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ANDREW W. GRIFFEN RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE VETERAN

Forty Years of Active Work and Two and One-Half Million Miles of Travel in the Railway Mail Cars Leaves Him Hale, Hearty and Full of the Keen Zest of Vigorous Life

F SOMEONE had approached Edward Griffen, a staid Pennsylvania Quaker, in the year of our Lord 1650, and told him that one of his descendants 250 years later would be whirling through the country at the rate of fifty miles an hour and attending to the work of distributing tens of thousands of letters in the conveyance while going at this terrific speed, the good old Quaker would doubtless have looked upon the person as a child of Satan. He would have folded his hands solemnly on the baggy front of his homespun trousers; he would have set his firm lips in a line still firmer than before; he would have looked solemnly upon the ground and then derhaps have raised his pious eyes still more solemnly toward heaven. And then he might have murmured a devout prayer that the Lord should have mercy upon the poor misguided person who was being assailed by the arrows of the devil and being inspired with evil thoughts by demons of wickedness.

However, all this is aside from the main part of this narration. It is, in the words of Kipling, "another story." Nevertheless, it is an interesting part of the life of Andrew W. Griffen, a resident of Omaha since 1867, and a railway mail clerk for more than forty years. More will be said about his ancestor, the plous Edward, in the course of this biography.

A branch of the descendants of Edward Griffen were living on a farm near Ypsilanti, Mich., in the year of our Lord 1845. On July 25 of that year the son was born who was to be such a faithful servant of Uncle Sam in the railway mail service. The early life of Andrew was the ordinary life of the farm boy, filled to overflowing of chores, work and school. The boy was ambitious. He applied himself diligently to his books and made the most of his small advantages. Having completed the course offered in the country, he entered the schools of the neighboring town of Ypsilanti and then took up the course in the normal college located there. Working on the farm in the summer and going to school in the winter, he completed three years of normal training and was nearly fitted for teaching school, which was the goal of his ambitions then.

Omaha Won Him Early

His uncle, Joel T. Griffen, had settled in the young town of Omaha, and in the summer of 1867 the young man came west to visit him. He liked Nebraska at once and told his uncle that his citizenship in the young commonwealth could be secured by getting him a position. His uncle had some influence, the proper machinery was set in motion, and young Griffen was appointed a railway mail clerk on the Union Pacific. He was one of the seven who were appointed when the railway mail service was first put into operation west of the Missouri river. The other six were G. B. Bail, N. M. Dickinson, A. C. Noteware, Captain Moore, L. M. Moe and J. F. Reynolds. Mr. Griffen is the only one of the seven who is still in the service. His record is more than that, for he has been on the same run-Omaha to Cheyenne-almost continuously since the year

At his home, 561 South Twenty-sixth avenue, Mr. Griffen told some reminiscences of early days in the service and drew a comparison between the days that are gone and the present.

"They called us 'route agents' in the early days," he said. "We occupied a little space in a combination car which was less than onethird of the small car. At one end of this space was a line of boxes in which we distributed the papers and at the right-hand side were several rows of boxes for letters.

"There was only one man in a car and I don't think the entire mail on the run from Omaha to Cheyenne weighed 500 pounds. I remember I used to get through with my work almost by the time we reached Papillion, just a few miles out of Omaha, and the rest of the run was pretty much of a loafing job. Coming back from

the west the mail was so light I could sometimes carry it all myself "Compare that day with the present. Now there are 127 men on the Omaha-Cheyenne run. Twenty-one of these go out every day in place of one in 1867. There are about ten big cars heavily loaded Cheyenne in place of the small part of the one car as in 1867.

Work Was Light Then

"I had very little distributing to do in those days. The distributing was done at what they called 'D. P. O.'s' or distributing postoffices. We put all the mail for Utah, for example, in one package. This was distributed in Salt Lake City and sent out from there.

"We used to catch bags of mail at small stations as they do today. Of course, the bags were only light and we caught them with our own arms, instead of using a big iron arm as they do today. This might seem hard to do while a train is going at a good speed, but it was easy when you knew how. The trick was not to try to stop the bag, but merely to reach out at the proper time and give it a yank toward the car. The speed of the train was sufficient to send it whizzing into the car and striking against the back of the car.

"The trip from Omaha to Cheyenne then took about twenty-six hours. Now we make it on the Overland in just about half that time. We made a trip every seven days. Our pay was \$1,000 a year. Today we make the trip twice every twelve days."

In 1869 Mr. Griffen was transferred for about a year to the Chicago-Iowa City run. With him were transferred T. N. Vail, who afterward became general superintendent of the entire railway mail. sevice. Also there was Daniel Kennison. On the Chicago-lowa City run were also at that time Captain White, later general superintendent, and Walter L. Hunt, also prominent later in railway mail circles.

When Mr. Griffen was transferred again in 1870 it was to become chief clerk of the Omaha district, succeeding James D. Stacy. This was before the days of the civil service. After holding this place for five years he was put back on his run, in which he has continued up to the present time with scarcely a break in the continuity of his service.

Viewing the service from the mountain height of forty years Mr. Griffen declares it has undergone a marvelous development.

"It is a wonderful system even to one in whom familiarity might be supposed to breed contempt," he says. "I remember well the poorly provided, poorly built bumpy little cars with their loose couplings that we bounced along in forty years ago. And I look with wonder at the great machine that grinds out a grist hundreds of times greater than was ground out forty years ago, and still runs so much more smoothly and accurately than that early machine of the mail service.

How the Country Has Grown

"And yet the development in the service is no more wonderful than the development in the country here in the west. When I remember the bare and barren and uninhabited country through which we ran in the '60s and then look at the present country, dotted with prosperous towns and villages, covered with fertile farms and fairly stippled with the dwellings, the barns, the granaries, of happy. healthy, wealthy farmers, I realize that I have witnessed one of the most marvelous developments that has ever occurred on this earth. if everything was all right that time. Somehew

"We used to pass many emigrant trains even after the Union Pacific was completed. Many of the towns were in the wild and right eye. woolly and wicked stage, filled with bad men, treacherous Indians. the riff-raff of the world, the scum of society. All this has vanished away and given place to one of the best governed commonwealths the world has ever seen.

"There were large garrisons in some of the western forts in the glass eye moves so naturally that many perthose days and much of the mail we carried was for the soldiers. sons never suspect that it is not the real thing. At Fort Sedgwick on the Platte river just across from Julesburg there was a big g: rrison. Other forts along the line were Fort Fred Steele and Fort Sanders. Fort Kearney was south of the river and could distinguish outlines of some objects, but we did not see much of it, though troops were stationed there in 1067. Some troops were also stationed at Fort McPherson, but the main body was at Fort Sedgwick. The old forts have been abandoned many years. The only one now remaining is Fort D. A. Russell at he lost his sight he promptly decided on the edu-Chevenne, it was built in 1867 and is now maintained as a brigade cation as first necessity and set about getting one. post, being one of the most important in the west.

"We saw great herds of buffalo on the plains in the early days. normal school, then the Cumberland university at



ANDREW W. GRIFFEN.

breath of the buffalo freeze on their shaggy hides and the steam covered. He suffered fearfully from the pain of the injury." coming in clouds from their fiery nostrils gave them the appearance of small engines.

"I saw the interesting sight of a man carrying his own scalp in mail cars it foots up to about 2,500,000 miles and is being in-

with mail going out of Omaha every day over the Union Pacific to I remember seeing a hunting party of Indians pursuing the animals in his hand. This was Thomas Cahoon, a Union Pacific conductor. on a very cold winter day. They would ride up beside the buffalo He was brought back from Lodge Pole, Neb., where he had been on their ponies and discharge their revolvers into them. It was an fishing with some others. The Indians had attacked him, taken the names, dates of birth and of death of their wives. interesting and very picturesque sight. The cold air made the scalp without killing him and escaped. The hank of hair was re-

Mr. Griffen's service is remarkable not alone from the chrono-

creased right along at the rate of 5,000 miles a month. It is an easy matter to figure how many times around the earth this equals or how many trips to the moon could have been taken had Mr. Griffen confined his journeying exclusively to a line of railway built from the earth to that satellite. A remarkable feature of his service is that he has never been in an accident. Wait a moment, though, that is not quite the truth. Once, it is true, one wheel of one truck . of the car he was in left the track at a switch when the train was nearly at a standstill and caused a delay of nearly half an hour. Mr. Griffen feels himself fairly fortunate in having traveled two and a half million miles right behind an express engine without sustaining a scratch of bodily injury.

Thus has come true the wonderful thing which the plous Quaker, Edward Griffen, who lived in the good old days, would have viewed as impossible. This swift moving workl is now practically run by a machinery which he from his stolid standpoint would have branded as an abomination and the creation of the devil himsolf.

However, Mr. Griffen is proud of that same old ancestor. It is a facetious saying, but one which contains much truth, that a man ought to choose his ancestors with great care. Certain it is that one could not possibly choose a better ancestor than a Quaker. Edward Griffen was one of the staunchest of that much persecuted but steadfastly devout sect. He lived in the days when it was considered a virtue to punish anyone who had the audacity to be a Quaker and the persecution was the more pleasant to cowards, because it was against the principles of the Quakers to make resistance.

Record of An Ancestor

Edward Griffen was born in 1602 and when he was 30 years of age he emigrated to the new world, sailing from London on October 24, 1632, on the ship Abraham for Virginia. In this country he was one of the earliest members of the Quakers, or Society of Friends, and took a leading part in their deliberations and in their passive resistance of the persecutions devised against them. His name was one of those signed to the "Remonstrance of the inhabitants of Flushing, Long Island, against the law against Quakers to Governor Petrus Stuyvesant of New Amsterdam." A part of this document reads as follows:

"Right Honorable: You have been pleased to send unto us a certaine prohibition or command that wee shoulde not receive or entertaine any of those people called Quakers, because they are supposed to bee by some seduceive of the people. For our part wee cannot condemn them in this case, neither can wee stretch out our hands against them to punnish, bannish or persecute them, for out of Christ God is a consuming fire and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Wee desire therefore in this case not to judge lest wee be judged, neither to condemn lest wee La condemned, but rather let every man stand and fall to his owne maister. Wee are bound by the law to doe good unto all men, especially to those of the householde of faith."

The document ends thus:

"Therefore, if any of these said personnes come in love unto us we cannot in consequence lay violent hands upon them, but give them free egresse and regresse into our towne and houses as God shall persuade our consciences, and in this wee are true subjects both of church and state, and wee are bounde by the law of God and man to doe good unto all men and evill to no man and this according to the pattent and character of our towne given unto us in the name of the state generall, which wee are not willing to infringe and violate, but shall houlde to our pattent and shall remaine your humble supjects and the inhabitants of Vlishing.

"Written this 27th of December, in the yeare 1637, by mee, "EDWARD HEART, Clericus."

Fifteen large books contain the history of the Griffens during the last 300 years. These were compiled by Mr. Griffen and represent the work of years. It is a hobby of his in which he spends much of his spare time. Typewritten copy covering twenty large pages relates the history of Edward Griffen alone. Mr. Griffen has in his fifteen books the names of hundreds of members of the family, with the dates of their birth and death, dates of their marriage, with

Mr. Griffen married Miss Mary E. Hollister in Rochester, Mich. January 11, 1871. They have three children, two girls and a boy. Mr. Griffen carries his sixty-three years with the vigor of a man logical standpoint. Expressed in the number of miles he has traveled of forty. He is still one of the best men in the service and doesn't

Ambition Led Blind Man Into the Senate Chamber

States senate? For that matter, how did a blind man ever have the courage to pick out that particular career and to make it the object of his greatest ambition?

There is one answer to both questions. He did it by being Thomas P. Gore.

Being Thomas P. Gore means a good many things. It means being 37 years old, in perfect health, of indomitable will and unlimited energy. It means being by turns a good fighter and a generous conciliator. It means the ability to get and to keep friends.

It means, moreover, having had a good mind to start with and having given it twenty-five years of almost unexampled training. And if that isn't enough to explain the senatorship, it means having Mrs. Thomas P. Gore for a wife and helpmeet.

When the present senator was only 7 or 8 years old he was accidentally struck in the left eye by a stick which a companion threw down. The whole thing was an accident, the stick rebounding and striking him under part of the eyeball. Some injury to the optic nerve resulted and the sight gradually failed in that eye.

When he was 11 years old and a page in the Mississippi senate-he was born and brought up in that state-he bought an air gun to take home to his brother for a Christmas present. Some of the children at the hotel where he was living wanted to see it work and naturally an 11-yearold boy did not need to be asked twice.

While he was showing it off the rod it fired kept catching in the barrel, so finally having placed it in position young Gore squinted down the barrel-with his good eye, of course-to see or other the gun went off and so did part of his

Of course, the sight was destroyed. An operation was performed, the front of the eyeball removed and a false eye substituted. Owing to the fact that not all the eyeball was taken away

Since he was 11 years old Thomas P. Gore has not been able to read a word. For a few years he since he was 15 or 16 he has lost even that power,

At 11 he was too young to have acquired a trade, a profession or even an education. After

He went through the public schools, then the

7 ASHINGTON, Feb. 8 .- How did a Lebanon, Tenn. One of his earlier schoolmates blind man ever get into the United accompanied him to Lebanon and read to him. Every bit of his work was done this way. He was valedictorian of his class and one of six who were graduated with highest honors.

> When he left college he went to Jackson, Miss., for six months to learn to read with his fingers. He even bought two books in Braille type, Longfellow's poems and the Constitution of the United States. But getting his learning through his fingers was too tedious a method to suit a man so eager, so fairly covetous of knowledge as young Gore was.

The two books for the blind with which he supplied himself then have not grown into a library. He never bought a third-and he's not very certain of the whereabouts of the original He has a library all right enough, but it isn't composed of books for the blind.

He cannot read one word in the volumes with which he has surrounded himself; yet he knows their contents with a thoroughness which would make most men seem, in contrast, to be strangers to their own bookshelves. Not only does he know their contents, he knows their outside also. As he would recognize the face of a friend by passing his hand over it, so he can recognize his books by

He loves to have a book in his hands. Whenever he is being read to he wants to hold a book

When he is getting his ideas into shape for a speech he goes off into a room by himself-but takes a book to hold. It may not be a book from which he is going to quote, but it will be a book he cares for, and a book, too, that he likes the feel of; for he is especially sensitive to certain

His wife says that books are his one dissipation. He neither smokes nor drinks. But he goes to a bookstore as a needle to a magnet and always succumbs to that one temptation of buying more and yet more volumes.

How does he make himself master of their contents? There's where you have a hint of the man himself.

No man who was not thoroughly likeable could ever in this world have managed to do what Senator Gore has accomplished, no matter how much he might have wanted it. Never, that is unless he had been ready to pay exhorbitantly for it, and Gore is not a rich man

A schoolmate read him through college. A brother became his law partner. Another is his secretary. His wife is something of all three, be-

sides being a good deal more. But neither a man's schoolmates nor his brothers, nor even his wife, can throw in their lives with his to that extent unless there is something more is only when he has a speech on hand, or somethan sympathy to keep them going. In this case thing of that sort, that he objects to having his there is more; there is admiration and affectiontwo sentiments which the blind senator seems to

inspire wherever he goes. Nothing would be further from the truth than to picture him as a semi-dependent drag upon his friends. Some imaginative correspondents have described his wife as his inseparable companion, going wherever he goes, sitting upon the platform during his campaign speeches and either leading or following him around constantly.

That's all nonsense. The other day when a Bee reporter called at the hotel where Senator Gore lives in Washington the senator had gone off to New York on business, and, according to his custom, he had gone all by himself.

He almost invariably travels alone. He has made a cafpaign tour of half a dozen states and done it quite alone. That's the kind of man he is. A man who has learned to depend first of all on himself-and then on others.

The stories of his wife campaigning with him are not true. She explains quite simply that she would have liked to go with him, but that "traveling costs twice as much for two as for one and I felt that we could not afford it."

It is not by being constantly with him that she contributes her share to her husband's success, but by reading to him. He has the courage and the will for everything else, but that is the thing others must do.

Before Oklahoma was admitted, when, as Mrs. Gore says, "we knew statehood was coming," they spent months reading and studying works on economics and constitutional law and history. When the time came for the campaign for the senatorship the trained memory of the blind candidate was stored with facts which he had at his absolute command. As a rule, all he needed to do when he wanted to prepare a speech was to go into a quiet room with a book in his hand and cogitate, as he calls it.

He is an inveterate worker. When he is not gaining knowledge through being read to he is assimilating it by cogitation. Sometimes, out of mistaken kindness, people rob him of the time he wants to spend at the latter occupation.

Another man could surround himself with books and papers so that anybody could see that he was occupied. But they see Gore sitting by himself on the train or in a hotel and think he must be in need of entertainment, which they pro-

ceed to supply. "And I didn't have any time to cogitate!" will be his lament later to his wife,

Not that he doesn't want companionship. It cogitation interfered with. He is a good fellow among men and is also, by his wife's own account, fond of the ladies.

But his one insatiable passion is for reading. Science, especially the science of government, economic subjects and, above all, the Bible and masterpieces of oratory, these are the things he cares most for. But although he loves to hear the Bible read, he is "not much of a church goer." Through his hearing and his speaking he

does all his work. He never writes anything himself. He did learn to use a typewriter, but never liked it and depends altegether on dictation. He can sign his name, but it is not a triumph of legibility. Ears and a tongue seem to be enough for him.

Every morning his wife reads the daily paper to him and anything else that he needs. His younger brother, Dixie Gore, is his private secretary and goes through his correspondence as any one's sec-

Even people who are not blind dictate their replies just as Senator Gore does. The difference is that he keeps in his mind, always at his command, a hundred times as much exact information as most seeing persons keep in their minds.

In his home town, Lawton, Senator Gore goes and comes without any escort whatever. In Washington, however, he has not begun to go about alone. There are wide, automobile-infested driveways to be crossed around the capitol, whose entrances also are complicated medleys of steps and archways, swinging doors and preoccupied pedes-

He has the subtle sense of perception which is not uncommon in the blind. Sometimes when he is walking alone he will sense the nearness of steps or a wall or some object.

In his home town the telephone and telegraph poles are along the edge of the sidewalk. Often when walking with his wife he will put out his hand and touch one of these poles as unerringly

as if he had eyes to see them. He says that it is something he cannot explain and something that he can neither control

nor depend upon. "If I should try to feel the nearness of objects," he says, "I could not do it. I can't depend upon feeling it, anyway. I might walk a dozen flights of steps for once that I would know enough

not to." It isn't to be wondered at that Senator Gore is not an enthusiast on the subject of outdoor

(Continued on Page Four.)