

Frisco Employes Honor Founder of Club Movement

By M. C. M.

THE Frisco Railroad System is almost "over the hill". We have successfully weathered the storm of the depression. Traffic is picking up. The physical condition of the property is excellent and is improving daily and we all can look forward now to another period of advancement.

The accomplishments and achievements of the Frisco Railroad in the last 13 years would form the basis for an epic story of American railroad-ing. Beginning with the return of the railroads to private management in March, 1920, at the end of Federal Control, and in the midst of another great international depression, the Frisco has struggled through to a position of dominance throughout the territory it serves. No railroad in the Mississippi Valley, the southwest and the southeast enjoys a greater prestige than the Frisco system and all of this is due to the leadership of one man more than to any other single factor.

That man, of course, is James M. Kurn, who came to the property, March 1, 1918, when he was 50 years old, and through his vision and courage, and leadership, has built the system up to its present high position.

Mr. Kurn will celebrate another birthday on November 10th and it probably will be a surprise to many of the employes to know that he will soon be 63 years old, because most of them believe him to be as much younger as he looks.

Parenthetically the editor would like to suggest right here that every Frisco employe make Mr. Kurn a birthday present of an additional passenger secured that we would not otherwise have handled on our trains—or an additional shipment of freight obtained that we would not otherwise have transported. If every employe will do that and make a special memorandum of it, it will be the best birthday present that any executive of any great organization ever received.

But to get back to the story, which, after all, is about Mr. Kurn—it is entirely fitting that Frisco employes should honor their "Big Boss", because no organization in the industrial history of this country ever has had a finer leader.

James Malcolm Kurn was born in a room upstairs over the Grand Trunk Railroad Station at Mt. Clemons,

Mich., where his father occupied the position of agent. He was the seventh child of a family later to number twelve. His father had a telegraph extension into the living room and this youngster was brought up to the tune of dots and dashes and before he was seven years of age he could tap out: "Mamma, I want a piece of bread and butter with sugar".



J. M. KURN

As the children would gather at the table, or after the dinner hour and talk about what they wanted to be when they grew up, many were the vocations chosen by the others, but "little Jimmy", as he was called, never varied in his determination to be a railroader. Sometimes he wanted to be an engineer, sometimes a brakeman, but always a railroader.

And he showed this determination throughout his childhood days, preferring any time to sit on a truck on the station platform and watch the trains come and go, in preference to playing baseball or any of the sports enjoyed by his pals.

His father was transferred to West Branch, Mich., and young Jimmy secured his first job at the age of 13 years. He became Western Union messenger at the huge salary of \$5.00 a month. He finished his study of the Morse Code and when 14 years of age became night operator at West

J. M. Kurn Celebrates Another Milestone On November 10th

Branch at \$30 a month. Soon after he was seized with a desire to travel and secured permission to go to Chicago, where he obtained a job with the Pekin & Southwestern road as night operator at Millsdale, Ill., at \$45 a month. The Santa Fe took over this railroad, and from that time on until he came to Frisco Lines his rise was rapid in the operating department of the Santa Fe Railroad.

He was an extra train dispatcher at the age of 22 years, and at the age of 27 was a full fledged train dispatcher. He then went from the position of trainmaster at Pueblo and Las Vegas, N. M., to superintendent at the latter place. This territory was known as the hardest on the line, and after five years of fighting wrecks, washouts, and the thousand and one things that beset a railroad in such territory, he became General Superintendent of the Santa Fe's Western Lines.

Then came the call from the east, to become president and general manager of the Detroit, Toledo & Ironton Railroad, which he accepted in 1914. It was after a most successful administration with that road, that he came to Frisco Lines on March 1, 1918, as first vice-president in charge of operations and construction. The offices of president and vice-presidents were abolished during Federal Control, and Mr. Kurn became general manager of the Frisco. When the roads went back to private ownership on March 1, 1920, E. N. Brown, who had been president, became Chairman of the Board and Mr. Kurn became President. By his fairness and justice, his deep understanding and his appreciation of a job well done, he has secured and maintained the love and devotion and loyalty of every employe on the Frisco System. Their problems are his, and his appreciation of their interest and wholehearted support of the club movement, urges them on to greater efforts and higher goals.

He is masterful in his dealings, yet the humblest employe who comes before him is the recipient of a word of encouragement and a sincere handshake.

He has been the power behind the
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A Frisco Club Comes to the Rescue

Fairland, Okla., September 5, 1933.

EDITOR, FRISCO MAGAZINE,

St. Louis, Mo.

Unfortunately, not all of our stations on the railroad have a sufficient number of employes to properly maintain an Employes' Club or organization, and, necessarily, the employes located at these smaller stations must belong to the nearest Club.

This has been the lot of the writer, who, during the past several years has belonged to several Clubs, consequently the views herein expressed are from an employe who has not had the privilege of actually living in a town or city where Club headquarters were located and who must depend upon the proceedings of the Club meetings he has attended and upon the actual help given him by these Clubs, in order to form an idea of what the Clubs mean to the Company and to the employes.

My experiences as a small town agent and telegrapher have convinced me of the value of the Clubs, and that they are doing a wonderful work in assisting the agent with his solicitation, checking short hauls, helping the agent in securing routing orders and working, as they do, in close cooperation with the division freight and passenger agent's office.

In giving you just one of the many instances of the value of the Club, I have in mind a shipment of sash and doors, LCL, moving from a point on our line approximately fifty miles away.

I called upon the consignee of this shipment, asking for a routing order, so that we might protect the routing from the billing station. He advised, however, that he would route via truck line, inasmuch as their service was quicker and there would be no transfers enroute. My personal solicitation failing, I immediately handled with the nearest Club, and on the following morning the consignee received a nice letter from the Club president, actively soliciting routing on the shipment, giving a rather definite arrival time of the shipment and other information. We secured the business.

Without belittling my own efforts in this instance, I am sure that, had I not handled the matter with the Club, the shipment would have gone to the truck line. The revenue derived from this shipment was small, but the manner in which we handled has contributed considerably to the securing of other business from this consignee, and I do not hesitate in saying that I believe it was the Club letterhead, with its message of solicitation, that secured this business.

As in all organizations, we find traces of criticism of the purposes of the Clubs and their activities, and some hints that perhaps the Clubs are nothing but company unions.

These Club meetings, you will find, are devoted entirely to the purpose for which they were organized, primarily that of securing more business for our railroad and, incidentally, making our jobs safer and more of them, and after the business of the meeting is over you will find the members enjoying a social hour of entertainment and pleasure. You will find members of every organized craft on the railroad attending these meetings and engaged in the one common work, that of solicitation, advertising our railroad, and combating the unregulated truck.

(Signed)

C. B. SIMMONS.

Accomplishments of the Employe Clubs

Wichita, Kansas

The Frisco Employes' Air Capital Club has been active since its beginning, with ten meetings in 1932 and nine so far in 1933. The club has limited its activities to business meetings only, at which employes and guests are always welcome. In 1931 this club took an active part in forming the Wichita Ship-By-Rail Club which held public meet-



R. DINSMORE

ings which were well attended, and caused much favorable comment. Members of this club also prepared special advertising, placing taxation, and other matters vital to the railroads, before the public in concise form. Members have been educated to observe and report any violations of the state bus and truck laws.

Merchants of Wichita respect the fine spirit of loyalty which prompts members of this club to solicit business for Frisco Lines and appreciates the fine service given them at this point. These employes watch closely for any delays in handling or delivering shipments and report same so that delays may be corrected. They also assist in tracing shipments and advising patrons of expected arrival of goods. The purchasing agent of one of the Frisco's largest shippers recently expressed his appreciation of the assistance given him by a member of this club.

Members find the club a convenient place to meet and exchange information and report matters of interest to each other and the club. The various crafts and lines of service have an opportunity to form a closer acquaintance, and this stimulates the team spirit, without which no organization can successfully function.

Members of this club plan to hold business meetings each month and to intensify their drive for more business, hoping to excel or equal their record of 1932. The intense desire to carry on for bigger and better business for Frisco Lines still lives, and this club continues to prosper.

During 1932 the club secured 81 carloads, 51 LCL shipments and 16 passengers. This year there have been

secured 51 carloads, 15 LCL shipments and three passengers. A pensioned clerk helped to secure the routing orders on which this club received over a dozen nice shipments from eastern points.

Ralph Dinsmore, chief clerk and cashier at the local office, is president.

Amory, Miss.

There have been but one or two meetings of the members of the Amory, Miss., club since its beginning. Their method, found to be most satisfactory, is to convey messages to the members through bulletins, for the membership of this club is comprised of trainmen.

Each employe has appointed himself or herself a traffic solicitor, and each has been responsible for his or her share of the business in and out of Amory. This club takes an active part in community projects and occupies a valuable place in the list of active employe clubs.

J. C. Gravlee, conductor, is president.

Okeene, Okla.

The club at Okeene, Okla., is a small one, and there are few meetings held. However, they have a most satisfactory manner of conveying information to their members, and each member of the club is working hard to advertise and solicit business for Frisco Lines.

They have held two meetings so far in 1933 and only three in 1932, but have accounted for five carloads, 12 LCL shipments and 8 passengers.

Wiley Stanley, section foreman, is president of the club.

Cape Girardeau, Mo.

And along came the depression and the loss of traffic due to unregulated competition, and with subsequent force reduction left the membership of the club at Cape Girardeau with a small number.



C. G. MOEDER

But, undaunted, each member has been hard at work in the solicitation of business.

C. G. Moeder, yardmaster, recently secured 50 cars of freight for Frisco Lines, which

would not have been secured had he not been on the job as an employe solicitor. Revenue from this station has increased most appreciably, and members of this club have found they can carry on without a great many meetings.

During the first six months of 1933 members of this club secured 18 carloads, 53 LCL shipments and 15 passengers.

C. G. Moeder, yardmaster, is president of the club.

Memphis, Tenn.

Through the past year there have been few big gatherings or meetings of the Frisco Employes' Club of Memphis, Tenn., but the greater traffic committee, within the organization, has been functioning most efficiently, and regularly.

This group meets during working hours to discuss the various problems confronting the solicitor and the shipper in Memphis. Tips are reported, letters are read, short hauls and rates are discussed, and through this traffic meeting, the employe members are enabled to know every situation which might arise which would enable them to secure or retain shipments.

This group secured (from January, 1932, to date) 59 carloads, 320 LCL shipments and 22 passengers.

Aside from the traffic committee which is purely business in its relations, the club has been the means of bringing the employes together at dances and golf tournaments and evening dinners. It has afforded an opportunity for all classes of employes to meet and become better acquainted, and the club has created a wonderful fellowship and kept alive the Frisco Employes' Club program.

Gordon Robertson, cashier local freight office, is president of the club.

Joplin, Mo.

The Joplin Club has found a unique way of maintaining interest in its club for men members as well as its auxiliary. Its meetings are always held at night and preceded by a covered dish supper which is prepared by the ladies. The men then withdraw and have their business meeting and the ladies conduct the affairs of the auxiliary. At intervals the club and the auxiliary stage a dance, and this summer they invited clubs from adjoining towns to attend a picnic at Joplin.

The club is active in welcoming officials of new industries to Joplin, takes an active part in all community projects and its members are sponsoring an intensive solicitation campaign.

The club is now at work on an elaborate Christmas program to be presented in the Union Station at Joplin. Other like programs have included a Santa Claus, carol singers and a huge tree.

In the first six months of 1933 members of this club and the auxiliary secured 23 carloads, 906 LCL shipments and 21 passengers.

S. R. Landrum, warehouse foreman, is president of the club and Mrs. O. G. Moulton is president of the auxiliary.

Ft. Scott, Kans.

The Frisco Employees' Club of Ft. Scott, Kans., held five meetings during the first six months of 1933, and through the activity of the members, 22 cars of freight and 16 passengers were secured. Some of these meetings were purely business and others were given over entirely to a social evening. The social events included a dance, a musical, a social entertainment and a picnic.



E. P. KNOX

Ft. Scott merchants are giving their support to all social activities and cooperating in every way to favor the Frisco with their business, fully realizing the worth of the Frisco to that city.

Members feel free to express their opinion and make suggestions as to methods and ways of increasing business at each of the meetings and good fellowship is developed and maintained, and several social entertainments are being planned for the coming season.

E. P. Knox, clerk, is president of the club.

St. Louis Girls' Club

The St. Louis Girls' Club has never missed having a monthly luncheon since 1927. This with the exception of the monthly luncheon called on the date of the death of F. W. Young, paymaster. While the luncheon was planned and arranged for, it was called off in tribute to Mr. Young's loyalty to the club. This record clearly shows the interest maintained in the club, and it may be further added that approximately 75 have attended

the luncheons each month, out of a total of 150 girls employed in the St. Louis general office building.

The members of this club feel that there are two records of which they may be proud. One is the mystery excursion, given in 1932, which brought to the company a total of \$730.00, and the second their Christmas program. Baskets are packed each year for needy folks of St. Louis and distributed by the girls. Plans include an elaborate program for 1933.

On October 1 each and every girl in the club was asked to sign the following pledge:

"I promise to earnestly solicit carload, LCL and passenger business for my road. I want to be signed up as an employe solicitor and at the end of October, I will make a report of what I have been able to accomplish."

This pledge was meant to inspire the girls to greater efforts in their solicitation work, even though it is more difficult to solicit in a city. Ten days after these pledges were signed, three carloads of business were secured, two to California and one, Tulsa to St. Louis and return. During the first six months of 1933, members of this club secured ten cars of freight and twenty passengers.

Martha Moore, associate editor of the Magazine, is president.

Frisco Colored Employees' Clubs

BIRMINGHAM, ALA.

The Colored Club, of Birmingham, Ala., has been actively engaged in solicitation work and in giving social affairs. One of the most interesting of these was a third anniversary celebration, staged at the St. Paul A. M. E. Church. The program consisted of music and addresses.

This club sponsored an all-day picnic, Birmingham to Cordova, Ala., on July 19, and members of the club sold \$62.80 worth of tickets.

Steve Robinson is president of the club.

ST. LOUIS, MO.

Members of the Colored Club of St. Louis, Mo., hold a meeting at the Tower Grove Station monthly, and often, following the business session, there is a short program of entertainment. Members of this club have been active in soliciting freight and passenger business, and Willie Robinson, secretary of the club, secures not less than two passengers a month to various points on the Frisco. They have secured some LCL shipments and are earnestly at work to secure carload business.

Thomas Henry, employed in the coach yard at St. Louis, is president.

Oklahoma City, Okla.

By M. W. BELL, President

With the fall season getting under way this club looks back with some



M. W. BELL

pride and forward with considerable anticipation as to the good we can accomplish.

During the first part of this year we had as our guests several outstanding speakers and, also, representatives of large shippers were invited to address the business meetings. We have now started a campaign of activity, soliciting direct to shippers by mail, as well as personal calls and our manner of approach has been approved by our general offices.

The business meetings of this organization are becoming of utmost importance wherein all are taking part. We hold meetings regularly once a month, after which a dance follows, which is thrown open to the public. This has been our program for several years until now the Frisco Employees' Club dance is well established with an average attendance of 400.

It is difficult to state which is the most outstanding program this year. Each meeting is different. Our last meeting took the form of a free discussion among all present along the lines of how the club could best solicit business. A definite program, in line with the thoughts expressed, was set out. This program resulted in letters to particular firms and the contents of these letters brought favorable comment from our management. Evidence of favorable reaction to them can already be seen. The follow-up program has been established with the traffic department, which should have favorable results.

Our monthly dances are regularly attended by numerous shippers and we expect to make these social evenings better each month. On the whole, we feel that the benefit to the railroad of the Frisco Employees' Club at Oklahoma City is becoming more clearly recognized each month.

Members of this club were responsible for 48 carloads and 39 LCL shipments during the first six months of 1933.

Monett, Mo.

By C. J. KUNZ, President

The Frisco Employees' Club of Monett have had seventeen business and social meetings during the past two years and the opinion is prevalent that in addition to the interest manifested by its members in matters of traffic solicitation, that our organization has done much toward creating a kinder feeling and cooperative spirit among themselves and have strengthened their fidelity toward the Frisco Railroad.



C. J. KUNZ

It has been our purpose to endeavor to instill upon the minds of each and every employe that their individual help and cooperation in traffic matters are just as essential and important to the Frisco, as the man that is assigned to deal with such problems in their entirety.

In this respect we don't feel that such efforts have gone for naught, for during these two years, from the traffic tips and other information given by them, has enabled us to secure 73 carloads, 142 less carload shipments and 118 passengers, which may have possibly been diverted through other channels, had not this advance information been furnished.

This club has had several business and social meetings and programs with the citizens of Monett and vicinity, which were both educational and entertaining, and have had a tendency to increase the interest of those present in traffic solicitation and other railroad problems, strengthen their faith in their co-workers and their loyalty to their employer. It is noted that the reaction of the merchant is usually the same for W. A. Lassiter, Monett merchant, says:

"The Frisco Club brings superintendents, foremen and employes together in a friendly get-together meeting, where plans are made for 'More Business', which, I think, is the local password of the club and it is not a secret one. I have observed their activities in soliciting and know that their efforts have been successful. This is not only a boost for the Frisco, but it boosts Monett, the merchants and the surrounding country. I am for the club."

One of the most outstanding meetings and programs given this year was held at the Park Casino on the night of March 27.

R. M. Callaway, pioneer merchant

of Monett, said, "That meeting was one of the greatest demonstrations of its kind that I have ever attended", he further states: "We all know that clubs and civic organizations cooperate together for mutual benefit. My honest judgment is that the Frisco Employees' Club has been a great benefit to the Frisco and very helpful to the business interests of this city. It takes 'team work' to put over anything worthwhile today and I believe that they have plenty of that".

Some of the outstanding work of the club was to pass resolutions to Congress, then in session, to take some favorable action toward relieving the railroads of their distressing plight with such unfair competition. Petitions were signed by some four hundred employes of Monett to our last State General Assembly, asking them to hold intact the present regulatory laws affecting truck and bus traffic in the State of Missouri. Our club purchased a membership in the Monett Commercial Club with the view of cooperating with them in promoting the welfare of Monett and its citizens, who are often referred to as the most loyal Frisco patrons along its entire line.

A recent enumeration of the Frisco employes was undertaken by the club, which resulted in a tabulation of 477 regular and extra employes, together with 1,798 dependents, residing in Monett.

The future plans of the club are similar to the program which has been followed the past two years.

Jermyn, Texas

The Frisco Employees' Club of Jermyn, Texas, have had difficulty in holding regularly monthly meetings, but they report several with approximately 70 members in attendance.

Meetings were discontinued for the summer months, and while they may not be held at regular intervals in the future, the employe-solicitation program is going on with enthusiasm. Since the club was organized in April, 1932, they have turned in 362 freight traffic tips and 15 passenger traffic tips, and while no accurate record has been kept of the actual business secured, the work of these members has increased the revenue at this point.

They plan to enter the fall and winter with an intensive soliciting program and in this the president of the club, F. J. Wieman, will have the complete cooperation of each and every member.

Sherman, Texas

The Frisco Employees' Club of Sherman, Tex., held 12 meetings during 1932, and four so far this year, with a total attendance at all meetings of 1,042.



C. V. MONTGOMERY

A number of meetings of importance have been held, one an informal reception for C. J. Stephenson, vice-president and general superintendent with 125 in attendance, including several business men, with the program furnished by the colored employes; two joint meetings with members of the Industrial Employes' Club and several other meetings which attracted from 100 to 250 employes.

The most outstanding work that the club has done has been the building of a better understanding between the Frisco Railway, its employes and the shippers and citizens of Sherman and vicinity. For instance the Industrial Employes' Club was formed under the guidance of the Chamber of Commerce and the Frisco Club of Sherman was used as a pattern for its formation. The Frisco Club took up a donation of \$50.00 for membership in the Chamber of Commerce, which did much to show the shippers and business men of Sherman that the employes of the Frisco wanted to cooperate with them in anything toward the betterment of the city and railway. Members of this club also furnished a ten minute entertainment feature in a city-wide club program sponsored by the Rotary Club with an estimated attendance of 2,500 people. Scenery showing the rear end of a Frisco passenger train, with electric train marker, lights, etc., was used and the Pullman porters quartette furnished music. The members feel that they have made good friends of the merchants in town and are endeavoring to strengthen that friendship as much as possible by personal contact.

Members of this club secured 243 carloads of freight, 12 LCL shipments and 13 passengers in 1932; 223 carloads, 3 LCL shipments and 8 passengers in 1933.

C. V. Montgomery, general foreman, store department, is president of the club.