

A railroad you can model

More track in the streets

A fine way to make your railroad seem larger than it is and add interest at the same time

PHOTOS AND DATA BY DRYDEN L. PRENTICE

GOT an odd corner on your layout where you would like to have a remarkable modeling feature? I mean something that visitors will at least remark about?

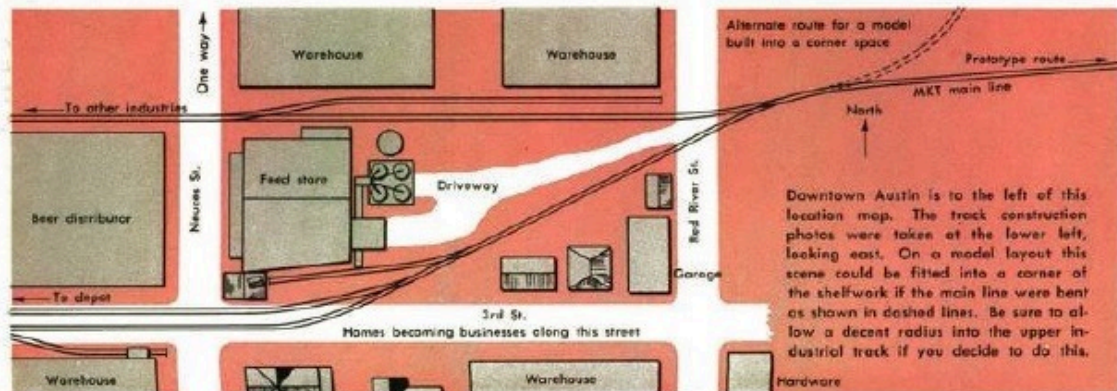
How about a bit of track laid in the city street? Only a few inches of this kind of modeling will establish the effect. It will make your railroad seem

longer by breaking the track into different zones. It will provide a place where you can install a lot of detailed model-work.

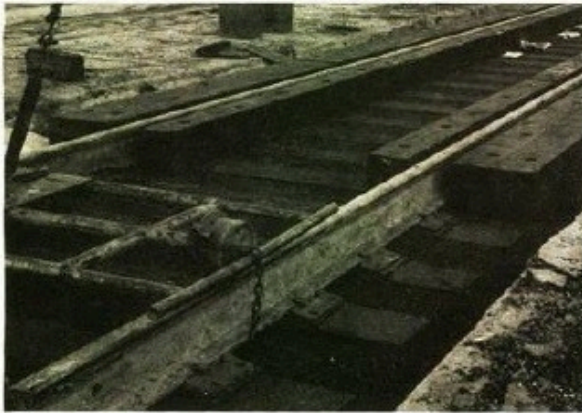
Tracks run through city streets in almost every part of the country — to Baltimore's wharves, to Omaha's warehouses, under the El in Brooklyn, past the uni-

versity in Fort Collins; at one time many a passenger station was reached only by tracks in the street: Los Angeles and Syracuse, for examples. Last April David Richter described a street-and-warehouses situation that exists today in Colorado Springs; it once served a passenger station. The material on these new pages comes from Dryden L. Prentice, of Austin, Tex., and shows a situation in that city in sufficient detail for you to model it without the need of drawings. One photo offers you the choice of modern trackage or well-aged trackage soon to be replaced.

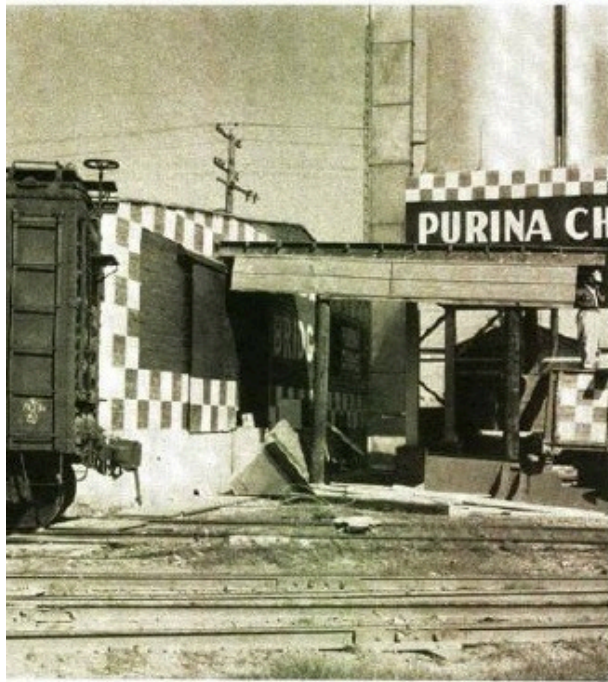
"Here in Austin," writes Prentice, "and within a few blocks of the state capitol, the Katy's Dallas-San Antonio main line runs through the edge of the business district partly in street pavements. There are a multitude of sidings serving warehouses, a hide-and-produce plant, a



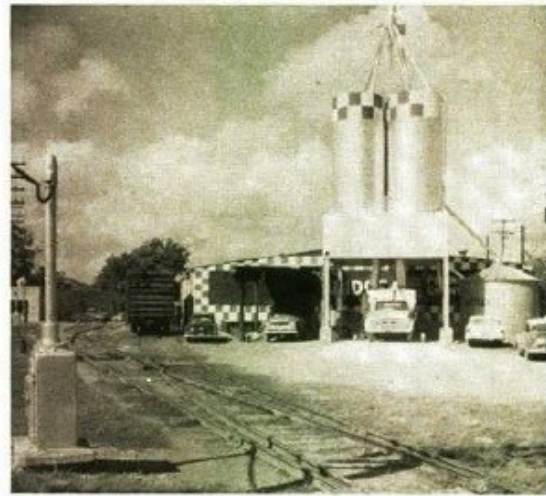
Ordinarily, track is leveled in the ballast pile, but in this streetwork the ballast underlay is leveled accurately with a power roller, right, before the track is positioned. Note the broken pavement above the ties of older track at left. A spur track to the warehouse, upper right, ends in the two wheel bumpers seen protruding from the driveway. Note also the protective buffer posts beside the warehouse doors. Six rows of timbers cover the ties at each side of the rails so the spikes can be uncovered at future times should rail repair or replacement be called for. The area between the rows of timbers, also the flangeways, will be filled to the proper level with pavement mixture. The rails rest on tie plates with shock-absorbing pads beneath them. Wheel in foreground is part of a rail-grinding rig.



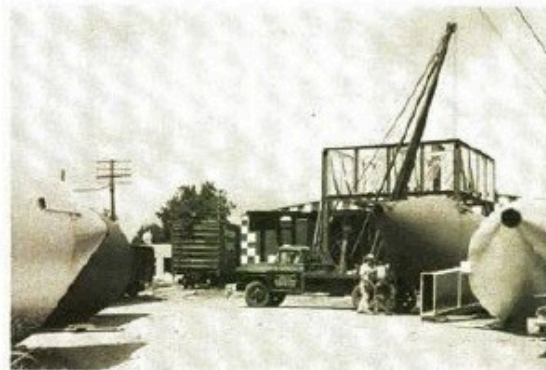
Looking northeastward as the main line and sidetrack curve through a street intersection. Note the air-conditioner cooling tower on roof.



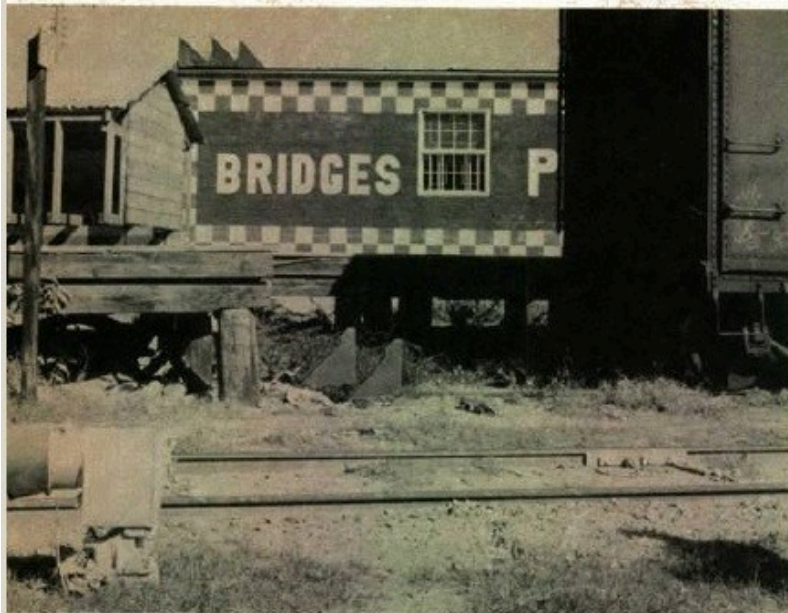
To unload a car of grain, the car is spotted with its doors about where the coupler now is. (This car is unloading crated or barreled goods at a warehouse door.) The sheet metal hopper lying on the ground, center, is erected over an underground belt conveyor next to either car door. As grain is pushed into this funnel it drops into the conveyor, which is covered by the boards seen alongside the building. The grain is elevated by the distant rectangular tower and is distributed by gravity to any of the four elevator tanks; the lifting of the grain gives this kind of structure the name "elevator." Tanks load trucks by gravity.



The mainline track passes the rear of the feed store. The truck is receiving chick feed from the elevator via a canvas chute. The tanks are about 14 feet (4.3 meters) in diameter, a little less than 40 feet tall.



The framework that supports the elevator tanks is simple box construction of various sizes of I beams including some diagonal panel bracing. Later this was covered with sheet metal. One end of the conveyor tower housing can be seen in the right foreground, between the two funnels.



Viewed from across the pot-sigaled main track, the unloading docks are simple timber affairs. Note the metal wheel bumpers in the center of the photo. The small structure on the platform at left is a turkey feeder ready for delivery. Sign on post indicates track in street is unsigned.



Main line where it has just left street is so covered with gravel and dirt you cannot see the ties. In modeling, note how soil rises to each side of track. This continues a little way until track can reach a better-drained level. Note also path worn through weeds, parallel to track.

newspaper plant, a large chili cannery, and others." ["Katy" is the Missouri-Kansas-Texas RR.]

One interesting way to model such a situation is to model the track as though being relaid, as in some of the photos. This provides a lot more detail for visiting modelers to study. Strategically located, the points of some of the turnouts could be located in the open, so that only a few actually remain in pavement where trouble is more likely to occur from trapped gravel particles or other sources.

Katy's track was doubled through the street area. Switching was done on one track while the other was being relaid.

Track is relaid by taking out the old track and ties and excavating a strip of pavement about a foot wider than the length of new ties that go in. This is excavated to about 2 feet below pavement level.

Crushed rock is spread in this trough and rolled flat with a miniature power roller. The level of the surface of the gravel is such that the ties will bring the railtops slightly above the general pavement level. This is because automobiles are less disturbed by rails being slightly high than if slightly depressed in a pavement.

Ties and track are now laid in the usual way and aligned perfectly.

Next, rows of stringers are laid along each side of each rail. These are square in section except for undercutting to clear the tie plates and spikeheads. The stringers are just high enough to come flush with the railtops; if railroad ties are of the proper height, they could be used. Two rows of stringers are used outside each rail, and one row inside, leaving a flangeway which is filled to flange level with paving mix.

This construction makes the track practically integral with the pavement; yet the stringers can be lifted out at any time for rail renewal without digging up the pavement generally.

The map shows the situation where the rails leave the street. Both Katy and Texas & New Orleans (Southern Pacific) use this trackage. This situation could be made to fit a corner of a model railroad shelf layout merely by bending the main tracks to the left as shown.

Feed delivered by railroad cars is belt-conveyed from under the track to storage tanks, as shown in one picture. Later it is distributed by truck to farms. These elevators were new just a few years ago: one picture shows them under construction. The tanks are aluminum with red trim; the concrete block building is blue and white with red trim; lettering is white on blue background. If you are modeling in HO size, Suydam has a **Furina** Chows structure kit which will furnish you with either an entire structure or useful material, signs, and other parts for decorating a free-lance structure of your own.

What's in the elevator tanks? That would depend on the needs of the particular agricultural area, and sometimes on the season. Prentice writes: "At the time I took the photos one tank contained maize, one chick starter, and two other kinds of poultry feed: broiler and egg-layer mixes. Most of the ranchers here grow their own corn or sorghum for cattle."