

The Duluth Red Lake Falls & Northern  
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Duluth Township might have been a very different place today if the DRLF&N had ever become a reality. This new railroad was just in the planning stage in June 1891 when it created a stir on the north shore. The plan called for a railroad terminus and community at the mouth of the Sucker River, which was to be named "Sucker Bay." A breakwater would extend out into the lake to protect harbor and loading facilities. The mainline track would run northwesterly and eventually reach the Mesabi Range mines. By mid-summer 1891 a surveyor by the name of Jonte and a crew of four men were running the preliminary survey line for the new railroad.

As far as the Duluth & Iron Range Railway was concerned, having another ore hauling railroad in the neighborhood was totally intolerable. They countered by creating their own new railroad based out of Marble siding west of Two Harbors. Their new railroad would be called the "Mesabi Short Line Railroad" and would parallel the line of the DRLF&N all the way to the Mesabi Range. D&IR survey crews immediately took to the field laying out the preliminary survey line. Back in 1886 the H. H. Porter group had used the threat of a competing railroad to force Charlemagne Tower into selling the D&IR to them. The strategy worked then, and it worked again now. The DRLF&N "dropped dead in its tracks" and along with it the community of Sucker Bay. The Mesabi Short Line was never built either. The D&IR did build to the Mesabi Range, but that line was from Allen Junction near present day Hoyt Lakes west. One can only wonder what might have been.