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Author:	Dean O'Neill

Blossburg MT Northern Pacific Depot



Introduction

The following is a description of process I went through to build a model of the Northern Pacific Railway station at Blossburg. I am an intermediate modeler, so if you are an advanced modeler, you can probably skip this write up. To build this kit, I modified the Northern Pacific Railway Station kit from American Model Builders (AMB).

The Prototype

The Blossburg station was built at the West end of Mullan tunnel in the 1890's. It does not follow a strict Class A, B or C configuration, but it is closest to a plan C configuration (the AMB kit describes these three configurations). I have photos of the west, south and east sides, but not the "back" of the station, the north facing side so I had to guess on that side. Here are a few photos of the actual structure, crude as they are, so you can see what I was modeling.



Images courtesy of "The North Coast Limited Across the Rockies" by Sunday River Productions

Surprisingly, the best photographic resource for this structure that I could find is a video, "The North Coast Limited Across the Rockies" by Sunday River Productions. I paused the video on my VCR and took a snapshot of my TV. It's a crude photograph, but great for quick reference when building the kit.

The station has a standard depth of 24 feet and standard height of 13 feet, but a short length at 36 feet. When I mention the front, back, left or right end of the station, I am assuming I am standing on the tracks looking at the bay windows.

Modifications

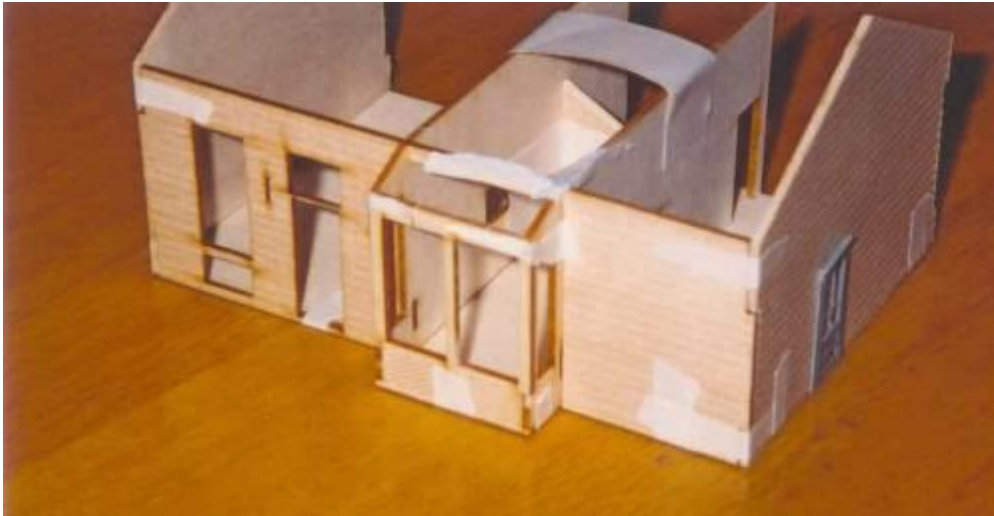
Both the sides and the ends needed to be modified to get the right configuration. For the ends, neither end had windows like the AMB kit so I decided to cut completely new ends out of Northeastern Scale Lumber scribed siding -- 3/32" spacing by 1/16" thickness. This was actually pretty easy, just put the kit's sides on top of the new material, scribe and then cut the new sides. The key is to keep the blade straight up and down so the dimensions are exact. Here is a picture of the old and new sides (new sides are on the right):



Next I needed to cut the door opening on the east end. I based this door on a Grant Line door, Walthers Part # 300-5163. You can see in the picture, I just cut the top off and moved the top trim down and then cut out two window panes.

For the sides, I decided to only cut off the right (east) end of the station, and leave the left end alone, even though ideally I would have taken out 2 feet next to the bay window. I left the right front as just a bare wall, which matched the video as best as I could tell. I cut a tab to match my end wall, and added a slot type hole in the wall to hold the one brackets on this wall segment. For the back side, I chose to include the freight door in the AMB kit even though Blossburg probably had little freight. I had no photo to go from and I thought it would be better than nothing. On the other end of the back wall, I used the door opening already in the AMB kit.

The hardest part of modifying the walls was the bay window. I had to reduce the bay window from 3 windows down to 2. To make a long story short, I cut the center window out right at the window edge, and then connected the two halves with little strips of wood on the inside. Additionally challenging were the interior walls. I was not interested in doing a full interior, but I needed some walls to extend and be the sides of the bay window. I cut a new slot for the wall tabs to sit into on the floor, but got the placement wrong and had to keep filing and filing until the slot lined up with the new 2 bay window wall I had created. I put in some scrap wall panels and glued them in to help support the interior walls. Here is a picture of a “test assembly” using masking tape to make sure everything fits together:



Next I painted all the individual parts (my first airbrush project) and the peel and stick siding trim parts. I used Floquil paint in the following formula for the main station color:

- 1 part Floquil Foundation
- 3 parts Floquil Reefer White

Once the parts were dry, I assembled the station.

The roof was pretty simple; I just hacked off the right hand end of the roof provided with the AMB kit. The Blossburg prototype has a simpler end structure vs. the AMB kit. You need to make it hang over the end of the building long enough so that the brackets attach and hold the roof up. The only hard part was calculating the placement of the end brackets on the gables so they match up right with the roof. I don't have any precise location to give you, just get as close as you can.

Before I put my two roof halves together, I put the AMB roofing on the two halves. I then painted it flat black to simulate common asphalt shingles. I did not like the look. So I peeled the whole roof off the wood and did some digging around. In the Narrow Gauge Gazette, I found a recommendation for some real wood shingles from Crystal River Products. I installed them and LOVE them. I used "Silver Wood" by Builders in Scale to stain the roof, lightly sanding after the dye had dried. For the smokestacks, I used the two included in the AMB kit, and positioned them straight up from the two internal walls. For the tar that connects the brick smokestacks to the roof, I mixed black food coloring into white glue and used it to hide gaps and defects where the roof meets the smokestack. I always like having a great roof on kits, since you look at the roof first on almost any kit.

Detailing

With all the walls assembled and the roof done, it was time to detail the kit. I made the station signs in Microsoft Word, with the font set to Arial Rounded MT Bold, 7pt. With the word Blossburg, the sign ended up being .09 in height and .68 in width. I then mounted the paper

signs on some thin plastic, using stick glue (the type they use for sticking photographs to paper). I also added some power line conduit made out of .025 brass wire, and fabricated a power box out of scrap plastic. I also installed Grandt Line outdoor lamps above the doors, and some B.T.S door knobs. As they always say, adding some simple details always improves the quality of the overall kit dramatically.

Wrap Up

To complete the scene, I built two small side sheds out of scrap wood and some more of the scribe siding. I had fun making the largest shed, its roof “droops” in the middle. To achieve that effect, I turned the completed kit upside-down and poured some white glue in the top. After letting it dry some, I turned it over and held it down with my thumb for 3 minutes or so and then held it down further with a makeshift weight. Luckily, it held the depressed shape, adding a nice visual effect.

I added some weathering with highly diluted paint, and then later with some black chalk and a paint brush.

Presto, 5 months later, Blossburg station. I sure learned a lot making this kit.





