The Railroad History of St. Louis Park
Doug Johnson
St. Louis Park Historical Society
This city map will be the background for all the following maps.
1857 Minnesota & Pacific Railroad Co. is chartered and proceeds to survey a route from St. Paul west to the Red River.
1862 Minnesota & Pacific Railroad has not laid a single mile of track. It forfeits its charter and the legislature turns it over to the St. Paul & Pacific Railroad.
1864 St. Paul & Pacific surveys its own route west from Minneapolis, passing south of Cedar Lake.
1867 St. Paul & Pacific reaches Lake Minnetonka, passing around the east and south sides of Cedar Lake. If you live on a parallelogram in Fern Hill, you probably live on its right of way!
1871 Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway builds southwest from Minneapolis to Carver, also passing along the east side of Cedar Lake.
1878 The bankrupt St. Paul & Pacific is purchased by James J. Hill and associates.
1879 Hill changes the railroad’s name to St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba.
1880 Commander Larrabee Milling & Storage builds the first grain elevator along the MStL in what was to become St. Louis Park (blue box).
1881 The Milwaukee Road, using the Hastings & Dakota, completes the “Benton Cut-Off,” a direct connection from Cologne to Minneapolis, including the tracks just outside our door on which this depot was built. The Benton Cut-Off proceeded across south Minneapolis to connect with the Milwaukee’s yard and shops along Hiawatha Ave.
1883 The St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba completes their “Minnetonka Cutoff” and abandons their original route through Hennepin County.
1886 The SPM&M builds the original “Hutchinson Branch” to Hopkins, St. Bonifacius, and Hutchinson, reusing some of the St. Paul & Pacific right of way.

1886 St. Louis Park acquires its name when it persuades the MStL to build a depot in the village in exchange for naming the town after the railroad. (Photos on walls of depot.)

1887 The Milwaukee Road builds our depot along its tracks about 100 yards east of where it now stands. (Photos on walls of depot.)
1890  T. B. Walker’s Minneapolis Land & Investment Co. begins an industrial park and constructs a loop of track connected to both the Milwaukee Road and the MStL.
1890  The St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba is renamed the Great Northern.
1892  Walker’s company begins a streetcar service from Minneapolis to the end of Lake St.
1893  The Peavey Interior Elevator Company builds a grain elevator on the MStL where Nordic Ware is now (green box).
1898  The streetcar line is extended to Hopkins.
1898  The Great Western grain elevator is built on the MStL near Bass Lake (orange box).
1899  The Peavey-Haglin experimental elevator is built.
Interior elevator in 1900, on the MStL where Nordic Ware is now (green box). The Peavey-Haglin experimental elevator is on the National Register of Historic Places.
1900 The Great Northern spur to its hotel on the west side on Lake Minnetonka is extended to St. Bonifacius, connecting to the Hutchinson Branch. The original Hutchinson Branch from Hopkins to St. Bonifacius is abandoned, portions of which become Excelsior Blvd. & Hwy 7.
1906 The streetcar line is sold to TCRT, which discontinues the Hopkins connection in 1907.
1908 The Exchange Elevator is built on the MStL near Bass Lake (yellow box).
1913 The Milwaukee Road builds Bass Lake Yard using fill acquired by lowering their tracks across south Minneapolis below street level.
1915 Col. Marlon W. Savage extends his “Dan Patch Electric Lines” from Auto Club Road to Golden Valley and adds interchanges with freight railroads to his original commuter line.
1918 The new Minneapolis, Northfield & Southern Ry purchases the bankrupt Dan Patch Lines.
Exchange elevator (yellow box) and Great Western elevator in 1914 (orange box).
1938  TCRT ends service to SLP. Sometime along the way the MILW discontinued passenger service to this depot.
1950s – 70s MNS, MStL & MILW had multiple industry spurs.
1960  MStL is sold to CNW.
1961  May 21, the final MILW Olympian Hiawatha passed this depot returning from the west coast.
1963  The MStL depot is damaged by fire and torn down.
1968  The Interior Elevator, then owned by International Milling and with a big Robin Hood Flour sign on it, is torn down (green box, where Nordic Ware is today).
1968  The Milwaukee Road only has 2 team tracks left in SLP and closes this depot.
1970  This depot is saved from destruction and moved to Jorvig Park.
1970  The loop is greatly reduced but still serves some businesses, including Republic Creosoting.
1970  BN is created by the merger of GN, NP & CB&Q, SP&S. Their industry spur to the north is where Home Depot and West End are today.
1970’s  The Milwaukee’s Bass Lake Yard is abandoned.
Republic Creosoting in 1931.
Republic Creosoting aerial photo in 1966 (Louisiana Oaks Park today).
Commander Larrabée elevator in 1962 (blue box).
International Milling Robin Hood Flour (formerly Interior) elevator in 1968 (yellow box, Nordic Ware).
http://www.rrpicturearchives.net/

MStL passenger locomotive 1945 (Vern Wigfield)
MStL Doodlebug making a flag stop in 1958.
GN Western Star westbound 1966 (Greg Smith)
Bicentennial Freedom Train crossing Brunswick Ave 1975 (Vern Wigfield)
MNS on interchange with BN, looking east, 1970s (Vern Wigfield)
GN bridge over Virginia Ave, built in 1924 (John Marvig)
MNS over MILW & MStL tracks, looking east, 1970s (Vern Wigfield)
MILW in 1976, looking west (John Hill). You can see that railing along the bike trail.
MILW in 1977, looking east from on the MNS bridge (John Hill)
CNW in 1977, looking west from near our depot (John Hill)
## Daily Yard Check & Milwaukee Road Report of Freight Cars on Hand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Name</th>
<th>Spur Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jordan Sash and Door</td>
<td>private spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical Research &amp; Andrae Chemical Co.</td>
<td>private spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakeland Door Co.</td>
<td>private spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogers Hydraulic Co.</td>
<td>private spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill City Plywood Co.</td>
<td>private spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Ramp in the Swamp,&quot;</td>
<td>Euclid Industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheeler Lumber Bridge &amp; Supply Co.</td>
<td>private yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allied Gas Inc.</td>
<td>private spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garrison Co.</td>
<td>private spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armstrong Construction Co.</td>
<td>private spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Lead Co.</td>
<td>private spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyrofax Gas</td>
<td>private spur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reilly Republic Creosoting Co.</td>
<td>private yards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Tracks used by:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoigaard's Co.</td>
<td>Air Reduction Co.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnard</td>
<td>Insulation Engineers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Businesses served by this Milwaukee Road depot Jan-Feb. 1962.
SLP & Hopkins businesses BN served in 1972, to the north and west along the Hopkins spur. I don’t have industry lists for the MStL and MNS.
1971  Reilly Tar & Chemical (formerly Republic Creosoting) closed, removing most of what was left of the old loop.
1977  Burdick Belco Grain Elevators, originally the Great Western, burns down in a huge fire (orange box). I think the Exchange elevator was part of that complex, with the Great Western, and came down in the same fire.
1982  MN&S is acquired by the Soo Line and the interchange with the BN is removed.
1984  Burlington Northern abandons the Hopkins spur, which eventually becomes a bike trail.
1986  The Soo Line takes over operation of MN&S and acquires the remains of the Milwaukee Road.
1989  The Commander Elevators, last owned by Con Agra Peavey, are torn down (blue box).
1990  Canadian Pacific assumes full control of the Soo Line and now owns the former MNS and the Milwaukee Road tracks out to Hopkins.
1991  Twin Cities & Western acquires the former Milwaukee Road route from Hopkins west to South Dakota.
1994  CNW removes the MStL tracks and it eventually becomes a bike trail.
2001  Progressive Rail begins operations on the former MN&S, now owned by CP.
Burdick Belco (formerly Exchange and Great Western) elevators in 1976, looking east. The railing is visible from the bike trail today.
The 1977 fire (orange box) (John Hill photos).
2018-08-29 BNSF east-bound ethanol train on a former MILW right of way now owned by CP, coming from the TCW’s former MILW route and crossing a brand new bridge over Hwy 100. That bridge will eventually be used by light rail with the railroad shifted north to the next new bridge to be constructed where the remaining old one sits, to run alongside the bike trail.