



June 2018  
\$6.99 US

## **RAILROAD MODEL**

### **CRAFTSMAN**

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*Includes - Structure Drawings*

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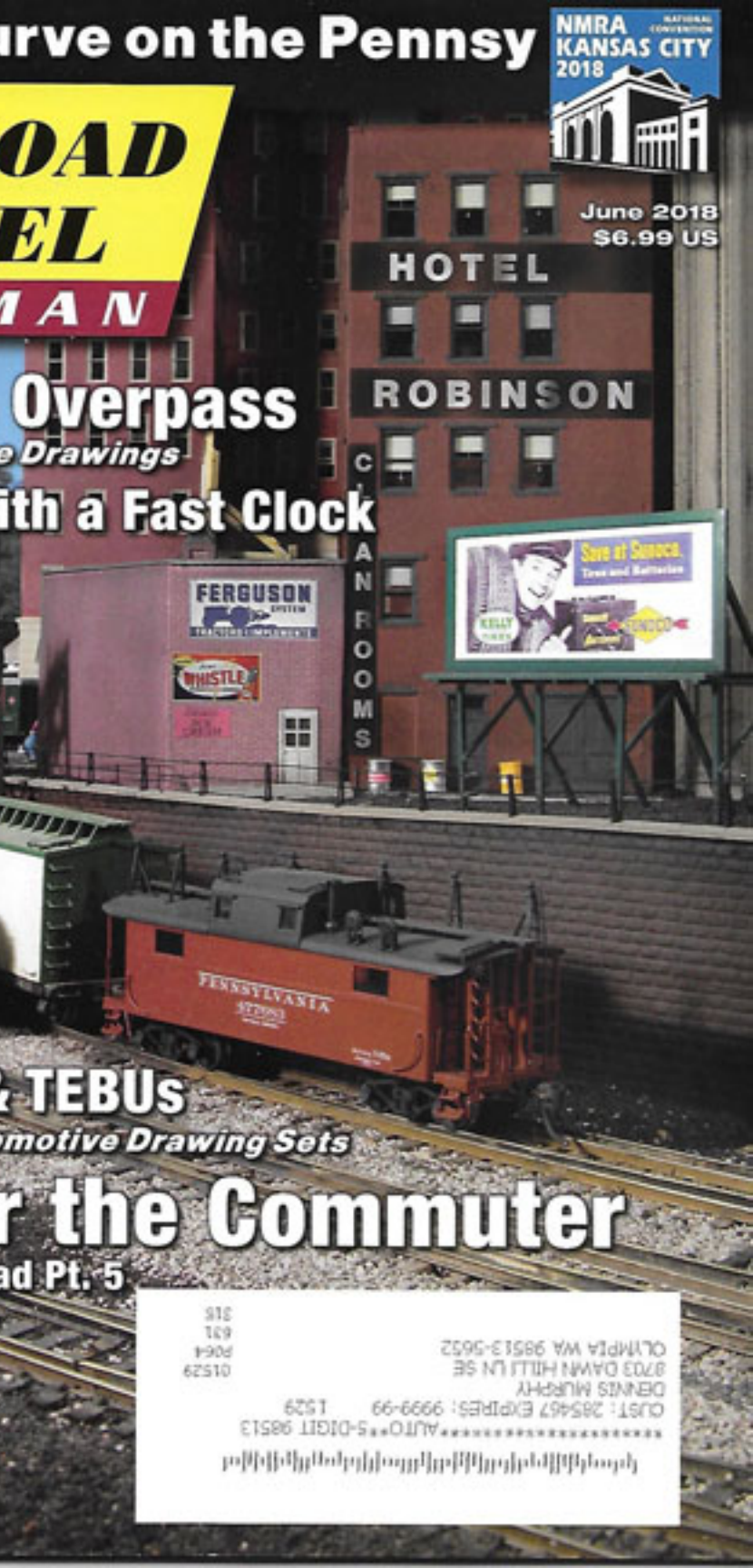
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*Includes - Two Locomotive Drawing Sets*

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*The Beginning of the  
End at Flagstone*



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## Test Track

### Roberts Product Company: Brick Mortar

**All Scales** — Just about the time I start feeling like I've discovered every interesting fun new product on the market, up pops something brand new (to me anyway). This time, it was something I didn't even know I needed! Let me fill you in on this little adventure of mine.

I have to admit that I'm not very good at coloring mortar lines on the models I build. To be honest, I'm lousy at it. I have tried diluted white paint, a variety of alcohol-based stains, and weathering powders. At best, I'd say my attempts ended with poor results.

By chance, a product called Roberts Brick Mortar fell into my lap. I was skeptical, but I had the product, so why not give it a try? What's the worst that can happen?

Believe it or not, I actually do read the directions. Not all of my modeling buddies do that impor-

tant step. This product comes with about the simplest directions I have ever seen. The short version of these directions is to mix well, apply the product, let it dry, and wipe off. That's it!

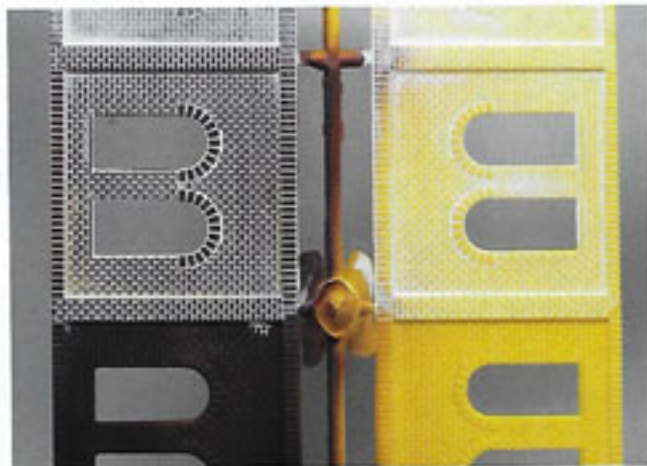
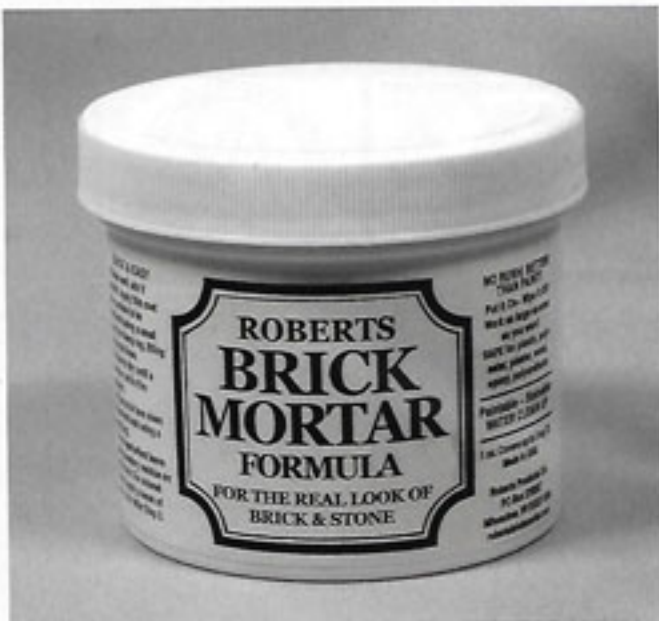
Of course, there is always more to it than that, but not much. So let me fill you in on

the use, and outcome, of my experience with Roberts Brick Mortar product.

I needed a number of different textures and substrates to try this product. So it was off to my "treasure chest" (mostly junk with a few "jewels" mixed in) to see what I had on hand. I diligently tried not to spend any money on the product evaluation. Fortunately, I had some cheap, very old injection-molded structure kits and some bits and pieces from past models that worked out perfectly to experiment on with this product. I promptly painted some, stained others, and left some with their native finish.

In the accompanying photos, you see some of the different textures that I worked with to try out Roberts Brick Mortar. In both cases, the left side is painted with acrylic, and the right side is native plastic. The top half of the parts have the Roberts applied, and the bottom half does not have any product.

I found the product applies best after thoroughly mixing in its jar. You need to start out by using something like a wood stir stick to



*Above: Roberts Brick Mortar was first tried on some injection-molded plastic pieces from my scrap box. The plastic, brick-detailed structure walls come in a yellow color, as you see on the right side of the sprue; I painted the left side brown, which allowed me to see how the product worked on a painted plastic surface (left), as well as a raw plastic surface (right).*

Any company wishing to submit products for Test Track may do so by providing samples to be reviewed to the address below. We prefer light-colored models that will photograph well. Submitted models will not be returned.

Please send product to:  
Railroad Model  
Craftsman,  
ATTN: Tony Cook,  
P.O. Box 177  
Plattsburg, MO 64477

get all the material off the bottom of the container. Shaking will not take care of this process. For best results, make sure to mix often while you use this product. Once mixed thoroughly, you then just paint it on the desired surface. Now comes the hard part: waiting patiently until the product is completely dry. Being completely dry is an important thing to remember — and follow.

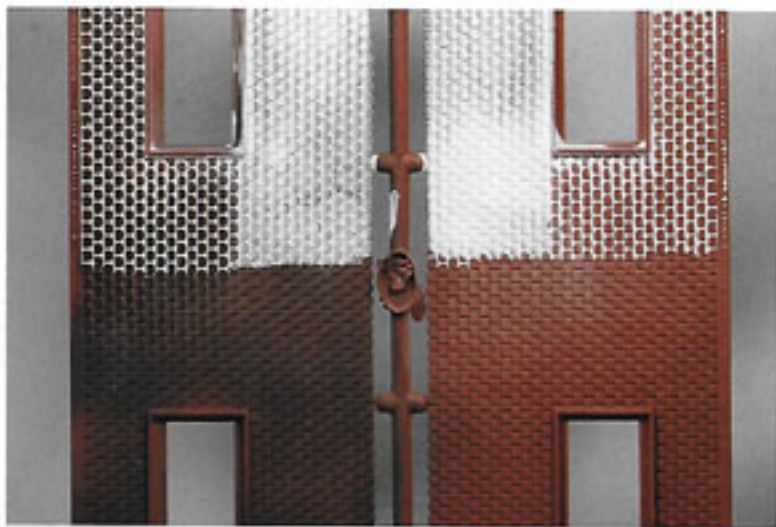
Once dry, it's time to wipe off the excess, which sounds really easy, but I learned a couple of things along the way. First, paper towels are not the "happening thing" for this work. I found that a soft washcloth worked way better. After an attempt with the cloth dry, I realized that if you ever so lightly dampened the cloth, it became downright easy to remove the unwanted product.

You can adjust the final look of the wall with this clean-up process, depending on how much product you remove. If you rub off less, the mortar lines look larger. Of course, the more product that you rub off, the finer the lines become. I found that this product worked way better on the painted surfaces than native plastic — no matter what the texture pattern was of the building or structure section. It might have been just me, but I think there is more to hold onto with the paint applied.

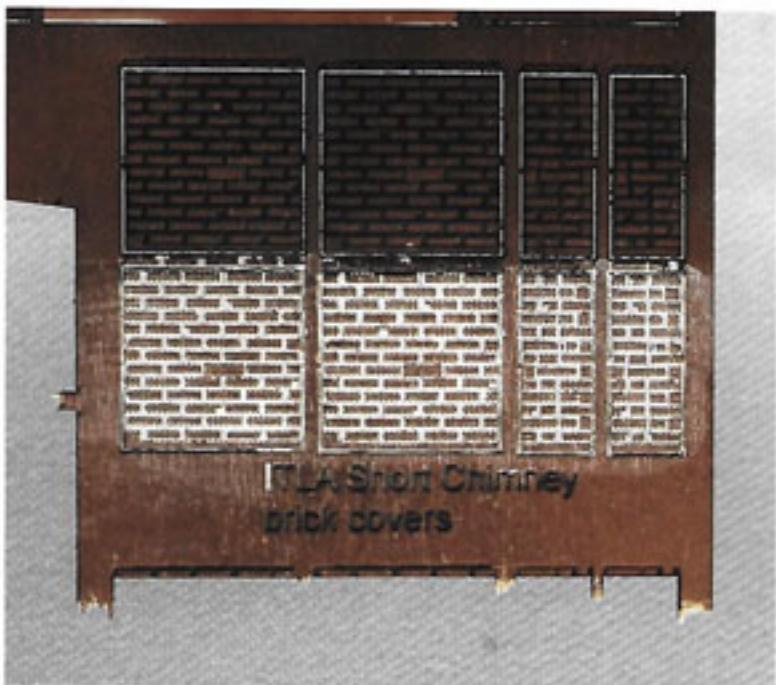
What about other surfaces beyond plastic? Will they work as well with this product? There's only one way to find out. I used a bit of stain on aircraft-grade plywood. As it turned out, this Roberts product works just fine on the wood surfaces too.

I was impressed with how easy and successful this little science experiment turned out. But what if you didn't want your surface as "bright" as mine? It was time to dig around and see what I might have lying around that could help. I decided to try one of the many different alcohol stains I have on hand with this wall section. A little dab here, a bit over there, and I was totally pleased with the outcome — at least on the painted surface. The results on the native plastic were something less than I would have wanted on a finished model.

I was so impressed with this product that I contacted the company directly to get a bit more of the story. Come to find out, Bob (as in Roberts) now runs this little business as a "retirement" filler of



*Above: This view shows shingle pattern roofing made of molded plastic and, again, the left side received a coating of paint; the right side did not. I've begun the process of wiping away the excess Roberts Brick Mortar from the outer areas, leaving the inner sections near the sprue with the original coating of product for illustrative purposes.*



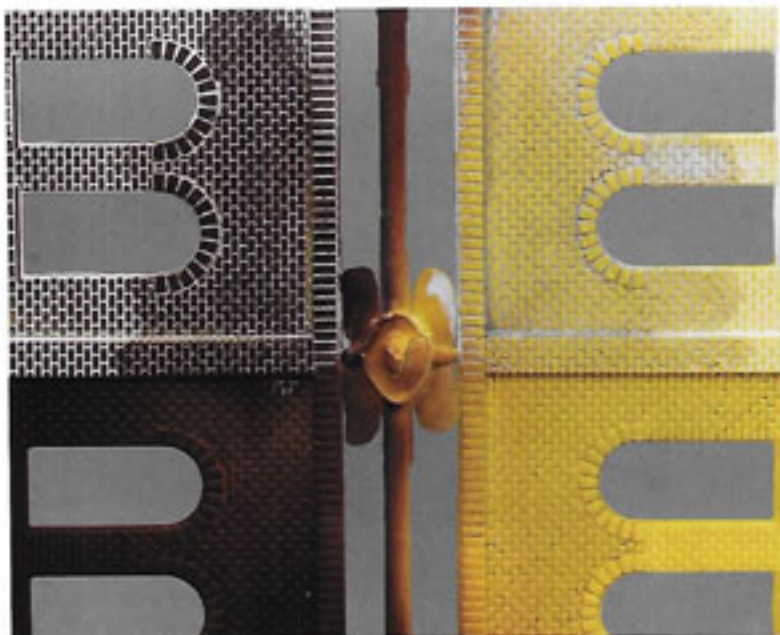
*Above: Curious to see how Roberts Brick Mortar worked on laser-cut wood, I used an ITLA-made chimney piece and applied the product. The lower half shows the finished chimney sides ready for assembly.*

time. This product is the only thing he sells unless you count the two different-size containers he offers. He started the business back in 1989 while scratch-building structures for his layout. And just like me, he wasn't satisfied with the

results of his brick mortar application.

This project was a fun learning experience. I'm sure glad I happened on this product because it really filled in a big hole in my modeling. This process, including the drying time, took me about





Above: I wanted to see how this product would react to having a stain applied over it. This is the same plastic brick wall section originally presented with only the Roberts Brick Mortar applied. Hunterline's Driftwood Weathering Mix, an alcohol-based stain, was applied over the Roberts product. As you can see, the mortar detail comes through, and the sides now include a weathered appearance from the stain application.

30 minutes to complete. And if I were to rate the difficulty of construction, I would say it's about at the bottom of the beginner level. It's downright easy, and anyone can get great-looking mortar from this product. What if you don't like the results? No problem! Just wash it off and start over.

If you're ready for that "next step" in your modeling, try this Brick Mortar from the Roberts Products Company. I'm sure you'll do fine, and I'm positive you will have fun with it! You'll find Roberts Brick Mortar available from hobby dealers, as well as direct from the manufacturer. The 4-ounce jar, as used and shown in this review, lists for \$15.95. A 1-ounce bottle is available for \$7.95. The manufacturer's website includes images, how-to pages, and more.

— DENNIS H. MURPHY

Roberts Products Company  
P.O. Box 270057  
Milwaukee, WI 53227  
[www.robertsbrickmortar.com](http://www.robertsbrickmortar.com)  
(414) 422-1371

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