Roundhouse Notes

Paducah Chapter
National Railway Historical Society
May 2018

From a 1922 Illinois Central Employee Magazine

Movie Show Tried Out on Our Train No. 3 1922

Passenger Department Joins in Experiment to Give New Pleasure to Patrons of the Illinois Central

MOTION pictures on a moving Illinois Central train were demonstrated purely as an experiment for the first time on June 7. No. 3, out of Chicago that evening, has the distinction of being that train. The pictures were shown in the diner after all meals had been served. Few, if any, of the passengers on No. 3 that day knew what a treat was in store for them, but the crew knew, and all the trainmen were more than eager for the performance to begin. It was nearly 9 p. m. before the last passenger left the diner, and that coach was to be taken off the train about 10 o'clock at Mattoon. That left only one hour to clear the diner of its dishes and tables and to transform it into a theater. Immediately after the last passenger had finished his meal and left the car, the work of transformation began. J. W. Stevenson, assistant general passenger agent, R. B. Gray, advertising agent, and E. H. Baker, supervisor of passenger service employees, who were overseeing the demonstration, pitched right into the work with the rest. The waiters carried the dirty dishes to the kitchen, the steward put the soiled linen out of sight, and the others interested in the show took down the tables. The chairs were placed facing forward and four across the car, with a narrow aisle down the center. A small white curtain was hung at the front end, and two portable motion picture machines were set up at the rear. By 9:15 o'clock, the diner really resembled a "movie" house. The passengers were pleasantly surprised when a porter calmly stepped into their cars and announced : "Harold Lloyd, in a three reel comedy, 'Now or Never,' is being shown in the diner, at the rear. Admission is free." There were a lot of "movie" fans on the train that night. Every seat in the diner was taken, and many stood in the aisle. Before the machines started clicking, the diner was given a more complete theatrical atmosphere by shouts of "We want music !" from some of the restless ones. The noisy person who tries to force almost every show to begin by banging his calloused hands together was also there. Then there was a click, and the diner was in darkness. That brought forth a round of applause. Another click, a whir, a series of many little clicks, and the "movies" were on. The audience was in an uproar, but the picture soon became so interesting that all else was forgotten. A few minutes before Mattoon was reached, Harold Lloyd had gone through three reels of pleasing antics. When the last click had died away, the audience burst forth in applause. The lights came on as expectedly as in any "movie" house, and the passengers walked leisurely to their berths. One girl with bobbed hair, painted cheeks and lips, a wad of chewing gum that kept her jaws, busy, short skirt, rolled hose and low heel shoes (we've often heard the type called "flapper") was heard to remark about the idea of having "movies" on a train: "I think that's cute." And an Illinois Central employee at the other end of the car said : "I've been railroadin' thirty-five years, and I never expected to see 'movies' on a train." Everyone agreed that the demonstration was a complete success as regards the possibility of showing motion pictures on a moving train. The screen was fastened so that it carried the motion of the car, as were the projection machines. The audience, of course, had the same motion. The picture was small, about 3 by 4 feet, but very distinct. The light was obtained from the generator of the car. A report on the experiment has been made to the management for consideration in connection with a proposal to work out a schedule of offering motion picture entertainments regularly to patrons on through passenger trains.

This was a big deal in 1922 to be able to show a movie on a train. Now we watch it on our phone.

RECORD AT ONE CROSSING

A "Safety First" campaign to lessen the danger of grade crossing accidents has been instituted by the Illinois Central railroad through its local division officials. Through the co-operation of the public, which officials say is absolutely essential to the success of the movement, the road hopes to make its crossings safer and to cause people in vehicles to exercise more care when crossing the tracks. Many accidents in the past have been due to the carelessness of the traveling public, railroad officials say, and if people will be more careful of approaching danger, there will be fewer accidents. A watchman was stationed Friday at the Benton road crossing to count passing vehicles and make a note of those which exercised proper watchfulness in crossing the tracks. During the hours from 8:30 a. m. and 5 p. m.,208 vehicles, not including bicycles, crossed the tracks at the Benton road crossing. Of these, 84 passed without looking to see whether a train was approaching or not. This is the point the railroad officials are emphasizing. A large portion of the traveling public fails to do its duty in not cooperating with the roads, and in failing to exercise care when crossing railroad tracks. The safety first campaign has been launched, and I. C. officials are watching results closely. Other crossings are being watched this week and further figures will be given out. A hearty response from the public is earnest.

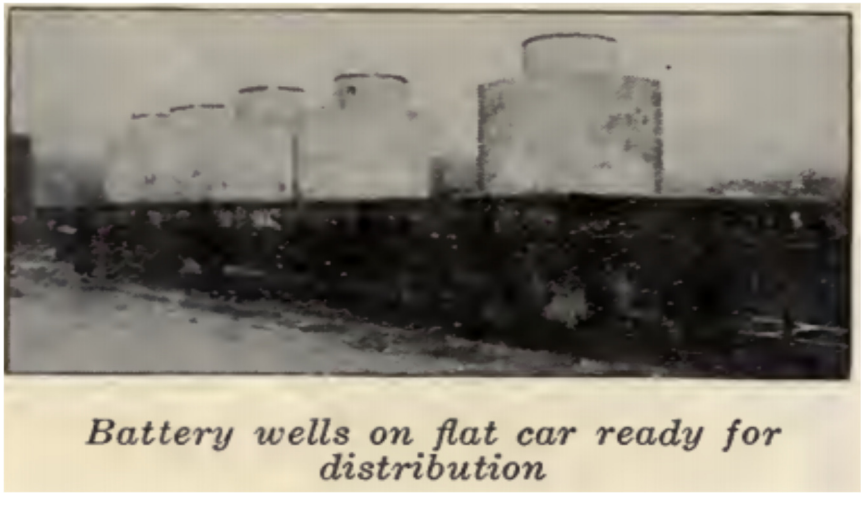
News and Views

Charlie G

Some Rapid Work in Signal Installation Protection of Kentucky Division Main Line Completed Speedily by Careful Planning

By JOHN PRICE, Supervisor of Signals, Kentucky Division The Kentucky division has recently installed and placed in service about seventeen miles of single track automatic block signals on the Paducah district, between Fox Run and Graham, Ky. This signal installation completes the automatic signal protection of the entire main line of the Kentucky division between Louisville, Ky., and Paducah, Ky. a distance of 225 miles. In addition, automatic signals protecting yard movements through Paducah yard extend southward to Mile Post J229 on the Tennessee division. The installation comprises thirty-three automatic signals of the 3-position, upper quadrant, semaphore type; four high volt- age, semi-automatic interlocking signals, and one semi-automatic dwarf signal. The automatic signals are the Hall Switch & Signal Company's style "L" bottom post mechanism type, operating on ten volts, direct current, furnished from a primary battery, and equipped with electric lights, controlled by the approach lighting circuit. The electric lamps were designed and furnished by the Aldon Engineering Company, Chicago, and are equipped with 3.5-volt, .025-ampere, single contact, bayonet, candelabra base bulbs. Current for the lights is furnished from four cells of a primary battery. The interlocking signals are the General Railway Signal Company's Model 2-A, semi-automatic, top post mechanism type signals, operating on 110 volts, direct current, furnished from ninety cells of Edison, Type B-4, alkaline storage battery. The dwarf signal, also furnished by the General Railway Signal Company, is a Model 3, semi-automatic, solenoid type. Foundations Made at Paducah In order to eliminate the use of revenue coal cars it was decided to make the concrete foundations at the source of the material supply. Accordingly, all the concrete foundations for the entire installation were made at the yard of the Paducah Sand & Gravel Company at Paducah. Sand, gravel and water were available at the yard, and it was necessary to transport only the cement and the forms. As Paducah store- house is conveniently located near the gravel yard, the cement and forms were trans- ported to the yard in shop trucks. Making up the foundations in this way resulted in the saving of four revenue cars a day which would otherwise have been used in a 75-mile non-revenue freight haul. Another saving was made in the amount of the concrete material used by reducing the size of the foundations from 4 feet by 4 feet by 5 feet to 3 feet 4 inches by 3 feet 4 inches by 4 feet, resulting in the saving of foundations. All battery material was placed in the battery wells, with the result that when the battery wells were distributed they contained all the battery material necessary for each signal location. Trunking, capping, stakes, track circuit material and line material were distributed as the train moved over the road. The work train arrangement for this was as follows: Engine; material car No. 1 (containing trunking material); flat car containing concrete foundations; derrick; flat car containing battery wells; material car No. 2 (containing track circuit material); material car No. 3 (containing line material). As a battery well is used at each signal location, the work train arrangement shown approximately one cubic yard of concrete and two tons of weight to each foundation.

New automatic signals in service. Train No. 195 is shown in the block



Battery wells on flat car ready for distribution

The finished foundations were loaded on flat cars, transported to Fox Run in one day and distributed between Fox Run and Graham the next day. Battery wells and battery, trunking and track circuit material were also distributed at the same time, thus completing the preliminary work of the installation by the use of one work train. Automatic signal installations are distributed over several miles of railroad, and it has always been a problem effectively to distribute the material and carry out the work in an efficient manner. The old plan of work was to make the foundations in the field, distribute the signals and battery wells, then transport the workmen and material from one location to another on hand cars or motor cars until the installation was completed. This, at its best, was a wasteful process, resulting in numerous de- lays and much time lost. On a busy single-track railroad, transportation difficulties aggravated these conditions to such an extent that the progress of the work was often materially delayed and the cost of the work increased substantially beyond the estimated price. Careful Preparations Made In order to overcome these conditions and carry out the work in an efficient manner, it was decided to distribute all the material necessary for the preliminary work with the same work train that distributed the above makes it possible to unload both foundation and battery well at the same time, without having to respot the train or double back over the installation. The crew line-up was as follows: Derrick foreman, derrick engineer, derrick fireman, one clevis man, one level man, one gauge man, two helpers, six material distributers, usual work train crew. The result of using the arrangement above was that after the work train had made one trip over the installation, all the material necessary to complete the field work was in its proper place, and the trunking work, track circuit work, line work and banking could then be carried forward to completion while the signals were being wired. Several Things Done at Once When the signal cases were received, they were unloaded at Nortonville and the local wiring installed in each signal. This consists of made-up lightning arrestor cable, motor cable, battery cable, terminals and local terminal board jumpers. In addition, lightning arrestors, signal mechanism, relays, ground wire, roundels and a cable outlet were placed in each signal case. While the wiremen were installing this work, the signal poles were fitted with ladders, lamp brackets, number plate clamps and conduit clamps. The conduit for the lighting circuit was cut and fitted and tied to each signal mast with wire, so that when the mast was placed on the case in the field the conduit was ready for installation. When all the work above was completed, the signal cases and masts were loaded on cars and distributed with the work train. In order to facilitate distribution, the following work train arrangement was used: engine; car with signal masts, fitted; derrick; car with signal cases. Spectacle castings, pinnacles, electric lamps, ground rods and blades were loaded in the same car with the signal cases and were distributed as the train moved over the road. The work train arrangement above made it possible to unload signal cases and masts alternately, without having to double back over the installation. The crew line-up for this arrangement was as follows: derrick foreman, derrick engineer, derrick fireman, four signal fitters, two material distributors. The average time consumed in unloading and fitting each signal location was seven minutes. After the signals were distributed and fitted, the only field work remaining was to hook up the line cables and battery. The signals were then ready for circuit test and inspection.

Derrick outfit unloading signal foundations and signal cases at the Paducah, Ky., yard. Derrick Foreman Joseph McCarthy, Signal Supervisor J. P. Price and Signal Foreman C. . Sauer are standing on the derrick.

Roundhouse Notes

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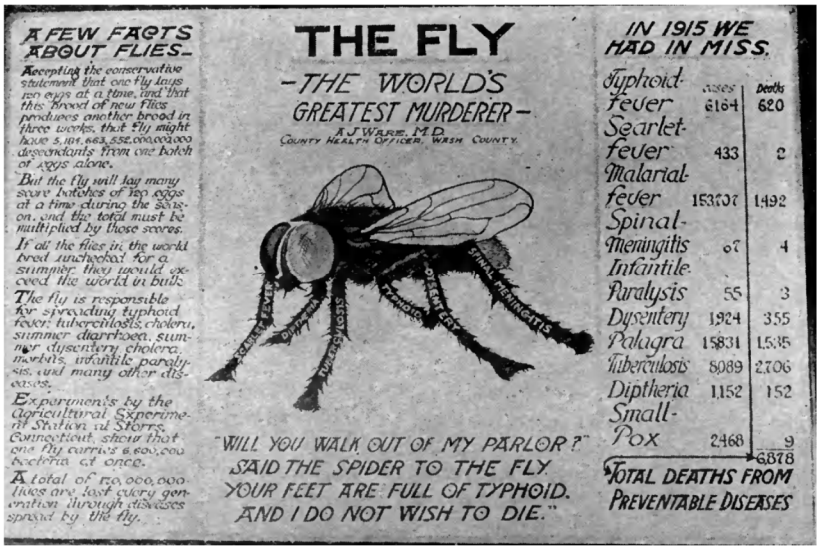

Sign Posted about flies and their diseases posted at a Mississippi IC passenger depot. From 1915

Next Meeting
May 8th
7 PM
At the
Railroad Museum
Paducah

National Train day at the Museum is May 12th

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