It ran smoothly and quietly, and on two rails like the real thing! The store owner noticed my obvious fascination, explained the locomotive was a HO scale, and asked me a few questions about my ability to put things together. I must have answered satisfactorily. A short time later, my Lionel trains had been exchanged for just enough items and carefully selected by the owner to make up a basic HO scale set. Another wonderful discovery was my debt to dad had also been scaled down proportionally. It was everyone's childhood ignorance, so began a lifelong love affair of trains and model railroading.

Early efforts were educational, at times frustratingly slow, and others disastrous, with some incredible amounts of smoke. But the few hobby magazines I was able to buy showed what could be done and kept me interested through the years of formal education, military service, a budding career as a commercial airline pilot, and the advent of personal time. I learned to bring a notebook to write down John's answers to my unending questions. His influence on my modeling, like so many others, was enormous, and I can only dream of reaching the lofty artistic benchmark he set. His achievements were all the more incredible considering materials available back then. Whilte became more friend than acquaintance. His mischievous sense of humor was always evident, even when he couldn't meet and he hadn't yet fully abandoned his "biffy" phase. The "Alturas & Lone Pine," although vastly different than John's GO&O, was just as exciting to me, and I decided go to work. Much of what I had built over the years (now in my residence) was in order and got to where it needed to be. Whit became more friend than acquaintance. His mischievous sense of humor was always evident, even when he couldn't meet and he hadn't yet fully abandoned his "biffy" phase. The "Alturas & Lone Pine," although vastly different than John's GO&O, was just as exciting to me, and I decided to go to work. Much of what I had built over the years (now in my residence) was in order and got to where it needed to be.

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