

VALUATION SECTION MONTANA 5.

Valuation Section Montana 5 covers the line extending from Harlowton in a general northerly direction through Meagher and Fergus Counties to the junction of the Great Falls and Hilger Lines west of Lewistown and comprises about 64 miles of railroad.

The line between Harlowton and Lewistown was built by the Montana Railroad Company in 1903 and when purchased by the Chicago, Milwaukee & Puget Sound Railway Company formed a part of the former Company's main line between Lombard and Lewistown.

The original surveys took place in August and September, 1902 under Mr. T. A. Clark, and the final survey was made in the Spring of 1903. Three separate preliminary surveys were made before the final adopted location was obtained.

In general, the line as constructed follows open creek valleys with a rolling gradient of one percent although a one and five-tenths percent gradient is used to attain a summit near Oka station.

The territory between Harlowton and Lewistown was unsettled at the time of construction of this line. All supplies, contractors' equipment, bridge and culvert material, etc., were shipped to Harlowton, from there they were hauled by teams to the points of use. No supplies were available locally.

A contract was awarded to the Utah Construction Company for the grading, bridge and culvert work, who in turn sublet the entire line to J. R. McShane & Company of Omaha, Neb. Construction was started in the Spring of 1903 and completed in October of the same year. The country being unsettled very few laborers could be obtained locally and it was necessary to import them via the Northern Pacific Railway to Lombard, thence via the Montana Railroad to Harlowton. Due to the bad water, camping conditions were adverse and it was necessary in many cases to haul water for long distances.

A large amount of cemented gravel was encountered in the grading, which required blasting. Some shale and solid rock was also encountered. After the completion of the grading in 1903 the contractors brought suit for additional compensation on account of the necessity of blasting the cemented gravel, and after several years of litigation received \$70,000.00 in settlement of their claim.

The Chicago Milwaukee & Puget Sound Railway and the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway have done a large amount of improvement work since their acquisition of the line in 1910. The entire line has been relaid with heavier rail, and cuts and embankments widened, culverts replaced, pile bridges strengthened and reconstructed, right of way fenced, and fire guards plowed. When the line was extended to Great Falls and other branch lines built out of Lewistown, extensive changes were made at that point.

The Montana Railroad depot at Lewistown was situated at the southerly end of First Avenue and the line originally terminated at the end of track about 900 feet north from the depot. When the Hilger Line was built it was connected with the end of track at this point. In the new layout two main tracks were graded, leaving the old line east of Spring Creek and extending through town about 200 or 300 feet to the east of the old main line and the Hilger Line, and crossed Main Street at approximately the same place. This involved the moving of the old engine terminal facilities, building new bridges across Spring Creek, grading new spurs to the various industries, and the construction of three channel changes in the Flour Mill Power Canal. The excavation was exceedingly wet due to the seepage from the Power Canal, and a long retaining wall was constructed as a matter of safety just east of the present depot. The site of the present passenger and freight depots was a waste of low ground that was flooded with water in wet seasons and a large amount of Force Account was paid in connection with the filling due to the special conditions.

Extensive freight yards were built in the outskirts of town along Spring Creek Valley. These necessitated three important channel changes at Spring Creek. The banks of the new channels are well protected with hand placed riprap and three dams were constructed to retard the flow of water. Part of the grading in these channel changes and yards was done by teams and grading machines, and part with train hauled material. Considerable hand work was required in the channel changes due to the soft wet material.

The engine terminal buildings are located at the extreme east end of the freight yards, and a large amount of grading was required as the channel of the creek originally lay where these buildings now stand.

During the construction work in Lewistown it was necessary to maintain tracks for the operation of the Grass Range, Hilger and Harlowton Lines, which often required the construction of temporary tracks and added materially to the cost of the work. The old Grass Range Line ran through the site of the present round house, and the old Hilger Line ran through the present location of the passenger station.

At Harlowton in 1907 a new connection with the main line was built which was about 6400 feet long, and is now the west leg of the wye. After this was built about 4000 feet of old track was taken up.

About 124 miles of six furrow fire guards have been plowed.

56 pound steel was laid in 1903. This was replaced with new 65 pound and 75 pound steel in 1912. The ties in the old road-bed were largely of hewed pine. Renewals have been made with western fir sawed ties. Tie plates have been placed on all new ties. Gravel ballast placed on the line since 1910 was hauled from gravel pits located at Two Dot, fourteen miles west of Harlowton on the main line, from pits in Miles 19 and 49, and the Brooks pit eleven miles north of Lewistown on the Hilger Line.

Temporary water stations were at Judith Gap, Straw and Moore, and three temporary stations were used at Lewistown. Permanent stations are maintained at Oka, Straw, Moore and Lewistown.

Many of the original culverts have been replaced since 1910 with corrugated iron, cast iron and concrete pipes. The pile trestles were rebuilt in 1911 to conform to the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul standard design.

Right of way fence with the proper crossing facilities has been provided except through the important station grounds. Portable snow fence is used where protection is required.

Combination freight and passenger depots were built at Oka, Judith Gap, Garnell, Straw and Moore. In 1913-14 a two story brick passenger station with rooms for the Superintendent's offices, and a one story freight house, were built at Lewistown. These buildings are surrounded with artistic parking and well arranged driveways. Engine terminals and shops were also built at this point in 1913-14 including a 12 stall round house, machine and blacksmith shop, power house, general store house, etc. The buildings are all of modern superstructure on concrete foundation.

Telephones for train dispatching purposes have been installed in booths at blind sidings as well as in the depots.

The line is operated as a part of the Northern Montana Division, with local offices in Lewistown. Standard main line equipment is used, and the traffic is fairly heavy.