



The Yardmaster

Southwestern Michigan Division



December 2024



This photo is the Pere Marquette Steam Engine # 1225, from the Steam Railroading Institute.

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Non-Train Related Holidays & Special Events – December 2024

Pearl Harbor Day	12/7
1st Day of Winter	12/21
Christmas	12/25
New Year's Eve	12/31



Editor's Comments

This is the final Yardmaster edition for 2024. I hope you enjoy each edition and find them both entertaining and informative. Your feedback is important to the long-term success of our Newsletter. I always appreciate any comments and ideas from our readers.

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Upcoming Division Nine Membership Meetings & Events:

Meetings & Events	Date	Location	Presenter & Topic
Membership Meeting	December 21 st 9:30AM	Kalamazoo Bridge Club	Rich Mahaney – Clinic on "Old Era Equipment"
Board Meeting	January 5 th 7:00 PM	TBD	
Membership Meeting	January 18 th 9:30 AM	Kalamazoo Bridge Club	Ryan Yanez - General Manager, will be speaking on the Grand Elk Railroad
Membership Meeting	February 15 th 9:30 AM	Kalamazoo Bridge Club	MMR Dan Lewis - "Getting the Most Out of DPM Kits"
Membership Meeting	March 15 th 9:30 AM?	Kalamazoo Model RR Club	Clinic with information, training and demonstrations involving model railroad layout building.
Board Meeting	April 6 th - 7:00 PM	TBD	
Membership Meeting	April 19 th 9:30 AM	Kalamazoo Bridge Club	Presentation by Doug Harding – Topic TBD
Membership Meeting	May 17 th	Mid-Michigan Railroad Facilities in Turkeyville, Mi.	
Membership Meeting	June 21 st	TBD	TBD
Board Meeting	July 6?	TBD	TBD

December 21st Membership Meeting Overview

Location: Kalamazoo Bridge Club – 648 Maple Drive, Kalamazoo, Mi.

Business meeting starts at 9:30 AM

Clinic Details:

Presenter: Rich Mahaney

Topic: "What to Do With "Old Era" Railroad Equipment On Your Layout?"

This presentation will give model railroaders some ideas on what to do with "old era" railroad equipment. "Old era" railroad equipment becomes available if you decide to change railroad time periods (1940's to 2007 as example), equipment that crashes to the floor, cheap plastic cars purchased years ago that are replaced with the high-quality cars of today, railroad equipment interest changes, etc. These are all real examples.

Four example photos to go with the above description are attached.



After you see Rich's clinic presentation on "Old Era Equipment", ask the question - what could you do with some of this used equipment from a train show?



Upcoming Membership Meeting Information

January 18th - We will be meeting at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club located at 648 Maple Hill Drive. After our normal business meeting, there will be an update on the Grand Elk Railroad by Mr. Ryan Yanez - General Manager. We will have a zoom link available for anyone unable to attend in-person.

February 15th - We will be meeting at the Kalamazoo Bridge Club. After our normal business meeting, there will be a presentation by MMR Dan Lewis on "Getting the Most Out of Your DPM Kits". We will have a zoom link available for anyone unable to attend in-person. There is more information available in the Yardmaster November edition.

March 16th Membership Meeting – Kalamazoo Historical Model Railroad Club

The Club is located at [9336 Riverview Drive Kalamazoo, MI 49004](#).

There will be no business meeting or zoom link for this event. Details of this session are still being worked out, the preliminary plan is that this meeting will focus on track issues, electrical wiring and signaling, with presentations by members of Division 9 and the Kalamazoo Historical Model Railroad Club.

Links to their website and a map are displayed below.

[Kalamazoo Model Railroad Historical Society 501\(c\)\(3\) – Model train club in Kalamazoo, MI](#)

[Kalamazoo Model Railroad - Google Maps](#)

April Membership Meeting – Kalamazoo Bridge Club

The plan for April is to have a clinic by Doug Harding. More details will become available in the next couple of months.

May Membership Meeting – Mid-Michigan Railroad Facilities in Turkeyville, Mi.

Watch for more details in future issues.

The National Model Railroad Association will hold the 2025 National Convention in Novi, Mi.

NATIONAL MODEL RAILROAD ASSOCIATION
2025 National Convention

STATION No. VI

Hosted by:
the NORTH CENTRAL REGION

July 14-19, 2025

Open to ALL model railroaders! You do not have to be an NMRA member to attend! **REGISTRATION IS OPEN!!**

Our location – Sheraton Detroit-Novi, MI
A suburban location with FREE parking!

CONVENTION GOALS and HIGHLIGHTS -
Our main objectives are to provide events of value, items attendees will see as worth their money, all at the lowest possible cost. ** We will honor the traditions of past conventions but at lower cost and with greater flexibility. ** This convention will be shorter, starting at 1 PM on Monday and continuing through Saturday afternoon with a banquet Saturday evening. ** Note that registration includes all layout visits and operating sessions, and all activities at the hotel except Modeling with the Masters, and admittance to the National Train Show. ** We will support all the traditional activities of the SIG's. ** The National Contest will be fully supported. The contest will be in a prominent room and will be run by the National Contest team. There will be space for model displays, modular layouts and other functions. Those putting their models on display will have the option of entering the People's Choice Contest. ** We will have several prototype tours which may include a Ford plant tour and a cruise on the Detroit River with an emphasis on the industrial aspects of the waterfront. ** We expect to have at least 90 clinics. The clinics will be varied, and each will be given twice. ** We expect to have at least 60 layouts open for visit. Most layouts will be at least 900 sq. ft. in size running to over 3,000 sq. ft. in one or more cases. All layout visits and op sessions will be self-guided so you may take your time.

<https://nmra2025.com/>

STATION No. VI

2025 NMRA

Novi, MI

CELEBRATING 90 YEARS

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

nmra.org



For more information click on the link below:

<https://nmra2025.com>

Upcoming Train Shows

Train Show List

The full list of shows is available here on the brand new website, which allows you to subscribe and submit your events directly. More features will be coming soon!

<https://www.trainshowlist.com>

Given that we are reaching almost 1000 subscribers every other week, please consider making a donation as part of your event's marketing budget. Please visit the Train Show List site and donate via PayPal. Thank you for your support!



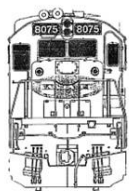
For Sale Items

Do you have an excess inventory of cars, supplies, etc. which are just taking up space and most likely will never be used? You can list these items here and try to sell them, so you can buy more train stuff.



To list your for-sale items here, send your list of items along with a picture if one is available, a description of your item(s) along with your asking price and contact information. If you wish your item(s) to be listed in the upcoming newsletter, you need to submit them along with needed information no later than the 25th of the month.

Send your information to alanwbau@gmail.com.



4th Annual MODEL RAILROAD SALE!

Hosted by Division 6
North Central Region - National Model Railroad Association



SATURDAY – JANUARY 25, 2025

10am - 3pm



2142 Community Center

7526 Grand River Ave, Brighton, MI 48114

**NEW Location!!
MORE Tables!!**

189 Tables of model railroad items - ALL scales!
Door Prizes Awarded every 45 minutes! (must be present to win)
Food available – FREE parking

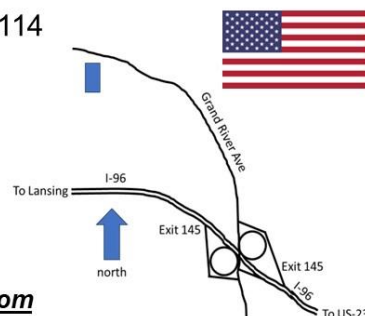
Admission –

\$5 per person over 18 years old (spouses/children under 18 = FREE!)

\$10 per person Early Bird entry at 9am

VETERANS AND ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE MEMBERS FREE (WITH ID)

Information – **Barry 734-649-3056 (6pm-9pm)** div6trainshow@gmail.com



4th Annual MODEL RAILROAD SALE!

Hosted by Division 6
North Central Region - National Model Railroad Association

SATURDAY – JANUARY 25, 2025
10am - 3pm

2142 Community Center

7526 Grand River Ave, Brighton, MI 48114

VENDOR INFORMATION..... HELLO!! Welcome to the 3rd Annual MODEL RAILROAD SALE, hosted by Division 6 of the NCR/NMRA.

Here is the info you need to be a vendor at our event.....

- * Vendor tables are \$25 each. Tables size is 30" x 8' long. There is no limit to how many tables you can buy. **We now have 189 tables!!**
- * Tables are assigned locations on a first registered-first get system. Please note any special requests below and we will do our best to accommodate you.
- * Set-up will start at 7:15am on Saturday, January 25, 2025.
- * All vendors will sell from behind your table.
- * There will be one chair per table. Extra chairs may be available.
- * There will be FREE donuts and coffee for vendors only, from 7:30am-9:30am
- * We are doing an Early-Bird sale at 9am-10am for the public. You are free to sell at that time, or not. Doors open to the rest of the public at 10am-3pm.
- * **NEW!!!** – Vendors are **NOT** allowed to have **ANY** food at their tables!! Food must be consumed at tables just off to the side of the sales area. Water is OK. This new policy will be **STRICTLY** enforced. Violation will result in not being allowed to return to this event!!
- * You are still allowed to bring your own food, but you **CANNOT** eat at your table!!!
- * There is a café/deli on the upper floor of the building for food purchases.
- * Cancellations for table fee refunds must be given by Wednesday, January 15, 2025. No refunds if notified after that date, unless we can resell your tables.

Please send this form with your payment, check or US Postal money order.

Make out to – **DIV 6 NCR NMRA** Send to – **Div 6 Model Railroad Sale 43642 Lotus Dr Canton, MI 48188**

EXHIBITOR AGREEMENT – Vendors will be responsible for any injuries or loss to themselves or their property. They expressly release DIVISION 6 and it's members from any liability and agree to indemnify and hold DIVISION 6 and it's members harmless. Signing this agreement means you have read all of the facts above and agree to them. If for any reason the SALE is cancelled, refunds will be issued asap.

Electricity yes ☐ no ☐

SIGNED- _____ Date _____

Name/Company _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

SPECIAL REQUESTS

Rich's Travels

Pictures & text provided by Rich Mahaney

Pictured below: Who says cabooses are not still used, train sitting north of Mattoon, IL



Pictured below: Engine of the Sand Springs Railway, west of Tulsa, OK.



Pictured below: Shelf couplers that are required on tank cars



2 photos of another working Sand Springs Railway train and engine.



2 photos in Mexico, MO of a tank car facility and car mover.



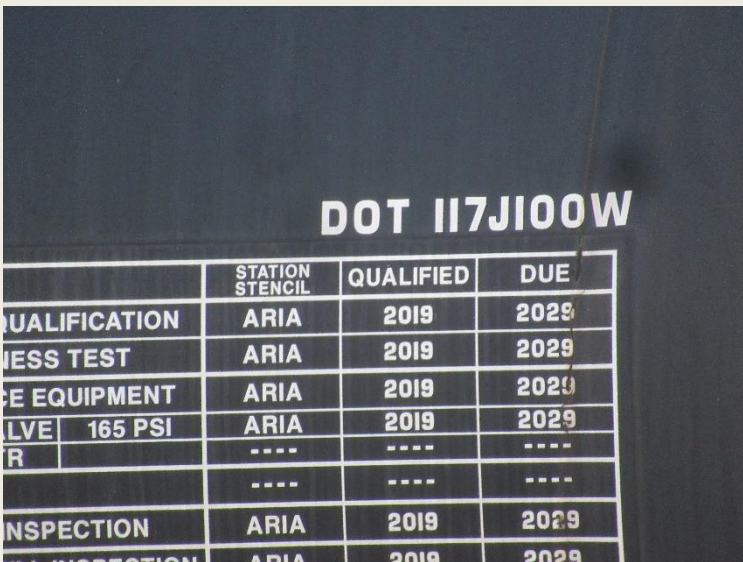
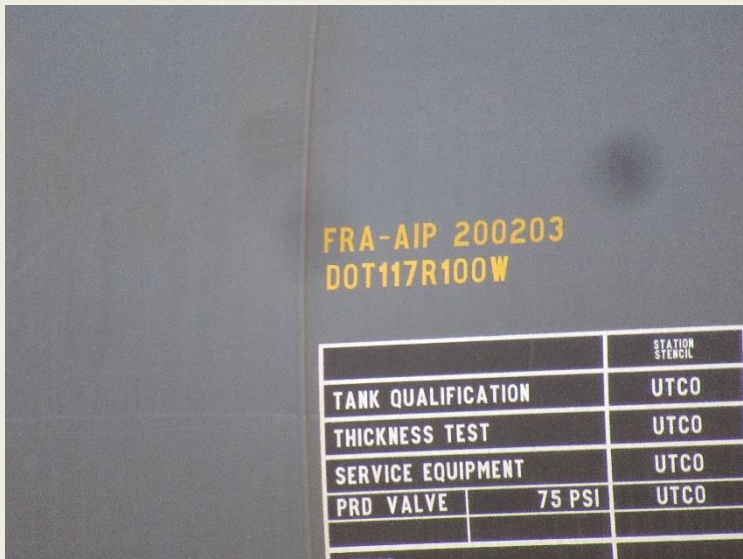
A device to make sure nothing is dragging or hanging out or off railroad cars before they head east and cross the bridge over the Mississippi River by Louisiana, MO on old KC tracks.



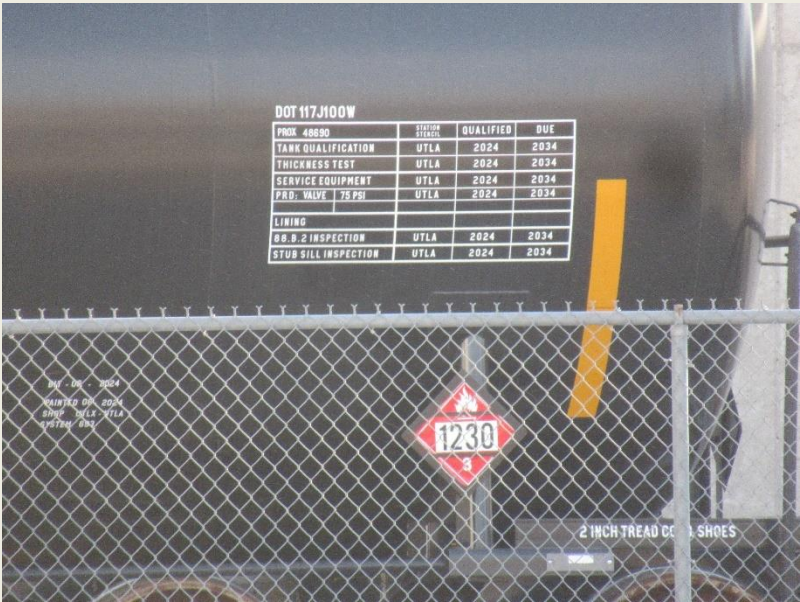
Poet Ethanol Plant at Laddonia, MO. Lots of ethanol filled tank cars and trucks for hauling carbon dioxide away from the plant. CO₂ is a byproduct when making ethanol. It could be hauled away in high pressure tank cars instead trucks.



With the new rules going in effect for "Highly Flammable Liquids" under the "FAST" rules. These liquids must be transported in DOT 117, DOT 117R or DOT 120 tank cars. So I saw a number of these cars in use.



Another couple of photos from the Bio Diesel facility in Mexico, MO. Another DOT 117 tank car, transporting UN 1230 product - methanol.



- Tank car facilities. They make bio diesel.
- Tank car is a AAR 211 spec car. No placard yet.
- Train tracks in downtown Mexico, MO. These are tracks for NS, CPKS and the Ozark Valley Railroad.



Caught this group of NS engines passing the old Lawton, MI train station today on a west bound trip.



Action and sights on Nov. 25th at the West Michigan Railroad Transload Facility east of Hartford, Mi.

There were a number of people working today at the WMR Transload Facility and a number of cars in use. Engines being used.



Two groups of tank cars for recycling liquids.

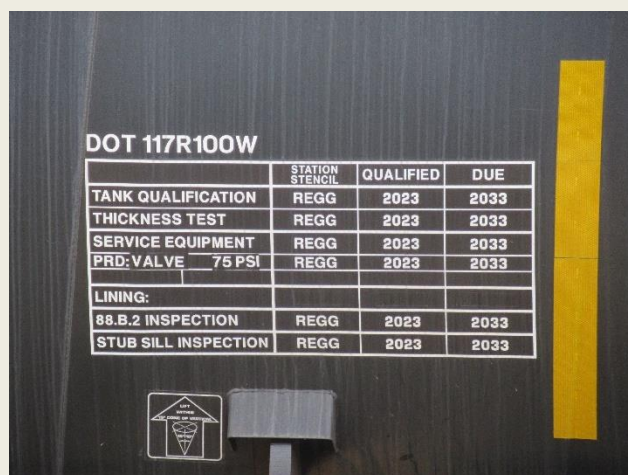


Work is starting to rebuild the old CNW caboose in Bloomingdale, MI on the Kal Haven Trail.



Was pleased to see some "newer" tank cars in the yard. These are DOT 117R, which means they were originally DOT 111 or DOT 111-CPC1232 tank cars but have been upgraded to the DOT 117 specifications. New bottom outlets, full head shields on the ends, valves on the top in the new protective housing and other stuff to make them stronger during derailments.

The methanol labeled (UN 1230) tank car is an older DOT 111 tank car, under the new F.A.S.T. rules will be requiring this product to be transported in DOT 117, DOT 117R or DOT 120 tank cars instead of DOT 111 tank cars.



This string of tank cars where on a WMR siding in Hartford, MI, placarded for methanol (UN 1230).



This caboose used to be owned by my brother Dave Mahaney (before a wife and kids) and was on the tracks and trains at the Coopersville and Marne Railroad in Coopersville, MI. Since Dave sold it, the caboose was owned by several others, before it ended up being owned by the West Michigan Railroad and finding a home as an office at the Transload Yard.

Also, they have added some equipment to control the snow at their switch off the CSX tracks in Hartford.

Rich Mahaney



Sanborn Maps

Sanborn Maps were used for years by the insurance industry as the "graded" properties for fire insurance consideration. Factors such as construction styles, materials used, height of the buildings, exposures to other hazards in the community, fire sprinkler system protection, security services and other concerns. The concept through the maps were to help give the Underwriters a good look at the property and to help them decide if this property was a good risk to insure or not. Below is information from Wikipedia (and me) on the history of Sanborn Maps.

As model railroaders, we can use Sanborn Maps to look at railroad truck routes in older cities, passenger stations, railroad spurs to industries, railroad yards and engines facilities and other reference points to help build a more accurate layout if you are modeling a specific city. You can look at the photos with this story to see the railroad tracks in some West Michigan cities.

If you are building cities and towns on your model railroad layout between 1900 to 1970 (or earlier - like the late 1800's), Sanborn maps can really help you with building locations, streets, construction materials, where the railroad tracks area, height of buildings, industries and other things in cities. They can really help you if you are trying to model a specific location in a city, industry, railroad tracks and other things.

Sanborn maps are detailed maps of U.S. cities and towns in the 19th and 20th centuries. Originally published by **The Sanborn Map Company** (Sanborn), the maps were created to allow [fire insurance](#) companies to assess their total liability in urbanized areas of the United States. Since they contain detailed information about properties and individual buildings in approximately 12,000 U.S. cities and towns, Sanborn maps are valuable for documenting changes in the [built environment](#) of American cities over many decades.

Sanborn held a monopoly over fire insurance maps for the majority of the 20th century, but the business declined as US insurance companies stopped using maps for underwriting in the 1960s. The last Sanborn fire maps were published on [microfilm](#) in 1977, but old Sanborn maps remain useful for historical research into urban geography. The license for the maps was

acquired by land data company Environmental Data Resources (EDR), and EDR was acquired in 2019 by real estate services company LightBox.

Description

The Sanborn maps themselves are large-scale [lithographed](#) street plans at a scale of 50 feet to one inch (1:600) on 21 by 25 inches (53 by 64 cm) sheets of paper. The maps were published in volumes, bound and then updated until the subsequent volume was produced. Larger cities would be covered by multiple volumes of maps. Between editions of published volumes, map updates were sent out as correction slips. Sanborn employees, called "pasters" or "correctors", would visit subscribers' offices to paste the slips on top of the old maps.

The map volumes contain an enormous amount of information. They are organized as follows: a decorative title page; an index of streets and addresses; a 'specials' index with the names of churches, schools, businesses etc.; and a master index indicating the entirety of the mapped area and the sheet numbers for each large-scale map (usually depicting four to six blocks); and general information such as population, economy and prevailing wind direction.

The maps include outlines of each building and outbuilding; the location of windows and doors; street names; street and sidewalk widths; property boundaries; fire walls; natural features ([rivers](#), [canals](#), etc.); railroad corridors; building use (sometimes even particular room uses); house and block number; as well as the composition of [building materials](#) including the framing, flooring, and roofing materials; the strength of the local fire department; indications of sprinkler systems; locations of [fire hydrants](#); location of water and gas mains; and even the names of most public buildings, churches and businesses.

Unique information includes the location of the homes of prominent individuals, brothels, and more ephemeral buildings including outhouses and stables.

In the late 18th century, insurance companies in London began to create detailed maps to give underwriters the information they needed to assess fire risk. The practice was adopted by American insurance companies in the mid-19th century. Demand for fire insurance mapping grew rapidly after the end of the [Civil War](#). Factors such as the [Homestead Act](#), [railroad](#) construction, the [Second Industrial Revolution](#) and

massive [immigration to the United States](#) all fostered huge population growths, urbanization, and heightened demand for mapping.

[Daniel Alfred Sanborn](#), a civil engineer and surveyor, began working on fire insurance maps in 1866. That year, he was contracted by the [Aetna Insurance Company](#) to prepare maps of areas in [Tennessee](#). About the same time, he developed similar maps of [Boston](#), published as *Insurance Map of Boston*, Volume 1, 1867. Seeing a lucrative market for this type of map, he established the D. A. Sanborn National Insurance Diagram Bureau in New York City to publish the Boston atlas and develop and sell maps of additional areas.

Within several decades, the company became the largest and most successful American map company. This growth came about through savvy management and the buyout of competing firms. In 1889 Sanborn acquired Perris and Browne, an older firm, and can by virtue of this expansion date its origins to 1852. The firm name established by Sanborn in 1867 was changed in 1876 when the firm was incorporated under the name Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, which then became the Sanborn-Perris Map Company, Ltd. until 1902, when the name was shortened to the Sanborn Map Company.

In 1916, Sanborn purchased its last major competitor, the E. Hexamer & Sons of Philadelphia, and became a [monopoly](#). Company headquarters moved to 629 Fifth Avenue in northern [Pelham, New York](#), but there were also regional offices in [San Francisco](#), [Chicago](#), and [Atlanta](#). The Sanborn Company sent out legions of surveyors to map building footprints in all major urbanized areas, along with building details related to fire risk. At its peak in the 1920s, the company employed about 700 people, including about 300 field surveyors and 400 cartographers, printers, managers, salesmen, and support staff. Areas under intensive development were surveyed every six months.

Sanborn's monopoly was resented by some insurance companies for its high cost. The Underwriter's Association of the Pacific complained that an "Eastern monopoly" was giving service that was "very slow, expensive, and generally unsatisfactory." In the 1910s, the National Board of Fire Underwriters investigated the possibility of creating its own maps. However, many insurance companies opposed the proposal, citing the "very large expenditure" required and their satisfaction with Sanborn's "commendably satisfactory" service. Instead, the NBFU Map Committee took an active role in Sanborn's operations. In 1922, Sanborn agreed to add a member of the

Map Committee to its [Board of Directors](#), and a second seat was added by 1927. However, the onset of the [Great Depression](#) greatly curtailed construction activity in the United States. By 1936, Sanborn had reduced its publishing output from 60 to 20 volumes per year, a pace that would take over 50 years to update the entire map collection.^[6]

Decline of insurance business

In the 1950s, insurance companies began to use an alternative form of [underwriting](#) known as *line carding*. Line carding had been used for decades to underwrite properties that were not covered by fire maps. Each insured property was listed on a single card, and no map was kept. Corporate mergers also reduced the need for Sanborn Maps, since the consolidated company only needed to buy one set of maps. As insurance companies increased in size, they could withstand larger disasters and no longer needed to use insurance maps to reduce their concentration of risk. Companies also cited "modern building construction, better [building fire codes](#), and improved fire protection methods for the decline in importance of fire insurance maps.

With the decline of its insurance business, Sanborn could no longer afford to maintain its army of surveyors. However, the company continued to sell its maps and perform some updates. Government sales began to play a larger role, especially the [Census Bureau](#) and municipal planning agencies. Sanborn printed its last catalog in 1950, created its last new map in 1961, and issued its last update in 1977.

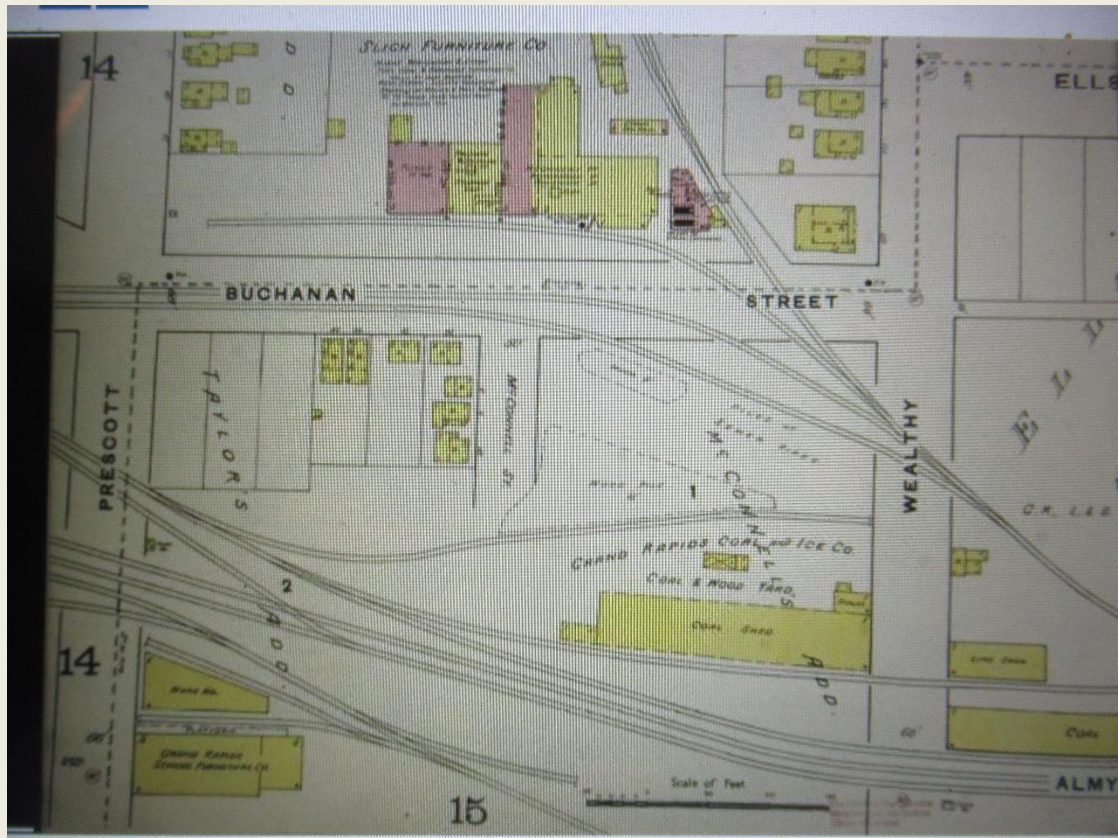
In 1996, the license for the maps was acquired by land data company Environmental Data Resources (EDR). In 2019, EDR was acquired by real estate services company LightBox.

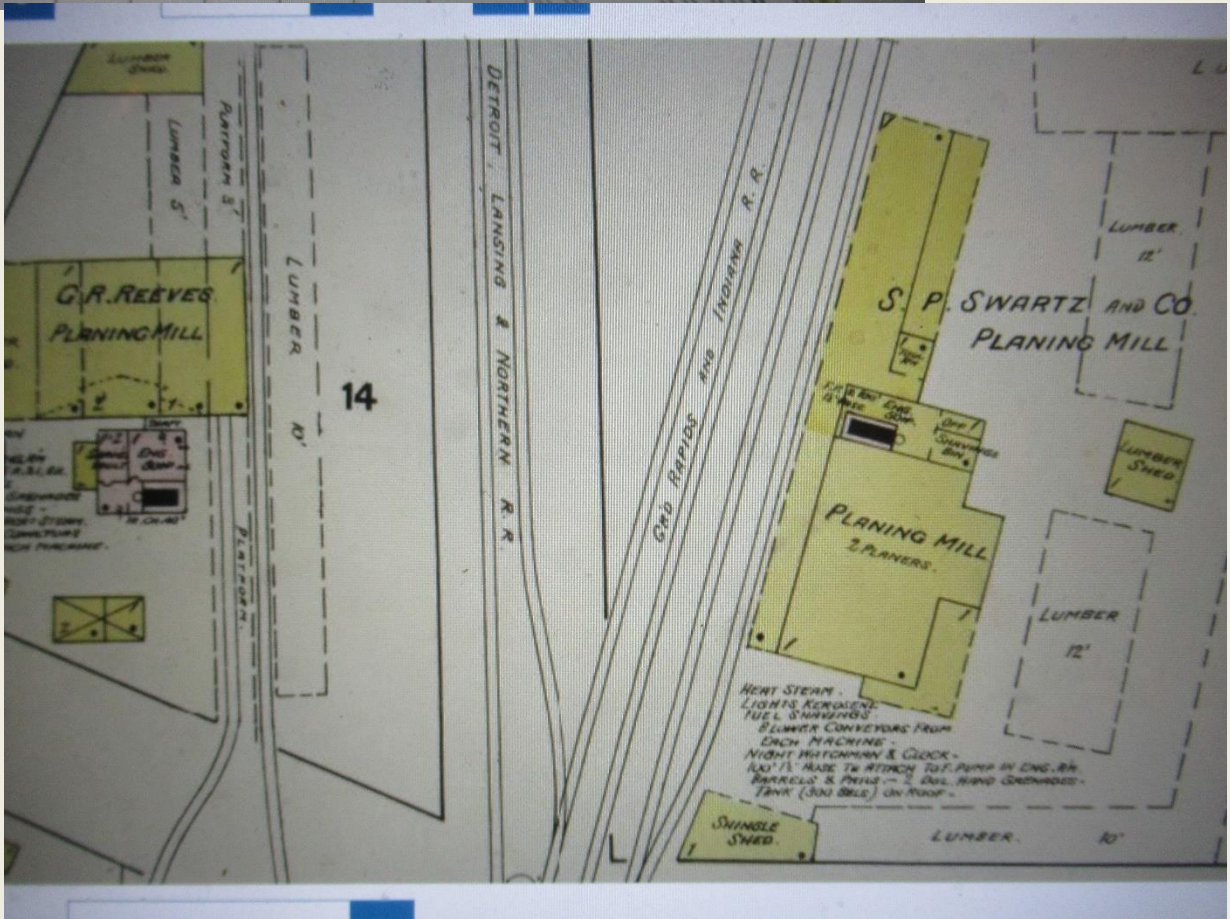
Over time, Sanborn diversified into other mapping activities, and as of 2020 is a geospatial specialist and holder of electronic GIS assets and systems, though the fire insurance business continues as a niche department. Corporate headquarters are in Colorado.

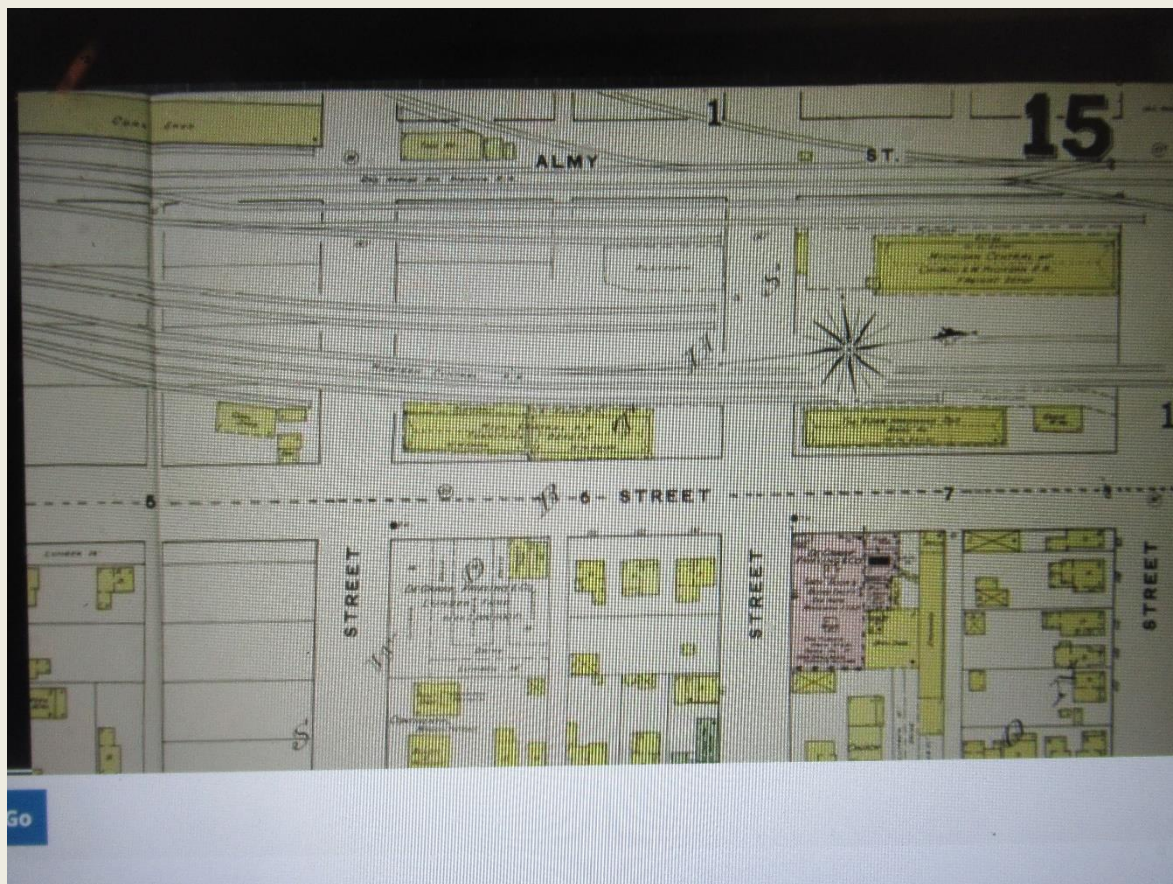
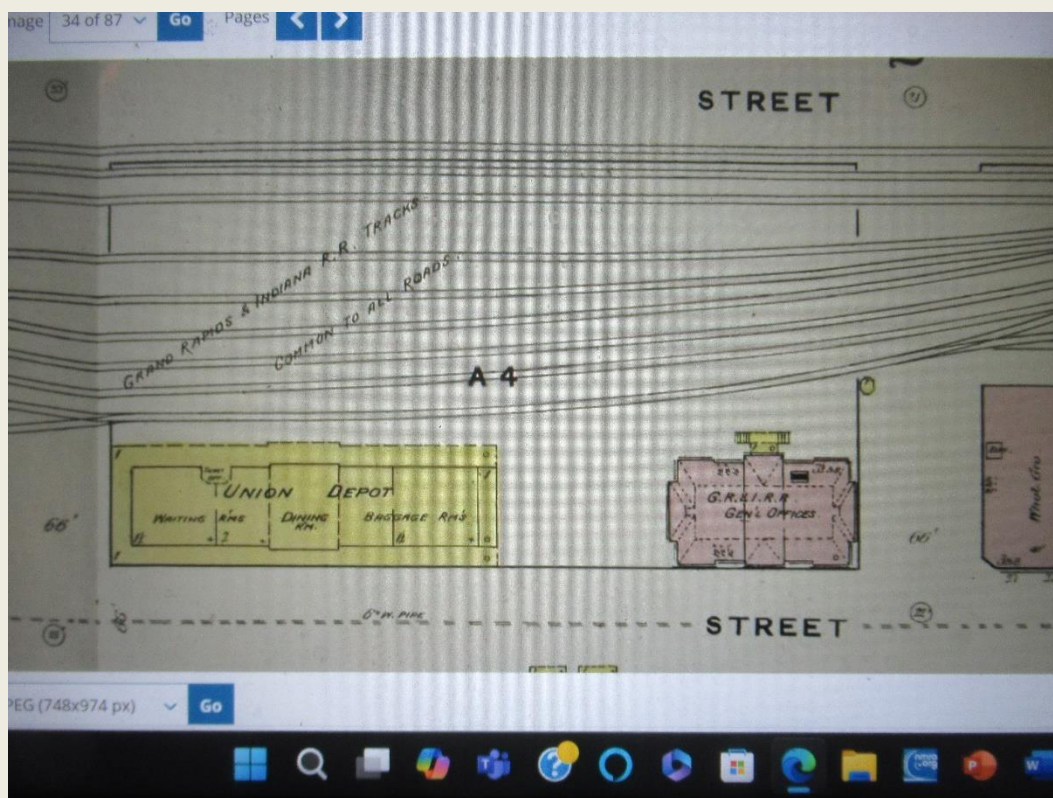
Photos of maps are in the next few pages. Note: Kalamazoo Maps will appear in the January edition.

Rich Mahaney

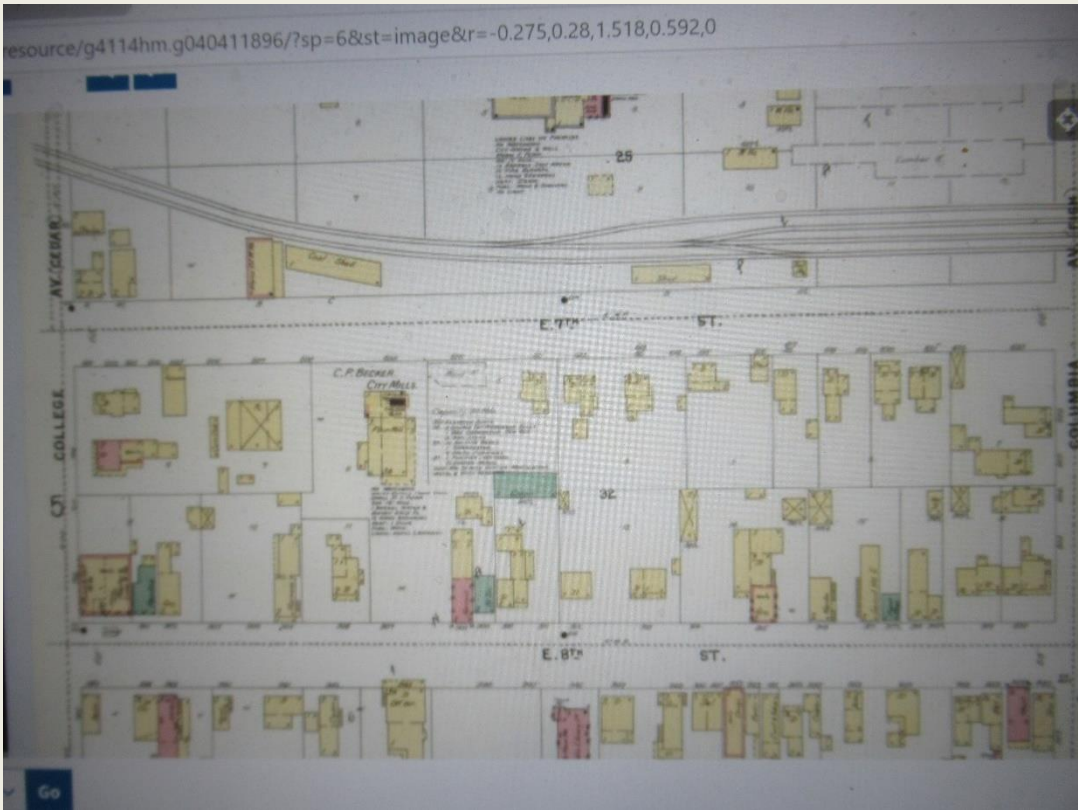
Sanborn Maps – Grand Rapids – Page 1



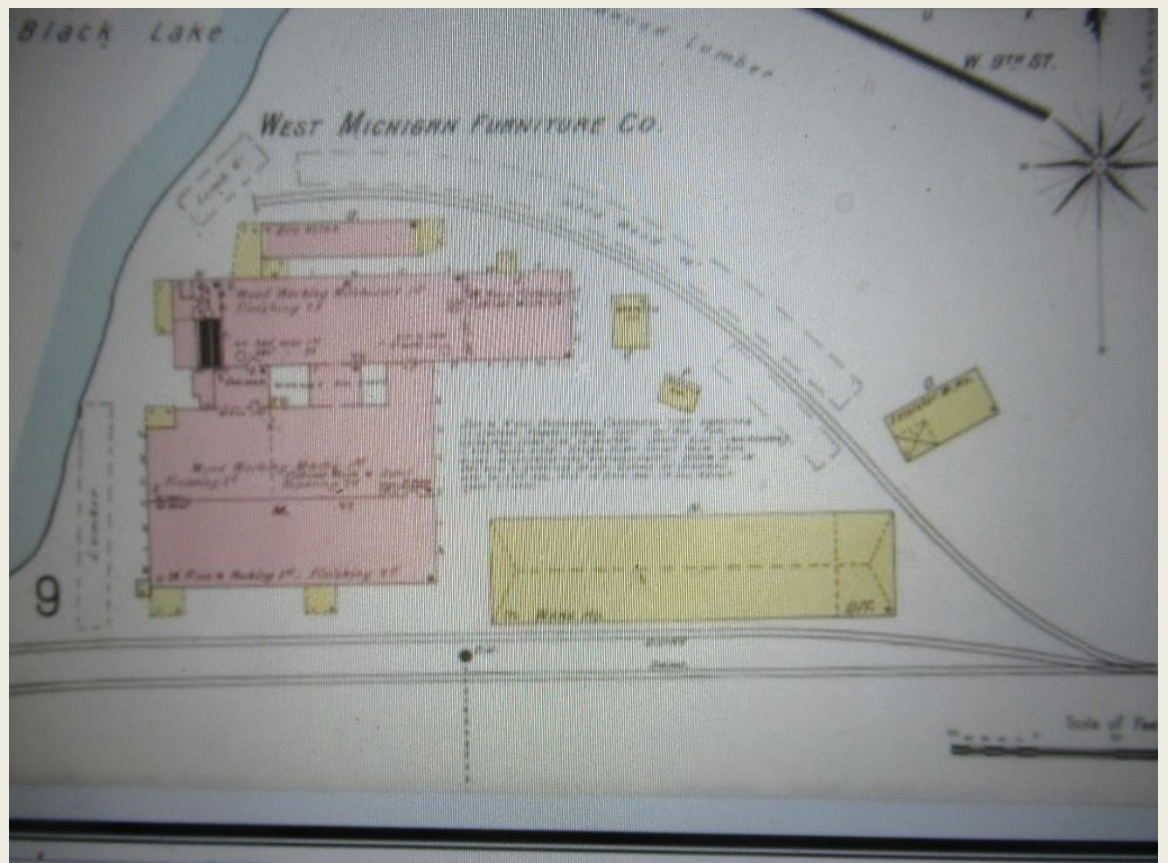
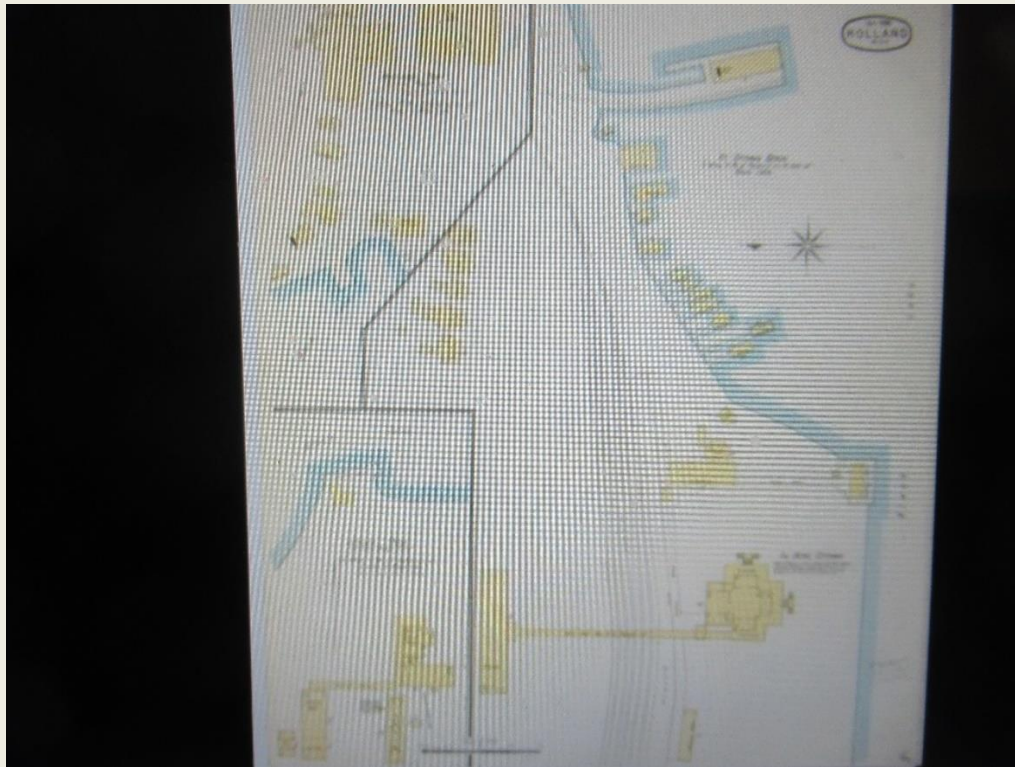




Sanborn Maps – Holland Page 1



Sanborn Maps – Holland Page 2



Alan's Adventures in Model Railroading

There isn't much to tell about my recent modeling efforts. My wife Brenda, had knee replacement surgery in November, which consumed quite a bit of my time. She is doing well as she recovers. Hopefully, there will be more time available after the holidays as the projects are piling up.

Wrap-up

Membership Status - In 2024 our Division 9 membership increased from 36 to 41 members or an increase of 14%. We had a lot of great layout tours, clinics and operating sessions and we hope that 2025 will be even better.

Remember the 2025 NMRA Convention will be held in Novi, Mi. You can access convention information and register by clicking on the link below.

<https://nmra2025.com>

Our next board meeting is scheduled for Sunday January 5th at 7:00 PM. If anyone has anything for the board please contact Alan Bau. All board meetings are open to all members.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a healthy, happy and prosperous new year.

Alan Bau
Divisions 9 Scribe & Newsletter Editor
alanwbau@gmail.com

