

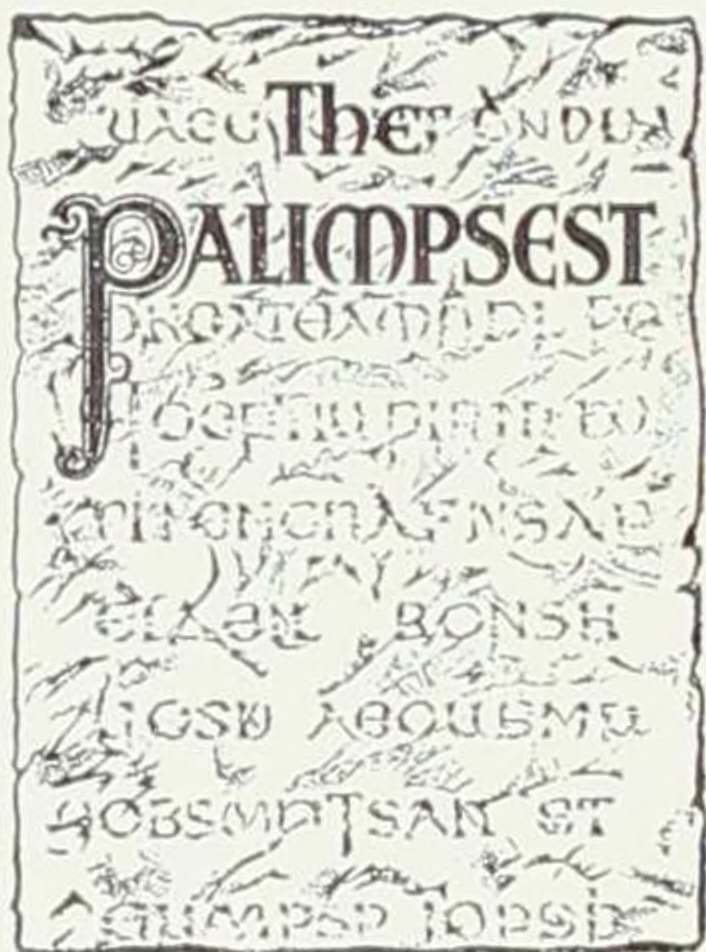
The
PALIMPSEST



INTERURBANS IN IOWA

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The Meaning of Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the record of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

Contents

INTERURBANS IN IOWA

FRANK P. DONOVAN, JR.

Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern	177
Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern	186
Cedar Rapids & Iowa City	194
Des Moines & Central Iowa	199
The Southern Iowa Railway	203
Short Line Interurbans	207

Cover

Front — Mason City & Clear Lake trolley cars about 1905. Photo by Dr. John H. Lepper.

Back (inside) — Map of Iowa's Interurbans by Franklin A. King.

Back (outside) — Top: Charles City Western on Little Cedar River trestle on Colwell Branch. Photo by Donald E. Smith in 1951.

Bottom: Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern No. 62 on high steel bridge. Photo courtesy Ft. Dodge-Des Moines Line.

Author

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Ft. Dodge, Des Moines & Southern

Iowa's biggest interurban — the Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern Railway — began as a small coal carrier running from mine to connecting railroad. Later it expanded and became a common carrier hauling freight, passengers, mail, and express. A subsequent metamorphosis changed it from steam to electric operation with greatly increased mileage. It has operated streetcars and buses in the past. In one way history repeats itself: the road began its existence almost exclusively as a freight line; it evolved to a point where passenger revenue exceeded that from tonnage; today it is again primarily a carrier of freight with gypsum products its chief revenue producer. But it has grown from a three-mile line to approximately 150 miles. Its operating revenue exceeds a million dollars a year, making it a Class I carrier.

In the eighties one of the largest coal operators in Boone County was the Clyde Coal Company. That firm sank its first shaft mine at Incline, west of Moingona, in 1885. The manager was Hamil-

ton Browne, an energetic and experienced operator, who later became as active in railroading as he was in mining. He and his associates formed the Boone Valley Coal & Railway Company, chartered February 23, 1893, to run from Fraser to a point on the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway called Fraser Junction. Fraser was named after Norman D. Fraser, vice-president of the company. The road was built to haul coal from mines in Fraser to the M&StL connection. The directors were Hamilton Brown and O. M. Carpenter of Boone; Norman D. Fraser and David R. Fraser of Chicago; and S. T. Meservey of Fort Dodge. Browne headed the company.

The Boone Valley Coal & Railway Company opened late in 1893 with about three miles of track. It commenced operation with a "40-ton locomotive." For the year ended June 30, 1897, the road hauled — with the help of another engine — 122,838 tons of coal. Two years afterward a company called the Marshalltown & Dakota Railway purchased the property of the BVC&Ry. The new road, headed by Hamilton Browne, was chartered "to build . . . from Story City . . . via Fraser, Gowrie, Manson, Pocahontas, Laurens and Hartley to Sibley, Ia., 145 miles, and thence northwest into southeastern South Dakota." It completed its line westward from Fraser Junction to Gowrie in 1899.

In 1901 the name was again changed, this time

to the Boone, Rockwell City & Northwestern Railway, with Browne again serving as president. The next year a new company took over the road under the banner of the Newton & Northwestern Railroad with Browne as chief executive. The N&NW, to quote *Poor's Manual of Railroads* for 1903, owned "two large bituminous coal properties, which have been profitable producers for years. . . . The output from the mines at present is about 400 tons a day, but this will be increased upwards of 1,500 tons a day during the current year."

Extensions were pushed from Fraser to Newton on the east, and from Gowrie to Rockwell City on the west. The biggest engineering feat, however, was bridging a tributary of the Des Moines River near Fraser. To span this valley a lofty wooden bridge 156 feet high and 784 feet long was erected. A million feet of lumber went into the long trestle. The entire line, Newton to Rockwell City, was completed in 1904.

One of the new towns along the line, Napier, took the maiden name of Hamilton Browne's wife, Mary L. Napier. Browne was not to remain president much longer, for a group of New Englanders secured control. In 1905 a Bostonian named Homer Loring headed the company. Among the new directors was Henry W. Poor, a well-known private banker, who, with his father, Henry V. Poor, inaugurated *Poor's Manual of Railroads*.

A branch was built from Goddard to Colfax in 1905, serving mines in the Colfax community. The Newton & Northwestern was now a line over 100 miles long. But it went from a comparatively small community on the east to a still smaller town on the west. Its principal source of income was coal, yet several mines were already becoming unprofitable. The road needed new industries, bigger and better terminals, and, most of all, fresh capital.

Enter now another company — the Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern Railroad, incorporated in Iowa on February 16, 1906. New Englanders furnished the needed capital, and Homer Loring of Boston was made the road's president. Further east-and-west expansion stopped, and, instead, the new managers looked to the gypsum area of Fort Dodge on the north and to the industries of Des Moines on the south. The FtDM&S acquired control of the Newton & Northwestern, along with the Fort Dodge Street Railway (a local trolley line) and the Ames & College Railway. The latter company, a two-mile steam dummy line organized on September 9, 1890, operated from Ames to the Iowa State College. To connect with the dummy line a seven-mile extension from Kelley to Ames was built.

The main feature of the improvement program was the electrification of new lines: Fort Dodge to Hope and Des Moines to Midvale. Overhead

wires were also strung on the N&NW between Midvale and Hope. The Ames-Kelley branch was likewise electrified. This meant high speed, frequent interurban service from the capital to Fort Dodge. The remainder of the system continued to be operated by steam, as did freight service on the entire railroad. Company coal furnished fuel for the new turbine-driven power plant at Fraser.

The \$2,500,000 improvement project featured large, 53-foot interurban cars built by Niles Car Company. With interiors furnished in mahogany, leather upholstery, and clerestory windows, they were the pride of central Iowa. Fast through service on the 85-mile run between Des Moines and Fort Dodge commenced late in 1907. Entry into Des Moines was over the tracks of the local street railway.

The expense of electrification proved too much for the company and it became bankrupt. In 1910 Homer Loring and Parley Sheldon of Ames were appointed receivers. To expedite the handling of heavy freight by electric locomotives, the receivers converted the line from 600-volt to 1,200-volt operation. About that time the road extended a branch from Niles to Ogden with running rights over the M&StL for two miles to nearby mines. Later the FtDDM&S had an interest in the Ogden mines, but labor troubles and floods made the operation impracticable. The Ogden branch was eventually abandoned.

Troubles continued to beset the management. The mines at Colfax were worked out, and the Colfax-Goddard branch was ripped out. Indeed, the whole line from Midvale to Newton proved to be a mistake, and abandonment by the receivers was authorized in 1912. Meanwhile, the road west of Hope, hitherto operated by steam, was electrified. This meant all-electric operation of the entire system.

In the spring of 1912 a disastrous flood washed out the center span of the "High Bridge" near Fraser. It took a dozen men seventy days to replace the old structure with a modern steel span costing \$110,000. To this day it provides the road's passengers one of the best scenic views in the state.

The road was sold under foreclosure in 1913 to the bondholders, Old Colony Trust Company of Boston, for \$3,900,500. The name remained the same, and Homer Loring continued as president. It is significant that "The Fort Dodge Line," as it was called, differed from many contemporary interurbans in that it aggressively solicited carload freight business. It followed steam-road practices in operating rules and it interchanged with trunk lines. When the government took over the railroads during World War I the FtDDM&S was taken over also. It was one of the few interurbans operated by the United States Railroad Administration.

Some idea of the fast growing freight business is attested by the fact that the road had 2,500 freight cars in 1918. It was said to have more cars for its size than any other road in America! Apart from freight the road once boasted of two parlor-observation cars with wicker seats, smoking compartments, and high-quality Brussels carpets. An excess fare of 25 cents was charged between Des Moines and Fort Dodge, and porter service was provided.

In line with the road's policy to serve more industries, it purchased the Crooked Creek Railroad in 1916. This pioneer carrier was chartered on November 8, 1875, and began operating a year later. It started as a 3-foot gauge, 8-mile line extending from Judd, on the Illinois Central Railroad, to coal mines at Lehigh. President and general manager was Walter C. Willson of Webster City. Willson was the first coal mine operator of importance in the Lehigh district.

In the middle eighties the Crooked Creek was widened to standard gauge and operated in conjunction with the Webster City & Southwestern Railroad, which had a 14-mile line from Border Plain Junction (on the Crooked Creek) to Webster City. A. K. Hamilton of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, who headed the Webster City line, was also a director of the CCRR. In 1892 the Crooked Creek bought the WC&SW, and around 1900 the road from Judd to Border Plain was scrapped.

When the FtDDM&S purchased the historic little road, it constructed its own line to Border Plain from Fort Dodge. That portion of the Crooked Creek from Border Plain running northeast to Brushy was taken up. A short cut between Evanston and Brushy was built, providing a direct route from Fort Dodge to Webster City. The entire line was electrified. The Crooked Creek's roundhouse was still standing in Webster City in 1954.

Changing conditions led to the forming of the Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern Transportation Company in 1924. Bus service was inaugurated between Boone and Ames; also to Des Moines. The bus subsidiary, however, was later sold. In the twenties, with the exception of Des Moines-Fort Dodge service, all passenger rail operation was discontinued. Local streetcar operation in Fort Dodge and Ames also ceased.

The road suffered from financial reverses in the late twenties, and in 1930 Clyde H. Crooks, who succeeded Homer Loring as president in 1920, was made receiver. In 1942 the company was reorganized as the Fort Dodge, Des Moines & Southern Railway with Crooks as president. Upon his death, four years afterward, Vice President & General Counsel Walter R. Dyer headed the road.

The boom in construction following World War II saw an increased use of gypsum and

greater business for the road. To handle longer trains, three 16-wheel "steeple cab" locomotives were purchased from the Oregon Electric Railway in 1947. These husky four-truck jobs greatly expedite freights up the $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent grade west of Fraser.

Recent improvements include modernizing the power plant in Fraser. This means cheaper power for the railway and more kilowatt hours for communities to which the company sells electricity. Under the stewardship of Arthur P. Wheelock, who succeeded the late Walter Dyer as president in 1953, continued progress is assured. Delivery of 200 new steel boxcars is part of the present rehabilitation program. Dieselization of some of the road is in the offing. At any rate, the Fort Dodge-Des Moines Line, as it is now called, will continue to be an important factor in providing the heart of Iowa with modern and efficient freight service.

FRANK P. DONOVAN, JR.

Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern

No Iowa interurban is better built than the Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern Railroad. This line has been called "a steam railroad with a trolley wire over it" because of the substantial manner of its construction. When Westinghouse wanted an outstanding example of electric freight haulage in the heyday of the interurban it chose the WCF&N. As a result the manufacturing concern published an attractive 84-page book titled *The Story of the Cedar Valley Road* to show what could be done to build up a lucrative freight business. Later *Electric Traction* conducted speed contests to stimulate faster running. A score of electric roads were listed each year, but only one appeared from Iowa. That was the "Cedar Valley Road." It ranked ninth in 1929 and in 1930. The average speed for both years was 45.9 m.p.h. on the 64-mile Cedar Rapids-Waterloo run.

In the vital matter of keeping on the black side of the ledger, the WCF&N has paid modest dividends each year since its reorganization in 1944. In the ten-year period, the railroad has paid out \$551,884.02 in dividends, and has reduced its bonded indebtedness from \$2,273,200 to \$827,700, a reduction of \$1,445,500, or about 64 per

cent. Because of its strategic location and good management the 99-mile-long road takes in enough revenue to rank as a Class I carrier.

The story of the railroad is largely that of three brothers: Louis S. Cass, Claude D. Cass, and Joseph F. Cass. Louis and Joseph Cass formed the Waterloo & Cedar Falls Rapid Transit Company, the forerunner of the present system. The Rapid Transit was incorporated in 1895 to connect the two cities in its name. Louis S. Cass, or "L.S." as he was called, for railroaders habitually use initials, headed the newly formed road. In 1896 he bought the Waterloo Street Railway, a horse-car line with two miles of track. This was electrified, and four miles were added. The next year the Rapid Transit reached Cedar Falls but could not get a franchise to operate downtown. To overcome this obstacle the "interurban" ran a short distance over the tracks of the friendly Chicago Great Western Railway. Through the purchase of the Cedar Falls street railway in 1898, access was had to the heart of the city, and operation over the CGW was given up. Meanwhile the local line was converted to electricity, having formerly been operated with Patton gasoline cars.

Constructed with 56-pound rails on private right of way, the intercity line was more or less of an interurban. As the century drew to a close, it even hauled some freight. This consisted of bricks shipped from a plant near Cedar Falls to

Waterloo by a regular interurban unit pulling a flat car. The operation was conducted between midnight and early morning, and delivery was made in the city streets. In 1900 the first electric locomotive was purchased, and the following year another was added. The pioneer engines had the task of taking coal cars up a 2 per cent grade to the normal school—now Iowa State Teachers College in Cedar Falls.

In 1901 the road was extended thirteen miles north to Denver, Iowa. At the same time a 22,000-volt transmission line was built along the route to supply power to the new railroad. It is reputed to be the first high-tension line in Iowa. A year later the road reached Denver Junction, where it connected with the Chicago Great Western. From the Junction the interurban secured trackage rights over the CGW to Sumner via Waverly, 31 miles. In fact the trolley company operated the Waverly-Sumner branch of the Great Western with steam trains in both freight and passenger service. In 1904 the name was changed to the Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern Railway.

What may seem a bizarre alliance between electric and steam roads is not so strange when analyzed in detail. The farsighted A. B. Stickney, head of the CGW, saw the interurban as a short cut for cars going from Waterloo to points on his Omaha line, instead of by the roundabout route via Oelwein. Moreover the "juice" road tapped

some busy industries in Waterloo which the Great Western did not.

Two of the Cass brothers learned to "railroad" on Stickney's system. The Casses liked Stickney personally, and he liked them.

A few biographical notes on the Cass family might be in order. Louis S. Cass was in between his brothers in age, but he always headed the inter-urban. Born in Wisconsin in 1865, he received his higher education at Iowa State Teachers College. "L.S." entered railroading as freight brakeman on the Minnesota & Northwestern, earliest predecessor of the Great Western. Later he switched to "braking" on the Milwaukee Road, then went as telegraph operator for the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern (now Rock Island), and finally with the Dubuque & Dakota (CGW) as conductor. His association with the "Maple Leaf" was renewed when he combined his stewardship of the WCF&N with the vice-presidency of the Great Western from 1905 to 1908, and became chief executive for the receivers, 1908-1909. He also served for many years as vice-president of the American Short Line Railroad Association under the strong leadership of Bird M. Robinson. A man of varied interests, "L.S." had other irons in the fire, including banking, real estate, and lumbering.

Claude D. Cass, youngest of the trio, was born in Sumner in 1879. He likewise went to Iowa

State Teachers College and later to the Iowa College of Law at Drake University. He "conducted" on his brothers' trolley line during vacations and then became permanently identified with the traction company. He became superintendent, general passenger agent and, in 1905, general manager. In later years he served as vice-president.

The third brother, Joseph F. Cass, like "L.S.," was born in Wisconsin, and was two years his senior. After a public school education he went with the Dubuque & Dakota Railroad. Biographical material on him is scant, but he served for many years as vice-president of the WCF&N. He differed from his brothers in physical make-up, being rather tall, whereas Louis was stocky and Claude portly.

The Cedar Valley Road had an amazing variety of rolling stock from open-bench, single-truck streetcars to four-wheel "convertibles" — a type of trolley in which the panels could be removed for summer operation; they bore little if any resemblance to the streamlined "convertibles" of today's automobiles. Closed city cars were featured along with large monitor-roof interurbans. For a time a motor bus on flanged wheels was operated on the Sumner branch.

Shortly after the Great Western went into receivership the Cedar Valley Road ceased operating over it from Denver Junction to Sumner. The

interurban thereafter built its own all-electric line from the junction to Waverly. It subsequently built south from Waterloo to Cedar Rapids. This extension had catenary construction of overhead wires, 85-pound rails, easy curves, and no grades over 1 per cent. Originally of 650-volt current, it changed to 1,300-volt in 1915.

The southern extension (completed in 1914) boasted of all-steel passenger cars, three of which were parlor-observation units. The parlor facilities had such niceties as buffet service operated from a Tom Thumb kitchenette, 6 ft. by 3 ft. 2 in., and built-in writing desks supplied with stationary bearing the "Cedar Valley Road" emblem. Finally, in the grand tradition, they had the company's herald on the brass railing at the observation end. The observation cars are still in service.

The railroad was poorly maintained during government operation in World War I. This condition, combined with a recession, put the company in precarious financial shape after its return to private ownership. In 1923, Cass retired from his long term as president and was succeeded by C. M. Cheney, who ran the railroad for a Protective Committee of first mortgage bondholders, since the company was unable to pay its first mortgage bonds. In 1940, as the first step in reorganization, Cheney was made receiver. Four years later, the reorganization was completed and the name changed to Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern

Railroad, with Cheney as president and general manager. Thus, in its whole lifetime, the Cedar Valley Road has had only two presidents.

Like his predecessor, Cheney began his railroad career on the Great Western, where he had worked as station agent and telegrapher from December, 1892, to October, 1904, leaving the Great Western at that time to become general freight and passenger agent for the Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern Railway, in which position he remained until September, 1920, when he severed his connections with the Waterloo road to become vice-president and general manager of the Des Moines & Central Iowa Railroad. He remained in this position until October, 1923, when he returned to the WCF&N as president and general manager.

Mr. Cheney was born in Illinois but came to Iowa as a small boy, spending his childhood in Marshalltown. The little hamlet of "Cheney," on the Cedar Rapids line, is named after him.

Today the Cedar Valley Road is a heavy-duty carrier with three daily time freights between Cedar Rapids and Waterloo. Fifty-car trains are common, and 70-car double-headers are not unusual. For passengers the road valiantly runs a daily train each way between Cedar Rapids and Waterloo with an additional run "Dly. Ex. Mon. Tue. Wed. Thur.," as the working timetable quaintly puts it. Cars no longer go into downtown

Cedar Rapids over the local streetcar lines (discontinued in 1940) but they do terminate at the road's smart Tudor-type depot on the north side of town. Daily round-trip service is also provided between Waterloo and Waverly.

Some types of operation, like that on the Waterloo Belt Line serving the John Deere plant and the Rath Packing Company, have been profitable. Local streetcar service in Waterloo and Cedar Falls ceased over a decade ago. In 1952 the railroad sold the bus line that supplemented interurban cars in the Cedar Rapids-Waterloo service, and relinquished its local bus rights in Waterloo and Cedar Falls the following year. On the other hand, service continues between the two cities with lightweight trolleys formerly operated by Knoxville Transit. The low-level vehicles still have the United States mail slots peculiar to the Tennessee system. They are the last streetcars (as distinguished from interurbans) in Iowa.

Some dozen electric locomotives busily pulling road freights and yard cuts are indicative of the type of service for which the road is best fitted. More changes may be in order. And yet, barring a depression, the Cedar Valley Road will probably continue to pay modest dividends in the future.

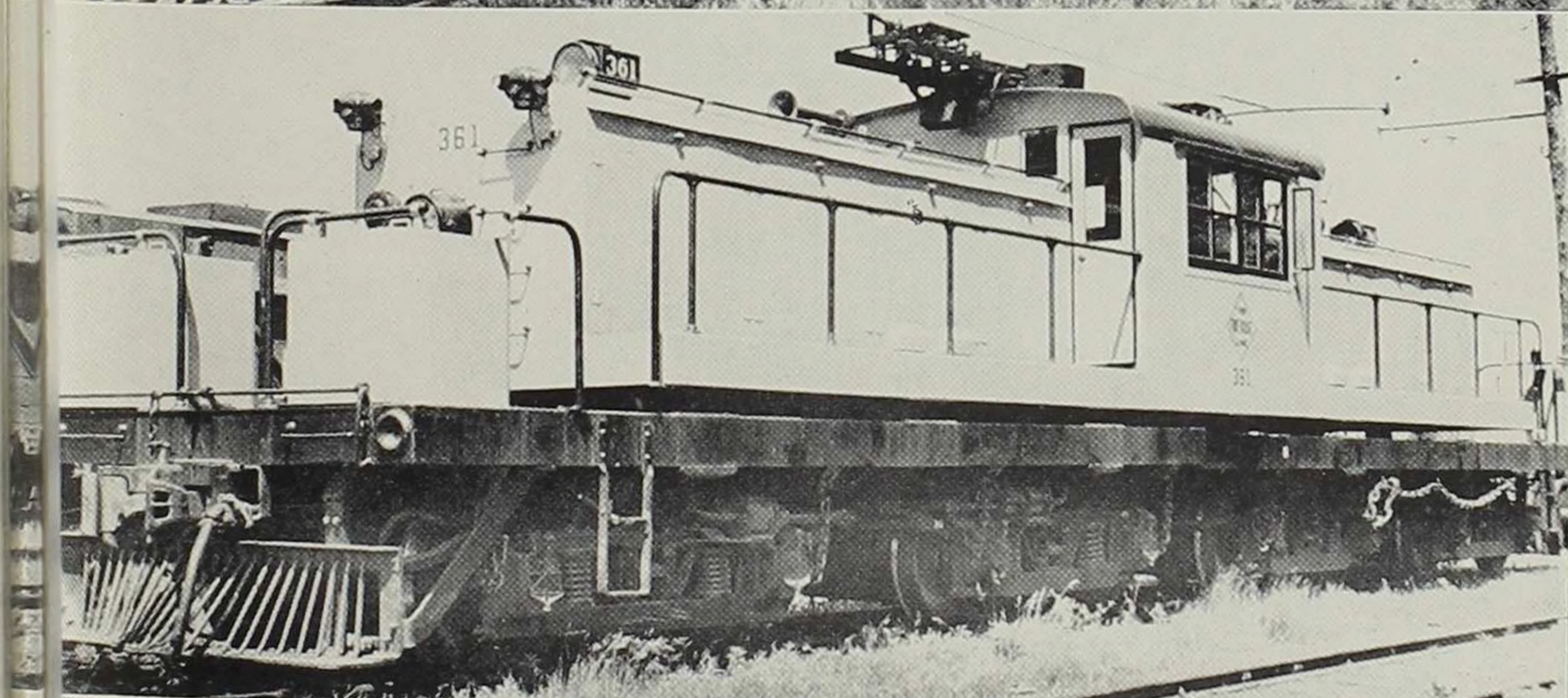
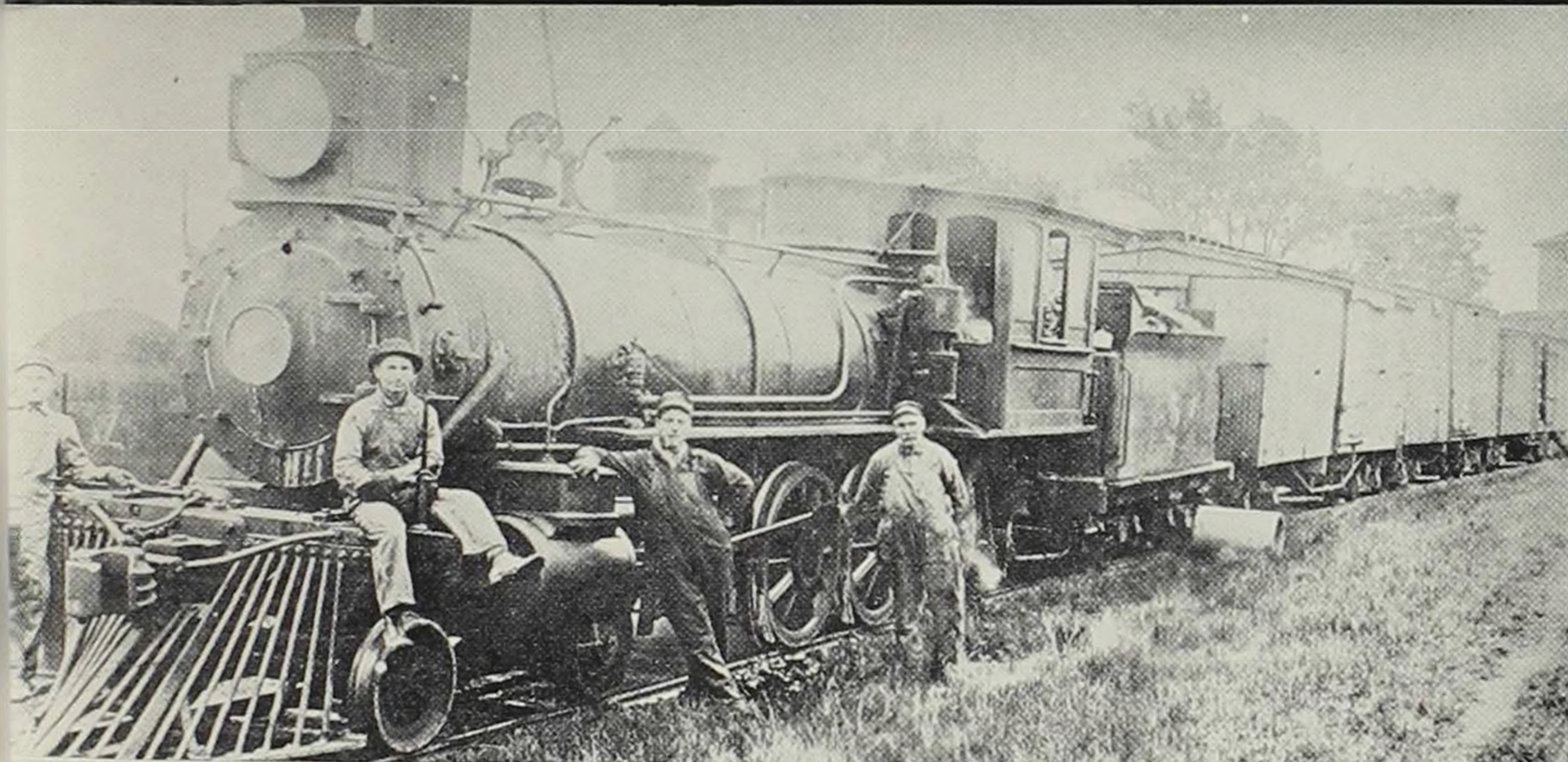
FRANK P. DONOVAN, JR.

Cedar Rapids & Iowa City

Riders no longer "swing and sway, the Crandic way," on the Cedar Rapids & Iowa City Railway, for passenger service ended May 30, 1953. To the people of Cedar Rapids and Iowa City it marked the end of an era but not the end of the railway. The road continues to do a very heavy freight business and interchanges with all connecting trunk lines.

For almost a half-century "The Crandic Route" (a nickname derived from its initials) was a 27-mile institution for students, traveling salesmen, and country folk along the line. Following the withdrawal of passenger operation, dieselization was inaugurated; and late in 1953 even the 70-ton electric locomotive gave way to the internal combustion engine. Today the Crandic is just another short-line railroad.

The Crandic came into existence when the Cedar Rapids & Iowa City Railway & Light Company was incorporated in 1903. Grading started in the spring of that year, and on August 13, 1904, the road was opened to the public. The route presented no engineering difficulties, except for substantial bridges across the Cedar and Iowa rivers.

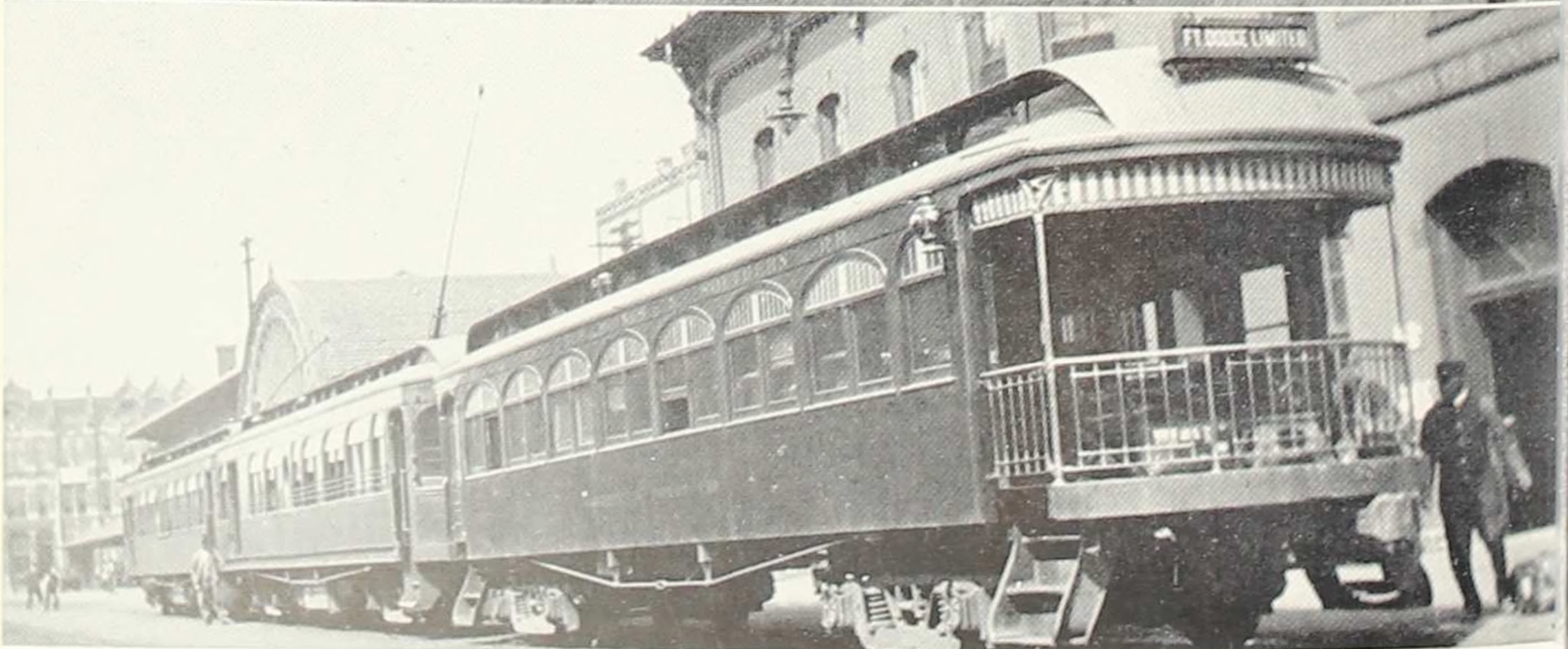
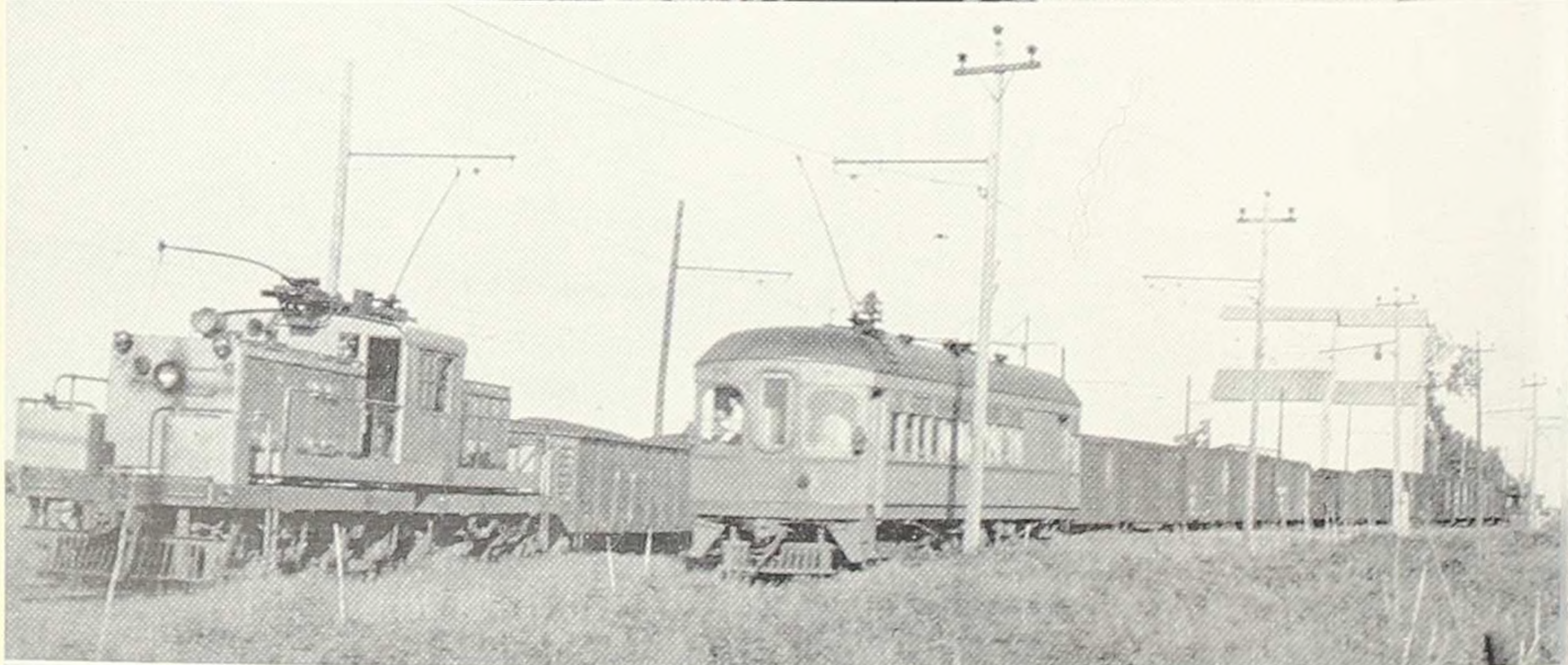


FORT DODGE, DES MOINES & SOUTHERN

Top: Early engine on Boone Valley Line
Cen: Modern electric locomotive
Bot: First diesel locomotive used

Photos by

FtDDM&S
Henry J. McCord
FtDDM&S

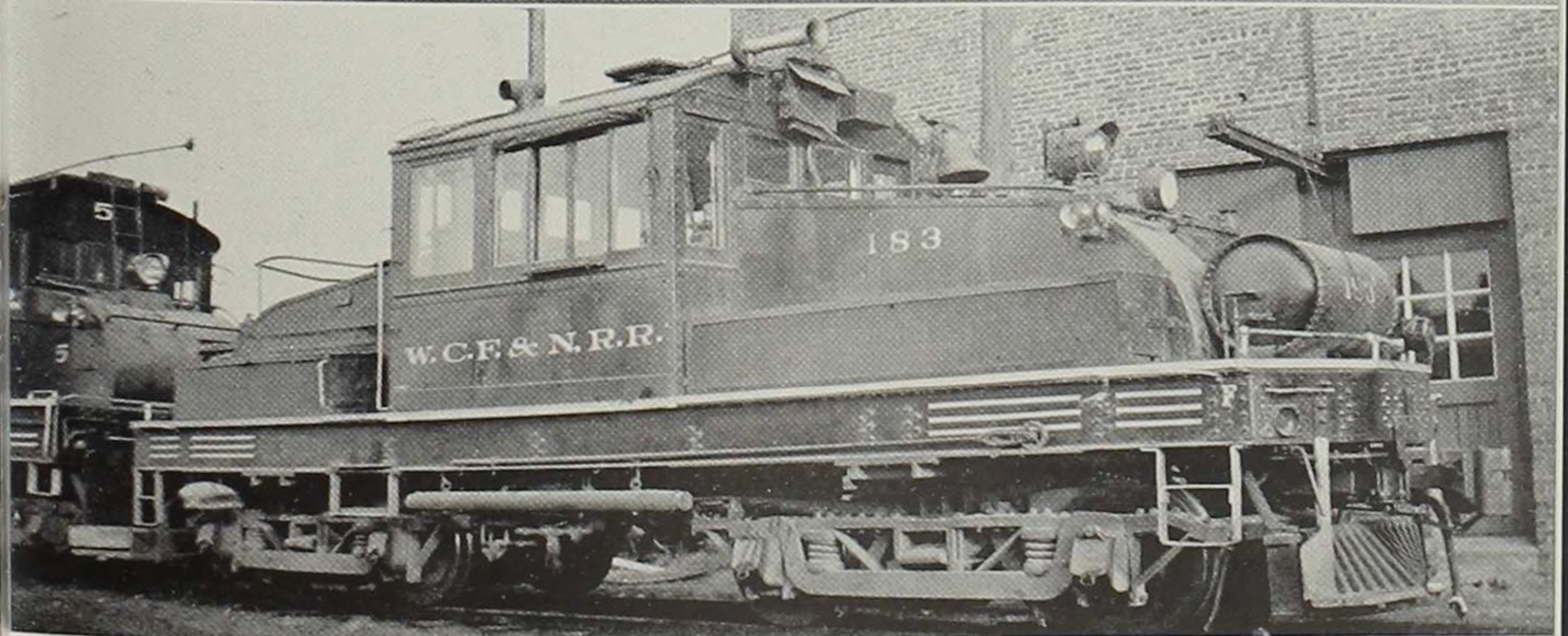
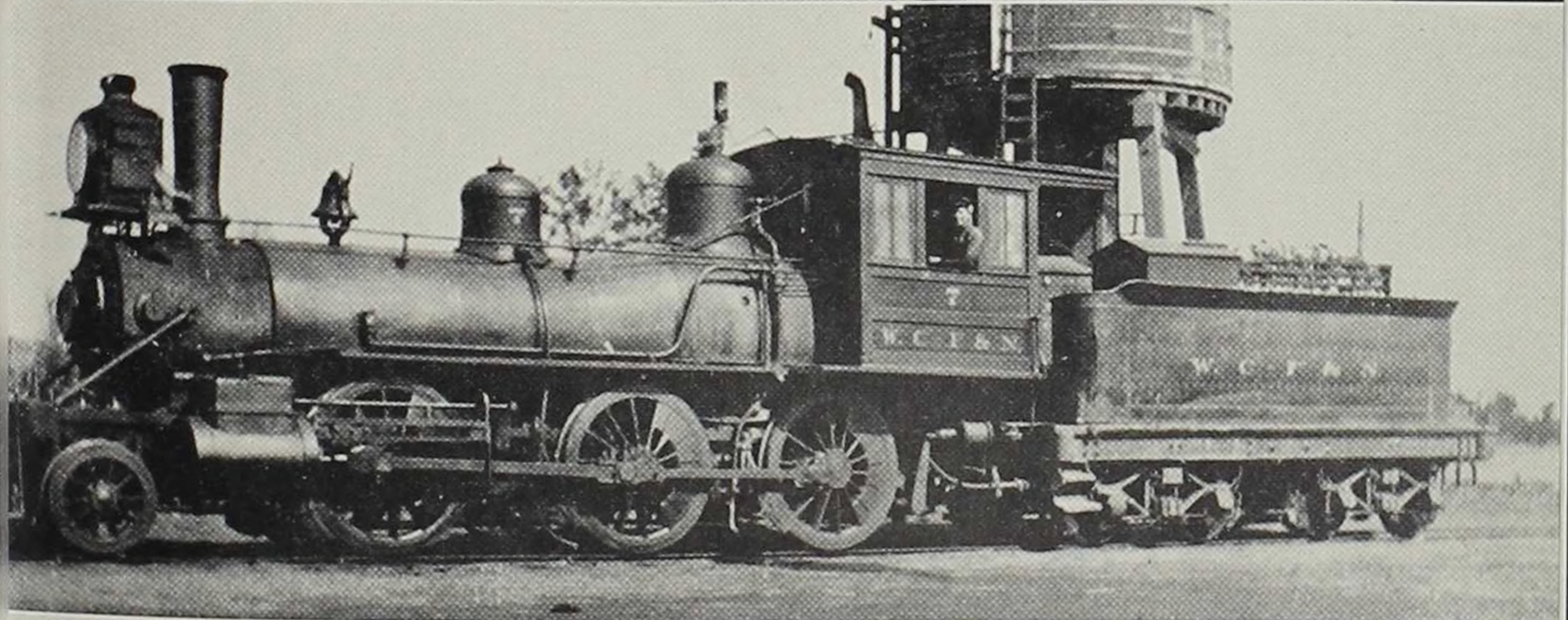


FORT DODGE, DES MOINES & SOUTHERN

- Top:* Snowbound on Rockwell City Line
cen: Trains meet at Napier
Bot: Three-Car Train in Des Moines about 1911

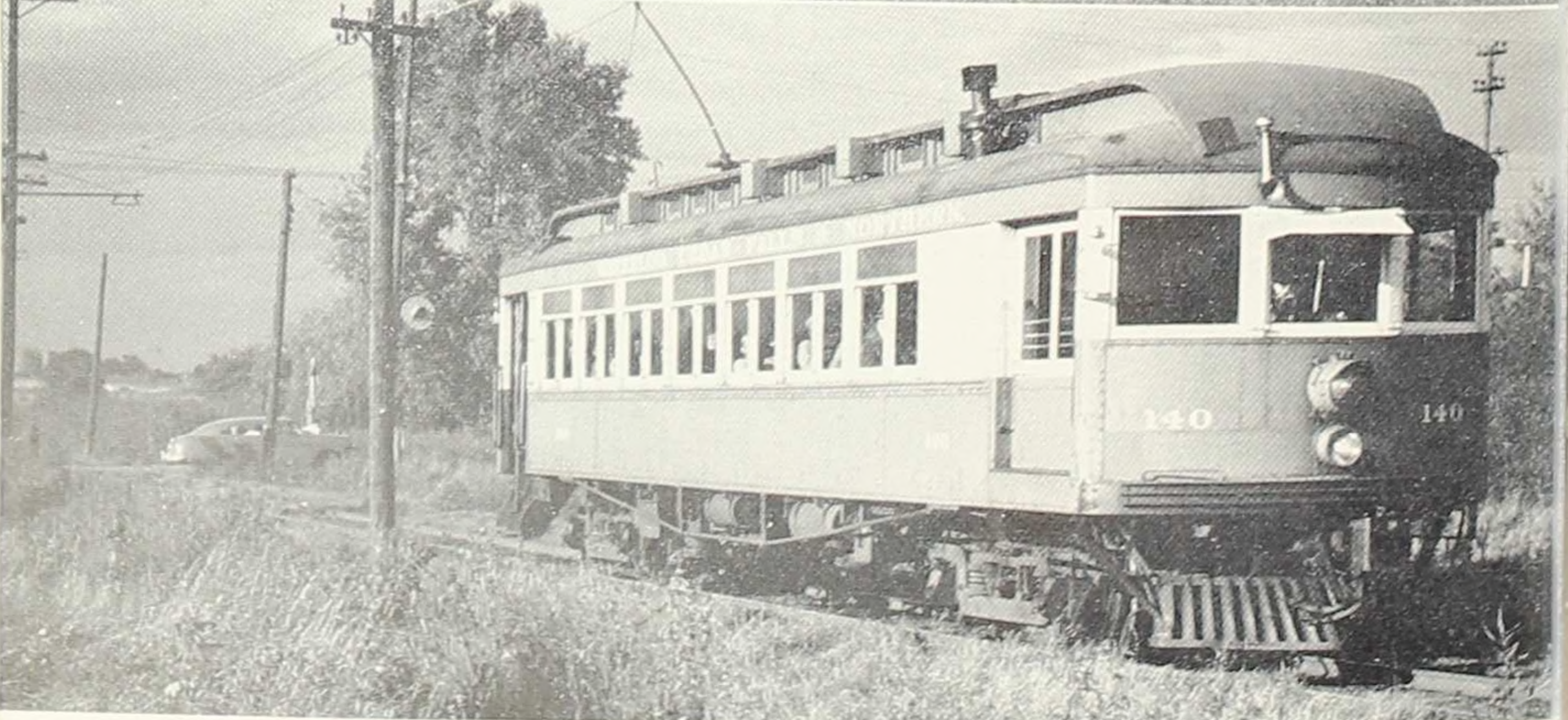
Photos by

A. P. Butts, FtDDM&S
FtDDM&S
A. P. Butts, FtDDM&S



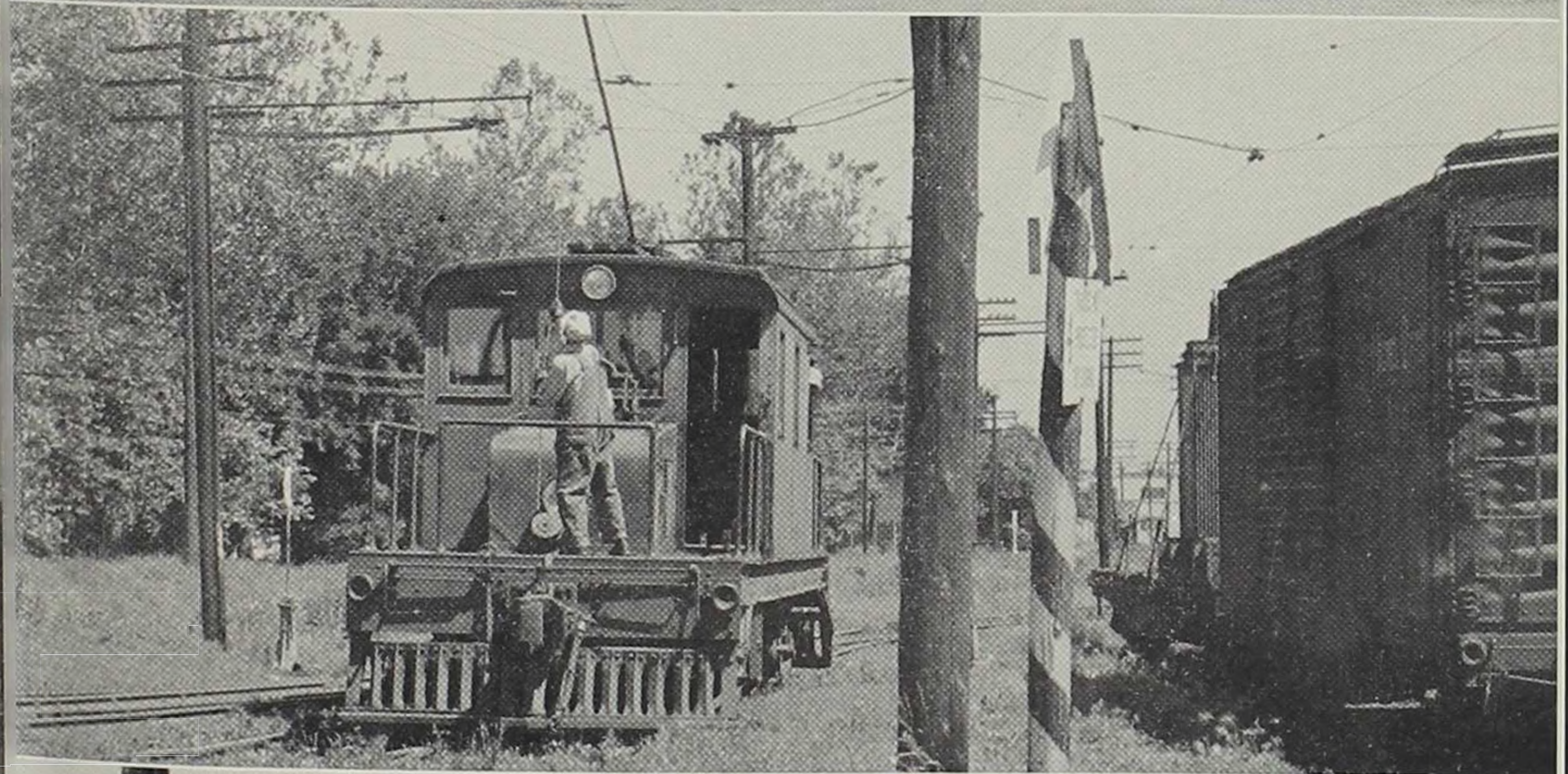
Top: FtDDM&S Station at Boone
Cen: Waterloo & Cedar Falls locomotive
Bot: Electric Locomotive on WCF&N

Photos by
Henry J. McCord
Barney Neuberger
Don Hofsommer



Top: WCF&N at Cedar Rapids station
Cen: Baseball excursion near Mystic in 1910 on CA&S
Bot: WCF&N leaving Waterloo

Photos by
W. F. Armstrong
So. Iowa Ry.
Donald E. Smith



CEDAR RAPIDS & IOWA CITY — THE CRANDIC

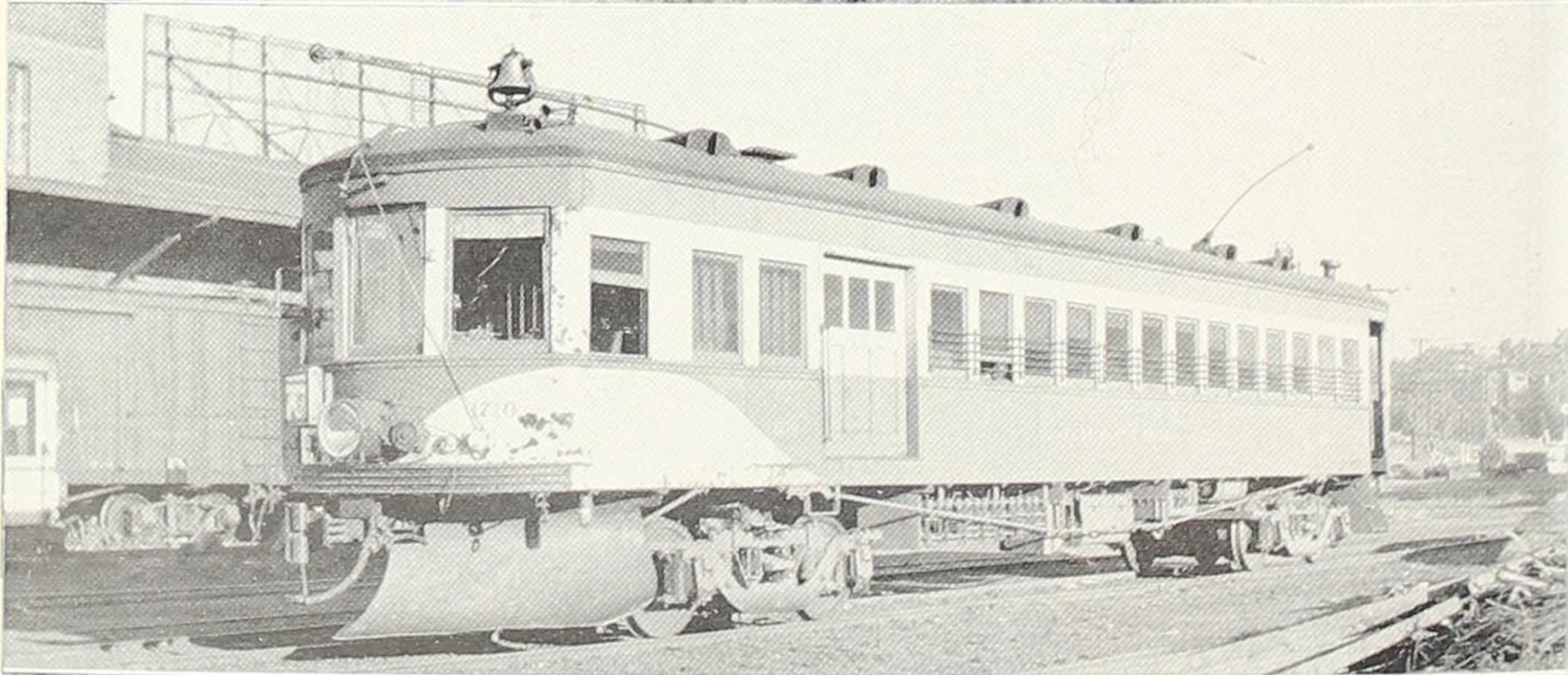
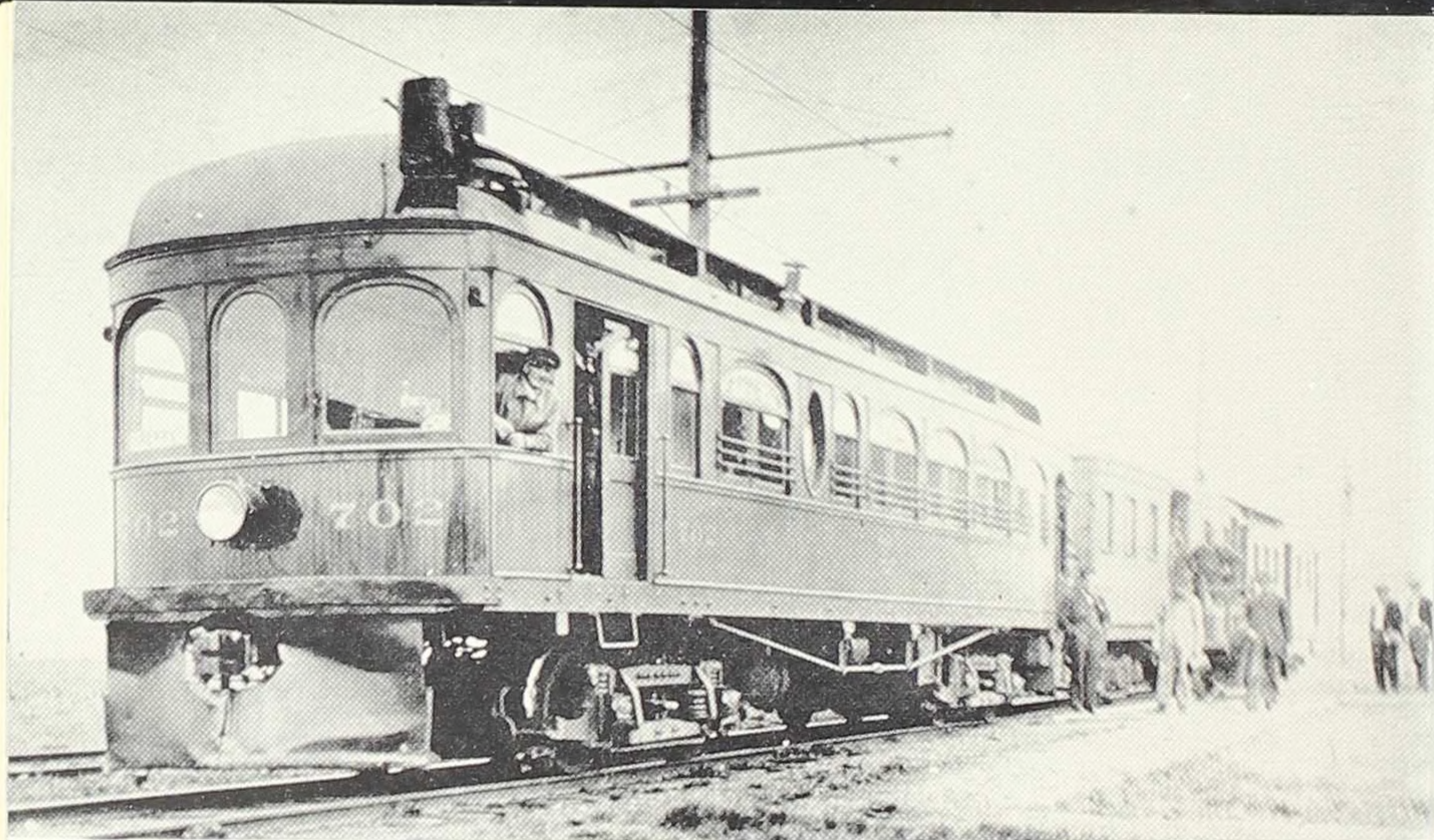
Top: CR&IC in Iowa City

cen: Switching trolley wires on Crandic

Bot: Crandic "highballing" between terminals

Photos by

Barney Neuberger
H. J. McCord
H. J. McCord

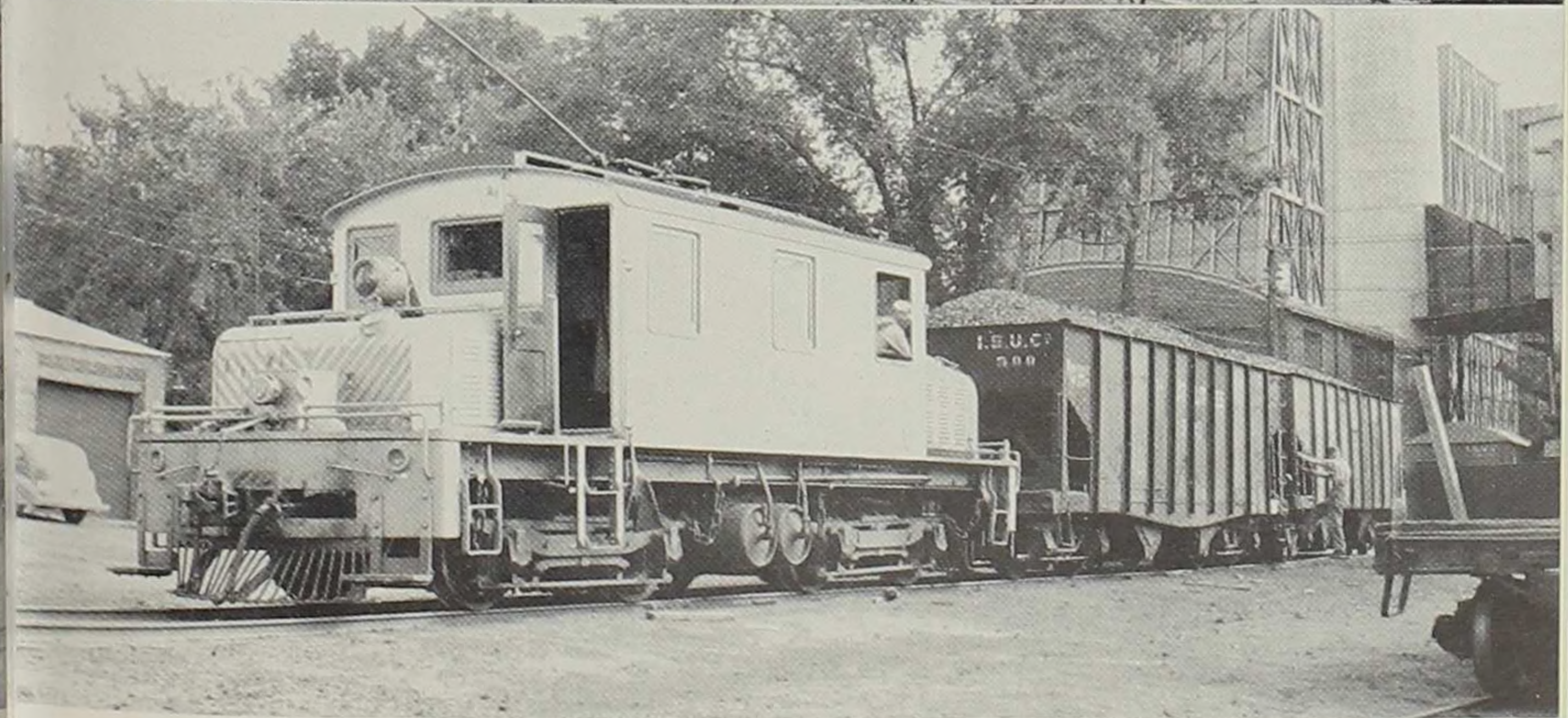


DES MOINES & CENTRAL IOWA RAILWAY

Top: Early 3-car train on Inter-Urban Ry.
Cen: Electric passenger train
Bot: Electric locomotive at Des Moines

Photos by

Barney Neuberger
W. F. Armstrong
W. F. Armstrong

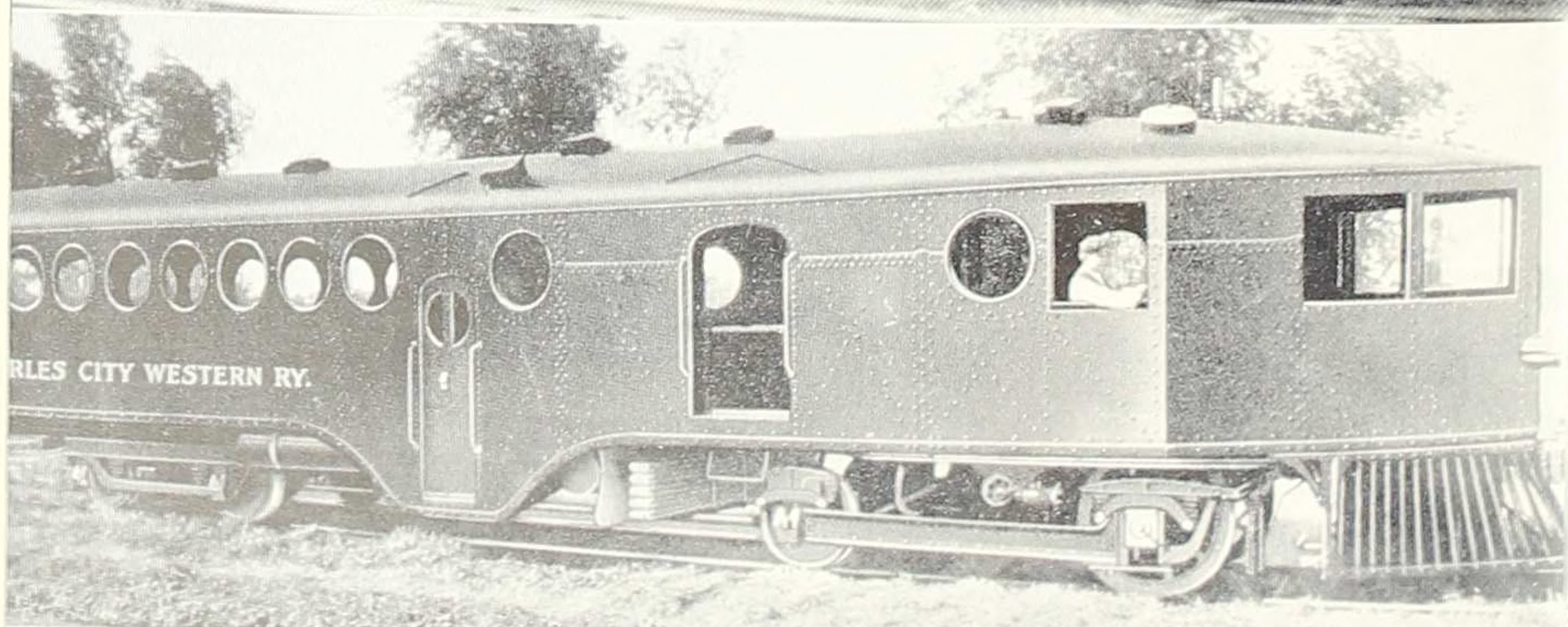
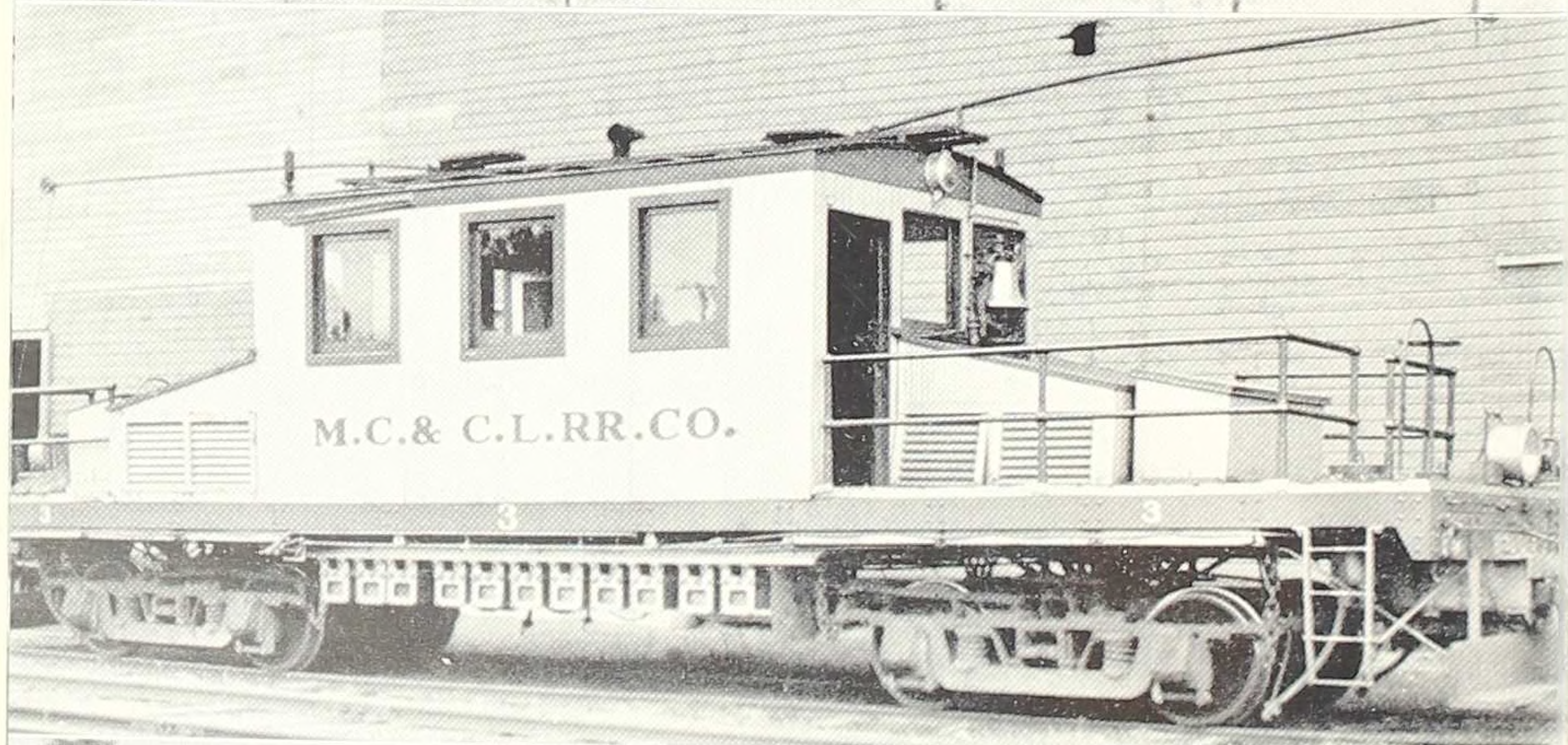


SOUTHERN IOWA RAILWAY

Top: Moravia freight and passenger station 1916
Cen: Baggage-type locomotive purchased in 1916
Bot: Modern locomotive at Centerville

Photos by

So. Iowa Ry.
 So. Iowa Ry.
 W. F. Armstrong



Top: Clinton, Dav. & Muscatine (now abandoned)
Cen: Mason City & Clear Lake motor in 1941
Bot: Charles City Western's McKeen Gas Motor Car

Photos by
Paul Stringham
Eugene Van Dusen
Eugene Van Dusen

From the start the Crandic was designed as a high-speed electric line primarily concerned with hauling passengers. Its foresighted management, however, soon perceived the value of carload freight, and by 1907 it printed tariffs in conjunction with the steam roads. In the process of growing up it shed the "& Light Company" from its title. From its inception to the present day, however, the road was operated in conjunction with the electric firm — now called the Iowa Electric Light & Power Company. With the exception of the road's third president, Isaac B. Smith, a Dows has always headed the company. S. L. Dows and Colonel W. G. Dows were the first two presidents and Sutherland C. Dows is the present head.

In 1914 an extension was built to Mount Vernon, fifteen miles east of Cedar Rapids. According to the *Electric Railway Journal*, a special four-car excursion was run on March 11 of that year. The *Journal* of May 16, 1914, reported that "the line eventually will connect Cedar Rapids with Davenport." The student traffic on the Crandic was heavy, for the road served both the State University of Iowa at Iowa City and Cornell College at Mount Vernon. The Mount Vernon branch was subsequently extended another two miles to Lisbon.

In addition to its "interurbans," the power company ran streetcar lines in Cedar Rapids, Boone,

and Marshalltown, and operated trolleys on the 3½-mile Tama & Toledo Railroad connecting the towns from which it took its name. All are now abandoned. After the Cedar Rapids-Lisbon line was scrapped in 1928, the company's local streetcars in Cedar Rapids continued to run over its tracks in the city until the late thirties.

Another interesting phase of development was that of a subsidiary, Crandic Stages, Inc., which in the early thirties boasted of buses running from Chicago to Denver via Cedar Rapids. The railway's versatile master mechanic, John Munson, doubled in brass by supervising repairs on some sixty buses as well as on interurban cars and locomotives. Incidentally, the buses had the same Iowa-shaped heraldic symbol as the cars. The busses were later sold to the Interstate Bus Lines.

Munson's ingenuity was responsible for many distinct features of the Crandic which were peculiar to that road. Among these were movable frogs on the overhead wires. When a trainman threw a track switch he automatically moved the overhead frog, thereby guiding the trolley shoe in back-up movements. Formerly crewmen had to pull down the trolley pole and reset it for the wire on a siding. Munson also invented controllers on switch engines operated from both sides of the cab, so that the motorman could observe signals on either side. Munson even had a locomotive constructed in the road's Cedar Rapids shops.

To observant passengers and especially to students making high scores on their Seashore music tests, the clickety-clack of the Crandic is off-beat. And it is! The rail joints are opposite each other instead of being staggered like other railroads. With the recent program of laying heavier rail, however, orthodox rhythm will prevail!

In 1939 the Crandic took on a new look when six lightweight, high-speed cars were purchased from the defunct Cincinnati & Lake Erie Railroad. Capable of obtaining 80 m.p.h. on the C&LE, these low-slung, semi-streamlined vehicles replaced heavier wooden cars. Painted yellow with brown and red trim, they virtually lapped up the hills and cut from ten to fifteen minutes from the running time. Later another "lightweight" was bought, this time from the Indiana Railroad, a once mighty system now abandoned.

More recently the Crandic augmented its motive power with "boomer" electric locomotives from the dieselized Washington & Old Dominion Railway in Virginia, and the late Union Electric Railway in Kansas and Oklahoma. Rebuilt cabooses, painted all-yellow, also enlivened the picture. Heavy double-headed freight trains became common. Meanwhile, in spite of new equipment, revenue passengers declined from over 500,000 in several of the World War II years to 188,317 in 1952.

The last day of passenger service, however,

looked like a familiar football special of yester-years. About three hundred people made the final run, including United States Senator Bourke B. Hickenlooper, who had ridden the line as a young lawyer. At least one passenger, Alfred N. Scales of Iowa City, had the distinction of having ridden the first passenger run in 1904. Railfans came from many sections of the country to ride the farewell trip. It took six cars to haul the throng, all of whom were issued souvenir tickets. At the Iowa City station a band played "Auld Lang Syne."

FRANK P. DONOVAN, JR.

Des Moines & Central Iowa

The Des Moines & Central Iowa Railway was incorporated on November 28, 1899, as the Inter-Urban Railway. Its first road was a 24-mile electric line from Des Moines to Colfax opened early in 1903. H. H. Polk, of Des Moines, was president and general manager; A. W. Harris, of Chicago, was vice-president; and two Des Moines men, G. B. Hippee and W. I. Haskit, filled the offices of treasurer and secretary, respectively.

Coal mines along the route provided considerable freight, while Colfax, then a popular health resort, accounted for a relatively heavy passenger business. Freight came into the north side of Des Moines on the interurban's own rails, but passenger cars used the local street railway's Douglas Avenue line passing the State Fair Grounds. Later, when the road built its new passenger terminal, all cars entered from the north side.

The Inter-Urban Railway did not become important until it built the so-called Beaver Valley Division. This 34-mile road, opened in 1906, veered northwest upon leaving Des Moines, running through Herrold and Granger to Perry. About the same time a 3-mile branch was built from Moran to Woodward.

When eight interurban cars with arched windows and heavy pilots came on their own wheels from the American Car Company in St. Louis, they presaged a new era in transportation. Several units of the big wooden vehicles operated in trains carrying passengers, baggage, United States mail, and Wells Fargo express. The road also had electric locomotives. In its heyday the Inter-Urban built up a flourishing freight business. A. B. Stickney, the farsighted head of the Chicago Great Western, encouraged freight interchange and saw to it that cattle cars originating on the Inter-Urban were highballed over his road to the Chicago stockyards. There were also shipments of bituminous coal and of ice and milk, the milk being shipped in cans from way stations.

For a time the Inter-Urban served what was locally called "the third largest 'city' in Iowa" — Camp Dodge — which was said to have had a population of from 40,000 to 50,000 during World War I. Camp Dodge served as the cantonment for the 13th Division of the United States conscript army. Many a graying father in Iowa and adjacent states recalls being shipped to Camp Dodge over the interurban line upon being mustered into service. It is said the road once moved 3,500 men and their baggage from a connecting railroad to camp, twenty-five miles distant, in five hours. Whole trains of a dozen Pullmans or more were shunted by the Inter-Urban's electric loco-

motives from interchange points to the busy Army post.

Camp Dodge reopened for inductees during World War II but on a smaller scale. Even so, the Inter-Urban had to borrow cars from the Cedar Rapids & Iowa City Railway to handle the extra movements. Like most Iowa interurbans, the carrier had "boomer" equipment: that is, cars purchased from other railroads.

When this writer rode the line in 1944, its steel passenger cars had a familiar look — like that of an old friend. Having ridden the now defunct Lake Shore Electric Railway between Cleveland and Toledo almost a decade earlier, he quickly recognized these 60-foot cars as having come from that Ohio interurban. The same feeling was experienced on the Cedar Rapids-Iowa City road. It was a peculiar quirk of fate to be a passenger bowling along "The Crandic Route" on cars of the abandoned Cincinnati & Lake Erie's *Daniel Boone* from Toledo to the Queen City, and the old Indiana Railroad. Iowa, in short, is a haven for interurban cars and locomotives from all over the nation!

Getting back to "the Perry and Colfax interurban," its days as an electric road were numbered. In 1922 it was renamed the Des Moines & Central Iowa Railway. Unfortunately, declining revenues continued between the two World Wars, and in 1946 the Colfax line was scrapped.

Five years earlier the short Moran-Woodward stub had ceased operations. In November, 1946, the Des Moines & Central Iowa Railway went bankrupt. Three years later it was purchased by Murray M. Salzberg, a New York scrap-iron dealer, who continued operations under the old name. Salzberg managed to make both ends meet by dieselizing the property in 1949 and discontinuing passenger service. The little-used section from Perry to Granger was abandoned in 1953. Previous to 1952, freight service to Fort Des Moines and to Urbandale, operated in conjunction with the Des Moines Railway, was withdrawn.

For many years the DM&CI was affiliated with the Des Moines Railway, but when the latter converted to buses it cut off all rail service to the suburban points of Fort Des Moines and Urbandale. There are still some valuable industries along the road between Des Moines and Granger and on the 3-mile segment of the "Colfax Division" to Highland Transfer. By pruning unprofitable branches the remainder of the system may operate indefinitely.

FRANK P. DONOVAN, JR.

The Southern Iowa Railway

The Southern Iowa Railway started as a steam road and was later electrified. At various times it was operated independently or by larger systems, and again there were months when it did not operate at all. Much of the road's earlier records are hard to come by, but there is enough evidence to indicate that its history was both colorful and hectic.

The original company, according to L. L. Taylor's *Past and Present of Appanoose County*, was chartered May 6, 1879, as the Centerville, Moravia & Albia Railroad. It was built in 1880 as a branch of the Missouri, Iowa & Nebraska Railroad (then part of the Wabash system) and leased by the latter road. Francis M. Drake, of Centerville, and Russell Sage, of New York, were the leading promoters and for many years served as officials of the road.

For a time the Wabash operated its St. Louis-Des Moines trains in conjunction with the MI&N from Glenwood Junction, Missouri, to Centerville, and the CM&A from Centerville to Albia. Upon the disintegration of the Wabash system in 1885 the lease was canceled and the Centerville, Moravia & Albia was turned over to the bond-

holders. Operation thereafter was sporadic and the road remained idle for a time.

At the close of the eighties the CM&A was leased to the Iowa Central, headed by Russell Sage. It was reorganized in 1890 as the Albia & Centerville Railway. The Iowa Central, which subsequently became part of the Minneapolis & St. Louis, continued to operate it until 1910. A new company, headed by W. A. Boland, of New York, with J. L. Sawyers, of Centerville, as vice-president, reorganized the Albia & Centerville in February, 1910, changing its name to the Southern Iowa Traction Company. Apparently no change in management was made until late in 1910. Meanwhile the road was being run by the Iowa Central (M&StL), much to the dissatisfaction of the new owners. How they overthrew the M&StL's operation is graphically related in the following letter by the late J. P. Boyle, formerly traffic manager of the little road.

President Boland and Vice President Sawyers figured that it would do no good to ask the M. & St. L. to hand the property over because there was a deficit then of about \$40,000.00 against it of expenses above income, so it was secretly decided to take the road by force. November 26, 1910, at 8:00 A.M. was the date and hour we were to go over the top. We borrowed a coach, engine, train and engine crew from the C. B. & Q. here [Centerville] and followed the regular M. & St. L. train out of here (after fixing the telegraph wire so it would not work) without their knowledge, without a train order or any rights what-

ever and arrived at Albia in due time after stopping wherever we found an employee discharging him as an A. & C. employee and hiring him as an employee of the S. I. T. Company. The M. & St. L. in some way heard we were coming and arranged that we would be allowed to go [to] their depot and then block the track so we could not get out and in that way compel us to sue for peace, but we anticipated that and stayed on our own track at Albia during the several days it took to fix matters up.

After that dramatic episode the Traction Company operated the road. Despite the name "Traction" the line continued to be run by steam. In June, 1914, the name was changed to the Centerville, Albia & Southern Railway after Frank S. Payne and D. C. Bradley of Centerville purchased the line. These men owned a majority of stock of the Centerville Light & Traction Company, which operated the street railway in Centerville, and which had built a short interurban to Mystic in 1910. The new management electrified the Albia line in the summer of 1914. In 1916 the name of the Centerville Light & Traction was changed to the Iowa Southern Utilities Company, and the CA&S was conveyed to the utilities firm.

By operating over local streetcar tracks at both terminals the Albia-Centerville interurban went direct to the railway stations. It made connections with Wabash, M&StL, and Burlington trains at Albia and the Rock Island and Burlington in Centerville. Agents also made Pullman reservations for passengers using connecting steam lines.

Two center-entrance cars with baggage, smoking, and a "ladies" compartment handled passengers; and two "box motors" (baggage-type locomotives) handled carload freight. The ladies' compartment provided privacy for female passengers, as the road hauled many miners who sometimes became quite boisterous, particularly on paydays.

Coal from the mines along the route provided a very substantial amount of freight. The inter-urban interchanged with all connecting steam railroads. For years, too, through package cars were run in conjunction with the Wabash to St. Louis, and via the Milwaukee to Chicago.

During the early years of the depression passenger service became unprofitable and it was withdrawn on the entire railroad in 1933. Eleven years later the 2½-mile segment on the "Mystic Division" between Appanoose and Mystic was abandoned; in March, 1948, the 10¼-mile section of the historic main line north of Moravia was scrapped. Today, however, the remaining 16 miles of the road continues to handle freight, the bulk of which is coal from on-line mines to the large Iowa Southern Utilities electric plant in Centerville. The line is still run by Iowa Southern Utilities Company, although corporately known as the Southern Iowa Railway since 1941. Its president is Edward L. Shutts, who also heads the ISU.

FRANK P. DONOVAN, JR.

Short Line Interurbans

The Mason City & Clear Lake Railroad

Shortest of all Iowa interurbans is the 10-mile Mason City & Clear Lake Railroad, yet mile for mile, it has been among the most profitable. During the Depression, when all five steam roads serving Mason City were in receivership, the MC&CL alone remained solvent. It vies with the Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern for the distinction of being the oldest *electric interurban railway* in Iowa, both roads having begun intercity service in 1897. The MC&CL is said to have been the first electric railway in the United States to have joint freight tariffs with steam railroads.

In 1896 W. E. Brice, Lew H. Ong, and others formed the Mason City & Clear Lake Traction Company. C. T. Dike, a young engineering graduate from Cornell who lived in Mason City, and who later became vice-president of the Chicago & North Western, was selected as the road's engineer. Brice was president and general manager of the new firm and Ong served as vice-president, secretary, and superintendent. The road commenced operation with an excursion on July 4, 1897, in which Mr. and Mrs. Brice, with their dog Sanko, occupied the front seat of an open car. At

Emery, Sanko took out after birds and delayed the train.

Brice continued as head of the Mason City & Clear Lake Railroad until it was taken over by the United Light and Railways Company in 1913. Besides constructing the interurban he built the Chicago & North Western's branch from Belle Plaine through Mason City to Blue Earth, Minnesota. This road was originally called the Iowa, Minnesota & Northwestern Railway and was sold to the C&NW in December, 1900.

The equipment of the old MC&CL was unusual. A large combination passenger and baggage car, equipped with four 75-h.p. motors, pulled double-truck open trailers, each seating fifty-six people. The road was busiest during the summer hauling excursionists to Clear Lake. In winter ice harvested from Clear Lake proved an important source of revenue. Before the days of mechanical refrigeration hundreds of boxcars of natural ice were shipped to many points in Iowa and neighboring states.

In the early days, through coaches from connecting steam roads often went direct to Clear Lake, making it unnecessary to change cars at Mason City. Many prominent railroad executives had their business cars hauled to the lake to enjoy the sensation of being drawn by electric power on this pioneer line.

Around the turn of the century the road

dropped the name "Traction" in favor of the more interurban-sounding "Railway." In 1910 the company was reorganized under its present title — the Mason City & Clear Lake Railroad. The road also operated local streetcars in Mason City until they were superseded by buses in 1936. During that decade company-owned buses supplanted electric cars on the interurban, although freight service continued by rail.

The MC&CL is now owned by a local group headed by Charles E. Strickland. While red wooden interurban passenger cars no longer shuttle between Mason City and Clear Lake, the road's four electric locomotives do a brisk business in freight. Hauling ice is a thing of the past, but there are still elevators, coal and lumber yards, tank farms, and cement plants which furnish the road with lucrative traffic.

The Charles City Western Railway

The Charles City Western Railway is a grass roots interurban with headquarters in Charles City, about thirty miles east of Mason City. This 21-mile road started life as a steam and gasoline-operated carrier. It was chartered on February 3, 1910, and the following year began operating between Charles City and Marble Rock, a distance of thirteen miles. Passengers rode a 55-foot long, pointed-front, gasoline-operated McKeen car that had porthole-type windows, a center entrance, and

a large pilot or "cow catcher." Steam locomotives handled the freight traffic. C. W. Hart of Charles City headed the road; and he and C. H. Parr, E. M. Sherman, C. D. Ellis, A. E. Ellis, N. Frudden, and F. W. Fisher, all of Charles City, served on the directorate.

In 1915 the CCW was electrified and an extension was built to Colwell, eight miles northeast of Charles City. The road also operated the Charles City street railway. The interurban sported a fascinating variety of rolling stock: new steel cars; an odd off-center-door car from the defunct Shore Line Electric Railway in Connecticut; a sturdy deck-roof car from the Twin City Rapid Transit; and other quaint but serviceable equipment. In more recent years diesels have been added along with a heavy-duty electric freight engine hailing from the abandoned Texas Electric Railway. Because of its variegated equipment and rural setting the CCW has long been regarded as a paradise for traction historians and railroad fans.

Now and then, when the power failed on the eastern end of the line, the motorman would coast down to the bridge crossing Little Cedar River, reach for his bamboo pole, and get in some fishing. The crews were paid by the month; like the Skipper of the famous Toonerville Trolley, they could afford to indulge in this pleasant pastime.

The Charles City Western serves important industries in its home community, including the

large Oliver Plow Works, and smaller firms along the way. It interchanges with the Milwaukee and the Illinois Central railroads at Charles City and with the Rock Island at Marble Rock. Some idea of its importance to the agricultural populace is suggested by the sign "Interurban View Farm" located about midway between Charles City and Marble Rock. Indeed, the road has been something of a family affair, locally operated and controlled, with the Ellis' and Frudden's invariably appearing on the directorate, as presidents or as other officials. M. W. Ellis was formerly president, and at this writing (1954) H. O. Frudden heads the carrier.

During World War I the Charles City Western received considerable publicity as the first electric railway in Iowa to have a "motorwoman" — Miss Marjorie Dodd, a college girl, and the daughter of the mayor of Charles City. During 1918 all the "one-man" streetcars in Charles City were operated by women. For a brief period, too, the interurban had an all-women section crew. Due to high cost of operation and automobile competition in the postwar era city service was discontinued in 1921.

In spite of extremely light patronage the interurban routes continued to feature two round trips, daily except Sunday, over the entire road. In the summer of 1952, however, this luxury was dropped; and the interurban, like an ever increas-

ing number of its fellows, is operated for "Freight Service Only."

This completes the story of all Iowa interurbans now operating. With the exception of the defunct Clinton, Davenport & Muscatine Railway, it includes every interurban line run in the state. The CD&M started as the Iowa & Illinois Railway in 1904, connecting Clinton with Davenport. In 1912 the Davenport & Muscatine Railway linked these two towns in its name. Four years later the two lines consolidated, forming the Clinton, Davenport & Muscatine. Unlike the interurbans still running, the CD&M never had a freight business sufficiently lucrative to enable it to continue operating as a tonnage carrier. This proved a major factor in its demise in 1940.

From the foregoing trend it is safe to make two predictions. One is that the so-called interurbans will all go out of the passenger business, at least by rail. The other is that dieselization will replace electric operation on most if not all Iowa interurbans in the near future. Indeed, the very name interurban will become archaic; and, except in a historical sense, it will have little meaning. Most of the Iowa "interurbans" will continue to be more or less economically important as dieselized, short-line railroads handling freight exclusively. But as passenger-carrying, high-speed, electric, intercity roads one regretfully concludes their day is over.

FRANK P. DONOVAN, JR.

IOWA'S INTERURBANS

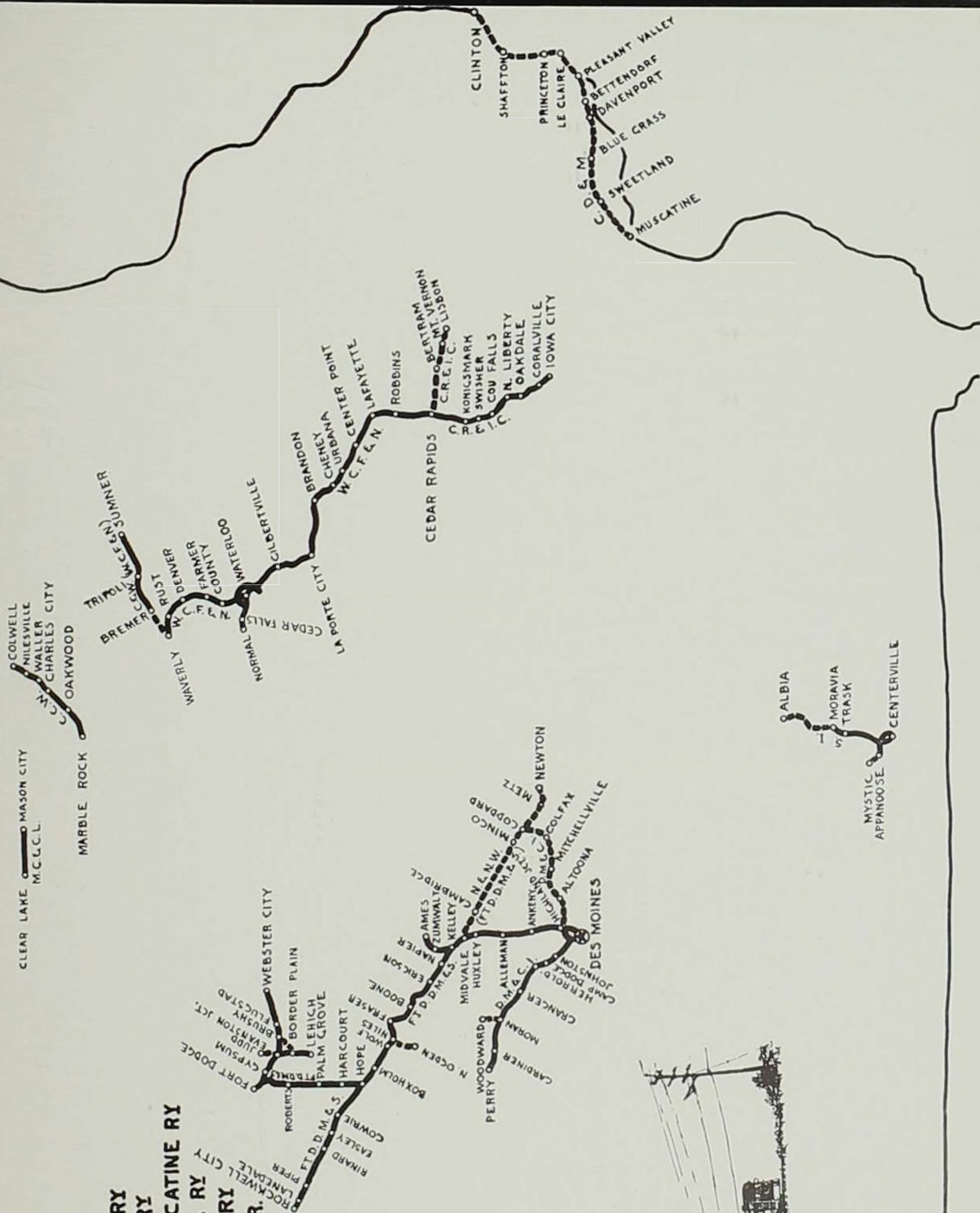
— OPERATING

- - - ABANDONED

- C.R.&I.C. CEDAR RAPIDS & IOWA CITY RY
- C.C.W. CHARLES CITY WESTERN RY
- C.D.&M. CLINTON, DAVENPORT & MUSCATINE RY
- D.M.&C.I. DES MOINES & CENTRAL IOWA RY
- FT.D.M.&S. FT DODGE, DES MOINES & SOU. RY
- M.C.&C.L. MASON CITY & CLEAR LAKE R.R.
- S. I. SOUTHERN IOWA RY
- W.C.F.&N. WATERLOO, CEDAR FALLS & NORTHERN R.R.

SCALE (MILES) 0 2 4 6 8 10

MAP BY FRANKLIN A. KING
1953



CLEAR LAKE MASON CITY
M.C.C.L.

MARBLE ROCK

COLWELL
MILESVILLE
WALLER
CHARLES CITY
OAKWOOD
C.C.W.

WAVERTLY
BREMER
TRIPOLI
W.C.F. & N.
DENVER
FARMER
COUNTY
WATERLOO
CLARVILLE
BRANDON
CENNY
CENTER POINT
W.C.F. & N.
LAFAYETTE
ROBBINS

BERTRAM
MONTVERNON
C.R. & I.C.
KONIGSMARK
SWISHER
COU FALLS
N. LIBERTY
OAKDALE
CORALVILLE
IOWA CITY

WEBSTER CITY
BORDER PLAIN
LEHIGH
PALM GROVE
HARPCOURT
HOPE
FRASER
BOONE
ERICSON
MIDVALE
HUXLEY
WOODWARD
PERRY
CARDNER
MORAN
D. ALLEMAN
N. OGDEN
BOYHOLM
ROBERTS
CORRIE
EASLEY
RINARD
ROCKWELL CITY
PIPER
FT. D. M. & S.
JUD
BRUSHY
EYANSTON JCT.
FLUCSTAD
BRUSHY

NEWTON
METZ
COLLIFAX
MITCHELLVILLE
ALTOONA
DES MOINES
HEROLD
CAMP DODGE
JOHNSTON
GRANCKER
MICHIGAN
ANKENY
MINCO
LODDARD
CAMBRIDGE
DAMES
ZUMWALT
KELLEY
MIDVALE
HUXLEY
WOODWARD
PERRY
CARDNER
MORAN
D. ALLEMAN
N. OGDEN
BOYHOLM
ROBERTS
CORRIE
EASLEY
RINARD
ROCKWELL CITY
PIPER
FT. D. M. & S.
JUD
BRUSHY
EYANSTON JCT.
FLUCSTAD
BRUSHY

GALBIA
MORAVIA
TRASK
MYSTIC
APPANOOSE
CENTERVILLE

