

The Rail History of Elwood, Indiana Elwood's Third Rail Line **EA&L RR**

ELWOOD, ANDERSON & LAPEL RAILROAD

1898 -- 1929

Elwood actually had a third railroad. The **American Sheet and Tin Plate Company** opened in Elwood in 1892 and was said to have been the country's largest tin plate producer. It also owned and operated the **Elwood, Anderson & Lapel Railroad**, the **EA&L RR**, although some maps of the day indicated the rail line as the **EA&L Ry**.

The railroad of The Elwood, Anderson and Lapelle Railroad Company, hereinafter called the carrier, is a single-track standard-gauge steam railroad operating as a switching road in the town of Elwood, Ind. The carrier owns 1.412 miles of main line. The carrier also owns yard and side tracks totaling 3.434 miles. Its road thus embraces 4.846 miles of all tracks owned. In Appendix 1 will be found a general description of the property of the carrier.

Corporate history — The carrier was incorporated under the general laws of the State of Indiana, with principal office at Pittsburgh, Pa. Its organization was perfected September 29, 1897. Control of the carrier is vested in the American Sheet & Tin Plate Company through ownership of its entire outstanding capital stock.

APPENDIX 2

DEVELOPMENT OF FIXED PHYSICAL PROPERTY

On May 17, 1898, the carrier acquired by purchase from the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad Company approximately 1.296 miles of track connected with the railroad of that company. These tracks were located on land owned by the American Sheet & Tin Plate Company at Elwood, which land was, on May 17, 1898, leased to the carrier. During the period from November, 1898, to November, 1904, the carrier constructed 0.258 mile of track to effect a connection with The Lake Erie and Western Railroad Company, and during the same period constructed 3.292 miles of yard tracks and sidings to serve industries located on its line of railroad.

The switching line was chartered on January 12, 1898, to connect the tin plate mill located on the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway (The Pan Handle, a Pennsylvania Railroad component) with the Lake Erie & Western (subsequently the **Nickel Plate Road**, **Norfolk & Western** and **Norfolk Southern**) in Elwood. Although the actual line was extremely short, it extended north from So. L Street between 25th and 27th Streets and operated over several miles of track in Elwood.

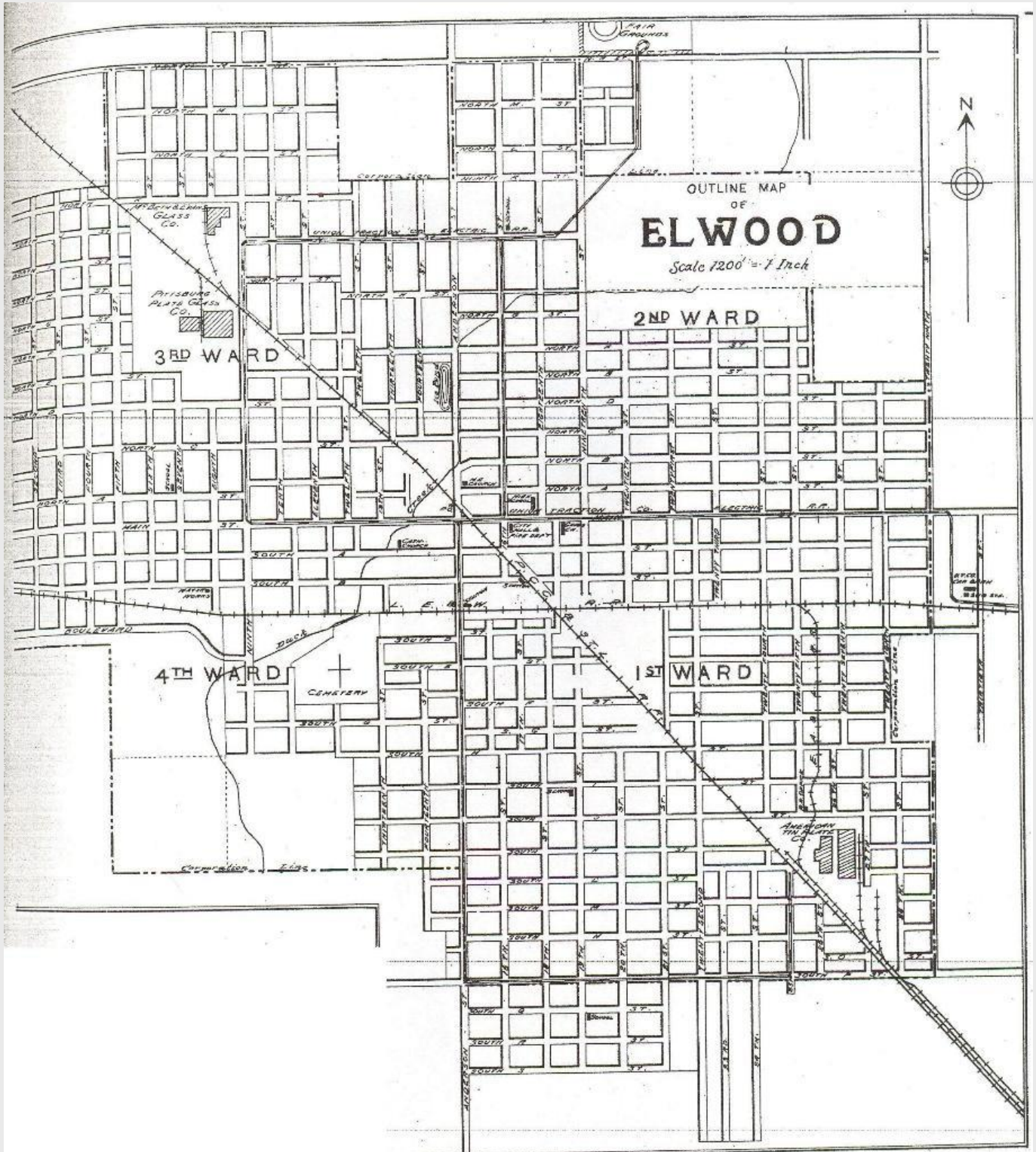
The Elwood, Anderson & Lapel RR was to have eventually run from Elwood to Anderson and then west to Lapel. Maps from 1901 do show it as proposed though track was never extended beyond Elwood. Rather than travel through Frankton, however, the **EA&L Ry** was to veer almost due east and around a settlement known as **Quick City** and then turn south again to parallel the PCC&StL tracks to Florida (Station) and Anderson. The proposed tracks were never intended to go through Frankton but around it.

From 1901: Elwood, Anderson & Lapelle R. R.

ELWOOD ANDERSON & LAPEL. -- This company proposes to complete its road from Elwood to Lapel, Ind., about 26 miles, this coming summer. Three miles of the track are already laid and in use by the American Tin Plate Company as sidings for freight cars. The line has been surveyed to Anderson, 15 miles from Lapel. D. B. Edwards, general agent, Elwood, Ind.

The following maps are from 1901 . . .

EA&L Map 1 – Elwood



This is a historical land grant map of the Florida Panhandle, showing sections 1 through 36. The map is divided into a grid of sections, each containing handwritten names of landowners and acreage. A diagonal line runs from the top left to the bottom right, separating the 'FLORIDA' territory from the 'ANDERSON' territory. The map is labeled 'T. 1 N. R. 1 E.' at the top and 'T. 1 N. R. 1 E.' at the bottom. The word 'FLORIDA' is written across the middle of the map, and 'ANDERSON' is written at the bottom. The map is a black and white reproduction of a historical document.

As an aside, Quick City was established for residents who worked for a glass factory. This factory was owned by a man named Quick, thus the name of the city. These factories came to the area to take advantage of the natural gas boom and cities erupted. Once the gas ran out, companies left, as did the Quick company, taking with them the workers and the houses in Quick City. Nothing remains of Quick City and the site is nothing more than farm land these days.

So, the EA&L RR was to remain an industrial track located primarily in Elwood to service the tin mill, glass plants, canning factories and for exchanging cars between the PRR and NKP.

The plant of the American Sheet & Tin Plate Co. at Elwood, Ind., is all enclosed by a fence, all of the tracks within which were formerly owned and operated by the P. C. C. & St. L. R. R., by which all the plant switching was performed. In 1897 the industry purchased the tracks for \$50,000, incorporated the E. A. & L. R. R., with a capital stock of \$50,000, and transferred the tracks to the railroad company in exchange for its capital stock. There are 4.51 miles of track, all within the plant enclosure, except the track extending about 7,000 feet from the north end to connection with the N. Y. C. lines, through the actual track connection is only 300 feet from the plant. All of the right of way within the enclosure, and most of that without, is leased to the industry, the lease providing that the E. A. & L. R. R. shall have the exclusive railroad right of entrance into and upon the grounds of the plant. The tracks of the P. R. R. extend along the property line of plant. The equipment of the E. A. & L. Ry. Consists of 2 locomotives, 1 flat car and 2 coal cars. The principal service performed is interchange switching; it does only a small part of the intermill switching. Inbound shipments of raw material must be placed promptly when actually required to meet the needs of the industrial service, and the E. A. & L. Ry. adjusts its switching service to meet the demands of the plant. It charges \$2 per car on inbound and \$4 on outbound business, which are absorbed by the trunk lines. The charge for intermill switching is \$2. On interchange the trunk lines charge demurrage against the industry. In 1911 the road handled 14,785 cars, from which it derived \$20,201; \$5,530 from the industry and \$14,671 from the trunk lines.

The following entry provides a little information about one of the EA&L Railroad's employees:

William Bateman Leeds (September 19, 1861 – June 23, 1908) was born in Richmond, Indiana in 1861.

1904: After hearing Wall Street rumors of dissension among the Directors, Mr. Leeds resigned from his position as President of the Rock Island & Pacific Railroad in 1903, his resignation becoming effective January 1, 1904. While President, his reported annual salary was \$32,000. After his resignation, he continued to play an active role in business and was made a Director in several other companies, including the American Tin Plate Company, the American Audit Company, the Ellwood, Anderson and Lapelle Railroad, the Nassau Gas, Heat and Power Company, the United States Mortgage and Trust Company, and the Windsor Trust Company.

The **E. A. & L** was highlighted in an **August 2, 1905**, article in the **Elwood Daily Press**:

SHORTEST RAILROADS TROUBLES

COMPLAINT MADE THE TIN PLATE ROADS CHARGES ARE EXCESSIVE

Commissioners Will Hear Complaint at the City Building August 8.

For several days it has been known to the railroads and others interested that the state railroad commission would meet in the auditorium in the city building in the city of Elwood on August 8, to inquire into certain complaints that had been made in regard to switching charges, and excessive coal rates. Who made the complaint could not be learned, everyone seemingly interested, denying all knowledge of the affair. It became known today, however, that the complaint is made against the Elwood, Anderson & Lapel railway, but who preferred the charge is a mystery.

None of the coal dealers seem to know anything about the matter and as there is no others who could be interested the facts will not come out until the commission meets.

The Elwood, Anderson & Lapel line is one of the shortest railroads in the state, if not in the country, being less than one mile in length, yet it has its network of side tracks and its equipment, consisting of the necessary rolling stock, being one engine, flat cars, gondolas, and box cars sufficient to carry on the business. The only railroad stock that usually belongs to railway equipment that it does not carry is coaches. As it runs no passenger trains this part of the usual railway equipment is unnecessary. The road has its own officers, telegraph lines, telephone service, the same as roads of a hundred miles in length and does more business according to its length and equipment, than any road in the state. Its work consists largely in switching cars between the tin plate works and the Panhandle and the L.E. & W. railroads, and it makes it especial rates for this work. It is presumed that some shippers have concluded that these charges were excessive, hence the complaint. It remains to be seen the complaint.

Whatever there is in an interchange between two roads there is always an extra charge for switching, the cars from one road to the other, otherwise the railroads would find themselves swamped and from one to three crews kept transferring cars from one line to the other for which the various companies would receive no compensation whatever, and in order to cover the cost of handling this excess business an interchange rate has been adopted. This rate runs from 50 cents to \$2, according to the work required to place the cars, etc.

In the case of the E. A. & L., the cars have to be hauled at least three-fourths of a mile before the necessary switching is done and it is quite probable that the commissioners will find that the rate charged by this short line is not excessive under existing conditions.

In 1918, there was an office listed for the EA&L in the Tin Plate Yards (phone *Main 87*) and another at S. J. and 25th Street (phone *Main 276*). Shortly before being abandoned, it was known to have 2 locomotives and 6 freight cars of its own. The freight cars were not employed in commercial service.

The *Lapel* in the corporate name was spelled *Lapelle* and *La Pelle* in some early records and was apparently a misspelling of the town of *Lapel.* Some records are hard to find because in some instances, Elwood is also misspelled as *Ellwood.*

The **Nickel Plate Road** eventually purchased the **EA&L** but abandoned it in **1929**. It is known that portions of the rails from the connecting tracks to the tin mills lasted into 2002.

*But here's a stunning exclusive -- this **Nevada Consolidated Copper Company locomotive #600** was a **1902** Schenectady 0-6-0 steam locomotive originally built new as U. S. Steel's Indiana subsidiary **Elwood, Anderson and Lapel Railroad's No. 3!!!** In a sense, Elwood had its own steam locomotive!



c1930-1931



12 July 1936



11 July 1939

The locomotive as delivered to the **EA&L Ry** was believed to have included a **wooden cab**. The **EA&L RR** sold **No. 3** to the **N. C. C. Co.** in October of **1916**! A rebuild around 1930 included a new steel cab and the only photos available are after the rebuild and the new steel cab.

*The **EA&L RR** was wholly in the city of Elwood, had no depots, no train dispatcher, ran no excursions, issued no passes, sold no tickets or mileage, owned but three engines and one car – that a work car, and handled nothing less than car lots.

Marvin Crim
WLWHS 1957