

Here's the kit that I'm building for Kevin. The house has very interesting lines and an especially interesting roof (which will probably be a challenge to complete!). I do love a good challenge! I can already tell from this picture that I **HATE** the foundation. Look at the large cracks in the corner! I'll have to look into that when I get that far to see if it can be fixed or if I will have to replace the foundation with something else.



I received the kit today from Kevin (April 2nd) and the first thing to do is setup the work area. I'll use a folding card table for that covered with kraft paper.



Here's the kit in the box that I'll be building. I've built a number of the Laser Art structures and they make a nice product.



The first thing I like to do is layout all of the contents and inspect them for any problems / shortages. I especially like the tab shingles and they will look realistic when completed.



Wow, all that work wore me out. It's a good thing that Kevin said "Please don't feel any need to rush or hurry with it". Actually I've got some other work that I need to do. More later.

Spray painting the parts

Thin wood loves one thing above all else - *to warp!* Today we'll try to reduce the warping. I'll use this spray can of Krylon(tm) Matte Finish clear coating to coat the wood. Why this particular brand and matte instead of flat? Because it is what I just happen to have.



Safety warning!: Always spray in an open area and use appropriate safety gear when using any hazardous substance (like spray finish). O.K., we got that out of the way! I have a line set up out back and use clothes pins to hold the walls on the line. I sprayed each part with (6) six light coats of the matte spray. **NOTE:** It's important to use light coats or you could warp the wood just with the spray. Didn't I say that wood loves to warp?



Now we have to wait for the coating to dry before moving on. I could do more, but I'm a great believer of not rushing things and will let the matte coating dry overnight. Let your nose be your friend - if you can still smell the coating, then it's not completely dry!

Beating it up!

With the clear sealing coat dry on the wood parts it's time for the next step which is "beating up" or giving the lap wood siding a little character. Kevin said *"As far as the kit itself goes, I envision it as definitely having seen better days.....some peeling paint, a few boards needing repair or missing on the porch..."*. I'll start by "lifting" some of the boards on the lap siding.

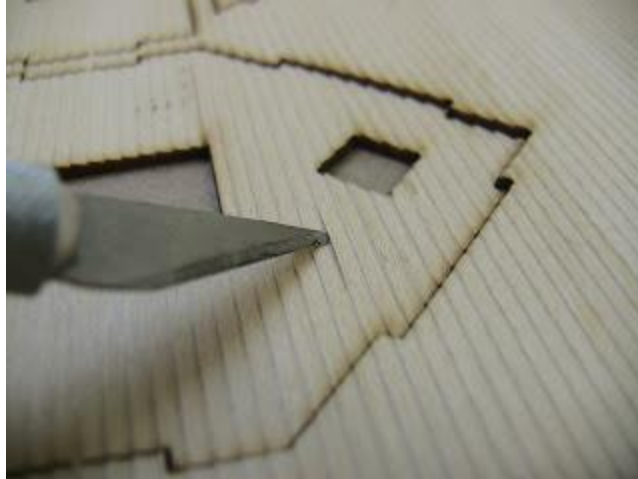
Here's a picture of my "2 story farmhouse" showing the effect.. The lifted boards are not real obvious and that's the point. I've added arrows to the picture to point them out.



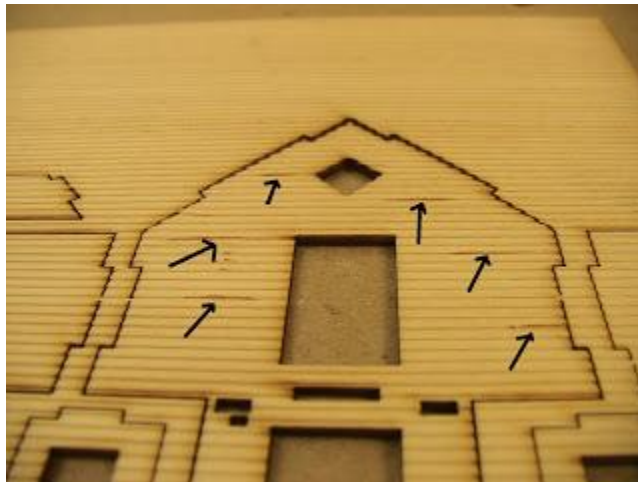
Here's a close up shot of the same house second story to show the lifted boards in more detail.



For this process I'll use my hobby knife with a #11 blade and slice under the boards where they overlap. I run the blade underneath the board and then slightly twist the blade to pull the board away from the rest. This process takes time as you have to be careful not to go too deep and when twisting not to get carried away and break the board - unless that is the effect you are trying to achieve.



So here is one panel completed. It will take some time to complete the process for the rest of the kit. I will probably do more of this near the bottom of the structure and near the corners as this seems where boards naturally pull away on prototype buildings.



Painting the Gray Base Coat

Since we have a nice coating of clear matte that is dry it's time to apply some paint. I asked my good friend and expert modeler Scott Perry which comes first, the chicken or the egg? Actually I asked Scott if I should paint the pieces first and then attach the reinforcement, or attach the reinforcement and then paint. Scott said to paint first, so paint we will do!

Since I was low on paint I went to Hobby Lobby (with 40% off coupon in hand) and picked up a few things. Left to right: a 6 pack of jars, (2) each of flat black and flat

white Testors enamel, paint thinner / brush cleaner, a 15 pack of #11 hobby knife blades, and some modelers putty. The jars are for cleaning the brushes and paint storage. The putty is for....well, you know what it's for!



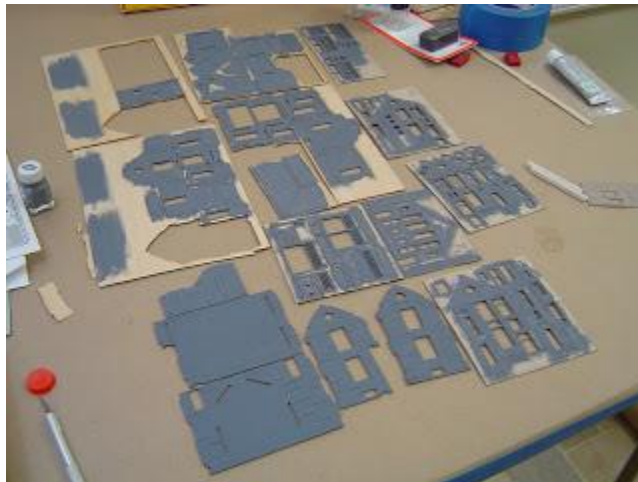
What's this? Well, I seem to subconsciously like to knock over paint bottles, so I used Scott Perry's excellent idea of creating a little foam base for the paint bottle. It wedges nicely into a little plastic tray to contain drips and whatever.



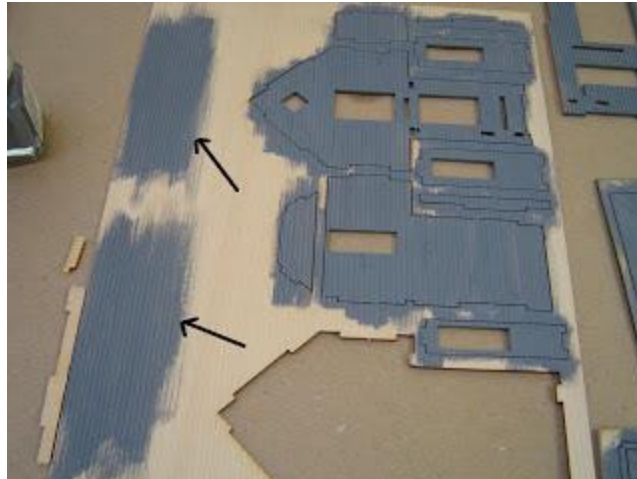
Here I'm painting the front porch deck with Testors flat gray. I'll give everything a coat of the same gray. This coating isn't to seal the wood because I did that with the clear matte spray. The gray will be used as an undercoating for the top coat to give variation in the color. You'll see this later. By the way, it looks like my brush has been through WW II - I quickly switch to another brush.



I've got to admit that by the time I'm done with painting everything I'm sick of painting! Why didn't I use spray paint? Well, since I'm using Testors paint as the top coat and as the base I wanted to ensure that there wouldn't be any funny business with reactions between different paints.



Why did I paint the areas noted with the arrows since they aren't part of the finished structure? I will use these areas as test areas for different paint colors, techniques and such before painting the actual structure parts.

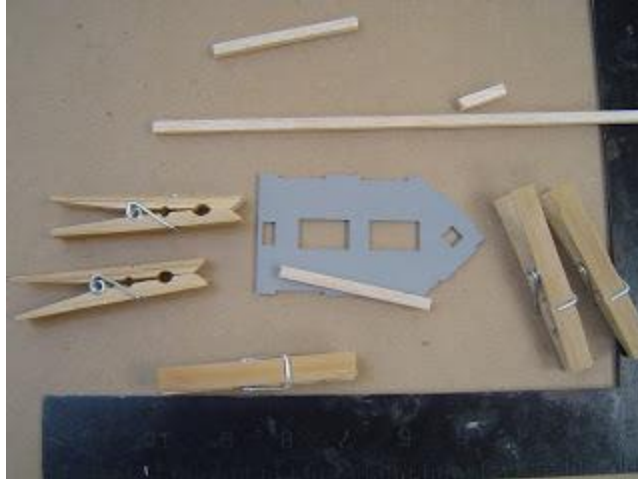


Wall Assembly

It's time to start making this look like a house! The first thing I need to do is organize and get my stuff ready. Starting at the top of the picture I've got toothpicks, white glue, a piece of hardboard with blue tape (for my glue), the first pieces to assemble, the instructions, high tech holding devices (rubber bands) and a square. Why such a large square? - because most of my modeling tools are packed!



I'll start by gluing some reinforcement stock (1/4" x 1/4") to the corners. Why such big stock? - because it's all I could find! Notice high tech holding tools #2 - clothes pins.



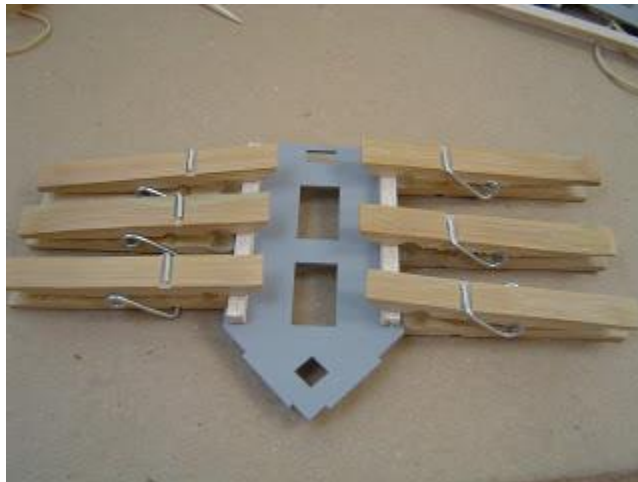
I use a toothpick to apply the white glue to both the wall section and the reinforcement wood.



Next I carefully align the corner piece (reinforcement wood) to the edge of the wall section and apply the clamps. Care must be used here as the wood can shift when the clamps are applied.



I repeat the process for the other corner. It's important that you pay attention when applying these corner reinforcement pieces. On a structure I built previously I attached the corner reinforcement pieces to two adjacent cornersoops! I had to remove one and it didnt' want to come off without a fight!



Notice that the other wall is a different width at the top than at the bottom. This can create a problem when trying to clamp everything together. Both wall sections are set aside for the glue to dry.



First we'll dry fit the wall sections together to make sure that everything fits, which it does. These Laser Art structure are quality products and I've yet to have a problem with them.



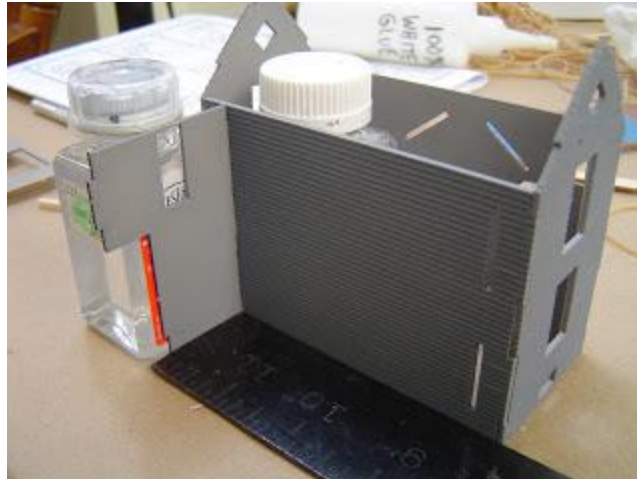
Now it would appear from this picture that I'm assembling all four walls, which isn't the case. I'm only gluing the front and right walls. The other walls are just dry fitted in place to allow for the rubber bands to clamp properly. What are the paint thinner bottles doing inside? Well, since I've **PACKED** my magnetic squaring jig they are applying pressure to the walls against the square. Now we have to wait for the glue to dry.



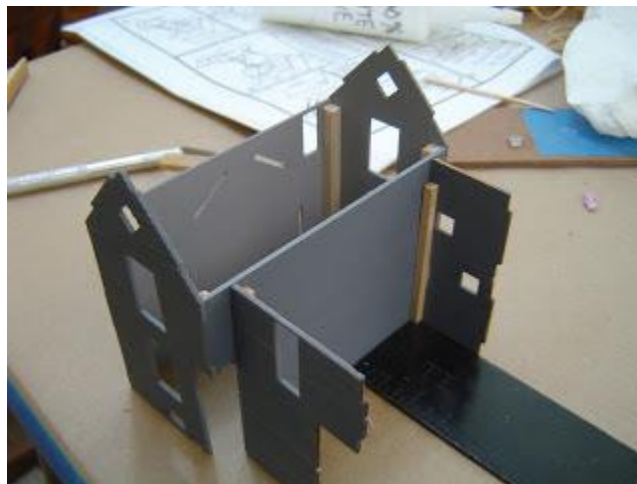
Now that it is dry I'll glue the front wall to the other wall. And we wait for the glue to dry.



Everything appears sturdy and square so the first thing I do is put a check mark on the instructions that I've completed this portion. Here I'm adding a wall on the right side front of the portion just completed. Notice I'm using the square to insure a 90 degree angle.



Another wall is attached to the right front. This time instead of attaching the corner reinforcement first I add it as I attach the wall. It's not contacting the wall at the top; however, it still will provide enough additional strength for the walls and joint. I also added the corner reinforcements to the left wall.

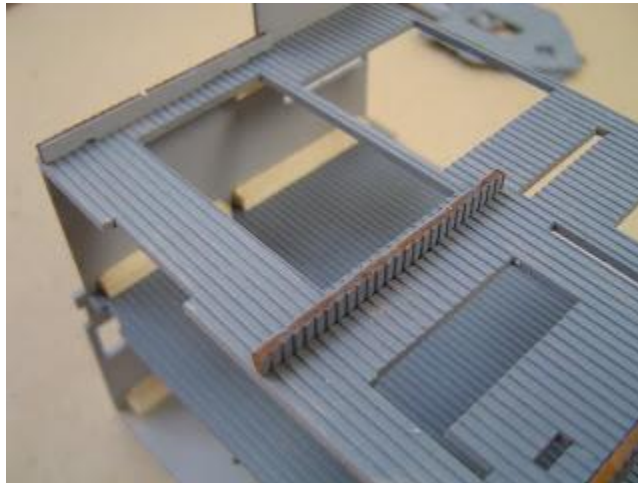


With the glue for the two side walls dry I attach the next section connecting the two. The horizontal $\frac{1}{4}$ " x $\frac{1}{4}$ " piece is temporary to hold the front wall in correct position. Can you believe that there's still ANOTHER section to add to the front of the section we just added? Nobody can say that this is your standard "4 walls and a roof" structure!



That's it for today. I want to let all of the glue dry overnight before proceeding. Since it's the weekend I don't know how much time I'll get to work on it with my "HoneyDo" list.

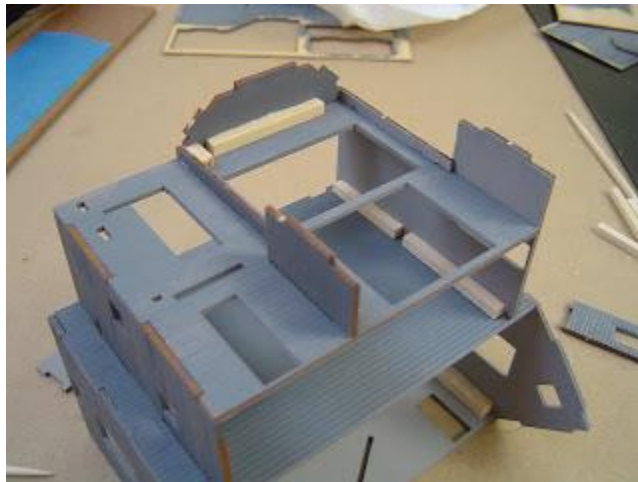
I'm still working on the front of the house and it's time to add the bay window section. First I add the two short walls on either side of the big opening.



Next I add the top right side wall for the bay area. The corner support piece isn't really for strength, but to help the wall maintain a right angle.



Here's where I ran into my first problem - adding the bottom plate for the bay window. The piece was too wide to fit between the short wing walls and when I tried to make it fit I cracked the one wing wall shown with the small corner reinforcement. I trimmed the width of the bottom plate (which I should have done in the first place) and got everything to fit. The corner reinforcement piece is to keep things at a right angle. **NOTE TO SELF:** These parts are fragile - don't try to force fit them!

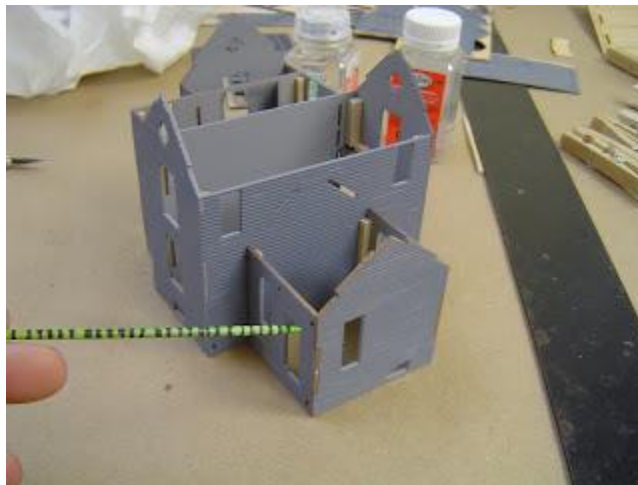


I added the front piece and the front wall sections of the house are now completed. What about all of those gaps between wall sections? - they will be covered with peel-n-stick trim pieces later.

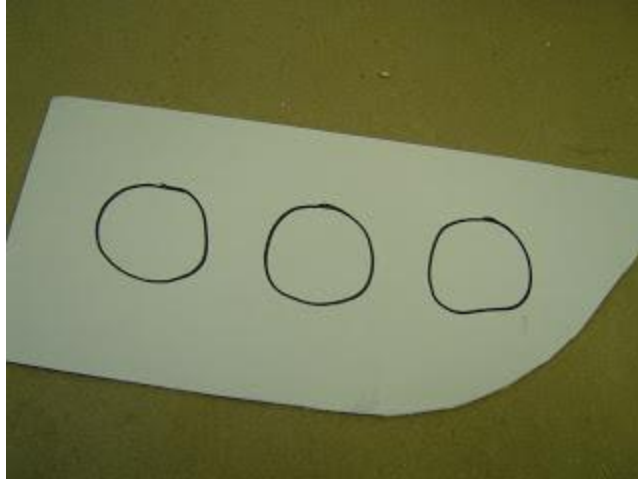


Dirty White, Boy!

No, not the song - I'm talking about dirty white paint! Yesterday afternoon I completed assembling the walls of the structure and wasn't able to get pictures during the process, so here's a picture of the structure with all of the walls assembled. What's with the pointer stick? Well, instead of adding arrows using my graphic software pointing out areas why not just use one of my uncoupling picks? Here I'm pointing out the addition to the rear of the structure.



Back to the dirty white thing. I've seen a number of wonderful model railroad structures painted with too white white, or too black black. Unless whatever the structure is was just painted TODAY pure white looks too stark and white. For this reason my "white" is actually VERY light gray and my "black" is actually VERY dark gray. I do not use pure white and black colors out of the bottle. I start with a piece of light colored paper for my mixing. The circles are drawn on with a pen to give me different work areas.



The color in the center of the circle is the pure white as it comes out of the Testors bottle. The color to the left of that covering the black line is my "dirty white" which in this case was achieved by adding 3 drops of gray to the white. This isn't an exact science - I just want to "dim" the white a little.



So I don't get confused about what's in the bottle I mark it with a pen. I don't want to mistakenly use this white for mixing other colors thinking that it's pure white.



Remember that I painted everything that gray base coat? The reason I did that is because the dirty white won't completely cover that dark color when applied which gives variation in the coloring. The amount of gray that shows through will determine how weathered the "white" paint is on the walls. This is just one coat of the dirty white.

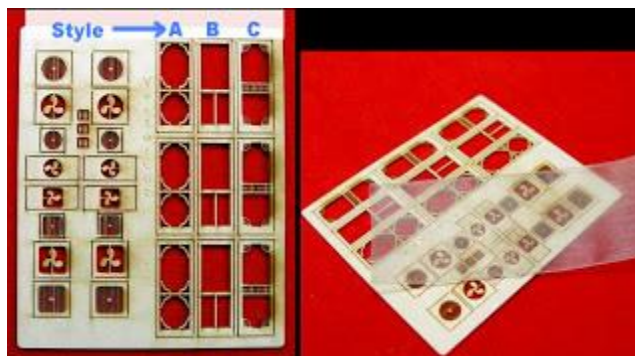


Here's another group painted the dirty white. To further complicate matters the paint that doesn't receive strong sun (such as shaded by the porches) will not be as faded and look less weathered. I'll have to figure out which pieces those are and give them more coats of paint to the rest.

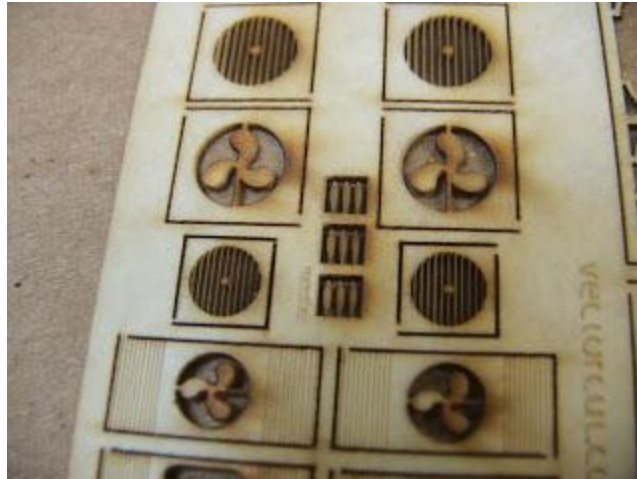


Screen Door

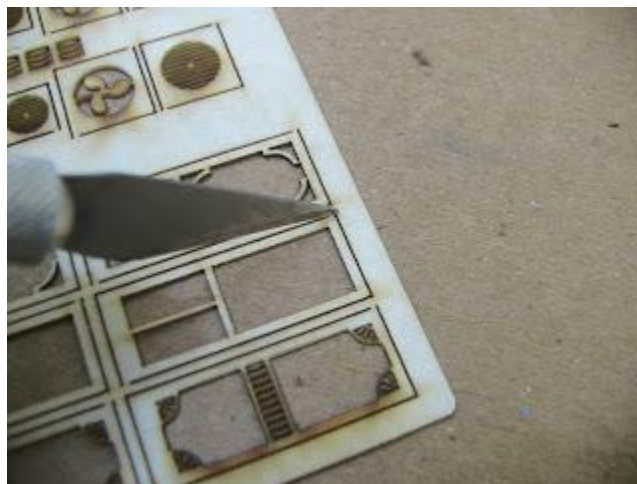
Kevin said that he remembered that his Grandpa Sam's place usually had the front door open (weather permitting) and that he had a screen door. The Laser Arts kit didn't come with a screen door, so Vector Cut to the rescue! <http://www.vectorcut.com/> I purchased their "Summer Breezes Screen Doors & Window Fans" set which they shipped promptly and I received yesterday. The kit came with three different styles of screen doors, so I sent him the picture below asking if he wanted style "A", "B" or "C". He replied that he remembered the screen door as being most like "B"



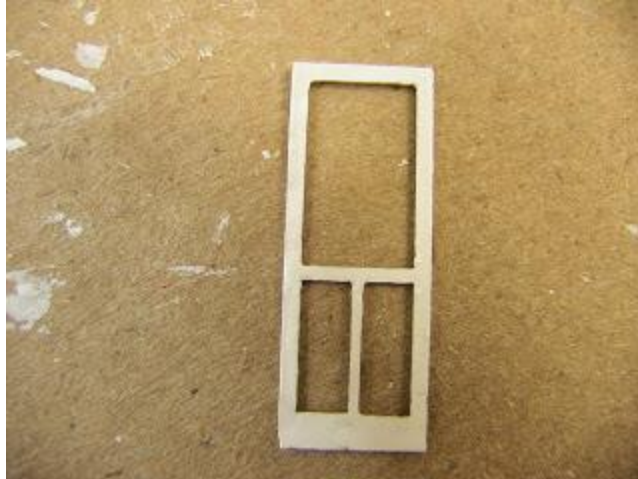
This is some excellent quality stuff! I am also going to install one of the window fans from the sheet shown here.



The first order of business is to carefully cut out the selected door from the sheet using my hobby knife.



Next I paint it using my famous "dirty white" using a toothpick.

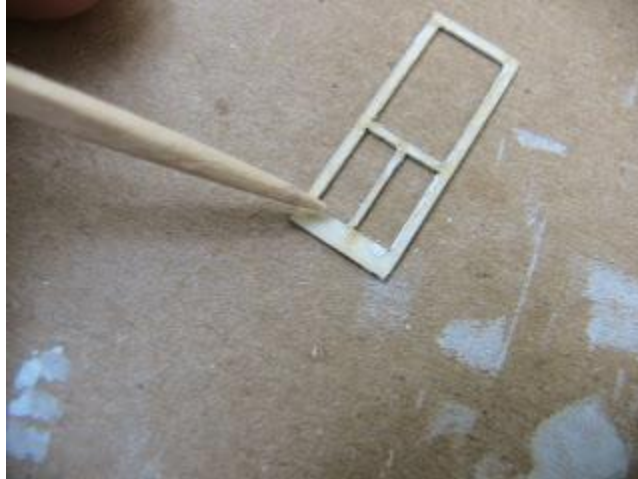


Did I mention that I didn't know how to install the screen? No problem, as I emailed the good folks at Vector Cut asking for instructions. Dave from Vector Cut answered me within an hour saying ***"So put a few small dots of white glue on the back side of the door frame, then drop it on to the mesh, make sure there's no wrinkles, then press it down between two flat surfaces for a minute or so. You want the glue dots to be small enough that they don't ooze out too much. When the glue is dry, use a sharp new blade to cut the ribbon along the edge of the frame."*** Now that's what I call great customer service!

What's this? I didn't want the screen / door sticking to the work surface so I used some handy no-stick aluminum foil.



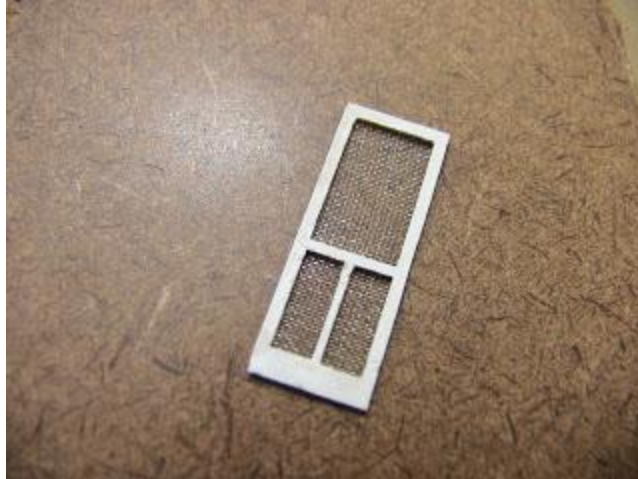
Here I add just dabs of glue on the back of the frame. I don't want to add too much as it will ooze out and be seen.



After applying the glue I flip the frame over, put in on the screen fabric, and weight it down while drying.



I couldn't take pictures and cut out the fabric at the same time, but I carefully used my new sharp blade to cut around the frame. Here's the result with the fabric trimmed and glued in place.



For the sharp eyed you will notice that the screen is NOT to scale; however, it need to be this size to even be seen. It will make a great looking addition to the structure!

[More Windows & a Door](#)

It's Saturday and I got to work a couple of hours on the house and feel like now that I'm "over the hump" on the windows and doors. I've still got a lot more to do, but did get the windows and door finished on one side!

For these pictures I put a piece of white card matte board behind the house to hide all of the stuff on the table. These pictures probably represent most accurately the color of the structure. I wonder if it needs another coat - Kevin?



This is the same side from a different angle. I'll install the windows in the foundation when I apply the foundation pieces to the structure.



I worked on trimming and painting last night while watching TV and completed another panel of parts. I didn't get to work on the model much today, but did assemble and install (4) more windows. The important thing is that I make steady progress - even if it's only a little at a time. Kevin, you'll have to be patient! Here's the back of the structure with those four windows installed.



Still More Painting!

Here's just one wall section with the parts punched out. I painted them when they were in the sheet; however, once they are removed I must trim off the "nubs" and paint the sides of the pieces. Since I need to hold them I really can't paint them in one pass - I have to paint them, let them dry, and then go back and paint the area where I was holding the piece. Once everything is dried then I can start assembling the windows and put them in the building.



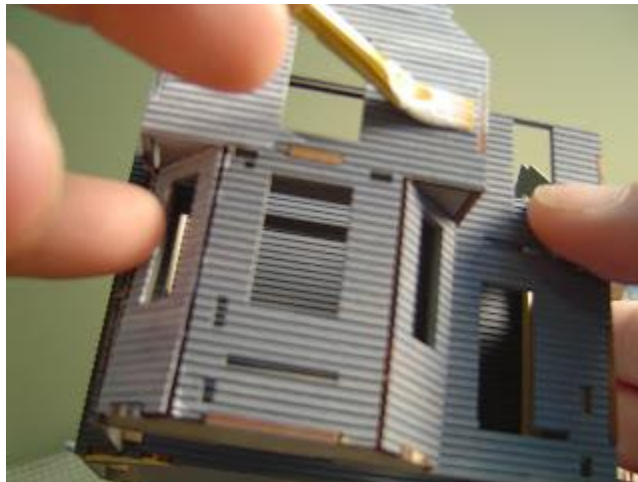
This is a very important time in assembly and it has to be right or it will hurt the final assembly. By the way, I need to adjust my white balance on my camera because the structure doesn't look this gray.



Here's a picture of the structure outside I took a couple of days ago that better shows the actual color of the dirty white. That's my "2 Story Farmhouse" on the left for white comparison.



I'm continuing to paint the dirty white on all of the pieces-parts. Today I feel like that I made some real progress in that I got the first coat of white on the main structure. Sorry for the out of focus picture.



The idea on the first coat of white is to just get some coverage, but not an even coat. Painting a lighter color over a darker color makes this easy. Here's the structure with the first white coat completed.



Here's a view from a different angle. If we were going for an abandoned house I could stop here without adding a second coat and I would "peel" some of the paint. Grandpa Sam's house is in a little better shape than this so once this is dried we'll add a second coat of white.

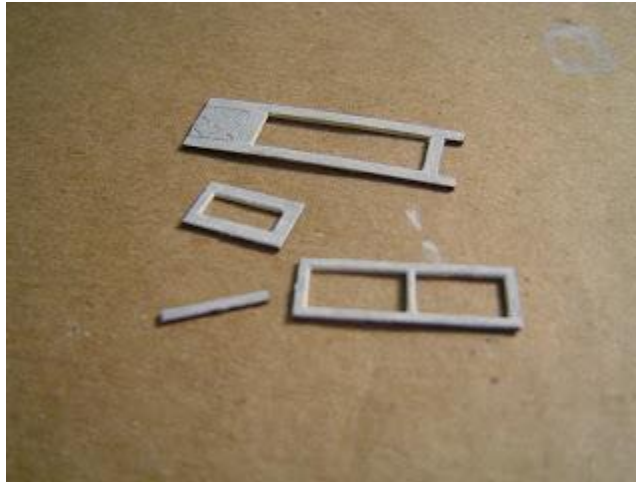


Misc. this and that

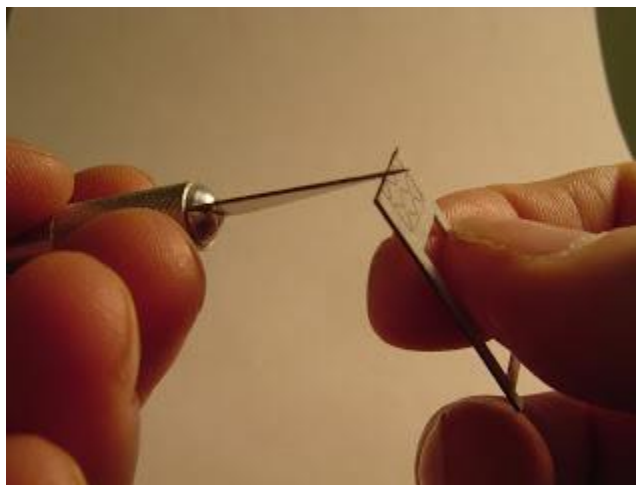
Although I haven't finished painting I am tired of painting so I decided to jump ahead a little on the assembly directions and do some window assembly. It's common for me to deviate from the directions when building a kit just as long as it doesn't cause any problems.

Here are the pieces to assemble one of the windows on the front wall. Missing from the picture is the clear window glazing. These pieces were previously painted when contained in the entire section for the front wall. Once the pieces have been removed

from the sheet with a hobby knife there is still more work that needs to be done before they are assembled into a unit.



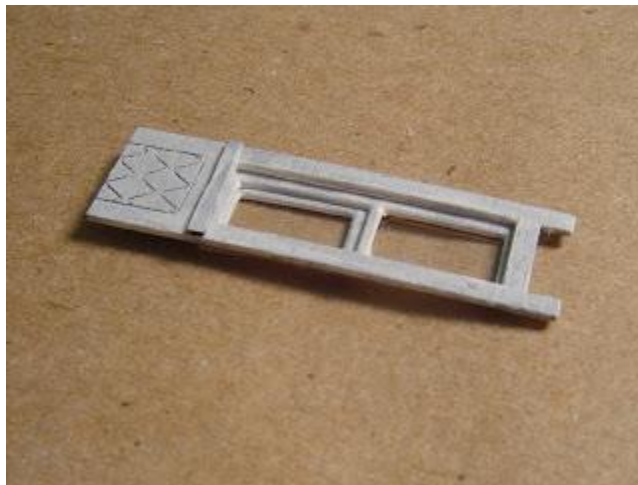
The first thing I need to do is remove the "nub" from where the pieces were attached to the sheet. I carefully use my hobby knife to do so being careful not to damage the pieces or cut my fingers! I've seen craftsmen kits assembled where this wasn't done and believe it or not you can see those stupid "nubs".



Next I use a toothpick to apply dirty white paint to the edges of the pieces. The same thing here is true as with the "nubs" - if you skip this step it will show!



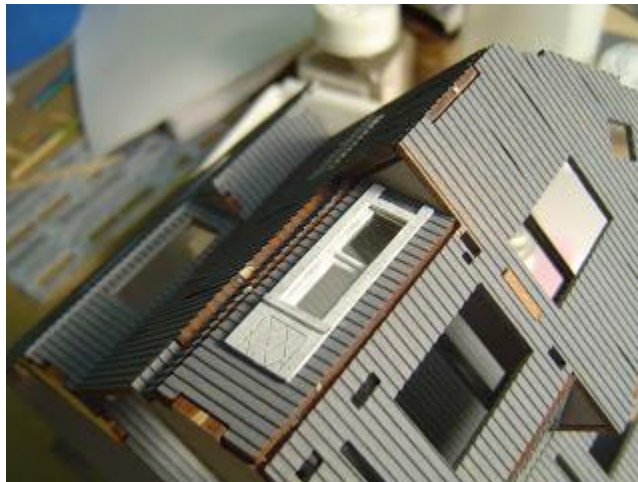
Here I've added the window glazing to the lower sash and attached it to the lower part of the window frame and attached the glazing to the upper sash of the window frame. The instructions say to add the outer most part of the window next, but for this picture it is just sitting on top of the window assembly. Why? Check out the next picture.



Here I'm test fitting the window assembly in the window opening before attaching the outer most part. The reason I do this is that often some trimming is required to make it fit the opening. That was the case with this assembly and it would be nearly impossible to do the trimming if I had already attached the outer part. Now how did I know this very important little bit of information? Because on my first build I followed the directions to the letter for ALL of the windows and many of them didn't fit!



I've just placed the outer most part on top of the window assembly to see how it looks. I think that it's a winner! Now once I get the main structure painted and all of the window pieces / parts painted and assembled I'll be able to mount the windows (and doors).



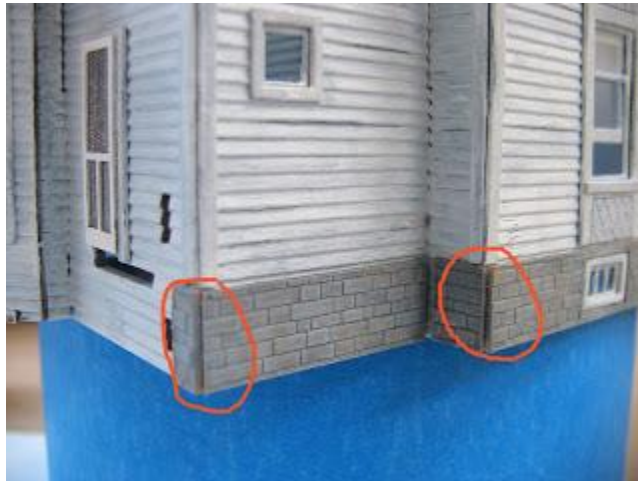
The painting of the dirty white color continues on the kit and will continue for some time. The section on the left has one coat of paint where as the section on the right has two coats of paint. When I paint the dirty white I purposely don't try to get even coverage but try for varying degrees of gray to show through. How weathered the paint will look will depend on the number of coats of dirty white that I apply. I was going to do peeling paint, but I didn't like the look of it on my test piece (sorry, no picture).



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Foundation Installation & Start on Front Porch

With the paint dry on the foundation pieces it's time to install them on the structure. The picture supplied with the kit shows gaps where sections meet and that's not a good sign. I peeled off the paper from the self-adhesive side and carefully applied them to the structure. Here's a picture of a couple of the corners:



And another picture of the other side:



Yech! This is NOT acceptable! All the hard work that I've put in thus far to be ruined by these !@\$#! corner joints? I could spend hours filling the edges with putty, carving the stone lines, and then painting them.
I've got a better idea.....



BUSHES!!! What you can't (or don't want to) fix you hide with bushes. Here's what one corner would look like with bushes



And the other side....



Now for my railroad I wouldn't have a problem hiding the bad joints (what bad joints?) with bushes, but this is going on Kevin's railroad, so we'll check with the boss - my email to him:

"Kevin,
Actually, I can fix the foundation gaps at the corner on your structure; however, this would take a great deal of time and effort. The kit just doesn't have a well designed foundation. What I'm suggesting is that you consider hiding the joints with bushes once the structure is on your layout - after all, what house doesn't have some bushes around it? I've attached pictures for reference - it's your call, so let me know what you want me to do."

And his prompt email answer:

"Rick,
No problem at all. I had actually planned to have bushes, plants etc., around the foundation in flower beds like Grandma had anyway. And trust me.....bushes hide a

lot of small flaws on my layout! It's one of my most used techniques! ;)"

O.K. Kevin - you're secret is out: Your railroad isn't perfect!!! In any event, problem solved!

So on I go to working on the front porch. See the gap? The porch doesn't fit flush against wall of the building.



Here's another view of the gaps.



Here's the offending section. I'll need to trim this area a bit to get rid of the gaps.



I want to make sure that I trim of just enough and not too much so I draw a black line with my felt tip marker as a guide.



I use my hobby knife with a #11 blade to carefully carve away to the line and finish up with a nail file (emory board) to smooth the edges. I test fit the piece and it fits great! Next I'll work on the floor.

Here's the floor painted standard Testors flat gray. It's a little boring looking.



I'll do the same process as with the foundation to give it some character; that is, by painting it with multiple lighter dry brushed coats of gray paint. Here's with the first coat only slightly lighter than the stock applied color.



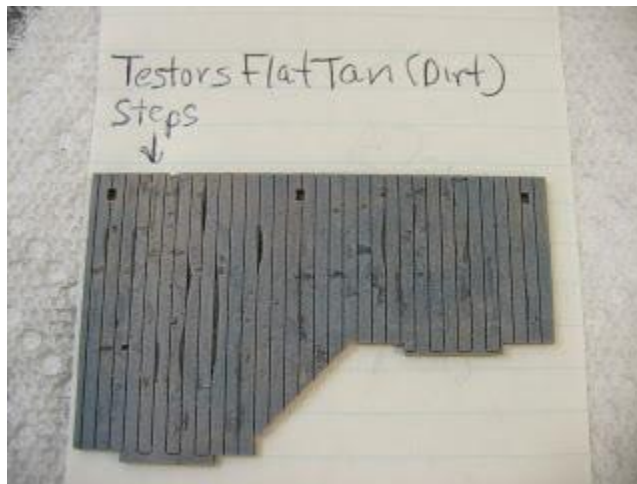
It looks better, so will dry brush an even lighter coat on next.



And a final coat of even lighter gray brushed on.



Now I'll add some Testors flat tan for dirt and dry brush it on with it heavier by where the steps would be and leading up to the door. I'm thinking Grandpa Sam doesn't always wipe off his boots real well before going up on the porch.



And here's the floor dry fitted in place on the front porch supports.

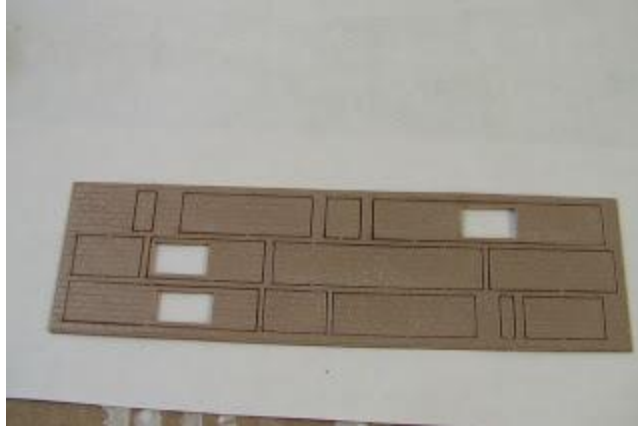


And a closer view to show the coloration of the porch deck.

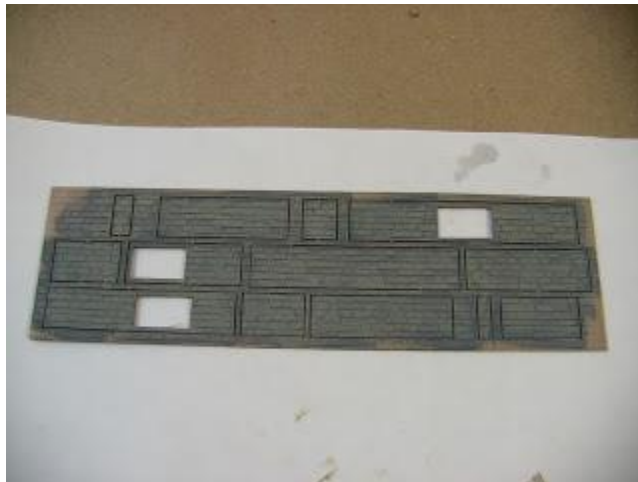


[Foundation Painting](#)

Today I worked on painting the foundation. It is a laser cut plastic sheet with self-adhesive stick-em on the back. Here's the way it looks as supplied:

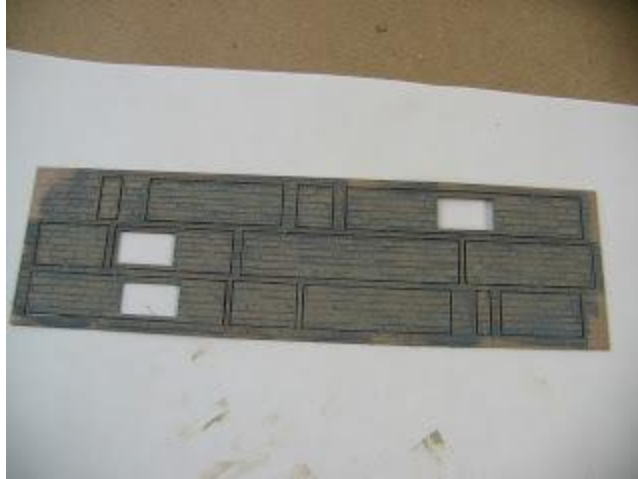


The first thing I did was clean the surface with a damp cloth. I couldn't wash it in the sink with soap and water as I normally do because of the self-adhesive backing. After it was dry I painted it with a dark gray and then painted it with Poly Scale "Concrete". When painting with the concrete color I didn't try for a consistent coat as I want variation in the coloring.

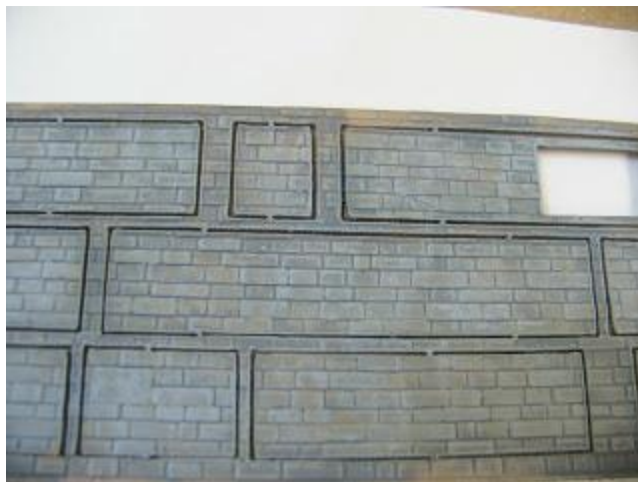


Next I applied Testors Flat tan using the dry brush technique and again trying for variation in the coverage

At this stage it looks a little too brownish, but I'll fix that with the gray coats I'll added next.



Here I've mixed some of my Testors "dirty white" with gray to have a medium-dark gray color. It is applied using dry brushing



I continue to add 3 more dry brush coats of tans and grays going from darker to lighter. You can see it's starting to get some character.



So, when to stop? Well, I believe that this will do it. Here's the finished product.



And here's a close up shot of the stone foundation ready to go.



.The next step will be to apply the foundation to the structure, fill any gaps, and touch up

painting of the completed foundation.

Trim Complete!

It's Sunday morning early and I wanted to get some work completed before church, so I applied the balance of the trim. Here's the front view showing the window fan and screen door.



This is a 3/4 view of the front / right.



This is a view of the right side of the house.



This is a view 3/4 of the right / rear.



And a view of the rear.



This is a 3/4 view of rear / left.



This is a view of the left side of the house.



An finally a 3/4 view of left / front.



I was careful as I could possibly be; however, there are still some gaps between abutting trim pieces. I will say that the joints look as good (or in some cases better) than the joints on the vendor supplied picture. I'm going to have to ponder this awhile to see if this is o.k. and "adds character" or if I want to try and fill the gaps with putty or something.

[Trimming it Out](#)

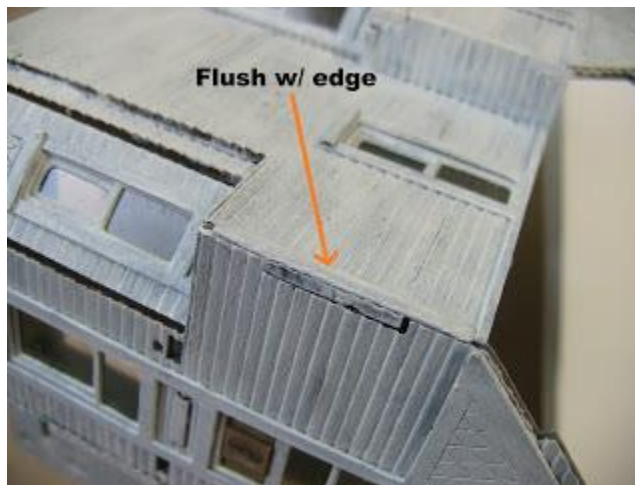
It's 7:30 Saturday morning and I can get some work done while my bride continues to sleep. I've got lots of trim to install and I want to take my time as it's not real obvious on what goes where. The instructions clearly state that for the corner pieces there are a wide and narrow piece. The narrow piece is to be installed first with it aligned with the edge of the structure. Next, the wide piece is installed and overlaps the narrow piece. Can you tell which are the wide & narrow pieces?



Here's a closeup to help. As you can see the narrow piece is on the left and the wide piece on the right. There's not much difference, which is why I want to take my time laying out the pieces and figuring out what goes where.



Here I add the narrow piece first aligning it with the corner edge. I won't press down on the self-adhesive pieces until everything is in its proper place. This is a little tricky as the pieces are small and want to stick immediately once they touch the surface.



Here's the corner with the wide piece installed. The pieces can be re-aligned if you haven't pressed down. Once everything is in place I use the flat end of my hobby knife handle to press on the pieces.



Here's the structure with a few of the trim pieces in place. I've got **LOTS** more of them to do. Hey, the trim pieces really start to dress up the structure! I can't wait (but I'll have to) see what it looks like all trimmed out.



[Window Fan](#)

No, I don't mean that I'm a fan of the window....I mean a fan for the front top window. After all, as Kevin said it does get warm in the summer up there!

Here are the parts for the window and the fan. The fan is from Vector Cut and a very nice unit. I've already painted the window frame parts dirty white, the fan mounting plate olive green, and the fan blades and grill tan. Why these colors? Well, I happened to have them in my Testors "Military" flat paint set.



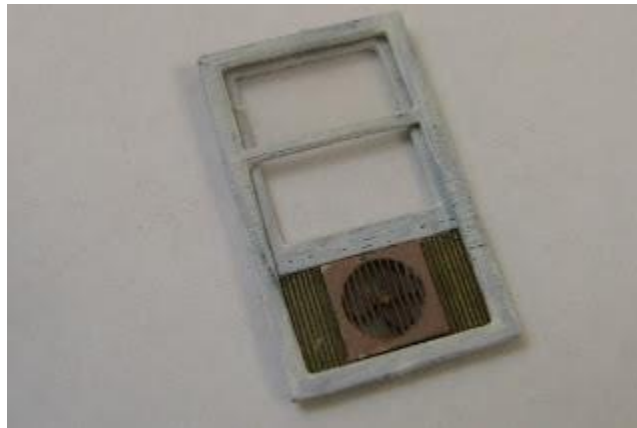
Here I've mounted the fan mounting plate first on the inside of the window frame using the supplied 3M sticky that is also holding the sliding window frame which was installed after the mounting plate. The fan grill is shown at the left.



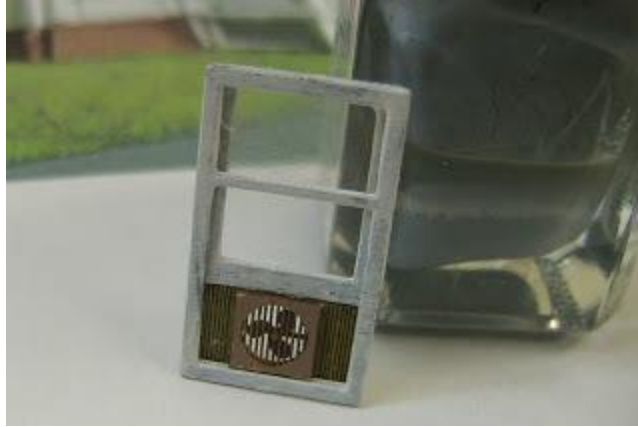
This is how the fan with mounting plate looks from the front before adding the fan grill.



Here's the unit with the fan grill installed. I used four little dabs of white glue to attach it. I could have installed the grill with the slates running horizontally; however, I wanted the viewer to be able to see through the grill no matter what their viewing angle. By running the slates vertically any height person can see the fan behind the grill.



Here looking at the completed fan installed you can see what I'm talking about. You can see the fan clearly behind the grill. I do see that I've got to do a little paint touch up on the upper left corner of the fan grill. I like the look of this detail!



Front Door & Screen Door Installed

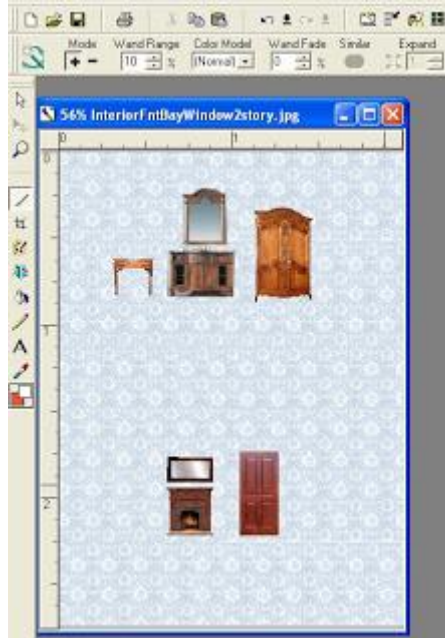
It's a very busy day today, so only one picture and a little progress. I glued the main front door to the frame in the open position and then used Api's "Incredibly TACKY" glue to attach the screen door to the door frame. For this picture I bounced a LED flashlight light off of a piece of white paper underneath the inside of the building to provide a little interior lighting. Without the light it was hard to see the open front door behind the screen door. You may notice that the vertical walls appear curved, but that is distortion from the camera lens with the camera only being about 1-1/2" from the subject.



!

Interior Details

Work continues on the interior detail for the structure. Here I've used my graphics program to assemble a panel for the bay window area, both downstairs and upstairs. The downstairs has a fireplace with mirror door, while the upstairs has a dresser, mirror, table, and wardrobe. I glued it to the interior wall with white glue after cutting it to size.



Next I worked on the downstairs main bedroom. I combined graphics for the wall paper, wardrobe, bedroom scene, and chest of drawers and printed in on heavy card stock. Since you can see the floor on this view I'll have to create one.



I folded the edges of the floor and glued it to the interior of the building. The next picture will show the hardwood floor from the top.



I printed duplicates of the wall section and installed them on the first floor. You can see the hardwood floor. Why the gap between the two sections? The lighting will go between the sections and backlight the walls. I don't want any light bulbs showing and this will help diffuse the light.



Next I add the second floor. The opening is to allow light between the floors.



Here is the wall section for the upstairs bedrooms. The line at the top is a cutting line. I have to put a peak in the room as it does have a higher profile due to the roof. I printed two of these sections and flipped one horizontally with my graphics software since the side wall sections are different widths.



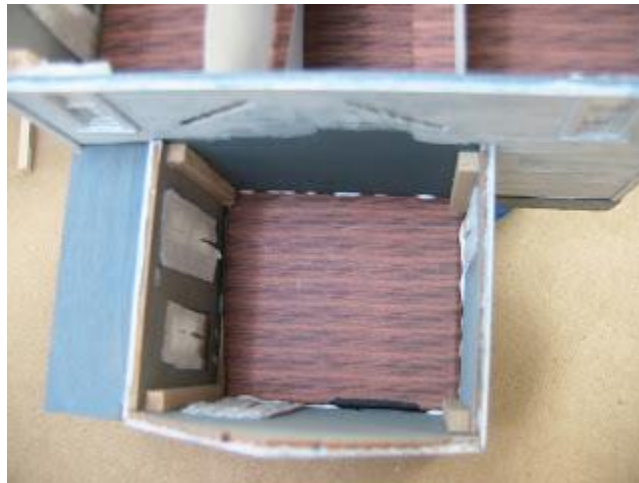
And here is what the sections look like installed.



This is another view of the installation.



Next it's time for the kitchen. First I add a floor.



Is that a turkey that Grandma is taking out of the oven? Yum! I print off two of these sections, cut them to size, fold them and glue them in place.



It's hard to see the result, but any peeping Toms looking through the kitchen curtains will get an eye full!



[Front Porch Railings & Roof](#)

What you **DO** see here is the front porch railing installed and being clamped with handy-dandy clothes pins. What you **DON'T** see is the hour I spend using the blade of my hobby knife to paint the area in between each vertical piece that didn't get painted when I painted the railings while they were still in the sheet. And did I say that I managed somehow to stab myself in the finger with that very same #11 blade? It was fun trying to keep the blood off of the white paint! Oh, Kevin - the sacrifices that I make for you! :-)



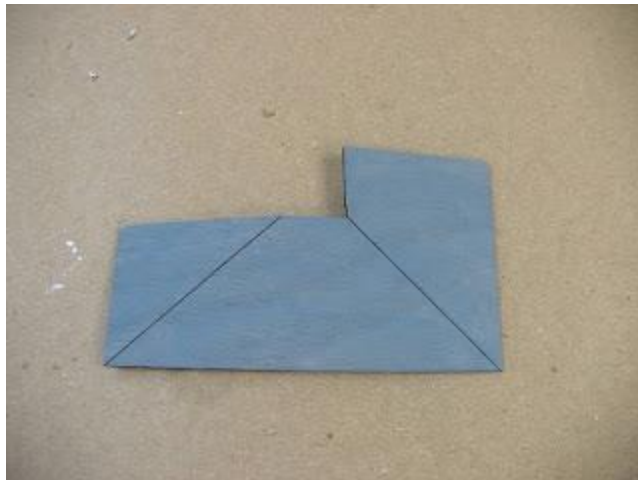
Now that the glue is dry off come the clamps.



Next it's time for the porch ceiling. I had to do some trimming and sanding to make it fit snugly to the house. Here I'm adding a support rib that will hold up the roof.



The roof section for the front porch is supplied flat with score lines. The instructions say to bend the roof at the score lines to get the proper profile. Here's a picture of the panel after the bending. How much to bend? - enough, but not too much!



This side view gives you an idea of the angle, which isn't very steep. I hope the water will run off of this properly!



Just as with the ceiling panel I had to do some trimming to make the roof fit. I can cover any gaps with the laser cut shingles that I'll add after all of the roofing substructure is in place. The roof is held in place with the self-adhesive that comes on the back of the panel. I apply clamps to apply pressure to insure that it stays stuck.



Here's the structure with the clamps off. It's really starting to look like a home! I can see that I'm going to have to paint the edge of the roof. By the way, the Laser Art people forgot to do that on their model that is in the photo of the kit!

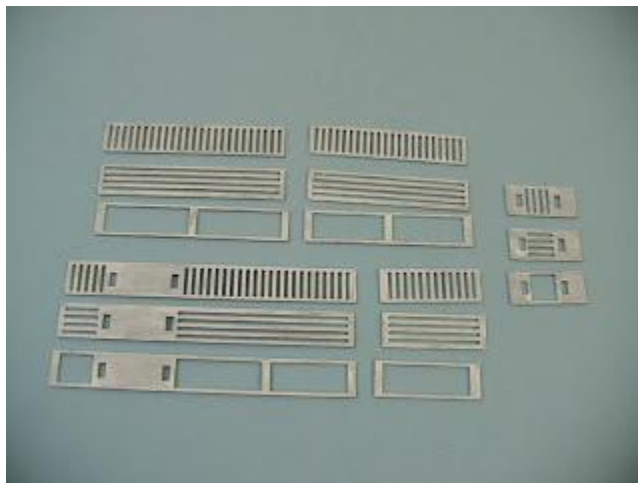


Next up I'll add the lattice work to the lower front of the porch.

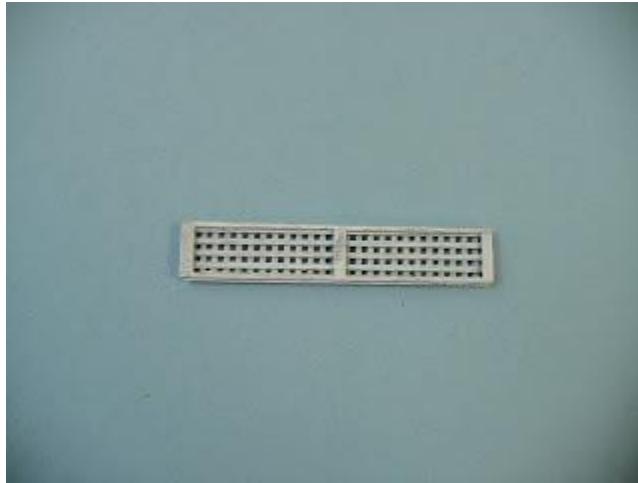
Front Porch Lattice

I didn't have much time today to work on the project - maybe my good friend and fellow model railroader Scott Perry is right. He said something about the Second Coming happening before I finish this kit! Anyway, today I did make some progress!

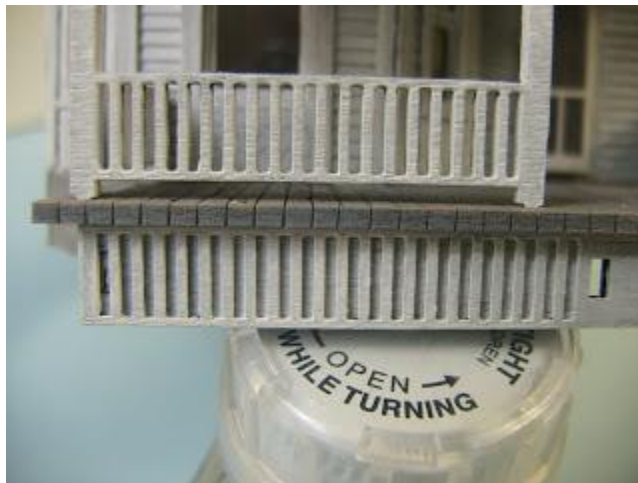
Here are the parts for the lattice. I had to use my hobby knife blade to paint in between all of the "rails" and this time I didn't even stick myself and draw blood! That's amazing because I did the painting last night while watching TV. Who says that I can't multi-task?



They are assembled in a stack to make the completed unit. Here I've just stacked them temporarily so you can see what the end result will look like.



The instructions show installing the piece with the verticals first. What the instructions don't tell you is that it's a good idea to paint the under porch pieces black so that you will see the black when viewing through the installed lattice.



So of course I didn't figure the black thing out until after I had affixed all three verticals to the structure. It's a good thing that I never press down on the self adhesive pieces until I'm sure that everything is correct. I used my hobby knife to carefully pry the pieces off and then paint the support pieces flat black.



Here's the same vertical in place with the black behind it. Much better! I had to be careful to align the holes for the steps.



Next I add all of the horizontal pieces and align the edges with the corners. It's really starting to look like something!



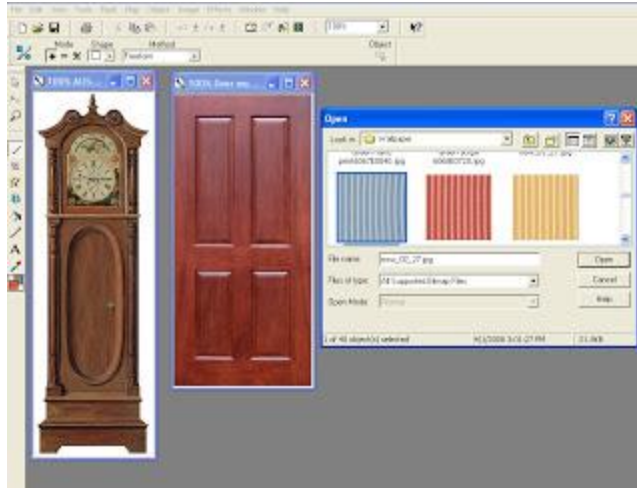
Finally I add the third and final trim layer and that completes the lattice work. I do have a gap on the left corner (out of the picture) that I'll fill with a piece of scrap lumber.



Interior Detail

Since we are able to peek in the front door through the screen and into some of the windows through the curtains it's necessary to do some interior detail. This isn't a store front with big picture windows, so we don't have to do amazing detail. I just need to add some stuff so we're not looking into an empty house. We'll use my handy-dandy graphics program to get the job done.

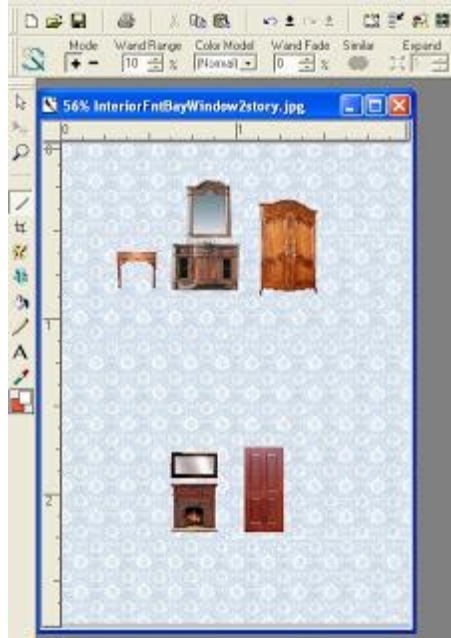
Here are some of the goodies we'll use to populate the interior. From left to right: a Grandfather clock (it is Grandpa Sam's place!), a door, and some different wall paper patterns. I got all of these off of the web.



Here I've sized the clock and added it to the wallpaper pattern along with a hat stand. Yes, I know that the lines don't match up - but trust me we won't see that. I've sized the paper to allow for folding to add it to the hallway by the front door.



This sheet is for the front bay window wall and covers two floors. The ground floor has a fireplace, mirror, and door. The upstairs bedroom has a dresser, mirror, table, and wardrobe.



Here is what the view through the front screen door looks like with the printed piece and a printed wood floor added. I printed the graphics on heavy card stock and glued it in place with white glue. You can't see the wavy lines in the wallpaper pattern.



Curtains Finished

I completed the curtains this Saturday morning and thought that I'd try something different. Instead of posting a number of pictures from different angles I created a little video showing the house from all angles. Note the high tech turntable - a plastic drinking cup and me turning it by hand! Anyway, you get the idea.

Back Porch & Window Curtains

I didn't do a step-by-step photo documentation of the rear porch as it's pretty much the same as the front porch I documented in my last post. In any event, here's a picture of the back porch.



The instructions with the kit state to put the roof on before doing the porches; however, I want to save the roof for last as I've got work to do on the interior of the house. I decided to put curtains in the windows and I found a wonderful source for the material. You will note in the picture that it has ribs and texture that looks darn close to real window curtains. What is this mystery material? Well, I'll give you a hint: You find it in your bathroom and it comes on a roll! I used a single edge razor blade to cut the slit in the center.



I used white glue to attach the curtains to the inside of the building. Here's a shot from the inside showing the first and second floor curtains installed..



And here's a shot showing the curtains from the outside. I'm going to leave the curtains in a mostly closed position so I don't have to do intense detailing of the interior.



Here's a view of a different angle of the house showing the curtains. Even with the curtains in place I'll have to add some view blocks / interior detail for where viewers can "peek" in through the curtains. If I light the structure I'll also have to seal up light leaks.

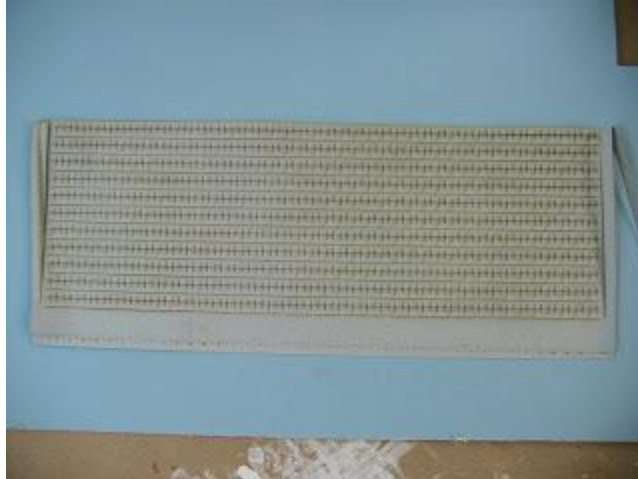


And here is a picture of the curtains with the interior lighted by a LED flashlight held from above. Notice the light leaks!



Shingles

No, not those painful kind that can make your life miserable, but the asphalt type that keep you dry. The very good news is the folks at Branchline Trains replaced the cheesy looking plastic shingle panels with laser cut paper shingles. Here's what they look like:



This is a closer view of the shingles. There is a variation in the colors of the shingles due to the cutting process as the laser browns some of them when cutting. I'll add more variation for more interest.



Since all of my stuff is packed away I head to the wife's craft room (with her permission!) to borrow her colored pencils. I don't need all of the colors, but if I don't take the lot I'll lose the ones I borrow!



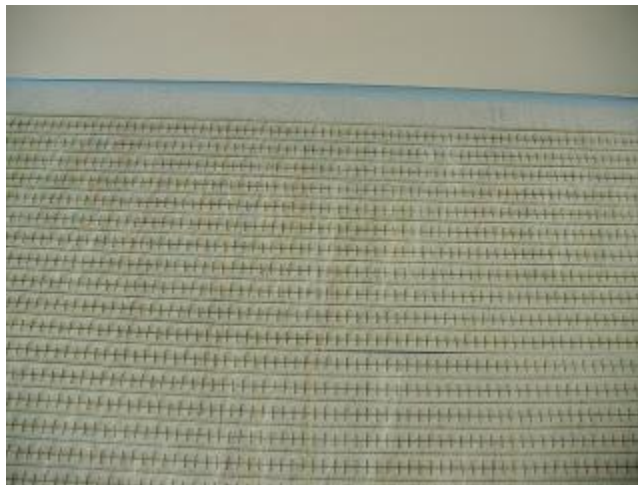
After some experimentation on the shingle paper I choose a few colors.



Next I lightly color the shingles using random patterns and all of the colors. Less is more here!



It's hard to see the results (that's a good thing) but there are more variations in the shingle colors.



I always read the instructions on structure even if I've done the process before as there might be something new and it reinforces what I already know. The instructions are somewhat generic as you can see they are not for this particular kit.



Here's some of the important part: Overlap and line up the shingles correctly.



Before cutting the shingles into individual strips I mark a line on the edge to make sure that the right side is up (the side I colored with the pencils). Here I'm test fitting the first row on the back porch. Just like with real roofing you start at the bottom and work up. I had to notch out the area where the corner trim is. I make sure to overlap the porch roof edges.



Here you can see where I trimmed for the corner edging.



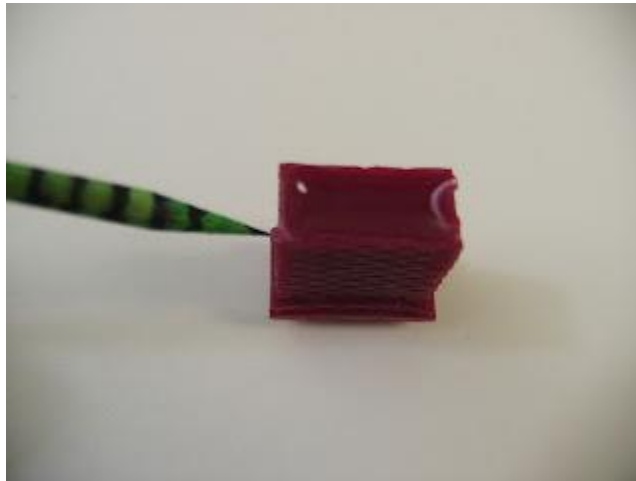
Four strips of shingles down and about a ga-zillion to go (for the entire roof)!



Chimney

What's an old house without a chimney? This kit is a little different than many because it has the chimney that is located in the center of the house. This is actually a great design since the heat from the fireplace would be more evenly distributed throughout the house.

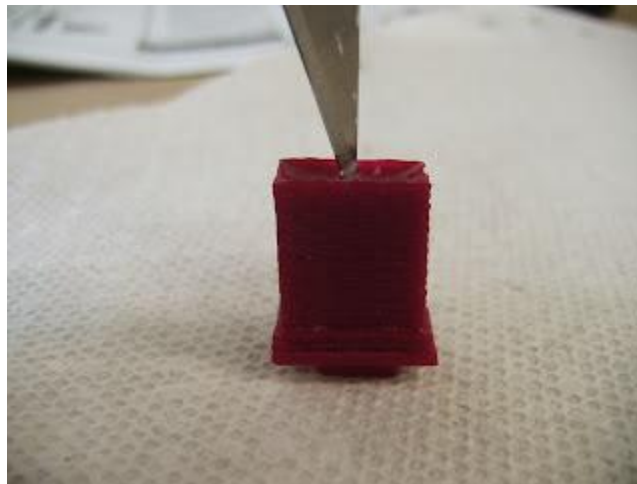
The chimney that came with the kit is a plastic unit that isn't the best quality. I wonder if the folks at Branchline Trains make them themselves or purchase them from a supplier? The issue with the chimney is that all four sides are slightly concave which makes the corners stick out. You can't see it real well in the picture below, but it is very obvious looking at it real time. I use my hobby knife to trim the edges which improves it.



There are many different brick colors that I can use. I'll use the Rust-O-Leum(tm) Professional red primer to paint the chimney. This color is a little darker and brownish than most red primers and I like it for "old" brick. Note to Scott Perry - Sorry, since it says "Professional" you won't be able to use it! ;-)



I'll need to hold the chimney while painting. I could: A.) Sand the bottom flat and stick it on a piece of cardboard; or B.) Drill a small hole in the bottom and insert a screw. I figure that (B) is faster so I use my hobby knife to drill a hole by spinning it round and round in the bottom. This only takes less than a minute to complete.



Next I insert a drywall screw I happen to have sitting around being careful not to insert it too far and split the chimney. Now it's off to the Giant paint booth (outside). I have a paint booth inside, but it's easier just to step outside of my basement door in the wide open outdoors and I don't have to use a paint mask.



While the paint is drying I locate my mortar. I've tried many different methods of doing mortar and found that I like **Roberts Brick Mortar** <http://www.robertsbrickmortar.com/> the best. The main reason is control - you can put it on, let it dry and then wipe it off. Too much mortar? - wipe off some more. Too little mortar? - put on more! It might seem a little pricey but trust me when I say that it's worth it. This jar is probably enough to last me a lifetime.



Now the paint is dry on the chimney. It looks very bland, but I'll fix that.



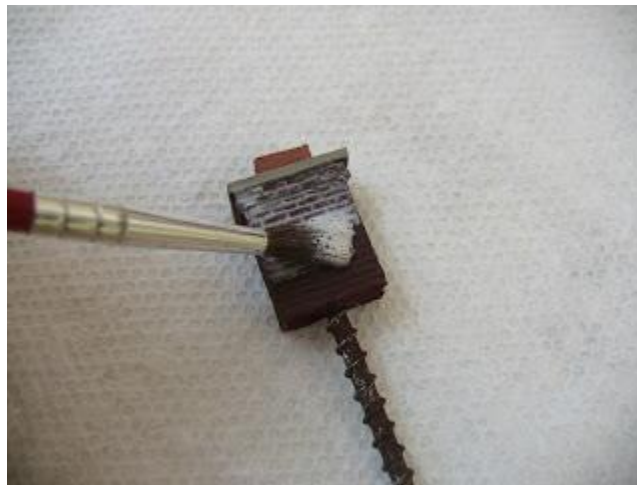
The picture that comes with the kit has the chimney, horizontal cap, and flue the same red color. Notice also that there's no mortar between the bricks! We know in real life that isn't the way a chimney looks. I paint the horizontal cap Polly Scale(tm) "Concrete" and don't go for full coverage. Like the dirty white over the gray for the house siding I want variations in the concrete color.



The flue on many chimneys is made from glazed Tera cotta tile pipe. I was going to custom mix some craft paint when what did I find in my paint box? A brand new unopened bottle of Tera cotta paint! Not only that, but this paint was on sale and only cost me 59 cents! I use my smallest brush and my magnifying viewer to paint the flue keeping paint off of the horizontal cap.



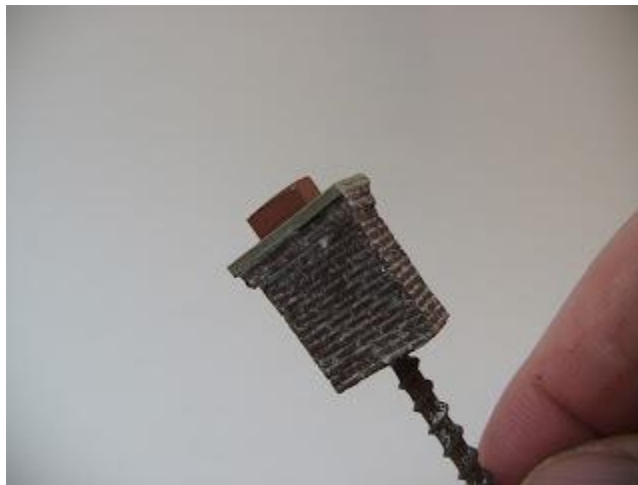
For the mortar mix the instructions say to "shake, then stir if necessary" before using. I shook the heck out of it and when I opened it there were still **BIG** blobs-o-goop inside. I stirred it thoroughly and then gave it a good shake. Here I'm applying the mortar mix on the chimney.



Here it is coated and drying. The instructions say let it dry to a light powder and then wipe with a damp cloth. I probably put more on than what was necessary, but that's the beauty of this stuff - you really can't mess up!



I didn't follow the instructions to remove the mortar with a damp cloth, but used a dry brush wiping carefully diagonally across the brick. Here's the result.



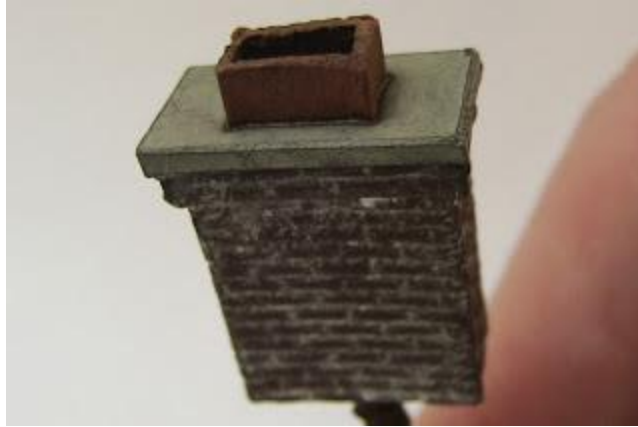
Now Grandpa's house has some age on it and I don't believe the mortar lines, horizontal cap, and flue would look this nice. Time for some aging! You can buy a number of high prices fancy weathering liquids and powders, but I stick with my cheap 70% rubbing alcohol with 2 tsps of black India ink added. I first test the mix by pouring a little in a cup and dipping the corner of a paper towel in it to see how dark it is. It's a good thing that I did that here as it was **WAY** too strong. I thinned the mix in my cup about 75% more with alcohol.



Here is the result of one coat of the weathering liquid once it has dried. Now that looks like an old chimney!



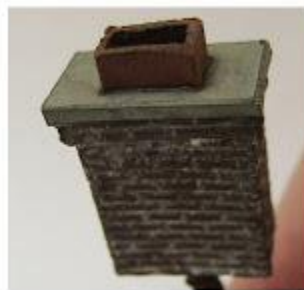
This is a different view so you can see the horizontal cap and flu better.



It's a lot of work for one chimney, but it's the highest item on the structure and your eye will be drawn to it. Here's a before & after - you be the judge.



Before



After

I had to deal with an issue when installing the chimney on the house as the supporting structure wasn't level. Now we could go with a crooked chimney as they do exist in the real world; however, most people will probably think that is was shoddy modeling work. The overcome the issue I put a bunch of hot glue on the underside of the chimney and held it level in the structure until the glue cooled. The little piece of wood sticking up at the base of the chimney is for reinforcement and will be hidden by the shingles



Sub-roof Complete

Today I completed the sub-roof assembly and it was a little challenging. There were a number of angles that had to be assembled and the only clamp that worked to hold things in place while the tar/glue dried was my hand. Fifteen minutes can seem like a long time! I only have one picture today and it looks like a mess with the tar/glue everywhere. No worries - it will be covered with the shingles!

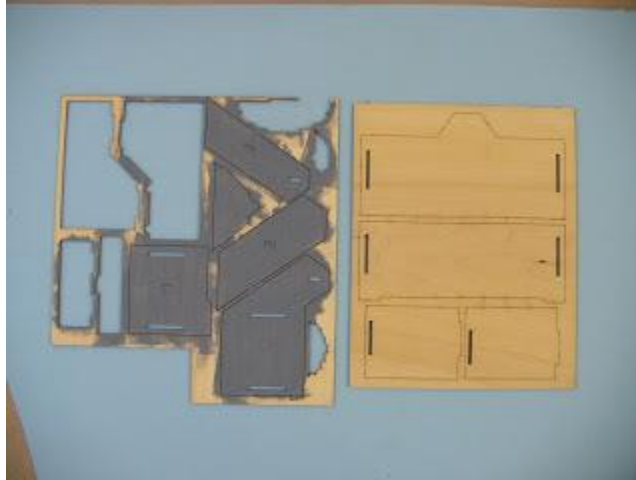


Next up will be the chimney. It will have to be detailed, painted and installed.

Sub-roof Part 1

It seems like I would never get to the time to put the roof on Grandpa's, but today was the day to start the process! Here are the sub-roof parts. You will notice that the ones on the left are painted gray, while the ones on the right are unpainted. I would like to say that there is a very good reason for this....but I just forgot to paint the ones on the right! This

isn't a problem because they are sealed with 6 coats of mate spray and won't show once the shingles are installed. I cut the pieces from the sheet and trim any tabs.



What's this? - black paint? No, it's my own custom "tar" which is made from Aleene's "Incredibly Tacky" all purpose glue and water based craft paint. I don't have a formula, but just keep adding black and mixing until it's black enough. I use this formula with white added to make aged (dark gray) tar for roof. We're going to use it for something else here.



First I dry fit the roof pieces to see how they fit. I don't need to worry about gaps as the shingles will cover them - just like with a real house roof! The hole in the center top will be for the chimney.



Since Kevin insisted that I light the interior (just kidding, Kevin) I'll need to try and seal up any light leaks. Here I've attached a piece of black electrical tape to the underside of a sub-roof section. It will mate with the other roof section to provide a light seal and a surface for my tar.



Here I add the tar to the mating surfaces for the sub-roof panel. I have to be careful because if this stuff squeezes out to the outside it will really show and have to be touched up.



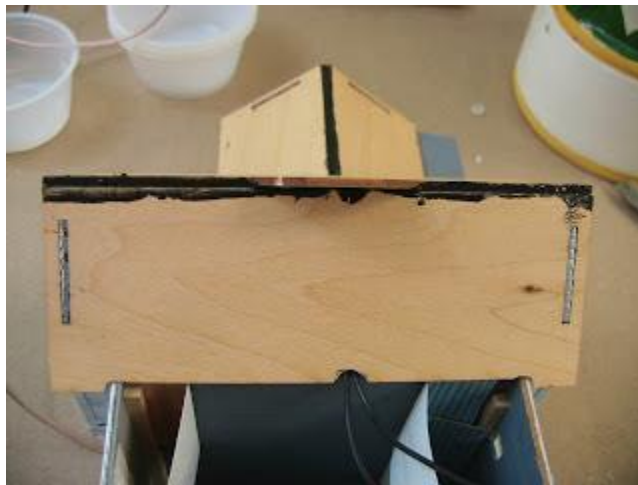
With both sub-roof panels in place I tar the seam. The black electricians tape keeps the tar from falling through into the interior.



Now I repeat the process for the long main sub-roof panels by first adding the tape. The notch at the bottom is for the light wires to pass through. The notch on the top.....well, we won't talk about that notch. I think that you can figure out what happened.



Here both of the long main sub-roof panels are installed and tar has been added.

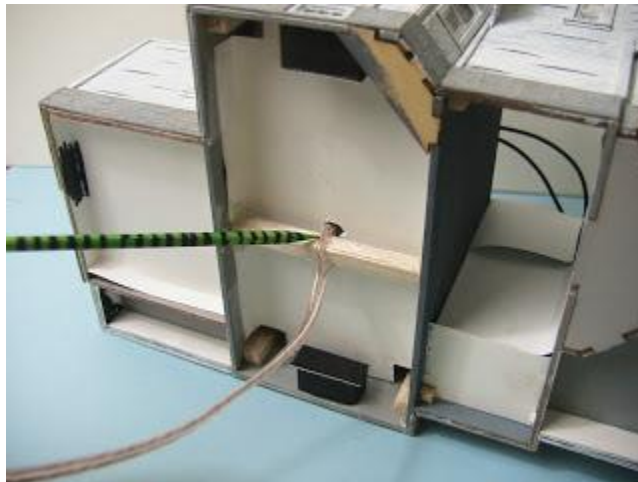


Interior Lighting

Rats nest! That's what the wiring looks like when I soldered all of the leads to the buss bars. It's a good thing that this doesn't show. The soldering was very easy. I cut the leads to the proper length, tinned them, applied a dab of solder to the buss, and then heated the solder while touching the wires to the buss.



This is a view from below where I ran the supply wire up through the center. Notice that I added a strain relief by splitting the wire, running a piece of 3/16" square wood through and hot gluing it to the inside of the structure. Once the roof is permanently installed it would be a problem if an accidental yank of the supply wire pulled it loose from the buss!



These next few pictures were taken with the room lights off to give you an idea of what the structure will look like when lighted. The pictures were so dark I used my graphic editing software to lighten them, thus the reason they are so grainy. Keep in mind that adding the roof will make the lights look brighter because of the reflection inside of the roofing. The good news is that the supply voltage can be reduced to lower level that looks good. You might even want to have a dual level - full 12 volts for "daylight" viewing when the train room lights are on, and a reduced voltage - say 6 volts when the train room is dark.



Another angle.



And another angle. By the way, I purposely light the front door area brighter to draw the eye to the door since you can see through the screen door and see the hall clock.



Interior Lighting Part 1

Let there be light! Interior lighting can absolutely enhance a structure.....or kill it. Number 1 No-No: naked bulbs that you can see!!! This is one of the reasons why I put in the printed paper detail with spaces between. I'll install the bulbs in between the sheets where they can't be seen and will backlight through the paper to give a nice even glow.

First we need some bulbs. I really like incandescent lamps over the LED because they don't require a resistor and have a nicer warm color. Now all you LED fans don't get your pannies in an uproar! I also use LEDs to light structures - it's just that all of my LEDs are packed away.

My preference is for Miniaturics 14 volt long life bulbs and I use them on 12 volts or less which increases their life even more. I use difference size bulbs with different brightnesses depending on what I'm doing in the structure. Here are the 5.5mm diameter units that are pre-tested and rated for 10,000 hours.



Here I've got some smaller units that are 2.4mm - also pre-tested and rated for 16,000 hours. The process of figuring what lamps to put where in the structure is mostly trial and error.



We'll need power for the lamps so I dig out my box of "wall wart" plug in transformers. Note that I had a brain storm and clearly labeled each one with a white pen marker. I did this when I finally got tired of digging through and reading each one. By the way, many of these power supplies are from broken equipment that has since been thrown away. I'd hate to think about how much \$\$\$\$ that represents! You can also pick up these things at thrift stores (like Goodwill) for about a buck a piece.



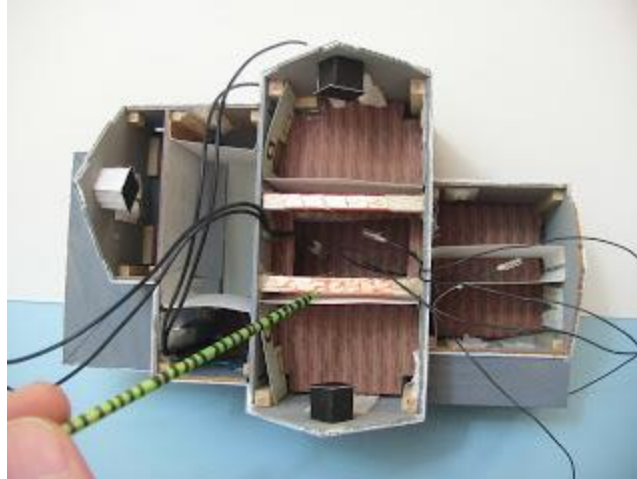
I've selected a nice 12VDC unit here. With in incandescent lamps you can use AC/DC, there isn't any polarity, and you can use voltages lower than the maximum - not true with LEDs.



Next I cut off the plug (leaving enough wire to use the plug elsewhere) and cut one wire shorter than the other before stripping the wire. Why did I cut one wire shorter than the other? Well, my old Daddy taught me that when you do this you are less likely to short the stripped ends of the wires together. Why the knot? - because I always tie a knot in the positive wire - which isn't necessary here but a habit.



Fast forward and here you see that I've glued the bulbs in place (using hot glue) and installed "buss bars". If you look at the item I pointing at with my pointer stick you can see them. They are made out of 3/16" square wood pieces wrapped with copper foil tape (like the kind used in stained glass). I've found that it's much easier to solder wires to a buss then trying to solder them together in a big old bunch.



Interior Detail Complete

With all the cutting and printing for the interior details I thought that I would never get done - and then Bingo! I am finally finished on the interior details.

What is this little black box? It's a light block for the basement windows. I didn't have any black construction paper so I printed some of my white card stock black on both sides. I cut the printed paper into strips, folded it into a rectangle, and then glued to the end piece. Why all the trouble? Well, if I simply glued a piece of black paper on the inside of the window it might possibly be seen.



Here's one of the light block boxes (say that real fast three times!) glued in place on the inside of the foundation wall.



And here is the view through the window from the outside with the box in place. It's DARK in that cellar (or basement depending on what part of the country you live).



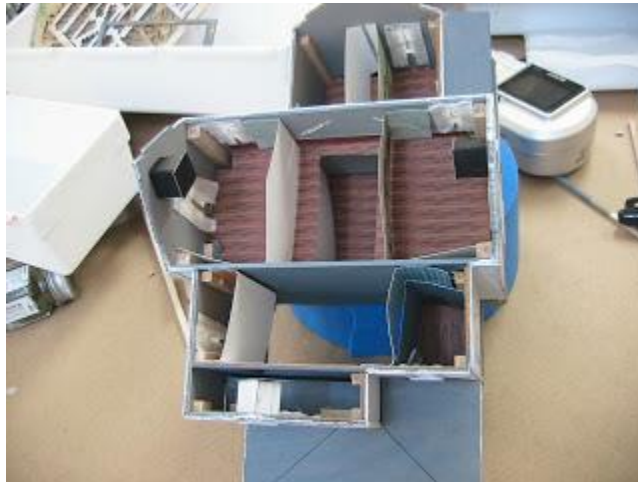
I also added the light block boxes to the attic windows.



This is a view of the structure where you can see some of the detail. Probably 95% + percent won't be visible once the roof is in place.



And another view of the interior. That wraps up the interior detail!



You know, it might seem like a waste of time to do the interior detailing as most of it won't be seen. The reason that I do this is because I have seen some absolutely beautiful structures and when I looked closely I could see in one window and out another - or see just plain emptiness. A great man once said: "Anybody can build a kit, Rick.....anybody!". This is true, so why not go the extra distance to "kick it up a notch"?

[Needs Touchup!](#)

I'm near the end of the main construction, so it's time to give a critical eye to my work. My first inspection found a number of areas that need attention.

These areas need additional paint. Since they are end grain they sucked up the paint and will need additional coats.



More areas that need more paint.



Another area that will need more paint.



This gap will need filling and painting.



Here we have a big gap (lower right) where the roof panel warped away from the house. I'll have to decide if I want to attach trim boards to hid the gap or fill it somehow. The gap at the eve peak can be filled & painted.



It is difficult to see, but there is a hole in the deck at this corner. I may cover it with something yet to be determined.



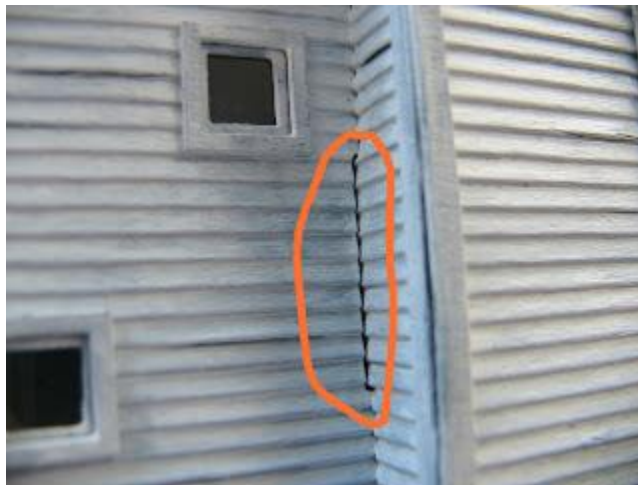
Ug! This gap will be a challenge to fill and I should have done it before I put on the porch roof.!



Two more gaps to be filled / covered up.



This is the same gap shown in the bottom of the picture above. I'm seriously thinking about using trim to cover these areas.



More gaps!



Front Porch Final Roofing

After careful consideration I decided to "tar paper" the front porch roof because of its very slight angle and to give a different look than the shingles on the main roof.

I started by cutting masking tape in scale 4ft widths and then applied the strips to the sub-roof overlapping the sections and offsetting the seams.



I've read arguments saying don't use masking tape as it will peel up after time. I've used masking tape for this process for over four years and yet to have any peeling. I do make sure that I burnish the tape thoroughly to the surface using the non sharp end of my hobby knife and toothpicks for areas I can't reach with the hobby knife. Here's another picture of the "tar paper" ready for paint.



I used Poly Scale(tm) F414137 "Grimy Black" to paint the first coat on the tape. Notice that I don't try for full coverage here.



Here's the roof with the second (and final) coat of Grimy Black.



Just like the regular main shingled roof we don't want any leaks. Here I've used my tar (described in earlier posts [here](#)) to seal the seams and junction where the roofing attaches to the walls.



This roof would be satisfactory if it was just installed in the last month or so, but since it's been on for years we need to weather it. I use my gray, brown & white weathering powders to age it.



Here's another picture of the roofing. You might notice that the tar where the roof meets the walls isn't as weathered. That is because the sun isn't beating straight down on it like the tar paper. I may add more weathering on it later if I so decide or leave it up to Kevin.



Tar, But No Feathers!

We don't want Grandpa Sam's roof leaking so today I added tar to the areas around the chimney and roof caps that might leak.

The "tar" is made out of Api's Incredibility Tacky glue and water based paint. I used to use white glue, but this stuff is much thicker and stays in place.



For some reason when ever I do these tar jobs I make about 50 times more than I need!
Here I've added black and gray to the glue and mixed it thoroughly. I won't be able to get pictures of me applying the tar as I can't do both at the same time.



Here's a shot with the tar added.



And another shot. Once the tar has dried I'll use some chalks to weather it and reduce the gloss.



[Shingles Part 5 & Roof Caps](#)

Can you believe that I finally got all of the shingles installed? Today won't have any "how to" information as my previous posts (Shingles Part 1 - 4) will give more detail on the process. Here are some pictures with this first one looking from the front.



Now, before you get all critical on me please realize that I will be using my roofing "tar" where the flashings connect to the chimney and where roof caps meet. The "tar" is made out of a mixture of white glue and very dark gray paint. I didn't see that idea for tar anywhere, but thought it up myself. While I was over at Tom Wilson's model railroad he described the very same "tar" formula that he uses on his excellent structures! What do they say about "great minds think alike"? Well, Tom has a great mind but mine is just so-so.

Here's a view looking 3/4 from the right front.



This view is at the right side of the house.

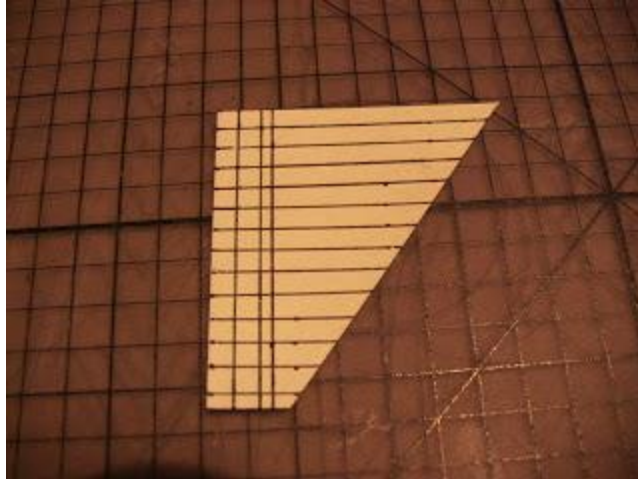


The 3/4 left view:

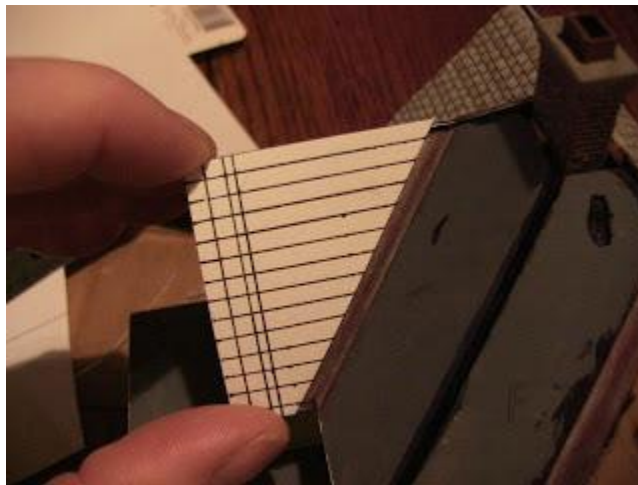


[Shingles Part 4](#)

More shingle fun! I first cut out the card stock template for the area to be shingled. I've added reference lines for shingle alignment.



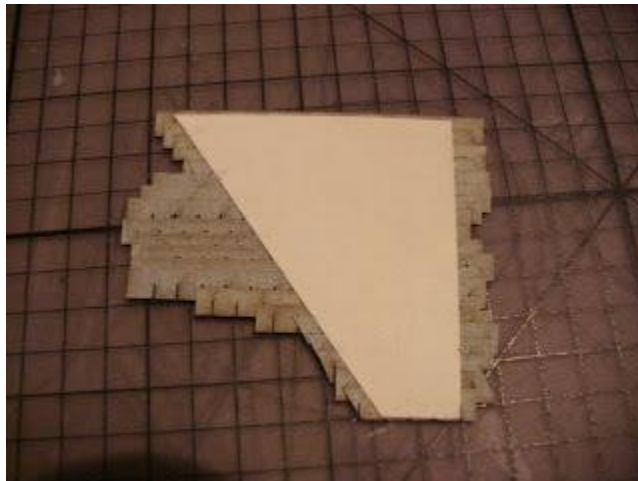
A test fit shows that the piece is ready for shingles. The piece is sized to allow for the valley to be visible - just like a real roof.



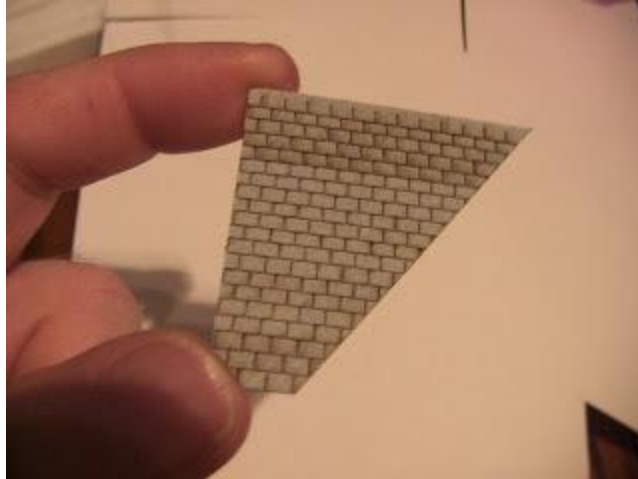
Fifteen minutes later I've got all of the shingles glued to the card stock. It doesn't look like much here



Here's the view of the underside showing the white card stock.



Here is the piece with the shingles trimmed. During trimming it is very important to hold the steel ruler down firmly while trimming so the ruler doesn't move.



Here's the section white glued in place on the sub-roof.



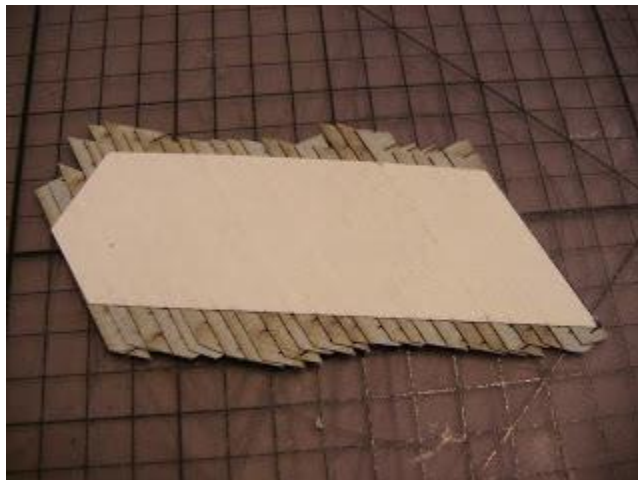
Now I'll repeat the process for the next roof section. First the card stock piece. Here I've cut it, added reference lines, and test fit it.



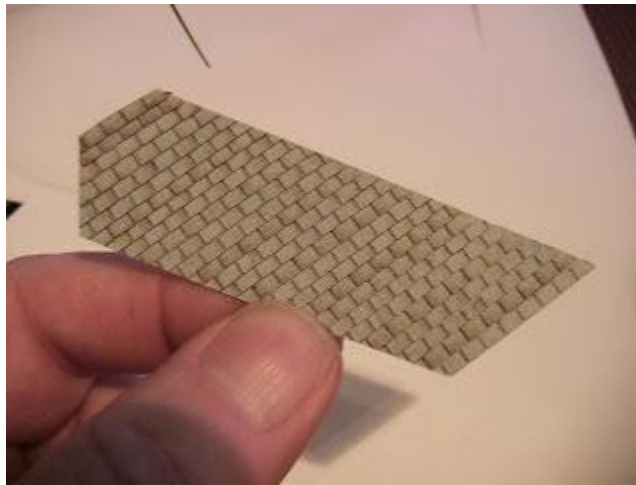
Fast forward 20 minutes all of the shingles have been glued to the card stock.



This is a view of the same place from the underside.



And the piece with the shingles trimmed.



Here's the shingle assembly glued to the sub-roof. I need to take a break before proceeding. Why? Because I'm tired of shingling!

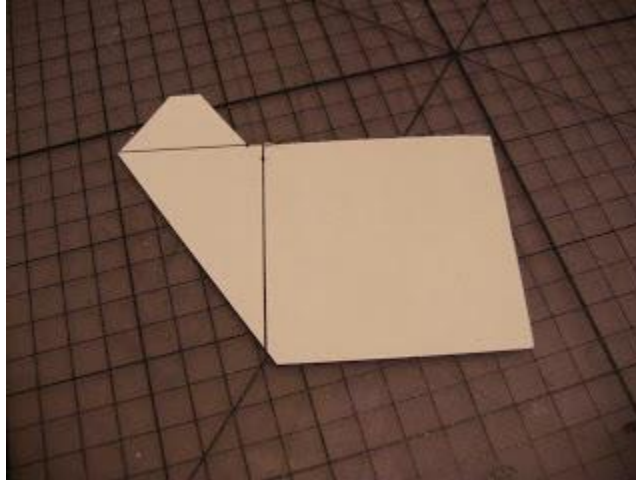


You can see that I have two more pieces to complete the shingled main roof. Although the instructions and pictures that come with the kit show a shingled front porch I am going to "tar paper" the front porch roof with 400 grit sandpaper. The reasons are two fold: 1.) The slope is too gentle for shingles; and 2.) I believe that it will look better than shingles. Stay tuned for Shingles Part 5!

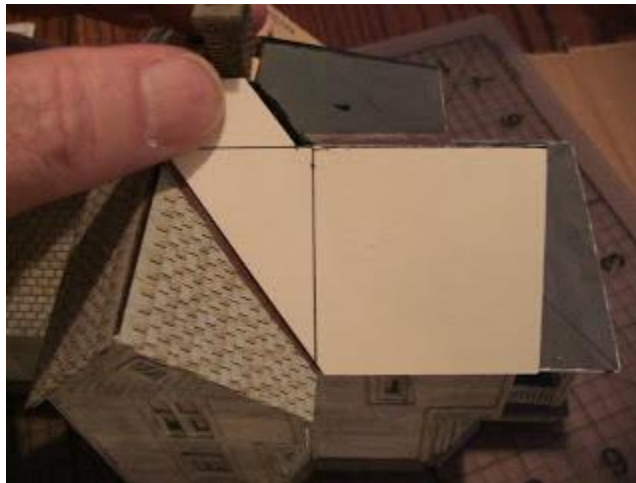
[Shingles Part 3](#)

Shingle work continues on the sub-roof with working on the front areas. As I stated in a previous post on this blog I thought that I would try out a new style of applying shingles.

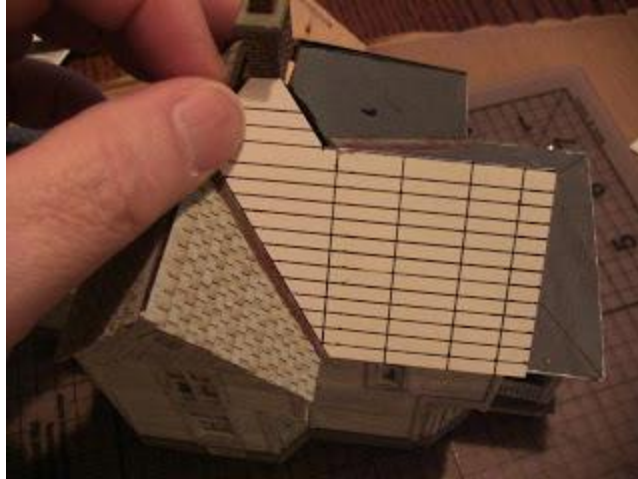
Here I cut out a template from card stock for the area. If I had this idea when I started the kit I would have just traced around the wood sub-roof part before attaching in to the roof. For this piece of card stock I measured the roof, transferred the measurements to the card stock and then cut it out.



Here I test the piece in the area. It fit fairly well but needed some addition trimming.



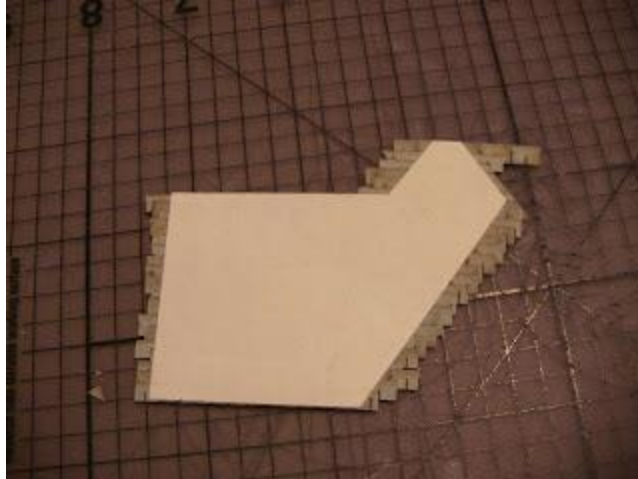
I was actually going to transfer the pattern to a piece of blue low stick painters tape and then after the shingles were all glued together remove the tape and glue the shingle assembly directly on the sub-roof. Then it occurred to me - why not glue the shingles on the card stock and then glue the card stock directly on the roof? Here I've drawn reference lines on the card stock and check the final fit. I want to leave a gap for the metal (rusted) valley to show through.



Fast forward about 30 minutes and here you can see the shingles glued to the card stock. I purposely didn't worry about overhang as I'll trim everything at once.



This is a view from below of the shingles glued to the card stock.



This is the shingle assembly after trimming the edges. I left a little overhang in the areas where the shingles will hang over the edges of the roof. I've got to say that this method was **MUCH** easier and faster than trimming and gluing the individual shingle strips directly to the sub-roof!



I applied a very thin layer of white glue to the wood sub-roof and to the back of the card stock shingle assembly and then applied the assembly to the sub-roof. I had plenty of time to position the assembly in the correct place and held it in place with my "Five Digit Universal Clamp Device" (my hand) until the glue set.



Here's another picture of the roof with the shingles applied.

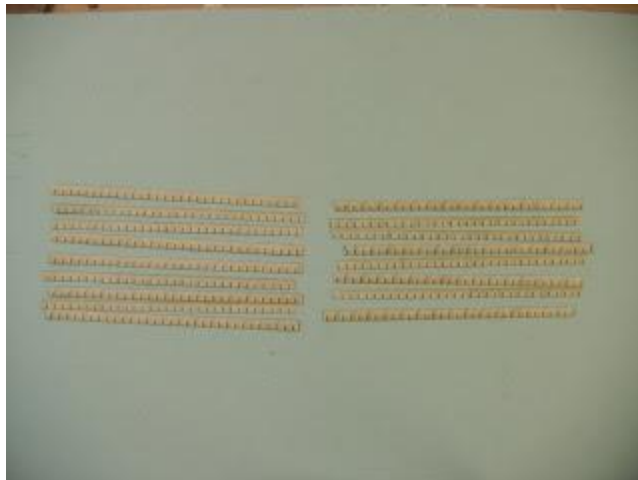


[Shingles Part 2](#)

I am 100% convinced that I could probably shingle a ***REAL*** house in less time than it's going to take me to shingle Grandpa's! In any event I finished the back / side porch shingles.



I decided for the back main roof to pre-cut the shingle strips all at once before starting the application. Here you can see two groups: (A) and (B). The only difference between the groups is the offset.



Here I've combined the two groups into one group that is A , B, A, B, A, B - well you get the idea.



The kit directions suggested drawing lines on the sub-roof to help keep the shingles square. I didn't worry about the lines being an exact distance apart since they are for reference only and not for alignment to the lines.



Here I've started in installation process using white glue to attach the shingles and lining up the gaps between every other row of shingles.



Fast forward about 30 minutes and here's the result. Oh, did I mentioned that I completed the back kitchen roof and roof cap? I'll weather the roof cap later once all caps are installed.



We'll need "sheet metal" valleys for the areas where the angles meet. I use the suggested spare pieces that are the borders of the sheets of shingles. I cut the piece to length and fold it in half over my steel ruler. The piece get glued in place with white glue.



Here's a close-up of one of the valleys.



These sheet metal valleys will need some weathering. I use gray, brown, and rust red paints dry brushed on to give them the well weathered look. Keep in mind that the majority of the valleys will be covered by the shingles.



Here's the structure with more of the roofing added.



What's going on here? It's an experiment to see if I can sort of "pre-assemble" shingles in sections and then glue the entire section in place. If this works I will first make a template of the roof area I want to shingle. Next I would assemble the shingles on a piece of blue low stick tape. After the glue dries I would remove the blue tape and put my template on top of the shingles and mark the final dimensions. Finally I would cut the assembled shingle section to size and glue in on the roof. If this works I believe it would be much easier than cutting and gluing the shingle strips one-by-one and give a better finished product.



Stay tuned for even more shingle fun!

Give Me Some Static!

Static grass, that is. I'm taking the time to build a little diorama for photos before I ship this off to Kevin. I don't plan on sending the diorama to Kevin, but will keep it for future photos. I started by shaping a piece of 2" thick foam, painted it earth color, and glued on a mixture of ground foams.

What is the white piece of paper on the foam? It's cut out as the shape of the structure so that when it is removed the structure will "nestle down" on the foam rather than sitting on top of the static grass. If I don't do this I have to end up scraping away the static grass in the area of the house after it's dried and that's a pain.



I used my homemade "Grass-O-Matic" static grass applicator to first add a layer of 2mm (6" HO scale) long "late summer green" using a 50/50 mix of white glue/water.



I went back and added here and there a mix of 2/4/6mm static grass of various colors to add some different texture. I then took a screwdriver and randomly pressed down the grass all over to give it a more realistic look.



Here I've removed the paper piece since the glue has worked its way under and would be a real joy to try and take it off once dried. You can see the area were the house will sit.



Boy, am I tempted to put Grandpa's house on the diorama right away! Not a good idea as it will get glue on the bottom. I guess I'll just have to be patient and wait for the glue to dry. Once the glue is dry I'll place the house on the diorama for the balance of landscaping.

Posted by [RickW](#) at [11:24 AM](#) [No comments:](#) 

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Posting No. 46 - Time for a Trim

After viewing Posting No. 45 on the stairs my good friend and model railroader Scott Perry emailed me saying *"Not a critique...just an observation...the stair step boards are too long for the stringers. Looks funny on the house."* I looked at the stairs again and he is correct! I measured the front stairs and they are OK with a 3" HO scale overhang; however, the rear stairs have a foot of overhang!



The stairs are attached with the self-adhesive coating so it wasn't a problem to carefully pry them off the stringers. Now how to trim these sticky devils without them sticking to everything? My handy-dandy Northwest Short Line "The Chopper" to the rescue! If you

don't have one of these tools I strongly suggest that you purchase one. I set up the stop for a 3" overhang and shop the stair steps (treads) to length.



It was an easy matter to re-attach the steps by simply aligning them and pressing down. Here is the result which is much better! Thank you, Scott!



Scott also noted that most houses this style have "box style" steps. It looks like the makers of this kit took a little short cut by supplying "open" style steps; however, they will work in this case since we're not trying to be historically accurate.

What's next? I'm working on a quick diorama for some photos.

Posted by [RickW](#) at [8:56 AM](#) [No comments:](#) 

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Tuesday, May 29, 2012

[Posting No. 45 - Taking the Right Steps & Shingle Repair](#)

SOMEBODY messed up my work area and I can't work like this - **AHHHHH!!!** It must be those darn Gremlins that sneak around at night time, hide my stuff, and mess up my work area!

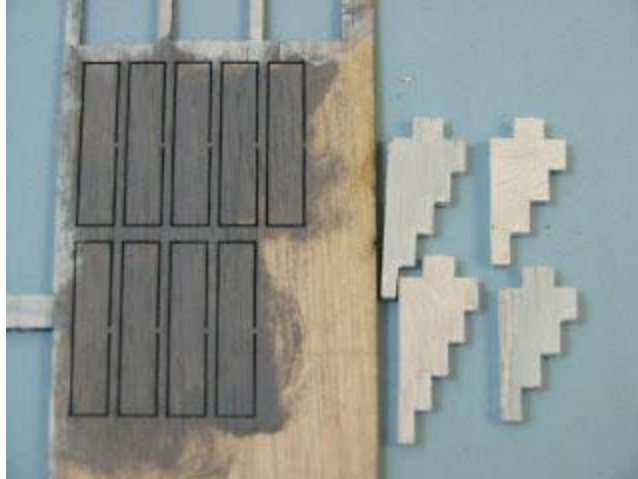


Twenty minutes of work and now I'm back where I can get some work done!

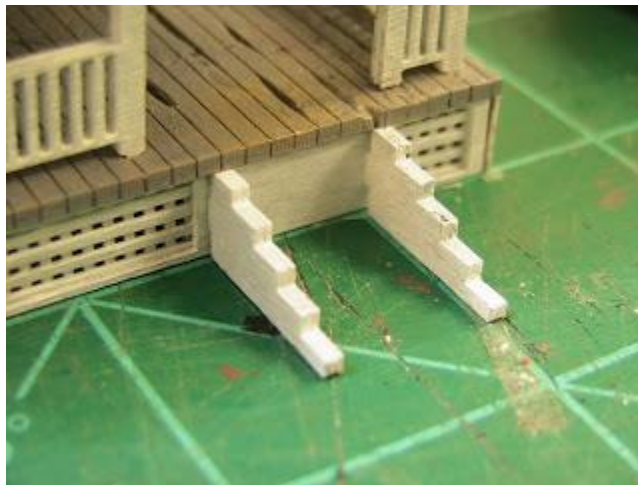


Even though the kit instructions said that the steps were to be installed early in the process I knew that I would knock them off a dozen times during while working on later instructions. I waited until the last so I'll only know them off a half dozen times!

Here are the steps that I cut out and touch up painted on the sides that show using the Testors(tm) flat gray. I had cut out and painted the stringers "dirty white" previously.



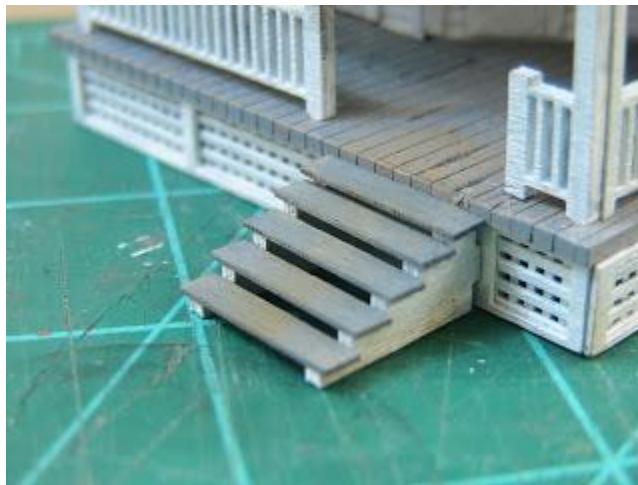
First I glue the front porch stringers to the porch using white glue. I'm doing this on my cutting mat so I can make sure that they are at a right angle to the porch.



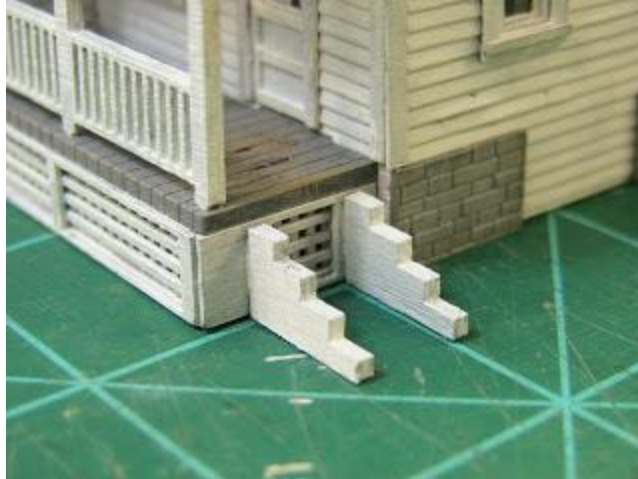
Next I apply the steps to the stringers using the supplied self-adhesive on the bottom of the steps. After positioning the steps I press them into place firmly.



Now I'll add a little weathering using brown, tan & black weathering powders.



Now for the steps on the back porch. First I glue the stringers in place.



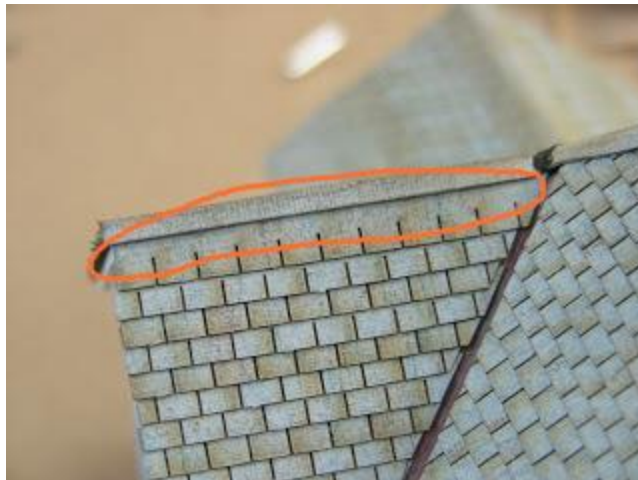
Next I'll add.....wait a minute.....one of the steps is missing! I spend 10 minutes looking for it and never find it. I cut out a step from the leftover wood using the existing steps as a template and then paint it. Here I've added the steps. Can you tell which one is my "home made" step?



And now a little weathering using the same colors. I go for a little dirtier as this is usually the way Grandpa goes into the house after being out in the "back 40". Grandma insists he come in through the kitchen and remove his boots!



With the steps completed I wanted to do some general weathering and spotted.....what's this? - a poor job of shingling!!! There should have been another entire row of shingles here! This has to be fixed!



I use my hobby knife to carefully pry under and lift up the roof cap. Now I have enough clearance to install another row of shingles.



I cut a row to fit, add glue, insert, and hold down until the glue dries. Now that is much better!



Do you know what? The only things I have left to do are to finish and install the outside cellar door and do final inspection and touch up! But before anyone gets too excited (Kevin) I want to make a little diorama and take the structure outside for pictures before I pack it up for shipment.

Posted by [RickW](#) at [2:10 PM](#) [No comments:](#) 
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Monday, May 28, 2012

[Posting No. 44 - Today I was the Chairman](#)

No, not that kind of Chairman - a chair-man! I'm fairly sure that Grandpa Sam and Grandma liked to sit on the front porch; however, Grandpa didn't want anybody calling

him "old" so he didn't want any rocking chairs! Actually, I didn't have any rocking chairs (but did have some kitchen style chairs) so I made up that story. Kevin, when you get the structure if you want rockers.....

Here you can see the chairs with a little table to hold their iced tea and newspaper (not shown). I already had the chairs "in stock" and made the table out of a wooden barrel and some styrene siding. It was a nice place for Grandpa and Grandma to sit and enjoy the day!



So that you don't think I've been lazy, behind the scenes I'm making more flower pots.

Posted by [RickW](#) at [11:09 AM](#) [2 comments:](#) 

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Saturday, May 26, 2012

[Posting No. 43 - Got Pot?](#)

No, not *THAT* kind of pot - I'm talking about a flower pot! I was tired on working on the main structure so now I'm going to work on details. What better way to dress up Grandpa Sam's then with a few flowers. I could buy those \$\$\$\$ HO scale flower pots with flowers included; however, I figured that I could do better.

Since the Mrs. likes to go to Michael's Crafts and she likes me to go along I always keep a "modeler's eye" out for things that I can use. The last time we were in Michael's I spied the following:



The pack of (23) was \$3.00 and I thought hummmm - I bet I can make flower pots out of these! I bought the pack with Kevin's structure in mind and we'll see how they work. First we'll measure them. In HO scale size they are 5-1/2ft high by 1-1/2ft wide at the largest end. The 1-1/2ft is OK, but we'll need to cut it down to size.



I put a tooth pick through the center and used my felt tip pen to mark a line at the 1-1/2ft distance.



How to cut this? - with my Dremel tool and a reinforced cut off disk. I clamp the Dremel to my table for stability. **SAFETY NOTE: ALWAYS USE PROPER EYE PROTECTION AND EXTREME CARE WHEN USING POWER TOOLS.**



It only took a minute and here is the result with the cut completed. We'll keep the long piece and perhaps cut it down to have a narrower opening additional flower pot.



I finish off the rough edges with sandpaper and sand the entire pot outside and inside with sandpaper for a rough surface for the paint. I've mounted it on the end of a dowel rod to hold it for painting with Testors(tm) "Flat Brown".



While the paint is drying (forgot to get a picture of the painted pot) we'll get the flowers ready. It just so happens that I have some Noch "flowering bushes". They aren't cheap, but a little goes a long way.



The pack contains red, white & yellow. I choose red. Here is an individual bush.




The bush is way too big for our pot, so I trim off some (that I save for later) and insert it into our pot.



I like! Just for fun we'll put it on the front porch temporarily to see how it looks. It looks nice and at only pennies per pot I'll need to make some more with different color flowers. Kevin, did Grandpa or Grandma have a favorite color flower?



I need to make some more pots and misc things. Stay tuned for more!

Posted by [RickW](#) at [9:21 AM](#) [2 comments](#): 

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Posting No. 42 - Touchup (Round 1) Complete

Boy, the devil is in the detail! I made progress in that I fixed the areas noted in round one of touch up. Before final completion (did I say that?) I'll have to make a round two inspection and repair.

Remember that gap in the front porch? Here you can see it clearer from the bottom. Can viewers see it from the top? - maybe, so it's got to be fixed.



Here is the piece of strip wood that I cut to fit the area and painted gray.



And here the piece is glued in position in the gap. That's one problem fixed and a bunch more to go.



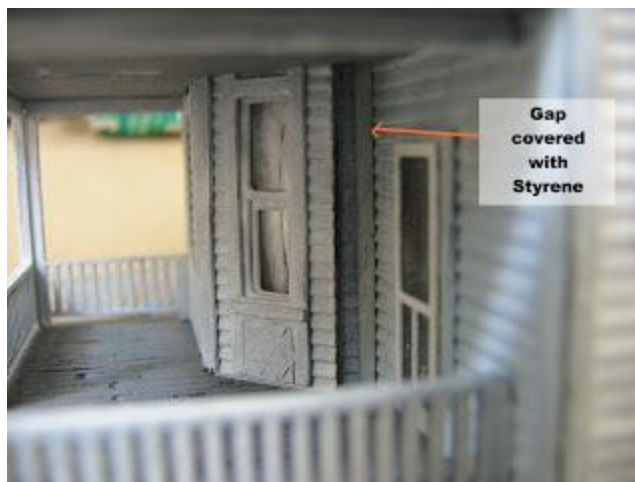
Now on to the gaps & painting issues. I know that this is a wood structure; however, the modeler uses materials that he has at hand so I snuck in styrene strips to cover gaps. I just happen to have some scale 1" x 6" stock which will work perfectly. Wood strips this size would be very fragile and break easily. The first thing I do with the strips is paint them with a gray undercoat and then apply my "dirty white" top coat.



Remember that long gap in this corner? - styrene strip and CA adhesive to the rescue!



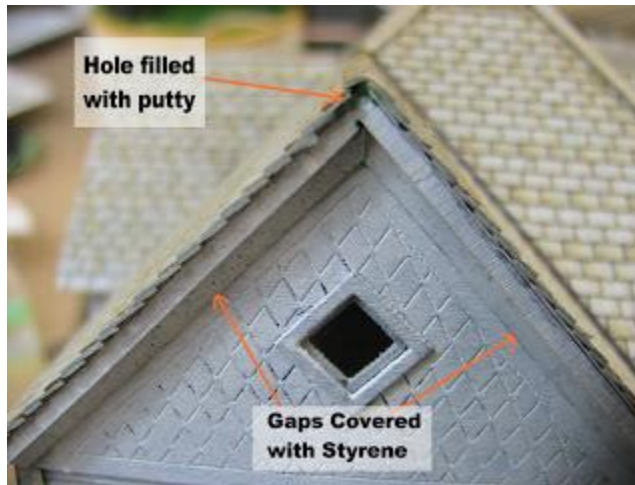
My good friend and excellent modeler Scott Perry suggested that I cover this gap on the porch with a hanging fern. While that is an imaginative and excellent idea I went with the easy way out - styrene strip!



All four of the eaves had problems with gaps where the roof panels met. I applied styrene strips to the areas using CA adhesive. While I was at it I painted any areas with dirty white that needed touch up.



I also used some putty to fill the holes at the very top of the gables and coated the repair with dirty white paint.



What's next? Well, I'll have to give that some thought. I need to assemble some chairs, paint the storm cellar doors, install the steps and then I want to create a simple diorama for outdoor pictures.

Posted by [RickW](#) at [7:52 AM](#) [No comments:](#) 

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Friday, May 25, 2012

[Posting No. 41 - Touch up, but no pictures](#)

I got some touch up work done today; however, I didn't have time to post pictures. I hope to post some progress pictures tomorrow.

[Posting No. 54 - More Pictures from Kevin](#)


Kevin has been busy on his layout and has added some beautiful landscaping around Grandpa Sam's place. He recently made a post to the Model Railroad Hobbyist site - go to Page 2 on the thread.

<http://model-railroad-hobbyist.com/node/12714#comment-94412>

I asked him if I could post his latest pictures to this blog and he said "Sure!"



Man, what beautiful detail! Thanks, Kevin

Posted by [RickW](#) at [12:26 PM](#) [No comments:](#) 

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Wednesday, June 27, 2012

[Posting No. 53 - Patience Rewarded!](#)

I got an email last night from Kevin with attachments - yes, pictures of Grandpa Sam's place on his layout. Here are some excerpts from his email:

Hey buddy!

Remember me? LOL Sorry it has taken so long to get back to you, but like you said, "life happens". Things have been crazy and I had hoped to get the total scene completed, but this should give you and the followers of your construction blog a general idea of where and how Grandpa Sam's Place will be on the layout. To the rear I plan to model a barn/out building type of structure. In one of the pics, you can see a hint of the Wolf River which sweeps through a narrow gorge bordering Sam's property. Lots more to do before I give a full reveal of that though! :)

Once again, I can't thank you enough for the awesome job on this structure! IT is going to be a highlight for sure! I have a thank you I'm working on you will be receiving in the not too distant future. With your permission I was going to put a small teaser on MRH forums to head to your construction blog for the rest of these pictures. Kevin.

All I can say is **WOW!** Kevin has done his usual wonderful job and I love what he's done! Click on any picture for a larger view of all pictures







Thanks, Kevin for the pictures and the opportunity to be a small part of your awesome layout!

Posted by [RickW](#) at [7:36 AM](#) [No comments:](#) 

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Thursday, June 21, 2012

[Posting No. 52 - Patience!](#)

I got an email from Kevin today. He wanted to reassure me that he hadn't forgotten about pictures, but that his life is very busy at the moment. That's just like Mr. Murphy - when you're anxious to get something done he throws a bunch of "life" at you!

Thank you Kevin my friend for the update. We will just be patient and look forward to your pictures!

Posted by [RickW](#) at [8:54 AM](#) [No comments:](#) 

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Tuesday, June 19, 2012

[Posting No. 51 - It Arrived!](#)

I received the following email from Kevin on Monday, June 11th:

"Grandpa Sam's just arrived here tonight and I just finished unpacking it! I am happy to report no borken pieces!!!! It must have had a slight jar or two to the rear of the structure as both the stairs off of the rear porch and the cellar doors were loose, but undamaged! Wonderful job packing and the instructions were VERY helpful! My wife and I are so impressed with the quality of workmanship and the way it looks. It reminds me very much of my grandfather's farmhouse. The extra details you added are going to be perfect sitting on the front porch! And even a 12 volt power supply! YOu are too much my friend!"

That is great news! Once Kevin provides pictures of Grandpa Sam's place on his layout I'll post them here (with his permission).

Posted by [RickW](#) at [8:21 AM](#) [No comments:](#) 

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Friday, June 8, 2012

[Posting No. 50 - Christmas in June](#)

Well, the package is on the way to Kevin and is scheduled to arrive Monday, June 11. I only wish I was there to see Kevin open and unpack Grandpa Sam's place! I've had such fun doing the project and communicating with Kevin during the build. I've learned a great deal from the build which I will use in future projects. Kevin has been busy preparing a place for the structure on his layout and I can't wait to see it installed! With Kevin's permission I'm going to post his pictures here. I feel like a kid at Christmas waiting to see those pictures!

Posted by [RickW](#) at [8:59 AM](#) [No comments:](#) 

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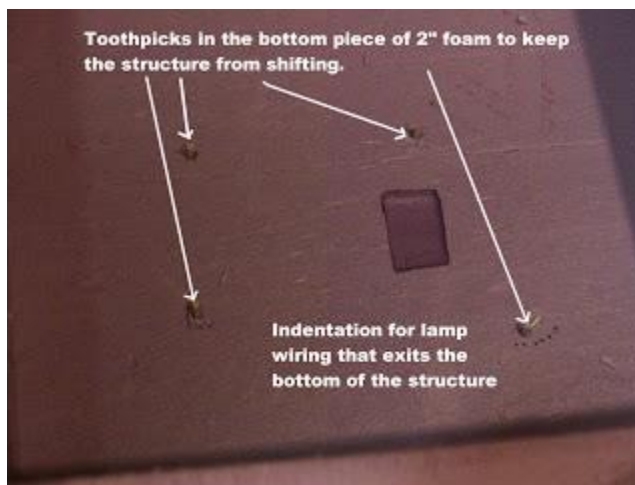
Saturday, June 2, 2012

[Posting No. 49 - I'm boxing!](#)

No, not that kind of boxing! - I'm boxing up the structure for shipment. I start by using an oversize box and lining the bottom and sides with 2" foam board. I hot glued the foam board together to make it stronger. I want this box "armored" to withstand harsh handling.



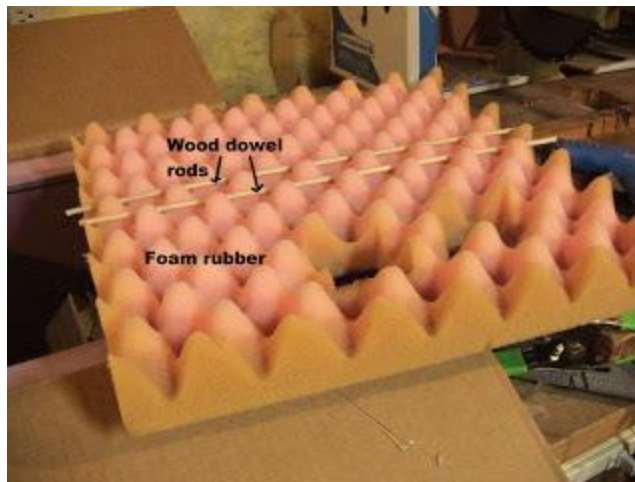
I've added toothpicks in the bottom piece of foam spaced to the inside 4 corners of the structure to hold it in place. The cutout is for the wire used for the interior lighting.



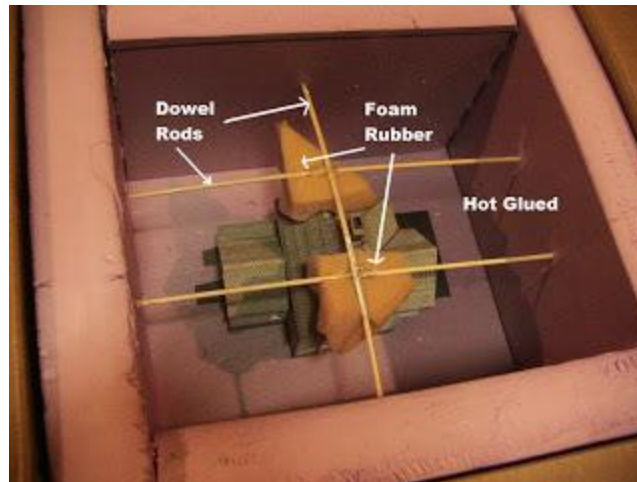
Here's the structure set in place on the bottom over the alignment toothpicks.



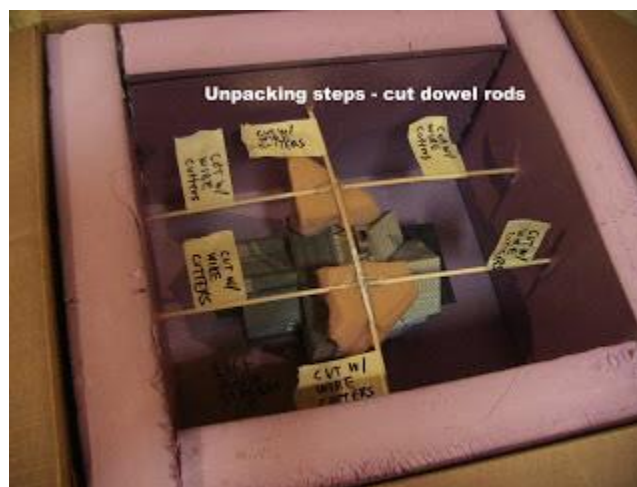
Now I'll need to hold the structure down gently while also allowing space above it to allow for any crushing of the box. Here is the foam rubber that I'll use and some small dowel rods.



I cut pieces of the foam rubber to go over the roof peaks and then I cut the dowels to length to allow them to fit in the side walls. Next I set the foam rubber pieces on the roof peaks and insert the dowels to bow slightly to apply gentle pressure on the foam. I hot glue everything in place so that it won't shift during shipment. I still have plenty of clearance above the structure that will be empty.



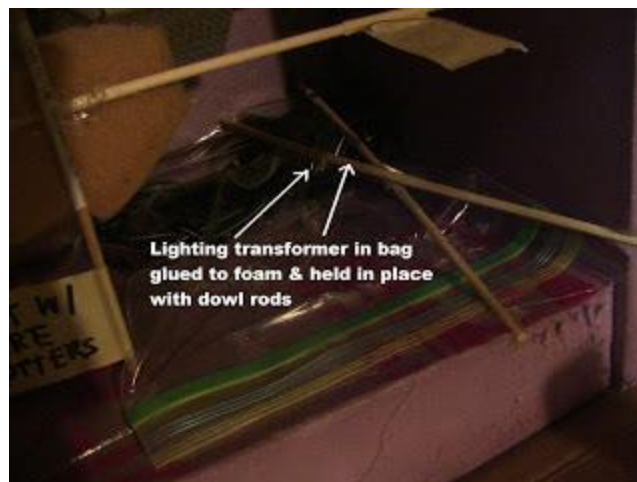
It's important that the dowels be removed gently so as to not damage the structure. I add tape with instructions to cut the dowels out with wire cutters.



With the structure firmly in place I add the accessory pack by putting a dab of hot glue on it and gluing it to the bottom piece of foam.



Next I secure the lighting transformer. If this bad boy got loose and rattled around in the box it could do a great deal of damage. I insert it in a Ziploc bag and hot glue the bag to the bottom and sides of the container. I also add dowels to add extra protection just in case the bag comes loose.



I don't want the top of those dowels coming loose so I add a corner foam reinforcement hot glued in place.



I want to make sure that the top of the box is "cave-in proof" so I add a 1" x 2" piece of wood reinforcement set into the foam sides.



Now I need something sturdy for the top insert piece so I use some double thickness cardboard.



Here I've cut it to size and inserted it into the top of the box. I don't have pictures of the next steps, but I tape a Ziploc back the the inside top piece with unpacking instructions, the kit instructions, and a letter to Kevin. I seal the whole thing up and put Kevin's address on it.



Man, I never thought it would take so much to pack this, but I want to make sure that it arrives undamaged. The delivery people would have to drop it from an airplane or run over it with the truck to mess this up!

Kevin, I'll email you with the shipping information! I'm hoping to have a future posting showing Grandpa's place on Kevin's layout once installed. Thanks for watching!

Posted by [RickW](#) at [2:37 PM](#) [2 comments:](#) 

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[Post No. 48 - The Great Outdoors!](#)

With the house completed I wanted some outdoor shots. I did some quick & dirty just to have something to remember the structure by since it's off to Kevins!



The background is from an area about 4 miles from my house that is a horse farm. It was a nice cloudy day which actually makes shooting better not dealing with shadows.



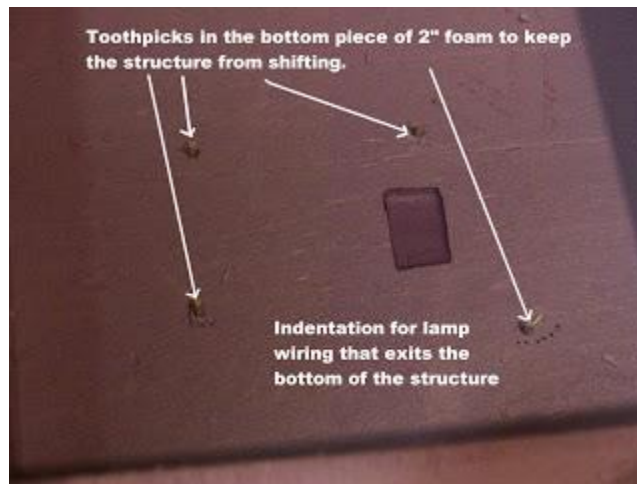
Next steps: Packing and shipping!

Posting No. 49 - I'm boxing!

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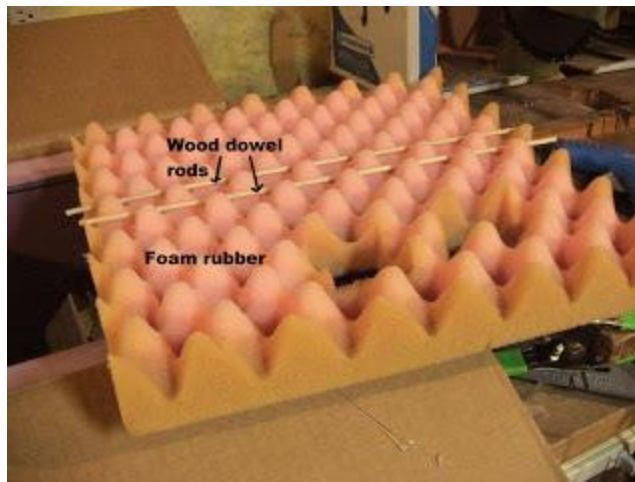
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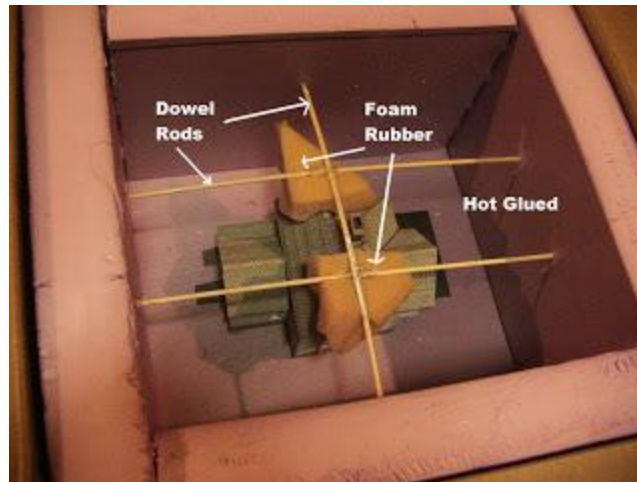
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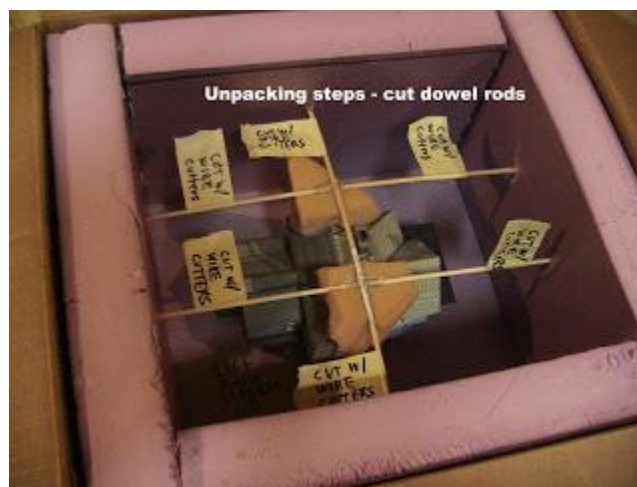
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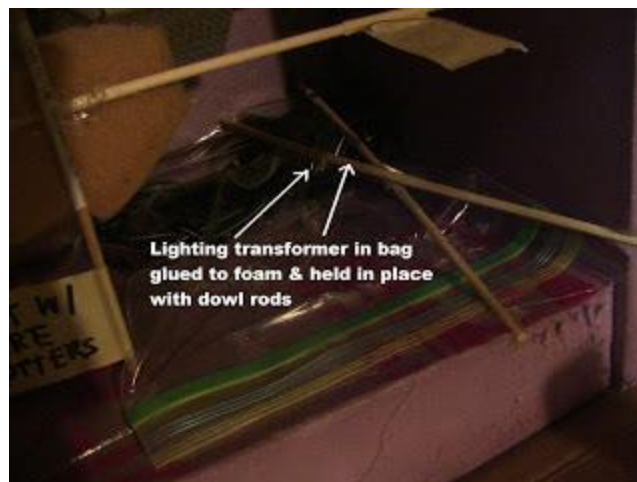
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That is great news! Once Kevin provides pictures of Grandpa Sam's place on his layout I'll post them here (with his permission).

Posting No. 52 - Patience!

I got an email from Kevin today. He wanted to reassure me that he hadn't forgotten about pictures, but that his life is very busy at the moment. That's just like Mr. Murphy - when you're anxious to get something done he throws a bunch of "life" at you!

Thank you Kevin my friend for the update. We will just be patient and look forward to your pictures!

Wednesday, June 27, 2012

Posting No. 53 - Patience Rewarded!

I got an email last night from Kevin with attachments - yes, pictures of Grandpa Sam's place on his layout. Here are some excerpts from his email:

Hey buddy!

Remember me? LOL Sorry it has taken so long to get back to you, but like you said, "life happens". Things have been crazy and I had hoped to get the total scene completed, but this should give you and the followers of your construction blog a

general idea of where and how Grandpa Sam's Place will be on the layout. To the rear I plan to model a barn/out building type of structure. In one of the pics, you can see a hint of the Wolf River which sweeps through a narrow gorge bordering Sam's property. Lots more to do before I give a full reveal of that though! :)

Once again, I can't thank you enough for the awesome job on this structure! IT is going to be a highlight for sure! I have a thank you I'm working on you will be receiving in the not too distant future. With your permission I was going to put a small teaser on MRH forums to head to your construction blog for the rest of these pictures. Kevin.

All I can say is **WOW!** Kevin has done his usual wonderful job and I love what he's done! Click on any picture for a larger view of all pictures







Thanks, Kevin for the pictures and the opportunity to be a small part of your awesome layout!

Posting No. 54 - More Pictures from Kevin

Kevin has been busy on his layout and has added some beautiful landscaping around Grandpa Sam's place. He recently made a post to the Model Railroad Hobbyist site - go to Page 2 on the thread.

<http://model-railroad-hobbyist.com/node/12714#comment-94412>

I asked him if I could post his latest pictures to this blog and he said "Sure!"





Man, what beautiful detail! Thanks, Kevin