



Dominick Laus, the Erie's enthusiastic duplicator in models of the company's harbor fleet in New York, is shown here adding the finishing touches to one of his tugboats. Many of the models which are shown in this picture were on display in the museum car which toured the railroad in the exhibit train which made a

two-month trip over the entire main line and branches last summer as part of the celebration of the centennial. Included in the photo is one of the company's float bridges (center, right) in the Jersey City terminal and a car float which is shown tied up at the float bridge.

—Photos by Jack Dimond

A BORN SAILOR

... born on the Hudson, Dominick Laus now captains an Erie tug, builds boat models for fun.

Among the men of Erie who "go out to sea," few if any have a richer waterfront background than young Dominick R. Laus, night shift captain of the Chicago, one of the tugs in the railroad's "navy" in New York harbor.

Now 34, Capt. Laus has been in the Erie "fleet" for 11 years. Literally he has been part of the navy since his birth. He was born on one of our barges. His father was a barge captain, and two of his brothers are "sailors" in our fleet.

Making a living on a tug is not Capt. Laus' only interest in boats. Since high school tugs and water

craft also have been his avocation. For about 15 years he has been a model builder of boats, especially tugs, and other harbor equipment.

The thousands of visitors who passed through the Erie's museum car when the centennial exhibit train traveled over the railroad last summer probably will recall vividly the models of some of the company's boats and harbor facilities in the New York area. Dominick built this display during his off-duty hours and loaned it to the Erie for exhibit purposes.

7 Months' Work

One of the models he built was the

tug Rochester. It took him seven months working about four hours a day when he had time to complete the replica. The miniature is built to scale, about one inch to five feet, and is 21 inches long.

Dominick started his hobby when he was attending Memorial High School in West New York, N. J., home of the Laus family. He developed a liking for the river on trips on the tugs with his older brother. Such trips were authorized at the time, and Dominick used to ride the tugs by the hour.

Since he began his hobby, he es-

timates he has built about 100 models but has not kept a record of them. Many of them were built to be sold or presented to tug captains who spent most of their adult lives on the tugs and through the ever-present models in their homes cherish the fond memories of many pleasant and exciting years spent on their craft.

Dominick has built models for tug captains of other railroads around New York as well as the Erie. He has built the boats in large and small size, the larger ones like the Rochester measuring 21 inches and the smaller ones measuring about seven and a half inches. He reports that he builds all his models from memory.

Loses Shop

Because he has lost his shop he has neglected his hobby in recent months. The shop was in the basement of the double home in which Dominick lives, and the landlord had to "evict" Dominick from his basement shop so that it could be used for other purposes.

Of the scores of models which he has built he has kept only the model of the Chicago of which he is captain.

Included in Dominick's display on the museum car are three tug boats, a giant Erie No. 5 floating derrick, two lighters, one float bridge and one car float.

Dominick lends many of his models to nearby schools for exhibits and occasionally displays them in the Erie's eastern terminal at Jersey City which also is the base from where Dominick operates the big Chicago.

Lacking a shop in which to continue model building, Dominick now is using his extra time to study for an extension of his tug captain's license. His present license does not permit him to enter Newark Bay although he can work the rest of the vast New York harbor.

The history of the Laus family is an amazing story of close ties to the Erie Railroad which has been the source of livelihood for two generations of the family.

Dominick's father, also named Dominick, no longer living, was an Erie barge captain for 20 years. During the elder Laus' career with the Erie, the barge captains' families lived on their barges. Dominick, Jr., was born on his father's barge at Richard Street, in the Erie Basin in Brooklyn on the Hudson River. His birthplace was Barge No. 292 of Erie's navy.

Become Landlubbers

The family eventually settled in West New York where Dominick attended school and where he lives now



After Dominick Laus had built his model of the tug Rochester he presented it to W. S. Rumsey, chief engineer of the actual tug who retired Oct. 1. Above, Dominick (right) presents the model to Engineer Rumsey who lives at Red Bank, N. J., and has been with the Erie since March 16, 1932.

with his wife, Madeline, and two daughters and one son. The children are Patricia, 9, Richard, 5, and Christine, 2.

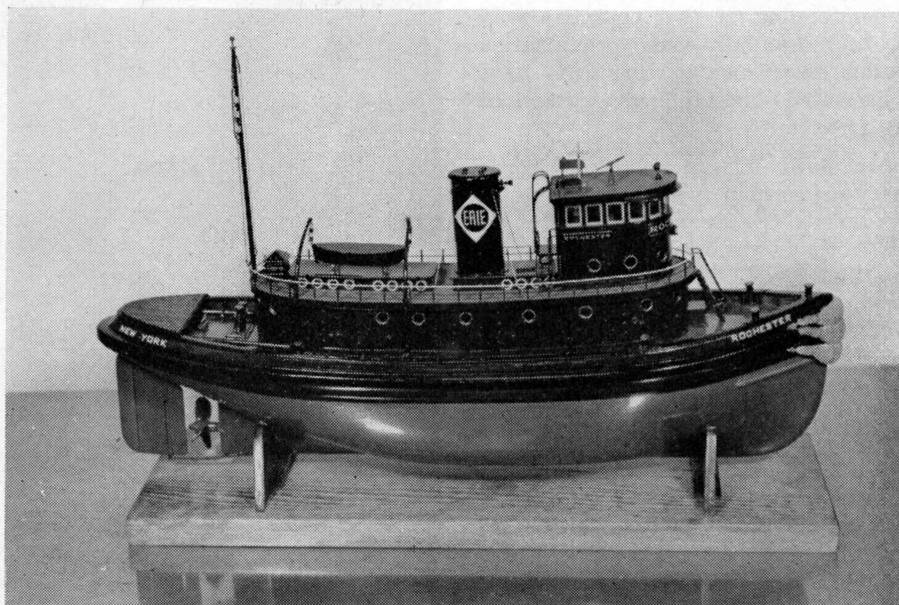
Dominick's two brothers still work for the Erie—in the navy, of course. The elder brother, John, is captain of the Rochester on the day shift, and Anthony is a tug mate on the Waverly.

Dominick, by the way, is the

youngest full-time tug captain on the Erie.

Although there probably are some hardy old salts who would dispute any claim that Dominick goes "out to sea," it would be difficult to find even salt water sailors who are more devoted to boats and who could boast more waterfront tradition than Dominick.

Only a fish could make that boast.



It took Dominick Laus seven months working about four hours a day to build this model of the Rochester, one of Erie's tugs in New York harbor. The model is 21 inches long and is built to a scale of approximately one inch to five feet.