

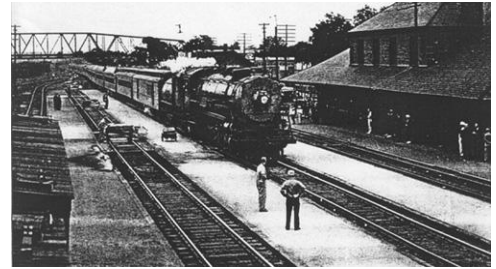
Kandiyohi County Historical Society

The Railroad

THE FIRST TRAIN to come to our county, from the Twin Cities, was pulled by the **Wm. Crooks** locomotive, and arrived in Willmar New Year's Eve, **1869**.

WILLMAR STREETS NAMED AFTER RAILROAD OFFICIALS: **Litchfield, Trott, Willmar, and Becker.** **Atlantic** and **Pacific**, one on each side of the tracks, were also standard street names in railroad towns.

COUNTY TOWNS NAMED AFTER RAILROAD OFFICIALS: **Willmar, Pennock** and **Atwater** were named after St. Paul & Pacific officials. Kandiyohi was originally called "**Kandiyohi Station.**" **Spicer** was named after J. M. Spicer, who was instrumental in establishing the north-south line in the county, and **Raymond** was named after his son.



RAILWAY COMPANIES: **St. Paul & Pacific** was the first in the county. It later became part of James J. Hill's **Great Northern Railway** (for which Willmar is still well known today). Great Northern merged with Northern Pacific and was known as **Burlington Northern** until 1996, when Burlington Northern merged with Santa Fe. Now, **Burlington-Northern-Santa Fe** is our railway.

The next railroad line, the **St. Cloud-Sioux Falls** Railway was built through Spicer in 1886, and through Raymond in 1887. It was also part of the Great Northern

In the southern part of our county the **Luce Line** came through in the 1920's, and the towns of Thorpe, Lake Lillian, Blomkest and Roseland were formed (or moved) to be located on the railway line. The Luce Line later became **Minnesota Western** Railway, but has been out of operation many years.

RAILROAD TERMS AND NICKNAMES:

Hog – Locomotive

Ash Cat – Fireman

Highball – Ready to Go (waiving the lantern)

Highball the Gate – All Done for this Time

Hoghead – Engineer

Gandy Dancer – Section Worker

TELEGRAPHY is a system for transmitting information over a distance by making and breaking electrical circuit. A is .-, K is -.-, W is .-- , etc.

Western Union telegrams were handled on circuits that were connected to the Western Union Co. offices.

Right after a shift change at midnight, the dispatchers office would put out reports showing down-to-the-minute

delays, number of cars, number of engines, and tonnage on passenger trains and freight trains over our division. There was also a report on car movements locally on our division. These reports had to be telegraphed to headquarter offices in Seattle, Duluth, and St. Paul, at a certain time and in a certain length of time. If the telegrapher was new and a little slow and could not make the time constraints, the receiving telegrapher would generally have a derogatory remark.

At noon a car report, showing cars in the station's yard, was sent by every depot agent. The receiving telegrapher would go right down the line and the depot agents were expected to take their turn promptly. In between times routine messages about track work, car orders, car diversions, job changes, etc., were sent and received.

Telegraph circuits were extremely busy. If you walked into a telegraph office a few years back, you would notice the continual telegraph clicking.

---Don Holmgren

RAILROAD JOBS:

Office worker-Clerks doing payroll

Depot Agent- Boss of shipping

Maintenance aways- fix track, make sure it's always in good shape

Switchmen- switch tracks in yards

Foremen- in charge of switchmen

Timekeepers- 45-60 workers

Officials- Train masters

Superintendent- boss

Cops- 700 watching railroad

Conductor- drives train

Fireman- Keeps fire burning

CLOTHES WORN BY RAILROAD WORKERS:

Denim overalls- they were easy to wash, they dry fast, they are comfortable, they keep you warm during the winter, and they were cheap.

Handkerchief- keep the coal from going down your shirt, and wipe sweat from face, each worker carried three or four

Leather gloves- prevent hands from being burnt.

WHAT DO THE LIGHT BULB COLORS MEAN?:

Green = Go

Yellow = Prepare to stop

Red = Stop

White = train following

