

MILEPOSTS ON THE NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILWAY 1864-1964

- 1864 -- President Lincoln signs act of Congress creating Northern Pacific Railroad and authorizing construction of the first of the northern transcontinental railroad and telegraph lines between Lake Superior and Puget Sound. Act provides for right of way and land grant. First board meeting is held; Josiah Perham is elected president. NP leases LS&M.
- 1866 -- J. Gregory Smith succeeds Perham. W. S. Rowland is appointed commissioner to "represent the interests of the company at Washington." Congress extends time required for commencing and completing construction. -- 110 miles -- is completed.
- 1867 -- Construction begins on Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad (incorporated in 1857 as Nebraska & Lake Superior; now part of NP). Gen. G. W. Cass and William G. Fargo are elected to board. Edwin F. Johnson is named chief engineer, begins surveys of line. and provides protection for NP survey and construction crews.
- 1868 -- Congress again extends time to begin construction. Gen. Cass and Director B. F. Cheney establish first of Dakota bonanza wheat farms and engage Oliver Dalrymple to manage the combined 75,000-acre operation.
- 1869 -- Congress consents to give NP authority to "issue its bonds and secure the same by mortgage." Board asks Jay Cooke to serve as NP's fiscal agent. Cooke sends out reconnaissance parties, then accepts. 1870 -- Henry Villard enters Pacific Northwest transportation picture, assumes control of several transportation companies for German bondholders and becomes president of Oregon & California Railroad.
- 1870 -- Groundbreaking ceremonies are held at planned junction of NP and LS&M lines 25 miles west of Duluth, in February. Grading and tracklaying are begun at both ends of system in June. LS&M drives last spike on 155-mile line between St. Paul and Duluth. NP buys first locomotives (Minnetonka, Itaska, Ottertail and St. Cloud) and rolling stock. tracklaying.
- 1871 -- NP completes 230 miles of line between LS&M junction and Moorhead, Minn., on the Red River, plus 25 miles of line on North Pacific Coast. Buys 50 per cent interest in LS&M between junction and Duluth. Maj. Gen. W. S. Hancock orders out 600 troops to protect survey parties in hostile Indian country. Brainerd, Minn., shops are established.

1872 -- Freight contract is signed with Hudson's Bay Company. Chief engineer reports completion of 164 miles of main line into Dakota Territory and 45 additional miles on coastal line. Colonization offices are opened in Europe. Frederick Billings is named managing director of land department. NP President Smith warns President U. S. Grant that hostile Indians are impeding construction. Gen. Cass succeeds Smith as president. NP leases LS&M.

1873 -- Medical department is established in Minnesota (predecessor of today's NP Beneficial Association). NP line is completed to the Missouri river. Jay Cooke's firm collapses. Coastal line from Kalama to Tacoma -- 110 miles -- is completed.

1875 -- Charles B. Wright is elected president as Gen. Cass resigns to become receiver of the company. Reorganization plan, formulated by Frederick Billings, is put into effect. New board of directors is elected. Gen. Custer is assigned to Fort Rice, Dakota, and provides protection for NP survey and construction crews. Gen. Cass and Director B. P. Cheney establish first of Dakota bonanza wheat farms and engage Oliver Dalrymple to manage the combined 75,000-acre operation.

1876 -- Henry Villard enters Pacific Northwest transportation picture, assumes control of several transportation companies for German bondholders and becomes president of Oregon & California Railroad.

1877 -- NP employs mining engineer to open company's coal fields in Washington Territory -- beginning of geology division. Shops are established near Tacoma.

1878 -- Directors order steel rails to be used to replace all iron rail previously laid and in all subsequent tracklaying.

1879 -- Contract is let for building first 100 miles of line west of Missouri river. Company expands foreign immigration program in Europe. Billings succeeds to presidency. Henry Villard defeats Jay Gould in Kansas Pacific reorganization fight.

1880 -- Northern Pacific Express company begins operations in Minnesota and Dakota.

NP institutes broad program of branch line construction.

1881 -- Henry Villard raises millions with famous "blind pool" to create Oregon & Transcontinental Company and secretly gain control of NP. Billings resigns presidency and, later, Villard is elected to the post. Line reaches Sandpoint, Idaho, from the western end and Horton, Mont., from eastern. 110 miles of branch line are completed. Contract between NP and Pullman Palace Car company is signed; NP will own 50-per cent interest in all sleeping cars it uses.

1882 -- Bridge over Missouri river at Bismarck is completed. 360 miles of main line and 368 miles of branch line are completed, bringing totals to 1,347 and 731 miles, respectively. NPBA is organized. First dining car is purchased.

1883 -- NP begins conversion of locomotives to burn coal. Mullan tunnel is completed. Yellowstone National Park branch is completed to Cinnabar, Mont., and NP becomes first line to serve a national park. Main line is completed in grand celebration at Gold Creek, Mont. First NP general office building in St. Paul is completed. Livingston, Mont., shops are opened. All passenger cars and engines are equipped with air brakes. Through passenger service is begun with "Pacific Express" (westbound) and "Atlantic Express" (eastbound).

1885 -- Construction is completed to eastern extremity of NP system, Ashland, Wis. Company's St. Louis Bay bridge -- connecting Duluth, Minn. and Superior, Wis.-- is opened. NP begins fitting freight cars with air brakes.

1886 -- Work is begun on Stampede Tunnel through Cascade range. All engines in regular service are now using coal as fuel.

1888 -- Stampede Tunnel -- first in the West to be electrically lighted -- is opened to service. Tacoma headquarters building is completed. NP introduces use of copper wire and quadruplex circuits in telegraph service.

- 1889 -- NP begins equipping all freight cars with Master Car Builders' automatic couplers. Company charters five liners to dominate tea trade with China and Japan.
- 1890 -- Right of Way and Lease department is created and industrial development begins. NP introduces a second transcontinental train.
- 1891 -- Edison phonoplex service is installed in telegraph facilities between Tacoma and Portland (Forerunner of telephone service).
- 1892 -- NP Steamship company begins freight and passenger operations between Tacoma and ports in China and Japan. New car and engine shops are established at Edison (South Tacoma), Wash.
- 1893 -- NP adopts oriental monad as trademark motif. J. W. Kendrick takes special train from St. Paul to Tacoma (2056 miles) in record-breaking 48 hours. NP goes into receivership second time.
- 1896 -- Company is reorganized to become NP Railway. J. P. Morgan & Company become financial agents, Morgan heads voting trust.
- 1898 -- NP acquires Washington Central and the Washington & Columbia River railroads.
- 1900 -- North Coast Limited is introduced. NP acquires Brainerd & Northern Minnesota and the St. Paul & Duluth (old LS&M); begins second tracking of main line.
- 1901 -- NP voting trust is dissolved. NP and GN purchase control of CB&Q. E. H. Harriman seeks to buy control of NP; J. P. Morgan stops the raid, but gives Harriman seat on NP board. (NP stock is quoted at 1000 at height of battle -- a Wall Street record.) Northern Securities company is incorporated to pool ownership of NP, GN & CB&Q.
- 1903 -- U.S. Supreme Court, by 5 to 4 decision, rules Northern Securities Co. violates Sherman anti-trust laws. NP extends Yellowstone National Park branch to Gardiner, Mont.

- 1905 -- NP and GN begin construction of Portland & Seattle railway (later Spokane, Portland & Seattle). NP and UP undertake construction of Camas Prairie railroad.
- 1906 -- Tie treating plants are erected at Brainerd and at Paradise, Mont. NP and GN open new King Street passenger station in Seattle. NP begins construction of yards at Pasco, Wash.; Laurel, Mont., and Dilworth, Minn.
- 1908 -- Company buys first of its Mallet compounds (2-6-6-2) and a Heisler, geared locomotive. SP&S is completed.
- 1909 -- NP introduces "Great Big Baked Potato."
- 1910 -- NP extends joint use of its line between Portland and Seattle to GN and UP.
- 1912 -- NP begins operating NCL into Chicago via C&NW trackage east of St. Paul. NP and GN begin operating Midland Railway of Manitoba into Winnipeg.
- 1914 -- NP and GN begin construction of St. Paul general office building -- largest in the city, then and now.
- 1917 -- NP sells its interest in sleeping cars to Pullman Company, ending 36-year policy of 50-50 ownership with that firm.
- 1921 -- NP organizes Absaroka Oil Development Co. and begins systematic geologic survey of company lands.
- 1923 -- Automatic block signalling is completed on all of main line between St. Paul and North Pacific Coast. U. S. Supreme Court upholds NP claim that its forest lands may not be included in National Forest reservations.
- 1925 -- Third Street Coach yard is built in St. Paul. An 800-HP ventilating system is installed in Stampede Tunnel. Hanna Ore Mining Co. leases NP iron ore properties in Minnesota.

- 1927 -- NP & GN file application with ICC for unification of systems. NP introduces Northern (4-8-4) locomotives.
- 1929 -- NP and other railroads acquire American Railway Express Co. and incorporate Railway Express company. NP introduces the Yellowstone (2-8-8-4) simple, articulated steam locomotive, largest in the world.
- 1931 -- NP and GN withdraw unification application when ICC bases approval on condition that the two lines divest themselves of their interest in CB&Q.
- 1932 -- Northern Pacific Transport company, NP-owned highway subsidiary, begins operating in Montana.
- 1933 -- NP purchases Timken's famed "Four Aces," world's first roller bearing locomotive.
- 1934 -- Judge Robert S. Macfarlane joins company as assistant western counsel in Seattle. NP begins air conditioning of North Coast Limited. Jule M. Hannaford, NP chairman, dies, ending 62-year career with company.
- 1936 -- NP installs its first continuous, welded rail, in tunnels.
- 1938 -- Company purchases first diesel-electric locomotives.
- 1939 -- NP begins mechanizing accounting procedures.
- 1944 -- NP installs first diesel-electric road locomotives in freight service. First diesel shops are completed at Auburn, Wash. Work is begun on new car building shops at Brainerd. NP orders its first lightweight passenger equipment. Last of steam locomotive purchases are placed in service. Company inaugurates systemwide carrier telephone service.
- 1946 -- Brainerd car shops are completed and work begins on new car program.

- 1947 -- Newly dieselized North Coast Limited goes in service with all new lightweight equipment. Company installs its first CTC, a 50-mile section in Montana; begins using end-to-end and dispatcher-to-train radio in Washington State.
- 1951 -- Board of directors elects Robert S. Macfarlane president, as C. E. Denney retires. Oil is discovered in Williston Basin; Texas Company brings in well on NP lands. Welded rail program is begun.
- 1952 -- Oil development department is established. North Coast Limited goes on new fast schedule, and second transcontinental "name" train, the MAINSTREETER, is placed in service.
- 1953 -- NP establishes photogrammetry section in Seattle and begins timber inventory with aerial cameras.
- 1954 -- Vista-Dome coaches and sleepers are added to North Coast Limited. NP receives 1954 Progress Award of the Federation for Railway Progress "in recognition of outstanding achievement in progressive passenger service." TOFC service is begun on NP.
- 1955 -- President Macfarlane dedicates new electronic freight classification yard at Pasco, Wash., first in the Pacific Northwest. Stewardess-nurse service, another PNW "first," is inaugurated on Vista-Dome North Coast Limited. First Budd RDC cars are added to NP passenger fleet. NP and GN institute new unification study. NP joins in building Butte Pipeline as Williston Basin discoveries continue. Accounting procedures are streamlined with installation of IBM 650 Data Processing system.
- 1956 -- NP oil and gas revenues nearly double that of 1955; shared wells grow to 166. Butte Pipeline is enlarged to handle additional crude. 80 new diesel-electric units go into service as dieselization nears completion. NP begins using helicopter for reforestation in tree farm operations. NP shares are split two for one.

- 1957 -- New five-track diesel maintenance shop is opened at Livingston. 2000-mile direct-dial telephone network goes into service between St. Paul and North Pacific Coast cities.
- 1958 -- Timkin's "Four Aces," later NP 2626, is reduced to scrap as dieselization program is completed in January. Oil and gas revenues pass \$7 million for new high. NP introduces all-steel, double-decked "Pig Palace" stock cars.
- 1959 -- Slumbercoaches -- "Loch Ness," "Loch Lomond," "Loch Leven," and "Loch Sloy" -- are added to Vista-Dome North Coast Limited.
- 1961 -- NP and GN stockholders approve merger plan; ICC begins hearings on application to unify NP, GN, CB&Q and SP&S. NP becomes first railroad to install IBM 11401 Magnetic Tape Data Processing system.
- 1962 -- Merger hearings are concluded. NP installs citizens band radio system to coordinate St. Paul general offices maintenance. Oil and gas revenues near \$8 million as shared wells grow to 766. Passenger revenue reaches highest peacetime level since 1929. Company begins to build single-sheath all steel box cars at Brainerd shops.
- 1963 -- NP further improves electronic accounting with installation of IBM 11410 Magnetic Tape Data Processing system. Addition of 80 miles of continuous welded rail boosts total on system above 400. Mileage under CTC grows to more than 400 also. Microwave radio between Seattle and Portland and intermediate points expands communications network. NP reports net income of \$24,592,470, highest since 1943.
- 1964 -- NP authorizes \$35 million improvement program, including more welded rail, CTC, branch line dial service, 15 new 2500-HP diesel units, 900 freight cars, and more, as President Macfarlane completes 30th year with company in its 100th year.