



DOUG WINGFIELD EARNS MMR #484

Most of us model railroaders can trace our hobby origin back to some experience when we were young. Mine is no exception. In the photo, I was only nine when my father arranged a ride on CNR 0-8-0 8303 in Hamilton, Ontario, in the fall of 1951. It is an experience I will never forget and would never have again — only a year later, my father died at the young age

of 34. He had started a 14x6-foot HO layout that never got completed, although I worked on it to some extent.

During my high school years, I spent some time in the summer building O scale kits for someone who did not want to build them himself. The best part about this was gaining experience in building craftsman wood kits and the reward of payment in HO kits he did not want.

The year 1957 was a major turning point for me in that at the age of 15, I joined my first model railroad club. The HO Model Engineers Society in Hamilton operated out of a two-car garage on Gage Avenue. It was at the back of a house owned by a Mr. Boyko, who was famous for his homemade wine. Needless to say, some of the members during the Christmas–New Year’s period were not shy about sampling the wine offered by Mr. Boyko. The wine, known as Boyko ‘57, was talked about for years to come.

In May 1958, I experienced my first fan trip or excursion on the Nickel Plate from Buffalo to Cleveland. It was an experience I will never forget because the Hudson that was hauling our train was not big enough to handle the 16 coaches, and we were falling behind schedule. At Conneaut, NKP put Berkshire 763 on the train, and I thought the baggage car was going to come apart due to the overwhelming power of this locomotive.

This fan trip kindled my interest in the prototype. I felt you could not do proper modeling if you didn’t understand the real thing. Over the years, my interests have been about half prototype and half modeling. This might explain why my photo collection is close to 20,000 images in both slides and black and white.

After moving to Calgary, Alberta, in 1967, I joined the Calgary Model Trainmen's Club and helped design a new club layout for the Calgary Centennial Planetarium. This was a wonderful facility because the layout was in a separate room with viewing windows for the public. After the layout was operational, we put a push button outside the windows so the public could run a train when we were not there.

The year 1979 was huge in that we ran the NMRA National Convention in Calgary called Railrodeo '79 — nearly 2,000 people attended. My responsibility was transportation, including outside tours and in-town shuttles to home layouts, hobby shops, and campgrounds.

My Achievement Program career started in 1971, when I entered a scratchbuilt business car in the Merit Award category. I achieved MMR status in 2012 — 41 years later. It is too bad they don't have a certificate for procrastination; I earned that one many times over.

I am currently working on a rather large 28x19-foot layout based on Canadian National Railway in the 1949 era, which means no diesels.

My sincere thanks go out to all those who have provided inspiration, enthusiasm, and prodding over the 60-plus years I have been in the hobby. To my mind, it is still the "World's Greatest Hobby," and it is up to us to encourage the younger generation to participate because the future is them.