

## A Working Model of #91

by Lynne Belluscio

The Marion steam shovel on Gulf Road is frozen in time, but Chris Rueby is making a 1/16 working model of the 100-ton behemoth. He first tackled the bucket, which he brought by to show me, and it fits into my hand. He has now completed the boom and will bring it to LeRoy House on Sunday May 6 for a program about the shovel. The program will begin at 3 pm and everyone is invited to attend. Come a little early if you want to get a better look at Chris' project. I first met Chris last November when Bruce Mowbray and Michael Theriault from National Park Service arrived from Steamtown in Scranton to do a condition report. The three men crawled all around and through the steam shovel taking notes and photographs. Chris was taking measurements and a few weeks later he produced large scale drawings that he would use for his model. There were still a lot of questions, so Chris was able to track down patents from the Marion Steam Shovel Company for many of the working details.

Chris lives in Rochester and was a software engineer at Kodak until he retired a few years ago. When he was a kid he built wooden ship models and when he was 14 he became interested in machining. For Christmas he received a small lathe and started making metal parts for the ship models. Then he tried a few steam engine kits. He built model boats and cars and started building full-sized sailboats, canoes and kayaks. He even built a few clocks from scratch. After his retirement he built a twin-cylinder Corliss engine and a twin cylinder beam engine. He then tackled a model of a Lombard Log Hauler that was like a full-sized hauler at the Maine Forest and Logging Museum. As Chris says, "I never had any formal machining training, other than one class in mechanical drawing in high school." He took one class in copper-smithing at a local welding shop and the rest he has learned as he has gone along.



It's going to take a couple of years to complete the Marion #91, complete with boiler and three engines, but when it's finished it will work.

The largest engine is the hoisting engine which is mounted on the floor inside the shovel. It is a double cylinder horizontal type with a 12-inch bore and a 16-inch stroke. It powered the hoist. It could also engage the tractors to move the shovel. The swing engine, which has an 8-inch bore, also rests inside the shovel. It engages a chain that is wound around a large round platform. As the chain moves the platform, the boom swings from side to side. The third engine is called the crowd engine. It has an 8-inch bore and is mounted on the boom. It raises and lowers the dipper. The shovel, when it was in operation, required two teams of men. The four men who operated the shovel included the cranesman who sat on the left side of the boom and controlled the crowd engine. He also pulled that chain to release the bottom door of the bucket. The operator controlled the hoisting engine and the boom and when necessary, steered the shovel when it was moved. The engineer worked toward the back



of the machine and made sure the boiler was working properly and the fireman stoked the fire with coal and maintained the water level. The other team of men, set the jackscrews to stabilize the shovel and (when the shovel moved on railroad tracks) laid railroad track.

Please come to LeRoy House on Sunday, May 6 at 3 PM, to learn all about the #91 Marion Steam Shovel, and its part in LeRoy History. The program will include a brief business meeting of the Historical Society for the election of trustees. For election of three year term: Bonnie Coniber and Allison Cray; for election of a sec-

ond three-year term Anne Fox.

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