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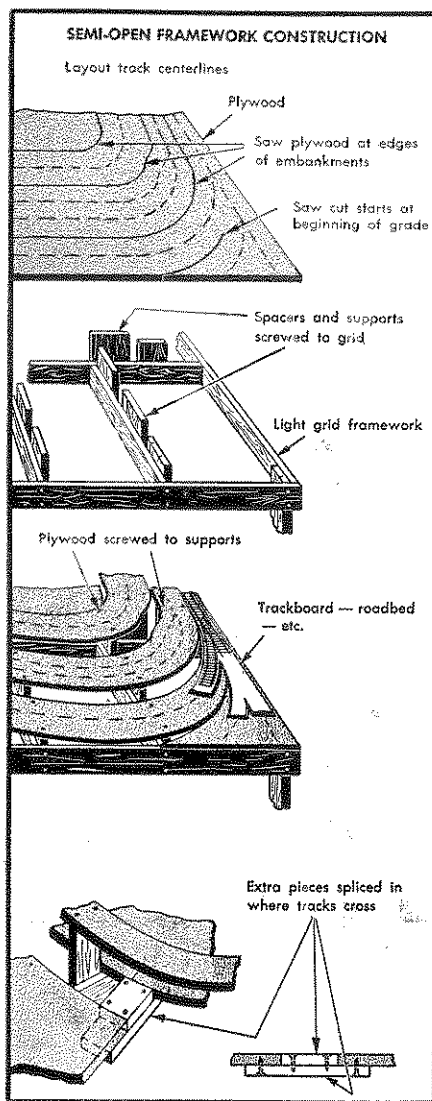
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Method of Making Continuous Track Supports

the kind of detail that's easy to model.

The track plan this month shows how the basic layout at Harper's Ferry can help us create a realistic mainline scene in a total space three by five times the minimum track radius, with a little branchline operation thrown in for good measure. What we see as we look at the layout from the west side is a stretch of the B&O's double-track main line. It comes out of a short tunnel on the Maryland side of the Potomac, crosses a multi-span deck girder bridge and disappears beneath our vantage point on the West Virginia side. Harper's Ferry station, complete with pedestrian subway under the busy tracks, is on the curve at the river's edge. The Shenandoah Valley branch to Winchester and Strasburg Junction, Va., switches from the main at the very mouth of the tunnel and crosses on a separate bridge. Behind this second bridge the Shenandoah River joins the Potomac from the south. Beyond it lies a corner of Virginia, connected to Maryland by a high-level bridge leading to a road

that clings to another steep mountain-side. Along the Maryland bank of the Potomac are the remains of the old Chesapeake & Ohio canal.

A sharply curved siding off the branch line in front of the Harper's Ferry siding looks as if it might formerly have been the main line before the curvature was reduced by building the present bridge; as a matter of fact, it was. The siding is always ready for emergency reconnection to serve as the main line again if the bridge should be blocked for some reason or other (as it was briefly in 1951, by fire). Still another row of piers, now decaying into little tree-covered rock piles, marks the location of an earlier B&O bridge across the Potomac which later ended its days carrying a road.

Underneath this tranquil scene lies the most tinplattish of layouts—a double-track figure eight with two reversing connections along the sides. This basic plan, unrealistic as it would be if left completely exposed, suits our purpose well. Two trains can run continuously on the main line without interference. Either can reverse its direction of travel via the appropriate cutoff, and the cutoff on the south side is long enough to hold two short trains so that up to four trains can be handled if need be. The operation in this case appears to be quite logical—various trains running back and forth on the main line, in no particular sequence and with no tendency for operation to favor one direction of travel or the other. Just how this is accomplished, however, is well concealed, as it should be.

A layout as simple as this won't take long to get into operation, although you'll probably spend plenty of time on the scenery in bringing it up to the standards of your rolling stock. Sooner or later, then, you'll be back at the bench turning out more rolling stock. So, a place has been provided where several more trains can be stored ready to enter the main line any time. Our subterranean "Brunswick Yards" are an insult to the B&O's enormous classification layout, which stretches for over eight miles between the two main tracks through Brunswick, Md. (five miles east of Harper's Ferry), but using the name is handy.

The underground storage tracks make it possible to leave much of your equipment made up in trains and ready to run without handling, while at the same time it is collecting little dust. You might add that it's morally better to be able to bring it forth with a locomotive, too. There is enough of a lead clear of the main line coming out of Brunswick to allow for changes of train consist without either stopping the passing parade or getting ulcers.