

Corner cards don't always identify users

By Steve Grabowski (#3409)

The corner card found with a perfin doesn't always correlate with what is known about the firm involved. Often researching the history of a perfin user will yield additional information.

This is an attempt to clear up the anomalies for the users of U.S. perfins P202 and P202A: the Chicago, Milwaukee & Puget Sound Rwy (CM&PS), the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Rwy (CM&StP) and the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Rwy (CMStP&P).

In 1905, the CM&StP made the decision to compete with the Union Pacific and Great Northern for the freight revenues of the expanding Northwest Pacific traffic to the Midwest. To this end the CM&StP purchased railroads in Washington, Idaho, and Montana and incorporated as the CM&StP of each state. To complete the link, construction of trackage in South Dakota began.

In 1908, the CM&PS was formed by amending the original charter and merging the railroads of Washington, Idaho, Montana, and South Dakota

into the CM&PS. This formed what was commonly referred to as the Pacific Extension of the CM&StP railway.

In 1912, the CM&PS was merged into the CM&StP as a division/subsidiary with rather independent operations.

In 1928, after going bankrupt in 1925, the CM&StP was reorganized as the CMStP&P.

In 1977, all of the lines west of Miles City, Montana, were abandoned or sold off to other railroads.

At some time, the CMStP&P was commonly referred to as the Milwaukee Road.

Based on this history, one can make the following assumptions about P202 and 202A.

- They may be found on covers with the corner card of CM&PS from 1908 to 1912; however, with the short time span involved, perfins may not yet have been prepared.
- They may be found on covers with the corner card of the CM&StP from 1912 to 1928.
- They may be found on covers with the corner card of the CMStP&P from 1928 to 1977.

This doesn't necessarily hold true in all cases. As companies merged or changed names, the supply of stationery and perfins did not necessarily change simultaneously. There could be some overlapping of usage.

The only cover I have has the CMStP&P corner card and is dated 1938 which fits with the history we know. If any readers have covers to corroborate any of the history, please let me know. I would be interested in obtaining copies of these covers to support the data for the new railroad perfins catalog.

