

THE RAILROAD THAT WENT NO WHERE

The Detroit, Toledo & Milwaukee Railroad was a road which probably should never have been built. It was a loser right from the start, because 1) though it was 94 miles long, it ran through only one city which was over 10,000 people (Battle Creek), 2) it had no major terminal on each end and 3) it handled almost no "bridge" traffic. The DT&M was created in the 1880's as the east-west line of the Cincinnati, Jackson and Mackinaw Railroad. The CJ&M came north from the Ohio line through Waldron, Hudson to Addison Jct. The line from Addison Jct. to Jackson was built in 1895. The CJ&M was in and out of receivership several times after its incorporation in 1886. In 1897, the east-west line from Dundee to Allegan was sold to the DT&M. Soon thereafter, it came under the control of the Vanderbilt (NYC) interests. (The line from Ohio to Jackson was sold to the Cincinnati Northern, which came under Vanderbilt control). The DT&M leased the line from 1897 to 1902 to the Cincinnati Northern (assigned to the Big Four). In 1905 the Big Four lease was cancelled and the route was leased to the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern (east of Moscow) and the Michigan Central (west of Moscow). In 1913, the line west of Battle Creek (to Allegan) was sold to the Michigan & Chicago Railway, and electric interurban route.

The line was operated in pieces during the early 1900's. Beginning in Dundee, the Detroit, Toledo and Ironton used the Dundee to Tecumseh route as a part of its main line to Springfield, Ohio. According to early NYC time tables, the DT&I dispatcher actually controlled the Dundee-Tecumseh section, even though it was owned by the Lake Shore. At Britton, the railroad crossed the recently built Wabash Railway. At Tecumseh, the DT&I left the main line of the DT&M south to Adrian. (The DT&I stopped using the route between Dundee and Tecumseh in the 1920's after Henry Ford bought the DT&I and straightened out the main line).

From Tecumseh to Moscow, the route was operated by the Lake Shore. There was a non-interlocked crossing at Tecumseh (the Lake Shore's Jackson Branch), and at Addison Jct. (with the Cincinnati Northern Railroad, affiliated with the DT&M).

At Jerome, the route crossed the Fort Wayne & Jackson Railroad and came under MCRR control at Moscow. It then went northwest through Homer (crossing the Air Line branch and the Lake Shore's Lansing Branch), through the south side of Marshall, and then roughly parallel to the MCRR main line to Battle Creek.

Even though the route west of Battle Creek has been sold to an electric interurban railroad, it came back into the NYC fold as a part of the Chicago,

Kalamazoo and Saginaw (CK&S) Railroad. The CK&S, which had been under Michigan Central control since 1906, apparently took over a small part of the Battle Creek to Allegan route, from Duster to Richland, with a crossing at a place known as Richland Jct. This route was operated by the NYC into the 1960's as the CK&S branch.

Interesting Notes about the DT&M:

1) The crossing at Britton was interlocked with a two-story interlocking tower. When the DT&M was abandoned in the early 1930's, the Britton interlocking tower was moved to Milan, just up the Wabash about 10 miles. It served at that location until it was torn down in the 1990's.

2) At Marshall, about mid-way in the DT&M east-west main line, a roundhouse existed for the maintenance of steam locomotives (common in most towns in the late 1800's). This roundhouse, which was no longer used after the DT&M close in the 1930's, fell into disrepair. In the 1990's, The Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum moved parts of the roundhouse to the Village, and a roundhouse, based on the Marshall design, was reconstructed in 1999-2000 (around a former PM turntable from Petoskey, MI).

3) When the DT&M was taken over by Vanderbilt (New York Central) interests, the property was divided for operational and ownership purposes between the Michigan Central and the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern. The dividing point was originally Marshall, which was approximately half way, and the home of the DT&M shops. But when the western part of the line west of Battle Creek was sold to an electric railroad, the dividing point was moved to Moscow.

What's Left of the DT&M?

Not much. Some of the road bed is recognizable. It can be seen near Addison Jct., but both routes at the junction have been gone for over 20 years. The "diamond" crossing of the DT&M at Tecumseh Junction is still in the track where the route crossed the Lake Shore's Jackson to Lenawee Junction Branch. The route is now owned by the Southern Michigan Railroad Society. The diamond piece of track can be seen on South Evans Street. Other remnants of DT&M grade can be seen throughout the length of the line.

Of course, a creation of the Marshall roundhouse can be toured at Greenfield Village. As of a couple of years ago, the DT&M depot was still standing in Marshall, about 50 yards south of the NS main line.