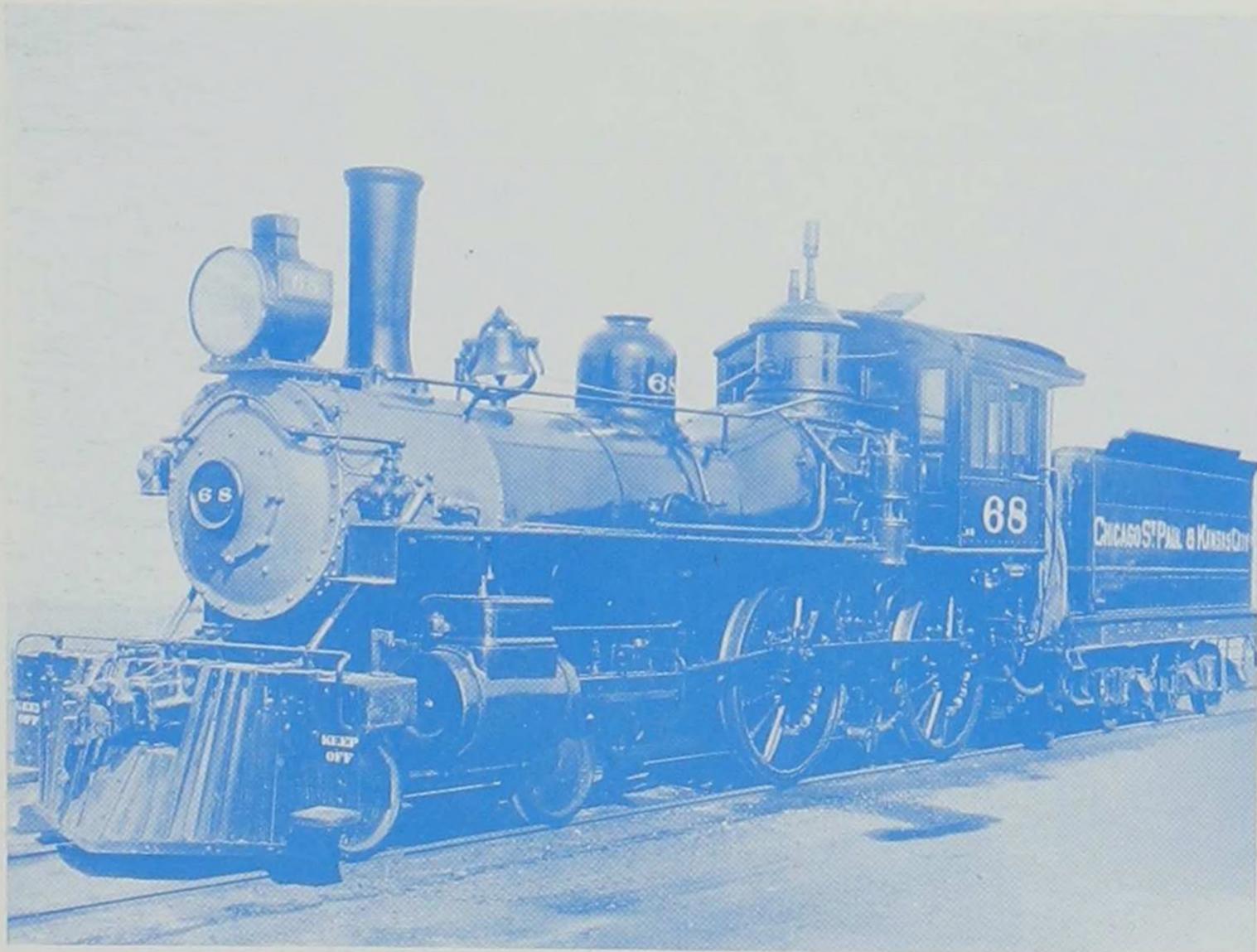


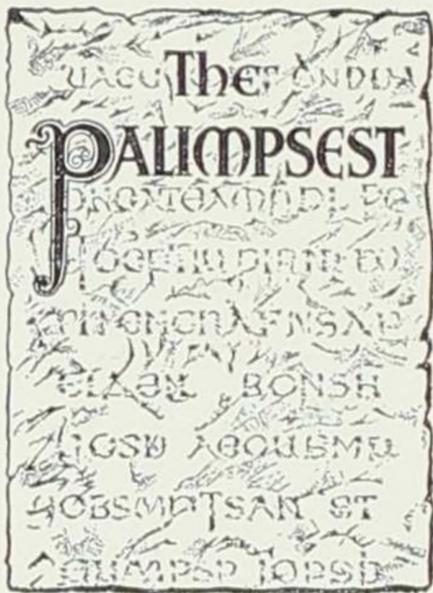
The
PALIMPSEST



A "RED STACK" ON THE CHICAGO GREAT WESTERN

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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.

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Back — Outside: Scene near Fort Dodge, with CGW train on the bridge, an Illinois Central train in foreground, and Minneapolis & St. Louis train in background.

Inside: Map showing CGW routes in 1953.

(All photographs and maps, unless otherwise noted, were furnished by the Chicago Great Western Railway.)

Author

Frank P. Donovan, Jr., is a railroad historian who resides in Minneapolis. He has been a frequent contributor to *THE PALIMPSEST*.

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Stickney's Railroad

"An institution," said Emerson, "is the lengthened shadow of one man." If Emerson had lived in the Midwest around the turn of the century he might have had the Chicago Great Western Railway in mind as the institution and A. B. Stickney as the man. It was Stickney who founded, built, and headed that 1,500-mile railroad serving Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois, Missouri, and, to a very limited extent, Kansas and Nebraska. Practically no mileage has been added since Stickney's death, nor have there been abandonments of any consequence. Other men have since taken over, and they have done — and are doing — a good job. If it had not been for the courage, resourcefulness, and determination of a New England schoolteacher, lawyer, and entrepreneur, however, there would not have been any jobs for them — at least not on the CGW. The story of the Great Western then is largely the story of Alpheus Beede Stickney.

Born in Wilton, Maine, June 27, 1840, Stickney remained in New England long enough to get an

education and to spend his late teens in studying law and teaching school. Later admitted to the bar, he found his legal training of considerable aid in subsequent railroad work. In 1861 he came west to Stillwater, Minnesota, where he taught school and later hung out his shingle. At the end of the sixties, sensing greater opportunities in the state capital, he moved to St. Paul, gave up his law practice, and became actively engaged in promoting, constructing, and operating railways. He served as vice-president, general manager, and chief counsel of the St. Paul, Stillwater & Taylors Falls Railroad (now the Omaha Road) and also as superintendent of construction of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba, which later became the Great Northern. In 1880 he served with the Canadian Pacific, supervising several hundred miles of line. The following year he returned to railroad building in the United States.

With this varied background, Stickney decided to build his own railroad. He acquired the charter of the Minnesota & Northwestern Railroad. Associated with Stickney in this enterprise were Maurice Auerbach, W. R. Merriam, Wm. Dawson, R. A. Smith, Crawford Livingston, W. R. Marshall, and Ansel Oppenheim of St. Paul; Wm. L. Boyle, of Winnipeg, Canada; and C. W. Benson, K. D. Dunlop, and C. F. Benson of Sibley, Iowa. The company, which had been chartered on March 4, 1854, had never laid a yard of track.

The energetic Stickney was quick to change this. Construction started in September, 1884, and by October of the following year the road was in operation from St. Paul southward to Lyle, on the Minnesota-Iowa border, 109 miles. Late in 1885 he extended the road to Manly Junction, in Worth County, Iowa, on the Iowa Central. Meanwhile the ex-schoolteacher had his sights set on Chicago.

From Hayfield, Minnesota, a few miles north of Lyle, a prong of the road pushed southeast to Dubuque, Iowa, which it reached on December 1, 1886. The Iowa section completed, the company went forward with construction in Illinois. This particular segment, however, was built from east to west because of hilly terrain in the vicinity of Winston, Illinois, twenty miles east of Dubuque. At that point a long tunnel had to be bored. The line from Forest Park (just outside of Chicago) to South Freeport was railed in 1887. Trains, however, did not run from the latter point westward through the 2,493-foot Winston Tunnel to Aiken, Illinois, until the following year. Between Aiken and Dubuque running rights were had over the Burlington and the Illinois Central railroads; from Forest Park to Grand Central Station in downtown Chicago, Stickney ran his trains over what is now the Baltimore & Ohio Chicago Terminal Railroad. Thus the dream of a new Twin Cities-Chicago route became an actuality.

Obviously the name Minnesota & Northwestern

was misleading to many people. Stickney was fully aware of this, so he and his associates incorporated the Chicago, St. Paul & Kansas City Railway in Iowa on June 1, 1886, to further his expansion program. The new company purchased the old Wisconsin, Iowa & Nebraska Railway, extending from Waterloo to Des Moines with a branch from Cedar Falls Junction to Cedar Falls. Because of its cater-cornered route in Iowa the WI&N was known as "The Old Diagonal"; it was incorporated under the laws of Iowa on March 17, 1882. The Chicago, St. Paul & Kansas City bought all the properties of the Minnesota & Northwestern in 1887.

Now the Stickney-envisioned system struck out for Kansas City. It spanned the gap between Waterloo and Oelwein, Iowa (the latter town being on the Minnesota & Northwestern), in 1887. It built from Des Moines to St. Joseph, Missouri, reaching "St. Joe" by the end of 1888. As a final step, it leased the Leavenworth & St. Joseph Railway in 1891. With certain trackage rights over other roads in Missouri, it ran into the heart of Kansas City, thus serving all the places in its name: Chicago, St. Paul, and Kansas City.

From the time that its rails first extended south from St. Paul, the Stickney road did a brisk cattle business. It was A. B. Stickney and his associates who in 1882 started what is now the famous St. Paul Union Stockyards. As the cattle and pack-

ing center grew, the railroad operated many stock trains from South St. Paul to Chicago. Contemporary accounts say that cowboy attendants on these trains sat atop the cars and whiled away the time shooting at the glass insulators on telegraph poles. They kept linemen busy repairing the damage.

During Stickney's regime the railroad always had its headquarters in St. Paul; until 1899 its shops were located at South Park, near the capital city. Among the executives of the road were Ansel Oppenheim and Arnold Kalman, well-known St. Paul businessmen and financiers. Later other prominent St. Paulites, such as Frank B. Kellogg and C. O. Kalman, were active in the affairs of the company. Samuel C. Stickney, a son of President Stickney, was for many years general manager and subsequently became vice-president.

Never a wealthy road, the Stickney enterprise needed all the managerial ingenuity its officers could muster to keep it on the black side of the ledger. Beset on all sides by well-entrenched trunk lines linking the Twin Cities with Chicago, the newcomer in this territory met intense and often cutthroat competition. Stickney had to be ever on the alert to capture and hold traffic. For a time in the late eighties he headed the Iowa Central Railway as a means to shunt more traffic to his road at Manly, Iowa. He even put on through sleeping car service between the Twin Cities and

Columbus, Ohio — a bizarre route over the roads he headed to Peoria, Illinois, and thence on the Big Four to the Buckeye capital.

When it came to courage, audacity, and original thinking it was hard to beat A. B. Stickney. The red-headed and red-bearded railroader was a non-conformist of the first water. He dared to sympathize with the Grangers when all other railroad presidents were dead set against restrictive legislation affecting rates.

Not content with running his railroad — a job in itself — Stickney found time to write a book called *The Railway Problem* (1891) in which he sharply criticized railroad management. Stickney foresaw the Hepburn Act and state and federal legislation which would prohibit all forms of discrimination. Time has vindicated his judgment. It may be added that Stickney was not necessarily for lower rates, but he was most ardently for *one rate for all shippers for a specific commodity between two given points*. He felt the Granger legislation was enacted because of rate-cutting, rebating, and other forms of discrimination.

Stickney cut rates along with his competitors. He had to, as long as other carriers posted one tariff and then found ways to lower the rates for favored shippers. Today this is an academic subject, but in the nineties it was very real. Nor was it entirely the railroad managers' fault. They were frequently dominated by large shippers, and they

had to grant a rebate. Sometimes it meant a special rate or a special master in receivership. And the specter of receivership on the Stickney system was always imminent.

In fact, the Chicago, St. Paul & Kansas City became virtually insolvent. Stickney, however, avoided receivership by reorganizing the road in 1892 as the Chicago Great Western Railway — a new company with no mortgage indebtedness. He prevailed upon the shareholders to exchange bonds of the old road for stock of the new. A novel feature of the reorganization was the issuance of debenture stock along with three other kinds of stock. Since most of the shareholders were English, they agreed to the proposition of having debenture stock in lieu of bonds. Thus the Chicago Great Western was the only American trunk line at that time without mortgage indebtedness. When the panic of 1893 came, the CGW rode the storm.

A few years earlier the railroad offered a prize for the best emblem in a contest open to ticket agents in the United States. R. G. Thompson, a Wabash employee at Fort Wayne, Indiana, won the award by designing a maple leaf on which the veins showed the lines of the railway. During the remainder of Stickney's tenure the CGW's timetables and advertising literature featured the Maple Leaf as the road's colophon.

In 1899 the CGW purchased stock control of the Wisconsin, Minnesota & Pacific, a road which

never operated in the Badger State and fell short of the Pacific by over 1,500 miles. It had a curious history, being operated in two parts: one from Red Wing on the Mississippi westward to Mankato on the Minnesota River; the other, or western end, from Morton, Minnesota, to Watertown, South Dakota. It was the eastern segment, which crossed Stickney's north-south line at Randolph, of which the CGW had control and, curiously enough, which A. B. Stickney helped build in the early eighties. Prior to CGW interest the road had been controlled by the Rock Island and operated by the Minneapolis & St. Louis. In 1900 an up-and-coming young lawyer by the name of Frank B. Kellogg was elected president of the eastern part of the WM&P. He later became world-famous as author of the Kellogg Pact to outlaw war. The Great Western subsequently operated the WM&P as part of its system.

No sooner had the Great Western controlled the WM&P than the latter company acquired other roads. The Duluth, Red Wing & Southern, extending from Red Wing south to Zumbrota, Minnesota, 25 miles, was purchased on July 3, 1901; on September 10 of the same year the Winona & Western came into the fold. The W&W road operated a 113-mile line from Winona, Minnesota, to Osage, in Mitchell County, Iowa. It also had a seven-mile branch from Simpson to Rochester, Minnesota. In 1903 the 26-mile gap

between Rochester and Zumbrota was spanned, giving the Great Western access to Rochester from both the north and south over its own rails.

All this time it was the driving force of Stickney which brought about these consolidations. He remained president of the Great Western and its predecessor companies except for the period from 1890 to 1894, when he was chairman of the board. During the interim John M. Egan, formerly general manager of the Stickney system, was president. Egan, onetime general superintendent of the Canadian Pacific's Western Division, and a civil engineer for several roads in America, had almost as varied a career as Stickney. In later years Egan headed the Central of Georgia.

This, roughly, is the history of the Chicago Great Western up to the twentieth century. Its subsequent expansion was chiefly in Iowa.

FRANK P. DONOVAN, JR.

The Great Western In Iowa

Slightly over one-half of the Chicago Great Western mileage is in Iowa today. Because the Hawkeye State has played an important role in the road's growth, a review of the antecedent companies in Iowa may be in order. One company's history, at least, goes back to 1870. It is that half mythical, half real Iowa Pacific, which palimpsest-like shows traces of cuts and fills and old rights of way here and there on the prairies. Many of the vestigial remains are hardly decipherable even to the student of railroad history. Until some patient antiquarian with a stout pair of legs and a liberal endowment can disclose the whole story of the ill-fated road, we will have to be content with fragments of its history.

The Iowa Pacific was graded from a point in Fayette County, called Fayette Junction, westward through Sumner, Waverly, and Hampton to Belmond in Wright County. Another section veered southwest from Belmond to Fort Dodge. The records seem to indicate that the company had laid only about a dozen miles of track in the vicinity of Waverly. A company titled the Dubuque & Dakota — nicknamed the Damned Doubtful — acquired some 95 miles of the old

Iowa Pacific right of way and laid tracks from Sumner to Hampton in 1879 and 1880.

Enter now the Stickney-controlled railroads. The Minnesota & Northwestern (a predecessor of the Chicago Great Western) purchased the Dubuque & Dakota's line from Sumner to Hampton in 1887. The Mason City & Fort Dodge (incorporated in Iowa, June 10, 1881) had built from Mason City to Fort Dodge in 1886, utilizing part of the abandoned Iowa Pacific grade. At this time the MC&FtD was controlled by Stickney interests, and in 1901 it was leased to the Chicago Great Western for one hundred years.

Stickney now extended the Mason City & Fort Dodge to fulfill his last major objective for the Maple Leaf system: a direct line between the Twin Cities and Omaha. The short Mason City-Manly Junction gap was spanned in 1901. The longest uncompleted section, the 133 miles from Fort Dodge to Council Bluffs, was finished in 1903. It featured a lofty bridge nearly a half-mile long over the Des Moines River at Fort Dodge. The 2,588-foot structure, reputed to be the second largest railway bridge in Iowa, entailed no loss of life in its building; the most serious accident being a smashed finger of one workman! From Council Bluffs the CGW had trackage rights into Omaha.

This completes the present Great Western except for the Clarion-Oelwein side of the triangle

near the center of the system so conspicuous on the map. As previously mentioned, the rails had already been laid from Sumner to Hampton — a part of that triangle. The western gap from Hampton to Clarion, 26 miles, was closed in 1902; on the eastern end, the 29-mile segment from Waverly to Oelwein was completed in 1904.

As was the case with many roads in the nineteenth century, the building of the Great Western was often done by construction companies affiliated with the railway. For example, on the Twin Cities-Chicago line, that portion of the road between Dubuque and Thorpe, Iowa, was built by the Stickney-controlled Dubuque & Northwestern, and on completion was promptly sold to the Minnesota & Northwestern. Again, land companies were formed to purchase rights of way and sites for depots and shops. The Iowa Development and the Iowa Townsite companies, which Stickney formed to acquire land, are still in existence today. Their book value, however, is now listed at \$1.00 each!

The turn of the century witnessed the moving of the Great Western's shops from South Park, Minnesota, to Oelwein. The new shop headquarters were officially dedicated on September 28, 1899, but it was not until about four years afterward that they were fully equipped for repair work of all kinds.

It was intended that Oelwein should have the

shops in the early 90's, but the panic of 1893 and the business depression which followed postponed the road's plans. A. B. Stickney, however, was fully aware that the Iowa community was the logical place for the company's major repair base. The practice of bringing bad-order cars and faulty locomotives all the way to the St. Paul area from Chicago and Kansas City entailed much wasteful mileage. After many premature announcements, Stickney declared on February 21, 1898, at the opening of Oelwein's Hotel Mealey, that the shops would be built that year. The news caused much rejoicing and moved a local bard, Mary H. Millard, to write an eighteen-stanza poem on "Oelwein's Glory." Her verses ended with a stirring —

Long live the noble president
Of western railroad fame!
And well may Oelwein's sterling men
Pay honor to his name,

For in the years that are to come,
Oft we'll tell the story:
How A. B. Stickney laid the road
That led to Oelwein's glory.

In 1890 Oelwein had about 800 people; a half century later the population had risen to 7,801. A large part of this increase may be attributed to the removal of the shops to Oelwein and the subsequent enlargements of the repair facilities. Contemporary accounts describe the main shop quar-

ters as two large buildings separated by a transfer pit and table. The one structure housed the general storehouse, the machine and erecting shop, the boiler shop, and the coach shop. The other building embraced the freight car shop, the blacksmith shop, and the paint shop. Some idea of the size of the layout may be gleaned from the fact that fifteen tracks were to go into the machine and erecting shop, six into the coach shop, and five into the boiler shop.

A novel feature in one of the smaller buildings was a recreation room called "Liberty Hall," where employees could spend their leisure time. The "club room" with reading matter is said to have been personally paid for by Stickney.

When Walter P. Chrysler came to supervise the shops from the Colorado & Southern in 1907, he found them among the most modern in the country. In his autobiography, *Life of An American Workman*, he describes them in glowing terms:

They were the biggest shops I had ever seen. Sixteen or eighteen locomotives could be hauled inside them. In the winter darkness they were brilliantly illuminated with sputtering bluish arc lamps. There were great cranes aloft that could lift a locomotive in their chains. Everything was marvelous, and when I saw the transfer tables I felt like applauding. Best of all, everything in those shops was to be in my charge. . . .

Chrysler rose to become superintendent of mo-

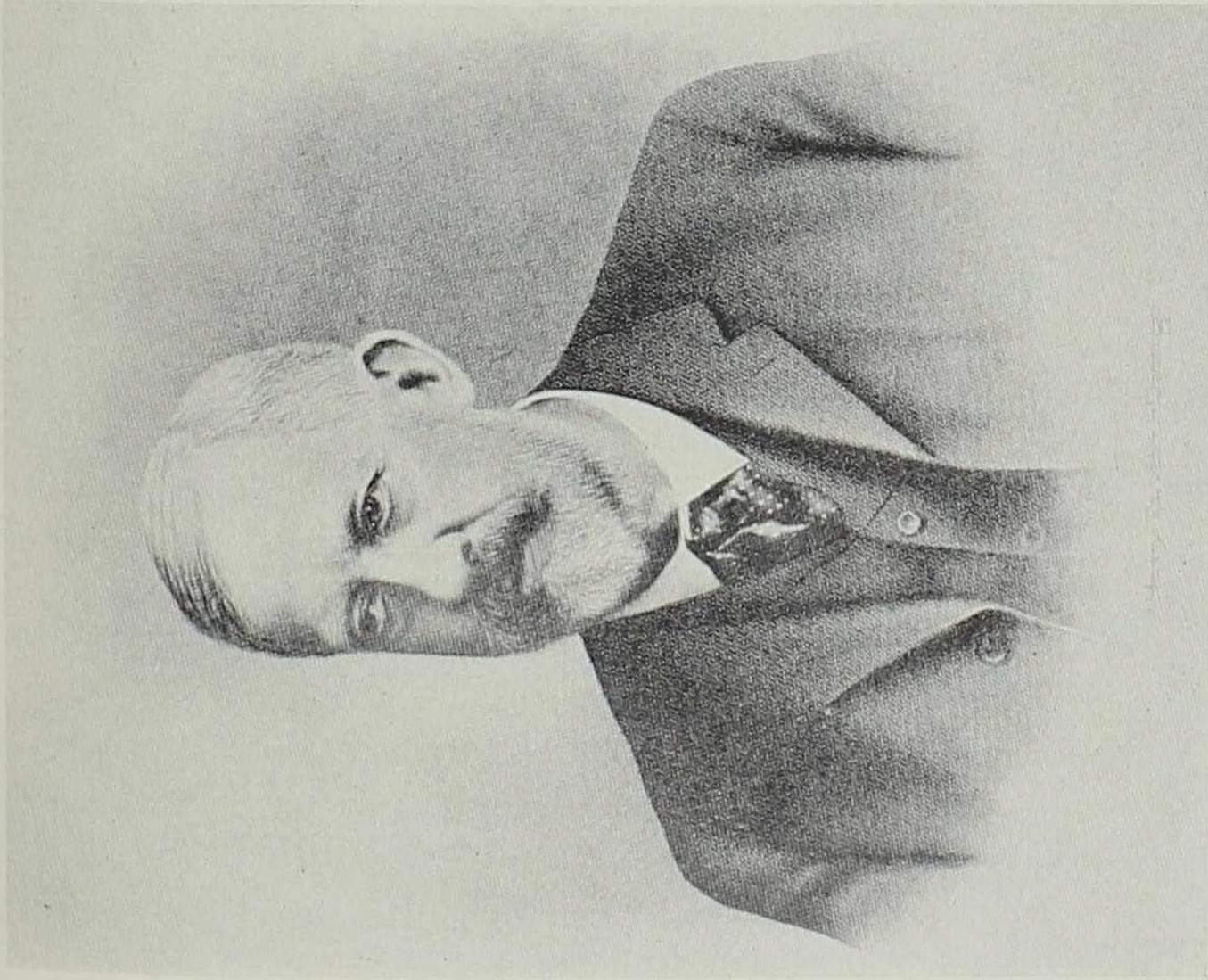
tive power for the Great Western but left the road after a tiff with Stickney's successor, Sam Felton. From the Maple Leaf system he went to the Pittsburgh plant of the American Locomotive Company as works manager. He subsequently quit "Alco" to try his hand at automobile manufacturing and later founded and built the huge Chrysler Corporation. It is significant that Oelwein remembers him as the owner of the town's first automobile — a Locomobile.

During Stickney's reign the locomotives were almost as individualistic as he, for their stacks were painted a bright red; the Great Western itself was frequently referred to as "The Red Stack." In a day when there was great rivalry between steam roads and electric interurbans Stickney had his company operate in close harmony with the Waterloo, Cedar Falls & Northern. The interurban operated over CGW tracks from Waverly to Sumner, whereas Stickney's road had running rights over the "juice" line from Denver Junction to Waterloo. This rapprochement was further strengthened when L. S. Cass, head of the interurban, was made a vice-president of the Great Western.

Stickney vigorously fought to get legislation enacted prohibiting discrimination in rates. He dared to say what he thought anywhere and at any time. At one important traffic meeting in the East he complimented the railroad presidents on

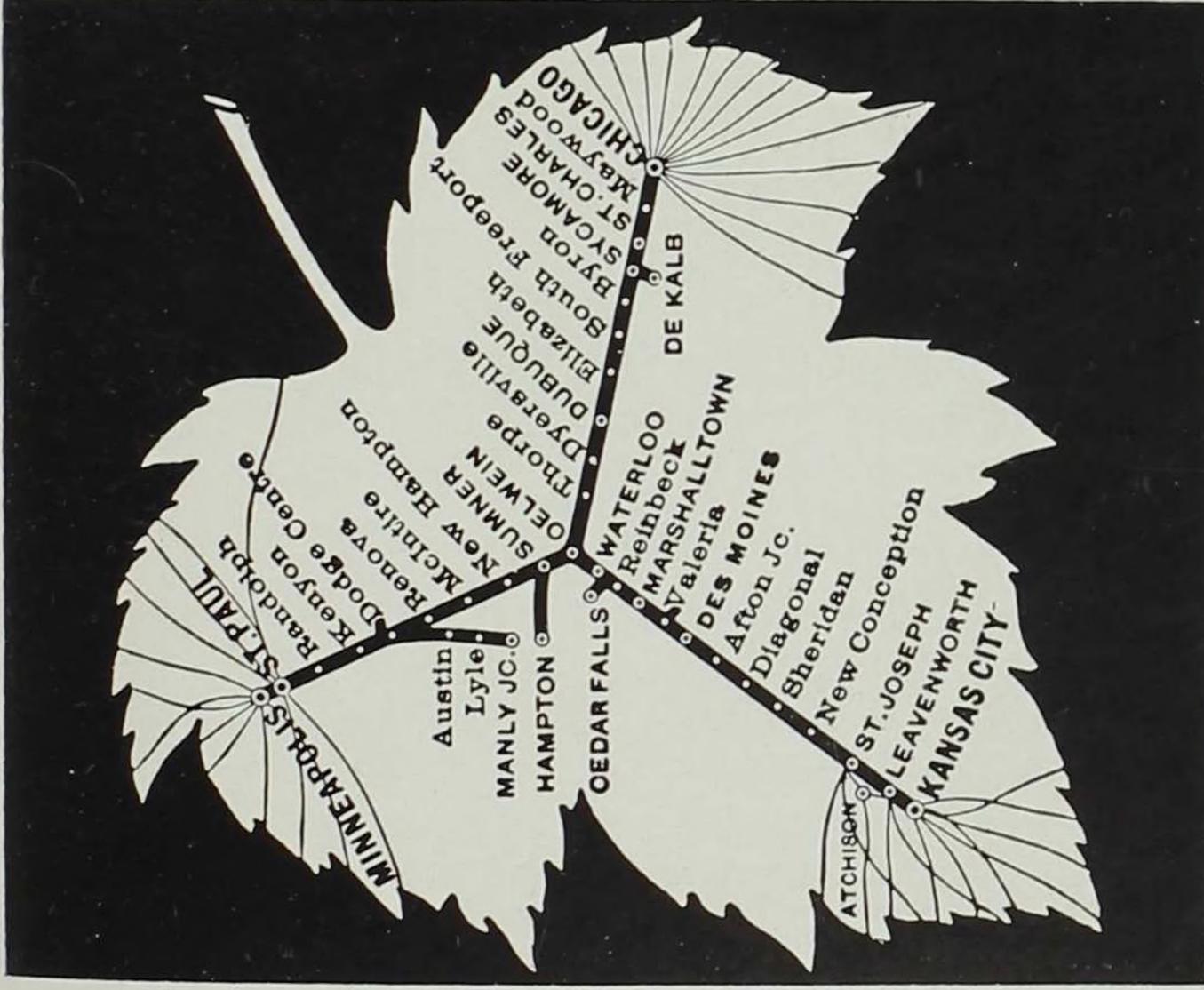
their honesty, integrity, and fine character, saying he would trust any one of them with his entire personal fortune. Then, according to the recollection of a former Great Western official, he added: "But, gentlemen, as railroad presidents I would not trust any one of you with my watch!" Stickney knew that once the presidents left the meeting, the rate agreements which they had just made would promptly be broken. In a booklet entitled *Railway Rates* (1909) Stickney also advocated tariff simplification and devised his own system which, he asserted, would reduce the rate sheets from an estimated 4,000 volumes to just 31.

Rumors of an impending financial crisis at the Great Western offices drifted through Wall Street during the first days of 1907. The year had opened propitiously for businessmen and investors, but the unconfirmed reports of low earnings and unpaid obligations were a harbinger of the famous panic of 1907. Despite a floating debt of \$10,653,000, on January 7 Samuel C. Stickney denied a report from New York "that a receiver had been or was about to be asked for the Chicago Great Western Railway." However, cabled news from London which came in the next morning confirmed the rumor. The British noteholders had met with A. B. Stickney and reached a decision on the company's financial plight. Out of their conference came a plan to place the railroad into bankruptcy "to maintain the status quo during the



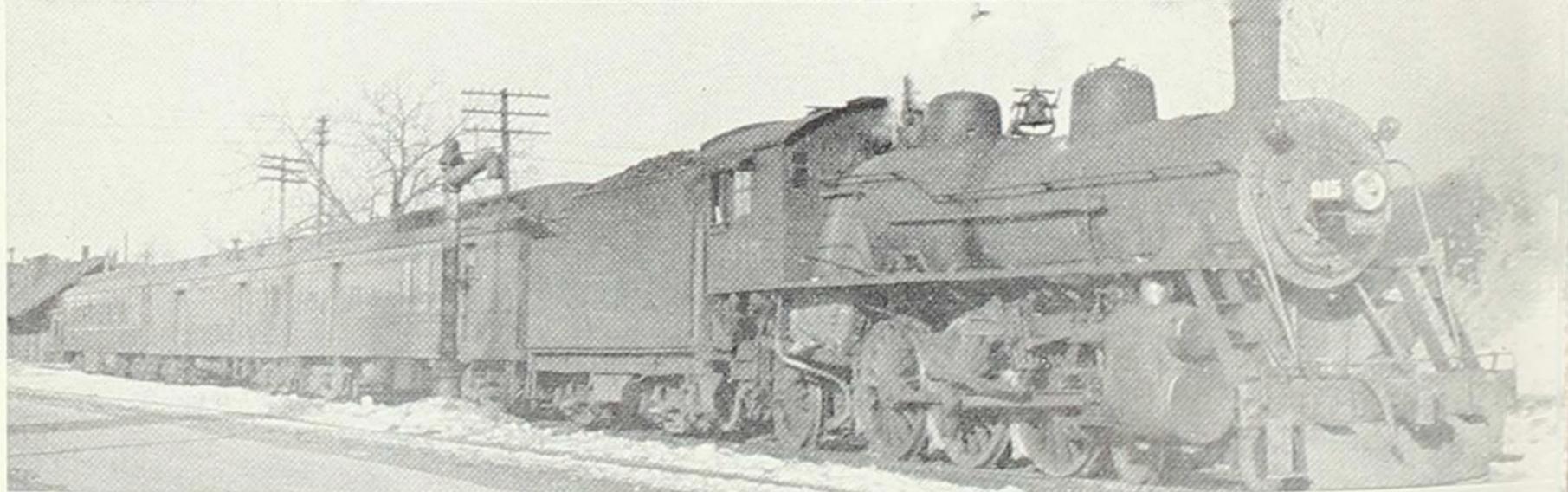
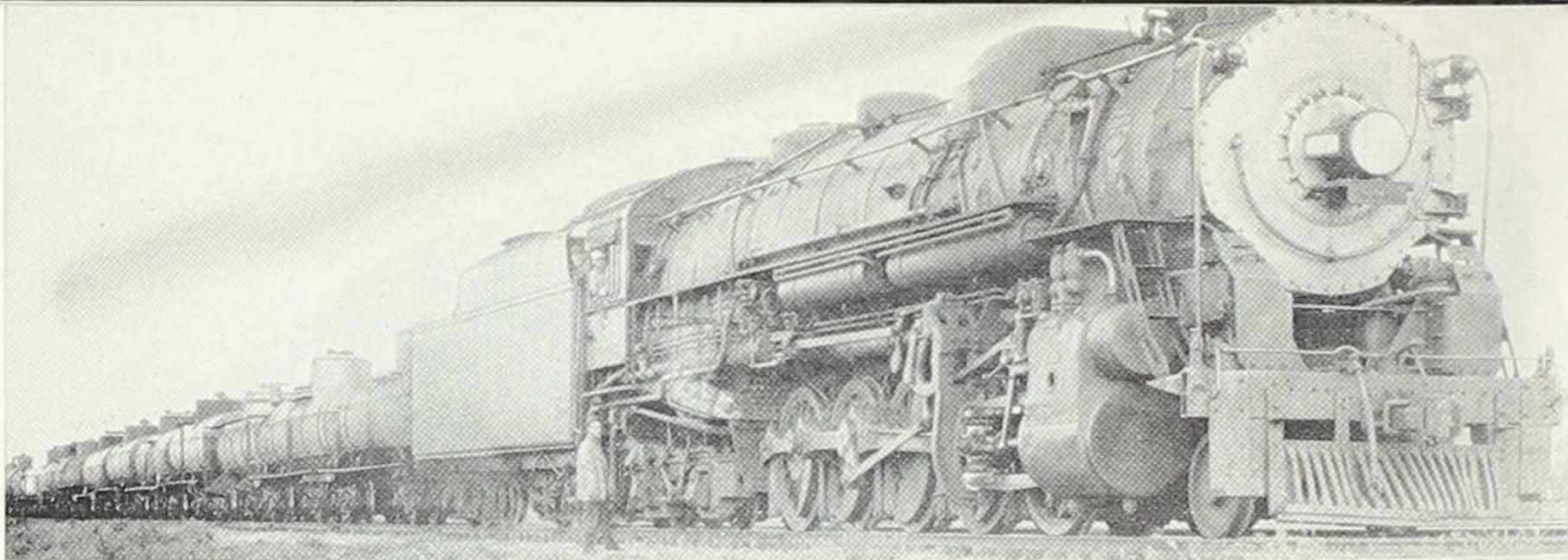
(Minnesota Historical Society)

Alpheus B. Stickney

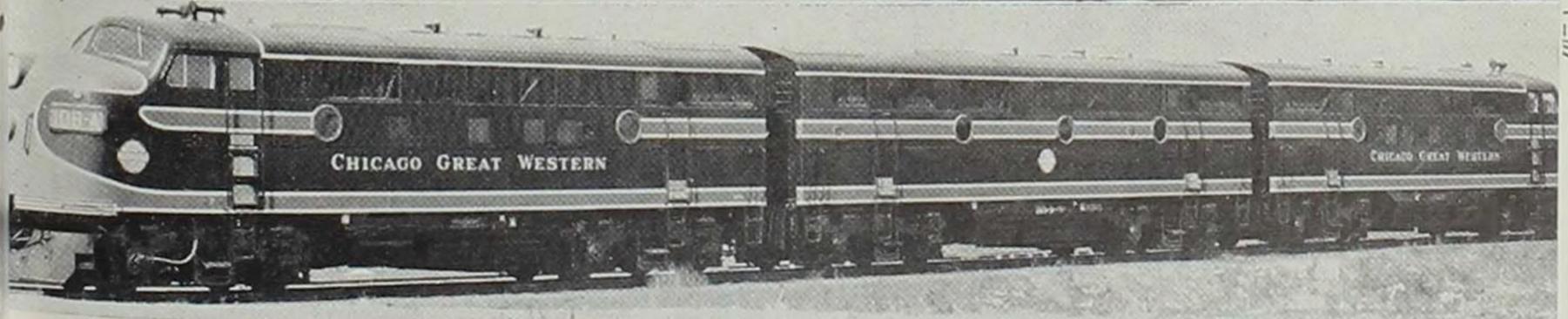
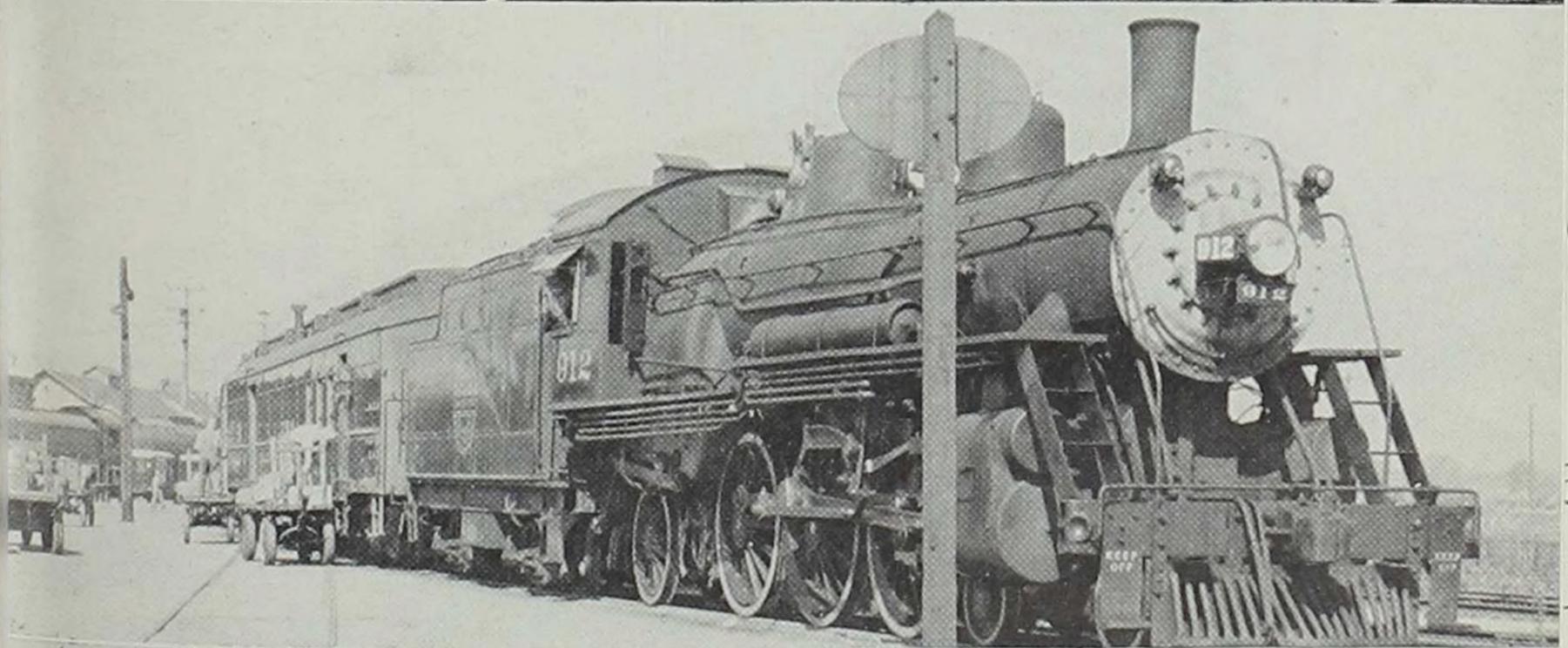


The Famous "Maple Leaf" CGW Trademark

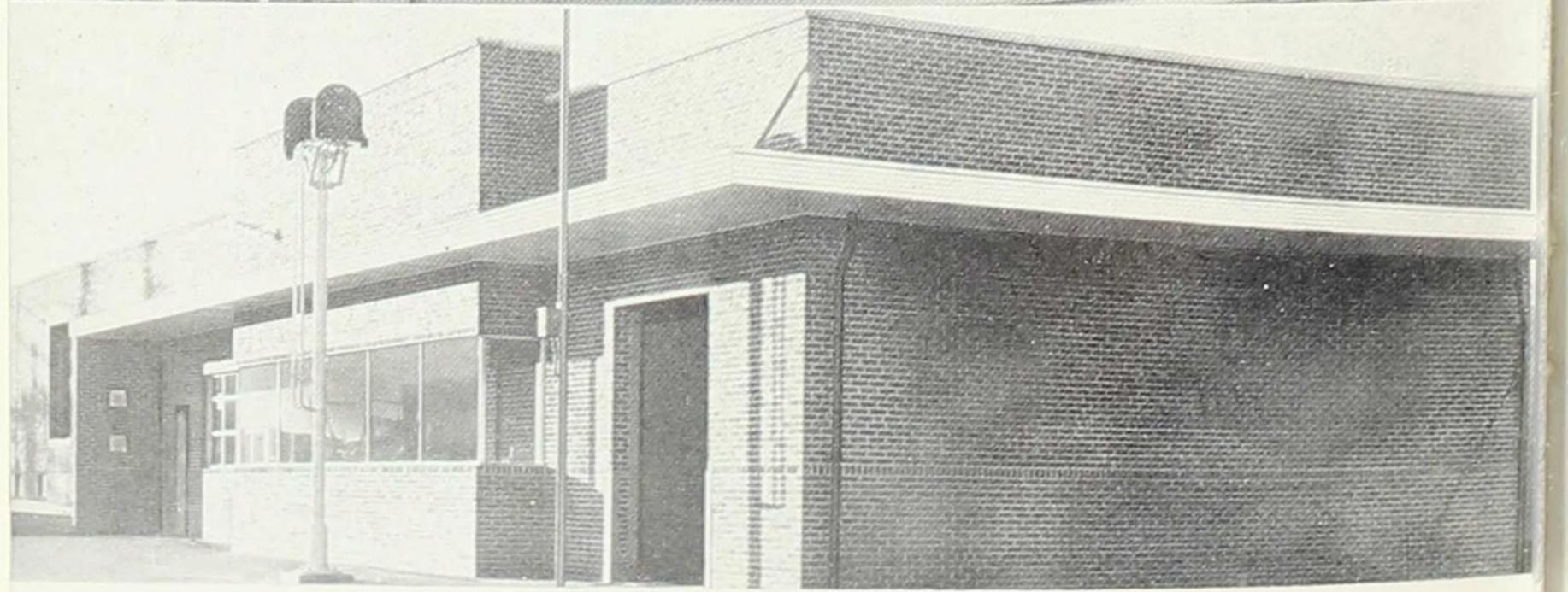
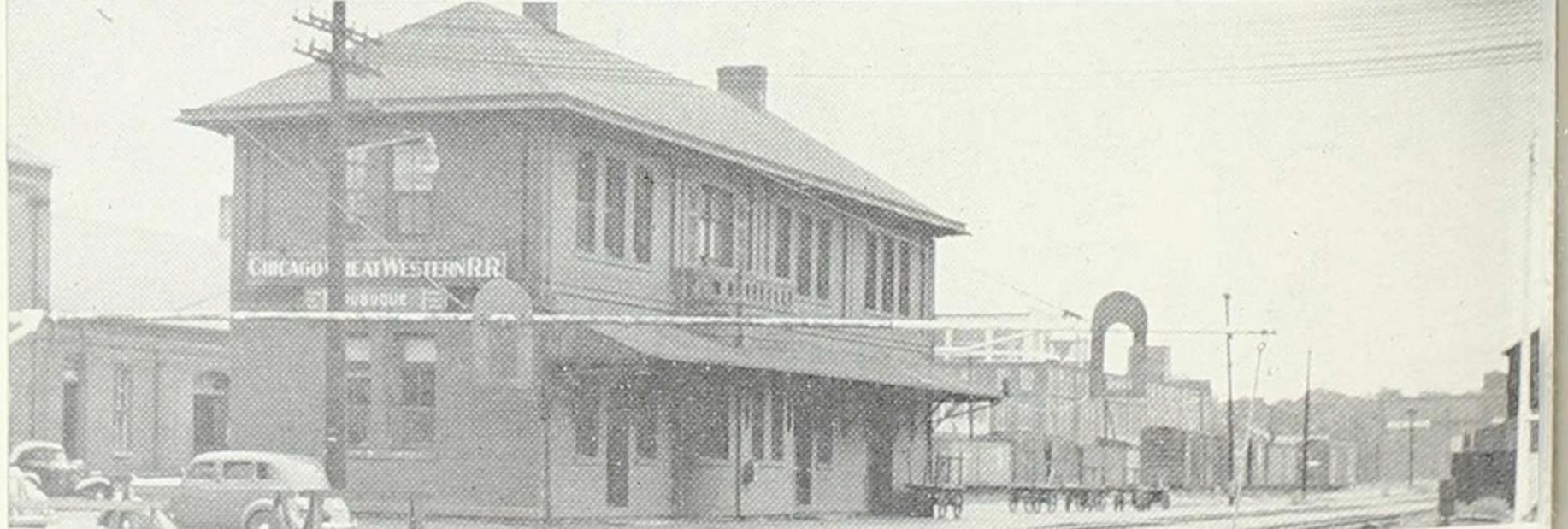
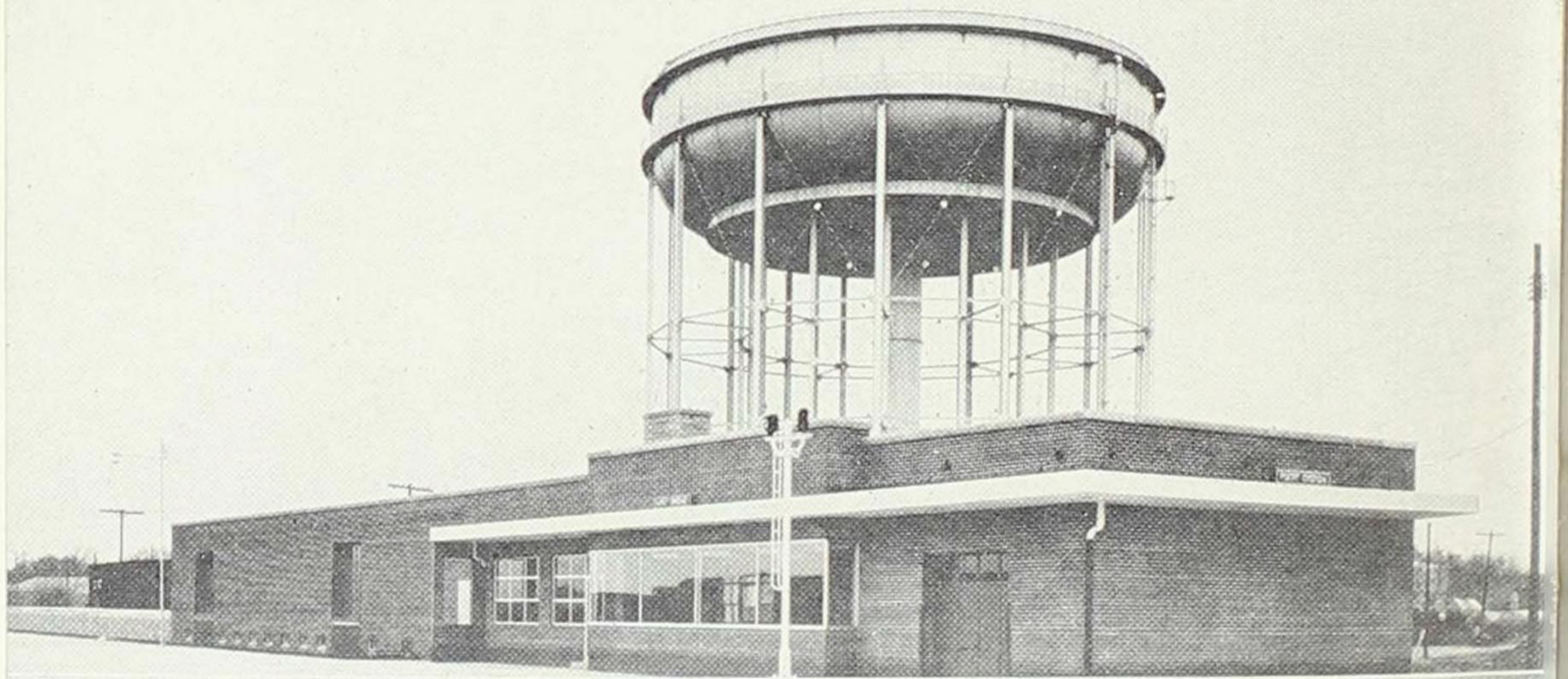
MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



CGW Locomotives (*top to bottom*): Texas-type
Trailer-on-flat-cars in St. Paul
Kansas City-Twin Cities day train on final run
1,500-h. p. Diesel
(Courtesy Ernest Sevde)



CGW Locomotives (top to bottom): The famous "Red Bird"
The "Blue Bird" (Courtesy Electro-Motive)
Loading mail at Council Bluffs
(Courtesy Henry J. McCord)
Latest Diesel types



Familiar CGW Stations in Iowa (top to bottom): Oelwein
Fort Dodge
Dubuque
(Courtesy Henry J. McCord)
Marshalltown

time necessary to prepare a first mortgage bond covering all the indebtedness of the road, and to obtain a vote of the stockholders on this measure." At this London meeting the elder Stickney declared that the financial climate in the United States was so unhealthy that the 7 per cent note obligations could not be met. Bankruptcy seemed to be the only answer. Wall Street reacted to the news with a wave of selling, and before the ticker closed on January 8, 1908, Chicago Great Western stock was selling for $4\frac{3}{4}$.

Stickney and C. H. F. Smith of St. Paul were appointed co-receivers of the railroad by the court, but within a year's time Stickney severed all his connections with the Great Western and for the remainder of his life lived in retirement at St. Paul.

In 1909 the road was sold and its properties conveyed to the Chicago Great Western *Railroad*, a newly formed company. That year Samuel M. Felton became president, an office he held until 1925, after which he served as chairman of the board until his death in 1930. Sam Felton had started his career as rodman for the Chester Creek Railroad (now a part of the Pennsylvania Railroad) in 1868. For the next twenty years he served in various capacities such as engineer, chief engineer, general superintendent, or general manager on a dozen roads. He headed the East Tennessee, Virginia & Georgia (now Southern) in

1890, and up to the time of his CGW appointment he had been successively president or receiver of another dozen roads, including the Mexican Central and the Chicago & Alton.

With the Felton management came fresh capital, an item sorely needed to rehabilitate the Great Western. Indeed, an almost complete physical regeneration characterized his incumbency. Even the "Maple Leaf" was discarded and a "Corn Belt Route" emblem used in its stead. Much of the motive power was run-down and obsolete. The most popular type locomotive, used in both freight and passenger service, was the Prairie (2-6-2). (The designation "2-6-2" indicates a locomotive with a 2-wheel leading truck, 6 driving wheels, and 2 wheels following the driver.) In the motive power reformation the Prairies used on passenger runs were rebuilt into faster and easier riding Pacifics (4-6-2). The Prairies in freight operation were changed from compound to simple cylinders and provided with superheaters. Forty new Consolidations (2-8-0) were in service or on order by the second year of Felton's administration. Finally, ten Mallet Compounds were placed in operation to expedite tonnage on the one per cent grades between Stockton, Illinois, and Oelwein. They were of the 2-6-6-2 wheel arrangement, with a tractive force of 81,175 pounds each. Later the Mikado (2-8-2) type made its appearance; these were followed by Diesels.

The millions poured into the system also accounted for grade reductions, a new bridge across the Mississippi at St. Paul, block signals between Chicago and Oelwein, and rail motor cars to cut down the cost of passenger operation. The Great Western pioneered in utilizing self-propelled vehicles in local service. The annual report of June 30, 1911, shows three 200-h.p. McKeen gasoline motor cars on the roster. At this writing one of the McKeens is still in service shunting cars in Winona, Minnesota, having been converted to a switcher several years ago. In 1924 the road took delivery of its first gasoline-electric car, which, incidentally, was Electro-Motive's first rail motor vehicle, too. Known as the M-300, it hauled General Manager C. L. Hinkle's 85-ton business car on a trial run from Chicago to Oelwein, much to the surprise of all concerned. As a final tribute to Felton's presidency, the CGW's Western Division won the coveted Harriman safety award in 1924.

When Sam Felton became board chairman in 1925, Nathaniel L. Howard, an Iowan, succeeded him as president. Born in Fairfield, March 9, 1884, Howard was educated at Parsons College in his home town and at the United States Military Academy at West Point. He started railroading as a civil engineer for the Burlington and subsequently became division superintendent at Hannibal, Missouri. With the outbreak of the

first World War he went into the army and was commissioned a colonel in 1918. After the conflict he returned to the "Q" as assistant to the federal manager, and following government operation he rose to be superintendent of transportation of that road. In 1924 he was made general manager of the Chicago Union Station Company and the following year took his Great Western appointment.

Tall, slim, and white-haired, Howard had a West Point bearing, but at the same time he was democratic and friendly. In contrast, Felton was somewhat austere, being brought up in the old school of railroading, which was rough and autocratic. It was during the administration of these totally different men that amazing developments in passenger service took place.

After a trip abroad Sam Felton became greatly impressed with the trim, clean appearance of British locomotives. Perhaps he saw the immaculate looking coaching stock of England's Great Western Railway; at any rate he came back with some new ideas for his Great Western. He had Oelwein "streamline" a conventional Pacific-type locomotive so that all outside pipes were concealed. The driving rods and cylinder heads were polished, the wheels painted red, the spokes golden. Engine No. 916, in short, had everything but a coat of arms! It, along with four cars, one of which was a baggage-mail unit, was painted Ve-

netian-red with gold lettering. The train was named the *Red Bird* and put on a non-stop run between the Twin Cities and Rochester, Minnesota, via Dodge Center. The CGW had trackage rights from Dodge Center to Rochester over the North Western.

Six years after the *Red Bird* appeared, Oelwein came out with another "bird" which fluttered even more in the limelight. Convention was tossed to the winds when the road's draftsmen designed a deluxe, three-car, gasoline-electric train for companion service with the *Red Bird*. The resourceful Oelwein craftsmen took the original underframes of the old McKeen cars and then built anew. One car had a six-cylinder, 300-h.p. Electro-Motive engine at the head-end followed by a railway post office and baggage compartment. The next unit was a passenger coach seating seventy-four. It had deep seats, spacious windows, and wide aisles covered with sound-proof linoleum. But the crowning achievement was the last unit: a parlor-observation-club car with a rounded end, anticipating today's streamlining. Its low-backed reed chairs, upholstered in soft old rose and shimmering blue mohair, were the last word in travel elegance. A deep-yielding Wilton carpet of blue-gray and some artistic wall-bracket lamps added to the smart decor. The car also had two complete Pullman sections in which the seats could be quickly converted to lower berths. The latter

were very much appreciated by sick folks going to the Mayo Clinic for treatment.

The motor-train was painted blue, with striping and lettering in gold leaf. Called the *Blue Bird*, the novel little "streamliner" was put into service in the ominous year of 1929. It operated between the Twin Cities and Rochester via Red Wing. Unfortunately, the *Blue Bird* had a short life, for the depression curtailed travel, and the increased use of automobiles took many of the short-haul riders.

While the mighty "Pennsy" and the equally powerful Sante Fe made headlines by inaugurating air-rail service from coast to coast in conjunction with the Transcontinental Air Transport ("The Lindbergh Line"), the Great Western officials launched their own plane-train operation. This, too, began in 1929. Through-ticketing arrangements were made with Universal Air Lines, and bus service was provided between Chicago's Grand Central Station and the Municipal Airport. One went by Great Western train to Chicago, thence by UAL plane to St. Louis or Cleveland. Leaving Des Moines (for example) at 9:00 p.m. on a sleeper, one's train steamed into Grand Central at 7:35 next morning; and by 9:45 one's trimotor plane left the airport for St. Louis, arriving at the latter city by 1:00 p.m. The flight to Cleveland, however, required a layover in the Windy City until 4:00 p.m.; arrival time in Cleveland

was 7:45 p.m. This, too, was an interesting, although short-lived, experiment.

From the days of Stickney until the Great Depression, the CGW showed great ingenuity in providing extensive passenger service on main lines and branches. It featured daily through sleeping cars from the Twin Cities to Los Angeles in conjunction with the Santa Fe at Kansas City. Through Pullmans were also provided from Minneapolis-St. Paul via "K C" to Dallas and Houston on the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad. Such Chicago-Twin City trains as the *Great Western Limited*, later the *Legionnaire* and still later the *Minnesotan*, were bywords in the Midwest. The *Nebraska Limited* (Twin Cities-Omaha) was also a favorite, but the *Mill Cities Limited* (Twin Cities-Kansas City) was usually the most popular on the system. In its heyday it was a common sight to see from three to five Pullmans on the *Mill Cities Limited*.

Iowans were particularly fond of their *Chicago Special*, a through train which highballed from Des Moines to the Windy City, making only a limited number of stops. Advertised as "an inviting train to enter — a comfortable train to ride on," "Des Moines' Own Train to Chicago" is now only a memory.

For many traveling men the Iowa communities of Oelwein and McIntire had a very special significance. It was at these stations that sleepers

were set out or added. True, some trains managed to get by McIntire without shuffling equipment, but at Oelwein, never! On some runs the night train from Chicago set out a couple of cars at Oelwein for Kansas City; another car or two was shed at McIntire for Rochester, Minnesota. The balance of the train continued to the Twin Cities. On the eastbound trip, sleepers were added. The arrangement varied with the year, the season, and the routing. The point is that any evening train going through Oelwein was generally shunted around midnight or very early in the morning. The test of an experienced traveler was to sleep through Oelwein. If he succeeded he was regarded as a 32-degree veteran by seasoned drummers.

Occasionally, switching cars at Oelwein caused complications. The late Sigmund Greve recalled a classic incident of this kind. On the day in question a porter took the shoes from his Twin City car into one of the other sleepers where he could have the companionship of a fellow-porter. After polishing the shoes, he started back to his Pullman but became confused and ended up in a Kansas City sleeper. Well, Oelwein came and went and so did the shoes — to Kansas City. Consternation reigned after the error was detected, but it was too late. When the train arrived in St. Paul the passengers were obliged to walk in their stocking feet about a block and a half to the nearest

hotel. Here they were met by a passenger representative, who took their measurements and provided them with new pairs of shoes, compliments of the Chicago Great Western!

The automobile and streamlined service on other competitive roads, better equipped to run fast trains, caused gradual retrenchment in CGW passenger service. But the plucky Great Western continued to fight a losing battle. As late as 1935 it tried a new plan: that of providing tourist-sleeper operation on the Twin Cities-Chicago run at coach rates. Instead of paying first class fare, the passenger merely bought a coach ticket and paid for his berth.

The depression years were trying to all railroads, and the Great Western was no exception. A high standard of maintenance had reached its peak about the time of World War I. After that it perceptively declined. Government operation during the war was responsible for diverting traffic to other rival lines. The Great Western's high joint-facility costs hung like a millstone around its neck. A relatively high percentage of foreign cars on its rails made the per diem charges soar.

In 1929 Victor V. Boatner, formerly head of the Peoria & Pekin Union, succeeded Howard to the presidency. Boatner in turn was followed in 1931 by Patrick H. Joyce, who continued as president for fifteen years. Before coming to the Great Western, Joyce had been a prominent railway

supply manufacturer. He aided in founding the Liberty Car & Equipment Company and in 1918 became its president. The following year he headed the Liberty Car Wheel Company and, when it merged with the Illinois Car & Manufacturing Company in 1921, he was elected president of the combined firms. The latter organization became the Standard Steel Car Company in 1928, and it in turn was sold to Pullman-Standard Car & Manufacturing Company in 1930. Joyce was successively vice-president of the "Standard" firms.

During the early thirties a fleet of modern Texas type (2-10-4) engines appeared on the motive power roster. In 1936 the seemingly dormant Great Western ingenuity recrudesced with the inauguration of trailer-on-flat-car operation over the 425-mile route between Chicago and St. Paul. Here, again, the road pioneered in a new type of service. While the CGW did not originate the idea of truck trailers by rail, it did operate the first service of this kind over *comparatively long distances on a permanent basis*. In 1939 trailers were also rolling on flat cars between Chicago and Council Bluffs.

No amount of ingenuity, however, could stem the decline in car loadings as a result of the Great Depression. The plight of the road was so serious that it went bankrupt in 1935. Joyce was appointed a co-trustee by the court; at the same time

he continued as president of the corporation. Reorganization was effected in 1941, and the Chicago Great Western *Railroad* became the Chicago Great Western *Railway*. The successor company is generally referred to as the second Great Western *Railway*, since Stickney's road as far back as 1892 had the identical name.

During World War II the Great Western hauled a record tonnage, due in no small measure to the admirable performance of the Texas-type locomotives. These Baldwin- and Lima-built engines were equipped with boosters, giving them a maximum starting tractive force of 97,900 pounds. In the late thirties Oelwein modernized them still more with lightweight rods and disk wheels. With the advent of Diesels, modernization was on the other foot; the internal-combustion engine modernized the Oelwein shops rather than the shops modernizing the locomotives. Today Oelwein's shop facilities are strictly up to date, being completely revamped for all-Diesel repair.

FRANK P. DONOVAN, JR.

The Chicago Great Western Today

The current rehabilitation of the Chicago Great Western may be said to have started soon after World War II; it has continued with renewed vigor ever since. In 1946 Harold W. Burtness succeeded Pat Joyce as president. Mr. Burtness started railroading at the age of seventeen as a clerk on the Burlington and shortly thereafter switched to the Pennsylvania, where he became secretary to the traffic manager. In 1922 he went with the Great Western as secretary to President Sam Felton and twenty-four years afterward found himself in his former boss's chair.

During Burtness' administration the Corn Belt Route bought its first Diesels: three 1,000-h.p. switchers, which were put to work marshaling cars at Oelwein in 1947. Later that year six 4,500-h.p. Diesels began replacing the faithful Texas steamers in road service. During the next two years there was a wide variety of Diesels, running the gamut from 660-h.p. switchers to ponderous four-unit 6,000-h.p. road freighters.

On October 19, 1948, Grant Stauffer, representing a group of investors who had purchased control of the road, succeeded Burtness as president. Stauffer headed the Sinclair Coal Company

and was also a director and chairman of the executive committee of the Kansas City Southern. His untimely death on March 31, 1949, resulted in the assistant to the president, William N. Deramus III, being elected to his place.

When Mr. Deramus took office at the age of thirty-three, he is said to have been the youngest Class I railroad president in America. He is a railroader by heritage and choice. His father is chairman of the board of the Kansas City Southern; an uncle, Louis S. Deramus, was trustee and chief executive officer on the Monon. Educated at the University of Michigan and at Harvard Law School, Deramus entered railroading after receiving his LL.B. His first job was as transportation apprentice on the Wabash. He left that road as assistant trainmaster of the St. Louis Division in 1943 to enter Military Railway Service. Mustered out in 1946 as a major, Deramus became assistant to the general manager of the Kansas City Southern. In November, 1948, he was appointed assistant to the president of the Great Western.

Under Deramus' presidency complete Dieselization was brought about in 1950. Within the past three years the main lines have been extensively reballasted and many miles of heavier rail laid. Radio communication has been installed, making it possible for train crews to contact dispatchers and yardmasters while their trains are

in motion. It also permits men in the cab to talk with crewmen in the caboose. Modern brick stations have recently been erected at Des Moines, Marshalltown, and Fort Dodge. In addition to shop improvements and more office buildings at Oelwein, a new icing plant and dock have been constructed in that community.

Time freights have been accelerated to meet or to better competitive schedules of other roads in Great Western territory. Trailer-on-flat-car service is now available at Des Moines. The pioneer Chicago-St. Paul and later Chicago-Council Bluffs service of truck trailer haulage on rails has been extended to include Chicago-Kansas City, St. Paul-Kansas City, and St. Paul-Council Bluffs operation.

On the other hand, the unprofitable dining and sleeping car service has been discontinued, and all branch line passenger service has been withdrawn. Local air-conditioned coach operation, however, continues on all the main lines.

The Chicago Great Western still serves virtually the same communities over the identical routes it did in the days of A. B. Stickney. In a few instances, noticeably on the Winona Branch from Planks to Winona, Minnesota, 41 miles, the CGW scrapped its own line and now operates over the North Western. A series of spindling trestles, along with a 3.3 per cent grade, plus a winding horseshoe curve, made that line uneco-

nomical to operate. More recently the five-mile Sycamore-De Kalb Branch in Illinois was pulled up, and CGW trains now use the parallel route of the North Western.

In several minor cases branches have been scrapped and service discontinued. As this is being written the road has received authorization to abandon the five-mile Bellechester Junction-Bellechester, Minnesota, spur. An earlier casualty in the same state was the Eden-Mantorville stub, six miles long, which had a daily milk train to St. Paul. For years the local was dubbed "The Milk Shake."

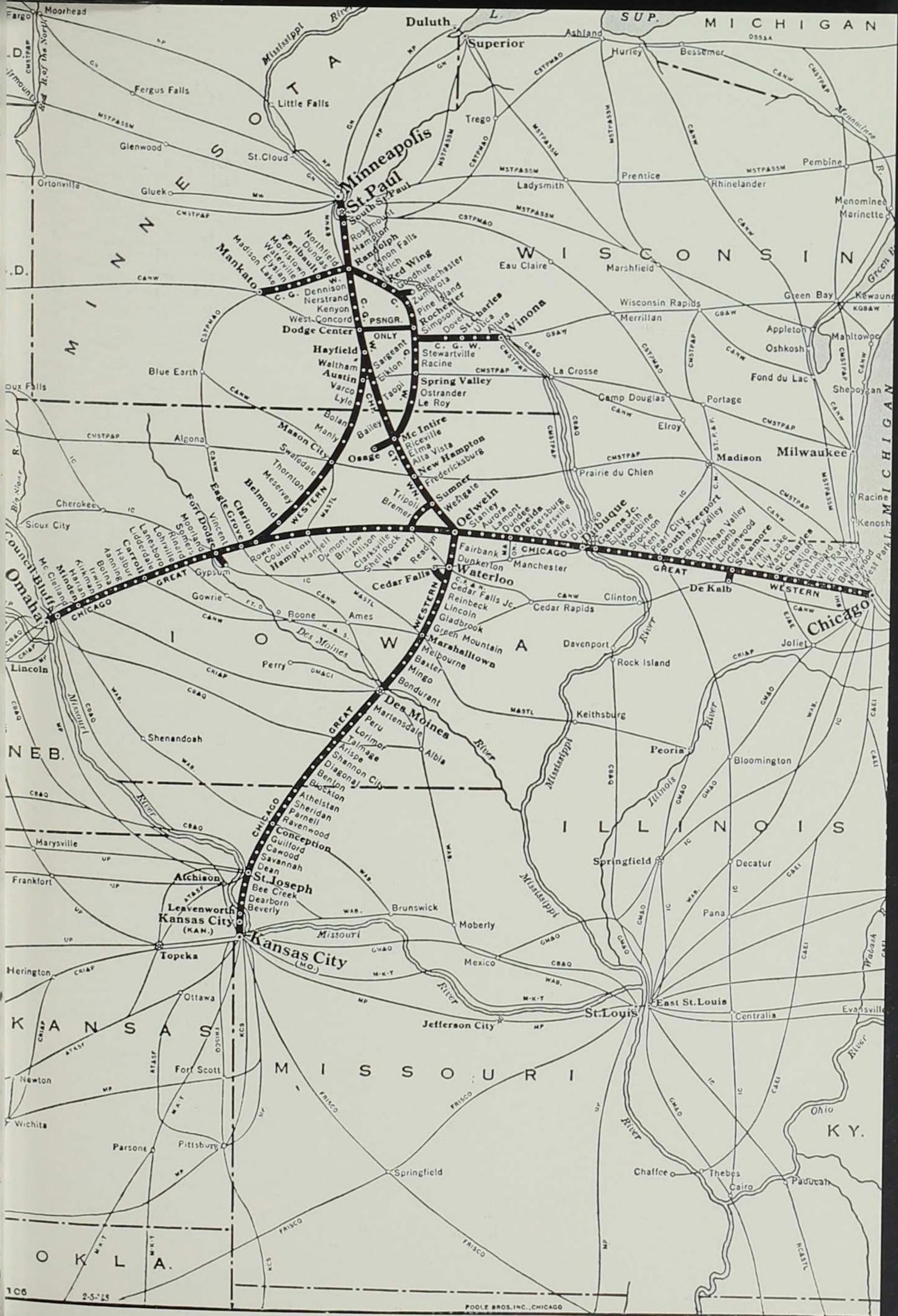
In 1951 the six-mile segment of the Waverly-Sumner Branch between Waverly and Bremer, Iowa, ceased operation. The other abandonments in Iowa occurred many years ago as a result of mining operations being worked out or rendered unprofitable. In this category was the long-forgotten three-mile stub from Valeria to the Oswald coal mines and the so-called Coalville Branch, which left the Fort Dodge-Lehigh Branch at Gypsum for mines three miles away. The thirties saw the Lehigh Branch cut back to Gypsum and the tracks ripped up east of that point.

With the removal of most of the general offices from Chicago to Oelwein in 1952, Iowa's role in the Great Western will be increasingly important. Having over half of its system in the state, it is a logical corollary for the Chicago Great Western

to have its management also within the state. Oelwein, Iowa, more or less the geographical center of the railway, is now the managerial hub as well.

Railroads have been called the "key to the prairies" because of their contribution to the settlement and growth of the Midwest. The history of railroading in Iowa is largely the story of the "Big Four" and the "Little Three." The "Big Four" is comprised of the Rock Island, the Burlington, the Chicago & North Western, and the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific — with almost seven thousand miles of track in Iowa. The "Little Three" includes the Minneapolis & St. Louis, the Illinois Central, and the CGW, with a combined trackage of over 2,200 miles in Iowa. Even in a jet-powered era, the Iowan still looks to the steel rails for much of his transportation needs. In 1953 there is every indication that the Chicago Great Western and her sister railways will keep pace with scientific achievements. The changes had been from wood, to coal, to electricity and fuel oil. The only question seemed to be: When will atomic-powered locomotives haul their cargoes over Iowa's prairies?

FRANK P. DONOVAN, JR.



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