

Range's School Train... Daily Mining Gazette green sheet October of? year.  
From the collection of Jim Alain, Chassell.

Researcher has not taken all words as written.. paraphrased.

Copper Range Railroad was providing train transit for about 200 Adams Township students and Stanton Township communities in the North. It began in 1909 when Adams Township School Board had budget of \$3000 for train transportation (Stanton gave \$ as well for their students). It operated until June 12, 1941 when school buses became the student transportation. Bill Brinkman was Superintendent of Schools in Stanton Township then. This was one of the few school trains in the nation. In 1940 it was labeled as the only such distinctive service in the country. Adams transported grade school and high school. Stanton transported only high school students.

The Gazette lists these names living locally when article was written as those who rode the school train:

Mrs. Norma Vezetti, Mrs. Eva Nozero, Mrs. Allie Rugani and her husband, Mrs. Marquerite Lazzari, Violet Brinkman Maki, Lois Simonson Ketturi, Viola Kopp Funkenbusch , Mae Raisanen Witanen, Freida Durocher Guilbault, Sundra Peterson Moyyad, Nellie Smith.. and more.

Evidence of the students and thousands of trips to the Painesdale High School (later named Jeffers High School) on the 17 mile route are the scores of apple trees that line the now nonexistent Copper Range railroad track, especially over the last 6 mile stretch. They are the product of hundreds of apple cores tossed out the windows by snacking students.

The engineer of the train was Houghton's Ed Schuster coming to the line in 1905. Another engineer was Ed Lurn of Hancock.

Students taking the train say it was always on time. The engine and 2-4 coaches started in Houghton at 7 a.m. picking up Freda sons and daughters of the Copper Range Mining Company Stamp Mill. It went to Beacon Hill, Edgemere, Stanwood, Redridge, Obenhoff, and Mill Mine Junction in Atlantic Mine near the cemetery. It continued on to South Range, and Baltic. Trimountain students had to walk.

After the students were unloaded in Painesdale the engine was unhitched and hauled copper rock between the mines and Stamp Mills. The coaches stayed on the Painesdale coal dock to await the end of the school day.

Arthur Sampson of South Range was one of the railroad section men who cleaned the coaches and fired up the coal stoves located at both ends of the cars. When the students came aboard at 3:45 the cars were warm for the trip home.

In late 1930's the train only had a caboose into Freda and neighboring Stanton communities. In Atlantic Mine they would pick up coaches for the ride to the Painesdale depot.

Passenger cars number 58 and 59 were used most often. They were painted a dull brown. They were wooden construction with open platforms, were 8 wheeled, 52 feet long, and had a seating capacity of 62 students. A kerosene lamp hung overhead at each end of the coach. There were 15 windows on each side of the car and the cloth-covered seats faced each other and had highly decorated wooden arm rests on aisle ends. The locomotive was coal fired and smoky.

Students would study, play pinochle, or discuss such things as boys, clothes, dates, weekend plans, teachers, hockey games at the Houghton Amphidrome, or baseball games in Calumet, South Range or Ontonagon. Subjects were discussed about hunting, fishing, camping and other outdoor recreation. There was always the kidding around. Discipline was under close control with the conductor watching, though the ride had well behaved students.

Chassell's Eric Styrainder working for the Detroit News as photographer took the pictures in the late 1930's.

Barb Koski, researcher 2011 See Schools for more on school train.