

Master Model Railroaders

conducted by Rick Shoup

James L. Teese, MMR #190

James L. Teese was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on Nov. 8, 1924. Although the term railfan had not yet been coined, his father, Harry F. Teese, was one. Jim remembers sitting on his father's shoulder in the cab of a switch engine in the yard of the old C&O passenger station in Cincinnati, and being the official bell ringer—at the age of two or so! He recalls riding in a Buddy L train in the backyard, and having O gauge electric trains inside, a Dorfan passenger set and Ives and Lionel freight cars. One of his fondly remembered jobs while in high school was working in Don's Model Railroad Shop in downtown Cincinnati, where he bought his first HO kit—a Megow "wagon top" boxcar for 25¢. Girls, cars, girls, airplanes and girls distracted him from model railroading, although in 1942, while living at the old Phi Delta Theta house on McMillan Street at the University of Cincinnati, he built a model of the streetcar that ran in front of the house, the No. 31 Crosstown. Then off to war with the Army Air Force, returning in 1945 to finish school. Back into the Army in 1949, with several rail-related jobs along the way, such as a short stint with the Railway Operating Battalion at Fort Eustis, yardmaster of Brooklyn Army base, train commander on the *Mozart*, the sealed military train that ran through the Russian Occupation Zone in Austria from Salzburg to Vienna, RTO Salzburg and RTO Brenner Pass. He retired as a major, senior Army aviator in 1966. After a stint teaching math and history in high school, he returned to aviation with Bell Helicopter, winding up with Bell as manager of an operation in Iran, getting out just in time as the revolution there developed.



A visit to Tenshodo in Tokyo in 1960, and a subsequent assignment to Fort Ord in Monterey led to visits with John Allen and a renewed interest in model railroading that continues to this day. He joined the NMRA in 1963 and became a member of SER. A blind date on the 4th of July, 1980, led to a move to Charlotte in 1981, and his marriage to Joann in 1984. He switched to MER shortly after arriving in Charlotte and is a past president of the Metrolina Model Railroaders. He finished his working career as an agent with State Mutual Life Assurance Company and a registered representative with SMA Equities. He retired in 1989 and is now able to devote most of his time to model railroading.

In 1987 he began construction of a 24' x 44' building in the backyard, a combination of garage, workshop and study/train room. The 16' x 24' study has built-in oak cabinets and bookcases from floor to ceiling, with an O scale railroad (48" minimum radius) at the 44" level on the 30" deep 3/4" plywood top of the lower level cabinetry. At the 54" level is the primary layout, a double-track mainline HO railroad with a 10-track, stub-ended passenger station, a 12-track, double-ended freight yard, a diesel engine facility with spots for 36 engines and a steam engine facility with a 134-foot turntable, a nine-stall roundhouse, a two-stall machine shop and 10 other garden tracks and the requisite coal, ash and water facilities appropriate for a terminal of this size. There is also an ET&WNC-based narrow gauge and a trolley line, still under construction, which features only equipment built by the Cincinnati Car Company.

Jim credits Rick Shoup with poking and prodding him into the AP Program. "The most difficult part is the paperwork," he says. He holds AP certificates for Motive Power, Cars, Scenery, Prototype, Civil and Electrical Engineer and Author. He is proud of having earned these certificates and encourages others to try. "It is not nearly as difficult as it seems—and the beauty of it is that it will improve your modeling to a degree that you never thought possible."