

NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS
Reginald Smith Collection

June 25, 1908

Tearing Up the Track and Piling Material at Marion

There have been rumors, and rumors of rumors, in circulation this week concerning mighty railroad construction that is going to happen in the Flathead in the near future or soon thereafter. The Great Northern has a large crew of men at work tearing up the track between Marion and Lake View and the steel is being unloaded at Marion, the latter fact being cited as positive evidence by local railroad builders that Jim Hill is going to build the Libby cut-off, of some other branch of the Great Northern system in the west end of the county right away.

All steel and heavy timbers are being removed along the old line west of Haskell Pass that has not been removed before, and it comes pretty straight that the bridges will all be burned. Whatever may be the intention of the railway officials, there is no way of finding anything out definitely, but it certainly looks reasonable that some new work will be done in the vicinity of Marion or the rails would not be unloaded at that point.

In case the company should decide to build the cut-off instead of establishing the double tracking from Columbia Falls to Libby, it would have the effect of putting Kalispell back on the main line, as the passengers would undoubtedly be run this way on account of the saving in distance over the present route.

The company would also get the benefit of a large amount of traffic by opening up the country west of Kalispell that is rich with agricultural, timber and mineral resources. On the whole it does look feasible, and stranger things have happened than the building of the line. Let us hope.

February 14, 1907

Local News

The work of filling the Great Northern ice houses from ice taken from Bitter Root Lake has begun. All the houses west of Minot to the coast will be supplied from the same source.

April 18, 1907

Marion News

Mr. Nelson with a crew of men are repairing the pump house and water tank for Jim Hill at Marion.

March 8, 1934

To Evade Taxes G.N. Would Abandon Line

The notice of intention of the Great Northern to abandon the Marion branch and the branch line to Somers, has caused an investigation which may result in a contest by county authorities. It is rumored that this is only a preliminary to the dismantling of these lines, tearing up the steel and abandoning the right-of-way, which will eventually deduct about 33 miles of railroad in this county.

It is alleged that the railroad company will lease these lines indefinitely to the Somers Lumber company for use as a logging road, but that may be more or less of a

subterfuge, as the lumber company is their principal patron and beyond the local freight from Somers and the lake traffic, the branch has little other business since regular passenger service was discontinued.

March 15, 1934

Miles of Rails Added to the Logging Road

E.N. McDevitt, general manager of the Somers Lumber Co., quiets rumors concerning the abandonment of several miles of railroad by the G.N., which followed the publication of an application to the state railroad commission for permission to withdraw regular service on the Somers and Marion branch.

According to Mr. McDevitt, the Somers Lumber Company proposes to add 30 to 40 miles of steel to the lines in use as a logging railroad. From Marion a spur will be built down Bitter Root creek to the Hubbard dam to take care of the large stand of yellow pine in that section. Should the Flathead and other mines produce sufficient ore to require rail service in the near future, it will be an easy matter to turn this spur to the left, through the canyon, and tap all that country.

In any event, the large bodies of timber, which the Somers Lumber Co. owns adjacent to the lake, will keep their railroad in operation many years. Of course, the Somers branch will be maintained as long as there are logs to harvest.

OTHER MISC INFORMATION

Norman Hanson owner of Shining Mountains Dude ranch 1954 -1972

Norman Hanson helped Mr. Stickels and Mr. McConnell harvest ice from Bitterroot Lake. It was stored between the store and the barn area. The ice was covered with sawdust to keep from melting. It was used for commercial use. They used horses and wagon to haul the ice. One day the ice broke and the horse fell into the lake. Mr. McConnell pulled the horse out with a tractor. Norm said he was surprised the horses neck didn't break.

Norman sold ranch to Del Grande & Flanders who started the Lou Flanders and John Brekke Wilderness Treatment Center for Chemical Dependency in 1983