

CA&E During Wendell Dillinger's Tenure

All photo by the author

In the Autumn 2015 issue of *First & Fastest*, Wendell Dillinger described his job that was to develop a plan to restore passenger service on the CA&E. During his tenure he was out on the property taking photos. He sent us these photos along with review comments on that article. It is timely to present these photos now as the freight service ended 60 years ago on June 10, 1959.

On March 16, 1957, Wendell journeyed to the Fox River and then to Glen Ellyn and Lombard. ◀ A westbound car has come along the Fox River, just north of the present Highway 20 Elgin bypass and is heading for its stop at National Street.



▲ Car 414 is laying over at the Aurora Terminal.

◀ Just to the north of the Aurora Terminal was a short storage track where car 406 is parked.

**CHICAGO
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▲ A favorite stop for CA&E photos was the Hill Avenue bridge in Glen Ellyn. We are looking east as a westbound train passes the Glen Oak stop, named for the country club of the same name along the south side of the railroad. Photos of the CA&E are posted in the clubhouse. In 2019, the open area in the background is the I-355 Illinois Tollway and beyond is Lombard. ▼ An eastbound train is stopped at Main Street, Lombard. The station building also housed an electrical substation. Wendell visited these two locations as well on March 16, 1957.





▲ Two weeks later on March 30th, Wendell was back along the Fox River in Elgin south of National Street as car 410 headed eastbound to Wheaton and Forest Park. ▼ Built as an express motor for the “United Parcel Service” of the railroad’s early days, car 11 was rebuilt as a line car. It was equipped with a third trolley pole having a shoe with a cup to hold grease that was applied to the trolley wire to reduce the friction of the sliding shoes on the passenger cars and freight motors. The intent was to extend the useful life of the overhead wires.





▲ Little known on June 9, 1957, was that the cession of the passenger service was less than a month away. At this time; however, all knew that the days of passenger service were numbered. Hearings, court battles and efforts to save the serviced continued. Car 459 was chartered for that day which included a trip over the freight only Cook County Branch. Car 459 is heading geographically south, just west of Mannheim (La Grange) Road and is about to pass under the Illinois Central's Iowa Division. At this point the car is in Westchester. A short distance ahead it will turn west and parallel Roosevelt Road to near Wolf Road. In history this branch was built to serve the Mount Carmel Cemetery on the west side of Wolf Road. Both the CA&E and Chicago Rapid Transit Company would provide the final ride for people heading for burial. ▼ Looking down from the ICRR the car is about to pass under the bridge.





CA&E's last passenger train was a charter sponsored by the Illini Railroad Club on December 7, 1958. This train operated from First Avenue, Maywood, to Aurora, then to Elgin before heading back to Maywood. ▲ En route to Aurora there was a photo stop at Weisbrook Road on the Aurora Branch. In 1958, this location was out in the country. In 2019 it is a fully developed part of Wheaton. ◀ Another photo stop on the Aurora Branch was at the Chicago Golf stop. ▼ The train is awaiting departure on the final run from Elgin. The usual flock of ducks was present to entertain the passengers in the hopes of being feed. Interurban and suburban trains of this era delivered Chicago newspapers. Between Chicago, later Forest Park, and Wheaton bundles of newspapers were carried in the head car and thrown off at station stops. West of Wheaton, the motorman became the "newsboy." Along the way he would throw individual papers off at the flag stops wherever they were to be delivered.





▲ On December 27, 1958, the east end of Wheaton Yard look like the railroad was ready to provide service in a matter of minutes.

► The west end of the yard was a different matter. Car 9 had seen its last day of service as well as some of the older wood cars. This raises the question of what would the CA&E have used for passenger equipment if passenger service had been resumed? The CA&E was chronically short of rolling stock and relied on the North Shore Line to supply extra passenger cars. ▼ By July 20, 1959, Wheaton Yard looked more like a grave yard than a railroad yard. Burning of the cars followed to reduce the rolling stock to its metallic content. The scrapper was in such a hurry to finish that they buried a portion of a front end of a steel car. It was discovered when excavation was being done during construction of the apartment complex that occupies the site today.





◀ The freight crew posed for a photo on December 27, 1958.

▼ The final freight run is returning from Aurora and the Chicago Burlington & Quincy interchange on June 10, 1959. The freight motor is on the Aurora Branch at Wheaton just south of Liberty Drive. Formal abandonment of the railroad was not granted until July 6, 1961. The railroad's corporation was renamed the Aurora Corporation and invested in real estate and industrial companies.



◀ The office staff in June 1959.