



# SPARKS AND CINDERS

*Our purpose as members of Wisconsin Chapter—National Railway Historical Society is to gather, preserve and disseminate information, both historic and current, pertaining to railroading in Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest.*

***Since 1950***

Preserving Wisconsin Railroad History for 70 Years

Visit the Chapter Webpage [www.nrhswis.org](http://www.nrhswis.org)



History repeats itself. This photo from 1986 shows flooding on Milwaukee's harbor Jones Island. This is similar to flooding that happened just recently on Jones Island. This is the west side of the island. Looks like someone's car didn't make it. Photo by Keith Schmidt

*In This Issue*

- ◆ *From the President*
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- ◆ *UP Trains currently scheduled*

# Wisconsin Chapter Meeting Schedule



Friday February 7, 2020 Morse Telegraph by James Wades

Friday March 6, 2020 The Milwaukee Road by Fred Hyde

## The Story of the Telegraph With James Wades

"Canst Thou Send Lightning" tells the story of the telegraph. By honoring the telegraph industry and the pioneers who made it possible, one can better understand our modern telecommunications and media industries. Most importantly, one will learn that despite our technological progress, the nature of man evolves slowly, with technology simply playing a supporting role to the best and worst of human nature.

### About the Speaker:

James Wades serves as International President of the Morse Telegraph Club, an association of retired railroad and commercial telegraphers, telegraph industry employees, historians and others with an interest in the history of telecommunications. In the past he has worked in the broadcast industry as well as the Class One railroad sector.

Monthly meetings are held in the lower level of the North Shore Congregational Church at 7330 N Santa Monica Dr. in Fox Point. The church is handicap accessible. Refreshments are available for a donation. For more up to date information on meetings and speakers, and also any weather cancellations, check the chapter's webpage at [www.nrhwis.org](http://www.nrhwis.org).

Doors open by 7:00 pm, so arrive early to socialize. The meeting will start at 7:30pm sharp with introductions and railroad-related news and announcements. Please bring a friend!

If you have a program idea please contact Program Chair Dave Nelson at [engine1385@aol.com](mailto:engine1385@aol.com)

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Sparks & Cinders is published by and for the members of the Wisconsin Chapter, Inc., National Railway Historical Society monthly except for July and August. The Chapter meets at the North Shore Congregational Church, 7330 N Santa Monica Blvd, Fox Point, Wisconsin, on the first Friday of each month, except May, July and August, at 7:30 p.m. The Wisconsin Chapter is a not-for-profit corporation, affiliated with the National Railway Historical Society and the Wisconsin Historical Society, organized to preserve the history of railroading in Wisconsin and the surrounding area. Additional information is available on the chapter's website, [www.nrhwis.org](http://www.nrhwis.org).

Membership in the Chapter is open to anyone having an interest in any aspect of railroading who is also a member of the NRHS. Paying \$20 annually to the Chapter will entitle you receive Sparks & Cinders. Paying the National dues of \$50 to the NRHS will entitle you to membership and subscriptions to the NRHS Bulletin and NRHS News. Full NRHS membership is required to participate in chapter business discussions and to vote in annual chapter elections. All address changes should be sent to Tom Hoffmann, [treasurer@nrhwis.org](mailto:treasurer@nrhwis.org) (or via USPS at 1102 Aspen Dr, Waukesha, WI 53188).

Wisconsin Chapter officers are: Mike Yuhas, President ([president@nrhwis.org](mailto:president@nrhwis.org)); Keith Schmidt, Vice-President; Tom Marcussen, Secretary; Tom Hoffmann, Treasurer. Directors: Dan Grudzielanek, Ralph McClure, Andrew Roach, Cathy Wegner and Neal Wegner.

Contributions to Sparks & Cinders should be sent to Editor Keith Schmidt at [editor@nrhwis.org](mailto:editor@nrhwis.org) (or USPS at 3286 S Springfield Ave, Milwaukee, WI 53207) by the 15th of the month to be considered for the following month's publication.

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## Notes from the Prexy

From the Prexy

Meetings, we hold meetings!

And one of the things that distinguish Wisconsin Chapter meeting programs is the diversity of subject and style. For instance, one month we might have Tom Hoffmann presenting an old-school program with carousels of 50-year old slides, the next month we might think outside the box a little and feature a program about telegraphy, and the month after that we might welcome a recognized Milwaukee Road author with a presentation of seldom-photographed MILW lines in the 1980s, and then we might have a Class I railroad official tell us about some of the new initiatives on that railroad, and then we might hear from an FRA agent with an update on regulations about steam locomotives. The Tom Hoffmann scenario happened in January, and all the others noted above are scheduled to take place before our summer break. Plan to attend, and bring friends!

The days are starting to get longer again, and soon I'll have a longing to get out trackside, and I hope you do, too. When you do, be safe! See you at the next meeting.

Minutes from Annual Meeting will be printed in the March 2020 Sparks and Cinders. This is due to space and time constraints. Thank You Keith

# “Canst Thou Send Lightning”

Job 38:35

Today’s generation is impressed by the fact that they can buy and sell stocks from their smart phone or make a hotel reservation via the Internet. They call it a revolution. Yet, when placed within the context of the broad sweep of human history, the Internet is a mere refinement compared to the impact of the telegraph.

The telegraph is often portrayed as a simplistic device. Old western movies, history text books and other documents reduce it to a mere footnote in the history of our nation’s cultural and economic development. Yet, it was the telegraph that made the standardization of time possible. It was the telegraph that made safe rail transportation possible. It laid the foundations for press syndication and electronic news gathering and made distributed manufacturing possible and began a trend that culminates in today’s “just in time inventory” systems.....and those on-line stock transactions? It was the telegraph that transformed formerly local stock and commodities exchanges into worldwide engines of capitalism and economic development.

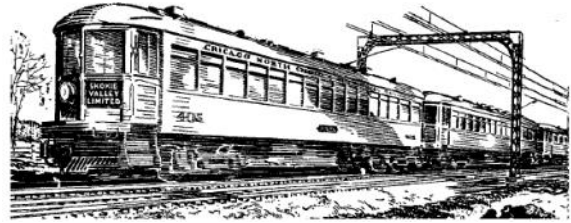
Contrary to popular belief, the telegraph did not vanish with the invention of the telephone. Many North American railroads used it extensively into the 1970s and some legacy railroad telegraph systems live on the into the mid-1980s.

The Internet is certainly a great step forward, but the truth is, the Internet evolved out of multiplexing and automation techniques pioneered by the telegraph companies. Even the telephone company utilized telegraphy extensively for its own internal communications and specialized business services.

“Canst Thou Send Lightning” tells the story of the telegraph. By honoring the telegraph industry and the pioneers who made it possible, one can better understand our modern telecommunications and media industries. Most importantly, one will learn that despite our technological progress, the nature of man evolves slowly, with technology simply playing a supporting role to the best and worst of human nature.

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On January 20, 1963 the North Shore ceased operations. It was a cold day when the trains reached there destinations in the wee hours of the morning.

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## Original 25th Annual Model Railroad Show

Presented by Metro Model Railroad Club

Sunday March 8, 9am to 4pm  
Circle B Recreation Center  
Cedarburg, WI

Operating Model Railroad Layouts in Various Scale  
Over 50 Swap Tables

For more information check out  
[www.metrorrclub.org](http://www.metrorrclub.org)  
[jimbartelt@gmail.com](mailto:jimbartelt@gmail.com)



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## The Extra Board - Upcoming Events

NRHS National Convention  
[www.nrhs.com](http://www.nrhs.com)  
2020 National Convention Fullerton, California  
June 9-13, 2020

TMER&THS (Traction and Bus Club)  
[www.tmer.org](http://www.tmer.org)  
Waterstone Bank  
Saturday February 15, 2020 - Charles Damaske - Rapid Transit

WISE Division NMRA [www.wisedivision.org](http://www.wisedivision.org)  
Bus Trip to Madison Train Show February 15, 2020

C&NW Historical Society  
[www.cnwhs.org](http://www.cnwhs.org)  
National Convention  
May 28- May 31 Mankato, MN

Milwaukee Road Historical Association  
[www.mrha.com](http://www.mrha.com)  
2020 National Convention - Elgin, IL No Dates  
June 18-21, 2020

Soo Line Historical and Technical Society  
[www.sooline.org](http://www.sooline.org)

Green Bay & Western Historical Society  
[www.gbwhs.com](http://www.gbwhs.com)  
Annual Meeting April 18, 2020  
Tittletown Brewery Green Bay, WI

# Do You Know ?

Story and Photos by Dave Nelson

The City of West Milwaukee is -- duh -- west of Milwaukee; the City of South Milwaukee is just as obviously south of Milwaukee. East Troy, the village where the electric railroad museum is located, is east of the Town of Troy and the unincorporated community of Troy Center, all in Walworth County. Makes sense. And then there's the City of West Allis. For years people have puzzled over just where the "Allis" is that West Allis is, well, west of. Allis was never a town or village or city. "Allis" was nothing more than a name given by a railroad to a railroad station.

It all goes back to Edward P. Allis who founded the company that bears his name in the 19th century. By 1901 it was named the Allis-Chalmers Company, and in 1902 that company built a huge new factory, strategically located so it could be served by both the Chicago & North Western and the Milwaukee Road, in a locale then known as North Greenfield. Actually, the area was known to those who lived there as "Honey Creek," but in 1880 the C&NW elected to call its depot "North Greenfield" (guess where it was north of) on its line to Madison, and when the area became a village it took the name North Greenfield from the railway station. In honor of the huge factory that moved there, it was renamed the Village of West Allis, and in 1906 it was large enough to be made the City of West Allis.

Edward Allis's factory moved to the Walker's Point area in about 1867, and the Milwaukee Road built a wooden depot where the rails crossed National Avenue and named it Allis Station; it was close to the Milwaukee's downtown depot, but warranted its own stop because of the large number of factory workers who took the train to work. Even after Allis-Chalmers built its huge new factory in West Allis, they still maintained a substantial factory near National Avenue. In 1916 the Milwaukee Road announced that the busy east/west streets crossing its rail lines would be lowered to eliminate dangerous grade crossings. That meant the old wood station would be demolished, and as part of the work, a new and interesting depot was built as an integral part of the new concrete railroad bridge over National Avenue. You know (and can visit) the Milwaukee Road's Allis Station as the home of the Model Railroad Club of Milwaukee. Passengers would buy their tickets and wait for a train down below track level, and then take stairs (now closed off) to a platform up above along the tracks. You can still see the 1916 date in the concrete railroad bridge. The grand opening was January 16, 1917.

If you know that general area, the Milwaukee Road was crossed by lines of the Chicago & North Western for access to customers and freight yards, and a passenger line that went from the lakefront depot west to Madison. Both railroads served the Allis factory at National Avenue. The C&NW originally called its passenger station National Avenue, but when the street was lowered it too built a new station, a substantial brick depot with the name "Allis" in cast concrete. The Milwaukee's station name had obviously become a place name as well. Ironically, both the Milwaukee Road and Chicago & North Western "Allis" stations were being built even as Allis-Chalmers was phasing out its operations there, moving more (and eventually, all) of its work to West Allis. Within a decade after it was built, the Milwaukee Road's Allis station under the National Avenue bridge was abandoned, sitting empty until leased to the Milwaukee Model Railroad Club in 1936, which remains there to this day. Similarly the Chicago & North Western soon closed its brick depot to passenger service and converted it into a very oversized yard office. By the 1980s it was shuttered and abandoned and eventually torn down. In 1984 I climbed some stairs to the tracks above National Avenue to look around, and took a couple of photos of the C&NW's large and imposing old Allis Station. It and the Milwaukee Road station below track level convey to us what a massive volume of passenger train traffic the Allis factory generated at National Avenue, while it lasted. With two busy and rival train depots both called "Allis," once the Allis-Chalmers factory made its move it was small wonder that people readily thought of the sleepy hamlet of North Greenfield as "West Allis."



# Union Pacific Trains in the Milwaukee Area

By Dan Grudzielanek

During the last couple of years, the Union Pacific has seen a dramatic shift in the amount and types of freight traffic that has been observed moving through the Milwaukee Area. The volume of frac sand being mined and transported from the state of Wisconsin is dramatically down as energy companies have built a number of sand mines closer to oilfields in Texas and Oklahoma. During this same period of time the UP has seen a significant increase in the amount of crude oil moving across the state. The UP receives unit crude oil trains from the Canadian National at Superior, Wis. that originates at locations in Alberta, Canada. It has also been noted that the Edgewater Power Plant in Sheboygan has not received any coal trains during the past few months. Below is a list of the trains regularly observed moving through the Milwaukee Area in January of 2020.

## Manifest Trains:

MALPR Altoona, Wis.-Proviso Yard  
MPRAL Proviso Yard-Altoona, Wis.

## Loaded Coal Trains:

CATWS9 Antelope Mine, Wyo.-Weston, Wis.  
CBTWS9 Black Thunder Mine, Wyo.-Weston, Wis.  
CBTOK Black Thunder Mine, Wyo.-Oak Creek, Wis.  
CNAWS9 North Antelope Mine, Wyo.-Weston, Wis.  
CNAOK North Antelope Mine, Wyo.-Oak Creek, Wis.  
CWTOK West Thunder, Wyo.-Oak Creek, Wis.

## Empty Coal Trains:

COKBT Oak Creek, Wis.-Black Thunder Mine, Wyo.  
COKNA Oak Creek, Wis.-North Antelope Mine, Wyo.  
COKWT Oak Creek, Wis.-West Thunder, Wyo.  
CWSAT Weston, Wis.-Antelope Mine, Wyo.  
CWSBT Weston, Wis.-Black Thunder Mine, Wyo.  
CWSNA Weston, Wis.-North Antelope Mine, Wyo.

## Loaded Crude Oil Trains:

OCSCQ CN Superior, Wis.-Eagle Mills, Ark.  
OCSNU CN Superior, Wis.-St. James, La.  
OCSSJ CN Superior, Wis.-St. James, La.  
OCSVP CN Superior, Wis.-Guffey, Tex.

## Empty Crude Oil Trains:

OCQCS Eagle Mills, Ark.-CN Superior, Wis.  
ONUCS St. James, La.-CN Superior, Wis.  
OSJCS St. James, La.-CN Superior, Wis.  
OVPCS Guffey, Tex.-CN Superior, Wis.

## Loaded Coke Trains:

ORPTS Roseport, Minn.-CSXT Chicago, Ill.

## Empty Coke Trains:

OTSRP CSXT Chicago, Ill.-Roseport, Minn.

## Loaded Ethanol Trains:

UEW1XC East Minneapolis, Minn.-CSXT Chicago, Ill.

## Empty Ethanol Trains:

UEXCW1 CSXT Chicago, Ill.-East Minneapolis, Minn.

## Local Trains:

LPA54 Butler-Cudahy  
LPA55 Butler-Jones Island  
LPA70 Butler-Granville  
LPA79 Butler-Sheboygan

## Yard Jobs:

YBU01R Butler Yard  
YBU65 Butler Yard



A pair of CN ES44ACs lead UP unit oil train OCSSJ (CN Superior, Wis.-St. James, La.) eastbound on the Adams Sub. near Merton, Wis. December 16, 2019

# The North Shore Electroliner - Back on its Own Trucks

by Tom Sharrat

One of the most famous pieces in the large collection of equipment at the Illinois Railway Museum is the Electroliner. Two of these four car articulated streamlined trains were built for the Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee Railroad (North Shore Line) in 1941 to compete with the Milwaukee Road's "Hiawatha" and the Chicago and North Western's "400" then operating between Chicago and Milwaukee.

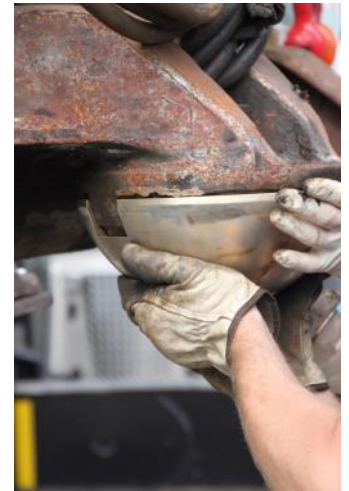
When the North Shore Line was abandoned in 1963, the trains were sold to the Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Company (Red Arrow Lines) where they operated as "Liberty Liners" until 1978. Train 801-802 was returned to Illinois in 1982 and underwent an extensive exterior restoration to reverse modifications made to the train while in Philadelphia, and to repaint it in its original salmon and turquoise paint scheme. Although it operated briefly, it became clear that there were major electrical and mechanical problems that needed attention as well as interior restoration work.

There was not enough money to do the needed work, so it sat on display inside one of the museum's barns for nearly 20 years before a campaign to complete the restoration was begun in 2013. It is estimated that the entire restoration will cost \$1.5 million, the majority of which has been raised. The train was disassembled in October 2015 and the five trucks were sent to Avalon Rail Inc. in Milwaukee, where they were completely rebuilt. The eight traction motors were rewound at the same time by Calumet Armature & Electric of Riverdale IL. The rebuilt trucks and motors were returned to IRM early in 2019.

On September 17, two large cranes lifted the four cars off their temporary shop trucks and the train was placed upon its original trucks. This was a lengthy process - work took over 8 hours. Cars had to be moved individually to get them in the correct order and to make sure that the cars balanced properly on the trucks. Work has now begun to inspect and reconnect the electrical and air brake systems. Work is also continuing on the interior, including inspection and repair of the air conditioning system, new seat upholstery, and rebuilt windows.

No date has been set for the train's official return to service, but it is expected that there will be some test runs in 2020 to verify that the electrical and air brake systems are working properly.

The second Libertyliner train has been preserved at the Rockhill Trolley Museum in Orbisonia Pennsylvania. It is in operating condition, although it has not been fully restored.



Photos by Tom Sharrat showing the Electroliner getting put back onto its original trucks



# From the Archives

## February 1955- 65 Years Ago

The Milwaukee Road has received permission to discontinue trains 14 and 33 between Milwaukee and Madison. This leaves the Milwaukee Road with two runs to Madison and one return. The C&NW has one train each way....C&NW's Third Ward roundhouse has been clamshelled to death. The once-active depot roundhouse is now just a pile of rubble....Joe Driscoll informs us that the Soo Line ran a train of 15 to 20 scrap-bound steamers through Waukesha, Thursday, January 20. The funeral train was pulled by two Geeps and was bound for Chicago

## February 1960 - 60 Years Ago

GB&W is experimenting with a new type of compartmentalized reefer which was built by Western Refrigerator Lines Co., of Green Bay. It features a ball-bearing mounted steel gate which, though it weighs 1,800 pounds, can easily be moved by one man....The Milwaukee Road and Chrysler Corp. are running a real piggy-back service – auto carrying trailers on flat cars. Approximately five days are saved on the 1,879-mile run from Chicago to Spokane

## February 1965 - 55 Years Ago

The Laker is gone – and we of WC-NRHS were on hand for the inevitable end. Several members and friends plus Frank Aukoffer of the Milwaukee Journal made the trip on No. 3. The following morning, Ferge, Sheperd, and Driscoll made the last trip on No. 4....From the March, 1902, issue of The Railroad and Marine Gazette: “8 Fast Trains Daily – The North Western Line – CStPM&O Ry. It costs no more to ride on these trains than on trains of inferior roads. The train of fame is the North Western Limited. It is the most comfortable train in every respect between Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Chicago. It has unexcelled dining car service, luxurious sleeping car accommodations, free reclining chair cars, and is lighted throughout by electricity and gas. A trans-continental traveler says: ‘I have tried them all and I prefer the North Western Limited, the best to be found from coast to coast.’”

## February 1970 - 50 Years Ago

Member Bob Manross contributed a history of the Fennimore “Dinky Line.” The 3-foot narrow gauge line ran from Fennimore to Woodman....Editor Bob Adams covered the last run of the Afternoon Hiawatha on January 23, 1970, which, he noted, came one day after the first commercial flight of a Boeing 747.

## February 1975 - 45 Years Ago

The first of a two-part history of Milwaukee Road steam, reprinted from the Milwaukee Road Magazine, was published....Jerry Hilton reported that excellent progress was being made on the restoration of SP 4449, slated to be under steam within a month.

## February 1980 - 40 Years Ago

The Chapter Board of Directors recommended that dues be increased by \$2.00 per year to help pay for increased production costs for S&C....Apparently the Rock Island will be liquidated after the Federal money for directed service runs out in March....The UP announced a merger agreement with MoPac on January 8.

## February 1985 - 35 Years Ago

A two-page article reprinted from the C&NW News detailed the exploits of steam engine 1385 during the summer of 1984....Jerry Hilton reported that if the acquisition of the Milwaukee Road core system is accomplished by C&NW, it will not include the Milwaukee depot or most of the buildings and land west of the 35th St. viaduct

## February 1990 - 30 Years Ago

The railfan community mourned the passing of David P. Morgan, long-time editor of Trains magazine, on January 10....VIA passenger service in Canada was cut by over 50% as many passenger trains ceased operations on January 15....“On Track,” a new TV series produced by Channel 10 and hosted by Chuck Zehner premiered of February 3. (The title was changed to “Tracks Ahead” when it was distributed nationally by PBS— ed.)

## February 1995 - 25 Years Ago

Ex-Pennsylvania Railroad GG-1 No. 4890 passed through Waukesha on its way to the National Railroad Museum in Green Bay on January 22....The City of Oshkosh announced that residents with property along the former Milwaukee Road branch through Oshkosh will be able to enlarge their yards. WisDOT has completed removal of ties and rails and property owners will have an option to purchase adjoining right-of-way.... WC has acquired three SD45s and FP45 No. 91 (in warbonnet colors) from the Santa Fe.

## February 2000 - 20 Years Ago

The former Ann Arbor Railroad, ex-Grand Trunk Western, carferry City of Milwaukee was towed from its long-time mooring point at Elberta, Michigan, to its new home at Manistee, Michigan, on January 14....UP Challenger 4-6-6-4 No. 3985, now undergoing flue replacement and running gear work in Cheyenne, may power a few trips later this year....WC is filing to abandon 26 miles of line between Crandon and White Lake....Illinois Railway Museum announced that ex-Frisco No. 1630, a 2-10-0, would operate on five weekends this summer.

## February 2005 - 15 Years Ago

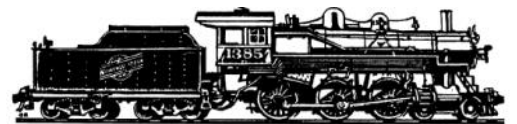
The new Amtrak station at Mitchell International Airport opened on January 18 with ceremonies attended by government, Amtrak, and airline officials. All Hiawatha service trains stop at the station which features a free shuttle to and from the airport terminal building....The \$5.4 million renovation of the downtown Milwaukee Amtrak station, already a year behind schedule, faces additional delays with zoning and permit problems....The State of Wisconsin purchased the abandoned 37-mile “Plymouth Line” between Kiel and Saukville from Canadian National on January 13. The line will be operated by WSOR. CN granted trackage rights to WSOR from the north end of Milwaukee to Saukville to access the line.

## February 2010 - 10 Years Ago

Amtrak has launched a humor-based ad campaign at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, hinting to air travelers that there's a better option, the Chicago Tribune has reported. The passenger railroad is advertising in the gray bins in which air passengers place carry-on items for security screening. “Wear mismatched socks - we'll never know,” exhorts one ad. “Upgrade to coach,” urges another. “Our goal here is to get a smile from passengers and also get them to think twice about going through the frustration of flying, or driving,” Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari said. “Amtrak most often is the most comfortable way to travel. Some would say more civilized.” The ads are running exclusively at O'Hare, and are to run through March.

## February 2015 - 5 Years Ago

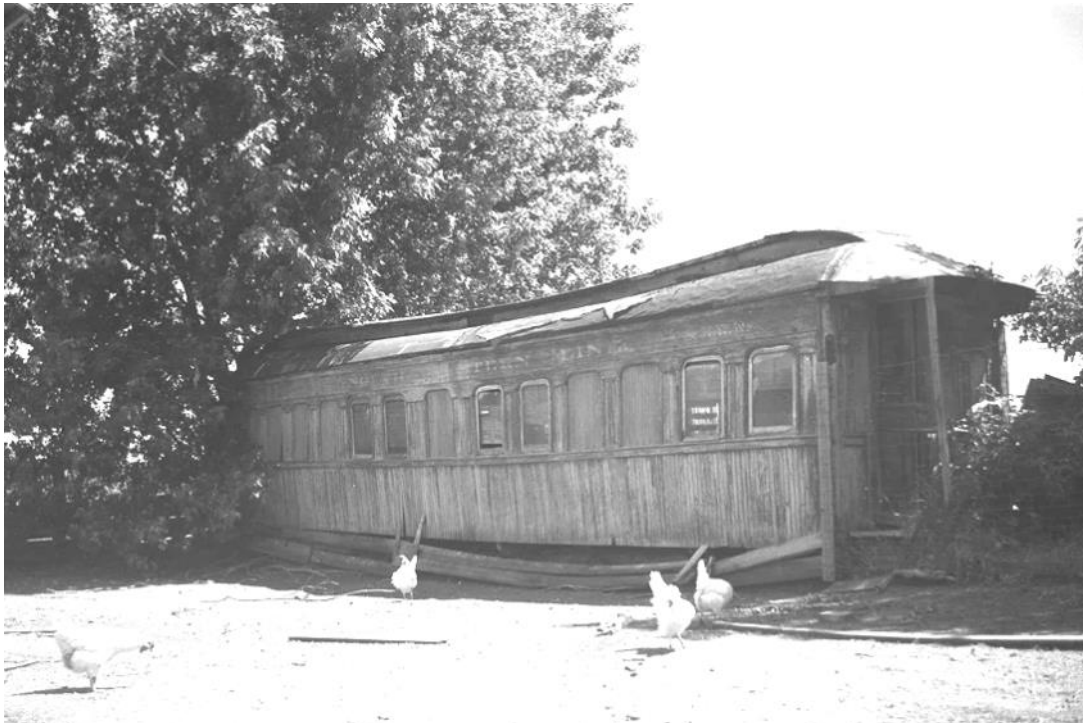
The ongoing project to restore Mid-Continent Railway Museum's Chicago & North Western 4-6-0 No. 1385 to service reached another milestone this month when the engine's frame was repainted. Over the last year the engine frame and other parts were cleaned, scraped, welded, and new parts were milled. Last month wheel work for No. 1385 was completed at the Strasburg Rail Road shop in Strasburg, Pa. The work included new tires, crank pins, and truing/turning the tire seats... During the month of December the Canadian Pacific changed the radio channel used for voice communications on a portion of the C&M Sub. Frequency 161.085 (AAR 65) is now used between Milwaukee and Rondout. Between Rondout and Chicago, and on the Fox Lake Sub., 160.770 (AAR 44) is still used. This change appears to be in connection with some modified dispatcher territories at certain times of the day and week.



Sparks & Cinders  
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**FIRST CLASS**

## The Final Frame



Hanging Out with the Chickens. This old Chicago Northwestern car is spending time becoming part of nature again keeping company with the chickens. Photo by Russ Porter Keith Schmidt Collection