

"The three of you together. Now that's a picture only Charles Addams could draw."

- Cary Grant, in *North by Northwest* (1959)

Charles Samuel Addams was born in Westfield NJ on this date in 1912. The family was distantly related to U.S. presidents John Adams and John Quincy Adams, despite different spellings of their surnames.

Artistically inclined but touched by a "different" sense of humor, Charles drew cartoons for his high school literary magazine. He studied at Colgate University, at the University of Pennsylvania, and at Grand Central School of Art. Addams' first full-time job was with *True Detective* magazine, where one of his duties was to retouch photographs of corpses.

In 1938, *New Yorker* magazine began publishing the cartoons for which Addams is best known. Eventually titled *The Addams Family*, the series depicted a well-heeled and loving family who seem oblivious that outsiders are repulsed by their macabre tastes and bizarre lifestyle. Characters (who remained nameless until 1964) included the suave and debonair

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Gomez; his wife Morticia (supposedly inspired by Addams' first wife); their children Pugsley and Wednesday; Uncle Fester; Grandma Frump; and their Frankenstein-like butler, Lurch. The family's Gothic mansion was inspired, in part, by College Hall at the University of Pennsylvania.

Addams' cartoons were the basis for an ABC-TV series (1964-1966), in which we learned that Gomez is a model railroader. He derives his greatest pleasure from staging train wrecks, which he usually precipitates by setting off explosive charges using a hand-held detonator.

Two different layouts appeared during the TV series. The first one featured some of Lionel's finest products from the postwar era, including Super "O" track, a #2348 M&StL GP9, a 2037-style steamer, and warbonnet F3s pulling what appear to be AMT aluminum streamliners. Sometimes the 2-6-4 was shown running without its tender. This prompted Ed Samsen to suggest that rolling stock lettered LIONEL was omitted to avoid having to pay royalties for use of the trademark. However, a #214 girder bridge with the *LIONEL* name was prominently visible in the same scene.

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/toytrains/photos/albums/1309084245>

A later setup had 031 track, ATSF warbonnet ALCOs with 2400-series cars, and a Scout-style 2-4-2 with 027 freight cars. Maybe simple economics forced the show's producers to blow up less-expensive models? Or was it because Uncle Fester (who generated electricity by chomping on a light bulb) couldn't crank out enough amps to run those twin-motored F3s ?

Sometimes scenes from the Super "O" and 031 layouts were juxtaposed within the same episode. Producers must have figured that most viewers wouldn't notice the difference.

Train scenes from ABC-TV series:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kS-vk9mPR8>

*The Addams Family* birthed a franchise that eventually included two animated TV series (1973-1975 and 1992-1993); a second live-action TV series (1998-1999); a Broadway musical (722 performances in 2010-2011); four feature-length films (1991, 1993, 1998, and a fourth movie expected to hit theaters in October 2019); ten anthologies of Addams' cartoons; at least six video games; and countless Halloween costumes. How long before these will be joined by a commemorative boxcar?

Train scene from 1991 movie:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOICSNCuBvQ>

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