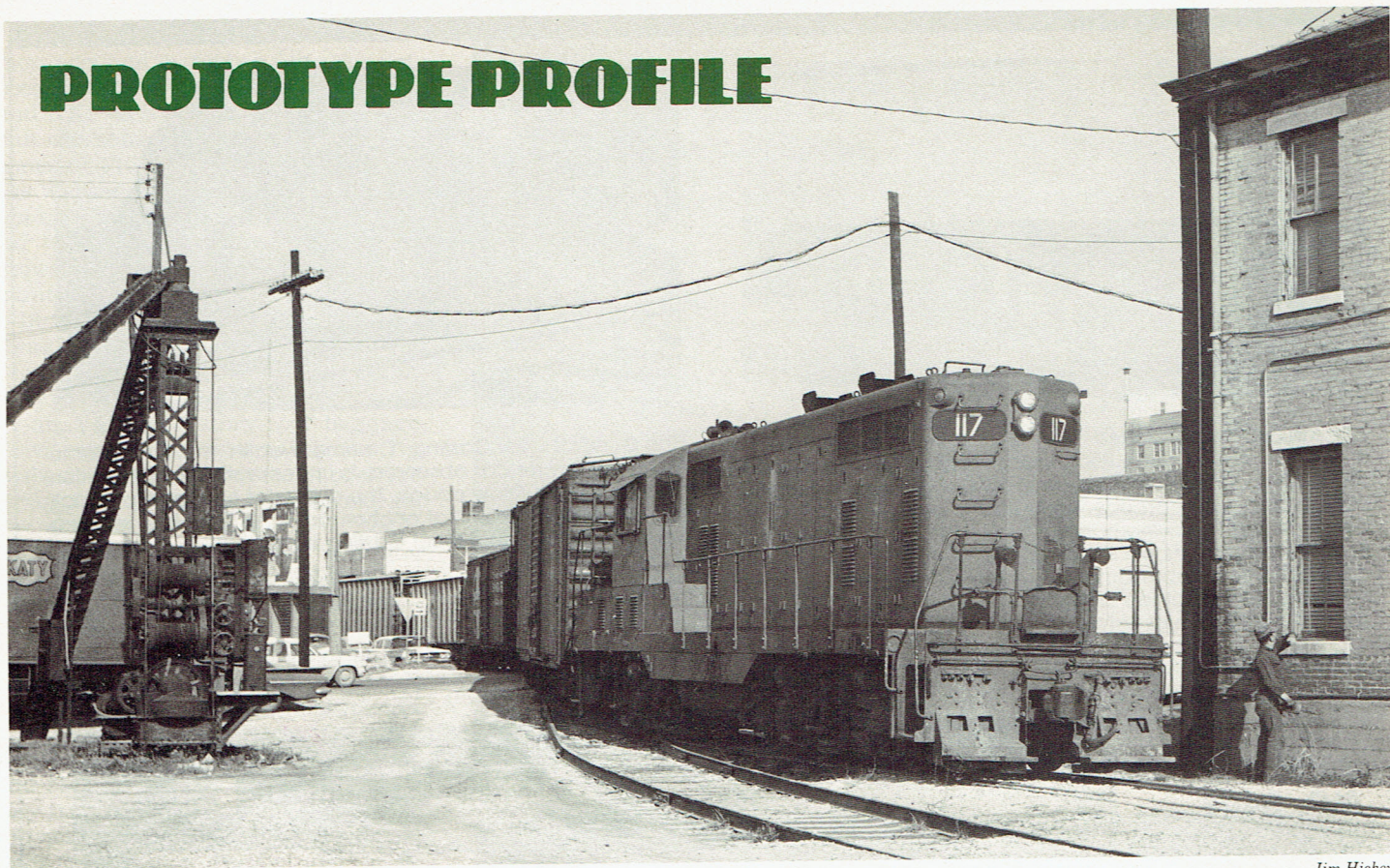


PROTOTYPE PROFILE



The Missouri-Kansas-Texas local from San Marcos pauses momentarily upon entering the yard at Austin in a scene from 1965. No. 117, a red GP7, is next to the old Katy office and station.

Jim Hickey

The Katy yard at Austin, Texas

A classic example of an industrial facility

by Tom Balzen

Modeling information by Paul Zack

The Prototype

The Missouri-Kansas-Texas system timetable places the Austin, Texas yard at milepost 955.5. In reality, the nearest MKT rails are at milepost 953.7 (Pershing Junction), which is about two miles to the east on the Southern Pacific. Strangely, this yard has never had a real physical connection to Katy trackage, and today this modeler's delight is thirty rail miles from the nearest Katy line-haul trackage.

This small facility, just ten blocks from the state capitol in downtown Austin, offers the modeler a rare opportunity to duplicate a complete railroad operation in a modest space. In addition to being a complete facility, the yard can be prototypically operated within its confines except for entry and departure.

Use the map to follow the description of the yard and industries. As can be seen, the yard is lined with buildings on both sides. All but one are (or were)

sources of revenue traffic. Besides these trackside customers, the central yard tracks are used as team tracks and for piggyback service.

Despite the number of potential locations, today's business consists of but one or two trackside customers, the piggyback ramp and occasional team track loadings. The other trackside customers have moved to other locations, switched to trucks or gone out of business. Prior to this exodus the yard was a busy place, and it was often

After the brakeman has received the orders, the local rolls into the yard. Southern Pacific S2 No. 69 waits in the distance to help switch the train. The entire yard is paved over with gravel, with the ties exposed only at switchpoints.



Railroads we'd like to model



Katy power seen at the Austin yard can be anything that the line runs. U23B No. 352, one of three that MKT owns, was in town during December of 1973.

choked with cars. Let's take a look at the various industries and see what they contributed to the Katy traffic in times past.

Beginning at the west end, on the north side, we see the Katy office and freight station. Today, the building serves as the agent's office and as a storage shed for company material. At one time, divisional freight and passenger offices were located in the upstairs of the structure as the sign on the west side of the building still pro-

claims. See the photo. The two-story brick edifice has a history of its own. It was constructed as a residence prior to MKT's Austin arrival, and was very elegant in its day. When the Katy arrived and obtained the building, the story goes that the building was used as a "house of professional pleasure." The building once sported a rooftop sign along the west edge above the freight proclaiming its status as the MKT Lines freight station. Also, the western exposure windows had canvas

sunshades for a while. At present, with the need for office space reduced, most of the windows have been boarded up.

The freight shed was a railroad-built addition to the two-story brick building. At one time, a thriving l-c-l freight business was handled with National Carload as a tenant in the freight house. In the late fifties, the eastward two-thirds of the freight house was leased to a beer distributor. For a while, beer was brought in by freight car. Today it's trucked.

We continue east on 4th Street, and the next structure is a block-long facility that was occupied for twenty years by the Capitol Paper Stock Co., a dealer in scrap paper products. Boxcars were often spotted two deep here, with loading accomplished by working through one car into the next. Several years ago Capitol Paper vacated, and today's tenant does not use rail service.

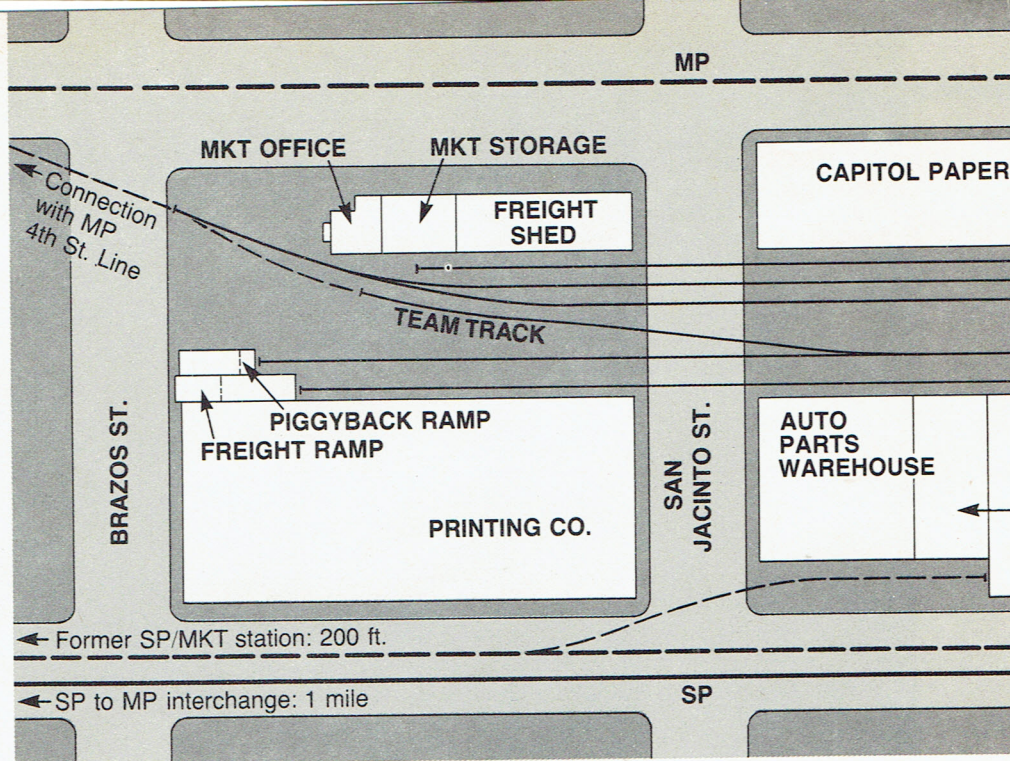
The next block east on 4th Street houses another beer distributor, one that handles several brands. With the current trend in the brewing industry toward building regional breweries, most of the beer is trucked in from a relatively close brewery. Only one or two cars a week are handled, some from as far as Milwaukee.

The most eastward block on 4th Street contains only a furniture company warehouse, currently used for carpet storage. Presently, no rail traffic goes here. In prior years, this was a lumber company warehouse requiring a steady stream of boxcars. Adjacent to the warehouse is a concrete parking lot used by the beer distributor. This lot is the foundation and floor of a warehouse which burned down several years ago. Prior to its demise, various tenants occupied it, most of whom used the railroad.

Looking at the south side of the yard along 3rd Street and beginning at the west end again, we find that the entire block is occupied by a printing firm which does not utilize rail service. In years past, this block had numerous tenants, many of whom did use rail service. Included was an automobile dealer who received new Chryslers in yellow Katy double-door automobile boxcars. These were unloaded on the platform immediately behind the building.

In the next block eastward on 3rd Street there are several small businesses requiring very little rail service. Until a few years ago, a wholesale grocer occupied the building on San Jacinto St. This business attracted a great deal of traffic (boxcars), and the firm's trucks frequently blocked most of San Jacinto St. while loading. At the east end of the block is an electrical supply company. This company does not use the railroad presently, and may never have. In the early fifties, the Sunshine Biscuit Co. occupied this location and used the Katy for delivery of baked goods.

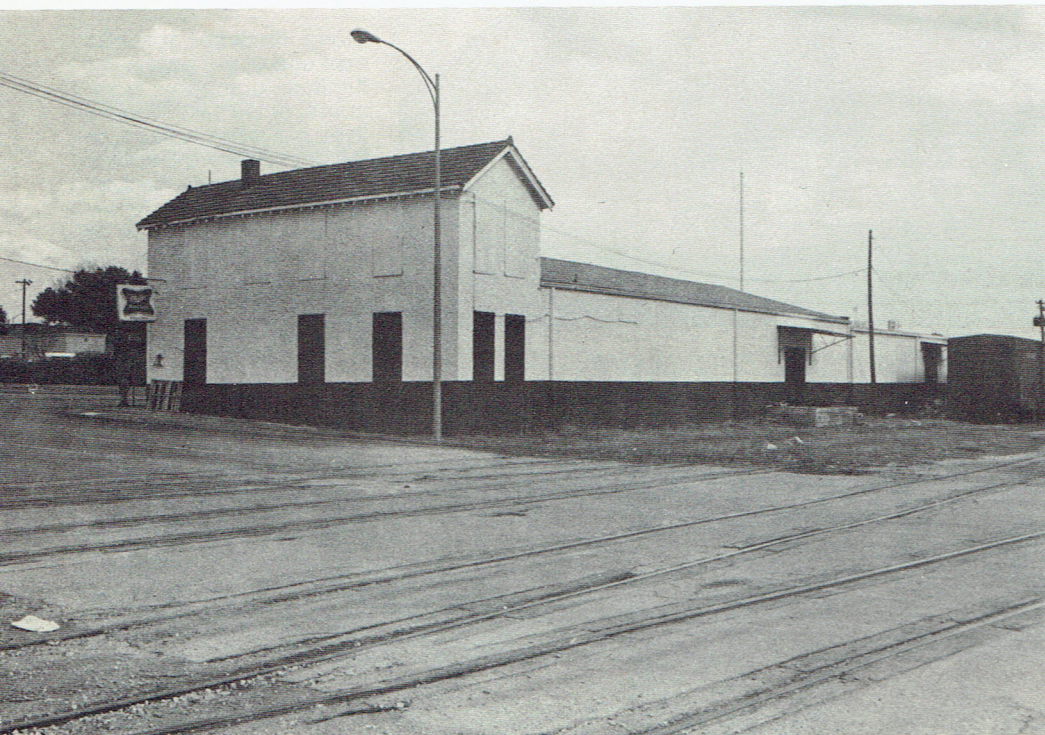
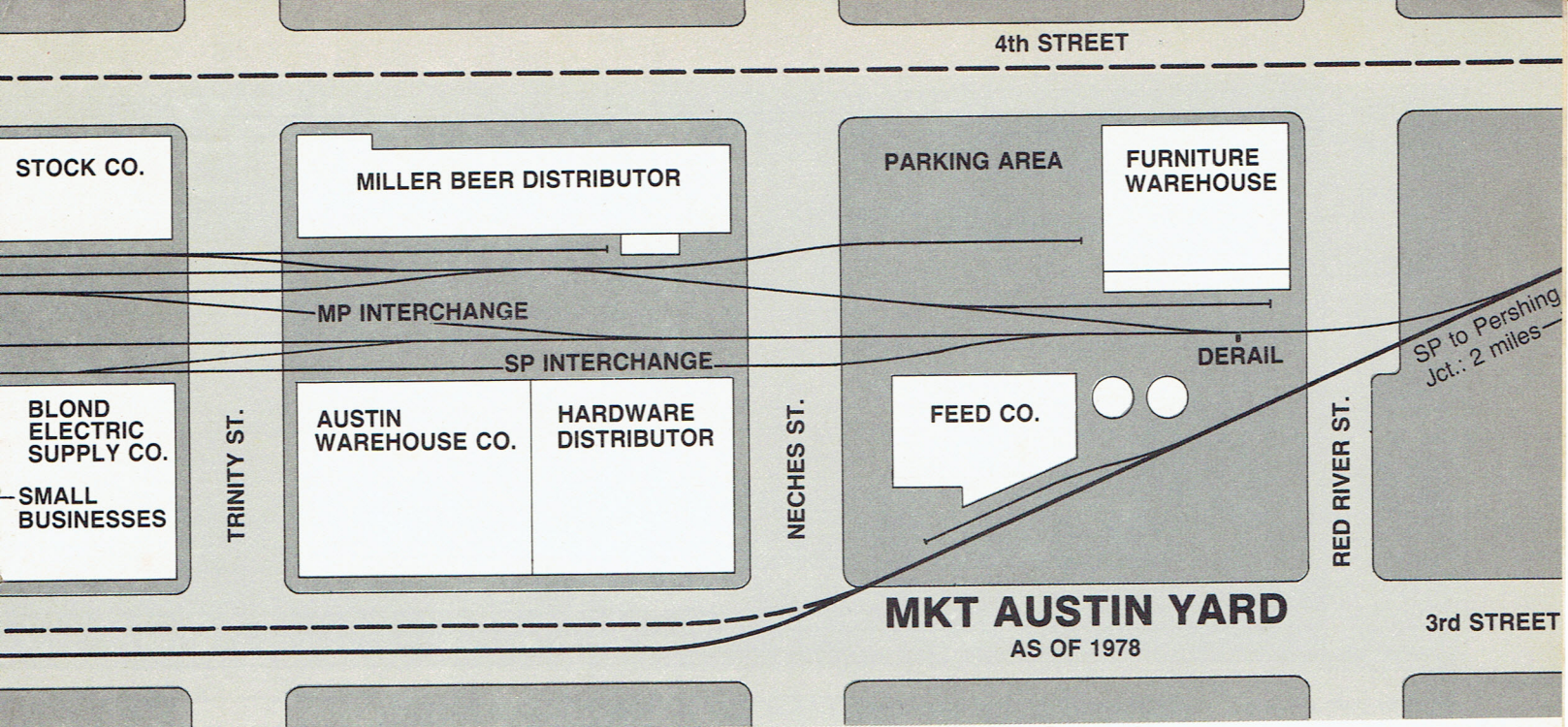
The first structure in the next block east is a moving and storage company. Again, no rail service. Its predecessor at this location was a warehousing and storage firm with several tenant companies, including food and beverage distributors and freight forwarders. There was a lot of rail traffic at that time, both boxcars and reefers. As late



Both photos, Tom Balzen

Above, the west elevation of the Katy station. Originally a residence, the building is now half vacant. The south side of the structure, facing the yard, is seen below. The freight shed area is to the right of the station.



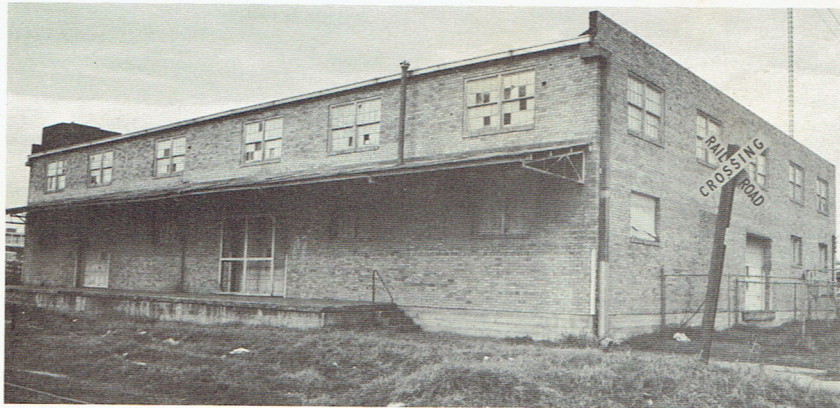
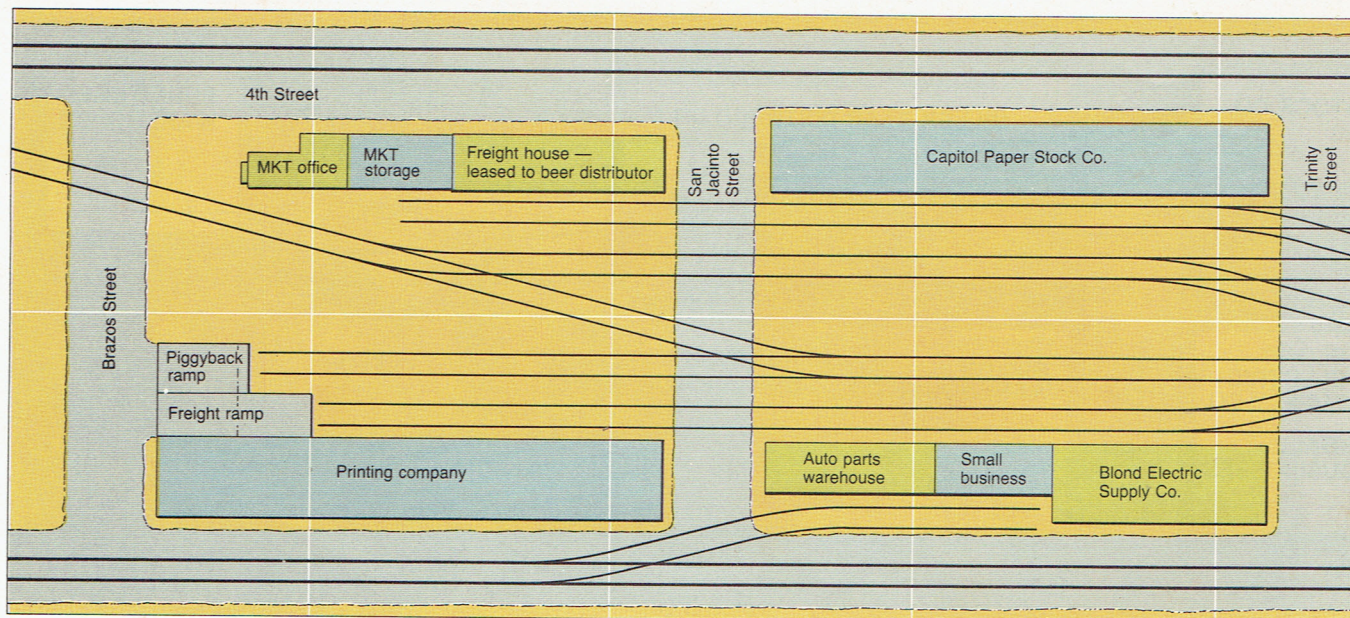


Left, the beer distributor's warehouse. Today, only one or two carloads of beer per week are handled here. Note the beer sign and the pallets standing below.

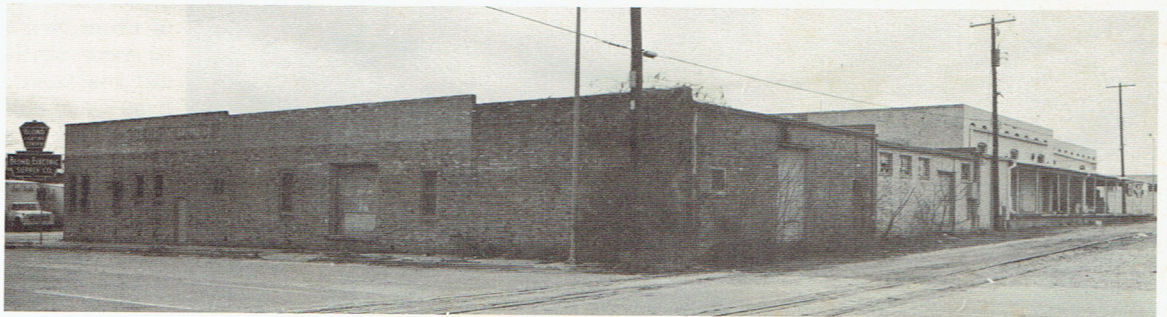
Both photos, Tom Balzen

At right, the block-long Capitol Paper Stock Co. building, no longer served by the Katy. Two different types of construction were used on the building. Years ago, box cars were spotted two-deep here. Note the evidence of the siding's current state of disuse. Debris such as this can be typical even if the siding is in use though, and is a detail that should be modeled.





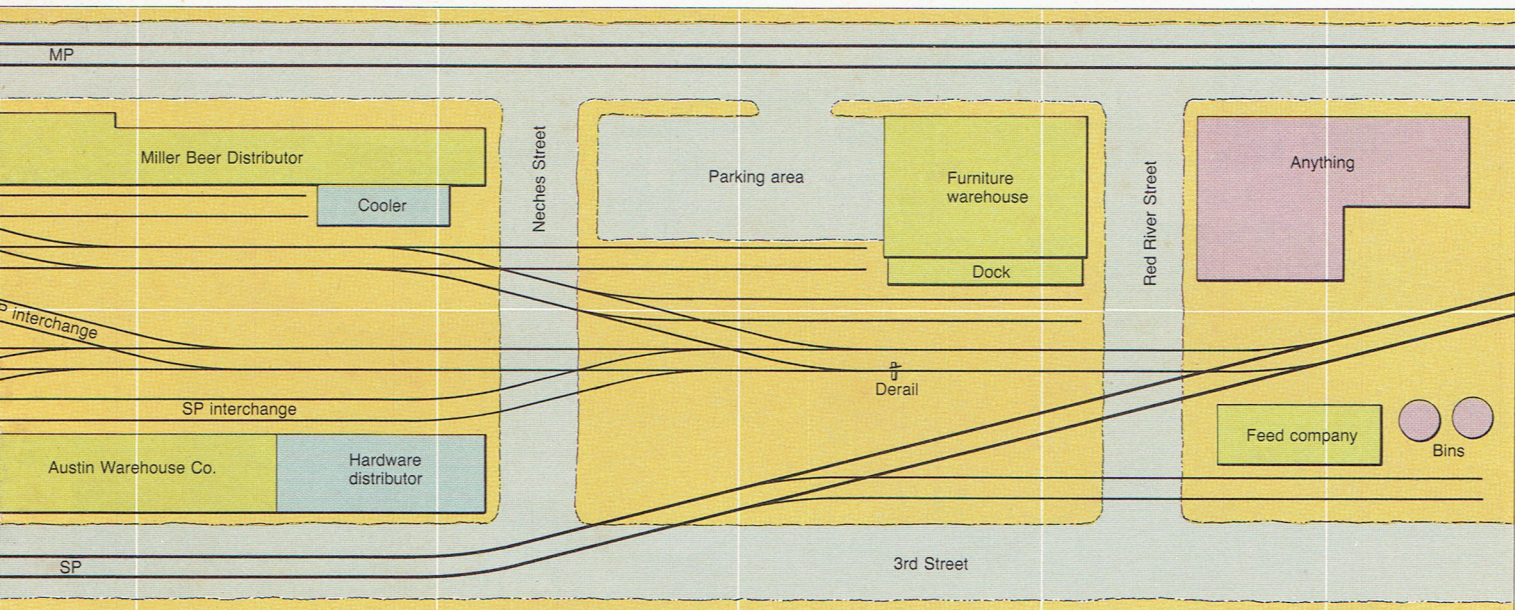
Along 4th Street at the far east end of the yard is the furniture company warehouse, at left. MKT locomotives are often parked on the siding there. The track in the foreground is the connection with the SP. Below, the block of businesses on 3rd Street containing the auto parts warehouse and the electric supply company.



Three photos, Tom Balzen



Right, the moving company warehouse on 3rd Street. Although the occupant does not use rail service, the structure would make an interesting model. Note that there are two freight docks, one along the tracks, and one on the street. Also note the cables supporting the freight dock canopies.



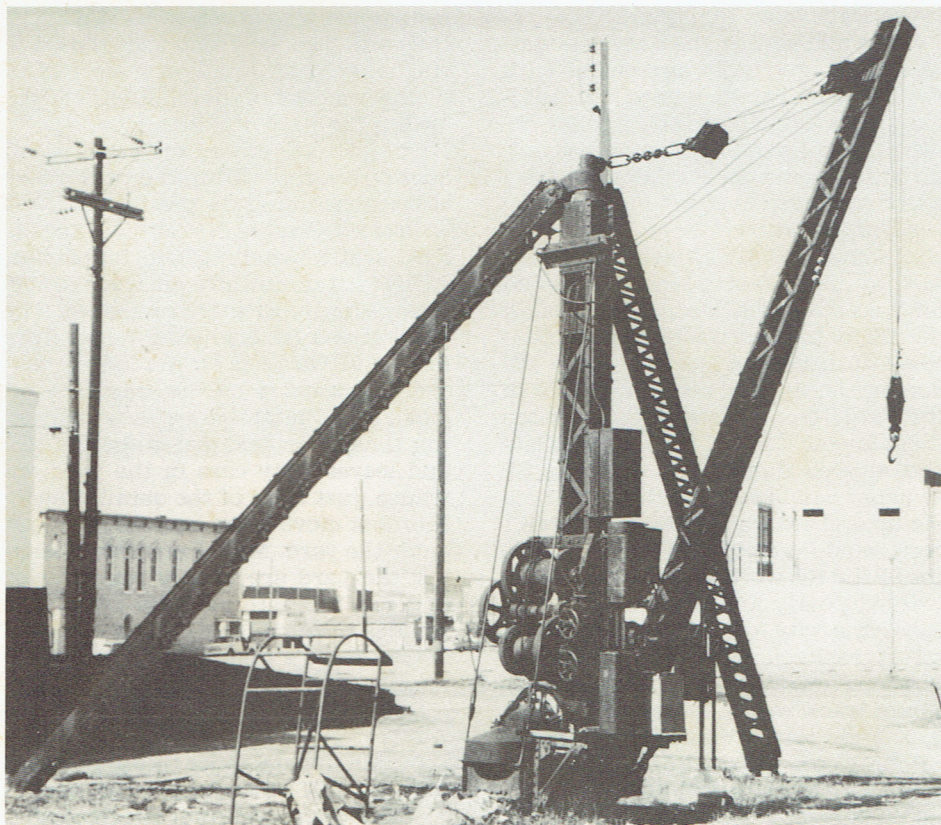
THE MISSOURI-KANSAS-TEXAS AUSTIN YARD

Scale	N	HO	S	O
Size of squares	6"	12"	18"	24"
Horizontal length	4'-9½"	9'-7"	14'-4½"	19'-2"
Vertical length	1'-0"	2'-0"	3'-0"	4'-0"

TRACK-PLAN DESIGN BY PAUL ZACK
RENDERING BY RICK JOHNSON

No. 4 turnouts on spurs

This plan has four locations (two at each end of the layout) where the yard can be connected to another unit of some kind. Note that the two tracks at the upper left converge. If you are building the Austin yard by itself, a track at one end of the layout must be extended to allow for train movements in and out of the yard. A simple two-track siding off stage would suffice to handle the interchange cars in this situation. Operational possibilities could be increased by similarly extending a second track at the opposite side of the layout.



Cyril Durrenburger

This is the stiff-leg derrick that was located across from the MKT station at the west end of the yard. It was used mainly for unloading heavy items from flat cars. The derrick is also seen in the photo on page 20.

as 1972, a rare wooden FGEX reefer was seen at the siding there. The other end of the block is currently occupied by a bolt and fastener distributor. Its predecessor was a grocery/beverage broker and warehouse.

In the last block along the yard on 3rd Street is a feed dealer. This is the only industry at the yard not served by the Katy. Southern Pacific provides the regular service.

In addition to these trackside customers, the yard also contains a piggy-back ramp, a freight ramp and a team track. Also, there used to be a stiff-leg derrick and loading platform adjacent to the MKT office building.

With the exception of the freight shed, all of the industrial buildings at the yard were constructed in a similar manner: brick or masonry with wooden framing and roof trusses. Two of these structures burned, the warehouse that is now a parking lot, and the printing company. It was rebuilt using modern steel framing. The office building is rather elegant with its cut limestone block foundation, granite lintels and sills and distinctive bay. Inside are hardwood floors, a broad staircase with heavy banisters and fireplaces on both floors.

The track arrangement in the yard has been altered periodically through time, with the present layout dating to



On the furniture warehouse spur, Katy GP7 No. 93 rests between switching chores.

Jim Hickey

the mid-sixties. Recently, all tracks across San Jacinto St. except the one leading to the piggyback ramp were removed. It would have cost more to repair the crossings, which were in bad shape. Either side of the street, the tracks remain intact. The entire yard except for the very east end is paved with gravel. Ties are exposed only at switchpoints. Measurements have shown that the frogs in all turnouts are No. 8. Low level switch machines are used, without indicators. The track dips and weaves over the streets, but is firm enough and gives very little when cars and locos roll over it.

Operations

Until the mid-sixties, the Katy stationed an engine and caboose at Austin which made a daily turn on the Austin subdivision to Granger. The engine was always parked on an unused yard track, and the caboose resided in the nearby SP yard. Southern Pacific did the Katy yard switching for them, and the engine (or engines) simply left the yard, picked up a train in the SP yard and departed for Pershing Junction. At Pershing Junction the train went on Katy rails, switched a few east side customers and then proceeded to Georgetown. From there, the train went to Granger, where the connection was made with the Katy mainline be-

tween Dallas and Houston.

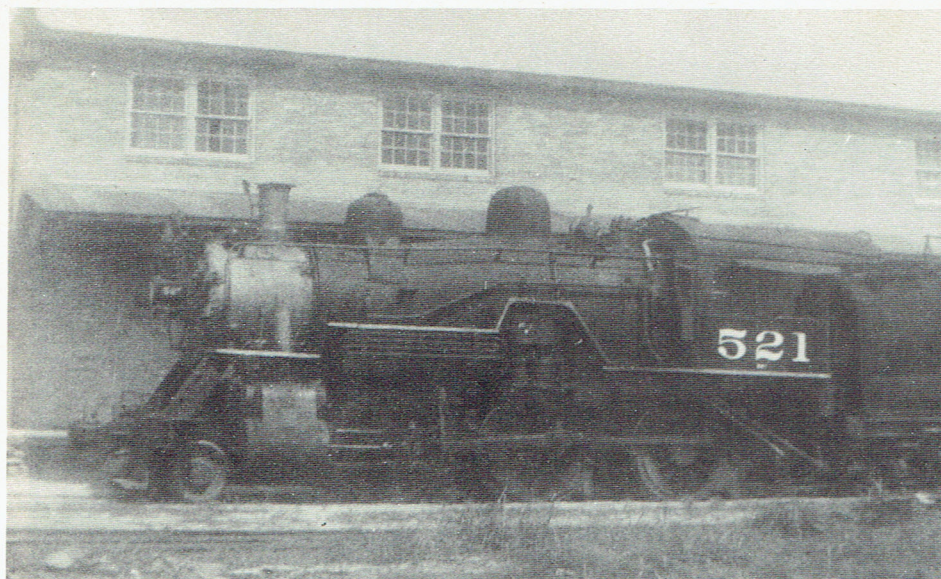
In the mid-sixties, the Katy negotiated a trackage rights agreement with the Missouri Pacific where San Antonio trains operated over the MP between Taylor and San Marcos, passing through Austin on the MP. The yard was rearranged at that time to the arrangement shown here. The now-abandoned MP 4th Street connection was in use. This situation allowed MKT access to the yard without using the SP (for the first time). A local would come up from San Marcos on the MP during the night, and set out cars in the yard. The SP would then switch these for the Katy. If the local was late and arrived during the day, the SP switcher would come to the yard, couple up and switch the train. The MKT crew would simply ride around while the SP did the work. This arrangement worked poorly and did not last long. Also, the city of Austin initiated a street-trackage removal program for downtown, and as a result, the MP 4th Street track was taken out. The Katy was again totally dependent upon the SP for access to the yard.

In 1976 the Katy abandoned the Austin subdivision between Georgetown and East Austin, and operations as they exist today began. The Austin local operates over the MP from San Marcos to Austin where it runs on the SP

for several blocks before backing into the yard. The local also uses the SP to run to Pershing Junction where it goes on the remnant of the old Austin sub to switch the East Austin customers.

Once a train enters the yard, it can operate entirely within the yard if necessary (assuming the yard is not filled with cars). Present operations have the local train switching the industries, piggyback ramp and team track. Interchange for the SP is left on the track by the bolt and fastener distributor. Cars for the MP are left on the long crossover track noted on the map. The SP picks up all interchange cars (delivering those cars designated for the MP) and leaves Katy cars in the yard entrance, just clear of the derail. The local must move these cars before it can enter the yard. MKT locomotives visiting the yard are mostly road power, and can be anything Katy owns. The same is true for the SP. In the days of steam, 2-6-0's and 2-8-0's were common.

Austin update: Since this article was written, MKT has taken the Austin yard out of service. As of late December 1982, most of the tracks were torn up. The Capitol Paper building has been demolished, although the final occupant spurned rail service anyway.



Jim Hickey

There are several details in this view of a GM&O box car spotted at the furniture warehouse. Note the low-level switchstand and the derail sign. The item in the foreground that is guarded by pieces of painted rail is an interchange waybill storage box—a detail that is common, but often overlooked.



Tom Balzen

The Model

There are many modeling possibilities for the MKT Austin yard. The two different external connections at each end of the yard enhance the flexibility of its use. Those with limited space can build the yard only, as a switching layout. If a little more room is available, a connection at either (or both) ends could be extended to a fiddle yard or another module. A nice L-shaped pike could be the result here. Other modelers with even more real estate will want to incorporate the yard module into a larger layout, perhaps an around-the-walls shelf type.

Which external connections used are governed by the era modeled. Given the variety of locomotives used by the prototypes, and the possibility of running up to three different railroads, the modeler has a very respectable array of modeling alternatives available

to him. Our track plan is designed so the yard can be used with any of the preceding examples.

No matter what situation you decide to model, some selective compression will be necessary. The most obvious change will be to shorten the east-west axis of the yard. The industrial buildings can be made smaller, and the connecting sidings shortened. Since there are only a few industries to begin with, all of them should be included on the model layout. Although not entirely true to prototype, a bit of liberty with modeler's license will permit substitution of industries that do not use rail service for ones that do.

Along the north-south axis, there are many choices. You can build the Austin yard with either side as the "front," and then simulate the industries on the far side with false fronts to save space. If it is modeled, the SP or MP track in the far street can run be-

hind the false fronts (out of view), or inside structures that are built against the backdrop. The SP or MP train that brings interchange to the Katy could be hidden in these structures, ready to make its appearance when needed. The industrial buildings should be shortened on their north-south axis regardless of what other selective compression is done. The emphasis is on the railroad, and the depth of the buildings, although not wasted space, is not needed.

The Missouri-Kansas-Texas Austin yard is a classic example of an urban/industrial railroad scene found in countless medium to large cities across the country. Offering industrial switching and interchange among three railroads, the yard's modeling possibilities for the imaginative model railroader are unlimited.