

The Rail History of Elwood, Indiana



The Extra Board Gate A

Travel

The railroad track is miles away,
And the day is loud with voices speaking,
Yet there isn't a train goes by all day
But I hear its whistle shrieking.

All night there isn't a train goes by,
Though the night is still for sleep and dreaming,
But I see its cinders red on the sky,
And hear its engine steaming.

My heart is warm with friends I make,
And better friends I'll not be knowing;
Yet there isn't a train I'd rather take,
No matter where it's going.

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Track 1

It was Tuesday, November 8, 1910. There was an accident near 22nd Street in Elwood between an interurban passing through town and Elwood city street car #15. The interurban made a sudden stop and the street car ran into the back of the interurban. Both the conductor and motorman were injured. The conductor was George Haynes . . . and the motorman?!! . . . ***Sam Aurelius!!!***

Track 2

It was Wednesday, June 16, 1948. Several hundred people lined both sides of the Nickel Plate and Pennsylvania railroads to get a glimpse of GM's Train of Tomorrow.

The train traveled to Elwood westbound from Muncie over the Nickel Plate tracks and inched just west of So. Anderson Street. It backed eastward into the siding and the interchange with the Pennsylvania Railroad to head north-westward to Kokomo later in the day. The announced arrival time in Elwood had been 10 a.m., but the train didn't leave Muncie until that hour. It rolled into Elwood closer to 11 a.m.

Although the public was not invited to tour the train, the Elwood Call Leader was admitted for a tour of the train as it switched from one track to the other.

Track 3

The New York Times

WRECKED BY SWITCH ENGINE

Two Coaches of Pan Handle Passenger Train Demolished -- 25 Persons Injured

Wednesday, July 9, 1901

COLUMBUS, Ohio, July 8. -- Pan Handle passenger train No. 19, known as the New York Express, due here at 1:45 P. M., was "sideswiped" by a switch engine just outside the Union Station here this afternoon. Twenty-five people were injured.

Seven of the injured were so badly hurt that they were unable to proceed on their way west with the train. They were J. W. Chapin of Indianapolis, Ind., side crushed; Helen Chavouc, Marion, Ohio, badly bruised about the head; Cora Jennings, Orrville, Ohio, right arm sprained; Mrs. Flyn, Elwood, Ind., head bruised; Mrs. James Coan, Elwood, Ind., probably fatality (sic) injured; Leon Coan, Elwood, Ind., head badly bruised and bad scalp wound; Samuel C. Fulsen, badly bruised and cut by broken glass.

The passenger train was approaching the station at rapid speed when the switch engine, with a cut of cars, dashed out from a siding, striking the third coach of the passenger train. The car and the one immediately following were demolished. Both trains were stopped at once and aid was summoned. The injured were removed to the Union Station, where they were made as comfortable as possible.

As soon as the wreckage could be dumped from the track, new cars were substituted and the train proceeded on its way west.

Track 4

On Monday, July 11, 1938, there was a collision between a freight train and an engine making a switching movement on an industrial track on the Pennsylvania Railroad at Elwood, Ind., which resulted in the death of one trespasser and the injury of two trespassers.

Track 5

On Friday, November 16, 1894, an explosion rocked the Elwood Interurban Power Plant and knocked the street cars out of service.

Track 6

The Indiana Railroad terminated the Tipton-Alexandria line passenger service at midnight on June 30, 1931. Regular freight service continued through Saturday, October 31, 1931 (Halloween), when the last interurban car left Elwood.

But freight service did continue on the line through Elwood to Tipton. It's a matter of record that the Western Gravel Company, just west and a little south of Orestes, continued using the portion of the Alexandria to Tipton interurban line westward for connections at Tipton at least until March 2, 1932. The company continued operations beyond that date and obtained the former Indiana Railroad shops in Elwood. Their equipment was known to have been at the Indiana Railroad shops in Anderson as late as 1936. But their entire rail and equipment facilities were sold to an area salvage dealer for \$5,000 after it ceased operations, but not until 1953!!!

Track 7

Elwood Beet Field Workers Victims of Crash East of Elwood Sunday Afternoon

It was Sunday, September 30, 1923 . . . and shortly before 2 p.m., an eastbound traction car hit a Ford automobile at the Range Line Road crossing three miles east of the city.

Five people riding in the automobile were killed instantly and two were seriously injured.

Track 8

One October day in 1958, the Nickel Plate Railroad had its share of problems.

Among other things, Elwood had a fire downtown and fire hoses were laying across NKP's tracks. When Train #63 came through town, it cut the fire hoses. When the engineer saw the fire hoses across the tracks, he applied the brakes in emergency and the train lost a coupler.

The police claimed they notified the agent at the depot and the agent claimed that they did not. It's now only speculation whether someone may have contacted the PRR Block Station and not the NKP station agent.

Track 9

March 31, 1976, will go down as the last day trains traveled the line from Anderson to Elwood. When Conrail took over on April 1, 1976, it had planned to abandon most of that line. Only a connection to the canning factory on 22nd Street was to remain and it would be accessed by way of the former NKP east/west line.

But when morning broke in Anderson on April 1 of 1976, it was discovered rail cars had been left in Elwood near the freight station on the last day of Penn Central... and although March 31 will go down in history as the last day for traffic on the old PRR line, Conrail assigned a crew and a train was dispatched from Anderson to pick up the cars still in Elwood. April Fool's Day in 1976... it seems most appropriate!!?