

The BN

Expediter

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FOBR
FRIENDS OF THE
BURLINGTON NORTHERN
RAILROAD

The official publication of *The Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad*, the historical society focused on the Burlington Northern Railroad, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, the BNSF Railway and the Montana Rail Link.

Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad

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www.fobnr.org

A 501(c)3 Not-For-Profit Corporation

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The Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad (**FOBNR**) was formed to gather, preserve, and share information about the history, current operations, and future development of the Burlington Northern Railroad and its successors. It follows the evolution of the railroad from its inception in 1970 with the merger of the Great Northern, Northern Pacific, Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy, and the Spokane, Portland and Seattle Railroads.

The purpose of the **FOBNR** is educational. We wish to perpetuate the history of the Burlington Northern Railroad, its successors and the Montana Rail Link. We seek to collect and preserve any materials which help establish or illustrate the life, conditions, events, and activities of the railroad. We will disseminate this information through the publication of a newsletter, establishment of a web site, by maintaining an archive, and by conducting an annual convention somewhere along the lines operated by the railroad. We may also publish information in other media and may restore and operate historical railway equipment.

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Regular membership is \$25.00/year; Sustaining membership is \$50.00/year; Junior membership (16 and under) is \$10.00/year. The membership year is from January 1 to December 31.

The FOBNR is not supported by, nor affiliated in any way with, the BNSF Railway, its subsidiaries or affiliates.

The BN Expediter

The BN Expediter is published four times a year and is included with membership in the **Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad**. Manuscripts, photographs and information are welcome for publication. Articles are compensated at \$25/page of text; contributors of photos will receive one free copy if an **FOBNR** member, two if not.

Anything published in *The BN Expediter* (including the classifieds), must be focused on the Burlington Northern Railroad, its successors and the Montana Rail Link. Information and/or pictures that give historical perspective or context are acceptable (e.g., premerger road numbers). The disposition of a locomotive, other piece of equipment or property is also acceptable. Further information is available from the Editor.

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- | | | |
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Corrections

On page 18 of the October 2020 issue it says that the Soo Line obtained two SD45s (ex-BN 6552 and 6679). The second unit number should be **6678**.

The caption for the photo of MRL 4407 on the back cover of the January 2021 issue says it was taken in *Livingston*. It was actually taken in **Missoula**.

Cover Photo: A northbound grain train glides through Hobson, Montana on BNSF's Laurel Subdivision on October 13, 2002. The pair of abandoned grain elevators have seen many a train pass by, pulled by Great Northern steamers, GN and BN diesels, and now BNSF, but who would have imagined Warbonnets?

2021 FOBNR Convention Vancouver, Washington

At the time this issue went to press it was still unclear where we'd be with respect to COVID-19. As a result we continue to monitor the situation and will hold off picking a date until it is clear we can hold a safe and enjoyable convention. Watch our website, Facebook page, and the July 2021 issue for updates. However...

Galesburg Regional Meet June 17-19, 2021

While not a replacement for the convention, we decided to organize a regional activity that would allow us to meet in person while staying safe—three days of pure railfanning in the Galesburg, Illinois area. If this works well, we may try similar events farther west later in the summer or early fall. See the enclosed flier (or our website) for more details. Come and enjoy the fellowship.

Sustaining Members

On behalf of our members, the FOBNR Board of Directors would like to thank our sustaining members for 2021. Their generous support is helping us achieve the goals of our organization.

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2022 All-BN Calendar Call for Photos

The Friends of the Burlington Northern Railroad is soliciting photo contributions for its 2022 all-BN calendar. If your photo is used we'll send you a free calendar.

Submit a high resolution scan of one or more of your favorite BN photos (sorry, no BNSF) to Mark Demaline at conductor7@aol.com. Photos of the BN in scenic locales, action photos, structures or unusual equipment are welcome. Photos taken between March 2, 1970 and December 31, 1995 are preferred. **The deadline is May 21st.** Submit a photo to help your society and see your work in print. Have a question? Send Mark an email or give him a call at 440-835-2069 (the number in the January issue was wrong).

FOBNR Financial Statement December 31, 2020

Balance on Hand, January 1, 2020	\$15,055.80
Revenue	14,430.85
Expenses	13,868.42
Balance on Hand, December 31, 2020	\$15,618.23
Revenue	
Dues	10,295.00
Postal Surcharges	171.00
Donations	1,448.49
Company Store Sales	1,839.30
Calendars	666.50
Miscellaneous	5.25
Interest	5.31
Total	\$14,430.85
Expenses	
Expediter	
Printing	3,994.70
Postage	1,152.90
Honorarium	800.00
Miscellaneous	1,639.01
Article Payments	289.00
Board of Directors Conference Calls	151.96
General	
Printing	100.08
Postage	741.03
PO Box Rent	134.00
Supplies	416.04
Company Store	1,426.02
Election	56.42
Calendar	946.20
Convention	56.42
PayPal Fees	315.98
Website Provider	281.66
Advertising	300.00
Archives	936.00
Miscellaneous	131.00
Total	\$13,868.42
Assets	
Cash	21,521.79
Prepaid 2021 Expenses	142.52
Certificate of Deposit	5,000.00
Liabilities	
Prepaid 2021-2025 Dues	10,972.00
Net Worth	\$15,692.31

FOBNR Freight Cars (N Scale)

On George Rabbitt's PG&D N-Scale Layout

The PG&D railroad is a hypothetical railroad which purchased the prototype Chicago Great Western Railway (CGW) instead of the CNW. PG&D originally stood for Phyllis, George, and Dale Racing Team. Now it stands for the N scale railroad. George Rabbitt drove stock cars and IMCA Modifieds, while his wife Phyllis Colaizzi raced stock cars. Dale was Phyllis' Dad and part of their joint pit crews. George goes by the nickname "Buggs" for the Bugs Bunny painted on the hood of his modified race car. After some health issues, Buggs quit racing in 2010 and took up the model railroading and railfanning hobby. He has turned his 32 x 28 foot home garage from a racecar garage to a garage containing a 24 x 23 foot N scale layout and two family cars (one in the layout center aisle). The basic layout design has the PG&D running on the CGW main lines on two levels joined with a helix. The top level is the CGW route from Omaha to Chicago. The bottom layout level is the CGW route from St. Paul to Kansas City.

Buggs is working on scenery before moving on to operations. Decisions on trains and their routes have not been finalized yet but current train control is Digitrax DCC.

Following are photos of **FOBNR** car #1994 and car #2020 taken by railfan/photographer Paul Brennecke on George Rabbitt's PG&D Layout located in Denver, Colorado.

If you are a modeler and interested in having your own **FOBNR** covered hopper on your layout, we sell decal sets for O, HO and N scale cars. A version of the decal with all white (no black) lettering is also available. Just go to the company store webpage and put in your order: www.fobnr.org/decals
Once you've completed your car, send us a picture or two in a scenic location on your layout and we'll put it on our website.



We pick up the **FOBNR** cars leaving Omaha eastbound, passing the TOFC/COFC loading area and the local race track. Buggs probably competed here at this race track. Note the **FOBNR** container in the COFC loading area.



Next, we catch the **FOBNR** cars eastbound through the Oelwein (Iowa) Yard on the main line headed to Chicago. In the background is the yard office and tower that still exist today as Hub City Heritage Railway Museum which is preserving Oelwein, Iowa's railroad heritage. All mainlines of the Chicago Great Western passed through Oelwein and the big CGW locomotive shops there gave Oelwein the nickname Hub City.

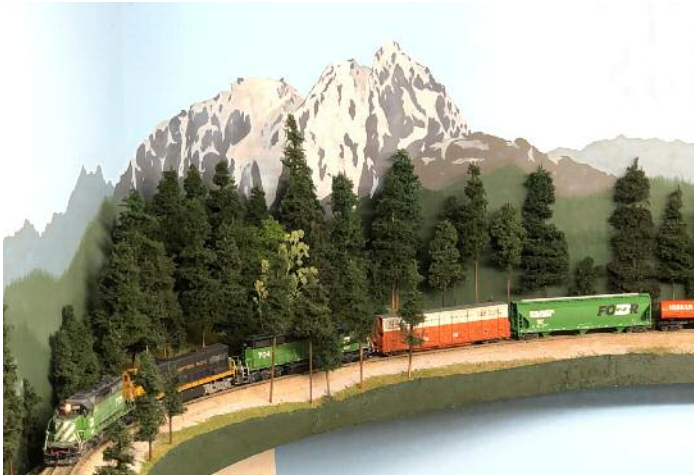


A few days later, our photographer caught the **FOBNR** hoppers headed westbound on Extra X116 led by CGW FP7A #116C, exiting the East Dubuque, Illinois Railroad Tunnel and crossing the Mississippi River into Dubuque, Iowa. This photo also shows that the layout is in a climate-controlled garage for in the background is a pedestrian door to the left and an overhead garage door to the right.

FOBNR Freight Car (HO Scale)

On Burr Stewart's BN Seattle Region Layout in Seattle, Washington

After a long trip across country, FBNX 1993 appears in a manifest freight that recently emerged from the Cascade Tunnel and makes its way downhill past the scenic loop near Mt. Index on its way to Seattle.



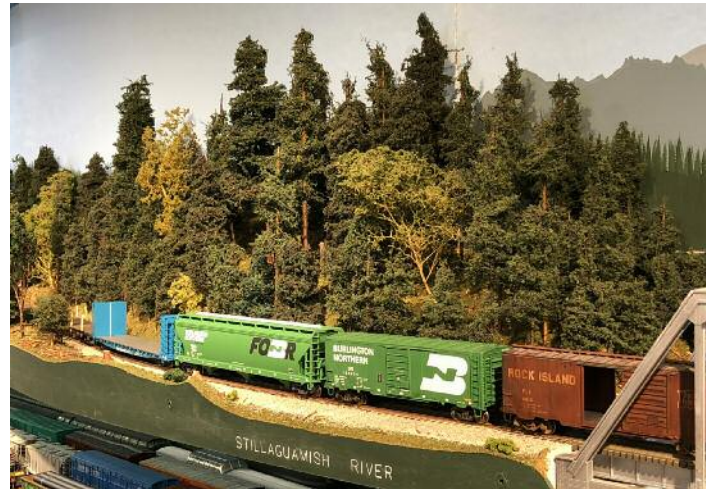
Seattle's Interbay/Balmer Yard is the temporary resting place for FBNX 1993 until a GP9 goes to pick the car out to send it north to a feed mill in Burlington, Washington.



In Everett's Bayside Yard, FBNX 1993 gets re-classified with some other cars headed north on the Burlington Turn.



The Burlington Turn carries FBNX 1993 north through forested hills after crossing the Stillaguamish River. Argo Yard and Coach Yard are on the deck below.



Arriving at its destination, FBNX 1993 finishes unloading its cargo at a feed mill in Burlington. On the front fascia is an example of the SPINS diagrams that Burr adapted from the prototype BN for each town.



Its business in the Pacific Northwest completed for now, FBNX 1993 heads back east on an empty unit grain train over Stevens Pass. See more of Burr's layout at:

burrstewart.com/index.php?n=Main.Trains



Wow, What a Ride!

Pat Keim: Oral History (Part 1 - Operations)

Interviewed by Dave Poplawski

While railfanning in central Montana in August of 2019, I met up with Pat and his wife at his home in Helena, did this interview, and checked out the model railroad he had built in his basement.

Dave: I'm in Helena to do an oral history with Pat Keim about his career on the BN and BNSF. So let's get started. Where and when were you born?

Pat: Well, I was born in Fairbury, Nebraska, which is down in the southeast quadrant of Nebraska. My dad was a railroader, an agent operator, a telegrapher. At the time I was born we were actually living in Swanton, Nebraska. So when I came home we lived in the agent's quarters in the depot in Swanton. I was in a railroad museum in California one day several years ago and I happened to look at the top of a shelf and here was a book, railroad depots in Nebraska and here was a picture of the depot that I called my first home. I gave the book to my Mom, but I made a copy of it before that. And so actually my very first experiences were on the railroad. I don't remember Swanton as a baby because we weren't there that long. We got transferred around a lot and lived in several different places in Southeast Nebraska.

Dave: What was your first memory on the railroad?

Pat: My first memory would have been Humboldt, Nebraska, in the far southeast corner of the state. Five miles further south and you would've been in Kansas, two towns further east you would've been in Missouri. I remember being on the depot platform, with my father who was the agent there at the time, watching the passenger trains come through. I had several memories of Humboldt and some of the things on the railroad there.

Dave: Where did you go to school then?

Pat: I started kindergarten in Humboldt and then we got transferred to Wymore, Nebraska, which at that point in time was a division point on the railroad. A lot of branch lines ran out of there back then. There's no railroad there now. We lived for a short while in Blue Springs, which was about a mile away because we couldn't find housing in Wymore, and then we moved into Wymore, and almost immediately got transferred back to Humboldt.

Dave: So did you go to high school in Humboldt?

Pat: I went to high school in Fremont, Nebraska. We lived in Humboldt for a few years and then when I was in the fifth grade we got transferred again. My dad got promoted to a

supervisory agent in Fremont and so that's kind of basically where I grew up. I went to high school and college there, what at that time was Midland College, a Lutheran school, and now named Midland University. A lot of colleges have become universities, so now I am a graduate of Midland University.

Dave: What did you get your degree in?

Pat: I got my degree in history and education. So I'm actually a history teacher, although I never taught history. Well, actually I did teach because I went to the University of Nebraska where I worked on a graduate degree. I had an assistant position in the Department of History where I did teach American history.

Dave: As a graduate student you taught?

Pat: Yes, as a graduate student.

Dave: Other than your father was there any other family history on the railroads?

Pat: No, not at all. My only thing close to that would be that the railroad ran through my grandfather's farm.

Dave: So it sounds like you were looking at a career in other fields than railroading, particularly in history education. So what led you into railroading?

Pat: Well I worked my way through high school and college on the railroad. I forget the year, but I was 14 years old when I started. I lied a little bit about my age. I worked as a summer vacation relief clerk in the depot where my father was an agent. He got permission to hire me. So my first job on the railroad actually was unloading boxcars of LCL freight. The cars would come through and I would unload them onto delivery trucks, and then I would be a janitor in the depot for the rest of the day. Little odd jobs, whatever. And then in the late afternoon the delivery trucks would come back with deliveries to go out on the railroad and I would load the boxcars. Sometimes I would do some other clerical work, stuffing waybills and whatever there was to do. And I did that for about six years, in the summers and Christmas vacations and covering for people on vacation.

Dave: This was on the CB&Q?

Pat: Yes, on the CB&Q, that's right.

Dave: So, you did that summers right up to the time you finished college?

Pat: Almost. When I went to the University of Nebraska for graduate school I took a summer job as a trainman/switchman working out of Lincoln. By that time I was married and

my wife actually got a job with the railroad and worked as a crew caller, trainmaster's clerk and that kind of thing, so we actually both worked for the railroad there.

I decided I really liked working for the railroad. And I got to thinking, did I really want to teach? When the opportunity came along I talked to the Division Superintendent, Walker Johnson, about opportunities on the railroad. I decided I liked being a brakeman very much, so I decided not to go back to school and stayed with the railroad.

Dave: Do you remember about when that was?

Pat: 1965, give or take a year.

Dave: So you were a brakeman on the Q, out of Lincoln?

Pat: Yes, out of Lincoln on what was called the Lincoln Division. It ran several different directions out of Lincoln and was an amalgam of three former divisions, the Wymore division, the Lincoln Division and the Omaha Division, and I ran on the Lincoln side. There were different seniority districts out of each of those. I basically ran west to Hastings and Ravenna, Nebraska. If I worked a passenger train I worked to McCook or up to Ravenna, Nebraska. Occasionally I would get loaned out on an emergency call to work on the Omaha and Wymore Divisions, but mostly I worked on the Lincoln Division. That's where my seniority was.

I was a brakeman called to go on duty on a freight to Hastings on the night in 1968 that the BN merger was supposed to have taken effect. They gave me a case of timetables to take on the engine out to Hastings to make sure they got delivered to the yardmaster there for distribution. By the time we got to Hastings, the federal courts had stepped in and stayed the merger. So, I appropriated the case of timetables. They are collectors' items now. You figure, how often do you get a chance to get a whole case of timetables for a railroad that didn't exist?

Dave: That's a cool story. You were a brakeman for how long?

Pat: About four years.

Dave: And then what happened?

Pat: I was offered a promotion to become a safety supervisor, again on the Lincoln division. I held that job for just three or four months. Then they came to me and offered me two different jobs. One was to go into Lincoln yard as a trainmaster and the other one was to move to Chicago as a safety supervisor and rules examiner. I elected to go to Chicago. The reason I did that was that I felt if I stayed at Lincoln as a trainmaster that's probably where I would stay forever. Not that I would've minded that, but I decided that I was going to take a promotion and see what I could do about moving up in the company. I learned that at some time, if you work for the CB&Q, you often ended up working in Chicago at sometime as that was the headquarters. And not that I wanted to go to headquarters, but let's get this Chicago thing over with early.

And so I went to Chicago as a safety supervisor and rules examiner. My territory was from Chicago, basically where the railroad came out of Union Station out to Aurora and up to Minneapolis, or technically Dayton's Bluff in St. Paul. I was sort of mentored in that role by a fellow named Martin Schwambergger. He ran the rules department. Martin and Ed Harvel, who was the General Superintendent of Safety and Rules, brought me there for a specific purpose. Up to then rules exams were all oral. The examiner would ask questions and you would answer them, face-to-face. They wanted to start a move toward written testing, and since I had a background as a teacher and part of that curriculum involved testing, they had me write the first tests. This ultimately led to computerized testing down the road.

I had that territory for just a few months, and then they promoted me to assistant trainmaster in the Cicero yards.

Dave: What were your responsibilities?

Pat: Basically the Trainmaster and I were responsible for the operation of the shifts. The supervision hierarchy was the Terminal Superintendent, Terminal Assistant Superintendent, Trainmaster, Assistant Trainmaster and the General Yardmasters. The yardmasters basically ran the yard itself. The trainmaster and the assistant trainmaster basically worked as co-equals. Being a trainmaster was important in my career. We would work twelve-hour shifts and about every three months we swapped days for nights, so I would work 6 AM to 6 PM or 6 PM to 6 AM. I was responsible for overseeing all the yard operations in the Chicago terminal complex. The general yardmaster was in charge of Cicero yard, but reported to the trainmaster on duty. We were smart enough to let them run the yard because we also had responsibility for the operations at Western Avenue in setting up the freight houses and other things.

Dave: What territory were you responsible for?

Pat: Our territory ran from Western Avenue to Berwyn, which is just at the west end of Cicero yard. Anything west of that was assigned to the trainmaster's out of Aurora, except that we were responsible for all the interchanges in Chicago and Congress Park.

Dave: Was it inside office work or were you out on the railroad?

Pat: Probably 75% was being out and seeing that things got done. We were going through interesting times when I was there. This was the time of the 1968 Democratic National Convention and the riots that accompanied it. We were dealing with the challenges of trying to put in a whole new computer system, plus deal with all the race factors that existed in those days. I remember once during the riots I had to go down to get a switch crew out of an area that was in trouble, and we ended up getting caught in the middle of the riot.

We were hiring a lot of black people, and I'm not saying ill

about the black hiring. They were just hired into a white world so I had to deal with the racial tension that was there. It was really quite interesting. It's an experience I wouldn't want to go through again, but it was an experience that was very life shaping to me in learning about people. Keep in mind that I came out of Nebraska, kind of white you know, and into Chicago, which was a whole new blend.

Dave: What did you learn from that?

Pat: I learned that there is value in everybody. I learned that there are things to be learned from other cultures if you're smart enough to stop and listen. I wasn't always smart enough. I learned that sometimes you find yourself down some cultural cul-de-sac and you have to back yourself out of that cul-de-sac. I had to move people around, and it could be challenging. I think I grew a lot from my experiences. At least I hope I did.

Dave: The BN merger happened during this time. What effect did it have on you?

Pat: Well initially it had really no effect because I remained there as assistant trainmaster. We knew the merger had gone through the courts and that this time it was going to happen.

The railroad had bought some new engines in the new Burlington Northern livery and stored them at Cicero yard. And also they repainted a bunch of old boxcars in the new livery and stored them at Cicero yard too. The night that the merger took effect I was the night assistant trainmaster. My job was to oversee getting together the so-called merger train, #97, the regular hotshot that went from Chicago up to Minneapolis to get on the Great Northern and go west to Seattle. My job was to see to it that those new engines and boxcars got on the head end of that train because it was going to be the official merger train. If you look today at the first calendar put out by the Burlington Northern you will see that train with those engines and boxcars going across the Gassman Coulee bridge—kind of an iconic merger picture. So I got that train together and a whole bunch of high-ranking officials showed up to be there for the train's departure. I was invited to join in a picture with them in front of the train. In that picture was the Trainmaster Wayne Hatton, who I worked opposite of, the Terminal Superintendent Jim Edwards, Assistant Terminal Superintendent Gary Widdle, and the Division Superintendent Wayne Arntzen. But also in the picture was Lou Menk, who had been President of the NP but now was President of the Burlington Northern, and Matthew Quinn, President of the CB&Q, and John Budd, President of the Great Northern. And so we are all in this picture together—an official merger picture. *[Editor's note: If you have or know somebody that has this picture, please contact us.]*

In the background of that photo was a hobo sitting in a boxcar. Years later when I was living in Helena I went down at

the hobby shop and this guy said, "Oh, you work for the railroad." He got to telling how he was a college kid and he would bum around the country in the summers. He said he was in Cicero yard when a whole bunch of officials were having their picture taken. He was that hobo! Small world. I also met Wayne Arntzen's daughter-in-law when she was a State Senator here in Helena. She's now the Superintendent of Public Instruction here and we're good friends. Little things that you never knew how they would turn out.

Dave: Did the railroad change very much on merger day?

Pat: Well it was pretty gradual, but we immediately started seeing what I called cross-pollination. The headquarters of the CB&Q moved to the Twin Cities. Every week we would have a trainload of piggybacks that would leave Chicago with office equipment. Each Friday the people in the old Chicago headquarters would seal their desks and they would be shipped up on the piggybacks. On Monday their desks would be there when they reported for work in St. Paul.

And then we also began to see that the railroad originally set itself up in regions and I was on what was then the Chicago region of the Burlington Northern. We had officials come off the Great Northern to Chicago and we had officials that went north. The cross-pollination was very well orchestrated. Soon it became pretty obvious that somewhere down the road my opportunities would open up and be quite a bit wider. That was the initial impact.

I do remember one kind of humorous story. People from the headquarters in St. Paul came down at different times to describe company policy. We were all called into a staff meeting with the new general manager and the new vice president, and there was a guy, I don't remember his name, but he was head of the vehicle fleet—company cars and that kind of stuff. This was back in the days when automobile air conditioning was still an option. Most of the CB&Q official's cars had air conditioning, and that was not in line with the new company's policy, and so we were told that all company cars would not have air conditioning. I'll never forget that Jack Hamer, who was an official in the Chicago region, got up in the end of the meeting and said, "We understand the policies and certainly will agree with them as soon as you guys from the Great Northern take the heaters out of your cars." End of subject.

Dave: And that was it?

Pat: Yep. The air-conditioning stayed.

Dave: After Cicero you moved to Kansas City, right?

Pat: Yes, I went to Kansas City as a terminal trainmaster, which had kind of the same responsibilities, but a bump up in pay.

Dave: You were at Murray yard then?

Pat: Yep, Murray yard. I arrived at a very interesting time

because the yard was being rebuilt from a flat switching yard into a hump yard. They were just starting humping operations when I got there, but some of the yard construction was still going on. I was brought in because I had a had hump yard experience in Cicero and I had also worked at the hump yard in Lincoln. I always described myself as having a BS degree in hump-ology at Lincoln, a Masters degree in hump-ology at Cicero and a PhD in hump-ology at Murray.

Dave: Your territory was mostly Murray yard?

Pat: My territory was the Kansas City terminal operation which included Murray yard, the Southwest yard down in West Knoche and the Bottoms down by the stockyard. It included the 10th Street yard, which was the industrial service area and the interchange with all the railroads in Kansas City, Missouri and Kansas.

Dave: Was that job significantly different from the job in Cicero?

Pat: Not terribly, other than having a new yard and different railroads to work with plus different people. It was fun to work with those people.

Dave: Was it the same culture?

Pat: Kansas City was a little more laid-back than Chicago, and a little less ethnic. In Chicago you had the old ethnic neighborhoods but you didn't have that in Kansas City. But this was still a time of racial issues, and we were into heavy black hiring in Kansas City. At the same time we were going through this new yard development we were starting to put in some of the first computerized railroad operations. The system was called Compass and it involved a lot of changes in the way data processing was done, and that required hiring lots of clerks to do initial data processing entry there. All the physical and technical changes, mixed with hiring more black employees, made for interesting times.

Dave: Would you say most of your time was spent dealing with personnel issues, technical issues or administrative issues?

Pat: Oh. if you're in administration on the railroad, like when running a freight yard or something like that, personnel issues are the biggest item. You always have to deal with that. Technical issues, sure I dealt with them too, like how we put the trains together, but I had yardmasters that worked for me and who worked most of that out. They did that job according to what we wanted done, and they worked out the details. And so the greatest part of it was personnel. At that time we had probably 60 clerks and rows and rows of desks. There were always issues. The superintendent once told me, "You know it helps to have a business degree, but what you really need to run this place is a clerical frock." There is some truth in that. We had to deal with the unions, but I liked working with the unions because it was easier to deal with one guy than a thousand.

Dave: So how long were you a trainmaster in Kansas City?

Pat: I left Kansas City in late 1976 and went to Spokane, Washington.

Dave: And what job did you have there?

Pat: I was assistant terminal superintendent.

Dave: So that was a promotion?

Pat: Yes, absolutely.

Dave: And this was offered to you? Did you have choices?

Pat: You always have choices whether to accept the move or quit. I could have said no and stayed in Kansas City. But when you were offered a job like that in those days they already had your replacement picked out. It was an interesting thing because there was another trainmaster in Kansas City, Mike Collins, a good guy. He was originally from the Spokane area. So here is part of this cross-pollination thing that the railroad did. We both got promoted the same day. Before moving I came into work one day and relieved Mike, and I said to him that I heard he was leaving. "Yeah," he said, "I heard I'm going to Centralia."

"Centralia Washington?", I said. "No, dammit, Centralia Illinois. And I hear you're going someplace too." And I said, "I hate to tell you, but I'm going to Spokane." So this was part of the cross-pollination.

Dave: They were doing that intentionally you think?

Pat: I'm sure they were.

Dave: They wanted people not to stay in their home area?

Pat: They wanted people that would develop an understanding of things in the whole railroad.

Dave: What was happening in Spokane when you got there?

Pat: Spokane was a critical area to the merger of the company. This was where the Great Northern and the SP&S and the Northern Pacific came together in one spot. And as a result we were having to put together the merged systems and operations. They pretty much had this done by the time I got there. Great Northern and Northern Pacific had facilities there, and we were also integrating in new hires at that time, so we dealt with three different seniority systems in one yard. That was kind of difficult.

Dave: And now you're not in the CB&Q culture anymore?

Pat: Definitely not.

Dave: What was different?

Pat: I think what was different was that I was thrown into a mix where there was still both the old Great Northern and Northern Pacific culture as well. These had been highly competitive railroads. So for the first time I was thrown into a place where we had to mix the cultures of three railroads, and I brought in a CB&Q culture that had never been there before. I was one of the first CB&Q guys to go up there.

Dave: Were you accepted?

Pat: Oh, yes. There was a really good group of officers out there. We mixed socially as well as work-wise. It was great. The division culture clash was more at the working guys and union level. We were starting to get past some of those tensions, but it was still there.

Dave: So you pretty much fit right in.

Pat: Yes, and to some extent it was an advantage for me being a total outsider.

Dave: So what did the assistant terminal superintendent job entail?

Pat: That job was mostly administrative, I had three trainmasters under me, plus a general yard master that ran the freight yards and related operations, and my job was to oversee the administration of it all. If there was a problem I would step in and solve it. I worked for a terminal superintendent who was a wonderful person named Percy Achre. He was old Great Northern. Percy was the type that everybody loved to work with and that made things really good. He saw to it that his people felt comfortable and he supported them all along. A really good guy.

Dave: How long were you Spokane?

Pat: I was in Spokane until 1979, so three years.

Dave: Were there any major changes in the area in that time?

Pat: Well, there was an interesting thing that went on while I was there. The company was looking at building a new, major freight yard out at the Idaho side of Spokane, near Rathdrum. Prior to my arrival in Spokane the former GN Hillyard yard was greatly scaled back and most of its operation and traffic had been relocated to the NP Yardley yard. This put a very heavy load on Yardley and it was originally thought that it would not be adequate. Therefore, a new yard would need to be built. But the development of the coal fields in the Powder River Basin of Wyoming and Montana consumed huge amounts of capital, so building of the new freight yard in Idaho was put on hold. In the meantime, we got things moving really well at Yardley, and it was decided that we didn't need the new yard and the project was cancelled.

Dave: Was that cancelled yard what later became Hauser?

Pat: That was Hauser, yes. The fact was everyone worked well enough together that we didn't need a new yard. We worked ourselves out of a new yard.

Dave: What was next for you after Spokane?

Pat: Then I went to Billings as a coal superintendent.

Dave: Coal superintendent?

Pat: Superintendent of coal operations. Here's an interesting part about how I found out about the move. I mentioned talking with Walker Johnson earlier in the interview when I first decided to make railroading a career instead of teaching. My wife worked for him as a clerk and secretary, and

back when we were in Lincoln. He called her into his office and said, "By the way your husband is getting transferred to Chicago," and she said "Oh no, we just bought new carpeting for the house." Fast forward to Spokane, and Walker Johnson was the vice president of engineering. We had a big open house and a lot of officials came out, including Walker Johnson. We visited a little bit, and then my wife came to me and said, "Is there something going on? Mr. Johnson just told me not to buy any new carpeting." He had remembered the carpeting incident from years before, and so it was obvious he knew something I didn't. Later I was told I was going to Billings.

Dave: What did being superintendent of coal operations in 1979 entail?

Pat: Well that was an interesting job. It was set up to serve the early days of the massive expansion of the coal operation. They set up three coal superintendents to oversee the development of coal movements. We set up the basis of the coal operation and what was needed to operate the coal trains from mines to power plants. I reported to the coal department in St. Paul and not to the Billings region. I was superintendent of the northern coal corridor, which basically meant working with the mines in Sheridan, Wyoming and out of Colstrip, MT and with the power plants back in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and the Pacific Northwest. It was my job to interface with the mines and the power plants on operations, not marketing. I also worked with the divisions to operate the trains across their territory. It was kind of an interface job.

Dave: So the coal boom had started by then, right?

Pat: Yes it had started, and they figured out that they needed to have some operating officers that had coal knowledge.

Dave: So you were responsible basically for anything coming up north out of Gillette?

Pat: My territory went down to but not including Gillette so basically it was the northern Powder River basin. Any coal trains operating north of Gillette were my responsibility.

Besides me there were two other coal superintendents. One was in Denver, and he covered the southern Powder River basin—Gillette South and the coal receivers down through Colorado and Texas. The other one was located in Chicago, dealing with coal mines in southern Illinois and the power companies that were receiving coal like Commonwealth Edison in the midwest.

Dave: So, was there a lot of growth in those years that you were there?

Pat: Yes.

Dave: And a lot of money poured into the railroad?

Pat: A lot of money poured in, and a lot of money poured

out because we were investing in capital infrastructure. Part of my job was to identify what infrastructure was needed to move coal efficiently.

Dave: Can you give me some examples?

Pat: One was lengthening of sidings so you could put more coal cars on a train. In some cases, sidings didn't exist, because a lot of those areas only had one train per day before coal came, so new ones had to be built. Upgrading of mainlines and signal systems was also extensive. Prioritizing capital investment was important.

Dave: A lot of that would've been on the old NP, right? Particular lines east of Billings?

Pat: Yes, east of Billings toward Glendive and across North Dakota and Minnesota. I spent a lot of time working with the divisions at Fargo and Glendive, helping them plan their capital planning.

Dave: Was there any expansion at Glendive?

Pat: There were some tracks added, but mostly it was new sidings on the main line. The NP territory had some sidings, but they weren't long enough for the unit trains so we did a lot of siding expansion. There were some major expansions in Mandan too, which got a locomotive servicing facility to handle the coal trains that came through. The idea was that empty trains would be serviced at Mandan, fly right by Glendive on the way back to the coalfields, and then stop again at Mandan on their way east to the power plants.

Dave: Was the connection at Huntley in yet?

Pat: It was in the process of getting it put in when I got to Billings. When I got there, a train would arrive and the engine would have to run around the train and reset the caboose to change directions.

Dave: I assume by the time you left it was in operation.

Pat: Oh yes, fully operational. It didn't take long to build it—it was just a matter of acquiring the right-of-way and building the third leg of the wye.

Dave: Do you know how long it used to take to reverse the train?

Pat: It used to take up to an hour and a half depending on the traffic involved.

Dave: Was there anything else that was interesting about coal while you were there?

Pat: Working with some of the mine superintendents was really interesting. They were kind of what I would call dirt under the nail type guys—rough and tough guys and I had to find some ways to soften them up to work with them.

Dave: So sometimes their priorities didn't match up with yours?

Pat: Their priorities were to move tonnage and my priorities were to move tonnage too. We just had different sides of

which tonnage moved. I am the kind of guy who doesn't like to be in the office—I like to be out there where the action is. I set up a kind of on-the-spot coordination which turned out to be a really neat relationship. So we kind of got along.

One of the other things I had to work with was the study on frozen coal. The problem was we were not getting all the coal out of the cars at the rotary dumps, which meant we were hauling some back to the mines. You waste a lot of fuel hauling frozen coal back in the cars, and then you lose loading capacity for new coal.

I did a survey by going over to Buffalo, North Dakota and standing on top of the coldest damn overpass in my life, looking down in the empty cars to see how much coal was still in the cars. So we started picking certain select trains and weighing them at Mandan, one car at a time, getting the tonnage full and the tonnage empty in the same trains. We would weigh the same trains going out and going back. Eventually we figured out that probably 8 to 10% of the coal in the winter came back as frozen and got hauled again.

In the process we began to find out that something weird was happening. We were delivering much more coal by weight than we were loading out of a couple of the mines. The mines were reporting that they were loading less coal than they actually they were, and so a train would leave the mine near Sheridan with 12,000 tons and arrive with 13,000 tons at the power plant. We checked the scales and found at some mines that the “scales were off”.

Dave: So how was that resolved?

Pat: The issue was, how do you go back, how do you know when that scale went off? You don't. We got with the Western Weighing and Inspection Bureau inspectors, but we ultimately determined that there was probably no way that BN was going to collect what was lost by shipping more coal than it was paid for because we couldn't determine when that loss started. But we were certainly able to collect the full amount after that. We basically got all the scales in balance.

Dave: How about the frozen coal? Did you ever find out a solution for that?

Pat: Somewhat, but not really. We found a lot of companies became interested in some polymers that were added to the coal to keep it from freezing. Some of that is still going on now.

Dave: I'm familiar with the Midwest energy site in Superior, Wisconsin. A lot of coal comes in there and they use a lot of heaters. Did that solve any problems?

Pat: It helped a little bit—they were putting some of those in when I left. I spent a lot of time in Superior and knew that operation really well. Interestingly I spent enough time in Superior to realize that we were hauling taconite there too, and that a unit coal train had a lot in common with a unit taconite train. So I found myself over at the taconite

operation for the same purposes.

Dave: But you were still officially living in Billings, right?

Pat: Interestingly, yes. When I went to Billings my job description said 80% travel. They didn't give me a company car so I used my own car and got paid mileage. There was one time when my car didn't get home for eight months. I'm a golfer, but I only played one round of golf in Billings. Yet I played with regular foursomes in Bismarck, Minneapolis and in Superior.

Pat: All the time you were headquartered in Billings, was your wife still working for BN?

Pat: No. She was working until the time we moved to Kansas City. She worked a little while in Kansas City, but resigned to raise our family. She had a full time job raising our two sons and me.

Dave: I was wondering if every time you moved if she had to find a new job?

Pat: No, we eventually decided that it was best that she be a full-time mom, and she was great..

Dave: So she was on board with moving around a lot and with you being away from home so much?

Pat: She was a real sport about it. But it was tough.

Dave: I would think so when you were away for eight months at a time.

Pat: Well, I did get home. BN would see to it that I flew home every weekend. I would park my car at the airport and fly home.

Dave: So the car didn't get home but you did?

Pat: Yes, I did. My wife is actually a professional organist, so every time we moved she would always land on her feet and would find an organist position and bam, off we would go to the next city. It was probably toughest on my kids. My oldest son went to four different high schools in three years.

Dave: How many children do you have?

Pat: We have two boys. My oldest son started his first year of high school in Billings, sophomore year in Birmingham, Alabama, junior year in Burleson south of Fort Worth, and a senior in Havre, Montana. It was tough on him but he pulled it together and I think is stronger for it. Our other son was fortunate to go all the way through middle and high school in Havre.

Dave: Havre? A neat place but, a big change from Birmingham and Fort Worth.

Pat: It turned out to be the best!

Dave: So now you left Billings for Birmingham?

Pat: We had merged with the Frisco by then. BN had talked to me about going from coal superintended directly to division superintendent at Havre. But nope, we would cross pollinate again. I would have to be a terminal superintend-

ent and go through the management program before I was a division superintendent. So I found myself moving to Birmingham as Assistant Superintendent, which also had a little bit of road territory attached to it. I always said that 700 Frisco managers went north and I went south.

Dave: Do you think it is true?

Pat: Pretty close. Top management all changed to Frisco-oriented and so a lot of Frisco people came north. I was one of the few BN people that went south.

Dave: What was it like in Birmingham, being ex-Q BN guy?

Pat: It was a real culture shock. The Frisco culture was very different. It was a southern culture. I'd had exposure to the Frisco when I was in Kansas City, so I knew what I was going to be dealing with.

Dave: Did much coal move down that way?

Pat: There wasn't much on the Frisco, and when I was in Kansas City there wasn't any coal moving through Kansas City until the very end of my time there. It connected up with the Santa Fe and the Kansas City Southern.

Dave: How was the culture different in Birmingham.

Pat: The management and culture was very different. It was more confrontational with labor. I think just a different style—Hunter Harrison style if you know what I'm talking about. I knew Hunter Harrison when he was an assistant trainmaster in Kansas City. He had a pretty in-your-face, abrasive style. I'm not saying that in a derogatory way, but I had to figure out how to bridge the gap. At the same time I found the people down there to be damn good railroaders. Good fundamental, down-to-earth railroaders. No nonsense, but just a little bit different pace. What I found was that they got as much work done as anybody else, but they just did a little bit slower.

Dave: It didn't look like they were in a big rush?

Pat: It was hot and they paced themselves for that. I walked right into having to bring in the new BN computer system (Compass). It was interesting as I also oversaw the operation of the Illinois Central yard in town. IC had a trainmaster there, but he was for the road, not the yard. The two yards paralleled each other, and we treated them as one yard and so I also had to pay attention to Illinois Central trains coming in. They had one or two trains a day coming in, so not a big deal. So that was kind of interesting in that we had to adapt our system to also work with Illinois Central's.

Dave: What was your biggest challenge down there?

Pat: My biggest challenge was changing the function of the yard office from a non-computerized or minimally computerized operation to a Compass operation, while at the same time being closely overseen by the General Manager in Springfield who thought that the yard in Birmingham was his personal bailiwick having been Superintendent there at one time. I was hardly allowed to move a desk without get-

ting his permission. I found a way to deal with it. I started firing back and saying, "Hey, this didn't work, and you know the old method doesn't work, and this is what I found that does work." He sort of okayed it, saying "Just make damn sure it works". It was that kind of management style.

Dave: You were just moving regular freight down there, right? Nothing special.

Pat: Yes, it was all less than trainload. There were no unit-trains at that time. There was a run-through we had going with Southern and with the Louisville & Nashville. We basically put together freight trains that came off the interchange with the Southern, L&N and the IC, plus out of the industries in that area. It was a typical end-of-line operation.

Dave: So you had a lot of interfacing with all those folks?

Pat: All the time.

Dave: And was that fairly smooth?

Pat: Yes, the merger of the Frisco with the Burlington Northern didn't change much of the terminal operation at the end of the line because we weren't putting together two parallel railroads. We were just putting together two railroads that extended each other. It wasn't like the Great Northern / Northern Pacific.

Dave: How long were you there?

Pat: I was there until 1982, just over a year and three quarters. Then I was transferred to Dallas-Fort Worth as a terminal superintendent. And here again it entailed merging two terminal operations because the Frisco interchanged with the BN. My job was to integrate the Frisco's Southwest and Irving yards with BN's North Yard at Fort Worth and integrate all that with the Frisco operations and interchanges with the other railroads there. We were having to enlarge

the North yard to accommodate the traffic. Also, at this time we were getting more and more unit coal trains and had to add trackage to handle them.

Dave: The coal trains were coming in on the Colorado & Southern, the Fort Worth & Denver?

Pat: Yes. During the time I was there we went through two mergers that erased the Colorado & Southern and Fort Worth & Denver, although those mergers didn't change any of what I was doing. They were basically just paper mergers. They were essentially BN already. The only difference was that the Fort Worth region disappeared and we were absorbed into the Denver region.

When I was leaving Birmingham, it was in the Springfield Region. The vice president of the Springfield Region at that time was Roy Buchanan, a Frisco guy. He called me up one day to tell me that I was going to be transferred to Fort Worth as a terminal superintendent. And one more thing. We're going to integrate the old Frisco yard in Irving, TX with BN's yards, and you will be reporting to the Fort Worth Region. And then he tells me that it is really important that the Fort Worth Region take over that yard at Irving because it really doesn't fit in with the Springfield Region. He was going on about this and what I discovered was that Irving was a real son of a bitch and nobody wanted to deal with it. It was a shoestring operation that was trying to do intermodal stuff and it was just tough to set up for it. It was tough to operate safely and efficiently.

About six months later Roy Buchanan got transferred to Denver as the regional vice president of the Denver Division. By then the Fort Worth Region had been done away with, and we were part of Denver Division. He called me up and he says, "You know, I've been taking a look at that Irving operation, and you know it really doesn't fit with this Denver Region, and I'm going to see if I can get it back to the Springfield Region.

Dave: I guess he really didn't want it! You said it was tough to manage. Can you expand on that?

Pat: It was a couple of passing tracks and the intermodal facility for BN at that time in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Now picture this—shoving around a sharp curve on a 2% incline with long drawbar flat cars up to a stub-end intermodal track. They were always derailling, and there were grade crossings and major highways all through this operation. It wasn't a pretty yard and it was just tough.

Dave: Did you solve any problems there?

BURLINGTON NORTHERN RAILROAD CO. DENVER REGION

ALLIANCE, COLORADO
AND FORT WORTH DIVISIONS

Sunday, April 29, 1984

FORT WORTH—IRVING TERMINAL

P. C. Keim Terminal Superintendent

J. W. SPIVEY	Terminal Trainmaster	Fort Worth
K. S. PETERSON	Terminal Trainmaster	Fort Worth
E. A. CHESTER	Trainmaster	Irving
D. L. STULL	Asst. Terminal Trainmaster	Fort Worth
M. R. EVANS	Trainmaster-Road Foreman	Fort Worth
R. L. MCWILLIAMS	Asst. Trainmaster-Agent	Fort Worth

Pat: Not really. I just kept it going and had a good trainmaster - Enis Chester. I just left him alone and let him run the yard. It never really quite fit in either region.

Dave: How long were you in Fort Worth?

Pat: I was there until June 1984. This was when the company decided to move its headquarters out of St. Paul to Fort Worth and I heard that they were going to build new facilities. Bill Greenwood was then assistant to the president of BN in St. Paul, and he came down to look at office facilities. I knew that something was going on. They were debating whether to move to Kansas City, Dallas-Fort Worth or Denver. Then one Sunday morning my wife opened the paper and she says, "I think your day just turned real interesting." She turned the paper around to me and there it said that Fort Worth had been selected.

It was always one of my personal goals to stay out of headquarters. And it wasn't 20 minutes later that I got a phone call asking where we could park the business cars, and where to find a freezer near the freight yard because we were going to need food for the business cars, and they were going to need space for a temporary office and a place for the president to stay. Life was interesting back then.

I was there at the time headquarters started moving there, but they hadn't gotten fully moved yet and we got the word that I was moving up to Havre, Montana. I always say that I first got interviewed in Billings about taking that job in Havre and now three years and two moves later we are going to Havre, Montana. I took the longest drive anyone ever took to go from Billings to Havre. By this time Wayne Hatton was the Vice President of the Billings region, the

same Wayne Hatton that I was trainmaster for back in Cicero so I would say he was very formative in my career. And we got along very well.

Dave: So do you think he requested you to move to Havre?

Pat: Most certainly. The way it worked was that was you were identified by human resources and by your managers as somebody that was promotable. When a position became open, human resources put you on the list as somebody that was promotable into that type of position. Then they would send out the list to the vice presidents of the appropriate region. That didn't always mean you would get selected, but it usually did. The reason my name came up for the Havre job was because what had happened to me on the Havre deal several years before. At that time Bill Thompson was the vice president of the railroad. He said this fella (me) hasn't been an assistant division superintendent or a terminal superintendent yet. In his regime, you had to go through those positions to get to a superintendency. So I went to Birmingham as an assistant division superintendent, and got that covered, and from there my ticket was punched to Fort Worth, and then finally I got back in line to be superintendent.

Dave: So he maybe had his eye on you the whole time?

Pat: I don't know if he had his eye on me the whole time, but when my name came up, Wayne Hatton, who was in Billings, had to make a change up in Havre because he had some problems. I was in the pool, and he picked me.

Dave: So now you're back in Montana, even farther north than before.

Pat: About as far north as you could go on BN.

I have to tell you one humorous part of the move to Havre. The company was still in the process of moving much of its headquarters staffing down to Fort Worth, and I was lined up to move north. We scheduled for a moving van on a certain day, but we had to set back the closing of our house for a day or two. My wife Linda was very helpful and called the moving coordinator at the moving company to see if it was possible to set back the move a day or so. She said the moving coordinator told her, "Honey, we have 3,500 vans coming down from Minneapolis-St. Paul to Fort Worth and you're the only person going north. We can change it by the day, the hour or the minute, whatever you need." 3,500 vans—that is a big move! The van driver we had was so happy because he had been on the I-35 run from St Paul to

BURLINGTON NORTHERN RAILROAD CO. BILLINGS REGION

MONTANA, YELLOWSTONE AND
ROCKY MOUNTAIN DIVISIONS

Sunday, April 28, 1985

MONTANA DIVISION

P. C. Keim - Division Superintendent, Havre

W. C. BUSH	Asst. Supt. Transportation	Havre
L. R. TAYLOR	Asst. Supt. Roadway Maintenance	Havre
E. J. BEIL	Trainmaster	Great Falls
L. D. HUNTER	Trainmaster	Glasgow
W. R. WALTERS	Trainmaster	Havre
E. L. HENCZ	Trainmaster	Havre
W. L. ANDERSON	Trainmaster-Road Foreman	Havre
D. L. SCHUCH	Trainmaster-Road Foreman	Shelby
J. F. WHITE III	Road Foreman	Glasgow

Kansas City then to Fort Worth for a year and he was tired of it, and was very happy to get to go somewhere else.

Dave: Did you move in the summer?

Pat: Yes, actually we did. We tried to time our moves so that the kids could finish a full year at the school rather than change mid-year. I got transferred in June, but we didn't actually get the move completed until September. So what I did was bring my oldest son up to the hotel in Havre with me for about three weeks, which gave him the chance to go out for football. That was a good thing because we got to spend some really quality time together and when the school year started he already had some friends.

Dave: You mentioned that there were some problems in Havre that you were going up there to fix. Can you elaborate.

Pat: Well, yes, they had to replace a superintendent there for some reasons that probably weren't his fault.

Dave: More personnel problems than anything else?

Pat: He was actually a pretty good guy, but he was just the wrong peg in the wrong hole.

They were making a lot of changes at that time. They had taken dispatching out of Havre and moved it down to Billings, and there were challenges in getting all that ironed out. They had moved all the clerical operations to Billings too. They were rearranging the offices, and had decided that my office would be where one of the dispatching consoles had been. When I got there the whole west wall of my office on the second floor was gone where they bashed in the bricks to get the console out. So I'm sitting there at my desk in a big empty room with most of the wall missing.

The biggest problem was that the railroad was moving toward short crews. Instead of an engineer, a conductor, and two brakemen, there would be an engineer, conductor, and just one brakeman. BN was also getting rid of cabooses. We had already switched to short crews on the ex-Q and Frisco territories, but the NP and GN territories were holdouts. That created a lot of management-labor tensions. The unions sort of knew it was coming, but they were holding out. The United Transportation Union General Chairman, Mel Winters, had sworn that he would never sign away a brakeman's job. The union was trying to figure out how to deal with the changes internally too. Havre was a crew change point and there were a thousand railroaders living there, and so there was a lot of anxiety about the security of their jobs. It was a challenge to deal with all that, and part of my job was to sort it all out and at the same time try to keep peace with labor. I think I sort-of did that, but there were tensions. We ultimately ended up putting in the new crew systems, including buying out some of the people. It was very disruptive to the families of all those affected.

Dave: I could see where moving all the dispatchers and clerks to Billings was difficult.

Pat: Sure, there was a lot of disruption because it was so protracted. It kind of established a poisonous attitude to work in, so I had to work around it. I think I got along with most of the individuals pretty well in the union management. But there was tension within the unions too—what I call a generational change of the old guard being pushed out by the young Turks coming in. It was real interesting.

Dave: How about cabooses phasing out?

Pat: They didn't get phased out while I was in Havre. They eventually got phased out after I left, but it was another tension in the works. BN was doing it elsewhere, and the only reason we kept the cabooses in Havre was because Montana had a coochee law that mandated that all trains would have them. BN had to go to the federal courts to get the law struck down. It was causing the company to have to put cabooses on the trains out of Minneapolis and Spokane.

We were also wrapping up some branch line abandonments on the lines out of Great Falls toward Augusta and up to Choteau and beyond. The Milwaukee bankruptcy had also occurred and we still had to integrate some former Milwaukee facilities into our facilities.

The other big thing that was going on was the constant tension between the railroads and the farm communities on grain rates. It was particularly focused in Montana when I got there because they didn't have unit grain trains yet here. They were just starting them and the grain elevators really weren't up to handling them. There was tension from the small country elevators that, frankly, were going to have to grow or go out of business. Ultimately most of them went out of business, and most of them took hard community feelings with them. I had to deal with a lot of that. But at the same time we were starting to put in some of the unit grain train operations and work with designing the facilities that would support the grain train operations.

When I was first in Billings several years earlier the railroad was only moving 45% of the grain out of Montana. The unit trains came in and they were moving 95% of the grain out of the state. So then we were accused of being monopolistic and that created more friction. This was a constant overriding problem that I had to deal with when I got into government relations. We also had a lot of corporate changes while I was there.

There were some territory changes too. When I arrived in Havre in 1985, my territory went from Columbia Falls, Montana (just east of Whitefish), through Glacier Park, east to Williston, North Dakota, and from the Canadian border at Sweet Grass, Montana to Great Falls and down to Billings. Then they dissolved the Rocky Mountain Division with the creation of Montana Rail Link and extended my territory down to Helena on the line from Great Falls, and then to just west of Garrison, Montana, which had not become part of MRL. I had to integrate that into my operation and figure out the coordination with MRL.

The MRL was just getting started when they had a train get away from them on the mountain west of Helena. It derailed in Helena and some tank cars blew up causing the a lot of damage. The temperature was 32 degrees below zero and the power was knocked out to the whole city for nearly 24 hours.. I had to deal with that situation even though it really wasn't my train or my tracks, but it started on my tracks and ended on their tracks.

Dave: Was that an MRL train?

Pat: Yes, an MRL train. Almost all the trains were BN trains but they are handed to the MRL at Laurel and handed back to BN at Spokane, and vice versa. The trains are MRL crewed and MRL managed. The only train that was fully BN was the local that had run from Great Falls to Helena, which now went from Great Falls to Garrison and interchanged with the Montana Western Railroad. We kept that interchange as part of BN.

Dave: Were you involved in the creation of the MRL?

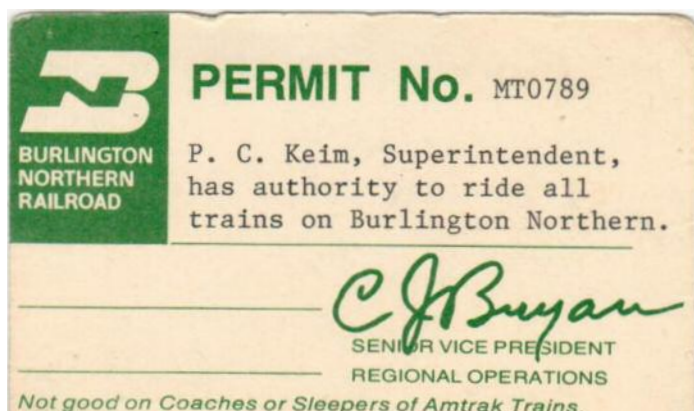
Pat: No. I was called one day and told that territory from Great Falls to Garrison was going to be mine. The agreements had already been set up with MRL. All that was handled at the system level, so I was just basically told what to do.

Dave: So you had to interface with the new railroad all of a sudden. How did that go?

Pat: Actually pretty well. Bill Brodsky was brought in by MRL as their president and he was a really good guy to work with. He and I became good friends and we worked very well together. Our first tough situation was that derailment in Helena. We sat down and figured out how we were going to do it and we did it. And it worked.

Pat: After Havre, what was next?

Pat: After Havre I was transferred to Helena. When I was in Havre, BN still had six operating regions and 18 divisions. Then they decided to go to three corridor regions and nine divisions, and the divisions would be run by general managers. But I wasn't at that level, so they left me in Havre for about six months as a superintendent of transportation. I stayed in that position until the position opened up in Helena in government affairs.



BNI, the holding company of which BN was part of, had a government affairs vice president in Helena. He represented both the railroad and the holding company BNI. Well, BNI broke up at about this time, and he was sent to Fort Worth to be Vice President of State Government Affairs for the railroad. That created an opening Helena. What happened next was kind of really odd.

At the same time there was a race for governor in Montana and there were three Republicans in the race. One of them was a guy named Calvin Winslow and the BN vice president had a particularly close relationship with him. The other two were Jim Waltermeyer and Stan Stevens. Stan Stevens was from Havre and I knew him. Havre was a small town, and all of us there were somehow related to the operations of government in Montana. What happened was Jim Waltermeyer's plane crashed on approach to Helena airport during the campaign and he was killed. I remember getting a call from the vice president, who was still in Helena at the time, saying we have a problem. He said, "The problem is this. I've been very closely associated with Winslow who was probably going to win the primary and then probably win the governorship in the general election. The Waltermeyer people hate anyone who's been associated with the Winslow people. Winslow was going to win with Waltermeyer coming in a distant second and Stan Stevens was hardly even going to be in the running. But suddenly the Waltermeyer people are going to hook up with Stevens and this would put Stevens on the top and he'll win. You know Stan Stevens and you gotta carry that ball." And I said "Oh thanks." Then he got transferred down to Fort Worth and they were looking for somebody to come in to Helena to work with the brand new governor who is from Havre. I was somebody who knew something about Montana government, so they said "Put him in." That was a decision made by Jerry Grinstein, and I wound up in Helena, which actually worked out fine for me.

I was not happy about leaving operations. I loved operations. I loved to get out and kick ballast and drive spikes. I like to be on trains. But with the change in the management situation, I would no longer be the top guy in Havre—I would be working under somebody. That wouldn't be the best situation. So when they asked me to come down to Helena I thought it was an opportunity. I could either do that or go to Fort Worth. I wanted to stay in Montana, so I thought, well, maybe this will work out. And as it turned out it worked very well. It was a good move.

This ends Part 1 of Pat's oral history interview. We'll wrap it up in part 2 in the July issue, where Pat talks about the rest of his career in government relations and life after BNSF.

The Return of the Kalispell Subdivision

The Kalispell Subdivision was originally part of the Great Northern main line through northwestern Montana before a longer but less vertically challenged route through Whitefish was constructed back in 1904. In the BN era, what was then a branch line and numbered subdivision from Columbia Falls through Kalispell to Somers, and then cut back to Kalispell around 1980, became the Kalispell Subdivision when BN switched from numbered to named subdivisions in the early 1990's. It remained the Kalispell Subdivision into the BNSF era, and was shortened again by two miles when Kalispell built an industrial park and the two industries that were at the end of the line moved there.

In December of 2004 BNSF leased the subdivision to the Mission Mountain Railroad (MMR, a Watco company), and for a while the Kalispell Subdivision disappeared from BNSF employee timetables. But in early 2020 BNSF decided not to renew the lease, and on April 1, 2020, the Kalispell Subdivision reappeared and BNSF started operating on the line with a local out of Whitefish that runs down the subdivision from Columbia Falls to the rail park weekdays except Tuesday.

For more information about the history of the Kalispell Subdivision, check out Justin Franz's web page at: kalispellrailroad.com



The first BNSF Kalispell Local heading south out of Columbia Falls passes WAMX 1598, the last Mission Mountain locomotive, on Wednesday, April 1, 2020, the first day of BNSF operation on the branch line after not renewing the lease with the MMR. Photo by Justin Franz.



The Kalispell Local switches CHS (Cenex Harvest States) Kalispell at the Glacier Rail Park on Nov. 9, 2020. Drone photo by Justin Franz.

Right of Way



Mark



Mark

BNSF's Laurel Subdivision: Mossmain to Great Falls by Mark Demaline and Dave Poplawski

Completed by the Great Northern in 1908, and inherited by the BN as the Nineteenth Subdivision of the Rocky Mountain Division in 1970 (see timetable below), the line traverses the wide-open spaces of central Montana. It was built to tap the vast grain farming areas as well as to gain access to the Northern Pacific and connections to the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy lines at Laurel and east of Billings. BN competed for business with the Milwaukee Road until that railroad ended service in 1980, then took over service on some of the ex-Milwaukee's trackage (see the article on page 26).

Railroad Avenue. How many towns across Montana have a street with this or a similar name? Along today's BNSF Laurel Subdivision it is four: Judith Gap (photo above) and Geyser, Hobson (*Railway Street*), and Stanford (*Railroad Street*). A fitting name for a street in towns whose existence depended on the railroad that served the towns and shippers in the area.

The many abandoned prairie skyscrapers serve testimony to its history and purpose, replaced by a handful of highly efficient, but less charming, 21st century shuttle loading facilities. The train order depots are gone, made obsolete by 20th century technology: 2-way radio and track warrants.

The line changed organizational divisions and subdivision numberings, eventually trading a number for a name. It even changed direction, from East-West to North-South, to become today's Laurel Subdivision (see timetable below).

Photos are identified by first name in the lower corner to save space:
 Mark - Photo by Mark Demaline. Dave - Photo by Dave Poplawski.
 Bruce - Photo by Bruce Black, from the Mark Demaline collection.
 James - Photo by James Herold, from the Mark Demaline collection.
 Unk - Photographer unknown, from the Mark Demaline collection.

NINETEENTH SUBDIVISION				WESTWARD		EASTWARD	
Rule of(A) Signs	Capacity of Sidings	Station Numbers	Distance from Mossmain	MAIN LINE STATIONS			
				Telegraph Offices and Calls			
JPYT		30852	0.0	MOSSMAIN			
PJ	47	32557	4.0	HESPER			
P	121	32563	9.3	RIMROCK			
OP	122	32590	36.2	BW	BROADVIEW		
	121	32609	55.8	CUSHMAN			
P	122	32635	81.5	HEDGESVILLE			
FW	127	32655	101.8	JUDITH GAP			
P	47	32668	114.1	BUFFALO			
OP	59	32683	129.4	HO	HOBSON		
OJPR	119	32688	134.7	MC	MOCCASIN		
OP	122	32694	140.1	BD	BENCLAND		
OP	65	32700	146.2	WD	WINDHAM		
OPW	57	32707	153.3	SD	STANFORD		
OP	47	32724	170.1	GY	GEYSER		
OP	47	32736	182.4	RF	RAYNESFORD		
P	128	32748	193.6	ARMINGTON			
OP		32750	195.5	B	BELT		
P		32754	200.4	WAYNE			
P	46	32766	211.9	GERBER			
CBJKP RWY		11118	221.9	PD	GREAT FALLS		

S O U T H W A R D ↓	Length of Siding (Feet)	Station Nos.	Mile Post	Laurel Subdivision MAIN LINE STATIONS	Rule 4.3	Type of Oper.	Line Segment	Miles to Next Stn.	↑ N O R T H W A R D
	Adjoining Sub: Great Falls Information for Great Falls is located in the Great Falls sub timetable.								
		32777	224.5	GREAT FALLS	BT			7.9	
	9,520	32766	216.6	WHITE BEAR				22.2	
	6,743	32748	194.4	ARMINGTON				11.3	
		32736	183.1	RAYNESFORD				13.9	
	8,445	32724	169.2	GEYSER				14.1	
	9,500	32707	155.1	STANFORD				20.0	
	6,196	32688	135.1	MOCCASIN Adj. RR: CM, MP 135.1	JT			5.3	
		32683	129.8	HOBSON				7.4	
			122.4	SIPPLE Adj. Sub: Lewistown, MP 122.4	J	TWC	362	8.0	
		32668	114.4	BUFFALO				12.3	
	6,654	32655	102.1	JUDITH GAP				20.3	
	6,339	32635	81.8	HEDGESVILLE				25.7	
	6,442	32609	56.1	CUSHMAN				19.6	
	6,400	32590	36.5	BROADVIEW				4.3	
	9,800	32586	32.2	WALTER Adj. Sub: Broadview, MP 33.3	J			7.6	
	9,425	32575	24.6	ACTON				20.4	
		32557	4.2	HESPER				3.5	
		30853	0.7	MOSSMAIN	T			223.8	

Our tour of the line begins at the east end of MRL's Laurel yard at a location called Mossmain. Looking east, the wye, whose North-West leg is seen curving off to the left (north), allows trains access to both the yard and the trackage east towards Billings. The date is November 10, 1990, and this westbound freight is entering the yard with a tiger stripe GP50 and a B30-7AB on the point.



James

Heading north from Mossmain, the first named place on the line is Hesper. Until 1980, a 38-mile Northern Pacific line west to Rapelje branched off to the left. In August 2019 a small MOW base and a short siding are all that's left.



Dave

There are five tunnels along the line, but the portals are accessible only from private property. Here's as close as one can get to the first tunnel, approximately 2500 feet long, near milepost 13. The south portal is just around the corner, frustratingly just out of sight. No excess height cars, including double stacks, are allowed on the subdivision due to low tunnel ceilings.



Dave

A little further north is the town of Acton with a short and through stub siding and piles of old ties, rail and grade crossing pads laying around in August of 2019.



Dave

Just two miles north of town is the Acton siding. Switch heaters are a good idea in this part of the country, and a majority of the sidings along the subdivision have them. The southbound baretable train on the siding appeared to be waiting for a crew.



Dave

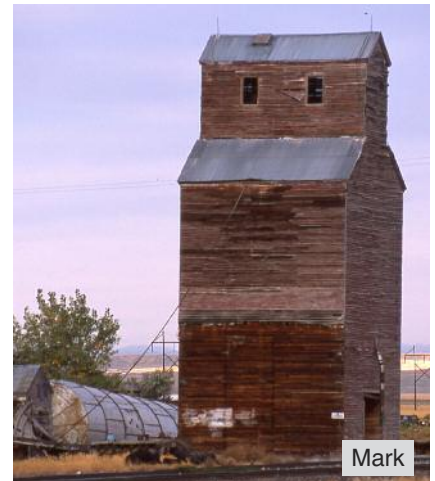
On October 7, 2013, one of BNSF's track geometry cars glides through the railroad location named Comanche. The railroad has a dragging equipment detector here, as well as a very short siding that doesn't see much use any more.



Mark

Another angle the same day shows the decaying state of the elevator. It lasted through 2019, but today only photos and memories of it are all that is left.

A few miles north is a relatively new siding at Walter, constructed in 2009. On October 5, 2011 this



Mark

southbound train of pipeline sections approaches the south end of the siding.



At the north end of the siding is the switch to the Broadview Subdivision, a 35-mile long line that was also built in 2009 to provide access to a single shipper, the Signal Peak coal mine, which as of February 2021 was still in operation. The August 2019 photo below, looking south, shows the north siding switch (NSS) at Walter, and the sign for Walter Jct, which is the railroad name for the same location on the Broadview Sub, which curves away to the left.



Just 500 feet north of the Walter switch is a short spur track to an impressive electric power substation. In 2019 it was clear these tracks hadn't been used in a long time.



About four miles further north is the town of Broadview. This once thriving little place had four slightly more modern elevators, three of which are shown in this October 4, 2017 photo. It appears that at least one of them was still in operation, but no longer served by rail as the loading track had been removed.



A testimony to the importance of Broadview in times past was its train order depot, shown here on October 4, 1970. The depot still exists, having been moved a short distance away from the tracks and renovated into a private residence while preserving the station signs on the ends.



The railroad curves away from all roads for 19.6 miles and passes through the second tunnel on the Laurel sub, this one 1000 feet long, and arrives at Cushman, site of a siding and short storage track, but not much else in this 2017 photo.



Just around the corner, however, the line crosses the Musselshell River, and, under the through girder part of the bridge, the remnants of the Milwaukee Road's main line across Montana. This location was named Slayton Jct on the MILW, and in 2002 even the right-of-way is hard to find.



It's another 25 miles to Hedgesville, which is a long way to drag a bad order car or get MOW equipment out off the main, so roughly half way there is a tiny single-ended siding at Franklin.



Dave

At Hedgesville the main line and siding cross Montana Hwy 297, along with another short stub track. The crossing gates are triggered normally by trains on the main line, but not so the siding. Instead, a train on the siding must creep up near this sign, which then triggers the gates, stop while the gates lower, then are allowed to proceed.



Dave

We're almost half way across the 224 mile subdivision when we come to the first town with a welcome sign. The largest town along the line so far, with a whopping 164 inhabitants, its name is derived from the passage between the Big Snowy Mountains and the Little Belt Mountains. Used by Native Americans, settlers and two railroads (GN and MILW), the sign captures some of that history.



Mark

On October 7, 2013 a southbound empty coal train with CP power in the lead runs down the main at Judith Gap,



Mark

while on August 11, 2019 a manifest awaits a crew on the siding.



Dave

A couple of miles north of town, a southbound grain train rounds the bend on October 4, 2017.



Mark

Farther north, another retired grain elevator awaits the inevitable at Buffalo in this August, 2019 photo.



Dave

At railroad location Sipple is a switch to the Lewistown Subdivision, which doesn't go to Lewistown any more (see the story on page 26).



Dave

The next town along the line is Hobson. Another one-time prosperous town with a nice welcoming sign.



Mark

With three elevators in October 2002 (see also the cover photo of this issue), it is somewhat surprising that the slightly more modern looking elevator in the middle is now gone while the two other remain.



Mark

Back on July 2, 1978 the train order depot in Hobson was still in operation and looking pretty sharp. You'll find only gravel at this location now.



Bruce

There is a lot of wide open, relatively flat and treeless prairie in this part of Montana, making photos of entire trains relatively easy. Mark almost got all of this northbound grain train in the shot on October 10, 2004, a few miles east of the next town on the line, Moccasin.



Mark

Just east of Moccasin are two landmarks shown in this August 2019 photo. In the background is a shuttle-grain complex, one of several that put the final nail in the coffins of the numerous old prairie skyscrapers that dotted the landscape of this part of Montana.

The other is the line branching off to the left. This originally was the Great Northern's branch line to Lewistown, inherited by the BN in 1970, but today is the interchange with the Central Montana Railroad, a short line created a few years after the Milwaukee ceased operations on its lines here 1980.



Dave

This 2002 photo below shows a relatively modern grain elevator complex in Moccasin. Unfortunately it too couldn't compete with the efficiency of shuttle loading just a mile away and ceased operation.



Mark

Compared to the depot at Hobson on the left, the depot at Moccasin wasn't much to brag about. But like all train

order stations, it served its purpose of communicating between dispatchers and train crews, enabling the efficient but safe operation of trains and maintenance crews for decades before the advent of track warrants on this subdivision 1988.



Bruce

In July of 1973 Benchland was a named location on the Laurel Subdivision, complete with a siding and a decent train order depot. In 1974 the siding was removed. In 1986 Benchland disappeared from the employee timetable.



Bruce

In 2019, the elevator at Windham, a few miles north of Benchland, was still standing, but clearly out of service.



Dave

In 1973 it had a nice train order depot.



Bruce

Moving north on the railroad and through another 1,500 ft tunnel, the next town is Stanford. With around 400 inhabitants, it is the second largest town on the entire subdivision other than the end points.

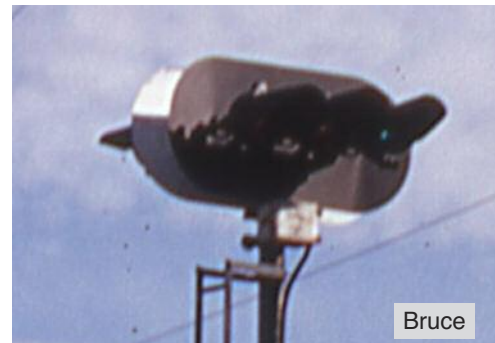


Mark

In October of 1977 it had active grain elevators and a train order depot with an unusual signal.



Unk



Bruce

Between then and 2002, the elevators received corrugated metal siding, but closed up shop never-the-less, likely



Mark

cast aside by the large, modern elevator just north of town seen in August of 2019.



Dave

BNSF also has a small MOW base. In 2019 piles of clean, fresh ballast and three loaded ballast cars waiting to be used mean this rather obscure line has a future.



Dave

Another 14 miles and another 1,500 ft tunnel, gets us to Geysers, site of yet another abandoned elevator and an 8,445 ft siding but, in 2019, a brightly painted switch stand.



Dave

14 miles farther along the line is Raynesford and one more abandoned elevator photographed in 2002.



Mark

On July 2, 1973 Raynesford had a train order depot that was in need of some new paint.



Bruce

Next up is the siding at Armington, occupied by an idle ballast train on August 11, 2019.



Dave

Just a mile farther is Belt, the largest town on the subdivision with almost 600 people. In 2002 the grain elevator was not only abandoned, but the tracks that serviced it were already taken up.



Mark

In July, 1973, the decent-sized train order depot, still served the railroad and the town.



Bruce

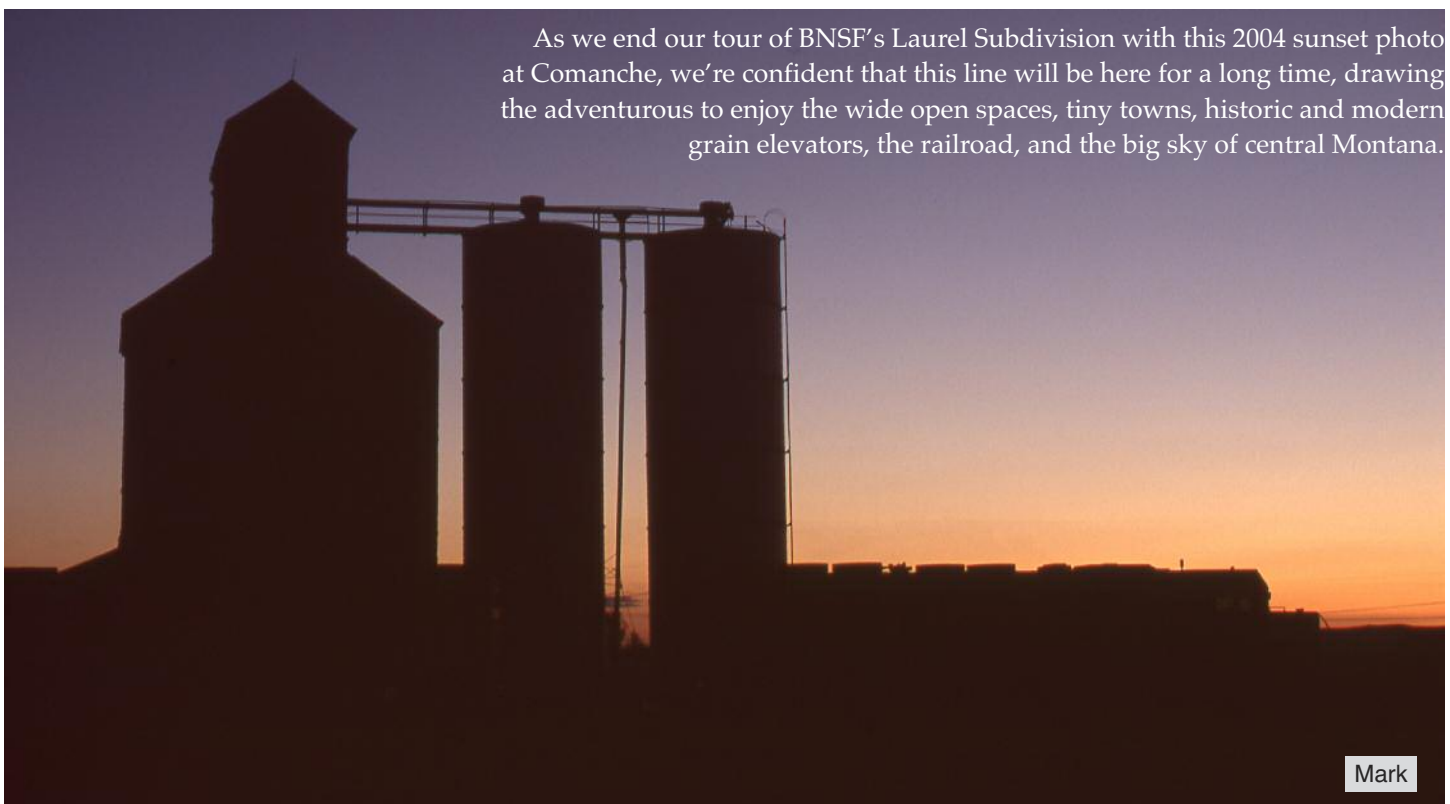
From Belt, the line follows Belt Creek for three miles, then climbs out of the valley and through the last tunnel on the line. Mark caught this southbound grainer on October 4, 2017 from the road that goes over the hill that the tunnel goes through. The elevator is at a location named Wayne, while the elevator in the distance is at Fife.



A southbound freight (below) is just passing Gerber in 2007, site of a short 2,618 ft siding.

We missed photographing the siding at White Bear, a new 9,520 ft siding constructed by BNSF in 1998, relegating the nearby siding at Gerber to brief mention in “Locations Not Shown as Stations” in newer timetables.

We reach the end of the subdivision in Great Falls right by the beautiful old Great Northern station, shown below in July, 1973. Here the line meets up with the Ft Benton Subdivision at a wye and then crosses the Missouri River to access the Great Falls yard and connections to the Great Falls and Helena Subdivisions.



As we end our tour of BNSF’s Laurel Subdivision with this 2004 sunset photo at Comanche, we’re confident that this line will be here for a long time, drawing the adventurous to enjoy the wide open spaces, tiny towns, historic and modern grain elevators, the railroad, and the big sky of central Montana.

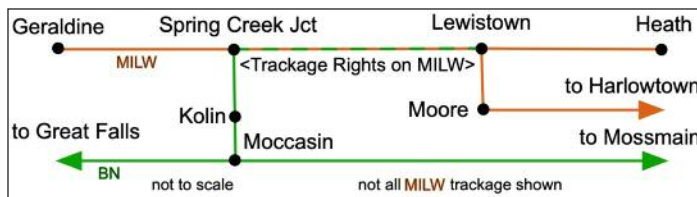
Rail Service to Moore, Montana

A Short History of a Short Subdivision

by Dave Poplawski

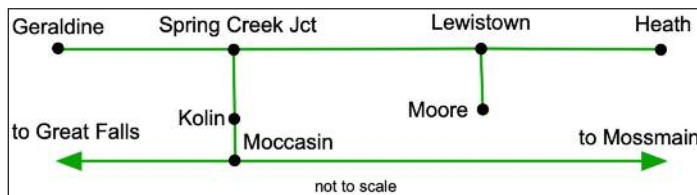
In 2021, the grain elevator in the central Montana town of Moore (right) is served by a short spur that branches off the Laurel Subdivision at a place known as Sipple. It is only 7.5 miles east from Sipple to Moore, and the tracks, which used to go another 18 miles to Lewistown, disappear into the weeds about a mile east of town. It is still known today as the Lewistown Subdivision, even though the line from Moore to Lewistown was abandoned in 2005.

Rail service to Moore has an interesting history. Until 1980 it was served by the CMSP&P (MILW) Railroad via a line that came up from the MILW's main line in Harlowtown and passed through Moore on its way to Lewistown. BN did have access to Lewistown via Moccasin, Spring Creek Jct and trackage rights on the MILW, but those rights did not extend to Moore.



Until the demise of timetable and train order dispatching, the very spartan depot at Kolin (right) connected the dispatcher with the train crews.

When the MILW discontinued service on all lines west of Miles City, Montana in 1980, the Burlington Northern took over service on much of the ex-MILW trackage in the area, and with it gained access to Moore via Lewistown.



The grain elevator in Moore, looking west from Highland Street in August, 2019. Photo by Dave Poplawski.

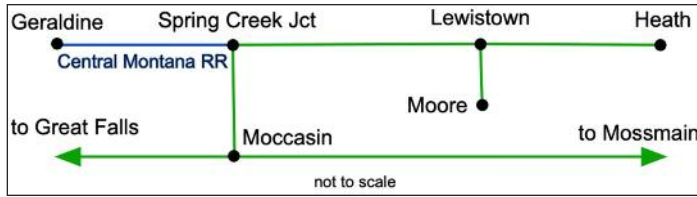


1973 photo by Bruce Black from the Mark Demaline collection.

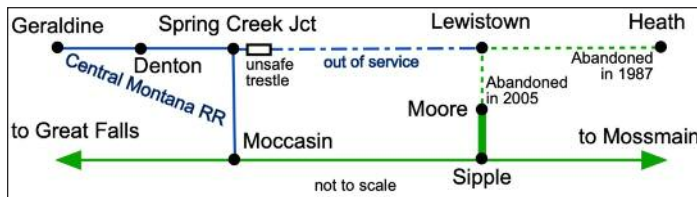


BN (ex-GN) station in Lewistown on May 19, 1985. Photo by Larry Zeutschel from the Mark Demaline collection.

In 1983 BN discontinued service on the line west from Spring Creek Jct to Geraldine. The State of Montana took over the line and in 1985 the Central Montana Railroad was formed to operate the line, interchanging with the BN at Spring Creek Jct.



Within a couple of years the 1,400 foot wooden trestle at Spring Creek Jct was deemed unsafe. Rather than repairing or replacing it, in 1998 the State of Montana funded the construction of a spur off the Laurel Sub to connect with the line between Lewistown to Moore. The line followed the ex-MILW roadbed south from Moore to a place on the MILW called Sipple, where it turned west across the wheat fields for a mile to connect with the Laurel Sub.



This new connection was named Sipple as the old Sipple no longer existed. The abandoned grain elevator at the old Sipple still stands as can be seen in the distance in the photo below, taken looking due east at the new line where it branches from the new Sipple junction.

The Moore elevator is still a vital customer on the BNSF system and hopefully will continue to provide service to shippers in the area and revenue to the railroad for many years to come.



The Central Montana Railroad in 2021

Today's CMR, with its only connection to the outside world through the BNSF at Moccasin, is mostly in the business of railcar storage, with trains running only on demand. However, the Charlie Russell Chew Choo dinner train is still in operation, with weekend runs planned for May through October from Spring Creek Jct to Denton and back.



Central Montana Railroad GP-9 in its BN-inspired paint scheme in Denton, Montana in July, 2000 on the point of the Charlie Russell Chew Choo dinner train. Photo by Peter F. Arnold, from the Mark Demaline collection.



The out of service trestle over Big Spring Creek in March of 2020. Being built of wood, fire was an ever-present danger, especially back in the days of steam. To avoid complete destruction, the bridge is divided into three sections with an all-steel span separating them. While still devastating, only a third of the bridge would have to be repaired if a fire broke out. Photo by Bridget Demaline.

Photos below and right by Dave Poplawski.



The end of the Lewistown Sub.
August 2019



Cars in storage on CMR near Moccasin: Tank cars (above) in August 2019, photo by Dave Poplawski, and BN covered hoppers (below) in July 2000, photo by Mark Demaline.

Montana Rail Link's GP9 Fleet

by Jay Glenewinkel



Considered as a non-streamlined version of the F9 model, the EMD (Electro-Motive-Division of General Motors) GP9 was a locomotive designed by EMD's chief engineer Richard "Dick" Dilworth, with assistance from John Markestein, who was head of the company's styling design department. Developed to offer improvements to the successful GP7, the GP9 would outsell it by more than 32%.

Though the GP9 looked similar in design to the GP7, there were a few notable external differences. The GP9 had a shorter fuel tank, thinner frame, taller or larger radiator fans, and the placement of the air tank/air reservoir was different. Internally, EMD's 16-cylinder 1750 horsepower 567C prime mover made its debut. The GP9 utilized D37B traction motors and a D12B main generator.

Production of the GP9 began in 1954 and continued on through the end of 1959. EMD's shops in La Grange, Illinois produced 3,441 locomotives with an additional 165 cabs or B-units built, while GMD (EMD's Canadian-based facility in London, Ontario) built an additional 646 units, many of which went to overseas railroads in Brazil, Peru and Venezuela, for a total count of 4,112 GP9s built.

In 1987 the Montana Rail Link (MRL) was created with 26 GP9s from BN, then got into the market for more second-hand locomotives from other railroads. Over the course of several years, the MRL would acquire over thirty GP9s and one GP7 from carriers across the United States and Canada.

Most of the former BN units that came to MRL had high noses. The non ex-BN units (mostly from C&NW) all arrived on MRL with a chopped nose. In time MRL would chop the remaining high noses at its shops in Livingston.

Several units got nicknames from the crews for their

GP9s 109, 130 and (maybe) 113 at Muir, Montana on January 13, 1998. Photo by Larry Zeuschel from the Keith Ardinger collection.



High nose version of #109 in Billings on November 25, 1989. Photo by Larry Zeuschel, from the Keith Ardinger collection.

paint jobs during the early MRL years. MRL 1946 was nicknamed "Gray Ghost" while in gray primer until repainted in Livingston on April 20, 1988 and numbered MRL 101. Then there was the first #4309, later #130, called "The Dodge" while in red primer. And lastly was #4355, nicknamed the "Hippie Bus" or "Frankengeep" while in C&NW patched paint before becoming #131.

Today, most of the MRL GP9s have been retired and removed from the roster. There are, however, a few that remain in service on local freights as well as in switching duties across the MRL system.

The editor thanks Dave Franz for his assistance in reviewing the roster and providing some extra information about the units for the article.

Montana Rail Link's All-Time GP9 Roster

<u>MRL Road #</u>	<u>Builder #</u>	<u>Build Date</u>	<u>Notes</u>
101	24057	6/58	ex-BN 1946, nee NP 367, renumbered MRL 125*
102	22777	2/57	ex-BN 1732, nee NP 294, renumbered MRL 126*
103	19370	5/54	ex-BN 1832, nee GN 680, renumbered MRL 127*
104	21255	4/56	ex-BN 1834, nee GN 682, renumbered MRL 134*
105	22721	7/57	ex-BN 1903, nee NP 318, renumbered MRL 135*
106	24021	1/58	ex-BN 1931, nee NP 352, sold 6/2008 to SRY
107	24024	1/58	ex-BN 1934, nee NP 355, scrapped 8/2008
108	21256	4/56	ex-BN 1835, nee GN 683, sold 6/2008 to SRY
109	20342	2/55	ex-BN 1710, nee NP 210, still on roster as of January 2021
110	21237	7/56	ex-BN 1897, nee NP 280, sold 7/2008 to SRY
111	21226	7/56	ex-BN 1717, nee NP 269, sold 11/2010 to Steel, Etc
112	21230	7/56	ex-BN 1721, nee NP 273, sold 6/2008 to SRY
113	22774	2/57	ex-BN 1729, nee NP 291, still on roster as of January 2021
114	22776	2/57	ex-BN 1731, nee NP 293, sold 11/2010 to Steel, Etc
115:1	22709	2/57	ex-BN 1744, nee NP 306, rebuilt as MRL 151 (GP-15-1), wrecked 6/2008, scrapped 12/2008
115:2	14719	9/51	ex-CNW 4337 (GP9m), nee CGW 120 (GP7), sold 5/2014 as NSHX 115
116	24761	10/58	ex-CNW 4507, nee MStL 706, sold 5/2014 as SSRX 116
117	21254	4/56	ex-BN 1833, nee GN 681, sold 5/2014 as SSRX 117
118	22742	8/57	ex-BN 1924, nee NP 339, still on roster as of January 2021
119	22743	8/57	ex-BN 1925, nee NP 340, sold 7/2005 to SRY
120	22744	8/57	ex-BN 1926, nee NP 341, sold 12/2018 as NPR 120
121	22745	8/57	ex-BN 1927, nee NP 342, sold 6/2008 to SRY
122	22747	8/57	ex-BN 1929, nee NP 344, sold 6/1999 to SRY
123	24020	1/58	ex-BN 1930, nee NP 351, still on roster as of January 2021
124	24025	6/58	ex-BN 1935, nee NP 356, sold 6/1999 to SRY
125	24057	6/58	ex-MRL 101, ex-BN 1946, nee NP 367, sold 11/2010 to Steel Etc
126	22777	2/57	ex-MRL 102, ex-BN 1732, nee NP 294, sold 11/2010 to Steel Etc
127	19370	5/54	ex-MRL 103, ex-BN 1832, nee GN 680, still on roster as of January 2021
128	22804	5/57	ex-CNW 4555, nee CRIP 4484:2/ 4538/ 1318, sold 6/2008 to SRY
129	9912	6/50	ex-CNW 4376 (GP9m), nee-SLSF 512 (GP7), sold 1/1999 to SRY
130	22984	10/57	ex-CNW 4309, nee MStL 608, still on roster as of January 2021
131	A-348	3/52	ex-CNW 4355, GMD-built, ex-QNSL 108, still on roster as of January 2021
132	A-941	6/56	ex-CNW 4512, GMD-built, ex-QNSL 162, still on roster as of January 2021
133	A-1065	6/56	ex-CNW 4525, GMD-built, ex-QNSL 171, sold 6/16 Transco Rwy Products
134	21255	4/56	ex-MRL 104, ex-BN 1834, nee GN 682, sold 6/2008 to CEECo
135	22721	7/57	ex-MRL 105, ex-BN 1903, nee NP 318, sold 6/2008 to SRY

Below GP9s scrapped before assigned MRL's three digit number:

1725	22770	2/57	ex-BN 1725, nee NP 287, wrecked 1/7/88 on BN at Marsh, MT, scrapped 4/27/88
1831	19369	5/54	ex-BN 1831, nee GN 679, bent frame on MRL, scrapped 3/1991
1904	22722	8/57	ex-BN 1904, nee NP 319, wrecked 1/7/88 on BN at Marsh, MT, scrapped 8/18/88

* Unit renumbered to make room for company business passenger cars 101-105.



GP9 113 in Helena on January 19, 1992. Photo by Larry Zeitschel, from the Keith Ardinger collection.



GP9 118 in Missoula in August of 1996. Photo by Bill McClure.



GP9 123 in Missoula on July 29, 2009. Photo by Bill McClure.



GP9 131 near Paradise on August 6, 1997. Photo by Keith Ardinger.



GP9 127 in Helena on November 2, 1996. Photo by Larry Zeuschel from the Keith Ardinger collection.



GP9 130 in Helena, Montana on November 2, 1996. Photo by Larry Zeuschel, from the Keith Ardinger collection.



GP9 132 in West Missoula on August 22, 2001. Photo by Keith Ardinger.



GP9s 123 and 128 lead the Paradise local through Thompson Falls on August 24, 1994. Photo by Bill McClure. See more of Bill's MRL and other photography at: billmcclure.smugmug.com/Steel-Rails/Montana-Rail-Link-Favorites

Before & After

1975 / 1981



Burlington Northern inherited 42 U25C locomotives on M-Day, 30 from the NP and 12 from the CB&Q. General Electric's first six-axle locomotives, they were built in 1964-65 and rated at 2500 horsepower. Interestingly, units 5602, 5608, 5623 and 5624 were equipped as Locotrol masters as BN experimented with this early form of distributed power. The units spent most of their time in coal service, as witnessed in the photo above by unit 5611 (and 5636's nose, still in CB&Q colors) on a coal train in Joliet, Illinois in August of 1975. Photo by Todd Miller, from the Mark Demaline collection.

BN's U25Cs didn't have a long life as locomotives go, just around 16 years. GE's U30Cs and U33Cs, having more horsepower, quickly displaced them, and in 1980-81 all the units were sold and scrapped. The Conrail funeral train below in the Rose Yard in the Juniata section of Altoona, Pennsylvania shows ten of the units on their way to the scrap yard on March 28, 1981. Unit 5611 is in the procession (circled). Photograph by James Appleman.



Rear Cover Photo: The size of the BNSF lettering on the long hood of BNSF's ET44C-4 units is a tad smaller than on all previous locomotive models, as can be seen in the photo of ET44C4 3833 and following ES44DC on November 21, 2020 in Tacoma, WA. The train was the north bound X-KALSSD, an empty grain train from Kalama, Washington to Selby, South Dakota. Photo by Dan Simmering.

