

Special Commuter Service Souvenir-Program Edition

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COMMUTER SERVICE
SOUVENIR-PROGRAM
EDITION

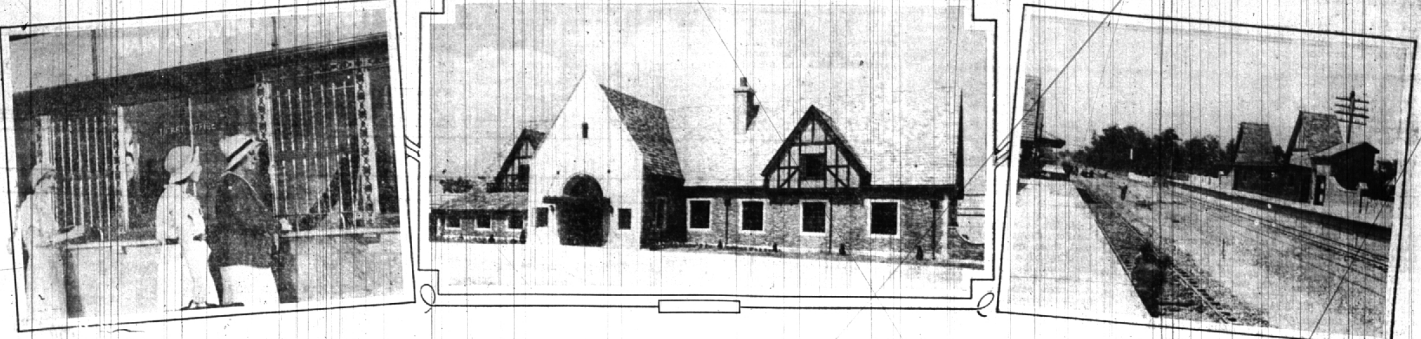
The Birmingham Eccentric

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FIFTY-FOURTH YEAR—NO. 16

BIRMINGHAM, OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN, SATURDAY, AUGUST 1, 1931

PHOTOS OF BIRMINGHAM'S \$125,000 STATION, TO BE DEDICATED SATURDAY



Scenes of Birmingham's new \$125,000 station to be formally dedicated at Saturday's celebration are shown above. The center picture gives a view of the front of the building showing a part of the large cement plaza for automobiles leading up to the door. At the right is a view of the west platform. An underground passage way connects the station platform and a glimpse of the building. A freight elevator and special baggage tunnel in connection with the express facilities allow of expeditious handling of baggage. Ground for the new station was first broken last October, and finishing touches on the completed structure were applied only a few days ago. The station was designed by Grand Trunk architects, and the Walbridge-Aldinger Company of Detroit were the contractors.

New Station In 1st Rank Among Suburban Depots

Passengers who make Birmingham their getting-on-and-off place in Michigan's first commuter service will have the use of one of the largest and most attractive suburban stations in the United States.

Located at the corner of East Maple and Eton roads and costing \$125,000, the station was conceived by the Grand Trunk Railway as a structure whose quality should harmonize fully with the beauty of the community it was to serve, and whose size should be sufficient to care for all traffic needs for many years to come.

As a result, the new depot is perhaps the most imposing and pretentious railway station of its kind in the country in proportion

to the size of the community in which it is located.

Of modified old English architecture, the station is modern in every respect and introduces in Michigan the station platform of car vestibule level. This means that passengers are able to step into the car from the platform without being forced to ascend steps. The platforms are the same type as those used in the Grand Central Station in New York City and serve to expedite the loading and unloading of passengers.

The beauty of the station is unquestioned. Its Vermont slate roof of blended multi-colored shingles and herringbone patterns in the brick construction of the station offer a pleasing contrast to the surrounding finely landscaped and terraced lawns and flower beds.

The ingenious blend of brick and concrete strikingly with the white Indiana limestone used in the main entrance. An ornamental marquis over the main entrance door is flanked by two decorative bronze lanterns. A large arched window in the main waiting room with a bronze grill on the outside affords excellent daytime lighting. In front of the station is a large concrete plaza for automobiles.

The southbound station platform, above the station level, is reached by concrete steps outside the station or through the waiting room. Passengers for northbound trains do not have to cross the tracks but use a tunnel from the main waiting room to the opposite side of the tracks where stairs take them to what might be called a miniature station on the other side.

Protected From Storms

The platforms which are, roughly speaking, 600 feet long on either side, are protected from rough weather by a continuous marquis adjacent to the station stairs. Ornamental iron light standards line the parapet walls. They contain 300-watt bulbs.

The Maple road grade separation adjacent to the station is of modern type in keeping with the fine architecture of the station building. It is of reinforced concrete with pannelled concrete fascia and deck terminates with heavy concrete pylons at the abutment ends.

The same quality of treatment is evidenced in the interior of the station. The floors of the main waiting room are of Italian marble terrazzo, the walls of travertine marble, the ceiling arched, with classic cornices and plaster plaques from which hang heavy bronze lanterns.

Each lantern is griddled with opalescent glass and each contains a single 500-watt bulb—none of the largest commercial sizes in general use. Bronze bracket lights adorn the side walls. All the interior bronze work is antique statuary in color. All doors inside are of silver oak trimmed to harmonize with the general interior treatment.

Even the placement of the radi-

ators is in keeping with the high grade type of construction used throughout the station. All radiators in the main waiting room are concealed in the walls and the openings are framed over by beautiful bronze radiator grills.

The ticket office is framed in travertine with the counter grill framed in plate glass and antique bronze. It is surmounted by a train indicator board which informs the passengers in the waiting room when a train has reached the mile limit.

When a train has approached within a mile of the station, the board illuminates and sounds a musical gong, also notifying the conductor from which the train is coming. A clock with ornamented hands and letters on a traveling face tops the ticket office.

A special telephone room and ladies ante room are features of the building. A freight elevator and special baggage tunnel in connection with the express facilities allow of expeditious handling of baggage.

Ground for the new station was first broken last October, and finishing touches on the completed structure were applied only a few days ago. The station was designed by Grand Trunk architects, and the Walbridge-Aldinger Company of Detroit were the contractors.

1852 started to run out of Brush street Depot.

Five Employees

A grand average of \$50 per day was given as the receipts of the railroad in 1838. At its inception the staff, from general manager to office boy, totalled five. A locomotive obtained from Philadelphia, the "Sherman Stephen", was first used in 1830 and was one of the original locomotives built by Bailyin, founder of the Baldwin Locomotive Works.

The first passenger coaches were divided into three rooms, benches for seats being arranged lengthwise and the passengers entering through doors on the sides instead of at the ends.

These were made in the company's shops and were used for 40 years. The trains on train of the Detroit and Pontiac must have been the first "accommodated train" in this part of the country, for the train stopped anywhere and everywhere to take on or let off passengers, and the time when the trains would reach any particular place was not guaranteed.

It is related also that strict rules were laid down affecting the use of the whistle at crossings, so as not to scare horses. The very sight of the train was such a fearful thing for the animals that when the engine added insult to injury by giving vent to a whistle that the horns would probably go one way and the carriage find its way into the ditch.

Strap Causes Trouble

The rails used by this time were of strap or flat iron spiked to the cross ties. In connection with the fact that they sometimes broke, entering the floors of the cars to greet the passengers, an advertisement in the directory of 1848 said: "The company have (Turn to Page 5, this section).

Grand Trunk To Celebrate 100th Birthday In 3 Years

It is almost 100 years since the "Sherman Stephen" of the old Detroit and Pontiac Railway, predecessor of the Grand Trunk Western, first began chugging down Dequindre street, spraying mud and water on all that hand and starting many a horse on a lively run.

As a matter of fact, at the very beginning, the cars themselves were operated by horse power on wooden rails.

After a heavy rain the tracks used to sink into the mud whenever the train went over them, going up again after it had passed. The good citizens apparently got tired of having their houses sprayed at regular intervals and one night after the train had gone to Pontiac tore up a number of rails near Beaubien street. This necessitated the engine being run backwards to Pontiac for several weeks.

Travel in those days was very fast; so fast, in fact, that when the locomotives went over the rails at 12 miles per hour, the coach wheels would pull the spikes holding them and the broken iron sheathing would come up through the floors of the coaches.

Incorporated in 1834

Dating its beginning from the inception of the Detroit and Pontiac, the Grand Trunk Western will be able to celebrate its 100th birthday in three years. In the possession of E. W. Hotchkiss, assistant treasurer of the Grand Trunk, is an old stock certificate of the Detroit and Pontiac Railway, giving the date of incorporation in Michigan as March 7, 1834.

Four years later a line was constructed and placed in operation for a distance of 13 miles from Detroit to Royal Oak. From Royal Oak to Birmingham an additional 5.40 miles was opened in the spring of '41 and an additional eight miles from Birmingham to Pontiac was finally placed in operation in September of 1844. Progress was not very rapid.

To the Detroit and Pontiac Railway, however, goes the credit of being the pioneer railroad of the western states. In 1839 there were only 24 miles of railroad in operation in Michigan and 20 miles in Ohio. In 1840 the mileage in Ohio was increased by 10 miles and in Michigan by 35. In 1841 railroads began in Illinois, and while Ohio added only six miles that year, Michigan added 79.

First Station

The original intention of the Detroit and Pontiac was to run into Detroit over Gratiot road from Dequindre street to Woodward avenue, and in 1838 the City Council gave the necessary permission but the company laid its tracks on Dequindre street instead, from Gratiot road to Jefferson avenue, where the first railroad station in Detroit was built.

It was a wooden structure, standing at the northwest corner of Jefferson avenue and Dequindre street. In 1842 tracks were laid from Dequindre down Gratiot road, now Gratiot avenue. The grading was not very good. The soil under the tracks was usually in very poor condition and in wet weather mud would shoot both ways, affecting persons and property in varying ways.

The City Council declared the tracks to be a nuisance in 1843,

avenue, but it was not until December of '49 that anything was done to put the order into force.

That was when the citizens took the law into their own hands and tore up the rails. The tracks were repaired, but each time they torn up again for a greater distance. In 1851 the company was granted permission to extend the tracks across Jefferson avenue to the dock property and early in

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