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The Modest Town Of Hoquiam Steam Train Terminus

In its early history as a small town, Hoquiam was part of a railroad network that served the different transport needs of the vast number of communities in and around the State of Washington. This was the great "Prairie Line" of the Northern Pacific railroad company. The Prairie line trains served passengers, goods and raw materials such as logs taken from the rich forest surrounding the city.

The Northern Pacific Railroad Company then was operating the following trains over the proud Prairie Line; #421 & #422 "Grays Harbor Limited", the trains #423 & 424 "Grays Harbor Express", and the trains #465 & #466 "Puget Sound Express" These trains headed west from Lakeview to Nisqually on the American Lake Line towards Grays Harbor destinations of Hoquiam and Moclips. Today, the prairie line is long gone and has given way to cheaper trucking and privately owned vehicles, which has impacted the use of the railroads giving way to the shutting down of operations several decades past.

What remained in the town is the Train Depot, Built in 1914 this is where the great and powerful trains of the prairie line once got repaired and rested from their long, eventful trips from city to city, state to state. This station served as a terminus for three transcontinental railroads, the Puget Sound & Pacific railroad, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, and of course the Northern Pacific Railway.

In 1914, a train depot was erected in the logging town of Hoquiam to serve as the terminus or the end of the line for three railroads of the North Pacific Railroad Company, these were the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railways, The Puget Sound & Pacific Railroad and the Northern Pacific Railways. The train depot is one of the few remaining witnesses to a bygone era of the Prairie Line that was also part of the history of the residents then.

1955 was the last year that a person bought a ticket and set foot on a train in Hoquiam station, but as progress and time would have it, the Prairie Line and the men of the railroad had to give way sooner or later and give way they did because it was the nature of the railroad, it was its purpose, to bring progress through wherever it went and ended, and it gave some of it to the town and the people did not forget.

The city and its residents have and will always be passionate lovers of history and heritage, this attitude has been proven worthwhile and honorable in many instances throughout its time as a community and the train depot is a testament to this attitude. Unfortunately for the rest of the Prairie Line with its old locomotives and disused railroads and dilapidated stations and depots, they will pass history and slowly fade away through rust and rot never to be seen or heard from again inevitably.

The historic train depot, through the efforts of the residents of the city got the building as a donation from Burlington Railroad, the company that acquired the old prairie line. The city fathers spent \$1.2 million for the restoration of the 96 year old train depot to the respectable structure that it once was, most of the funding came from grants from the Federal Highway Department.

The Department of Licensing Office leased the old but restored train depot from the city for 10 years to serve city residents and those in the State of Washington, the licensing office will continue the heritage that once was the role of the great Prairie Line and that is to bring people and commerce to the city and its residents. The Prairie Line of the North Pacific Railroad Company during its hey day was coveted by those who once got power and wealth from the railroads and was held as one of the most significant elements in bringing forth progress to the Northwest communities is to be slowly lost in time and memory for the most part, but thanks to people like those in the City of Hoquiam such memories of both men and machines of the Prairie Line will continue on bringing progress for generations to come.

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