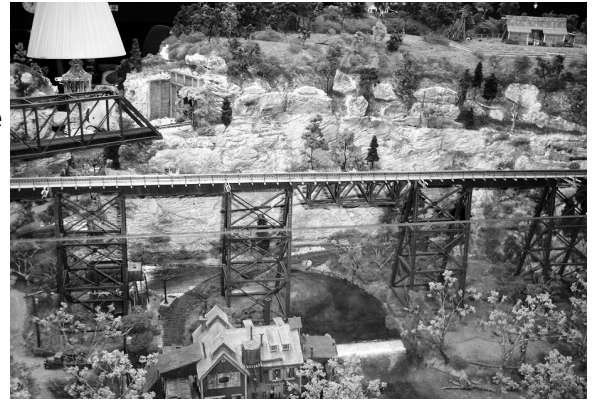




A trip up North.

By John Williams

On December 6th five of us took an afternoon road trip to Johnson City, TN. This was one of what I hope will be several road trips we will make each year. It was my first experience with prototype and model railroading outside of the Asheville area.



The first place we visited was a storefront in downtown Johnson City. Here several model railroaders have set up several basic layouts, primarily Lionel and American Flyer. We then traveled to the George L. Carter Museum at East Tennessee State University. At the museum are several highly-detailed layouts in several scales, including HO and N. The images provided here are from the HO scale layout. In looking at the design of the HO layout it is clear that it had its beginnings as a modular layout. But with a permanent home it was possible to create a far more detailed design. We finished up with a brief stop at the Erwin CSX yard. As an added bonus, Johnson City is also home to a Hobbytown USA store. The store has a fairly good selection of motive power but was a little light on rolling stock and detail parts. With a driving time of less than an hour from Asheville a trip up north to Johnson City is well worth the time for a look at several model railroad layouts and some 1-foot-equals-12-inches railroading.

On November 16, 2007, the George L. Carter Railroad Museum was dedicated at East Tennessee State University by ETSU President Paul Stanton with a large, enthusiastic crowd in attendance. Named in honor of George Lafayette Carter, the founder of the Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railroad, Carter is also recognized as the founding father of ETSU by donating the land for the campus to the State of Tennessee. The museum hosts three historic model railway layouts and was developed via the work efforts of the Mountain Empire Modular Railroaders. The exhibit continues the organizational effort toward creating a permanent collection and museum dedicated to the railway history of the Johnson City area. Several years in the making, the railway exhibits had previously been hosted by the Carroll Reece Museum at ETSU and the Tipton-Haynes Historic Site.

Three model railway layouts are in the museum: a G (large) scale layout (obtained by former Johnson City Mayor Tom McKee) measures 12.5 feet by 12.5 feet; a 44-foot-by-24-foot HO scale layout owned by members of the modular club and a 23-foot-by-12-foot N (smaller) scale layout donated by Ms. Marian Bankus, of Knoxville, make up the permanent display. "The N layout was sort of like building a boat in a basement," said Dr. Fred Alsop of the ETSU Biology Department and a member of the modular railroad group. "It wasn't meant to be moved and was almost completed before Mr. Bankus died."

The HO modular layout built by the Modular Railroaders club is owned in portable sections by each of its members. ETSU President Dr. Paul Stanton saw this layout and became an enthusiastic supporter of obtaining a permanent home for a railway museum on the ETSU campus in tribute to George L. Carter. At any given time you may see any or all of Johnson City's three legendary railroads, the ET&WNC (Tweetsie), the Clinchfield, or the Southern in operation on the HO scale layout.

The Museum is open to the public on Saturdays from 10 a.m. until 3 pm. For more info, go to <http://www.johnsonspot.com/glcarter/cartermuseum.htm>