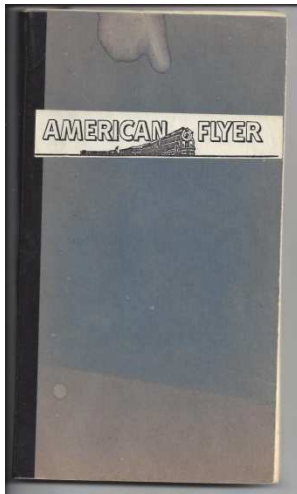
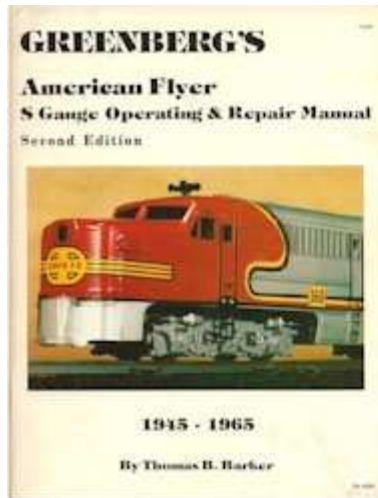


# Thomas Barker's Best Selling Guide For the Repair and Restoration of Gilbert American Flyer S Gauge Trains



First Edition



Second Edition



New Third Edition

American Flyer Club member Tom Barker's best selling guide to the repair and restoration of Gilbert American Flyer S Gauge trains is available in print once more. Now in its 40th Anniversary, Third Edition it is packed full of new information including a new chapter on cosmetic restoration and an expanded chapter on accessories. Tom includes a handy checklist that gives you the step-by-step procedures for servicing a steam or diesel engine when it comes into your roundhouse. The book's footprint has been made smaller so more precious space on a workbench is available. At the same time, the type has been made larger and all the Gilbert hook-up instructions have been reset for easier reading. The famous trouble shooting flow diagram has been redrawn and 85 new photographs have been added for a total of 120 close-up, detailed visual insights into how these prized model trains are assembled and serviced. If you are new to American Flyer S Gauge operating and collecting, this is a "must have guide" to your hobby. If you have a previous copy of Tom's book, you will certainly want to get this new version! Available on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

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## PREFACE to the 3rd Edition And a History of the AF Repair Guide

When I began collecting and operating Gilbert American Flyer S Gauge trains in the early 1970's, I renewed a childhood dream of a large operating pike with multiple trains on multiple levels. At the same time, I experienced parenthood with

Audrey, who when she was less than a year old would wake up around 2 in the morning and cry out, "Cars, cars (or more like caz, caz)." I had a loop of track under my desk in the den and we would put her on her tummy, start up the UP 4-8-4 and the Atlantic 4-4- 2 each pulling a string of freight cars. The smoke would puff out of the stacks and we thought we were either drugging her with the smoke or lulling her with the motion, but in about 5 minutes she was fast asleep! I would gently carry her back to her crib and only morning would wake her again. The trains were magic! And they still are! Audrey is grown up now and has two of the most wonderful boys, Jesse (11), and Tim (8). While they live about 325 miles away in Amherst, Mass., they get to visit the trains and are as marveled as their mother was back in 1971.

My son Greg was born in 1973 and he too became a train lover. He and his friend, Mark who lived next door, spent countless hours as I ran the trains around my room sized pike. His favorite accessory was Gabe, the Lamplighter. I made a movie (available on a DVD now) using the super 8 technology of the time depicting the history of the AC Gilbert Company and showing the fabulous AF trains with my kids and the neighbors.

In this same era, I learned about various train collecting organizations from local friends who were collectors in the Rochester, NY area. Stan Slade (who now runs one of the largest train stores in New York State) was my first introduction to the world of collecting. Back then, Stan had one of the largest AF S Gauge collections I had ever seen. I remember going upstairs in his house and how my eyes popped open to see all the engines and cars on shelves, in boxes, and just about everywhere there was space to house them! Stan has been an AF friend for all these years and is always happy to give his sage advice when I need it. When I decided to reduce the size of my collection, Stan was the buyer.

However, it was another AF friend who really helped me build my collection and learn how to fix these fine trains. John Paille, was building his collection at the same time I was getting into operation and collecting. John would buy an entire collection, cull from it the pieces he needed, and sell the other items which would often pay for the cost of his initial investment in the collection. John was good at business, but admittedly not up to repair. He wanted the items he sold to be operational, so he would send me 5 engines and I would check them out, fix if needed, and restore to factory condition. My "pay" was one of the engines! Besides building my collection, I was building my skills in AF repair. Another train friend, Craig MacMillan, who was an officer in the newly formed Toy Train Operating Society (TTOS) suggested that I might be up to writing for a Chicago based magazine edited by Don Heimburger. I wrote to Don and he said the magazine, S Gaugian, needed a repair column.

I felt up to the task and “The Roundhouse” began with the May/June, 1973 issue and ran under my authorship for nearly 15 years. Roundhouse is still a part of that magazine. My articles were a mixture of a topic of my choice and answers to letters (I got thousands) from readers who needed particular help. I began to see the potential for a book based on the many Roundhouse columns and I began typing out a book in a handy 4 x 6 inch 6-ring bound format. (This was long before computer driven word processors). I “printed” the book after hours at Xerox where I was employed as a design engineer. I began advertising the book (in S Gaugian Magazine) in March of 1974 and until Greenberg Publications put it into an “official” book format in 1979, I sold nearly 500 handmade copies. I thought the market had been saturated, but the Greenberg version sold over 10,000 copies!

Greenberg was acquired by Kalmbach (Model Railroader, Classic Toy Trains magazines) in 1991 and that company continued to sell the book until it went out of print about 10 years later. The sales volume had slowed at that point and Kalmbach decided not to invest in a new printing. In 2001, Kalmbach returned the rights to me and I made a scanned Adobe Acrobat® version of the book available on a CD.

My AF Web Site began in 2000 and I have had over 3,000 e-mails on AF questions since then. Many are in regard to values, but most are on how to get the trains running for grandchildren. I reply to everyone and in cases of grandmothers in dire need, fixed the trains for free.

I always had wanted to get the book back in print as a hard copy and with the advent of print on demand technologies and Amazon’s CreateSpace, I am now able to fulfill that dream.

This version, the Third Edition, has much of the original First and Second Editions material that has been so helpful in allowing operators and collectors to restore these prized trains. I have reset all the type (in a larger font) and restored the original photographs and included many more new photographs along with new material on accessories. A new chapter on cosmetic restoration has been added and of course, this rather long Preface and History.