

» A day on

Working the eastbound way freight on the HO Maumee Route



5:30 a.m. We start our day at the East Yard engine terminal on Bill Darnaby's HO Maumee Route. Our engine, Mikado no. 521, is waiting for us under the coal dock.

Welcome to LaFontaine, Ohio. It's 5:30 a.m., September 1955, and we're at the roundhouse of the Cleveland, Indianapolis, Cincinnati & St. Louis RR, better known as the Maumee Route. We're called for train No. 20, the daily-except-Sunday eastbound local freight on the First Subdivision of the Youngstown Division, and we'll end our day at Dacron, Ohio, 90 miles away.

We'll be governed by Timetable No. 3 and by train orders from the dispatcher. There's no signal protection except at interlockings. The timetable makes eastward trains superior to westward trains of the same class. As an eastbound third-class train, No. 20 is superior only to westbound third-class and extra trains. We'll have a long day.

Our engine, a J-2 class 2-8-2, is on the outbound track under the coal dock and

is filled with coal and water. The Maumee runs on Digitrax Digital Command Control, so we assign the engine to our throttle and check the headlight, backup light, bell, and whistle functions. Then we head down the engine lead.

Before we can leave

The details of today's work are all at East Yard Office, and that's our first stop. First, we check the bulletin book for changes to daily operating procedures.

Next, we check the train register for overdue superior trains. Number 20 is scheduled out of East Yard at 6:31 a.m., and the timetable shows five opposing superior trains. One was due in more than 12 hours ago and is no longer a concern – any train more than 12 hours late loses its schedule authority. The register shows that all the others have

We stop at the East Yard office to check the train register and get our paperwork.

arrived except second-class freight No. 57, so we can't leave until it shows up.

We also receive our train orders with the clearance Form A that's required for any train at its initial station and is our authority to proceed on schedule. That's often all we'd need for a scheduled train. However, the clearance says we also have train orders 4, 5, and 6, and one message.

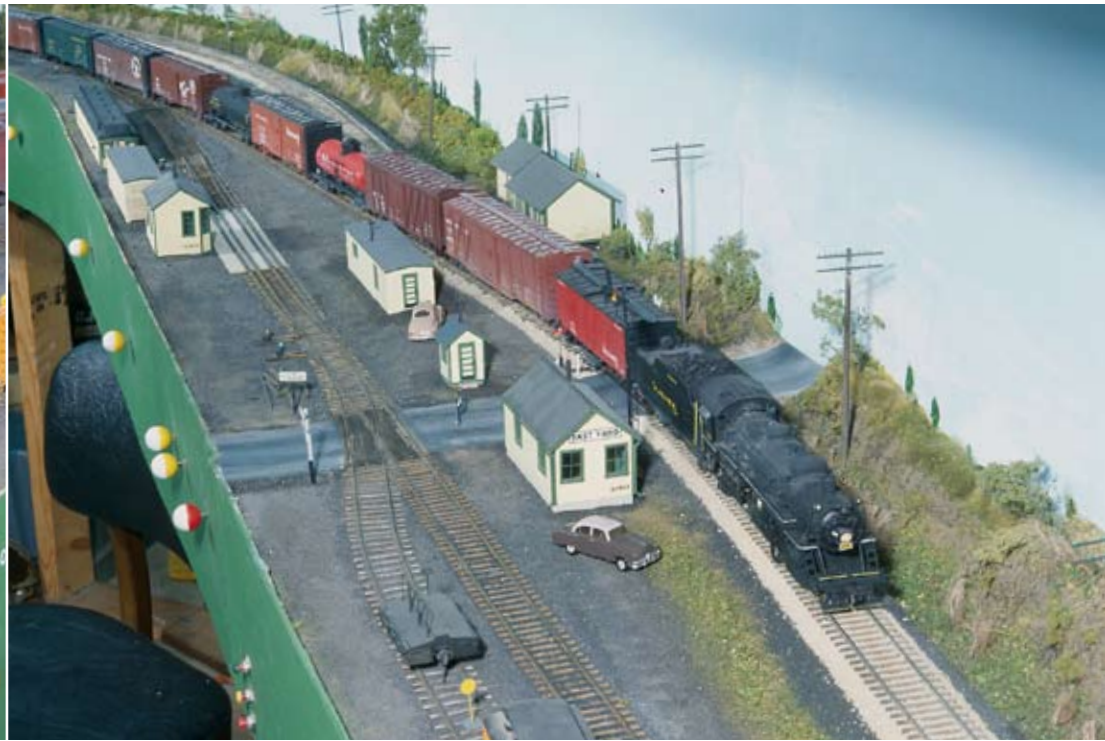
Order no. 4 is a Form 19 saying "No. 20 has right over No. 57 East Yard to Mifflin." That makes 20 superior as far as the west switch of the Mifflin siding, so we won't have to wait for 57 after all.

Form 31 order no. 5 says "No. 20 meet No. 21 at Avoca." Our train is scheduled to meet 21, the west local, at Avoca, but the dispatcher routinely sets a "hard meet" by train order so No. 21, inferior by direction, can proceed to Avoca if 20 is late. The dispatcher used Form 31

No. 20



By Bill Darnaby • Photos by the author



6:33 a.m. Train No. 20 passes the East Yard Tower. Sometimes the dispatcher puts out additional orders or instructions here, but not today. We're on our way!

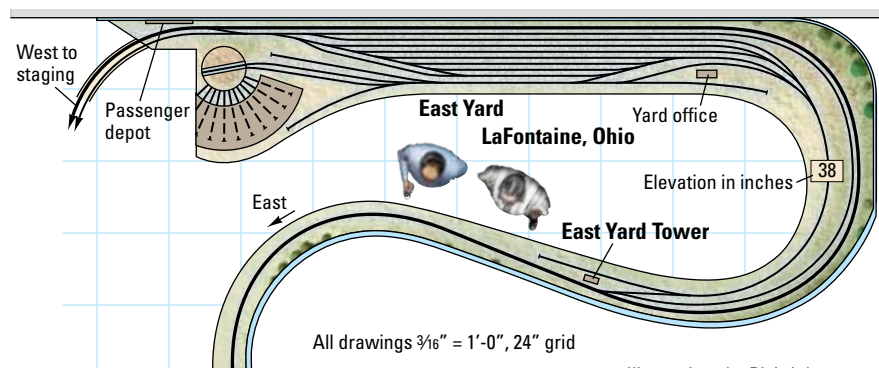
because this order takes superiority away from 20 east of Avoca. A 31 order requires the signature of the conductor or engineer to make sure the restricted train receives the order.

The third order, Form 19 no. 6, says "Eastbound extra trains wait at East Yard until 12:01 p.m." We won't have to provide flag protection against extra trains until after that time, but we must still protect against the schedule of second-class train 54, due to leave East Yard at 10:56 a.m.

Finally, the message gives us some work instructions, telling us to pull four cars of coal from the Gastonia storage track and spot them at the power plant.

We'll be able to leave on time, so you can go ahead and sign the register to show No. 20 out at 6:31 a.m.

Next we couple our engine to the train and check the waybills while the air test



Illustrations by Rick Johnson and Terri Field

is being made. We have 18 cars to deliver. In addition, the train has a rider car behind the engine for an extra crewman and to handle company mail, followed by a way car, a Maumee boxcar carrying less-than-carload-lot (LCL) shipments. We use this time to plan our work and write out a switch list.

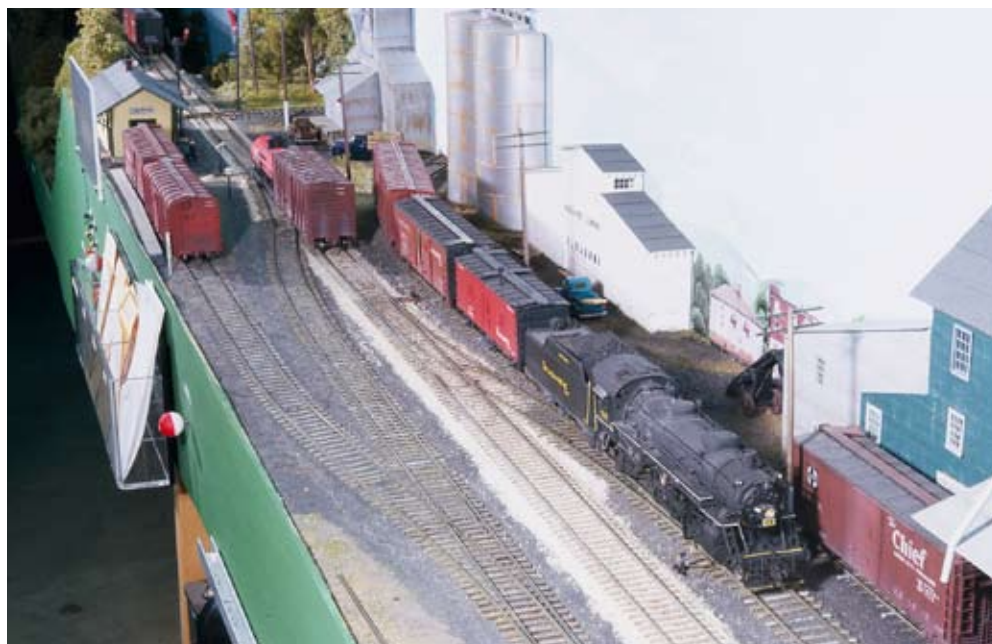
Usually road crews phone the dispatcher to report the time out, but often the yardmaster or operator will do this at a terminal. Okay, we're on our way. GMR

Bill Darnaby is a frequent contributor to Model Railroader and Model Railroad Planning magazines.

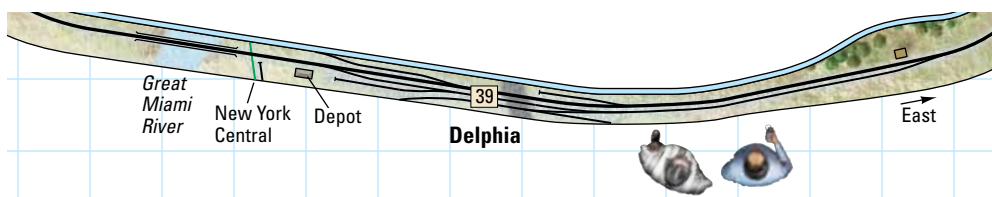


We cross the Great Miami River observing the 30-mph speed restriction for the high bridge west of Delphia, Ohio.

Leaving most of the train west of town, we pull up to the depot and spot the waycar for loading and unloading.



Still hanging on to the rider and way cars, we back a boxcar of lumber onto the lumber company's spur. The box and tank cars on the main will be spotted next.



Delphia

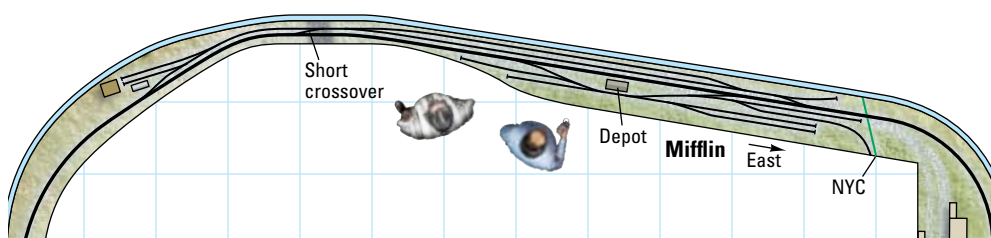
6:40 a.m. Crossing the Great Miami River west of Delphia we look ahead to see that the target signal guarding the crossing of the New York Central's St. Mary's Branch is set for the Maumee. We stop just west of the depot and cut behind the three cars we have to deliver at Delphia, leaving most of our train sitting on the main line. We know from the timetable and train orders that no opposing or following trains are coming for hours, so it's okay to leave cars we won't need here out on the main.

While we do our station work, the agent tells us about an eastbound boxcar to pick up and take to Edison. He also says that we can leave the tank car we brought for the oil dealer on the drill track for No. 21 to spot later. Not having to make that facing-point delivery will save us time.

We make our setouts and pick up the Edison car, then get our train back together and test the air while we update our switch list. When we're ready to go, you call the dispatcher. Acting as the operator, you say "Oh-Ess Delphia, No. 20 by at 7:45 a.m." "OS" is the old telegraph code for "on sheet," also meaning "out of station."



On the way to Mifflin, we cross the NYC's Big Four main line to Cleveland at Miami Junction over a series of crossovers instead of diamond crossings.



Mifflin

8:34 a.m. We make the maximum authorized speed of 49 mph most of the way from Delphia, though we must slow to 20 mph to cross the NYC at Miami Junction. We slow down again approaching Mifflin, where our superiority over No. 57 ends. We find 57 holding the main waiting for us, and its crew has lined the west switch for the siding. After we ease into the siding at 15 mph, 57's head brakeman lines the switch back to the main and gives his engineer a highball to head west.

After 57 leaves, we can back most of our train out onto the main, stopping with the east or through cars clear of the

We have several setouts and pickups to make at Mifflin. The interlocking signals and tower at the east end of town guard another NYC crossing, here the old Toledo & Ohio Central line.

modelrailroader.com

crossover roughly halfway down the passing siding. We cut off the Mifflin cars and that car for Edison that we picked up from Delphia and continue down the pass. We'll have a couple of facing-point moves, so we leave those cars on the siding and continue down to the interlocking protecting the Toledo & Ohio Central (NYC) crossing.



Arriving at Mifflin, we find No. 57 waiting for us on the main line and pull our train into the siding.

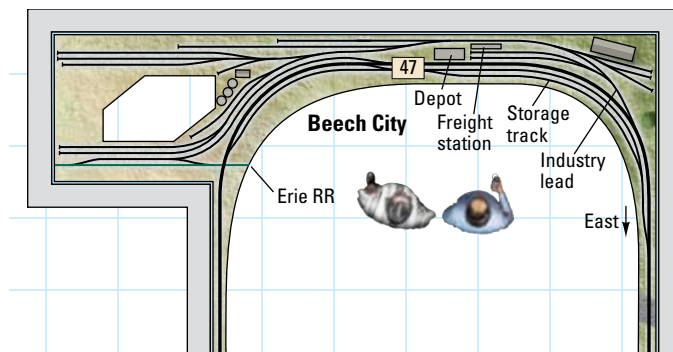
The towerman lines us out of the siding and then east on the main so we can back to the depot for our station work.

The train order signal is clear, indicating that there are no orders for us. After conferring with the agent and finishing the station work, we back farther west on the main to the short crossover. There we get back over to the passing track to couple the facing-point cars ahead of the 521.

We make our setouts and pickups and leave the cars picked up from facing-point spurs in the pass. That way we can run around them on the main and get everything behind the engine again.

We have time before any trains are due, so we'll sort the train. Using the short crossover and the main line, we place all our pickups at the rear of the train and that boxcar from Delphia with the other Edison cars. We'll leave our next setouts just behind the way car. Wherever space and time permit we'll keep our train in station order and through cars at the rear.

Let's go. Call the dispatcher to report us out of Mifflin at 10:03 a.m.



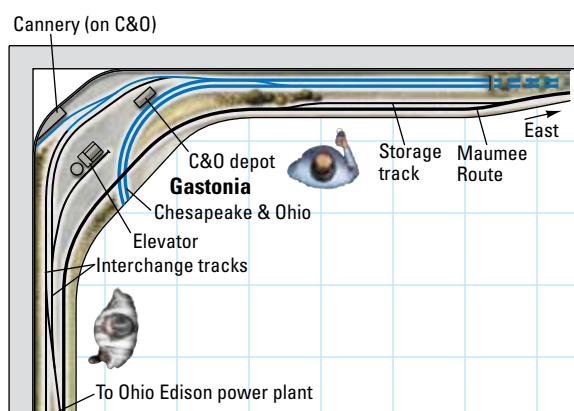
Beech City

10:27 a.m. Some 10 miles down the line we see the yard limit sign for Beech City and slow No. 20, knowing that Rule 93 allows other trains or engines to occupy the main track within yard limit signs without regard to the superiority or schedules of trains other than first class. We get a clear signal at the Erie crossing west of town and find a westbound extra waiting in the passing siding for us.

After pulling in far enough to allow the extra to leave the siding, we back our train to a stop opposite the depot for the station work. Again the train order signal is clear.

We have two cars for Beech City, and the agent says he has nothing for us. As Beech City has a daylight switch job, we'll set the two cars over to the industry lead

Pulling into Beech City on the main, No. 20 meets Extra 653 West waiting in the siding. The extra's white flags show that it has no timetable authority and is inferior to our third-class way freight.



Gastonia

11:05 a.m. At Gastonia the Maumee crosses the Chesapeake & Ohio, but there's no Maumee depot or agent. There are interchange tracks, the Ohio Edison spur, an elevator, and, east of the crossing, a short storage track. We have one car for the elevator, a facing-point move, and that message to spot four coal loads from the storage track at the power plant.

From experience I'll tell you to pull the empties from the power plant first, and we'll leave that elevator car on the storage track for No. 21 to handle as a trailing switch. Rather than drag the empties with us, we'll leave them on the storage track too. Number 50, the eastbound pickup train, can take them later on today.

We spot the first coal hopper on the dump pit and the rest beyond, so the

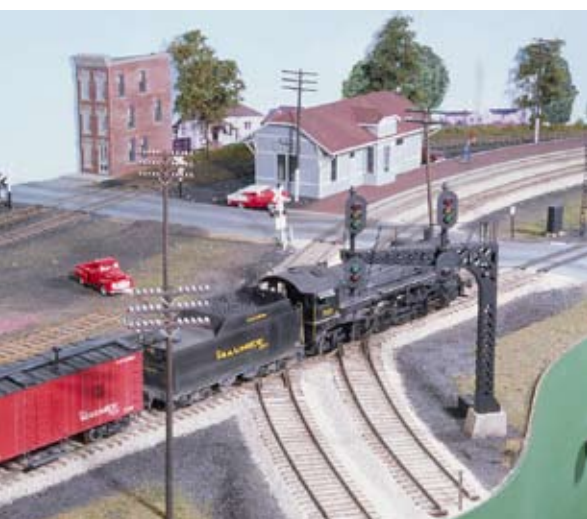
We're spotting the four hoppers loaded with coal at Ohio Edison, after first pulling the empties from the power plant and exchanging them for these loads from the storage track.





There's a daytime switch job at Beech City, so rather than spotting our two cars for this station at their destinations, we leave them on the industry lead for the switcher to handle.

and let the switcher spot them. When we're back on our train and ready to go, call the dispatcher to report us out at 10:15 a.m. Then whistle off for Gastonia.



As we leave Gastonia, we cross the Chesapeake & Ohio's double track main line between Toledo and Columbus.

power plant can unload the cars and roll them past the pit one at a time. When we're ready we'll continue east without calling the dispatcher. Remember, the Maumee has no station here, so there's no one to report our passing.



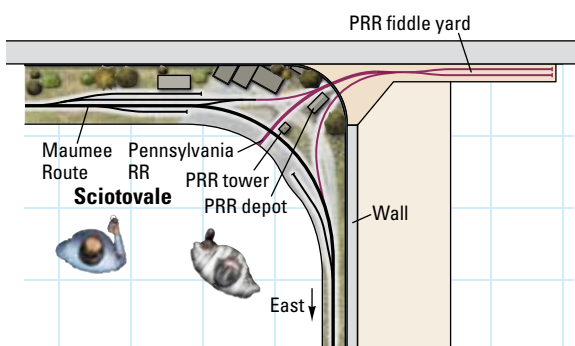
We had just one car to deliver at Sciotovale, and now we're on our way across the Pennsylvania RR's line between Sandusky and Columbus, and passing the Pennsy tower. The PRR towerman reports No. 20's departure to the Maumee dispatcher.

Sciotovale

11:55 a.m. At Sciotovale we stop at the home signal for the Pennsylvania RR crossing and cut the train behind the car for the feed mill just east of the diamond. As you pass the PRR tower you note that the train order signal is clear. The Maumee pays part of the Pennsy towerman's wages to copy orders for our road. After making the spot at the mill we back across the PRR to our train and make our air test. Acting as the PRR towerman, you call the dispatcher and report us out at 12:19 p.m. It's getting close to time for No. 54, and we wonder how far behind us he is.

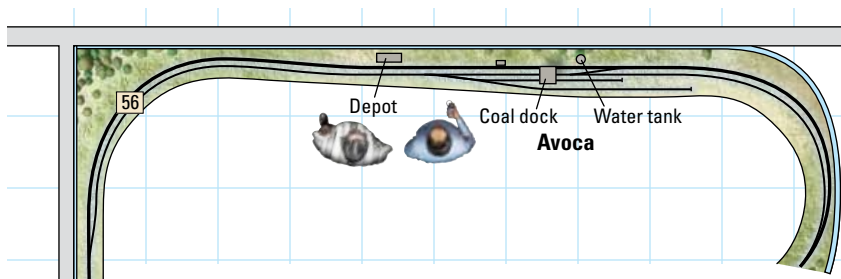


On the way to Avoca, our No. 20 crosses the Maumee's big bridge over the Olentangy River.





We're on the main at Avoca, stopped under the coal dock to take water, as No. 21 pulls by us on the passing track behind engine 527.



Avoca

12:30 p.m. We're meeting No. 21 at Avoca, but we can hold the main as the train superior by direction. At the depot, the train order signal is at stop, indicating that we'll get a Form 31. The operator has you sign for order no. 9, which states "No. 20 meet Extra 647 West at Avoca." The dispatcher used Form 31 because we're getting this order at the station where our superiority is restricted.

We also get a message stating that 54 was by Mifflin at 12:18 p.m., indicating that the eastbound second-class train is about an hour late. The message doesn't relieve us from protecting the rear of our train against 54, but it gives us an idea of where he is. The agent says we have no work at Avoca, and we tell him about the cars we left in the storage track at Gastonia so he can arrange with the dispatcher to have No. 50 pick them up.

Avoca has an extra-long passing siding with a crossover, a storage track, and, being roughly halfway to Dacron, a coal dock and water columns. We pull east under the coal dock to take water and



Our No. 20 arrives at Clay Center just ahead of No. 54. Our head brakeman will line us into the siding to let that second-class fast freight go by.



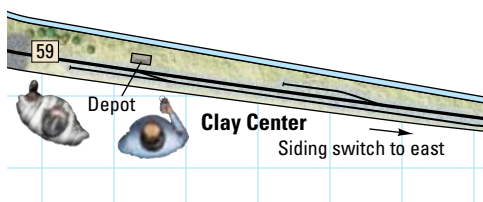
Soon after we're clear in the siding, 54 shows up with engine 632 and some Maumee trailer-on-flatcar equipment.

Clay Center

12:54 p.m. We approach Clay Center knowing that train 54 is getting close. Rule 99 requires us to provide flag protection when we may be overtaken. As we slow for the siding, our flagman drops off to protect our rear while we head in. As it's

now past 12:01 p.m., the flagman will stay out to protect against eastward extra trains while we work Clay Center.

Number 54 comes along shortly, and after he passes we can do our station work and make two setouts. The train order signal is clear, and the agent wants us to pick up two cars at the elevator. We get





As No. 20's caboose passes under the coal dock, Extra 647 West follows No. 21 through the siding. The Avoca operator had a Form 31 order for us giving 20 a meet with this westbound extra.

await developments. Very shortly, our westbound counterpart, No. 21, arrives, followed by the Extra 647 West. Both trains received orders at Edison, two stations west of here, that helped them advance to Avoca against No. 54.

You call the dispatcher to OS No. 20 by Avoca at 12:47 p.m.



our work done but don't take time to resort the train. Train 31, a westbound second-class train superior to us by class, is due out of Dacron Yard at 3:15 p.m. We want to be able to run to Edison and do our work there before we have to clear for 31.

Don't forget to whistle in the flagman while we're getting the train back together on the siding. The signal is four long toots for "flagman may return from the west or south." When he's aboard we can start rolling, while you report us out at 1:58 p.m.



After leaving most of our train west of the home signal for the Edison interlocking, we pull ahead to the depot where we'll get a 19 order.

Edison

2:04 p.m. At Edison we again cross lines of the NYC's Big Four and T&OC. We find the home signal lined for the main instead of the siding, suggesting that 31 may not be close. We'll come to a stop with our head end occupying the crossings and cut off behind the Edison cars and the pickups from Clay Center, leaving the rest of the train west of the home signal. Whistle out the flagman – one long toot and three shorts – to protect against extra trains, and we'll pull up to the depot for our station work.

The train order signal is at "caution" or 45 degrees, indicating a Form 19 order. We get order no. 11 stating "No. 31 meet No. 20 at Fairmont." The tower operator also received a copy of this order and so knew to line us for the main. Since Fairmont is the next siding east, we can proceed with our work without concern for No. 31.

We have one car for the NYC and one for the freight house, and the agent

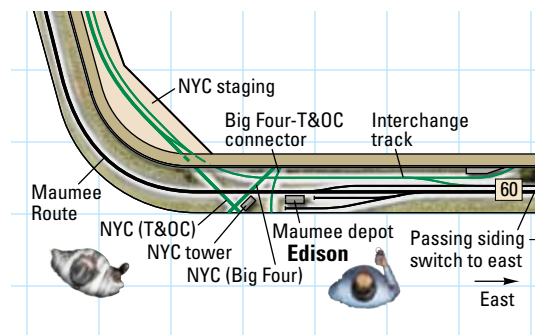


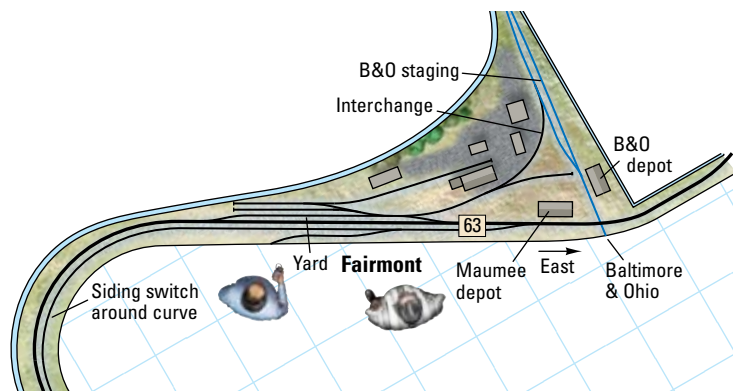
While we work in Edison, our flagman protects the rear of No. 20 against any following extra trains.

also wants us to pick up the cars from the NYC interchange and take them east.

Afterwards, we back west across the diamonds to our train and whistle in the flagman. He leaves a fusee (a red flare) burning and begins walking in.

As we pass the depot on our way east, you call the dispatcher to report our arrival and departure times – we get out of Edison at 3:09 p.m.





After doing our work in Fairmont, we start to pull east and see that we have a 19 order to pick up as we pass the depot.

Fairmont

3:24 p.m. We make it into the siding at Fairmont 8 minutes before No. 31's scheduled departure. That's not really an issue since order no. 11 requires 31 to wait for us. Still, it's good not to have delayed this fast freight. It comes steaming along behind L-class 4-8-2 no. 612. We look for green signal flags on 31's engine, and seeing none we know there are no following sections of that schedule.

After No. 31 passes we go out the east end of the siding onto the main and pull

down to the depot for our station work, stopping on the Baltimore & Ohio crossing. The train order signal indicates no orders. We have four setouts and two pickups, and the agent tells us to leave any westbound cars we've picked up in the small Fairmont yard. We'll leave with cars only for Kersey, the last station before Dacron, and points east. He also wants us to push a car out of the yard into the B&O interchange track.

We get this work done and take advantage of the yard tracks to put the through cars at the rear of our train. It's close to 5 p.m. as we get the train together to go east, and now the eastbound train

order signal is at caution. We pull down to the depot to see about the order.

The B&O automatic interlocker hasn't released, leaving the home signal at stop, so we can't go anywhere anyway. You hit the button to release the interlocker and, while it's timing down, we read the order.

Form 19 order no. 12 says: "No. 20 has right over No. 51 Fairmont to Dacron." The dispatcher has taken away 51's superiority and given it to us. This lets No. 20 proceed to Dacron against 51's time – it's scheduled out of Dacron Yard at 6:06 p.m. The only other westbound schedule we have to worry about is first-class train No. 17, out of Dacron at 5:31 p.m., but we have enough time to get to Kersey for it.

The interlocker releases and the eastbound home signal clears. You OS us out of Fairmont at 5:01 p.m.

Kersey

5:28 p.m. We approach the west switch at Kersey slowly, knowing we have to stop and line our train into the siding to clear for 17. Our flagman throws a fusee off the rear in case an extra is following us and also trying to clear 17's time. About fifteen minutes after we've stopped at the east end of the siding, No. 17 rolls by on its way west. This is the last superior train we'll have to look out for before we expect to get to Dacron, since we're now superior to 51 thanks to order no. 12.

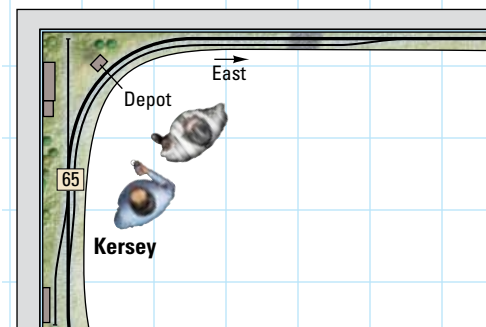
We cut the train behind our two Kersey cars, pull out the east end of the siding, and back down the main to the depot. It's more than three hours after the agent closed up and went home, but we have keys to the depot so we can handle the



There's only one daily passenger train each way on the Maumee's Youngstown Division, and No. 20 is in the siding at Kersey to meet westbound No. 17.

company mail and LCL. The agent also left a note and the waybill for a car to be picked up from the elevator.

The work is easy: one car in and one out of the elevator, and one into the team track. We're quickly back on our train and ready to go. Before we begin pulling east



out of the siding, we whistle in the flagman who's been protecting the main while we occupied the east switch. Stopping clear of the switch, we wait while the switch is lined back to the main and the flagman gets on. When we get the highball from the rear we head east. Since the depot is closed we don't have to make an OS report, but we get rolling at 5:56 p.m.



Dacron at last, and we pull No. 20 through the yard lead to the passing track while a Lima diesel switcher waits in the clear.

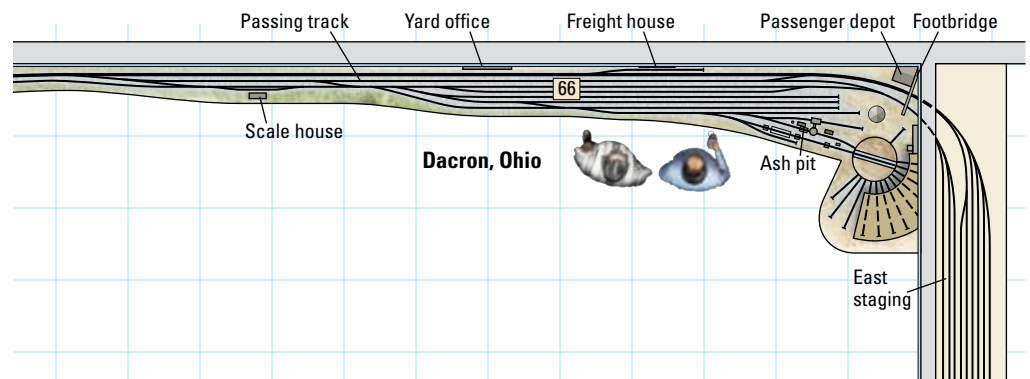
Dacron

6:07 p.m. As we pass the yard limit sign for Dacron Yard, we slow to restricted speed in anticipation of the west switch into the yard and in accordance with Rule 93. Number 51 could be waiting for us on the main, but he's still in the yard. The yard foreman gets on our engine at the switch and tells us to tie up on the passing siding. He gets off at the yard office and, as the caboose passes, he gets the waybills.

We pull to the east end of the siding, cut off the 521, pull out on the main, and back down to the yard office. While 51 pulls out, you sign the train register to indicate our arrival and report the time to the dispatcher.

When we can again head into the yard, we follow the ladder track to the roundhouse leads. Our brakeman lines us onto the inbound track, and we spot engine 521 over the ash pit. The hostler will take over from here.

After collecting our gear we walk over to the roundhouse to wash up. Then we'll take the footbridge across the tracks for a beanery supper and an early night's rest at the railroad "Y." Nice run!



We leave Mikado 521 on the ash pit to be serviced – the engine hostlers take over from here. We'll head for the roundhouse to go off duty and wash up.