

A spread from the 1931 Lionel catalog showed this lineup of stations and industrial structures designed to hide transformers and operate trains. All were made of heavy stamped steel, painted in enamel.

## STANDARD GAUGE ACCESSORIES

Accessories are plentiful and should not be overlooked by the collector as they will enrich and broaden any collection.

**C**OLLECTORS don't normally get as excited over accessory items as they do over cars and locomotives yet many of them have a charm of their own which should not be overlooked.

Lionel track in Standard Gauge was made with virtually no changes from 1909 through the last days of the gauge in 1940. Heavy gauge tinned steel was formed into a round headed rail with the base bent over to form a very sturdy track section when fastened to three stamped steel ties. Perhaps this track more than any other factor helped give tinplate railroading its name.

Curved Lionel track produced a 42 inch circle, eight sections to the circle. Standard Gauge train operators will find many good plans in the book, "Complete Layout Plans", published by

Model Craftsman Publishing Corp., Ramsey, N.J. and available at most hobby shops for \$1.00 or direct from the publisher for \$1.10.

Lionel early introduced such other track components as switches, crossings, and bumpers. Remote control switches were cataloged back in the pre-World War I era along with companion manually operated switches. The early units are almost entirely of stamped steel construction. By the early 1930s, Lionel had modernized many items through use of Bakelite, replacing fibre strips in earlier units.

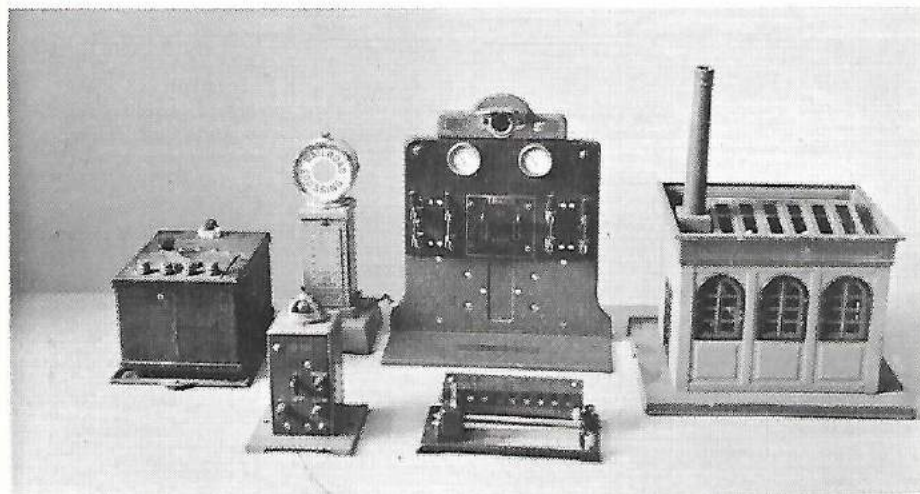
The earliest toy electric trains were designed for battery operation. Lionel's Multivolt transformers in five sizes made trains easier to operate and less messy at a time when electricity in homes was still a wonder of the age

and a thing to be feared. Supplementing the transformer line was a Direct Current Reducer and the famous No. 88 Rheostat. Through the years these pieces showed progressive refinement. Rare is the Multivolt transformer of 1930 or 1920 or even 1915 that still doesn't function perfectly today.

Lionel's 1915 catalog offered four semaphore signals, Nos. 63, 64, 65, and 66. These later gave way to the Nos. 80 and 82 semaphore signals with their die cast bases. The early No. 121 station gave way to a whole series of later stations in a wide variety of sizes and designs, culminating in the giant No. 128 Station and Terrace and the No. 116 Illuminated Station. All Lionel stations of the period were of heavy steel construction with baked enamel paint.

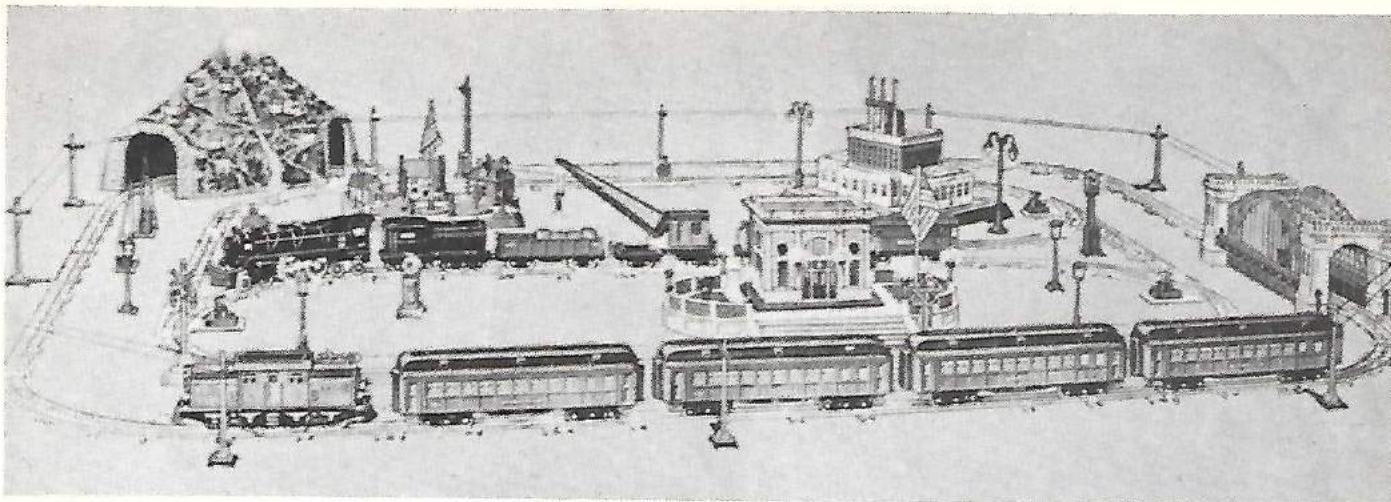
Lionel's No. 437 Switch-Signal Tower was equipped with six knife switches for actuating accessories and also had provision for mounting four Lionel switch control units. An Elevated No. 438 Signal Tower had two knife switches for accessories. Two power stations, the small No. 435 and the larger No. 436 ingeniously hid a large or small Lionel Transformer with a removable roof skylight providing easy access to change the voltage setting. And finally, Lionel's giant No. 840 Industrial Power Station hid from view two transformers and had a six knife switch panel board built in. Again, all structures were of heavy steel construction, painted with enamel in several colors.

Three Lionel houses mounted on landscaped plots with trees were close to HO in actual scale but were sold for use with either O or Standard Gauge



Later accessories, typical of the 1930 period used a variety of materials including steel, die castings, Bakelite, and celluloid.





Staff Photos.

The 1931 catalog offered this tremendous two train set in Standard Gauge with the 400 E and 408E locomotives, four State cars, four 200 series freight cars, Hell Gate Bridge, Power House, Station and Terrace, Tunnel, and numerous other accessories, track, and power.

trains. Scale in those days was a minor consideration. Trains were made for play value. The kids weren't as sophisticated as today and even in the 1930s, scale model railroading was in its infancy. Those HO houses, beautifully proportioned and painted, looked mighty fine on the layouts of the day.

Lionel also had a No. 103 Bridge back in 1915, this giving way to the No. 105 bridge by 1928, with the old number assigned to a new arch type bridge. The early No. 103 was a simulated concrete viaduct that raised the track about an inch. Lionel's No. 101 Bridge could be had in one, two, three, four or five units. In all these early bridges, the track raised up about an inch off the floor.

The later No. 280-281-282 Bridge, optionally available as one, two, or three units; did not raise the track, providing smoother operation. Neither did the big No. 300 Hell Gate Bridge, the most famous miniature bridge of them all, raise tracks above regular track level.

Early accessories are easily spotted by their more box like appearance. For example, the early No. 76 Block Signal used stamped metal switch lamp housings for lights. Later units were more advanced in design. Lionel long used a girder type construction for many pole type accessories, notably telegraph posts, semaphore, and the renowned No. 68 Warning Signal.

No early train could be without a tunnel. The classic example was a papier mache affair painted grass green and having a simulated road and house thereon. Lionel's 1915 period No. 118 was cross braced with steel. By the late 1920s, Lionel bragged that its units were made entirely of heavy steel that required no cross braces. In 1935, the tunnels were of either steel or felt composition. The biggest was the No. 915 Curved Tunnel at \$15.00 that stood 20½ inches high. Lionel also offered two mountains, 20 and 34 inches long. They would have been ideal for HO.

Street lamps were another big item and the early ones stood tall. No. 67 stood a tremendous 13 inches high and Lionel bragged that their lamps were

"100% superior to the flimsy stuff often had and seen in toy stores". Six styles were ultimately offered representing common street and boulevard lights-of the period. Certainly street lights provided the toy train layout with much of its charm, making night scenes not only feasible but a very desirable thing to make and operate.

The 1930s saw still more Standard Gauge accessories, although in truth most of the accessories were designed as all gauge items unless made to clip to the track, as with the No. 86 Telegraph Post set which was otherwise similar to the O gauge set, No. 071. The No. 200 Turntable was never offered in O gauge although Lionel finally did make one in 1961. No. 200 measured 17 inches in diameter and accommodated 8 tracks.

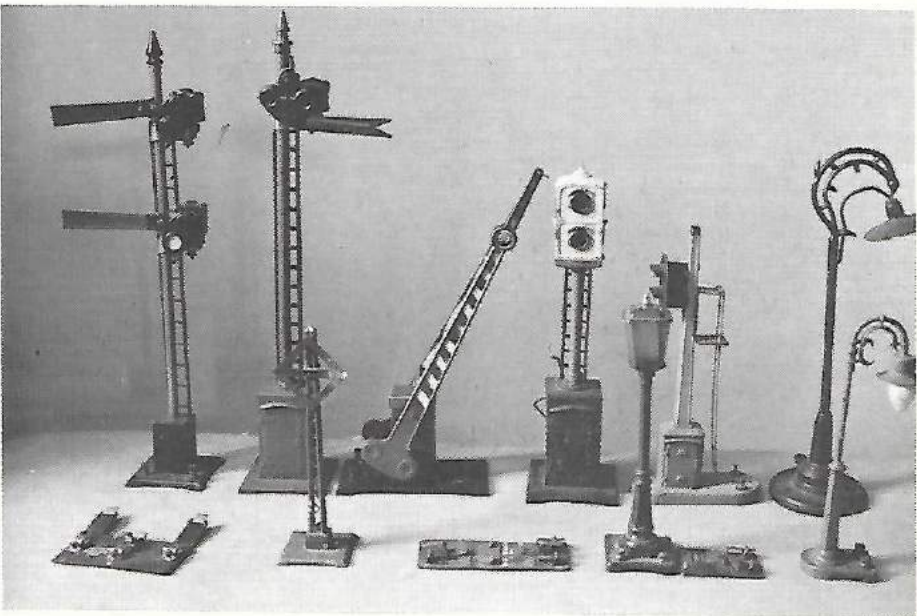
There were 20 inch tall floodlight towers, a No. 94 High Line Tower, a set of 3 inch tall people, a No. 90 Flagpole, crossing gates, traffic signals, and the Automatic Gateman. Other accessories were largely designed for O gauge use

but could be used with standard gauge equipment.

The tremendous variety of accessories offered by Lionel makes a complete listing here virtually impossible. Yet no series of articles would be complete without at least a quick rundown of some of the items offered through the years.

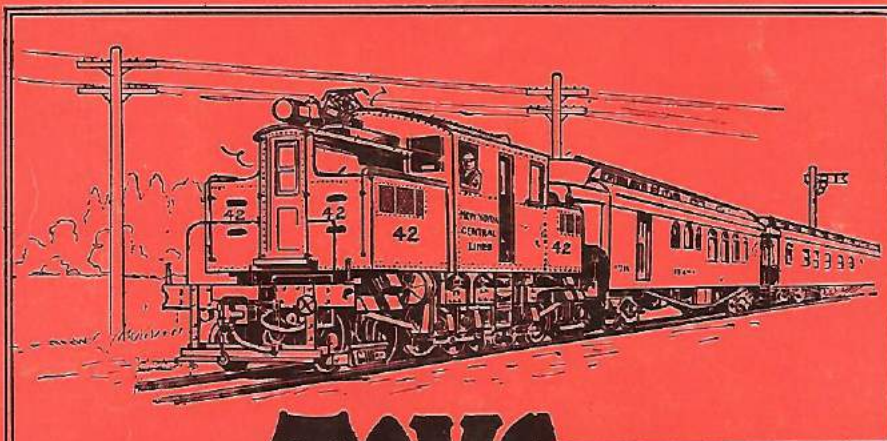
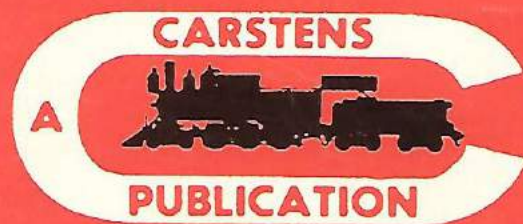
Lionel catalogs provide a rich source of information for the collector and historian but are far from an accurate guide as to what actually was available. Catalog illustrations were often made from mockup models and do not accurately portray the final production model. Catalog colors were subject to change. Prices and materials were also subject to change.

The 1939 catalog was the last one in which Standard Gauge train sets were offered. Twelve sets were offered on two pages. Another 2/3s page was devoted to extra cars of all types and a fourth page covered Standard Gauge track. Of course many accessory items were suitable for multi-gauge use. ☞



A collection of early period lamps, signals, and similar accessories is shown in this photo, and are typical of items available into the mid-1930 period. Construction was largely of stamped steel.





# LIONEL TOYS ELECTRIC

ELECTRIC TRAINS—TROLLEY CARS  
RACING AUTOS—TRANSFORMERS  
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Made by THE LIONEL MANUFACTURING CO.  
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Front Cover of 1915 Lionel Catalog

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