

How Many Cows?

Or, do people in other hobbies have these questions?

By Charles Malinowski

Regular readers to *The S Scale Resource Magazine* may have seen the introduction/update on my shadow-box layout for my local historical society. (December/January 2024 issue of *The S Scale Resource Magazine*) At this stage I'm working from the back to the front of the layout, building the large structures/business... bulk fuel dealer, MONON Depot, residential house and so forth.

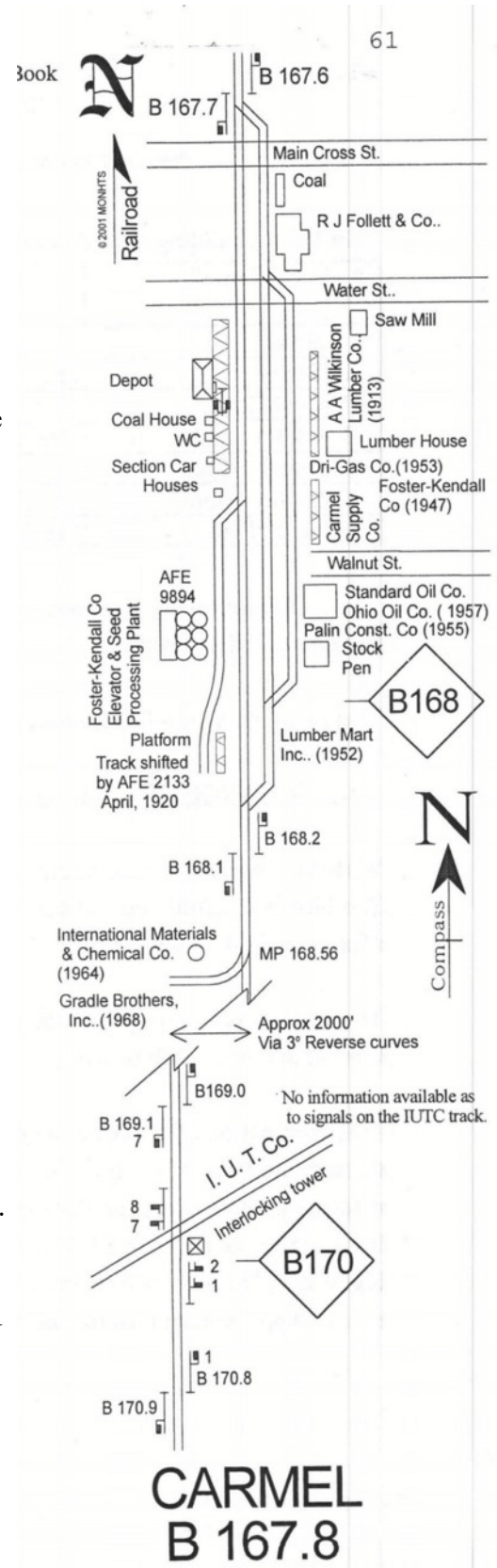
Utilizing a photo from the Society showing cattle loading presumably in Carmel and a Monon Railroad track chart from the Monon Railroad Historical Society, I determined that a stock pen for cattle loading was located on the Team Track. This seems like a cool addition to show visitors that 75-100 years ago Carmel shipped livestock. Hard to imagine next to the coffee shops and art galleries of today.



In my rolling stock collection I have a "Big 4" SHS stock car. Good start! Then I asked my good friend and neighbor Mick Hinkle to model a stock loading ramp on which he did a super job.

With no photos of the stock pen available, I asked myself how large would the pen need to be to make a rail shipment of cattle worth the investment in the pen and be profitable for the MONON to service.

Then I asked myself...HOW MANY COWS?





We are familiar with selective compression in our hobby. I'm applying it to the lumber yard for the Carmel Layout. In my allotted space I could model JUST Wilkinson Lumber Company! I didn't see a way to compress the stock pen and needed to determine its size.

Follow along....

A search on the Internet revealed two key **"facts"**:

1. "A typical cow weighs 1,300 pounds."
2. "...40 foot cars could be handling anywhere from 10 to 15 tons of cattle... An average of 12.5 tons of cattle per car."

NOW WE ARE GETTING SOMEWHERE!

Lets do the math:

12.5 tons = 25,000 pounds. 25,000 pounds divided by 1,300 pounds per cow equals 19 to 20 cows.

I have one model cow in my collection and it occupies a area of about 2 by 6 feet or 12 square feet.

THIS IS EXCITING! Drumroll please!

12 square feet per cow x 20 cows = 240 square foot stock pen.

Now I have it! 20 cows in a stock pen to get a full load to market.



As built Stock Pen

Turning again to the Internet, I searched for and found photos of Monon Railroad stock pens. This gave me a good idea of how high the pens needed to be. Next, *Model Railroader* 75th Anniversary CD to search for how-to articles and was rewarded with 2-3 super articles. I was hoping to fill space next to the Lumber Yard with the Stock Pen, but that didn't make sense as the stock would have required moving from the pen to the ramp with no fencing that would require additional (railroad?) workers to load the stock car. So it seemed more prototypical to place the pen next to the Team Track as indicated in the Track Chart.



As built Stock Pen

I settled on a pen that is 32 x 16 feet or 512 square feet, giving those cows lots of mosey room.

Wow, this is like work!

So, do other hobbies have to answer such crazy questions as this one?

If they don't, those folks are missing so much fun!

Happy modeling.

Next...what color would those cows be?

For additional information on Carmel Indiana and the MONON Railroad, please follow the links below. I'm most grateful for their support on the article and for Mick's help building the ramp.

Carmel Clay Historical Society: <https://carmelclayhistory.org>

Monon Railroad Historical Technical Society: monon.org