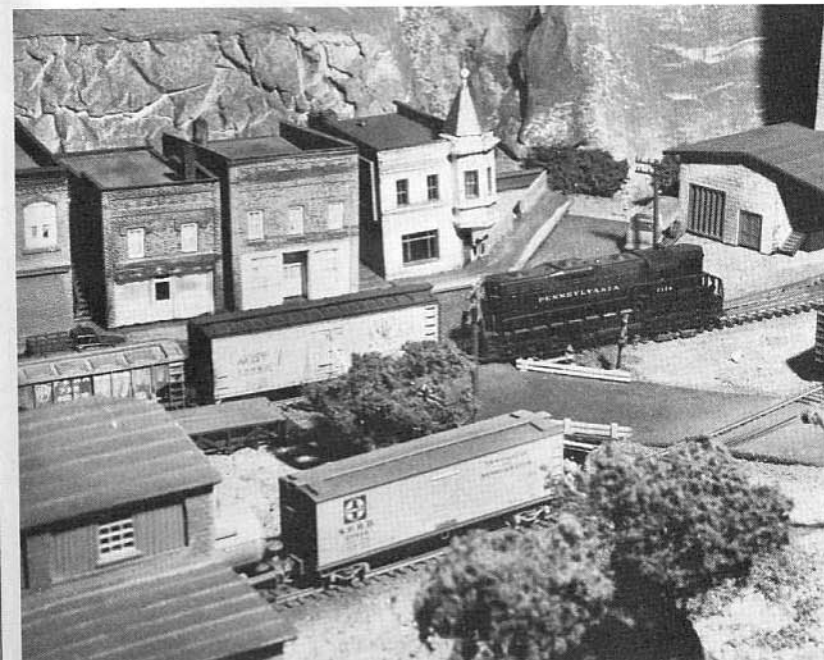


*The piggy-back terminal is located on a stub end yard, next to the main engine terminal.*



*A Pennsy GP-7 does some switching across from the main commercial shopping area.*

# THE PRSL LIVES

**Conrail may have killed off the Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Line, but Lou Fols keeps it alive in N scale.**

BY DENIS DUNNING

There are innumerable reasons given to explain why people take to model railroading, but one that is not often mentioned, yet of great underlying importance to many, is that of preserving shortline, or, as seems to be the case most often, a section of a large Class 1 carrier.

Lou Fols of Granada Hills, California was raised in the New Jersey area and still carries a soft spot in his heart for the heavy eastern railroading with its large steam locomotives, long coal drags, dense industrial areas and all the other features that give eastern railroading its distinct flavor.

Well experienced in HO railroading, Lou chose to switch to N scale for the space advantages gained, since the space available for a railroad, gained through a land war with



*A scratchbuilt Baldwin switcher rests between switching chores on the upper level industrial area.*

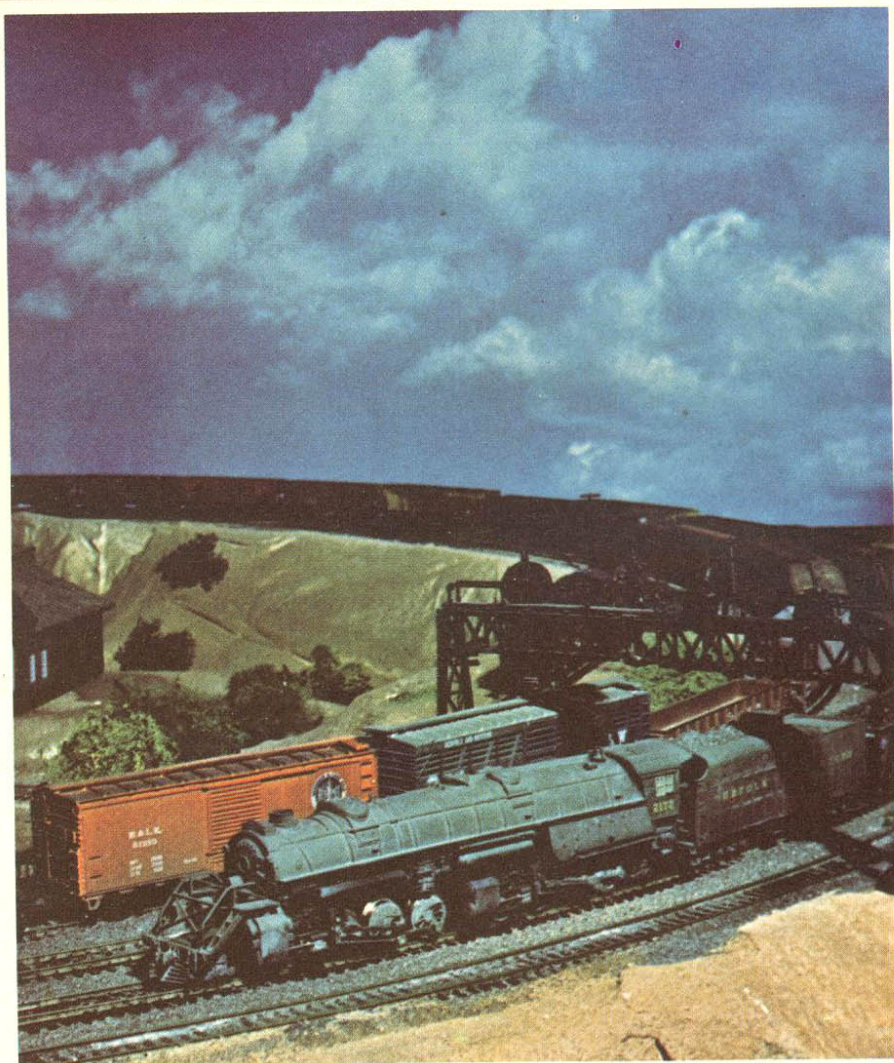


his wife, not dissimilar to the right-of-way fights of the Santa Fe Railway and the Rio Grande for expansion in the west, was not very expansive, being a spare bedroom measuring 9½' x 11'.

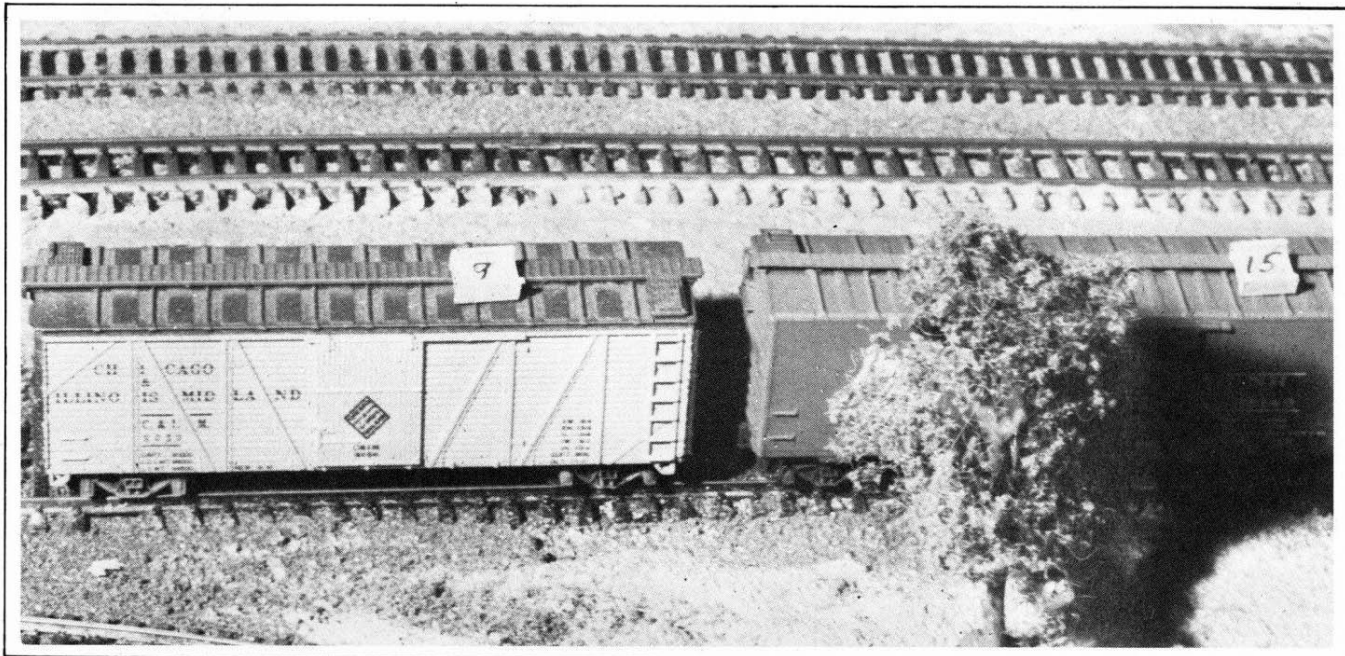
Choosing the southern part of New Jersey as a basis for a railroad, he picked a section of the Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Line, beginning at Camden and traveling almost straight south to the small town of Millville, a prototype distance of about forty miles. The time is the late '50's and early '60's when steam and diesel worked together in fact, if not in spirit.

He has kept the flavor of the railroad quite authentic, though there have been some major accommodations including the movement of the famed Horseshoe Curve from Pennsylvania to the outskirts of Camden. But, as with all model exercises, some changes have to be made and others just seem to happen due to personal preferences.

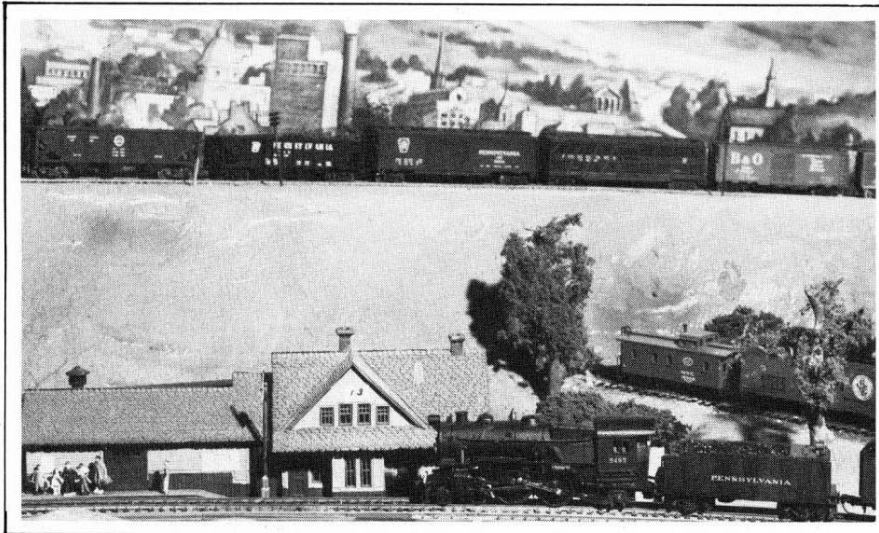
The motive power used seems to lean a bit in favor of diesels, though many of these were modified or scratchbuilt onto existing frames by



**There are many action packed small areas on the layout, such as this complex of industrial structures, located just beyond the control panel.**



**The small tabs on the roofs of the cars are used for the operating sessions. The numbered cars will go to a similarly numbered industry.**



Lou, including Baldwin diesel switchers, and even a turbine demonstrator, later to emerge as the Union Pacific's turbine. It is a nice change of pace from most N scale railroads where all the power is expected and can be seen on thousands of other model railroads. Another diesel project is a tiny General Electric 44 tonner, an unpowered model that is still

to be completed, but shows a lot of promise. Lou hopes to power a box car that will provide the driving force for the 44 tonner.

Steam locomotives get the same treatment, and the roster includes a Pennsylvania RR Class E-6 Atlantic, rebuilt from an Atlas Pacific, and a Pennsy Class S-2 steam turbine. This latter locomotive was reworked from

**An extensively reworked locomotive resulted in this PRR prototype Atlantic, seen here leading a local passenger run.**

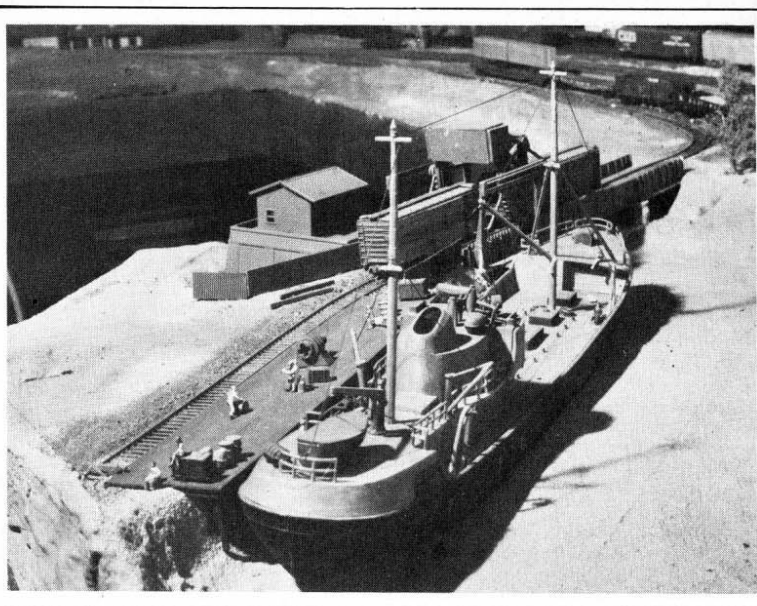
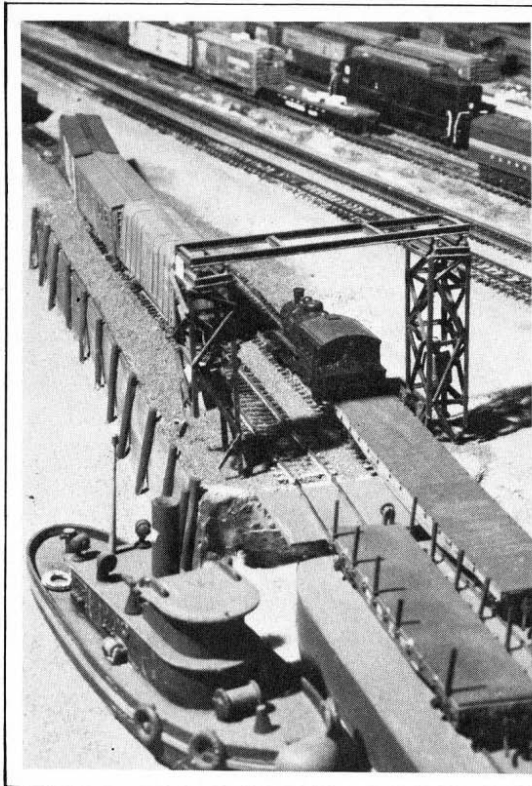
a Bachmann Northern. One of the nicest running locomotives is a Con-Cor Y6b 2-6-6-2 that has been refitted with a Micro-Motor. The locomotive is extremely smooth in operation and pulls quite well, though the builder noted that it had picked up a definite whine from the gears.

The track plan is basically a large double track dogbone loop, with two large yards and a separate branch that works to an upper level providing a great deal of industrial switching as well as a lead to the second yard. The scenery on the layout is fairly complete, with only small detailing items left to be done. Probably the biggest project left is the addition of water to the port area.

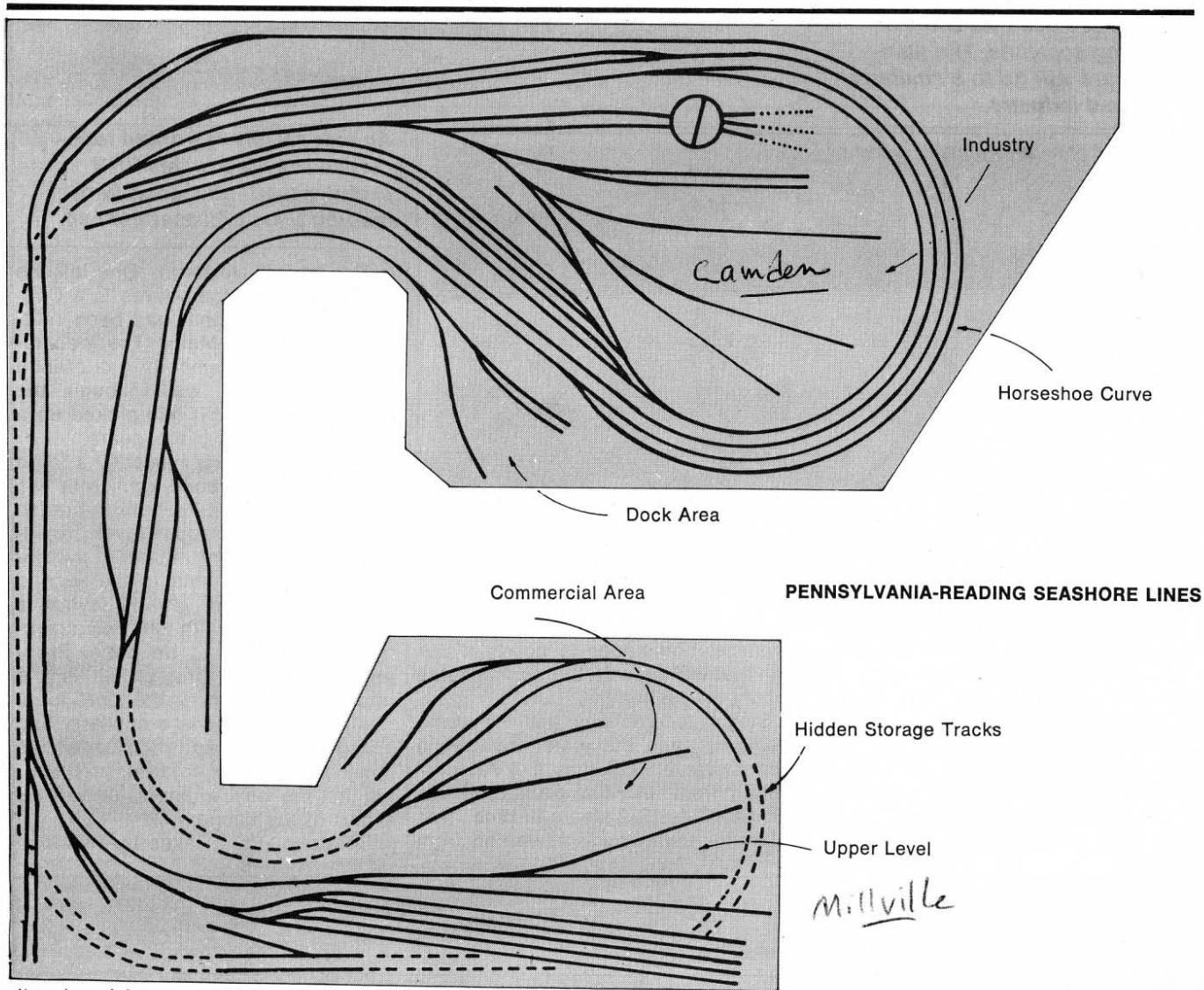
Already in place is a car ferry and a large freighter, and the river bed is in place and fully colored, just waiting for the day when water will be a part of the scene.

Scratchbuilding takes up much of

**Lou moved the famed "Horseshoe Curve" to New Jersey, where we see his repowered Y6b leading a long string of coal cars.**



*The dock area on the railroad is completed except for the addition of water. On one side is a car ferry operation, while on the opposite side of the river is a dock for medium size freighters.*

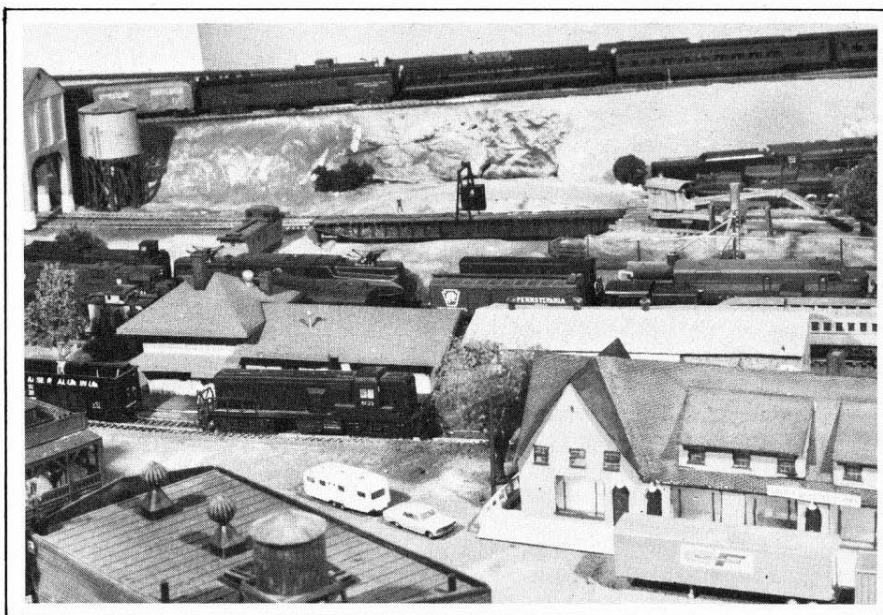


Lou's modeling hours, and some completed projects include the engine terminal with a five stall roundhouse, a turntable, and large concrete style coaling tower, along with the aforementioned dock facilities. On the industrial side are ice platforms, and a number of factories.

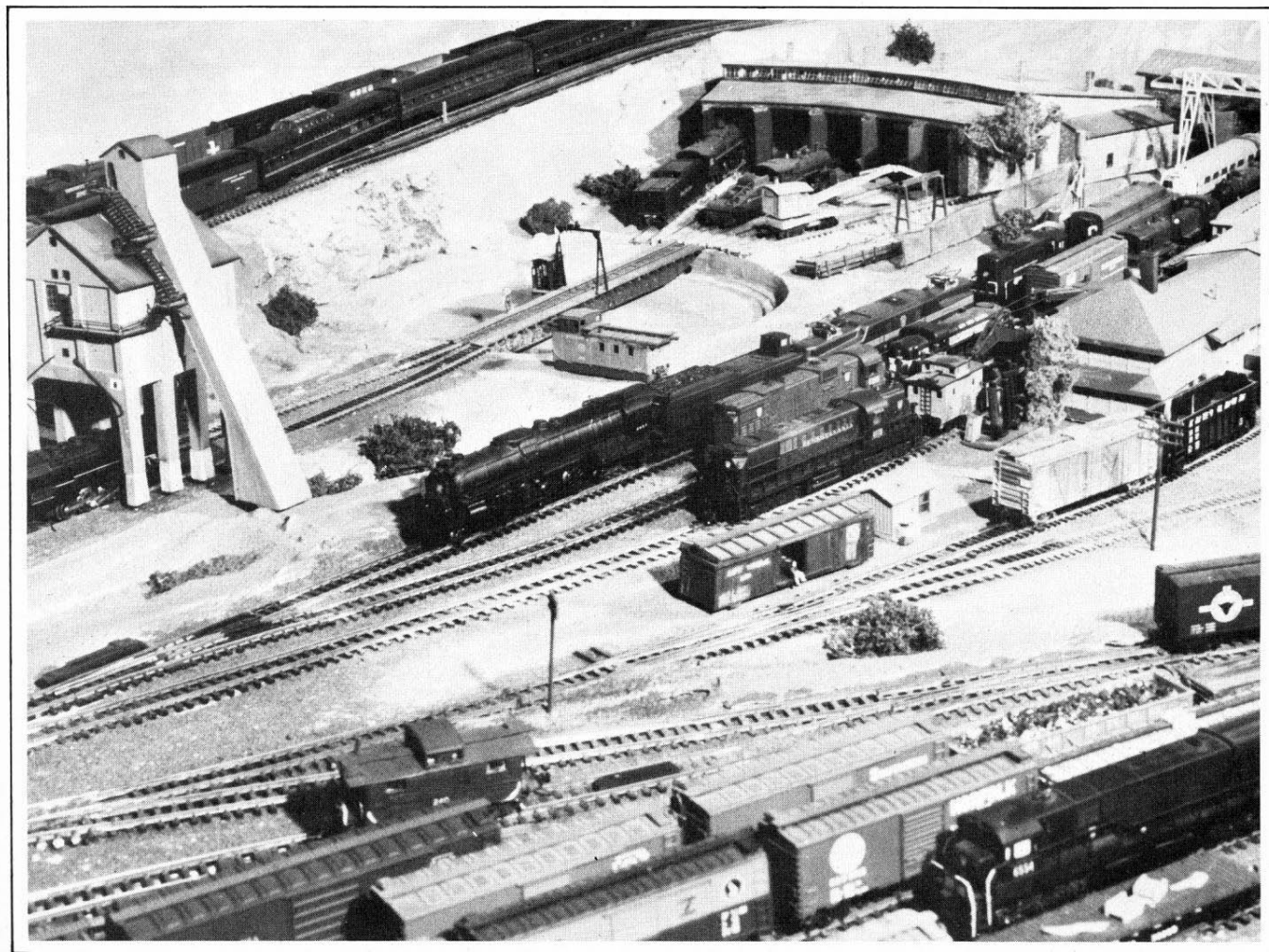
The track on the layout is varied with most of the turnouts being from Peco, while the track is a combination of Peco and Con-Cor/Shinohara for the mainlines, and Rail-Craft code 55 flex track used on the branch and sidings. The combination appears to work well as the railroad operated quite flawlessly upon our visit.

Control on the railroad is from one master panel, with an MRC Control-master transistor throttle power pack being the main power source. When a friend is also invited to help in the operation, there is a Troller hand-held transistor throttle on a long cord.

The two yards on the railroad each have a capacity of seventy-five cars, but they are kept relatively clear to provide someplace to make up



***This Baldwin diesel is another of the locomotive conversions to be seen on the railroad, tucked between some industrial buildings.***



***The engine terminal features a five stall roundhouse and turntable, along with a modern concrete style coal tower, all scratchbuilt.***

freights and break them down again as part of the operational scheme.

Operation plays an important part in the railroading of Lou Fols, and the layout was designed to allow a large amount of running and switching. He uses a "Tab Operation" in which small numbered tabs, made from small metal "I" beam channel, are placed on cars in the yards in a random pattern.

Each tab has a separate number which corresponds to a numbered industry. The yardmaster then makes up a train and turns it over to the road engineer (usually the same person) who delivers the cars to the appropriate industries. Once all the cars are delivered, the tabs are turned over to reveal another number, to which the car is to be delivered.

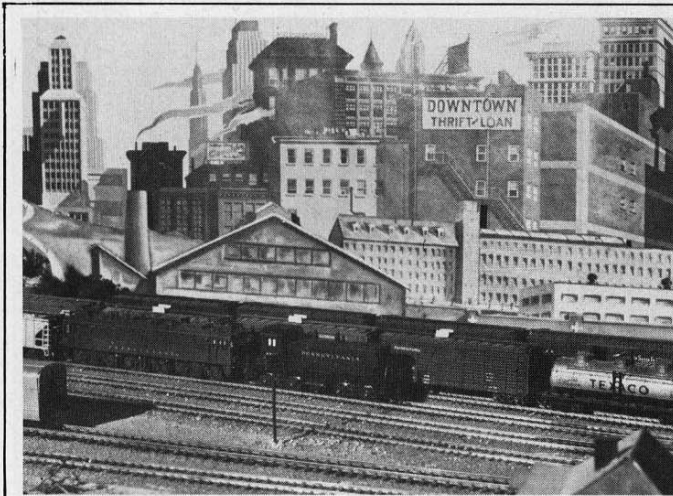
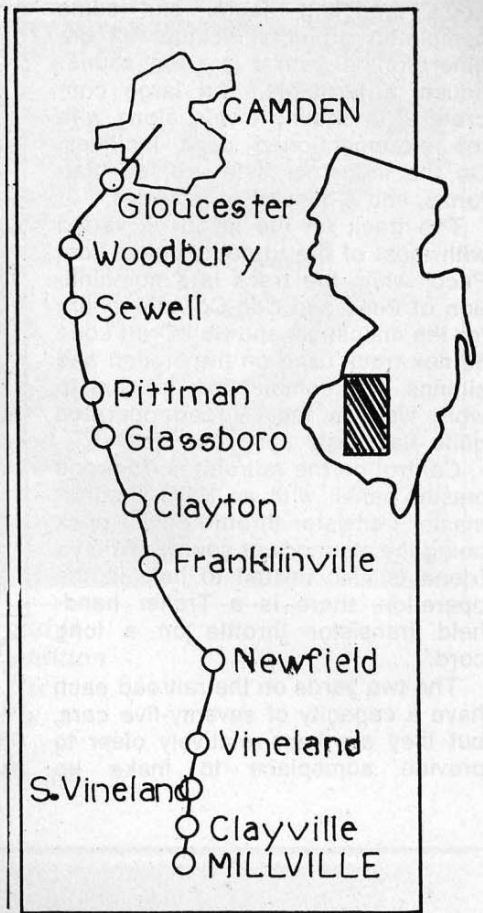
When that car reaches its new destination, the tab is removed and after an appropriate length of time for unloading of the cargo, the car is returned to the yard as an empty.

The random numbering of the tabs

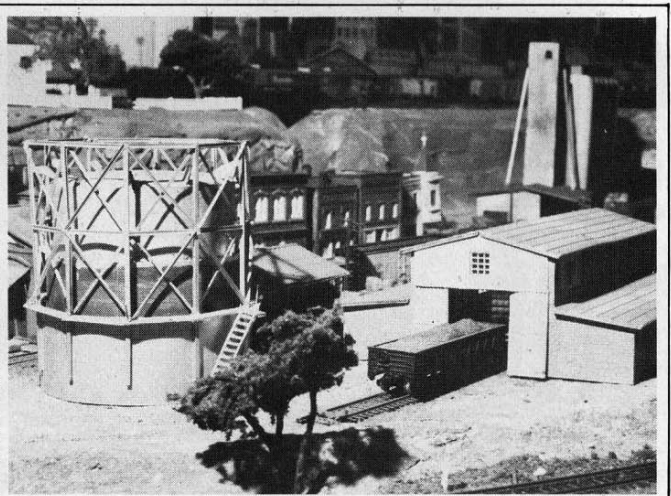
and the selection of the cars results in an operation that is always different and keeps its interest. And it takes only a few minutes to set things up, without the necessity of filling out forms and keeping lots of records as is the case with many types of model operation. For those who want to run trains rather than keep records, it is a very nice method.

The variety of projects that one encounters in model railroading was mentioned as one of the major reasons that Lou likes the hobby. He showed us a sound system he has installed in a box car that uses recordings of actual steam locomotive sounds, rather than synthetic sounds as with most systems. He is also working on lighted signals for the railroad, a project that is guaranteed to keep him busy for awhile.

There is still a lot of work to be done on the N scale version of the Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines, but there seemed to be no complaints coming from the builder.



**One of the yard dead ends on this upper level, where there are many industrial sidings mixed in for variety.**



**Like many of the structures on the layout, Lou built the high pressure gas storage tank from scratch.**