

# Dispatch

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

Volume 5, Issue No. 1

January 1992

## - A NIGHT OF MISTAKES -

By Bill Wilkerson

It was during the Christmas holidays of either 1950 or 1951. I was called as a "Holiday Hoghead" (extra engineer) for a trip to Melstone on freight. During that time, my engineer's seniority was low enough so that I almost always caught a trip as engineer on holidays or if the weather was miserable and the regular engineer laid off. This trip was a combination of both, but it was part of the job until your seniority built up.

I was called at Melstone for train 264, our fast freight east, only this one was quite late and it was in the wee hours of the night. When 264 arrived from Harlowton they headed in on track No. 1 and brought the S2 back to service on the main line.

I had an order to meet passenger train No. 17 (westbound Columbian) at Melstone. Their on time at Melstone was around 3 AM and they usually met No. 18 there. This night, 17 was late and was meeting 18 at Ingomar (mp 204). Because 18 would get to Ingomar first, the dispatcher gave them orders to head in. This was the first mistake of the night. It was blowing and drifting snow and was below zero.

If there was a snow drift anywhere on the division, it would be at the west end of the passing track at Ingomar. There was a small cut just north of the switch that caused it to drift down the passing track if the wind was blowing from the northwest and it almost always blew from the northwest. The east switch was almost always clear so he should have given them a straight meet at Ingomar and then eastward trains of the same class are superior so 17 would have headed

in. When they would have found the drift on the west end, they could have backed out after left 18 with very little delay.

264 had let No. 18 by at Musselshell (mp 1243) 13 miles west of Melstone, so all I had to worry about was meeting No. 17 at Melstone and my train was already in the clear on No. 1 track.

At Melstone, the west end of No. 1 and No. 2 tracks came together

at the coal dock. A metal lined section of the main line between the coal dock and the track that went around the north side of the coal dock and there was a supply house north of this track. While I had a meet with 17 at Melstone, I had no authority to go over the east switch to get on my train. This would throw the blocks red to the west block at Sumatra (mp 1215). The only time I had was their Timetable time and it was long past that time. I backed up to the west switch and came down No. 1 track.

Our caboose was just in the clear on No. 1 and when I stopped to line No. 2, the conductor came out of the office and swung me down with his lantern. He told me they wanted my orders and to stay right there. He asked me if my train line heat was working. I opened the cab valve and could see and hear the steam blowing out the back of the tender. He went back to the office and came right back with my new orders. They instructed me to run extra Melstone to Ingomar (mp 1204) and then return to Melstone. I also had a meet with 17 at Ingomar. There was a yellow message that instructed me to turn the S2 on the Melstone Wye and back up to Ingomar and pull 18 out of a snow drift at the west switch. It also instructed me to make sure my steam line didn't freeze as 18 had broken in two and I would have to supply steam to the train until we got the diesels out. We went back to the west switch and came down the back lead so we could turn the engine. We had to put a white lantern on the tender because

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### Annual Dues Reminder

This issue of the Dispatch is a month late as we had to wait for the 1992 renewals to come in. For those of you who have renewed, thank you. For those who have not yet renewed, please do so right away to keep your MilWest membership and continue receiving the Dispatch. Please send your \$10.00 U.S. renewal to the Secretary.

just east of the coal dock, so engines on either track could get coal and water. The coal dock was north of the main line about 500 feet west of the depot. The water stand pipe was between the main line and No. 1 track



## MISTAKES

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the S2 didn't have a back-up headlight. The conductor sent the head brakeman with the engine and he and the flagman stayed at Melstone where it was warm.

It was miserable backing up an S2 under the best conditions as

### MilWest Management

MilWest is a Washington State non-profit corporation founded in October, 1987. It serves to preserve and promote the history of the (former) CM&PS, CM&StP, CMStP&P, MILW Lines West.

Annual membership is based on the calendar year, cost \$10.00 (US), and is due no later than January 1. Please make all remittances payable to "MilWest" and send to the Secretary. Persons joining during a year will receive all issues of the Dispatch for that year. Other back issues are available from the Secretary.

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If you move, please notify the Secretary of your new address promptly.

#### Whom do I contact?

Matters pertaining to MilWest policy, annual meetings, etc., contact the General Manager.

Payment of dues, membership applications and inquiries, non-receipt of the Dispatch, address changes, back issues, contact the Secretary.

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you had to lean way out the cab window to look around the big tender. This night we had a northwest wind blowing snow on my side and the snow whipped up on the fireman's side so it was almost impossible for them to see anything. We went out the east end and I started backing up about 40 MPH as the tender seemed to ride pretty good at that speed. We worked from block to block as long as they were green. The intermediate block between Sumatra and Ingomar was yellow so we had to keep our heads out the window from then on. The approach to Ingomar was red. We stopped and whistled off and worked our way back until we were just a few feet from 18 and stopped.

Eighteen's conductor got up in the cab and told me the diesels had broken off trying to ram through the drift and there was about a 40 foot gap. He wanted me to push the train up to a joint with the diesels. I asked him if he wasn't going to cut the steam heat in and he said no. I showed him my message and told him that was the reason we turned the S2 and I had backed up 25 miles. He told me he didn't give a damn what kind of message I had, that he was in charge of the train and all I had to do was what he told me to do. I told him fine and we coupled up and connected the air line. I pumped up the air and released the brake. I had the rear sander on when I backed up, but with the wind blowing snow across the rail at about 30 MPH right against the sand pipe, I'm sure I wasn't getting any under the driving wheels. There was about five cars west of the switch on the main line and the rest of the train in the passing track with a couple of cars in the drift. This put the S2 on a curve and part of the train on an "S" curve. When the brakes released my brakeman gave me a backup signal. I tried to push east, but the drivers just spun. I reversed and pulled ahead a few feet and then lunged back. When we got to the same spot, we came up against a solid wall and the drivers spun again. I could pull them west with no trouble, but I couldn't move them any further east. I probably gained about 10 feet in six or seven tries, but all I was doing was packing the snow harder against the baggage car. When 18's diesels had plowed into the drift, they were heading into the passing track

about 10 MPH. When they started to stall, the engineer reversed and backed out. He then came in at full throttle to try and get through. Evidently the packed snow uncoupled the baggage car and the three diesels lunged ahead about 40 feet before the drift stopped them. When they stalled, the snow rolled back in and wedged them tight. It also rolled back into the gap and had been drifting in for about two hours before I got there. The drift was about 6 to 8 feet deep and probably a block long.

I couldn't hit the drift very hard because I had ahold of about 10 cars with passengers and for fear of jackknifing the cars on the S curve. When you have a 440 ton locomotive pushing with 70,816 pounds of tractive effort, something is going to give when you hit a solid wall of snow. I couldn't take the chance on derailing cars and injuring passengers.

After about 6 or 7 tries, I pulled back and stopped. I told 18's conductor that we couldn't make it with the train for fear of derailing and we were jltng hell out of the passengers. I suggested that we cut in the steam and then push the train down against 17. They had 3 FP-7 diesels with the steam line in front. I was sure that 17's boilers could handle both trains once we got 18 warmed up. Then I figured I could come back with the S2 and I would be on straight track in the passing track and could hit the drift harder, and probably get 18's diesels out.

The Ingomar Section Foreman had climbed up in the cab to argue with our method of operation, and heard my suggestion to the Conductor. This really made the Conductor "blow up" and he insisted that I could shove them together if I didn't shut the throttle off the minute it slipped. He told the Section Foreman to get down and dig out some of that snow. The reason the foreman was in the cab was to tell me not to hit them again because he was putting his men in the track to shovel. At the same time the Pullman Conductor came in raising hell about the rough handling and the cold coaches. He asked me about steam and I told him I had turned the engine at Melstone and backed up 25 miles

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## MISTAKES

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so we could use the steam but the conductor wouldn't cut it in and I showed him my message.

I thought they were going to come to blows right in the cab. 18's conductor refused to change his method or cut the steam in. He took the position that it was my fault and said if he had an engineer instead of a young smart alec, 18 would be half way to Miles City by now and that we didn't need the steam cut in. I reminded him that he had been in the cab warming his butt ever since I got there while his passengers were suffering in the cold coaches.

The Section Foreman and Pullman Conductor got off and went to the phone at the west switch and called the Dispatcher. Pretty soon the Ingomar operator came up with a message for both the conductor and me. It instructed us to cut the steam in to 18 immediately and get the coaches warm. Then take the train down and connect it to 17's steam line and work with just the engine and that the section foreman was in charge of getting the diesels out of the drift. All that was left for 18's conductor was to sulk and just as soon as the train started to warm up he left the cab. I had tried to get him to cut it in, in the first place like the message said. He didn't like young engineers and no one was going to tell him how to run his train. He told me that if we did it my way, the diesels would be behind the train. I told him 17 could shove the train into the east end of the passing track and the diesels could back in on to them. It was real simple. By then he was so mad he couldn't think of anything but to shove the train together. He was conductor by seniority and not by his ability to use his head.

The section foreman figured it would be easier to try and get the diesels out from the east end as there was only about 20 feet of drift ahead of them. He asked me if I would try it from the east end. I told him I thought it was a good idea and that he was the boss. We finally got the steam cut in and I pushed the train down onto 17 and they cut their steam line in. 17 then backed up far enough for us to get into the east end of the

passing track. This would be nicer for me because I was now working forward and could look out the front cab window instead of freezing my face trying to look back.

There was a pretty good size drift from the wool house out over the passing track, but the turtle back pilot on the S2 plowed through it on the first try at about 10 MPH. We had to wait about 30 minutes until the section men shoveled enough snow so they figured I could get in. The joint made on the first try. With the S2 and 3 diesel units rocking back and forth on the section foreman's signals, we finally broke loose and pulled the diesels out. I backed up and got hold of 18 and pulled it into the passing track so 17 could leave town. I then pushed it out onto the main and backed up to the depot. The diesels came out onto the main and backed up to the train. When everything was ready, they left town and I headed back to Melstone. It was a lot easier running the S2 the way it was designed to run and I ran it about 50 MPH all the way.

I had been around Ingomar about 4 hours and when I got to Melstone I had been on duty about 8 hours. The crew behind us was rested so they called them for 264 and tied us up for 8 hours rest.

With all that delay to two passenger trains, the Superintendent had to have statements from all of us involved. He called 18's conductor into the office and really read the riot act to him for his handling of everything at Ingomar. I'm pretty sure the conductor always blamed me because he hardly spoke to me the rest of his working career, which fortunately, wasn't too long after that. He figured I didn't know how to run the S2 and if I had known anything I would have shoved them together the first time. What he wouldn't accept was that once the drivers slip and start to spin, the only thing you could do was shut the throttle off and then jerk it open when they got a grip on the rail again. Backing around a curve with the wind blowing the sand off the rail, there was no way the S2 could push the train into a joint. I just kept packing the snow harder. I could pull them west on the curve because I could get some sand on the inside rail at least.

While I didn't have his 40 years experience, at least my idea was

right and worked. I was smart enough to know that in a Montana blizzard, the most important thing is to keep warm. It didn't make sense to anyone to let a big S2 with 285 lbs. of steam be coupled to the train and not couple the steam line to heat the train. If I could have pushed them together the first or second try, his method would have been all right, but when I couldn't, then he should have cut the steam in and tried to figure out a different approach. The fact that a smart young hoghead suggested a different approach, and he didn't like young hogheads, sure made a miserable situation. It was truly a night full of mistakes and most of them belonged to 18's conductor.

- Bill Wilkerson

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## NEW MEMBERS

*We welcome the following new members who have joined MilWest for 1992.*

Bill Taylor, Missoula MT  
 Stephen Myers, Rathdrum ID  
 Keith Trout, Milwaukee WI  
 Gil McGee, Newport WA  
 Jerry Webb, The Dalles OR  
 Ray Alkofer, Yakima WA  
 Brent Murray, Tukwila WA  
 Doug Walters, Tacoma WA  
 David Covert, Lynnwood WA  
 Jeff Kehoe, Oswego IL  
 Clinton Johnson, Tacoma WA  
 William Barker, Hamilton MT  
 Dave Jackson, Gig Harbor WA  
 Robert Rogers, Ellsworth KS  
 A. E. Roach, Alexandria VA  
 Sheldon Shalett, Tampa FL  
 Arnold Joseph, Bronx NY

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## WAYBILLS

For Sale: HO scale oil storage tank, 2- 1/2 inches long, made of wood, plastic, and steel. Decals not included. \$7.50 U.S., postpaid from - Branchline Models, P.O. Box 156, St. Regis, MT, 59866.

WANTED: Soho 10-section lounge observation Mt. Hood. Oriental Limited GN baggage car 400-406. Call Nate Moldren (715) 834-3016.



## "DFW"

*This column serves for miscellaneous news items about the former MILWAUKEE ROAD's operations. Like the symbol for "Dead Freight - West" it utilizes, the subjects found here are a "catch-all" from a variety of sources.*

*Steve Koberstein of Pullman sent along several news reports from the area, regarding the former MILW water tower at Ewan, WA.*

On October 16, 1991, the Inland Empire was subjected to extremely high winds. The winds caused many fires in the Spokane area that made national news. Another casualty that did not make national news was the water tank at Ewan, WA. This water tower was on the former MILW main line and was one of the last (if not the last) remaining water tank from the days of steam on the MILW. The lower part of the tower contained reservoir tanks used as part of the town's water supply. This left ten families and the Nazarine church without water. Since Ewan is an unincorporated town, the county is ultimately responsible for the water system under state law. Dave Johnstone had run the water system from a well dug in 1909 by the MILW. He had inherited the system when he bought his land and house in 1950. The homes south of highway 23 are supplied from another well. Houses north of the highway could still get water from Dave's well, but with no reservoir, supply is severely limited. Johnstone could not afford to repair the system and said he would give the required one year notice and then cut-off service. The problem was resolved in December when Whitman County Commissioners approved using state and federal emergency funds to replace the tank and repair the water system. It was estimated it would cost up to \$50,000 to repair the system.

MILW artifacts continue to disappear. Several years ago the MILW bridge over the highway at Ewan, just south of the water tank, was removed by the highway dept. - Thanks to Steve Koberstein, the Whitman County Gazette, and the Spokesman-Review.

The annual MILW event put on by Dave Haskins will be held again on March 28 at the Burien Public Library, 14700 6th Ave SW, Burien

WA. At this meet MILW followers trade or sell MILW related items. For further information you may contact Dave Haskins, 15181 Columbia Ave, White Rock BC Canada V4B1J2 (604) 531-6190.

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## Notes from the General Manager

Annual Meet - General Manager Art Jacobsen announces details of the 1992 MilWest Annual Meet. The meet will be held in Miles City, MT, on July 31 and August 1st, at Miles Community College. Staff Assistant Kirk Petty is the co-ordinator for this meet. His address is listed in the masthead on page 2 and we suggest you contact him directly for further information. We will have further details in the April issue of the Dispatch but we wanted to announce the date early so members can begin making their plans to attend. This should be one of our best meets as there are many MILW facilities still in existence. We hope to have Bill Wilkerson do some presentations for us. We have scheduled a tour of the Trancisco Rail Services shops which use the original CM&PS shops on the north side of town. We will also try to get in the former passenger depot now owned by the school district. We invite all MilWest members to make plans to attend this meet as we feel confident they will really enjoy it.

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## Notes from the Editor's Desk

As noted on page 1, this first issue of the Dispatch for 1992 is about a month late coming out. One reason for this is that it has been a very busy winter for me and I have had very little spare time to devote to the Dispatch. The other, and more important reason is that it seems everyone forgot about paying their dues for 1992. As of the end of January less than half our members had renewed. In 1991 we broke into the 200 member range which lets me use bulk mail to send the Dispatch. This provides a considerable savings

on postage. Late renewals also cause the Secretary to have to send reminder cards to those who have not renewed, which costs more postage and takes more of his time. I'm happy to report that Ron's efforts bore fruit and the renewals came flowing in during February. My point is to remind you that it is very important to remember to renew your membership prior to the end of each calendar year as failure to do so creates additional expense for MilWest, and more work for Ron. All of us on the board are volunteers and devote some of our spare time to perform our various duties. We do appreciate whatever the members can do to eliminate unnecessary work for all of us. After this issue is out I should be able to get back on schedule with the rest of the issues for the year.

I also wish to thank those members who sent me cards and letters during the holidays. They were greatly appreciated.

Many of you know Phil Kresik, one of our staff assistants. We are sorry to report that Phil is experiencing some serious medical problems and will be undergoing surgery the first week of March. We know that Phil would appreciate cards and letters from any of you who may care to write to him. His address is in the masthead on page 2. We on the MilWest board wish Phil the very best and hope he has a speedy recovery.

- Rocky Gibbs





## In Search of the Western Extension

By Fr. Dale Peterka

Two years ago (1989), a couple of us decided to go looking for the mysterious Adair Loop, a spectacular hair-pin curve that helped the Milwaukee Road mainline in Idaho climb down from the heights of St. Paul Pass (named back in the days when the railroad was nicknamed "The St. Paul") to the little railroad town of Avery. The loop itself, portrayed in the fascinating photos taken by Ashel Curtis back in the early days of the line (and by a few others since), is located back in the Bitterroot Mountains on the Montana-Idaho border, miles from the nearest paved road, a McDonalds or other signs of civilization. According to the photos, the loop was punctuated by a collection of tunnels, trestles, and great steel bridges. At once a railroad builder's nightmare and a modeler's dream.

Planning the expedition was a project in itself. The road to Avery from the west was fifty miles of dirt and dust, but some maps showed another route over the top of Moon Pass that would take us right into the area. Was it possible? By car? The access roads in the loop area: were they open? Barricaded? Jeep roads only? The roadbed itself: accessible? Hikeable? Were the bridges still there, or was the line now a series of disconnected paths? Were the tunnels open? Were they safe?

Fortunately, one of the group lived in Wallace, just a few miles from the Moon Pass road. His report: the place looks just the way it did the day the scrappers left!

We picked a spectacular sunny day in late September 1989 for our endeavor. The sky was a brilliant Montana blue. Sunny all day. Temps in the '70's. The ride over Moon Pass was a delight with the road surface gravel and dirt but well maintained. At the top of the pass, we snaked around a bit and then began the descent into the St. Joe Valley. In places we could still see tall black skeletons of burned-out trees, remnants of the great fire of 1910.

Across the valley, we got our first glimpse of the now-abandoned

Western Extension. It was, from our vantage point, a dark streak on the piney green hillside. A hint that someone had cut a pathway through the forest.

We turned sharply left at the bottom of the grade. We followed the St. Joe River a few hundred yards, and then turned left again onto the sorriest excuse for a goat-path imaginable. We started climbing. We swerved to avoid rocks and wash-outs. The path wound back and forth, clawing its way up the hillside. The big Olds managed the ordeal well, but not without lots of complaints: the motor groaned, the transmission sought in vain for a gear ratio it could be comfortable with, the wheels slipped in the loose dust and gravel, and rocks and stones banged against the floor.

We made it! The road suddenly crested, and we found ourselves on the Milwaukee mainline!

We turned left again onto the well graded gravel road. Apparently the crews that removed the rails and ties found their job easier if they smoothed things out as they progressed. The road was wide and clear. Not exactly I-75 through Cincinnati, although --come to think of it-- in a few places the comparison was quite apt! Add a few orange barrels and the flatlanders among us would have felt right at home!

The road took us through Tunnel 21 and around a curve. A quarter mile, and we arrived at St. Paul Pass Tunnel.

The short avalanche shed that kept rocks and snow from blocking the portal is still in place, with the 12 x 12 vertical ribs in surprisingly good condition. The corrugated sheet cover is bent and rusty, but its all still there.

We walked inside the shed a few feet, but the area was pretty wet. Someone had done a bit of bulldozing; water draining out of the tunnel was dammed into a small pond that blocked any efforts at exploring farther into the tunnel. We squinted into the darkness; no sign of light at the other end.

Finding St. Paul Pass Tunnel was quite a thrill but further adventure awaited. We drove back to our starting point; from here, we followed the roadbed in the other direction and through Tunnel 22. Just

beyond, we found Brushy Creek Bridge, a spectacular curved trestle about 50 yards long. It seemed to be in perfect condition, except for a small washout that had created a void behind the east abutment. It was probably safe to drive, but the dozer had been at work again. A mound of dirt blocked car and jeep access to the bridge. We loaded pockets with film, hitched up our courage, and started walking.

The ride around Adair Loop on the train must have been a scenic wonder. The shelf on which the rails were laid is hundreds of feet above the creek and the valley floor. We could look out across the valley at the lower level of track/roadbed opposite. Bridges across Bear, Clear, No Name, and Turkey Creeks are still in place; they stand as monuments to the railroad builder's art. In the distance, the mountain peaks could be counted by the dozen, all covered with pine and fir. An occasional car could be seen below on the road that follows the creek, carrying fisherman to the their favorite spots. Rolls of film were exposed and rewound to be replaced by fresh rolls.

We came to Kelly Creek and cranked up our courage once again for the walk across the highest and longest of the trestles. Kelly Creek Bridge is about 200 yards long, with the tallest stations over 100 feet high. Below we could see the creek itself winding among the firs, dwarfed by the distance.

After Kelly Creek, the line passed through Tunnels 25 and 26, curving 180 degrees and doubling back on the other side of the valley. Tunnel 25 was curved, long, and quite black; we decided to continue on a narrow path rather than fumble our way through the darkness and risk a fall or injury. On the other side, we noted with fascination the concrete tunnel portal and the legend, "C. M. & P. S." cast into the lintel.

Around the curve, we passed through the shorter Tunnel 26 and found ourselves on the curved and lofty Turkey Creek Bridge. From its center, we could see Kelly Creek Bridge on the hillside above us, nicely lit by the late afternoon sun.

The day was getting long; we hurried on to the Clear Creek Bridge

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## Search

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and tried to duplicate the Curtis shot of the Westinghouse motor with the bridges and tunnels of the upper line in the distance, but the necessary elevated vantage point had long been covered by forest. The shot would have to wait til another day, when we had a chainsaw with us.

The walk back to the car was a pretty grim affair for us and our tender feet. We had brought no lunch, no water, and no hiking shoes. We decided that we would come back next time with more supplies, more film, and mountain bikes!

We drove back down the nasty access road and headed for supper in the surprisingly busy town of Avery. Most of the roadbed after Falcon was closed while the highway department added guardrails to the Milwaukee's great bridges. The plan, we learned later, was to abandon the narrow country road that follows the line into town in favor of the roadbed. By now, the visitor can probably drive from the south end of Moon Pass Road into Avery on the railroad grade itself.

Idaho's timber cutters, fisherman, and fire fighters will probably keep this area open for many more years. Until the price of steel escalates, the bridges in Adair Loop are probably safe. The tunnels seemed safe (no sign of fallen rock). With the exception of a few charred snags, the scenery is spectacular and unspoiled. The only thing missing is the overhead wire, the rails, and the traffic. Not exactly railfanning at its finest -- what memories Steinheimer and Holley must have! -- a visit to Adair is nevertheless fascinating and well worthwhile. Don't miss it!

- Fr. Dale Peterka

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## Searching Again

*By Rocky Gibbs*

When I received the story by Fr. Dale Peterka concluded above, I got to thinking about the Adair Loop. While having lived in the Spokane area most my life, I had never personally seen the Adair Loop. I had been to East Portal in 1974, and again

in 1987. In 1974 I had driven from Avery over the pass to East Portal but had not investigated the Adair loop.

I can report that tunnel 20 (St. Paul) is still open to walk into, and if you enter from East Portal through the snowshed far enough to get to where the tunnel straightens out, you can see a small point of light at the west end (Roland). It is easy to see the grade in the tunnel as the apex was in the middle of the tunnel.

I was also curious as to how much of the former right-of-way was accessible and driveable. We selected a warm, sunny Saturday in September, 1991 to find out. We went from Spokane to Haugen, MT and upon investigation we found you could drive the roadbed east to Two-Mile Creek (about a mile east of Drexel) at which point a wooden trestle has been completely removed. With my wife driving, we set out west on the roadbed. I was videotaping out the windshield, the idea being to capture a hint of what it must have been like to be in the cab of a MILW locomotive going west. We were able to drive the entire route right up to East Portal. From there one must drive the mountain road over the top of St. Paul Pass, also known as the Rainy Creek road. This road brings you back to the roadbed at Roland, the west end of the tunnel. Here the road has been moved onto the former roadbed for 2-3 miles, including driving through tunnels 21 and 22. Prior to arriving at tunnel 23, the road diverts from the roadbed and goes down the mountain to the creek in the bottom. You can still drive east through tunnels 23 and 24 but upon exiting tunnel 24 you hit the roadblock F. Peterka spoke about being at the end of a trestle.

Back at the junction we unloaded our mountain bikes, loaded up the cameras and the two-way radios and headed east down the former roadbed while my wife took the van and headed down the mountain and up the creek to tunnel 25 where we would meet.

Any words I would use to describe the view as we came down the roadbed, through the tunnels and across the bridges on our way to Adair, would not adequately describe what you see. All the pictures you may have seen from the area do not have the impact that viewing the entire

scene at one time does. One quickly gets the impression of viewing a large model railroad when standing at the top and looking down on all the trestles and the roadbed. I did not video while riding but stopped very often and videoed the views from each stop. We had taken flashlights with us so we were able to walk through the tunnels. Our rendezvous with the van was successful (we had radio contact) and had only taken us about an hour to get to Adair. We decided to continue west on the roadbed and the wife drove back down the creek road. Again, the experience of finally standing in these spots and viewing the area that I have seen in photos for years really can't be described. Above Falcon I found the remains of a water tank. Throughout this entire trip so far there had been very little remaining of any former facilities. We had gotten to Falcon when my bike's front wheel got caught in the remaining gravel and ballast and I took a header over the handlebars. I lost some skin and wrenched a shoulder but have healed up for the most part in the months since. Since I landed on the video camera it was not as fortunate. It still runs but does not track properly and would cost more than its worth to fix.

Fortunately, we were almost to our meet with the van so I didn't have to ride much further. This is the same point at which the Moon Pass road joins the former roadbed, and is in fact now moved onto the former roadbed all the way into Avery. Two MILW steel trestles are crossed but have had new concrete decks installed more suitable for auto traffic. When you arrive at Avery you find the road has now been paved and in fact is now a two-lane highway. This highway runs right down the middle of what used to be the MILW yard in front of the depot, and continues west on the former roadbed for about 10 miles before crossing back to the south side of the St. Joe River. Again, some of the former railroad bridges were replaced with highway bridges.

In February, 1992 I went snowmobiling in the East Portal area. We unloaded on top of Lookout Pass and rode the former NP grade eastward down to Taft, and then up Rainy Creek to East Portal. It was a

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## Again

(Continued from page 6)

strange sensation to sit in the middle of what was formerly the MILW mainline on several feet of snow while visualizing what used to be there. Only a couple of the houses are left but are badly vandalized and slowly collapsing.

I would recommend to any MILW fan who has not seen this area firsthand to make a trip to the area if at all possible. I would be surprised if you did not find it spectacular. It also won't last forever. Already some of the tunnels have parts of the concrete linings disintegrating and falling onto the roadbed. When it becomes a safety problem the Forest Service will shurely close them. The increasing environmental pressure to close all western forests to public access may also impact this area in the future. If you want to see it yourself, I suggest you don't wait. - Rocky Gibbs

## Freight Equipment of the WI&M

By Thomas E. Burg

One of the interesting facts of the Washington, Idaho & Montana (WI&M) Railway Company was that even though a shortline, independently owned, it possessed a wide variety of equipment of its own, rather than depending upon off-line equipment to accomplish its tasks. This article will attempt to trace the WI&M's history of freight equipment.

Being a logging line, the WI&M's freight car roster consisted primarily of flatcars, augmented by a specific series of box cars, and a small group of other specialized freight equipment.

The earliest available equipment roster of the WI&M, dated January 1, 1907, reflects ownership at that time of 216 freight cars. Although the precise order of purchase is not known, some inferences might be made from the car numbers assigned. The initial group of 19 cars (source unknown) consisted of 18 flats (odd numbers, 101-137) and one box (#102), all 41 feet and of 60,000 lbs capacity. These

were followed by 150 American Car and Foundry log cars, all 41 feet and 70,000 lbs capacity, numbered as follows: (odd, 139-199, 301-537). Twenty-five Oregon Short Line gondolas were purchased from A.J. McCabe and apparently rebuilt as follows: "sleepers" (#210, 223, 227, 229), flats (#203 through 221 odd, 225, 231, 241), box (#202, 204, 206, 208), and "boarding" (#233, 235, 237, 239), all being 34 feet and 40,000 lbs capacity. From the Hawthorne, Nebagamon and Superior Railway (Wisconsin) and its trustee E.L. Ainsworth of Ashland, WI came 21 flats, all 34 feet and 60,000 lbs capacity, numbered (odd 243-285, somehow omitting 251). One Northern Pacific (NP) boxcar, 40 foot and 80,000 lbs capacity became #402.

An undated list of approximately 1909 reflected the addition of 41 foot, 70,000 lbs capacity flats #539-637, and somehow the #251. Flats #243 and 245 appear in this list as 36 foot and 50,000 lbs capacity.

American Car and Foundry Co. specifications dated August 20, 1909, reflect the construction of ten 40-ton capacity boxcars (NP type) for the WI&M. These were numbered 404-422, and are reflected in the WI&M equipment roster dated April 29, 1913.

Like any other working railroad, there was a constant evolution and change of equipment. Log flats in particular were subject to damage and destruction and frequent rebuildings. This roster lists #101-107 as wood rack cars. Wood rack cars were described in a 1918 WI&M letter to the Official Railway Equipment Register as having "a frame at each end to hold the wood and save the staking of cars". Box #402 was being rebuilt. A few of the older cars had by now been "dismantled", some flats were "destroyed by woods department", and a few were used as "dirt flats". A large number, in no particular order or scheme, were "sold to Potlatch Lumber Co.". This pattern of exchange of equipment between the WI&M and the parent company continued in both directions throughout the WI&M's existence and complicates greatly the task of accurately researching the WI&M's freight equipment. By this 1913 roster the log flats numbered (odd) through

739, with numbers 731 and 739 being listed as "coal cars".

The March 30, 1915 WI&M equipment roster has, as its main addition, additional boxcars extending the 400 series (even) on through #482. One additional flat (#751) was added, and a number of the older, smaller cars (such as #102-108 and a few others) were made into Outfit Cars. Flats #243 and 245 were listed as "plain flats". Box car #402 was traded to the NP for an NP boxcar destroyed on the WI&M. Numbers 202 and 204 were Stock Cars of 36 foot and 50,000 lbs capacity. A group of log flats could not be located and were believed to be in some manner to have become exchanged with log cars belonging to the Potlatch Lumber Co. Car numbers on these cars sometimes became unreadable and the cars lost their identities.

- Tom Burg

## Transportation Facts Far Out

*The following is from The National Association of Railroad Passengers. It points out facts that indicate the value of railroads, both past and present. The article is not dated.*

- To move 500 people, 2 per auto, 300 miles, it takes 250 auots and 4150 gallons of fuel. To move the same by rail it takes one train and 600 gallons of fuel.

- At 60% capacity, Amtrak Superliners will obtain 108 passenger miles to the gallon vs the airline record of 36 passenger miles per gallon.

- In the busiest rail year before WW II, 63 people died in rail accidents. Today 45,000 people die on highways each year.

- Upgrading a highway mile to interstate standards costs \$1 million. Upgrading a rail mile costs \$200,000.

- One 75-car freight train can relieve the highways of 150-200 trucks.

- One Amfleet 8-car train can relieve the highway of up to 600 autos.



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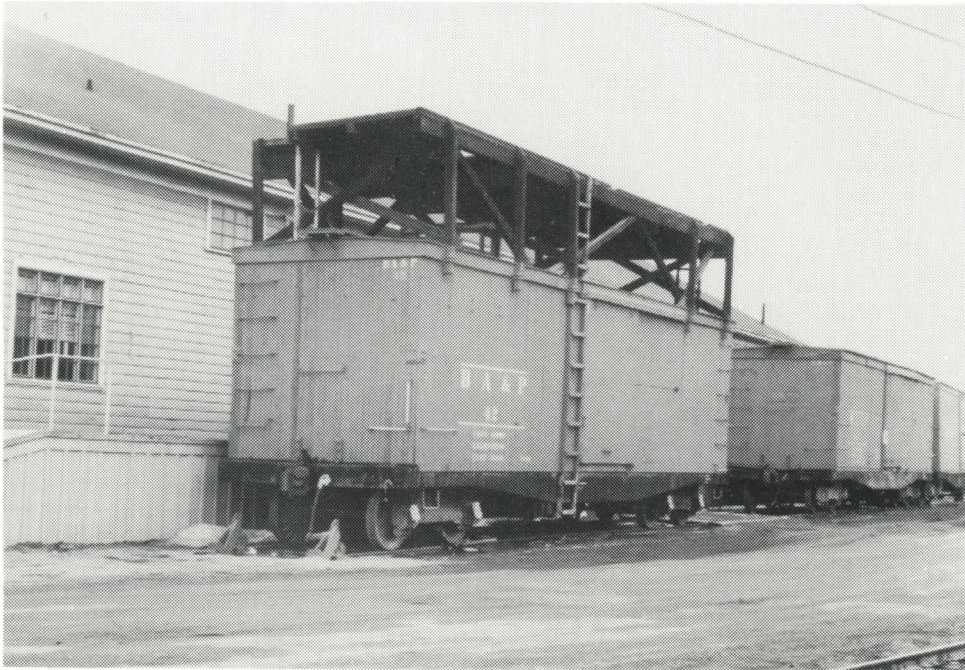
**DOMELINERS**

- CITY OF LOS ANGELES
- THE CHALLENGER
- CITY OF PORTLAND

For HIAWATHA schedules, see tables A, B and 1 to 5  
For Western "CITIES" Streamliners, see tables C to H

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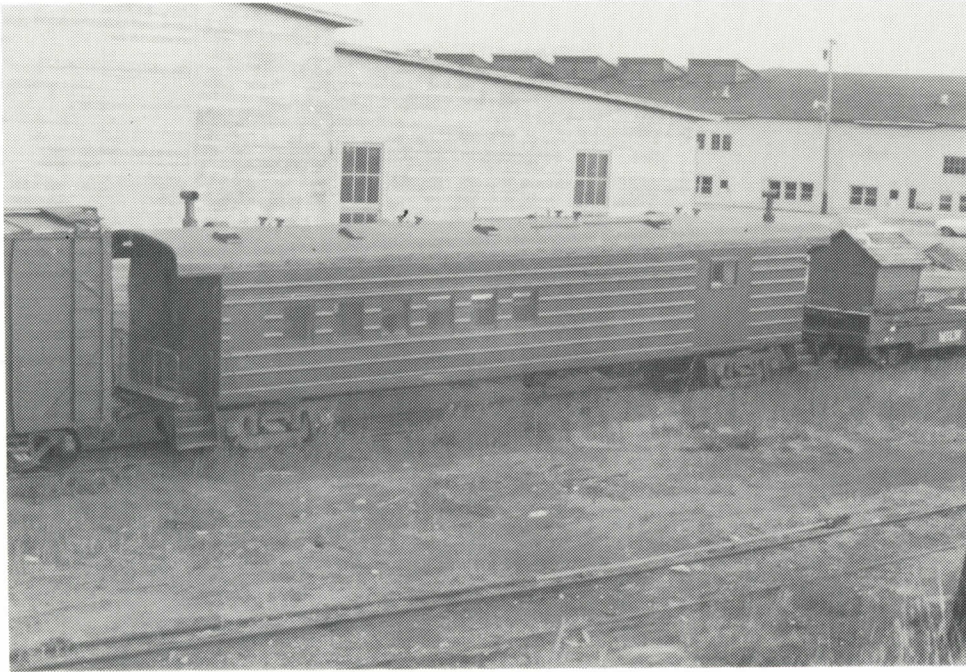


BA&P wire service car #42 is shown at Rocker, MT, circa 1962. Pete Ellis photo.

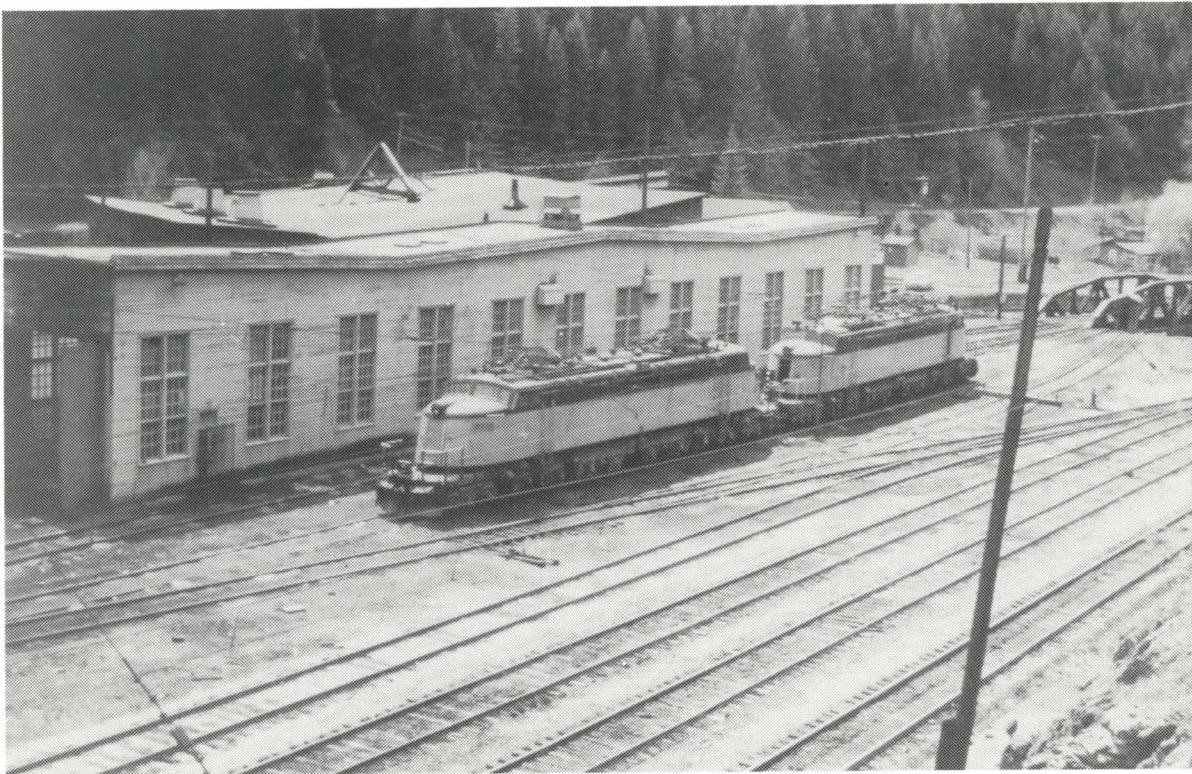


E29A, 36C, 29B boxcab set (probably the Avery helper) is traversing the Adair Loop. This scene is between tunnel #24 and the Kelly Creek bridge, all above Adair siding on May 26, 1973. Ted Schnepf photo.





Baggage/Coach car (built in the 1930's) is at Deer Lodge on 9-19-66. These cars were used extensively in South Dakota and other Midwest areas. While not used extensively in MT they are reported to have been used some on the North Montana Line to Great Falls. In 1966 it was in work train service.  
Pete Ellis photo



Little Joe's are waiting outside the Avery enginehouse for their next assignment in the early 1970's. All railroad items in the photo are now gone and a newly paved road now runs where these tracks used to be.  
Jerry Quinn photo