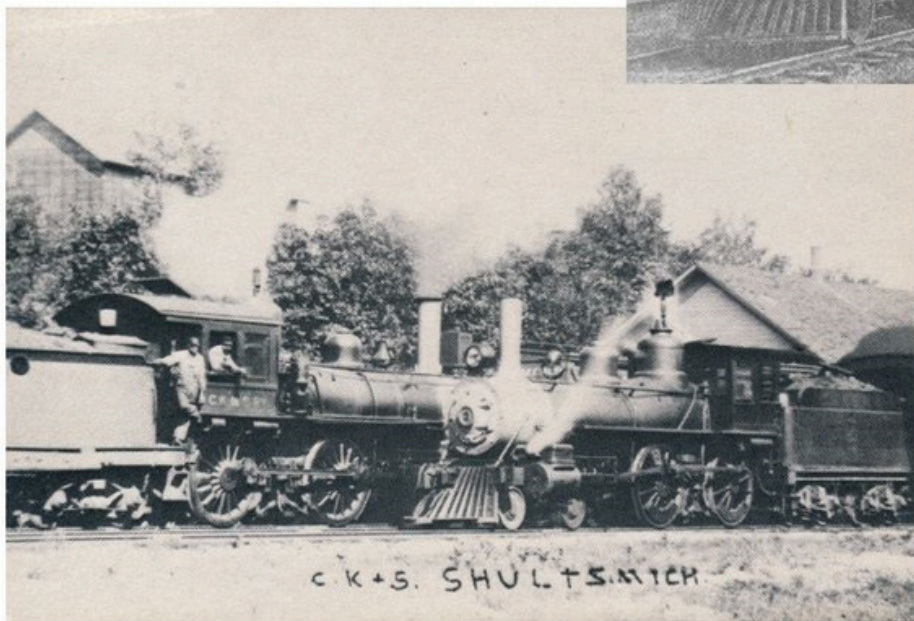
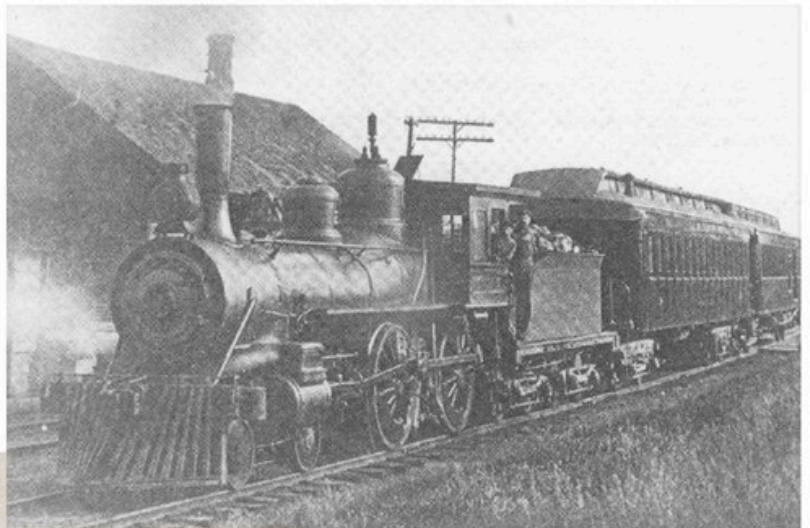


It was a favorite pastime for passengers to travel from Kalamazoo to Cloverdale to spend the day. In the early 1900s they added a fishing expedition. These excursions were always loaded. The train would leave Kalamazoo at 7:00 AM. The passengers would fish, swim and picnic all day and the train would deliver them back to Kalamazoo by 10 PM.



The CK&S Railroad also made it possible to ship bricks from Cloverdale brickyards. Before the railroad came, bricks had to be transported by wagon loads. Now they could be moved by train car load, giving new markets to one of the area's oldest industries. It also delivered dried apples, peaches, ice, wheat, cream, coal, mail and much more.

In 1886 activity building on the CK&S was renewed with vigor. In October a Directors meeting was held and plans moved ahead to target completion of the railroad to Hastings by spring. All the right of ways had been obtained except for about two miles south of Hastings. Landowners were holding out for more money which they got.

The grading from Kalamazoo north went through relatively flat land. This allowed the rails to be laid between Kalamazoo and Doster with little trouble. Remember, there was no earthmoving equipment in those days Just men with shovels and horse drawn wagons. The picture below shows the workforce of the day!



Once the path of the railroad entered Barry County, grading the roadbed became more challenging. There were hills to work around, lakes to pass and swampy land to pass over. One good example of the terrain is between Delton and Shultz. The village of Shultz was just over the first hill on Shultz road which is a couple miles north of Long Lake. The village disappeared when the CK&S ceased to exist in 1937.

If you look along M-43 just South of Cloverdale Lake you will see the railbed cut out of the hillside. And if you walk down the CK&S Trail in Cloverdale you will see that a huge amount of fill was needed to get from Cloverdale to where the present public landing is on Long Lake. More than likely, the dirt dug out south of Cloverdale was used to fill in the roadbed north of Cloverdale. Just past Shultz is a stretch that ran through swampland and there were numerous times that sinkholes developed. To solve that problem, trees were cut and laid to attempt to overcome the situation .

In July of 1887 a number of investors took a ride out of Kalamazoo on the CK&S to view the progress made so far. It left with an amazing speed of 25 miles per hour! They went out 11 miles before returning. In September it was reported that the railroad was complete out 19 miles and it was expected to have 3 more miles complete in another week. By October of 1887 the tracks were within 5 miles of Hastings.

Once the railroad made it to Hastings a problem developed in that it had to cross another railroad and a bridge was needed to cross the Thornapple River. The law in that day was that a railroad could not cross another railroad unless a cross rail was laid. So, on a quiet Sunday the CK&S workers tore up a section of the other railroad and laid a cross rail so they could proceed north.

The costs to construct the railroad are not readily available, but surely some of the rails came from other railroads that went out of business. In 1887 a locomotive was purchased for \$2,500, two handcars for \$100, a passenger coach for \$1,800 and a freight car for \$1,500.

On September 1, 1889 service opened from Kalamazoo to Woodbury. No progress was ever made further north or south so the CK&S was really the Kalamazoo Woodbury Railroad. However. it never officially was named that.

In 1891 the Railroad went into the coal business selling coal at cost plus a delivery charge. The railroad tried to force the coal dealers along its route to buy their coal from the railroad, but that did not end up working out.

On July 15, 1909 the railroad suffered its only serious wreck when a northbound passenger train collided with a southbound freight train. Killed were Melvin Mead, the engineer and Seth Chandler, a fireman, both on the passenger train. Mr. Mead was my great grandmother's brother and Mr. Chandler was also a relative of mine.

In 1915 the CK&S was purchased by the Michigan Central Railroad. In January of 1934 it was announced that the passenger service would be discontinued on February 1st. Then in 1937 freight service from Doster to Woodbury was discontinued and the tracks were removed from Doster to Woodbury. The service from Kalamazoo to Doster was continued until the 1960's, most likely to accept surrounding abundant farm crops and to service the small Doster Lumber Company.

And so, ends the story of a railroad, commonly referred to as "The Cuss Kick and Swear Railroad" (CK&S) that had the distinction of having been constructed by home capital and without funded debt.