

OZARK DIVISION NEWSLETTER

“Celebrating the Magic of Toy Trains”

www.ozarkdivision-TCA.org

Special points of interest:

- The OO Gauge Story
- HOA Tour of National Museum of Toys & Miniatures
- 62nd TCA National Convention “The Place to Be in 2016”
- The Rest of the Story
- Calendar

I was going through my research material and I ran across a Scale-Craft Trains catalog from November 1937. This is a unique 48 page catalog in that Elliott Donnelley, the founder of Scale-Craft Trains, wrote many notable educational articles on modeling for his catalogs. The first 18 pages of this catalog featured some of his articles.

The introduction written by Mr. Donnelley, describes best what modeling railroading is all about. “When a man can lay aside his cares and worries at the end of the day and become supreme dictator in a world of his own making, he’s getting the greatest satisfaction that life can provide. He’s doing the things he wants to do, and boredom vanishes forever. Mental recreations may become tiring, physical ones contingent upon weather or health, but the recreation of Model Railroading is independent of these conditions. Fifty thousand enthusiastic devotees of America’s fastest growing hobby have learned the secret of really enjoying their spare hours and adding to the real value of living. What model railroading has done for them, it can do for you, and to the task of initiating the public into the secrets of the hobby, this catalog is dedicated.” The 1937 Scale-Craft Trains catalog introduced their new line of OO Gauge kits and assembled trains and accessories.

You can trace the history of OO Gauge back to the early 1920’s when Bassett-Lowke introduced some lithographed OO gauge products from original Bing designs. These were modeled after the prototypes of the big four railways of Britain. The company would provide custom-built railway service for customers. There is one such layout that survives today at Bekonscot Model Village, Beaconsfield, England. www.bekonscot.co.uk

Jumping ahead to the early 1930’s when OO Gauge came to America. The American OO is unique with a unique history. It was probably orphaned before it could get started. When the British started making OO Gauge in the early 1920’s the body scale was 1:76 but the track gauge was 1:87 (5/8 inch) so the bodies were over scale. My research indicates that models are still being made today with the HO/OO. Also models may be purchased in several versions of a correct gauge with the 1:76 bodies.

The American OO retained the slightly larger body scale of 1:76 and corrected the track gauge to 3/4 inch (1:76 track gauge). This allowed for the use of larger motors and modeling techniques similar to the O Gauge models of the time.

I must admit that when I first became aware of OO Gauge years ago I thought it was a Lionel brainchild. My research told me that Lionel was one of the manufactures

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trues who produced large quantities. Scale Craft Trains (1937—1955) produced large quantities along with some other manufactures Famoco, Nason Railway, Kemtron, Schorr and many other cottage companies that manufactured items between 1934—1955 with some production lingering into the 1960s.

Scale Craft Trains introduced their line of OO Gauge trains in their 1937 48 page catalog. They dictated seven pages to the new line. They offered two complete train sets, the first being a passenger set and the other a freight set. The passenger set kit included a complete 4-6-0 steam locomotive kit, a baggage car kit and two passenger coach kits. Also included was 16 sections of curve track and 4 sections of straight track, and is assembled for two rail operation. The locomotive and rolling stock parts were pressure die cast, insuring the super detail. All the drilling had been done only assembling remained. The freight set came with a 4-6-0 steam locomotive kit, tank car, box car, hopper car and caboose kits. The freight also came with the circle of track described above. The catalog emphasized the kit versions but both sets were also available fully assembled. The kit version of the passenger train set sold for \$48.50 , fully assembled \$68.00. The kit freight train set for \$48.50, fully assembled \$68.00. The original locomotives were shipped with a 7 pole, permanent magnet motor which ran on DC current. The transformer –rectifier unit sold for OO use produced 24 volts DC. The transformer-rectifier sold for \$17.50 plus .35 for the fuse wire. Later catalogs expanded the line adding two additional steam locomotives, a 4-4-2 and a 4-6-4T and powered by their 12 volt universal motor.

Was Lionel caught of guard with the new Scale Craft catalog and the introduction of their American OO gauge line of trains? I don't know, but it got them to introduce their line of American OO gauge trains in 1938. It should be noted; Scale Craft and Lionel were already competing in the O scale market. Lionel O scale models were introduced in 1937, a market that Scale Craft pioneered back in 1933. Was there a rivalry?

The Lionel 1938 consumer catalog made reference to “Last Year, Lionel startled the whole model world by mass production of a quarter-inch-scale locomotive—amazing in its accuracy and in its fidelity of detail. No one had ever attempted such a thing before! No one had even dreamed it possible...”

“But—what Lionel did in 1937 was only an introduction for this year’s engineering achievement...”

“RAILROADING FOR THE CITY APARTMENT” was the hook to get you to look at the new OO gauge sets that were referred to as “outfits” of which there were two. It should be noted that Scale Craft used similar wording in their 1937 catalog “this is good news for model railroaders who live in apartments are otherwise cramped for space”. Back to Lionel and their 1938 catalog and the two OO outfits they introduced; Set 0080 consisted of 001 locomotive with 001T tender, 0014 box car, 0015 tank car, 0016 hopper car, 0017 caboose, 11 sections of 0061 curved track, 0064 curved connection track, 4 sections of 0062 straight track and the 88 controller all for the price of \$35.00. Our you could buy set 0080W which was similar to set 0080 except set 0080W came with a whistle in the tender and a whistle controller for \$39.00. These sets came with three rail track .

Lionel expanded the OO gauge line in their 1939 catalog. They added 2 rail track along with several new outfits for 2 rail operation. The most expansive set was \$42.50 the 0090W set came with 003 locomotive, 003W tender, 0044 box car, 0045 tank car, 0046 hopper car and 0047 caboose. To complete the outfit it came with 11 pieces of curved track and one 0034 connection track; no straight track was included. Their was also a whistler controller included. The same set without the whistling tender sold for \$37.50. The catalogs for 1940 and 1941 didn't add any new items. However in 1940 the brain trust at Lionel was not happy with the results of the new line. They put a brave face on it as they had an investment to recoup. Lionel was invisible from most of the hobby publications of the time except for their own, *Model Builder*. In the February 1940 edition there was an article about starting a layout which featured O Gauge with just a mention of OO Gauge. The line was dropped in 1942 and there was no mention of it in their 1946 consumer catalog.

One final note about Lionel getting into the OO Gauge line. When they entered the market place in 1938 they used modified Scale-Craft OO cars in their pre-production sets and catalog photos. Lionel infringed on the Scale-Craft patents in their truck design and had to pay Scale-Craft a royalty. It is also worth noting that the Lionel three-rail track seems to have been inspired by the 1935 line of Tix Twin HO/OO track.

There was another company that introduced a line of OO Gauge toy trains sets of sorts. That was Strombek-Becker Manufacturing Co. (Strombecker) of Moline, IL.. They introduced their first models in 1936. These prewar sets were unpowered wood and paper kits-static models for a freight train. The cars could be converted for model railroad use. They were built to 5/32"=1' scale but were marketed as OO. Models offered included 2-8-2 locomotive and tender, gondola, boxcar, NYC MDT reefer and caboose.

I remember the company from the 1950s as they produced a line of wood and plastic static model kits. They also had a line of slot cars in the 1960s. I built a lot of models but I don't recall tackling one of theirs.

OO gauge survives today; it is the principal gauge of model railroading in Great Britain. Unfortunately in the United States it is an orphaned scale. There are some groups that model it. I don't know how collectable the Scale-Craft trains are but the Lionel OO gauge is certainly collectible. If you have access to the internet go to You Tube and type in American OO in the search line and you can watch some videos featuring OO Gauge from both sides of the Atlantic.

Heart of America Chapter sponsored a special tour of the National Museum of Toys and Miniatures on Saturday February 6, 2016. There were 38 members and friends who took the tour. The Museum is located on the campus of the University of Missouri Kansas City in a 38-room Italianate mansion at 52nd and Oak. The mansion was bequeathed to the University in the 1960s. The home was originally designed for physician Herbert Turerman in 1906 by architect John McKecknie and completed in 1911.

The first thing seen on entering the Museum is the two story Toytisserie spinning display of toys that were donated by the community for display. The recently renovated museum contains more than 300,000 items included in that is world's largest collection of miniatures. You can see toys that kids played with in colonial time all the way up to modern times. There are some trains mixed into some of the exhibits.

It was a great way to spend a Saturday afternoon and all who attended had a great time. For more information about the National Museum of Toys and Miniatures you can go to their website www.toyandminiaturesmuseum.org.

Andy Dubill, HOA Secretary/Treasurer

Membership Renewal: There is still plenty of time to renew your membership in the Ozark Division. All you need to do is complete the enclosed Membership Renewal Questionnaire and mail it as directed. How do I know if I am current? If you receive this Newsletter electronically you are in good standing or if you receive the Newsletter by mail look at the number above your name on your mailing label. If you see the number 16 or higher number you are in good standing, if you see a number lower it is time to renew your membership.

Take a look at the list of TCA members living within the Ozark Division boundaries who have allowed their membership to the Train Collectors Association™ expire December 31, 2015. Let them know they are welcome to return and take advantage of all the features and benefits of being a member of the premier collecting organization.

62nd TCA National Convention: "The Place to Be in 2016" is Houston, Texas for the Train Collectors Association™ 62nd annual convention, June 18—26, 2016. It looks like the Convention Crew has arranged for some great tours, great social events, a Train Meet and the annual Board of Directors and Membership Meetings. The convention information can be found in the latest addition of the National Headquarters News or the Convention website www.TCAconvention.org.

And The Rest of The Story: "This is not the end of the story" is how I ended the story of the Greatest Mail-Train robbery in America from the Fall 2015 Ozark Division Newsletter.

All robbers were captured, tried and convicted and sent to prison by November 1924. Here is what happened after some of them were released which brings the story to an end. Two of the Newton Brothers, Jess and Joe were released first and returned to Uvalde, Texas. Jess lived out his life as cowboy dying in March of 1960 in a VA hospital. He was a veteran of the Texas Brigade of World War 1. Joe Newton the youngest of the brothers owned a café and some other business around Uvalde. He was also an avid horseman well into his 80s. He died at age 88 in February 1989. In October 1980 at age 79 appeared on *The Tonight Show* and was interviewed by Johnny Carson. That can be seen on You Tube.

When Willis Newton was released from prison he returned to Tulsa, Oklahoma where he ran a series of gas stations and nightclubs. According to research he seemed to have maintained some criminal connections and probably involved in the "nightclub wars". He returned to Uvalde in the 1950's and stayed out of prison and the lime-light for the most part. He was implicated in a bank robbery in 1973 in Brackettville, Texas but there was insufficient evidence to arrest him. He died at 90 in August of 1979. Wylie "Dock" Newton returned to Uvalde, Texas after release from prison but there was not much information about him. He was arrested for a bank robbery in 1968, in Rowena, Texas but due to his old age charges were dropped. Apparently he was roughly beaten following his arrest and never fully recovered, although lived until 1974 dying at age 83.

Brentwood Glasscock, a member of the Newton Gang, when released from prison became a successful business man. William Fahy the postal inspector who was the "inside man" returned to Chicago, Illinois after release from prison. He managed to wangle himself into a job as an accident investigator for a Chicago street car company. He died in 1943 at the age of 61.

Calendar: For Ozark Division future event dates please see the attached Registration Form for the Great St. Louis Christmas Train Show & Food Drive scheduled for December 3, 2016.

Heart of America Chapter is hosting an overview of Lionel and MTH command control systems on Saturday, May 14, 2016 at Avila University, 11901 Wornall Rd., Kansas city, MO. The meeting will be held in the O'Rielly Hall, room 117. Meeting to get underway at 1 pm and will try to end by 3 pm. For more information contact Don Miller at olathadonm@aol.com.

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Postscript: I was surprised about the amount of information there was about OO Gauge trains. Yet OO Gauge in America is pretty much orphaned. I tried to rationalize why Lionel jumped into OO Gauge? I am not sure Lionel put forth all the effort required to make it as popular as the O and Standard Gauge trains. They dedicated just 2 pages (6 and 7) in their 1938 consumer catalog for OO Gauge. Although they did expand the line in 1939 and made available a dealers display No. 13 and was available for \$58.50 net. A picture of it can be seen in the Kalmbach publication *Lionel Trains, Best Layouts and Store Displays* page 50. The display featured two loops of track, one 3 rail and the other 2 rail along with some structures and scenery. I didn't know that Lionel produced 2 and 3 rail sets and that the 3 rail cars were not compatible with 2 rail as the wheel sets were not insulated. Also the Lionel sets were AC powered, like their other train products, so their OO models were not compatible with DC powered Scale-Craft which probably a marketing blunder. It apparently is not uncommon to find some Lionel locomotives that have been modified for DC operation with new motors and drive parts probably from Scale-Craft.

Most of my research came from the publication American OO Today produced by John Ericson, probably the most informed OO modeler. For OO action go to You Tube and in the search box type in OO Gauge Trains.