
MID-CONTINENT
RAILWAY

Gazette

VOL. 32, NO. 1, MARCH 1999





Three Mid-Continent members, in time-honored railroad tradition, compare watches outside the North Freedom station, decorated for the Santa Express. Photo by Dick Gruber

The Mid-Continent Railway *Gazette* is published by the Mid-Continent Railway Historical Society, Inc., North Freedom, Wis. 53951-0358, phone 608/522-4261, e-mail midcon@baraboo.com and is distributed free to members and friends of the society. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without consent of the editor, John Gruber, 1430 Drake St., Madison, Wis. 53711. Vol. 32, No. 1, March 1999. Mid-Continent is a member of Tourist Railway Association and Association of Railway Museums. Internet: <http://www.mcrwy.com>
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Mid-Continent's Mission: Rural Railroading

By John Gruber

Such, in essence, is the country railroad even in the fifth decade of the 20th century, a familiar bread-and-cheese institution whose implications are wide as the American way of life itself. Lucius Beebe, in *Mixed Train Daily*

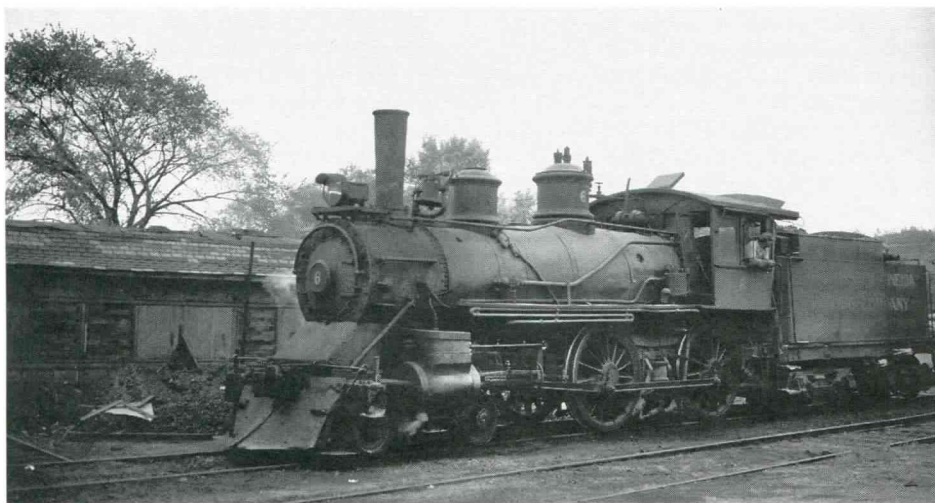
Rural railroading, the name adopted for Mid-Continent—style railroading in the revised mission statement, offers a rich mixture of people, places, and times for museum interpretation. It's an unusual combination of independent railroads and branch lines serving communities all across five upper Midwestern states. Beebe's definition, the conclusion to *Mixed Train Daily* (1947), influenced Mid-Continent's early planners; other writers have written in a similar manner about the "bread and butter" rail lines.

It's also a way of honoring small towns, the "mid-continent of America" described

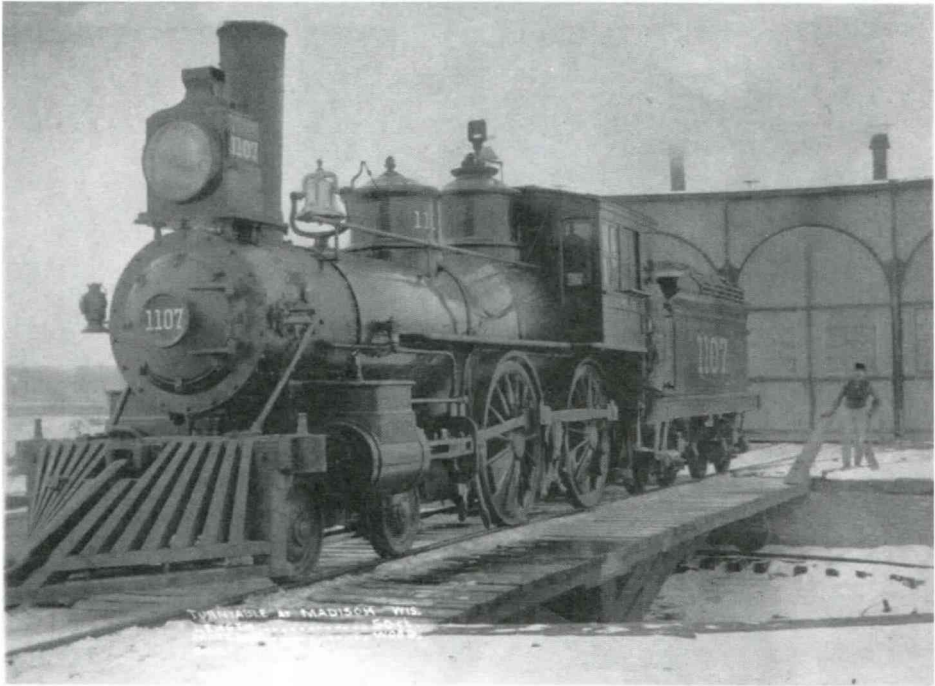
by Sauk City author August Derleth. In *Walden West* (1961), Derleth tells about people "who live their lives in no way differently from lives spent in countless other villages, in many an un-named Sac Prairie within the country's borders."

It recalls the golden age of railroading from 1880 to 1916 when small towns depended on the steam locomotives for communication with the outside world, the depot was the center of activities, and the railroad's agent occupied a position of prominence in business and social life. You'll see evidence in the telegrapher's key in the bay window at North Freedom and the milk cans on the platform.

Thousands of well-painted depots "served rural and small-town Americans, the warp and woof of society in the innocent generation before World War I," John F. Stover writes in *American Railroads* (1970).



Manchester and Oneida, an 8.1 mile line in Iowa, operated from 1901 to 1951. No. 6, built by Rhode Island in 1886, served the Atlantic Northern from 1929 until sold to the M&O in 1936. Photo by Don Hofsommer



Illinois Central's four-stall enginehouse in Madison, shown in 1897, is an example of a branch line structure in a larger city. IC Historical Society photo

Agents such as Fred Spratler at Sauk City, Frank Miles at Prairie du Sac, Mathias H. Schleck at Fennimore, Harry Lathrop at Bridgeport, and Mary O'Connor at Juneau staffed the stations. And the families of railroaders, working for generations as locomotive engineers, firemen, conductors, brakemen, trackwalkers, and sectionmen, kept the trains running.

Rural railroading includes independent companies such as the Cazenovia and Southern in Wisconsin or the Manchester and Oneida in Iowa. Their impact extended beyond the commercial aspects. "Being community-owned and as close to public-operated as a private line could be, the M&O was the subject of Manchester's personal and friendly interest," Frank P. Donovan Jr. said in Iowa's *Palimpsest* (September 1957).

It also encompasses most branch lines in southwestern Wisconsin: the Milwaukee Road west from Janesville to Mineral Point; the Chicago and North Western from Madison to Galena and Fennimore, plus the narrow gauge to Woodman; the Illinois Central to Madison and

Dodgeville. Prairie du Sac, Richland Center, and Soldier's Grove—all branches off the Milwaukee Road's Madison to Prairie du Chien route—fit the definition, although the main line would be excluded, at least in this time period.

The mixed trains, running where there is not enough business for a full passenger train, are another indication of rural character of some routes of larger companies. In Wisconsin, in 1916, mixed service covered 1,320,092 train miles during the year, about 5 percent of the total miles. By railroad, the numbers are: C&NW, 437,241; Milwaukee Road, 529,800; Omaha, 268,669; Illinois Central, 13,110; Soo, 53,948; and Northern Pacific, 17,324. That included, for example, the three weekday trains from Prairie du Sac to connect with main line trains at Mazomanie.

Women sometimes specialized as telegraphers. O'Connor started as night operator at Juneau, Wisconsin, in 1889. She moved on to Burnett Junction, Plymouth, and Green Bay before being promoted to the agency at Juneau in 1908, where she remained until retiring in 1940. Shortly

before her death in 1948, she took part in groundbreaking for a new passenger depot at Juneau. She was widely known as the first woman telegrapher on the C&NW. Irma Steidtmann Spellman worked at Sauk City for 11 years beginning in 1910. Green Bay and Western hired women for its track crew in World War II.

The role of Afro-Americans workers in sleeping and dining cars is well known. But they served in executive positions as well. A descendant of Thomas Jefferson, Carl Jefferson, born in Madison, was a lawyer for the Milwaukee Road in Chicago for 40 years; two brothers also were railroaders. Another was Frederick E. Pearson, a telegrapher and dispatcher for the C&NW.

The motive power, often handed down from the main line or purchased second hand, included 4-4-0s, 2-6-0s, and 4-6-0s. Mid-Continent's 1385, built in 1907 for mainline service, is an example of a locomotive quickly moved to branch lines as larger locomotives were purchased. But the equipment also reaches to McKean motor cars on the Illinois Central and Ryan steam cars on the Milwaukee, among others.

A Mid-Continent strength is its wood passenger and freight cars. Sometimes the cars were purchased new, sometimes they moved from main to branch lines, but always they showed how skilled people worked with wood. Outstanding examples are a Great Northern coach, with stained glass windows, and Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western #63, a first-class coach with Edward Colonna's interior designs (page 12). C&NW used combine #7409 on Dakota branch lines after its Chicago suburban service career. Soo Line mail car #552, converted to a milk car, was on the last passenger train on the Stevens Point Portage branch; it also was used as a trailer for a motor car. KGB&W mail/express car #76, rebuilt from a Hicks coach, ran to the 1950s on the last vestige of GB&W mixed trains. C&NW narrow gauge baggage car #1099 and box car #10 were used on the Fennimore—Woodman line until abandonment in 1926. The collection also has early steel cars.

Without the roundhouses and machine shops in places such as Baraboo and

Elroy, the independent and branch lines could not have existed. For heavy repairs, the Hillsboro and North Eastern brought its locomotives to Elroy, the C&NW moved its narrow gauge locomotives on flat cars to Baraboo. Industrial spurs contribute to the heritage. Mid-Continent's route to La Rue has the same alignment as when the line opened in 1903 to serve iron mines. Another spur went to the Devil's Lake quartzite quarry which hauled the rock to the C&NW on a narrow gauge line with a Porter locomotive.

More material than might be expected is available. In addition to *Mixed Train Daily*, books include Archie Robertson, *Slow Train to Yesterday*, 1945; John Krause and H. Reid, *Rails Through Dixie*, 1965; and William S. Young, *Short-Line*

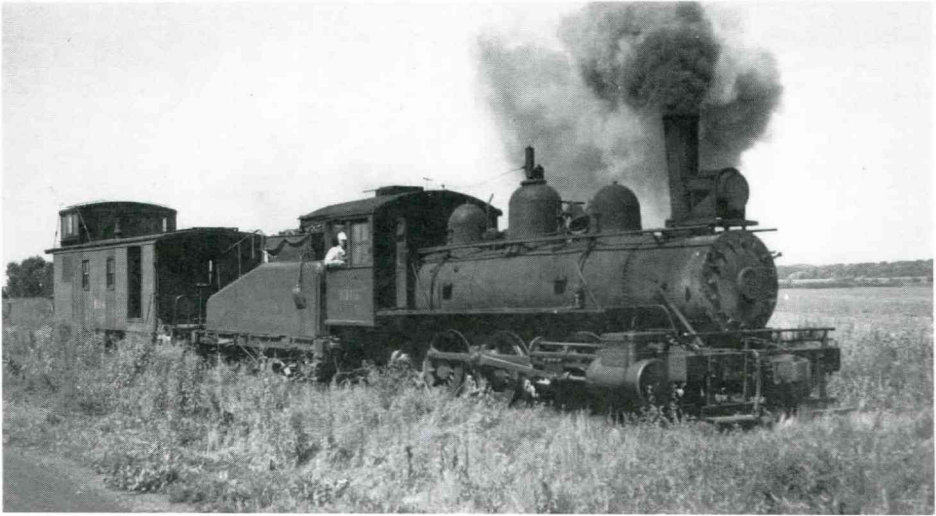
Mission Statement

The Mid-Continent Railway Museum is dedicated to preserving and interpreting the railroad legacy for the educational benefit of the general public. Its primary focus shall be on the railroading of the Upper Midwest during the golden age of railroading, 1880-1916.

The museum adheres to the following principles:

1. to collect and preserve rolling stock, structures, and other artifacts that meet the mission's focus.
2. to restore the equipment based upon sound scholarship.
3. to operate a demonstration steam passenger train in an historically accurate environment of a turn-of-the-century rural railroad.
4. to interpret, through museum display and educational programs, the history, equipment, skills, and the human facets of the rail industry.
5. to maintain a library and archival collections in the interest of promoting historical studies of the industry.
6. to hold the museum's collection in the public trust, ensuring long-term care of historic objects entrusted to its collections.

Adopted October 1998



Hooppole, Yorktown and Tampico at Hooppole, Ill., Aug. 13, 1941. Paul Stringham photo, Bill Raia collection

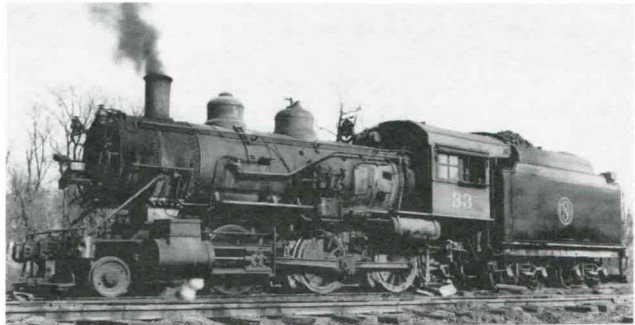
Odyssey, 1981. Herber G. Monroe covered southern short lines in *Railroad* in the late 1930s and 1940s. Robert Richardson, best known for his association with the Colorado Railroad Museum, told about "The Unreliable Mixed Train" in the November 1947 issue of *Trains*. More recently, Daniel Lanz wrote the *Railroads of Southern and Southwestern Wisconsin, Development to Decline* (1985).

Photographers include J. Foster Adams, Fairchild, Wisconsin, and Portland, Oregon; and H. D. Runey, Horseheads, New York, in the late 1940s in *Trains*. Sometimes photos come from unexpected sources. *Granger Country*, published by the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy in 1949 during its centennial year, has pages about people and railroading in small towns. The photos by Esther Bubley and Russell W. Lee, well known for their U.S. Farm Security Administration and Standard Oil of New Jersey work, are especially significant.

Another way to get a feeling for rural railroading is to look at typical lines selected by Ray Buhrmaster. Statistics, if available, are from Inter-

state Commerce Commission's report for 1916 and show miles of road operated and railway operating revenues.

Wisconsin. Ahnapee and Western (GB&W), 34 miles, \$111,393; Cazenovia and Southern, 6.29 miles, \$12,163 [MC may acquire coach body #202]; Ettrick and Northern, started operating Jan. 20, 1919; Green Bay and Western (*Gazette*, October 1986, August 1993), 230 miles, \$816,118 [box car #8020]; Hillsboro and North Eastern, 5.7 miles, \$23,956; Kewaunee, Green Bay and Western [locomotive #49, baggage car #76, hopper car #4567], 37 miles, \$226,697; and Mineral Point and Northern, 30.6 miles, \$120,859.



Chicago, Springfield and St. Louis at Alton, Ill., Nov. 3, 1940. Photo by J. Boose, Bill Raia Collection

Michigan. Boyne City, Gaylord, and Alpena, 73.15 miles, \$263,753 [Russell snow plow]; Copper Range, 139.83 miles, \$907,963 [2 passenger coaches]; East Jordan and Southern, 41.60 miles, \$93,994 [passenger car, MC's oldest]; Lake Superior and Ishpeming, 39.16 miles, \$802,590 [1 locomotive, 2 passenger cars, 1 caboose].

Minnesota. Duluth and North Eastern (Northwest Paper Company), 61.75 miles, \$151,309; Minnesota Western; Minneapolis, Northfield and Southern; Minneapolis, Red Lake and Manitoba, 33.5 miles, \$61,330.

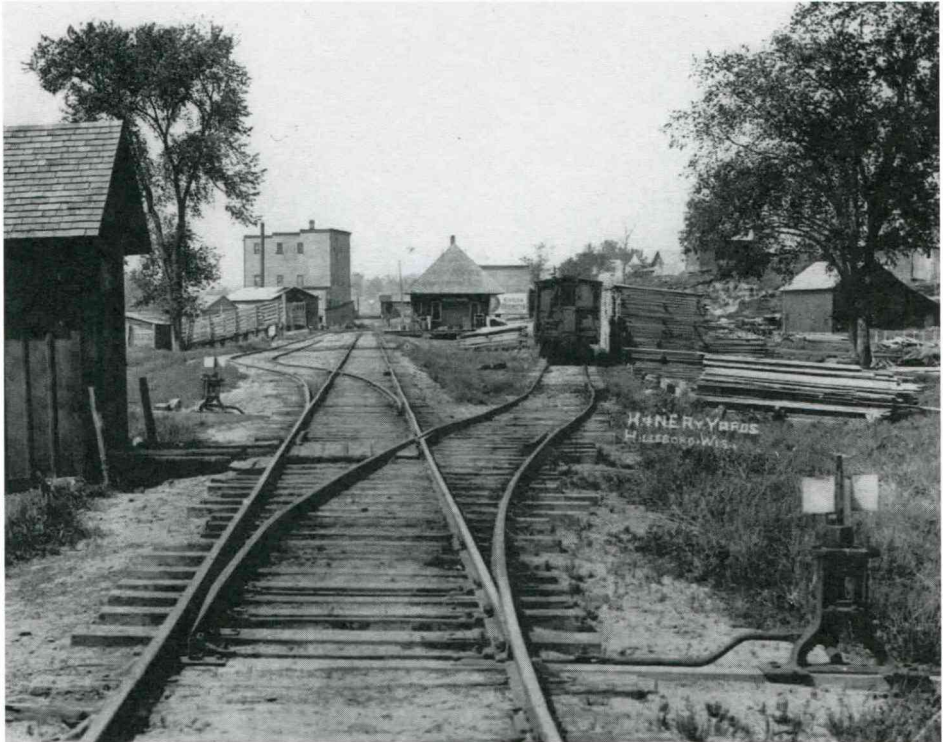
Iowa. Atlantic Northern, 17 miles, \$36,021; Burlington, Muscatine and North Western; Davenport, Rock Island and North Western (Milwaukee Road and CB&Q), 50.06 miles, \$117,492; Manchester and Oneida, 8.16 miles, \$24,608; and Newton and North Western.

Illinois. Chicago and Illinois Midland (Richard R. Wallin, Paul H. Stringham, John Szwajkart, *C&IM*, 1979), 25.22 miles, \$290,099 [office car #90]; Chicago,

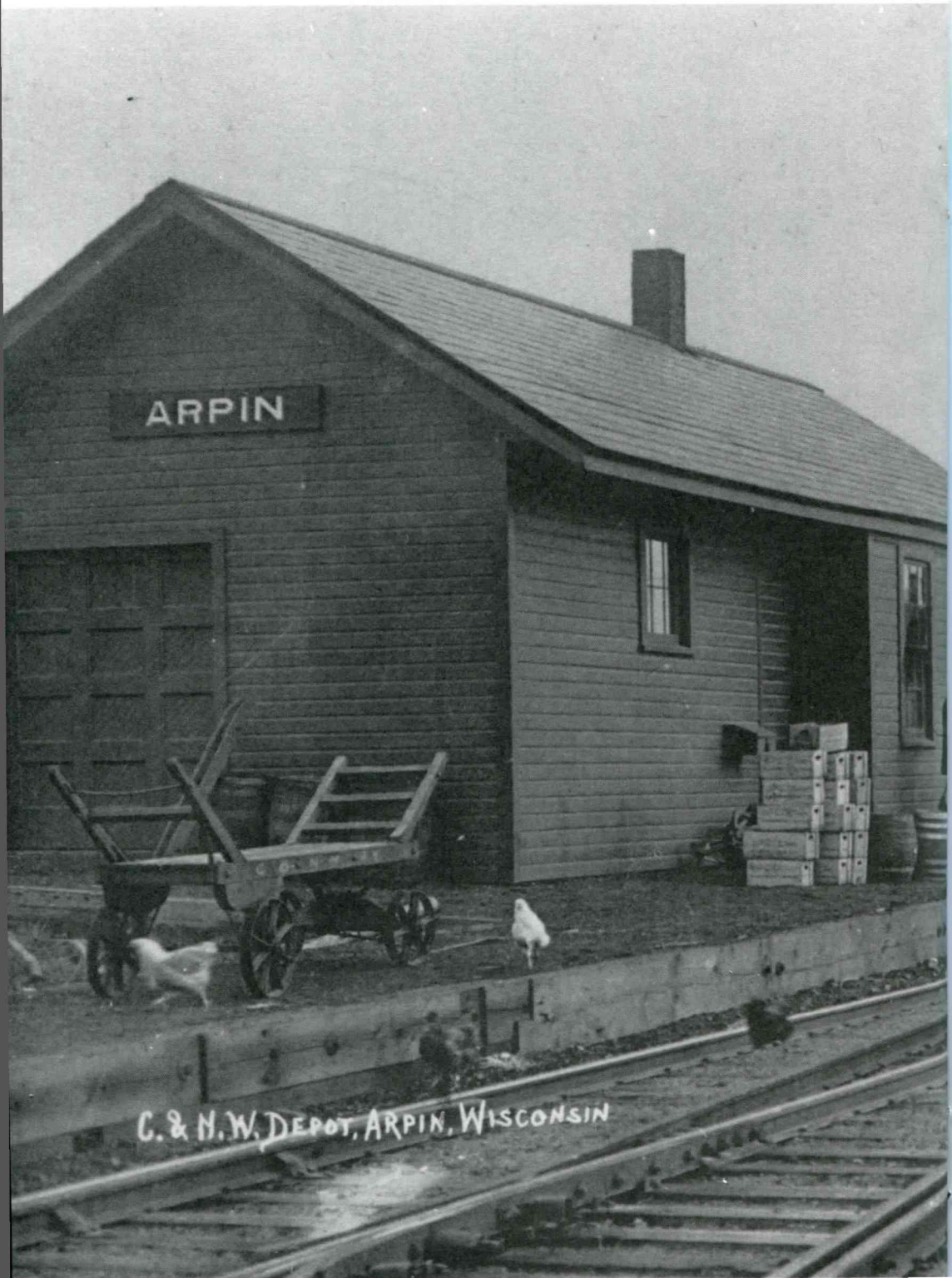
Springfield and St. Louis [office car #90, same as C&IM]; Hoopole, Yorktown and Tampico, 12.2 miles; Illinois Midland, 2 miles; Rock Island Southern, 62.21 miles, 460,824; and Rutland, Toluca and Northern (Chicago and Alton), 26.97 miles.

The revised mission statement was drafted by the accession/deaccession committee, headed by Buhrmaster, and approved by the board of directors in October. "It's basically a restatement of what we have been doing since almost the beginning of the museum. We hope it will serve well in explaining golden age railroading to 21st century audiences," Buhrmaster added.

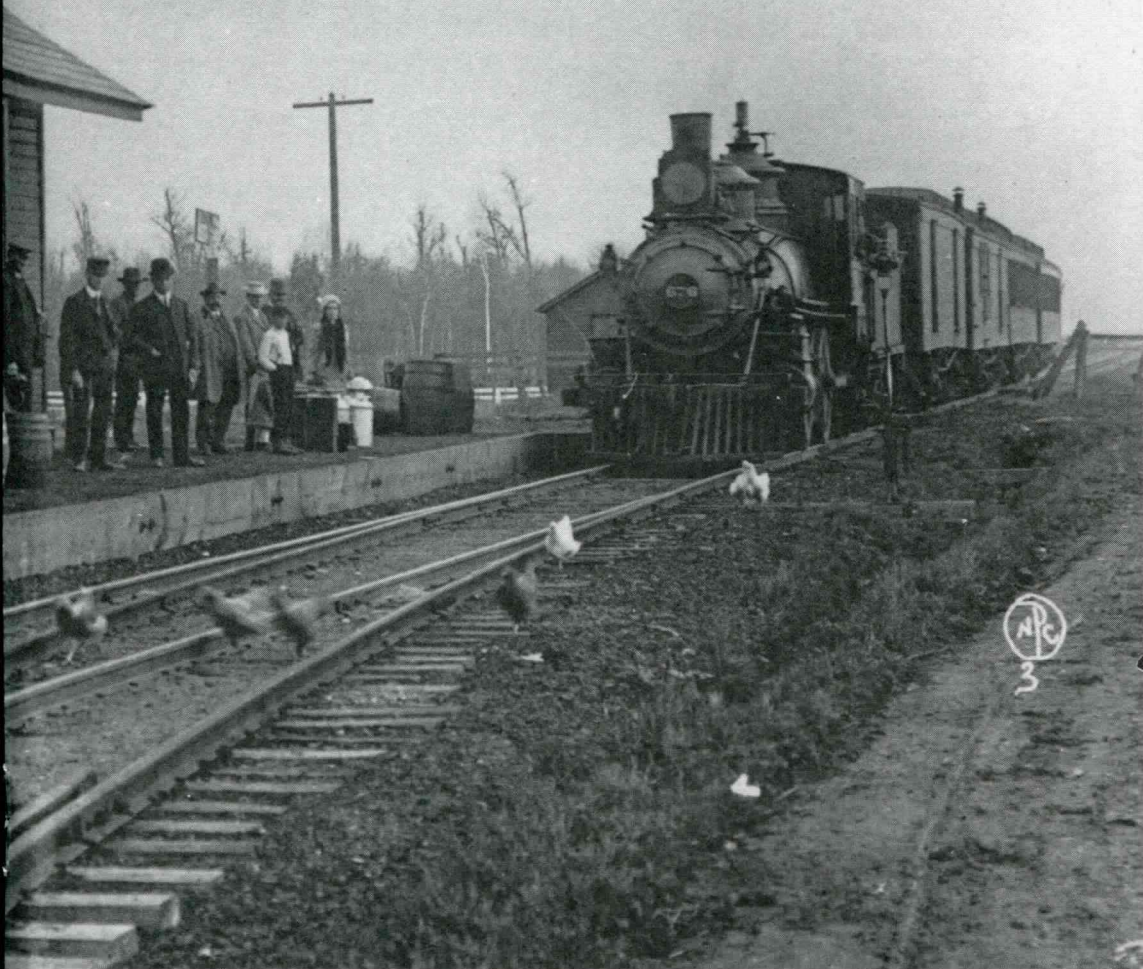
John Gruber, editor of the Gazette since 1982, has resigned, effective with publication of this issue. He thanked members who have helped with the publication, especially Dick, his son. John edits Vintage Rails magazine for Pentrex Publishing; recently, he has been given added responsibilities as acting editor of RailNews.



Most elements of rural railroading are present in the H&NE yard in Hillsboro, Wis. Ray Buhrmaster collection



Chicken scatter at train time in Arpin,
a Wisconsin station on the C&NW be-
tween Wisconsin Rapids and
Marshfield. Colby photo, Ray
Buhrmaster collection



Cold Weather Brings Unprecedented Ice Traffic

For a short time in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the natural ice industry generated unprecedented traffic for Upper Midwestern railroads. Workers flocked to large and small lakes and rivers to harvest ice in the cold January, February, and early March weather.

All of the ice moved quickly by rail to meat packing plants, breweries, and consumers or was stored in large ice houses. Refrigerator cars boosted the summer demand for ice.

Railroads kept a close watch on the harvest. The Milwaukee Road's industrial department collected information from 1,200 stations in February 1898. Louis Jackson, the line's industrial commissioner, told the *Ice Age Journal* that "the company's ice haul now amounts to hundreds of thousands of tons a year. The industry employs thousands of men during the season."

The Chicago and North Western purchased 400 ice box cars in 1898, with capacity for 30 tons. By 1923, 12 of these cars remained, plus 17 cars of 40-ton capacity. All ice cars were gone by 1930.

Since the U.S. Census did not gather production information, except for 20 principal cities in 1879-80, details come from newspaper and personal accounts from countless large and small communities such as Baraboo, Madison, Lake Mills, or Prairie du Chien in Wisconsin.

In Madison, the North Western, Milwaukee Road, and Illinois Central railroads shipped 8,812 carloads in the season ending in March 1890. Freight cars averaged 18 tons, making the total shipped 158,616 tons. And, said the *Madison Democrat*, "three times this amount of ice is stored in houses here awaiting the demand next summer." That, too, would travel by rail.

At Lake Mills on the C&NW, the Washington Ice Co., then Chicago's largest ice dealer, used a 100 horsepower steam

engine to power an endless chain moving ice from the lake to the ice house the same year. "A boarding house 50 by 100 feet, two and one-half stories high, has been erected to accommodate 150 men, who are well taken care of by two first-class cooks from Chicago. A stall accommodates 20 horses. The work goes on night and day; at night electricity lights up the scene," according to the *Democrat*.

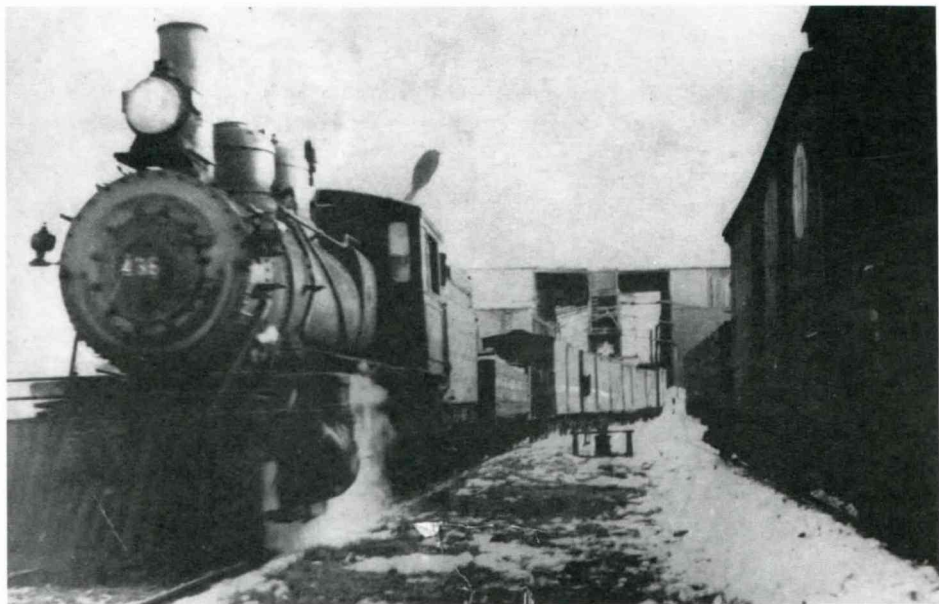
Madison, known for the beauty of its lakes and isthmus, was in a unique position to benefit from the ice harvest. Railroads built tracks to the lakes, C&NW to Lake Monona in 1890, to Maple Bluff about 1895 for the Kurtz and Huegel Ice Company.

The best ice came from Lake Wingra, the smallest of the city's lakes. Illinois Central built a siding in 1894. Knickerbocker Ice Co.'s house went up in the next year; 12 cars could be loaded from its runway.

In 1902, 80 men worked to cut and pack the Wingra ice. The IC loaded upwards of 1,000 cars, "all of it hauled south of the Ohio River, some of going as far south as Memphis and McComb city. "This congealed product of this picturesque lake is used by the company solely for refrigerating purposes," said the *Wisconsin State Journal*.

C&NW's narrow gauge line carried ice in every available flat, stock, and box car (including #10, now at Mid-Continent) from the Wisconsin River near Woodman to Fennimore, for transfer to standard gauge cars.

Under a "large contract" for the Milwaukee Road, about 800 cars were shipped from Prairie du Chien to the company's ice houses in February 1903. All of the Milwaukee's ice houses on the Prairie du Chien, Dubuque, and Iowa and Dakota divisions were filled from Prairie du Chien in 1904, when 1,200 to 1,400 cars were harvested.



Illinois Central loads cars at the Knickerbocker ice house on Lake Wingra in Madison. The IC had a spur track along Commonwealth Avenue from 1894 to 1936. State Historical Society of Wisconsin photo, WHI(x3)43036

While the business increased, profits did not always follow. Complaints about tariff increases give more clues to the far reaching nature of the traffic. When the Wisconsin Lakes Ice and Cartage Company protested to the Wisconsin Railroad Commission in 1912 about rates, statements list some of the "ice-shipping points" to Milwaukee: Pewaukee, 20 miles; Waukesha, 21 miles; Merton, 32 miles; Kansasville and Barton, 34 miles; North Lake, 35 miles; and Random Lake, 40 miles. Wisconsin Lakes was paying portionally more for a 7 mile haul from Silver Springs to Milwaukee.

At Baraboo, harvesting ice was an every winter task for August Platt & Sons until about 1946 (*Gazette*, Jan.-Feb. 1985). The C&NW's ice house in Baraboo, sold in January 1932, was removed. By that time, icing operations had shifted to Madison, where the C&NW maintained a 5,000-ton ice house from 1926 to 1956.

Natural ice and the ice houses in Madison lasted until the 1930s. Oscar Mayer manufactured ice from 1921 to 1968 in Madison and at La Crosse from 1962 to 1967. Some of the company's ice-making equipment was sold to the Wisconsin Ice and Coal Company, Milwaukee, which

continued to serve ice dealers.

Technology was available in 1860s to build refrigerator cars, but their general use came later.

When the C&NW started running refrigerator cars twice a week from Madison to Chicago in 1873, the *State Journal* said: "This improvement our merchants will fully appreciate, as they will now be able to ship butter and eggs to that city without fear of damage."

Companies such as the North Western Refrigeration Line, organized in 1925, maintained fleets of wood, ice cooled cars. Its Baraboo shop closed Dec. 31, 1963, as the transition to steel, mechanical cars was underway. The same Chicago investors organized the Western Refrigerator Line in 1929 at Green Bay to furnish cars for the Green Bay and Western's perishable traffic. The WRL shop on a corner of GB&W's Norwood Yard was purchased by GB&W when WRL phased out its refrigerator car fleet.

The end for ice-bunker cars came in 1973 when the Interstate Commerce Commission approved railroad plans to discontinue "icing, re-icing, salting, and resalting services." The transition, started years earlier, was complete. JG

MUSEUM HIGHLIGHTS

Mid-Continent Gets \$175,000 Challenge

The Jeffris Family Foundation took the lead toward preserving a rare piece of Wisconsin history with a 50 percent challenge grant (\$175,000) to Mid-Continent. The museum has until September 1, 2000, to raise the matching amount. The estimated cost to return former Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western first-class coach #63 to its original condition is \$350,000. MLS&W became a part of the Chicago and North Western in 1893.

Barney and Smith of Dayton, Ohio, built the car in August 1888 (*Gazette*, May 1971, August 1993). Mid-Continent saved it from demolition 30 years ago when it was a produce agent's office at the Wood Street Potato Mart in Chicago.

"The coach was built by the predominant car company of the period for an early Wisconsin railroad that helped open the northern section of the state for settlement and industrial development," said Don Ginter, the museum's curator. "However, it is of greater significance to the general art world as the surviving example of Edward Colonna's interior car design work." An exhibition organized in 1983 by the Dayton Art Institute, shown in Dayton, Montreal, and Washington, D.C., included examples of Colonna's work in the Mid-Continent car.

Colonna was an early champion of the Art Nouveau style. In the late 1800s he was an assistant to an architect hired by Barney and Smith as a consultant. But when the manufacturer hired him as its designer-in-chief, he established a carving and marquetry department that created the kind of interiors whose beauty transcended a railroad car's utility. In this first class coach, his influence can still be seen in the hand carved ornamentation of polished cherry wood around the doors and windows and in the stenciled patterns on the oak veneer ceiling panels.

"This is probably the most unique restoration project in the history of the Foundation," according to Tom Jeffris, president of the Jeffris Family Foundation, "Here you have a one-of-a-kind railroad car due to the international renown of its interior designer." Colonna developed his Art Nouveau designs while in the employ of Barney and Smith. These came to their full fruition during his later years in Paris, where he gained renown as a designer of furniture, jewelry, and glassware.

The coach is stored in the museum's workshop. The coach will be put on public display when the work is complete and that is dependent upon a successful fund raising campaign. The gift from the Jeffris Family Foundation starts the campaign at the halfway mark.

"The restoration of MLS&W #63 is more important even than the preservation of a unique historic artifact," said Al Louer of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. "By an association with designer Edward Colonna, the project instantly bridges the divide between the specialized interests of an industrial/technical museum like Mid-Continent and the broader world of cultural heritage. This is a gap museums must span if they hope to succeed in their mission to communicate with wider audiences and build financial support. The Jeffris Family Foundation's extraordinary generosity and commitment to Mid-Continent demonstrate perfectly the positive effects that may result," said Louer, who visited Mid-Continent in 1997.

Village Signs Agreement

The letter of agreement between WisDOT and the village of North Freedom for reimbursement of #1385 repairs was signed in February; Mid-Continent is preparing a bid packet. "They will make a site visit to discuss the project, determine the validity of the bid packet, and then

allow us to release it to at least three potential bidders. The whole process is painfully slow. The plus is that we are guaranteed the funds to do the project. Cash on hand is about \$100,000 with another \$10,000 pledged for 1999. We'll use this as the up front money we must spend before the state reimburses us for the actual expenditures. When the project is done, we'll still have a significant portion of this cash on hand since the state is covering 80% of the costs. With the remainder, we'll finish the shop upgrade. The key piece there is the electrical system. This will all take longer than we want, but by the year 2000, our steam program will be in good shape," according to Don Meyer.

John Gruber has submitted the National Register nomination.

Planning Priorities

Planning Mid-Continent's needs for the next 20 years and beyond should begin as soon as six committees are appointed. Ken Breher, president, expects the committees to coordinate their efforts to anticipate needs and recommend priorities for museum growth and interpretation in the 21st century.

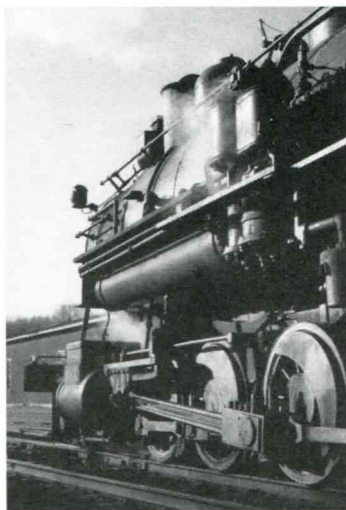
The Physical Plant Planning Committee, approved by the board in November, includes Mike Harrington (chair) John Sorrel, John Gruber, Dick Goddard, Ray Buhmaster, and Breher. Other committees are being selected.

Museum Bids for Badger Track

Mid-Continent has appeared in several newspaper articles about the soon to be liquidated Badger Army Ammunition Plant. The articles, including one in the *Sauk Prairie Eagle*, explain that Executive Director Don Meyer has proposed that the museum move its training, storage, and repair facilities to the plant.

A proposal to Tim Kabat, Sauk County Planning and Zoning administrator and to the General Services Agency, was made in August. The GSA is the federal agency in charge of disposing of the surplus government property.

"When I heard that the federal government was disposing of the property, I thought, 'we need the space, we can get there, and we can do our crew training there without interfering with our public rides,'" said Meyer.



Saginaw Timber #2 performed at Santa Express. Photo by Dick Gruber

The proposal asks that the track, a portion of the right-of-way surrounding the track including several warehouses, the repair shop, tool house, and scale building, be donated to the museum. The warehouses with loading docks would be immediately useful for storing parts, supplies, materials, and equipment, Meyer noted. The shop is the only building with rail going inside and includes a spacious two-bay pit. Badger has 27 miles of standard gauge track, part of which forms an 11-mile interior loop.

Regarding Mid-Continent's proposal, Dennis Spearman, GSA official in charge of administering the disposal of Badger, said, "First, we have to determine what the proposed uses for Badger will be. What we're going to do with the rail is not one of our top priorities." (The *Gazette* thanks Diane Schwartz for information from her article in the December 3, 1998, *Sauk Prairie Eagle*.)

Members

A whistle from GB&W engine 2-8-0, no. 399, with ID tag attached, was stolen in Milwaukee. If you see it at a swap meet or on sale at an antique store, call Jeff Haertlein, North Freedom. The whistle, painted silver, is a typical round, flat type of whistle.

Amy Marie Gornicke and Jeffrey Nelson were married Saturday, Jan. 30, at St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Wausau.

W. W. "Pete" Gorman: 1913-1998

The *Gazette* asked three friends to write remembrances of Pete Gorman, 85, a long-time member who died Dec. 28 in Milwaukee. Memorial may be sent to the museum. For more about Gorman, see the Feb. 1990 *Gazette*.

On one of my visits to Mid-Continent back in 1967 I saw Pete Gorman for the first time. I thought he was the quintessential railroad passenger conductor. Uniform, cap, watch, information, kindly demeanor; he had it all. It was some time after that when I actually met him. My wife, Rita, and I soon became good friends with Pete and Betty.

Pete's father was a Milwaukee Road locomotive engineer. Pete was proud of that. We had dinner at the Gorman's several times, always followed by Pete's movies and always including one that he took of a ride with his dad back in the steam days. Pete's rides on the 1385 when we had her out on the road reminded him of that trip. One of the rewards of preservation is generating feelings like that!

Others are better qualified than I am to talk about Pete and Betty's contributions to Mid-Continent over the years, although I can personally attest to the morale building and restorative powers of her chocolate chip cookies. Pete's dedication to railroading, to Mid-Continent, and to his family (and theirs to him) were wonderful to see. We are all the better for having known him. We wish Betty and his family nothing but the best.

Chris Burger

One of the fondest recollections of Pete Gorman will be that of his many years of dedicated service as conductor on passenger trains at Mid-Continent. If there ever was an image of a conductor that we would wish to remem-

ber and emulate, it would be that of Pete. Always crisply attired in proper uniform, with freshly sharpened pencils in his coat pocket, the image presented by Pete left little doubt as to who was in charge of the train. Pete would always find time to talk with the passengers, relate some history of the railroad or equipment, and spend time with the younger passengers. After the advent of first-class service at Mid-Continent, Pete was the obvious choice for "Pullman" conductor on Soo diner-lounge #2017. In this capacity Pete was able to spend more time conversing with the passengers "one on one," while still attending to the traditional duties of a conductor.

Pete made a substantial contribution to the rail history education of several generations of Mid-Continent members through showings of his diverse collection of railroad films. Filmed over the course of many years, Pete had documented a tremendous variety of rail history such as the Pennsy locomotive test plant at Altoona, Pennsylvania, the White Pass & Yukon in Alaska, and the Colorado & Southern running up Clear Creek Canyon in Colorado. The images that were captured on film by Pete are priceless and most cannot be experienced today. A favorite Pete Gorman film has always been the footage he shot while riding with his father, a Milwaukee Road engineer, on a steam locomotive. Pete's narration of this subject and all of the films included both historical data and personal remembrances.

The Mid-Continent experience was always a family event for the Gorman's. If Pete was working the train, Betty and her daughters would be passing out cool drinks to the volunteers, and, if you were lucky, homemade chocolate chip cookies. Both a Gorman hallmark and tradition, Betty's chocolate chip cookies were eagerly received as door prizes at many a



Pete Gorman

Mid-Continent banquet. Many times a lunch invitation to the train crew working with Pete would be extended. There always seemed to be room for one more in the Gorman trailer, or, if the weather was good, to gather around the trailer outside for lunch. Good food, good conversation, and the requisite chocolate chip cookies were enjoyed by all.

Tom O'Brien Jr.

Pete once commented in a magazine article how I looked the part as a conductor on our railroad. But what he didn't realize was just how much a role model he was. In our early days, few of us had complete, authentic uniforms. Pete wore his uniform with style and created a wonderful image for our passengers, an image that others, like myself, wanted to follow.

Pete was a stickler for authenticity. I remember his concern of having an air-conditioner sticking out of the back side of the depot, creating a non turn-of-the-century appearance. He shaped many of our thoughts as to how Mid-Continent should look.

I remember the nice visits on warm summer evenings with he and Betty up on "the hill." We talked about Mid-Continent, his trips to Colorado, his Dad's

days on the Milwaukee Road, and the Milwaukee Road *Hiawathas* (my favorites!).

Pete also was interested in star gazing, and his spot on the hill provided him with many a beautiful night in which to gaze towards the heavens.

But, my most memorable evenings were spent with Pete and Betty in Milwaukee. When I was still living in Milwaukee, a number of us would gather at their house to assemble the monthly *Gazettes*. We were then treated to Betty's delicious bakery and Pete's many great movies he shot during the steam era. I especially enjoyed his great footage of the *Hiawathas*.

Thank you Pete for your inspiration, the good times, and all the memories.

Jeff Haertlein

FOUNDATION

The Mid-Continent Museum Foundation has made its first major grant to the museum—\$7,000 for a soil study in the west yard area across from the office building.

Since its organization in 1996, the Foundation has made more than 560 contacts with prospective donors, bringing \$20,721 in gifts from 12 foundations and individuals. Ken Breher has been elected to the foundation board, and Tom O'Brien, past president, remains as a member. Steve Brist, who as secretary help get the foundation organized, declined reappointment; Don Meyer is serving as secretary.

A bequest to **Mid-Continent Museum Foundation** is very easy to arrange and can be made by including these words in the will: "I give, devise, and bequeath to Mid-Continent Museum Foundation, c/o Firstar Bank Wisconsin, P.O. Box 7731, Madison, WI 53707-7900 (insert amount of money, percentage of estate, or describe property) to be used for its museum purposes."

Any type of cash, securities, personal property, or real estate can be given through a bequest. Your bequest will be a tangible gift to keep Mid-Continent strong and growing.

 **SCHEDULED**

Schedules on the Internet, <http://www.mcrwy.com>. Call 608/522-4261 for information, or send e-mail to midcon@baraboo.com

Train operations: daily May 24 and through Labor Day; weekends May 8-9, 15-16, 22-23, September 4-5, 11-12, 18-19, 25-26, October 1-3, 8-10, and 16-17. Train times (except for October): 10:30, 12:30, 2, and 3:30.

Special Events: Autumn Color, October 1-3, 8-10; Santa Express, November 27-28. Coach, first class, and dinner services are available. For the Santa Express, coach fares are reduced to \$6 for adults and \$3 for children ages 3-12. For Snow Train and Autumn Color coach fares are the same as the regular season. First class service is \$18.50, which includes hors d'oeuvres and drinks. Dinner is \$55 per person. Reservations are required for first class and dinner service. Call the Mid-Continent office at (608) 522-4261 for information or reservations.

Depot Gallery: May 1-June 15, photos of Mid-Continent's first 40 years.

Cover. The water tower, a rarely preserved structure, adds to the rural railroad atmosphere at Mid-Continent. The photo by Bill Raia is from the 1998 Snow Train weekend.



**Mid-Continent
Railway**

Mid-Continent Railway Historical Society
North Freedom, Wis. 53951-0358

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