

A PUBLICATION OF THE IVES TRAIN SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 2007



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IVES "2 ¼ Inch Gauge"

1921 – 1928

by John DeSantis 75-7885

(Used with permission of the Train Collectors Quarterly)

The IVES Manufacturing Corporation of Bridgeport, Connecticut was one of the grand old masters of the American toy business. Founded in 1868 by Edward Ives, the company had produced hundreds of innovative toys in the last decades of the 19th century. From simple iron cap balls and floor toys to elaborate automatons and mechanical animals, IVES was widely sold and well regarded as a premium product.

After a devastating factory fire in 1900 destroyed everything, including hundreds of casting molds, the firm concentrated most heavily in cast iron horse-drawn wagons and toy trains, both floor toys and wind-up mechanicals. From the beginnings on 0 Gauge track, they expanded in 1904 into mechanical #1 gauge with 1 7/8 inches from railhead to railhead. In 1912 the #1 gauge line added electrically powered locomotives.

For 1921, Harry Ives (son of Edward) changed his #1 gauge locos, rolling stock, and track to 2 ¼ inches from railhead to railhead. Although IVES couldn't use the phrase "Standard Gauge", Lionel now had a well established and knowledgeable competitor at the top of the toy train market.

IVES Standard Gauge electric outline locomotives are distinguished by heavy cast iron frames with stamped and soldered cab bodies. Steam locomotives featured heavy metal castings. Passenger and freight cars are elaborately soldered constructions, often with fair amounts of hand painted detailing. Rubber stamped lettering gives way in 1925 to inserted brass plates.

In 1924, IVES scored the toy train coup of the prewar era, the three position automatic sequence reverse. Ads screamed "Automatic Electric Reversing Trains!" and buyers lined up to buy a feature that only IVES could offer. *Continued On Page 2*

IVES "2 1/4 Inch Gauge" 1921 -1928 continued...

Harry Ives had agreed to an exclusive license with the patent holders, H.P. Sparks and B.A. Smith of the Westinghouse Electric Corporation in Pittsburgh.

Although IVES trains were innovative and substantially more realistic than those of their competitors, their production costs were also substantially higher. By 1926, the company was losing money and accumulating debt, culminating in bankruptcy in July 1928.

IVES Transition (Occupation) Period 1928 - 1932

After a convoluted reorganization, IVES emerged under the joint ownership of Lionel and American Flyer. Harry Ives was gone and so was the laboriously assembled and costly IVES rolling stock. In its place came first the passenger and freight cars of American Flyer, painted in strikingly new colors and labeled for IVES.

After 1929, the partnership of Lionel and American Flyer dissolved. Lionel assumed full control, and it was now Lionel cars in bright new colors that wore the IVES name. Lionel kept the IVES line alive through 1932, and then discontinued it.

This unique triangle of competing companies even produced some cars and accessories which boast major components from all three firms on the same piece. Unwittingly, the "Transition Period" (some IVES fans insist on the word "Occupation"!) created many of the most beautiful and sought-after trains ever produced in America. Most are also exceedingly rare; a result of low production across very short periods of time.



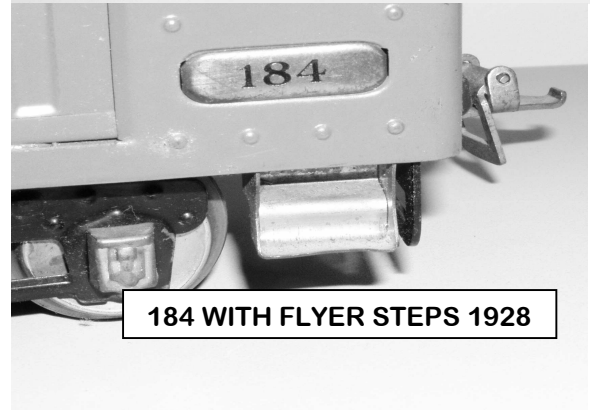
3242 WINDOW PANES 1928



186 WITH LIONEL RAILING 1928



20-192 WITH FLYER BODY 1929



184 WITH FLYER STEPS 1928

The Conductor's Call

Dear Fellow Society Member:

I am sorry to report that in May 2007 our beloved "TRACKS" editor Alan Siff died. We will miss him. His interesting life story is included in this issue on pages 4 and 5.

Marty Fasack, a member of our Board of Directors, has agreed to become the "TRACKS" editor. Thank you Marty.

September is here already. I hope you all had an enjoyable summer. As you will note we have made some dramatic changes to the "TRACKS" publication. We have changed the design and are working hard to improve on the content. As with any change it can only be successful with your help and participation.

There is a new interview format that is premiering in this issue. As cost permits we will try to keep it as a color insert. We think you will enjoy this exciting new addition. As Marty mentions, we will do all the work for you. All you need to do is participate.

The summer was slow as it relates to Ives trains or just trains in general. I can't think of any highlights on which to report.

October York is a few short weeks away. April seems like it was just yesterday. As always, we will hold our Friday afternoon educational session at 1 PM. Please plan to join us. This is a great opportunity to discuss our new feature with Marty. If you have a scarce piece maybe Marty can even do the interview that day. In any event we look forward to seeing you there.

York bound,

Don Lewis

Ives Toys Make Happy Boys

By James D. Fuller

Forward by Rod Cornell

When I first purchased this boxed set I was aware that there were several pages of hand written text in the set box but I did not read the text for several months. The seller, a collector who had advertised for old toy trains, as many of us did, had mentioned to me that there was an interesting story written by the original owner. I wish I had read the story immediately so I could have met the author. As it turns out he passed away before I read it and could seek him out.

It is a story that brings to life the joy a little boy from the cold Midwest felt when he got his most memorable Christmas gift. The same joy many of us have felt when we got our first trains as youngsters. It's the same joy which keeps us devoted to our hobby of train collecting. But most of all, it is a Christmas Story.

The Story

I had arrived home from school that afternoon, a few days before Christmas and found the door locked. Mama always left a key hanging in our secret place in the shed, if she had to go out and I knew where to look for it. I let myself in and had just changed from my school clothes into my play clothes (we never went out to play after school in our school clothes for fear of soiling or tearing them) when the rear doorbell rang. I answered it to find a deliveryman with a huge box in his arms looking down at me.

"I have a package from Gimbels for Fuller", he said.

"That's us", I replied and turning led him through the hall into the kitchen. The box was too big for me to carry.

He laid it on the floor and with a "good bye" turned and left the house. After making sure the outside door was closed tight (you never left an outside door ajar when the weather was cold), I returned to the kitchen.

Looking down at the box, I puzzled over it. The printing said "tires" and included the name of tire company. That's strange, I thought, we don't have a car. My curiosity got the best of me and I untied the cord holding the cardboard in place. Moving the top piece of cardboard revealed a box with a picture on it. It was that of a boy playing with an electric train and I read the caption "Ives Toy Make Happy Boys." *Continued on page.... 6*

Ives Toys Make Happy Boys - continued from page...3

My heart pounded and I was almost breathless as mentally I said, "it's a train I'm getting a train."

I had tasted of forbidden fruit and realized that I should have never untied the cord or removed the cardboard covering. Now everything would be spoiled and I would get a scolding or licking. This was supposed to be a Christmas surprise! Carefully I restored the box covering and cord to its original condition, tying the cord just the way it had been.

"There now it's just the way it was and I'll not let anyone know I opened it or knew what was in it," I thought. I slid the box into a corner of the kitchen, again determining that it had an undisturbed appearance. Mama would never know!

I put on my coat, hurriedly grabbed some of the homemade cookies in the cookie box and left the house, locking the door and putting the key back in our hiding place. I was flying high – head in the clouds – my heart fairly bursting with pure joy – I was getting a train, my train; just what I had wanted. I had even pointed out to Mama, that time we were in the department store, the kind of a train I'd like. A big one – not one of those other little ones – the kind you had to windup.

I wonder what kind it is; I thought; "I'll bet it's a big blue one. Kind of like the one we looked at."

Later, playing with my friends, I didn't say anything about what I had seen. I didn't want anyone to know what I had learned that might spoil the whole Christmas – and I kept the secret!

When I returned home, in time for supper, the box was nowhere to be seen in the kitchen. "Mama, the man from Gimbel's left a package while you were gone", I said. "I know, I put it away" she replied. And the subject was closed.

That Christmas was one of the most memorable that I could remember. It was 1927 and I was in the third grade. Boy, how I played with that train. Speeding it up, slowing it down, it even went in reverse. The soldiers rode on it and guarded the station and the tunnel. The only thing was, on Christmas Day, with the train going around the tree, which as usual was set up in our parlor, everyone else wanted to run it. My dad, my brother Harold and his friend Jerry Holtz. All were running it until I complained long and loud. It was my train and I wanted to run it.

Over the years, my train meant more to me than just a toy. There were times I would set it up and play with it by the hour. Then there were times

when, stored away in its box, I never looked at it for months at a time. But it was always there – my gift from Mother.

Our family didn't know we were poor because we were like everyone else. We had little in material things but had such a wonderful family relationship. There was much love. There was much discipline. There was much reliance on one another. There was much respect. There was struggle.

The center of the family was mama. It seemed she did everything. Papa worked everyday at the Milwaukee Railroad. It felt as if he was always working – coming home dirty with his lunchbox in his coat pocket (it was a type which could be folded up flat when empty). He was a boilermaker and almost always talked about his work at the roundhouse during our evening meal. Early in life I knew what a stay bolt was and a crown sheet and rivets and flues. Mama did work that people paid her for doing she would wash and stretch curtains for people and she put the curtain stretcher up in our parlor. Sometimes I would help her slip the curtain over the numberless sharp hooks on the stretcher. She would show me how to do it and she made "stolen" at Christmas time for people who ordered them. Sometimes she made them for the corner grocery man, Mr. Rink, who sold them to his customers.

I am sure my train was paid for with stolen and fruitcake and stretched curtains! All of the twelve or thirteen dollars it had cost. It was decided that each year I could have something to add to my train. So the next Christmas there was additional track. The Christmas following that, I was allowed to pick out whatever I wanted for it. I settled for a red coal car; a gondola, that is. I wanted a set of switches too, but was told they would have to wait. The switches would come next year.

The switches never came! Mama died only a few weeks after Christmas of 1929. It was pneumonia, they said. She was in bed, ill for two weeks and had passed "the crisis". She would now get well, the doctor said. The next day, on a Sunday morning, she died. She was 39 years old. I was in the fifth grade at St. Thomas Aquinas School.

Please take good care of my train; it was purchased with stolen and fruitcake and stretched curtains!

James D. Fuller
April 6, 1985

Richmond Times Dispatch

Obituary: 4/24/2007



Alan Richard Siff, of Richmond, Va., died Sunday, April 22, 2007. Born in the Village of Upper Nyack, New York, at 54 Highmount Avenue, on August 8, 1931, he was the youngest of four boys born to Philip Joseph Siff and Mary Eleanor DePew Siff. He was a 1948 graduate of Nyack High School, where he met his wife of 51 years, Laura Roberts Siff. A 1956 graduate of LaCrosse University, he earned a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs in 1957. In addition to his wife, Laura, he leaves three children and their families, Brigette Siff Holmes of Dunbarton, N.H., Andrew Siff of Richmond and Brian Siff of Hanover; son-in-law, Nicholas Holmes and daughter-in-law, Mimi Siff; grandchildren, Henry and Hillary Holmes and Dillon and Eleanor Siff; brothers, Robert Siff of Concord, N.H. and Leonard Siff of Romney, Ind.; sisters-in-law, Marilyn Siff of Concord and Winifred Roberts of Willoughby, Va. He was predeceased by his oldest brother, David P. Siff, in 1999. Mr. Siff also leaves many nieces, nephews and cousins with whom he maintained fond relationships over the years. Mr. Siff

served as a firefighter with the Empire Hook and Ladder #1, Nyack, N.Y. (1947-1954), was a U.S. Marine and member of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves. He was a 50-year member of the Harrisonburg, Va., Elks Lodge. He played baseball for the Marines at Quantico (1950-1951) and played professional baseball in the Washington Senators Farm System, including the Evangaline League for the New Iberia Mexers and the Crowley Millers from 1951-1954. In recent years, he enjoyed becoming reacquainted with his former Crowley Millers teammates at four reunions organized in Crowley, La., 50 years after their baseball careers ended. Mr. Siff dedicated his professional planning career to improving housing conditions for under-represented people in many communities, primarily in Virginia. His first job after graduate school was Assistant Executive Director of the Harrisonburg, Virginia Redevelopment and Housing Authority. He then worked for the Federal Urban Renewal Administration in Philadelphia, Pa. In 1961, he and his family moved to Richmond, where Mr. Siff joined Harland Bartholomew and Associates, City Planning Consultants. Mr. Siff set up the Richmond office of HB&A, and was employed by the firm for 35 years, serving as Vice-President and as a member of the Board of Directors. While at HB&A he concentrated on neighborhood planning in blighted areas working with community leaders to improve housing in neighborhoods throughout Virginia. Among Mr. Siff's most rewarding career experiences were projects in the communities of Randolph and Fulton in Richmond and Mt. Hermon in Portsmouth, Va. He had great

respect for the community members and leaders he served, and took pride in working with them towards the common goal of justice in housing and land use. Over the years, Mr. Siff earned the respect, trust and friendship of community leaders in the neighborhoods he worked so tirelessly to improve. He served as Chairman of the Virginia Human Relations Commission for two years, on the Richmond Board of Zoning Appeals as Vice-Chairman for two years, and two terms on the Richmond Planning Commission. In 2006 he received the Distinguished Service Award from the Richmond City Council in recognition of his dedication to planning and redevelopment of Richmond and his many years of service on behalf of Richmond communities. After his retirement from HB&A, Mr. Siff worked as a private consultant and continued serving as a volunteer for a variety of organizations. Around this time he began a new chapter of his life as an avid train collector starting in 1991, when his son and daughter-in-law, Andrew and Mimi Siff, opened the Ironhorse Restaurant in Ashland. While collecting train memorabilia for the restaurant, his 15-year avocation as an antique train collector began. His collecting focused primarily on Ives toy trains, which ceased production in 1928. Mr. Siff was a member of Virginia Train Collectors (VTC), Ives Train Society and Train Collectors of America. He served as Vice-President and President of VTC, published the VTC Newsletter for four years and its annual magazine, "Observation," for two years. He was a member of the Ives Train Society Board of Directors and published their newsletter, "Tracks," for two years. Through these associations he made many dear friends who shared his

passion for trains and history. A 45-year member of St. John's United Church of Christ in Richmond, Mr. Siff served several terms as President of the Church Council and of the St. John's Endowment Fund, Inc. Mr. Siff was a founding board member of the New Community School in Richmond, the first school in Virginia providing specialized education for children with dyslexia and, at the time, one of the few in the nation. He served as the longest continuous board member and served as President of the Board for 13 years. Throughout his life Mr. Siff made numerous friends in his various professional, church, civic and recreational roles. Despite a lengthy illness over the last two years, he enjoyed and greatly appreciated the many visits, calls, e-mails and cards from friends and colleagues, many of whom took the time to thank him for his many contributions and for being their "hero." The family will receive friends on Tuesday, April 24, from 2 to 4 and 6 to 8 p.m. at the Central Chapel of Bennett Funeral Home, 3215 Cutshaw Avenue. Funeral services will be held 10 a.m. Wednesday, April 25, at St. John's United Church of Christ, 503 Stuart Circle. Interment in Hollywood Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to The New Community School Endowment Fund, 4211 Hermitage Rd., Richmond, Va. 23227 or to the St. John's United Church of Christ Endowment Fund, Inc., 503 Stuart Circle, Richmond, Va. 23220.

EDITORS COLUMN

As the new editor of "Tracks" I have suggested to the Board of Directors that we update the appearance and content of this excellent quarterly publication. All were in agreement. As you can see we now have a new logo that will be used for all future printings.

I'm sure you've noticed that over the years the same individuals are writing the articles for Tracks. They wrote on IVES items that were of interest them. I feel now is the time to focus our reporter staff on great, and maybe little known items that might be in your collection and therefore of interest to you. To accomplish this I have instituted a new feature called the "Ives Interview". This interview will focus on a particular scarce item in your collection that you can identify with a phone call to me at 516-627-8804 or an email to fasttrack@rcn.com. One of our reporters will call to interview you about the item, and publish the interview in the Track's quarterly. We will have a dedicated page to the highlighted item, and as costs allow we will try to color print this insert. This issue has a sample interview of how it will be appear in the future. As editor and owner of the item presented I interviewed myself to show the editorial mechanics of this new feature. I hope you will support this effort and call us about your scarce pieces. Another new feature is the highlights of the Board of Directors Meetings (April & October) will be published in TRACKS. Advertising in TRACKS will resume. Please send your ads to fasttrack@rcn.com. We will keep all ads at a simple \$10 fee. We are looking for articles. You can send them to fasttrack@rcn.com. You can also send an article either typed or hand written by mail to my attention at POB 937 Plandome, NY 11030. If you are wondering what to write about I have listed some potential concepts for you to use

- **I HAD AN INTERESTING FIND -**
- **DID YOU EVER SEE THIS -**
- **MY IVES LAYOUT IS -**
- **HOW I GOT INTO THIS HOBBY -**
- **HOW TO REPAIR A -**
- **MY COLLECTION CONSISTS OF -**
- **THIS VARIATION SHOWS -**
- **AT CHRISTMAS WE WOULD -**
- **THE IVES THAT GOT AWAY...ETC**

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING - APRIL 19, 07

Attendees: Don Lewis, Rod Cornell, Dave McEntarfer, Marty Fasack John DeSantis and Bill Kotek.

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 PM

TRACKS: Marty Fasack agreed to become the editor of our quarterly newsletter. The Board accepted and committed to assist Marty when needed.

TIES – Dave reported that he had a number of articles for this year's edition. Rod handed Dave and article that he had acquired. The Board asked and Dave agreed to have the 2007 edition out to our membership prior to the Holiday Season.

Membership: A report prepared by JoAnne Baldwin, and incorporated by reference, indicated that we had 242 members on December 31, 2006. Membership increased by more than 25 individuals from December 32, 2006.

Financial Review: On March 31, 2007 our bank balance was \$6,823.48. The account balance is sufficient to sustain the Society for 2 years with no collection of dues.

Museum Display: After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that a theme for our next effort at the Train Collectors Museum would be a celebration of the 60 year existence of the Ives Corporation (1868-1928). John agreed to assist Bill with this project. The display will be updated during the winter of 2008, prior to the 2008 April York Meet. More to come as the project develops.

No new business was presented

Meeting adjourned at 6:10 PM.
