



## Victor Shattock An American Gauge '3' Pioneer

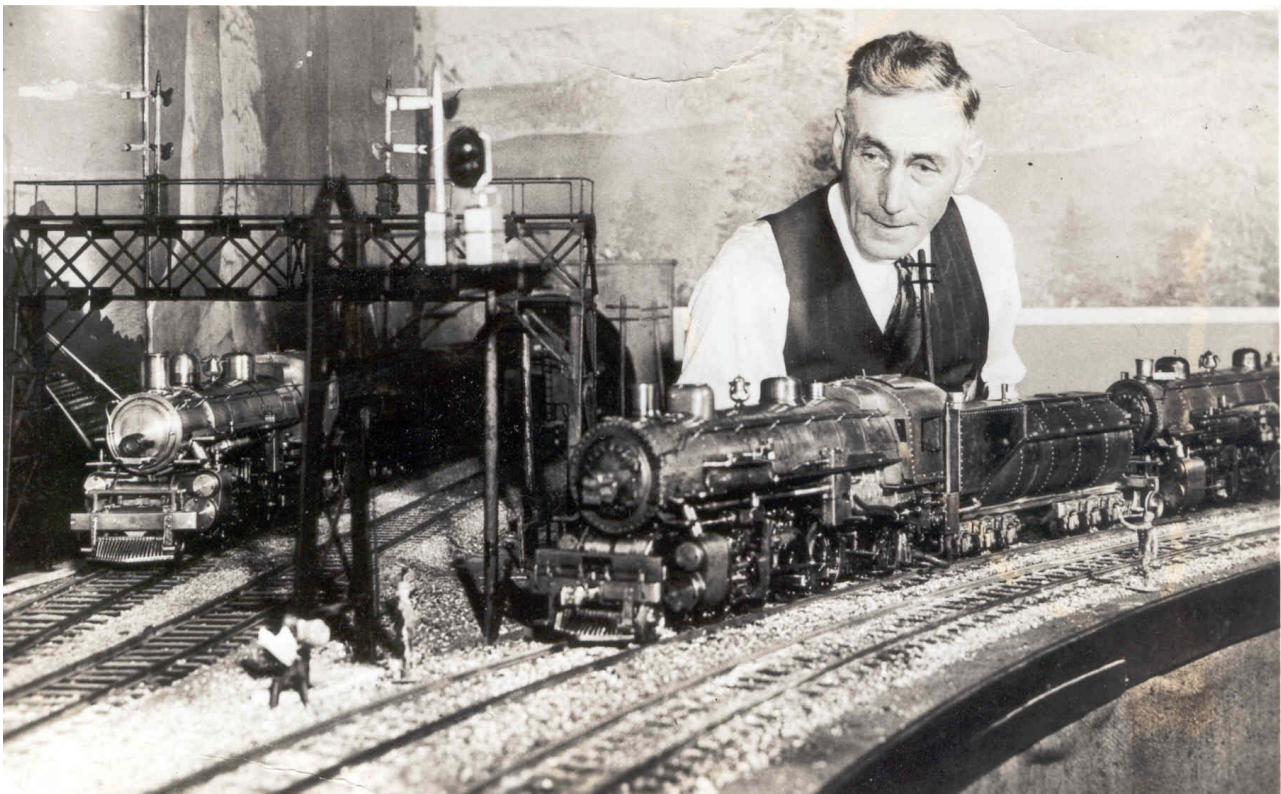
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Victor was born in Culmstock, Devon on December 20, 1886, one of five children of James and Lavinia Shattock. James worked as a stationmaster on the Great Western Railway for some 47 years. His brother Harry (Vic's uncle) was an Inspector on the GWR Exeter Branch. When Vic was still in his teens, he started working in one of the Engineering Offices of the GWR and stayed with them for approximately three years. In September 1906 Victor married Maude Drake, the oldest of eleven children who lived in the Hornsey district of London, England. After they got married, Vic and Maude started their family. Two sons and a daughter were born in England.

Around 1911, the family made the decision to set out for a new life in North America. They decided to settle in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. During those very early years, Vic tried to find whatever time he could to devote to his hobby. He built model steamboats and scale models of stationary traction engines. In 1913 he built his first live steam locomotive model and had it running on a short test track in his backyard. When World War 1 began, he enlisted in the Canadian army, serving in France in a division of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces, known as the 8<sup>th</sup> Railway Troops.

When the war ended Vic came back to his family in Canada but began to hear of greater job opportunities, and possibly a better life, in California. Once there, Vic started working for the Southern Pacific Railroad as a "Water Service Helper" (a glorified name for a "railroad plumber") and was required to travel in an "Outfit Car". During this time Vic built a 2 ½ inch gauge live steam railroad that ran up and down on a piece of track inside the car.

During the thirties Vic moved his residence several times, with each move hoping to find a place where he could build a railroad and have room for a nice workshop. Finally, in 1934, he found a



house in which he could build the railroad empire he had always dreamed about. The house was a two story Victorian, with the living quarters on the second floor and the “basement” space actually on the ground level. The basement was quite large at 32 x 45 feet and with the notable exception of the heating furnace and the laundry tubs, it could be entirely devoted to steam railroading. The track ran all the way round the basement walls, and included an electrically operated model of a 110 foot turntable built to prototype Southern Pacific standards.

By this time Vic had three or four engines, which were fired up near the turntable, adjacent to where the water tank was located. Denatured alcohol was used for fuel, which burned with a terrific heat in a special vaporizing burner of Vic’s own design. A blower was used during the startup procedure, the fumes being directed up the nearby chimney. Once the first engine was fired up a test run was made. If successful, a freight consist was coupled to the engine and running would commence, sometimes single headed and sometimes double headed. These weren’t passenger hauling runs of course, just free running alcohol burning engines.

MODEL RAILROADER author, “Boomer Pete” visited Vic’s layout and wrote about his visit in the January 1939 MR. He wrote that, “All model railroaders are brought up to believe that live steam and model railroading are two distinct hobbies.” And went on to note, “But, I’ve just found out this is not always the case. I put in an evening last month as brakeman on a pike that really ran trains, did switching, included scenery in the layout and was in every way a true model railroad—but the motive power was honest to gosh steam.” In these sentences, Boomer Pete summed up the unique quality of Vic Shattock’s layout.

There were 12 turnouts, including a double-slip switch, all hand-laid with scale **110**-pound rail specially made for Vic by the O scale manufacturer, Lobaugh. There was a working turntable, a five stall roundhouse, a ballasted deck trestle, one steel girder bridge, two signal bridges, one working water column, one working water tank, three tunnels and an automatic block signal system. Rolling stock included 22 scratch-built freight cars and a Harriman Coach. The wood bodies of the freight cars were made from Kraft cheese boxes, and the tanks on the tank cars were old carbon tetrachloride bottles. Vic’s Pacific Fruit Express **refrigerator** cars could keep your sandwiches cold if you dropped ice cubes through the working ice hatches.

The motive power was all scratch-built by Vic. The locomotives averaged about 42 inches in length, and weighed from 70 to 80 pounds each. All were highly detailed scale models, had axle-driven water pumps, mechanical lubricators, and ran on 85 to 100 pounds of pressure.