



Members of the Frisco System Club and their families gathered at the Rock Springs Turner Hall, St. Louis, Friday evening, February 6, for the club's regular monthly meeting and social session.

Prevention of accidents was the topic of the evening's business session. Stereopticon slides were shown, illustrating how trespassers are killed and injured on railroads, and interestingly commented upon by W. B. Spaulding, chairman of the Central Safety Committee. J. W. Rogers, chief claim agent, the next speaker, addressed the meeting upon the advantages accruing, not only to Frisco men but their families as well, from a strict adherence to the principles of Safety First. Mr. Rogers' talk elicited much applause.

After the business session a supper was served the members of the club and their guests and a very enjoyable time was had.

Mr. Max Hosang, president of the club, is planning a series of such meetings and feels confident much good will be derived from them.

No. 8

Train No. 8 ready to depart out of Neodesha, Kans., was snapped, as shown in the accompanying reproduction, February 2.



The train was pulled by engine 1106 in charge of Engineer J. P. Dwyer and Fireman Ed. Stevens.

REMINISCENCES OF AN OLD TIMER

MR. EDITOR:

The old man said to me the other day, "If you would spend some of the time that you devote to dodging the pension agent, in writing a story of your life, and telling some of the things you learned by hard knocks, I believe you would be more valuable to the Frisco."

I told him I never was a writer, and, while I was willing, I did not know how to begin, I would not know what to tell and I would not know when to finish.

But he said, all that I had to do was to begin at the beginning and tell all the things I knew something about, and that he would tell me when to finish.

I believe there is something in what the old man said, and, if you think it worth while to print the story of the life of a Frisco man, who started in when it was getting into Vinita and who knew Bud Turner and "Uncle" Harry Taylor when they were comparatively speaking young men, and who has seen everything on the Frisco change not once but many times, —HERE GOES:

I am the son of an old-fashioned farmer and by that I now know he was the kind that did twenty hours a day work with his hands and feet and never more than twenty minutes brain work.

A slight depression in the height of the weeds indicated where the railroad passed our farm.

The old man was a firm advocate of two things in particular—revivals and no latch for the pasture gate. I suppose the first netted him considerable spiritual benefit and I knew that the latter brought financial gain, as our stock seemed to be peculiarly attracted to the pasturage in the middle of the track.

I was a husky kid when I had my first railroad experience, and it was about the old man's front gate. The section foreman, now dead, a wit whom everybody loved, came to the gate one day when I was puttering around. He closed it and leaning over the fence said:

"Boy, I have closed this gate six times. Your old man evidently thinks that this is the pearly gate through which his cattle passes into heaven.

Now I'm getting a little tired of this gates ajar effect and the next time one of your stock is killed, I'm going to nail the gate closed and nail you to the gate."

I made no reply except a feeble grin and stood watching the section gang unloading ties along the right of way. One of the ties skidded out into the road. I picked it up and tossed it back. The foreman, who had carefully closed the gate, said:

"Don't you want a job on the section, son? Pay you a dollar a day."

In those days a dollar was bigger than anything which exists nowadays. I had never had any money except on Christmas when my father gave each of us boys 25 cents and told us to be carefully and not spend it wastefully.

I went to work the next day after promising my father I would give him \$15.00 a month for my room and board.

With a fence rail and other persuasive influences my father had taught me that when I worked I was expected to work. Pauses, or intervals consumed in conversation, or much energy expended for trivial results—another name for shirking—

were noted by him and promptly stopped.

As result, I formed a habit of being persistently industrious, and, I can even at this late date state, that I never have shirked, not because of any high principles, but solely because idling to me was much more uncomfortable than working.

In my first day's experience with the section gang, I, for the first time, realized that there were men who did not like to work and tried to avoid it in ever way possible.

With the rest of the gang, I was put to unloading ties, and, from my simple viewpoint, I had entered into a contract to unload all the ties I could possible unload from shortly after day break until about six o'clock in the evening and the railroad had agreed to pay me \$1.00 for this work. Therefore, I proceeded to do nothing else but unload ties.

When the foreman told us to knock off for dinner, I was surprised to find how quickly the time had passed, but it didn't take me long to realize that for some reason or other I was not popular with most of the gang. They crowded off in a bunch under the shade of some trees and returned short replies to my rather timid efforts to become acquainted.

This puzzled me as I had never met any of the men before and knew no reason why they should dislike me. Giving the matter but little thought, I finished my dinner, closed the pail, tucked it away in the bushes and strolled back to the cars.

The foreman, who had been sitting near me, called me back.

"Where you going?" he asked.

"Back to the cars," I replied.

"What are you going to do?"

"Unload ties."

I can, even after more than thirty years, still see the twinkle in the foreman's eyes as he looked at me and glanced at the sullen gang seated under the trees smoking.

"Don't you know that we are allowed an hour for dinner here?" he said.

"No," I replied, "besides I am through my dinner."

"Would you rather unload ties than sit in the shade?" he asked.

This was a new phase of the situation to me. On the farm, the moment we quit eating, the next moment we were working. As I said before I had formed the habit.

"Let the young fool go out and kill himself, Tom," yelled one of the gang.

I could see the old foreman bristle.

"Work," he retorted, "will never hurt you and I believe the day will come when this boy will fire you and maybe me."

He turned away and beckoned me to follow him. When we had reached the cars he said:

"The boys have it in for you, son. They are not afraid of work, in fact, they can go to sleep beside it, but three or four of them dislike to have one man do as much as all of them together. Now, you are right, but I cannot mix in this thing for if I do, I will have to officially recognize the fact that they are a lazy worthless lot, and if I recognize that fact I'll have to fire them; if I fire them, I'll have no section men; if I have no section men, I'll have no track; and if I have no track, I'll have no job, so take my blessing and clean the scuts up."

The old foreman then proceeded to show me how ties should be piled. I was working on this when the gang returned and were put to unloading

more ties. Of course the engine would pull the car up a short distance and we would throw the ties from the car as we went along most of the time.

I was thinking over what the foreman told me when my meditations were brought to an abrupt stop by the insertion of the end of a tie, swung with considerable force, into my ribs, with result, that if I had not made a quick jump, I would have been knocked from the car, and perhaps badly hurt.

As it was I landed on my feet and looking up I saw several of the men grinning at me. In an instant I realized that this had been done intentionally and my first impulse was to climb on to the car and clean out the gang then and there. But the foreman was, as always, at hand, and he proceeded to deliver a blistering talk to the man who had knocked me from the car, the length of which evidently served his purpose—of giving me time to cool down.

I always have been a slow thinker, which, perhaps, is one explanation of why I never got very far in railroad business. It's the men who think quick, decide quick and act quick that seem to get by, particularly in the operating department. They make a lot of breaks, but at the same time, they make a lot of hits. In other words, there's a lot doing where they are and there is so much steam escaping that it's hard for anyone to see just what is being done. The only impression you get is that there's a lot doing and the persons that's doing it must be considerable of a man.

Anyhow, I thought this matter out the rest of the afternoon and decided if I was to stick with the gang and earn that big dollar a day, the only thing for me to do was to wade in and lick

one or two of them that afternoon, if they gave me a chance, and I was sure they would. I sized them up as they worked by me and saw that most of them were a scrawny looking type of men, but, as with men of that kind, they put one or two husky ones to camp on my trail and the rest of the afternoon several things happened which I now know were done by those men, all of which caused me discomfort.

Finally the day came to an end and the foreman told us to knock off. Several of the men boarded at his house, among them two I had singled out to have a settlement with.

As we started home, the old foreman at the lead, one of these men pushed the other one against me, as I have hundreds of times seen boys do in an effort to start a scrap. The man who was pushed threw all of his weight against me but I braced myself and drove my elbow with all the power which I could put forth—which was considerable then—into his ribs. It took the wind out of him but he finally gathered himself and started for me.

There were no rules for fighting in those days. It was fight simply and entirely to put the other man out of business, kicking, biting and hitting anywhere and everywhere was permitted. Therefore, I was not surprised to receive a hard kick in the shins when he closed in on me, and I do not suppose he was surprised—at least from the point of its being proper—to get a jolt in the stomach that completely laid him out from me.

As he lay on the ground gasping for wind, his partner decided to take a hand. He was a larger man than I was, but, as I stated, I was a husky young fellow, who never smoked nor

drank and besides, unlike either of the two, I was not mad. I was fighting really to hold my job and get a definite understanding as to our future relations.

The big man, whose name was Jim Robinson, and I fought, bit and hit each other over the road until finally he threw me down, but I had got my fingers around his throat and, though he beat me unmercifully, I gradually choked him until he had to tear at my hands for air. Then, with my free hand, I returned some of the blows he had been giving me with interest.

In the meantime his friend, who had been knocked out by my blow in the stomach, recovered sufficiently to run to his assistance and started for me, but the old foreman snatched him back and pulled me away from Robinson who was now down and out.

I was perfectly willing to continue and told them I would take them collectively or individually, as they desired; that I wanted to be friends, but that if they proposed to continue to annoy me, I proposed to thrash them every evening, as I had done this. With that I picked up my bucket and made across the fields to my home, leaving a grinning foreman

and two very much battered up section men.

Thusly ended my first day of railroad experience.

It Wasn't the Railway Charges that Time

In an address before The Chicago Traffic Club, Judge Prouty of the Interstate Commerce Commission related the following experience:

I had occasion the other day to send a couple of barrels of potatoes from my home up in Vermont, where we raise potatoes fit to eat, down to Washington, where you cannot buy potatoes fit to eat. The railroad company charged me \$1.45 for carrying those barrels of potatoes, about six hundred miles, and the truckman, who carried them the mile and a half from the station to my house, charged me a dollar. If the transportation charges enter into the high cost of living, we want to look, I think, somewhere else rather than to the transportation charges of our railroads.



North Yard Section Gang, Fort Smith, Ark. In charge of William Purvis. Picture was taken just south of the old passenger station, opposite Oil Mill, on Mile 417.