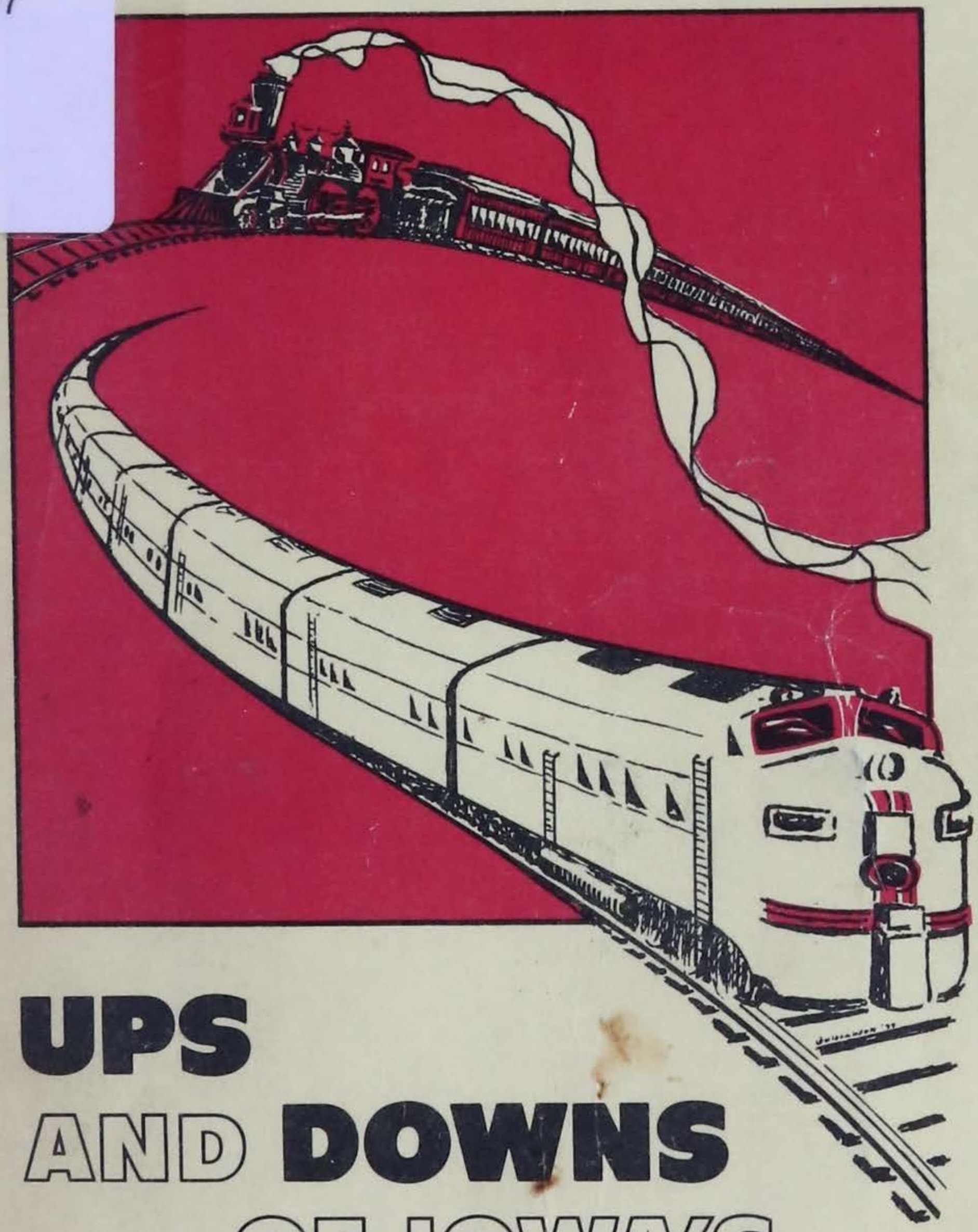

UPS AND DOWNS OF IOWA'S RAILROADS

by William Nelson Whitehill

UPS AND DOWNS OF IOWA'S RAILROADS

This work is hereby dedicated with sincere and honorable respect to those early Iowans who, as early as the 1840's, envisioned the urgent need for railway transportation, however primitive—who planned and projected, surveyed, financed and built the first segments of trackage. Not to be forgotten in this recognition are those who were unable to invest financially in the new ventures but who contributed most generously to the construction work with their own manpower, horsepower and equipment.

They all had an important part in paving the way for the extensive railroad coverage that soon was providing excellent freight and passenger service to all corners of the State of Iowa.

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This author acknowledges with a great deal of appreciation the valuable assistance accorded his efforts by the following:

M. Ernest Sevde, a longtime railroad "buff" of Toledo, Iowa, who has supplied me with much printed matter relevant to the early railroads including operating rules, timetables and even a 1962 edition of the Official Railroad Guide.

Mrs. Lawrence Nason of Marshalltown for her on-the-scene recollections of the G and M branch and its operations in and about Van Cleve, her home for many years.

Howard Soorholtz, Melbourne, who also has recalled for me the trials and tribulations of the State Center Branch—and whose grandfather was one of the original stockholders of the G and M corporation and paid county taxes in support of that railroad's construction.

Frank Brown, whose memories of early State Center history helped in the description of that town's "heyday" railroad facilities.

Wilbur Jessup who contributed the information concerning the Farmers Union Railroad.

Max Landon for his contribution of early Milwaukee Railroad timetables.

Lee Brintnall who has shared with me his collection of early Northwestern timetables, maps and other items of railroad interest.

Also Helen Whitehill and Peggy Small, who have helped in the production of this book. And the many others who have given me encouragement and suggestions and have shared with me their own recollections of travel on Iowa's Railroads.

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FOREWORD

"THE UPS AND DOWNS OF IOWA'S RAILROADS" will have a distinct appeal to several age groups of readers.

There are those whose age precludes any knowledge of what a passenger train looked like inside and out. They have never thrilled to the gentle sway and roll of a speeding train, never relaxed to the sleep-inducing clickety-clack of the rails or never enjoyed the ever changing landscape as viewed from a passenger train window. To those readers, the following pages contain informative reading. You will learn what it was like to luxuriate in pullman and parlor cars, to dine in style in the diner, to ride the dome cars and enjoy wide vistas of scenery. In addition, you will learn about the inconveniences and discomforts of local passenger train travel in the earlier days.

Then there is the larger group who will remember the trains of the decades prior to 1960—and some, like me, will recall the rail services all the way back to 1900. Most of you can reminisce with me as I recall the days of the locals, the express trains, the fast mail trains, the way freights and the mixed trains. The pages that follow include memories of the depot's potbellied stove, the section crews, the stockyards and the cattle cars, and the transition of steam to diesel locomotives. Also, all of you will remember the steady decline of railroad passenger service in the face of automobile, bus, and airline competition.

Finally, there surely will be some readers whose recollections will date even farther back in the story of railroading in Iowa. To you, it is my hope that this brief history of the rails will stir your thoughts to relive your own personal experiences în passenger train travel and in shipping grain, cattle, and hogs by rail.

I feel confident that all age groups and all categories of readers will find considerable interest in these pages of informative railroad history, recollections, and nostalgia.

One final word to those who have never experienced a train ride—it isn't too late. Now there's the extensive nationwide coverage of AMTRAK with its fleet of modern red, white, and blue passenger trains. I suggest you plan a lengthy vacation trip by rail—you'll enjoy it.

I

DREAMS AND LINN CREEK VALLEY

To dream is the privilege of all ages of man. In our younger years I suppose it is natural for our dreams to take the form of prolonged looks into the future—consideration of what we might make of our lives—what occupation or path to follow in our adult times—how to gain the success and accomplishment we hope for in those dreams.

In middle life we have an opportunity to reassess our aims and goals—to look back at misdirected effort and make corrections—to reestablish our purposes and determination for success in our chosen line of endeavor.

Upon reaching the golden age of retirement our thoughts and dreams must surely be of the past. How pleasant it is to recall and relive those years gone by! But how much more difficult it is to remember the more recent events in our times. Highlights of our lives three score years ago come to mind much clearer and in brighter perspective than perhaps a special day in that life that dates back a mere week or two. Thus our dreams become a means of retrospect and review of a life nearing completion—a life that no doubt has been filled with joys and happiness, with disappointments and successes, with some goals reached and others never attained.

One great advantage of our natural ability to recall the past, even to the days of our childhood, is that in retirement we are permitted to consider in detail the changing times through which we have lived. Stop to think for a moment—to dream if you please—of the multitude of changes in the way of life that have occurred in these United States in the past hundred years. Consider the tremendous advances in electronics, communications, transportation, agriculture, medicine and a host of other accomplishments that have come to reality during a normal lifetime. What a joy it is to have been a part of this gradual transformation and to be blessed with the ability to look back on it all in retrospect.

At the moment I am in a mood to dream as I gaze across a wide and beautiful valley that is showing the first signs of spring—the results of gentle rains and warm sunshine. It's the valley of Linn Creek just west of Marshalltown in central Iowa. The wide expanse of the valley spreads out below and beyond to include farm land, soon to become fields of green; gently rolling golf courses; modern homes; and the meandering course of Linn Creek with its accompanying woodlands that up to now have survived the complete encroachment of civilization. The changing seasons will vary this picture for me from glorious green patterns of spring and summer to the multicolor hues of autumn; to the indescribable beauty of a winter landscape that greets the eye on a frosty morning after a sparkling new snowfall.

But in keeping with the tendencies of my seventy-five years, my dreams seem to drift back in time, even beyond my own three quarters of a century—back to the time when Linn Creek, except for abundant wildlife and an occasional band of nomadic Indians, was the only occupant of this valley. The pioneers and early settlers had not yet arrived on the scene. The rolling hills were virgin prairies and the wooded areas were as nature planned them.

Now, in order to develop my dream to a more recent point in time, I find I must rely on the writings of historians and on other well preserved records of those early times.

My memory, now in high gear, again proves equal to the task and I recall reading about what happened to the peace and quiet of my dream valley.

II

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THE FIRST IOWA RAILROADS

Before 1850 the early settlers in eastern Iowa had no means of transportation except horses and mules, oxen, the rivers and their own sturdy legs. They were forced to travel many long miles across trackless prairies and unbridged streams to procure supplies and materials so necessary to their very existence. Almost as important was the lack of a market for their farm produce.

In that year the rapidly expanding railroad industry completed several lines from Chicago to the Mississippi River where that formidable barrier effectively blocked progress westward. With the railroads in operation just across the big river, those early Iowans saw their Illinois neighbors enjoying the many advantages offered by this newer and faster means of transportation. In fact it was plain to see that the railroads were vital to their own agricultural and mercantile pursuits as well as all-important to their own personal well being.

So while they waited for the river to be bridged just about every community, town, and city in eastern Iowa sprang into action. They organized railway companies, raised monies by every means possible, surveyed possible routes and even completed considerable roadbed construction.

There originated a multitude of small companies, some of which went bankrupt and some went through reorganization—a few partially completed and some finished lines resulted—and, unfortunately there were some who never really "got off the ground". The result was a hodge-podge of short line projects, most of them in the counties adjacent to the Mississippi.

But in northeast Iowa there was considerable railroad enthusiasm that resulted in some real accomplishments. It was the result of the comple-

tion in 1857 of the new Milwaukee and Mississippi Railway from the former city to Prairie Du Chien on the east bank of the big river directly opposite the Iowa towns of McGregor and Marquette. Although there was no bridge across the river as yet, those early Iowans started planning in anticipation of the time when the Milwaukee Road's trains would be crossing over to provide services for their communities on the west bank.

During the next ten years construction was completed on a line westward from Marquette to Monona and several other shorter lines were put into service in the same area. All of these independent efforts, including the beginning of the River Road north from Dubuque, were soon to become parts of the Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul System. By 1870 the Marquette line had reached to Algona in northwestern Iowa and would eventually reach out all the way to the Black Hills as the Iowa Dakota Division of the Milwaukee Road.

About 1856 no less than four of the larger railroads out of Chicago bridged the river barrier—the Rock Island (the first across), the Burlington, the Northwestern, and the Illinois Central—and the race to the Missouri River was under way. In the process, these better organized and better financed railroads quickly gobbled up the many small partially completed short line local companies and used to good advantage their construction projects already under way or partially completed. Thus the foresight and timely efforts of those early pioneer Iowans did, in effect, speed up the westward progress of the new rail lines.

Federal and state land grants, financial aid from local communities, plus much volunteer encouragement and assistance all along the line—all provided impetus to continued completion of segment after segment. The work continued in spite of the fact that the nation was, by the early 60's, involved in the War Between The States. That great war for the survival of the Union was rapidly draining away the resources and the manpower of all the states including Iowa whose statehood numbered less than twenty years at that time.

Four of the main line railroads that began the race westward set their courses almost due west, all aiming for the Council Bluffs-Omaha gateway where connections with the Union Pacific were available. The Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad, having crossed the Mississippi at Burlington, took a southerly course across Iowa through Fairfield, Ottumwa and Creston. The Chicago Rock Island and Pacific crossed at Davenport and included in its route Iowa City, Grinnell, Des Moines and Atlantic. The Illinois Central took a more northerly route, crossing at Dubuque and building west through Waterloo and Ft. Dodge to Sioux City. Later the IC reached Council Bluffs via a line from Ft. Dodge.

The Chicago & Northwestern Railroad was projected from the river crossing at Clinton due west across the state through Cedar Rapids, Marshalltown, Boone, and Carroll reaching Council Bluffs in 1867—a winner in the four way race to the Missouri.

The first Iowa segment of the Northwestern, built under the name of Chicago, Iowa and Nebraska Railroad, was completed and put in operation to Cedar Rapids in 1859. That same summer another company, the Cedar Rapids and Missouri River Railroad, was organized to con-

tinue the construction to Marshalltown. A great amount of promotion and solicitation was required before this part of the line got under way. Personal cash pledges of individuals and companies and a considerable amount of actual labor donated by farmers went into the completion of this segment. More land grants helped mightily in assuring financial soundness.

Sometime during the four years required to complete the section from Cedar Rapids to Marshalltown, all the various companies involved in the construction to date were consolidated into a new, well financed corporation—The Chicago and Northwestern Railroad.

On January 17, 1863, the first C & N W passenger train arrived in Marshalltown. It carried railroad officials and visiting dignitaries from Chicago, all of whom were honored guests at the huge celebration marking the coming of the first railroad to Marshall County. The completion of the line opened up a whole new way of life for those early residents in central Iowa. It provided a direct connection with the outside world to the east, a new faster mode of travel, faster mail service, and probably most important of all, a direct freight service to the grain and livestock markets of Chicago.

MARSHALLTOWN TO STATE CENTER

Now my thoughts into the past return to that tranquil scene of beauty—the valley of Linn Creek. On a bright spring day in 1863 a new entity has burst upon the scene; the unsullied landscape is being transformed as never before; and the peace and quiet of the ages has been rudely disrupted. There is great activity in full view of my hilltop grandstand seat. A railroad is under construction—the same railroad that would continue to operate over that same identical right-of-way to this day—one hundred and fourteen years later.

The Northwestern spent the winter months of 1862-63 at Marshalltown gathering supplies and materials; rails, ties, and ballast were brought in; and a new work force had now set out to build the next segment of their trans-Iowa mainline. The gathering of those materials and that work crew could have presented some problems in view of the fact that the Civil War was still in progress.

Surveyors had already determined that the Linn Creek valley was the best route westward from Marshalltown. Procurement of right-of-way was no problem. The company owned a good share of the needed land through grants of alternate sections on either side of the new rail line and the government owned almost all of the rest. There was, at that time, very little privately owned land in western Marshall County and beyond.

From my elevated viewpoint, I can watch (in my dreams, of course) a grade being thrown up, using mule and oxen drawn slip scrapers. They would be followed by crews of men laying ties and rails with the strong armed spikers swinging their mauls in rhythmic fashion. The work train, riding the newly laid rails, was following close behind with supplies of all kinds for the day's work. At the end of the day, the same train would provide a ride for the work force back to Marshalltown.

For a few weeks I am privileged to "dream" watch the panorama of a pioneer railroad in the making. But all too soon the new construction disappears as it curves around the hill to the west, later to be known as the Four Mile Hill. Still there are crews spreading ballast, tamping ties, and building bridges. There are few, if any, road crossings to build—as yet there were no roads—but the need for safe crossings would be a must very soon. Also, the telegraph poles would have to be set and the wires strung. Right-of-way fences would probably be the last order of business, at least, until there were herds of cattle grazing in the valley.

The new construction slowly moved up the creek valley following the curves of the stream to the first pre-designated town site (the survey called for a town to be located every seven or eight miles). Here a temporary depot and a side track were built and the town-to-be was named LaMoille. In that year, 1863, there would be but very few settlers for miles around but the new C & N W and the service it would provide soon would attract many newcomers to the area. However, LaMoille never experienced much growth, although for many years it was a regular stop for all local passenger and freight trains. Until the early 1920's there were a few retail businesses, an elevator, a school, churches, and a number of substantial homes in the community.

In the meantime, the work train, pulled and pushed by the tiny wood burning locomotives, moved back and forth from each day's "end of the line" to the supply base in Marshalltown. Through the rest of the summer the new activity continued in my valley. Now there are frequent train whistles to break the silence but Linn Creek is apparently reconciled and agreeable to its new neighbor. At least, it has failed so far in that year, 1863, to show any resentment to this invasion of its valley by unleashing a devastating flood such as occurred on occasion in later years.

By November, 1863, the Northwestern reached its second station site west of Marshalltown. It had taken a full nine months to extend the line just fifteen miles, rather slow progress which could have been due to manpower and materials shortages occasioned by the war.

The construction finally climbed the last two or three miles out of the valley of Linn Creek and topped out on a wide open sweep of gently rolling prairie that stretched for miles to the south, north and west. There were little or no signs of habitation but the survey maps showed this to be the sight of the next town and it was so designated.

It was noted that this new station site was almost in the exact center of the state. So, logically enough, it was named Centre Station, using the old spelling. The first agent, William Barnes, very soon renamed the station State Centre and some time later modern spelling prevailed. Actually, the center of the state, by modern survey calculations, is a few miles northwest of the town, but I reckon that this slight miscalculation is of no great consequence at this late date.

Here the construction halted for the winter and retreated to "winter quarters" at Marshalltown. In the spring of 1864 the base of operations was again moved up the line, this time to State Center and the crews started work on the remaining segments of the C & N W through Ames,

Boone and on to Council Bluffs. This trackage was completed in 1867 and connections with the Union Pacific Railroad effected at Omaha. Just two years later (1869) the U.P. made its memorable junction with the Western Pacific at Promontory Point, Utah Territory, and the dream of a transcontinental railroad became a reality. The pioneer Northwestern line in Linn Creek valley became an integral part of that cross country route.

From my dreamland observation point, I could now watch the ever growing numbers of passenger trains carrying mail, express and local travellers "whizzing" along the valley route at speeds of perhaps a startling twenty miles per hour. And there were the regularly scheduled way freights that daily chugged up and down the line.

With the completion of the coast-to-coast railroad, the Northwestern soon inaugurated its first (as early as 1873) "limited" west coast passenger train, the original Overland Limited that was to continue in service for more than 70 years. There were cars of all kinds from those with very few comforts for the many immigrants, to the plush (for that day) sleeping cars and parlor cars for the more affluent travelers. These through trains were the first in a long history of Northwestern-Union Pacific joint railway service to and from the west coast.

THE KATE SHELLEY SAGA

Just west of Boone the surveyors had met up with a sizeable "road block" in the form of the Des Moines River valley with its steep bluffs on both sides of the river. A bridge that high and that wide would have to wait.

So the survey crews found a tributary stream that led them through the hills in a southwesterly direction down to the valley floor and a river crossing. A similar exit from the valley was found on the other side to get the line back on its true westerly course. The trains that followed this course had steep hills to climb on both sides of the valley, necessitating helper engines most of the time.

The small mining town of Moingona and the river bridge, on the night of July 6, 1881, became the locale of the Kate Shelley saga of disaster and heroism.

A terrific rainstorm was raging with lightning and thunder and both the river and Honey Creek were raging torrents as Kate and her mother watched with fear, knowing that a midnight passenger train was due soon. The father, a railroad employee, had passed away only months before.

A "helper" engine suddenly appeared crossing the river bridge and approached the wooden trestle over the creek in front of the Shelley home. The watchers heard the crash as the engine disappeared in the flood waters. Kate made her way down to the scene and discovered two of the four man crew alive and clinging to the trees.

Making her way alone across the river bridge in the dark to the Moingona depot, she reported the disaster. Then, after the agent had headed off oncoming trains by telegraph, Kate went along with the rescue

team to direct them to the two survivors who were pulled out of the water uninjured.

For her efforts on behalf of the two surviving crew members and for making possible the warning to later trains, Kate Shelley became the recipient of much recognition and many honors in the years that followed. Always a railroad lover, she became the depot agent at Moingona in 1903, a post she held until her death in 1912. The Northwestern operated a passenger train out of Chicago that was named "The Kate Shelley" and the new high bridge that now spans the river valley was known for a long time as the "New Kate Shelley Bridge".

THE BEGINNINGS OF A TOWN

Now we return to that newly designated town site on the prairie where there developed a community that typifies, I believe, the hundreds of such towns that actually grew up with the railroads. State Center truly qualifies as this representative town. It began with the arrival of the Northwestern—was designated as a town site, named and surveyed by the railroad, and received its first boost businesswise by becoming a base of operations for the railroad's westward construction in the spring of 1864. The town enjoyed a rather spontaneous early growth - levelled off in population at about the turn of the century - and, while many others have slumped, it has maintained a population level of about 1200 through good years and bad.

At this point I must interrupt to confess that there is another underlying reason for my selection of State Center as a typical Iowa town. You see, I was born there in 1901 and lived the first eight years of my life there. Furthermore, my grandparents on both sides of my family were early farm settlers within two miles of the new town site. The railroad barely beat them to their new homes.

As a result, I have a good foundation of State Center recollections both of my own and of earlier times, the latter passed on to me by my forebears. So if bits of personal references and incidents creep into this historical recording from time to time, I trust they may be charged off to my early relationship to the subject.

Now, in early 1864, out typical community to be has again become a center of construction activity. The work trains have moved in and crews assembled—depot and sidings built and an agent hired—and supplies and materials hauled in for the push westward.

The first train to arrive that spring was not greeted by a joyous crowd of celebrants as had happened in other more established communities—in this case, there were no people to form a welcoming committee. Nor was there anyone to hear the engineer's long whistle blast announcing his initial arrival. The train itself was probably anything but imposing. It probably consisted of a few flat cars of rails and ties, some gondolas carrying ballast, a passenger car or two for the work crew and possibly a few paying customers, all pulled by a very small "tea kettle" engine with balloon smoke stack and long pointed cow catcher.

State Center's first commercial building was the Union Hotel erected in 1864 adjacent to the railroad tracks by William Barnes, the first depot agent. He bought the land from the Northwestern and, as a condition of the purchase, agreed that travelers arriving on the new railroad would always be accorded preferred accommodations. That same year a house was moved in from Marietta—the first permanent residence in the new community. History does not record by what means nor by what roads (if any) it was transported the fifteen or so miles across the prairie.

The start of State Center's retail business district came in 1865 when the first store was opened by J. W. Dobbin and V. J. Shipton. A school was started that same year in a small one room log building—an indication that a population burst of sorts had already started in the town and surrounding countryside. My own grandmother to-be, Jennie Bradbury, was the teacher hired at a salary of twenty dollars a month, probably a tidy sum in those days. The town was officially incorporated in 1867 and a bank, The First National, was established just two years later.

With the activity connected with continuation of railroad construction westward and the beginnings of business ventures, it is easy to understand the quick start and rapid growth experienced by this new community. Almost immediately the Northwestern started running passenger trains from as far away as Chicago to State Center and beyond, bringing settlers to town and rural areas alike. Farmland, some of the richest anywhere, was homesteaded or bought up at very low prices by those seeking success in agricultural pursuits. Others, recognizing the potential for a successful business career, settled in town for a life of serving the ever growing rural population and the in-towners as well. And there were the real estate salesmen and land speculators—all moving in to make some profit at this most opportune time.

For all the hundreds of other new Iowa towns just like typical State Center, it seemed that all the elements for success and growth were at hand in this period of 1864 to 1870. Rail transportation came at a time when the movement of settlers heading west was just getting into full swing. The Civil War had ended, releasing thousands of veterans, many of them seeking new homes and a new livelihood. The new Iowa communities offered countless opportunities for settlement to these newcomers. In short, all conditions combined to provide the big initial boost to newly established communities.

State Center probably was originally platted by the railroad (at least that part known as "Old Town") since all "nearly" east-west streets parallel the tracks. Later additions follow the original directional pattern. In keeping with the general practice of the day, and as an indication of the close ties between the railroad and business, the first stores and retail establishments were built on the first street south of the tracks. The sidetrack ran along the back of these buildings, providing back door loading and unloading to and from the freight cars. This arrangement was particularly necessary for such businesses as grain elevators, coal dealers, and lumber yards.

The other side of Main Street, as it was commonly called, was soon occupied by more and more retail businesses, offices, hotels, banks and

many other business ventures. Within a few years the Main Street business area extended more than five blocks east and west.

The residential area became pretty much equally divided north and south of the tracks.

That first school which had been established in 1865 was replaced just a few years later by a new two story building. For a short while the little log school did double duty, serving as the first meeting place for the Presbyterian Church congregation. But it wasn't long before the Presbyterian, Methodist and Lutheran denominations were all housed in new houses of worship.

The very first trains in 1864 began regular deliveries of the mail, necessitating a United States Post Office which became a very early addition to Main Street.

While the newborn town of State Center was rapidly becoming established and organized, the surrounding countryside was also undergoing a decided change. The wide expanse of open prairie soon was marked with newly established farmsteads, each with its ever increasing acres of rich black soil under cultivation. Some of the new settlers moved in by wagon from other parts of Marshall County (as did my own grandparents), no doubt attracted by the convenience and service of the nearby railroad. Other newcomers arrived almost daily by train to purchase land and establish a home.

Most of these new settlers were from the eastern states but there was a considerable number of families that were of German descent—first and second generation immigrants from their native land. These thrifty, hard working and dependable families and their descendants have left their mark on the community through the years. Such names as Riemenschneider, Hilleman, Goecke, Schoppe, Schilling, Thake and Rohwedder, to name a few, identify the family as descendants of those early German settlers in the State Center community.

In those first two decades of its existence the new town at the center of the state experienced a steady growth from a standing start of 0 to 854 in 1890. Likewise, the total population of the township—1650 in that same year—reflects the rapid influx of farm families to the new community.

So it was that State Center owed its successful beginnings and its rapid growth in large measure to the almost simultaneous arrival of the railroad and the rapid westward movement of settlers—both farm families and town dwellers. The former quickly established a dependence on the business people for their needs and the town folks relied on their rural neighbors for the success of their business ventures.

And both would depend for fifty years or more on the Northwestern Railroad to keep them supplied with the necessities of life and with transportation to market for their farm products. It was a three way cooperative effort that, through hard work and friendly cooperation on the part of the three partners, brought immediate success and long standing stability to the State Center community.

I'm sure the same success story and reasons for the same could be applied to hundreds of other Iowa towns and settlements, towns that in the beginning were merely designated town sites on a newly constructed

railroad. However, a small dot on a new railroad map denoting a station site at that location gave no assurance of it developing into a thriving center of population. A great many of those dots, particularly on branch line railroads, never got beyond the depot and siding status. The elements necessary for growth and success were very often missing.

IOWA COVERAGE

The completion of the railroads' all-out effort to reach the Missouri River did not conclude the era of construction in Iowa by any means. It was only the beginning.

The major companies began almost immediately to reach out with branch lines to bring freight and passenger service to newly settled areas away from their main line routes. These projects were centered at first in the eastern counties but, as settlement of the state moved farther and farther west, the networks of branch line trackage followed close behind. Accordingly the northwest corner of the state was the last to receive coverage.

In the 70's and 80's competition was keen among the established lines for the opportunity to serve every new community. It seemed that the incorporation of a new county seat not yet on a railroad or the settlement of a new area that showed promise of growth was the signal for a race between two or more railroads to be first on the scene.

The Spirit Lake-Okoboji area, now known as Iowa's Great Lakes, was a case in point although in this instance the potential for abundant summertime resort passenger business was the prize. The race was won in 1882 by the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern Railroad (soon to become a part of the Rock Island Lines) with well publicized service from Cedar Rapids and eastern Iowa. The Milwaukee Railroad came in second with a line from Des Moines only a few months later. Both railroads, for many years, reaped a tidy profit from their passenger service to and from the area—they even operated (at a sizeable net gain) large resort hotels in conjunction with that service.

This railroad boom continued in Iowa without letup to the turn of the century until there were very few inland towns left (those without rail service). Even those towns were within walking distance of a train track of some kind where an accommodating engineer would quite likely stop for even a single passenger. And it was possible to journey to any part of the state via rail by utilizing the many junction points and connections.

Most of the branch line trackage in Iowa was owned by the five major railroads operating in the state. The Burlington Lines had several branches off their southern Iowa main line—one of them reaching out to Des Moines and a few others running down into Missouri. The Northwestern operated six or more branch lines off the main line and all connected with a sizeable network of lines covering north central and northwest sections of the state. Two of their lines offered daily service to the Twin Cities from Des Moines and from Council Bluffs through Sioux City. The latter was the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha, a subsidiary operative of the Northwestern.

The Rock Island Lines had extensive branch line coverage in all parts of Iowa. One Principal segment ran from Burlington through Cedar Rapids and Waterloo to St. Paul and Minneapolis. Another, up from Kansas City, served Des Moines and Mason City on its way to Minnesota. And a third ran the diagonal course from Cedar Rapids to the Iowa Great Lakes.

The original entry of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway into Iowa was in connection with the consolidation of numerous independent lines in the northeast corner of the state under the ownership of the Milwaukee Road. From its river crossing at Sabula, Illinois, one line extended up river, eventually to the Twin Cities in Minnesota, another from Milwaukee crossed the river at Marquette via a pontoon bridge (one of the very few pontoon railroad bridges in the world) and extended on out west through northern Iowa to the Black Hills. They also operated over many branch lines throughout the state.

The Milwaukee's main line (double track), built in the 1880's, from Chicago to Omaha was unique in that it intentionally avoided the larger centers of population across Iowa, missing Cedar Rapids, Marshalltown and Des Moines. The route closely paralleled the Northwestern and Rock Island trackage.

Not to be outdone by the larger companies, the Chicago Great Western and the Iowa Central also operated over several branch line tracks. Most of them were comparatively short lines except for the C G W service from Council Bluffs into southern Minnesota.

The Wabash Railroad was another company that, by 1900, had reached Council Bluffs and Des Moines from main line trackage in Missouri.

Even a number of electric lines came into being during this era. Most of them were comparatively short lines that provided convenient "interurban" passenger service—often on an hourly schedule—between cities or to and from resort areas. The "trains" consisted of a single street car like a coach or, in some cases, two or more of the same coupled together. The Ft. Dodge, Des Moines and Southern Co. operated from Des Moines through Boone and Rockwell City to Ft. Dodge and the Waterloo, Cedar Falls and Southern that eventually reached out to serve Cedar Rapids and to Iowa City as the Crandic Line were two of the most extensive electric railways in the state.

MARSHALL COUNTY TRACKAGE

The principal railroad in my "home" county, the Northwestern—its arrival in Marshalltown and its construction on to State Center and beyond—has been described in the preceding pages.

One of the early class "B" railroads that was destined to become an important part of the rail picture in Marshall County and across the central part of the state was the Central Railroad of Iowa, later renamed the Iowa Central. That was its official corporate name but through the years it was assigned many nicknames, some of them anything but complimentary and most of them undeserved. Much of this mild ridicule probably can be attributed to the distinctively "local" type of service and to the

outdated passenger cars and dinky locomotives that the company continued to use long after other railroads had updated their equipment.

This line was the outgrowth of the discovery of coal in the vicinity of Eldora, at the time the "no-railroad" county seat of Hardin County. In February of 1866, a company known as the Eldora Railroad and Coal Co., was formed and tracks laid sixteen miles north to Ackley to connect with the new Illinois Central trunk line, thereby providing an outlet to market for the output of the mines. Two years later the same company (presumably for the same purpose) constructed a thirty mile line to the south to connect with the Northwestern at Marshalltown. While all this was going on, another company, known as the Central Railroad of Iowa, built northward from Oskaloosa, also a coal mining center. That line ran sixty miles through Grinnell to Marshalltown and as might be expected, was soon consolidated with the other two into the Iowa Central Railroad.

Piece-meal progress continued in both directions until by 1872 the Iowa Central became the first north-south line across the state. Its trackage extended from Albia to Mason City with general offices and car shops located in Marshalltown. Later construction extended the company's service from Peoria, Illinois to Manly, Iowa and through a close operating arrangement with the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad, both passenger and freight service was continued to the Twin Cities in Minnesota.

Of the Marshall County towns served by the Iowa Central, Albion had become an established community some sixteen years before the coming of the railroad. But Liscomb, Dillon, and Gilman owe their origins to the new railway.

From the very beginning the "Central" catered particularly to the needs and desires of the local passenger and freight patrons. Its schedules were arranged to provide frequent and convenient service to all the towns, large and small, and, even though on the slow side, they were maintained with considerable dependability.

The Iowa Central, for close to sixty years, continued virtually the same passenger schedule through the heart of Iowa—two morning and two afternoon local passenger trains each way except Sunday. And, in keeping with its later corporate name, there was the Minneapolis to St. Louis through service—a "fast" night train with only a few scheduled stops that was proudly called the North Star Limited (the Wabash Railroad provided the connecting service from Albia to St. Louis).

A third major trunk line railroad, the Chicago Great Western, emerged on the Marshall County scene in 1882. It resulted from a series of promotions dating back to 1869 that involved several corporations. Eventually the route was projected in a diagonal direction from Kansas City across Iowa through Des Moines, Marshalltown, Waterloo, and on to St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Several new towns came into existence in the county as a result of this new line. Green Mountain, settled in 1855, was moved to its present site on the C G W. Melbourne was platted by the Great Western and the Milwaukee roads as both arrived at the scene the same year. Luray and Rockton were two other Marshall County communities that appeared on early C G W maps but both have since disappeared.

The Milwaukee Road, officially the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, was the fourth company to bring service to Marshall County. This line, starting at Chicago, crossed the Mississippi at Sabula, Illinois and struck out on a direct westward course to Council Bluffs on the Missouri.

The Milwaukee completed construction across the south part of Marshall County in 1882 and the towns of Dunbar, Ferguson, Haverhill and Edenville (later named Rhodes) became established communities on the new line. Melbourne was also located on the Milwaukee at its junction with the Great Western Railroad. Pickering and Capron were only railroad crossings (of the Iowa Central) serving in those early days as junction points for local passenger service and switching facilities for freight interchange.

Only two branch line railroads were ever built in Marshall County—both by the Iowa Central. One of these, the Story City branch dated about 1882, left the main line at Minerva Junction just north of Marshalltown and was built northwestward to Story City in Story County, a distance of some thirty-five miles. It provided daily, except Sunday, freight and passenger service—in the early days two round trips a day from Marshalltown—to several small towns and settlements. Story City branch towns appearing on county maps of 1900 included Marietta, Galvin, Minerva, Bromley, Clemons and St. Anthony. There were some other "conditional" stops such as Monigers where an obliging engineer would stop to take aboard or detrain passengers. It was definitely a railroad operated for the convenience of its patrons.

In the "heyday" of the Story City branch it was said to be one of the most profitable pieces of trackage in the Iowa Central System.

The other "Central" branch line in Marshall County was known as the G and M (Grinnell and Montezuma) and by this means we get back to our typical town of State Center, because that's where you would wind up if you boarded the train at Grinnell or Montezuma. The original section of the line was completed from Montezuma to Grinnell about 1881.

As far back as I can remember this railroad was called the G & M Branch but I doubt that many people, including myself, ever knew that there actually was, at one time, an independent company entitled THE G and M RAILROAD CORPORATION. This fact was brought to my attention not so long ago by a good friend, Howard Soorholtz of Melbourne, Iowa, who showed me, with justifiable pride, one of the company's common stock certificates that was purchased by his grandfather in 1882.

Lacking confirming information, it can be assumed that this pioneer railroad corporation was organized to build the segment of track from Montezuma to Grinnell, successfully accomplished in 1881. That in the following year the same company planned and started an extension of its line from Newburg to State Center, probably leasing Iowa Central main line trackage to the former town. It is logical to assume that both segments were purchased by the larger company that same year of 1882 or shortly thereafter because period maps show the lines as parts of the Iowa Central System. Nevertheless, the name of the original cor-

poration has "stuck" through the years as a quick reference name for the State Center Branch.

Also, Mr. Soorholtz has among his papers a tax receipt dated January 31, 1882, indicating that his grandfather paid on that date a $105.50 "railroad" tax to Marshall County. It was levied on 160 acres of land that the elder Mr. Soorholtz owned in the Van Cleve-Melbourne area. The receipt says "For railway taxes voted and levied in the year 1880 on the following described property in Logan Township in aid of the Grinnell and Montezuma Railway Company."

The above indicates that this railroad, like many others in those early days, was extended considerable financial aid in the form of taxation levied against farmland in the immediate area of the proposed railway construction.

Both the stock certificate and the receipt are reproduced on the opposite page, courtesy of Howard Soorholtz.

In any event, construction was started in 1882 at Newburg, seven miles north of Grinnell, where the branch left the main line and continued on a diagonal line over very flat terrain through Laurel (one of the early Marshall County communities to be moved to a new town site on the railroad) to its northern turn-around at State Center.

Two new towns were established. Van Cleve, a few miles northwest of Laurel, quickly became a growing community with numerous retail businesses, a school, churches and a doctor. The other town, Malta, with an elevator and other farm oriented enterprises experienced a lesser growth. Also designated on railroad maps, Capron was never more than a railroad crossing to accommodate the exchange of passengers between the Iowa Central and Milwaukee trains. For a time there was a tower at the crossing with operators on duty round the clock.

History does not record any grand celebration as the first G & M train came to a somewhat jerky stop at the new State Center depot in January of 1883, even though the town had grown to about 800 population since the first Northwestern train had made its inaugural stop almost twenty years before. But outward show of welcome or not, the community must have been happy for this new sign of progress.

The first G & M train could hardly be described as a glamour train. Instead it probably consisted of a few box cars, one or two cars of coal and an antique passenger coach all pulled by a small locomotive. Like all those to follow through the years, it was classified as a MIXED train, very common on branch lines at that time.

The Iowa Central yards, located in the southwest part of town, included side tracks, a "Y" by which the engine was turned around for the return trip, and, of course, a depot and loading platform. And in due time there was a new grain elevator, a lumber yard, and stock yards to serve the needs of farm patrons. There was never any switching connection built to the adjacent Northwestern tracks—no interchange of traffic—probably because of the limited volume handled by the G & M.

"Daily Except Sunday" service was scheduled right from the beginning and was continued for many years. The passenger traffic was never any great producer of revenue but the freight service and additional grain

CAPITAL, $1,000,000

Number 628 — One Shares.

Incorporated under the General Laws of the State of Iowa.

GRINNELL & MONTEZUMA RAILROAD COMPANY.

Certificate of Stock. — Shares $100 Each.

STATE OF IOWA.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY, That John Boonholtzer

is the owner of One Shares in the Capital Stock of the

GRINNELL & MONTEZUMA R. R. CO.

subject to the Articles of Incorporation and by Laws of the Company.

This Stock is only transferable on the Books of the Company, at the Office in the City of MONTEZUMA, Iowa, by said Stockholder personally, or by Attorney duly authorized, on surrender of this Certificate to be canceled.

Signed by the President and Secretary, at MONTEZUMA, this Third day of January 1882

Levi Kimball, Secretary. — L. Munn, President.

Treasurer's Office, Marshall County,

Marshalltown, Iowa, Jany 31 1887

RECEIVED OF John Boonholtzer

One hundred Fifty-two and 75/100 DOLLARS,

For Railway Taxes voted and levied in the year 1880, on the following described property in Logan Township, in aid of the Grinnell & Montezuma Railway Company:

Kind of Tax.	Amount. Dolls.	Cts.	Description of Property, Township, Town, or Addition.	Sec. or Lot.	Twp. or Blk.	Rng.	Acres.	Valuation.
Railroad,	102	50	S ½	9	82	19	160	1603
			Personalty					467
Interest,								
Certificate,		25						
Total,	102	75						

No. 31

By W. H. Beeman, Treasurer Marshall County, Iowa.

Deputy.

EURENT, FIOLAN & CHAMBERS, DAVENPORT, IOWA

and livestock markets now available to farmers made the G & M branch a worthwhile entry into the business life of State Center.

The round trip from Montezuma (about 50 miles) and back took the better part of the day what with stops for switching at every town plus an occasional stop at a crossing here and there to pick up a passenger or two. There are even stories that "the Dinkey", a name given in jest to the G & M, accommodated hunters who, with shotguns at the ready, rode along to shoot rabbits and other game from the slow moving train. There were other derogatory names applied to the branch such as the "Weedy Pacific" and the "Hook and Eye" and such, but for more than forty years, except for weather related interruptions, it continued to provide service that for the most part was dependable, even after the schedule was reduced to less than "daily except Sunday".

This was the railroad over which my father started his eleven day box-car ride with the horses and mules on our move to Canada in 1910—all recorded in detail in "Early Dawn", published in 1975.

Time has almost completely wiped out the memory of another Marshall County railway project—The Farmers Union Railroad Company. It was organized in Liscomb on March 22, 1875, to build a narrow gauge line "from the Mississippi to Liscomb then west to the Missouri River"—an ambitious undertaking indeed, particularly for a community at that time of less than 300 residents. The Iowa Central had been operating north and south through Liscomb for about seven years but apparently the railroad enthusiasts felt the need for an east-west line as well.

The ties were sawed from native oak trees as were the rails (in lengths up to 16 feet) and first grading was started early in April. By the time the track was completed to Beaman, a small locomotive and six or eight cars had been leased or purchased and delivered ready for operation. Some grading was also completed west of the Iowa River toward Bangor but no trackage was ever laid in this direction except to the saw mill. During the relatively short existence of the Farmers Union Railroad (probably no more than two years) a considerable quantity of livestock, coal and lumber was handled over the 12 miles of trackage but there was very little passenger patronage even though this fare was only 36 cents.

Before too long the owner of the rolling stock, possibly lacking adequate financial return on cars and engine, loaded up his equipment and shipped it to Des Moines. For a short time the railroaders used horses to pull the cars over the tracks to and from Beaman but the limited income soon brought an end to the venture. A few years later the Northwestern built its branch line up from Tama to Beaman and Conrad and provided a rail service for those communities.

One can only admire the enterprise and courage of those early Liscomb, Bangor and Beaman settlers who ventured into the transportation field in an effort to better the economy of their communities.

MAPS

Until about 1900 the only maps available to the traveller were railroad maps, a situation readily understandable since other modes of travel

were as yet undeveloped. Roads, such as existed, were unmarked—there was no state highway system—The Lincoln Highway was yet to come and the freeways were unheard of—and so no road maps.

Ever since the railroads appeared on the scene every atlas that was published contained maps that portrayed first and foremost the existing railroads as of that date—lesser importance was allocated to state and county boundaries and natural features such as rivers and lakes. State and county governments made such maps available to the public and some were distributed by advertisers.

But the railway companies themselves were by far the largest distributors. They produced maps of all sizes from folder type to large wall sizes—maps of the entire United States down to state and sectional maps, all of them featuring the distributor's own railroad. They were good advertising give-aways in an era of intense competition.

Best remembered by older readers would be the extra large map that occupied a prominent place on the wall of every depot. It would be, of course, a map of THAT company's railroad system with perhaps some of their connecting lines shown in less imposing type. The map also might carry advertising slogans and statistics and very likely a picture or artist's sketch of the company's "Flyer" rounding the curve at "BEAUTY BEND", a particularly spectacular scene on the company's line.

The town whose depot displayed such a map could be located very quickly on said map—that spot would be besmudged and well worn by the hundreds of lookers and pointers. I have seen many such maps with the "spot" worn completely through the printing by much contact on the part of waiting passengers with nothing better to do.

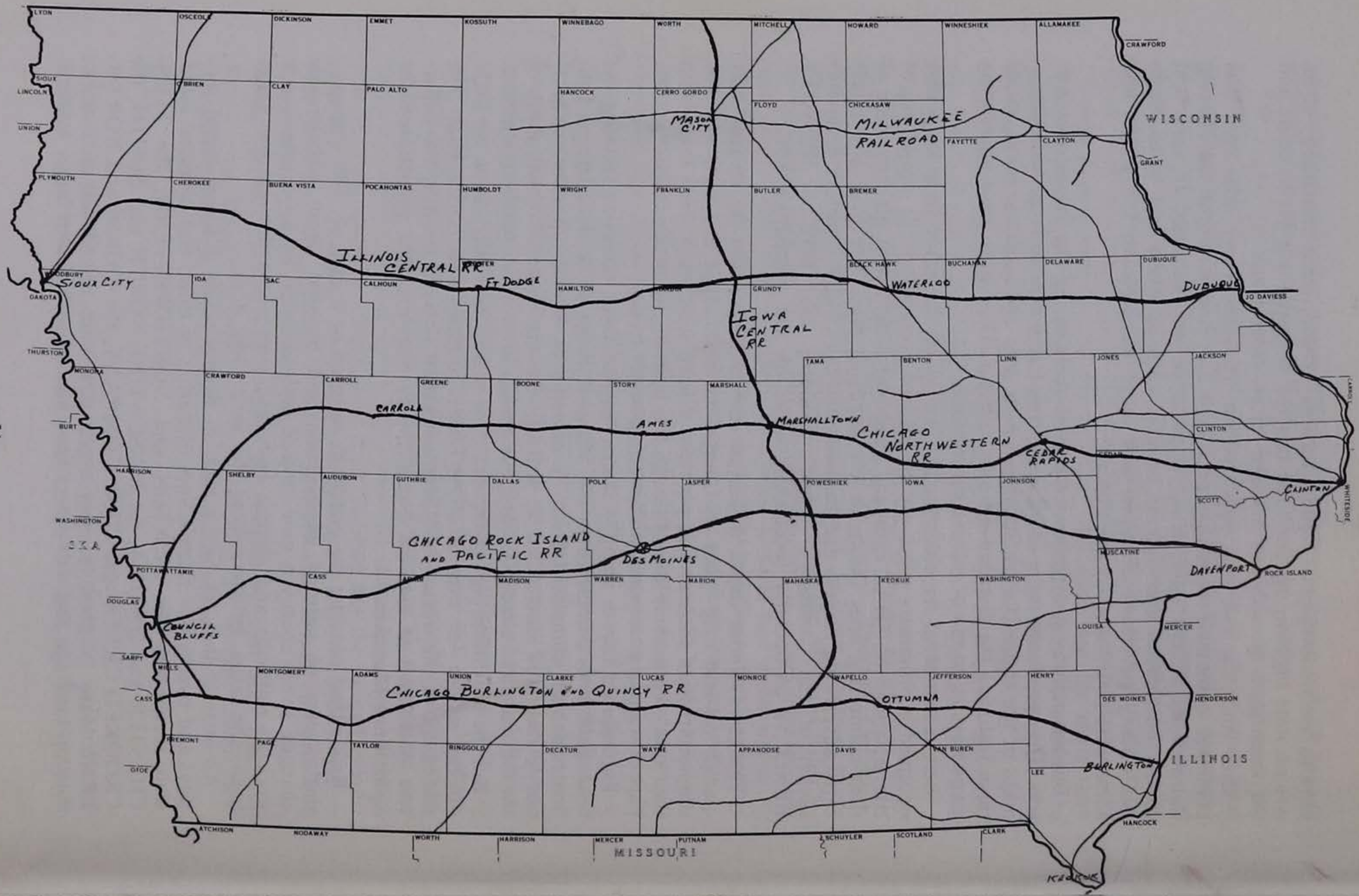
Reproduced here is an 1870 sketch map of Iowa railroads showing the four trunk lines completed to the Missouri River as of that date. A fifth line had been completed from its crossing at Sabula up river to Marquette then westward as far as Kossuth County. Note also that some of the railroads had already pushed out branch lines in the southern counties.

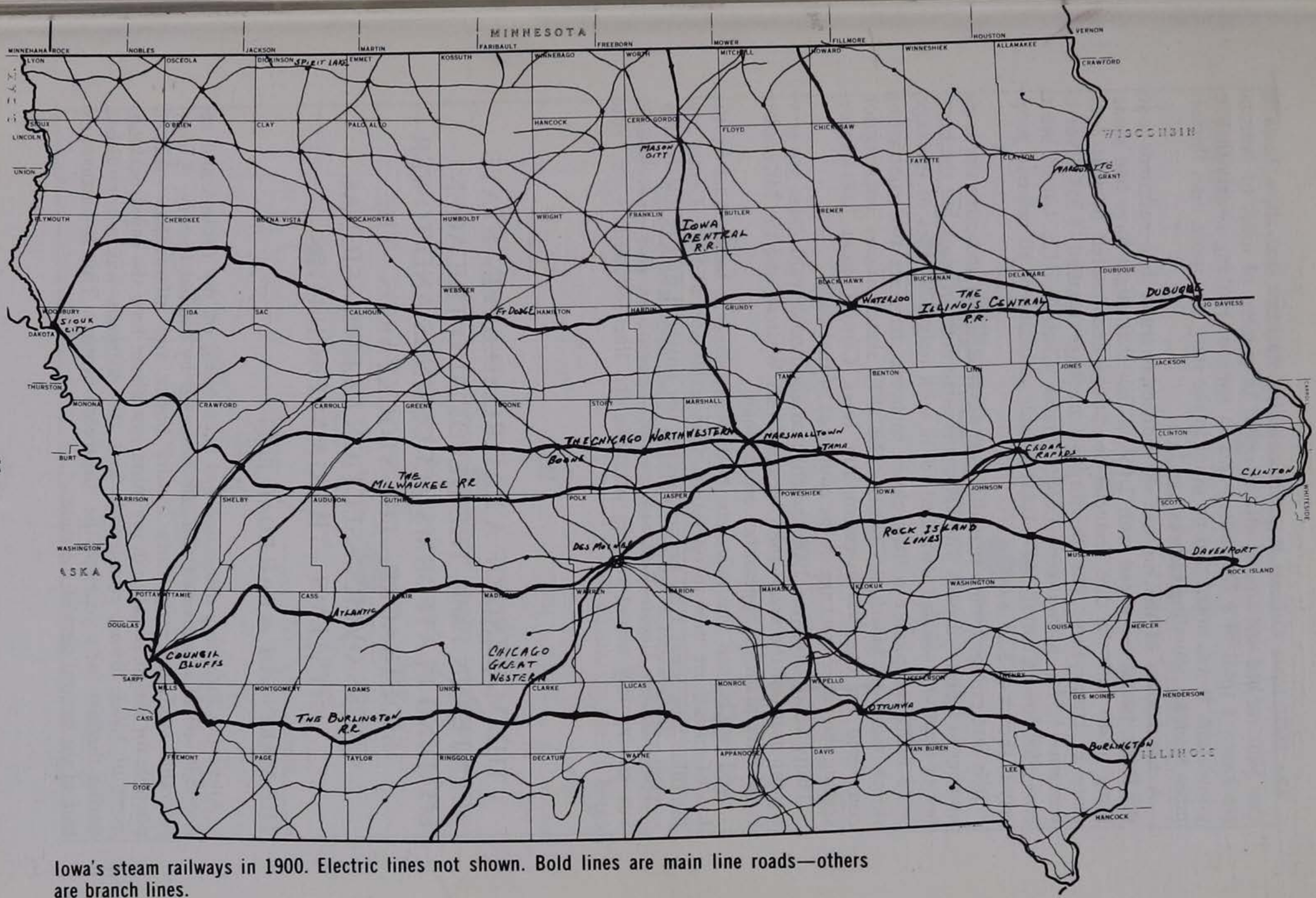
But the northwest part of the state, the last to be settled, is as yet without rail service—an area of about fifteen counties with no trackage. The settlement of this region had been somewhat delayed pending the departure of Inkpaduta and his blood thirsty warriors that perpetrated the Spirit Lake Massacre.

By contrast consider the picture as revealed by a map of 1900 vintage—thirty years of railroad construction had brought about unbelievable changes. Every county is now crossed and recrossed by an extensive network of railroads and electric lines and even some few narrow gauge lines—the latter leftovers from the very early days.

An atlas of that era lists a total of twenty seven different steam railways and twenty five electric lines operating in Iowa. But of those listed, who remembers the NEWTON and NORTHWESTERN, the MANCHESTER and ONEIDA, the MUSCATINE NORTH and SOUTH, the CROOKED CREEK and COAL COMPANY, the TABOR and NORTHERN? Many of these pioneer companies were abandoned and tracks torn up long ago and still others have been absorbed into larger systems.

Iowa railway trackage in 1870. Bold lines indicate main line tracks—lighter lines are branch railroads.





Iowa's steam railways in 1900. Electric lines not shown. Bold lines are main line roads—others are branch lines.

The 1904 Iowa Official Register contains statistics that show Iowa in that year ranked 4th among all the states in number of miles of railroad trackage—a total of 9,724 miles—this in spite of ranking twenty-fifth in population. It was noted that no point in the state was more than thirteen miles from an operating railway.

A breakdown of the mileage of individual trunk line railroads puts the Rock Island far ahead with 2,168, a fact that might have had something to do with the dire financial conditions encountered by that company in later years. The Burlington trackage totalled 1,358; Northwestern—1,574; Milwaukee—1,868; Illinois Central—712; Great Western—588; Iowa Central—449. Total taxable valuation of all railroad property is shown at $2,078,000.

It is interesting to note that the 1925 Iowa Register indicates the same number of steam railroads with about the same miles of track but the number of electric lines had dwindled to 13 with only 529 miles of trackage.

To bring the picture a little closer to home, here are two contrasting sketch maps of Marshall County. The 1870 sketch shows construction completed on the Northwestern and Iowa Central main lines—representing the entire trackage in the county as of that date.

Thirty years later (see 1900 sketch) two additional trunk lines are serving the needs of the area—the Chicago Great Western and the Milwaukee Road have made an appearance on the map.

And two branch line railroads, both constructed as feeder lines by the Iowa Central, are now in operation. One terminates at State Center and the other, the Story City branch, serves the northern part of the county.

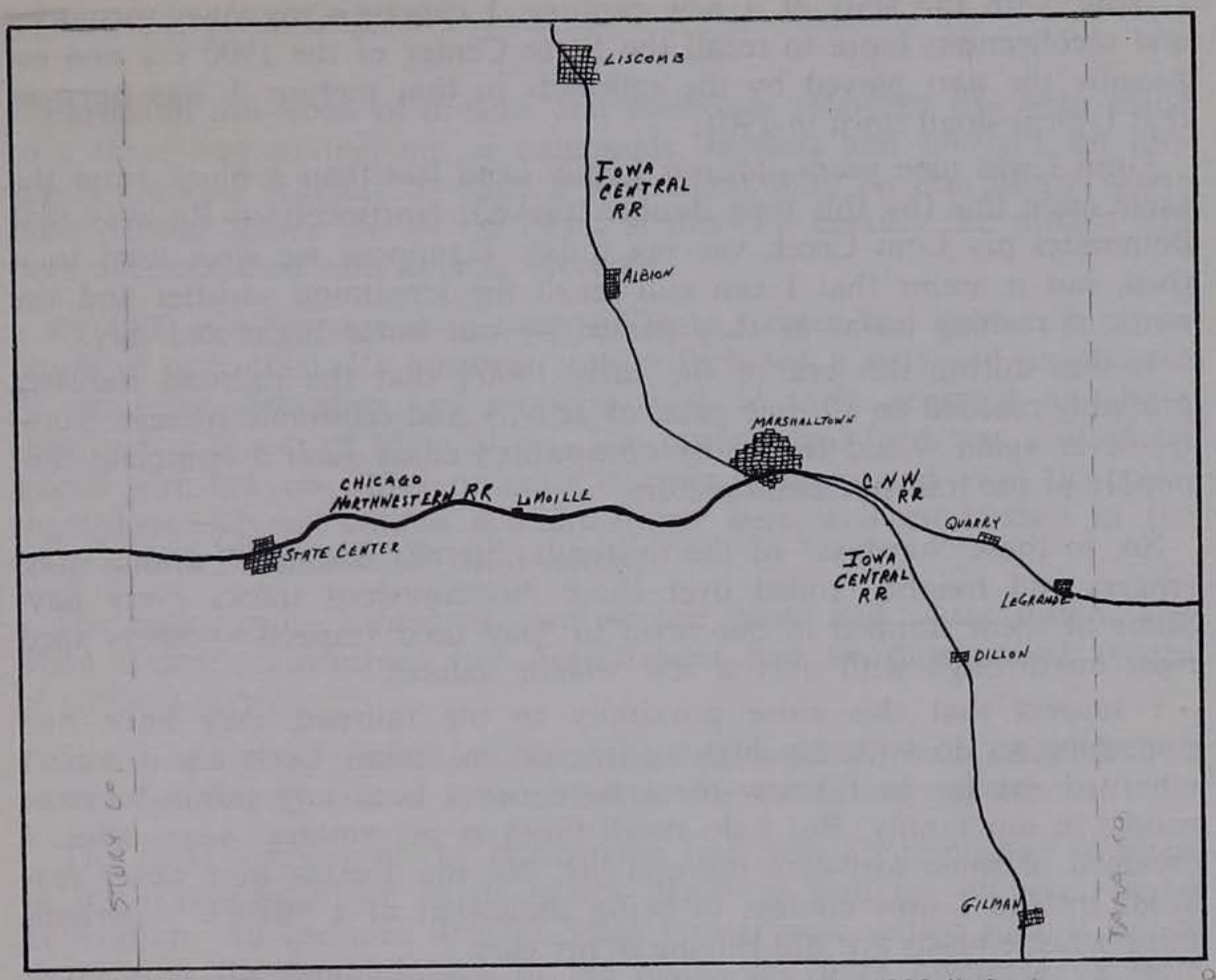
The Farmers Union Railroad out of Liscomb is also sketched in but lacking any actual routing of same, the line followed is an "educated guess".

III

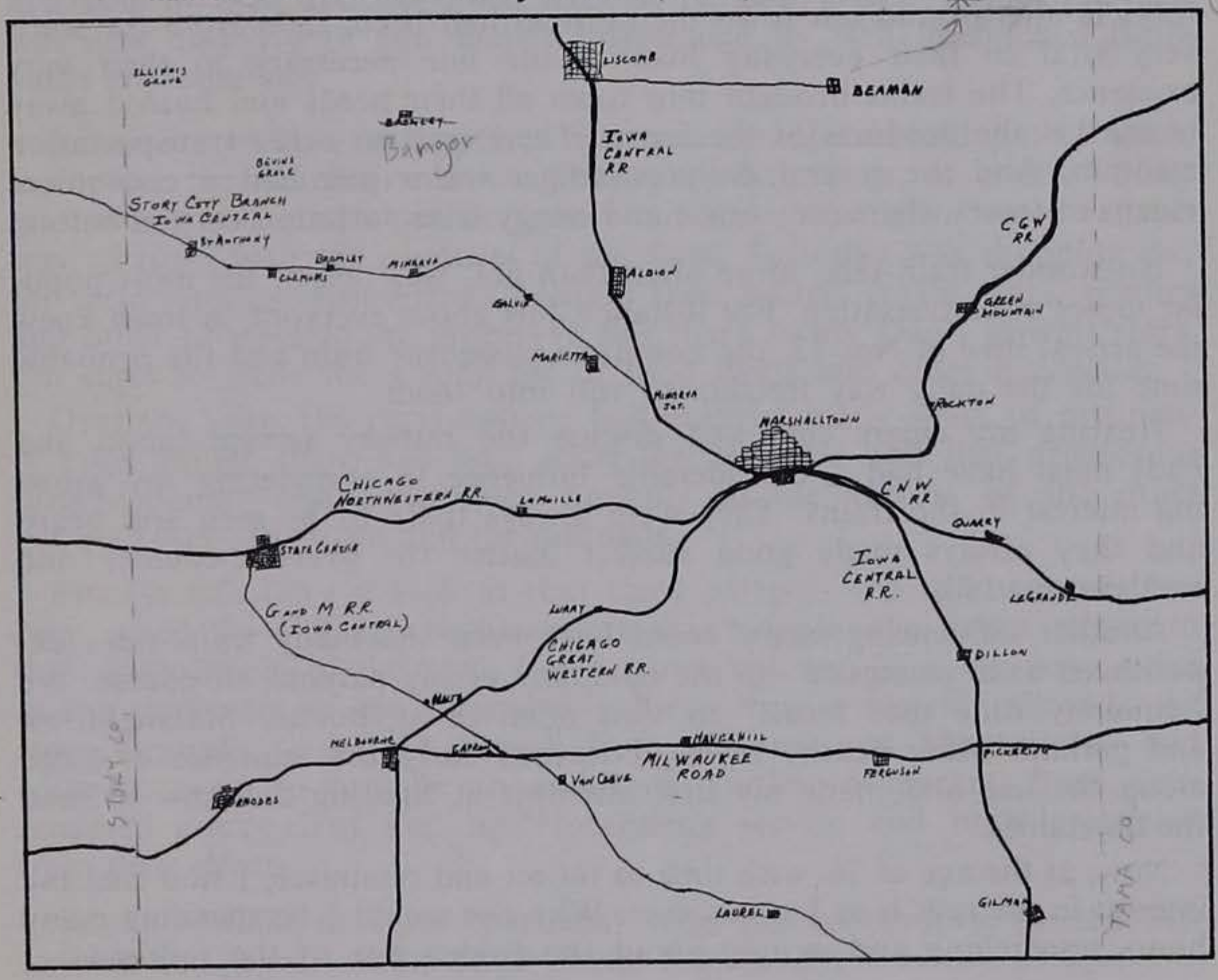
THE MAKING OF A RAILROAD BUFF—STATE CENTER IN 1900—THE DEPOT AND THE AGENT—LOADING PLATFORMS—CROSSINGS AND TOWER—SIDETRACKS—THE STOCKYARDS—THE CROSS-OVERS—SECTION CREWS—SIGNAL SYSTEMS—THE G&M FACILITIES

THE MAKING OF A RAILROAD BUFF

All of the foregoing discussion has been based on my dreams and reflections, all of it activated and substantiated by factual history. A considerable study of early Iowa history books and atlases has made it possible for me to visualize in my mind just about how the rapid development of Iowa towns, countryside and the railroads was accomplished during the last forty years of the nineteenth century. This is particularly true of the central part of the state.



Railroads in Marshall County in 1870 (above) and in 1900 (below).



Now, with the start of a new century, I can turn my own memories and recollections loose to recall the State Center of the 1900 era and especially the part played by the railroads in that picture. I was born in that typical small town in 1901.

Until I was nine years old, our family lived less than a block from the same main line (by this time double tracked) Northwestern Railway that dominates my Linn Creek viewing today. I suppose we were used to it then, but it seems that I can still recall the screaming whistles and the noise of rushing trains as they passed by our home night and day.

It was during this era of the early 1900's that the railroad industry probably reached an all time peak of activity and economic success. Surely, never again would the many companies enjoy such a complete monopoly of the transportation picture.

So, in these "heydays" of the railroads, literally dozens of trains, passengers and freights, rolled over those Northwestern tracks every day. Some of them stopped in our town to "pay their respects"—others sped right on through with only a few whistle salutes.

I suspect that this close proximity to the railroad may have had something to do with my lifelong interest in trains. Certainly it wasn't inherited—as far as I know there have never been any railroad career people in our family. But I do recall times in my younger years when I dreamed of some sort of a railroad life, but the dreams were never realized. Instead I now confess to being somewhat of a "BUFF"—perhaps those whistle blasts are still ringing in my ears.

Another explanation, possible a more plausible one, was that to the folks in and around our town the railroad had been, right from the start, very vital to their everyday lives—a life line necessary to their very existence. The trains brought into town all their needs and hauled away to market the products of the farms. There was no other transportation medium. And the several daily passenger trains provided a convenient means of travel where only horse and buggy transportation existed before.

No wonder train talk, more often than not, was one of the most popular topics of conversation. For instance, just about everyone in town knew the arrival time of No. 12, the noontime passenger train and the probable time for the daily way freights to roll into town.

Hearing my elders cuss and discuss the railway service (good and bad) must have had a considerable influence in stimulating my growing interest in the trains. They were always there to be seen and heard and they always made good subject matter for over-the-counter and on-the-street talk.

Another influencing factor could have been the many train rides experienced as a youngster—in the company of my parents, of course. We frequently rode the "locals" to visit relatives at Boone, Marshalltown and perhaps other nearby towns. I learned early the sequence of stops along the line and made my first attempts at figuring out how to read the timetables.

Now, at the age of 76, with time to reflect and reminisce, I find that my interest in the rails is as keen as ever. Why else would I be spending many hours researching and writing about the golden age of the railroads?

STATE CENTER IN 1900

Earlier in this book of dreams and memories reference has been made to a three way partnership of merchants, farmers and railroad, all diligently working together to build a new community on the prairie where none existed before. Before the dawn of this new century the project had been accomplished with notable success.

By 1900 this representative town of State Center had grown in population to over 1000. Its business section included a balanced assortment of retail establishments and services, most of them centered on about four or five blocks of Main Street. The professional field was well represented with lawyers, three or more doctors, dentists and even two photographers. Several church denominations were well established in the town and in the immediate rural vicinity.

The municipality owned its own electric plant and water system and State Center's volunteer fire department had an outstanding record of efficient service.

There was every indication that the "partnership" had established a town of stability with a sure potential for continued growth.

The rural member of the partnership had also accomplished wonders in the transformation of its prairie lands to millions of acres under cultivation. All the area around State Center was settled in just a few years after the establishment of the town—no more homesteads were available in 1900 and no more acres at bargain prices. The countryside was now dotted with new homes surrounded by well maintained farmyards and buildings.

A farm to market road system had been established and put to grade to replace the old prairie trails. They were dirt roads, of course—dusty in summer and mud at other times—but they provided a more reliable way to town with the products of the farm. Saturday was shopping day for farm families. Housewives brought their butter, cream, eggs, poultry and other produce to the grocers (a fair share to my Dad's general store, I'm sure) to trade for a long list of food items and other necessities.

Over the years the rural partner had enjoyed many years of prosperity even though there had been some few reversals and that prosperous farm economy had contributed mightily to the success of the other two partners—the town and the railroads.

Finally, let's have a look at that third partner—the railroads. As has been noted the Chicago Northwestern was actually the prime mover in the establishment of the State Center town site and in a big way, aided in the settlement of the surrounding area. Now a second railroad—the Iowa Central's G and M branch from Grinnell and Montezuma—had come to town to provide an additional outlet to market. Both lines rendered convenient and understanding service and both prospered from their efforts.

So, as of 1900, all three "partners" were still cooperating for the betterment and growth of the State Center community.

THE DEPOT AND THE AGENT

Those readers who can still remember the railroad boom days of the late 1890's and early 1900's can reminisce along with me as I attempt to enlighten the younger generation on such things as depots, sidetracks, stockyards, fast mail pick-ups, and other facilities that existed in towns like State Center. There may be some corrections forthcoming from some of you oldsters—or you may have some additional information—I will maintain an open mind on both.

To those who can't remember or never have known what a way freight was—or how the fast mail train zipped through town tossing mail bags hither and yon—or has never ridden a slow poke local passenger train on a hot summer day with the open windows "breathing in" cinders, dirt and dust—here's how it was. But first let me remind you again that we are dealing with an era BEFORE hard surfaced roads, automobiles, trucks, buses, airplanes—to say nothing of interstates and controversial speed limits. The railroad was just about the one and only connection with the outside world.

I'm sure that the Northwestern layout in State Center was about the same as in hundreds of other towns of that size. But ours was a double track line with one distinctive difference—the trains operated in opposite directions to the normal pattern of other United States double track roads and also opposed to the normal flow of highway traffic. It is said that this came about through the fact that the C & N W was originally financed largely by English money, so it was directed at the outset that the trains should operate as in England. And they have done so ever since—eastbound trains on the north tracks and westbound on the south tracks. No change was made in the position occupied by the engineer—he has always been in the normal right hand seat which in the case of the Northwestern, is the "blind side" so-to-speak. However, no serious difficulties have ever been encountered because of this operational eccentricity. In the modern diesel locomotives the cab is up front which provides full vision from either side.

On single track railroads, passenger cars were opened for loading and unloading on either left or right hand side depending on which side of the train the depot was located. But on the double track C & N W all trains necessarily opened on the left side (facing the engine). However, at every station there were platforms on both sides of the tracks to accommodate both eastbound and westbound trains. Since the depots were on the north side at some stations and at other stops on the south side, passengers might be unloaded on the depot side or on the opposite "non-depot" platform. It all sounds quite confusing and in a way it really was, particularly to travellers unfamiliar with the reverse traffic pattern of the Northwestern.

Our depot at State Center was on the north side of the tracks, so eastbound passengers gathered on the depot side and those headed west, on the south platform.

One important duty of the depot agent was to notify his passengers when an incoming train was nearing arrival time and it was also his re-

sponsibility to see that they were all safely stationed on the proper platform in plenty of time before the train rolled in. The operation was really a matter of timing. Usually the agent played it very safe and had his charges in position long before the required time. That safety precaution was all very well in nice weather but in rain, snow or cold—not so good. There was no shelter whatsoever on the "opposite" platform.

Then there were occasional instances when trains travelling in opposite directions might meet at any given station at the same time, resulting in some confusion particularly for strangers. Engineers, facing an obvious situation such as this, always approached with caution in consideration for the safety of platform switching crowds. At some of the larger cities a tunnel or overpass was built to alleviate the cross over problems.

The State Center depot, a duplicate of hundreds of others up and down the line, was a small one story building that featured the trackside bay window that was characteristic of all depots of that day. This type of window permitted the agent or telegraph operator to look down the tracks in both directions.

The building interior consisted of a waiting room and a ticket office. The waiting room seating was a stereotype of all others of the era—designed to give the least possible comfort to the weary traveller. The low backed benches, providing little if any support for tired backs, were divided in very inadequate widths by steel armrests—an arrangement that thoroughly discouraged any attempt to stretch out for a short nap. Rows of these back breakers were arranged around the outside perimeter of the room and in back-to-back rows in the center of the room as space permitted. There were many times when holiday crowds plus an abundance of luggage left little else than standing room and very little of that.

And then there was the DEPOT STOVE! Who, old or young, hasn't heard at least some of the wintertime tales of the pot-bellied cast iron stove. It was the only source of heat in the small town stations for both the waiting rooms and the ticket office. The control and maintenance of the fire, usually the responsibility of the agent, was dependent on how busy he might be with his other duties. Reasonable regulation of the old "Pot Belly" was just about non-existent. But given a good charge of coal and a little draft it provided ample heat for the small rooms—often too much.

Normally the stove would be properly loaded up prior to an upcoming train arrival; the waiting room would begin to fill up; a red glow would show on the belly of the stove; the heat would pour forth; and soon the room would become stifling. About that time, some brave passenger-in-waiting would slip over and throw open the front door of the heater. If this draft retardant measure didn't do an adequate job, the self-appointed stove attendant might open the outside door and let in a few blasts of Iowa winter weather.

In the proper sequence, the agent would begin to feel the effects of the open door and would enter the picture with a show of authority to close the outside door and restore the venerable heating unit to its full capacity. If the train was late, usually the case in the wintertime, this cat and mouse routine might be repeated several times, much to

the annoyance of the agent. The train waiting audience enjoyed the entertaining side light.

The above brief accounting of pot-belly stove problems may sound like I have been there and experienced both the absence of adequate heat and an overabundance of same. If you have gathered that impression, you are correct—I have recollections of many such incidents.

Another fixture of all depot waiting rooms was the bulletin board, usually hung on the wall opposite the ticket window. On the board were written the names, numbers and scheduled arrival times of all trains that regularly stopped at that particular town. The many "through" trains were not listed. There was also space to record train delays and late arrivals. If there were no "comments" in the space provided it was assumed that that particular train would be on time. However, if the agent could find time, he might emerge from his office and record on the board that No. 13 (or whatever) was late and he might even estimate the latest reported arrival time. This information would have been received over his busy telegraph wires.

That notice of delay might very well be followed by a second revision and in, some cases, even a third. Any and all would bring forth murmurs of disappointment and dismay from impatient travellers who might face missed connections as a result of the delays. For the experienced travelling salesmen in the group, such delays were just a part of the day's work—they often were able to make a few more calls as a result of the delay.

Anyway, it was a part of the service to keep the patrons informed—if the agent didn't post these notices, he would be continually bombarded with the same obvious question—"When?".

The ticket office portion of the depot was the agent's "sanctum sanctorum". It had two openings: a door into the waiting room that was supposed to be locked at all times and a ticket window that was seldom open except just before train time. The furniture, as I remember it, was usually of quite ancient vintage and well worn. The desk would be well cluttered and the chairs showed the marks of long service.

In defense of the agent in charge, be it remembered that he was a very busy, often harassed individual. He had no time for "operation clean-up"—no secretary—no weekly cleaning lady—he probably, on occasion, had to sweep out the entire depot. As a result, his sanctum was not the tidiest of offices.

The telegraph instruments were installed on a counter arrangement that occupied the bay window nook of the office. Here the agent spent a great deal of his time completing various clerical chores and attending the busy telegraph, which maintained almost a constant dot-dash clatter. He paid little heed until his own code call came over the wire. It might be a routine report of arrival time of a passenger train or it might be an emergency message concerning a wreck that might require some quick adjustments of the normal flow of traffic. Again it might be one of those "40 minutes late" messages that would have to be posted on the bulletin board. All sorts of information was flashed back and forth over the wires.

With a minimum of six passenger trains a day in and out of State Center, ticket sales also consumed a considerable share of the agent's time. At a certain point in time prior to train arrival he would abandon his other duties and open the ticket window for business. His customers would be waiting to be served, usually in a state of nervous irritation lest the train arrive before they could obtain their tickets. The agent, of course, was fairly calm and collected—he had been through this momentary rush of business many times before—and he also knew exactly how much time he had to complete the sales. There are no records of disappointed patrons being left behind for lack of a ticket.

After the buyer declared his intended destination and advised "one way or round trip", most sales were consummated quickly. A selection of the correct pasteboard from the rack just beside the window to which the date was affixed with a practiced blow of the fist on the dating machine (every depot had the same equipment); a brusk announcement of the amount of the fare due him; cash received; change returned and the transaction was completed.

There were exceptions to this oft repeated routine, of course. Occasionally a passenger-to-be might surprise the agent by announcing that his destination was some town in far off Texas or in the state of Maine, thus drawing a look of disgust or possibly only a frown from the vendor and a request that he or she wait at the end of the line. There would be an explanation to the effect that, while he knew the fares to most towns on the line, in the case of such an unusual destination he would have to research timetables for routing, connections and fares before making out a lengthy "strip ticket". All of that would require some extra time. Most travellers, when making a lengthy trip would give the agent some advance time to prepare the tickets.

Finally the ticket business was completed, the ticket window closed, the office locked up, and the passengers ushered onto the proper platform in position for boarding. If timing was good, the local would in due time pull in to a sometimes jerky stop and the agent would turn to supervising and helping with the loading and unloading of mail, express and baggage. In the meantime, the conductor and his brakeman would be assisting the passengers off and on the train, after which the conductor would make a final check to see that all was clear, signal to the engineer with a wave of his arm, sound a booming "ALL A-B-O-A-R-D," and the wheels would begin to turn.

Now the agent could return to his office duties, of which there were many. His was a busy and responsible position in those days of many passenger and freight trains—no wonder he sometimes became irritated and short tempered.

One section of our little red depot, but separate from the aforementioned rooms, was for the storage and handling of mail, express and baggage. Presiding over this area was the baggage or express man—either title, appropriately enough, would fit the job.

All three commodities were loaded on four wheel, hand pulled (or pushed) trucks from the cars and rolled into or at least to the vicinity of the depot "annex". The mail would be picked up by the postmaster

and hauled to the post office with a two wheeled truck or, if the delivery was heavy, by wagon.

Baggage was held for identification and claiming by the owner either after the train's departure or at a later time. Personal baggage could be carried on the train by a passenger or it could be hauled to destination in the baggage car free of charge. Most passengers chose to check trunks, heavy suitcases and other cumbersome items, even dogs and cats if properly caged or crated. All such items were checked at the baggage room by presenting a valid ticket. In return the baggage man would tag the trunks, etc., and give the patron duplicate claim checks with which to claim his property at destination. It was all a free service for which the railroads had to include one or more baggage cars in every passenger train.

Shipment by express was the business of at least four different private concerns that operated for varying lengths of time during the many years of passenger train service.

Probably the first in the business was the Wells Fargo Company which had its beginning in the stagecoach days of the untamed west. They quite naturally turned to the railroads for faster and more dependable transportation as the new lines were pushed across the country.

Adams Express was a second well known name around the turn of the century as was a third entry in the field, The American Express Company. Eventually the service was taken over by The Railway Express Company, owned and operated by the railroads. Of course, rail shipment by express came to a complete halt with the discontinuation and cancellation of the passenger trains.

But up to the time of the consolidation of the three companies, each one operated over different rail lines. For example, Adams Express was carried under contract in central Iowa by the Iowa Central. All "Central" depots displayed the Adams Express Agency sign. The Great Western had the contract to haul Wells Fargo express and the Northwestern stations were American agencies. In other words, each and every carrier was a ONE express company railroad.

The business was pretty much confined to the transportation of small consignments including perishables or to merchandise requiring the fast delivery of passenger trains. One particular commodity that was a great revenue producer in days gone by was full and empty cream cans. At almost every station, the local passenger trains took on one to a dozen or more of the full 5 or 10 gallon cans consigned to a creamery up ahead. And at the site of that butter business the same train would load up with empties for distribution up ahead. All the cans were well battered from long use.

Nowadays, stainless steel tank trucks drive regular rural routes to pick up the cream for butter and cheese manufacturing plants.

Up to a point in weight it was less expensive to ship by express—freight shipments carried a minimum rate for consignments of 100 lbs. or less. Another advantage or express over freight was that all express shipments were insured free of charge up to fixed maximum valuations.

Valuable express consignments were the targets of the early day train robbers who used various and devious means to stop a train and loot

the express car even to blowing up the safe. There have been many dime novels written and western movies filmed depicting these storied events of the past.

As stated above, in the smaller towns all express shipments were stored in the baggage room of the depot to await pick up by the consignee. In larger cities, the express companies maintained uptown offices from which wagons (later trucks) fanned out to effect free delivery to homes and businesses, another plus for express over freight shipment.

As for warm comfortable indoor rest rooms—forget it! They were not a part of our depot and I'm sure the same was true of hundreds of other small town stations such as ours. Instead they were the fresh air variety positioned down the track a piece—cold in winter and inclined to be a bit smelly all the year round.

Such was the typical small railroad station at the turn of the century. It was a very busy place throughout the day and an intensely interesting place for old and young alike, particularly for me who, at the tender age of eight years or so, was thrilled with every opportunity to join the train time crowd (in company with my parents, of course). Already I had been captivated by the romance of the rails.

LOADING PLATFORMS

The platforms of our railway installation were a full block long and perhaps fifteen to twenty feet wide. One was used as much as the other because of the double track system. Sizeable crowds usually met the trains—departing passengers with friends and relatives to see them off; another group to meet arriving passengers; and there were those who "just walked over to see the train come in". It was a great place to get caught up on "who had been where" and "who was going where". For the **State Center Enterprise** it was a gold mine of information for the daily happenings column.

There were times when the crowds were very thankful for the extra width of the platforms. Occasionally the local, for which the folks were waiting, would be preceded unexpectedly by a speeding freight or a through passenger train whose engineer might slow down only slightly, indifferent to the people gathered so close to the track. His rocketing approach would quickly move them back to the relative safety of the rear of the platform. Dust and cinders filled the air for the duration of the train's passing.

Warnings of these surprise speeders were usually sounded by the agent and baggage man since they would have advance notice of oncoming trains. In any platform waiting crowd there were always some of the more venturesome youngsters who delighted in walking the rails and placing pennies on the rails to be recovered after the train had passed. Screeching whistles and advance warnings from the agent would send all of them to the protection of their respective parents.

Most of the platforms in the smaller towns were basically cinders, packed hard and fairly smooth by years of use. Sketches and pictures of very early day platforms—1870 and 1880 eras—show them to be heavy

plank construction, some of them built up to the level of the lower step of the passenger cars. The city platforms were brick.

CROSSINGS AND TOWER

There were four busy street and pedestrian crossings in State Center, all spanning the double tracks of the C & N W and its sidetracks—and one across the G & M tracks in the west part of town. All of the Northwestern crossings were protected by gates which were lowered across the roadway at the approach of a train. They are still a part of the road and street crossing systems all along the line, but today they are electrically actuated and operated. In the 1900's there was a tower just west of the depot from which the round-the-clock operators of the gates did their "thing". It was a rather lofty perch reached by a considerable number of steps and afforded a clear view up and down the tracks.

Unlike today's electrically operated barriers, the 1900 gates were raised and lowered by a hydraulic system that required some manual pumping by the operator. There was a definite time lag after a train passed before the gates started up, but if you were in a position to see the operator start his pumping routine you knew that sidewalk and road clearance would follow soon.

As an added protection for the unwary vehicular and pedestrian traffic, kerosene burning red lanterns were hung on the gates at night. It was the duty of the tower men to hang the lanterns at dusk and retrieve them in the morning. There was also the matter of keeping said lanterns filled with kerosene and keeping the glass clean. Today's electric gates are equipped with reflectors that show up red in the headlight glare of automobiles.

And there has always been the locomotive whistle which, by rule, the engineer sounds as he approaches each and every crossing in town and in the country. Other precautions of long standing included bells that rang to tell of an approaching train and, of course, the time honored cross-arm sign posts that have stood on both sides of the tracks everywhere for lo these many years to tell of the presence of railway tracks at that point. Still, thousands of people lose their lives every year at railroad grade crossings in spite of all the warning and protective devices in use through the years.

As small boys, my brother and I, along with all other youngsters, were carefully schooled and warned of the dangers of crossing railroad tracks or of playing anywhere near them. Today's youngsters no doubt receive the same warnings but the greatest hazards now are in the streets and on the highways. Slow moving horse and buggy traffic and occasional horseless carriages offered few dangers to our young lives but the trains were a very real potential for accidents.

That gate pumping tower man was also a telegrapher and as such was in charge of "the key" during the nighttime hours or when the agent was otherwise engaged. No night trains stopped at State Center so activity at the depot came to a halt with the departure of the evening westbound local, leaving the tower man in charge. His telegraph duties kept him in touch with all the action going on up and down the line. Most certainly he was an important part of the railway operation in State Center.

SIDETRACKS

An important segment of any railway installation has always been its sidings and switch tracks. Many smaller towns on single track lines had a passing track that was long enough to accommodate an entire freight train when it was necessary to clear the main line to allow a faster passenger train to pass or to make way for an oncoming train. The double tracks of the Northwestern all but eliminated the need for these long sidings.

At State Center there was no long sidetrack—only one about seven blocks in length to serve the business firms that shipped and received commodities and merchandise in carload lots. These included grain elevators, coalyards, lumber yards, implement dealers and several retail businesses that from time to time received car lot shipments of merchandise. Most of those retail stores had back doors directly on the siding to facilitate unloading right from the car.

That back door was also mighty handy to the depot platform—only the sidetrack separating them—where express and small freight shipments were unloaded many times a day. Merchants could readily claim such merchandise and tote the same right into the store.

As a bonus benefit, that door often served as a good observation point from which to watch the arrival of trains and the flurries of activity that accompanied the same. Usually the locomotives of westbound local passenger trains would stop right at the back door of Dad's general merchandise store—only twenty or thirty feet away—affording a great opportunity for two small boys to get a good close up look at the big (in our eyes) engine. We might even get in a wave or a word of greeting to members of the crew.

But there was also a disadvantage to having the back door so close to the tracks. When a fast moving train, particularly a freight, came rumbling through town, the noise all but eliminated any attempt at conversation for the moment. Many a choice bit of gossip was interrupted by the whistle blasts and many a telephoned grocery order was misunderstood by the crescendo of noises.

For the benefit of the implement dealers, the railroad provided adjacent to the siding a platform and ramp for unloading wheeled vehicles such as farm implements, wagons and even the new automobiles that were beginning to make an appearance. In those days autos were still shipped in boxcars.

THE STOCKYARDS

The only other sidetrack in State Center was really a dead end spur off the eastbound track and north of the right-of-way. It was in the east part of town. For many thousands of cattle and hogs, here was the starting point for their last long ride to the slaughter houses in Chicago.

But the stockyards weren't always on the north side of the tracks in State Center. The original site was on the opposite side and a little farther east. When the Northwestern was double tracked in the 1880's it was found that for eastbound trains to pick up loaded stock cars and leave some empties was an awkward operation (almost all stock went

out on eastbound trains). It required crossing the westbound track at the cross over switch before making the stockyards pick up. And it was definitely time consuming. So the entire facility, spur track and all, was simply moved to the other side, adjacent to the eastbound track.

For more than half a century the railroads of the midwest and the plains states provided the only means of transporting livestock to market. Every day long strings of cattle cars, also used for hogs, sheep, horses, and mules, moved along the branch lines everywhere, picking up loaded cars and funneling them to the main line for fast movement to Chicago. In fact, the transportation of these livestock products of the farm contributed a very great portion of the railroads' freight revenue in those days.

This was particularly true of the Northwestern system with its widespread network of branch lines and its double track main line to move the stock directly to the great stockyards complex in Chicago.

In this pre-trucking era, the eastbound flow of loaded cattle trains through State Center was very heavy and the long strings of empties headed west were likewise common sights.

Needless to say, the railroads provided and maintained a stockyard and sidetrack in just about every town, large and small. It was a small investment to make in return for the resultant livestock business.

Our facility was no different from the hundreds of others across the country. It consisted of a group of pens with high board fences and gates and a sloping chute at trackside up which the stock was driven for the long ride. The fences and gate were usually white washed (but not always white) and since the yards were within the city limits, although usually in the outskirts, it was necessary to maintain some semblance of a periodical clean-up program. Otherwise, odor complaints from the local citizenry might become troublesome.

Because of the large numbers of cattle and hogs raised by area farmers, the State Center yards were in constant use. Usually there would be a number of empty cattle cars on the siding ready for use at any time—if more were needed, the agent would order them out, to be spotted on the spur by the next day's way freight.

The farmers themselves arranged for the cattle drives to town or if a shipment of hogs was bound for market, wagons were put into service (still not trucks). Sometimes the drive would be a cooperative effort entered into by several neighborhood farmers. The stock would be loaded into the cars amidst a din of squeals and bellowing protests on the part of the closely confined beasts. The next "cattle-hog-special" would receive orders to make a pick-up at State Center and the ill-fated livestock would be on their way to slaughter. An afternoon pick-up would normally be in Chicago by early morning.

Shippers quite often rode in with their stock on passes furnished by the railroad, one or two coaches, called drovers' cars, having been added to the train just ahead of the caboose. But there were times when the only "ride-along" was that little old caboose itself which provided little in the way of comfort. At times like this, the conductor and brakeman probably bore the brunt of considerable grumbling.

THE CROSS-OVERS

Switching facilities in our town as in about all other main line C & N W towns, included cross-over tracks to permit movement of engine and cars or even whole trains between the two sets of tracks. Since the principal siding in State Center was on the south side of the right-of-way, an eastbound freight always had to transfer over to the other set of tracks and then move onto the siding to spot cars and to pick up others destined for movement east. The reverse procedure might be required in the next town where the siding could be on the other side of the main line. Such switching procedures could often hold up through traffic so they were not undertaken without a careful check on the proximity of oncoming trains.

THE SECTION CREWS

Not to be forgotten in the lineup of railway employees was the section crew. All those who remember anything about the 1900 railroad era will certainly recall the local track workers and their handcars. Every town—large and small—main line or branch line—had a crew consisting of a boss man and a varying number of workers, depending on the season of the year and the amount of work to be done. In the summer months extra hands were hired—quite often they included teenage boys. Later in the year, as winter approached, the crew would be whittled down to three or four.

Each local crew had a section of track to patrol (probably the origin of the name given this group of workers) that extended half way to the next town in both directions. Most of the minor track and roadbed work as well as right-of-way maintenance was done by these men but if major trouble areas were detected, as a result of the constant patrol, extra help with heavier equipment and, in some cases a work train, would be called in to make the needed repairs. This system of local crew coverage resulted in a safe, well kept Northwestern right-of-way and trackage through many years of heavy traffic.

A smallish building near the depot housed the section crew's tools, supplies, equipment and the handcar. This was headquarters for the track workers, from which they started out every week day morning with their lunch buckets in hand and to which they returned at the end of the day.

The means of travel to and from the scene of the day's labor was a handcar—an almost forgotten piece of equipment today. It consisted of a platform or deck about eight feet by approximately ten feet, four small wheels with flanges like those used on railway cars, and a mechanism by which the miniature flat car was propelled down the track. The propellant was strictly human, applied by two to four facing members of the crew in an up and down action of the handles. In turn the pumping action was transmitted to the wheel turning gear mechanism.

The handcar hauled both men and whatever supplies and tools were needed for the day's work. A trailer flat car, without "motive power", might be attached to the handcar if extra equipment and manpower were involved.

The first order of business on arrival at the scene of the day's work was to "detrack" the handcar onto a convenient road crossing or onto one of the many specially built track side "parking" spots. There were occasional reports of near misses and a few fatal accidents where a crew failed to clear the track in time to avoid onrushing trains.

Section crews and their parked handcars were familiar sights to passenger train travellers as they sped past in their day coaches and plush pullman cars. An unexpected reduction in the speed of one of these trains was usually an indication of a crew at work on the tracks ahead.

All railroads during this "boom" era practiced this "every-town-section-crew" system of patrol and maintenance on main lines and branch lines alike. It was a sensible precautionary and efficient safety measure that was responsible for the generally good roadbeds and trackage that existed during these times.

SIGNAL SYSTEM

Among the safety precautions taken by the Northwestern along its Chicago to Omaha main line was a signal system that featured uniquely shaped steel support towers. The top or business end was shaped somewhat like a banjo with a hole in the fat part of the "instrument" through which the changing red, yellow, and green signals could be seen from a considerable distance. Placed on both sides of the right-of-way to face both east and westbound trains, the signals were spaced at regular intervals or more frequently where visibility demanded it. The distinctive shape of the "banjo" signals, used only on the C & N W, added to the effectiveness of the system. They were stand-outs against the array of conventional road crossing and other trackside signs.

A green signal in the eye of the banjo told the engine crew that the "block" they were entering (usually about four miles) was clear of traffic. A yellow light was a "slow" warning that a train ahead had not yet cleared the "block". A red signal ordered a full stop until the track was cleared and the "banjo" eye turned green. The signal lights were actuated electrically.

The Northwestern's "banjo" system provided an effective measure of safe traffic control for many years but was finally replaced in the mid 1930's by a more sophisticated electronic system that eliminated trackside towers entirely.

The new system, still in use as this is written, automatically slows a train as it nears another in its path and finally stops it altogether when it gets within a predetermined distance of the preceding train. The retarding and stopping is accomplished entirely independent of any action or lack of same by the engineer. The brakes are set and released automatically.

The greater safety provided by this system was particularly essential to the operation of the super fast streamliners that began operation in the 1940's. Protected from rear end collisions by this modern train control, some of the diesel powered speedsters rolled across the state only minutes apart. Nowadays a further measure of safety has been added by the use

of radio, telephone and walkie-talkies by which train crews can talk to other crews and talk directly with dispatchers up and down the line.

THE G and M FACILITIES

Over at the Iowa Central's G and M yards, the facilities were quite limited. There were some short spur tracks to the commercial enterprises located there and to the stockyards. But the principal yard trackage was the "Y" referred to heretofore. The depot, center of minimal activity, was typically small but did include the usual waiting room, the pot belly stove and the agent's office.

IV

MARSHALLTOWN RAILROAD FACILITIES AND CHARLIE DUELL

MARSHALLTOWN RAILROAD FACILITIES

At Marshalltown the railway facilities in the early 1900's were considerably more extensive than in the average Iowa community. It was a growing city of 11,500 population with several rapidly developing industries that produced a sizeable volume of freight traffic for the rail lines.

Three different railroads intersected at Marshalltown, making it, at this early date, an important junction point in the Iowa network of railways.

The Chicago Great Western's depot and trackage was only a block or so away from the other two lines. Their sidetrack and switching facilities served several businesses and industries. For passengers transferring from the other station (C & N W - Iowa Central) it was only a walk of about a block. As many as six or eight passenger trains a day served all towns from Kansas City to Minneapolis-St. Paul, as well as cities and towns in northeastern Iowa via the Oelwein-Chicago division. Traffic to and from Des Moines was unusually heavy.

A second railroad, the north-south Iowa Central line, had the most extensive facilities at Marshalltown. Their central division headquarters was located here. They had car shops, round house, freight depot, and expansive freight yards and switching facilities—it was a crew and engine change point for all trains—and most all freight trains, both north and southbound, were re-worked and made up here. The Iowa Central had by far the largest payroll of all the three railroads—many freight and passenger crewmen as well as many yard men, shop workers, round house employees, and a sizeable force of clerical help, made their homes in Marshalltown.

The Iowa Central maintained freight and passenger service for many years between the Twin Cities in Minnesota and Peoria, Illinois and Albia, Iowa. All passenger trains were locals except for their North Star Limited, trains 5 and 6, which offered "stepped-up" service be-

tween Minneapolis and St. Louis. Six main line passenger trains a day rolled in and out of Marshalltown on the Central at the turn of the century. A seventh, the Story City branch, made its "daily except Sunday" round trip to Story City during that era.

It was about 1912 that the Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad purchased all the properties of the Iowa Central and took over complete operational control of that pioneer railway. The new company soon after began using the familiar "PEORIA GATEWAY LINE" slogan.

The east-west main line tracks of the Northwestern crossed the other lines at a railroad crossing about three blocks west of the depot. It was a very busy intersection presided over by the tower men whose job it was to see that there were no TIE races. In their elevated observation post, they used telephone and telegraph communications along with the red and green signal lights to maintain a safe and orderly parade of trains night and day through the crossing. I have found no record of serious accidents at this cross-over junction, in spite of the unusually heavy traffic.

Marshalltown was a scheduled stop for all passenger trains except for some of the fast west coast "limiteds" and the time freights that operated on fast through schedules.

Several sidetracks extended from the depot to the east city limits and there was a sizeable two story freight depot where carloads of merchandise were unloaded every day for local distribution among Marshalltown businesses and where cars were loaded out for way freight handling east and west. The second floor housed a considerable force of railroad clerical personnel.

The depot was a jointly operated union passenger station, serving both the Chicago Northwestern and the Iowa Central. As such, it was an extremely busy place all around the clock. Four sets of rails paralleled each other—the C & N W double tracks next to the station and the Iowa Central tracks close by to the south—an arrangement that required all west, north and southbound passengers to cross one to three sets of tracks to get to their particular loading platforms. More than a dozen passenger trains a day made regular stops and there were frequent unscheduled stops by west coast trains to discharge or detrain long haul patrons.

About nine each morning and again around five o'clock in the afternoon (except Sundays) business was very brisk indeed, as two Iowa Central trains and two C & N W locals arrived about the same time on four different tracks. This situation called for some careful maneuvering on the part of passengers (and their accompanying groups of friends and relatives) to make their way to the proper platform. The same situation often prevailed at many other stations where there was more than one railroad and where multiple tracks created similar problems. Late comers at Marshalltown finding their train already "in" had a choice of walking around the engine or tail end car or, in later years, they could climb the stairs to the viaduct and down the other side.

But for many years there was helpful and expert guidance for the often mixed-up passengers in the person of CHARLIE DUELL. Who, among the older generation, can forget this self-appointed director of traffic

at the Marshalltown Union Depot as he took complete charge of the situation during those busy rush hours. He wore an old hand-me-down cap such as worn by brakemen and conductors (without indication of status although it could very aptly have indicated his role as TRAFFIC MANAGER); a very shiny, well worn blue coat with brass buttons also of the type worn by trainmen; and he always carried an oversize bundle of papers, for sale of course, under one arm.

Like all efficient depot announcers, Charlie always knew the arrival and departure times of all trains and was able to answer any and all questions put to him—right or wrong, he had an answer. He was constantly on the go in the waiting rooms and on the platforms doing what he liked to do—announcing trains and directing the crowds of people to their respective places of waiting. His loud clear voice, his arm waving and his very authoritative manner commanded the respect of one and all. Even the engineers observed his arm waving signals that assured them the track was clear and seemed to say—"Come ahead, I have cleared the way for you."

No one seems to know for sure whether or not Charlie Duell (actually the owner of a news depot uptown) was an employee of the railroads—whether or not he ever received any compensation for his conscientious effort on behalf of the public—or whether he even received much public acknowledgment of his service. In any event, I trust that his dependable day after day efforts were somehow duly appreciated—who knows how many lives he may have saved. He certainly will be remembered by all who were privileged to watch him "in action" during those busy times at the depot.

That Marshalltown depot itself was one of the larger stations on the C & N W line, incorporating a double waiting room for smokers and nonsmokers; a good sized ticket office; his and her rest rooms (never too well ventilated or maintained); a restaurant; and a rather spacious combination baggage, express and mail receiving room.

The waiting room was furnished with the usual back breaking benches plus a few very well worn cane back rocking chairs. The ticket office sort of divided the two waiting rooms and, as in all depots of that day, the wall space opposite the ticket window was occupied by the C & N W and Iowa Central railroad maps and the schedule board for the two lines.

The restaurant section was typical of those found in depots of the larger towns and cities. It served short orders, sandwiches and snacks, all of which would probably have been rated no better than second or third class by those who partook of the fare.

The west end of the station provided space for handling incoming and outgoing express, mail and baggage. It, too, was a busy place with several handlers on duty 24 hours a day. All three commodities were hauled out on hand pulled and pushed four wheel trucks (now antique and equipment that vanished with the passenger trains) to service each and every train—loading out the outgoing consignments and hauling back the unloadings.

At Christmas time, this part of the depot was a beehive of activity requiring considerable extra help, the holiday mail forming the bulk of this surplus load. Trains were delayed at Marshalltown and every other station during this season of the year while handlers wrestled with loading and unloading long strings of the four wheeled mail trucks. In the meantime, the conductor stood around impatiently looking at his watch and tentatively figuring his possible arrival time at the end of his run.

With the two railway stations only a block apart, both serving frequent passenger train arrivals, Marshalltown's South Third Avenue depot district traffic was heavy in the early 1900 era. In the early days horse drawn hacks met all trains to provide transportation to the uptown business district. Later the public enjoyed the comparative luxury of streetcar service from the car barns near the Great Western depot.

V

THE LOCALS—THE CREWS—LUNCHTIME AND THE BUTCHER BOY—EXCURSIONS AND SPECIALS—THE FLIERS AND THE SEMI-LOCALS—THE FAST MAIL TRAINS—WAY FREIGHTS AND FAST TIME FREIGHTS

THE "LOCALS"

Those first passenger trains of rather "picturesque" design that started in service across the land in the 1860's were very slow by all modern standards, offered very little passenger comfort, and were not too dependable in maintaining on-time schedules. But I'm sure the public was so glad to have this new convenient mode of transportation that the slow and often tardy service and the crude car furnishings were readily overlooked. Anyway, it wasn't long before many notable improvements in equipment, trackage, safety measures and motive power resulted in generally improved service on all the lines.

As of 1900 there were many of the old open platform coaches still in service particularly on the rails of branch lines and smaller railroads. They allowed blasts of cinders and smoke laden air (cold in winter) to sweep through the car every time a door was opened. Likewise, the windows were easily opened in the summertime by passengers seeking some fresh air—a procedure that almost always brought protests from a good share of the others in the car. Like the open doors, the windows when open let in the same dirty, smoky air which had a tendency to color passengers' complexions about three shades darker than normal. Also some cars had small transom windows on either side high above the seats that the brakeman opened on occasion. But the influx of engine smoke through these openings only brought more complaints from the customers.

These hazards of dirt, cinders and smoke were pretty much eliminated by simply forbidding the opening of windows and finally by the use of

double pane windows that were tightly sealed and could not be opened at all. Of course, the ultimate in clean air came with air conditioning at a later date.

Needless to say, CLEAN day coach windows were rare indeed. More often than not they were so dirty that viewing the passing landscape was virtually impossible.

The introduction of closed vestibule coaches before the turn of the century eliminated the open door hazards and now a passenger could walk from one car to another without exposure to the elements and without running the risk of being swept away into oblivion by a sudden gust of wind. The old day coaches were gradually moved into branch line service or sold to some of the short line railroads. The Iowa Central used these old cars until their trains were converted to the "Doodle Bug" self contained motor coaches along in the 1940's.

Another step toward cleaner air (the environmentalists were at work way back in 1900) was the introduction of the SMOKING CAR. In the beginning there was no segregation of smokers from non-smokers. Also, there were tobacco chewers for whom spitoons were provided but the target was more often than not entirely too small. So before long almost all trains included a smoking car for tobacco users and for anyone else who preferred the polluted air and none too clean floors, seats and windows. Smoking and chewing were now prohibited in the other coaches and the non-users were much happier. In pullman sleeping cars, smoking was permitted only in the men's room at the end of the car (lady smokers were almost unheard of then).

Lighting was very inadequate in those very early coaches. Old interior pictures of the cars show kerosene lamps hanging from the ceiling or mounted on the sides of the car. Later they were replaced with gas lights that provided much better illumination—even good enough to read by if the roadbed was smooth enough. Of course, it must be remembered that for the "locals" artificial lighting wasn't too important anyway except in the fall and winter months—most of them completed their runs before dark. It was the brakeman's duty to go through the cars and light the lamps or gas lights if darkness overtook the train before it reached its terminal. Both kerosene and gas lights must have constituted a real fire hazard particularly to those old all-wood coaches.

Heating the old time passenger cars in the wintertime was another inadequacy that the long suffering public had to put up with for a good many years. The only source of heat was a rather small model of that cast iron pot belly stove of depot fame in one end of the coach (the railroads must have purchased this type of heater by the train load). The chimney extended out through the roof, providing at least some of the coal smoke that filtered into the car through opened doors, windows and transoms. The maintenance of the fire was a responsibility of the brakeman and he usually did his best, keeping the little stove well charged with coal—but even in moderately cold weather the heat seldom penetrated to the far end of the car so experienced travellers came prepared with plenty of warm clothing.

Steam heat came to the rescue of cold and shivering passengers late in the 1800's. Those comforting steam pipes ran the full length of the car at floor level and on both sides, thoroughly distributing the heat to all corners. There was no automatic regulation—it was all or nothing—so the heat sometimes became oppressive and the patrons simply waited for the brakeman to recognize the "too-much-of-a-good-thing" and apply some "twist-of-the-wrist" to the valves. This yo-yo heat regulation was far from satisfactory but it was a great improvement over the hand-fired coal stoves. Only thermostats and automatic controls, to come later, would completely solve the heat problem.

Rest room facilities on the early "locals" were rather primitive, to say the least. Each coach had a "MEN" and "LADIES" at opposite ends of the car—this was still the nineteenth century—no adjoining rest rooms such as found in modern public buildings. The facilities consisted of a flush type toilet (directly to the tracks below) and a very small lavatory with cold running water if the supply tank had not already been exhausted. Toilet paper, towels, and soap were of the "sometimes" category. Spacewise, the rest rooms were very small and, depending on how far the train had come at any given time, they could be heavily littered and dirty.

Coach "biffys" were always locked (for understandable reasons) by that busy brakeman when the train was nearing any stop of considerable length of time and, of course, he had to reverse the procedure as the train got under way again. Quite often there would be a waiting line anxiously anticipating the unlocking.

One convenience (intended as such at least) was drinking water contained in a tank at the end of the car and available via a spigot. The tank was filled before the train started on its run and, if available, a chunk of ice was added but both water and ice were all too soon exhausted, depending on the temperature in the coach and on how many thirsty youngsters there were aboard. Those water tanks seemed to have a super attraction for children. I remember how quickly Joe (my brother) and I acquired a thirst at first sight of the water cooler. Until the advent of paper cups and dispensers, all experienced parents carried the ever handy collapsible metal cup when travelling with the family. I don't remember that the drinking water supply was ever replenished during the day's run—not on the local trains at least.

Day coach seating on the early locals was not comfortable by any stretch of the imagination. All seat padding was not exactly cushiony, the backs likewise and almost straight up and down—no reclining backs until a later day. All seats faced in the direction the train was moving—that is they were in that position when the train started its run. But the seat backs could be flipped over to make a double seat with room for four passengers to sit facing each other.

Luggage racks extended the length of the car above the seats. They were always well filled with all sorts of luggage from carpet bags to suitcases, plus box lunches, shoppers' purchases, and, if room, a hat or two. With some brakemen, when announcing a station stop, it was routine to pass along a reminder "Don't Forget Your Parcels".

Bear in mind that the average single passenger or family riding the local passenger trains travelled only short distances, quite often just to the next station. So the many hardships and inconveniences—the dirty air, the unpredictable degree of warmth, the flickering lighting, the inadequate rest room facilities, the uncomfortable seating—were endured without too much complaint. Only the all day passengers became restless to have the journey end.

The "locals" that started rolling over the newly laid rails away back in the beginning, remained the backbone of the passenger service right up to the coming of the automobile. In fact, they were the ONLY passenger trains operating over the many branch lines—regularly scheduled through trains were few and far between even on the Class B main line railroads in the early days of railroading.

At the start of the twentieth century, State Center and central Iowa still enjoyed the convenience of every morning local train service each way and the same two-way service in the late afternoon. In addition, a noon Chicago bound train No. 12—a so called semi-local—stopped regularly at our town. This five-trains-a-day schedule was well patronized and the depot area was the scene of much activity at train times.

A typical "local" of those days would consist of a mail car, baggage and express cars and two or three coaches, one of them the smoker. The locomotive would be one of the smaller steam engines designed especially for the local passenger quick start and stop service that regularly hauled these trains over the same run day after day. Almost all the locals were of the "daily except Sunday" category and were so designated on the timetables which were supplied on request by all agents.

THE CREWS

The crew was headed by the conductor who was in full charge of the train and its operation. The engineer and fireman were in command of the locomotive, the brakeman had a variety of duties, some of which have been detailed heretofore, and the postal and express clerks operated in their respective cars.

All members of the crew, except the engineer and fireman who were dressed to suit their jobs, wore blue uniforms with caps peculiar to the trade, on which was attached a designation of their duty. Also sewed to the coat sleeves of the conductor and brakeman were service stars and gold bars indicative of their respective years of service.

At each and every station stop the depot agent and his helpers, the train crew, and the passengers all went through the same daily stereotyped routine. As the train neared a station, the approach was signalled by one long whistle blast and, in response, the brakeman would pass through each car and call out something like "State Center the next stop. All out for State Center. Step to the front of the car. Don't forget your parcels." All or part of the announcement, depending on how much time he had, would be delivered in a sing-song, hard-to-understand jargon that barely overcame the noise of the train. Every brakeman had his own particular "song" that he repeated many times every day except for the names of the towns and hardly anybody could interpret that most important part of the speech. You just about had to know from ex-

perience, the exact time or from a quick reference to your timetable when it was your time to unload.

The conductor and brakeman, after opening the coach doors, were the first off the train, the latter positioning his little step stool and assisting the passengers off the train and helping his new guests up the steps. In the meantime, the conductor supervised the passenger exchange, making a quick head check of the number of new passengers, as well as the loading and unloading of express and mail. After all was accomplished he would get the train under way again with a hand signal to the engine and a loud A-L-L A-B-O-A-R-D, all as described in preceding pages. Then as the train began to roll, both he and the brakeman would, with a good show of grace and nonchalance, grab the hand rail of the coach and step aboard. The whole performance followed an orderly pattern, the result of prescribed railroad orders and long experience.

As the train gained speed the conductor, starting in the first coach with his attention getting "Tickets Please", began the all important duty of collecting tickets and in exchange placing a passenger check in the wall clip for that seat. On the check was scribbled some very abbreviated information that indicated the passenger's destination or that information might be indicated by hand punching the check in a certain way. It was quite fascinating to watch a conductor perform this duty of ticket taking. Armed with a pencil stuck in his mouth or over his ear, a rubber banded bunch of passenger checks in his left hand, and his ticket punch suspended by a ring from his little finger, he proceeded down the aisle on his assigned duty with a distinct show of confidence and authority. He glanced from one side to the other, pausing only where no ticket check was in evidence in the prescribed clip or, if the patron was a man, in his hat band. Almost always the passengers heeded his opening request and had their tickets ready.

On occasion the "head man" came across a passenger who had arrived at the depot too late to purchase a ticket. In lieu of that official pasteboard the latecomer would pay his fare in cash and accept a receipt from the conductor who would continue on down the aisle perhaps a little disturbed by this interruption in his regular routine.

A little later the brakeman would follow his boss through the car to pick up the passenger checks of those who would detrain at the next stop, a rather loose method of checking on those who might try to ride farther than their tickets provided for. Also it gave him an opportunity to awaken any sleepers who might otherwise snooze through their station stops. Both he and the conductor would be frequently interrupted by travellers' questions about arrival times, connections at junction points, stops for lunch, etc. Generally they would be answered with consideration and courtesy.

It was always interesting and most of the time entertaining to watch newly entrained passengers enter the coach and begin the usual routine of selecting a seat and then start stowing their luggage between the seats, under their feet and on the overhead racks above the windows.

If the train was somewhat crowded, as often happened, empty seats would be scarce and there would follow some character-revealing en-

counters. There was the congenial individual who "made room for one more" without being asked. There was the sleeping beauty, draped over two or three seats, who grudgingly yielded to an awakening nudge and a request for a place or places to sit down. And there was the non-cooperative grouch who wanted no part of a seat-sharing suggestion and bluntly made his position perfectly clear—this type, fortunately a rare bird, sometimes held out until ordered to "surrender" by the conductor.

On the other hand, some of the requests to share a space were not too politely put and the result led to outspoken clashes of personalities. But, by and large, the travelling public generally cooperated to utilize all available seating spaces. If all else failed, one could sit on one's suitcase in the aisle—that is until the conductor raised his voice in protest—then it was "standing room only".

LUNCHTIME AND THE BUTCHER BOY

Packing a lunch for an over-the-noon-hour "local" train ride was a must, especially for families—there were no diners on these trains. They all had scheduled lunch stops of fifteen or twenty minutes at a depot lunch counter but most folks, who had experienced the quality of the food at such stops, much preferred to go without or resort to the sack or basket lunch prepared at home. On this score I can speak from experience and note that, on an all day ride on an Iowa Central "local" back in 1910 with my mother and brother, I still remember how good Mom's fried chicken, jelly sandwiches, cookies and trimmings tasted as we jolted along on our way to St. Paul, Minnesota.

We were not alone in our lunchtime activity. There were many others munching on a sandwich, eating an orange, or partaking of a complete picnic that was spread out on a vacant seat or on the laps of the eaters.

And on most "locals" as well as on some of the better trains there was still another source of snacks. He was usually a young man licensed by the railroad to ride the train and sell a wide variety of goodies to eat and, in addition, books, magazines, newspapers, novelties and notions. His "store" consisted of a miscellaneous assortment of merchandise selected and purchased from various sources and contained in a few well worn suitcases that occupied the first double seat of the first coach, usually the smoker. The sales person was commonly referred to as the "Butcher" (why I don't know) but according to the identification on his official railroad cap, which he wore all the time, he was the "VENDOR".

This regular non-paying passenger was the first to come aboard in the morning with his "store" and was soon busy unwrapping his newest purchases and freshening up the appearance of yesterday's leftovers. From then on throughout the day the vendor made frequent tours of the train, each trip with varying selections of things for sale. His sales pitch varied with the commodities he was carrying in his trays but he was quick to respond to an inquiry for some unrelated item that he might have in his "store" up ahead.

The most productive tours for the "Butcher" were those at lunchtime or suppertime if the train's run extended into the evening hours. It

was then that he showed up with the well polished apples, the sweet juicy oranges (so described in his sales talk), big yellow bananas and a selection of cookies, candy bars, and other goodies—all very tempting, especially to the younger generation.

Also at these times he might appear with a stack of fresh sandwiches which he had picked up at the lunch stop. He had no liquid refreshments for sale with which to wash down the lunch fare—there was only the water cooler at the end of the car which was very likely empty or the contents far from cool. But the chances were good that he just might have some of those collapsible cups from which to drink the water, if any.

These were some of the many diversions for the weary traveller on the locals of the 1900 era, particularly for those riding a considerable distance. There were frequent tours of the vendor—the constant turnover of passengers with a passing parade from all walks of life—the conductor's official ticket taking trips—and the brakeman's tours in the performance of his many duties. Also there were many trips to the "MEN'S" and "LADIES"—the footloose wanderings of children—and the sometimes animated discussions over seating space. To all this there might be added the exciting, even frightening, news of a derailment up ahead or other causes for serious delay. Such news, spreading rapidly through the cars, was always upsetting for those who had connections to make at junction points ahead.

EXCURSIONS AND SPECIALS

Common in this era (1890 to 1920) were the many offers of reduced fares and excursion rates to special events, fairs, and to vacation and holiday resort areas. The newspaper and magazine advertisements of that time are evidence of the aggressiveness of the railroads in their bids for this short haul passenger business.

During the spring and summer all the lines ran numerous ads about their service and low round trip fares to the lakes area in northwest Iowa and to the Clear Lake region as well. Not only the Rock Island and Milwaukee roads, both of which served these vacation spots, but other lines, as well, reminded their potential passengers that they, too, had excursion rates to the lakes in connection with the two principal roads. The usual ads stated the round trip special rates and listed arrival and departure times for the various trains.

In the fall there were numerous fairs—state, regional and county—all of which were prime targets for railroad passenger promotions. Regular local trains carried extra coaches as needed and, on occasion, special trains were operated to handle the crowds. The Iowa State Fair was, of course, the largest event of this kind and as such attracted literally train loads of fair goers from all over the state. In those pre-automobile days the railroads offered the only practical way to get there and the companies did their best to accommodate the extra traffic.

Also there were the sports events, notably the football games in the fall at Ames, Des Moines, and Iowa City. The Rock Island for years operated several special trains to every University of Iowa home game, the trains pulling onto special sidings adjacent to the stadium to unload

their wildly enthusiastic fans. The job of gathering them back aboard for the ride home was often more difficult than the unloading, especially if the Hawkeyes won.

Other college and university homecoming games also prompted special inducements on the part of the railways to attract riders to and from the games. Again special concessions costwise were the principal attraction.

Even high school games of special interest were occasions for special trains. I well recall one such event in my junior year at Marshalltown High School. I was a member of the football team that had built an undefeated record which was being challenged by the Mason City team with a similar record. There was so much interest in the showdown at Mason City that Marshalltown fans, including most of the city's prominent businessmen, prevailed on the M and St. L Railroad to put together a special train for the 100 mile journey. That train of 10 or more of the company's old open platform coaches was packed with enthusiastic fans, young and old, the latter well healed with the green stuff to wager on us young warriors, the underdogs in the battle of undefeateds. The resultant TIE game was heralded as a great moral victory for us—the elder citizens' wagers paid off—and the return trip on our special train was unforgettable.

Winter in Iowa was an inactive season for railroad promotions but all through the rest of the year there were excursions to Chicago for week end ball games and many other special occasions; to the Mississippi for river boat rides; and to many other points of interest within the state for all sorts of special events. The rail lines took full advantage of their monopolistic position to promote their services at low cost fares that just about everyone could afford. Regular fares at that time for coach travel were only three cents per mile, so any special rates below that would have been real bargains.

Regular advertising schedules in the newspapers were maintained for many years even though many of the ads merely reminded the public of the regular daily passenger schedules in effect at that time. In later years, after local service had been surrendered to the automobile, the advertising switched to the deluxe through service now available to the sunny climes of Florida and California; to the vacation lands of Minnesota and Wisconsin; and to the beauty of cool resort areas in the Colorado Rockies.

FLIERS AND THE SEMI-LOCALS

Passenger trains of this category actually dated back to just a few years after the introduction of the locals on the new rail lines. Contained in a book entitled "Out West on the Overland Train" is a very interesting record of a journey by train from New York to San Francisco in 1877, just fourteen years after that first Northwestern line spanned the state of Iowa. More importantly, only eight years had elapsed since the completion of the Union Pacific - Central Pacific Transcontinental Railroad at Promontory Point, Utah in 1869.

The book is by Richard Reinhardt and is a chronological story of that epic journey across the continent at a time when the west was still a vast unsettled expanse of prairies, deserts and mountains. The narrative is

taken from the pages of "Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper" and contains reproductions of original drawings made by two young artists who were members of the touring party. No attempt was made to set any records for travel time elapsed, but on that score, there is a factual record of a special train of three cars making the same trip about that same year in the remarkably fast elapsed time of 83 hours and 13 minutes—the distance 3316 miles. The luxury streamliners of the 1960's made the same trip in just about half that travel time.

In any event, relatively fast through service became a reality at a very early date on all the principal railroads. Those early trains, a couple of steps above the lowly locals described in the preceding pages, were made up of accommodations for all classes of passengers from immigrants bound for a new home in the west to parties of wealthy sportsmen and sightseers who luxuriated in private sleeping and parlor cars.

During the late years of the nineteenth century, many improvements were made in passenger travel on the long haul trains. Greater comfort was incorporated in the newer coaches and sleepers and many innovations came into being to make the ride more pleasant for the patrons. So by 1900 the fast trains with stepped up schedules and operating over much improved roadbeds offered a more sophisticated means of travel, to which the travelling public responded in ever increasing numbers. More and more luxury trains were introduced to haul winter visitors to California, the Southwest and to Florida and to haul them back in the spring. More about this flourishing "Name Train" business later.

In between the locals and the "Super Trains" there was a third classification that was faster than the locals because of fewer stops but still not in the class of the trans-continental trains. The "in-betweens" also differed from the through trains in that they operated only between terminals of a given railroad. The Northwestern operated four such trains for many years between Chicago and Omaha.

No. 12 eastbound left Omaha about eight o'clock in the morning, made twelve or fifteen stops including State Center about noon, and arrived in Chicago in the early evening. Its counterpart, No. 13, also a day train but westbound, made the State Center stop about five o'clock in the afternoon. These two day trains were well patronized by folks going to and returning from Chicago or beyond.

A second pair of fast trains, Nos. 14 and 15, operated over the same route but as night trains on a considerably faster schedule, again because of fewer stops. Our town was not on the stop list for these two flyers.

All of these fast semi-locals on the C & N W were long, heavily loaded trains, normally consisting of the usual mail, express and baggage cars, several coaches, pullmans (on the night trains), a dining car and bringing up the rear would be the symbol car of the luxury flyer, the parlor or lounge car. This latter car, available only to pullman and other first class ticket holders, featured an assortment of comfortable overstuffed chairs, a selection of current magazines and newspapers, and an attendant to serve refreshments as ordered.

Many of the tail end parlor cars had an outdoor rear platform with a few chairs provided, where passengers could sit and enjoy the scenery.

A sturdy brass railing around the observation platform provided adequate safety for the passengers. However, there were always the hazards of flying dust and cinders, smoke from the engine, and the ever present wind created by the train's movement. Such inconveniences were endurable while train speeds were moderate, but faster and faster schedules of later years made the outdoor platforms just too much of a windy, dirty experience. The dome cars of the fifties and sixties provided the ultimate in comfortable air conditioned scenery observation.

One memorable use of the observation platform was its utility as a speaker's platform for politicians. Throughout many years of campaigns, presidential candidates orated from these made to order podiums at whistle stops all across the country.

THE FAST MAIL TRAINS

All railroads, right from the beginning, were under contract with the post office department of the federal government to carry mail on most all passenger runs. Specially designed cars, called railway post offices, were regular equipment on many through trains and on all locals. They were built to facilitate rapid sorting of mail by a trained crew while the train was in motion. At regular stops mail sacks were unloaded and outgoing sacks taken aboard and sorted for delivery at a designated station or at the proper re-routing terminal post office.

Every railroad post office had one or two slots in the side of the car where a last minute letter or card could be mailed in the hope of a quick delivery. Such mail would carry a special cancellation indicating the date and railway mailing. I can remember the thrill of my Dad boosting me up on his shoulders to send a letter on its way via one of the local train's railroad po's. Those were the days of penny postcards and three cent letters.

The headliner of the mail carrying trains was THE FAST MAIL. They carried regularly assigned train numbers—but to everybody along the line it was simply the fast mail—in today's alphabet jargon it probably would have been known as the FM.

All main line railroads operated these trains—the Northwestern was no exception. Its two daily mail trains operated between Chicago and Omaha on schedules that were the fastest on the line—all other trains had orders to clear the track for the speedy FM's.

Each train was made up of at least two post office cars and a string of sealed baggage cars that were destined for terminal post offices or beyond. The chores of the conductor and brakeman on the FM runs were just about nil, but they were required crew members according to union operating rules. The power was supplied by finely tuned locomotives (coal fired in this era) that were built for speed.

The baggage cars contained all kinds of mail—newspapers and other publications, parcel post, and, of course, first class mail. Some would have been loaded and sealed in Chicago or Omaha, while others may have been transferred from other railroads and could be destined for east or west coast terminals.

The 485 mile Northwestern run was scheduled to require only about nine hours with stops at Clinton and Boone for engine and crew changes. Cedar Rapids and Marshalltown were the only other regular stops. But mail was delivered and picked up at all stations along the line—ON THE FLY—by methods that were awesome.

The mail clerks were busy sorting mail throughout the whole trip. Sacks were loaded for each and every town and piled for "delivery" near one of the sliding doors. As the train neared State Center, for instance, the sacks for our town were placed in the doorway and at the proper time simply booted out by a clerk assigned to that duty. If the clerk's timing was good, the sacks would land on the platform with a good deal of momentum and roll to a stop somewhere in the target area. From a train travelling at 60 or 70 miles per hour that platform wasn't an easy bulls-eye to hit. Sometimes the platform would be burdened with freight so the clerk had to quickly locate another unloading area. As a result, the postmaster or his helper had to sometimes search along the sidetracks and even under the boxcars spotted there for the local mail delivery.

Most of the sacks were heavily loaded and constituted an extremely dangerous missile to any object, human or otherwise, that happened to be in the line of flight. A fast mail train speeding through town with dirt, dust and cinders flying through the air, contributed enough hazards but when those mail sacks were detrained in the manner described above—LOOK OUT!

However, I don't recall any mishaps or injuries to unwary spectators. Local residents were well aware of the regular arrival times of those FM's and stayed clear of the tracks and unloading areas at such times.

Rolls of daily and Sunday papers (the Chicago Sunday Tribune was a favorite in State Center) received even rougher treatment as they were launched into space without the protection of the heavy canvas sacks. As for parcel post, fast mail deliveries, even though they were sacked, could hardly escape some damage.

Mail pick up by the FM's was accomplished with a little more finesse. Outgoing first class mail to be picked up by these trains at the smaller towns was usually of limited quantity—easily contained in one mail sack. Heavier and bulky mail was dispatched on the local passenger trains.

Every town had at either end of the platform, a specially designed "F" shaped scaffold-like structure. They were located in full view of approaching trains and at exactly the correct distance from the outside rails to insure positive pick-up by the "hook". The mail sack was pinched into an hour glass shape by a strap around the middle and then suspended from the upper arm of the scaffold and the lower end of the sack secured to the lower arm. Light twine was used to fasten the sack in place. It was the duty of the postmaster to hang the sacks for "snatching" by the two daily fast mail trains.

One of the railway mail clerks, other than those engaged in the aforementioned jet propulsion mail deliveries, had the duty of hooking the sack. The procedure was simple and sure. The grabber hook, mounted on the side of the car at one of the doors, was swung out in a horizontal posi-

tion as the suspended mail sack showed up down the track—the hook did the rest, grabbing the pick-up securely for a quick retrieve into the car. The whole operation, neatly executed from the speeding train, was over in a flash and the clerk was back at his sorting duties without further ado.

I recall watching with awe and wonderment as that wicked looking hook, seemingly without human control, suddenly appeared from the side of the car to snatch the sack from its moorings. You had to watch closely or you would miss the instantaneous disappearing act entirely. I'm sure Dad was called upon frequently for an explanation of "How did they do it?".

The fast mail pick-up and delivery plus the many passenger trains that regularly carried mail were largely responsible for the very satisfactory mail service enjoyed in those days. And at three cents for letters and a penny for postcards—the price was right, too.

Of course, there were times, particularly at Christmastime, when the volume of mail increased to many times the normal load and the service suffered a seasonal slow down. At those times the train schedules suffered, too. The FM trains with their non-stop schedules maintained their normal service but the other mail carrying trains struggled with long delays required to load and unload mail while the travelling public waited and fumed.

The long strings of man-powered four wheel trucks at every station loaded with sacks and more sacks of holiday mail. It must have been a discouraging sight to the train crews, already away behind schedule, knowing that all succeeding station platforms would present the same picture. The railroad postal clerks and the local handlers worked feverishly with the overflow load while the engine and train crews frequently took meaningful readings of their watches.

The generally satisfactory mail service (except for the Christmas rush) was to continue until the competition from automobiles and trucks began to be felt. Lack of passenger patronage resulted in more and more train cancellations and the mail service suffered accordingly, until finally the federal postal department began wholesale cancellations of mail contracts.

THE WAY FREIGHTS

Only we oldsters remember the lowly way freights that gave way to every other kind of train on the line, and when not busy getting out of the way, peddled local freight to every station, large and small. In the early days of railroading ALL freight trains made local stops. But after the fast through freights started operating, local switching and peddling was relegated to the daily way freights. In a material way they constituted the life line between all towns such as State Center and the outside world.

Those were the days when the general merchandise stores, the grocery stores, meat markets, druggists, hardware and farm stores and every other mercantile operation bought from the many wholesale houses usually not too far from home. Marshalltown, for instance, had no less than three grocery wholesalers and one or two fruit middle men.

Traveling salesmen made regular weekly or semi-weekly calls to write up orders from the retailers' want lists and try to sell something new from the growing assortment of amazingly different and up-to-date products just coming on the market. In a relatively short time the merchandise would be delivered by the "daily except Sunday" way freight. It was the ONLY type of freight transportation available to cities and towns alike.

The way freights operated over comparatively short distances because they spent so much time at each station and the service was limited to daylight hours only. On the C & N W main line the runs were probably no more than a hundred miles long—the State Center runs operated between Tama or Belle Plaine on the east and Boone to the west. The trains, quite short, were made up of general merchandise cars containing goods of all sorts and descriptions to be peddled along the way and cars of coal, lumber and other full carloads of commodities to be set out on the local sidings. As the train moved along its route it constantly added to its mixed "baggage" an assortment of empties and newly loaded cars from those same sidings.

At every stop, the head end brakeman and the engine crew would spot the merchandise cars at the depot loading platform and proceed with their switching chores. This shuttling of cars back and forth consumed quite a lot of time.

While all that was going on, the conductor and the other brakeman assisted by the local agent and his helper, if any, would be very busy unloading from the boxcars a wide assortment of crates, boxes, barrels and many other types of containers consigned to the State Center business houses. The many shipments might be unloaded from as many as a half dozen different cars and deposited on the platform in a mixed jumble of goods that often stretched from one end of the platform to the other. The day's deliveries might include, for the grocers, cases of canned goods, bunches of bananas encased in the peculiar type of crating, barrels or kegs of pickles and pickled herring, cartons of crackers, breakfast foods and cookies, sacks of coffee, sugar and flour. And for the hardware merchant there would be, among other things, machine parts, home appliances, and machinery repairs bundled together with bailing wire; boxes of patent medicines and notions for the druggist; and a host of other consignments, even some ordered from Sears Roebuck and Marshall Field mail order houses by local residents.

The train crew was only interested in the unloading, checking the consignments against the accompanying way bills, and getting the train on the way again. The sorting of the merchandise would come later.

Way freight chores were always seriously complicated by rainy days and by those frequent winter days when bitter cold with blowing snow prevailed. The depot platforms were very much exposed to the hazards of the weather.

Finally, there was the loading into one of the cars the outgoing freight, if any—the car doors were closed and sealed using the soft metal devices still in use today—and the "move-out" signal passed on to the engineer. His answering two short whistle blasts told all those in ear shot that the

way freight's visit was over for another day. As a final flourish, the brakeman and conductor gracefully swung aboard the caboose with the greatest of ease that told of years of experience at their trade.

This way freight show was a two-a-day performance—one eastbound and one westbound. Fortunately for the busy agent, the two trains seldom arrived at our town at the same time. When it did happen there was considerable confusion and delay, particularly in the switching operations.

Following the train's departure, the draymen moved in with their horse drawn flat bed wagons. They had the daily job of hauling the freight to the various businesses with whom they had contracted to perform this service, but first there was the chore of sorting and determining what went where and applying the correct way bill to each consignment. To ease the carry from the south platform they often, when possible, drove the wagons right down the side track between the platform and the rear of the stores. For some of the more spirited horses this was entirely too close to any non-stop trains that might happen to come zipping through with whistles screaming and the teamsters would be hard pressed to calm the nerves of their charges.

The draymen's contracts called for delivery of freight, rain or shine, to the side or back doors of the stores where it was checked in against the way bills (way freight-to-door delivery about 1900). I was quite young at the time but I recall the excitement of gaining permission to help the draymen deliver freight. Sometimes there was the added thrill of driving the team up and down the alleys. It wasn't really work—it was fun. Just being around where the way freight had been gave the payless job a great deal of related excitement to this budding buff. Along with other railroad oriented youngsters we saved the usually congenial drayman quite a few steps but probably caused him some annoyance, too, by unloading some items at the wrong place. What a thrill it was to lug some small item of freight into Dad's store, one of the ports-of-call on the drayman's route. That particular delivery might merit a small fistful of jelly beans or a licorice stick.

In the wintertime, bob sleds took over for the wagon, a move that provided the draymen's helpers with much fun. "Hopping bobs" was one of our favorite wintertime sports, even though some drivers were dead set against kids riding the runners. A few even resorted to a whip at times to enforce their stay-off orders. We soon learned to avoid these non-cooperative drivers.

But to get back to the depot—the draymen's job was never done for the day until both platforms were cleared. If either or both way freights were late, the draymen's work day might extend into the hours of darkness, especially if it happened during the fall or winter.

Any consignments for individuals not on the "store door delivery" list would be moved over to the depot baggage room by the agent to await pick up by the consignee.

THE FAST TIME FREIGHTS

Local freight service was common on all branch and main line railways right from the start of railroading. In fact, it was essential to the all-out

service rendered to cities, towns and villages and, for a few years, ALL freights were locals. Some of them trailed a passenger coach instead of a caboose for local travellers thus qualifying as "Combines" or "Mixed Trains". Some of the trains on the Iowa Central's State Center and Story City branches were of this type. Travelling salesmen frequently rode the trailer coach or the caboose for short hops, making their calls while the train crew performed their switching and unloading chores.

Then, as volume of carload shipping increased and shippers demanded faster long haul service, the railroads responded by scheduling main line THROUGH FREIGHTS or TIME FREIGHTS with only a few intermediate stops. On the branch lines such trains were put together only when sufficient long haul volume justified the service. They were referred to as "EXTRAS" that usually carried two white flags on the front of the engine.

On the Northwestern through State Center those fast freights, by 1900, had become more and more numerous. Much of this increased volume, at least as far as eastbound trains were concerned, was due to the extra large share of exchange traffic enjoyed with the Union Pacific at Omaha. Many solid trains of perishables and other west coast commodities were switched over to the C & N W, engines and crews exchanged, and the long strings of loaded cars sent on their almost non-stop way to Chicago. Typical of this service that stopped only at Boone and Clinton for engine and crew changes were the many Pacific Fruit Express trains of all-alike yellow refrigerator cars, called "REEFERS". In the summer these trains had to stop a few times, on their way east, for re-icing at yards where special trackside facilities provided the means for refilling the bunkers with large chunks of ice. Today's long haul reefer trains are modernized with mechanical refrigeration—no more re-icing delays and another feature facility of many railroad yards disappeared from the scene.

Westbound fast freights were equally as numerous. They, too, were made up of a good proportion of long haul carload freight exchanged with other railroads that fed traffic into Chicago.

All of these trains operated at or near passenger train speeds on daily schedules or as extras. They were powered by massive freight locomotives of ever increasing size which in turn made it possible to haul longer and longer trains.

One noticeable consequence of the increased frequency of railway traffic in State Center was the noise factor. It was a condition to be lived with in our town as well as in many others where the busy double track line ran right through the center of town. In this era of railroading there was almost a constant procession of fast freights and passenger trains too, speeding through town at all hours of the day and night. The sounds of laboring locomotives, screeching whistles and the ever present clickety-clack of the trailing cars must have been startling, to say the least, to strangers in town. It seemed at times that the trackside buildings themselves trembled with each passing train.

But to our family and to others living and conducting businesses only a block or less away from the tracks, it was just an everyday noise hazard to which we had long since become accustomed. I don't recall that

we lost any sleep as a result of train noise and our home didn't succumb to the trembling.

VI

THE BOOM YEARS— WORLD WAR I YEARS— SIGNS OF TROUBLE

THE BOOM YEARS

The era around the turn of the century could quite properly be called the high tide of railroading, particularly in the states west of the Mississippi River. Since the crossing of that river barrier, the transportation industry had been monopolized almost completely by the many railroads that now reached out with networks of trackage to every state all the way to the Pacific Ocean. In the absence of other means of transportation and because of the huge growth in population and the expanding economy in the west, the railway companies prospered mightily and waxed rich in the process. Many promoters and executives emerged as millionaires during the boom era. Some of the more successful companies used the build-up of their enormous earnings surplus to build mighty holdings of real estate and industrial interests that were only loosely related to the transportation field.

However, their business of transporting people, mail, express, and freight was not neglected during these decades at least. Vast sums of money were spent on improving and maintaining trackage—steadily bettering the quality of service with the latest developments in equipment—and reaching out to serve new industries and new communities.

This was an era of high frequency passenger service both local and long haul—of good mail service—of convenient daily way freight service—of ever increasing numbers of fast freights—and of courteous and cooperative service from all railway employees in their contacts with the travelling and shipping public.

All of these "boom years plusses" were indeed as true of the railroads operating in central Iowa as they were everywhere else. The Northwestern, the Iowa Central, the Great Western, and the Milwaukee as well as the many other lines operating in Iowa all continued to provide entirely adequate and dependable service to their patrons.

WORLD WAR I YEARS

In the midst of this railroad prosperity a war of world wide proportions burst on the scene to tax the resources of the railways all across the nation. Through 1917 to 1919 there was much need for every available

passenger coach to carry service men to training camps all over the country and to points of embarkation on the east coast. Long troop train specials were common sights.

Likewise, freight cars of all description, many of ancient vintage, were put into service to carry munitions of war, personnel supplies and foodstuffs to those same ports for shipment to Europe. It was an all out effort that doubled and tripled the traffic over the rails in every part of the country, most all of it eastbound to the Atlantic.

Regular freight service was subject to many delays, particularly on single track railroads where the extras always had the right of way. Through passenger trains were overloaded with the large numbers of Army and Navy personnel in transit to camps and training centers. Standing room was even at a premium on many trains.

World War I was, of course, a great boon to the already prosperous railroads. Practically every line, large and small, had a part in the increased activity which lasted well into 1919 when traffic gradually returned to normal. Those companies serving the middle west and particularly the state of Iowa, all had a prominent part in the all-out war effort.

In the meantime, trouble had been brewing for the railroads and their long standing stranglehold on transportation. The age of automotive power—automobiles and trucks—was at hand.

SIGNS OF TROUBLE

Even before the busy war years of 1917-18, signs of competitive trouble for the railroads began to appear. The horseless carriages and the many models of the early motor cars had made the scene in the early 1900's but were not taken too seriously by the public nor by the railroads. They broke down frequently, were designed for short distance pleasure rides, and most important of all, were not built to cope with the dirt roads of that time—roads that quickly became slippery with only a brief shower, impassable after a day long rain, and totally impossible in the wintertime.

But the Buicks, the Oldsmobiles, the Reos, the Chandlers, the Dodges and a host of other brands of automobiles continued to increase in numbers. And they all gradually improved in dependability and in adaptation to the changes in weather and to variations in road conditions. Acceptance on the part of the public was slow at first—there was widespread predictions that "they would never replace the horse and buggy".

And then about 1910 Henry Ford started mass producing the now famous MODEL T FORD with the avowed purpose of "putting the country on wheels". At a price of about $500 or less he gave the automobile its first great boost into nation-wide popularity. The number of cars in use began to grow dramatically and the railroads at last started to pay some serious attention to this new mode of transportation. There were only minor dents in the railroads' control of passenger traffic during those first

two decades of the new century, but the handwriting was on the wall.

Weather was the principal retardant to the growth of automobile travel. Winter actually put the cars up on blocks in the owners' barns, garages or sheds to take the weight off the tires and the radiator was drained to prevent freezing—all standard procedures with the first frost in the fall. There was no way those early cars could negotiate the ice and snows of Iowa's winters—they were indeed fair weather vehicles.

In the spring those well publicized Iowa dirt roads would become treacherous mud roads for a month or more, after which clouds of dust followed the passage of every car. Throughout the summer the motorist had frequent thunderstorms and prolonged rainy spells to contend with, all of which made auto travel hazardous and often next to impossible. Those early cars had only detachable side curtains to keep out the weather.

Many of the roads paralleled the railroad tracks. In fair weather train crews could witness the growing volume of automobiles that was eating away at their passenger traffic but there were other days when they noted, with some degree of glee, the motorists in trouble—stuck in the mud or stalled for one reason or another.

There was another drawback to motor trips of any distance—there were no marked highways and, of course, no road maps. The first main thoroughfare to be marked was the Lincoln Highway that paralleled pretty closely the Northwestern Railroad across Iowa, right down the main streets of most of the towns and cities, including Marshalltown and State Center. The marking consisted of red, white and blue stripes painted on roadside telephone poles with a large letter "L" overpainted on the stripes. The designation appeared on poles about a mile apart—more frequent in the towns. This route, so designated in the very early days of the motor car, later became U.S. Highway 30.

Another early "name road" was the Jefferson Highway that was publicized as being marked from New Orleans to Winnipeg but never quite lived up to that complete routing. It followed a near north-south route through the center of Iowa to Mason City, Minneapolis and north, quite generally the present route of U.S. Highway 65.

My very first trip to Minnesota's lake region was over this highway (until we ran out of "JH" marked poles) in 1916. Our promoter and the man in charge was my uncle, Dr. Whitehill of Boone, Iowa, and our transportation was a large Chandler touring car. Gravel roads made the going easier in Minnesota but still it took us four days to reach Ten Mile Lake near Hackensack—total mileage less than 500 miles. We could have made the same trip in 24 hours by train but would have had to overload the baggage car to handle all of our clothes and gear.

At Brainerd we ran out of "JH's" and finished the last 50 miles on a single lane logging road through the north woods from which there wasn't the least possibility of getting lost. The same trip by car today would require less than a day.

VII

PROBLEMS OF THE TWENTIES—THE FATE OF THE G AND M—THE STORY CITY BRANCH—MAIN LINE TRAFFIC—THE DEPRESSION YEARS—NAME TRAINS—ACROSS IOWA—A BIT OF REMINISCING—THE STREAMLINERS—BACK IN IOWA—WORLD WAR II DAYS—CENTRAL IOWA SERVICE

PROBLEMS OF THE TWENTIES

The years from 1920 to 1950 witnessed violent ups and downs in the nation's overall economy. There was the stock market crash in 1929 and the country's worst depression ever in the 30's followed by a slow but sure recovery. World War II involved the nation in 1941, stimulating a tremendous upturn in the economy that was largely attributed to the war effort. With the end of the war came a mild recession and a subsequent leveling off to generally stable business conditions.

The railroads experienced much of this erratic pattern of boom and bust. But unlike the nation's overall up and down experience, the trend of the railroad economy, even though stimulated temporarily by the war efforts, continued over the years to lose ground to its persistent competitors, the automobiles, trucks and buses. Henry Ford's avowed intention was coming true—transportation was rapidly shifting from the rails to the highway.

The reasons for the railway companies' fall from monopolistic control have been debated at great length. Some have claimed that the railroads' image and public relations suffered as a result of their long standing non-competitive position at "the head of the class" in transportation. The accommodating service so prevalent during the late 1800's and early 1900's gradually deteriorated; requests for aid and assistance went unanswered or were refused; and there was increasing indifference on the part of management to the needs of passengers and shippers alike.

As might have been expected, these attitudes were assumed by the lines' personnel—all the way down to the train crews who were in fact the companies' direct contacts with the public. People began to complain of a lack of common courtesy on the part of depot agents when asked for a bit of information. Conductors' normal congenial greetings, in some cases at least, gradually changed to an attitude of indifference to the patrons' interests.

The same changes were occurring in the relationship between shippers and freight personnel. The congenial cooperation of switching crews and the willingness of way freight handlers to be helpful were showing signs of collapse. It was a strange attitude to assume in the face of the growing competition of motor cars and buses, one that only aggravated the

problems of diminishing railroad traffic. To the public it seemed that the rail industry as a whole intended no compensatory measures designed to retain its once very profitable freight and passenger business.

From the railroads' viewpoint it probably appeared to them that the public was deliberately deserting the dependable rail services—which they, the railroads, had furnished for more than fifty years. Actually, it wasn't that their long time passenger and freight services had failed them—instead, it was simply the advent of a new convenient and intriguing mode of travel that was catching on very rapidly.

Iowa's extensive (probably considerably overbuilt) network of branch line railroads were among the first to feel the pinch of decreasing patronage. Most of them were short lines catering to local short haul passengers—the exact type of patron who, like as not, now owned his own auto and preferred the convenience of that vehicle for the short trip to the county seat or wherever.

Such lines would include the many short feeder or spur lines—all in the marginal category as far as profits were concerned. Hence there was little objection on the part of these patrons when a growing number of reductions in passenger service and some cancellations were ordered by management.

The local trains on the longer branch lines continued to operate profitably for a while longer, particularly during periods of bad roads such as winter and spring months. Iowa's roads, as indicated on preceding pages, from late fall to the end of spring rains were seldom passable for those early motor cars and trucks. It was during these times that the public continued to use the trains—bad weather was always a signal for a business upturn for the railroads. Even though these booms were brief and of infrequent occurrence, they perpetuated the branch line service for a time.

It would seem these times of up and down business trends could have been opportune periods for train personnel to practice some of the courteous service so prevalent in the past. It could have made a beneficial impression on at least some of their passengers. But no such change of attitude was evidenced.

Beginning about 1920 there was serious agitation to get Iowa "out of the mud" by paving and gravelling the principal highways. There was organized opposition at first but in time the movement for all-weather roads prevailed and by 1924 ribbons of concrete began to replace the old dirt roads in various locations throughout the state.

In 1925 and 1926 the Lincoln Highway (now Highway 30) was paved across Marshall County; in a few years, across the state; and in a relatively short time Iowa and other midwestern states had made good on the oft repeated threat to "get out of the mud".

Now automobile traffic increased by leaps and bounds—likewise, trucks and buses entered the picture in a big way. Those bad road bursts of business for the railroads gradually disappeared and the trend of train patronage moved rapidly downward.

The railroads' first branch line reaction to the threatening picture was more reduction in passenger service—a natural reaction perhaps, but one that did little to retain or regain lost patronage. Multiple daily ser-

vice became one-a-day local trains on all lines where passenger travel had shown a steady decline. The next cut was to "Mon.-Wed.-Fri." service—then they became "combines", a combination freight and passenger train with an irregular and non-dependable schedule. Finally, all passenger service was discontinued on a great many of the branches.

Such was the pretty well established pattern followed by almost all railroads. Freight trains continued to make the runs for a time, but the inroads of the new truck lines doomed this service as well and ultimately many of the marginal branches succumbed to complete abandonment and the wrecking crews.

Oddly enough, there was no great objection on the part of the public to the tearing up of the trackage in those days. Perhaps it was because of the great depression that gripped the country about that time or perhaps a feeling of indifference to the impending fate of their rail connection to the outside.

It could be that many of these communities had already profited by the new hard surfaced road system and no longer needed the less convenient train service.

Curtailment of passenger trains also meant a drop in the efficiency of the mail service and final cancellation of trains resulted in a switch to star route deliveries for local patrons. For the railroads it was a stunning loss of revenue—never to be regained.

THE FATE OF THE G & M

One of the old Iowa Central's branch lines (by now the M & St. L) to meet an early demise was the State Center end of the G & M that ran from Newburg on the main line. The official operating timetable for this 27 mile long feeder is shown to the right. Reproduced from the company's trainmen's booklet in effect as of May 28, 1922, it provides complete detailed information on the service rendered or at least intended—all subject to washouts, snowstorms, derailments, and other mishaps. On another page of the booklet, the speed limit for all (actually two) trains on the State Center branch is given as 20 MPH.

In 1925, only three years after the effective date of the above timetable, G & M service, as far as State Center was concerned, became a thing of the past. The tracks were torn up as far south as Van Cleve—the turn-around "Y" and the stockyards were moved to that community and for thirteen years a considerable volume of livestock moved out to market from this newly established terminal.

Back up the line at State Center, the site of the G & M depot and yards gradually lost all identity with the railroad. The property was sold and eventually became a modern athletic field, the "Home of the West Marshall Trojans". The only remaining evidence of G & M right-of-way is a few bits of well weathered bridge piling where the tracks crossed a small creek and entered the town near St. Joseph's Cemetery.

EASTERN DIVISION—Between G. & M. Jct. and Montezuma

EASTWARD SECOND CLASS 362 Ex. Sun. Passenger	EASTWARD SECOND CLASS 360 Ex. Sun. Mixed	Miles from St. Paul	Station Numbers	Car Capacity of Sidings	Car Capacity of Other Tracks	Time Table No. 18 Taking Effect Sunday May 28th, 1922 STATIONS	Telegraph Calls	Telegraph Stations	Coal, Water, Scales, Turn Table, Wye	WESTWARD SECOND CLASS 361 Ex. Sun. Passenger	WESTWARD SECOND CLASS 363 Ex. Sun. Mixed
P. M.-L	A. M.-L									A. M.-A	P. M.-A
s 7.15	s 10.35	272.2	E272	....	....	.G. & M. JUNCTION.	....	....	.....	s 7.45	s 4.25
						4.0					
s 7.30	s 10.55	276.2	M276	....	5	..JACOBS SWITCH..	....	....	.....	s 7.30	s 4.05
						3.0					
s 7.40	s 11.15	279.2	M279	....	15	.....EWART.....	AR	D	.....	s 7.20	s 3.50
						6.6					
8.00	11.40	285.8	M286	9	21	....MONTEZUMA....	Z	D	T	7.00	8.25
P. M.-A	A. M.-A									A. M.-L	P. M.-L
0.45	1.05					Running Time				0.45	1.00

Nos. 360 and 362 are superior by direction to Nos. 361 and 363.
WESTWARD TRAINS ARE SUPERIOR BY DIRECTION, EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE SPEC

EASTERN DIVISION—Between Newburg and State Center

EASTWARD 2nd Class 350 Ex. Sun. Mixed	Miles from St. Paul	Station Numbers	Car Capacity of Sidings	Car Capacity of Other Tracks	Time Table No. 18 Taking Effect Sunday May 28th, 1922 STATIONS	Telegraph Calls	Telegraph Stations	Coal, Water, Scales, Turn Table, Wye	WESTWARD 2nd Class 351 Ex. Sun. Mixed
A. M.-L									A. M.-A
351									350
11.45	289.0	L289	....	13	.....STATE CENTER.....	SC	D	W Y	11.20
					4.7				
s 12.01PM	284.3	L284	....	26	.....MALTA.....	.....	....	....	s 11.05
					2.3				
					C. G. W. CROSSING-INT'LKD				
					1.4				
s 12.15	280.3	L280	....	42	.....CAPRON.....	JO	D	....	s 10.50
					C.M. & ST. P. CROS.-INT'LKD				
					1.8				
s 12.25	278.5	L279	....	45	.....VAN CLEVE.....	CK	D	....	s 10.40
					6.8				
s 12.55	271.7	L272	....	37	.....LAUREL.....	AU	D	....	s 10.00
					9.3				
1.35	262.4	E262	49	28	.....NEWBURG.....	WR	D	W	9.25
P. M.-A									A. M.-L
1.50					Running Time				1.55

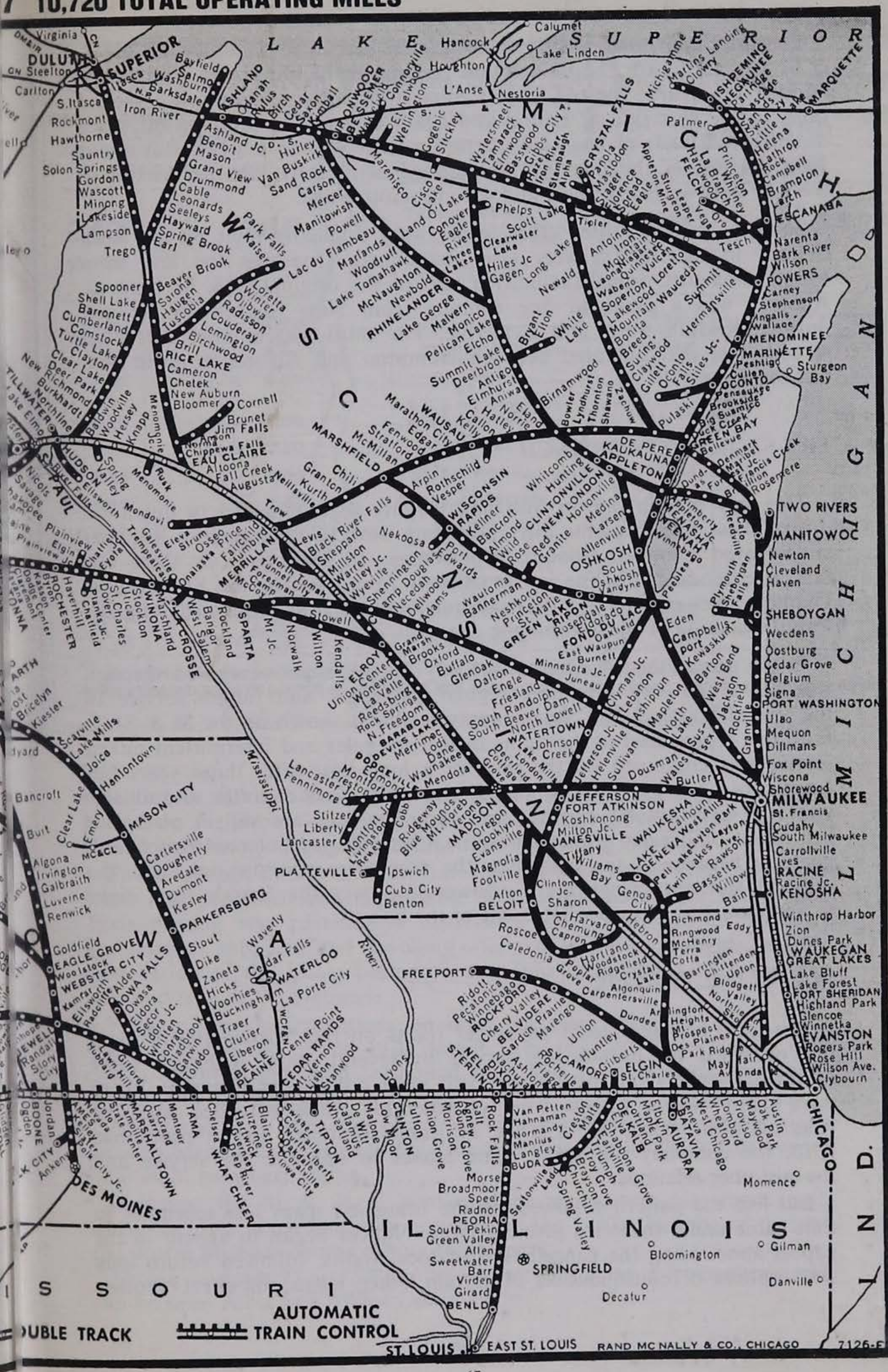
WESTWARD TRAINS ARE SUPERIOR BY DIRECTION. EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE SPEC

In 1938 the line was again shortened to terminate at Laurel and another stretch of track torn up, the grade levelled and the land sold back to the farm owners at prices commensurate with the prices paid by the railroad 50 years before. The old Van Cleve depot was purchased by Lawrence Nason, moved to his farm and used as a machine shed for many years. Mrs. Nason recalls when the "Y" and the stockyards were scenes of much activity as the G & M mixed train (officially No. 351) made its "daily except Sunday" appearance adjacent to their farm home. The loss of the railroad was a serious blow to Van Cleve—only a church and a scattering of residences remain today to mark the site of a once growing town.

ENTIRE SYSTEM APRIL 1

My May 1961 edition of THE OFFICIAL RAILROAD GUIDE (a gift from a fellow railroad buff, Ernest Sevde of Toledo, Iowa) contains a map of the entire Northwestern system with its thousands of miles of trackage in seven states. The reproduction reveals the tremendous extent of the coverage. The guide also lists all the C & N W lines still in existence as of June 1961 but for all those west of the Mississippi River there are no passenger timetables—just the blunt statement "Freight Service Only".

7 10,720 TOTAL OPERATING MILES



Elevators and other businesses at Laurel generated a somewhat greater flow of traffic for the branch and prolonged the life of the railroad for another few years. The old State Center stockyards were moved a second time, to the east side of Laurel and again became the jumping off place for many carloads of hogs and cattle on their way to market. But about 1940 the rest of the line was abandoned completely, another victim of the new hard surfaced roads and the automotive age.

Some years later, three other feeder lines originally built by the Iowa Central in the 1880's, were also abandoned. One was the line from Montezuma to Grinnell (actually a part of the original G & M branch). Another was a diagonal line running from New Sharon to Newton through Kilduff, Sully and Lynnville. The third was a large part of a 40 mile line that operated between Hampton and Algona in north central Iowa.

THE STORY CITY BRANCH

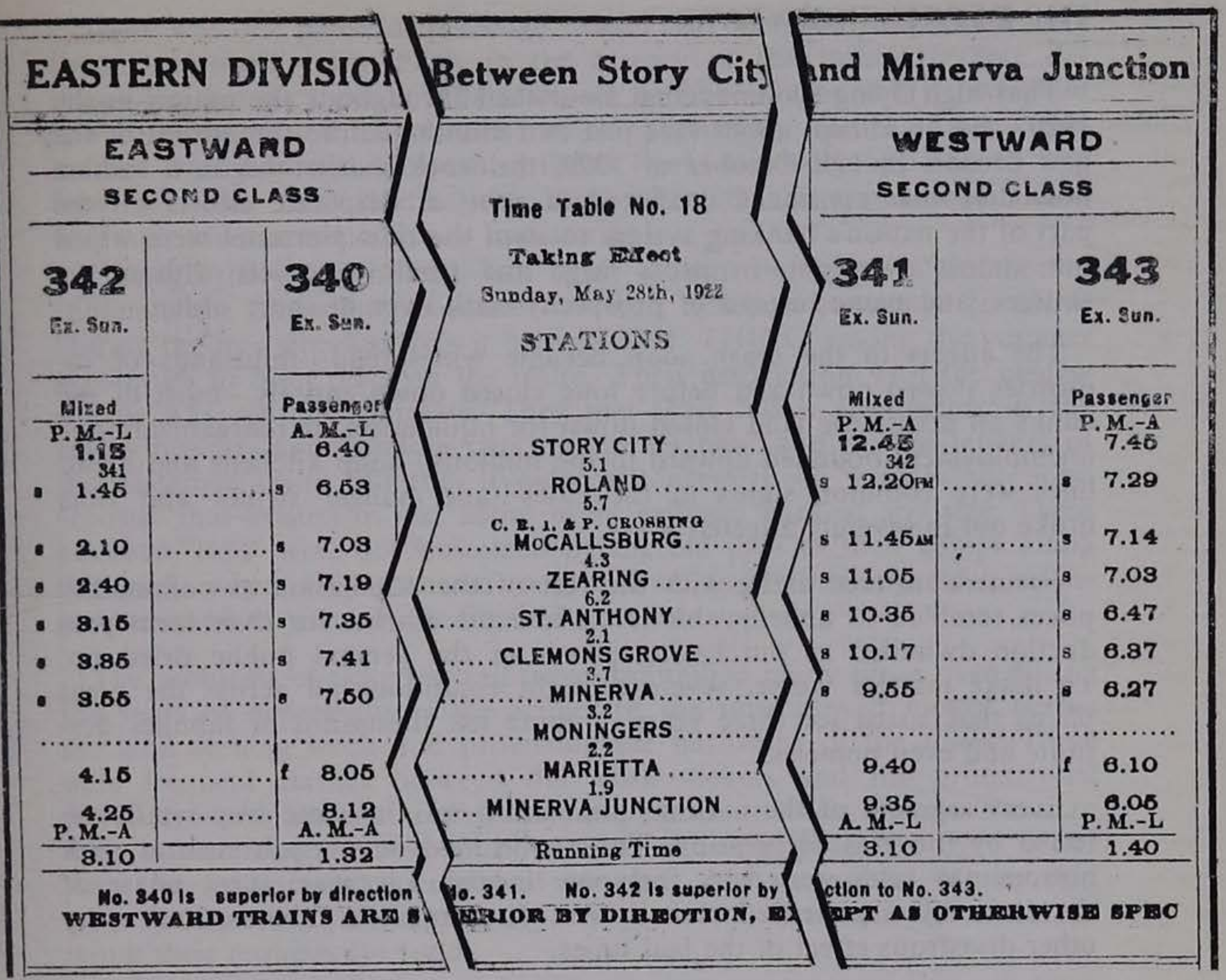
The only branch line in Marshall County that remained in operation during these years was the forty mile long Story City Branch, a line that still enjoyed a limited amount of patronage. In years gone by there was talk of extending this line into northwest Iowa even to the Spirit Lake-Okoboji lakes region. But that optimistic dream was expressed long before the coming of the automobile age.

In any event the Marshalltown-Story City branch weathered through the 1920's and 30's providing regular passenger and freight service to the several Marshall and Story county towns as shown on the M & St. L timetable reproduced to the right. In fact irregular and intermittent mixed service was continued on the line for a long time after those years but eventually it too experienced almost a complete loss of traffic and all service was discontinued several years ago. The rails are still in place but just about obliterated from view while a long drawn out controversy still goes on between a few shippers, the commerce commissions, and the railroad (present owner the Northwestern) over the latter's legal right to abandon and tear up what is left of the line.

MAIN LINE TRAFFIC

The local and semi-local passenger trains on the Northwestern's main line outlasted the branch line service by several years. Although some of the passengers on these trains still rode only short distances, there were many whose travels were considerably more extended and the runs of such trains, for a while at least, continued to be profitable. Also, the company did make some moves to improve the service and the customer relations.

But like the pattern followed on the branches, main line schedules in time came under the same pruning knife. Notices began to appear in the papers announcing the cancellation of local trains, followed before long with notices of consolidation of certain other trains, in effect another



EASTERN DIVISION Between Story City and Minerva Junction

EASTWARD — SECOND CLASS

Time Table No. 18
Taking Effect
Sunday, May 28th, 1922
STATIONS

342 Ex. Sun.		340 Ex. Sun.
Mixed		Passenger
P. M.-L		A. M.-L
1.15	.....	6.40
341		
s 1.45	.....	s 6.53
s 2.10	.....	s 7.03
s 2.40	.....	s 7.19
s 3.15	.....	s 7.35
s 3.35	.....	s 7.41
s 3.55	.....	s 7.50
.....	.....	.....
4.15	.....	f 8.05
4.25	.....	8.12
P. M.-A		A. M.-A
3.10		1.32

STORY CITY
5.1
ROLAND
5.7
C. R. I. & P. CROSSING
McCALLSBURG
4.3
ZEARING
6.2
ST. ANTHONY
2.1
CLEMONS GROVE
3.7
MINERVA
3.2
MONINGERS
2.2
MARIETTA
1.9
MINERVA JUNCTION

Running Time

No. 340 is superior by direction to No. 341. No. 342 is superior by direction to No. 343.
WESTWARD TRAINS ARE SUPERIOR BY DIRECTION, EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE SPEC

WESTWARD — SECOND CLASS

341 Ex. Sun.		343 Ex. Sun.
Mixed		Passenger
P. M.-A		P. M.-A
12.45	.....	7.45
342		
s 12.20PM	.....	s 7.29
s 11.45AM	.....	s 7.14
s 11.05	.....	s 7.03
s 10.35	.....	s 6.47
s 10.17	.....	s 6.37
s 9.55	.....	s 6.27
.....	.....	.....
9.40	.....	f 6.10
9.35	.....	6.05
A. M.-L		P. M.-L
3.10		1.40

reduction in service. Also, there was schedule change information to be posted on the depot bulletin boards. All of the above moves were intended as economy changes to compensate for loss of business.

The first main line C & N W trains to go were those same early day locals that provided such dependable service for more than fifty years. Their passing was particularly distressing to regular patrons such as businessmen, shoppers, and travelling salesmen. It is even probable that the cancellation of the locals prompted even more "regulars" to desert the rails and take to the highways.

Passenger service reductions on lines operating through central Iowa began near the end of the 1920 decade. The loss left State Center with only a morning and noon eastbound train and a single westbound semi-local late in the afternoon.

About the same time the Great Western eliminated its evening locals through Marshalltown leaving only the two morning locals and two semi-local night passenger trains.

However, the M & St. L continued its six-trains-a-day north-south schedules for a much longer time even into the 1940's, in spite of the ups and downs of the economy during those years.

Shown on pages 77 and 78 are the complete M & St. L passenger schedules between Albia and Albert Lea in 1922.

That high flying economy that flourished throughout the nation in the 1920's did an abrupt about face just two months before the advent of the new decade. In late October of 1929, the stock market began a sudden nose dive that continued unabated in spite of desperate efforts on the part of the nation's banking system to stem the tide. Fortunes were wiped out almost overnight, investors large and small were left without resources, and panic instead of prosperity took over in short order.

The effects of the crash soon became widespread—thousands of industries slowed down and before long closed down entirely—most of the banks all across the land closed down for liquidation or reorganization—unemployment bounded upward to the millions—soup kitchens and bread lines were common sights in the cities—and hunger strikes and riots broke out in severely affected areas.

Farmers suffered along with the rest of the population as commodity prices tumbled to unbelievable levels and the market for their farm production dwindled as purchasing power of the general public dried up. To make matters worse, severe drought conditions all across the great plains that lasted for three years or more left thousands of families destitute and even homeless.

Every segment of the nation's population was in some way vitally affected by the great depression. Those who held onto a job even at rock bottom pay rates were very fortunate indeed. Likewise, every phase of the economy experienced shut downs, bankruptcies, failures, and every other disastrous effect of the bad times.

The railroad industry, already beset with a life and death battle for its passenger business and an emerging competitive struggle with the trucks for its freight traffic, now faced a third even more serious problem—the rapidly declining economy in general. Both freight and passenger business fell off at an alarming rate in 1930 and 1931. As a result, all lines were forced to make even more drastic cuts in services that had already been sliced to meet automotive competition. Cutbacks and lay-offs affected all forms of railroad employment—train crews, yard workers, clerical help, even the local section crews that had done such a good job of maintaining the millions of miles of trackage across the land. Permanent (at least for the "duration") cancellations of passenger trains were announced daily, the freight trains operated as ever shorter versions of past editions, and grass grew between the rails of little used switch yard trackage.

Many railroads, even some of those with extensive networks, failed to weather these trying years. By 1932 and 1933 the reports of bankruptcies among hard hit rail lines began to make the headlines in the newspapers. But only a very few actually ceased operation—the industry was too vital to the nation to permit any of them to go out of business. Somehow financial assistance was arranged for the bankrupt companies and they continued to operate under receiverships for a number of years or until the economy returned to normal.

There was one phase of passenger travel that increased mightily during these depression years. Early in the history of the railroads there developed a classification of riders known as hoboes (for short, just plain "Bo's"), tramps and many other uncomplimentary names. These freeloaders were addicted to travel (always free), decidedly opposed to any form of work, their destinations were wherever the trains took them, and their rail accommodations immaterial.

Through the years the railroads made a sometimes serious attempt to eliminate the free riding clientele but their numbers continued to grow. During the free wheeling 20's it became THE THING among the younger generation to bum rides on the trains. Their association with the professionals was not too intimate. They met their fellow freeloaders in the empty boxcars and gondola cars, in the "blinds" and on the tenders of the passenger trains but they avoided the network of "jungles" or hobo "roosts" that existed in just about every railroad yard of any size. These amateur "Bo's" were not welcomed by the old pros at their camps along the tracks where they gathered to contribute to the makings of a mulligan stew and to share in the finished product.

The problems of ticketless rail travel multiplied many times over during the years of depression as the armies of the unemployed moved across the land seeking work and protesting the hardships of the times. There were frequent clashes between the work seekers and the professional work avoiders, but, as a rule, the latter stuck to their "jungles" and to their panhandling for handouts and in so doing, probably lived better than the temporarily unemployed travelers. Most members of the clan were so disreputable looking that housewives were actually afraid to refuse their requests for food.

Before the depression years, hardly a freight train passed through town without a few "knights of the road" in their rag tag clothes, appearing in the doors of empty boxcars. Now they were joined by dozens of slightly better dressed, down on their luck, out of work individuals. When cold weather came to the middle west, the freeloaders of both classes moved south with the birds to warmer living conditions. These were signs of the times.

The Roosevelt New Deal administration came into office in March of 1933 and immediately instituted a fulfillment of campaign promises to alleviate existing conditions. While the remedies smacked of socialistic tendencies, they did produce almost immediate evidence of better days ahead.

Banks reopened to provide limited financing for business recovery and the administration began to crank out numerous commissions and emergency agencies to relieve the unemployment situation. Included were the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps), the AAA (Agricultural Adjustment Administration), the WPA (Workmen's Productive Administration), the NRA (National Recovery Administration) and a host of others. It was the beginning of the "INITIALS" vogue that has gained popularity in the abbreviated designation of government agencies as well as corporation names. In any event, the remedies proved successful to the extent that by 1935 the nation had started on the road back.

At this point in the depression, railroad service across Iowa and the nation had been reduced to a minimum. Most branch line passenger trains were gone and freight service cut to infrequent way freights. However, in the midwest there still remained the main line semi-local and fast long haul passenger trains as well as some fast through freights. These trains formed the nucleus for a slow but sure recovery in the rail travel during the last half of the 30's.

The impetus for better business on the rails came from the steady recovery in the economy, also from a growing demand for faster and more comfortable train travel, in other words, a change in the emphasis from local service to luxury long haul service. The railroads responded in several ways.

Schedules of the semi-locals were revised to eliminate some of the stops, thus shortening the elapsed travel time between terminals. But more important was the increase in the number of fast luxury trains between the west coast and Chicago. All the major western railroads, including the Northwestern, joined in this competition for this long haul business. As the economy improved, California, the Southwest, and Florida became meccas for winter visitors—the railroads profited accordingly.

THE NAME TRAINS

It was during this period of intense rivalry for the long haul business that the "NAME" trains came into the picture. At first every new addition to the passenger service was a "FLYER", an "EXPRESS", or a "LUXURY TRAIN", all implying a faster schedule. Then followed a whole galaxy of names that were supposedly indicative of grandeur, luxury and prestige along with updated equipment and much improved service from train crews and attendants.

Who can forget the prestigious TWENTIETH CENTURY LIMITED (familiarly known as the CENTURY) of the New York Central lines; the Illinois Central's PANAMA LIMITED; those famous Santa Fe CHIEF west coast trains; the Rock Island's GOLDEN STATE LIMITED to the Southwest and California; or the DIXIE FLYER and the FLORIDIAN from Chicago to Florida. Three railroads competed for the Chicago to the Pacific Northwest business—the Great Northern with its EMPIRE BUILDER; the Northern Pacific had its NORTH COAST LIMITED; and the Milwaukee Road boasted of its fine fleet of HIAWATHA luxury trains.

ACROSS IOWA

The first transcontinental line, a combined effort of the Northwestern, Union Pacific and Southern Pacific, maintained its position of leadership in this hotly contested competition for the west coast traffic. Their fleet of "Overland Route" super trains such as the LOS ANGELES LIMITED, the PORTLAND ROSE, the OVERLAND LIMITED to San Francisco and several others featured the very latest in equipment including comfortable new reclining chair cars, pullmans, diners and club cars.

Most all of the "Overland" name trains departed from Chicago in the evening and their eastbound counterparts arrived at that terminus during the morning. They all passed through Marshalltown and State Center with only a warning salute from the engineer's whistle, a far reaching headlight probing the darkness, and finally a blur of lights as the string of cars sped through town.

For most of the "top of the line" trains, there were only two regular stops between Chicago and Council Bluffs—at Clinton and Boone, both were division points where locomotives and crews were changed in the least possible time. Passengers from intermediate points in central Iowa who wanted to board these trains for Omaha and beyond, had to ride an earlier train to Boone and wait for the super train. Through the years some of the larger towns (Marshalltown included) were designated as flag stops for passengers arriving from or departing for west coast points. But such irregular stops were minimized as much as possible by the railroads—the trains were on very tight schedules and too many stops resulted in late arrivals. Also, to stop and start these heavy trains was an expensive operation. So it was considered a recognition of influence to be accorded the courtesy of a stop to detrain from the Los Angeles Limited, for example.

Speed of passenger travel steadily increased as the railroads made every effort to shorten the elapsed time enroute—sure evidence that they had given up on the local traffic and were out to hang onto the more profitable long haul business. The Northwestern's midwest advertising emphasized such claims as "Only 40½ hours to Portland via C & N W and U P" or "New Faster Service—only 39 hours—on the Los Angeles Limited". It was an achievement of note when a competing railroad was able to pare another fifteen minutes or half hour from its existing schedules.

To accomplish these faster schedules and maintain "on time" service required a return to full time maintenance of tracks and roadbed. Section crews, idled for several years by the depression, were called back and in many cases enlarged to get the neglected rights of way back in good condition as soon as possible.

Also, more speed called for more power. So the locomotives built for passenger service increased in size and power as the trains became longer and heavier. By the late 30's, the engines that pulled the better C & N W trains through central Iowa had grown to tremendous proportions—actually awesome to look at.

A BIT OF REMINISCING

It was about this time (I was now married, living in Marshalltown and the father of three youngsters) when our family was growing up that we used to drive down to the depot quite often in the late afternoon to see No. 13, the Continental Limited, pull into the station. I suppose it was a toss-up as to which of us, the youngsters, their mother Adaline, or this dyed-in-the-wool railroad buff, got the biggest kick out of the "see-the-train-come-in" trips. We weren't the only lookers—there would always be a half dozen or more other family car loads parked just west of the

depot where the huge locomotive came to a stop with an audible sigh of relief in anticipation of a few minutes rest.

Both engine men would be out of the cab immediately—the fireman to climb onto the tender, pull the water spout around in position and unloose a torrent of water into the tank; while the engineer, usually a veteran of many years service, started around his power plant on wheels, inserting his long snouted oil can in all the important points of lubrication and making a quick check of this and that. He followed the same routine every time. As he stood beside the big drivers, considerably taller than the man himself, the enormity of old 13's locomotive came into clearer focus.

By the time the men were back in their cab, the loading and unloading of passengers, mail and express would be about completed and the conductor would pass along his hand signal and call out his own personal rendition of A-L-L A-B-O-A-R-D. Now we watched as the engineer (on our side of the train) went to work.

He first released the air brakes and then expertly eased back on the throttle—too much all at once only resulted in spinning the monster's wheels. If the load was heavy, usually the case with No. 13, those first applications of power merely took up the slack between cars and the train got nowhere. Next the engineer put his charge in reverse and backed up until all the slack was eliminated, then again moved forward with just a little more power and perhaps some sand on the rails. Sometimes it took three or four tries but eventually all-out power and a skilled hand at the throttle won out and the long string of perhaps twenty cars slowly began to roll.

Meanwhile, the many passengers were experiencing the usual series of jerks and jolts that accompanied the false starts. Veteran travellers could just about tell which start would be successful and would breathe a sigh of relief when a look out the window showed continued movement. The hard working engineer must have heaved even a greater sigh as his efforts to get moving finally paid off.

This jockeying back and forth was usually a case of inadequate starting power for the weight and length of the train. It was a common occurrence on both freight and passenger service but one which was entirely eliminated with the change over to diesel power in the forties and fifties.

Back in our ring side seats, all the youngsters with their papas and mamas joined in to lend moral support to the big old engine, recalling and reciting the oft repeated legend of No. 13's tiny counterpart that puffed out the rhythmic "I THINK I CAN - I THINK I CAN - I THINK I CAN". And then we watched the long parade of cars pass in review as the train gained speed. First came the mail cars, then the express and baggage cars, coaches, and pullman cars and finally the brightly lighted dining and parlor cars. They were the ones that symbolized the luxury and comfort of these super trains.

I'm sure all of us parents, viewing the passing show of elegance, wished for the day when we, too, could enjoy a ride on a train of this class. Little did we realize that in only a relatively few short years they would be relegated to the pages of railroad history and the streamliners of another era would take their place.

THE STREAMLINERS

With the improvement in the economy and the slow but sure emergence from the depression in the middle 30's came some notable developments in the railroad industry. All the main line and most of the branch line locals had been cancelled, never to return, and all of the larger railroads had as we have seen, switched to a strong emphasis on the long haul trains with increased speed, improved equipment and luxury service. In keeping with that new trend, the all new streamliners took to the rails. It was the beginning of a final all-out effort of the major lines to maintain their dominant position in the cross country passenger business. It should be noted that it was about this time that air travel began to pose a further threat to the railroads.

At the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago in 1935, the first diesel powered streamliner to operate over the western lines was introduced to the public—it was the original Burlington Zephyr which on its maiden trip between Chicago and Denver set a new elapsed time speed record. The Zephyr embodied a completely new concept in passenger train design from its all new diesel engine to the streamlined parlor car at the tail end—a low profile, lightweight, integral design to give the impression of a solid train instead of a combination of many cars of all kinds. I was in attendance at the Exposition and had the exciting experience (along with many thousands of others) of walking through and examining the entire train. It was to be the "Train of Tomorrow"—replete with all the symbols of luxury and comfort and I'm sure I made a silent wish or two that someday I might luxuriate in some of that comfort.

The Denver Zephyr was followed only a year or so later by the first of the Union Pacific's streamliners—the CITY of DENVER that, like all U P trains, operated over the Northwestern between Chicago and Omaha. Its initial run was widely publicized—dignitaries were invited to enjoy the ride—probable times of viewing were sent out to all local media so the public could have a fleeting glimpse, and guards were posted at all grade crossings to protect the public from the speeding (in comparative silence) special train.

The publicity got the desired results. Large crowds of spectators went to the depot, to grade crossings and all vantage points to get a look. For sure, I was among the viewers. We were not disappointed but the look-see was very brief as the streamliner streaked in and out of view at speeds up to ninety miles per hour. Across the flatlands of Nebraska it was reported that the "Denver" attained speeds in excess of 100 MPH to break the record set by the new Burlington Zephyr.

The immediate success of these first streamliners prompted all railroads to get into the act of conversion to diesel power. Soon the manufacturers of locomotives and railroad equipment were swamped with orders and in time a whole new array of name trains of the streamlined variety would replace the old heavy steel trains of the previous decades.

The introduction and development of the diesel powered locomotive came at a most opportune time—a period when railroad management was desperately seeking economy and efficiency in operation. The amazing

efficiency of diesel power, compared to steam, was to prove to be a great "shot in the arm" for the beleaguered rails. Savings in fuel costs of up to fifty percent while developing almost twice as much horse power, plus the fact that diesels could travel much greater distances without stops for refueling and servicing, all were good reasons for the change over.

BACK IN IOWA

Across the country the economy had, by the end of the 1930 decade, returned pretty much to normal. Industry was operating at near capacity and employment was high; the drought conditions that had swept across the central plains had run its course and farms were back in production with new methods and equipment introduced to correct the errors of the past; and farmers and ranchers were realizing a more equitable return for their grain and livestock.

Even the railroad industry was showing strong signs of overcoming the losses resulting from the inroads of automotive competition and the ravages of the depression years. Elimination of many profitless passenger runs on both main and branch lines plus a continuing rather slow abandonment of non-profit lines all helped to cut down on the loss figure on annual balance sheets.

In Iowa there had been many changes during the 30's in railroad service. All local passenger trains on the Northwestern main line had been discontinued, leaving only the morning, noon, and evening semi-locals. All three stopped at State Center and Marshalltown but many other towns in Marshall County and across the state were left without passenger service of any kind. Of the several fast west coast trains, at least two stopped regularly at Marshalltown. Also, the speeding fast mail trains continued to zip over the rails all through the 1930's.

The M & St. L maintained the operation of its locals and the North Star Limited, using the same old open platform coaches (except the "Limited") that had been hauled back and forth through Marshalltown for more than fifty years. The mail contract and the express business probably produced more revenue than the passenger patronage. See Passenger timetables on following pages.

Freight traffic was skimpy all through the lean years of the early thirties but as the economy improved both the way freight and the time freight service returned to normal, on the main line at least. The Story City Branch continued freight service only—on an irregular schedule.

As reported on preceding pages, the M & St. L was one of the class "B" railroads to fall into receivership during the depression but there was never any interruption in the service. By the end of the 30's the receivership had been lifted and the seventy year old railroad steadily regained economic stability.

Marshalltown's other north-south railroad, the Chicago Great Western, weathered the automobile competition and the depression, but, in the process, did find it necessary to cut back on its service. Passenger schedules were cut in half, leaving two morning and two middle of the night trains between Minneapolis and Kansas City. Their schedules were slow and "20 minutes" to "3 hours late" postings were common reports on the depot bulletin board.

First District—EASTERN Division

Time Table No. 18

Taking Effect

Sunday, May 28th, 1922

STATIONS	WESTWARD FIRST CLASS			EASTWARD FIRST CLASS		
	5 Daily	1 Ex. Sun.	9 Ex. Sun	2 Ex. Sun.	10 Ex. Sun.	6 Daily
	North Star Limited	Day Express	Mason City Mail	Day Express	Peoria Accom.	North Star Limited
	A. M.-A	P. M.-A		P. M.-L		P. M.-L
ALBERT LEA	5.25	2.20	.....	12.30	.....	10.30
0.8	96					
CURTIS	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
6.1						
GLENVILLE	This time table is without force			anly and Albert Lea. For time		
4.7	of trains and rules governing s			time table of C. R. I. & P. and		
GORDONSVILLE	& St. L. Railroads.					
5.1						
NORTHWOOD	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
6.3						
KENSETT	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
4.8						
	A. M.-A	P. M.-A		P. M.-L		P. M.-L
MANLY		2		1-97		
C. G. W. CROS. INTERL'KED	s 4.35	s 1.15	.....	s 1.35	.....	s 11.20
5.1						
FREEMAN	.....	f 12.58		1.45		.....
4.0		97	P. M.-A	39	A. M.-L	
MASON CITY	4.15	s 12.50	9.25	2.00	5.00	s 11.40
1.0			94			
C. M. & ST. P. CROSSING						
MASON CITY JUNCTION	s 4.05	s 12.35	s 9.20	s 2.06	s 5.03	s 11.43
C. M. & ST. P. CROSSING						
1.6						
C. & N. W. CROS.-INT'D	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
2.5				33		
CAMERON	3.55	f 12.27	f 9.12	f 2.17	f 5.10	11.52 PM
6.7						
						95
ROCKWELL	3.44	s 12.15	s 8.59	s 2.30	s 5.23	12.03 AM
6.5						
SHEFFIELD	3.32	s 12.03 PM	s 8.45	s 2.43	s 5.35	12.14
4.1						
CHAPIN	3.24	s 11.53 AM	s 8.33	s 2.52	s 5.44	12.21
6.4						
C.G.W. CROS. INTERLOCKE						
HAMPTON	s 3.09	s 11.41	s 8.20	s 3.14	s 6.00	s 12.38
6.7						
GENEVA	2.54	s 11.20	s 8.00	3.28	s 6.12	12.48
4.8						
						94
FAULKNER	2.46	s 11.10	s 7.50	3.38	s 6.22	12.55
4.4		33				
ACKLEY	2.39	s 11.00	s 7.41	3.49	s 6.35	s 1.07
I. C. CROS. INTERL'KED						
4.5						
C. R. I. & P. RY. CROSSING						
ABBOTT CROSSING	2.30	s 10.48	s 7.31	s 3.58	s 6.44	1.16
0.6	94	32-96				
ABBOTT	2.29	s 10.45	s 7.29	s 4.00	s 6.46	1.17
6.8						
STEAMBOAT ROCK	2.18	s 10.28	s 7.15	4.17	s 7.00	1.31
3.7						
C. & N. W. RY. CROSSING						
0.6						
ELDORA	2.10	s 10.16	s 7.03	4.29	s 7.12	s 1.44
5.5						
C. & N. W. RY. CROSSING						
GIFFORD	6				97	5
3.7	s 1.57	s 10.02	s 6.51	s 4.41	s 7.26	1.57
UNION	1.49	s 9.51	s 6.44	s 4.50	s 7.35	2.03
5.0						
					33	
LISCOMB	1.41	s 9.40	s 6.33	s 5.03	s 7.46	2.13
5.5						
ALBION	1.33	s 9.28	s 6.21	5.16	s 7.57	2.28
3.1					340	
MINERVA JUNCTION	1.29	9.20	6.15	5.23	8.02	2.28
4.1						
C.N.W&C.G.W.CROS.-INT'LD		341	2-343	9-343		
MARSHALLTOWN	1.22	9.10	6.05	5.35	8.15	2.35
	A. M.-L	A. M.-L	P. M.-L	P. M.-A	A. M.-A	A. M.-A
Running Time	4.03	5.10	3.20	5.05	3.15	4.05

Second District—EASTERN DIVISION

Time Table No. 18

Taking Effect

Sunday, May 28th, 1922

STATIONS	WESTWARD FIRST CLASS 5 Daily North Star Limited	WESTWARD FIRST CLASS 1 Ex. Sun. Day Express	WESTWARD FIRST CLASS 9 Ex. Sun. Mason City Mail	EASTWARD FIRST CLASS 2 Ex. Sun. Day Express	EASTWARD FIRST CLASS 10 Ex. Sun. Peoria Accom.	EASTWARD FIRST CLASS 6 Daily North Star Limited
	A. M.-A	A. M.-A	P. M.-A	P. M.-L	A. M.-L	A. M.-L
			2	9		97
MARSHALLTOWN	1.15	9.00	**5.50**	**5.50**	8.30	**2.42**
7.1		10			1	
DILLON	1.00	s **8.45**	s 5.34	6.06	s **8.45**	2.56
2.5						
PICKERING	12.56	s 8.40	s 5.29	s 6.11	s 8.52	3.00
4.6		34				
GILMAN	12.48	s **8.32**	s 5.18	s 6.23	s 9.04	3.09
4.5					34-351	
NEWBURG	12.40	s 8.22	s 5.07	s 6.34	s **9.14**	3.17
6.4						
		94	96	362		
GRINNELL	s 12.30	s **8.09**	s **4.55**	s **6.55**	s 9.30	s 3.37
C. R. I. & P. CROSSING						
3.4						
		361	363			
G. & M. JUNCTION	12.16	**7.57**	**4.43**	7.03	9.36	3.45
1.4						
	97					
OAK GROVE	**12.14**	7.55	4.41	7.05	f 9.39	3.47
6.7						
SEARSBORO	12.03AM	s 7.43	s 4.29	s 7.20	s 9.56	4.01
4.4						
					35	
MOORE	11.55PM	f 7.35	f 4.21	f 7.28	f **10.05**	4.08
4.3						
NEW SHARON	11.48	s 7.26	s 4.14	7.42	s 10.19	s 4.21
4.9						
LACEY	11.38	s 7.13	s 4.03	s 7.54	s 10.29	4.30
7.2						
		371	372		94	
OSKALOOSA	11.25	**7.00**	**3.50**	8.10	**10.45**	4.45
	P. M.-L	A. M.-L	P. M.-L	P. M.-A	A. M.-A	A. M.-A
Running Time	1.50	2.00	2.00	2.20	2.15	2.03

Time Table No. 18

Taking Effect

Sunday, May 28th, 1922

STATIONS	WESTWARD FIRST CLASS 1 Ex. Sun. Day Express	WESTWARD FIRST CLASS 5 Daily North Star Limited	EASTWARD FIRST CLASS 2 Ex. Sun. Day Express	EASTWARD FIRST CLASS 6 Daily North Star Limited
	A. M.-A	P. M.-A	P. M.-L	A. M.-L
	36			
OSKALOOSA	**6.50**	11.22	8.20	4.52
3.8				
EXCELSIOR	6.40	11.14	8.29	5.00
1.8				
GIVIN	s 6.36	11.11	s 8.33	5.04
C. R. I. & P. CROSSING				
4.5			396	
EDDYVILLE	s 6.26	11.02	s **8.46**	5.13
4.7				
COALFIELD	s 6.14	10.53	s 8.57	5.20
2.9				
LOCKMAN	f 6.08		f 9.07	
4.2				
MAXON	f 5.57	10.37	f 9.14	5.42
C. B. & Q. CROSS-INTERLOCKED				
1.4	6			1
ALBIA	**5.55**	10.35	9.20	**5.45**
	A. M.-L	P. M.-L	P. M.-A	A. M.-A
Running Time	0.55	0.47	1.00	0.53

The Great Western had several lengthy branch lines operating in north central and western Iowa extending as far as Council Bluffs from southern Minnesota. A good share of this passenger service passed out of the picture and some trackage was abandoned and torn up during the thirties. The Minneapolis to Council Bluffs train (a full 12 hour night ride) was still operating as late as 1961—all others are listed as freight service only in the Railroad Guide of that year.

With all the loss of trains, particularly the locals, the scene of bustling activity at the Marshalltown depot, over which Charlie Duell used to reign supreme, was no more, Only on arrival of the family favorite, old No. 13 in late afternoon, was there any semblance of a depot crowd. Times had changed but there were more ups and downs still to come in the years ahead.

Over at State Center local passengers now had only one eastbound train—a semi-local Omaha to Chicago and a choice of two westbound semi-locals—one in mid morning and No. 13 in the evening. Both of the latter were west coast trains. For a time at least, the C & N W, in an effort to provide some sort of service for the smaller towns, designated some of them as flag stops for those who had ridden or would ride a specified distance. They were so indicated as such on the timetable by the letter "F". State Center was one of the flag stops for a very few of the middle-of-the-night trains.

Here at our typical small town depot, busy times were now limited to only three a day and the size of the meet-the-train crowds was materially reduced from days gone by.

WORLD WAR II DAYS

At the start of the 1940 decade the nation was enjoying a considerable degree of economic prosperity, but there was a growing fear of our becoming involved in the war that was engulfing Europe and the far east. For two years public opinion was divided over active participation or a continuing policy of armed neutrality that for some time had called for the shipment of foodstuffs and even war materials to Great Britain and her allies.

The Japanese decided the issue suddenly and without question by their infamous surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The entire nation was immediately aroused as never before, all indecision was forgotten, and suddenly the United States became an active participant in World War II against Germany and Italy in Europe and Japan in the Pacific. Never before had the country mustered its military, industrial, and its agricultral forces so quickly—never before had the nation been called upon to fight a world wide war on both sides of the globe.

First results of the fighting (principally naval) in the Pacific were disastrous because of the surprise element and it required some time to bring needed assistance to the European theatre. But the all-out war effort in the U.S. soon got into high gear and within a year the tide on both fronts began to turn.

All the railroads all across the land immediately became vitally involved in the transportation part of the effort. Even before Pearl Har-

bor they were hauling an ever increasing volume of foodstuffs and munitions to the east coast for shipment to our traditional allies in war-torn Europe. Now transportation requirements were multiplied many times over as the increased traffic became two-way—to shipping points on BOTH the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

All railways were called upon to marshall all their resources and prepare for all-out movement of military personnel and equipment. The switch to diesel power was slowed and all available steam locomotives, no matter how old, were continued in service. Those that had been sidetracked and marked for reduction to scrap were reactivated and put back to work. All types of freight and passenger cars were resurrected from sidetracks and forgotten resting places all over the country and made ready for a few more busy years of emergency duty. Manufacturers of railroad equipment were now mainly engaged in the production of tanks, artillery, armored vehicles and other implements of war—railroad equipment became of secondary importance.

During those war years of 1941 to 1945 traffic on the rails was the heaviest in the long history of the railroads. Freight trains, longer and far more numerous, carried the products of the farm and of the war industries to coastal port cities. Flat cars loaded with tanks, jeeps, dismantled fighter and bomber planes, amphibious landing craft and many other strictly wartime cargoes were common freight train sights.

Troop trains, carrying all branches of the military to training camps and eventually to embarkation ports, vied with each line's regularly scheduled passenger trains for clearance to operate somewhere on time. More often than not, the troop trains had right of way preference so on-time maintenance was difficult for the overloaded regular passenger carriers.

The trials and tribulations of non-military travellers in those trying times were many. All reserved space in deluxe coaches, pullmans and parlor cars of the "name trains" was almost always taken well in advance of departure time at the train's origin. Military priority or considerable influence with the right people was always a must to assure accommodations. Even then a civilian could be bumped and his reservation taken by a member of the military. Day coach seats were not reserved (except on the super trains) but they were always filled to overflowing—all seats filled and standing room only. Many sat on suitcases in the aisles and in the vestibules.

Such conditions were just as irritating for the crews of those overloaded passenger trains. Working their way through the crowded aisles of coaches after every stop to accomplish the ticket taking chore was a trying experience for conductors and brakemen. No wonder they were apt to be discourteous at times as they attempted to answer questions and listened to complaints.

Delays and disrupted schedules were common, particularly on single track lines—much longer than usual stops at stations—and unexplained (to the passengers at least) stops out in the country in the middle of nowhere—all added up to making passenger travel in those years exhausting and frustrating for all concerned. Transportation authorities even tried to discourage train travel by the widespread use of posters that

asked "IS THIS TRIP NECESSARY?" And the Federal Government even levied a special tax on all tickets to discourage railroad travel.

But for the railway companies the war years were profitable times. Those still in bankruptcy or threatened with same as of 1940 gained new life for the years ahead and many of those operating under receiverships were reorganized and returned to normal operation. As the war came to an end on all fronts in 1945, all the railroads entered the last half of the decade in much better condition economically.

The national industrial economy quickly returned to normal. Troop trains were still operating to return discharged servicemen to deactivation centers, but soon all that equipment of the older vintage would be returned to the yards. Freight trains, not so numerous now, were back to their normal business of hauling industrial raw materials and finished products.

One important lesson learned from the first and second world wars was the realization of the vital importance of our national railway network. Even though the second one, involving two fronts, taxed the resources of the rails to the limit, they got the job done. There was ample proof that we need the railroads and always will.

Railroad equipment manufacturers resumed the production of those new deluxe streamliners, some of which had gone into service before the war ended. Also, work was resumed on development of larger and more efficient diesel locomotives for both freight and passenger service. By the late 40's many of this new breed of powerful engines took to the rails hauling longer and longer trains with the greatest of ease. They embodied the same desirable features of the passenger diesels—fuel economy and long hauls without frequent stops for fuel, water and service—but had the increased power needed for the freights. The old steamer—the IRON HORSE—was on the way out.

CENTRAL IOWA SERVICE

By the end of the 1940 decade, passenger service had settled down to the status of the pre-war years but with the addition of more streamliners on the Northwestern. To that first UP - C & N W entry in the all-new diesel train competition, the City of Denver, three more were added in the late 40's. New members of the "City" fleet were the "CITY of LOS ANGELES", the "CITY of SAN FRANCISCO", and the "CITY of PORTLAND", all operating between the cities for which they were named and Chicago.

Only the eastbound "Portland" stopped in Marshalltown (at 4:30 am)—an early hour but they almost always took on a number of passengers. The return trip was made on the "Denver" leaving Chicago at 5:00 pm and arriving at Marshalltown at 9:40—300 miles in considerably less than five hours. It was a fast ride amid luxurious surroundings but the combination of lightweight cars and high speed required a good deal of dexterity and ability to roll with the train. Dinners in the diner were the best and the service was fine but here again it took a steady hand and some experience to really enjoy it.

One very noticeable difference was immediately apparent to those passengers used to riding behind the old steam locomotives. Diesel power got the long streamliners in motion without the old jerk and jolt routine—a glance out the window was often required to assure a passenger that the train was actually under way. Smooth starts and stops are trademarks of diesel powered trains—both passenger and freight. In spite of the early morning departure, the City of Portland and City of Denver service between Marshalltown and Chicago remained very popular with central Iowa travellers for nearly twenty years. Breakfast in the "Portland's" well publicized observation dome diner was an added attraction.

The three west coast "City" trains passed through Marshalltown only minutes apart—eastbound in the early morning hours—westbound about 10:30 pm. At the latter hour many central Iowans enjoyed watching the passing parade of lights as the trains followed each other up the Linn Creek Valley.

The three steam powered semi-locals of the 1930 era continued to stop at both Marshalltown and State Center and the fast mail trains still picked off the outgoing mail and kicked out the incoming sacks.

Local passenger service on the M & St. L was still maintained as late as 1950. But the night train, the North Star Limited, was no more, a victim of diminished patronage. The same reason would soon cut the Great Western service to two trains a day.

VII

THE LAST BID FOR PASSENGER BUSINESS—ANOTHER BIT OF REMINISCING—THE DINING CAR—DOME CARS—THE END OF THE LINE—CENTRAL IOWA ABANDONMENTS—MERGERS—COMMUTER TRAINS

THE LAST BID FOR PASSENGER BUSINESS

At the start of this new era (1950) the railroad powers continued their intensified program of trying to improve the declining profit picture by more and more cancellations of passenger service. Trains were eliminated from the schedules, as in the past, by simply posting notices on the depot bulletin boards and by inserting notices in the newspapers. There was some grumbling but no serious objections raised by the public—automobiles, buses, and airplanes had pretty much taken over passenger travel.

But the next step—abandonment of the trackage—was a different story. This meant a permanent loss of ALL rail service including freight handling for elevators, lumber yards and other bulk commodity businesses, most of whom filed protests with the federal and state commerce commissions. Long, slow, red tape hearings and investigations resulted to

slow up and delay for years hundreds of abandonment plans. In most cases, both sides presented perfectly logical and fair arguments pro and con but while the decisions were delayed over lengthy periods of time, the railroads were burdened with taxes on unused trackage.

Through the years a great many of the cases have been won by the railroads by exhibiting records of year after year of operating losses on each line in question and as a result wreckers have moved in without delay. And there are many evidences today of abandoned rights-of-way in Iowa where old maps indicate tracks once crossed present county and state roads. Now those tracks are gone, the grade levelled and the land returned to the production of corn and beans.

Nevertheless, the problems of abandonment continued along with the discontinuance of passenger and freight service all through the 1950's. But not without one final all-out effort on the part of the rails to meet the challenge of the new modes of travel.

That last ditch stand was based on faster service (made possible by diesel power) to meet air line competition; by a return to all-out luxury and comfort such as offered on the new streamliners; by concentrating on wooing back the long haul traffic; and by a return to the courteous, friendly service of the past. The railroads had long since given up the battle for the local business. But there remained a considerable proportion of the travelling public that preferred the relaxation of the railways' long haul trains with a certainty of schedule maintenance in all kinds of weather in contrast to the airlines' as yet crowded seating, the often rough rides and frequently interrupted schedules due to weather conditions.

So in the 50's the railroads, nationwide, set out to insure a fair share of that part of the passenger business that was still profitable. Just about every class "A" railroad became involved even though many of them could ill afford the tremendous outlay of money for the necessary new equipment.

Manufacturers suddenly became swamped with huge backlogs of orders for diesel engines and for new streamlined trains designed to operate as single coordinated units. Before long the relatively few streamliners that were in operation during the war years were now joined by an ever increasing number of widely publicized new name trains.

Well remembered by midwesterners are the Rock Island's fleet of ROCKETS, the Santa Fe's new CHIEFS, the Burlington's ZEPHYRS to Denver and the west coast, and the Illinois Central's HAWKEYE and LAND O' CORN. As fine as any were the four sleek new "CITY" streamliners operated jointly by the Northwestern, Union Pacific, and Southern Pacific—over the original Overland Route between Chicago and Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Portland.

The advertising campaigns promoting the new service were extensive. They stressed the new faster schedules, comfortable new air conditioned cars with all space reserved in advance, newly designed bedroom and roomette sleeping cars, and the all new dome top observation cars. Also on some of the super trains, the services of hair dressers and barbers, stenographers, nurses and hostesses were available. No display ad was

complete without a picture of the luxurious club car with its overstuffed swivel chairs, its big picture windows and its many other features designed for maximum comfort. Usually the picture portrayed some of the pampered patrons enjoying all the amenities that the company's newest streamliner had to offer.

The cars that made up these new integrated trains were entirely different—a far cry from the old wood (later steel) coaches with all the discomforts described in preceding pages. All cars were now completely air conditioned with accurately controlled temperatures—no dust and dirt—no cold drafts from open vestibule doors.

Day coaches had reclining seats and pillows were usually available on request. Cleanliness was a special much appreciated feature of the new cars and since all seats (even coach seats) were reserved in advance on most trains, there were no crowded aisles and no arguments over seating space. Rest rooms were more spacious and definitely cleaner. There was no question about it—even day coach travel had improved in every possible way.

The conductor was still in charge and he still made his ticket taking trips through the cars—but his chores were now materially lightened by the very infrequent station stops. Each coach had an ATTENDANT (instead of a common everyday brakeman) who assisted the conductor, answered questions and saw to it that passengers were alerted and ready to detrain when their destination was called—time involved in station stops was limited to the very minimum.

Sleeping cars had also undergone many changes through the years. From the start they had been essentially double facing seat sections in the daytime that made up into upper and lower berths for nighttime use. Heavy curtains provided the necessary privacy. Space was sold for single or double occupancy.

There were ladies' and men's dressing and rest rooms at either end of the car, both of which were very busy areas in the mornings. These rooms featured stainless steel lavatories and fixtures, spacious mirrors, an abundance of towels, and for the smokers (allowed only in the dressing rooms) ash trays and spitoons.

Some patrons preferred disrobing and dressing in the very limited confines of the upper or lower berths. Limited head room, in particular, made the regular morning and night shedding and donning of clothes an ordeal better suited for youngsters. A mesh hammock was hung the length of the berth in which one's clothes became well wrinkled by morning; lights operated from within the berth provided light for dressing and for reading; and there was a push button with which to call the porter if assistance was needed.

Every car had its pullman porter whose duties were many. He settled his passengers in their assigned seats or sections, stowed their luggage, and attended their every wish during the extent of their varying journeys. At night he made up the sleeping berths and in the morning dismantled same—experience had made him very adept at both operations. He was on duty night and day for the duration of the trip which in the case of west

coast trains made the "work day" very lengthy. But again, experience had taught him when and how he could catch a few winks of sleep.

Most porters were naturally jovial, obliging and very attentive to the needs of their patrons. And those patrons normally showed their appreciation for services rendered by adequate and often generous tips at the end of the run.

ANOTHER BIT OF REMINISCING

My first introduction to sleeping or pullman cars came on a trip to western Canada in 1910 in company with my mother and brother. I was nine years old—my brother seven. The train was the Winnipeg bound night train of the Great Northern Railroad from Minneapolis—the year 1910.

We boarded the train about 6:00 pm and were ushered to our assigned section of facing seats by the courteous porter (the car was one of the open section pullmans as described above). After an eating treat in the diner, which was an eye opener and an experience for two small boys to remember, we returned to our sleeping quarters for the night where another bit of travel education awaited us.

The porter was making up the berths. The nice clean soft seats were being converted to beds—an upper and a lower in each section—with Mother's consent we made our way down the aisle to get a closer look at the porter in action. We saw him rearrange the cushions and seat backs, pull a mattress from its hiding place, make up the beds with sheets, blankets and pillows pulled down from mysterious storage space up above. He then pulled down the upper berth, made up that bed, and finally hung the heavy green curtains that provided privacy for that section.

We watched without a word, but brother Joe was thinking hard. He returned to Mother and, in all seriousness, asked "Do they furnish the nightshirts, too?" It was a logical question in light of what we had just witnessed—one that was enjoyed by all in earshot including the porter himself.

Next the two young travellers were directed to the men's rooms at the end of the car with instructions from Mom to make use of the facilities including the soap and water. The lavatories were a little high off the floor—we had trouble with the faucets, stops and soap dispensers—and the rock and roll of the train presented problems. But we returned to our section to pass inspection after which the porter brought his ladder and helped us into the upper berth. We stripped off our clothes, stuffed them in the hammock, put on our nightshirts (our own), crawled under the covers and were soon lulled to sleep by the gentle sway of the train and the clickety-clack of the wheels. Such was my introduction to pullman travel.

With the introduction of the newer luxury trains of the forties and fifties, came some radical changes in the general interior design of pullman sleepers. The old full car complement of standard sections on either side of the aisle was out. In its place came the bedroom-roomette cars with the aisle moved to one side of the car. The old open day coach type

car now became a row of completely enclosed roomettes (singles) and bedrooms (for two or more). Each was complete with clothes closet, luggage space, toilet, and lavatory facilities—a much improved arrangement that met with instant approval among travellers. Every inch of space was utilized in a very ingenious manner and the "conveniences" were neatly concealed when the room was made up for daytime use—even a folding arm chair appeared from nowhere.

At night the upper and lower beds were made up in the usual manner but now there was ample room for at least one person to stand up while dressing and undressing—the other occupant might have to wait his or her turn while enjoying a few more winks of sleep. And now there was complete privacy for occupants of the new quarters.

At the start of this change to bedroom sleepers, many of the old pullmans were completely renovated by tearing out the old insides and replacing same with the new design. The renovation process preceded the all-new luxury pullmans that in the fifties became integral parts of the streamliners. The latter provided even more improvements—the ultimate in comfort and luxury—a part of the new drive by which the railroads hoped to retain their share of the passenger business.

THE DINING CAR

To many travellers, the dining car had always been the symbol of luxury train travel. The dining rooms on wheels of that golden era of railroading were open cars with tables for four on either side of the aisle. Large picture windows provided a good view of the passing landscape. Less than one fourth of the car was taken up by the pantry and galley, where there was hardly an inch of unused space.

A dining car steward was in charge of the crew consisting of the chefs and the several waiters that were always dressed in spotless white. White table cloths and napkins, a wide selection of gleaming silverware, and even a vase with a fresh flower in it adorned each table. The waiters, almost all black, were skilled and well trained and very adept at balancing large trays of food down the aisle and over the heads of seated diners. Mishaps involving spilled food were very rare, in spite of the roll, sudden stops and the herky-jerky starts of those earlier trains.

The steward always met his patrons at the door and politely seated them at a table, oftentimes shared with other diners. The menu provided a wide choice, the prices somewhat higher compared with hotels and city restaurants, but the food usually very good. All in all, it was a pleasant experience to eat a meal in the diner during the boom days of the railroads.

Then came the depression days, the numbers of diners decreased noticeably (there weren't very many that could afford dining car prices) and the service and the quality of the food became less than acceptable. Economy measures were introduced by the railroads in an effort to continue meal service of some type on all through trains. Cafe and restaurant cars, snack bars, and serve-yourself buffet cars were tried with not too much success. Most of these innovations were tried in "combination" cars—part eating service and part lounge car.

Then after World War II the plush dining cars of the new streamliners returned the pleasures of dining on the train to its former luxury and enjoyment. Of course, the new cars featured much new decor and some noticeable improvements, but the old touch of elegance, good food, and good service were also very much in evidence.

There was only one complaint. The light weight of dining cars and the train's high speed made eating and drinking a rather hazardous adventure, especially for those who were enjoying dinner in the diner for the first time. Hoisting a cup of coffee or a bit of food to one's mouth about the time the train would be swinging around a sharp curve could result in a missed mouth and a messed up face. However, such misadventures occurred very infrequently and diners soon learned how to avoid them. In any event the dining car of a fast moving streamliner was no place for a passenger who had lingered too long in the BAR CAR.

Almost all of the new luxury trains included a cocktail or bar car. On the "City of Denver" the booze car was named THE FRONTIER SHACK. It was windowless, decorated with pictures and decor befitting the name, checkered table covers, and attendants dressed a la western saloon days. The "Shack" was a popular retreat, particularly since it departed both Denver and Chicago at five o'clock in the afternoon—just at the cocktail hour.

DOME CARS

The dome cars were new innovations of the streamliner age and a part of the railroads' all-out play for the non-stop passenger business. Some were domed chair cars, others lounge cars and there were a few domed dining cars as well. The dome feature actually added a "second story" to the car—a level reached by a winding stairway. The entire top was clear plexiglass or similar material that afforded an entirely unobstructed view of the landscape—farmlands, rivers, lakes, deserts, mountains and other features of the viewing. Particularly beautiful was the dome ride at night with the scattered twinkling lights across the countryside and the bright array of lights of towns and cities as the speeding train brought the changing views into the picture.

All seats—unreserved—were the comfortable reclining variety and were almost always fully occupied. Because of the added height of the dome, there was a noticeable increase in train motion that took a little getting used to.

The lounge and parlor cars that usually brought up the rear of the luxury trains were carry-over conventionals of those in use in years gone by. But now they were all new tail end parts of the streamliners. Usually these cars were divided into a bar section and a "parlor" section with an abundance of very comfortable seating of all kinds, card tables, the latest reading materials, and courteous attendants to serve the passengers. Parlor and lounge cars were available to only first class passengers—those with pullman or special parlor car tickets.

By the middle 1950's the railroads in general were actually enjoying a very real revival in profitable passenger business. The new diesel

powered streamliners, costing into the billions; the powerful promotional campaign; and the return to good courteous service on the part of the companies' employees all had a part in recovering more than a fair share of the long distance traffic.

The traveling public responded very favorably at first to the new look in luxury rail travel. But, unfortunately, it wasn't to last. The newness wore off all too soon and the call of the open road gradually returned the travellers to their automobiles, travel trailers, and campers. Bus companies increased their coverage all across the country aided and abetted by the new Federal Interstate Highway System, federally subsidized for the benefit of automotive traffic. State highway systems also were vastly improved.

It all worked out to an inevitable decline and ultimate end of the passenger business. As had happened before, passenger count on the fleets of extremely expensive luxury equipment began to dwindle and eventually reached the non-profit status.

And as before, the railroads met the situation with drastic economy moves—cuts in the luxury service, discontinuance of some trains, and elimination of many of the niceties of travel that the public had thoroughly enjoyed. Worst of all was the gradual return to the old discourteous treatment at the hands of railroad personnel.

The companies' reaction to this final failure was typical of their former methods of dealing with adversity. They had made a truly all-out effort to improve the passenger service in every way with new equipment, faster schedules, smoother operation, and a decided improvement in customer relations. And the favorable response from the public had been only temporary.

To the remaining patrons of the rails, it became quite obvious that the industry was no longer interested in their business, which was very true indeed. Railroad economists had finally come to the conclusion that passenger trains could no longer be operated at a profit—that passenger service in fact was the primary cause of their sorry financial plight.

The end of the century-old railroad passenger trains was in sight.

The eastern lines, including such giants as the New York Central and the Pennsylvania, were already in serious financial trouble and so were among the first to cancel many of their celebrated streamliners. Cancellations spread rapidly in the east and soon many of the railroads had sidetracked their entire passenger fleets. Many millions of dollars in comparatively new equipment stood idle in the yards, perhaps in anticipation of some miracle that would somehow return them to active duty.

The western roads hung on a little longer because of their still profitable west coast traffic. But they, too, one after another eventually announced many cancellations of trains and consolidations of others.

THE END OF THE LINE

Throughout the 1950's the once extensive network of railways in Iowa continued to disintegrate at a rapid pace and, of course, passenger trains were the first to go. Many of the branch lines disappeared entirely, others provided freight service only and still others were involved in aban-

donment hearings with the commerce commission and carload shippers.

State Center still had a noon and evening passenger train—one train a day each way. The "City" streamliners and the fast mail still whizzed through town, all drawn by diesel engines now—all the old steam powered "Iron Horses" had been retired to the ignominy of the "scrap track".

At Marshalltown, the passengers were served by the same two semi-local Northwestern trains mentioned above but in addition had streamliner service once a day to and from Chicago.

The M & St. L Railroad, no longer under the control of a receivership, still operated a semblance of their original local passenger service. The old wood coaches and the small antique locomotives that pulled them up and down the line for so many years had given way to motor coaches. They were "over-grown" interurban cars with self-contained diesel power—a single all-purpose car that contained the engineer's cab up front; limited space for mail and express; and, at the rear, day coach space for fifteen or twenty passengers. These abbreviated locals, referred to as the "PUDDLE JUMPERS" or the "DOODLE BUGS" were economical to operate and continued for a few years to provide adequate once-a-day each way local service between Oskaloosa and Minneapolis.

The M & St. L's Story City branch discontinued regularly scheduled freight and passenger service in the 50's and has been seeking permission to tear up the tracks ever since. In the meantime, the roadbed has washed away in some places, the ties have rotted out and mother nature is doing her best to obliterate all signs of a once-profitable branch railroad.

About 1955 the Northwestern acquired the entire M & St. L system and proceeded at once to attempt abandonment of a good share of that line's rather extensive trackage in Minnesota, South Dakota, Illinois and Iowa.

The other Marshalltown railroad, the Chicago Great Western, continued passenger (one train a day each way) and freight service through the 50's and into the 60's when that line, too, was absorbed by the C & N W. Passenger service came to an end after the Northwestern took over.

The consolidation of the three lines was to have an important effect on Marshalltown's future status as a growing railroad center and as an important division point for the new enlarged system.

Late in the 1950's the Northwestern came up with a sudden shocking announcement, although it had been more or less expected for some time. It called for a complete cancellation of all remaining passenger service on the company's many lines west of the Mississippi River, the first all-out cancellation by any major western railroad. This surprise news left even the double track main line, which at one time carried 20 or more regularly scheduled passenger trains every day, without a single carrier for the first time in more than 100 years—ever since that first mixed passenger, freight and work train puffed along Linn Creek on newly laid rails in 1863.

There had been no confrontation with the Interstate Commerce Commission—no advance notice of the drastic move—and there was very little adverse reaction on the part of the public—"the handwriting had been on the wall" for a long time—previous train cancellations and abandon-

CHICAGO—OMAHA

Protected by Automatic Train Control—that silent and invisible guardian of Safe Travel

Shown at the right is about the last printed schedule (the late 1950's) of passenger service on the double track Northwestern main line—Chicago to Omaha. Note that only two trains each way remained of the impressive fleet of locals, limiteds, and streamliners that once crossed Central Iowa on this route. One was the former fast mail train—by this time a combination mail and passenger train for much of the run. The other, "The Omahan," was a slow passenger semi-local that made frequent stops.

Table 10

Italics show connecting tables.

READ DOWN							READ UP			
9	1 Kate Shelley "400"	5 Fast Mail	3 The Omahan	Miles	Central Standard Time		4 The Omahan	6 Fast Mail	2 Kate Shelley "400"	10
Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily				Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily
PM	PM	PM	AM				PM	AM	AM	AM
10.30	5.30	9.30	10.00	0.0	Lv CHICAGO	Ar	8.50	6.15	10.35	8.25
.....	.....	.....	.....	3.6	" Kedzie	Lv	.....	.....	.....	C 8.16
10.45	.....	.....	A10.14	8.6	" Oak Park	"	J 8.34	.....	J10.18	M8.08
.....	.....	.....	.....	10.4	" Maywood	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	14.2	" Proviso	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	15.8	" Elmhurst	"	.....	.....	.....	C 7.58
.....	.....	.....	.....	24.9	" Wheaton	"	..E..	.....	.....	..C..
11.06	.....	.....	.....	30.0	" West Chicago	"	.....	.....	.....	C 7.40
11.12	K 6.12	D10.07	10.45	34.5	" Geneva	"	8.00	.....	9.49	H 7.35
.....	.....	.....	.....	40.6	" La Fox	"	.....	.....	.....	f 7.30
.....	.....	.....	.....	44.0	" Elburn	"	.....	.....	.....	f 7.26
.....	.....	.....	.....	50.6	" Maple Park	"	.....	.....	.....	f 7.18
.....	.....	.....	.....	55.4	" Cortland	"	.....	.....	.....	f 7.13
.....	6.32	.....	11.10	58.3	" DE KALB 38	"	7.30	.....	9.29	7.09
.....	.....	.....	.....	64.3	" Malta	"	.....	.....	.....	f 7.01
.....	.....	.....	.....	69.7	" Creston	"	.....	.....	.....	f 6.56
12.12	6.47	.....	11.27	74.8	" Rochelle	"	7.02	.....	9.11	6.51
f12.21	.....	.....	.....	83.7	" Ashton	"	.....	.....	.....	f 6.42
f12.26	.....	.....	.....	88.0	" Franklin Grove	"	.....	.....	.....	f 6.37
f12.31	.....	.....	.....	92.9	" Nachusa	"	.....	.....	.....	f 6.32
12.42	7.09	.....	11.50	97.9	" DIXON 68	"	6.33	.....	8.50	6.27
12.47	.....	.....	.....	104.3	" Nelson	"	.....	.....	.....	f 6.20
1.07	7.21	.....	12.04	109.5	" STERLING	"	6.20	.....	8.39	6.15
1.20	.....	.....	.....	118.6	" Round Grove	"	.....	.....	.....	f 6.05
1.37	7.35	.....	12.20	123.8	" Morrison	"	5.58	.....	8.24	5.56
.....	.....	.....	.....	127.6	" Union Grove Ill.	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
2.00	7.55	11.35	12.45	138.1	Ar CLINTON, IA. 36 ‖	Lv	5.40	3.50	8.08	5.40
AM	PM	11.50	12.55	138.1	Lv CLINTON, IA ‖	Ar	5.20	3.30	AM	AM
.....	.....	.....	.....	147.6	" Low Moor	Lv	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	D. J.	157.1	" De Witt	"	B. E.	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	162.9	" Grand Mound	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	168.7	" Calamus	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	172.8	" Wheatland	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	177.8	" Lowden	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	184.8	" Clarence	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	189.8	" Stanwood	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	195.0	" Mechanicsville	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	201.9	" Lisbon	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	f 1.52	203.3	" Mount Vernon	"	4.20	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	1.15	2.18	219.4	Ar CEDAR RAPIDS ‖	Lv	4.00	2.12	.....	.....
.....	.....	1.50	2.18	219.4	Lv CEDAR RAPIDS 37 ‖	Ar	4.00	1.40	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	227.7	" Fairfax	Lv	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	234.4	" Norway	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	238.5	" Watkins	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	243.8	" Blairstown	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	248.9	" Luzerne	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	N 2.25	2.55	254.0	" Belle Plaine	"	3.11	G 1.01	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	260.4	" Chelsea	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	3.05	3.13	270.7	" Tama	"	2.55	12.41	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	277.8	" Montour	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	281.0	" Le Grand	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	3.48	3.34	289.1	" MARSHALLTOWN	"	2.33	12.18	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	296.4	" Lamoille	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	303.2	" State Center	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	311.1	" Colo	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	4.21	f 4.02	318.2	" Nevada	"	2.03	11.36	.....	.....
.....	.....	5.10	4.18	326.7	Ar AMES 11, 35	Lv	1.53	11.22	.....	.....
.....	.....	5.10	4.18	326.7	Lv AMES 11, 35	Ar	1.53	11.22	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	330.0	" Ontario	Lv	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	333.1	" Jordan	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	5.30	4.38	340.2	Ar BOONE 34 ‖	Lv	1.35	10.53	.....	.....
.....	.....	5.45	4.50	340.2	Lv BOONE ‖	Ar	1.24	10.41	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	348.4	" Ogden	Lv	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	359.5	" Grand Junction	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	6.15	f 5.15	366.4	" Jefferson	"	12.54	10.09	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	375.3	" Scranton	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	380.1	" Ralston	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	385.1	" Glidden	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	6.55	5.45	392.7	" CARROLL	"	12.28	9 42	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	402.6	" Arcadia	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	405.6	" West Side	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	411.6	" Vail	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	7.30	6.15	420.3	" Denison	"	11.59	9.03	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	427.7	" Arion	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	429.7	" Dow City	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	437.6	" Dunlap	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	447.8	" Woodbine	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	455.3	" Logan	"	.....	.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	8.15	7.00	463.7	" Missouri Valley	"	11.16	B 8.20	.....	.....
.....	.....	I 8.45	7.27	485.1	" COUNCIL BLUFFS	"	10.48	7.55	.....	.....
.....	.....	9.05	.....	486.5	" Co. Bluffs Transfer, Ia	"	10.43	7.50	.....	.....
.....	.....	9.15	7.50	487.9	Ar OMAHA, NEB	Lv	10.30	7.30	.....	.....
		AM	PM				AM	PM		

ments had made it plain that C & N W management was indeed anxious to drop the entire non-profitable passenger business.

Passenger trains were still operating over the system's tracks in Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan and to the Twin Cities in Minnesota as late as 1961, but that service was also discontinued a year or so later.

It seemed almost impossible that a once-thriving industry with its extremely large complex of facilities for transporting people could vanish with such suddenness. For those of us who have lived through this era of disappearing passenger traffic, there remain only the memories.

We can readily form a mental picture of the passing parade of many trains from the earliest pioneer locals to the flashy streamliners at the rear of the parade. What a moving panoramic picture they once made as they rolled over the "Linn Creek Valley Route", particularly at night—the old steam locomotives belching sparks and black smoke and working so hard to gain speed; and later the new diesels with seemingly little effort and only a low pulsating moan, pulling the long strings of brightly lighted streamlined cars at amazing speeds through the darkness.

In State Center, the depot, that I remember as a beehive of activity, is no more—replaced by a very small building that serves only as storage for equipment. All of the "out" buildings, the gateman's tower, the funny looking arms from which the fast mail snatched the mail bags—all these parts of the typical railroad installation are gone. The trackside loading platforms, that through the years supported tons of freight and express as well as thousands of passengers and lookers-on, have been levelled into non-existence and the stockyards facility has fallen into utter disrepair. Only the main line tracks, the long sidetrack and the automatic gates at the crossings remain.

At Marshalltown in the late 50's and early 60's there also were many changes in the railroad picture. With the acquisition of the M & St. L and the Great Western by the C & N W, Marshalltown became a single railroad city and there was considerable speculation concerning the Northwestern's plans for development of local facilities. The answer was soon forthcoming.

The junction of the three railroads with its rather unusual triple main line crossing, the yards and shops of the M & St. L, and the central location in the heart of Iowa made Marshalltown an ideal location for the new Northwestern division point.

By now the passenger trains were gone so the old depot on 3rd Avenue under the viaduct was converted to divisional and yard offices—headquarters for all operational personnel and clerical help. The loading platforms that served both M & St. L and C & N W passengers for so many years are gone as is the tower at the three way cross-over where the operators controlled traffic on the three lines. The old Iowa Central-M & St. L yard office building is no more and the two freight depots whose crews used to handle many thousand tons of local and way freight consignments, are out of use.

The freight yard trackage, roundhouse, shops and other facilities have been updated for the diesel locomotives, enlarged to the limits of land available, and generally improved to handle the combined freight

train traffic of all three lines. A recent Northwestern advertisement appearing in the bicentennial edition of the Times Republican, proudly proclaimed that an average of 45 freight trains move in and out and through the Marshalltown yards daily.

Marshalltown has lost its position as an important passenger junction point but in recent times it has become a major terminal and perhaps will soon have the largest classification and marshalling facilities on the C & N W system west of Chicago.

CENTRAL IOWA ABANDONMENTS

All through the 50's and 60's the controversial debates over the fate of non-profitable branch lines continued. In most cases the railroads simply cancelled all service and discontinued all maintenance work. They continued to pay taxes on the lines but depots were closed and all related activity closed down.

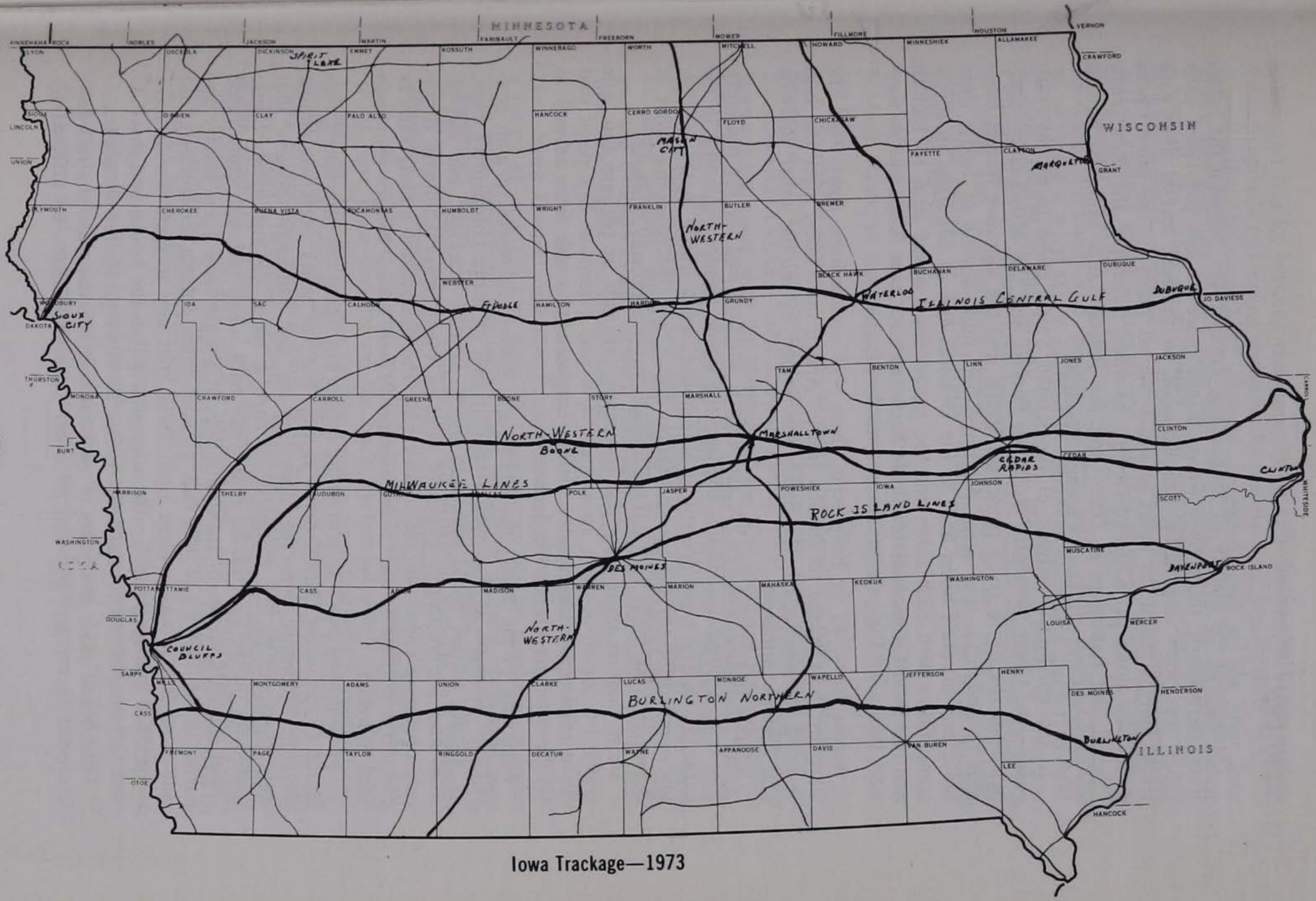
Much of the old Iowa Central trackage dating back to the 1870's and absorbed by the Northwestern in the 1950's, has also met the ultimate fate of obliteration. That part of the line from Peoria to Oskaloosa (185 miles) is no more—the New Sharon to Newton branch (30 miles) is gone as is the Hampton to Kanawha branch (35 miles) and the fate of the G & M branch has already been recorded. A large part of the system elsewhere in Iowa, Minnesota, and South Dakota has been eliminated.

Likewise, other railways in Iowa, through the years, have trimmed and whittled away at their non-profit lines. Compare the accompanying Iowa map (1973) with the 1900 coverage shown on page 25. The Rock Island and Milwaukee roads have given up on much of their freight-only branch networks and have undertaken or have completed extensive abandonment projects as fast as approvals are received from the commerce commission. The Burlington and the Illinois Central have followed suit wherever possible.

Saddest of all sights are the lonely empty depots that for a century or more had been that town's center of activity several times a day. Most of them have now been torn down—a few purchased for uses much less glamorous than their original purpose—and still others, few in number, have been purchased and renovated for historical monuments, restaurants and public buildings.

The whole process of abandonment and elimination has continued right up to the present. It has included all of the electric lines, the independent short line roads and even some of the once prosperous class "B" railroads. It appears that in time, the Iowa rail network, once more than 11,000 miles of trackage—now less than 9,000 miles, may be whittled down to little more than the original main line arteries that crossed the state in the beginning.

All of the branch line railroads that still exist are really only semi-operational. Freight service is no longer on a regular schedule. And the trackage and roadbeds are, in most cases, in deplorable condition—the result of no maintenance for years. But for some of them there is a program of rebuilding and rehabilitation now in operation—a cooperative effort on the part of shippers, State of Iowa, and the railroads. See Chapter XI.



Iowa Trackage—1973

MERGERS

Throughout the history of railroading, competition between the many lines, particularly those lines whose tracks more or less paralleled each other, was often very fierce. For example, in the east several lines with tracks only a few miles apart at times, served many of the same towns and cities along the Chicago-Detroit corridor. Likewise, the New York Central, the Baltimore & Ohio, and the Pennsylvania railroads battled for years for the east coast-Chicago business.

In the northwest corridor of the United States three trunk line railroads—the Great Northern, Northern Pacific, and the Milwaukee—competed for the north coast passenger traffic and the lucrative freight business to and from that area. All three had built dozens of feeder lines branching off their main lines in the Dakotas and in Montana in direct competition with each other for the tremendous wheat haul to Duluth and the Twin Cities. Most of those branches have now fallen by the wayside, victims of the grain trucks and modern highways.

Across Iowa, as we have seen, there was competition right from the start for the Chicago to Omaha traffic. And a little later, after the rails reached the west coast, the battle was joined by all the other midwest and western railroads.

All this rivalry was fine for passengers, shippers and for the railroads, too, until a number of things changed the whole picture beginning in the early 1920's. The rapid growth of automotive, truck traffic, buses, and air line competition for the transportation dollar, and the economic woes of depression—all made very serious inroads into the railway business.

From then on there were just too many railroads or perhaps too little traffic left for all of them. In any event, it was evident at this point that the cost of operations was exceeding revenues on trunk lines as well as on the extensive branch line networks.

Beginning in the 1930's the MERGER movement began to gain considerable impetus. It was suggested that two or more competitive lines, by joining forces, could eliminate much parallel trackage, cut clerical costs and administrative expenses, and in many ways eliminate duplicate operating costs. Almost immediately the discussions among railway executives became serious and constructive and actual merger proposals soon followed.

The stumbling block to immediate action was again the Interstate Commerce Commission. This federal agency had for years exercised almost dictatorial control over the operation of the railroads—powers that were legislated by the Congress to curb a trend toward monopolistic tendencies on the part of the rails away back when railroads constituted about the only means of transportation. It should have been plainly apparent in the 1930's and 40's that no such monopolistic tendencies could still exist. But it was evident right away that any mergers would have to be OK'd first by the ICC—the laws were still in the books and the ICC was still an important segment of the bureaucracy in Washington.

Thus began years and years of negotiations, first between the railroads interested in merger, between all other lines that might be affected by

same, and finally, between the commission and the parties to the union. Final proposals containing terms of the merger were presented to ICC for consideration, hearings held, changes suggested, and at last after long drawn out negotiations an approval or denial would be handed down.

Out of the years of proposals and negotiations came a number of notable mergers—some that have proved to be highly successful ventures and a few that failed miserably for one reason or another. The union of the Northern Pacific, the Great Northern, the Burlington Lines, and the Spokane, Portland and Seattle System into THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN RAILWAY resulted in the most successful merger to date. It also resulted in the largest system in number of miles of trackage. Consolidation of competitive service to the Pacific Northwest, joint use of yards and facilities, elimination of much of the parallel trackage, and huge savings in administrative and clerical expenses have resulted from the merger.

Also successful was the merger of the Norfolk and Western with the Wabash Railroad that gave the former road outlets to Omaha and Kansas City.

A Southland merger of note brought the Atlantic Coast Line and the Seaboard Air Line railroads together under the new corporate name of SEABOARD COAST LINES. And several other successful unions have been consummated with the blessings of the ICC, many of them involving mere take-overs of smaller lines by larger companies operating in the same area. Thus, during this era, dozens of class "B" and smaller short line railroads voluntarily lost their independent identity and became parts of larger systems. As noted heretofore, the Minneapolis and St. Louis and the Chicago Great Western Railroads, two central Iowa trunk lines, were successfully absorbed into the Northwestern System.

On the other side of the ledger, was the long drawn out merger of the New York Central and the Pennsylvania System into the new PENN CENTRAL RAILWAY. Both of these giants of the northeast corridor were near bankruptcy (as far as their respective railroad operations were concerned) when the merger approval came through. But for them a union was not the all-out answer to their problems and the new company continued to operate in the red for many succeeding years.

In the midwest several possible mergers involving trunk line railroads have been brewing on the back burner for years. Both the Rock Island and the Milwaukee, at the present time financially troubled railroads, could provide access to the Chicago gateway for several of the more prosperous western lines. Both have had extensive talks with the Union Pacific, Southern Pacific, Missouri Pacific and others but the run-down condition of the R I and Milwaukee trackage, rolling stock and facilities has discouraged serious bargaining. The Northwestern is also vitally interested in any shake-up involving its two long-time competitors for the Chicago-Omaha freight business.

So the games of merger, take-over, and outright purchase continue to highlight the railroad picture all across the country. In the process, companies that have dominated the scene for so many decades fade out of the picture and new corporate names take their places.

Since about 1920 the railroad industry has presented a depressing picture of almost continuing loss of stature and prestige. Once one of the giants of United States industrial power, the rails fell victim of a series of events and conditions that reduced their operations from outstanding prosperity to desperate financial status—in some cases even to insolvency.

In 1929, the railroads nationwide operated approximately 20,000 passenger trains, carrying about 77 percent of intercity traffic. Buses carried 15 percent and aircraft less than 1 percent.

By 1950 the railroads' share of passenger business had dwindled to 46 percent, bus traffic had increased to 39 percent and the airlines' share had grown to 15 percent.

1970 figures show passenger train traffic (Amtrak) at only 7 percent and the number of trains now down to less than 450 including commuter service. Airlines as of this date dominated the picture with 73 percent and the buses easily outdistanced the rails with 16 percent of the business.

The above figures reveal rather graphically the almost complete take-over of the intercity passenger business by the airlines and the buses.

COMMUTER TRAINS

By the early 1960's practically all intercity passenger trains all across the land had been sidetracked—only one type of service survived—the COMMUTER trains. There is still a very great need for this rapid transit suburban service in the areas of large cities and the railroads apparently have found it profitable.

From early morning to about eight or nine o'clock the commuter locals operating only minutes apart, haul the suburbanites to the downtown terminals from which they make their ways to the heart of the city and their work. Again, from late afternoon to early evening the same multitudes gather at the same terminals for that ride home on the same trains.

Train service is very frequent during those two opposite periods of the day—during the early hours of the day and late evening hours, service is provided at less frequent intervals.

The Illinois Central, Northwestern, and the Burlington are prime haulers of commuters in the Chicago area. In New York, well known providers of this service are the Long Island Railroad, the Central of New Jersey, the New York New Haven and Hartford, and the Penn Central. Commuter service has always been important to the alleviation of the traffic problem in all large cities. Rapid transit subway and elevated railways have also had an important hand to that end.

In days gone by it was most interesting to watch the seemingly endless flow of commuters rushing to their trains in the Northwestern's Chicago station. On return trips from Chicago we boarded the City of Denver in plenty of time to witness the suburbanites "on the run". The several commuter trains would be parked on nearby tracks in full view of our ringside "Denver" seats. We could see the passengers reading their evening papers and playing cards—the latter a regular pastime enjoyed by the same groups every evening.

The commuter schedules called for minutes-apart departures so they pulled out exactly on time, else the entire departure timing could be easily scrambled. We often watched as two or more passengers failed in their desperate dash to catch the disappearing train. It could be that the disappointed late-comers lingered too long over that second martini in the station bar, but there would be another train shortly and perhaps the little woman would accept whatever excuse was offered for the late arrival.

The departing train would hardly get out of sight when another backed onto the track just vacated and immediately started loading. While we waited the twenty minutes or so for our streamliner to depart we would watch a half dozen commuters fill up and pull out with standing room only loads. And it seemed that all the passengers were always on the run.

Then, as we watched the commuter phenomenon across the way, we began to sense a little motion in our own train and in a few seconds our super smooth get-away left the station scene far behind. We often agreed that the everyday life of a commuter was not for us.

IX

THE FREIGHT BUSINESS—THE DIESELS—PIGGY-BACK-BY-RAIL SERVICE—AUTO CARRIERS—UNIT COAL AND GRAIN TRAINS—L C L FREIGHT—OPERATION AND RATES

THE FREIGHT BUSINESS

Through all the lean years and the good years the freight trains, still the money-makers, continued to roll. During many of those more trying years the trains had become rather few and far between and they were often limited in tonnage. But since about 1950 this part of the railroad business has been making a slow but steady comeback in the competitive battle with the trucks.

It was apparent that at long last, management had begun to "think positive"—to forget the passenger train troubles and concentrate on constructive methods of retaining what freight business was left to them and on reclaiming some that had been lost.

THE DIESELS

The new diesel locomotives gave the railroads their first substantial boost toward a new sounder economy and an approach to prosperity. They were first introduced for the streamlined passenger trains of the 40's and early 50's and as such, speed was the prime sought-after element. But engineers continued to work on the development of more powerful units for the freight service—units that would still embody the same worthwhile characteristics of operational economy and speed as

the originals but with the added potential of power needed to haul ever longer and heavier freights.

Progress in this field was rapid—to the point that by the late 50's diesel power almost completely replaced steam engines on both passenger and freight trains. Practically all of the nation's railroads had relegated their old steamers to the salvage yard—they had arrived at the "end of the run".

Development of the power potential of the new locomotives continued until some of them ultimately developed up to 5000 HP per unit. Multiple units of up to six became common sights on the head end of long strings of 100 to 200 cars with outstanding savings in crew man-hours, fuel savings, and much less over-the-road operating costs.

Diesels operated much greater distances without stops for fuel or servicing so time-consuming delays for coal and water were eliminated and the old coal chutes and water tanks disappeared from trackside and rail yards. For instance, the running time of the M & St. L's daily time freights No.'s 19 and 20 between Minneapolis and Peoria was 32½ hours in 1935. By 1945 that elapsed time had been reduced to 18 hours—no less than 11 fuel and water stops had been eliminated—and the diesels made the entire run without service. These trains were non-stop except for crew changes at division points. Over-the-road freight schedules were speeded up and deliveries expedited materially.

The change to diesel power brought on a bitter, long drawn out controversy between the unions and the railroads over the new status of the fireman. His principal function had been completely eliminated but the unions resisted all attempts to do away with the jobs. The Interstate Commerce Commission, the Labor Department, and finally, the federal courts all eventually got into the act.

After more than ten years, the lengthy arguments resulted in the railroads gaining the right to discontinue the fireman's long-time position in the cab except for some few types of service. His seat in the cab is now usually occupied by the head end brakeman, if any. Thus, another sizeable cut in manpower operational costs was accomplished.

PIGGY-BACK-BY-RAIL SERVICE

Also in the 1950's the railroads began to give the shippers some long-neglected consideration—what they might need in the way of better service as well as more modern and more adaptable railroad equipment. Up to that time there had been very little change in freight rolling stock—still the same old boxcars, gondolas, flat cars and tank cars. Studies were made of better ways to transport and handle the many different industrial products and it was quickly found that a great many of them could be better handled by the rails than by the trucks, providing that suitable equipment was available.

As a result of these findings, new innovations in rail car designs soon appeared on the scene.

Piggy-back-by-rail service, introduced in 1954 to meet the over-the-road truck competition, met with immediate success. Semi-trailer loads of merchandise, instead of starting over the highways for distant destina-

tions, were hauled to the railroad yards and there rolled onto long special-built flat cars—two trailers to a car—for rail transport to the designated distribution center. There they were picked up by truck tractors and hauled to their respective final destinations. The long haul, the most remunerative part, was by rail—a boon to the railways.

At first the piggybacks were parts of mixed freights, but before long the volume of this new business led to the operation of solid trains of TOFC (trailer-on-flat-car) traffic. The service gained much popularity with shippers because of lower overall freight rates and less time in transit. Bad weather highway problems, especially in winter, that plagued the trucks, were never particularly serious drawbacks to the maintenance of schedules on the rails. In short, the shippers benefitted from lower freight rates, a reduction in over-the-road elapsed time, and better service and in return the railroads reclaimed some more of the business lost to the trucks in years gone by.

Ironically, the railroads had hauled circus wagons around the country for years on special flat cars in the same manner as they had just instigated for the truck trailers. It seems strange that someone among the railroad powers didn't think of their already-in-use equipment thirty years before.

AUTO CARRIERS

Four years later tri-level AUTO CARRIERS were put into service. Especially adapted new flat cars carrying ten to fifteen automobiles soon caught the attention of the public as the carloads of new, many colored autos streaked over the rails instead of the highways.

At the start of the gasoline age, automobiles were shipped in small old style boxcars. In thirty years or more, about the only concession to the difficulties of loading and unloading was an increase in the overall size of the cars and a sizeable increase in the width of the doors. In the meantime, the trucking industry introduced the over-the-road multicar truck trailers, and delivered four to six cars per trailer right to the dealer's door. By so doing they claimed about 60 to 70 percent of the automobile transport business.

Now at long last, the railroads, by adapting the multi-auto idea to new double and triple deck railroad cars, had in a very short time recaptured almost all of their lost auto transport traffic. The loaded carriers were consigned by the manufacturers to distribution centers from which they were hauled by truck the remaining short distances to dealers or in some instances, the cars were driven to their final destinations. Again, it was a case of successfully reacting to a loss of traffic after "the horse was stolen", and again, the shippers benefitted from improved freight costs and all-weather, improved deliveries

UNIT COAL AND GRAIN TRAINS

In the first fifty years of railroading the transportation of coal produced a very large share of the freight revenue. Coal was pretty much the uni-

versal fuel for heating homes, businesses and factories, for generating steam and power and for hundreds of other purposes. So every freight train had its quota of coal cars, some full on their way from mine to ultimate consumer and some empty on their often devious way back to the mine for reloading. Every town large and small had its coal dealers with bins along the sidetracks where hard and soft coal of all kinds was kept for customer's orders.

And the railroads themselves used huge quantities of coal to generate power in the thousands of steam locomotives in use at the time. As the steamers grew larger and larger in size, so did the tender part of the engine that carried the coal and water.

The first replacement for coal was fuel oil. Oil fired furnaces for homes came into quite common use, followed shortly by the use of the same fuel in industrial installations. Even some of the newer railroad locomotives were oil fired—the tender having been converted to an oil and water carrier instead of coal and water. The number of coal cars in transit diminished and oil tankers became more common in the make-up of the freights.

Then came natural gas which was to replace to a large extent both oil and coal. But this fuel was PIPED across the country—in time to every community, town and city, and the railroads had lost almost all of the once lucrative fuel hauling business. The old coal cars soon joined obsolete cattle cars on the scrap tracks where they were burned and the remains reclaimed for scrap steel.

However, in the 60's and early 70's, coal again came into its own and the demand for transportation of that fuel to the many new electric generating plants and to large industrial users presented another opportunity for the railroads to innovate still another specialized service and regain lost revenue.

In due time solid trains of coal began to roll across the plains and the midwest (many of them over the Northwestern main line just below my balcony observation post) from the huge open pit mines in the west to generating and industrial plants and to the many river ports along the Mississippi. The new UNIT COAL TRAINS definitely were in business.

They are made up of new large capacity steel dump cars adapted for quick loading at the mines and speedy unloading at destination. These unit trains, numbering 100 to 150 cars and pulled by three or more of the newest diesels are routed with special clearance orders straight through with a minimum of stops and the empties quickly returned, also as unit trains. Minimized in-transit time, attractive rate schedules, and maximum usage of specialized equipment are among the plus factors of this service. The long uninterrupted hauls utilize the efficiencies of diesel power to the fullest extent.

Eastern long-time coal haulers such as the Norfolk and Western, the Chesapeake and Ohio, and others have also adopted the Unit Coal Train innovation with great success.

Another instance of the railroads' new approach to reclaiming lost business has been the introduction of solid UNIT GRAIN TRAINS. Some of these trains, consisting of large special hopper cars, are leased to private companies and to co-ops with extensive loading facilities.

Others are owned outright by the shippers but in all cases unit train operation makes maximum usage of the unit by rapid loading processes, a quick turnaround and return of the shipper intact. Rapid deliveries at special reduced rates has returned a large share of the movement of grain to the rails.

There were other types of new freight cars that were built during this time for special duty such as the new "AIR FLOW" gondola cars for hauling powdered or pellet materials. They are designed to be loaded quickly by forced air—a method requiring a minimum of labor.

And there were newly introduced 60,000 gallon tank cars for hauling a wide range of liquid products over the rails, often at special rates. Many other specially designed cars and equipment, developed for handling specific commodities, continued to appear on the scene—all a part of the railroad company's efforts to better serve their customers. It also successfully lured a considerable volume of traffic back to the rails from the truck lines.

Before long a completely new customer relationship had developed between the railways and their shippers. The companies now honored their customers' suggestions for ways and means to meet specific shipping needs instead of displaying a totally indifferent attitude. Cooperation and service again became all important to both parties.

In the process the railroads discovered that they still could remain the prime movers of most all bulk commodities while adding many other manufactured products. But to do so they would have to be alert to the ever changing requirements of shippers and be willing to listen to their suggestions with an open mind.

L C L FREIGHT

No successful method of reclaiming L C L (less-than-carload) freight traffic has as yet been discovered. At one time, the railroads did make an effort in that direction by introducing "door-to-door" delivery in the larger towns for the benefit of local businesses. It provided free delivery of L C L consignments from the railroad freight house to the consignee—a service that local truckers had supplied for years. But the railroad found it impossible to compete with the quite satisfactory door-to-door service of the trucking companies whose customer routes were, by now, well established, and the plan was abandoned after less than a year long trial run.

OPERATION AND RATES

During the past two decades, the railroad industry has introduced many noticeable operational improvements that have furthered their recovery. New huge classification and marshalling yards with sophisticated automatic switching have been built; two-way radio communication between members of the train crews, yard masters, and switching crews have come into common use; and there are now in use many new electronic methods of directing and managing the flow of traffic, including the C T C (central traffic control) which does just what the name implies with mini-

mal human direction. All of these new operational innovations have been tremendous money and time savers for the railroads but they are also important to shippers by providing much faster in-transit service.

Also, considerable progress has been made in the long standing confrontations with the Interstate Commerce Commission. Requests for more equitable freight rates to cover specific commodities over certain hauls invariably were subject to lengthy delays. But the railways have persisted and in many cases, have won beneficial schedules that have resulted in considerable increase in traffic in certain areas. Many of these rate adjustments have put the railroads in a much better competitive position with the trucking interests. And again the shippers have been materially benefitted, too.

All these major improvements and many others in facilities, equipment, operation, rate schedules and in customer relations have restored most of the principal railroads to profitable freight operations. The companies of the northeast sector of the country remain in serious trouble with unsuccessful mergers and bankruptcies, but the government's new Conrail Corporation may provide the solution to this situation. More on that later.

Elsewhere throughout the nation, the industry has come a long way back toward prosperity since the dark days of passenger train losses, depression and recessions. In the south and west all major lines are financially sound and reporting consistently profitable traffic figures.

In the midwest the picture is clouded by such deteriorating main lines as the Rock Island and the Milwaukee Road. Mergers and take-overs are still under consideration that could benefit all parties concerned but resolution of such plans will take time. Other midwest rail carriers, at this writing, continue to show improvement in traffic and profit patterns.

X

THE 1977 SITUATION

Now, what of the present railroad situation in Iowa—Marshall County—and along the Linn Creek Valley Route!

That first trackage that, in my daydreams at the start of this book, I watched being constructed has existed through more than 110 years. It has gone through many changes; weathered wars, depressions, recessions, labor troubles, freight rate inequities and severe competition; and during the changing times of late years it has entirely lost the passenger business which, in the beginning, was the foundation of its success. But the Northwestern freight trains in large numbers still roll over that same right of way that was put to grade so long ago.

Gone are many of the towns that owed their start to the coming of the railroads; gone are many of the branch lines by which the Northwestern

and other companies reached out to all of Iowa's ninety-nine counties and, with that loss, those old standby's, the local passenger trains; gone are the way freights, the fast mail trains, the stock trains and the speeding streamliners. And yet the Northwestern Railroad is still alive and regaining strength.

The smaller towns that lost their daily contact with the outside world when the locals were cancelled have suffered the most. Railroad activity at State Center, for instance, is limited to an occasional freight, stopping to spot some empty cars or to pick up full carload shipments. The depot and its over-worked (in days gone by at least) agent are gone and it's been a long time since a section crew pumped their handcar down the track to replace a tie or cut some weeds.

State Center's G & M Iowa Central branch has been gone for many years (1928). There is no longer any evidence of the once-not-so-busy depot, the "Y", the coal yards and Horace Patton's elevator—only a bit of trestle piling marks the place where the G & M entered the town.

On the other hand, Marshalltown, as we have already seen, had become a growing railroad center, the result of absorption of the north-south M & St. L and the Great Western railroads. The three-way junction and the M & St. L yards, shops, and diesel facilities have made this Marshall County city a logical site for the C & N W's new center of operations.

The old depot building, the scene of so much passenger activity and the locale of Charlie Duell's efforts on behalf of the public, is still intact. The entire interior of the building, including baggage and express rooms, has been redone to accommodate the divisional and yard offices of the new three line operation. The old brick, plank and cinder boarding platforms have long since disappeared.

The yards are way too small for the increased volume of traffic (a reported 45 or more trains per day), resulting in serious switching delays and frequent hold-ups for through trains such as the numerous unit trains. Another result is the all-too-often blockage of street crossings within the city—a decided annoyance to the public.

But plans are under way for extensive changes. An all new classification yard is being planned for an area just east of the city; a realignment of the entrance of the old Great Western tracks from the north to run these trains directly into the new yards is under consideration; the same plans would do away with considerable trackage that is now a bothersome hindrance to the development of some city industrial areas; and finally, the city, state, and railroad have tentative plans to widen or replace the present over-the-tracks viaducts, and possibly build one or more new ones. Action on these developments may be some time in coming but they are urgently needed and hopefully will be accomplished in the near future.

Shortly after the end of passenger service, the Northwestern became an EMPLOYEE OWNED corporation—probably the first in the history of American railroads. It was felt by many that Northwestern Industries had "unloaded" on its employees, but the new company, now known officially as the Chicago Northwestern Transportation Company, has registered steady gains in traffic and profits.

Many reminders of bygone days remain in the depot area to recall the past for us oldsters. Stone's Restaurant, dating back to 1887, now a well known eating place, still occupies the same "down under the viaduct" location and is owned and operated by the third and fourth generations of the Stone family. The Third Avenue viaduct that has spanned the C & N W and the M & St. L main line tracks and yards for sixty years, is still in use although, as stated above, much in need of repair or replacement. The Northwestern's sizeable freight depot, a once busy facility for handling local freight shipments, is no more, but the M & St. L's freight building still stands trackside, used now as rental warehouse storage.

And in the area are many other landmark buildings such as the former homes of the Western Grocer Mills, Marshall Canning Co., Marshall Oil Co., and many others—all once housed thriving businesses which received and loaded out literally trainloads of merchandise through the years. The majority of the buildings are still there but the companies and the railroad traffic they generated are gone.

Freight trains still roll into and out of the Marshalltown yards over the same roadbeds and routes that were first used in the 1860's and 70's—the main line over the Linn Creek route and the old Iowa Central's Minneapolis line following the same entrance and exit as always.

A short while ago I reached one of the several street crossings of the latter line just as two powerful diesels effectively blocked my path. They were very slowly, but successfully, pulling a train of 120 cars (I counted them as I waited) up the hill and out of town. In the olden days of the coal burning steam locomotives, the same number of cars would have required the dispatch of at least three separate trains with double headers to pull them. The diesel powered train with a crew of four was accomplishing a job that thirty years earlier would use possibly six engines and a total of twelve to fifteen trainmen.

The former C G W line continues to operate over the same northeastern route in and out of Marshalltown maintaining freight service between the Twin Cities and Kansas City, including carload shipments to and from all remaining towns along the line. And the Milwaukee Road still serves the Marshall County towns of Ferguson, Haverhill, Melbourne and Rhodes along its Chicago to Omaha main line.

Yes, the trains, in ever increasing numbers and in ever increasing lengths, are still rolling over the rails across Iowa. The romantic passenger trains that once flashed across the landscape are gone, perhaps forever, but the modern freight trains have maintained this writer's interest with a passing parade that bears witness to the noticeable changes and the new look in the once maligned slow moving trains.

As I watch from my hilltop fourth floor porch, where I sat when the inspiration to record some history of the rails in Iowa took root, a considerable variety of trains pass in review, all announcing their entrance on the stage by repeated blasts on the diesel's air horn (the shrill whistles of the "Iron Horse" are long gone). As I write, a long string of mixed freight cars—gondola, box and flat cars; auto carriers; refrigerator cars; and others—some loaded, some empty, makes the scene and disappears down the tracks. Next may appear four, five or even six bright yellow diesels of the latest design at the head end of a heavy trainload of coal—

one of the modern unit trains from the far west on a near non-stop schedule. And there's a chance that the very next entry in the parade could be an even longer unit train of empty coal cars headed back to the mines for a refill. This "longy" could number 150 cars or more.

Like as not, the next to roll into view would be another mixed freight on the old Great Western line from Kansas City, the engineer sounding off with his horn for the street crossings and for clearance to enter the yards. At about the same time an all piggyback fast unit train might come around the "Four Mile Hill" to the west and the two trains seemingly contest the right to hit the three-way railroad crossing first. The piggyback would no doubt win as the unit trains usually have the right-of-way over all others. At this point a third train, westbound, might pass my vantage point and, as happens frequently, all three tracks are occupied.

In the course of an afternoon, I watch the comings and goings of solid trains of refrigerator cars loaded with perishables from the west; unit grain trains made up of the new large capacity gondolas carrying the name of the grain company or co-op owners and loaded with Iowa corn or beans; and some trains of two and three decker carriers loaded with new many-colored automobiles, pickup trucks and other motor vehicles.

And then there's the old Iowa Central tracks behind me only two or three blocks away over which daily freight train service rolls down the hill into the yards or, at a much slower pace, up the hill and out of town. This is the same trackage that was built into Marshalltown way back in 1868.

A closer look at the makeup of the modern freight trains, a look gained while waiting at a crossing for a slow mover to pass in review, reveals that some interesting changes have taken place.

The narrow walkways atop the boxcars over which the brakemen used to move precariously to pass along hand signals to the engine crew and, in a very early day, to operate the handbrakes, are no more. The handbrakes themselves are now mounted on the end of the car. Likewise, the boxcar ladders by which the brakies climbed to the top of the swaying, bouncing train are reduced to only three or four rungs, just enough for brakemen to hang onto during switching operations.

Almost all cars of all types are now steel construction—only a very few of the old wood variety show up among the new "steelies". And the newer cars are noticeably much larger with greater load capacity.

The names of the cars' owners that have always adorned both sides of the cars, still provide a rundown of railroads from all over the United States and Canada. Included in the list would be a few older cars from railroads no longer in existence or possibly absorbed or merged with some other lines. But there are also quite a few new names that reflect changes in ownership such as the Burlington Northern, the Penn Central (now a part of the newer Conrail system), and the Northwestern cars that proudly proclaim, as a part of their name, "Now Employee Owned". A Rand McNally Railroad Atlas dated 1973 lists more than 600 operating railways in the U.S., Canada and Mexico as well as 60 non-operating corporations that own railroad cars.

Whatever system the railroads have used through the years to keep track of the nationwide movement of their cars must be extremely intricate. In contrast to the mixture of cars of all lines common in the United States, a freight train in Canada is generally made up almost entirely of that company's own rolling stock. On many trips to our neighbor country north of the border I have seen very few Canadian National or Canadian Pacific trains with any other cars than their own. What happens to cars of competitive lines and cars of U.S. railroads is a mystery to me—I have never found anyone who seems to have the answer. And yet CN and CPR cars are common in the make-up of our own railroad trains.

One long-time fixture of the freight trains that pass my way is the little old CABOOSE that has always bounced and swayed along at the tail end of any and all freights. It is the "private" car of the conductor and brakemen.

The observation cupola on top of the caboose from which the tail end brakeman kept an eye on the rolling, rocking cars up ahead, has been deleted. And on most modern cabooses, the bay windows on the sides, which provided additional "look-ahead" vantage points, have been eliminated. The extreme lengths of modern trains and the fact that the caboose now is always the smallest car in the train, makes tail end observation quite impossible.

But to my six year old great grandson, Jason White, the caboose, in spite of its size, is still the most intriguing part of a train. Who can tell—we may have another railroad buff in the family.

XI

LATE DEVELOPMENTS—THE STORY CITY BRANCH—CENTRAL IOWA ABANDONMENTS—THE IOWA PLAN OF REHABILITATION—FEDERAL RAILROAD AID—AMTRAK—THE NEW CONRAIL SYSTEM

THE STORY CITY BRANCH

Reference has been made several times heretofore in this story of Iowa railroads to the Northwestern's branch line from Marshalltown to Story City—a distance of about forty miles. Constructed about 1880, it has had an up and down history of growth to a real revenue producer, a decline to marginal value in the depression years, finally to a cancellation of all trains and a subsequent struggle concerning abandonment of the line. In the meantime, the Northwestern has continued to pay taxes on the unused tracks.

After many lengthy hearings over the years, a ruling has been handed down (January 17, 1977) out of Washington by the Interstate Commerce Commission to the effect that the C & N W must maintain service on

the line as far as Zearing, about half the total trackage. Permission was granted to abandon and eliminate the rest of the line.

But, as expected, the Northwestern has, since the above date, appealed the ICC ruling to a federal circuit court which probably will delay any further decision-making for another year or so.

No trains have operated over the line for more than five years nor has any repair or maintenance work been done. A look at the ancient trackage where visible in the overgrowth of weeds, brush and even trees indicates that considerable time will elapse before traffic can be resumed. In most places completely new grading will be required, bridges rebuilt, new ties and rails laid, and sidings modernized to carry the large capacity grain cars and the heavy diesel engines now in use.

Meanwhile, farmers as well as grain and fertilizer businesses will be looking ahead hopefully to a return of rail transportation for their products. Perhaps the Iowa three-way cooperative plan might, in the foreseeable future, enter into the rehabilitation of the Story City Branch, but at this writing that action appears to be only a faint possibility.

CENTRAL IOWA ABANDONMENTS

Within the past two years the Northwestern Railroad has received sanction from the Interstate Commerce Commission to tear up the rails of two of its principal central Iowa branch lines. The branches in question are parts of the Tama to Jewel Junction and on into western Iowa line and the Belle Plaine line that extended through Mason City to Sanborn, Minnesota. Both at one time were very productive feeder lines to the main line Omaha to Chicago tracks. Old timers remember, in particular, the many long stock trains that rolled into the two junction points almost daily on their way to the packing houses.

Now the Tama branch operates only to Toledo, Garwin, Gladbrook, Beaman, and Conrad (28 miles) to provide freight service to those five aggressive centers of agricultural interests. The Belle Plaine line (once 240 miles long) is completely torn up and all facilities abandoned.

The counties through which these extensive branch lines passed have lost all the tax revenue paid through the years by the Northwestern and the central Iowa towns of Elberon, Clutier, Dike, Whitten, Gifford, and others are left with no railroad service.

The trackless roadbeds, rights of way, bridges, telegraph poles, fences, and grade crossings are gradually disappearing, aided and abetted by the forces of nature. In some areas the right of way has been sold to adjoining land owners but in many places it has become just a very lengthy weed patch from one town site to another.

Now, as of April 1977, the Northwestern has filed notice of plans to abandon, within the next three years, 380 additional miles of its once extensive branch line system. Included in this mileage would be another segment of the Tama branch from Lawn Hill through Jewel Junction to Harcourt, and all of the Oelwein to Dubuque line. This latter rail line was once the Chicago Great Western's main line branch that pro-

vided both passenger and freight service from the Twin Cities and Kansas City to Chicago.

These and another 200 miles or so are either in the process of abandonment or are considered to be "subject to potential abandonment" in the near future.

Other Iowa railroads also have similar programs of branch line elimination under consideration or actually in process. The Milwaukee Road anticipates abandonment within the next three years of 300 miles of track plus 280 more miles potentially planned for destruction.

Also, the Burlington Northern expects to abandon 131 miles, the Illinois Central—81 miles; the Rock Island—38 miles; and the Norfolk and Western—24 miles.

The above abandonment figures are contained in proposals filed with the Interstate Commerce Commission in April 1977. The railroads' plans specify the various branch lines they expect to discontinue within that time but actual abandonments will be subject to ICC approval.

Thus, the once very extensive Iowa rail network continues to dwindle at an ever increasing rate.

THE IOWA PLAN OF REHABILITATION

Iowa's latest railway assistance program—in effect for the past three years—provides for rehabilitation of trackage on selected branch lines in an effort to halt further abandonments within the state. More than 800 miles of Iowa rails have been torn up in recent years and many more branches are threatened with deletion.

The Iowa plan is a cooperative venture involving the three vitally interested parties—the state, the shippers along the line, and the railroad, each providing one third of the cost. The latter may be extended a loan, if needed, from the state to be repaid out of the increased traffic over the rebuilt trackage. Instead of the destruction of a specific segment of track that may be declared vital to the agricultural economy of the area, the three partners agree to improve the roadbed, lay new rails and generally make the line and its sidings usable once again.

The first segment of rehabilitation was a considerable length of the Milwaukee's Des Moines to Spirit Lake line in northwest Iowa. The results have been most gratifying to all concerned.

Late in 1976, the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) was reported to have approved a $1,500,000 contract for reconstruction this year (1977) of 22 miles of Milwaukee track in northeast Iowa. Three segments of track of roughly 10 miles each are designated for improvement—all are parts of the Milwaukee's Iowa-Dakota Division extending from Marquette on the Mississippi to Rapid City in South Dakota. It was the first line to span the northern section of Iowa.

An energetic group of organized grain shippers has been largely responsible for this latest move to rebuild Iowa's threatened branch railroads. The DOT further advises that this contract is actually the first phase of a ten year reconstruction project designed to upgrade the line

all the way from Marquette to Sheldon—encouraging news indeed for the many other seekers of assistance and cooperation from the railroad and the state.

A recent newspaper story tells of the efforts of a group of central Iowans to gain support for saving the 75 mile long Rock Island branch line between Vinton and Iowa Falls. The Benton-Hardin-Grundy-Tama Railroad Association has been organized to petition the DOT for inclusion of their railroad in future rehabilitation plans. The line in question has served the above counties for more than 100 years but is now threatened with abandonment.

More than a score of shippers have raised a considerable fund of money and the association now hopes to enlist the aid of the state and the Rock Island Railroad in their behalf. The plan to improve only a section at a time, as indicated above for the Milwaukee Line, has been recommended.

On June 1, 1977, a new contract was approved by the Iowa DOT for upgrading the Northwestern branch line from Kanawha to Belmond to Clarion at an estimated cost of $1,073,000. Again, the project is a joint undertaking of shippers, state and railroad.

At the same time, the DOT reported that since the state's program of cooperative aid was started in 1973, it has contracted for upgrading a total of 671 miles of branch line and is negotiating on an additional 623 miles.

No doubt there are many other community groups of shippers and interested businessmen that would like to see the legislature continue its present plan of branch line salvation. A continuation of freight service throughout the state is vital to the life of the smaller communities in particular, and certainly very vital to the agricultural economy of the state.

So it is hoped that the annual appropriations to the DOT for railroad improvements will continue and that the cooperation of shippers, state and railways will remain as effective as at present. So far there has been quite prompt action in getting projects underway—in welcome contrast to the federal aid program still entangled in lengthy planning and endless red tape.

FEDERAL RAILROAD AID

In January 1976, the Congress passed a $6.4 billion federal aid bill to be allocated nationwide to the states and railroads that are deemed the most needful. But it was made clear that very little, if any, of the assistance would be allocated for the rebuilding of branch lines—Iowa's most immediate and demanding need. Two years later the distribution of those funds is still in the "study" stage with no actual allocations made and no definite plans for same.

One phase of the study, "TRAFFIC DENSITY", identifies Iowa as having an "excess capacity" or, in other words, too many competing trunk line railroads operating between Chicago and Omaha. Of course, that "density" dates back to the very early pattern of railway development in the state as described in the first chapters of this book—the highly competitive race by five major lines to link those two cities and connect

with the Union Pacific. That pattern has continued to be the basic flow of traffic across Iowa for more than a century and is indeed a relatively high density, highly competitive corridor.

The rapid coverage of every county in the state that followed was a consequence of the demand for rail service by every new community that settled the rolling prairies. At the present time Iowa has approximately 9,000 miles of operating railroads owned by sixteen companies and ranks fifth in the nation in that category while only twenty fifth in area and population. 80% of that trackage is what is left of the vast branch line coverage that was constructed in the late 1800's. And this 80% is the part that the Iowa DOT, grain and fertilizer dealers, and the agricultural industry are interested in preserving.

But the federal administrators have declared their interest lies only in the 20% of Iowa's mileage—the original trackage across the state. Their approach to the Iowa situation is that federal aid should be allocated to only one or two of the five trunk lines, (probably rightly so) and suggest ways and means to reduce the congestion in that traffic corridor.

First, they suggest consolidations and mergers, something that has been argued and debated through hearings and court fights for twenty or more years. As a second alternative, the railroads might arrange joint trackage agreements thus making it possible to concentrate rebuilding funds on only one or two lines—a move that certainly makes sense. But mutual agreement on which roads would be selected might be a decision the companies would find hard to come by.

A recent encouraging news release concerning the above second alternative has just recently been issued by the Interstate Commerce Commission. It reports that the Milwaukee Road has been granted permission to operate its through freight service (between Chicago and Kansas City) over Rock Island trackage that closely parallels their own rails from Muscatine, Iowa to Polo, Missouri. This news would indicate a mutual agreement has been reached between the two lines that would clear the way for federal aid to renovate the Rock Island tracks and could spell eventual abandonment for the Milwaukee line. In any event, it appears to be the first Iowa breakthrough in the Commerce Commission's second alternative as a means of alleviating excess rail capacity.

As a third alternative, the federal DOT proposes a "downgrading" of one or more of the five Iowa trunk lines. It is questionable as to what is meant by "downgrading"—possibly abandonment—but it suggests something that any one of the roads would certainly resist to the bitter end.

These proposed solutions to the question of which Iowa railroads will ultimately be selected as the recipients of federal aid seem at best a far off answer. There is even the possibility that the "musts" set forth by Washington could be delayed or not complied with at all and, as a result, Iowa's share of the aid allocated elsewhere.

But a midsummer (1977) news story out of the general offices of the Northwestern Railroad offers some good news relative to that line's double trackage across Iowa. It announced that the C N W had successfully negotiated a sizeable loan from the federal government under the 1976 Aid Bill for the rehabilitation of its main line from Missouri

Valley to Marshalltown. The project calls for laying new continuous welded rails (no more monotonous clickety-clack sound effects) on updated road bed with new ties and ballast—a promise of a return to the top quality double trackage of days gone by. It would also indicate that the Northwestern has been selected as the first of the across Iowa trunk lines to qualify for federal help under the Aid Bill. If so the report speaks well for the future of the employee owned Northwestern and for its maintenance of leadership among Iowa railroads.

It is acknowledged that a large part of Iowa's trackage is owned by railroads that, at present, are in serious financial difficulties and are in no position to allocate large sums of money to rebuilding. Long delays in the settlement of government aid distribution would certainly result in a continuation of track deterioration to the point of no return for many lines. In short, continuing a "talk-and-do-nothing" attitude would eventually result in a survival of the fittest and a final demise of those lines that failed the test.

So for the immediate future at least the Iowa cooperative plan as approved and supported by legislative action from year to year and administered by the state's DOT has the best chance of getting results. Under this plan, projects have already been completed and others are under contract. Shippers have lent enthusiastic support and the railroads have cooperated within the limitations of their financial conditions. And, most important, the results are immediate and have already proven successful—not subject to lengthy bureaucratic delays in Washington.

AMTRAK

An entirely new concept of railroad passenger service was inaugurated, with the blessings of the federal government in 1970 and was called Amtrak. It was the result of a considerable hue and cry for a resumption of intercity passenger service, particularly in the eastern corridor of travel and was instituted in the face of extensive protests of experienced railroad executives. They wanted no part in a business that had been checked off as a loser a good many years before and they predicted that the new federally subsidized company could not possibly generate enough traffic to show a profit or even pay expenses. They further prophesied that Amtrak would be back to the Congress for more financing, a prophesy that has come true not once but several times in recent years.

A news item of February 1977 reports that Amtrak's loss in fiscal 1976 was $441 million, compared to $352 million in 1975. Further, the company projected even greater deficits of $483 million in 1977 and $534 million in 1978.

The National Railroad Passenger Corporation, known as Amtrak, came into existence in May 1971 and immediately became the recipient of a very substantial federal starting subsidy. Passenger cars of all kinds were purchased from the rolling stock of many railroads' mothballed equipment and diesel locomotives were also purchased. The first trains to operate were mixtures of cars from different railroads, of many colors and designs, all definitely showing the ravages of time inside and out.

This "Raggedy-Ann" exterior appearance and the outdated interiors of the passenger cars, plus numerous breakdowns in the heating and air conditioning, the water service and the electrical conveniences gave the travelling public a decidedly poor first impression of Amtrak service. Later, as new equipment was delivered, the trains took on a fresh new look with a red, white and blue color scheme and the name Amtrak prominently displayed on all cars.

Operation was first instituted in the busy eastern corridor where the demand for passenger service had been the loudest. Amtrak has no corporate connection with existing railroads, but, by contract, it operates its trains over the latters' rails which, as has been noted heretofore, are sadly lacking in maintenance in many cases. As a result, the new trains quite often encounter "slow" orders forcing late arrivals; schedules are subject to revisions to the slower side; and derailments seem to make the headlines all too frequently. These conditions still exist to this day.

In the beginning 13 major trunk line railroads signed contracts with Amtrak for the operation of trains over their rails. Three lines—the Denver Rio Grande Western, the Rock Island, and the Southern Railway chose not to operate under the Amtrak system and, as a result, were required to continue their intercity passenger service until January 1975 after which they could request permission to discontinue their trains. Commuter passenger service was not involved in the new regulations.

In response to petitions for passenger service from other parts of the country, Amtrak has gradually reached out to meet at least a portion of the demands. The company has been careful to spread their coverage rather thin, travelling only those routes that promise the most patronage, preferably the long haul routes. Present law permits the establishment of only one new experimental route each year.

The accompanying map pictures the coast-to-coast coverage as of early 1977. Briefly, the red, white and blue streamliners span the northwest over the Burlington Northern trackage between Chicago and Seattle; over Burlington-Union Pacific-Southern Pacific tracks Chicago to San Francisco with a newly added train between Ogden, Utah and the Pacific Northwest; on the Santa Fe to Los Angeles; and via Southern Pacific lines across the southwest from New Orleans to Los Angeles. The many other Amtrak routes are shown on the map.

The only service in Iowa is the Burlington-Union Pacific-Southern Pacific route to San Francisco with stops at Burlington, Ottumwa, Creston and Council Bluffs. Also, the Santa Fe route cuts across the extreme southeast corner of Iowa and may be boarded at Ft. Madison. An Amtrak train has been operating between Chicago and Dubuque but late reports indicate that its days are numbered because of limited patronage.

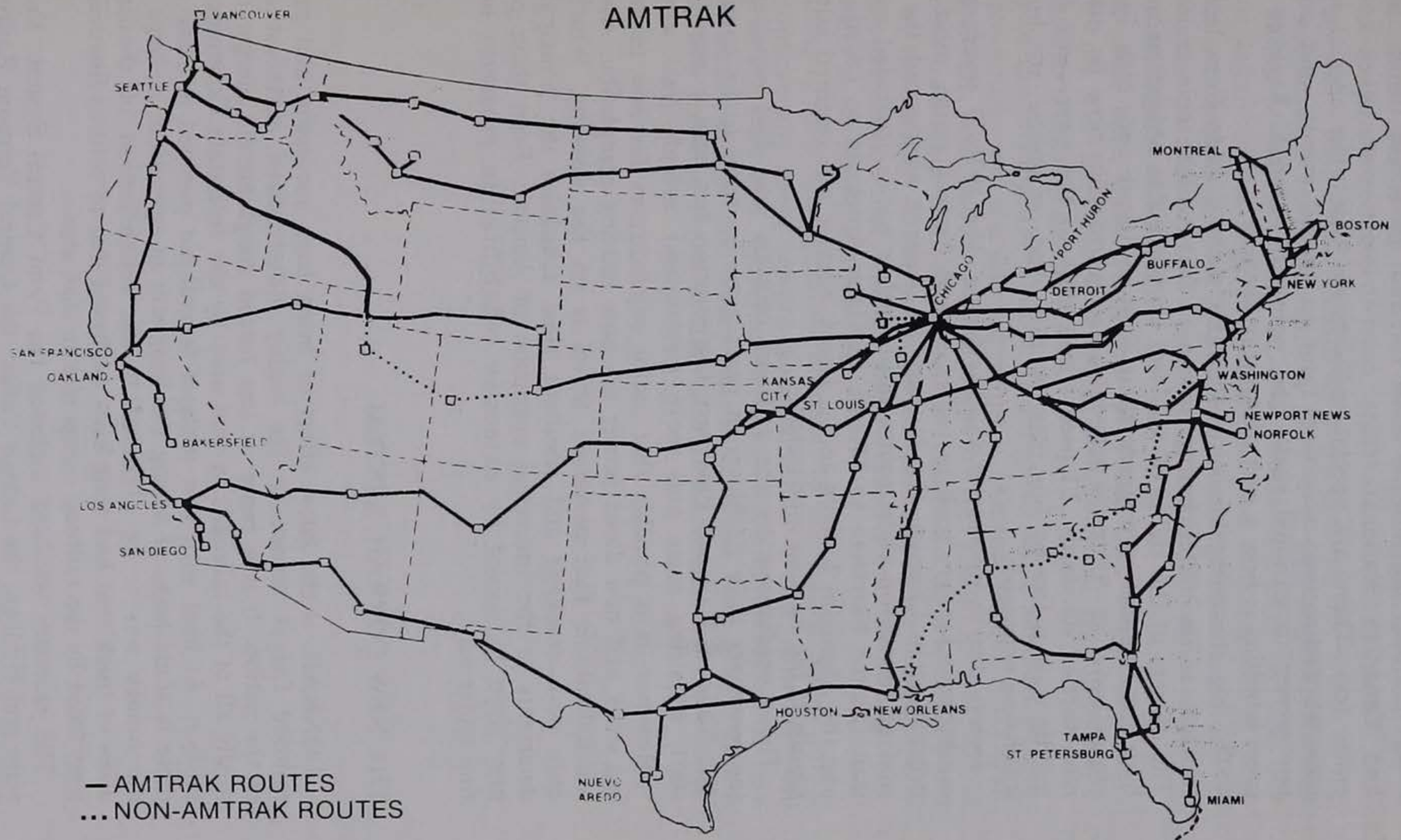
There have been some attempts made to interest Amtrak officials in the inauguration of service between Chicago and Omaha over the Northwestern or Rock Island tracks but all attempts have met with little encouragement.

Amtrak has recently embarked on an all-out program to make their nationwide train travel more inviting and more complete. All new cars of the latest design and incorporating all the new travel comforts make

INTERCITY RAIL PASSENGER ROUTES

National Railroad Passenger Corporation

AMTRAK



— AMTRAK ROUTES
... NON-AMTRAK ROUTES

up these streamliners. And schools of instruction in customer relations and customer service are a part of employee training.

Reservations can now be made for joint passenger travel on Amtrak and Canadian National trains coast-to-coast—one ticket covers the entire trip. There are special inducements that offer special rent-a-car rates at destination; excursion rates to special events; and connecting bus service to national parks and points of interest. Baggage and express handling is now a part of Amtrak service.

The big stumbling block to Amtrak's success, aside from lack of patronage, is the deteriorating trackage over which their trains travel. The owners of the rights of way feel no particular obligation or do not have the finances to upgrade their lines to insure safe high speed passenger travel so Amtrak's schedules are notoriously slow by other common carrier standards. Elapsed travel time to the west coast from the middle west is less by bus than by rail. And, of course, the bus trip is much less expensive.

Delays due to weather is another factor. The 1976-77 severe cold December and January took its toll of several Amtrak trains, most of them originating in Chicago. On January 18, Amtrak announced the suspension of service on eight routes until further notice. Included were such trains as the Floridian to Miami, the Inter-American to Laredo, Texas, and the Abraham Lincoln to St. Louis. Service was restored later in the month as the weather moderated.

Those predictions by the railroad officials who had experienced all the passenger train problems in years gone by seem to be coming true. The National Railroad Passenger Corporation has been a loser from the start, requiring more and more government subsidy year after year.

However, it is possible that major expenditures for new modern rolling stock and new diesel power are now nearing completion. Also, there are indications that passenger travel is on the upswing. Which leaves only poor trackage and resultant slow schedules the principal major deterrents to the successful operation of Amtrak. Even these problems may soon be solved by extensive rehabilitation programs now getting under way.

THE NEW CONRAIL SYSTEM

CONRAIL is the latest effort to bring back successful and profitable railroad freight service to the highly industrialized northeast corridor of the nation. It is a more or less forced conglomerate merger of practically all of the railroads in that area by the Interstate Commerce Commission. At least with vast sums of federal aid pumped into the project, there is some hope of saving the lines still in operation. A large part of the money was to be allocated to the rehabilitation of thousands of miles of track that had long been neglected due to serious financial problems faced by the railroad companies in that area.

The railroads involved included the Penn Central System, the Delaware and Hudson, the Lehigh Valley, the Central Vermont Railroad, the Central of New Jersey and several others. It is primarily a freight only

operation except that CONRAIL is also saddled with the management and operation of all commuter passenger service in the area. AMTRAK passenger trains operate by contract over some of CONRAIL's lines but only as a separate company.

Congressionally authorized, CONRAIL took over the operations of the troubled northeastern railroads April 1, 1976, and was originally funded with $2 billion of federal money. It is, of course, too early to judge the success or failure of the huge new enterprise and early reports of large losses are not surprising. The corporation has reported a loss of $139 million for the third quarter of its operation and a $205 million loss for the first nine months of operation.

At the same time, management has proposed that within sixty days extensive cuts will be made in existing commuter service—presumably in the interest of operational economy.

So, as of this writing, the Federal Government has made two tremendous commitments into the railroad industry. Whether or not AMTRAK and CONRAIL will lead to further steps in the future toward all-out government ownership of all the railroads remains to be seen. Much will depend on the reaction of the public to the promise of revitalized freight and passenger service that would possibly result from the two government entries in the transportation field.

One thing is sure—the operating railroads of the United States would bitterly oppose any move toward nationalization of the American rail industry to the very end. Government ownership and operation of railroads in Canada and several European countries has been a loser profitwise for many years—a constant drain on the economies of those nations.

ADDENDUM

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF RAILROAD TRAVEL IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

EARLIEST RECOLLECTIONS

As I look back through the years, I wonder when I first became enamored with the railroads—when I first felt awed at the might and power of the thundering, hissing locomotives and the intensely interesting strings of cars they pulled. There seems to be no exact time in my life when that happened, so I suppose it was just a part of growing up near the railroad, in a town where the trains were such an important part of everyday life. In any event, the bug must have bitten me very early.

Some of my earliest childhood recollections have to do with the railroads—their close proximity to our home in State Center—the characteristic noises of whistles, bells and panting sounds of locomotives—watching the passenger trains and the local freights as they made their daily stops at our depot—hearing the grown up conversation that had so much to do with those trains. All of it must have made a strong impression on my very early years and had a strong tendency toward instilling the romance of the rails in my blood.

It is quite generally agreed among railroad buffs that the romance was pretty much centered in the old steam locomotive—the IRON HORSE of years gone by. Pictorial histories of the railroads are largely devoted to characteristic pictures of the classic steamers at the head of a speeding passenger train or of a much larger locomotive belching smoke as it labored up the grade with a heavy load of freight cars. And usually it would show the "Hogger" (the engineer) on his throne in the cab, his right arm resting on the window ledge and his left hand gripping the throttle. The conductor was always in charge of the train, but to the romantics the engineer was the "top banana", the one whose deft manipulation of throttle and brakes would bring the train safely and on time to its destination.

The demise of the steamers and the takeover by the diesel locomotives seemingly took some of the romantic stature away from the head end of the train. But to me it still remains up there with the mighty power plants of the modern age—the engineer still occupies his throne seat, still in command of his following train, his job possibly made a little easier with the innovation of two-way radios, and more sophisticated controls at his command.

Very early in my life, probably while still a babe in arms, I rode the Northwestern local passenger trains to Marshalltown and Boone for visits

with relatives (my parents once told me so). Those were my introductions to train travel—short trips but the only means of travel at the time—and they were followed with numerous similar journeys to family gatherings at Christmas time or at Thanksgiving or to just visits.

My earliest recollections of these trips date back to when I was about six years old—to the year 1907. I remember the fascination of each ride, all on the locals that stopped at every town and how I looked forward to each succeeding journey. I was becoming a seasoned traveller—knew the station stops and pretty well conversant with most arrival times.

CANADIAN JOURNEYS

Early in 1910 our family moved from State Center to western Canada—to a new life of farming on the prairies of Saskatchewan (see *Early Dawn* published in 1975). Dad and his boxcars of horses and mules, chickens, furniture and household goods left on February 22nd over the G & M branch to Grinnell, was switched over to the Iowa Central main line and headed north via the Great Northern to Dundurn. The latter town, 650 miles northwest of Winnipeg, was to become our new home town.

Mother and her two sons (I was nine and Joe seven years old) began the trip on March 3rd over the same route but by passenger train, of course. The start of our journey was via the Iowa Central local from Marshalltown to St. Paul, Minnesota—an all day ride that could hardly be classified as 1st class. But the next leg was entirely different—an all night ride on the Great Northern Railroad to Winnipeg in the luxury of a pullman sleeping car. This was indeed an eye opener for Joe and me. It was our first exposure to the cleanliness and niceties of sleeping car accommodations and was a decided contrast to our Iowa Central day coach ride. Soon after boarding the train, Mother escorted us into the dining car for our first adventure in eating dinner (we called it supper) on the train. The immaculate table settings, the waiters in spotless white, the service and, most of all, the food were all sources of amazement to two small boys.

After a full day's layover in Winnipeg, we boarded a Canadian National train for the final 18 hour ride to our destination—Dundurn, Saskatchewan. Again, we enjoyed the comforts of a first class standard sleeping car as well as breakfast and lunch in the diner and we arrived only a day after our boxcar-riding head of the family had completed his slow journey. His trip took 11 long days and nights—ours only 2 nights and 2½ days.

During the first three years of the six we lived in Canada, we made two trips back to State Center for the Christmas holidays and winter visits with relatives and friends. All of these round trippers were over practically the same route and the same railroads.

Then, in the summer of 1913, I was told that plans had been made for me to live with my uncle and family in Boone, Iowa, and attend school there during the coming school year. The trip down was made all alone—quite an adventure for a twelve year old farm boy—but it was the same trip that I had already made a couple of times before. The experience

gained on those previous journeys, the close attention to travel details—a part of my early railroad romanticism—helped to make all connections and assured a safe arrival at Boone. I remember accumulating a bundle of timetables and studying them thoroughly as the wheels clicked away the 1500 miles of the trip.

The return home for the summer was made without mishap the following June. And twice more in succeeding years I made the same round trip—also alone. By now I suppose I considered myself an experienced traveller—over that particular route at least. The sequence of towns and cities through which we passed was well memorized and the arrival and departure times of trains involved were equally well known. The only variation in the trip was the Iowa-Minnesota segment. I recall travelling at different times over the Iowa Central, Rock Island, and the Northwestern in starting or finishing that part of the ride.

In 1916 the family moved back to Iowa—to Marshalltown when Dad became Commandant of the Iowa Soldiers Home. It was to be many years before I would again ride the rails over that old familiar route. They were over long distances but every one was a real thrill for me, probably because I was adding to my interest in the railroads and rapidly advancing my status as a railroad buff.

During the long days enroute to and from Canada, I not only studied the literature and timetables of the roads over which I was riding, I also picked up here and there material and maps of other areas, the railroads that covered them and the trains that made their daily runs from such cities as Chicago, St. Louis, Denver, and Omaha. I must admit that some of the information gleaned from those folders has stuck with me right up to the present.

HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE TRAVELS

Eight years of high school and college athletics furthered my railroad travel experience considerably because all trips to out-of-town games were made by rail. Bus service was yet to be developed and automobiles coupled with Iowa's dirt roads were none too dependable.

As a freshman at Boone High School in 1915 my football game experience was limited to one very brief bit of action—just two plays—the last of which put me on the sidelines for the "duration". The game was played at Nevada involving a 40 miles round trip train ride on the Northwestern locals.

The next fall I began a three year athletic stretch at Marshalltown High School. During those years of both football and basketball we travelled by train to all out-of-town games at Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Cedar Rapids, Grinnell, Oskaloosa, Boone and many other central Iowa cities. All were on local passenger trains of the Northwestern, Great Western and M & St. L railroads. I enjoyed each and every ride all of which gave me opportunities to learn the names and locations of all the towns in the area and how to get to same.

My freshman year at Grinnell College was just a lot of head knocking against the varsity—we were ineligible for interscholastic competition.

But my athletic travels were broadened a great deal during my three years of competition as an upper classman. Grinnell was a member of the Missouri Valley Conference at that time, so among the states visited for football and basketball games were Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska and, of course, we also played several Iowa institutions.

The football trips to St. Louis and Washington Universities as well as the University of Missouri were by special pullman cars via the M & St. L and Wabash Railways. Also, there was the long four day basketball trip each year to Kansas and Oklahoma to play Kansas State, Kansas University and Oklahoma University on successive days. We first rode the Rock Island to Des Moines and Kansas City and from there via Union Pacific to Manhattan for a night game; back to Lawrence, Kansas the next day to take on the University Friday night; then a night ride by pullman to Norman, Oklahoma for an afternoon game against the Sooners. Finally, there was the long ride back to Grinnell for a completely exhausted group of weary travellers. Usually it was a win one-lose two trip.

These longer trips revealed that among my teammates there were some who had little or no experience in train travel, particularly as sleeping car passengers. So I had many opportunities to show off my travel know-how in ways that I trust were not too obnoxious. Those trips also broadened my own knowledge of the railroads in areas that were new to me.

After my graduation from Grinnell, I continued in the field of athletics but as a coach this time. But first there occurred an all-important event in my young life—a wedding to my high school sweetheart, Adaline Thayer, and a not so glamorous honeymoon trip to my job at Sanborn, Iowa via train, of course. It was a day long journey by M & St. L and Milwaukee local passenger trains, not particularly by choice—rather because we didn't own an automobile until a couple of years later.

During that brief stretch as a coach and teacher (2 years) we continued to use the locals for travelling the 200 miles back and forth between Sanborn and our home base at Marshalltown for holiday breaks and summer vacations. In so doing we tried three or four different routes over different railroads using different junction points and in the process I gained added knowledge of Iowa railroads, this time of the northwest sector.

BUSINESS TRIPS

In the years from about 1926 to 1945 while employed at Lennox Furnace and at Fisher Governor Companies, I made a number of train trips to Chicago to meetings and trade shows. Also, there was one to Michigan and another to Toronto, Canada over the Grand Trunk and Michigan Central railroads. All of them added to the railway lore that I continued to accumulate.

By 1945, I was in business for myself—the Marshall Office and Marshall Printing Companies—and buying trips to gift shows in Kansas City and Minneapolis and the National Stationers Show in Chicago became annual events to attend. The latter was a tedious three or four days of

hard work so the ride home on the streamliner City of Denver was a welcome four hours of relaxation.

PLEASURE—VACATIONS—SIGHTSEEING

—1948—

In celebration of our twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, Adaline and I enjoyed, in 1948, a long relaxing round trip to the west coast—a trip that we had talked about and looked forward to for a long time.

To formulate plans, I first wrote to the Great Northern and Southern Pacific railway passenger offices for literature and schedules. From these I laid out a tentative route for a three week tour and finally submitted the whole layout to the G.N. offices. In return, I soon received a very comprehensive and detailed itinerary that included rail connections, lay-overs as requested, information about and reservations at Glacier Park, and, of course, the total package cost. All that was left to do was select a departure date, authorize the preparation of tickets and submit a check to cover same.

In due time the mailman brought us an envelope containing our vacation trip tickets, reservations, and all other detailed instructions pertaining to our package deal. Nowadays all this service is readily available at the many travel agencies. But in 1948 we found the Great Northern passenger agent's office most efficient and cooperative in lining up our trip—there wasn't a single hitch in the entire journey.

The departure from Marshalltown was on the City of Denver, but only to Boone where, after a short wait, we boarded the Overland Limited for the ride to San Francisco. The Overland was a "descendant" of the very first Chicago to San Francisco through train over the newly completed Northwestern-Union Pacific-Southern Pacific trackage that was little changed from the original route. We opted for this name train instead of the faster City of San Francisco because it offered a more leisurely and more comfortable ride and its schedule was timed to travel the most interesting and spectacular parts of the trip in the daylight hours. But the Overland didn't stop at Marshalltown—hence the short hop to Boone at the start.

By morning we were rolling over the Union Pacific tracks in western Nebraska, following quite closely the covered wagon trails of the 49ers along the North Platte River to Cheyenne and over famous South Pass to Ogden, Utah. The scenery through the mountains was thoroughly enjoyed as we alternated between our pullman quarters, the comforts of the lounge car, and the luxury of the dining car. Now we were actually partaking of the niceties similar to those we had observed at the Marshalltown station twenty years before as old No. 13 slowly pulled out under the watchful eyes of the Whitehill family.

At Ogden the Southern Pacific took command of our "Overland Limited" for the remaining part of the trip to the coast. We crossed Wyoming during the night and from Reno, Nevada, in the morning, started the climb over the High Sierras at Donner Pass. To help us over the top and to help slow our descent down the west slope, a second large locomotive was added to the tail end of our train.

This last portion of the ride provided an abundance of spectacular mountain scenery, particularly the ride down along the American River canyon to Sacramento. The S.P. terminal at Oakland was the end of the train ride—from there we were ushered aboard the ferry boat for the ride across the bay to San Francisco.

After a day and a half in the Golden Gate city, we again crossed over to Oakland and boarded the northbound Southern Pacific to Gold Hill in southern Oregon for a few days visit with my cousins and with Adaline's brother and family. This was Rogue River-Crater Lake country—great for fishing and for sightseeing—we enjoyed both.

Shortly, we were back on the rails headed north overnight to Portland and Seattle. Our Great Northern streamliner, the "Western Star" that left Seattle in early evening, proved to be newer and more modern than the "Overland", with many new innovations that added to passenger comfort. It was indeed a super train.

We woke up in the morning at Spokane and from there through more exciting scenery to Belton, the western entrance to Glacier Park, where we were met by very courteous mini-bus drivers for the short drive to the Great Northern's Lake McDonald Hotel. The next day's itinerary called for the drive by limousine up the Going-to-the-Sun Highway—a spectacular ride up the west side of the mountains to the top of the Continental Divide and down the east slope to Many Glacier Hotel where for two days we enjoyed the beauty of the glaciers, the mountains, and the forests. The hotel accommodations and the food were all strictly first class.

The Great Northern Railway, at that time at least, owned all resort and transportation facilities in Glacier Park. There were no private commercial activities in evidence anywhere within the park boundaries. The stop-over there was certainly an enjoyable experience.

The evening of the third day we were taken to East Glacier where we reboarded the "Western Star" for a continuation of the trip through Grand Forks and Fargo, to the Twin Cities. This day's travel provided a decided change in scenery, from the majestic mountains of Glacier to the flat plains of Montana, North Dakota and the Red River Valley of Minnesota. The Great Northern (now the Burlington Northern) is the northernmost rail line across the American Northwest.

From Minneapolis we started the final leg of the trip over the Chicago Great Western to Marshalltown. It was a far cry from the luxury of the "Overland" and the "Western Star". The one pullman car in which we had reserved a seat was dirty and dusty—we wondered what the day coach was like. There were only two other occupants in the whole car. Against our better judgment, we decided to try the diner for our 25th anniversary dinner—we had no other choice.

What passed for the diner was a small section of the club car. Three or four trainmen were enjoying (?) their evening meal and discussing the disturbing news that this train would very soon be cancelled. By the time we had finished our *no* good meal the trainmen were gone, we were alone with one attendant who we concluded was waiter, chef and dishwasher. We had to agree that maybe the train should have been cancelled a long time ago.

But our spirits were given a definite boost when we piled off the train at eleven o'clock at night to find a welcoming party of parents and our children there to greet us and wish us a happy anniversary that was almost over.

Except for the final leg it was a great trip, the memory of which stands out even now as probably one of our most enjoyable vacation rail journeys.

—1953—

In the spring of 1953 my travelling partner and I set out on another railroad journey, this time to Florida. Her parents wanted a couple of volunteers to drive them home from a winter in the sunny south and we were glad to accommodate them.

A visit with the Marshalltown station agent provided me with some information on the best routes, accommodations and cost, all gathered from his "Bible", the Railroad Guide. After we decided on a departure date, the agent proceeded to make the reservations and to make out our lengthy strip tickets, necessitated by the several railroads that were involved. We went to Chicago on the Northwestern and transferred over to the Union Station where we boarded our name train, the Floridian—it could have been a one time predecessor of today's Amtrak train of the same name. It was a regularly scheduled Pennsylvania train to which our pullman "home" for the next two days and nights, was attached. At Cincinnati we were switched over to the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, to the Central of Georgia at Atlanta, and finally, to the Atlantic Coast Line for the last part of the run to St. Petersburg. The joint effort of the participating railroads was obviously set up to handle through passenger traffic from Chicago to Florida with the least possible inconvenience to their patrons. The trip wasn't designed for speed but, instead, was relaxing and comfortable and the service was more than acceptable.

I had a great time with a fistful of timetables that kept me busy reading schedules and literature covering the several railroads over which we were travelling.

—1957—

Four years later we rode the Rock Island-Southern Pacific Golden State Limited from Des Moines to El Paso, Texas on a visit to brother Joe and his wife, Verna. This diesel powered, comparatively new streamliner was rated at one time as one of the top luxury trains to Southern California from Chicago.

The Rock Island operated through sleeping car service originating at Minneapolis on the Twin Star Rocket and continuing all the way to the coast. We went aboard at Des Moines. At Kansas City, during the night, our pullman was picked up by the Golden State and headed out across Kansas. By morning we had become a "ward" of the Southern Pacific with S P power units and crew and were starting the long diagonal route

across New Mexico, arriving in El Paso in late afternoon. The return trip two weeks later was over the same route.

This Texas trip was relaxing, but the country through which we passed was uninteresting and quite monotonous—very few towns, all small after leaving Wichita, and as a result, stops were few and far between. The Golden State was a fine luxury train with all the modern appointments for passenger comfort, but the roadbed wasn't in keeping with the quality of the train—it was showing evidence of lack of maintenance and slower speeds were required the farther south we went. It was a somewhat rough ride at times.

From the number of passengers riding the train and the sparsely populated country through which the line ran, it was pretty clear that this train relied almost entirely on terminal to terminal travellers. So it isn't surprising to note that the Golden State was one of the first of the coast trains to be discontinued—a victim of other faster trains, air travel, and the combination of automobiles and interstate highways.

—1960—

Our next adventure by rail was an AAA tour to the Pacific Northwest that included the inland passage boat trip to Alaska and a return trip through the Canadian Rockies over the Canadian Pacific Railway.

The tour originated in Chicago on the Northern Pacific's North Coast Limited, another of the western railroads' top ranked streamliners. We joined the group at St. Paul in early evening and quickly found that our travelling companions were all congenial, friendly folks from east of Chicago. We met them all in the spacious observation dome of the lounge car. Big George Holtz from New Jersey, our tour director, soon made his appearance and introduced us all around to the entire party of about twenty-five. In his own friendly manner, that we all came to admire, he made sure that we all got acquainted on this first evening out—and we were off to a great trip.

Our first stop the next morning was at Glendive, Montana for a fifteen minute break—already we had crossed two states, Minnesota and North Dakota. Everybody piled off the train for some leg stretching and to have a good look at our sleek twenty-three car streamliner. We had already given the interior, including the dining car, a thorough inspection and a vote of approval.

Again on board, most of us found seats in the forward end of the dome car that provided a view over the top of the entire train that included the landscape on both sides. It was a great spot for the camera fans. For many miles we followed along the north bank of the Yellowstone River before starting up the Continental Divide, one of the lowest crossings of all the western routes. By evening we were in Butte, Montana and the next morning we rolled down alongside the mighty Columbia River and into Portland, Oregon. After breakfast and a little time for shopping, we set out by bus back up the Columbia—a very scenic and interesting ride—and on up to Timberline Lodge high on the slopes of Mt. Hood. Here we spent the night in complete comfort with the dense forests below us and snow-blanketed mountain ski slopes above use.

The next afternoon it was back to Portland and a night train ride to Seattle. I suppose that every trip has to have one bad experience as far as accommodations are concerned—this was the one bad episode of the AAA tour. Our pullman, one of ancient vintage, was attached to a slower than slow "milk train" that stopped and started a hundred times during the night. But we weathered the experience and were able to laugh off the inconveniences and discomforts in the morning.

After a day and a night in Seattle, we took to the waters of Puget Sound for the journey by ship to Victoria, British Columbia and an overnight stay at the Empress Hotel in that city. Then another short boat ride over to the Canadian mainland at Vancouver, an afternoon of leisurely looking, a good dinner at the Hotel Vancouver and at day's end we boarded our cruise ship for the Inland Passage part of our trip. The Princess Louise was our home for eight days as we threaded our way through the islands and narrow passages with stops at Prince Rupert, Ketchikan and Juneau to the end of the run at Skagway.

Here we enjoyed the unusual narrow gauge railway ride on the White Pass and Yukon Railroad that climbs the precipitous pass up which the gold prospectors, in 1898, labored on foot on their way to the Yukon. Their trail up the mountainside can still be seen from the railroad. Our train took us as far as Carcross before turning back to Skagway and our tour ship which was by then readied for the return trip.

This round trip aboard ship was a most enjoyable part of the tour. The old "Princess" was well along in years, but was comfortable. The food was excellent and the service on the part of the crew was the best. We passed through fields of icebergs, saw numerous glaciers and an abundance of beautiful scenery. Except for a misty morning at Skagway, the weatherman was good to us.

From Vancouver we began the eastbound ride on a Canadian Pacific streamliner through the rugged beauty of the Canadian Rockies. We took full advantage of the dome liner to observe the ever changing scenery—that is until we approached the famous spiral tunnel that was a necessary part of the railway construction in order to gain necessary elevation for the climb to Kicking Horse Pass and the Continental Divide. The tunnel makes a complete loop, all the time maintaining the maximum possible climb upward, and finally emerges from the mountainside at a point considerably above the tunnel entrance. Our temporary exodus from the "dome" was railroad ordered in the interest of protection from an occasional falling rock.

Most of our party was back in the "dome" as the train topped the divide so we had a surprising view over the top of the cars. The locomotives and front cars entirely disappeared from view before our rear car completed the climb. It was clear evidence of the precipitousness of the climb up and the steep incline on the way down.

Our itinerary called for a twenty-four hour stop at the well known Lake Louise Chateau and a two-day stop at the beautiful castle-like Banff Hotel. Both resort hotels, on the east slope of the lofty Rockies provided the best in accommodations, food, and hard-to-forget scenic splendor, but most of us agreed that Banff was the choice of the two.

The second afternoon we once more boarded the Canadian Pacific for the run across the prairie provinces to Winnipeg. There was a sense of nostalgia for me as we crossed Saskatchewan only a hundred miles from the prairie farm where I lived for six years as a boy about fifty years before.

Our C P R train arrived in Winnipeg only minutes before departure time of our Great Northern connection to St. Paul, but efficient George was equal to the occasion. He rounded up several cabs and piled us in bags and baggage and we hustled off to the G N station barely in time to claim our pullman reservations. The next morning Adaline and I left for home by car and the rest of the group continued on to Chicago and the termination of the tour.

Most all of us agreed during that last evening's ride to St. Paul that our Alaska tour had been a great adventure. And we also agreed that a very great share of the credit was due our tour director, George Holtz. He looked after our problems and needs, quickly solved emergency difficulties like lost luggage, lost tour members (yes, those things did happen), minor complaints about this and that, and, in general, looked out for us like a mother hen with her brood. On the train or ship, at hotels and at restaurants, he had ways of getting extra service and the best of everything for his group.

—1964—

The next summer vacation we undertook was by rail all the way—a second train ride to the west coast (or nearly so) but by a different route. I had often read accounts and seen advertisements about the scenic beauty of the Burlington Zephyr route to San Francisco, so we decided to give it a try. Other bonus advantages of the Zephyr route that I had noted in the ads were the slower speed through the mountains to give the passengers a chance to enjoy the spectacular scenery and a time schedule that exploited the scenic parts of the trip.

The year was 1964 and all passenger trains through Marshalltown had been discontinued. So we drove to Fairfield to board the train. It was a unitized streamliner of the latest design throughout and was manned by courteous attendants and crewmen. Our "home-away-from-home" was a modern pullman bedroom, but we spent considerable time in the deluxe lounge car and even more time in the dome observation car.

The Frisco Zephyr would travel intact all the way to the coast from Chicago but over Burlington tracks to Denver—Denver Rio Grande Western Railroad to Salt Lake City—and Western Pacific to the coast. We went only to Sacramento where we visited Adaline's brother and wife.

Arrival in Denver was in the morning so we enjoyed the ride over and through the Rockies (via the Moffat Tunnel) and a full day of ever changing mountain scenery to Salt Lake City. As advertised, the pace was slow, sometimes necessitated by sharp curves and hairpin turns, but always providing plenty of time to look.

By Western Pacific we travelled across the barren lands of Wyoming and most of Nevada at night arriving in Reno in the morning where,

as on the Southern Pacific, we took on a "helper" locomotive to boost us over the Sierras and to lend slow-down assistance on the down side. This day's ride offered outstanding viewing, particularly the slow glide down the west slope with the Feather River almost always in view far below the rails over which we were rolling.

Today's modern Overland Amtrak route operates down the tremendously spectacular American River canyon and the equally beautiful Feather River route is lost to the travelling public—passenger trains no longer operate over the Western Pacific rails.

At the end of our visit with the Max Thayers, we went to the station to start our trip home and were advised that our Zephyr was on time, but due to a derailment somewhere up ahead, we were being rerouted over the Southern Pacific tracks up the American River canyon to Reno where we would return to the Western Pacific. There was no difference in the mileage so our schedule was maintained and we returned to Fairfield on time.

The California Zephyr trip lived up to all our expectations and to the promised advantages as contained in the advertisements.

—1970—

My next trip by rail was undertaken just before the complete collapse of passenger service in the United States and it would be a few years until Amtrak entered the picture.

I had always wanted to take my three grandsons up to the Saskatchewan prairie farm where I lived from 1910 to 1916. And since they had never experienced a long train trip, especially a ride in a pullman sleeping car, I decided that we should go by rail while it was still possible. The year was 1970.

There was no passenger service from Marshalltown to St. Paul, but I found there was still a Great Northern (now Burlington Northern) train to Grand Forks and a "puddle jumper" local on to Winnipeg. It was all that was left of the once busy three railroad (Soo Line, Northern Pacific, Great Northern) daily service between the Twin Cities and the Manitoba rail center.

So we drove to St. Paul and boarded the day coach of the train that once was rated as a luxury train—the Western Star that Adaline and I rode from Seattle to Minneapolis in 1948. Now the schedule had been slowed to a local status, stopping often at small towns and cities and gradually getting farther and farther behind time. But for the three boys—14, 16, and 18 years of age—there was much for them to absorb in this their first train ride. The local nature of the train with the constant flow of passengers and the regular trips through the train of the conductor and brakeman recalled for me the many local train rides of my early years in State Center.

At Grand Forks we changed trains to a two car motorized unit for a "rock-and-roll" ride across the border to Winnipeg. This was truly a local train—we didn't miss any towns regardless of size. After crossing the border, a Canadian customs representative came through the train

to make a rather hasty check of the passengers. His stop at our double seat to ask the usual questions about citizenship, destination and, in this case, the relationship between three boys and the old gent accompanying them, was another new experience for the grandsons.

At Winnipeg we had a few hours wait for our Canadian National train to Saskatoon, an overnight ride in a deluxe pullman car, still another first for the boys. We stowed our luggage in a depot locker and set out to see a little of that area of the city including the remains of Old Fort Garry and the Canadian National Hotel of the same name.

Shortly before midnight our Super Continental Limited, the C N's top flight transcontinental streamliner, was announced as being ready for boarding so we joined the crowd to find our cars and pullman accommodations. Two of the boys had roomettes in a different car from Brad's and my accommodations so were on their own in getting located in the completely unfamiliar surroundings. But the porter helped them get settled and showed them all about the various facilities that were squeezed into the compact quarters.

Brad and I found, with our porter's help, our double bedroom which was all made up for occupancy. My roommate was very busy inspecting the beds, the disappearing lavatory and concealed toilet and other accessories, all of which carried labelled instructions in both French and English, an intriguing discovery for him. I claimed the lower berth, giving Brad the experience of tucking his lengthy frame into the upper quarters.

At dawn's early light we were rolling across the endless wheat fields of Saskatchewan with just time enough for breakfast in the diner which the boys enjoyed as much as I did. At Saskatoon we rented a car, bought some sandwiches and soft drinks, and set out for a full day of visiting the scenes of my own boyhood—"Early Dawn" and vicinity only about twenty miles away.

We stopped at the old home site where I had lived some 50 years before and visited with the young couple that now own the farm. All the old buildings except a granary are gone—replaced by a newer house, barn, etc.—but the flat and treeless land and the almost unlimited horizons are timeless. I'm sure the boys were much impressed by the prairie scene. For me there was a strong feeling of nostalgia as there always has been whenever I have revisited "Early Dawn".

We drove all around the old Whitehill farm, visited with the few neighbors still there that I knew, and ate our lunch near Elvevow schoolhouse where my brother and I went to school for two summers. Finally, after exploring the whole area pretty thoroughly, we drove into Dundurn, once our "home town", to keep a date for dinner with Stan and Norma Brown and family. That evening we all drove back to Saskatoon, visited with other members of the Fisher family for a while and finally went to a motel for a night's sleep—a change in plans occasioned by a several hour reported delay in the arrival of our train from the west due to a wreck somewhere in the mountains of British Columbia.

It arrived about day break and the boys elected to enjoy some more sleep, a decision probably prompted by an opportunity to get a few more hours sack time or to enjoy for one more time the comfort of those pull-

man berths. And well they might because it would be a long time the way things were going before they could step aboard another train with sleeping car accommodations. I chose to sit in the lounge car and enjoy the passing prairie landscape.

We were very late getting into Winnipeg which upset our sightseeing plans, but still left us some time for dinner uptown and some present buying for sisters, parents and other members of the families. After a night in a motel we were up early, grabbed some breakfast at a near-the-depot diner, and hustled through the station to catch our abbreviated local passenger train for another rough ride back to Grand Forks. There we made good connections with the Western Star for the run to St. Paul and the final leg of our Canadian journey.

It had been a gratifying trip for me and I had the feeling that the boys enjoyed every minute of it although they were rather non-responsive for the most part. Perhaps they were over-awed by the train rides, particularly the pullman travel and the diner and by the unusual panorama of the flat, treeless Saskatchewan landscape. It was indeed an entirely new experience for them.

—1972—

By 1972 my fellow traveller (she liked the train rides as well as I did) and I were looking around for another trip over the rails. But there were very few operating passenger trains in the whole United States and those few that were left went nowhere.

And then one day in a newspaper I noticed a Canadian National Railway advertisement that extolled the virtues of railroad travel in Canada, that the C N luxury trains still operated up there, and solicited an inquiry. So we requested literature and schedules and started planning.

As I had done once before I laid out a route that we thought we would enjoy, selected the trains we would prefer, and a date of departure. The route chosen would take us via Canadian National from Winnipeg to Vancouver through Saskatoon and Edmonton, a layover at that western terminal, a bus trip back through the mountains to Lake Louise and Banff, up to Jasper Lodge for a few days and back on the C N to Winnipeg—about a three week journey all told.

But before we completed the arrangements, a couple from Grand Island, Nebraska, friends of several years standing, expressed an interest in the proposed trip with the result that we ordered four tickets instead of two. After some phone calls from the C N passenger office in Chicago concerning train and hotel reservations plus the remittance of a check to cover the total tab, we received our packet of tickets, pullman reservations as well as all confirmed reservations at the stop-overs. In other words, we bought a package deal for the tour but without a tour director.

We met the Reaves in Brookings, South Dakota, flipped a coin to see whose car would take us to Winnipeg (I won—he drove), and headed north. Our transcontinental Canadian National's Continental Limited took us aboard late in the evening on August 1, 1972, and we sat down to our FREE breakfast in the diner the next morning at Saskatoon. Yes!

That's right! All meals are no charge for pullman passengers on the wholly government owned C N and I couldn't figure any padding in the ticket cost for food either. Also we found the meals very good—not a very great selection but the quality was good and the service courteous.

That day's ride took us to Edmonton, the capital of Alberta, by noon-time, and on into the Rockies past Mt. Robeson, the highest peak in Canada and a majestic sight, before nightfall.

The next morning we were in Vancouver, comfortably lodged in the Hotel Vancouver where Adaline and I had dined twelve years earlier before departing on our Inland Passage boat trip to Alaska. That first day was spent seeing the city via sight-seeing bus, but the second, we got out our bus tickets to Victoria on the southern tip of Vancouver Island.

The first part of the trip was over the road that ended at the ferry slip where our driver piloted our bus into a stall aboard the ferry boat. For the next two hours we had the run of the ship, to enjoy the island dotted passage, the many fishing boats of all sizes, and we also partook of a good lunch aboard.

We were taken to the Empress Hotel and from there to the beautiful Butchart Gardens for a leisurely couple of hours of wandering around the many areas of flowers and plants. Back to the hotel for a "refresher" before reloading on the bus for the trip back to Vancouver. A beautiful sunset across the water was a much appreciated bonus of the return ferry ride.

After breakfast the next day, we again climbed aboard a bus but this one would take us on a two day ride that we were looking forward to—the ride over the Canadian Rockies to Lake Louise on the Trans-Canada Highway. Our pilot proved to be not only a good driver, but also congenial and courteous—always willing to stop when requested for picture taking. There, of course, were many regular stops at historical spots and places for scenic viewing. The entire trip was full of awe-inspiring sights that were called to our attention by our ever-alert driver.

The C N general passenger agent with whom I corresponded about our preliminary plans, had suggested that we travel this segment by bus, adding that we would see much more than by train. The railroads follow the river canyons and the view is restricted by precipitous canyon walls. The highway also follows the rivers at times—the Fraser and the Columbia, for instance—but it also scales the heights at other places to provide bird's-eye views of the railroad and the river far below. We were grateful to the agent for his suggestion to "take the bus".

We crossed the divide at Kicking Horse Pass alongside the Canadian Pacific tracks over which we rode in 1960 and stopped overnight at the Lake Louise Chateau. Then on to another enjoyable night's stop at the stately and sedate Banff Hotel.

The fourth day by bus took us over the Ice Field Highway to Jasper Lodge for a two day stop at this outstanding Canadian National resort hotel. But on the way we stopped many times to view the many glaciers that sparkled at us from just across a narrow valley; and to gaze at the headwaters of the mighty Saskatchewan and Athabascan Rivers, their waters heading for Hudson Bay and the Arctic Ocean, respectively, at

the same time speculating on the vast areas of Canada these two tremendous rivers would cross on their way to the seas.

Also, we made the regular scheduled stop at Athabasca Glacier for lunch at the chalet and a fun ride on one of the icemobiles over the top of this huge ice field glacier that extends to the very top of the Continental Divide.

We found the highly regarded Jasper Lodge everything that had been claimed for it. Our three room apartment was spacious and very comfortable, the diningroom was tremendous and the food was wonderful. The big lawn sloped down to a clear water lake, and the wide variety of living quarters fanned out in all directions from the lodge. The huge lodge itself dominated the grounds that were nestled in the valley of the Athabasca River with towering peaks of the Canadian Rockies ranging around the area. We found Jasper an inspiring resort—a scenic wonderland that we hope to return to some day.

The third day we reboarded the C N's Continental Limited for the return trip to Winnipeg arriving there the next morning. As we headed south by car through the Dakotas and Iowa, we discussed with interest the mountains, the rivers, and diversified scenery that we had seen and that would not soon be forgotten.

So that's the end of past railroad trips. But the writing of this book has stirred some desire to make just one more over-the-rails journey—the questions are WHERE and HOW. The latter problem is not too hard to solve—with the possible exception of Canadian railroads—AMTRAK is all that is left. However, Amtrak service in Iowa is limited and it's a long jump to Canada. Still it's possible that we may some day work out some answers to satisfy that urge for a final fling at riding the rails.