

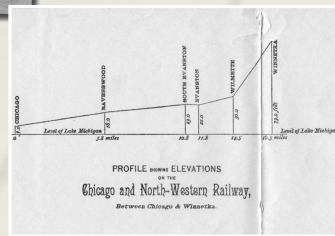
Why Are the Train Tracks Lower in Winnetka?

WINNETKA AVE - WINNETKA
Looking Northwest
Sept. 22, 1930 - 8:20 A.M.

In 1906, Village Engineer Frank Windes designed a plan for depressing the tracks (remarkably similar to what was implemented decades later) but nothing was done. When the Plan of Winnetka was issued in 1921 by architect Edward Bennett, track depression was the first topic listed, and grade crossings were described as “Winnetka’s most serious and urgent problem.” Village leaders embraced the plan, but no action was taken.

PERSPECTIVE VIEW OF
PROPOSED BRIDGE, VIADUCT, AND
TRUCK DEPOT, WASHINGTON, D.C.
1904

With the community demanding action, a funding solution was finally achieved. Of critical importance was a commitment from the Public Works Administration, headed by Secretary of the Interior and Winnetkan Harold L. Ickes, to fund 45% of the project. The Village contributed 29%, and the balance was funded by the Chicago & North Western and North Shore railroad companies. The Chicago & North Western railroad was in favor of the plan, as their trains had been getting stuck on the incline between Evanston and Winnetka for decades. An additional engine was frequently sent from Evanston to push the train up the bluff into Winnetka.



1999.2029



The "Big Ditch" construction project began in 1938 and ran from Indian Hill to Hubbard Woods. It included seven bridges (two for pedestrians) and three train stations along with retaining walls. Much of the excavated soil was used as landfill in Crow Island Woods. After five years of construction, the project was completed in 1943.






History Displayed in Partnership with The Hudson Company
 Concept & Design by Anne Bahr