

BUILDING BOOTY CORNER

Part Two: Getting Started with Construction

Sue Osberg sent me some pictures of her build of this structure after reading part one.

Here they are:



There are a lot of other pictures on the internet, and specifically at one of the best resources for model railroaders, Railroad Lines Forum. This website has been around for years, and has a vast archive of building and construction threads. Several are on this building. You can find them at <http://www.railroad-line.com/>. Now to get started.

First, think about a few basic tools. Here are some of the tools I use (most of them, actually, if you assume more sizes of paint brush).



I use Titebond instead of white glue because Titebond is NOT water soluble, and we use some water in weathering. The light ink is in an old candle jar, which has a terrific seal. I wrote the recipe on the label for consistency of wash.

I keep my knives and such in a car kit box that has a piece of mailing tube glued to the back so I can see them easily.

I have a number of preset blades on knife handles – safer than changing all the time. Specifically, I have a regular #11 blade, a saw blade, and a chisel blade, as well as on medium sized blade for heavier cutting. I will show some additional tools as we proceed as necessary.



Remember, **reading the instructions is step one**. Normally, especially if you have not done this sort of thing before, I would recommend following them as written. Later you can decide what order works best for you when constructing a building. In this case, however, as in every building I do, I do make a deviation right at the beginning.

The first thing I do is **prime the metal and window castings**. I do this so they are ready to paint with a final color later. I use a spray can – usually Tamara grey. This gets the job done quickly. Paint dries quickly, but it takes at least overnight to cure. The difference is whether the paint can still absorb what is applied over it. I prefer my castings to be cured, not just dry, so I spray them right away and set them aside. Painting an unarmored casting is asking for trouble.

If you decide to paint the castings, remember to make sure that castings that are part of the structure – windows, doors, parts of walls – need to be consistent across the board. I suggest not painting those right away. I will discuss painting detail castings at a later time.

I **primed the windows with a grey primer from Tamara**, which holds a top coat well. I used a brown from the same company for the metal castings, since some of the most prominent are wood.

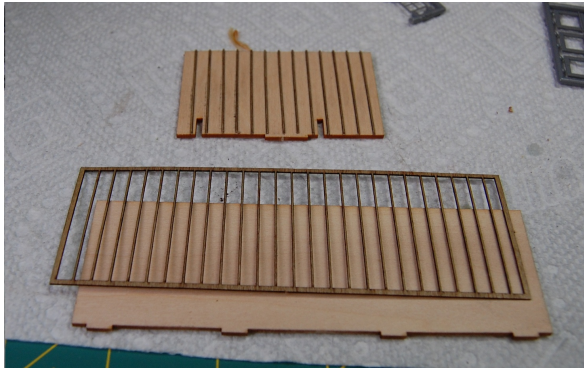
Speaking of castings, there are forty separate metal castings in this kit. Some had “tails” from the molding process, but they are easily removed. I like to file the bottoms of castings to flat with a coarse emery board to ensure there are no gaps when the castings are placed. This only takes a minute but does wonders for the credibility of the completed project. First, a picture of the unpainted castings on the next page.

The castings, like in most kits, consist of three types -- those that are integral to the specific structure (such as the fruit bins for the front of the store); castings that are part of the structure (chimneys, vents, etc.); and castings that add to the ambiance of the scene -- barrels, crates, pallets, etc.). As you go along and accumulate castings from different sources,

do not be afraid to “swap out” the second and third types with castings from other sources. That will help make your building more distinctive.



Going back to the instructions, I built three first floor walls using a unique board and batten siding technique. Prototype board and batten consists of wide planks butted along the long edge with another, thinner piece of wood (the batten) nailed over the joint to ensure weather tightness.



Taking full advantage of the laser cutter capabilities, Bar Mills uses a two step process -- a **blank wall underneath, and a veneer overlay that carries the battens in place until placed on the under wall.** This can be a little confusing at first -- as the photo at left demonstrates, the battens are attached to an exterior frame, the entire unit is placed on the under wall, and then the outside carrier pieces are removed.

This is a complex process, but not difficult. The result is a sharper feel to the siding than can be achieved through traditional use of milled siding. In fact, **the battens were so sharp I decided to use Valejo green paint to cover the lower walls.** This paint, which I generally use for figure painting and castings, has a much finer pigment than regular acrylic craft paint. Make sure you get the sides of the battens painted as well as the front. Valejo is available on line, at some craft stores, and at hobby shops that specialize in war gaming.

I got enthusiastic and built up the commercial door that is on the street side. There are three layers, all laser cut, which allows you to get a sharp distinction between the different layers. I like to paint these in mildly contrasting colors so that the detail is clear. Here is a picture of the door, after three layers (all different colors) have been applied. I kept the bottom one on the carrier sheet to ensure that it is square and to

guard against warping.



Don't worry about the shiny part, it is just paint not fully dried. This will get some level of ink wash and a dusting of weathering powder later.

Priming the castings, building and painting the three lower wall pieces and doing the door took just over an hour.

In my next session, running again about an hour, I painted the rest of the first floor walls and assembled the windows. The front store windows are overlays, like the freight door. They have tabs on them that fit into the slots on the precut base/sidewalk piece.

I painted and weathered the sidewalk, using Floquil Concrete and a dusting of Pan Pastel colors, mostly grey.

So I have spent well under three hours – the equivalent of one good evening of work, or part of a weekend afternoon – and have the walls ready for the first floor. The first floor could be pretty much finished at this point, but before continuing I am going to create a quick interior and set up lighting for it. That will be the subject of next month's installment.