

The Clifton Depot
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The Duluth & Iron Range Railway Company, like most other railroads, established depots at locations where there was a reasonable amount of passenger traffic. Where there was a lot of traffic an agent was assigned, and where there was less, a flag stop depot was erected. In the case of the latter, the passenger train would not stop unless the person wishing to ride signaled the train to stop. This was done with a flag during the daylight hours and a kerosene lantern after dark. When the engineer saw the signal he answered with a whistle signal to let the person know they were stopping to pick them up. One of these small flag stop stations was built at Clifton in February of 1916. It was a very small structure only 16 feet by 10 feet and made to look somewhat like a Japanese pagoda. A single bench seat was attached to both the side and back walls wrapping around the interior. A single door faced the track and two windows, one on each end, providing a view in both directions up and down the track. It is impossible to say how many people sat in the small depot over the years and awaited the arrival of the passenger train. During the course of those years they would have watched as the mighty steam locomotive stepped aside in 1953 to be replaced by a shiny new diesel Budd car.

A few years later in 1958 the DM&IR began to eliminate some of its depots. The following year more depots were closed and disposed of. Then passenger service ceased entirely on the DM&IR on July 20, 1961. The Clifton depot was sold to a private party and then prepared for removal off of railroad property. The moving of the depot happened in the late hours of the night during the winter. It had just snowed and the new owner pulled the small depot down the road on two skids. The final destination was fairly close to the Duluth Township Hall. There, it remained for quite some time with the Clifton signs still prominent on both ends of the building. Many of these old depot structures were moved to various locations in private ownership. Most of them were moved on trailers or flatbed trucks, but the Clifton depot was the only one to ski to its new home in Duluth Township.