

Gerald S. "Jerry" White—MMR #139

Jerry was born in Keene, N.H., July 23, 1914. He received his first train on his fifth birthday. It was an American Flyer wind-up with a circle of track. He built pull-trains from cardboard matchboxes at about age seven. Got his first electric train on his tenth birthday. It was an Ives, with locomotive and three passenger cars. Also, on that day, he got his first airplane ride in a Waco 9 biplane. (Someday, he vowed, he would learn to fly.)

He sold his first commercial model in 1931 while a junior in high school. It was an O scale Boston & Maine gas-electric, built from cardboard and wood with a K&D No. 1 motor with hand reverse. In the late 1930s he produced and sold two O scale kits, both of Central Vermont prototype, one a 2-8-0, the other a 4-6-0. These sold for \$35 and about two dozen were shipped. He also offered a B&M gas-electric in kit form, but these did not sell well, so only about four or five were produced.

He was a charter member of both the New England Association of Model Railroaders and the Cheshire Model Railroad Club, located in Keene. In 1939 he accepted a job with Rollin J. Lobaugh in San Francisco and migrated to California taking a room in a private home in San Bruno. (He planned to spend only the winter and return east in the spring, but it turned into a long winter—50 years.) In 1941 he married Lois Hanson. In 1942 he enlisted in the Army Air Corps, spent time in both New Mexico and Washington State before going to the South Pacific for a short stint on Iwo Jima and Saipan. Was discharged in 1946 and spent the next few months back with Lobaugh, but longing to get back to custom building, quit and built a shop in Redwood City where he used the tradename of Superior Models.



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While there he produced HO freight car kits under the name of Kurtz-Kraft. These sold well, but were ahead of their time. He continued custom building as time permitted.

He and his wife designed and built their present home in Menlo Park, Calif. He was a charter member of the West Bay Model Railroad Association and is still active there. He bought a life membership, No. 86, in the NMRA in 1946. He was the first division superintendent of the Coast Division and, while serving as vice president of PCR, was the first Achievement Program chairman. He worked with the late Ole Olesen and Brad Bradley on the RP-25 wheel program in the 1960s. A licensed pilot for 35 years, he flew to many of the NMRA meets. Sold the last plane in 1974. After selling out the Kurtz-Kraft line, took a job with Philco Western Development labs as a modelmaker; this later became

Ford Aerospace. He took early retirement in 1974 to devote full time to the custom building once again. A new shop was built at the rear of the garage where he is still building O scale models. Always a huge backlog of orders.

Served as general chairman of Engineering-NMRA from 1985 to 1990, working with the various committees to develop the module standards and RPs. These were accepted by vote of the membership on the 1990 ballot.

He received Master Model Railroader award 139 at the Birmingham NMRA convention. President Bob Dupont made the presentation on July 23, 1988, his 74th birthday.

Jerry has served in numerous positions on committees at both the division and national levels and continues to promote NMRA and O scale modeling along with the custom building. (The wife says he has a single-track mind and does not know enough to quit.)