

VOLUME 35 NUMBER 10
OCTOBER 2004



DULUTH MISSABE AND IRON RANGE RAILWAY
MISSABE AND IRON RANGE DIVISIONS

SHIPPING POINTS STATIONS, SPURS AND MILEAGE.

MISSABE DIVISION FIGURES DENOTE DISTANCES IN MILES FROM MISSABE JCT. DULUTH.
IRON RANGE DIVISION " " " " " " ENDION " " " " " " (MILE POSTS ARE BASED ON BETWEEN VIRGINIA & IRON JCT. TO ALLEN JCT. PRINCIPAL POINTS HAVE MILEAGE BOTH WAYS.)
SPIRIT LAKE & INTERSTATE BRANCHES FIGURES DENOTE DISTANCES IN MILES FROM ADDOLPH (9.0 MAIN LINE)
NAMES OF MINES AS GIVEN HAVE TRACK CONNECTION WITH D.M.&I.R.R.V.

REVISION	DATES
JULY 1931	MAR. 1937
SEPT. 1932	JULY 1937
NOV. 1933	FEB. 1943
MAR. 1936	MAR. 1944
JAN. 1946	SEP. 1949
OCT. 1947	

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER
[Signature]
CHIEF ENGINEER

- LEGEND -
— N.P. TRACKS USED JOINTLY
— IRON RANGE DIVISION
— MISSABE DIVISION
— G.N. TRACKS USED JOINTLY

(NOT TO SCALE, BY APPROXIMATELY 4 MILES = 1 INCH)

DESTROY ALL ISSUES PREVIOUS TO LATEST

196-168-v-24A



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North Star Chapter Membership Information

Yearly dues are \$32 (this includes \$20 National dues and \$12 Northstar Chapter dues, plus \$3 more if you would like a family membership) made out to: Northstar Chapter, NRHS. Mail it to treasurer, Northstar Chapter NRHS, 1092 Humboldt Ave, West Saint Paul, MN 55118, or stop by one of our Saturday meetings and see what we are about.

October Meeting Notice

The October meeting will be held at the St. Paul Fire Training Center on **Saturday, October 16**, at 7 o'clock pm. The program will be a presentation by Carl Wessel, traction systems engineer. He will talk about the Hiawatha Light Rail since its opening on June 26 of this year.

Credits

This month's cover is a system map of the DM & IR Railroad, circa 1949. From the Hudson Leighton Collection.

An Erie Mining Trip, by Andy Cummings

Well, I think I can mark down Saturday, Sept. 18, 2004, as my best railfan day ever. My story goes something like this:

I got a message on my machine from fellow railfan Kevin Madsen on Friday afternoon. He'd heard through the grapevine they were running Saturday. With my girlfriend, Sheryl, hitting the road to come down and visit, I called her on her cell phone and asked very, very nicely if she'd consider spending Saturday with us chasing F-units. Being the good sport she is, she agreed.

Kevin and I arranged to meet in Carlton at 7:45. However, I set my alarm clock wrong, so we didn't make it to Carlton until 8:15, by which time Kevin had moved on on his own. A wise move; it was a long drive to Salem, which we'd planned as our first shot, and he didn't want to miss the shot any more than I did.

The Interstate was closed through Duluth, so as Sheryl and I threaded our way through city streets, seemingly hitting every light red, I started to get frustrated. This wasn't something I wanted to miss.

As we hit the Two Harbors expressway, foggy skies gave way to severe clear. My one F-unit experience on Erie in 1999 was overcast, so I was happy to have a little sunshine. As we progressed up the shore, every trace of haze disappeared from the sky. No need for a polarizing filter today; I've seldom seen the sky so blue.

Long story (relatively) short, having never been to Salem, I missed the turnoff and went straight up highway 2. It was a beautiful drive, with the maples ranging from blaze orange to blood red. But I kept looking at the map, thinking my turnoff should have been further back. It wasn't until later that I realized what I thought was the right turnoff, Forest Road 104, was nothing more than two ruts through the woods, which my Grand Am never would have negotiated, even if I'd spotted it while driving by, which I didn't.

Then, about a mile ahead, I saw some cross-traffic. In fact, it seemed like whatever road was crossing ahead must be really busy, because there was just car after car after car passing from left to right across the ro...WAIT A MINUTE! It dawned on me that I'd unknowingly driven almost all the way to Sarto, where Highway 2 crosses the Cliffs-Erie

line, and what I was looking at was the train I was supposed to be shooting.

After some choice words, I got the car swung around and started racing (within the bounds of the posted speed limit, of course) back south. Thanks to my trusty atlas book, I was able to engineer a route through Finland where I could wind up at Cramer, where County Road 7 crosses under the Erie on the old Duluth and Northern Minnesota logging railroad grade. It would be a stretch, as part of my trip was on gravel, and my route was longer than the train's. But I surmised I'd be able to make it.

Well, I took county road 6 instead of 7 at Finland, which put me on an even longer route that involved Highway 61 along the lakeshore. But I managed to get to Cramer. Sheryl and I got out and started looking for a way to get to the tunnel. There was a creek next to the road that would be tough to cross, and the tunnel was still quite a ways up. Kevin and railfan Dave Schauer had done it last weekend, but I had no idea how. Now I really wished I'd made my scheduled meet time with Kevin in Carlton, as he could have guided me both to Salem and the west tunnel portal.

As Sheryl and I began to explore a way to get across the creek, I heard the unmistakable sound of diesel engines. "Back to the car!" I yelled, and just before I climbed in for the race across the ridge and toward Taconite Harbor, I looked up at the Cramer bridge, over which the power was now passing. And there it was. A bright yellow A-B-B-B-A set of F-units, standing stark against the cloudless, deep-blue sky, blasting over my head.

The bitterness of missing the shot was more than overpowered by my amazement at what I was seeing. I would have been scarcely more awestruck if I was watching Milwaukee trains cross Montana on a re-laid main line powered by their old U36Cs resurrected from the scrapyards. That scene seemed equally improbable just a few weeks before. Wasn't this just one more thing that had passed on, blown away by the winds of change? How could this be happening?

Sheryl didn't quite understand why I was so excited, but she seemed to be enjoying the scene as well, with the breathtaking fall colors, almost

faky blue sky and near Boundary Waters remoteness.

We drove up and over the ridge at the fastest speed I deemed safe on the gravel road. My car's brakes, which were near the ends of their lives, scarcely stopped me from hitting a big buck with large antlers near where Sugarloaf Road comes in. That would have put an unfortunate end to the chase.

Now, I'd seen the Cramer Road crossing before, when I was up shooting the GEs in June of 2001. The location seemed to me to be pretty mundane. Light favored the outside of the curve, so it didn't seem like that great of a shot. But this day, the maple trees behind the curve were eye-popping. There was scarcely a green tree to be seen, and every maple leaf looked as if it had been hand-dyed just for a passing rail photographer.

I climbed on top of my car and framed up the view. Had the power been BNSF dash-9s or CP AC44s, it still would have probably warranted 8x12 status on my living room wall. But with an ABBBA set of Fs on its way... I couldn't believe it. What was happening was so improbable that I had to pinch myself. No way!

As the engines rolled past, I grabbed my shot and watched what was happening in utter amazement. The 4210 rolled by and the engineer gave a wave. Behind him was the nautical-looking F9Bs, with their three portholes a piece. Then the 4211 rolled by. I pointed out to Sheryl that we'd been in the cab of that 4211 not a week before when it was sitting outside the depot for Railfan Weekend. There it was.

Then came the beat-up old taconite cars rolling down the 2 percent grade. One after another passed by, then the FRED. The whole experience was too incredible to put into words. Making it even more mysterious was the fact that there were no other railfans shooting it.

We got the usual shots at Taconite Harbor, then went back to the Cramer Road crossing to get the uphill shot, where Mr. Madsen was waiting as well. He'd gotten the eastbound shot here and down at the Harbor last weekend, so after he shot the train at Salem and missed it at Cramer, he let it go. Now, as it returned up the hill, we shot it grinding back up the grade it had rolled down just a short time before. We managed one more shot at Cramer before deciding to break off the chase.

Kevin seemed to be equally amazed as me at just what we were shooting. It was mind-boggling.

Sheryl made fun of me for it. She just doesn't understand; no non-railfan would. But she was very patient and tolerant, for which I'm very thankful.

Afterwards, we made the trek down to MP 7 on the North Shore Mining to catch their afternoon train. I'd only caught NSM on a few occasions before, never in good light, so this seemed like a good chance to rectify that. Still, after my experience on the Erie, anything more was just icing on the cake.

The 11 a.m. train was rolling downhill when we got there, its dynamic brakes screaming. We watched it go by, then set up for its return trip uphill near the tailings dump line junction. After a 45 minute wait, we caught it coming back uphill, with its dumpster-on-wheels-looking cars in tow. Kevin knew the locations, which helped a lot.

About the same time, Kevin (who has a working radio, unlike me) heard a DM&IR train talking about dying on hours at Wales or Highland. We chased the NSM train west, shot him at the new overpass west of Northshore Jct., then proceeded to Highland. Kevin set up at Lauren, while I shot the train, led by 413, at Highland and again at Lauren. We then chased him down to Two Harbors and shot him by Airport Road.

By now it was getting late, so Kevin broke for home and I treated Sheryl to dinner and beer at Pizza Luce. On our way out of town, with the sun dipping down behind the bluffs, I noticed ore empties were rolling off the Duluth ore docks. So I stopped at Spirit Mountain curve and waited for the great sound and smoke show that always accompanies a trip up Proctor Hill. Sure enough, about 20 minutes later, a trio of SD38s trudged their way up the hill with a train of empties, pumping out smoke and sound like one seldom hears. The shot probably won't turn out, but it was worth the wait just the same.

As the afterglow disappeared, it occurred to me that there was still not a single cloud, not a trace of haze in the sky.

What a day.

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