

## = A Little Reminiscent =

By E. Minor Moore.

So go back to 1879-80 is to go far where there are very few now living to corroborate your strange and almost unbelievable statements. Those who now think of an age sufficiently matured to appreciate the conditions then existent have nearly all passed away while those now living were then too young to realize the extremely hop-frogged lines we led. They have grown up with safety appliances and improved facilities, until even they are loath to admit that such conditions existed, and such circumstances surrounded us, as those we recite to day. A general retrospect is rarely disputed, it is the minor details that seem so strange to our advanced civilization.

In the latter part of 1879 or the early part of 1880 knowing that I would be of a legal age on September 8<sup>th</sup>, and also knowing that the Railway Companies were not always strict regarding your age especially when they needed a man right bad, I came up to Bowling Green and with the assistance of my elder brother, J. L. Moore, now a retired Gardmaster, who was already in the employ of the Louisville and Nashville Railway as brakeman, I was enrolled as an "extra brakeman." Mrs. John (Sark) Niemel was then the General Gardmaster at Bowling Green and as he was Proprietor of the American Hotel on Adams Street and also had the "hiring and firing" of brakemen on the Second and Clarksville Divisions, I thought it good policy to board with him! Mrs. J. L. Sims was Night Gardmaster. The Ritter House was in full blast at that time operated by Uncle "Bill" Minerva and was a very attractive place and was patronized by many Railway men. Uncle John Burke operated the Buire Hotel and Almon. At 9 o'clock I went to my rooming

clothing from Mr Rice Rauschel who ran a clothing house adjoining the American Hotel, and who afterward acquired the Hotel and operated it as the Rauschel House until his daughter had married a Memphis line Passenger Conductor when it was known as the Crest Hotel. Mr William Rice was Master Mechanic of the Round House, shops, and of the mechanical work generally. I soon learned to know many of the Engineers and Firemen as well as all the Conductors and Brakemen on both Nashville and Chattanooga Divisions. I made my first trip as brakeman with Conductor Wm Glenn now retired and living in Louisville.

I had nothing but "hand brakes" with which to control the train speed, and as each Caboose was equipped with an accurate speed recorder and the limit of speed on freight trains was twenty five miles per hour, we had to do some sure enough braking. The automatic coupled was unheard of and the cars were coupled by means of the old "link and pin" method, and as there was always a great deal of slack between the drawbars the cars were often so far apart that we would have to take a run and jump from one car to another. At night and in rainy, sleety weather with the train running twenty miles per hour this was a dangerous duty. I shall not attempt to recall the names of the many employees I had known to be killed or crippled by reason of these crude and faulty appliances. When a Conductor or Brakeman was killed his Caboose was draped with mourning and for thirty days and when an Engineer was killed his engine was draped and a draped Caboose or engine was not a rare sight. Soberly I am getting too reminiscent and had better hurry on.

Heatin and Thrans Service kept a Confectionery and fruit store on the corner of Main and Adams St. Bill Wright was on the opposite corner with a grocery. George Wood ran a dining and feed stable on that side of the street and then

came Bernhardt's shoe shop. The North side of main was occupied by saloons, A. M. Parker's Drug Store, Geo. Collette's Seed Store, and Adams Grocery on the corner. Across Fronteney Street on the corner was old Mac Norton's clothes cleaning shop. This corner was in after years the location of the Morris Dry Goods and Wocey. Robold ran a viney stable on the corner of main and Fronteney St. On the northeast corner was Graham's Dry Goods. On the southeast corner was the Merchants Hotel. Then on the same side of the street was a marble yard, the Baptist Church, Vogel's Saloon and Restaurant, and then came Odeon Hall on the corner of the Public Square. On the North side of main St between Green and College Streets was R. Bonome's Bakery, Jim Norton's Hotel and H. C. Hines Grocery. Below Odeon Hall on the west side of the Public Square was J. P. Peters' Bangs Bonnets Furniture Store, Molans Saloon and Pool room, Green's Furniture. Along here there was a Chinese Laundry in which the Chinaman was mysteriously murdered, and Bowling Green was thereafter boycotted by the Chinese. Then came "Boss Edwards Undertaking establishment. Across the street and on the corner of Oregon River was Smith's "Gears Stone cutting" yard. Oregon River at that time furnished very little of the city's business except that furnished by saloons, pool rooms, and numerous fights. The East side of the square was traversed by Juniper's Drug Store and a few smaller firms. On the northeast corner of the Public Square was the "Moosehead House, at that time the most highly respected hotel in the Queen River country. The north side of the Public Square was really the business center of the town, being occupied by such firms as Graham's Brothers Furniture, Carpets, Dry Goods etc. E. Mahan and Co. Dry Goods, H. Walling Drugs, W. B. Dumbler-Jewelry, Escorial etc. F. Main Stewart, W. A. Smith's meat market and Colonel At Jackson money lender. J. Whit Potter was engaged in buying and selling live stock. He was pretty successful and once when the whisky distillery had twenty cars of fine fat hogs for the Winnipeg Eng market he let another bidder have the stock and the result was that the cattle

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Having been floated up with hot "still slops etc" and having had little or no solid food, could not stand the long trips and shrank in looks and size, and weight, until the shipper lost over five thousand dollars. The old market house was in full blast and was worth going to see. The Shoben Mills situated near the Railway Bridge was one of Bowling Green's largest institutions and this and the Axe Handle factory, together with the L and N O.R. kept the unemployment question in the back ground. The Green and Baven River Navigation Company owned a franchise on these Rivers and did a big River business between Bowling Green and Evansville/Indiana, and sometimes things got pretty lively at the Boat Landing. Charges were low compared with the wages of this date, but one dollar would buy as many groceries as two dollars will buy now. brakemen on the Railways were paid fifty dollars per month, while Conductors were paid the princely sum of seventy five dollars per month. That is, these employees received these wages provided that they did not "lay off" and were ready for instant duty day or night. The Company did not furnish callers and the Conductors and brakemen had to call themselves as their trains were due to depart. The Railways at that time had very small engines and cars. I had been on the Road several months when the first thirty thousand pound capacity cars came out and when they were soon followed by the thirty six thousand pound capacity "big red hocks" the brakemen talked of striking rather than try to handle them, for the Company would not keep on increasing them until they got them to fifty thousand. Now the capacity of many cars is one hundred and fifty thousand pounds, with a car weight of from forty to fifty thousand pounds. Of course the character and power of the locomotives has changed accordingly. The Company had very small engines at that time and the first locomotives that I saw were "wood burners." The Company

had men to cut wood into convenient lengths, some to  
 get and stack it near the track and trains would stop  
 and the train crew would fill the tender with wood <sup>sufficient</sup>  
 to carry them to the next wood pile, some eighteen or twenty  
 miles. Now the monster locomotives weigh three and often  
 four hundred thousand pounds have automatic firemen,  
 and take coal once in four hundred miles, while many  
 are "oil burners," and use no coal or need. When I first  
 went traveling the little engines would handle from  
 two hundred and fifty tons to sometimes three hundred tons  
 in good weather, while today our freight engines handle  
 from three to five thousand tons on the same road.

The locomotives of fifty years had no safety appliances  
 whatever, and no conveniences, while today they all are  
 equipped with every convenience, every safety appliance,  
 and every means of economy that can be suggested. And  
 it should be recorded that ~~that time~~ <sup>that time</sup> Ventury was just  
 about as far advanced in such matters as any of the  
 Middle and Southern States, and away ahead of many.  
 In 1882, what was known then as the "Big Roger" engine,  
 now numbered in the 500 class and too small for  
 Road Engines, came to Bowling Green for service on the  
 Second and 6 Divisions, and six or eight of our oldest  
 and most experienced engineers assigned rather than  
 men! such "big engines." Sometimes I wonder what  
 Engineers like John (Culber) Boyd, Jack Boone, McFarland,  
 Geo Coersill, Mr Dixon, Chas Dixon, Jess Boone, Geo Long,  
 Tom Rowe, William and Jesse Roy, and others of that date  
 would say if they came back to earth and were called  
 to make a trip on one of the modern locomotives of today.  
 They were as efficient as locomotive engineers could  
 be at that time, but they were deemed of machinery  
 such as we have now, and it is very doubtful if one of  
 them could move a present day train out of the  
 Bowling Green Road. What has been said of the

Engineers of Police equally as well to the conductors of that time, for such men as Captain Petty, Mr Gardner, Jesse H. Thompson, J. A. McDaniel, E. H. Brown, Mr Glenn, M. C. Haight and Geo Spies on the Second Division and Boutwell, Balch, Mr Andrews, Henry Bradley, A. J. Vick, and George and James Webb, Loonis, and others on the Clarksville Division would be lost cheating numbers and seals on a freight train a mile long. The S & N Shops and Round House were built before the Civil War, and during that war were often bombarded with shot and shell from Batteries and Vinegar Hills when an attempt was made to run any amount of either Steam or the cannon were too small to damage the buildings beyond knocking down a wooden door once in a while, but sufficed to keep the engines inside, the Shops were among the most substantial on the entire system and withstood many storms, cyclones, and other hardships that killed others, I deem it of interest to record the following true statement: When it became known that the S & N had decided to move their Shops from Bowling Green to Paris Tenn I, at the request of certain citizens, and instructions from the Board of Directors of locomotive Engineers went to Louisville to see the Officials of the Road, and if possible induce them to let the Shops remain at Bowling Green. The trip was a fruitless one, as the President said that he most positively would not endure the prosecution the S & N was receiving from the citizens of Bowling Green and Madison County, and the Shops should be moved. Any one at all acquainted with Mr M. H. Smith, President knew that when he had made up his mind no circumstances could change it. Mr Geo. E. Evans General Manager, then said to me "We regret having to move our Shops from Bowling Green and I will tell you why: In the first place we have one of the most substantial Shops there we have on the entire system. A Drill Press

doing heavy work on engine frames was located there fifty years ago and when examined a few days since it had not moved one sixty fourth of an inch. The foundation there is solid rock and will support any machinery needed by mortal man. In the second place we have there the first natural beverage I ever saw and we have not, and never will have, anything on the system to equal it. Thirdly, we have an abundance of pure free water that we can use eight months in each year without ice. We can get coal and wood in an abundance and within one day haul with a two horse wagon. We have been conveniently situated there for large shops, and have made many figures on increasing our facilities there, while one of our greatest considerations has been that Bowling Green was above the epidemic line. These are some of the reasons why we have stood the persecution so long, but you have heard Mr Smith's decision, and the flies are out in the Bowling Green shops."

This was a severe blow to the financial interests of the city, as the S. N. R. R. had a payroll there that often amounted to fifty thousand dollars per month, and as practically all the employees lived there and many owned their homes, the major part of this large payroll found its way into the hands of real business men. When the shops had been taken away, and hundreds of the former employees had been forced to move their homes to some other point, and local option was voted in the county & city, Bowling Green went into the "dumps" and probably would have remained in the dumps but for the oil boom a few years later, and the development of her wonderful shale system. It is indeed interesting to recall the days when Bowling Green boasted of her free Public School with Professor Wiley and Taylor as Superintendents.



her Ogden College which graduated such men as Horace  
to Billie - Tommy Thomas, Chas Drake, and hundreds of  
others space will not permit me to name, turning out as  
many noted Judges, Attorneys, Bankers, and business men  
generally, as any institution of its size in the  
known world, her J. J. Potter College and its subsequent  
wonderful development, and with J. H. Mallory and  
H. L. Hines for "Magor" and "Jim" "Whiterson" for "Gitty"  
Ginginess, Boring Green was hard to beat.