

Rural Coal Mining

"Mountain.scarm" models the action packed coal and logging industries, such as those that might be found in the Appalachian mountains.

Near the left side of the module, between the main line and the front of the module, is a rural passenger station such as the Atlas Rural Station #2009000 (or similar). This station serves the mine and company town (unseen off the forward edge of the module), as well as skiers from the city in winter. It was not uncommon for rural stations to have a daily mailbag for pickup, so nearby to the left of the station is a Lionel Mail Pickup Set #161 (or similar). Local farmers might keep a few cows, so it was not uncommon to have a few cans of milk waiting at the station for daily morning pickup, with the empties getting returned later in the day. Nearby to the right of the station therefore is a Lionel Operating Milk Car Unloading Platform (or similar). Stop here to manually load full cans into your operating milk car or to automatically unload empties. You can also toss mailbags from a passing operating mail car here. Because passengers, mail bags and milk cans can be transferred quickly, they can be serviced right on the main line.

Branching inward at the right edge of the module is a long spur. The first stop on the spur is a small animal pen. Typical animals driven over and penned here awaiting transportation are goats, sheep, or hogs. Due to the small size of these animals, they can be transported on bi-level stock cars. Pen construction would be a great craft project. All you need is a fence, water trough, and two ramps. The main ramp reaches the lower deck of any stock car, while the other ramp reaches the top level of a bi-level stock car.

To the left of the small animal pen is where log loading operations occur. Logging is a side business for the coal mine, growing from their internal need to use smaller logs for bracing. We will use the American Flyer Log Loader #787 (or similar, such as the Lionel Log Loader #164) operating accessory. If you are willing to sacrifice the small animal pen, you can even substitute the Lionel Conveyer Log Loader #364 to load logs at the same spot. Logs are assumed to be delivered by logging trucks arriving from the right. Should you choose not to use an operating accessory, place a scenery crane truck and a stack of logs at this location, and then manually put the logs on your cars by hand here.

To the left of the log loader is where coal loading operations occur. We will use the Lionel Coal Elevator #97 (or similar). Should you choose not to use an operating accessory, place a scenery Bachman Coaling Tower (or similar) at this location, then pour the coal into your cars by hand here. Coal is assumed to be delivered to this spot directly up from a below ground coal mine. Coal loading operations are simple enough that they can be done either by day or under lights after dark. There is room on the spur for a whole string of coal cars to be shifted back and forth under the loader.

The tracks tail to the left of the coal loader is used for unloading cars of supplies and cut lumber planking for the mine (unloading on the mine property side of the track, towards the module rear). It is also used for unloading boxcars carrying explosive dynamite after dark, when there are less people around if an accident occurs. A Cibolo Crossing Dynamite Igloo #CIB5 (or similar) should be placed on the mine property towards the back left corner of the module to hold the unloaded dynamite. The public property on the opposite side of the track, towards the module front, is the side where an occasional box car with items for the company town can be unloaded. To better indicate that this area of the spur is an unloading zone, you could optionally add a very tiny platform with shed, such as the Bachmann/Plasticville Trackside Building Loading Platform #160-45977, along the main line opposite the Mail Pickup Set, at the modules far left edge.

For after dark operations you should install a yard light on the mine property, such as the Lionel Yard Light #65 (or similar). Should you own one, the very end of the spur could serve as a place to store your snow plow car during the summer.