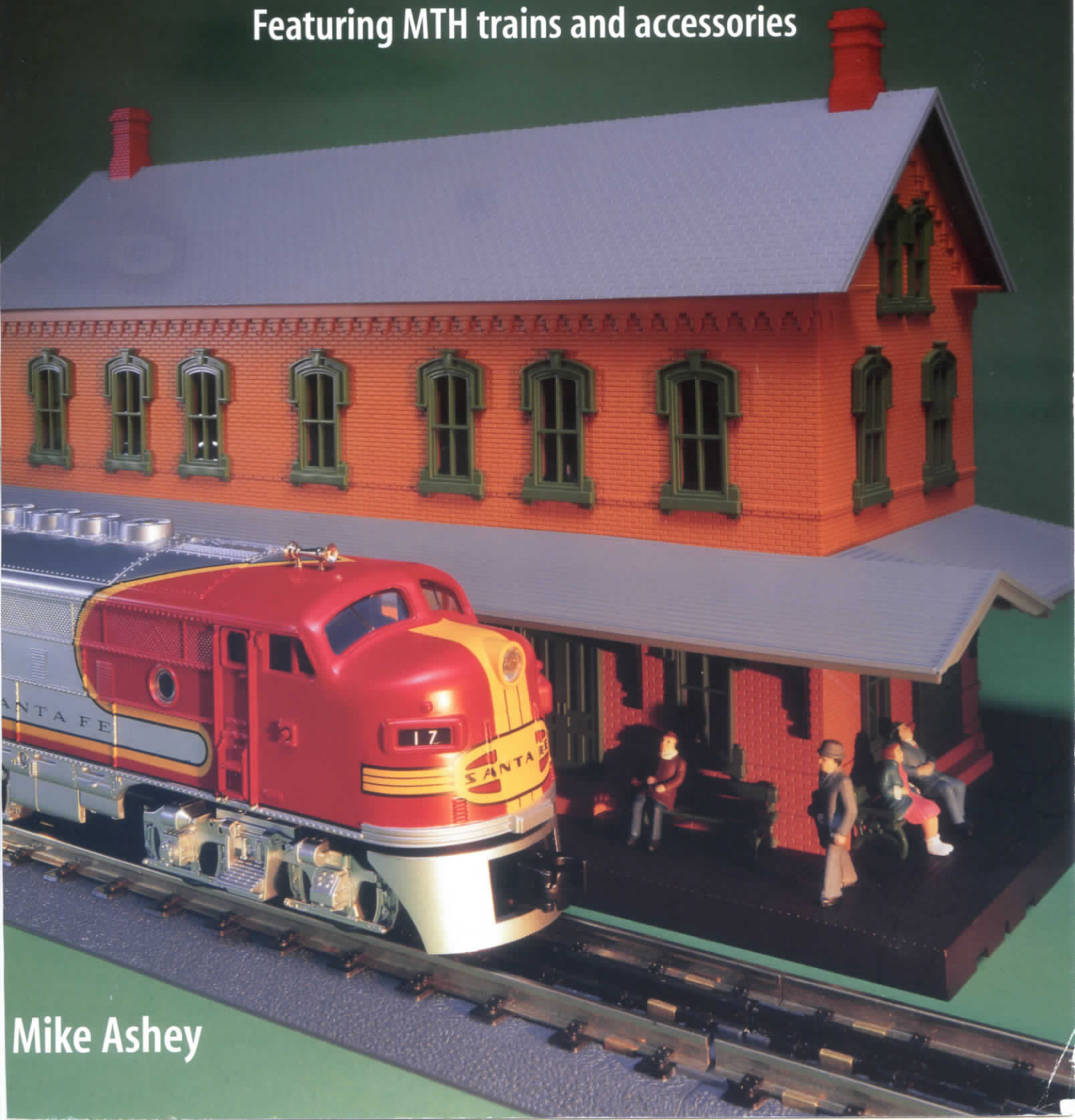


MIKE ASHEY
PRODUCTIONS

Your First 0 GAUGE LAYOUT

Featuring MTH trains and accessories



Mike Ashey

About the Author



Mike Ashley lives in Tallahassee, Florida, with his wife Kelly and their two sons, Thomas and Gregory, both of whom played prominent roles in building this layout. Mike's primary hobby interest is plastic models. In fact, he has authored five books on the subject for Kalmbach Publishing Co.: *Basics of Ship Modeling, Building and Detailing Scale Model Ships, Modeling Realistic Tanks and Artillery, Detailing Scale Model Aircraft, and Model Aircraft Tips and Techniques*.

Since Mike is an accomplished author and photographer (though not a toy train enthusiast), and the father of train-loving boys, he seemed the perfect candidate to write a book on the basics of building a toy train layout.

Mike enjoys writing, scuba diving, flying, staying in shape, and fatherhood. He has an undergraduate degree in Ocean Engineering. He spent four years in the U.S. Marines and worked for the Department of the Navy as a senior engineer and project manager, and as a technical advisor for the Navy's elite SEAL combat force. Presently, Mike is involved in environmental protection and is the Assistant Director for the Division of State Lands for Florida's Department of Environmental Protection.

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DEDICATION:

TO MY SONS THOMAS AND GREGORY

Printed in the United State of America

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Foreword

Like so many other adults who remember their childhood experiences with Lionel and American Flyer electric trains, I wanted to re-create those great memories for my two sons. I also wanted to rekindle the excitement within myself that I once felt as a child—there is something special about building an O gauge layout and watching a steam locomotive chug down the track puffing smoke.

As I started looking into the world of O gauge electric trains after being away for many years, the first thing I noticed was that much has changed: there are new manufacturers, new ideas, and new products. Information on the latest developments was available here and there, yet I was unable to locate a single reference that could explain the basics. I was lacking a resource that could remove the gray cloud of confusion and get me going on setting up a decent layout, complete with scenery, with minimal effort.

Having written several scale modeling books, I found it a natural leap to write a beginner's book for O gauge railroaders and parents who want to introduce their children to the exciting world of O gauge electric trains. I have packed as much information as I could into this book; much of it is in the pictures themselves. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and I think you'll agree that looking at a picture greatly enhances a written explanation. With pictures you readily see how to use basic carpentry skills to build a sturdy train board, use good wiring techniques for the minimal amount of wiring you will have to do for track and accessories, or build a hill or mountain.

As I started learning more about the manufacturers of O gauge trains, I was impressed with the products of relative newcomer M.T.H. Electric Trains. They have truly taken O gauge railroading into the 21st century by designing their trains for "plug-and-play" use. All their products are designed to draw power directly from the track. What this means is that all you have to do is snap their track together, plug in accessory sensors and accessories, turn on the transformer, and away you go. With MTH's new track design you can even run the trains on carpet. In a minimal amount of time you and your children will be running trains and getting inspiration for expanding your layout.

I have distilled all the knowledge, skills, and techniques necessary to understand O gauge railroading, build a train board, lay out track and wire it along with accessories, and add scenery. All these things are conveyed through brief introductory text followed by step-by-step pictures and captions.

Letting your children participate in creating a layout teaches them organizational skills, planning and implementation techniques, basic carpentry and electrical wiring, and analytical thinking through problem solving. It will also fire their imaginations and expand the boundaries of their creativity. But best of all, it will be fun today and tomorrow.

I think I have accomplished what I set out to achieve. Have fun O gauge railroading, spend quality time with your children, and most of all, keep it all in perspective!

Mike Ashley

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