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Sidnaw Rail Junction
'Way Back in '88

Sidnaw, March 22 - A lot of interesting railway happenings could mark their anniversaries in and about the year 1952. Some of them size up as interesting and even humorous when analyzed in retrospect.

Take the advent of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul into the Sidnaw region. Ultimately destined to converge on Ontonagon for the terminus of its now known Superior division, it came into Northern Michigan at this point with something far less than fanfare.

Preceded by DSS&A

The Duluth, South Shore and Atlantic road was extended into the Sidnaw region in 1888 and not too many year later the "August St. Paul" came through. Fireworks ensued when the latter decided to proceed northerly, for the South Shore already was on the job in Sidnaw.

But while the South Shore men were enjoying a heavy night's snooze, the track men out of Chicago and Milwaukee placed rails atop the South Shore's tracks. When the hefty snorers aboard the work cars of the latter road eased reluctantly out of their berths next morning they found the Milwaukee engine plumb cross the DSS&A track. Well, the deed was done then and very little about it could be changed. Consequently Sidnaw became a railway junction point over night.
Northern Kept Out

Positively diplomatic, too, were the reasons which kept the Chicago and Northwestern out of the Copper Country. Ramsay, in the Gogebic iron range, was just getting settled. A planing and shingle mill was built in Irondale(Ramsay) in 1887. At the time Avvil, Colby Puritan and Mikado were producing ore, but Ramsay was not.

The railway which coursed through Ramsay at the time was predecessor of the Northwestern, the Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western. But the South Shore ran through Bessemer Township to Hurley, Wis., in 1890, too.

Gentlemen's Agreement

Through a gentlemen's agreement between the two lines it was decreed that the South Shore would stay out of Iron County and the Northwestern would remain distant from the confines of the Copper Country. To this day this agreement has been honored.

True, the Northwestern did run a passenger train into the Copper Country prior to 1920, but never over its own tracks. It always used those of the South Shore.

And did you know that the Copper Range had a track all surveyed through to make a connection with the Northwestern at Watersmeet? That's right. What a road the CR would have been had they followed their plans!

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