

# Deerfield and Highland Park Before Metra

By Bill Otter



▲ E9A 34C is leading a two-car suburban train from Fox Lake that is making its station stop at Deerfield on February 25, 1968. The Milwaukee Road's suburban service on both the North Line to Deerfield and Fox Lake and the West Line to Elgin consisted of a few trains in the rush hours and two-to-three hours gaps in the off-peak service. This service pattern continued well into the period during which Metra operated the service. When the North Shore Line abandoned service in January 1963 there was no increase in rush hour service on the North Line until 1965.—Joe Pierson photo

Growing up in Deerfield, IL in the 1950s and 1960s before Metra was about as good as it gets for a young grade schooler who loved trains. Deerfield was a small town with about 1,800 residents. It was considered back then as being “out in the sticks” at the far reaches of the growing Chicago area. The Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad's busy double-track mainline between Chicago and Seattle-Tacoma ran right through town. Deerfield was on the Milwaukee Road's C&M (Chicago & Milwaukee) Subdivision. Passenger and freight traffic was heavy and the speed limit for passenger trains was officially 90 mph with an Automatic Block Signal (ABS) system in operation. Since the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and its track class speed restrictions were not yet in existence, passenger train locomotive engineers often ran their trains at speeds over 90 and even 100 mph north of Deerfield to make up time.

The Milwaukee's “C&M Sub” track was likely the best and fastest track on the railroad. It was constructed with jointed rail using what at the time was called “river-wash” sand and gravel for ballast. The main

station platforms were constructed with paving blocks, and the platform extensions were constructed with an orange-colored granular material framed in with treated timbers. Cinders (collected from steam locomotive ash pans at the engine servicing tracks) were used for ballast and walkways in the yards and on the sidings.

The Deerfield Section Foreman (I believe his name was Danny Intranuovo) and his five laborers used their Fairmont motor car and a trailer to transport ties and rail to work sites up and down his 10-mile double-track territory. They kept up the track surface and alignment with only hand tools, track jacks and lots of hard labor. Loading, transporting, and installing eight new creosoted ties a day and the hand surfacing needed to maintain the track for 90 mph, and then getting back to Deerfield with the old ties was a full day's work.

Danny was a strong, stocky man with Italian heritage and a short temper. Danny's territory was very well maintained and all the crews knew how hard Danny and his crew worked to keep it that way. But that didn't stop some of the engineers, when they'd see Danny trackside in the clear for them somewhere, from bouncing

up and down in their seats and giving Danny the rough track sign as they went by. Danny would shake his fist at them, as they both laughed and the train roared past. When there really was a track problem, the train's engineer would sound a series of extra whistle signals (usually a series of 4 shorts repeated several times) approaching a station to get the agent's attention, and then toss off a handwritten note wrapped around a 10-minute red fusee with a rubber band, describing the defect and its location. That information was relayed to Danny, and by phone or telegraph to the train dispatcher and the Roadmaster.

Mechanized track gangs came through every two years in those days. They replaced worn out ties, dumped and surfaced ballast, oiled and tightened all the joint bars and left the railroad looking well maintained. There was also a “weed-burner” work train that came through each year. It had a special car that spread fire onto the track and roadbed to burn all the weeds. Another car at the end of the train sprayed the track with water to put out the fires. Sometimes, the Deerfield-Bannockburn Volunteer Fire Department with its one Seagrave 250-gallon pumper fire





▲ Our author captured the midday local, train 144, during its station stop at Deerfield in 1958. During the period of February through May 1956, Milwaukee received 12 E9A and 6 E9B units that were numbered 200A-B-C to 205A-B-C. They were renumbered 30A-B-C to 35A-B-C. All 18 units were retired in 1972.—Author's photo

▼ What appears to be E6A 15B, one of the two E6As delivered to the Milwaukee by EMD in September 1941, provided the motive power for train 149 on this day in 1958. This was a Fox Lake train that stopped at Deerfield at 6:00 p.m. This locomotive was retired in January 1961.—Author's photo



engine had to respond to extinguish grass fires along the railroad after the weed burner train passed through town.

Dad rode the orange and maroon “heavyweight” coaches in the Milwaukee Road’s suburban trains (also called “Dinkys”) between Deerfield and Chicago Union Station (CUS) for his commute to and from work. Mom drove Dad to the Deerfield station just in time to catch the 8:00 am Suburban Train 146 that operated from Walworth, Wisconsin near Lake Geneva. It was a popular train with eight coaches that only made a few stops and arrived in Chicago at 8:42 am. Dad then walked to work on LaSalle Street and got to the office by 9:00 am.

When we first moved to Deerfield from Evanston, I remember seeing Train 146 being pulled by a steam locomotive, but that did not last long. Soon, the train was assigned one of the Milwaukee Road’s Fairbanks-Morse “Erie-Built” 6-axle diesels. These heavy and powerful locomotives had been purchased to operate the Milwaukee Road’s Hiawathas, but the units were unreliable and were soon downgraded to secondary passenger trains and suburban trains. Train 146 was usually assigned either the 8-A or the 22-B, but the reliability of the “Erie-Built” units was a problem even in suburban service.

Eventually, the Milwaukee Road purchased newer passenger diesels built by the Electro-Motive Division (EMD) of General Motors in La Grange, IL to replace the “Erie-Built” units. Train 146 was usually assigned EMD E-6A units 15-A or 15-B, which, when they were brand new, were originally used each night on Train 57 (*The Fast Mail & Express*) from Chicago to Minneapolis, returning the

next morning on Train 6, the *Morning Hiawatha*, from Minneapolis to Chicago. Later, Train 146 was assigned one of the next series of EMD locomotives (E-7 units 16-20 AB) which had replaced the “Erie-Built” units on the *Hiawathas*.

Each night, Dad would try to leave the office in time to catch Train 35 from CUS. Train 35 was pulled by a new EMD GP-9 and had two heavyweight coaches. It was an all-stop local that terminated at Deerfield at 6:41 pm and laid overnight there.

### Newspapers

I was lucky enough to land an afternoon newspaper route in Deerfield for the Glencoe News Agency. For Christmas, Mom and Dad bought me a big new 26" J. C. Higgins bike from the Sears Roebuck store in Highland Park. We bought a large “paper basket” for the front of the bike that would carry a large bundle of rolled newspapers.

The Glencoe News Agency was a north suburban newspaper distributor that met certain Chicago & NorthWestern commuter trains at Glencoe station every day of the week where the train crew members quickly unloaded many bundles of papers onto baggage trucks. Then the news agency staff transferred them into the specially-built waiting Ford “Courier” station wagons. These station wagons had only a driver’s seat. The rest of the car was all flat deck for loading bundles of papers. The bundles of papers were taken to the news agency’s office a few blocks from the station. There, the bundles of papers were opened, the right number of each type paper for each paper route was counted out, then rolled one at a time and put in a machine that quickly tied a neat small string around each paper to hold it tight.

The bundles for each route were then tied with a rope with a special metal buckle that held any size bundle together. The bundles were loaded into a Ford Courier and delivered to the back door of the newspaper and cigar store in Deerfield. There, right after school each afternoon, we four newsboys met the Ford Courier, took our bundle out and loaded it into our paper bike and headed out to “peddle our papers.” My route took me north and west of the Milwaukee Road tracks where I could keep track of many of the trains going by.

In the morning, paper boys delivered the *Chicago Tribune*, *The Chicago Sun-Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. In the afternoon, we delivered the *Chicago Daily News*, the *Herald-American*, and the *Waukegan News Sun*. I earned \$18.75 a month for delivering my 75 or so papers six afternoons a week. That was big money for a grade school kid. After delivering papers on my route for about a year or so, I got my “big break” into railroading.

The job of selling papers in the morning rush hour at the newsstand in the Milwaukee’s Deerfield station came open one day and the news agency driver asked me if I would be interested in it. I said “Yes!” without hesitation, and without asking my folks! The job paid a whopping \$30.00 a month. I arrived at the Deerfield station at about 5:30 each morning, opened the bundles of papers and readied the newsstand for business. The first suburban train was Train 130 at 5:50 am. The Milwaukee Road North Line had nine morning commuter trains to Chicago: one from Walworth, six from Fox Lake and two from Deerfield. Two of the Fox Lake trains did not stop at Deerfield, and the news-



From the inception of the suburban service the coaches were hand-me-downs and the locomotives were general service engines that had seen premier assignments in their past. All this changed in 1961 when Budd delivered 40 stainless steel bi-level cars that were equipped with electric-powered air conditioning and heating. Also in 1961, EMD delivered six E9A locomotives, numbered 36AC-38AC that were equipped with a Cummins diesel generator to power the HVAC in the passenger coaches. Incredibly, the Milwaukee found sufficient funding to pay for these cars and locomotives without any public subsidies. ▲ The new suburban train equipment is on display at Deerfield. ▲ Locomotive 38C powered the demonstration trains. Milwaukee's two E6As built by EMD in September 1941 and four of the 10 E7As built by EMD in June 1946 were traded-in to EMD in partial payment for the new E9As.—Two photos by the author

stand closed after Train 146 left at 8:00 am, so I had to sell my 300 papers to the riders of seven trains. Most days I had only a few left unsold. If the trains were late, I sold all the papers. After Train 146 left, I counted my cash and turned it in to the Milwaukee Road agent and rode my bike to school. The agent held the cash for the Glencoe News Agency driver to pick up about 9:00 am.

Mr. Henry “Hank” Honeman was the agent at Deerfield. Hank was a low-key, strict, careful, and highly-respected agent with a lot of seniority. He arrived every morning at 6:16 am on Train 132 from Round Lake where he lived. He always had his work finished so he could catch Train 137 at 4:36 pm back to Round Lake. Deerfield was a desirable station agent position because of the substantial commissions from the large amount of Railway Express Agency traffic that added to the agent's railroad salary each month.

Deerfield was a train order and train register station for trains originating and terminating there. There was no train order signal for mainline trains. After school each afternoon, Hank let me listen in on the dispatcher's line while he did all his bookkeeping and other tasks. I could hear what was happening all the way from Milwaukee to Chicago. In the early mornings between trains, I watched Hank copy train orders for the morning Trains 32 and 48 that originated at Deerfield. A white Clearance Form A was always on top of the green “Form 19” train orders for each train. There were three copies: one for the conductor, one for the engineer and one

for the station copy. Train orders were on very thin paper and double-sided black carbon paper was used to make the needed copies. As I learned a little each day, Hank let me open the mail and put all the new railroad public passenger timetables in the rack. He let me take the outdated issues home. Soon, he let me start selling commuter tickets, checking baggage in and out and labeling Railway Express shipments that the local delivery truck brought in.

### “Go Peddle Your Papers, Kid”

Deerfield was an overnight layover point for two suburban trains. Initially, the train crews wanted nothing to do with this pesky young newsboy who was always asking questions. “Go peddle your papers, kid.” Then I began stopping at the Deerfield bakery early each morning (at the side door before it opened) and bringing a bag of warm fresh donuts to the crews at the station. Those donuts went well with the morning cup of coffee for the crews, and soon I was getting an occasional invitation to ride a train with a conductor. My first cab ride was in Milwaukee Road FP7-A locomotive 97-C on Train 35 from Chicago to Deerfield. Occasionally I would get to ride with a Conductor or Collector into Chicago on a Saturday morning commuter train, ride in the Super Dome on Train 5 from Chicago to Milwaukee, and visit the train dispatcher's office in Milwaukee. Then we would catch Train 6, the *Morning Hiawatha* back to Chicago where I'd ride in the Super Dome car, get a sandwich and catch a suburban train back out to Deerfield.

One day, I was even able to ride the “*Rondout Patrol*” which was the Milwaukee Road's way freight based in Rondout that switched the EJ&E and CNS&M interchanges, worked the C&M east to Tower A-20 and the Fox Lake line west out to Libertyville serving the increasing number of new industries on the line. The *Rondout Patrol* crew were experts at dodging *Hiawathas*, other fast passenger trains, suburban trains, the freight trains and still getting all their work done each day. The train crews taught me basic railroad operating and safety rules and how important they were. On rare occasion, if there was an incident with an operating rules violation, the Trainmaster would appear in the territory the next day. He was easy to spot. He was an older man, always wearing a suit, white shirt and tie, polished brown leather shoes and a big brown hat. He never smiled. The crews always knew when he was coming and they let me know so I could vanish.

### A Close Call in the Morning Rush at Deerfield

At about 6:25 am on weekdays, with the rear brakeman on the point of the shove, GP-9 2434 would shove Train 32's six heavyweight coaches north off the house track onto the Deerfield siding and out onto the westward main track and stop just north of the north crossover at the Deerfield station. The head brakeman with the train orders would come out from the station, line the crossover switches so Train 32 could cross over to the eastward main track, and then Train 32 would pull

into the Deerfield station in time for its 6:40 am departure. Usually, everything worked well.

However, one morning an extra board head brakeman was called for Train 32's crew and he arrived late for work. Besides getting the train orders for the engineer, one of the head brakeman's important tasks before going out to the crossover, was to check to be sure all Eastward First Class trains that were due had passed or left Deerfield. This included Train 56 (*Fast Mail & Express*), Train 4 (*Pioneer Limited*), and suburban Trains 130 and 132 from Fox Lake. In his haste, the brakeman headed out to the crossover without checking for those First Class trains. As soon as Train 32's equipment stopped north of the crossover, he threw a burning red fusee in the middle of the eastbound track, unlocked and threw the first switch of the crossover and started walking toward the other crossover switch. Almost immediately, all of us in the station area heard the loud urgent successive blasts of the horn on an approaching train.

I was already outside on the platform selling papers and saw the bright headlight on a late Train 4 (*The Pioneer Limited* from Minneapolis) rapidly bearing down on Deerfield. The brakeman tossed the burning fusee off the track and ran back to line back the north crossover switch. Train 4 whizzed by with its horn blaring and fire coming off the wheels and brake shoes. The engineer had made an "Emergency" brake application. Train 4 passed Signal 24.0 and stopped down near the Osterman Avenue grade crossing south of Deerfield. The train stood there for about ten minutes. Then it "whistled off" and proceeded slowly with flattened wheels limping all the way into Chicago, with most of the commuter rush creeping along behind it. The Trainmaster came around later that day, and the next morning too. I was nowhere to be found!

### The Afternoon Rush at Deerfield

Watching the afternoon rush at Deerfield was quite a show. At 5:50 pm, suburban Train 39, a five-car all-stop local pulled by a new GP-9 (usually the 2426) arrived at Deerfield with brake shoes smoking. It unloaded its passengers, shoved back into the Deerfield siding south of Osterman Avenue and cut off three coaches. The 2426 and two coaches



▲ The Milwaukee Road along with the Illinois Central and New York Central were among the few railroads that used the Flexi-Van technology to haul mail and express shipments. Two Flexi-Vans are being unloaded at Chicago Union Station.—*Author's photo*

hurriedly returned to the main track and stopped north of the north crossover at Deerfield. It then shoved back through the crossover onto the eastbound track, spotting the two coaches in front of the station. The engine cut off, crossed back over to the westbound track, and then quickly headed back south (railroad east) to the south crossover. By this time, Train 139, usually with the 15-A or 15-B and about 8 coaches, was slowly creeping into town on a Restricting signal waiting for the 2426 to clear onto the eastbound track. Train 139 (at 6:00 pm) had the most detraining passengers for Deerfield of all the afternoon trains. As soon as Train 139 had cleared, and all the passengers were safely out of the way, the Conductor of Train 39 (who was now the Conductor Train 44) came out of the station, helped the last few passengers onto his train, gave the "highball" and the 2426 and two coaches departed on schedule at 6:05 pm for Chicago.

At 6:20 pm, Train 53 arrived, usually with the 2434 and seven coaches. After unloading, Train 53 shoved back into the siding, coupled to the three coaches left by Train 39, and shoved further east down the siding where it cut off four coaches (its

rear coach and the three coaches left by Train 39). It then pulled up into the house track and tied up for the night. The 2434 and six coaches stood for Train 32 the next morning.

While Train 53 was putting its train away, Fox Lake suburban Train 141, usually with an E-6 or E-7 and 7 or 8 coaches stopped, unloaded, and departed at 6:28 pm. At 6:41 pm, Train 35, an all-stop local usually with GP-9 2436 and two coaches arrived and unloaded its passengers, usually including my dad. Train 35, then backed down onto the Deerfield siding, coupled to the 4 coaches left at the far east end, and pulled all six coaches up alongside Train 53's equipment. Train 35's 2436 and six coaches stood for Train 48 due to leave Deerfield at 7:24 am the next morning.

In the mornings, Train 136, an express suburban train from Fox Lake, departed Deerfield at 7:21 am on the eastward track. Train 48 would normally shove out from the Deerfield siding to be spotted on the westward track short of the crosswalk at the Deerfield station by about 7:18 am. Once Train 136 left at 7:21 am, Train 48 would leave at 7:24 am with orders to run "wrong main" east on the westward track



In these photos you can see the location of the crossovers south and north of the Deerfield station. ▲ In August 1973, a westbound freight train headed by GP40 2020, built in October 1966, is crossing over from track 1 to track 2 just south of the Deerfield station. The move is being made under the careful watch of the engineer on the *Rondout Patrol* and his youthful helper. The *Patrol's* switch engine is on the Deerfield Siding and its caboose is on the set-out track. ▼ The Deerfield station agent is hoping trains orders authorizing movement “against the current of traffic” on track two. Track two is the normal eastbound track. The north crossover can be seen behind the station agent.—Two photos Joe Piersen



from Deerfield to Tower A-20 where it would cross over and follow Train 136.

### Railway Express at Deerfield

Railway Express Agency shipments arrived in Deerfield each weekday morning on Train 135 at or close to 9:08 am. We usually received one, sometimes two, baggage trucks of Railway Express shipments. The train consisted of one locomo-

tive, an express car with a messenger, and two coaches. At Fox Lake, Train 135 would set out the express car on the stub of the wye track and return to Chicago with two coaches as Train 144. In the afternoon, Train 145 from Chicago would arrive at Fox Lake with its two coaches, pick up the empty express car off the wye track, and depart as Train 152 with two coaches and the express car on the rear. At

Deerfield, we loaded one to three baggage trucks of Railway Express onto Train 152 each day, hustling so it could depart at (or as close as possible to) 2:30 pm.

At Deerfield, before spotting the baggage trucks up close along the eastward track for Train 152, we had to be very sure that Train 16 (The *Olympian Hiawatha* from Seattle/Tacoma) had passed. Occasionally, Train 152 would be held at the signal on the Fox Lake line at Rondout for a late Train 16. One afternoon, when a relief agent was handling Deerfield while Mr. Honeman was on vacation, I had loaded three baggage trucks full with Railway Express shipments for Train 152 and had them lined up outside the freight house door but away from the track with wheels chained. At about 2:25 pm, the relief agent told me to spot the baggage trucks trackside for Train 152. I told him that Train 16 was late and had not gone by yet. I also told him that I had to leave to go home for a birthday party, and I left. The following day, the train crews told me that the relief agent spotted the three baggage trucks trackside anyway. Then, at about 2:35 pm, Train 16 blew through at 90 mph with its horn blaring. Cartons of express shipments were blown all over the platform and into the parking lot. When Train 152 arrived about 8 minutes later, the whole crew, including the engineer and fireman, joined the agent and train passengers gathering up all the scattered express packages and throwing them into the express car. Train 152 was about 45 minutes late into Chicago. The next day, the Trainmaster showed up. I made sure I was somewhere else peddling my papers!

### Green Signals Displayed!

Suburban Train 140, the last train of the morning inbound fleet, usually left Deerfield at 8:46 am. Shortly after 9:00 am, when it was on time, Train 22 (The *Sioux* from Rapid City, SD) would blow through Deerfield arriving a few minutes behind Train 140 in Chicago. In the winter, Train 22 was often quite a sight with big ice buildups on the locomotives and snow and ice buildups under the cars. I remember one particularly bad winter when we did not see Train 22 two days in a row. Then, on the third day, the morning C&M lineup showed 1st 22, 2nd 22, and 3rd 22, all moving about 30 minutes apart from Rondout after coming down the Fox Lake line from Madison and joining the C&M at Rondout

► Eastbound train 46, on the left, is meeting westbound train 23 in Deerfield on March 19, 1968. The trains which operated between Chicago and Milwaukee did not have names. They typically had one locomotive, a baggage car and three or four coaches. Train 23 carried some partially loaded mail and express head end cars from Chicago that were set out at Milwaukee. These cars were loaded with mail and express from Milwaukee and then picked up a few hours later by Train 57 *The Fast Mail & Express*. This saved dwell time in Milwaukee for Train 57.—*Joe Pierson photo*



for the trip into Chicago. The first two trains each displayed green classification lights on their engines. They were all covered with snow and ice.

### All the Oil You Have & Quickly Please!

One afternoon, Train 152's engineer told the agent at Libertyville that his engine, the Fairbanks-Morse "Erie-Built" Engine 22-B, was leaking more lube oil than normal and the train would not be able to make it all the way to Chicago. He said more lube oil was urgently needed at Deerfield. The agent at Libertyville called the operator at Rondout who called the agent at Deerfield with the request. I was in the station with the agent when the call came. The agent called the Pure Oil station owner whose new gas station was on Deerfield Road very near the station. He asked him to bring "all the oil you have up here and quickly, please. The agent asked me to run down to the Pure Oil station and help load the truck, which I did. We put all the cases and cans of every type oil he had into his truck. Train 152 arrived while we were still loading the truck. The agent and the express messenger loaded the Railway Express as quickly as they could. By then, we had arrived alongside the 22-B with the Pure Oil pickup truck. The biggest cans we had were the one-gallon cans and the rest were quart cans, cases of them. Neither of us could handle the few 55-gallon drums of oil he had at the gas station. The 22-B was still running but an alarm bell was ringing. The Pure Oil manager and I loaded cases of oil cans from his truck onto a Railway Express baggage truck that the agent spotted next to the 22-B. The engineer and firemen took the cans, opened them, and poured them into the engine. The brakeman, in a passenger uniform, put all the empty oil cans back

into the bed of the Pure Oil pickup truck. After all the oil was poured into the engine, we all noticed a growing pool of lube oil dripping onto the track below the 22-B. Train 152 then left Deerfield about 45 minutes late with the 22-B's alarm bell still ringing ... and with a late Train 16 (*The Olympian Hiawatha*) not-so-patiently following along behind it. We never saw the 22-B on the line again.

### Train 165's Derailment at Rondout

Late each night, Train 165, a freight train from Bensenville Yard to Janesville, Wisconsin via Rondout and the Fox Lake line passed through Deerfield and headed up the "J Line" as the Fox Lake line was called back then. One winter night, Train 165 derailed between maybe 10-15 freight cars on the "J Line" just past the absolute signal at Rondout. This derailment trapped all six morning suburban trains that originated at Fox Lake, leaving only the two Deerfield-originating trains to handle all the suburban passengers the next morning. Trains 32 and 48 became all-stop locals and were quickly jam-packed with standees. Many passengers at stations closer to Chicago could not board the trains. Forces at the Milwaukee's Western Avenue Coach Yard in Chicago prepared an emergency "rescue" passenger train made up of spare coaches scavenged from various passenger and commuter trains, added two E-7As and the crew "tail-hosed" (shoved) all the way to Rondout and up to the derailment site. Passengers from the stranded Fox Lake trains were transferred to one train which operated from Libertyville to the derailment site. The passengers walked through blowing snow along the right-of-way and around the derailment site to reach the rescue

train. Once the rescue train had departed for Chicago, the work train with the Bensenville wrecker moved in to begin clearing the wreck. The six trains from Fox Lake all returned to Fox Lake.

### Briergate on the North Shore Line's Skokie Valley Route

Occasionally Dad would have a business appointment on Chicago's North side, and Mom would drive him about two miles east on Deerfield Road to the North Shore Line's Briergate station where he would catch a 6-car North Shore Line train for Chicago. Those trains were crowded and becoming very popular with the exploding growth in homes along the U. S. 41 corridor between the Milwaukee Road and the Chicago & Northwestern's Kenosha line. Dad told me the North Shore was losing money and would not last many more years. He had joined the commuters' association to try and save the railroad. I remember him telling me that the Susquehanna Corporation got control of the railroad and was closing it down. One Saturday, he drove me to see the Highwood Shops. I particularly liked watching the "Electroliners" roaring through Briergate, especially in the winter with snow blowing all over. Soon, it was all gone!

### Friday Nights on the C&NW's Ashland Limited to Highland Park

Dad sometimes worked a little later on Friday nights and he couldn't catch the Milwaukee's Train 35 at 5:48 pm from CUS to Deerfield. When that happened, he would take the C&NW's Train 211, the *Ashland Limited*, from NorthWestern Station at 6:20 pm out to Highland Park where Mom and I would pick him up at 7:02 pm. The *Ashland Limited* was a big

Bill's dad's alternative commuting option until January 1963 was the North Shore Line. The Briergate station in Highland Park was located between Central Avenue and Deerfield Road on the North Shore Line's Skokie Valley Route. While all trains except the Electroliners stopped at Dempster Street Skokie, all of the remaining stations on the Skokie Valley Route between Skokie and Lake Forest were local stops served by Waukegan and Mundelein trains. Briergate had the most passengers of the Skokie Valley local stations. ▶ A northbound rush hour express train to Waukegan or Mundelein is stopped at Briergate as a southbound local from Mundelein approaches on June 6, 1959.

▶ The southbound local is boarding passengers. Note how the motorman is looking back for the highball to proceed. This was the standard practice on the North Shore.

▼ In March 1959 a Mundelein local is unloading passengers at Briergate. In 2024 the station is the sole remaining Insull Spanish-design built on the Skokie Valley Route in 1926. The HVAC company that occupied the station for decades built an addition around the east and north sides of the building. They preserved the interior for their office. The building is now occupied by an agency of the Highland Park City government.—Three photos Joe Pierson



train, usually with two E-units, a few head end cars, two heavyweight sleepers, a lounge-dining car, and reclining seat coaches. In its last years, on Friday nights only, Train 211 also carried three of C&NW's black St. Louis Car Company

commuter cars on the rear end. This was very popular with Highland Park (and Deerfield) commuters. Dad told me that the three commuter cars were cut off at Milwaukee and returned to Chicago on other trains.

### New Bi-Level Commuter Cars and E9-A Diesels!

One of my last pre-Metra memories of the Milwaukee Road's commuter service was the arrival of a special train on a Saturday morning at Deerfield promoting the new commuter train equipment that was arriving to replace all the heavyweight cars and the old diesels. The special train had one brand new EMD E9-A #38-C (rebuilt by EMD from one of the E7s that were traded in), two brand-new Budd bi-level commuter coaches and a cab car. The train approached Deerfield at 90 mph and the engineer quickly learned that his new train of bi-level cars had a much longer stopping distance than the same train of old heavyweight cars did. The train completely overshot the Deerfield station where the crowds were waiting to see the new train. A reverse move into the station area got the gleaming train back to its admirers and photographers.

It was a great time to be a young boy with a bicycle growing up "out in the sticks" in Deerfield! (My memory then was a lot sharper than it is now. I apologize for any inaccuracies you may find in this!)