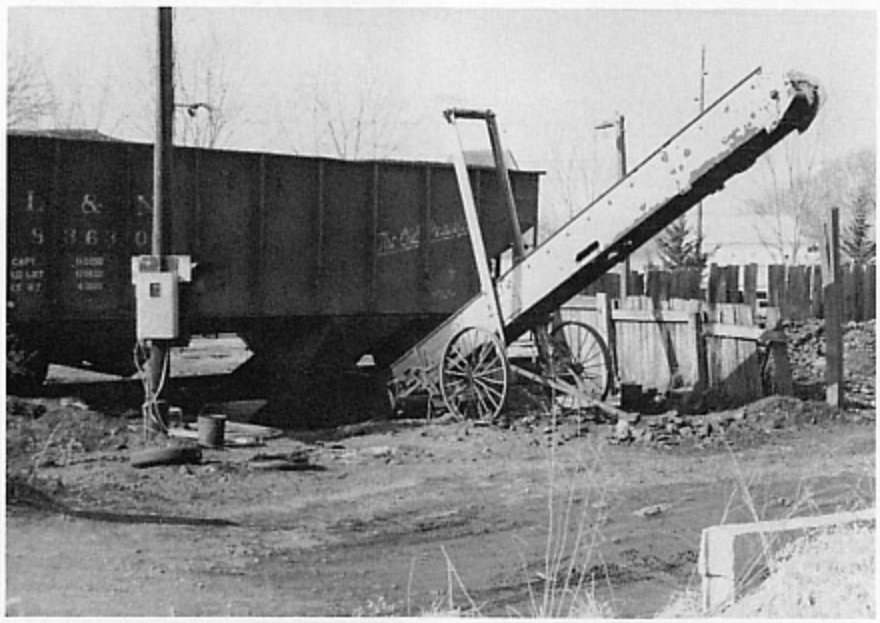
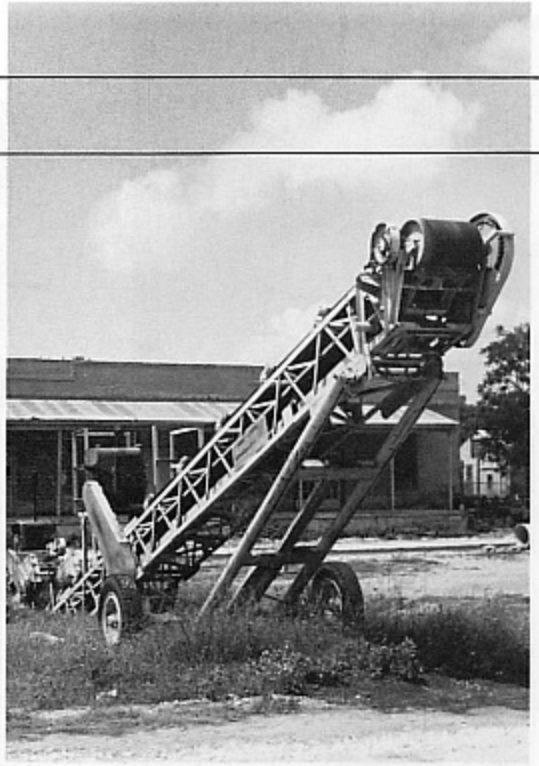


A coal unloading conveyor on Illinois Central at Hogenville, Ky. Modelers should note small details such as the electricity supply box on the power pole and the coal spilled around the site; adding these to your modeled scene will make it appear more realistic.



A two-stage hopper unloading facility at the SP yards in Austin, Texas. In the foreground is the portable second-stage conveyor; in the background at left is the smaller, permanent first-stage conveyor which lifts materials out of a concrete unloading pit.

Portable
Hopper Unloading Facilities

BY CYRIL DURRENBERGER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE AUTHOR

Railroad hopper cars are frequently sent to small customers who don't receive a large number of loads. The volume of traffic does not warrant building a permanent unloading facility, yet they must have a way to unload rail cars. In many cases, portable conveyors are used.

A simple method to unload coal from a hopper is illustrated by the photo taken on the Illinois Central at Hogenville, Ky. As it is equipped with wheels, the conveyor can be moved around on-site or even transported to another location. At Barron, Wis., on the Soo Line, a similar conveyor is used to unload covered grain hoppers.

There is a larger and more permanent unloading conveyor at the SP yards in Austin, Texas. Covered hoppers carrying lime and road materials are unloaded here. The hoppers are spotted over a receiving bin under the track and the car doors opened. The two-stage conveyor picks up the material and loads it into a truck. This conveyor has a larger capacity than the other two shown, and it has a wider conveyor belt, a larger support structure and a larger motor to provide power.

This type of unloading facility requires only a few inches of space on a model railroad spur. Dyna-Model Products and SS Limited make models of portable conveyors similar to the ones shown in the photos.

At Barron, Wis., on the Soo Line, this conveyor is used to unload grain from covered hoppers. Modelers may want to add details such as spilled grain and "weeds" (actually sprouts from spilled grain) on the ground surrounding the conveyor.