

# ***Rails Around Michigan***

## ***The Wolverine State in Days Past***

@ 2010 K G Productions. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form without expressed written consent from the Publisher. Send request to [mike@railsaroundmichigan.com](mailto:mike@railsaroundmichigan.com)

***ISBN 978-0-578-04723-2*** First printing 2010, Printed in China

**Introduction..... 1-7**

**Chapter 1: Southeast Michigan.....8-31**

**Chapter 2: Central Michigan.....32-49**

**Chapter 3: Southwest Michigan.....50-66**

**Chapter 4: The Thumb.....67-80**

**Chapter 5: Northern Michigan.....81-109**

**Chapter 6: Upper Peninsula.....110-127**

**Epilogue.....128**





*Left - Durand was the crossroads of two GTW mainlines, a branch line and the Ann Arbor mainline. It was here that GTW passenger trains from Detroit and Muskegon made connections with the Chicago-Pt. Huron-Toronto trains. In this sequence in the mid-1950s, GTW train # 21 arrives at Durand behind 4-6-2 # 5632. It will pull up to the depot, detrain passengers, and wait for train #17 from Toronto to Chicago. While waiting, a switch engine will connect to the rear of the train, remove the through-coach for Chicago and proceed around the wye tracks to couple the coach onto the rear of #17 after its arrival. *Bluewater NRHS**

Action intensifies as three trains meet at the Durand depot on September 7, 1956. Train #56 from Muskegon to Detroit waits on the left as 0-8-0 # 8325 works the rear of train # 20 on the Chicago-Toronto mainline. On the right, 4-6-2 # 5629 leads train # 21 from Detroit, waiting to depart for Muskegon once #20 clears the station. The railroad first came to Durand in 1856 when the Detroit & Milwaukee built through Durand towards Owosso and on to Grand Rapids, reaching Grand Haven in 1858. *Bill Clynes*





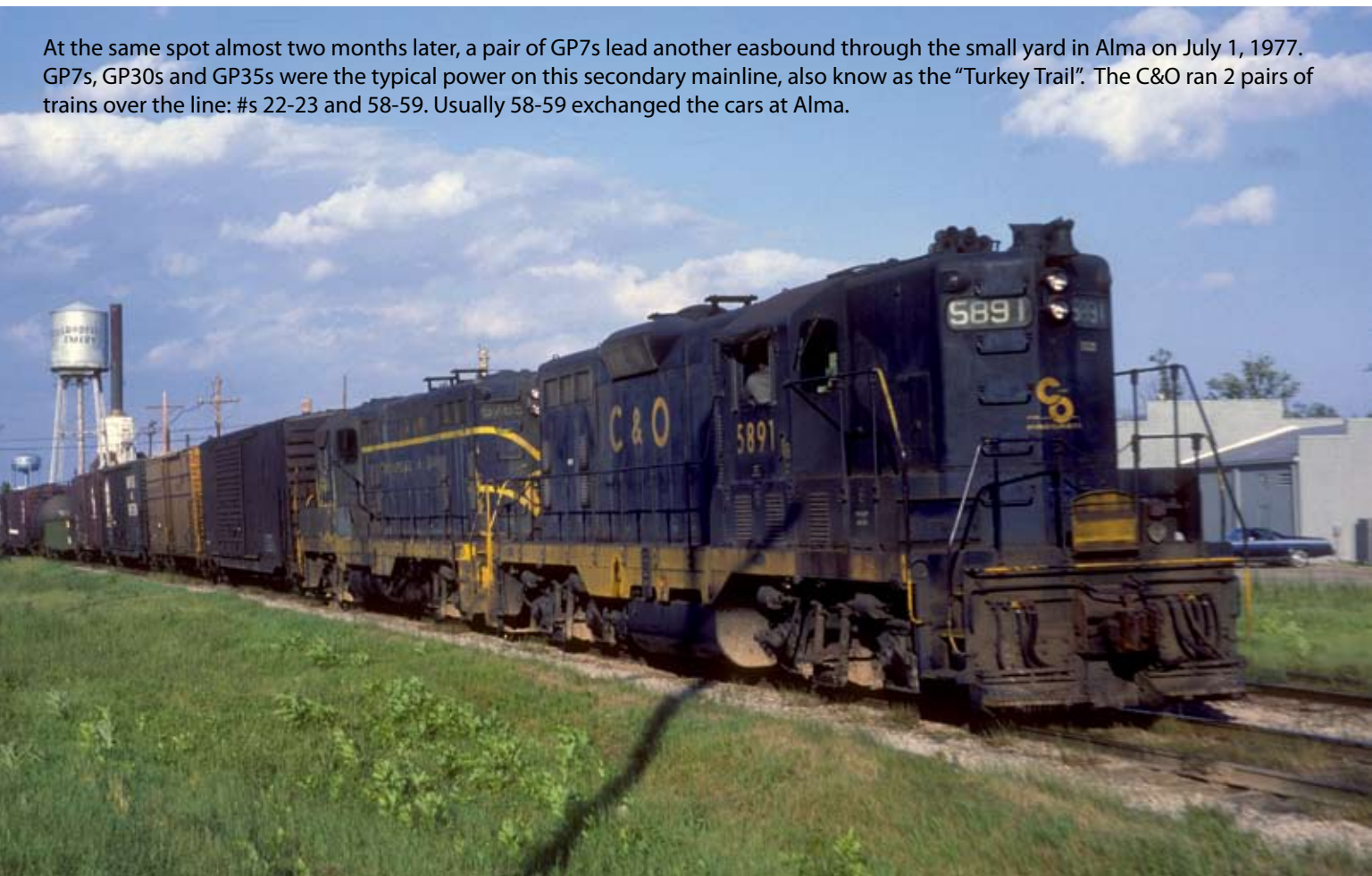
Left - GTW 4-6-2 # 5633 runs light through the crossing after running around the wye tracks. Trains 17, 20 and 21 have already departed for Chicago, Toronto and Muskegon respectively. The large three-story Durand Union Station was built in 1903 to serve the Grand Trunk Western and Ann Arbor railroads. This station still stands today and houses the GTW Historical Society archives, the Michigan Railroad History Museum and a large model railroad. *Bluewater NRHS*





Above - The C&O kept a switcher here in Alma to service the local businesses in the area. A small yard and the engine house were the base of this operation. The road crew discusses the set-outs with the local crew as C&O GP35 # 3535 is stopped in the small Alma yard with an eastbound on May 13, 1977.

At the same spot almost two months later, a pair of GP7s lead another eastbound through the small yard in Alma on July 1, 1977. GP7s, GP30s and GP35s were the typical power on this secondary mainline, also known as the "Turkey Trail". The C&O ran 2 pairs of trains over the line: #s 22-23 and 58-59. Usually 58-59 exchanged the cars at Alma.





*Left* - On March 4, 1979 a recent snowfall lingers as Ann Arbor GP35 # 390 crosses the C&O with a southbound train. Ann Arbor's GP35s were ordered in 1963 and built on trucks from Alco FA2s, which the Ann Arbor traded to EMD in the deal. Delivered in DT&I orange the units now work for Michigan Interstate by the date of this photo.

*Right* - Before moving on from Alma, C&O GP35 # 3572 and a GP7 lead a westbound out of town on May 7, 1979, headed for Grand Rapids. This line would cease to be a through route in 1988 as C&O successor CSX would abandon the line west of Alma to Edmore and south to Greenville. Today Alma is served by locals out of Saginaw.



*Left* - Six miles east of Alma is St. Louis, namesake of the Saginaw Valley & St Louis Railroad, builder of the line through here in 1873. Just over a hundred years later on May 31, 1980 C&O GP35 # 3564 leads two other units on an eastbound freight headed for Saginaw. The C&O had an agent based at the depot here, and the railroad's main customer was a chemical company. Cars for the chemical company were dropped off at the yard in Alma, and the local freight brought them over in the morning and switched the plant as well as the other customers in St Louis.

*All - Dennis Schmidt*





*Left* - The French turbos were so lightweight that they were not heavy enough to grind the rust off the rails after rains. This created signal problems for the Penn Central dispatchers so to correct this, PC began to re-route hotshot freights ahead of the turbos to polish the rails. These were the first mainline freights over the former NYC west of Kalamazoo in years, as the PC had rerouted these freights south from Kalamazoo to Elkhart Ind. Penn Central GP40 # 3156 leads westbound freight JK-5 from Jackson to Kalamazoo past Nichols tower on May 31, 1976.

*Right* - Nichols tower in Battle Creek was built in 1905 to protect the crossing of the Michigan Central and Grand Trunk Western mainlines. It was equipped with a 24-lever frame that controlled switches, signals and derails and was named after the neighboring Nichols & Shepherd factory. The crossing would be eliminated in the 1980s when traffic on the former MC was re-routed over the Grand Trunk through downtown Battle Creek. On August 8, 1975 Amtrak turbo # 58 heads west past Nichols tower with train # 355.



*Left* - The Michigan Central completed construction of this large red brick station in Battle Creek in 1887, the same year as the station in Kalamazoo. This station, however, was larger and grand, designed in Richardson-Romanesque style. The station was recently restored and is now a restaurant. Conrail B23-7 # 2902 leads a westbound freight past the historic station on June 21, 1979. *All - JP*

*Right* - The Grand Trunk Western came to Battle Creek in 1869 as the Peninsular Railway. Controlled by English and Canadian interests from its beginning, the Grand Trunk was to be part of a line completing a connection from Maine to Montreal to Chicago via Sarnia, Ontario. After a bankruptcy in the early 1920s, the line was included in the 1923 nationalization of various Canadian railroads. The Canadian government did not wish to use the Canadian name in the US, so the line west of Sarnia across Michigan would be called the Grand Trunk Western. GP38-2 5819 and SD40-2 5918 lead eastbound freight # 398 through Battle Creek on September 16, 1979.



*Left* - The Grand Trunk's Battle Creek station was constructed west of Nichols tower in 1906 and up until 1988, housed the Superintendent and offices of the Chicago Division, as well as the dispatchers for the South Bend, Flint, and Kalamazoo subdivisions. The station at one time had a single track "coach yard" which is now gone as GT GP9 # 4137 leads westbound freight 513 past the historic station on December 15, 1979. The Canadian National Railway still uses this station today.

Snow is more than a frequent visitor to Michigan and the Grand Trunk is prepared, keeping a Jordan spreader on stand-by in the Battle Creek yard. CN influence has always been seen on the Grand Trunk, and finding CN power on GT road freights was not uncommon. February 3, 1980 finds snow on the ground and CN GP39 # 5532 leading GT GP38 # 5813 with westbound freight 513 out of the Battle Creek yard. *All - JP Baukus*





*Above* - On May 31, 1968 the 646 has been repainted with the D&M's new gray and maroon paint scheme and is switching local industries in Bay City. Lumber and tourism were the mainstays of D&M traffic in its early years, but so was ice. In the time before the electric refrigerator, the D&M would bring carloads of northern ice down to ice houses in Bay City when winters in southern Michigan were too warm.

*Below* - Grand Trunk Western reached Bay City on a branch line from Durand via Saginaw. The nick-name of this line was the "Salt Line", originating from the large salt deposits discovered in the Saginaw Valley. The GTW provided a round-trip daily mixed train from Durand until March of 1958. Before then, passengers could get from Bay City to Chicago in just under ten hours, and return the next day in just under eight hours. By April 16 of 1969, that service was eleven years long gone, as GTW GP9 # 4555 rolls into Bay City with the freight from Durand and Saginaw. *Both - Dennis Schmidt*





The main interchange for the Grand Trunk in Bay City was the Detroit & Mackinac, two miles to the east of GT's Bay City station. In the days of GT's mixed train the combine would be dropped off at the depot while the rest of the train continued to the D&M yard. There it would make its exchange, turn on the D&M wye and return to the GT station to pick up the passengers for the return to Durand. Prior to 1940 through-passenger trains were operated between Durand and Alpena. On July 29, 1975 GT GP9 # 4901, built for passenger service, leads a GT interchange train to the D&M at Bay City.



*Below* - In its early days the D&M went to great lengths to develop business and tourism along its line, including special excursions, picnics and tourism brochures. The railroad even published fish and game laws in its timetables and offered camping packages. The Great Depression and America's love for the automobile forced most railroads to give up on tourism. By June of 1976 the tourists were long gone from D&M rails, as D&M RS2 # 481 works the D&M yard on Bay City's northeast side. *Both - Dennis Schmidt*





Beulah is seven miles east of Elberta at the east end of beautiful Crystal Lake in Benzie County. Ever since the arrival of the first Ann Arbor passenger trains in the 1890s, Crystal Lake has been a seasonal vacation destination for many generations of Midwest families, including mine. In the 1930s my grandfather served as secretary to one of the Vice Presidents of the Wabash Railroad, owner of the Ann Arbor Railroad. He traveled to this end of the Ann Arbor on several occasions and began bring the family to Crystal Lake during that time, a tradition my family continues today.

*Above* - In a scene that can not be repeated, Ann Arbor GP35 # 390 and 3 sisters lead a long, heavy boat train east through Beulah in July of 1973. The train has been skirting the south shore of Crystal Lake for several miles now, separating vacation homes from their beach access, and is crossing Main street.

*Left* - From here the line arches southeast . passing the granary and under US31. At one time the Ann Arbor had a station on the spot from where these two shots were taken. All of this is gone now: the trains, the station, and the tracks. The right of way became a bike trail that stretches all the way from Thompsonville to Lake Michigan.  
*Both* - Michael J Kelly





Above - As the caboose brings up the rear we finish the picture of life in this quaint resort town as it was into the 1970s. It was quite exciting as a child to spot an eastbound AA train headed for Beulah from the beach of our cottage on the north shore of Crystal Lake, run into the house and yell to my dad "There's a train dad! Let's go!"; jump in the car and head for Beulah. Because of deferred maintenance on the AA, track speeds were low which allowed us to get to Beulah in time for shots like these. Beulah still enjoys lots of summertime vacationers today, but the trains are gone. *Michael J Kelly*

Below - Petoskey is located in northern Emmet County on Little Traverse Bay. The Chicago & West Michigan (Pere Marquette) arrived in Petoskey in 1892 on a line it built from Traverse City. The railroad constructed a depot that same year right on the waterfront which still stands today. The Petoskey area became filled with resorts catering to summer vacationers and tourists. The PM and later C&O operated special resort trains from Chicago and Detroit into Petoskey and neighboring Bay View until 1957. Regular passenger service to Petoskey on train #25 & #26 ended in 1962, when those trains began ending their run from Grand Rapids at Traverse City. On November 14, 1979 C&O GP35 #3538 is arriving at the Petoskey freight yard with a freight from Traverse City. The C&O still served several customers in Petoskey at this time. *Neil Plagens Sr.*





Above - Negaunee is also in Marquette County, 12 miles west of Marquette. Iron ore was discovered in the vicinity in 1844, and mining companies needed to get the ore to Marquette for shipment via the Great Lakes. The Iron Mountain Railway Company was constructed in 1857 connecting the mines near Negaunee with Marquette. Soon after the railroad began to build west to Lake Michigamme and would become part of the Marquette and Ontonagon Railroad in 1865. The M&O would merge with the Houghton and Ontonagon in the early 1880s, with the new name being the Marquette, Houghton and Ontonagon Railroad. With the aid of land grants the railroad build north from L'Anse to Houghton and west from L'Anse to Nestoria by 1883. In 1890 the MH&O would merge with the Detroit, Mackinac & Marquette to become the Duluth, South Shore and Atlantic, and would reach Superior, Wisc., from Nestoria in 1892. The DSS&A became part of the Soo Line in 1960, and on May 2, 1975 Soo Line geep # 2411 and an F7 are stopped at LS&I Junction in Negaunee, waiting for an eastbound train led by GP30 # 713 (below) Both - Barry Carlson





Above - Ishpeming lies just west of Negaunee near the western border of Marquette County. The LS&I and the C&NW interchanged ore loads at Euclid Yard in Ishpeming, and here on July 11, 1977 a trio of C&NW Alco C628s wait on the yard lead near the yard office as an LS&I train departs. The LS&I at the time handled all service to the mines in the area including Empire, Tilden and Republic mines. The LS&I made up trains for the C&NW bound for Escanaba at this yard. The typical C&NW power for these trains from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s was three of the Alco C628s. Beginning in 1986 the railroad began to replace these 20-year old Alcos with brand new SD50s and SD60s from EMD.



Above - The LS&I handled operations to the mines and had four yards to handle the traffic, all located between Eagle Mills and Republic. Eagle Mills assembles empties to the mines and loaded trains to the dock at Marquette. Humboldt yard handles ore cars bound for Humboldt and Republic mines. Harris yard is used for car storage, and as stated, Euclid yard in Ishpeming is used for interchanging ore with the Chicago & Northwestern. The LS&I favored Alco power, owning several units each of five different models since the end of steam. On July 15, 1979, Barry Carlson is back in Ishpeming as LS&I RSD-12 # 1804 and a sister lead a loaded ore train from Republic mine towards Euclid yard. In the late 1980s the railroad would begin to retire the Alcos and replace them with second hand General Electric U30Cs. Today's LS&I roster is all GE with the U30Cs and C30-7s. Both - Barry Carlson