

Dispatch

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

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MY FIRST PAY TRIP By Bill Wilkerson

I woke up about 5 AM, August 26, 1991 to the sound of an east bound Burlington Northern train whistling through Miles City. In the bath room I listened as he blew for the last crossing just a short distance south on the same road crossing that crossed just east of the Milwaukee yard switch. It suddenly occurred to me that fifty years ago at this same hour I was making my first pay trip as a fireman on L3 number 354 with Engineer George Williams. I looked at my watch and realized that about this same time we were either stopping at the west switch at Tusler, or pulling into the passing track to let passenger train No. 16, the Olympian, pass us. As I journeyed down memory lane, it dawned on me that I had better write down what I could still remember of that first trip. I had all the basic facts on the back of a painting I had made of the 354 on the outbound round house track at Miles City as I remembered how it looked when I first walked up to it. What prompted the painting was that on August 26, 1963, I had been called as the engineer for Extra 354 east at 3:15 AM, only this 354 was GP 30 diesel.

No. 16 was due out of Miles City at 5:10 AM. We had been called for 3:45 AM. The 354 was on the outbound track at the water tank and service shack. It was all serviced and ready to go as soon as Williams completed his ground inspection. Head brakeman Bill Freeland showed up in about 5 minutes and threw his grip up in the gangway for me to put up in the baggage rack next to mine. He then backed us up to Montana Avenue and brought us down the long lead and stopped in front of the yard office. Conductor Watkins gave George his orders and compared watches. We went east through the yard to get on our train. Our train was made up on one of the short tracks. I think was 5 or 6 and was about 75 cars. Tonnage for a L3 from Miles City to Marmarth was 3800 tons and we were right on it.

There were air lines in the west end of the yard and the carmen

used them to charge up the train while waiting for the road power to get on the train. They were supposed to charge the train line to 50 pounds. The train line feed valve on the engine was set for 70 pounds and there could only be a 10 pound difference in the caboose which would allow the engineer to fully release the brakes on the rear cars. Some of the head brakemen would dump the air on the train before they coupled up the air hose to the engine. The carmen knew who was called and who the ornery ones were and Freeland topped the list, so they would turn an angle cock about 4 or 5 cars back to save the air and then cut it back in after the engine was on. The real objection of the train crews was that it cut down on the initial terminal delay if the train was charged. Terminal delay was paid at the rate of 12 1/2 miles per hour on a 5 minute basis so if the engine had to pump the air on the whole train, it resulted in more terminal delay pay for the crew.

The carmen were in charge of the air test and the engineer set and released the brakes on their signals. They would make a walking inspection to see that all cars set up properly and then released. He then waited a few minutes to make sure the brakes were all released and his trainline pressure properly restored. The carmen watch as we pulled by and if there was any brakes sticking they would bleed the brake cylinder with a bleed rod on each side of the car. Miles City yard was on a curve so you couldn't get a signal from the caboose unless they were up on top and the head brakeman was on top the first car, but there were usually three carmen along the train that relayed the release signal and the highball to leave town. The east switch was a spring switch so we didn't have to stop and line it back once we got the train on the main line.

The fireman on a coal burning steam locomotive, or any steam locomotive, is a very important position. The success or failure of the trip depends on his ability to keep the steam pressure up where the engineer can efficiently use it. I was the second new fireman to work out of Miles City since 1929. I was actually the first one to make a road trip as Harold Reid had made his date on the switch engine two days before and Bud Wellems had deadheaded to Harlowton to work off that board. My whole crew viewed me with alarm right from the start. Here is the crew I was called with and you can see why. Engineer Williams firing date was 11-03-09 and engineer date of 9-19-13. Head brakeman Freeland's braking date was 5-2-17 and promoted 12-15-28. Conductor C.E. (Alfalfa Bill) Watkins braking date was 11-17-09 and conductor date of 5-03-13. Flagman Micky Hanahran was a 12-21-10 brakeman and a 8-14-15 conductor. As you can see, they were all men in their 40's and 50's and defiantly weren't to happy with a 20 year old student fireman on his first pay

FEATURES THIS ISSUE

- Page 1: "First Pay Trip" by Bill Wilkerson
- Page 3: Waybills
- Page 4: Substations by Jack Barger - Part III
- Page 5: DFW
- Page 8: "Crisis at Scranton" by John Elliott
- Page 9: Fire Destroys Bridge by Ed Emanuel
- Page 10: My First Run by John Elliott
- Page 10: Milwaukee buys Ties - Archives

trip with a tonnage train. To add to Williams worries, the 354 was making its first trip after a complete overhaul in the Miles City shops.

The 354 had a Simplex pot stoker. The coal was augured up into the pot just inside the firebox door opening and five steam jets blew the coal off the pot out over the grates. You had the left front, center front, and right front on the top row of valves out of the steam manifold. You had the left rear and right rear valves under the top three. Each jet was controlled by its valve and each jet head had three holes for the steam to blow out in a fan shape. They were a good stoker, but you had to make sure you got started right or you could get in trouble real fast.

I had checked my stoker, water pump and supplies when I first got on the engine. I ran the stoker and set my jets to just clean the pot rim the way I had been instructed and I could see where the coal was going. I had worked on the Miles City cinder pit, cleaning fires and servicing engines and was well acquainted with the operation of the three different types of stokers. I had done a lot of experimenting with running the stokers after I had cleaned the fires and was building them up to burn evenly before the road crew got on the engine. On my six student trips I had selected the firemen I knew were good and would give me good instructions. It doesn't take long cleaning fires to find out who the good firemen were. On my last student trip, I had a simplex stoker from Marmarth to Miles City and the fireman had ridden in the caboose because he had that much confidence in my ability to fire the locomotive. There were only three seats on a L3 and

sitting on a handful of waste on the compound bucket wasn't his idea of comfort.

By the time we were ready to leave town, I had my jets all set and had full confidence in my ability to fire the engine to Marmarth.

As we eased out of the yard, George stepped over, opened the firebox door and told me he would set the jets for me. I told him I had them all set, but he proceeded to adjust them to his satisfaction. I was watching him and told him it looked like he was blowing them too hard. George had a quick temper and was nervous at having a student fireman with a tonnage train as it is mostly uphill to Marmarth. He told me he was the engineer with over 30 years experience and I would work according to his instructions. He was my boss so all I could do was run the water pump.

When the caboose was on the main line, George went right to work on the 354 as it was upgrade for about four miles. I had the blower on pretty strong to get my fire burning hot and get the boiler hot before he started to work on it. Starting out, most boiler gauges drop back a few pounds until the fire gets to burning white hot. The boiler gauge had dropped back about five pounds and I increased the stoker speed to put more coal in. George opened the firebox door again and reached over and increased the manifold pressure about five pounds. I told him again that it looked like he was blowing too hard. He never answered but got back to his seat to whistle for the county road crossing. The next thing I knew, Freeland had the scoop shovel and started to throw some coal in the right back corner. I tried to stop him and George stopped me. He informed me that Free land knew how to fire. By this time I was wondering what the hell I was on the engine for if they were all going to do my work.

George took another look after we got over the crossing and adjusted the jets again, but the steam pressure continued to drop.

The only way you can read a white hot fire is to use your scoop shovel to deflect the air rushing in through the open firebox door. The deflected air will part your fire enough so you can see how it is burning. Otherwise the whole firebox is just a white hot glare. You deflect the air across the grates and mostly look for color changes. White hot is perfect, yellow showed you it wasn't burning properly, orange showed you it was starting to clinker and brown and black was unburnt coal and that was real trouble. George didn't use the scoop shovel, he just looked at the stoker pot and had no idea how the fire was burning. While he had over 30 years seniority, he hadn't fired stokers very much as his seniority kept him working as an engineer.

When I could finally see in the firebox, there was a big drift of unburnt coal across the front of the grates and both back corners were almost built up to pot level with unburnt coal. It was down grade into the Tusler passing track, so I got the long paddle off the front of the tender so I could pull enough fire back to get the front section burning again after I dumped the front grates. I had worked on the cinder pit since June 1, 1941 cleaning fires and servicing engines and I knew this one had to be cleaned in a hurry. George stopped me until he could take a look. When he looked in the firebox, he shook his head in disgust and Freeland made a smart remark. I reminded them that they were the ones that screwed up the fire, not me and from now on to keep their hands off so that I could fire the engine. George blew up and told me he could go to the phone and get another fireman in damn short order. I told him he had better wait until I screwed up because he hadn't let me do anything but run the stoker engine and the mess in the firebox was his and Freeland's. I started shaking grates and pulling fire as we rolled into the passing track so there wouldn't be any delay on the fireman. I got down and opened the ash pan hoppers as soon as we stopped. I was putting out the hot coals with water so they wouldn't catch the ties on fire. There was a big cloud of steam rolling up around the firebox when 16 went by on the main line with it's fireman laughing and gesturing at the dumb student fireman that had to clean fire just seven miles out of town.

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Everyone in the cab was mad, especially me. I told them I was being paid to fire the engine and I would fire it from here to Marmarth with no help from either one of them. I reminded them I had been knocking fires since June 1st and hadn't had any trouble on any of my six student trips. Needless to say I had plenty of draft leaving Tusler as George beat hell out of the 354 up over the Yellowstone River bridge and across the Kinsey flats. They were both hoping I would get in trouble, but the 354 was really steaming and burning a beautiful fire. It loved the abuse. We stopped at Bonfield for water. While I was taking water, George lined up the fire so it was ready to go just as soon as I got in the cab. He was always good about doing that. By this time he had cooled down a little and could see that I was probably going to do alright. At Mildred, he did the same thing while I was taking coal and water. When I got in the cab, he told me the fire looked pretty good. That was as close to a compliment as I was going to get.

The main trouble was he hadn't had a student fireman since 1929. During the depression of the dirty thirties, he had even been cut back to firing for a while. George was a pretty good fellow and always had a fireman with years of experience, so naturally he was worried when I reported this trip as his fireman, I can see it all now, but on August 26, 1941, he was just an ornery old S.O.B. to me. He was short tempered and blew up easily, but he got over it fast.

We had a meet with a L3 on a drag of empties at Ismay and he was in the clear, so we made it to Plevna for water. The 354 was still steaming freely and I was pretty proud of myself. The westbound way freight was in the clear at Baker switching the elevators so we didn't have to stop. The 354 was still steaming freely when we went over the top of the hill at Kingmont. It was 14 miles down hill to Marmarth and then into the yard. On the cinder pit at the roundhouse, George looked at the fire and told me it looked good. It had to be as I had watched it awful close all the way. We tied up about 11:30 AM.

I don't remember much about the return trip. I was so excited to get much sleep in the afternoon and we were called for a drag of empties about 9:30 PM. We followed passenger train No. 15 out of Marmarth and made it to Miles City for No. 16 at 5 AM. I'm pretty sure the L3 was the 396. It had a Duplex stoker, as did most L3's. There wasn't any controversy going back that would cause me to remember anything special about it, except that it was the whole night and I was pretty tired when we tied up at Miles City.

I fired for George quite a few times after the war. By then I was an old head and after same of the firemen they had to put up with during the war, I was really welcome. I had the reputation of being a good fireman and I took pride in my work and I was always interested in locomotives, so I got along real well with the engineers I fired for.

I was never on the 354 again, or even saw it. It was a Lines East engine and had been sent to Miles City for overhaul. It was back on Lines West during the war, but I was in the Navy. George Williams hit it with the 227 at Bluffport in 1943 when he thought he had the main line with the big S2 on the fast freight 263 west. Bluffport was on a curve around the end of a hill. It is a hard passing track to get out of going east as you dropped down to the O'Fallon creek bridge on a curve through a cut, and then up grade. The dispatcher had given the heavier 354 east the main line. They were both only going about 10 to 15 MPH when they hit, but it damaged both locomotives.

George and his crew were all fired but were soon reinstated because of a shortage of experienced men and the heavy war time traffic. There were no automatic blocks at that time and both engineers were figuring on stopping short of the switch if they had to.

During most of my steam career, a trip on a L3 in freight was anywhere from about 5 hours at best to the full sixteen hours or more, if they relieved you on the road and you deadheaded in to the terminal. You always had two or three meets and your timetable trains. There were a lot of trains and a lot of employees. There was

a lot of double-heading heavy trains or to transfer power. Double-heading was always interesting to me. Engineers developed a feel as to how their engine was working and how the other engineer was working his engine. A double header, especially two locomotives of the same class could sure make beautiful music barking up hill with their sharp exhausts.

To me, it was a good paying fun job and I'm glad I got in on as much steam as I did. Diesels were a much better job with more comfortable cabs, but they lack that something that endeared a steam engine to us. The way the exhaust would talk to you was almost as if they were alive. It makes you tend to forget their discomforts and draw backs.

- Bill Wilkerson, 8-26-91

Waybills

WANTED: Slides, photos, information, on MILW rib-side cabooses out west for possible publication in booklet. Write to Jeff Kehoe, 45 Brockway, Oswego IL 60543.

FOR SALE: T-shirts with boxcab E-50 crossing Hull Creek trestle. The artwork is by Bill Edgar from photos by Doug Nighswonger. Sizes S - XL are \$16.50. Size XXL is \$19.00. Add \$3.50 per shirt for postage and handling. WA residents must add 8.2% sales tax. Order from - Bill Edgar, North Coast Limited's, 8306 23rd Ave NW, Seattle WA 98117.

FOR SALE: Bill Wilkerson's book on the EF-4 Class Electric "Little Joe". The book is softbound in 8.5" by 11" format, 45 pages with color cover. The book contains previously unpublished photos and information on the "Joes". Several original drawings are included as well as a special chapter on the wreck of E-78 in 16-mile canyon in 1966. The entire life of the EF-4 is covered from their inception in 1947/48, all the way to the recent E-70 project. The book should be of significant value to "Joe" fans. Cost is \$10.00 U.S., postpaid, from The Harlowton Times Clarion, Dept. #EF-4, 111 South Central, Harlowton, MT 59036. Also available is Bill's book on the Montana Railroad, better known as "The Jawbone". This softcover book is also \$10.00 U.S., postpaid, from the same address.

FOR SALE: A numbered and signed, Limited Edition Art Print of the E-70 in Deer Lodge. It is a colored pen and ink side-view of the E-70 in it's new orange and maroon colors. The original drawing was done by Joseph C. Anderson of Portland, OR. It measures 12" by 20" and is printed on slick, heavy stock. Prints may be ordered for \$50.00 U.S., postpaid, from Les Schmidt, 211 South Delaware, Conrad, MT 59425.



OPERATING IN THE MILWAUKEE ROAD SUBSTATIONS

Part III

By Jack Barger

EDITOR'S NOTE: This text is from the personal recollections and anecdotes as told by Mr. Jack Barger, Ex-Milwaukee Road Substation Operator. These comments were recorded and transcribed by Ed Burton at the MilWest Annual Meet - 1993 - CleElum, Washington. This is Part III and the conclusion of this article. Parts I and II appeared in the May and August 1994 issues of the Dispatch respectively.

Q. I still don't understand. OK, your machine....

J. B. You got a dead short on a power system, it's just like an AC system. That's why you got a fault out here on one of these, and you got a breaker here and a breaker here, and you got a fault out here on the line and you have another breaker out here. You don't want this breaker to open if the trouble is over here, you want this breaker to open and that one to stay closed. And it has taps off it feeding somewhere else.

Q. While your running, I mean while your machines are running and you are generating power, and there's a train coming from the east, you're feeding just into the east trolley, or are you.....

J. B. Until you close that tie switch.

Q. Until you close the tie switch. Well, what was the normal operating sequence? I mean would you have the tie switch open?

J. B. Any time a train went by there, normally you would run with it open, yea, unless you had a train in this section over here too.

Q. OK, I only have one train, it's down there....., so you're tied to the east trolley and that's it. You're not connected to the west at all?

J. B. No, not electrically with the trolley.

Q. Because you have the switch?

J. B. The guy on the other end, the substation at that end, he's going to have his station on the line when the train goes by anyway, so you're.....

Q. So you're saying that....

J. B. Power on this trolley's (indicating east) gonna be coming from him, and power on this trolley's coming from you (indicating west).

Q. You're feeding that way?

J. B. And the other guy too.

Q. The guy down here's feeding this way. You never fed that way.

J. B. Not until I closed that tie switch. And he crosses the gap.

Q. When the train went by did you close the switch?

J. B. No, before. Always before. Which was bad because guys would forget it a lot of times and when they'd jump that gap...

Q. Well, I still don't understand. You could tie onto the east trolley and the west trolley, right?

J. B. Oh yea.

Q. So that's the same generator. Why can't the pantograph go across the air gap and not have a problem?

J. B. Because there is a difference in...., it's the difference in the potential of voltage.

Q. Its the same thing.

J. B. This guy, this side might have 2500 volts, this side 3400 volts.

Q. Yea, but our generator could be tied in with both trolleys, couldn't it?

J. B. Yea, with the tie switch closed.

Q. With the tie switch closed only?

A. J. Right, voltage is a function of load. It isn't so much a bother when you're out in the flats when you pick up a load, because the trains, they pull about the same load. But when you get one coming off....

Q. Yea, but your machine can be tied to both trolleys. Without the tie switch, you can be feeding that way and that way too, can't you? That's not right.

J. B. No.

Q. You come off the generators and either go that way or this way, no, they can never be connected together.

J. B. With the tie switch closed, yea.

Q. Without closing the tie switch. So you can alternate feed load. So you can follow the trains in some ways. If a train is coming up the....

J. B. Well, it depends on what you got now. You got a substation over here feeding into the same trolley you are. So you have a substation feeding this way too.

Q. So you got a west train coming. And it's like five miles away. He's coming this way. You're on line, is the tie switch open or closed?

J. B. Its open.

Q. Its open. So he's getting real close and he's about to go past you, do you close it now?

J. B. You close it before he gets here. I closed them at least five-ten miles before they got here.

Q. OK.

J. B. Here's the load run, as soon as he hits the block, I close the tie switch.

Q. OK, so you close the tie switch and the power goes by, then do you open the tie switch?

J. B. Not normally, no. I leave it open, no, I leave it closed.

Q. You just leave it closed?

J. B. Until he's gone, yea.

Q. OK, now at Kittitas, would they have shut down?

J. B. You'd shut down after he goes by. I'd call them and tell them he's by. Then you'd shut her down....

Q. You'd tell them he's by you?

J. B. Unless he's gonna cut voltage on me leading, like onto a hill, then he'd stay on for awhile you know.

Q. Did you have troubles coordinating with other substations about that?

J. B. Well, you had a hard time getting a hold of them because they were probably over feeding their dog or something. (laughter) Once in awhile he was gone to the bathroom, any kind of excuse will work. (laughter) "I broke my axe handle!". You broke your axe handle? What kind of an excuse is that?

Q. We had a guy washing his car....Guy used to wash his pickup truck....

J. B. Everybody washed his car in the substation. I did! Shoot, I did all kinds of things.

A. J. He was asking....Jack...did you have a separate calling circuit from the dispatcher net?

J. B. Oh yea, we had a block phone and we had a Rocky Mountain Division phone. And then we had the Dispatcher's phone line in our area. Then they got radios. Then they got radios, yea. Worst thing in an airplane there is, is a radio.

Q. So if you're running three...if you're running three sets of generators, are they running in parallel?

J. B. They're just...this is DC now.

Q. Right, but are they running in parallel?

J. B. They're tied to the positive and negative, same circuits.

Q. yea, parallel.

J. B. They're running in parallel.

A. J. So you added them up....

J. B. Yea, you added them up.

Q. I was just wondering how you would equalize them. The machine would probably be putting out exactly the same amount.

J. B. They would if they were all tied together, yea.

A. J. Its not a problem. Its not near as big a problem as you have with AC and you've got cycles to worry about.

Q. Right, then you have phases and such.

J. B. I can go out there. I'd go out on that switchboard. They all would take one off the line...Now that I didn't show you. OK. You have two machines on line and you want to take one off the line and they both have 500 amps, and you know that one of them will handle a thousand. What do you do? You lower the field voltage with your rheostat, and your current goes back to zero, the other picks up what its losing. As soon as its zero, pop the tie to the breaker, the machine is off the line. With DC only. Then you go over and trip your running switch and take it off the AC.

Q. So, until you take it off line its still sitting there turning?

J. B. Yea.

Q. What speed did they turn at?

J. B. Five hundred and seventeen; does that ring a bell?

A. J. Yea.

Q. Isn't it a synchronous motor, wasn't it based on....

J. B. Yea, it definitely was a synchronous speed. 517 on the big machines. No, the small machines were faster than on the big machines, I,m thinking 517 RPM.

Q. So the commutator was only for the DC side?

J. B. You had slip rings on the synchronous motor. Brushes and such and then you had an operator who would put scotch tape on the slip rings for you to help you out trying to get it on line then. There were guys who put scotch tape in gate circuits in DC to help you get it on line. Oh we had fun!

A. J. The DC line was tied to your east trolley or your west trolley, and then you had the tie switch to tie the two halves together. If you have from your rotary converter and you're tied to the east line and the west line, they're tied through the line on this side....

J. B. That's right, this side together, on this side.

A. J. Even though the tie switch isn't closed, they're actually tied together...

J. B. That's because he's pulling on the trolley and the taps, there's a difference in voltage when he goes across that air gap, you're still feeding voltage across them.

A. J. Yea, because you have losses through your contractors and through your buss lines. You have...

J. B. That's basically the reason for the tie switch. And also when those trains used to come at high speed in a shunt, they're supposed to drop the shunt within three to four miles of the substation. When they're in the shunt position, the field current is way down low, and their armature current is and you get too low on your field current, its just like a dead short on the current. And what they'd do is they'd get up close to a substation and drop the shunt and try to reverse, and BLOOEIE!! Flashovers on everything! Traction motors, substations. I got tripped there at Piedmont one night, and this is the one that Bob Harden walked out of the substation on, he'd quit. He didn't even ever start a machine, it scared him so bad! The breakers opened up in the office! that's what happened too...

A. J. Also, if you were off-line, you could still tie and feed the other juice up, say, to the other guy.

J. B. Oh yea, no problem. That came through on my buss and went on anyway.

Q. So if Hyak was only putting out a lower voltage, and you had a high voltage train coming up, and you had a mismatch of voltage and you had to close that gap, would you lower the voltage on this line so it would match what was coming from Hyak.

J. B. The only way I could tell was... No, I couldn't.

Q. Otherwise, when he hits that gap there'd be a big difference or when you closed that switch...

J. B. Oh yea, I could plug in the east and west feeder breaker and see what voltage he had on there.

Q. And then you would raise it up so that the train wouldn't know that wire had a lower voltage on it...

J. B. At Avery... It was interesting when we made Avery run off the generator at East Portal, they put a frequency meter on the panel so they'd know when they were 60 hertz. They'd just start those generators from a dead stop and they'd just creep up, rotating like this. When you closed the AC starting switch, that old machine would start to rotate! It wouldn't take maybe 12 to 15 seconds to get up to speed, or less. Just turn the old generator up and get her up to speed and watch the meter, soon its got to 60 hertz they'd cut in the transformer and feed the city power. They should have done that years before! Before they killed some of those guys, trying to cut trees under a hot line. Now the line's gone and they're feeding from St. Maries.

A. J. Well, they could have done that too, if they'd thought about it.

J. B. Yea, right.

- Jack Barger, as transcribed by Ed Burton

DFW

This column serves for miscellaneous new 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.

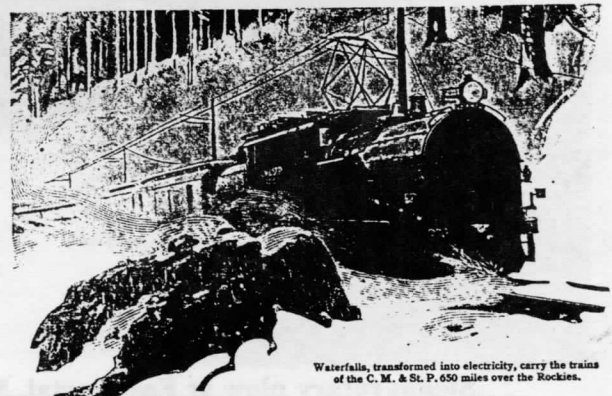
FUNDS OK'D FOR TAFT TUNNEL TRAIL.

A House-Senate conference committee approved funds for the Taft Tunnel recreation trail project.

The Interior Appropriations conference committee approved a measure containing \$390,000 for the 46-mile-long trail that would follow the path of an abandoned railroad line across the Bitterroot mountains from Idaho to Montana.

Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, said he expects both houses of Congress to pass the measure by the end of September, and President Clinton to sign it into law.

- as reported in the Spokesman-Review on 9/23/94.



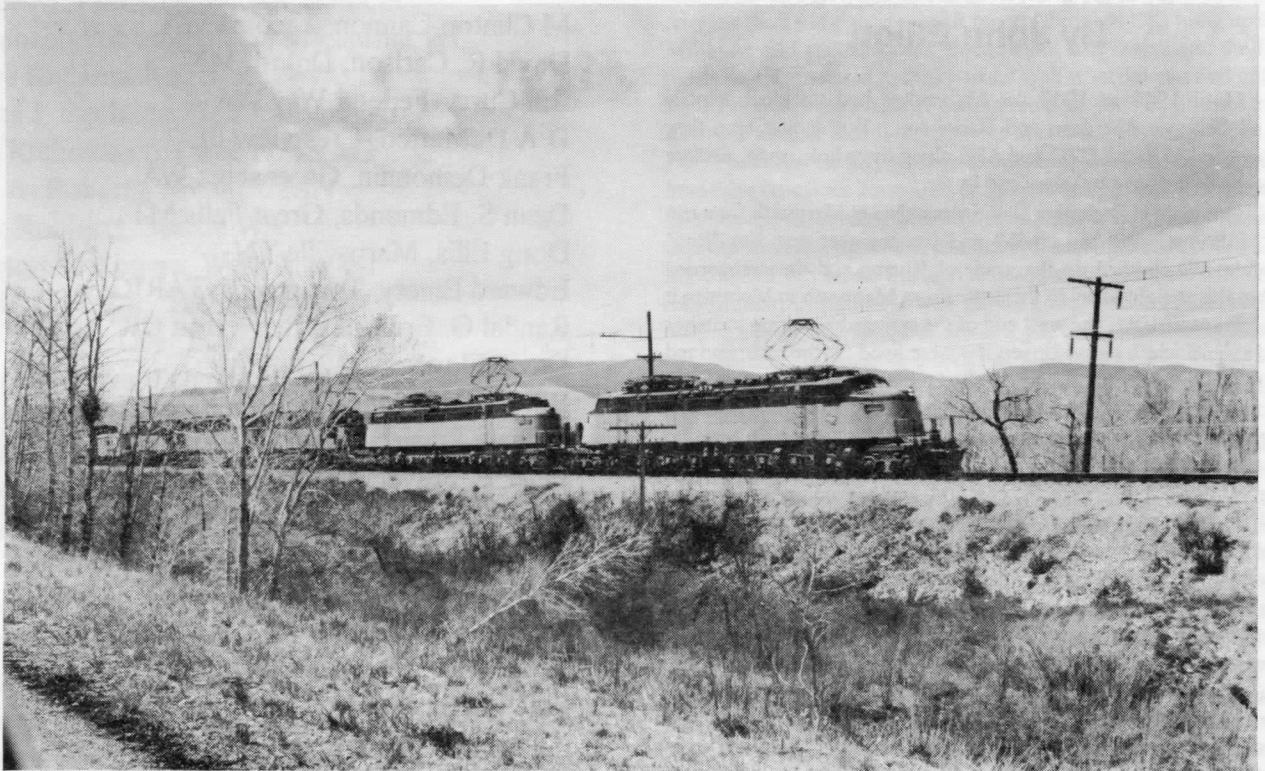
Waterfalls, transformed into electricity, carry the trains of the C. M. & St. P. 650 miles over the Rockies.



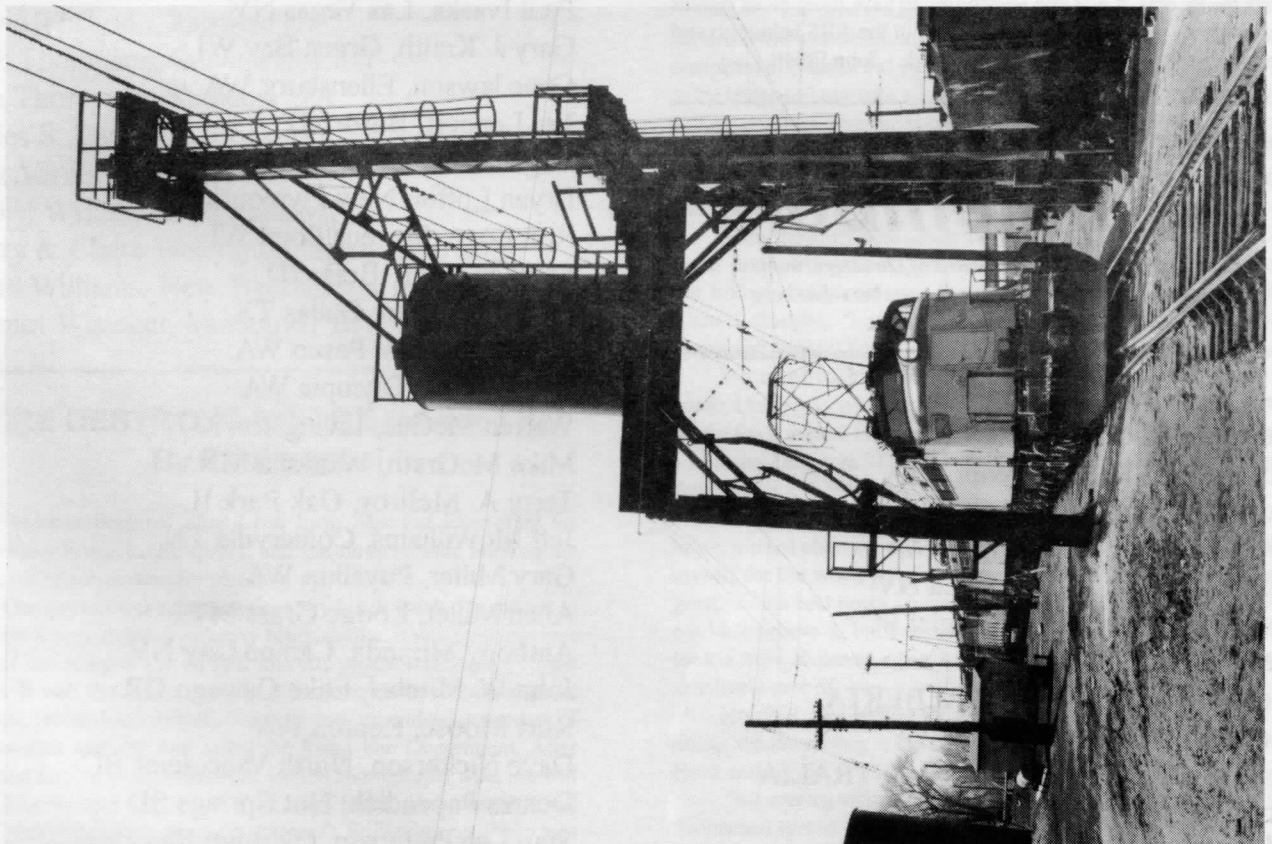
Two Dot, MT substation. 1930's. Note the wigwag crossing signal. Gene Lyle Collection.



Steam rotary plow at East Portal, MT 1930's. The plow is clearing the siding.



#264 rolls along the easy descent near Groveland behind E73 and E76 on May 9, 1974.
Ted Benson photo.



Day's work is done as the E73 and E76 ease up under the sand tower at Harlowton. Having arrived on #264, they'll go west on #263 tomorrow. May 9, 1974. Ted Benson Photo.

CRISIS AT SCRANTON

By John Elliott

Until 1946 or 1947 the Milwaukee had no block signals at all between Aberdeen and Harlowton. But at that time they proceeded to install CTC and ABS along the whole route. Before that the trains went by guess and by God.

One night in December 1946 I was called at Marmarth for a run to Mobridge. We had an S-2 and the engineer was Jim "Red" Wands. We climbed up the grade to Rhame and then proceeded down the straight-away to the east. From Marmarth to Mobridge it was almost all dark. The west end of the sidings had spring switches and a signal which showed green if it were lined for the main and red if it were lined for the siding. We had a meet at Scranton with #15. At that time the ABS had been installed through Scranton. Well, as luck would have it, we overshot the switch and the train was too heavy to back up. So we cut the train west of the switch and hurried down the main to the east end, and backed up the siding to pull the train into the clear. But the ominous thing about it all was that the block had turned yellow as we hurried down the main. It was also yellow for #15. No sooner had we cleared the west switch when the block showed red. No. 15's headlight was visible in the distance and it wasted no time in highballing up the main. There was no letter to write and no investigation. We had handled the crisis in good form. But the ominous thing about it all is what would have happened if there had been no ABS. Actually, nothing bad, as there would have been some frantic flagging. The crews had their own system of signaling such as excessive smoke and leaving their headlight on until they cleared. To my knowledge, outside of the Custer Creek disaster, there was only one fatal "Header" on the old TM. This was near Roundup & was caused by a careless engineer. As remarkable as this safety record was, it was still comforting to have those block signals showing red, green or yellow. We soon put the ABS behind us and the track to Mobridge looked awfully dark. - John Elliott.

New Members

On behalf of the MilWest Board of Directors, we wish to welcome the following new members that have recently joined MilWest.

Edward Abbott, Elgin IL
 Forrest G. Baker, Davenport IA
 James Barkume, Royal Oak MI
 Fred Bateman, Vancouver WA
 Edwin Bellach, Winnemucca NV
 Dean Belowich, Murrells Inlet SC
 Ted Benson, Modesto CA
 Keith Boody, Three Hills ALBERTA
 Donald E. Brock, Spokane WA
 John R. Brown, Melbourne AUSTRALIA
 Phil Buchert, Waterford ME
 Michael Burbridge, Bellvue WA
 Chuck Burnham, Chicago IL

Tom Butterworth, Sandpoint ID
 M Clinton Cannon, Tacoma WA
 David R. Carlson, Duluth MN
 Bill Curry, Federal Way WA
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 James C. Herold, Romeoville IL
 Robert Hollenback, Deer Lodge MT
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 Ron Loge, Stevens Point WI
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 Jennifer Martin, Pasco WA
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 John Pickett, Kinderhook NY

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 Kalmbach Publishing Co., Waukesha WI
 Steve Radmacher, Seattle WA
 James J. Rechtien, East Lansing MI
 Ron Richardson, Three Forks MT
 Rex A. Roberts, Richfield MN
 John Robinett, Seattle WA
 Thomas L. Rogers, West Allis WI
 David A. Roher, Tacoma WA
 John Satake, Deer Lodge MT
 Les & Sharleen Schmidt, Conrad MT
 Ray Shinn, New Britain CT
 Lowell Shuck, Rapid City SD
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 Robert W. Slauson, Vancouver WA
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 Scott R. Snell, South Bound Brook NJ
 Fred M. Staudaer, Alexandria VA
 William F. Stauss, Mount Horeb WI
 Richard Stivers, San Jose CA
 James M. Stone, Clinton MD
 Robert Swartz, Phoenix AZ
 Eugene D. Teel, Perry IA
 David Thebodo, Fairfield IA
 Kirk Thompson, Stevensville MT
 Dan Thompson, Spokane WA
 James S. Torgeson, Lockport NY
 Jack Varney, Spokane WA
 Daniel Walker, Great Falls MT
 Harry & Claire Wellington, Spirit Lake ID
 Brian Williams, New Westminster BC
 Helmut Wisinger, Vancouver BC

FIRE DESTROYS BRIDGE (or does it)

By Ed Emanuel

This incident occurred after I had been Agent at Ellensburg for sometime. It was in the spring, and the farmers were burning the fields off in preparation for planting.

One day as I was returning from my lunch break, I could see to the west a huge column of heavy black smoke. It was quite obvious one of our bridges was on fire. The city phone was ringing off the hook. It was the school teacher at the two room school house at Woldale, (about 3 miles west). She informed me indeed it was one of our bridges and she had called the Rural Fire Department. After thanking her, I immediately called the DS and reported what she had said. The 1st trick DS was C. P. "Pinky" Miles. (Any reason to call him "pinkie" had long since disappeared). Suffice to say, Pinky was not the most beloved Dispatcher ever to work on the Coast division. After he demanded to know what bridge it was, the extent of the damage and exactly what time the fire would be extinguished, I told

him, "I haven't the slightest idea." He said, "Well, get in your car, drive out there and give us a quick report." I replied OK, hung up the earphone and started for the door. About half way there, the DS phone rang, I answered it, Pinky said, "Well what did you find out?" My reply was "Hell I haven't got out the door yet!" So after he told me I was wasting time, I departed for the scene of the fire.

The closest highway was to the bridge was about a half mile, from there I could see it was a 10 or 12 span bridge, and was burning from one end to the other, with flames as high as the trolley. Burning creosote was creating a huge column of black smoke. The RFD fire truck had driven across the field and was at the east end, with only one fireman in sight. He was standing on the end of the bridge holding a hose, it kind of looked like a guy doing you know what.

I decided it would be a waste of time to walk over there, so I turned the car around and sped back to the depot. Pinky had the DS bell "tied down." He must have thought I was just sitting there, so when I got on the phone, I sarcastically said, "Are you ringing Ellensburg?" (It did not take long for me to regret this. I soon found out I wasn't so smart either). I made my report, which would have been OK, except I decided to editorialize with the statement, "They will never get that fire out, the bridge is a goner."

This started the wheels turning in Tacoma. Al Bill's B&B crew was at North Bend on the Everett line, they were instructed to stop whatever they were doing and to make preparations to move to Thorp (The first station west of the bridge). A work train at Hyak was started towards North Bend to get the B&B crew. The Tacoma Roundhouse was instructed to put diesels on No. 16 so it could be detoured over the NP from Easton to Spokane.

In the meantime, No. 263, which had been holding at Kittitas, was brought over to Ellensburg, (a move I didn't understand, but no doubt saved me even more embarrassment) and the crew laid up for 3 hours.

H. R. "Fat" Rhay, a B&B man working on the Cle Elum water service crew was deadheading home on No. 263 from a job he had completed in Othello. Fat came into the office and said, "Let's go out to the bridge so I can take a look at it." When we got there, I couldn't believe my eyes. The fire was out, the bridge was still standing, and I was beside myself. We walked over to the bridge, and after making an inspection, Fat pronounced it better than ever; only the creosote had burned.

Many thoughts were racing through my head: "I wonder if I can sneak into town, get a 10 gallon can of gasoline, come back and set the bridge on fire, no way, there were too many people around." Then I thought, "I wonder if the Mexican railroads are hiring operators? What if they are, you can't speak Spanish, Dummy!"

We went back to the depot. I had no choice but to face the music. I told Pinky what we had found, and then sat back and waited for the tirade to start. Pinky was unusually calm. All he said was "Just a minute, I am sure "JTH" (J. T. Hansen, the Division superintendent) wants to hear your story."

After I made my report to "JTH", if Pinky thought I was going to get a royal chewing out, he was very disappointed. I had steeled myself for the worst possible scenario, and all I heard was, "That's great, it's the best news I have heard today." What an anti-climax. I couldn't believe it, but I certainly didn't argue. At that moment, I took a vow to never again offer any information that I was not absolutely sure of.

No. 263 was turned loose, and the B&B crew went back to doing whatever they were doing. The work train headed back to Hyak and No. 16's detour was cancelled.

That evening with a sigh of relief, I OS'd No. 16 and headed for the nearest tavern.

- Ed Emanuel

MY FIRST RUN By John Elliott

It was a day in November 1946, an exciting day for a student fireman. I had just come in from my last student trip on the North Line. All the requirements had been met. I checked in with the round house foreman and he took me to see the "traveling grunt," Mr. R. B. Aney. We hit it off splendidly. Mr. Aney impressed me as a square shooter. If you did a good job & tended to business, that was all he expected. On my last student trip a fellow named Wurly was the engineer. He impressed me as being very old and feeble. It was all he could do to get up in the cab. Sometime ago I read an article in the Milwaukee Railroader. Wurly had a main line run. Mr. Aney climbed on the engine and gave Wurly a visual test, asked him to read the signal. He couldn't. He was blind. It seemed that the fireman and head brakeman were his eyes. That was the end of Wurly's career. I was marked up. For me it was back to the good ol' Northwest Hotel. Sadly it's gone. I checked the Mobridge Directory and there is no listing. It was a homey place. We sat around the parlor, all rails. One was an old Greek who had lost the lower half of a leg in an accident. Car toad, I believe. Fell under a car, they say. But the phone rang. Closest guy answered it and said, "It's for you." I was called. Had to deadhead to Marmarth on #15 and take the Lemmon local the next day. One of the guys said, "Take my room." It was in an old flop house where many of the crews stayed. I got to Marmarth and found the old flea bag and the room. Several guys were there. They pointed out the room. Since it was late, I crashed. But the first impression I got was the sheets hadn't been laundered in some time. Then if that weren't enough, the last guy had clipped his toe nails. So I brushed away as many of the little barbs as I could. Quite a change from Mrs. Chase's hotel across the street. I had slept there previously on an expense account, courtesy the engineering department. Well, morning came and it was breakfast at the beanery and I hoofed it over to the roundhouse. The foreman took me to the engineer, one Bernie Schiffelbiem. With a big grin on my face, I said, "This is my first run," whereupon the hoghead turned the air blue with a string of profanity and said, "Thanks a lot for giving me a green fireman." They had a shouting match but as it was, I was all they had. They couldn't "Beam" a fireman from Mobridge. So Bernie was stuck with me.

We moved down the yard and hooked on. Soon we were puffing up the hill to Rhame. For some reason I did all the right things. After all, I had two weeks of student firing behind me, I knew how to handle the water pump and the stoker. We got to Hettinger without incident.

But then I was in deep Doo-doo. Had a lot of switching to do at a stock yard. There were all kinds of critters to be shipped to market. But in all my student trips I had never learned the forward signal. I knew the night signals. Well, this didn't do much for the engineer's disposition. Finally a brakeman clued me in. But in the mean time a B & B foreman I knew from Miles City stood below my window and said, "Johnny, one of them brakemen said 'We have a dumb S.O.B. in the cab.' Is he talking about you?" He was. But that's life for a new fireman.

We left Hettinger and about ten miles out of Lemmon another crisis. The engine popped and the engineer said, "Give her some water." I did and the needle sagged. I cut off the water and turned on the stoker. Opened the firedoor and it was all black. Then some more noise from the right side. "Give her some more water. You're killing her. Here, get out of there, I'll take over." To the brakeman, he said, "Watch the line." Things settled down and he motioned me back to the left side. It was dark and I couldn't see his face. Probably just as well. Come Lemmon and we tied up. The crew from Mobridge would take our engine on to Mobridge in the morning. We'd take

theirs back to Marmarth. We had dinner and hit the sack. Since there was a housing shortage in Lemmon, the local hotel had a dormitory. The operator in Lemmon was named Beulah and was blessed with considerable glandular emollients. Beulah's "boobs" were a topic of conversation along the Trans-Missouri. Next day it was back to Marmarth. The trip was routine. Engine steamed well and the engineer seemed calmed and collected. Hettinger provided some more switching but we arrived in Marmarth fairly early in the afternoon. For November it was a balmy day. I wandered across to the Chass Hotel. Nothing for me at the flea bag. Mrs. Chase had a living doll for a daughter. But alas she was taken. Her "regular run" was a fireman. They later married. He had a string of good luck. Over fifty old heads retired by 1950 and he was set up running.

Was told that a diesel was coming through. The only one I saw my whole time running. So after it arrived I settled in the crummy, in fact stretched out on the cushions. We had a L-3 for a helper which was a surprise for me. We never had a helper for any run I had out of Marmarth. Were they afraid of stripping the gears on the "growler?" We left and the L-3 was making a racket. But you knew it was like a lullaby for me. I was gone before we got to Rhame. Woke up about Lemmon. They were switching. Got down on the ground and watched. That diesel had a different sound, kind of a whirring noise. Heard an interesting comment from the conductor. "Gee, we didn't have to stop once for coal and water." A portent for the future, I'm sure. Mobridge at last and the Northwest Hotel for me. On December 12, my birthday, I was cut off and left for my home in Idaho. But the badlands of both Dakotas left their mark on me. Sometime ago I acquired a book by Kathleen Norris, entitled "Dakota." She's a writer that left New York and moved back to Lemmon, her home town. She speaks of a mystique of the high plains. I believe it. I grew up in the Rockies and still live there. But there is something about the plains that grabs me way down deep. And Marmarth is an ideal small railroad town. In 1951, while on our way to the Navy and Newport, Rhode Island, my wife and I stopped in Marmarth and went over to the beanery. Who did I meet but "Red Wands." I heard he retired and moved to Hawaii. What a change from Dakotta. Dakota was a great experience. Glad I had it. - John Elliott

MILWAUKEE BUYS TIES

This is taken from a copy of a contract between Potlatch Lumber Co. and the Milwaukee to purchase ties. The Contract date is December 3, 1906. The contract copy was supplied by Tom Burg.

The Potlatch Lumber Co. agrees to sell and deliver to the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad Company, Washington and Idaho, two-hundred-sixty-two thousand Red or Yellow Fir or Tamarack cross ties. To be paid for at the rate of \$13.00 per thousand for square sawed or slab pole cross ties, and at the rate of .45 cents per tie for #1 hewn ties, and at the rate of .35 cents per tie for #2 hewn ties. Said ties to be of the following specifications; squared sawed ties to be seven inches in thickness, nine inches in face and exactly eight feet in length. #1 slab pole ties to be seven inches in thickness, eight inches in face, and exactly eight feet in length. #2 ties to be the same as #1 slab pole ties in all respects except they may be only seven inches in width of faces. #3 ties to be the same in all respects as #1 and #2, except that the faces may be six inches in width.

Not to exceed ten percent total contract to be #3 ties, and not to exceed thirty percent total contract to be #2 slab ties.

All ties to be delivered f.o.b cars Palouse, Washington. Delivery to commence by July 1, 1907, and to be delivered at the rate of about fifty-thousand or more per month.

Cross ties to be inspected as loaded on cars or at mill where manufactured

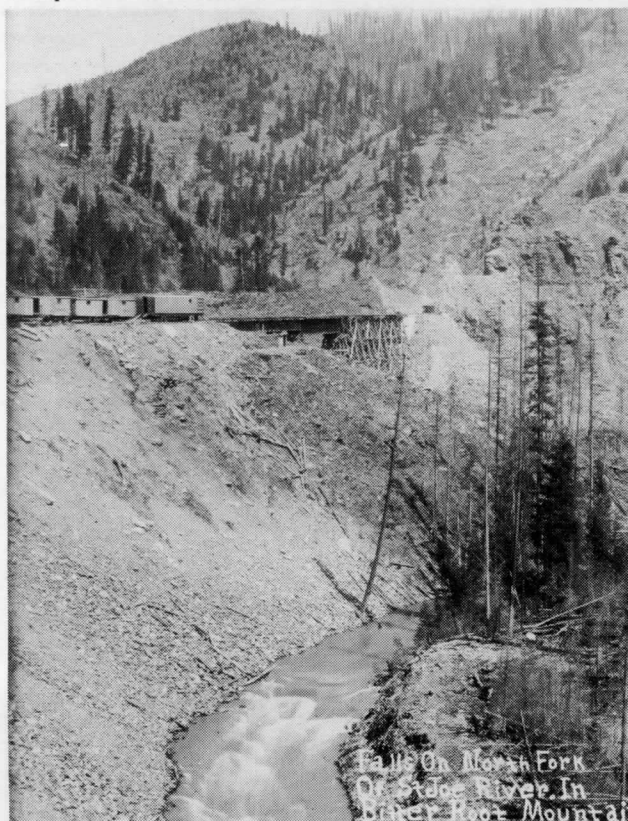
Payments to be made on or about the fifteenth of the month succeeding the month in which ties are delivered.

All cross ties to be made from sound, live timber, free from wind shakes, black or rotten nots.

Editors Comment: One has to wonder how many of the ties made in this purchase, if any, were still installed when the railroad left Lines West in 1980.

Editors Desk Notes

In 1994, MilWest was able to purchase for the archives, a collection of rare photographs from a private source. This collection is primarily of the Idaho and Montana area, but there are some of the Cascades as well. Almost all from 1907-1912 period. All are pre-electrification and feature many shots of the construction of the Pacific Extension through this region. We feel most of these photos are priceless for their historical record. Over the next few months I will be getting them organized in a display book, with proper captions so they can be displayed at the Annual Meets. So that all members may enjoy them, I will often publish selected photos from the collection. Below is an example from the collection.



On the North Fork of the St. Joe River near Avery, ID. Notice the trestle is partial steel girders and wooden bents and bracing. Post-card by the Puget Sound Studio, J. Fish Prop.



Holiday on rails...
 OLYMPIAN
Hiawatha
 Chicago-Pacific Northwest

Travel on this Milwaukee Road streamliner offers just about every ingredient of a happy holiday.

Friendly service, pleasant surroundings and appetizing, moderately priced meals all help to create the take-it-easy spirit that banishes worry and tension.

Winter wonderland scenery makes daytime hours delightful in the lookout seats of the full-length Super Dome. Electrified over four mountain ranges.

If your holiday isn't complete unless the family is along, we can take care of that. Ask us about new and thrifty Family Fares that apply for Pullman, Touralux sleeper and coach travel. Harry Sengstacken, Passenger Traffic Manager, 708 Union Station, Chicago 6.



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MilWest Dispatch

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**Wreck on the C. M. & P. S. Ry., May 30, 1911 near Marengo, WA.
Photo by Cramer, St. Maries. MilWest Archives collection.**