

## BUILDING BOOTY CORNER:

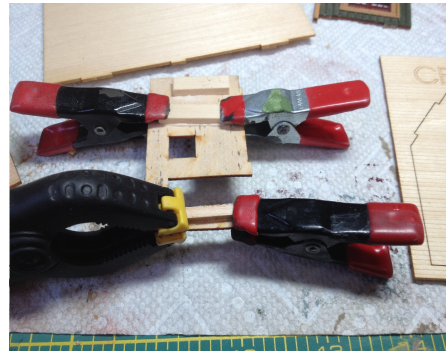
### Part Three: Walls, Windows and Signs

In this installment I am going to just concentrate on finishing the walls and windows, and adding signs. In part four I will show how to add simple lighting, a quick interior, add the second floor and roofs, as well as tackling a scratch built side stair enclosure, add some exterior details and, hopefully, finish up.

#### THE WALLS

Assembling the walls is not hard. There are a couple of key points, however, particularly with respect to the second floor walls. The first is the need to brace the walls, particularly those for the second floor. I cannot emphasize this enough. Bracing strengthens them against breakage, prevents them from warping, and extends the life of the building.

The kit provides some wood, which you can use, or you can use scrap pieces from other kits or pieces of basswood from the hobby shops and places like Michaels. I use Titebond for attaching the bracing, and clamp every piece of bracing until dry. Sometimes I just use a brick (I have three or four, bought fresh from Home Depot, for this purpose). Here is an example of clamping, using cheap clamps you can get by the bucket at home improvement shows.

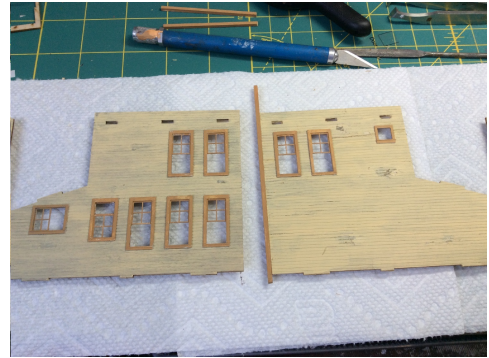


The next step is to paint and weather each of the exterior walls before installation. Some kits suggest painting and weathering after assembly, but this strikes me as asking for trouble. It is much easier to paint, distress, and put signs on walls when they are flat on your workbench. This is sound advice no matter what the instructions say, frankly. Painting and weathering for me is a three or four step process. First, I use a light alcohol stain to distress the wood. You can use a mixture of 91% alcohol (I find it at Walgreens) and india ink to achieve this look very easily. A couple of drops in a cup of the alcohol until you get the desired color (medium dark) will do it. Don't worry too much about "formulas". I use a commercial product from Hunterline, which has alcohol stains in a variety of colors, but home made stuff works just as well, especially if you are starting out. Brush this on lightly, and use the highest level of alcohol you can find to ensure that the walls do not warp. Allow to dry.

The second step is to dry brush the walls – too much paint cannot be taken off, but more can always be added. To dry brush, dip your brush in the paint and then remove most of it – on aluminum foil, paper towels, whatever. Then hard brush it into the walls, leaving the stain underneath showing just a bit. You know you have enough color on if the wall looks painted by the darker stain still shows through.

Depending on whether the paint is faded enough, you can skip step three, which is to apply a very diluted alcohol and ink wash to the paint. This is useful if you “overpainted” the walls and they look too new. If you are basically happy with the wall color, skip this step.

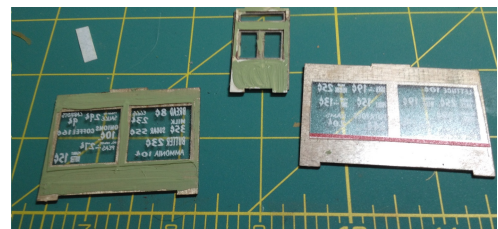
Finally, you can add weathering highlights using chalks or pastels. I have gone almost entirely to Pan Pastels for this step. A light makeup brush with a dark color (black, brown or gray) really brings out the wood.



A note on nail holes: instructions often say to apply them, but I generally disagree. You need them in contest quality models, but the reality is that the holes are far too obvious at scale range, they can be difficult to get straight, and are not prototypical at all. So skip them, I say. Generally there is so much other stuff going on with the walls (windows, signs, vents) that they are unnecessary.

## ADD THE WINDOWS

First, add the store windows to the wooden window assemblies on the first floor. These should be added from the back, being careful to ensure that the writing is visible on the outside and centered. Since these windows are slightly frosted, it will make the process of adding the interior that much easier. This photo shows the one window installed and one lined up for cutting.



Now add the windows to the second floor walls. The windows in this kit are a little funky, in that the lower part is a separate piece which you can position open, closed, or partially open. That adds variety, but complicates things a little. You need to ensure that you find the correct window glazing and apply it to the main window piece before adding the lower pane if you want the window to be open at all. Apply some glue (or Future, see below) and allow to thoroughly dry. With Future, let it set overnight. Other glues can set more quickly.

Here is a braced wall with the main part of the windows glued in from the outside, ready for the lower panes to be installed.



I use what used to be called Pledge Future Floor Wax and is now called Floor Care Finish (there is NO wax in it) to install windows. It dries clear, wicks around the window, and is easy to use. Others use different types of glue. Be careful if using CA (superglue) or styrene cement, as they will craze the surface)  
Right: back wall waiting for lower panes



← All four walls painted, signed, windowed, and ready to be assembled into the second floor. There is a fifth wall that completes the third floor that is now shown.

After the walls have been weathered, apply the signs. This kit has a row of signs with a laser cut framework that makes the small signs around the bottom of the second floor easy to apply (if somewhat generic). I swapped out the larger signs directly applied to the side walls for ones that I liked better from the internet.



Applying signs can be difficult, but it should not be. I like to look for signs that complement the wall color, sometimes by contrasting with it, but never clashing too badly. Garish can be overdone in HO scale, I prefer a more subtle approach. The key is to cut out the sign carefully with a good pair of small scissors. There are many types available at places like Michaels, but be sure they are small. A large pair will not serve you well. Some people cut out their signs with an exacto knife, but I never like the result. You can get a straighter edge with small scissors with just a little practice. If you like, you can sand down the back of the sign to make it thinner, especially around the edges.

Turn it over, spread a thin layer of white glue with your fingers on the back, pick it up and apply, using a clapboard to ensure level. Rub it in gently. Use a small pick or other tool (not sharp edged) to work it into the wood. It is as simple as that.

## WRAP UP

Well, that is it for this installment. The following photo shows a look ahead, with the walls assembled and the roofs dry fitted. Come back then and see how this finished up.

