

Views of Oklahoma City's Enthusiastic Reception of Meteor

Below: Taking part in the Meteor reception at Oklahoma City. Miss Margaret Kenney of Oklahoma City, daughter of Engineer Ed Kenney of the Frisco, as "Miss Meteor of 1902" stands on the right of Vice-President Koontz. Miss Betty Johnson of Oklahoma City, is on Mr. Koontz's left as "Miss Meteor of 1927." S. S. Butler, freight traffic manager; H. F. Sanborn, assistant to vice-president; and M. M. Sisson, ass't gen'l manager are also in the picture.



Below: Miss Betty Kirk, girl reporter of the Oklahoma City News, who rode Meteor engine into city, is presented with flowers on arrival. Engineer J. W. Binkley of Oklahoma City, is at the left, Fireman Frank Howarton in center, and Engineer Harry C. Dean at the right.

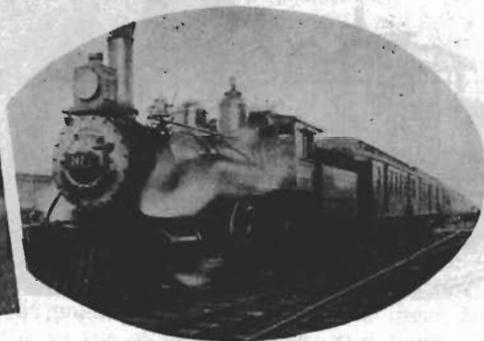
Above: A part of the crowd of 4,000 persons who welcomed Meteor on its Silver Anniversary arrival at Oklahoma City. Note Pathe and Fox film moving picture camera-men on top of tender.



At right: Presentation of huge floral horse-shoe to Vice-President Koontz, by Mr. Ed Overholser, president-manager of the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce. One thousand carnations and 500 other flowers were used in making it.



Below at left: Misses Kenney and Johnson with Oklahoma City's gift to the Meteor. Below at right The first Meteor arriving in Oklahoma City twenty-five years ago.



prompted the Oklahoma City people to arrange "the finest celebration of its kind it has ever been my pleasure to attend."

Following the luncheon, the entire Frisco party went to Sorosis Hall where Mrs. Robert Whelan, president of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Frisco System Veteran Employes' Association, had called an

afternoon meeting: Mr. Koontz again addressed the gathering, stressing the importance of the auxiliary to the veterans, in promoting more interest and good feeling. Messrs. Butler, Nourse, Nash, Shaffer, Sanborn, Sisson and Baltzell also spoke, and other speakers of the southwestern division personnel were called on.

Miss Virginia Berry, a Frisco daughter, was on the

The "Meteor" Leaves on Twenty-fifth Anniversary Trip



At top: The Meteor as it looked under way near Meramec Highlands, St. Louis. At right above: Engineer Harry C. Dean of St. Louis, who took the first Meteor out of St. Louis 25 years ago, and who both started and completed the twenty-fifth anniversary trip.



At left above: A close-up of the beautiful floral horseshoe, Oklahoma City's gift to its favorite train.

Below at left: Engine 19, which played an important part in Meteor celebration as first engine to pull train, and Engineer Binkley and Fireman Howarton who were in the cab on the Meteor's arrival in Oklahoma City March 18. Directly above: Flashlight photo of Meteor's party taken at head end just before departure from St. Louis. Top row, left to right: Miss Martha C. Moore, Fireman E. T. White, Mrs. Harry C. Dean, Engineer Harry Dean, J. H. Brod, director of public safety, City of St. Louis. Bottom row, left to right: General Passenger Agent J. W. Nourse; A. J. Marris, Tulsa, Okla., oil operator (who was a passenger on first Meteor); R. N. Nash, assistant freight traffic manager; P. J. Conley, superintendent of terminals; J. N. Cornsaz, S. S. Buller and Vice-President J. R. Koonts.

program for an interpretive dance, and others gave piano and vocal selections.

But not yet were Oklahoma City employes through with the celebration of their famous train, and another meeting was scheduled for 7:30 that evening at Sorosis Hall. President Fred Carter of the Oklahoma City chapter of The Frisco Club, found 150 employes on hand in answer to his call, and until 11 o'clock employes and officers made merry with music, refresh-

ments, dancing and speaking. Many reports were made of business secured, both in passenger and freight and there was genuine regret expressed by many when the evening drew to a close.

And so the famous Meteor had its twenty-fifth anniversary birthday party.

It was an event that attracted attention from all points on the Frisco, and this renowned train was honored and acclaimed in a fitting manner.

Briefs on Meteor Party

Addressed to the Hon. Officials of the St. Louis-San Francisco Railway Company, the letter from the citizens of Bristow, Oklahoma, follows:

The people of the City of Bristow have expressed through their various civic organizations, the Chamber of Commerce, Lions Club, Rotary Club and the Business and Professional Women's Club, a desire to extend to you their congratulations and felicitations on this, your Silver Anniversary, at which time you are celebrating the Twenty-fifth Year of the Service of the "Meteor", and we, as officers of the various organizations, and as Mayor, are directed to convey to you their wishes in the matter, and we, also, are directed to express to you our appreciation for the splendid service and fair consideration given our city throughout this period of time.

We review the past twenty-five years with pride and satisfaction, and extend to you our heart-felt thanks and keenest appreciation for the success of your business and ours, for together we have grown and prospered.

We wish for you even greater success in the years to come, and we especially wish for the personnel of your splendid organization, health and happiness.

Respectfully,

THE CITIZENS OF BRISTOW,

By Malcolm Morrison, Mayor.

W. H. Clarke, president Chamber of Commerce. Morris K. Kohlmann, president Lions' Club. L. N. Barnes, president Rotary Club. L. L. Van Wye, president B. & P. W. C.

Conductor L. S. Coover of Springfield was intensely interested in the Meteor's Silver Anniversary party. Now on another run, he nevertheless ran on Nos. 9 and 10 for many years, and was one of the Meteor's earliest conductors. He is the oldest conductor in point of service on the Eastern division. Ernest Page was the conductor in charge of the Meteor out of St. Louis on her Birthday trip, and Bert McCaslin "skipped" the train into Oklahoma City.

The joyous reception at Newburg, Mo., was planned by Otto N. Watts, assistant superintendent; George C. Hughes, general foreman; R. D. Wilson, foreman, car department; S. E. Fellows, division storekeeper; and James H. Davis, train dispatcher.

Vice-President Koontz headed the official party out of St. Louis, which included: S. S. Butler, John W. Nourse, R. N. Nash, and W. L. Huggins, Jr. H. L. Worman put his car on the train at Tulsa. Those who joined the party at Oklahoma City included: F. H. Shaffer, M. M. Sisson, H. F. Sanborn, Superintendent C. T. Mason and Assistant Superintendent Ed Hill.

The Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce committee on arrangements relied heavily on the good offices of H. C. Conley, assistant general freight agent, and L. W. Price, division passenger agent, and President Overholser praised them heartily for the interest with which they helped perfection of the plans.

Engine 79 attracted a great throng of the curious to its antiquated side as it steamed into position on track one at the Oklahoma City station, just before the Meteor arrived. Its ancient appearance contrasted greatly with the huge 1503, which pulled the Meteor 542 miles, from St. Louis to Oklahoma City, in 15 hours and 47 minutes.

Harold D. McEwen of Oklahoma City received many compliments on his judgment in selecting two charming girls to represent the "Misses Meteor" of 1902 and 1927. (See photographs).

Walter Harrison, managing editor of the Oklahoma City Times and Oklahoman, said in a front page editorial in the Times of March 18: "For twenty-five years the Frisco's crack train has brought the east down from St. Louis and carried away from Oklahoma City our eastern bound travelers. The Frisco has been an important factor in the development of Oklahoma City and the southwest. Our salaams on their silver anniversary."

The trip was one of greatest pleasure for Mrs. Harry C. Dean, wife of the Meteor's first engineer. She had never been in Oklahoma before. "I am afraid, though," she remarked, "that after all the honor that's been paid him, and all the pictures they took of him, I'm going to have an awful time with Harry for a few months!"

Columnist E. A. E., in the Oklahoma City News of February 18, said of the Meteor: "The 1902 Meteor was a string of wooden coaches, pulled by a locomotive that, to modern eyes, looks ridiculously small. The 1927 Meteor is an all-steel train, luxurious, hitched to an oil burning engine that is one of the biggest on the rails today. . . . Somebody could write a romance about the famous trains of Oklahoma, the Meteor . . . and others. They were crude in their beginnings and so were we, but we have grown together and have helped each other."

The Meteor party was an important one in the Southwest. Papers in that section devoted columns of space to the celebration, the Associated Press sent it throughout America, and the Fox and Pathe news reel pictures will be shown in all parts of the country. Incidentally, thousands of people have become acquainted with the Frisco's Meteor who will some day be potential passengers. That helps, too.

The celebration at Oklahoma City "made" the front pages of the three papers, there for two days prior to the event. Pictures and news stories of the ceremony at the station were printed on the front pages of the evening papers March 18, and the Daily Oklahoman thought enough of the affair to publish a four column picture with story on its first page the morning of March 19. The Meteor as a twenty-five-year-old train from Oklahoma City to St. Louis was indelibly fixed in the minds of Oklahoma residents, and the Frisco owes a debt of thanks to Oklahoma City newspaper editors and reporters.

Frisco's Oldest Pensioner Confined to Bed in His Home at Springfield, Mo.

William Marion Box, Age 92, Recalls Civil War Times—Began Work for Frisco Lines in 1885 in Springfield Cinder Pits

THE oldest of the 393 men on the Frisco railroad's pension roll, William Marion Box, who was 92 years old last Tuesday, remains cheerful in spite of the fact that he has been confined to his bed for five years as the result of a stroke of paralysis.

The picture here was taken at Mr. Box's home, 1044 West Mount Vernon, just before his illness.

Because of his failing memory, he relied on Mrs. Box to do most of the talking the other day when he was visited, but when the Civil war came into the conversation his memory quickened and his eyes brightened.

Saw Lyon Shot

"Yes—I remember the battle—of Wilson Creek," he said in a husky voice. "I was there," he went on, raising up as he recalled more clearly those exciting times.

"I saw General Lyon shot and saw him die. The way it was—Lyon was wounded; someone pointed him out to me—the major, I don't remember his name, was tying a bandage around the general's head. General Lyon said, 'I fear the day is lost.' But the major reassured him, 'No, general, we'll beat them.'"

Mr. Box's memory faded and he relaxed again. When reminded that a move is now on foot to make a national park of the Wilson Creek battle grounds, he smiled and said: "They can't get Sharp's cornfield to look like it did after we'd gone through it, no, sir."

Mr. Box was in the Eighth Missouri cavalry, Company K.

Captured and Freed

He seemed most interested when the war experiences were discussed. "They captured us at Lexington—28 of us were surrounded. Mulligan was our commander. But they didn't have any place to put us so they turned us loose." He smiled as he lived again, possibly the most exciting part of his life.

At the conventional questions such as "What rules

can you give for long life?" and "What do you think of bobbed hair?" Mr. Box was rather hesitant.

"I don't know," he said. "We live 'till we die anyway." And "if they want to bob it, I guess it's all right." He looked at Mrs. Box, and so did the interviewer. She has bobbed hair.

At Current River

Mr. Box came to Springfield to work for the Frisco in 1885 and began in the cinder pits of the south shops, then belonging to the Gulf railway. He soon was transferred to the job of machinist. And as a machinist he went with the crew that built the Current River branch of the Frisco about 1887.

Asked about other men who went on the job, he recalled "Hugh Davis, the engineer—but he's dead now. 'Doc' Harmon—he's dead, too. They're just about all gone now. Al Harmon, up here on Fort street (Albert P. Harmon, 713 South Fort), can call the spikes all the way to Memphis."

Native of Tennessee

Born on a farm in Jefferson county in the eastern part of Tennessee, January 11, 1835, Mr. Box lived the first years of his life on the farm, coming to Missouri several years before the Civil war and operated a mill at Brighton, Missouri, following his service in the army. He also operated a mill at Humansville, Missouri, for a period of years before coming to Springfield.

He and Mrs. Box now live with Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kelpé, their son-in-law and daughter, at 1044 West Mount Vernon. Mr. and Mrs. Box have four daughters living. An only son, Arthur, died three years ago. The daughters are: Mrs. Minnie Rogers, Fresno, California; Mrs. Effie Stanley, Mrs. A. D. Fenton and Mrs. Irene Kelpé, all living in Springfield. There are seven grandchildren and one great grandson, the latter Raymond Stalling, 12, 1811 College, the son of Mr. and Mrs. G. B. Stallings, of Springfield.



William Marion Box, 92, the oldest pensioner on the Frisco Railway system, with three of his grandchildren. The grandson on the left is Howard Rogers, son of Mrs. Minnie Rogers, Fresno, Cal.; the larger boy in the center is Tom Purcell, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. C. Purcell, 625 South Fort street, Springfield; and the lad next to Mr. Box is Ralph Denton, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Denton, 709 South Fort street, Springfield.

Veteran Train Dispatcher Attracted to Frisco by Excellent Appearance of Motive Power

"Powerful Shiny Frisco Engine Made Up My Mind" William Marsh of Memphis Says—He Has Served Frisco Since 1888

OFFICIALS of the mechanical and motive power departments have always prided themselves on the clean appearance of the power and grounds around Frisco properties, but William Marsh, veteran Frisco train dispatcher at Memphis, Tennessee, paid the officials of the old KCFS&M (many of whom are with the Frisco today) a real compliment, when he said: "I came to Kansas City in 1888 on a leave of absence from my services with the CM&StP. I saw a KCFS&M engine, black and shiny. The brass which adorned it was polished and blazing in the sunshine. Somehow I just wanted to be associated with a road that kept its equipment looking like that."

He applied for a position, and was hired as an "extra" train dispatcher, due to his former experience with the Milwaukee, where he had begun service at the age of sixteen. Although he came from a family of manufacturers of Horicon, Wisconsin, he found railroad work more to his liking.

He served the KCFS&M, and later the Frisco, which absorbed that line, at Kansas City, Willow Springs, Springfield, and Thayer in Missouri, but has been stationed at Memphis since 1915. Thirty-eight years of service in the capacities of yardmaster, operator and train dispatcher have given him a keen insight into conditions on this road, and he is well qualified to discuss the tremendous change which has taken place since he first beheld the small shiny engine of which he spoke.

"My period of service", he said, "has covered a period of transformation from a railroad of largely 56 pound rail, small engines, link and pin couplers, and serving a territory of small hamlets and woods, to the present well equipped railroad, serving a well developed territory. I consider that the telephone, especially in train dispatching, has been one of the greatest single improvements in railroad history. It has enabled us to work faster, and the personal touch which it gives, is invaluable. From a safety standpoint, the automatic block system is the greatest improvement."

Mr. Marsh served the Frisco Lines before the splendid system of drainage which is now prevalent in

the south existed, and each spring the Mississippi and St. Francis rivers would break the levees and wipe big chunks of the railroad completely off the map. In the capacity of dispatcher, he was in the midst of the trouble, directing relief trains and equipment.

"Sometimes the strain was great. Many men broke under it—many of them quit, rather than endure the hardships, but the great mass fought the swollen streams with sand bags, trying to keep the track from being washed away", he said.

Due to recent rains and snow the Mississippi river was rapidly rising on the day that the reporter sat and talked with Mr. Marsh. His hand waved toward it, (and it is only a short distance from his office) as he said: "Many years ago, we would have already begun to muster our forces and equipment in dread of this rising. Now we think nothing of it, for it has been years since we have had any serious trouble with high water. Drainage has been a wonderful improvement—a wonderful aid for the farmers and our railroad."

The old Memphis bridge was in plain view, and he was asked if he remembered the opening day.

"The building of that old Memphis bridge in 1892 was an outstanding feat for this southern country. People did not believe that a bridge could be built over the Mississippi. They came from miles around to see the opening. Excursion trains came from all over Arkansas, one was run from Springfield, Mo., crowded with people who viewed with a great deal of doubt, this bridge of steel which was one step further into advanced civilization and transportation. We actually had to put six of our little engines on the bridge at one time to show the people that it would hold up a train", he said.

The southern division handles fast freight trains, with bananas for the northwest, meat from Kansas City for the south and many commodities for export at southern ports. Mr. Marsh recalled an interesting story of a movement of freight.

"In 1893, we operated a banana train of fourteen

(Now turn to Page 43, please)



WILLIAM MARSH