



The New Holland Secondary is a busy little point to point branchline located in the heart of Lancaster County Amish country. The line is currently serviced by Norfolk Southern out of Lewis Yard (formerly named Dillerville Yard). The line originates at milepost 39.4 via Cork interlocking on the Amtrak Keystone line. The line ends just west of the town of Blue Ball at milepost 26.6. At one time, this line extended eastward to Honeybrook and eventually connected to the PRR mainline in near Exton. (?)

In current times, the railroad operates the line 5 days a week. Two shifts are required to get all of the work done each day. The current symbol NS gives this job is H28 for the outbound move and H29 for the return trip. The current motive power used on this job is a pair of GP38-2 road switchers. During the Conrail years, a GP38-2 coupled with a GP15-1 was almost always the motive power of choice.

Typically, the crew leaves Lewis yard around 1PM with anywhere from 15-45 cars. The second crew usually brings the train back early the next morning. There are quite a wide variety of industries along this line with large and small customers dotted along the way. The three largest customers are RR Donnelly & Sons (printing), Dart Container (Styrofoam, cups, utensils, etc), and L&S Sweetners (bulk grains, corn syrup, molasses and other food related items).

In terms of model railroading, one could model any portion of this line, or even the entirety this line using shelf style benchwork or a mushroom. The terrain goes from being surrounded by a 3rd class city around Lewis Yard (Lancaster City), to an industrial park setting, through open farmland and through two small suburban towns. The maximum grade along the line is 1.5%, according to the Conrail track charts I have found.



Signaling: This stretch of railroad is "dark" when it comes to lineside signals. No other trains operate on this line when the local crew is servicing it. Train crews are issued a Track Authority sheet in compliance with NORAC rules for the entire line before leaving Lewis Yard. Before Norfolk Southern adopted NORAC rules, a Form-D was issued.

Most of the more rural crossings are protected by only a pair of crossbucks. Some of the busier crossings have had flashing lights and sometimes gates installed in recent years.

There were quite a few businesses which had rail service in years past, but no longer receive shipments. Most of these customers received poor service during the Conrail years, and turned to trucking. Some businesses closed or moved away from the line. Depending on the era or personal interests, you could utilize these locations on your model railroad. Sperry New Holland had a 4-track yard that actively shipped farm implements on 60' flat cars into the late 80's. Presently, these pieces of equipment are all shipped by truck. Most of the rail which was removed from New Holland Machine was reused to expand the yard facility at L&S Sweetners in more recent years. New Holland Concrete had a siding at one point, and presumably received bulk cement, sand and aggregates. A number of mobile home manufacturers received carloads at some point in time as well.

Follow along as we tour the New Holland Secondary from start to finish.



Once the H28 crew gathers its train up in Lewis yard, the crew alerts the mainline dispatcher for a track authority for "2-Industrial", which get them to the Amtrak line adjacent to the yard. At the same time, the dispatcher also will issue a track authority for the New Holland Secondary. Once the proper track authorities are received, the crew departs Lewis yard and heads for their first customer, located just off the Amtrak mainline.

Our first stop happens to be one of the largest receivers along the line, RR Donnelly & Sons printing. This location prints periodicals and telephone books, and receives several carloads a day of paper products. There are a number of external storage tracks, but the railroad does all shifting work in and out of the plant. There are three interior bays for receiving high cube boxcars. Keeping the weather away from the raw materials is very important to the process, which is why all car unloading is done indoors. If there are an excessive number of empties to leave Donnelly on a given day, the crew will leave them west of the Donnelly switch. Once the empties are set out, a yard crew out of Lewis yard will run down and retrieve them. While it would be possible to build the entire Donnelly facility on your layout, you will most likely want to scale things down a bit. Kitbashing some basic steel buildings from Pikestuff and Walthers kits would be a good starting point. The Walthers Superior Paper mill kit as well as the Ford assembly plant kit would make a good starting point for kitbashing these buildings.



Continuing East along the line, we cross over Greenfield road and immediately to the left, there is a vacant siding splitting two 1980's era single story warehouse buildings constructed of brick. One building housed an ink distributor, and the other was an Exide battery manufacturing location.



After we travel through a 10 degree curve about quarter mile eastward, we come upon another unused siding leading to a precast concrete warehouse. This is currently another RR Donnelly printing location. Built in 1982, this location previously was a grocery warehouse for the Acme grocery store chain. You could easily model this location as the grocery warehouse, and reefer cars could be spotted here at one of the 5 outdoor car spots.



We continue eastward through some Lancaster county farm country for about two miles to our next pair of customers. The railroad passes through open several fields on 30MPH trackage in this area. In most places, the railroad has been slightly elevated to make up for the gentle rolling terrain.



The next siding serves two customers: Kirby Agri and Lancaster Foundry Supply. The Kirby siding is rather nondescript. Kirby sees most of their activity in the spring time, when farmers are getting ready to plant their summer crops. On the day I visited recently, a single tank car was spotted just off the switch lead for Lancaster Foundry Supply. Presumably, this is some kind of pesticide or chemical used

on crops. The following day, the tank car was gone- replaced by two covered hoppers. The following day, the covered hoppers were removed and the siding was left empty. Lancaster Foundry supply occasionally receives 2-bay covered hoppers of foundry sand.



Here is an additional note about operations at the Kirby/Foundry siding. The crew needs to pay close attention to where their cars are in the consist for this industry. There is enough room for 12 cars between the Kirby switch and the road crossing to the west of Kirby. This means that you have 25 cars to go to, say, L&S Sweeteners, you need to leave the rest of the train to the west of the crossing. Sometimes, crews will pull their cars out of the consist for the Kirby/Foundry siding while they are still at Donnelly, and they will run them up to Kirby by themselves. Once that job is done, they will head back to Donnelly and retrieve the rest of their

train.

A quarter of a mile east of here, the railroad passes under a unique local landmark called "The Goat Path". In the 1970's the state of Pennsylvania was going to build a 4-lane limited access highway to bypass the congested PA Route 23 corridor. The state ran out of money for the project half way through, so the partially completed roadbed was covered over and the completed overpasses were abandoned. These roadbeds and overpasses are sometimes used for grazing cattle by local farmers, hence the name "Goat Path". This would be an interesting and unique feature to model!



Immediately following the Goat Path, the railroad passes through the Conestoga Valley Industrial park at milepost 35. This 1970's era industrial park had 3 spurs serving separate businesses over the years. None of these spurs are active today. The last spur was idled

sometime in the early 2000's.



The railroad crosses over Horseshoe road and heads down a 1% grade over the next 3/4 mile to our next stop, Bristol Pipe. This facility has spots for 14 PVC pellet hoppers. The new Walthers storage silos along with some steel buildings kitbashed from Pikestuff kits would make a nice representation of this facility.

Norfolk Southern crews will usually leave their train consist just before the Bristol siding and work the next three customers from this position. The next small customer on the line is HM Stauffer, a building truss manufacturer. Centerbeam flat cars of various wood products will be delivered one or two cars at a time to this





location. Immediately following the Stauffer switch, there is a runaround track roughly 875 feet long. This runaround is key for being able to spot cars on the westbound-facing sidings.

Immediately east of the HM Stauffer facility is Dart Container. Dart is a particularly interesting customer to model due to its interesting track layout. The complex in general sits on a very large and sprawling footprint. The first track arrangement we arrive at requires careful planning for switching. One lead has spots for two tank cars of pentane to be spotted on the west end, and two cars of plastic pellets to be

spotted adjacent to the tank cars. This spur is accessed via switchback across two more spurs which hold several more plastic pellet hoppers between them. There are 3 additional Dart spurs east of the first Dart spur. Those are fairly straightforward in comparison to the first arrangement. The last two spurs nearly meet each other with the point end of the switches opposing each other. Crews will need to utilize the runaround in order to have their cars in front of the locomotives for spotting at the easternmost spur. Once switching is completed for the Dart properties, the crews will sometimes leave empty cars on the runaround track for the return trip. This will be a common occurrence as we head down the line. Since the runaround track in New Holland is of limited length, the crews will have to pick up all of the stashed empties on their way back through. Again, more Walthers plastic pellet silos and various Pikestuff buildings would be suitable for this complex.



At this point in our journey, the first crew usually runs out of hours for the day. On a recent Friday night, the crew change occurred around 10PM. Once the second crew climbs on board, we head on down the line to L&S Sweeteners (provided all the Dart and Stauffer work is done).

By now, the time is likely after midnight. Working during the overnight hours is ideal on this part of the line, as the traffic over the multiple road crossings in the New Holland area is kept to a minimum.



Our next customer is the largest one on the line: L&S Sweeteners. Built in 1985, L&S has bulk refining and truck transfer facilities for corn syrup, sugar, molasses and other food related products. They also offer interior bulk dry transfer to trucks, and interior truck tank washing. They have a scale track on site so they can accurately weigh their inbound and outbound shipments. This facility has

grown quite a bit in size in the last 15 years or so. Norfolk Southern usually drops off loads and picks up empties here. The rest of the switching is done by L&S and their two Trackmobiles.



The owner of the facility seems to be somewhat of a rail buff- their main office was built to resemble a period train station, and there are two custom painted bay window cabooses that are used for some sort of additional office space adjacent to the station. The L&S facility can hold about 90 rail cars before they are "plugged". They also lease space inside Lewis yard for additional car storage. Once the inbound cars are spotted, the empty cars are left behind for pickup on the return run.



To the east of L&S is a siding with a concrete unloading ramp. The company here produces manufactured housing, and on very rare occasions, they receive a boxcar load of wood products.

Between MP 29 and 30, we come upon the Case New Holland assembly plant for farm implements. At one time, a curved 4-track yard was in place here. Farm implements, mainly square and round hay balers, were shipped out of this facility by rail. Sometime in the late 80's, New Holland moved away from rail and began to ship everything by truck. In the early 90's, the switch leading from the secondary was removed, as well as all the yard tracks. Incidentally, the rail used to expand the yard at L&S Sweeteners came from the old New Holland yard. This facility would be a very interesting modeling subject if you would choose to incorporate it into your layout.



Next, we travel into downtown New Holland. This is a pretty busy area, and there are several sidings relatively close to each other. First, we pass a 1500' runaround. This runaround is used,

once again, to position cars so they can be delivered to the westward facing sidings. Immediately following the runaround, a siding that leads to a flush loading dock on the left hand side of the tracks. L&S Sweeteners also leases this building, and they receive boxcars of various bulk products. There are 4 car spots at this facility.