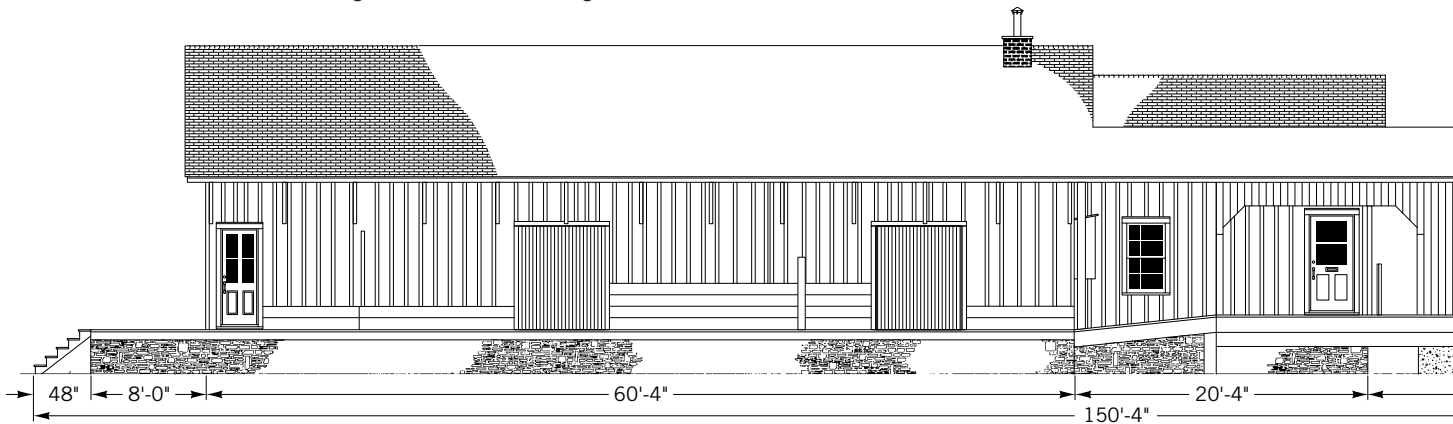


A classic wooden



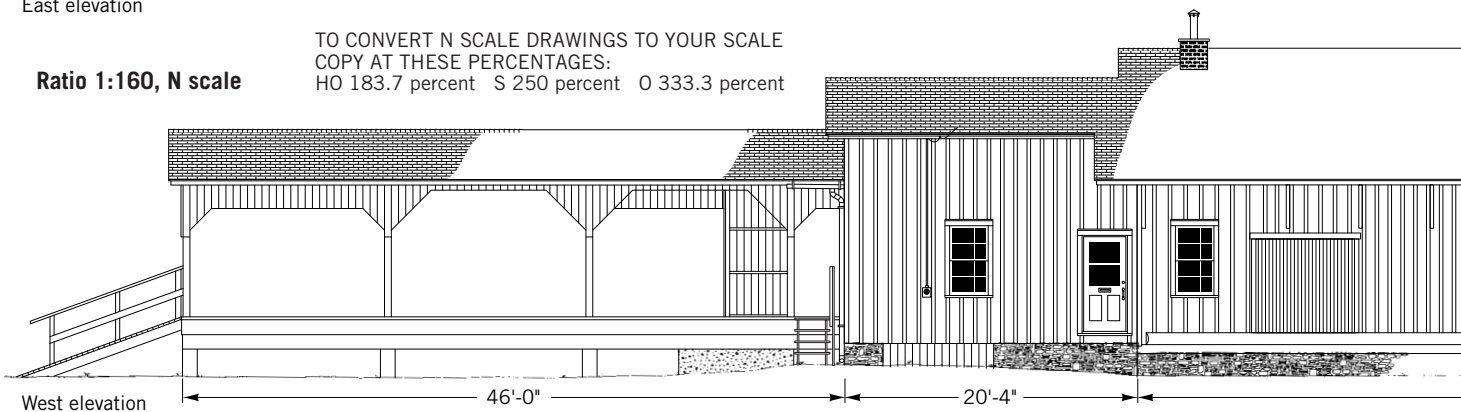
This freight house served the town of Canton, Pa., on the Pennsylvania RR's Elmira branch. The building was still standing when Harold Russell measured it in 1996. The "Canton" sign wasn't on the building when it was in railroad service.



East elevation

Ratio 1:160, N scale

TO CONVERT N SCALE DRAWINGS TO YOUR SCALE
 COPY AT THESE PERCENTAGES:
 HO 183.7 percent S 250 percent O 333.3 percent



West elevation

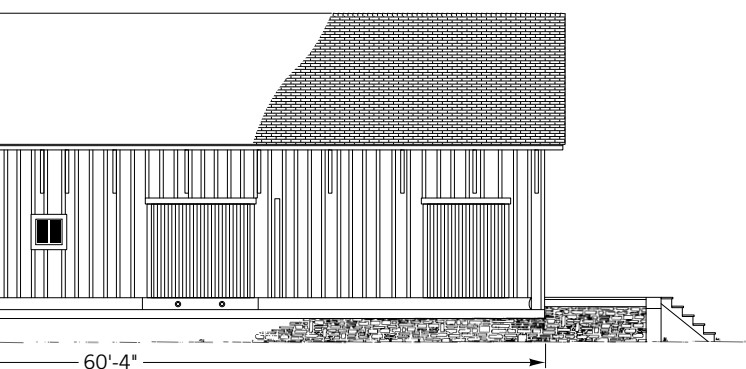
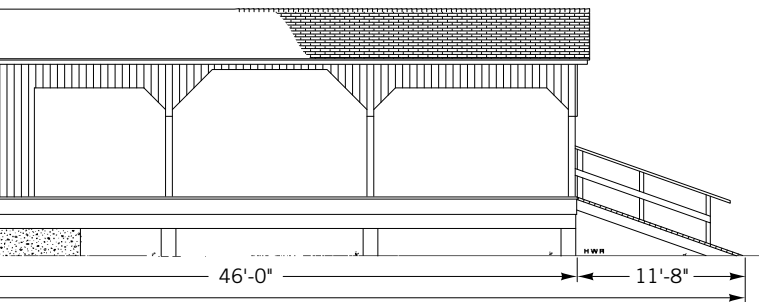
freight house



The old PRR right-of-way is still visible in front of the freight house. Note the inclined freight platform.



This south side view shows the truck loading dock. The paint looks a lot fresher now than it did when Pennsy's 2-10-0s pounded past.



Pennsy's Canton, Pa., freight house would make a great addition to any layout

By Harold W. Russell

Photos and drawings by the author

Years ago nearly every town in America had a freight house. Most of these existed to serve the needs of businesses too remote or small to justify a dedicated rail spur. While it wasn't unusual for items like personal baggage to arrive and depart via the freight house, such shipments were more often handled by the Railway Express Agency office located in the local passenger station.

The Pennsylvania RR's former Elmira Branch, between Williamsport, Pa., and Sodus Point, N. Y., was a unique line offering many elements of big-time railroading with a short-line atmosphere. Although the rails were torn up in 1972, elements of this stretch of railroad can still be seen today.

Bill Caloroso's book, *Pennsylvania Railroad's Elmira Branch* (Andover Publications), alerted me to one of these remaining jewels, the Canton, Pa., freight house. Fortunately, the building has been preserved with the exterior remaining much the same as it was when the line was in use.

Not much different today

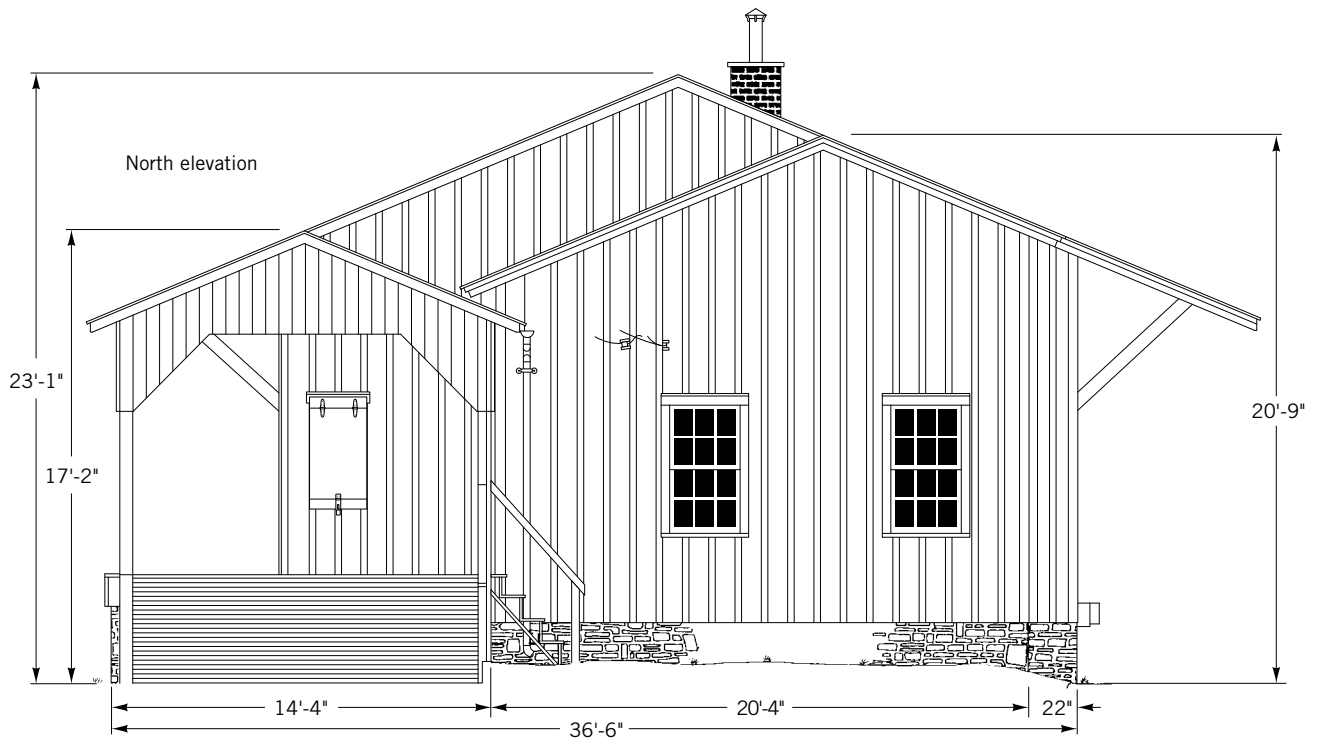
I was unable to determine the exact year the freight house was built but the early 1900s seem like a safe bet. Photos from the 1950s show the station in the same general configuration as it is today. The long, covered platform gives the freight house much of its character. A section of concrete foundation and vertical siding on the long platform accommodated a scale. That heightened bay provided clearance for tall freight. The opposite side of the building was designed to permit trucks or wagons to back up to the large freight doors. Finally, the ramp at the north end allowed push trucks easy access to the platform.

The two-level platform was probably designed to accommodate cars with different floor heights. The south end of the station has a stone foundation which I believe supported a wood platform at still a third elevation. A narrower office structure is attached to the north end of the freight house. The small, round stack was added to the chimney in later years, as it doesn't show in earlier photos.

When I measured the building it was still painted in the same gray used by the PRR. A note painted inside reads "Color Code, Pennsylvania Railroad Medium Gray Building Paint, Ref. no. 47-2365, June 1954."

Modeling notes

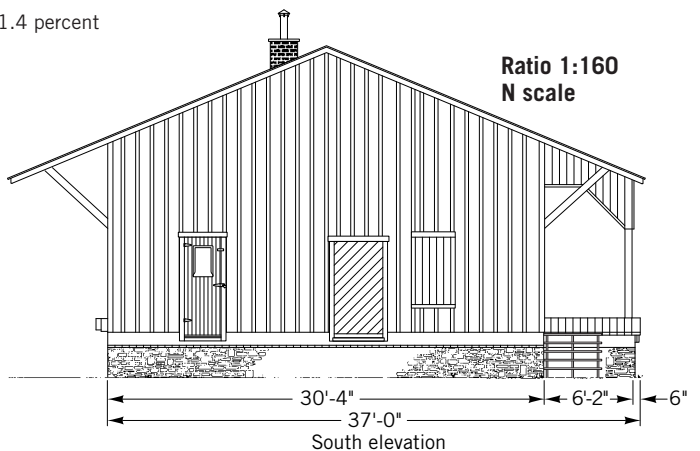
A model of the Canton freight house would certainly be impressive – 40" long in O scale or 20" in HO. Construct the walls from commercial board-and-batten siding, either wood or styrene.



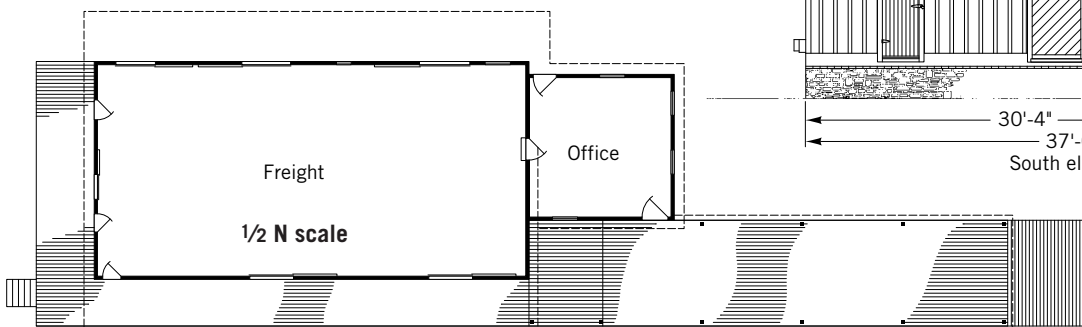
Ratio 1:87, HO scale TO CONVERT HO SCALE DRAWINGS TO YOUR SCALE COPY AT THESE PERCENTAGES:
 N 54.4 percent S 136.1 percent O 181.4 percent

Drawn for MODEL RAILROADER Magazine by
HAROLD W. RUSSELL

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**Ratio 1:160
 N scale**



These two views show the construction details of the canopy roof (far left) and roof supports (left).

The prototype battens are $2\frac{3}{4}$ " wide, nominally spaced on 12" centers. In reality, this spacing varies and some of the battens were considerably wider. These may have been replacements over time. If you want to give your model a distinctive flavor, duplicate the exact battens shown on the drawings.

A freight house is a true "universal" industry with virtually any kind of car sometimes spotted there, although boxcars were the most common. This unique piece of Americana would make a fitting addition to any model railroad. ♣

Harold Russell has been a regular MODEL RAILROADER contributor for years. This is his 88th MR byline.