

# Railroads and Railroading in Manitowoc County

by  
LAWRENCE BOHN and  
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## Railroad Building in Manitowoc County Prior to 1870

During the early years of railroad building in Wisconsin (in the 1850's) builders were linking port cities to river ports somewhere on the Mississippi river system. The Manitowoc and Mississippi Railroad company followed this pattern.

In 1856 the projectors of the Manitowoc and Mississippi organization were George Reed, president; Benjamin Jones, vice-president; Sylvester A. Wood and Jarvis Platt, and four or five other men who came from Menasha and Milwaukee. A contract was entered into with Barker and Hoes, a Manitowoc construction firm, for a line between Manitowoc and Menasha. Another company was given the contract to build the road bed west of Menasha. Capital stock was fixed at \$1,500,000. In December 1853 the village of Manitowoc voted 92 to 6 to take \$150,000 in 7% bonds. Menasha took a similar action. President Reed anticipated that it would take a year to build the line to Menasha and that the cost would be approximately \$925,000 or \$22,000 a mile. Equipment was to include five locomotives, 11 baggage and passenger cars, and 50 freight cars.

Ground was broken in June of 1855; however, little construction work actually began. The company had trouble in disposing of its stock. Barker and Hoes finally began construction of perhaps one-half of the road bed where earth-moving was needed. The bridges and culverts were nearly completed, and ties were distributed preparatory to laying of the tracks. The financial troubles were aggravated by the Panic of 1857, and this caused all work on the road bed to stop. There was dissension among the stockholders, which resulted in abandonment of the project for some years. With the advent of the Civil War railroad construction work nearly everywhere was discontinued, and the full resources of the country were given over

to winning the war for the North, and to the reunification of the country.

Some time in the period between 1857 and the Civil War years Benjamin Jones and Jacob Lueps bought the assets of the former Manitowoc and Mississippi organization. Incidentally, Jacob Lueps was a German immigrant who had settled in Manitowoc in the area where the Manitowoc Company is now located. He was a farmer, the first man to keep careful records of weather, temperature and rainfall, and applied these statistics to agricultural practice and research. He was prominent in organizing the Manitowoc County Agricultural Society which conducted the first County Fairs. Mr. Lueps influenced the history of the Manitowoc community in other areas over a period of a number of years.

From 1866 through 1872 there were efforts to take advantage of the work done by the earlier railroad builders, and

to complete the railroad to the west. These finally had their culmination in the Manitowoc to Appleton railroad. At the same time the line was extended from Appleton to New London, thus connecting the lake port of Manitowoc with the Wolf river. A few years later this railroad was extended to Clintonville, thus there was a connection with the Green Bay and Western railroad.

According to some records the completed segment of the Appleton and New London railroad was sold to Milwaukee, Lakeshore and Western railroad on June 1, 1872. The remainder was sold December 10, 1875 under mortgage foreclosure.

*Eitor's note: for a more detailed and comprehensive summary of this phase of railroad building in Manitowoc, see Bulletin No. 121, published by the Railroad and Locomotive Historical Society, October 1969, by Ray Specht.*

## The Building of The Milwaukee, Lakeshore and Western Railroad

During the winter of 1870 certain eastern men in conjunction with parties from Milwaukee, Appleton and lakeshore cities appealed to the Wisconsin state legislature for a charter for a railroad from Milwaukee, via Sheboygan and Manitowoc, and thence west to Appleton. However, they were defeated by opposition put up by the Chicago and Northwestern railroad. That company had applied for a charter and had been given one to build a railroad to connect Milwaukee, Ozaukee county, Sheboygan county, and Calumet county by way of Chilton. The "Northwestern" used every means to oppose the lakeshore line, including negotiations for loans, etc. When the Lakeshore line was to be

connected with Green Bay, however, the charter was granted. Among those active in the Milwaukee, Lakeshore and Western railroad were: J. Vilas, Jacob Lueps, J. E. Markham, M. Fellows, and C. H. Walker, all of Manitowoc. Later Charles Luling became a director of the corporation. On the Board of Directors also were persons from Milwaukee, Port Washington and Sheboygan.

In a paper entitled "Railroad Reminiscences," written in October 1909, there was this paragraph: "The contract for the construction of what is now called the Lakeshore road was given to a Mr. Easton, who started the work vigorously from Milwaukee toward Port Washington

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# Railroad Building Done by "The Wisconsin Central."

*The following is taken mainly from "History of the Wisconsin Central" by the late Roy L. Martin and published as Bulletin No. 54 of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society.*

by Lawrence Bohn

In 1895 an organization known as the Manitowoc Terminal Company quietly purchased all the available land around the river on the flats west of the town of Manitowoc, Wisconsin. The Manitowoc Terminal Co. was an undercover subsidiary of the Wisconsin Central Railroad, its ownership and purpose remaining unknown to the public until after the required land had been secured.

It was then disclosed that the Central proposed to build a branch line from Hilbert Junction, making Manitowoc the terminal and distributor for certain heavy freight traffic then in the process of establishment.

Manitowoc by this time had built up an extensive lake shipping business accompanied by active shipbuilding interests, dry docks, and boat repair yards.

The plan for a railroad connecting Menasha and Manitowoc had been agitated periodically since George Reed started in the '50's, and while C & NW enjoyed a tight monopoly on Manitowoc rail traffic, various promoters rose and fell over this plan.

Now in 1895 Edwin H. Abbot, President of the Central divulged a plan that worked. Together with Wm. W. Crapo, President of the Flint and Pere Marquette railroad, he studied grain movements from the west to the eastern markets and coal tonnage from West Virginia to the west.

Abbot and Crapo finally evolved the first practical plan for ferrying freight trains across Lake Michigan — 60 miles of deep rough water — an innovation in box car transportation.

In connection with its railroad business the F & P.M. owned and operated a fleet of steamers which plied the Great Lakes serving primarily the ports located on F. & P.M. rails. Crapo had completed designs for a huge broad-beam freight car ferry with four parallel tracks capable of accommodating forty standard cars. This design as worked out has been used on all succeeding ferries.

Ingenious blocks and clamping devices were designed to hold the freight cars rigidly upright on the rails in rough weather. Loading the cars on the ferry would be accomplished by the use of a hinged apron on the loading dock or slip,

maintaining constant contact with the boat deck rails at all levels.

In the agreement between the Central and F. & P.M., the Central east bound freight cars emanating from north and west terminals were to be delivered to the car ferry at Manitowoc. Likewise, the F. & P.M. agreed to deliver their westbound carloads to the Central at Manitowoc via the ferry from Ludington. The Central also negotiated contracts with certain

## Milwaukee, Lakeshore and Western cont.

but soon ran out of funds and credit. When grading in the deep cut near the County Line, a Milwaukee man named F. W. Von Cotzhausen said, 'I had to go to the Second Ward Savings Bank to borrow \$8,200 on my own signature to pay off the laborers.' Easton soon thereafter absconded and the president of the company, Mr. Joseph Vilas, Manitowoc, assumed the continuance of the work. It was a great undertaking but he succeeded and the money was returned which had been advanced. The lakeshore cities and counties helped liberally by subscriptions of the capital stock, and all of them in the course of time met their obligations faithfully, except the Town of Port Washington, which repudiated liability after the road was constructed, and squeezed out on a technicality.

The projected line was one of the straightest and easiest graded in the state. The average grade was little more than 30 feet per mile, and the cost of grading, bridging and tying the road from Sheboygan to Milwaukee did not exceed \$3,000 per mile. It was necessary to build only one major bridge between Manitowoc and Sheboygan."

The Sheboygan Times had this to say about Joseph Vilas: "To Joseph Vilas, the president of the company, is due the largest share of the honor for his untiring energy and perseverance at a time when the prospects looked dark and gloomy, and many of its warmest friends and supporters seemed willing to give up in despair. The word fail is unknown to Joseph Vilas."

Regularly scheduled freight and passenger service moved between Milwaukee and Sheboygan by the first of January 1873. Meanwhile construction continued between Manitowoc and Sheboygan. Construction was taking place from both cities and on September 24, 1873 at Centerville, the rails finally linked the cities of Manitowoc and Sheboygan. During 1873-74 the Two

grain shippers and flour millers in Minneapolis wherein fast freight train schedules would expedite such shipments to the east in conjunction with the F. & P.M.

In this series of plans and arrangements the purpose of the Manitowoc extension is explained and some light thrown on the secretive acquisition of land on the west side of

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Rivers branch (6 miles) was constructed.

Bulletin No. 121, edited by Ray Specht, states, (pp 46-7) "It was conceded that the Lakeshore road was of very great importance to the prosperity of the city of Milwaukee, and while the value of the line was fully appreciated by the most progressive of her citizens, the fact existed that the city or county of Milwaukee did not contribute a dollar to its construction, and that Milwaukee and the state at large owed it in the main to New York capitalists who were allied with the intimate policy of the road, from 1874, when their large-handed enterprise stimulated the weak, bankrupted scheme to a vigor which had never waned, and hundreds of thousands of dollars were applied to sustain the road. The value of this important outlet to the lakeshore cities was evinced and was appreciated by substantial and generous aid tendered and paid. The City of Sheboygan contributed \$50,000, County of Sheboygan, \$80,000, City of Manitowoc, \$75,000, and County of Manitowoc, \$100,000. The city of Two Rivers contributed \$25,000. "Incidentally the railroad having the name Milwaukee, Lakeshore and Western was chartered under the laws of Wisconsin on November 11, 1875. By that time the company had been refinanced with eastern capitalists largely taking over control of the company. It was reported that all obligations of the former company were generously paid."

Construction men on the "Lakeshore Railroad," consisted mainly of Irishmen. Continued interruptions in construction, due to financial difficulties caused small groups of these men to leave the railroad service and settle in small groups along the route. They sometimes took up homesteads or bought small farms and a small settlement of Irish farmers would result. One such settlement was at Maple Grove. A second settlement was at Meeme, near Cleveland, between Manitowoc and Sheboygan.



*The big cut and fill going into Manitowoc on the Wisconsin Central. The fill area in the center of the photo is just North of Lindbergh Drive.*

### Wisconsin Central continued

town by the Manitowoc Terminal Company.

The Manitowoc branch project began under the name of the Manitowoc and Western Railroad Company, incorporated May 25, 1895, chartered to build a line from Hilbert Junction to Manitowoc, a distance of 27 miles, generally eastward. Construction actually began in April 1895 under contract with Evans and Richards Company of Minneapolis. On July 12, 1895, The Manitowoc & Western Railroad was sold to the Milwaukee & Lake Winnebago Railroad Co., one of the major constituents of the Wisconsin Central System.

More than a year's time was consumed in building the 27 miles of road from Hilbert Junction to Manitowoc. Immediately west of Manitowoc where the prehistoric bank of Lake Michigan rises abruptly for several hundred feet, a huge cut through a wide neck of land (north of the north end of South 29th St. and just south of the present "clay pits") had to be made with the vast quantities of earth removed on both ends of the cut to make a fill from the timber trestle over the Manitowoc river on the east and to create an even larger fill on the west to gradually bring the line up to another cut about a half mile west of the first one which eventually brought the grade level up to ground level. (This cut is more familiar to most people of Manitowoc as it is visible from the railroad crossing of Meadow Lane at the present location of "Meadow Lanes" bowling alleys.) No less than three crossings of the Manitowoc river were required, the first being the aforementioned timber trestle which was

later replaced by a combination timber trestle and through plate girder bridge which is still being used. The second was built as a swing type draw bridge (which is still being used where the RR crosses between Manitowoc Engineering and Burger Boat yard.) The final bridge crossing the Manitowoc was a Jack knife draw bridge, which was later replaced by the present span at the west end of the Soo Line Yards.

Work was further complicated by a crossing of the C. & N.W. line that required an overpass for the Northwestern to allow it to pass over the Central trackage which came through at a lower level. In that the C. & N.W. was operating trains on a regularly scheduled

basis on the line, a temporary siding of "shoo fly" had to be constructed complete with a timber trestle to allow trains to pass while stone cribbing was laid for a pair of bridge abutments and a truss girder bridge was built for permanent right of way for the C. & N.W. This job was finally finished on May 1, 1896. On June 24, 1896, the first passenger train from Menasha entered Manitowoc in charge of Conductor Bernie Scott and Engineer Nolan, and the line was formally opened on July 2. Passenger service on the line provided two regular trains each way between Neenah-Menasha, and Manitowoc.

In the construction of the Manitowoc Branch, no Central employee showed deeper interest or maintained closer contact with the work than A. R. ("Your Fired") Horn, superintendent of the southern division.

It was here that Horn's steam hobby horse, the homemade open-face inspection car with Horn at the throttle, became a signal to all hands for a resumption of feverish activity and stern application to duty.

While the Central steam-shoveled and dump carted the Manitowoc branch line into tangible form, President Crapo of the F. & P.M. built the famous car ferry, the "Pere Marquette". The stout old ship made her maiden voyage February 17, 1897, and her successful performance fully confirmed the utility and value of the Abbot-Crapo plan.

For many years following 1897, the Central handled solid trains of flour and western wheat from Minneapolis to

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*The western end of the big cut and fill. In that the steam shovels were tied up on the bigger cut to the east, the western cut was made primarily with hand labor and dump carts. This photo was taken from the approximate location of the Soo Line crossing at Meadow Lane.*

# The Steam Locomotive and Manitowoc

by Lawrence L. Bohn

Although railroads did not enter the picture at Manitowoc until 1871, the chronology of development of locomotives used in this area dates from the mid-forties. Although a great to-do was made over the shiny new engine that came to Manitowoc when the Benjamin Jones was delivered by the schooner, Mediterranean, the only known photo of the Jones shows an engine of far earlier design than would have been built in 1871. Obviously, the A. & N.L. followed the lead of many earlier railroads and to cut down on expenditures, bought a second hand locomotive from some other railroad. No data has come to light as to who originally owned the Jones or for that matter who built it. Mechanical appearances place the date of the engine somewhere between 1838 and 1850, most likely about in the middle of that period.

Engines 2 and 3 of the A. & N.L. were purchased from the Baldwin Locomotive works and were in every respect new and up to date engines of the times.

When the road was taken over by the Milwaukee Lake Shore & Western Railroad, the roster was further augmented by five engines built by Danforth, Cooke, & Co. "The Lake Shore" again followed the general trend of most railroads in that after shopping

around among various builders, found a definite preference for one builder and usually used exclusively engines from that firm. The L.S. turned to the Rhode Island locomotive works as a main supplier of locomotives. The Rhode Island works was in general considered a "Johnny come lately" in terms of locomotive builders in that it was not formed until after the Civil War. Their plant was a converted musket factory that supplied the Union Army until the end of the war. In that railroads seemed to be the coming thing, it was decided that a locomotive manufacturing plant was more likely to succeed than other ventures, so a conversion took place and although their product was not particularly noteworthy, they did build good dependable engines. By the time that the M.L.S. & W was absorbed by the Chicago & Northwestern in 1893; eighty-eight of the 113 engines in the system came from the Providence works. Although the Northwestern continued to order occasional Rhode Island engines until 1906, they also had a few from Brooks, Cooke, Richmond and Baldwin. The C. & N.W. power pool after 1893 was predominately built by the Schenectady Locomotive Works.

Wisconsin Central on the other hand took longer to settle down to a standard builder. Originally starting out with an

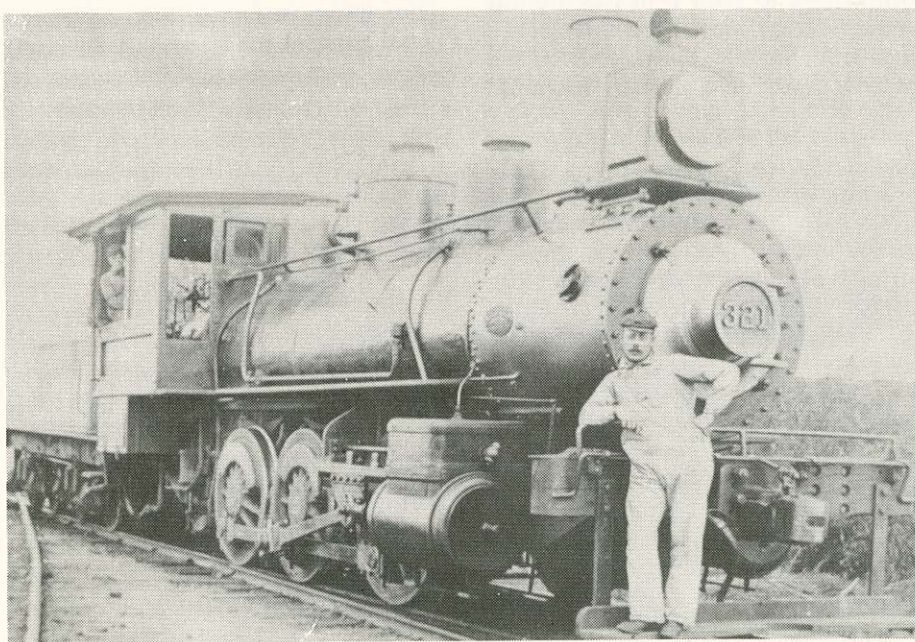
order of 15 locomotives from Baldwin, they alternated orders between Baldwin and Schenectady several times over the years along with a small trial order to the Manchester Locomotive Works which was never repeated.

Finally in 1892, the Central went exclusively to the Brooks Locomotive works of Dunkirk, N.Y. with all orders from 1892 until taken over by the Soo Line being Brooks products. During this time period 111 Brooks engines were delivered to the Central. After 1909, the Soo Line orders for their W.C. division shifted back to Schenectady for any engine which ever saw service on the Manitowoc-Menasha route.

Although the first 10 engines from Brooks were supposed to be a great advancement in locomotive design, (of the 4-6-0 or ten wheeler pattern) they failed to exhibit the smart characteristics of earlier standards, nor did they capture the fancy of enginemen. Hard riders and not particularly fast they soon fell heir to the name "Brooks Pigs".

In the dark days before "counter balancing" became a fine art, the "pigs" rolled along with a swaying gallop between 40 and 50 miles per hour, very hard on the back of the engineer, whose personal kit usually contained a bottle of

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This is a Soo Line locomotive - No. 321. Picture was taken about 1895. Locomotive was built by Rhode Island Locomotive Works, December 1887. This locomotive is now owned by the Manitowoc County Historical Society. It is in the process of restoration to what it looked like in 1887. Members of the Model Railroad Club are doing the work. The locomotive is stored in the C. & N.W. roundhouse in Manitowoc. It was purchased from Robert Miller of Milwaukee and shipped to Manitowoc via C. & N.W. railroad and C. & O. Careferry. (photo courtesy of Bruce Miller collection)

*donated to the society by*

## Advertisement Carried in Newspapers All Summer in 1871

Wanted  
Immediately!  
500 Hundred Men  
to work on the Railroad  
Wages \$1.50 per day.  
\$3.00 per week for boys  
Apply to L. Soulerin  
Windiate House

## Wisconsin Central continued

Manitowoc via Menasha on airtight time schedules, and all except first-class passenger trains "went in the hole" to clear the track for the "high ball flour runs."

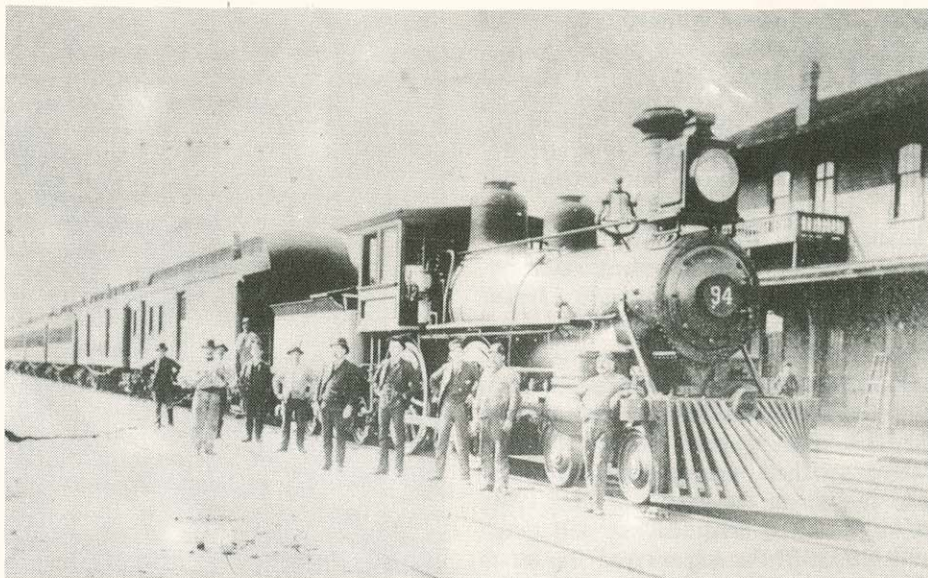
In 1909 the Central was absorbed by the Soo Line Railway which still operates it. Until a couple of years ago it appeared as though the future of the railroad was likely to be as long as its past. It is however, a matter of conjecture to wonder how long the Hilbert Junction - Manitowoc branch will continue to operate if railroad carferry service to Manitowoc is dropped. Neither has ever existed without the other and probably neither one could.

liniment, some Haarlem Oil and a box of kidney pills. Later Brooks' engines were greatly improved however, and although the lack of frills and handy devices made them look crude and obsolete by other railroad standards, they represented the most power possible for the money expended. Strictly utilitarian with excellent boilers and running gear, lack of handy gadgets in no way affected locomotive performance, and the Brooks engines of 1899 and 1900 always displayed a dependable quality scarcely equalled by fancier power.

In terms of locomotive design, the Lake Shore and the Central ran closely parallel even though they were buying their locomotives from different sources. Both the L.S. and the Central started out with the 4-4-0 type (meaning a 4 wheel leading truck of small wheels to help the engine around corners, 4 power or "Driving Wheels" and no trailing wheels behind the drivers.) This type of locomotive was a jack of all trades, equally at home whether pulling a fast passenger train, slow freight, or coupled onto a pile driver in a work train. Of the 113 engines transferred to the C & NW records upon their absorption of the M.L.S. & W., all but 21 were of the 4-4-0 or American type as they were called. The Chicago & Northwestern, also a firm believer in the American type, continued to order them from the Schenectady works until 1899, long after most other railroads had abandoned the design. Far from being obsolete, the Schenectady Americans were among the finest of the type ever built and many gave continuous service until finally scrapped in a modernization campaign of 1928 - 31.

By the time the first train from Hilbert Junction reached Manitowoc, the Wisconsin Central was in the process of up-grading to heavier power but was still largely dependent on the American for the bulk of the tonnage moved. Of the 135 Central engines listed in 1896, ninety-five were of the 4-4-0 type. Incidentally, the first train into Manitowoc from Menasha was pulled by Engine No. 42, a Manchester built 4-4-0 which coincidentally was also the first engine into Chicago on the "Central" in 1886. The 42 was assigned permanently to the Manitowoc passenger run where it stayed until scrapped in 1909. It was replaced by a Brooks 10 wheeler.

The first heavier engines on the L.S. were known locally as "Lake Shore Hogs". The type was actually developed by the eastern railroads in the early



*One of the 62, 4-4-0 type locomotives built by Rhode Island for the M.L.S. & W. Railway. Engines No. 94 and 95 coincidentally were being put together on the erecting floor of the Rhode Island plant at the same time as the Soo Line switcher No. 321 in December, 1887. Over 80 years later (Dec. 1968) the 321 became the last steam locomotive to enter Manitowoc when it was presented to the Manitowoc County Historical Society.*

1870's and was called the Mogul type in the east. Of the 2-6-0 type, the Hogs had an extra driving axle to give it more pulling power to handle the heavier trains that were becoming more predominant. A single axle for a leading truck carried a smaller percentage of the engine's weight than on the American type which gave the hogs even more traction. This, along with a smaller driving wheel to give more power but less speed, made the hogs a formidable freight locomotive.

The Central had also introduced the 2-6-0 type in 1887 and because theirs were built by Baldwin, the 21 engines in that class were referred to as the "Baldwin Hogs".

Both the Northwestern and the Central continued the practice of adding driving wheels for greater pulling power in later years with the introduction of 2-8-0 or consolidation type. in 1909. In terms of the slow "drag freight" type service needed on the Manitowoc branch, the consolidation type was all that the Soo Line ever needed. They stayed with this type of locomotive power until the advent of diesels. The Northwestern however found that the "Zulus" (as they called the 2-8-0 type) left something to be desired in hauling "time freights" so they again up-graded their freight power with the introduction of the "Mikado" type in 1913. By adding a two-wheel trailing truck to the 2-8-0, the Mikado or 2-8-2 type provided a far bigger firebox which in turn produced steam at a far faster rate. The pulling power of the Mikado was somewhat greater than the Zulus but even more important, they

could pull the load much faster enabling far faster schedules to be maintained. Although the Northwestern and Soo Line both had larger engines in later years these were never assigned to the Manitowoc divisions.

In heavier passenger engines the 10-wheeler or 4-6-0 was introduced first on the Central in 1890 and later on the Northwestern in 1893 with a single 10-wheeler built for the Chicago Worlds Fair. The type didn't really take hold on the Northwestern until the advent of the "R" class in 1897 and the R-1 of 1906. As with the American type, the Schenectady 10-wheelers were late in coming but were the epitome of locomotive design of that type. Although relegated to way freight service in later years, the R-1's lasted until being retired by diesels. In fact, R-1 No. 462 was the last Northwestern steam locomotive in road service in Manitowoc.

The fastest thing on wheels on both the Northwestern and the Soo Line was of the 4-4-2 or Atlantic Type introduced on the Northwestern in 1900, and in 1902 on the Soo Line. Although these engines would "run like the wind" with a light passenger train on level track, the steep grades leaving Manitowoc on either road were tough on the "long legged engines." Although records of whether or not these engines were ever permanently assigned to the Manitowoc runs are not clear, it is known that they at least occasionally found their way into town. For a period of time, one was kept at the Calumet roundhouse on standby

## Steam Locomotive continued

passenger duty. These engines had the same wide deep firebox supported by a 2-wheel trailing truck that worked so successfully on the Mikado type already mentioned. That, along with extremely large driving wheels, (79" on the "Shanghi's" of the Central and 81" on the D's of the Northwestern) made an engine of nearly unlimited speed potential. As long as passenger trains were small, the D's served the Northwestern well but as train lengths increased over 5 cars, the D's became less and less equal to the task. Consequently the road again beefed up their motive power with the introduction of the Pacific or 4-6-2 type in 1910 and it continued to add these until 1923. These engines had the same characteristics as the D's except slightly smaller driving wheels and an additional driving axle to greatly increase its pulling power. These engines were still working passenger trains through Manitowoc well into the period of dieselization.

Many people were glad to see the last of the steamers in Manitowoc in the mid 1950's. Some of those who worked with them hated the grease and grime that they produced and swore at the rough ride to be had in the poorly maintained locomotives in use just prior to dieselization. Others of the more nostalgic remember how the steamers all had individual personalities and were a mechanism akin to a living being with a temperament that changed with the weather. They remember the overwhelming sights, sounds and smells upon entering a roundhouse full of live steamers in below zero weather with the swirling steam enveloping everything in sight when the door was opened, or the heart-stopping report of a pop valve blowing on an engine with a full head of steam. The passing of the steam locomotive has, to these people, left one more "vacant lot" along with those produced by the last of the schooners, paddle wheel steamers, the Goodrich Fleet and the street cars.

## EXCERPT FROM NEWSPAPERS IN 1871

October 1871

The two new locomotives ordered for the road are shortly expected to arrive, in expectations of which we see that active preparations are being made at the depot grounds to construct a round house, turn table, etc. For this purpose a force has been set at work to level off the ground and prepare the foundations for the buildings.



*(From Manitowoc Daily Herald, October 19, 1916) Last night's wreck, the second in which the limited train has been derailed here within a year, and fourth attempt at wrecking occurred shortly before 11 o'clock and was due to a switch being thrown near the Invincible plant. A peculiarity of the wreck which establishes it as a deliberate act is that the signal of the switch had been turned showing the green light - a clear track - when the apparatus, if not tampered with, should have shown the red, or danger light under the condition of the switch. This same situation prevailed at the time of the previous derailment of the train last spring when the engine and tender of No. 11 left the track in Calumet yards, a short distance further south than the present disaster, at the scene of another switch.*

*The body of Engineer Fitzgerald was recovered from under the overturned engine but that of Fireman Deshais was not found during the all night search in the debris.*



*Street car - Manitowoc & Northern Traction Co. interurban car No. 2 shown in front of Schuette's store. Besides the two interurban cars, Manitowoc & Northern also had some small cars that operated wholly within the Manitowoc area. Operation of the street cars ceased in 1929.*

# A Railroad Engineer Reminisces

## SOME EXPERIENCES OF HERMAN WEBER ON THE RAILROAD

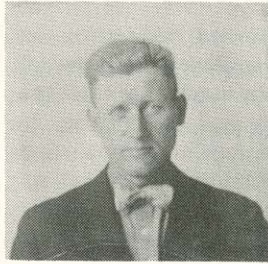
Herman Weber began his railroad career on March 20, 1907 at West Green Bay when the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad employed him as a section hand. The chief responsibility of a right of way maintenance worker was to check the tracks to see that there were no breaks in the rails, and no obstructions on them. Following a heavy rain, the possibility of "wash-outs" would need to be checked.

Section hands in those days used a "hand-car" to take them to work. The motive power to operate this conveyance was furnished by the section hands themselves. It was tiring and exhausting work, especially if there were grades that needed to be climbed. When there were major repair jobs that needed to be done, (e.g. the replacement of railroad ties, or when sections of track needed to be replaced) this was done by special maintenance crews. There usually were eight or ten men in a crew.

During summer months the section hands used weed killers to kill plants growing beside the road beds and between the tracks. Or they might in some cases resort to burning. Chemicals were used to settle the dust, thus making riding in passenger coaches more pleasant. In winter section hands had to check switches to see that snow had not become imbedded in the operating parts. Snow was more than a small problem for railroad workers. Signals and signs needed to be clearly visible at all times, so it was necessary to regularly check that snow and sleet had not obstructed these signals, and that they were clearly visible.

### He Begins His Work As a Fireman

After two and one-half years in the Maintenance Department, Mr. Weber was transferred to the "Motor Power Department." It was then that he began working as a fireman on a locomotive. At first he had no regular run, operating "off the board." This meant that those who had seniority would have prior rights to service. If one of the "regulars" was ill, or if extra trains were made up, the engineers and firemen for these runs came from the list of those who had not yet established seniority. Many of these who operated "off the board" were used in switching in the railroad yards. Mr. Weber lived at Green Bay during those years, and worked on the Marshfield-Iron River line, the Green Bay to Milwaukee, or the Green Bay to Fond du Lac runs.



H. A. Weber

When a person was called for work, he usually remained on the train to the end of the run, then rested in a rooming house near the depot, and the next day took a train back to Green Bay. Among the many duties of a locomotive fireman was to see to it that steam pressure of the locomotive was kept at about 200 pounds of pressure at all times and that there was sufficient water in the boiler.

Proper firing of a steam locomotive was an art, for the coal needed to be spread evenly all over the fire bed. If improperly done clinkers would form, and this could become a serious problem. Although from ten to fifteen tons of coal were carried in the coal car, fuel had to be replenished several times on the run. For example on the Ashland Limited, coal and water were taken on at Sheboygan and Manitowoc. On the run north of Green Bay, these were taken on at Shawano and Eland. The Ashland Limited traveled between Milwaukee and Ashland, a total distance of about 400 miles. Train crews were changed at Green Bay and Eland, with three different crews taking the train to its destination at Ashland.

To keep a railroad locomotive at "full steam" was almost a full time job. The firing was done with a scoop shovel, and the fire door had to be opened and shut with each shovel full of coal that was added. The fireman was required to watch his side of the track. He had to be especially alert on curves and as the locomotive approached the crest of a hill or grade, and if any obstructions were noted on the railroad right of way, it was his duty to inform the engineer at once. There were signals along the right of way, and whistling posts, and, although the engineer was responsible for blowing the whistle or ringing the bell, the fireman would need to take over if the engineer could not do so. When the train crossed a crossing, the whistle had to be blowing,

to warn people of the approaching train.

The fireman was required also to keep the cab immaculately clean and neat. It was the fireman's duty to replenish the supply of coal and water at those points along the line where this was to be done.

### Mr. Weber Becomes an Engineer in 1913

Mr. Weber had qualified as an engineer in 1913. However, he remained a fireman from 1909 until 1928. To become qualified to become an engineer a very rigorous written and oral examination needed to be taken. In addition to a full understanding of the mechanical features of a locomotive and its manner of operation, the engineer needed to be thoroughly familiar with the many rules and regulations for the safe operation of a train. While Mr. Weber became a fully qualified engineer in 1913, he functioned in that capacity only at such times as when an engineer with whom he was working was unable to perform his duties. (e.g. when an engineer became ill during a run) Or he might be given a run at such times when all the regular engineers were busy.

It was a fortunate circumstance that Mr. Weber became an engineer on a regular run in 1928. He then established seniority and thus could not be laid off so long as trains operated at all. We remember that during the depression years there was much unemployment, and those railroad employees who had not established seniority were laid off altogether, or worked very infrequently. Not so with Mr. Weber. He had full employment during those difficult years.

### Some Unusual Experiences

When we made inquiry about unusual experiences that Mr. Weber had had, he was very reluctant to relate anything. He said, "I had few unusual experiences. In fact, so little of the unusual happened that I wonder how you can write anything about me that is interesting."

He related that at one time there was a place where some timber had been piled close to the railroad tracks. A fire had started among those timbers, and as the train approached the fire, there was no choice except to run through it . . . and hope. He remembers that three or four of the cars caught fire, and that the fire department had to be called to put out the fire.

Another incident occurred near Cleveland. A broken rail is always a great concern of an engineer. This can be detected as one passes over the broken rail, since the resulting sound has a different "ring" from the normal sound

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## Railroad Engineer Reminisces Continued

when one passes over a joint in the track. When one hears that sound, one always hopes that the last car will pass over without being derailed. In this particular case the last car did not make it. While it was derailed, it remained upright. As Mr. Weber had heard the tell-tale sound of the broken rail he had used the sander and had applied the brakes. His alertness had spared the railroad company a much more serious accident.

On another occasion, at a highway crossing some distance down the track, an automobile was seen parked on the tracks. The brakes were immediately applied, but when a train is operating at near maximum speed, it takes some time to stop the train. It depends on track conditions, and the extent to which sanders can slow down the train, to determine the distance in which a train can be stopped. As the locomotive approached the crossing, Mr. Weber detected that a man was asleep in the automobile. It is a moment in Mr. Weber's recollection of railroad

experiences which he would prefer would go into the realm of forgotten memories.

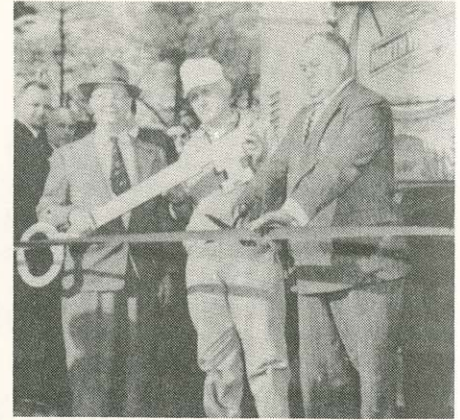
On another occasion his train was following a passenger train. There was a "wash-out" in which several passenger cars were derailed. Two persons were killed in the derailment. As the freight train could not proceed because of the accident, it was Mr. Weber's duty to get the rest of the passengers back to the station which they had just passed, so that they could be transferred to another train and thus gotten to their destination. On another occasion Mr. Weber remembers that six cows were killed on one of his runs.

### The Transition to Diesel Locomotives

During Mr. Weber's later years as an engineer he operated a diesel engine. While the mechanical features of a "diesel" are quite different, all engines operate on the same general principles. He said that no special training was required. However, on the first trip an instructor was with him, following which he was on his own. He said that in the cab of a "diesel" everything is more compact

and convenient.

When Mr. Weber was married in 1916 he became a resident of Manitowoc. He retired on September 29, 1967. He is now a resident of Shady Lane Home in Manitowoc.



*At Shawano, Wis., Mayor David H. Winter (right) cut a ribbon for "Flambeau 400" as Harry Meyer, Chamber of Commerce president, presented a big key to Engineer H. A. Weber, of Manitowoc.*

# Some Memories of My Career on The Railroad

by Hugo A. Vetting

It was on April 1, 1920 that Hugo Vetting began his career with the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. Actually his first day of employment was on March 31, 1920, but for that day of service he received no pay. This seems to have been a traditional practice in that day. His career began in Manitowoc as a fireman on a switch engine. Employees were required to serve a probationary period of six months, and during this time employment might be terminated almost any time at the whim of management. After the probationary period was completed, however, one was protected by virtue of membership in the railroad union.

It was on Engine 35-M-1 that Hugo spent his first days with the railroad. Attached to the locomotive was a tender with a sloping tank. On the outside, in U-shaped fashion was the tank where water was stored. The center section was used for carrying the coal that was needed. There was room for about five or six tons of coal and about 6500 gallons of water in an engine tender. The Chicago and Northwestern owned its own coal mine at Centralia, Illinois. Railroad employees called the coal "Illinois rock,"

for it would form clinkers very easily.

When a fireman and engineer reported for work in the morning, they would find the locomotive to which they were assigned, all fired up and ready for use. The windows of the cab had been washed by round house men, and the repairs had been made which had been called for on the engineer's report of the previous day. The engineer would always spend the first few minutes of the day "oiling up" and checking the various moving parts of the locomotive. He would try the sander and also the air brakes to see that they were operating properly.

As for the fireman he would clean the interior of the cab, would use the "injector" to see that it was operating properly, would wet down the coal to settle the dust, (this only in summer time, for in the winter, if coal was wet it would freeze into a solid lump). The fireman also checked that the necessary tools were in the cab, such as a clinker hook, two monkey wrenches, (one 12" and the other an 18" wrench) a big chisel, a coal pick to break up the coal, and a coal shovel. Firemen had a preference for certain shovels, and frequently a favorite shovel was kept in the fireman's locker.

One of the requisites for good firing of

a locomotive was that black smoke from the smoke stack must be avoided. This could be done by not putting too much coal on the fire at one time. The fireman would put three or four shovelfulls of coal on each side, alternating the side with each shovelfull, and then shoveling coal toward the back. There would be less coal in the middle. The problem was to avoid clinkers if at all possible, for if clinkers developed that would make it very difficult to maintain proper steam pressure. For proper firing of a heavily loaded train it was necessary that one would shovel coal almost constantly.

The boon of a locomotive fireman was the "air door." This was a device which automatically opened the fire door as one approached with a shovel full of coal. The air door was opened as one stepped on a trip lever. Previously the fire door had to be opened and closed by hand.

The fireman had a "seat box" on which he had to be sitting when the locomotive went over crossings. When the train was going around a curve, it was necessary to check that there were no obstacles of one kind or other on the track.

Another responsibility of the fireman

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## Some Memories of My Career Continued

was to watch the water gauge. There was a hose between the engine and the water tank on the tender, and as the boiler required more water, the fireman opened the valve to bring the water up to the proper level. In the older engines the hose was attached to an iron pipe. However, these sometimes broke off and scalded the persons in the cab. Thus there was an Interstate Commerce Commission regulation which required that all steam pipes in cabs be of copper or brass.

On a switch engine a tank of coal and water would usually last for eight hours. However, on locomotives which operated on freight or passenger runs, it was necessary to take coal and water regularly. For example, on the Green Bay - Milwaukee run, water and coal was taken at Denmark, Manitowoc, Sheboygan, and Port Washington.

### Mr. Vetting Qualifies As An Engineer

After four years as a fireman, one had to take an engineer's examination. Mr. Vetting mentioned that he took his examination at Chicago. It consisted of an oral and written examination. While it was rigorous, he passed the examination, and then was qualified to serve as either a fireman or engineer.

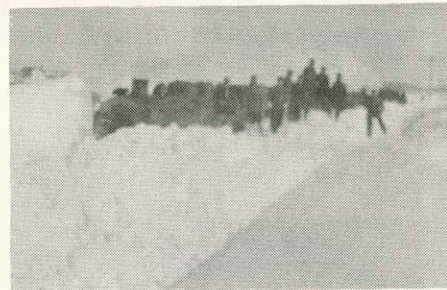
Having seniority was almost a priceless possession for a railroad employee. Whenever there was a job opening as an engineer, the position was filled by a person next in line so far as seniority was concerned. Thus, even though Hugo was qualified as an engineer, he continued to work as a fireman. It was not until 1929 that he was used for the first time as an engineer.

1929 was also the year when railroad jobs became scarce. Not a single man was hired, either as an engineer or fireman from that year until 1940. When there were "lay-offs" those having the least seniority were affected first. During the depression years Hugo was a landscape gardener, and did such other work as was available.

When World War II came there was an increase in business, and employment returned to normal. It was then that Hugo returned to his "first love." He was a railroad fireman until 1953, when he began as an extra on the engineer's list. One of the rules in effect was that one had to work as an engineer on freight trains for 48,000 miles before one would be permitted to operate a passenger train. Until his retirement in 1967 he was employed exclusively as an engineer.

It was the engineer to whom special

orders were given as to other trains that were to be dispatched to operate on the line. These orders gave instructions as to when and where to await the arrival of other trains. Operating a railroad locomotive was an art. It was expected that starting and stopping would be done smoothly, that time schedules be kept, that all safety regulations be strictly adhered to, etc. The engineer was responsible for stopping the train at stations. Hugo said that it was expected that the train stop "on a dime." When water and coal had to be taken on, it was not permissible to uncouple the locomotive and tender from the rest of the train, and proceed to where those commodities were taken on. Passenger cars were heated by steam produced by the engine, and no interruption in flow of heat to the cars was permissible.



### Some Interesting Experiences

Mr. Vetting was asked to recall interesting experiences during his career. He stated that in 1923 while he was working on the Kaukauna line, there was a snow storm of major proportions. West of the overhead on Highway 141 the snow had filled the cut and the train became stranded. The train dispatcher anticipated that there might be difficulty so four engines were sent along and also a snow plow. With the snow packed as tightly as it was, even all of this power and snow plowing equipment proved of no avail. It was necessary for snow shovelers to open up the railroad right of way by hand. It took nearly two days to complete the shoveling so that the train was able to move again. In the meantime

the supply of water and coal had become exhausted. Farmers were hired to haul coal, and snow was shoveled into the tender, which when melted supplied the necessary water. In the meantime the tender was torn apart from the engine. Chains were used to fasten the tender to the locomotive, and thus they were returned to the round house. As for the original train, it finally was able to complete its run to Kaukauna after two days.

On another occasion Mr. Vetting had just completed his run, and had returned home to rest. During the night a fire broke out near Cleveland, and the supply of water to fight the fire was some distance away. The railroad company was requested to send an engine and tender to Cleveland to haul water to the fire. Hugo was the engineer who was called to give this service.

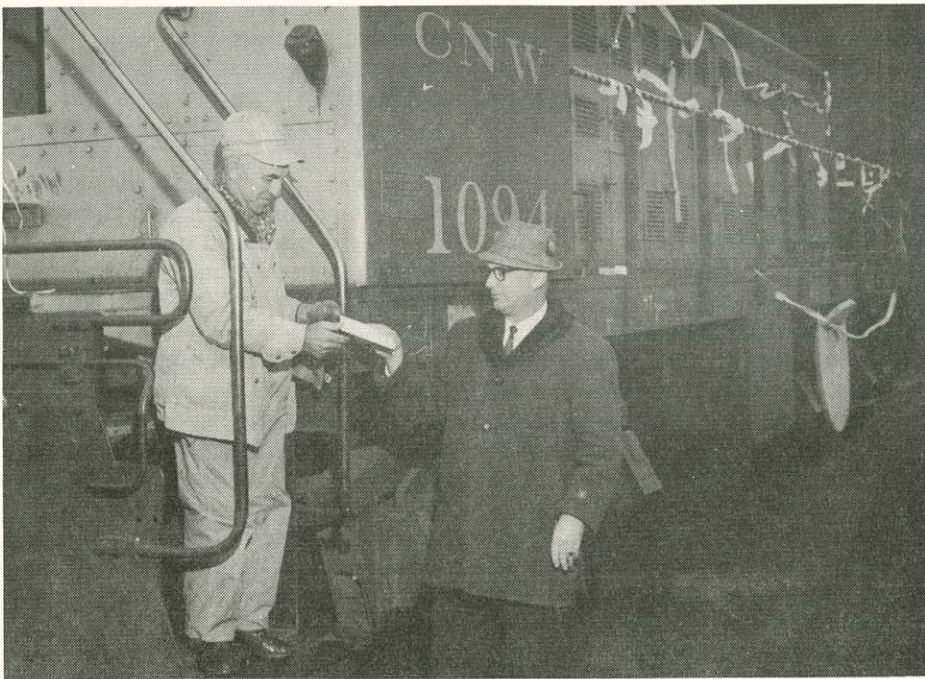
Of all the times to be sent out on a special assignment, this was the worst, for he left Mrs. Vetting at home alone to take care of a family of sick children. The doctor was called around midnight, and he diagnosed the disease with which the children were afflicted as scarlet fever. The house was placed under quarantine, and Hugo was not permitted to return for four weeks.

There were several railroad crossing accidents which Hugo recalled. These were incidents, however, which he preferred not to mention. Instead he stated that automobile drivers ought to take just one ride in the cab of a railroad locomotive. To see a speeding automobile approaching a railroad crossing as a train is approaching, even when the whistle is blowing, and even then to cross the track ahead of the train . . . if one would see something like this from the vantage point of the locomotive cab perhaps then greater caution would be exercised. Even the "near misses" do not soon pass from memory.

Mr. Vetting mentioned that in his later years as an engineer he also made the transition from steam motive power to the Diesel. However, most of his experiences with the "Diesel" were in railroad switch yard service.

When Mr. Vetting retired in 1967, Rod Hoard the agent at Manitowoc, presented him with a purse contributed by fellow workers. To send him off in a blaze of glory on his last day on the railroad, the locomotive was decorated in holiday attire. As he retired he had many memories, most of them pleasant, and some to be stored in the recesses of mind and hopefully forgotten. It was a good life, said Hugo. It was good that one

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*Hugo Vetting receiving purse contributed by fellow workers on day of his retirement. Rod Hoard, station agent at Manitowoc making the presentation.*

### Some Memories of My Career Continued

could have the thrill of directing a powerful steam locomotive on its way. The safety of all the passengers on board depended on the fireman and engineer

doing their work efficiently, safely and well. Conscientious and faithful men in the cab of the locomotive are among a transportation company's greatest and most valuable assets.

## Down Memory Lane With A "Northwestern" Car Repairman

by Ed Dallman, Manitowoc

It was in Huron, South Dakota in August, 1918, that Ed Dallman began his career with the Chicago and Northwestern railroad. As a car repairman he had the responsibility of keeping the passenger and freight cars in running order. Carpenter work was involved most of the time; however there also were iron and steel parts that frequently needed attention. Car repairmen were also required to make repairs on the locomotive tender, the cow catcher of the locomotive, and also the cab. To qualify for a position of this kind a four year apprenticeship was expected. However, in 1918 there was such a shortage of mechanics that this qualification was waived, and substituted therefore was four years of experience as a carpenter. Ed was married in 1920, and for the next nine years he found steady employment around Huron, S.D.

During Ed's last year at Huron, he was



*Ed Dallman*

in the wrecker service. It was the duty of men in this department to get wrecked cars off the tracks as soon as possible and to see to it that trains could be routed over the tracks where the wreck had taken place.

From 1929 until 1940 Ed was

required to make many changes of address, with some of these moves being on only a few hours notice. The first move was to Adams, Wisconsin. On this occasion he was promoted to foreman of the car department. After a few months he was transferred to Winona, Minnesota, this time as assistant foreman. From Winona he went to Boone, Iowa, and from that city to Clinton, Iowa, and finally from Clinton Iowa to Watertown, South Dakota. On one occasion Ed was required to be ready to move and be on a train that left early in the evening. In less than eight hours of time he had to have all his furniture and personal possessions on a freight train ready to be taken to his new place of employment. It seemed like an impossible request; however, eight friends helped to get the moving done, and when the passenger train left that night, Ed and his family were on it. All of them were surprised at how much could be done if there was real application to the assignment. Those were depression days and jobs were scarce, so one was not in a mood to argue or plead for any change in orders.

### Mr. Dallman Transferred To Manitowoc

In June, 1941, Ed was transferred to Manitowoc, Wisconsin. He was sent here as a mechanic and car repairman, and had the special assignment of inspecting the cars as they came off the car ferries. The cars of many different railroad lines came on the car ferries, and the Chicago and Northwestern Company insisted that these cars be in a good state of repair before they be permitted to travel on the Northwestern Company's tracks. If the repairs needed were minor, Ed made them, took note of what was done, and charged the repair work to the railroad company of the line that owned the freight car. Sometimes major repairs were needed which required that the car be taken from the train.

Generally in 1941 the cars were lighter in weight and of smaller design and construction. The locomotives were smaller in size also, and thus there was more breakage. Many cars came to this port loaded with grain. Sometimes the floor of the car or sides needed repair. There wasn't time to unload the car so that repairs could be made. The workmen had to do the best they could in a minimum of time.

One of the things to which a car inspector gave careful attention was the possibility of cars having a "hot box." These came about when the axles of the wheels were improperly lubricated. When a hot box was noticed, it sometimes was

Continued on Page 11

## Down Memory Lane Continued

possible to make the necessary repairs on the spot. Sometimes the repairs made were of a nature only so that the car could reach its destination. Delay enroute could be costly, and so every effort had to be made to keep the cars moving toward their destination.

The car repairman and inspector had to be alert also to broken wheels, chipped rims, and similar defects on this equipment. The air hoses and brakes also were carefully checked. Repairmen had to follow what was called "the A.R.A. rule book."

The last few years of Ed's tenure with the C. & N.W. railroad was spent at Kaukauna. The foreman at that city died very suddenly and Ed was assigned to

take over his duties. Ed retired in 1960. He said, "My work was always interesting. I never lost interest in my work as a railroad man. Every day seemed to have a new and different challenge."

While we have related the stories of only a few railroad employees, it is clear that to keep the trains moving, many people were needed, each responsible for a specific duty and assignment. The genius of American industrial management can be seen in the fact that trains seem to operate so smoothly. It seems that things just happen. Not so, many people, each responsible for a specific assignment must cooperate so that the products of farm and factory get to their destinations with a minimum of delay.

## September 21 Milwaukee Manitowoc and Green Bay Railroad

4500 tons of rail have been purchased for the Milwaukee - Sheboygan road and 100,000 ties have been contracted for from Kewaunee and Carlton and will be delivered to Sheboygan and Milwaukee within 60 days.

## November 15, 1871

The new locomotives from the Baldwin works, Philadelphia, for the Appleton & New London Railway have arrived at Sheboygan, and will be towed to this city on scows today or tomorrow, the tug Kitty Smoke, of this port, having been engaged for that purpose. As soon as they arrive and some baggage cars and passenger coaches, already on the way, regular trains will be put on between this city and Brillion during the coming winter.

The schooners Hanna Etta and Cappella, with railroad ties from Clay Banks for the A. & N.L. Ry., came in last week.

## 14 September 1871

Under the stirring management of that driving and experienced Railway builder, J. S. Beck, secretary of the A. & N.L. Railway, work is progressing rapidly. The "long bridge" and fill at Zalesberg is completed, and the graders are nearly through the town of Brillion and will enter Woodville in a few days.

## EXCERPTS FROM NEWSPAPERS IN 1871

### Appleton Daily Crescent, Dec. 2, 1871

The Appleton & New London Railway will commence carrying the U.S. Mails daily to Manitowoc as soon as a regular passenger train is established. This will at once turn a large amount of travel for Chicago and Milwaukee to the Chicago and N.W. railway at this point. It is already evident that there will be freight enough at once to keep a freight train busy all the time between Woodville and Manitowoc.

### August 10, 1871

#### Railroad Accident

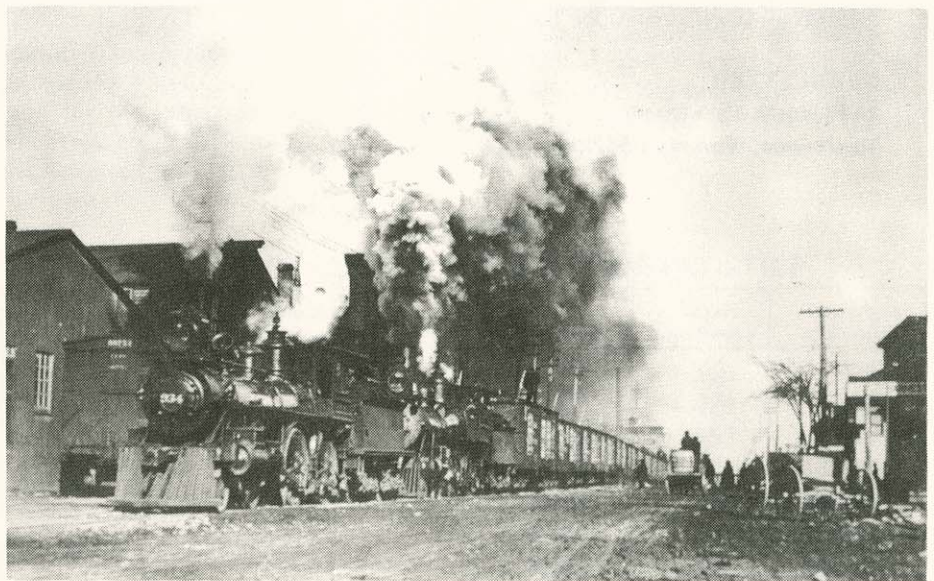
While six men on a hand car were coming down a grade near the city on the A & N.L. RR. on Monday afternoon at a rapid rate of speed several of them undertook to jump off. One of them, John Lavano, fell and struck his head against a tie injuring him very severely. His fellow workmen conveyed him to his residence on the south side in an unconscious condition. And at the latest account, he was in a fair way of recovery.

### 6 July 1871

The work on the Western railroad is being rapidly pushed forward and wages have been increased to \$1.50 per day. We are informed by Mr. Oliver Brown, Engineer of the locomotive Benjamin Jones, that he expects to have up steam and the iron horse pulling over the track within a week or 10 days.

### Arrival of the Locomotive Benjamin Jones

A locomotive named Benjamin Jones together with the balance of the first purchase of 2500 tons of iron for laying the track between this city and Appleton arrived here last Sunday on board the schooner Mediterranean. This of course will stop the mouths of all croakers, if indeed they were not stopped before, and we shall soon expect an invitation to take a trip via rail from this city to some point on the Pacific coast.



*Air Pollution 1898 style. A pair of Rhode Island built American type engines pulling some type of special freight west on Quay Street. The building to the left of the second engine is the one presently housing the One Hour Martinizing on 8th and Quay Streets. Air pollution and noise caused many of the Quay Street merchants to complain about the railroad's operations on this route from the lake. This was the main reason for the Northwestern putting in the southern belt line to the car ferry docks.*

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