



SNOW PLOW TRAIN ~ 1959

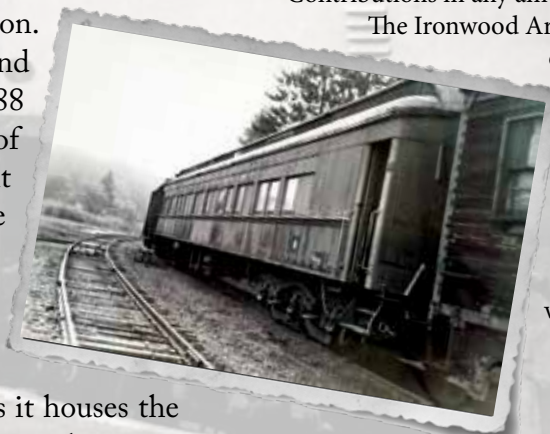


THE BEST & WORST OF TIMES

The fortunes of the depot rose and fell with those of the iron mines. Iron ore trains ended in 1967 and in 1970 passenger rail service ended.

The City of Ironwood purchased the C&NW station. In a dramatic leap of faith, the Ironwood Area Historical Society (IAHS) leased the station from the City in 1986 and launched plans for its restoration. Countless fundraisers and volunteer hours starting in 1988 with efforts to fund a new roof were set in motion. Present day fundraising efforts include Commemorative Platform Bricks and membership drives.

The depot welcomes visitors today but in a different sense as it houses the IAHS Museum. Come inside to learn more about iron mining on the Range, early life in a mining town and the depot's colorful history. Do research in the depot's Baggage Room that stores archived photographs, books, documents and other historical resources.



In 1986 the Ironwood C&NW Railway Depot was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The depot has not outlived its usefulness. It has enriched the lives of generations; in the early years by transportation to and from the Gogebic Range and now by enrichment through time and history back to that bygone era.



IRONWOOD AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY DEPOT MUSEUM & GIFT SHOP

MEMORIAL DAY - LABOR DAY: OPEN MON-SAT NOON - 4PM
WINTER HOURS: VARY, PLEASE CALL AHEAD
150 N Lowell St., Ironwood, MI 49938
906-932-0287

Email: ironwoodhistoricalsociety@gmail.com
www.ironwoodareahistoricalociety.org

GPS coordinates: 46° 27' 21" N 90° 10' 12" W

Contributions in any amount are welcome and appreciated.
The Ironwood Area Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization, so the full amount of your donation is tax-deductible.

This brochure is made possible with funding from the Ironwood Area Historical Society. Together with the City of Ironwood, Michigan we welcome you to a region rooted in history and planting the future.

Snap this QR code to stay connected to Ironwood, a City with opportunities, adventure and history.



Photo credits: IAHS, Robert Anderson and Sandy Sharp
Brochure design by: SANDY SHARP GRAPHIC DESIGN

IRONWOOD HISTORIC DEPOT & MUSEUM



MAKING HISTORY MATTER.



WORLD WAR I RECRUITS



All aboard!

Welcome to Ironwood's historic Depot & Museum.

THE DEPOT ARCHITECTURE

The Chicago & Northwestern (C&NW) Railroad Depot was constructed in 1892, finished in 1893. Its architecture is true to its Richardson Romanesque origins. The exterior is baked-red brick above and a heavy base of Lake Superior sandstone from the brownstone quarries located on the mainland and Apostle Islands near Bayfield in Northern Wisconsin. The Ironwood depot is a stunning structure with three tapering roof lines including an unusual hipped, cross dormer and a signature finial cupola reflecting flanged rail wheels crowning the pinnacle. Its steeply pitched, slate-clad roof continues across a breezeway to the baggage room. This is a building with character and style.



THE PLATFORM

On the track side (north side), a 400-foot-long platform extends past the northwest end of the station. Today, the platform is paved with new bricks, many engraved with the names of donors who helped fund the depot's restoration.

THE ROAD THAT IRON BUILT

As the iron mining industry boomed in the late 19th century, along with the mines came railroads to haul the ore to ports like Ashland, Wisconsin, where ore was shipped to the steel mills in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. The railroads brought workers and others who would call the burgeoning Gogebic Range home. Two rail companies played primary roles in the area, the Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western Railway, acquired by the C&NW Railroad in 1893 and the Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste Marie Railway, which became known as the Soo Line. So strong was the potential for riches on the Gogebic Range that Frederick Rhinelander, President of the Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western Railway, rerouted the new track originally intended for the Copper Country, through the Gogebic Range.

Once the depot was open, the C&NW Railroad extended train service to

Milwaukee and Chicago. Prospective miners and their families had their first look at the booming mining town of Ironwood as they steamed into town, completing their long journeys from Europe to a hoped-for better life. That the rail line from Chicago came to Ironwood is testament to the importance of the Gogebic Range iron mines to the country. Ironwood was the largest city on the Gogebic Range and their own C&NW depot was right in the midst of the activity.

The operations of the C&NW in the 1940s and 1950s illustrated the paramount role Ironwood played in rail operations. Empty trains (deadheads) returned to Ironwood from Ashland after the iron ore was unloaded at the ore docks. At that point, the engine was then hitched to fully loaded ore cars and headed back to the Ashland ore docks. In 1960, C&NW recognized that if transportation costs were not lowered, the mines on the Gogebic Range would cease operation quickly. A decision was made to suspend operations at Ashland and transfer C&NW ore to Escanaba for transshipment. This decision was said to have forestalled the closing of some mines. The steel mills welcomed the change, as the



Escanaba docks were much closer to the steel producing areas, thereby providing faster turn-around of the lake vessels.

