

# Dispatch

*Dedicated to the historic preservation and/or modeling of the former CMStP&P/Milw. "Lines West"*

Volume 2, Issue No. 4

OCTOBER 1989

## The MILWAUKEE ROAD and the MONTANA RAILROAD

### 3/4 of a century in Harlowton

#### Part III

By Art Jacobsen — additional research by Dale Martin

The steam era ended in Harlowton by 1954 on both the North Montana Line and the main. Initial dieselization was an almost all EMD event except for the appearance of the F-M's in 1947-50, and on rare occasions in the form of "C-liners" A-B-A- or "Baby" H-16-44 "Trainmasters" in 1954-55. Cab units ruled the main on the Trans-Missouri division, and the North Montana Line saw the delivery of the earliest SD-7 models. The FT's did make occasional trips as far as Lewistown on the branch in this period as well. By the end of the 1950's, however, the first freight diesels had all been traded for the MILW's "standard" road freight of the day — the GP-9. GP-9's had also made appearances earlier on passenger service, and now three or four unit sets of them arrived/departed daily on the trains #263/#264. Before the Great Falls passenger service was discontinued in mid-1955, one of the two "homemade" passenger units, #5401, made at least a few trips on the North Montana Line. This was an attempt to maintain a passenger service at bare minimum levels short of gas-electric operation. The #5401 (and identical unit #5400) were built in the Milwaukee, WI shops in 1948 with an EMD 6-cylinder 567B prime mover, and an F-M singleequalized A-1-A power truck (the rear half of these units were baggage compartments on a standard 2-axle outside equalized passenger truck). Initially intended for service on the "SM" line between Austin, MN and LaCrosse, WI (and also on the original M & StP line north from Austin to Minneapolis), these units actually had less tractive effort than a GE 44-ton centercab diesel. The result was the #5401 had to be rescued by either G-7 or G-8 class "Ten-Wheeler", or an F-5 "Pacific" on any grade that exceeded 3/4% - of which there were numerous places on the North Montana Line between Great Falls and Harlowton.

During the second half of the 1950's passenger power assignments out of Harlowton went through major changes. Following the delivery of the EP-4's in 1950-51, the MILWAUKEE upgraded two classes of

electric locomotives at the Tacoma shops. The first was the re-appearance of the EP-1 class passenger GE motors in two streamlined sets. The #E-22 A/B and #E-23 A/B, the "A" units were fully streamlined on the cab ends with the rooflines getting additional casing on both units. Assigned to the "Columbians," they were also used on the "Olympian Hiawatha's" when trains #17/#18 were cut back to Marmarth in Spring, 1955. The EP-1's were reassigned to the Coast division in 1955, and the EP-2 "Bi-Polars" were operated out of Harlowton. The five EP-2 motors had been streamlined the previous year, the #E-5 at Tacoma and the other four in the Milwaukee shops. For the next five years the former "trademark" locos of the Coast division would change-out with EMD cabs at the west side of Harlowton's depot while the lesser-known former passenger units of the Rocky Mountain division — the EP-3 Westinghouse motors were all retired and scrapped. In the summer of 1960 trains #15/#16 no longer changed power at Harlowton as the EP-2's were withdrawn from regular service. The standard power that remained until the end of MILWAUKEE's transcontinental passenger service in early 1964 became E-9A/B/FP-7A sets (or a single E-9A/F-7B/FP-7A). However, for a brief time in September, 1960, at least one EP-2 found itself in the unusual service of "yard goat" at Harlowton. The #15/#16 were cut back to Deer Lodge in late May, 1961 and the power on these trains was reduced accordingly to pairs of FP-7A's or an occasional E-9A/B set. The trains, unofficially known as the "City of Deer Lodge" were terminated at Aberdeen, SD beginning early in 1964.

Mainline freight traffic underwent major changes during and after the final years of passenger service. First the EF-4's were equipped with the diesel m/u controls developed by Chief Electrical Engineer L. A. Wylie. Trains #263/#264 now operated with "Sputnik" lashups of two "Joes" with a GP-9 west from Harlowton into the mid-1960's. A new service began in 1963 with

trains #261, the "XL Special" and #262, the "Thunderhawk" which first operated with three diesel sets of GP-30's and GP-9's. Often, however, the "all-diesel" sets were augmented with single EF-4's as tonnages increased. By the end of the 1960's higher horsepower units from EMD had arrived in the form of GP-35's and GP-40's followed by SD-45's. GE had returned to the locomotive market with their own Universal series of which MILWAUKEE acquired the three most popular 4-axle types — the U-25b, U-28b, and U-30b. Except for a brief period following the introduction of the GE units, Harlowton remained an all-EMD terminal and service area for diesels.

The early to mid-1950's also brought changes to the yard and electrical operations in the area. The ES-2 class steeple cab #E-83 was retired on January 18, 1952 and replaced by a GE boxmotor. There were a total of three such units used in Harlowton, all classified as ES-3's. They were: #E-55A (originally an EF-1 #10207A, built as GE 5032A in January 1916) which lost its other cab unit to the EF-5 set as E-37D in July, 1951. The #E-55 was retired on May 22, 1964. Next was the #E-56B, originally the #10209B (GE #5108B/ALCO #55087 built February, 1916) which had its other "A" cab converted to a slug for an EF-2 motor as #E-36C in March, 1953. The #E-56B became a slug itself on the former Coast division as part of the EF-5 class motor #E-50C in February, 1960. It was subsequently retired in Tacoma in early 1969. The #E-57B was built as the GE #5110B in February, 1916 and had its "A" cab also placed on a former Coast division EF-5 motor as the #E-42C in March, 1950. The #E-57B has worked the longest of the three ES-3 boxmotor switchers both as a single unit, and with "bobtail/slug" motor #E-47D (Spring, 1971 through early 1972 when it was wrecked and rebuilt) as #E-34C (March, 1972 until the end of electric operations). Electric operations were upgraded with modifications in the substations. The commutators on the gen-

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## MONTANA RAILWAY

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erators were shimmed to produce 3400-VDC in the trolley to improve paired EF-4 power ratings. Also the substation controls were modified with remote switching panels. This allowed Two Dot to control either Loweth or Francis (or both) substations, or be controlled from either of them.

The final decade of MILWAUKEE ROAD operations in Harlowton was the one of greatest change since the arrival of the CM&StP Ry. in Montana and the 1907-1917 period. The original mainline electric power — the GE boxmotors — had been relegated to helper and "dead" freight or work train service. Essentially all boxmotor freight operations between Harlowton and the next division point west (Three Forks) came to an end by 1970. Extra movements for livestock shipments in the Fall were handled either as part of the #263/#264 or a new set of mainline trains — the #265/#266. These new trains were for all intents "dead freights" elevated to the status of numbered operations rather than "DFW" or "DFE" symbols on lineups. However, they did revive the practice of ten years or more before with either all-"Joe" or two "Joes" and a "Geep" power combination. East from Harlowton they even boasted EMD F-units by 1971,

unfortunately they were removed as numbered trains by 1973.

The MILWAUKEE began experimenting with slave and master radio control operations in the late 1960's. In the early 1970's trains #263/#264 began operating regularly with slave units added/removed at Harlowton. These were GP-40's at first, then SD-45's were also modified as slave units. Once again Harlowton became the eastern end of a relatively new operation on the MILWAUKEE ROAD. Throughout this final decade of the railroad's operations it became the major shop for radio control mechanisms. With the arrival of the first order of SD40-2's in September 1972, the final chapter of all operations began. Within a year trains #263/#264 became the electrically powered varieties while the premiere trains of the previous decade operated three and four unit sets of "dash twos." During this period the formal announcement was made about ending all electric operations within "two to three years," and by Fall, 1973 there were no electrically operated trains west of Deer Lodge.

June 14, 1974 was the date of the last electrically operated freight out of Harlowton as "Joes" #E79/E-71 departed that morning with two SD40-2's and a GP-9. The yard was worked by one of the original GE boxmotors until late the next night, however. This was the #E-57B which had been matched with the #E-47D since 1971. This motor, reclassified as an ES-3 from an EF-1, had been working Harlowton regularly for over 20 years. The #E-57B was originally a single cab unit that replaced the ES-2 steeple cab in Harlowton, #E-83 which was retired in mid-January 1952, following a wreck in the yard. The #E-47D "bobtail" slug unit was also involved in a wreck in the yard twenty years later. It was rebuilt with parts salvaged from the #E-34C and received this retired unit's number. Throughout the remainder of the summer of 1974 the #E-57B sat by the sand tower east of the roundhouse. The #E-34C (2nd, ex-#E-47D) was scrapped.

The yard was now worked by diesels, usually power from the North Montana Line trains such as the original SD-7 or SD-9 units. The North Montana did receive new power during the mid-1970's. First came the GP38-2's beginning with the non-dynamic brake types (#350-355) in mid-1973, then "SD-10's" and the unique SDL-39's the following year. Also there had been rare ventures of GP-35's and GP-40's to Lewistown and back, similar to the first EMD freight diesel trips of a quarter-century before. Both the yard and the NML also saw the arrival of the MILWAUKEE's last new diesels in Spring, 1976 when the MP-15AC's arrived. A more unusual diesel locomotive that first appeared in 1971 (in Harlowton) were the five FP-45's reassigned after Amtrak replaced the passenger trains on Lines East operations. These were the largest diesels owned by the MILWAUKEE, and they regularly ran

through or were serviced at Harlowton into the latter half of the 1970's. The GE diesels only appeared during the times they were transferred between the former Coast/Washington division and Lines East.

The last two years of MILWAUKEE ROAD operations in Harlowton were the most varied in terms of motive power since the end of electrification. For the first time since the MONTANA R.R. had leased N. P. 4-6-0's, "foreign" locomotives were making regular appearances. Three Butte, Anaconda & Pacific Ry. GP-9's (#105, #106, and #107) were leased beginning in January, 1978 for yard service. One of these units regularly worked in Harlowton through the Spring of that year. Fourteen Canadian National SD-40's were leased in January for Lines East freights, and by the Fall of that year these had begun operating between Harlowton and the Twin Cities. All fourteen had no dynamic brakes and were largely confined to the eastern end of the division. However, in late October, they began running through (as trailing units) to Tideflats Yard in Tacoma. Another unusual event that came within a week after the end of electrification was the detouring of Amtrak's #9/#10- "North Coast Hiawatha" service. Due to high water on the Yellowstone River undermining the center pier of the bridge east of Livingston, SDP-40F's with the usual "rainbow" of former owners cars ran through Harlowton for a week in late June, 1974. Similar occurrences took place in 1978 with the power being replaced with F-40's and the cars in a uniform Amtrak paint scheme. By 1979 only 12.4% of Harlowton's labor force was employed by the MILW according to an I.C.C. report that year. This amounted to 74 workers, however the payroll was fairly large for the area's economy as it totaled \$1.7 million that year.

The final six months of operations were a return to scenes of the decade before, minus electrics and older rolling stock. The SD40-2's were assigned to Lines East and replaced with the units they had bumped in 1972-74: GP-40's and GP-35's. GP-30's even reappeared although they were mostly operated in helper service in Butte and Haugan. The North Montana Line trains were powered by combinations of SD-7's, SD-9's, SD-10's, SDL-39's, GP-20's, GP-9's, and even an FP-7A (#97C). This was the first time in nearly thirty years that a cab unit was used on the branch. Cleanup trains began full operations following the last #200 train in early March, 1980. These were somewhat sporadic and towards the end of the month there were times when the main and branch lines were idle for days. The last cleanup arrived on March 23 and departed two days later, leaving an empty yard, roundhouse and depot with nearly three-quarters of a century of memories. The rails rusted in place for over two years before the contract

### MILWEST Management

MILWEST was organized at a meeting in Spokane, WA on October 24, 1987. It is composed of individuals interested in the historic preservation and/or modeling of the (former) CM&PS/CM&StP/CMStP&P/MILW Lines West. Officers are:

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scraper arrived, while other features such as the turntable and unique footbridge just west of the depot were removed in the summer of 1980.

Ten years after the final summer of The MILWAUKEE ROAD in Harlowton there remain a few reminders of its' presence. The depot and freight house still stand, both in very dilapidated condition, as does the 17-stall roundhouse, boilerhouse and the former engine service area (diesel fuel tank, water tank and sand tower). Even the former stockyards along the old North Montana Line grade still stand, although the railroad ended livestock movements almost a year before filing the final bankruptcy. At one time a wood coal dock stood above the service tracks east of the sand tower and an icehouse occupied the middle of the North Montana Line's "wye."

The best preserved reminder of the former railroad's operations in Harlowton is the #E-57B boxcab switcher. The unit was repainted and externally restored when it was moved to its' present location at the southwest corner of Central Avenue and US Highway 12 in 1985, after ten years of vandalism and weathering in Chief Joseph Park west of the depot.

The North Montana's Line's grade under US Highways #12 and #191 overpass at the east side of town is still quite evident, while the former mainline grade east from the yard has been obliterated in spots by adjacent landowners.

Following the end of steam in the mid-1950's, the most visible railroad presence outside of the tracks themselves in any community was the depot. Lavina's depot was closed and removed in the mid-1960's, and the unique two-story joint agency depot at Slayton was gone in the preceding decade (although the footings of this structure are still visible beside the former MILW mainline grade just west of the BN's bridge). Ryegate had a two-story depot that was replaced by a standard "crackerbox" type in the same era as Slayton's removal. Shawmut's "boxcar" type office was removed following the first bankruptcy and reorganization in the 1920's. Two Dot and Martinsdale had new depots built with the new railroad at the close of the "Jawbone" era, the former was demolished in 1972 while the latter stands today beside the abandoned grade. Loweth retained its' boxcar depot into the end of helper operations there in the 1930's when EF-2 and EF-3 class boxmotors appeared. Ringling replaced Dorsey as an agency for the upper Smith River and Sixteen Mile Creek country. The agency remained used until 1980 and the depot building still stands today. On the North Montana Line, Judith Gap's and Straw's depots (the latter the original

MONTANA R.R. Harlowton agency) were gone by the end of passenger service in Spring, 1955. The agencies in the "boxcar" depots at Oka and Garneill ended much earlier.

Remains of the electrified operations are few. Two Dot's substation #1 was demolished in 1984 although the transformer and switchyard remains for the town's power supply. Loweth's building remains facing the former MONTANA R.R. grade — the only substation not facing the mainline after the 1956 line relocation moved the main into a deep cut to the south. The 100KV substation "buss" line still exists — it was sold to Montana Power Co. (the original supplier for the electrification) in the summer of 1974. Without the electrification, communities like Two Dot, Martinsdale, Ringling and White Sulphur Springs may not have had electricity until the advent of the Rural Electrification Administration nearly twenty years later. The last section of catenary on the former Rocky Mountain division was on the east side of Loweth on the 1956 relocation grade until Fall of 1977. The former mainline grade itself through Groveland and above Lennep has been obliterated by agricultural activities.

Standing on the U. S. Highway #191 overpass at Harlowton's southwesterly edge and looking east is a large flat field of weeds. This was once a nine-track yard (actually it was eight tracks when #4 track was removed for trolley poles in 1915) switched by 0-6-0's "Ten-Wheelers," and the diminutive power of the CM&PS — replaced by ES-2 class steeple cabs and later a boxmotor. The first overpass at this location was a Warren truss type (replaced by the present structure in 1970) identical to one just west of Roundup — underneath it rolled the heavy L-3's and S-2's of the prewar mainline freights from Miles City and Lines East, followed by F-units in grey and red stripes or orange and maroon. Looking to the west up the Musselshell Valley can be seen (on most

days) the low range of the Castle Mountains on the horizon with the sharper outlines of the Crazy peaks to the southwest. Down this three-mile tangent to the confluence with the original MONTANA R.R. grade rolled the K-class "Prairies" and the first L-class 2-8-2's of the Puget Sound era, followed by the largest steam owned by the railroad — the N-class 2-6-6-2's. Then a new era of motive power, freights of wooden cars nearly a mile long pulled by pairs of black EF-1 class GE boxmotors, and the "Olympian" and "Columbians" behind giant Westinghouse EP-3 motors with their quill drives howling. Freights lengthen and the boxmotors add a unit, passenger power enters the streamlined era in the form of chrome-nosed opposed-piston power in orange, maroon and grey. The electric power follows suit, including units designed for service a continent away now running with the diesels. One passenger train vanishes while the remaining one now runs with a symbol of the Coast division, then again with UP colors and all-EMD cabs. The boxmotors vanish to the west (except for the switcher), and the remaining motors now run in single with four (or more) "second generation" all-EMD power. Another pioneering venture in motive power utilization appears with all-diesel freights of three units leading with two in mid-train under radio control. A fleet of the most prolific 6-axle diesel EMD ever built arrives, the electrics vanish, and the parade of orange and black continues relieved only by a flash of red-white-and-blue for a national event. The catenary disappears, freight manifests change to blocks of containers, piggy-backs, auto racks, and mechanical refrigerators all trailed by variations of orange bay-window cabooses. Then it all comes to an end — the rails rust and are gone, leaving the valley with a long straight "hump" between the cottonwood trees and the wind . . .

## Olympiagram

*The title of this section derives from the former newsletter for passengers on the "Olympian" (trains No. 15/16) west from Harlowton, Montana. Published in Lewistown, Montana between 1910 and 1918, it provided the latest wire-service news of the day.*

### MILW SD40-2's Further Information

Fred Hyde passed along the following further details regarding the return of the SD40-2's to Montana we reported on last issue. Fred reports that the 6349 (MILW 182) is at the SOO Shoreham facility, not at Livingston. Fred also reports that SOO 6387 (MILW 200) was retired on 7/2/89 at the lease expiration. It was wrecked at Pandora, WA in 1977. The unit was rebuilt using parts from a wrecked Central of New Jersey SD40 and returned to service in early 1979. It was

equipped with "pace setter" and ballasted to 390,000 lbs. for use on joint BN-MILW coal trains. Later (1984), the 200 was certified for Canadian operation and was common on run-throughs between St. Paul and Winnipeg, Manitoba when not on coal trains. It was assigned to St. Paul for maintenance. It was the first unit rebuilt with the post-1976 corrugated radiators seen on later SD40-2's. The unit now resides at Shoreham.

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# OLYMPIANGRAM

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## U-25B #5057 Undergoing Restoration

Rick Yaremko passed along a page from the newsletter of the Feather River Rail Society (FRRS) that detailed some of the restoration efforts they are putting forth on former MILW #5057, a GE U-25B. This loco spent most of its MILW operating life on the western end of the MILW in our MILWEST area of interest. The loco was last owned by Western Technical College in Sidney, NB, and was used in a contract program to train military personnel in locomotive maintenance. The locomotive was donated to the FRRS and is located at Portola, CA. Beginning June 23, 1989 they were able to start and run the prime mover for 15 hours over several days after it having set idle for over three years. The consensus is that the major systems on the loco are in basically good shape but a great deal of "TLC" will need to be applied to the details to put it into proper condition. It seems a lot of sheet metal needs replacement or repair as well. On September 4, 1989, they were able to actually move #5057 under its own power. Plans are to have the loco fully restored and repainted within two years. Apparently, visitors are welcome at the repair site, and I'm sure they would welcome donations towards the restoration work.

They have other units in their collection but this is their first "running" GE unit. Any others running are EMD.

## Editor's Notes

The MILWEST Board of Directors had a breakfast meeting while in Harlowton to decide on several matters, and the following decisions were made:

**NEW MEMBERS AND BACK ISSUES OF THE DISPATCH** — Milwest Secretary, Ron Hamilton, reported continued growth with new members signing up regularly. We welcome this growth but it has created a problem with regard to back issues of the Dispatch. It has been Milwest policy so far to provide all issues for the year to a new member when they joined. We have also had a demand for purchased back issues from other members. We have now run out of some issues for 1989 so we had to decide whether to have copies re-printed, or something else. After checking costs it was decided that it was too expensive to re-print issues. We decided on two steps which should solve the problem. First, we will

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# MILWAUKEE MODELS

In order to help the readers of the Dispatch keep informed on what Milwaukee models will be coming available, I will — via this column — be passing on the information received through my various contacts. Future columns will provide updates as available.

## OVERLAND MODELS

### Model

#	Scale	Description	Status
5315	HO	SD40-2, #130-176, early version	avail
5316	HO	SD40-2, #130-176, late version	avail
1264	HO	Terminal Caboose, original	avail
1265	HO	Terminal Caboose, rebuilt	avail
5482	HO	EMD F-3 phase II A, #80 A-D, 83 A-D	avail
5483	HO	EMD F-3 phase II B, #80 B-C, 83 B-C	avail
5649	HO	EMD F-7 A	avail
5650	HO	EMD F-7 B	avail
5651	HO	EMD F-7 A	avail
5652	HO	EMD F-7 B	avail
5739	HO	EMD F-9 A, passenger version	avail
5740	HO	EMD F-9 A, freight version	avail
5741	HO	EMD F-9 B	avail
6029	HO	EMD E-9 A, #30-35	avail
6030	HO	EMD E-8 B, #30 B	avail
6074	HO	EMD SD-45, #4000-4005	reserve
3163	HO	70-ton refrigeration car URTX 89025-49	reserve

## NJ INTERNATIONAL, Inc.

602A	HO	40-foot single door ribbed box	avail
602B	HO	40-foot double door ribbed box	avail
602C	HO	50-foot single door ribbed box	avail
602D	HO	50-foot double door ribbed box	avail

Above NJ models are also imported in "O" scale.

## OVERLAND MODELS

H5027	HO	FM H-12-44, #740-744	avail
H5165	HO	EMD SD-7, #504-515	avail
H5170	HO	EMD SD-7, #538, dynamic brakes	avail
H2144	HO	16-foot pantographs for "Little Joes"	avail
H2145	HO	16-foot pantographs for "Boxcabs"	avail
H2109	HO	Hiawatha passenger car decals	avail
H2780	HO	"Chippewa" 4-6-2 decals	avail
H1446	HO	G-6ps 4-6-0, #1100-1113	avail
H5810	HO	EMD FP-7 A, #90 A-C, 105 A-C	avail

## PACIFIC FAST MAIL

HO	2-6-6-2	reserve
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Numerous people have asked me what has become of the 1984 announced Cascade Models Milwaukee Road cupola steel caboose. My last contact with Cascade was Summer of 1986 and it was expressed that they were still "taking reservations." Cascade Models no longer advertises so I presume they are defunct. We should look to Overland Models, who have done such an excellent job for the Milwaukee modeler, to try to have this model caboose imported. Since it fits both the steam and diesel era and was in service into the 1980's, many of us would like to add this model to our collections.

— Richard Yaremko



## EDITOR'S NOTES

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print more copies of each issue, thereby making a larger back issue file to fill needs, and second, we will photocopy issues as required to fill out new members needs. All back issues will be available to any member who wants them for \$2.50 U. S. per copy as long as available. Our decision for now is that when an issue is gone, then its gone for good. We will not re-print, although demand or other circumstances may cause us to reconsider.

**RELEASE OF MILWEST MAILING LIST** — MILWEST has had requests from several vendors of MILW-related items for a copy of our mailing list so they may mail promotional material to the members. The board decided to make the list available to these vendors beginning in January, 1990. This does not mean we will release the list to any and all who ask. Each request will have to be considered and decided on by the Board. The reason for delaying this first release until January is to give any member who does not want their name included on the list, ample time to notify the MILWEST Secretary, Ron Hamilton, that they do not want their name released. If you do not want your name released, you must notify Ron Hamilton by January 1, 1990 or it will be included in the release. You may also at any time in the future request that your name not be released but that won't keep it out of any releases made prior to your request. We decided to release the list to the vendors currently requesting it because we feel it provides another member benefit in the form of information about MILW items they may be interested in if they are made aware of the item's existence, and where to get the item.

**CHARGE FOR "WAYBILLS" ADS FOR ITEMS FOR SALE** — MILWEST has had requests from vendors to place ads in our "Waybills" section of the Dispatch. We had already been discussing whether we should provide free ad space, even to the members to sell items. The Board decided to allow ads from vendors for a fee, but the ads must be for MILW items only. We don't care if the vendor sells other items as well, the ad can only reference MILW items. The Board also decided to charge a fee to members placing an ad to sell something. There will be no fee for an ad providing information or announcing an event of interest to MILWEST members, or to request information. The rationale for deciding to charge

## "A VERY UNUSUAL SQUEAL"

As told to Bill Wilkerson by *Glen Sarff*

In 1914 Glen Sarff was firing for Heinie Arlin on the Melstone mine run. In those days locomotives were assigned to the engineer, and Heinie had a K1 (2-6-2) assigned to him.

The Melstone mine job was a way freight type job that switched the mines between Melstone and Roundup. On this day they pushed about 14 coal cars out to Geneva, a station 7 miles west of Melstone. A mine spur left the main line just West of the depot on a long 90 degree curve to the Geneva mine about 2 1/2 miles south. It was about a mile to the Musselshell River bridge, then past the little settlement of Absure where the miners lived, and uphill from the river to the mine. The standard shove was about 14 cars as that was about all the mine track could hold for loading.

It was a Fall evening and was dark by the time they spotted the mine and picked up their loads. They probably sat there against the loads for about 15 minutes while the train crew laced up the air, released the hand brakes and made the air test. On the downgrade from the mine, all Heinie had to do was release the air and the loads would push them all the way down to the main line. As the engine started backing up there was the usual wheel flange noise as they came out over the switches, which is normal for a moving locomotive, but they could hear an unusual squealing under the tender. It didn't sound like dry metal and they hadn't run long enough or fast enough to have a hot journal, so Heinie decided that whatever it was, it would go to the main line. They had

to stop short of the depot for orders to occupy the main line. When they stopped, the squealing continued. Heinie lit a torch (this was long before flashlights) and got down to investigate. When he looked under the tender he saw that they were dragging a large pig which they estimated weighed 250 pounds. When Heinie had released the air, the brake rigging and rods caught the pig behind the head and held him fast. Pigs are curious animals and evidently this one had been snooping around up in the tender frame when the air released and the moveable beams and rods snared it. Dragging the pig a couple of miles had scraped its' rump and side badly, and it was fighting to get free. Heinie hollered to Glen to hand him a hammer, with which he promptly knocked the pig in the head. The pig was so mad that this was the only way to get it out from under the tender without getting hurt. No one knew where the pig had come from, so the conductor and brakemen dragged it under a small bridge and butchered it. Glen didn't want any of the meat as he wasn't married and ate in the beanery. They never made out a stock report and no one ever made a claim to the railroad for the pig.

Stop to think about it. How would you have filled out the Milwaukee's printed stock report with questions such as these?

When did you first see the stock?

"I DIDN'T"

What side of the track was the stock on?

"I DON'T KNOW"

What speed were you traveling when you hit the stock?

"STANDING STILL"

Condition of company fences?

"MINE PROPERTY"

Did accident happen on a public crossing?

"NO, MINE PROPERTY"

Use this space to explain details of the accident.

"PIG STUCK HIS HEAD IN TENDER BRAKE RIGGING AND WE SNARED IT AND DRAGGED IT."

As you can see, no printed stock report fit the situation so it was prudent for them not to report it. Pigs were not branded in those days, so there was no way a stock inspector could trace it.

Glen Sarff went firing 5-11-13 and was promoted to engineer 5-11-18. He is 95 years old.

was simply that it costs MILWEST members money to publish every inch of column space in the Dispatch and that space should be used for articles of interest to the members, not as a vehicle for persons and vendors to use free of charge to sell things. Dispatch column space has monetary value and to use it to provide a vehicle (as well as a selected market segment) for a company or individual to sell things for financial gain, is not right unless the space is paid for by the seller. Most other similar publications do not provide free ad space for sellers. For us to continue to do so would not be fair to MILWEST members. The price schedule for ads, and instructions for placing them are indicated at the head of the "Waybills" section and will be in effect for the January, 1990 issue of the Dispatch.

*"A Railroad Not As Long As Its Name"*

# The WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS & YELLOWSTONE PARK RY.

## 1910-1980

### Part I

By Art Jacobsen

Following completion of the MONTANA R. R. to Leadboro in 1896, the upper Smith and Shields River valleys were provided with rail access to a transcontinental system. This situation improved with the leasing of the MONTANA a decade later by the CM&StP as an integral part of their new Puget Sound extension. Yet, just over one year after the latter's completion, a new railroad was being constructed in the upper Smith River country. This fourth part of the series of articles on The MILWAUKEE ROAD around the Harlowton area will review the history of one of the more obscure shortlines in the West — The WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS & YELLOWSTONE PARK Railway (WSS&YP).

The rather grandiose name for a line not even 25 miles long originated with its incorporation on June 18, 1910. The railroad came into existence largely through the efforts of one John T. Ringling, co-founder of the Ringling Brothers circus. Ringling was one of the more influential public figures of the region and offered financial backing for direct rail service to White Sulphur Springs. This was contingent upon area ranchers and local merchants utilizing the new line. White Sulphur Springs had been established as a community for nearly ten years following creation of Meagher County in 1867. The community and county residents had been hoping for a railroad since the building of the N. P. in 1882-83. Unfortunately that line and the Montana Central of five years later bypassed the county to the south, west and northwest.

The MONTANA R. R.'s initial completion and later extensions brought the long-desired railroad service to the county, but the community still lacked a direct connection. White Sulphur Springs had been the county seat of Meagher (pronounced "mar") County since 1880, and when the CM&StP acquired use of the MONTANA, it was hoped that the quarter century of dependence on horse-powered travel beyond the town would be ended. However, it soon became apparent that the MILWAUKEE was not going to build down the Smith River and rebuilt the MONTANA's line down Sixteen Mile Creek instead. The town's business interests and agricultural producers obviously felt slighted yet again. So when Ringling made his proposal dependent on local support, the enthusiasm was

exceeded only by the scope for the proposed route! The more excessive ideas included constructing a railroad down the Smith River to connect with the former Montana Central at/near Great Falls. The plans to either connect with, or build a line paralleling the N.P.'s Shields River branch to Wilsall and ultimately reach Yellowstone Park's northern boundary were also brought into being at this time. The name of the new railroad was a direct reflection of these promotional schemes.

Completion of the WSS&YP came in early November, 1910 and included a dedicatory address by Napoleon Bonaparte Smith, Meagher County's attorney at the time. Shortly after completion, operations were subject to the extremes of weather that had plagued the MONTANA R. R. in the same region. Nearly half the time between late November, 1910 and May of the following year was spent digging the daily train out of snowdrifts, particularly on the Dorsey-Calkins section. When the snow finally melted, the results were the same as those experienced by Harlow's line, although washouts were not as extensive as those in Sixteen Mile Canyon in 1897 and 1899. The minimal grade level (often not more than a foot above existing ground) combined with the nearly non-existent ballasting made for very precarious operations under wet conditions. Less than anticipated traffic levels resulted in an attempt to reduce train operations to tri-weekly five years after the line was opened. However, local residents and the White Sulphur Springs postmaster opposed this scheme and the train ran daily except Sundays by January, 1916. Freight traffic was largely confined to fall livestock shipments interspersed with occasional cement or machinery/implement loads inbound.

The second decade of WSS&YP operations saw the regular one or two car passenger train converted to a mixed. Freight traffic in the early years averaged 15,000 tons annually, and dividends were paid through 1921. Having been constructed without the issuance of bonds was a major factor in keeping the railway operating for the next quarter-century. Another was that despite the lack of any normal engineering practices used in construction, the track stayed in operable condition with very little maintenance. Both of these factors prevented the

marginal operating revenues from being drained away. However, the financial instability of the only outside connection for the WSS&YP soon had a degrading effect.

The basic problem was that one of the conditions to the stock purchasers by the CM&StP tied the freight rates of the WSS&YP to it. The receivers of the then-bankrupt CM&StP cut freight rates during the 1920's in an attempt to attract long-haul traffic. The WSS&YP had to comply, and the revenue that had kept it operating without a net loss was gone. By the mid-1930's the annual freight traffic had dropped to 6,700 tons and revenues were less than half of those of the decade before. Even at the beginning of WWII total operating earnings were almost a third under those of the early 1920's although freight tonnages had increased substantially since 1932. By 1943 the majority owner of the WSS&YP decided it was not worth running as a railway, and in the midst of the wartime scrap drive offered the line for sale. The formal petition to abandon was filed, and March 10, 1944 was to be the date of closure.

Passenger traffic had essentially remained the same throughout this period. The mixed train had a paying passenger once or twice a week since its inception. At the end of the 1930's the mixed service was replaced with a "motor," a Mack railbus carrying #2. It vaguely resembled the first "Skunk" of California Western fame.

Despite the CMStP&P's desire to abandon the line, area stockmen, the governor and Montana's U. S. Senator B. K. Wheeler all issued strong statements opposing the move. The latter still wielded some influence from the early "New Deal" days of the Ft. Peck dam era, and the I.C.C. responded by denying the abandonment petition until further hearings could be scheduled. Then in December, 1944 the CMStP&P shares were sold to George Wetherell of White Sulphur Springs and W. C. Ramsey of Hannibal, Missouri. The former was manager of the Ringling property in the area. That estate's interest in the WSS&YP was managed by John Ringling North, John T. Ringling died in 1938. Ramsey provided the financial backing to acquire the 51% of outstanding shares from the CMStP&P, which withdrew its abandonment petition early in 1945.

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## WSS&YP Ry.

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The Wetherell "era" on the WSS&YP lasted for nearly three decades, and brought about rather dramatic changes to its nature. First was the marked increase in freight traffic, beginning with a test shipment of pulpwood to a Wisconsin paper mill a month after the railway was acquired from the CMStP&P. Tonnage rose from the abandonment year of 10,000 tons, to 20,000 tons in 1946, and doubled every other year to over 150,000 tons for 1951! Nearly half of that figure was in the 1,400 carloads of pulpwood shipped east during that year. Yet two years later the pulpwood shipments fell by almost two-thirds, and the total annual freight was down to 35,000 tons.

Two other aspects of the Wetherell years involved track maintenance and passenger service. The track was in no worse condition in 1944 than it had been for a quarter-century before. The railbus still took the hour (when it was running) to get between terminals that the passenger train of 1916 required. However, the doubling of freight tonnages the following year nearly destroyed the very weak track structure so a two-year rehabilitation program was launched in 1946. This included both raising and levelling the grade and tie replacements. Unfortunately, the railbus broke down once too often and was replaced by a two-ton Dodge bought used in 1950. Mail, express, L.C.L., and the rare passenger or two were driven on the highway between Ringling and White Sulphur Springs afterwards.

Freight traffic climbed slowly from 1953 into the 1960's with the opening of two on-line sawmills south of White Sulphur Springs. These provided inbound loads during their construction, and rough-cut lumber loads outbound. The timber came from the Little Belt Mountains north of the community. The beginning of the wood products hauling era was also the end of leased CMStP&P steam on the railway. One of the last MILWAUKEE ROAD steam locos used was a G-6ms class 4-6-0 #1166 in early 1954. The following year dieselization arrived with a GE 44-ton centercab. The CMStP&P had purchased three of these for branchline use by 1941. Within five years traffic had recovered to the point where heavier power was needed. The MILWAUKEE was seeking to standardize its "Lines West" diesel fleet with all EMD power, so the solution was introduction of the SW-1's. These would remain the standard WSS&YP leased power through abandonment.

With freight traffic climbing steadily

and the prospects looking good for additional tonnage in the near future, another major track rehabilitation program got underway in 1957. This involved tie replacements which had not already been made ten years before. The ties all came from the N.P. "low line" abandonment between Logan and Bozeman that same year. The wooden box culverts were also replaced with corrugated steel types. By this time Wetherell had acquired the shares purchased from the CMStP&P by Ramsey in 1944. Ownership of the railway was then split between Ringling's estate under J. R. North, and Wetherell, the WSS&YP's superintendent.

The last two decades of WSS&YP operations were filled with both high hopes and utter failures. The mail/express/passenger truck made its last connection at Ringling early in 1964 when the "City of Deer Lodge" #15/16 remnants of the "Olympian Hiawathas" were reduced to Minneapolis-Aberdeen night runs. Lumber business was following the livestock traffic onto the highways starting in the mid-1960's. However, opening of the Hoerner-Waldorf paper mill west of Missoula brought back pulp traffic in the form of chips from the sawmills. Therefore, while some tonnage was lost, it was hoped that the new "short-haul" service would keep operating returns from sinking into the red.

The early 1970's brought about the final major change to the WSS&YP. The Wetherell and Ringling estates sold their shares to one Clarence Willson, late of Los Angeles and originally from the Ft. Benton area northeast of Great Falls. The sales came about for two reasons. First, the former owners had no desire to continue with what was at best a very marginal operation. Second, Willson, who had made money in burglar alarm screens in southern California, was looking for a recreational pursuit that could be used for a "tax break" as well. With the former owners not wanting to sink any more capital into a property that had been virtually without maintenance for nearly twenty years, and a prospective buyer with cash-in-hand available, a sale was quickly arranged!

Almost as soon as the railway was conveyed to its new (and final) owner, the region's media was literally bombarded with schemes and proposals the like of which had not been seen since the line's incorporation. Some were actually carried out, such as the purchase of a 1923 Baldwin 2-6-2 originally used on a Florida logging operation, then sold to a recently-closed Virginia tourist line. This carried the number 18, and was duly interchanged from the MILW at Ringling in 1976. This and two steel

"heavyweight" coaches, one formerly N.P., the other an ex-G.N. once owned by Carl Seltzer and kept at the MILW's Falls Yard were to be operated on a daily basis between the terminals from Memorial Day through Labor Day weekends. To further impress the public, the White Sulphur Springs depot was repainted from its basic whitewash to pale yellow with brown trim. Used ties were purchased from BN, and rather sporadic attempts were made to place them where there were virtually none left between White Sulphur and a mile or two to the south.

Yet, even if one sawmill had not closed shortly before the line was sold, and freight traffic not continued to decline, it would have been at best unrealistic to attempt to justify some of the more extravagant proposals by the WSS&YP's last owner. These included the rather fanciful notion of completing the railway to its southerly named objective, and this in the face of BN's abandoning most of the former N.P.'s Yellowstone Park branch in 1975! These grandiose ideas kept recurring through the last years of operations, including the proposal to the MILW's trustee to "donate" the former GV line from Three Forks to Bozeman with the Gallatin Gateway branch to the WSS&YP following the former's abandonment in late April, 1978. This was also to have "trackage-rights" between Ringling and Three Forks with an option to purchase should MILW abandon the main line there!

Another scheme involved the creation of a "paper" railroad to own the as-yet-not-operating steam tourist-train business. Named after the former railroad built by Great Falls, Helena and Butte interests over ninety years before, investors were actually solicited for portfolios in this rather dubious venture! Naturally, any potential prospects were quickly cured of taking the risk upon viewing the condition of the property for the first and probably only time! The WSS&YP of the late 1970's was in worse shape than the MONTANA R.R. (aside of the floods) in its early years, and Willson's "jawboning" lacked the support of major investors that Richard A. Harlow earned.

Events followed in quick succession, while the #18 actually ran once on Labor Day in 1977, and several times in May through July of 1978 (including one memorable excursion to Ringling on July 9), its best event was in the late summer of 1979. Here the loco and two operating coaches as well as the White Sulphur Springs depot were part of the backdrop in the PBS movie "Heartland." Although the train never ran over 10 mph as a rule, a "special effects" technique of film-

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## WSS&YP Ry.

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ing slower-than-normal made it appear to "tear right along" at nearly four times that speed! Willson had even continued to acquire additional rolling stock in those last years, although none of it was to turn a wheel in revenue service. These items included a very decrepit "Harriman-style" diner from the GTW. Of specific interest to MILW fans were five stock cars, a ballast hopper, and the former sleeper/solarium observation "Coast" from trains #17/18 and last used by the Rocky Mountain Division's trolley foreman.

During the last full year of WSS&YP operations the MILW's trustee attempted to force the railway to buy the former MONTANA R.R. trackage 4.7 miles northerly from Ringling. Willson forestalled this by continuing to press for the Ringling-Three Forks section of the MILW main line at a much-reduced price compared to its scrap value. Even when the latter ceased stock movements in 1977, he purchased five stock cars as part of a proposal to a local ranch for taking seasonal cattle drives off the highway to Ringling! The surprising thing in this idea was that the ranch foreman actually thought it had some merit! However, the ranch owners had other plans, as did the MILW's trustee and the WSS&YP soon had no means to move any cars at all.

A small grain terminal was built just south of Ringling in the late summer of 1976. This brought the first such revenue of that type to the WSS&YP since the grain elevator was opened at the northern terminal after the railway was completed. Yet this was a

classic example of "too little — too late" for events were happening beyond the railway's control once again. The WSS&YP's sole outside connection filed bankruptcy for the third and final time in December, 1977. The MILW's final "embargo" west of Miles City went into effect on March 1, 1980, the final e/b train picked-up

WSS&YP's last leased SW-1 at Ringling on March 25. The rails were removed from almost non-existent ties the following summer, stranding most of Willson's collection of battered rolling stock at White Sulphur Springs.

(To be concluded in the January 1990 issue of MILWEST DISPATCH)

## WAYBILLS

### Important Announcement to all "WAYBILLS" users

Beginning with the January 1990 issue of the Dispatch, there will be a charge for "Waybills" ads for items for sale only. Please see the "Editor's Notes" section for further details. The charge will be \$5.00 U. S. per column inch, or part thereof, used by the ad. You may buy as many column inches as desired per ad. We use a 3-column format, so a column inch is one vertical inch of text in one column. As a guide in sizing your ad, an illustration is included with this column to show you a one column inch format.

Send your ads with payment enclosed to Milwest Dispatch, W. 444 15th Ave., Spokane, WA 99203-2110.

This rectangle shows you how much is included in one column inch.

**SELL:** The Milwaukee Road Class EP-3 Electric Passenger Locomotives, by Bill Wilkerson. 24 pages, photos and illustrations. \$3.00 U. S., postpaid from either The Times-Clarion, Box 307, Harlowton, MT 59036 or Bill Wilkerson, 418 S. Merriam Ave., Miles City, MT 59301.

**WANTED:** Information on the HO scale 100-ton Evans log car from PSC regarding possible MILW prototype(s). Also need information (map, photos especially) on CMStP&P/MILW and BA&P in Butte for designing HO scale layout. Contact Tim Heil, P. O. Box 1339, Silver Lake, OH 44224.

**WANTED:** Anything regarding Washington, Idaho & Montana Railway and rail operations of Potlatch Lumber Co/PFI. Information, photographs, paper, memorabilia, etc. Thomas E. Burg, N. 2771 Thiel Dr., Merrill, WI 54452. (715) 536-3700.

**WANTED:** Buy or trade for MILW slides, action or train-shot, of MILW activity anywhere west of the Twin Cities from 1968-1982. Will pay well for original Kodachromes, high-quality duplicates OK. Fred Hyde, 1725 Chatham Terrace, New Brighton, MN 55112.

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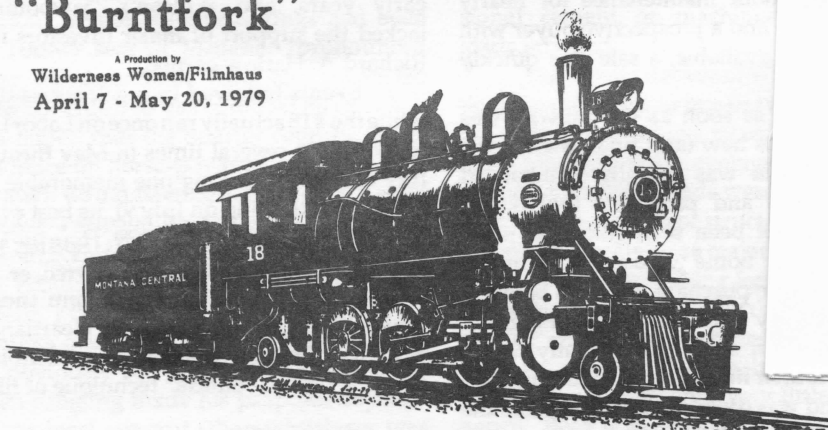
## MilWest Dispatch

West 444 15th Ave. Spokane, WA 99203-2110

Steam Locomotive  
Appearing in

### "Burntfork"

A Production by  
Wilderness Women/Filmhaus  
April 7 - May 20, 1979

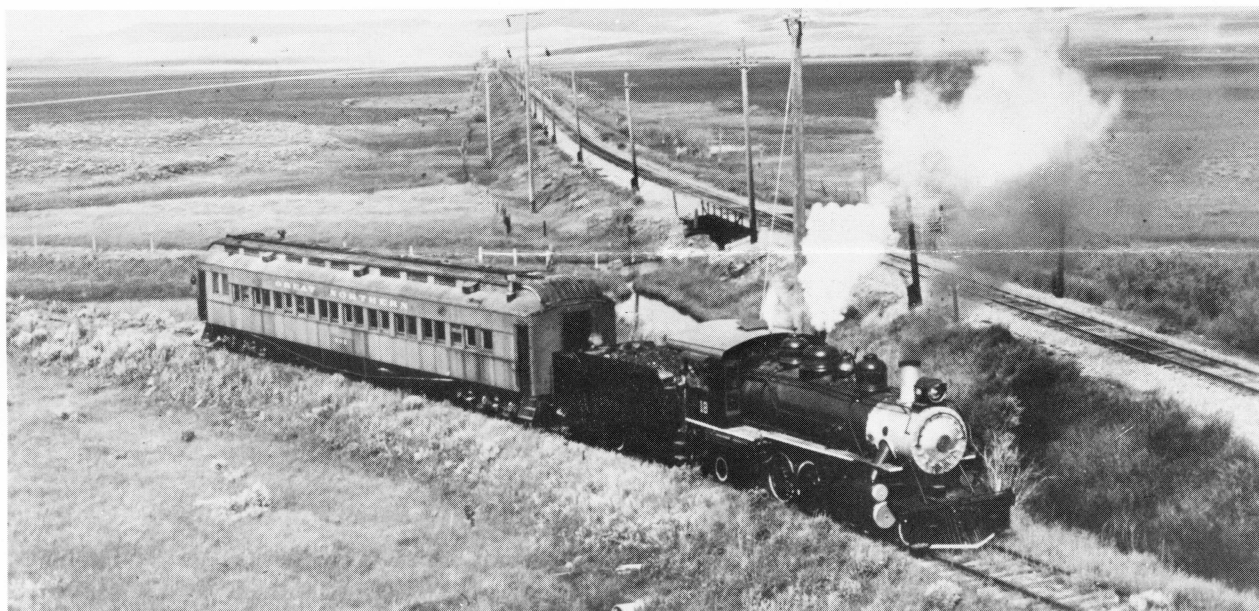


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WSS&YP Extra 42 West, South of White Sulphur Springs, October 2, 1942.  
R.V. Nixon photo, Rufus Cone collection.



Former WSS&YP 2-6-2 #18 and an ex-GN coach on the original Montana RR right-of-way east of Ringling, adjacent to the MILW mainline at m/p 1392.6.  
Art Jacobsen slide, 7-8-78.



WSS&YP No. 36 at White Sulphur Springs, September 17, 1941.  
R.V. Nixon photo, Rufus Cone collection.



Substation at East Portal, Montana, Half Moon Pass, located on the Idaho-Montana border, circa 1949.

Ray Homer photo and collection.



Rotary working eastbound clearing the siding at East Portal, Montana, circa 1949.

Ray Homer photo and collection.