

RAILROADING ALONG THE WATERFRONT WITH WALTHERS  
SOME PROTOTYPE IDEAS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS  
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**OBJECTIVES** of this clinic:

- The material included in this program is designed with several objectives:
- To discuss the **prototypes**, as best identified, for the Walthers products
- To discuss possible **changes** to models to enhance fidelity
- To discuss other prototype variations amenable to **kitbashing** with Walthers products
- To give you additional **informational resources**

**BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

When the Milwaukee firm of Wm. K. Walthers announced their "Railroading Along the Waterfront" project in 1997 for roll-out in 1998, many modelers, especially prototype modelers apprehensively waiting to see what, if any, prototypes would be followed, because the subject itself is a broad one and there are many non-complementary choices that could be made. Some of us suspected that they would end up closer to their Great Lakes roots and follow prototypes found in that part of the country. That they would come out with an integrated theme project such as this would have been surprising indeed, had it not been for the previous issuance of the--in my opinion at least-- "steel" and "wood" projects. I think most of us were surprised and pleased at what resulted. The following text supports the eighty slides presented in this clinic and provides hard copy of the background information and references cited in the clinic.

**THE BOOK**

The first installment in the project was the book *Railroading Along the Waterfront*. This book provided an overview of the subject, organized regionally. This is a logical way to do it, as the physical aspects of rail-marine operations tended to vary by region. Some of the sections are better than others. There were a number of non-critical reviews in several of the enthusiast magazines (*Railroad Model Craftsman*, 12/98, pp. 29-34, *Model Railroading* 1/99, p. 19) amounting to little more than new product releases. A more comprehensive commentary including addenda and errata was published in *Transfer*, issues No. 28 and No. 29. (*Transfer* is the publication of the Rail-Marine Information Group--see note at the end of this writeup for more information.) As one of the contributors to the book (my section covers a very cursory look at Baltimore Harbor's rail-marine operations), I was very pleased with the way my material was published in its full length (twice what I was originally asked to do) and essentially unedited instead of being chopped up. At the same time, it was frustrating to be limited to such little space, and I'm sure other contributors felt the same. I suggested some illustrations that were not used due to space; these illustrations were later published in *Transfer* No. 35, sort of an "addendum" to my section in the book. I contributed a bibliography to my material. While there was no bibliography in each section, many or all of my suggested items were included in a general reference list in the book, which also pleased me. Overall, because of its survey nature, the book may serve to frustrate a modeler who wishes to execute a scene or operation; at the same time, it is an excellent overview and probably served to get a lot of people interested in the field who would not have otherwise. In all reality, Walthers could have published a book five times as big and still left a lot of folks unhappy (including the many who would not have been able to afford it!)

**PIER AND CRANE**

The first actual plastic kit issued as part of the project was a pier and traveling crane. While I could not find an exact prototype for this crane, it is similar to some Reading cranes that operated at Reading's Port Richmond terminal in Philadelphia, shown in the slides. Detail oriented modelers can note all the accessories lying around, which is typical (magnet, different size buckets, hooks). These Reading cranes were located on a finger pier, as with the Walthers kit.

The pier structure is also interesting. Of course the prototype exhibits a tremendous variety of pier structures. Mr. Plaster and other vendors over the years have sold solid wooden piling style bulkheads. Walthers' execution

is of sheet pile. Nobody sells decent HO scale sheet piling, although a decent surrogate can be modeled using that corrugated cardboard that is about 3" wide and comes in rolls, sold in party shops for use to twist and string across the auditorium for your prom.

The slides illustrate a number of other variations:

- A similar 40 ton shipyard crane at International Marine in, Savannah, GA, next to a drydock
- a modern cargo crane that is somewhat different from the Walthers crane, located at Locust Pt, Baltimore, MD alongside a warehouse. This gives you an idea of positioning the crane relative to a modern pier transit shed building.
- A variation is a pair of "two-legged cranes," are shown at ex-PRR, Pier One, Clinton St.; Baltimore. One crane rail is located in the "apron" (the paved surface where the tracks are located) while the other one is on the side of the building. This is a nice, space-saving feature.
- Several other cargo cranes are shown on piers and alongside transit sheds in Savannah, GA
- A shipyard crane that is now part of a waterside park in Wilmington, DE is pictured, courtesy of Joe Gotaskie.
- Nicholson Terminal on the Detroit River-these are used for cargo, largely steel.

Walthers' promotional material depicts the pier being used alongside the transfer shed building. However, the pier could also be used by itself as a finger pier. A photo of such an installation at Harsimus Cove, PRR, Jersey City is shown.

--Another interesting variation for modelers is a crane on Barge. This one was in New Orleans; note rails raised at end and buckets and stuff on deck.

--Another variation of a pier is shown with concrete pilings and timber fenders in Savannah

A modeling application that is pretty much "out of the book" is an illustration on Aaron Dupont's layout in OH; Dave Marvinney photo.

The pier and crane kit were reviewed in *Railroad Model Craftsman*, 9/98, pp. 96-104

#### **MUNICIPAL PIER BUILDING/TRANSIT SHED**

Walther's "Municipal Pier Building" has a generic appearance that seems to resonate with many modelers who claim it is based exactly on such and such--San Francisco, Norfolk, etc. In fact, it is a selectively compressed hybrid. The above response suggests Walthers was highly successful! In reviewing prototypes, I found it to most closely resemble Pier 40 in Philadelphia. Something extra found on some full size piers but not on the model are the grid structures on the roof. These are called cargo masts and they were used to load and unload ships using what is called the "married fall" system. View the classic Marlon Brando movie *On the Waterfront* to see how this works.

Some other variations of pier transit sheds are illustrated in the slides:

--Pier One, Clinton St., Baltimore; shows the original building plus lower, newer structure plus cargo masts.

--Pier 5, Locust Pt., Baltimore--This is a modern transit shed could be modeled using Pikestuff.

Aaron Dupont has executing several modeling applications:

He combined 2 Municipal Pier buildings, resulting in a substantially larger structure.

He appended a lower building from Pikestuff next to the Municipal Pier building.

He modeled the Bunge Grain building at Galveston by kitbashing using sides and second story of ends of Municipal Pier Building.

I'm sure what Aaron has done is what Walthers hoped modelers would do--mix and match.

This kit was reviewed in *Model Railroader* 12/98, p. 21

#### **TERMINAL WAREHOUSE**

This structure I found to be a bit strange, at least for the ports with which I am familiar. It seems to

resemble more of a 19th century factory building. Indeed, Vince Altieri wrote an article on doing such a kitbash in the October 2003 *RMC*, pp. 83-84. A member of my clinic audience recently was most emphatic--this is the customs warehouse in Milwaukee. While I haven't seen this one and I'll take his word for it, I did find a photo of a pierside warehouse with some similarity that was operated by the Canton Co. of Baltimore (also note one unloader crane.)

Aaron Dupont again has performed a modeling adaptation using pieces of this structure to nicely represent a compressed version of the Galveston Cotton Compress. I would be interested in talking with Bill Wischer of Walthers to see what the actual prototype of this building was. At the same time, it is a good structure for various kitbashing uses.

I could not find a review of this kit in the enthusiast press.

## **DIESEL TUG**

There were roughly 49 postwar diesel tugs built for East Coast US railroads. There were three similar designs with some recognizable architectural differences, and each design represented about 1/3 of the total fleet. Many of them are still in the service of commercial towing/docking companies or marine contractors, although in the last couple years at least two have been sunk for fish reefs and many more are now laid up and for sale or being used for spare parts. The prototype for Walthers tugs was the Lehigh Valley's Wilkes Barre class, one of the three designs built by the Jakobson shipyard of Oyster Bay, Long Island. Illustrated is a photo of the prototype *Capmoore*, renamed *Hawkins Point* by Moran. Unfortunately, since this picture was taken she has been sold by Moran and is now in Boston reportedly being used for spare parts. The slides illustrate some of the variations of the "Modern Diesel Tugs."

A photo of *Bethlehem* represents the Walthers model nicely finished and decorated by John Koenig

A bow view of another Jakobson prototype showing heavy bow plating; in this case New Haven's *Cordelia*

Erie's *Marion* and *Elmira* are shown tied up at Hoboken; these were also variant Jakobson designs

Another Walthers model modified slightly as Erie's *Akron*, decorated by John Koenig

The Walthers model is NOT correct for the second design, namely those tugs designed by the Philadelphia firm of Bowes. Some examples of Bowes-built boats:

The B&O's *Howard E. Simpson* was an example of one of the other designs by the firm of Bowes design (she had about 10 other sisters)

The "class boat" for the B&O's diesel tugs, the *Roy B. White*, renamed *Hercules* by Boston Towing and Transportation. She was sold to Nigerian owners in early 2003.

CNJ's *Sandy Hook* was another Bowes design, sister to B&O tug except for height of pilothouse

C&O's *M.I. Dunn* at Newport News in Chessie Marine colors. This was originally CNJ's *Liberty*, then B&O's *J.W. Phipps*

B&O's *Lehigh*, one of four original Reading tugs, was another Bowes design, and a smaller version of the tugs above.

The third design, also different in some important ways from the Walthers kit, was the "Consolidation," "General Managers Association" or "Standardization" design. The Pennsy, Lackawanna, Bush Terminal and New York Dock used this design. (Many of these GMA tugs are in New Orleans owned by Crescent Towing and are one-by-one being modified and upgraded pretty much beyond recognition--a testimony to their robust engineering.)

An example was the New York Dock *Brooklyn*; note the "slab" sides.

*Brooklyn* was nicely kitbashed from the Walthers tug by John Koenig

As a final modeling idea for the tug, convert it to ship docking service and model the tug headquarters, e.g. a Life-Like house, such as one shown in Savannah.

The kit was reviewed in the May 1999 *Model Railroader* and in the October 1999 *Railroad Model*

*Craftsman*. In addition, there was an article elaborating on the architectural differences among the three “classes” in the January 1999 *Railmodel Journal*. Finally there was an excellent article on upgrading article plus some tips on building the kit by George Barrett *Transfer No. 35*. George, proprietor of Sheepscoot Scale Models, has also produced an etched-brass replacement handrail kit for this tug. Walthers has “retired” this kit as it supposedly “did not sell well,” so if you still feel you want one, better get them while you can.

#### CARFLOAT

Walthers’ carfloat model is an excellent representation of a three-track “transfer” float, a carfloat that was used to interchange cars from one railroad to another. There were some prototypes on the East Coast that were longer and some that were shorter, but Walthers has chosen a common length. Given the size of this vessel, many modelers have experienced challenges in getting the parts to fit. Ron Parisi wrote an article on coping with these challenges as well as applying further details (such as railings and letter boards), painting and weathering it in the April 1999 *Railmodel Journal*. If you intend to build this kit, this is a must-have article.

The possibilities for variation are endless. First, you can remove the center track and add a loading platform in its place like the prototypes that were designed for loading and unloading boxcars and refrigerator cars at Pier Stations. I am aware of a manuscript describing such a project that is being submitted to one of the hobby magazines and which may have been published by the time you read this. Crow River Products produced a set of castings to use for the platform bents. You can also shorten or lengthen the carfloat by removing the center section or splicing another one in, as Aaron Dupont’s two carfloats illustrate.

MER member Terry Nesbitt presents a clinic, which I haven’t seen, on kitbashing the carfloat, “expanding” its utility. He makes another hull from a clear 1x8 onto which he applies the styrene deck, then uses the leftover hull to model open barges.

In addition to the above reference in the enthusiast literature on the model, *Transfer* issues No 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 38 and 39 had a great deal of information about carfloats, and there is more to come. The kit was reviewed in the May 1999 issue of *Model Railroader*.

#### FLOATBRIDGE

There are numerous engineering techniques of transferring railroad equipment from the shore to floating equipment. The suitability of each technique depends on such factors as desired speed of operation, tidal ranges and size of the floating equipment. Certain ports tended to employ certain styles, so the style tends to be associated with the geography.

The Walthers floatbridge kit has been subject to numerous valid and not so valid criticisms. The main misconception is the fact that it is missing some of the important features seen on other common New York Harbor floatbridges such as the ones at Long Island City as well as ones operated by the Lehigh Valley and Erie in Jersey City. This is true--you need to redo the suspension arrangement and the bridge itself to correctly represent these. Numerous articles in *Transfer* (see below) have described the various and deceptively similar architectures. I got the impression that the Walthers folks were influenced in their design by a lot of the black and white photos of Reading subjects by Ed Birch from Oklahoma City, some of which were reproduced very small in the book. And indeed, the Walthers’ floatbridge is pretty closely correct for a much simpler design that was used by the Reading on the Delaware River. Units of this type were at Bulson St. in Camden and at Pigeon Point Delaware, and Deepwater, New Jersey. (In fact, at this writing, the one at Pigeon Point is still extant and can be seen when traveling in the westbound lanes of the Delaware Memorial Bridge.) We could spend--and Tom Flagg has done just this--several hours in a clinic discussing these floatbridges, but suffice it to say, this style of Reading floatbridge actually had a pontoon supporting the “live” load. The cables were just used to raise the bridge for pontoon maintenance--they were not in tension when a live load was traveling over the bridge.

On the other hand, West Coast floatbridges had suspensions similar to what you see on the Walthers model. In these cases, the apron was counter weighted and rested on a shelf on the carfloat so that the carfloat, rather than the floatbridge mechanism supported the live load. From what I know about these, the Walthers unit appears to replicate them rather nicely.

Going beyond that, the Walthers floatbridge can be the kitbashing basis for other designs simpler than the later, heavy duty New York “electric” floatbridges. The easiest example is one operated by the Pennsylvania Railroad in Canton Hollow, Baltimore. This is, I believe, based on the Andrew Mallory patent (the late Paul

Mallory's father) which was used until it failed under operating conditions that exceeded it's design limits in New York. Another kitbashing candidate, illustrated in the slides, would be the B&O's Locust Pt., Canton and Curtis Bay floatbridges in Baltimore that had twin towers on each side, the latter one supporting a set of "pickup" counterweights that served similar functions as the threaded suspension rods of the heavy duty New York units.

Finally, it is important to note that there are a lot of other floatbridge designs besides this "overhead gantry" style, and they were sometimes employed side-by side. For example, wooden Howe trusses supported by pontoons (without overhead structure) were used into the final years in New York and Philadelphia. Two are still extant (one restored in Manhattan, one rotting in place in Philadelphia.)

Several modeling executions using what appear pretty much to be "out of the box" Walthers kits include Barbara Brunette's Whatsup Dock Ry. and Aaron Dupont's Galveston Wharves.

Reference: The October/November 1999 issue of *Model Railroading* elaborated on the prototype background of this kit with black and white photos of the Bulson St. floatbridge. *Transfer* Nos. 12,13,14, and 15 covered the architecture of New York floatbridges. The kit itself was reviewed in the May 1999 issue of *Model Railroader*. So far nobody has done an article on kitbashing this floatbridge to more accurately resemble the more complex "French" design that succeeded the Mallory design, although I have seen a number of nice scratch-built models of the French design..

#### **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER--**

It is nice to see a marine scene with many of the elements executed in a reasonably prototypical fashion.

The Galveston Wharves Diorama, in the Railway Museum at Galveston Texas is one such example, although I believe this was executed before the advent of the Walthers project. On the other hand the Port of Mobile Project by Mike Broadway and Bob Beatty of the Birmingham metro area did use the Walthers items and was covered in 7 installments of articles in *Model Railroading* starting in November 1998. There are at least three more chapters that have not been published as articles. At one time the thought was that the publisher, Highlands Station, would compile all of this material and publish it in a project book form like those put out by Kalmbach..

Several other books were published on the subject after the Walthers book. One is *Where Rails Meet the Sea* by Mike Krieger, published in 1998 by Metrobooks, 1998, at a list price of \$22.95. Then in 2000 and 2002 respectively, Morning Sun published Vol. 1 and Vol. 2 of Tom Flagg's *New York Harbor Railroads in Color*. These contain the kind of great color images we have come to expect from Morning Sun, plus Tom's extensively detailed caption information.

#### **WHAT'S NEXT? (WISHFUL THINKING?)**

I have concluded this clinic in recent years by noting that Walthers had provided the rail-marine modeler with a huge resource of basic modeling material. I jokingly suggest that all we need now are a High Lift McMyler-style car dumper (such as those used at Port Reading in Arthur Kill and Jersey City) and a Hulett Unloader such as used on the lower Great Lakes. I must be careful about these jokes, however. In the January and February 2003 issues of *Railroad Model Craftsman*, Don Spiro published an article on scratch building a New York Central covered lighter barge for which plans had been run in *Transfer* No.22. I sent Don an e-mail telling him I'd heard a rumor that Walthers was coming out with this in injection molded form. The joke was partly on me, however. The day after my e-mail, I received an e-mail from John Hitzeman of American Model Builders with images attached showing AMB's new Laserkit of this very barge--it should be on the market by the time you read this.

#### **A SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP**

And if you can't get enough of rail-marine, there is a Special Interest Group--the Rail-Marine Information Group. RMIG publishes *Transfer* several times a year. For membership and back issue information, write John Teichmoeller, 12107 Mt. Albert Rd., Ellicott City, MD 21042. The above plus a comprehensive index of back issues is on our Website: **[www.trainweb.org/rmig](http://www.trainweb.org/rmig)**. (The website also contains other worthwhile information such as a detailed list of addenda and errata for Tom Flagg's book as well as a listing of the New Haven Railroad's marine department files archived at the University of Connecticut.)