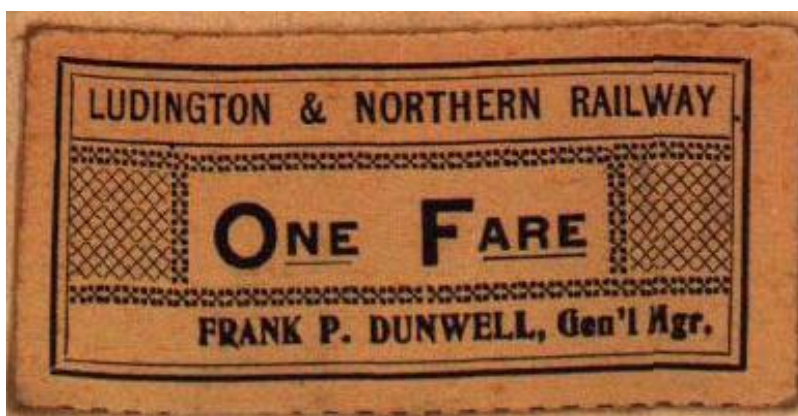


A Ride on the Dummy Train



Ever imagine what it would be like to ride the Dummy Train? After reviewing a few old newspaper articles we can get an idea of what it must have been like.

To ride the Dummy Train, the first thing you need to know is that the train is seldom on time. There is a detailed time schedule available showing many roundtrips out to Hamlin Lake each day giving the times for each stop, but passengers could not depend on those times. Even though it is clearly written on the schedule that there are no unscheduled stops, the train actually stops quite often. In addition to picking up passengers at the scheduled stops, the train also picks up additional passengers along the way causing delays. And there are unscheduled refueling stops at the water tower where water and coal are loaded onto the train. Often the passengers are asked to help load the coal.

When planning your trip, you should dress for the weather. The trains are open and so if it is raining or windy, you certainly will be affected. In fact, it is always wise to check the way the wind is blowing and choose your seat accordingly to avoid getting wet and windblown as much as possible.

Just getting on to the train would be a challenge for those of us used to our barrier-free world. The step up is quite steep and most of us would need help.

It is always wise to not sit near the engine. There is a lot of smoke with soot and sometimes cinders that fly out and if the wind is just right, land on the passengers. Yes, there are incidents of passengers clothing being set on fire. Don't worry; though as there are fire extinguishers available on each car.

Be sure to get yourself seated in a way that you can brace yourself. Once the train starts you will be jerked back, which can put quite a strain on your neck. And then when the train stops, you will jerk forward. You want to be hanging on to something so you do not fall off the seat.

As the train starts, the whistle blows and the bell starts to ring. As the train jerks and lunges along, the bell continuously rings. The train follows Charles Street (Rath) North

to Bryant Road and then goes NW to Epworth. From there it travels to Hamlin Lake with several stops along the way. The last stop is at the North Bayou.

If you are lucky, it will not be raining when you arrive and the launch taking you to your destination on the lake will be waiting.

In the early 1900's taking a trip out to Epworth or Hamlin Lake for the day was a fun filled thing to do for a family. They would take along a picnic lunch and enjoy a program at Epworth or a boat ride on Hamlin Lake.