



MRHS MAINLINE

*The Official Newsletter of the
Muskegon Railroad Historical Society
Our 25th Year!
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Santa Rides the Rails in West Michigan

Report and photo by Jamey Morrison



On December 16th, the Marquette Railroad ran the "Santa Special" from Comstock Park to Manistee. The day long trip included 15 to 20 minute stops in over a dozen cities along the route. The crowd turn out was excellent, with children and rail fans alike. Santa, Mrs. Clause and their elves greeted children, passed out candy and listened to Christmas wishes. The Marquette staff spent the last few months restoring the interior of a former C&O caboose, painting the exterior, adding the company's logo and familiar Marquette lettering. Leading the Santa Special was the company's bright blue GATX GP-38, which was recently cleaned, polished and lettered for the Marquette Railway.

The Marquette Railway runs along a former Pere Marquette route, from the northern edge of Grand Rapids to Baldwin, and then westerly to Ludington and Manistee.

THE PERE MARQUETTE: SAGINAW'S FIRST RAILROAD

PART II: By *Herbert L. McCullagh* for the Saginaw Historical Society

Article Submitted by Andy Busard

About the time of the completion of the line to Ludington, the Holly, Wayne & Monroe Railroad was being completed. The F. & P. M. saw it as a means of reaching Toledo via Monroe, and a way into Detroit via Wayne, thus eliminating their reliance on the Detroit & Milwaukee connection at Holly. The trouble was that the Michigan Central was also pursuing it as their Ohio link. After considerable manipulations, and negotiations, the F. & P. M. won out.

George C. Kimball, formerly Superintendent of the Flint and Holly became Superintendent of the F. & P. M. when the F. & H. was purchased. He continued on until 1873, when Sanford Keeler took over. During Keeler's control the road was excellently operated. William F. Potter, Dr. Potter's son, took over from Mr. Keeler, and proved to be an excellent administrator as well. William Potter later moved to the Long Island Railroad.

There followed a succession of other capable leaders. Jesse Hoyt was president until his death in 1882, then William W. Crapo, under whose reign the F. & P. M. merged with the Chicago & West Michigan and the Detroit, Grand Rapids and Western to form the Pere Marquette Railroad on January 7th, 1900. Earlier additions were a succession of short lines in central Michigan which eventually formed a link between Saginaw, Alma, Edmore, Greenville, Grand Rapids and other small towns in the area. (This entire segment was later to be nicknamed the "turkey trail.")

January Meeting

Meeting Program:
"Once Upon the Wabash"
A 1953 16mm film
journey
Presented by:
Gary Herne

Tuesday, January 2, 2007
7:00 PM
Don't Miss It!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The Pere Marquette... Continued

Other additions to the growing railroad during Crapo's administration were a narrow gauge lumber line, the Saginaw, Tuscola & Huron R. R., (which the F. & P. M. Railroad standard-gauged in 1891) which ran from Saginaw to Bad Axe and on into the Thumb region, The Manistee and Northeastern, from Manistee to Traverse City and the Port Huron & Northwestern, a line from Port Huron to East Saginaw, plus branches to Sandusky and Harbor Beach. (also originally a narrow gauge lumber road) The acquisition of this railroad gave the P. M. a through line between Ludington, Saginaw and Port Huron. About this time the railroad began steamship operations, from Ludington across Lake Michigan to the Wisconsin ports of Manitowac, Milwaukee, and Kewaunee, originally with break-bulk freighters, then later with the first car-ferry operation.

It was during the period of the Crapo and subsequent Prince Administrations that the directors of the now Pere Marquette realized that the railroad would not be able to rely solely on the traffic originating in Michigan and remain profitable. So they decided to make the P.M. a bridge road between the east at Buffalo and northwest via car-ferries across Lake Michigan from Ludington to ports in Wisconsin, and by securing access to Chicago with these connections. Accordingly, in 1904 the Canadian railroad Lake Erie and Detroit River was purchased, giving them access to St. Thomas, Ontario from Sarnia and Windsor. Trackage rights were obtained on the Canada Southern (New York Central) from St. Thomas to Buffalo via Niagara Falls. The C&WM. merger only got the P.M. as far as New Buffalo (via a roundabout way through Grand Rapids,) so access to Chicago was finally secured by some construction, the formation of a new railroad subsidiary and a series of expensive trackage rights agreements, ultimately involving the Pennsylvania Railroad.

In 1903, at the same time entrance into Chicago was achieved, an attempt was made to shorten the Chicago route (via Kalamazoo rather than Grand Rapids) by buying and extending the Chicago, Kalamazoo & Saginaw Railway, however, the Michigan Central (always a P.M. arch-rival) bought the C.K.&S. while the P.M. was still negotiating.

A look at the Pere Marquette map would have shown lines radiating out of Saginaw in 6 directions. (To Bay City, Ludington, Flint, Port Huron, Alma and Bad Axe) At this time the railroad maintained a three-floor General Office building in the area on North Washington, diagonally across from where the Temple Theater is now located. The yard complex included a car shop, blacksmith shop, machine shop, two roundhouses, a complete locomotive backshop, pattern/cabinet and paint shops. They actually constructed their own passenger cars here. At one time as many as 3000 men were employed. The railroad was truly a Saginaw-based operation.

The General Office building lasted until the Pere Marquette passed into control of a syndicate headed by F. H. Prince. The syndicate bought the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton Railroad and leased the P.M. to it in March of 1905 for 99 years, however the shady stock manipulations of the syndicate resulted in the bankruptcy of both roads. They went into receivership in December of 1905, finally emerging in December of 1907. The C. H. & D. (along with the leased P.M.) was bought by the Baltimore & Ohio in August of 1909. The line later became their (now heavily used CSX) Toledo-Cincinnati main. The B&O later determined that the P.M. didn't fit into their plans so it was cast loose, to be picked up by the J. P. Morgan interests in March of 1911. It went into receivership again in April of 1912, basically because the funded debt, incurred earlier, couldn't be overcome.

The railroad struggled on its own under a receiver until it was re-organized as the Pere Marquette *Railway* in April of 1917, and then was picked up by the enterprising, Cleveland-based Van Sweringen brothers as a companion for their expanding collection of railroads, the Wheeling and Lake Erie, Nickel Plate and Chesapeake & Ohio. Its identity was regained under their control and then lost for the final time when it was merged with the C & O in 1946. By that time the railroad was being operated from Grand Rapids.



JANUARY 2007

MRHS Open Houses an Overwhelming Success

Over the past three weekends, the MRHS held holiday open houses where we invite the public to come and enjoy the trains during the holidays. Turnout was average during the first couple of weeks, but on Tuesday, December 12, the Muskegon Chronicle ran a wonderful article with color pictures about the MRHS and highlighted our open houses. The Grand Rapids press also ran the article (minus pictures) on Thursday, December 14. Well, having just returned from the last open house of the year, the newspapers have truly publicized the MRHS more than we could have imagined. Over the two day weekend of Saturday, December 16 and Sunday, December 17, 2006, approximately 900 people visited the MRHS, and many left wonderful donations in support of the club! It felt at times you could not even move around the club, but the smiles on both children and parents made it all worth while. A HUGE THANK YOU goes out to all of the MRHS members that worked at the open houses, and an even bigger thank you goes to the Muskegon Chronicle and Grand Rapids Press for so wonderfully helping us promote railroad history and model railroading in Muskegon and the West Michigan area!

New MRHS Board of Directors Elected

The membership has spoken and a new board of directors has been elected. At the December 5, 2006 General Membership Meeting, members voted for the 2007 MRHS Board of Directors, and while all but one of the board has served previously, some of the positions have changed around. Your new board of directors for 2007 are:

President: Steve Bowyer
Vice President: Thomas Anderson
Treasurer: Andy Busard
Secretary: Thomas Van Bruggen
At Large Board of Directors: Jamey Morrison, Jim Funnell, and Jason Bach.

We welcome Jason Bach as the one new board member, and we would like to thank Jim Beal for his dedicated service over the past year! And remember, the board serves YOU, the membership, so if you would like any issues or items addressed, be sure to bring your thoughts and ideas to the board.

The new board will take office at the December 19, 2006 board meeting, and will be taking on the establishment of numerous committees for the MRHS. We need your help, so let a board member know where you would be willing to help.

Member News and Donations to the Club

New Books and Donations

Mrs. Art Million: Framed Baldwin Locomotive Works builders photo of Muskegon Rail & Navigation steam Locomotive picture and Framed MR&N Stock Certificate
Ray Veeder: HO track, cars, engines & buildings, as well as an old Lionel train.
Jim Hower: Several railroad magazines.
Hugh Hornstein: 11 railroad related Books
Check them out in the library
Bob King: The Milwaukee Electrics book

Thanks to all of the donators for helping us have the great collections we have! Your donations are very much appreciated.

Dates to Remember

Monday, December 25, 2006 –
MERRY CHRISTMAS!
CELEBRATE CHRIST'S BIRTH!
Monday, January 1, 2007 - .
HAPPY NEW YEAR!
Tuesday, January 2, 2007 7:00 PM
MRHS General Membership Meeting
Saturday, January 6, 2007
Riverbend Model Railroad Train Show
Wyoming, Michigan
Tuesday, January 16, 2007 7:00 PM
MRHS Board Meeting
Tuesday, February 6, 2007 7:00 PM
MRHS General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, February 20, 2007 7:00 PM
MRHS Board Meeting
Saturday, March 10, 2007
NMRA Division 4 Quarterly Meeting at the MRHS
Sunday, March 18, 2007
MRHS Spring Train Show
LC Walker Arena



THE END OF THE LINE

From the Editor: As you can already tell, I have changed the layout of the newsletter, and I hope to incorporate more changes during the coming year! I have requested articles over the past couple of months, and at the last couple of meetings the future of the Mainline was discussed. If you offered to write and article or two, make sure to get them to me soon. Bring them up to the club or email them to me at webmaster@mrhs-online.org. Thanks, your secretary and editor, Thomas Van Bruggen

DUES...DUES...DUES

Discounts, Library Access, Layout Access to name a few...

Get your dues in so you don't lose these privileges of membership.

If you have a check mark by your name on the envelope, your dues **have not been** paid for **2007**, so **send in the Membership Application/Renewal below!**

MUSKEGON RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

561 W. Western Ave. – PO BOX 765
Muskegon MI, 49443



2007 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION and RENEWAL APPLICATION

NAME: _____

AGE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

MEMBERSHIP TYPE:

INDIVIDUAL (\$20/yr)

FAMILY (\$30/yr SPOUSE AND CHILDREN UNDER 18)

Modeling Interests

- N Scale Z Gauge
 HO Gauge O Gauge
 G Gauge S Gauge
 Modular Other _____

Historical and Prototype Interests

- Preservation Static Display
 Companies Routes
 Proto Operations Other _____

SPOUSE NAME: _____

CHILD _____ AGE _____ CHILD _____ AGE _____

CHILD _____ AGE _____ CHILD _____ AGE _____

THE MRHS ENCOURAGES THE PRESERVATION OF PROTOTYPE RAILROAD EQUIPMENT & STRUCTURES FOR THEIR HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE, PROVIDES A PLACE FOR MEMBERS TO CONSTRUCT A RAILROAD MUSEUM AND MODEL RAILROAD LAYOUTS, AND PARTICIPATES IN COMMUNITY FUNCTIONS WHEREBY THE INTEREST OF RAILROADING IS PROMOTED TO THE PUBLIC.

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