



Current Events

It would be hard to find a more powerful image of the fun and feel of electric toy trains in the interwar period than this illustration (top) that appears in *Electricity Comes to Us*. This children's book was written by Rose Wyler and Warren W. McSpadden with pictures by Th. D. Luykx (this name must be a pseudonym!). It was published by Grosset & Dunlap in 1937. Three-rail track and recognizable tinplate trains and accessories cover the floor as a boy engineer works the transformer.

The book's cover shows a GG1-style electric loco pulling a passenger train past a hydroelectric generating station in mountainous terrain. Another illustration inside this beautiful 10- by 9-inch color book shows how to wire a miniature structure for lights.

There is a subtle touch in the style of this book's artwork that anticipates postwar catalog illustration. One picture depicts a Mack Bulldog truck and an early intercity bus crossing a bridge beneath which speeds a Multiple Unit passenger train. A generating plant abuts the tracks and wires on towers and poles run everywhere. The MU train sports a pantograph reaching an overhead wire, but a close inspection of the drawing reveals that this railroad line has been constructed with inside-third-rail track, the dual feeds bringing to mind for this writer a certain New York City showroom layout still a dozen years in the future.

HWR

