

## ORIGINS OF THE COLVILLE, REPUBLIC AND PALOUSE RAILROAD

Around the turn of the century gold was discovered in Eureka and Last Chance gulches near Republic, WT. At about the same time huge wheat ranches were being farmed in the Palouse Country south of Spokane, WT. Fortunes were being made from both enterprises. The mine owners and ranchers married, built large homes and started families. Their wives reveled in their newly acquired wealth and social status. They had expectations.

The Great Northern Railroad had taken over the Spokane Falls and Northern, and extended the trackage north into Canada, west to Grand Forks, BC and from there down to serve the mines in Republic. Similarly, the Northern Pacific Railroad built down into the Palouse Country through Pullman, WT and down to Lewiston, IT, and ultimately partnered up with the Union Pacific Railroad to construct the Camas Prairie Railroad.

Both the GN and NP ran passenger service, but it was not emphasized and ran on schedules considered inconvenient by the wives who had expectations. Spokane was the only place to shop for anything beyond bare necessities, and the *nouveau riche* wives felt that they deserved shopper-friendly train schedules in well-appointed conveyances. They made powerful suggestions to their rich husbands that they should build them a proper railroad. And thus was born the CRAP.

The CRAP was disadvantaged from the beginning by having to build in an area in which the best routes had been taken by the GN and NP. In essence the new CRAP paralleled the older lines, although the CRAP chose the shorter but steeper route to Republic over mile high Sherman Pass. They were able to compete with the larger railroads via the purchase of the very latest in luxury passenger equipment, running it on convenient schedules and the providing of customized freight service that was not being offered by the other lines, including the Old Dominion Mine in Colville and the Staeheli creamery in Addy. The CRAP enjoyed initial success.

Unfortunately the passage of time and the advance of technology undermined that success. Automobiles and roads to drive them on hurt ridership. The once-proud wooden coaches were showing the ravages of time, and the CRAP was unable to replace them with newer equipment built of steel. Ultimately the economics of the situation prevailed, and the CRAP replaced their once-resplendent steam passenger trains with a pair of former Northern Pacific motor cars purchased from a scrap dealer.

The wives with expectations raised a great hue and cry. A meeting with CRAP officials was called. The wives hurled accusations, and ignored the pleadings of financial realities. Finally the CRAP president commanded attention with his big, booming voice, and reminded the complainers of the company's past policy. "We started you out in the penthouse of railroad accommodations . . ." He was cut off by Mrs. Grundshuh, who replied, "That may be, but now you have us in the outhouse!" The meeting then disintegrated, the complainers remaining unmollified.

In an attempt to put a positive spin on the discontent, the Railroad commissioned an artist to create a CRAP herald. The result was the fanciful outhouse that appears on CRAP equipment to this day. The slogan, "Route of the Chic Sales" was stenciled on the side of the McKean motor car, but it never caught on like the outhouse herald did.

By continuing their business plan of customized freight service and convenient passenger service, the CRAP was able to limp on thru the 1920's. The onset of the Great Depression brought the CRAP almost to its

knees. Bankruptcy was averted only by the outbreak of WWII. The wartime economy put a great strain on the NP and GN, and they shuffled some of their traffic onto the CRAP in order to meet schedules. Spokane sits in the middle of the "Inland Empire," with its wealth of ore, timber, livestock and wheat—all much needed for the war effort. It is now harvest time in 1944, and business on the CRAP is brisk. But the reality is that their equipment is old, their track is in disrepair and no reasonable economist expects the CRAP to continue on once the War is won.

For the present, however, the CRAP every day receives 24 cars from the Spokane interchanges with the NP, GN, UP, MILW, SP&S and Spokane International railroads, and an additional six cars from the Camas Prairie interchange in Lewiston, ID. These are mostly loads of machinery, manufactured goods, and processed foods from the east; and coal and petroleum products from Montana. A like number of cars are sent out daily to each of these railroads, consisting of ore, wheat, finished lumber and meat products. In addition there is a great amount of on-line wheat traffic, plus daily runs of log trains between the Spokane Falls Lumber Company's Spokane sawmill and its cutting site above Colville. Altogether the CRAP runs four passenger trains and about ten freight trains daily that handle about 100 cars up and down the Colville valley and the Palouse Country. There is also a daily mixed Milk Train, and the occasional Football Special hauling paper boys or Shriners down to WSC games at Pullman.

All this takes place in HO scale on a 13' X 13' layout in a special room inside my garage, with forays out of the room to the interchanges and to the Lumber Camp and Mine sites above Colville. The layout has five levels on three decks, the lowest point being 32" at Pullman, and the highest 68" at the summit of Sherman Pass. An operating day takes six operators four to five hours to complete. Guest operators are welcome. I can be reached at [crapmanv@comcast.net](mailto:crapmanv@comcast.net), or afternoons and evenings at 707-763-9072. Verne Alexander



In real life my grandfather was one of the discoverers of the Old Dominion Mine in Colville. The head frame of an abandoned shaft is visible behind the trees. Current operation involves shoving a string of empties out of the room to the tippie where ore is being loaded, and pulling a string of loads to take to Spokane to be sent on their way to the smelters on connecting railroads. The clear cutting in the foreground demonstrate the loggers lack of foresight in 1944.



1354 drifts downhill from Colville past Chewelah. Some may have known Don Cabrall, who in 1944 is proprietor of this machine shop. The MDC box is a stand-in for part of the Magnesite Reduction Plant to be built there.



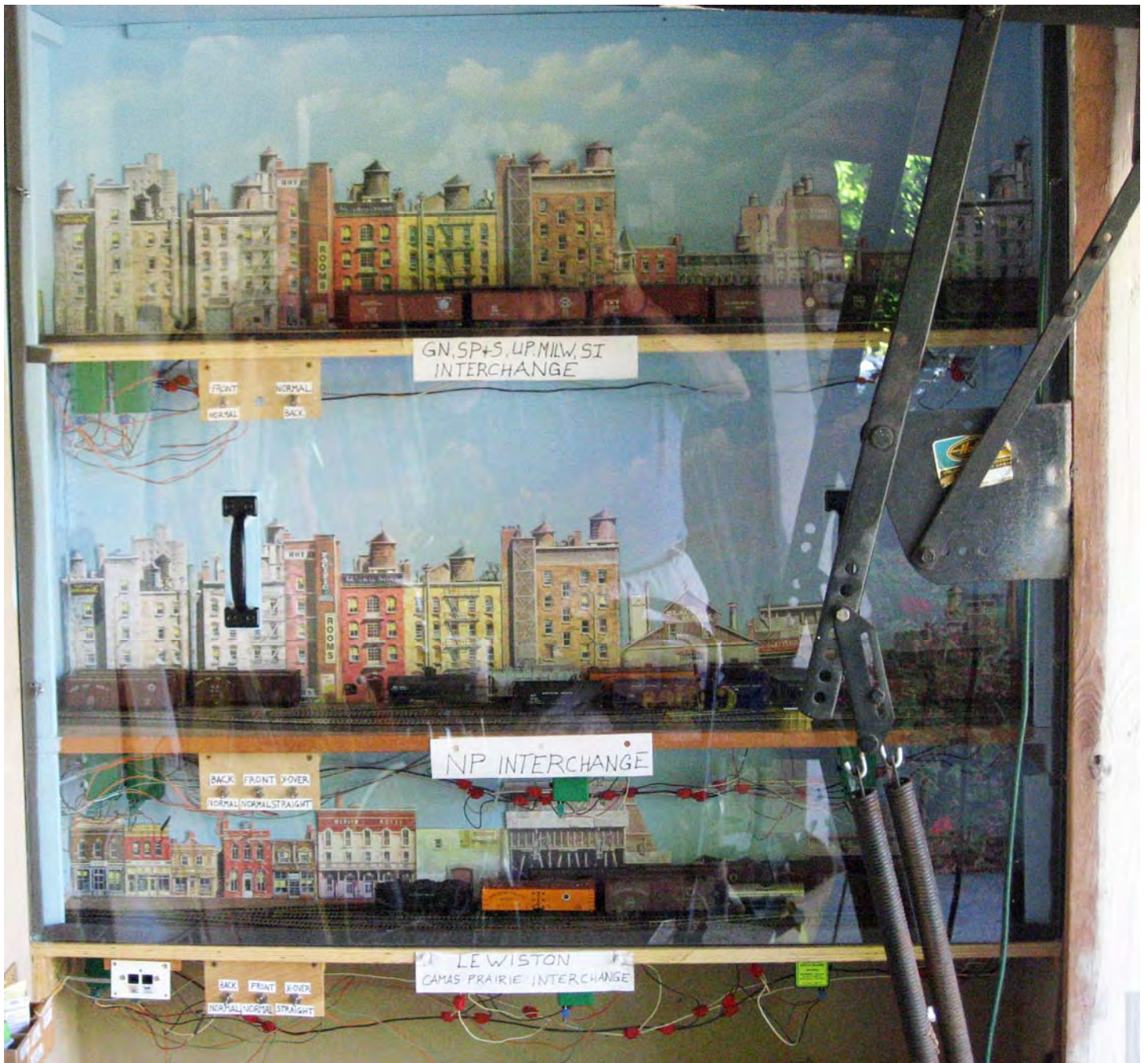
Shows the Old Dominion Mine ore loading spot on the left, and the Spokane Falls Lumber Co. log loading area on the right. These scenes are outside of the layout room, and supply 16 or more car movements per operating session without taking up any real estate on the layout!



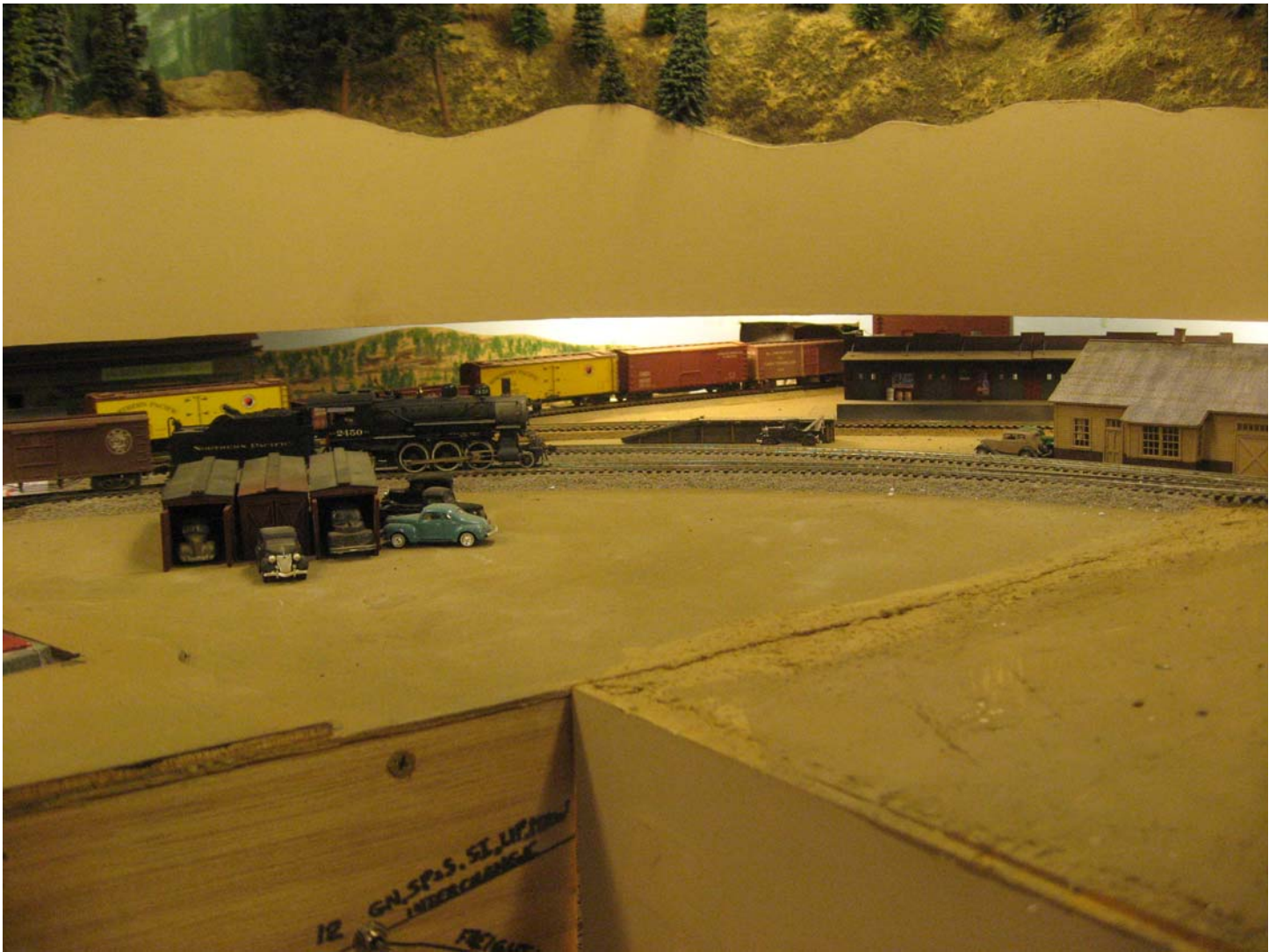
Scene is the throat of the Spokane yard. 1388 is backing down past the yard office to pull cars for the Colville Turn. Looking past the ice plant, 1178 is on the main line bringing a transfer cut from across town (down the helix) at Garry. 1049 is switching the stock track at Kornfeld Meats.



1033, on the Garry Wrangler switch job, is headed down to pull the flour mill and warehouse cars in Garry, an industrial area on the other side of Spokane (down the helix) from the Spokane Yard. 18 is taking water prior to rounding up cars to take to the Spokane yard.



Here are the CRAP's interchanges with foreign roads, the top two levels are in Spokane, while the bottom is in Lewiston. Each of these outside-the-room areas has an 18 car capacity, and are the backbone of what I call my Freight Car Staging. The acrylic cover is removed during Op Sessions.



This unfinished scene shows the Spokane depot, freight house and team track on the right. 2450 on the Milk Train is headed north to distribute empty cans and collect raw milk for the Staeheli Creamery at Addy. A corner of the unfinished roundhouse is visible at the lower left. The CRAP saved a few old 36' box cars to be garages for employees. The string of cars at the back of the scene are ready to be shoved out to be interchanged outside the room with one of the five connecting railroads in Spokane. The third deck on top of this scene is the east slope of the line up over Sherman Pass and down into Republic.



The Staeheli Creamery in Addy, a part of my real-life family history. The model in the coke ad is one of my granddaughters, who just happened to have a photo taken in period costume. I liked it, and used it for a building sign!



The Palouse Goose, the evening passenger train, stops at the Palouse depot on its way down to Pullman. The rather stagnant Palouse River is in the foreground of this unfinished area.



This unfinished area shows North Pacific Grain Growers' elevator at the left rear. It is responsible for up to a dozen car movements per Op Session. The Centennial flour mill is another big shipper, as is the Schade brewery on the left. 1178 is the protection engine for the Garry Wrangler this day. The scene is at the base of the helix across town to the rest of Spokane.



The CRAP does not enjoy a spotless safety record. This incident occurred at the Spokane TT.





Power for the Pullman turn on the TT adjacent to WSC. The caboose of the Highball Junior is seen on its way down to Lewiston. CRAP 8 is pulling an empty coal hopper from the WSC power plant.



The McKen car crossing Dragoon Creek on its way down from Colville to Tiger. The new CRAP herald and slogan are visible on the side.



One of the two roundhouses that face each other across the TT in Spokane. Walls and roofs to come!



Small farm near Arden. The track at the base of the hill is the low line to the Concentrator. The middle track goes to Chewelah and the Magnesite Plant. The lower track is the passing track on which the Chewelah depot sits.