

The Milwaukee of Today

Essentially, the Milwaukee looks the same on the map of Iowa as it did during the last century. But many branch lines which were so important to it fifty years ago have become of less significance today. Even at that, comparatively little pruning has taken place, considering the extensive mileage within the state.

Among the first of the early Iowa abandonments was the retiring of the little-used cutoff between Rock Valley and Hudson, South Dakota in 1918. Next came the Farley-Worthington segment on the branch from Monticello. Indeed, the complex of branches from Monticello to Davenport, and from Eldridge Junction to Maquoketa, proved to be so light in traffic that substantial parts of them were removed. The section on the former, between Oxford Junction and Dixon, was scrapped in 1940, and between Monticello and Oxford Junction in 1957.

On the Maquoketa branch, the 9-mile sector between De Witt and Long Grove was abandoned in 1931, and seven years later tracks were out of service from Long Grove to Eldridge Junction. The little 2-mile extension from Maquoketa to Hurstville was retired in 1934.

The longest single abandonment, however, was the 58-mile Turkey River-West Union branch, which ceased operating in 1938. It was a victim of the depression, the motor truck, and possible over-expansion in the first place.

Line revision in the vicinity of Madrid in the Des Moines River valley has resulted in considerable revamping of operation. After the main line was shortened by the erection of the lofty, new bridge across the river at Madrid, the old 5-mile route through Phildia to the south was scrapped between 1918 and 1922.

Then, to eliminate the costly High Bridge over the Des Moines River on the Boone-Clive Branch, the section between Madrid and Granger was abandoned in 1943. By building a new road from Granger to Woodward Junction, where it connected with the main line, operation was continued up to Boone via Woodward Junction and Madrid. The historic High Bridge, which brought the original narrow gauge up from Des Moines, was subsequently dismantled.

The last addition to the Milwaukee in Iowa came when it purchased thirteen miles of the Minneapolis & St. Louis' Storm Lake Branch in 1936. This line connects Storm Lake with Rembrandt, and it was slated for abandonment by the M&StL.

No, there are not many changes on the map, but there are far-reaching changes in methods of operation. Up until about the time of the depression,

six Milwaukee division offices were located in Iowa. Five of these had much if not all their mileage within the state. In the south, Des Moines was the headquarters of the Des Moines Division as was Marion for the Iowa Division. Down near the southern border, Ottumwa Junction had jurisdiction over the Kansas City Division. To the east, Dubuque supervised the Dubuque Division; and on the north, Mason City was the nerve center for the lengthy Iowa & Dakota Division. Finally, on the west, there was Sioux City, whose responsibility covered the Sioux City & Dakota Division, a territory largely outside of Iowa.

Today, there are just three divisions in Iowa, and only one has its headquarters in the state. This is the Iowa Division with its central office in Perry. The other two divisions, the Dubuque & Illinois, and the Iowa, Minnesota & Dakota, as their names would indicate, are not entirely confined to Iowa.

Modern diesel locomotives have eliminated delays incident to steam operation, such as stopping for coal and water, to say nothing of time lost in double-heading and frequent engine inspection. Longer and heavier trains on accelerated schedules to meet competition have tended to lengthen runs.

If the sleek *Cities* streamliners are the pride of the railroad, the "hot" time freights over the same track are the lifeblood of its existence. Currently, three scheduled fast freights shuttle across the state to and from Council Bluffs in each direction.

They operate in close connection with the Union Pacific and account for considerable trans-continental tonnage going over the route.

They operate over a well-maintained, rock-bal-asted track on 115-pound rails over a route protected by CTC and cab signalling. Radio communication between trainmen and enginemen is provided, along with communication to wayside points.

To expedite meat shipments and other high-grade commodities, a time freight highballs out of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, via Canton, and thence through meat packing centers of Spencer, Mason City, and Dubuque to Savanna, Illinois. At Savanna a connecting train rushes the meat to Chicago.

Another fast freight is carded between the Twin Cities and the Kansas City gateway via La Crescent, Minnesota, and Dubuque. In addition, going through southeastern Iowa the Milwaukee has two scheduled fast freights each way to and from Kansas City.

The Milwaukee has coordinated its service so that important branch line points, such as Sioux City and Des Moines, have time freights which connect with main line "hotshots." The road is also enthusiastically fostering trailer-on-flat-car service, Flexivan container traffic and multi-level automobile shipments.

Confident of the fact that excellent passenger

trains advertise a railroad as nothing else can and that such goodwill attracts freight, the Milwaukee is pleased with the increased importance of its main line across Iowa. The superiority of the *Cities* streamliners for passengers is being matched by the prompt dispatch of freight for shippers.