

BIRD'S NEST RAILWAY Eastern PA



From Joe's Emails with his permission.

Here's a picture of the storage building I've built to hold my trains. I'm just getting started on building the railroad. I put two tunnel portals in the building so the trains can run out into the garden and back in the building for storage. The entire railroad is elevated about 30 inches above the patio for viewing. I used your #19 stone sticks to create the face of the portal. I cut my own stones to veneer the insides of the portal. I also cut the cap stones and the arch stones from local stone.

I read your Mill book twice. It's a great resource. Hope to see you at the Convention in Cincinnati this week. I'll be looking for your clinic.



I've been working on two long stone bridges to span my patio between my train station and my garden railway. I sent you pictures of the stone portals I built in the train station, now I have the bridges done and in place.

Mary - I took your advice and cast the sides of the stone bridge instead of just gluing stone to my wood base. It worked out very well. I cast a thin stone wall eight foot long and 2.5 inches high and 5/8" thick. I then glued and screwed this casting on to my wood base. I cut cap stones to glue over the edge to hide the joint and give the bridge a great edging for the track ballast.

The bridge in the foreground was a little trickier as I had to cast a 5 ft radius curver to get the track across the patio to

the right spot in my garden railway. It was a challenge building the molds, but it worked out just fine.

Pictures show the stone bridge, the curved molds and my train station with the stone portals....and a picture of Rockville...just for fun (I go by there all the time).



I'm working on a stone bridge pier for a transition to a wood trestle...the castings came out just great....I'm getting fairly good at cutting stones with a chisel. Using a lot of local blue stone... the color is great!



I finally finished my flag-stop station. Your step-by-step book was excellent! The stone building techniques I learned will let me build houses of any size with all the corner details just right.

I cut the stone for the station from some local blue stone and some oddball pieces of different rock in our central Pennsylvania area. I used the same station order board from Ozark Miniatures and fashioned a brass pole for the signal and a RR sign. Our garden railroad, which is just barely under construction will be called The Bird's Nest Railway. I will have lots of 'BNR' signs around the garden.

I cast the station foundation with your cobblestone casting master and made it one inch thick for stability outside. I soaked the cobblestones with a mixture of rubbing alcohol and India ink. After it dried I used a small sponge soaked in light gray, oil-based stain to highlight the tops of the cobble stones. I made the light fixture out of brass tubing and a brass bell from AC Moore craft stores. It has a screw-in bulb for easy replacement. The smoke jack is from a piece of soft copper tubing.

It's a great project and I really enjoyed building it. It should last for a long time with maybe only replacing the wood shakes later on.

It was fun seeing my tunnel portals on your website!..I'll have more to show you once the snow melts off my three-arch, double track stone bridge in the Spring.



I built a wooden mill house and wheel recently and decided to make it a bit more functional by adding a stone wall, sluice way, stone pier, and some stone steps for the front porch.

I cast each component separately, (stone wall, pier, and steps) and then cast a 1" foundation around the components with lots of strap iron and hardware cloth for strength.

The foundation came out beautifully! It makes a solid support for the building and rigidly holds the water wheel in the correct position.

I also just finished a three arch stone bridge that is wide enough for two tracks (used a 2 by 12 for the bridge decking). It was the biggest job I've tackled yet, but your instructions were terrific. I filled the bridge with concrete, which certainly makes it heavy and sturdy...may take your advice and fill the next one with foam!



I started building this Watchman's Tower soon after I got back from the ECLSTS. First, I fully read your new book about modeling in stone & cement - an excellent primer for stone modeling techniques.

I based this structure on a design from Garden-Texture. I bought the plans from Bob Kelly which called for a completely wooden structure. I chose to make the first floor storage room out of stone, and then build the second floor operations center per Bob's design.

I made the deck by casting cement with a casting master and made the stairway posts out of brass tubing so no wood would be in contact with the cement deck.

I made the rear wall of the operations center removable, so I could add interior lighting and figures to 'peer out' from behind all the windows. The stairway was the most challenging as I had to cut stairway stringers similar to a full-size stairway.

This was a very enjoyable model to build and customize with ideas from both Garden-Texture and Stoneworks...Enjoy!



Just finished a Quaker barn for the Bird's Nest Railway. It's the first building that I've designed and the first one that is made entirely out of vinyl patch cement. I used the 'board & batten' casting master for the barn walls and the 'corrugated roofing' master for the roof. The only thing made out of wood is the cupola. I will be building a wood fence to surround the front and the side with the barn light. The fence will be grounded by a cast foundation.

I 'mitered' the foam formwork to create a 'mitered' barn wall on each corner. The walls then fit together nicely with the joint directly at the corner. The walls are well connected to the foundation walls and the floor with lots of joiner wire. I made a copper barn light out of copper cow bell and used an Ozark Miniatures weathervane.

It can stay in the garden year-round with nothing to rot or wear. The roof was a bit of a challenge as it is only 1/4 inch thick. I formed it in two pieces and used a brass corner strip to cover the top joint. It's weathered with some rust paint and an india ink/alcohol wash.