

30 Years of Innovation and Fun



1980

Mike's Train House:

Armed with a separate phone line and a fancy new device called a FAX machine, 20-year-old Mike Wolf opens Mike's Train House, a toy train mail order

and retail business run out of a spare bedroom in his parents' home. Along with high school classmates Andy Edleman, Jeff Strank, Mark Hipp, and Ryan Iseman — all of whom will later become M.T.H. vice-presidents — Mike continues to work for Jerry Williams of Williams Reproductions, a pioneer in the revival of tinplate production and 3-rail O Gauge model railroading.

1982

Replacement Parts: Mike graduates from college and gets his start in manufacturing by purchasing Jerry Williams' replacement parts business, which sells parts for prewar and postwar Lionel trains.

1983

Tinplate Manufacturer: Jerry sells Mike the tooling for his Standard Gauge tinplate reproductions line, and Mike becomes a full-fledged manufacturer. Paul Wolf withdraws his entire retirement savings account to loan his son the money to buy the business.

The first M.T.H. catalog, printed in black and white, offers No. 9, No. 381, and No. 408 locomotives. Sheet metal parts are stamped in Minnesota, painted by Mark Hipp in his parents' garage, and assembled in the Wolf family's basement.

1985

Korea: Mike meets Mr. Se Yong Lee of Samhongs Co. and contracts to have Standard Gauge tinplate reproductions made in Korea. With Jerry Williams' blessing, Mike leaves his job at Williams Reproductions to concentrate on his own



business full time. Working as many as 30 train shows annually and driving a beat-up van purchased for \$100, he becomes one of the largest sellers of Williams O Gauge brass locomotives, in addition to his own Standard Gauge items.

1986

Columbia: Mike moves the business out of his parents' home to his first of three addresses in Columbia, Maryland, just a few doors away from Williams. Mike begins traveling to Korea to work with Samhongs. The M.T.H. "Blue Comet" corporate logo is introduced.

1987

Lionel Classics: Mike stops producing his own tinplate and becomes a subcontractor for Lionel®, manufacturing Lionel Classics tinplate reproductions in Korea — an arrangement that begins with the Hiawatha passenger set and foretells the formation of Lionel Corporation Tinplate two decades later. Mike's Train House becomes a full-service Lionel distributor.

1989

Lionel Collector Line: The Reading T-1, modeling a real locomotive owned by Lionel Chairman Richard Kuhn, becomes the first scale-detailed Lionel product produced by Mike and Samhongs. The following year, Andy Edleman joins M.T.H. as Project Manager for Lionel items. In the space of a few years, M.T.H. will produce models for Lionel that set new standards for full-scale, three-rail O Gauge trains, including the die-cast Pennsylvania S2 Turbine, ALCo PA diesel, the first three-rail Shay, and an operating lift bridge.

1990

Weaver Gold Edition Line: Mike contracts with Quality Craft Models/Weaver Trains to build scale O Gauge brass locomotives for Weaver under the Gold Edition label. The relationship continues through 1996, also producing scale plastic diesels including the EMD E8 and Baldwin Sharknose. The diesels later become part of the M.T.H. Premier lineup. At its ten-year anniversary, Mike's Train House has nearly a dozen employees.

1993

Dash-8: The company name is officially changed to M.T.H. Electric Trains, and the initial M.T.H. catalog announces a Dash-8 diesel — the first scale O gauge locomotive produced under the M.T.H.

banner. Lionel ends Mike's subcontracting and dealership relationships. Mike's Train House closes its retail store to concentrate on manufacturing.

1994

Challenger and Proto-Sound®: M.T.H. delivers the Union Pacific Challenger, the first die-cast O gauge articulated steam engine and the first M.T.H. product with factory-installed Proto-Sound, licensed from QSI, Inc.



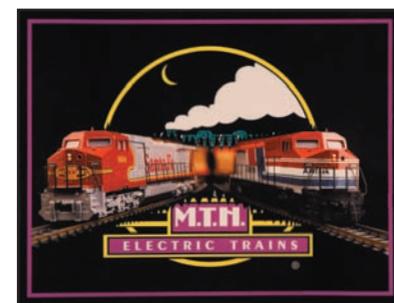
1995

RailKing®, Smoke, and Dave Krebiehl: A 4-8-2 Mohawk with synchronized, puffing smoke and the Pennsylvania GG1 inaugurate the RailKing line, intended for hobbyists who want traditional-sized O Gauge trains that operate on tighter O-31 and O-27 curves. RailKing sales will eventually dwarf the scale-sized Premier line. Dave Krebiehl is hired to initiate manufacturing contacts in China and eventually becomes VP of Research and Development, leading the Michigan-based R&D team. Fan-driven smoke debuts on the Premier Empire State Express Hudson.

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1996

RailTown™ and Tinplate Traditions™: Fully painted and assembled RailTown buildings enter the RailKing lineup, along with the first ready-to-run RailKing sets. Passenger station and freight yard sounds are added to Proto-Sounds. M.T.H. returns to its tinplate roots with the first Tinplate



Traditions products, the No. 408E electric and No. 613 passenger set; the following year, tinplate engines are offered for the first time with Proto-Sounds and puffing smoke.

1997

Gateway Drive, RealTrax™, and Accessories: M.T.H. moves into its own 125,000 sq. ft. building at 7020 Columbia Gateway Drive, Columbia, MD. Mike's favorite memento of the occasion is a photo with his wife Rasamee and his parents, Doris and Paul Wolf. RealTrax is introduced, the first O Gauge track system with roadbed. An operating gas station, the first M.T.H. accessory to combine action and sound effects, joins the RailTown line; a firehouse, car wash, and Mel's Diner soon follow.



1998

Z-4000®, Subways, and MTHRC: The Z-4000 transformer is introduced — the first truly viable replacement for the venerable Lionel ZW, and still the most powerful UL-approved transformer in O Gauge (and the best-selling product in

M.T.H. history). The RailKing Metropolitan Transit Authority R-42 becomes the first ready-to-run 3-rail O gauge subway, complete with station announcements. The M.T.H. Railroaders Club™ is introduced, offering unique cars, the CrossingGate newsletter, and discounts on special items.

2000

Proto-Sound 2.0: Pennsylvania E6 Atlantic, the first Proto-Sound 2.0 steamer, introduces hobbyists to synchronized puffing smoke combined with digital sounds and smooth, steady performance down to 3 scale miles per hour. Later this year, the RailKing Metropolitan Transit Authority R-21, the first PS 2.0 subway, introduces Transit Stop Proto-Effects. Operators can program the R-21 to run automatically on a loop or out-and-back route, calling out nine different New York City station stops.

2001

RailKing One-Gauge: The first M.T.H. One-Gauge locomotives, a Dash-8, Hudson, and Challenger, bring sound, smoke, and command control to 1:32 scale garden railroading.



2002

DCS and York: The arrival of DCS, the M.T.H. Digital Command System, brings out the full potential of Proto-Sound 2.0 engines introduced two years earlier — and offers the hobby's first (and, so far, only) command control software that can be upgraded for free over the Internet. Within six months, the first upgrade adds new features to the DCS system.



M.T.H. adjusts its catalog schedule to coincide with the Spring and Fall York TCA shows and begins a tradition of offering limited-run York Cars to show attendees.

2004

Proto-Scale 3-2™, Period Engines, and DCS Upgrade Kits: Proto-Scale 3-2 allows select Premier locomotives to change quickly between 3-rail and 2-rail operation, using AC or DC power.

The Premier Pennsylvania H-3 2-8-0 is the first ready-to-run 19th Century scale-detailed O gauge locomotive. DCS upgrade kits arrive, allowing modelers to upgrade non-Proto-Sound 2.0 engines to command control, digital sound, and speed control.



2005

HO Engines and Automatic Operating Pantographs: DCS arrives in HO scale with the Pennsylvania K4s Pacific; locomotive features Proto-Sound 3.0, which includes both DCS and NMRA-standard DCC receivers. Premier Pennsylvania GG1s are the first O Gauge models to feature pantographs that



raise and lower automatically, according to the direction of travel.

2007

Silver Bullet and Chapelon Pacific: The Coors Silver Bullet set introduces a new Proto-Sound feature: the ability of a locomotive to send operating commands to its trailing cars or trackside accessories. The Chapelon Pacific, with passenger station announcements and crew conversations in French, is announced as the first European-prototype M.T.H. model.



2008

DCS 4.0 and Quillable Whistle: DCS 4.0, a free downloadable software upgrade, allows operators to access all Lionel TMCC® features from the DCS handheld. The "quillable" whistle, a DCS feature that simulates the varying sounds of a prototype steam whistle, debuts on the Premier 2-8-8-2 Triplex and 4-8-4 Norfolk & Western Class J.

2009

Smoking Whistle and Lionel Corp. Tinplate:



The RailKing One-Gauge Triplex is the first North American model in any scale with a quillable, smoking whistle. Lionel and M.T.H. announce their first cooperative venture since the Kuhn era, Lionel Corporation Tinplate. One of the firm's new products — which sells out almost instantly — is the legendary Brute, a huge 1920s Lionel prototype that was never produced.



2010

The Big Book of Possibilities: With over 35 engine types in more than 120 road names, the 2010 Volume Two catalog offers three times more variety than any other manufacturer's O gauge lineup. Including this volume, M.T.H. has cataloged over 17,000 items during its 30-year history.