

WILLIAM L. PARK PRACTICAL RAILROAD SUPERINTENDENT

Youngster Who Decided Many Years Ago to Be a Railroad Man Grows Up to Realize His Ambition and Makes Good As General Superintendent of the Great Overland System.

THE REMARKABLE FEAT OF THOMAS A. SCOTT in moving Hooker's army from the Potomac by rail to Chattanooga, 1,200 miles, in twelve days, in the face of Hallack's pessimistic opinion that it could not be done in three months, with the rescue of Rosecrans' army, first attracted the attention of William L. Park to railroading. Many a time as a small boy he sat and listened to his father tell the story of this greatest military move in history, and heard him give the credit to the railroad men and it made a deep impression on his youthful mind. While still a small boy he determined to adopt a vocation that could do greater things than an army, notwithstanding the fact that his father had outlined a West Point education for him.

Such was the impetus for a railroad life which was early given to W. L. Park, general superintendent of the Union Pacific railroad, which, with its 5,000 miles of tracks, has thousands of men in the operating department and the maintenance of way department who are under his direct supervision. The superintendents of the five divisions report to the general superintendent and the operation of all trains is handled from his office. All trainmen and engineers and operators report all their grievances to the general superintendent, who makes their scales of wages and handles all matters in connection with the men employed in operating the road.

Park Hill, near Elmira, N. Y., is the scene of the early childhood of W. L. Park, his ancestors having obtained from the government a large tract of land in Chemung county, through the construction of military roads in the latter part of the seventeenth century. A portion of this land is still retained by the Park family. Colonel Josiah B. Park, father of W. L., moved with his family to Ovid, Mich., in the late '50s, where he engaged in civil engineering and the construction of railroads, until the breaking out of the civil war, when he was elected and commissioned captain of Company D, First Michigan cavalry, August 22, 1861. Colonel Park was soon promoted to major of his regiment and February 18, 1862, was commissioned lieutenant colonel of the Fourth Michigan cavalry, retiring at the close of the war as colonel of a regiment of engineers.

Family Comes to Omaha

The Fourth Michigan cavalry was distinguished by the capture of Jefferson Davis, president of the confederacy, May 10, 1865, near Macon, Ga. Lieutenant Colonel B. D. Pritchard being in command at the time. Colonel Park was on the staff of Generals Sheridan, Stanley and Thomas, was post commander and superintendent of fortifications at Franklin, Tenn., during the battle at that point and was with General Thomas at Chickamauga. The Fourth Michigan, Seventh Pennsylvania and a squadron of the Fourth United States cavalry held a part of Bragg's army, consisting of 16,000 men, from crossing Reed's bridge on the 18th for several hours and made a spectacular crossing of the creek on a narrow bridge to the federal side. They were highly commended and given the credit of saving Rosecrans' army from being more seriously compromised.

After the close of the civil war Colonel Park moved his family to Omaha, arriving on a steamboat at the foot of Douglas street in August, 1866, there being no railroads across Iowa at that time. He formed a partnership with Henry C. Campbell of Fontanelle, and engaged in the survey of government lands in Nebraska until his death in June, 1873, which was prematurely caused by wounds received at Winchester while reconnoitering on General Stanley's staff.

Arriving in Omaha at such a youthful age W. L. Park can truthfully be said to be a product of the west, as he gained his early education in such schools as the west provided at that time. He first attended Mrs. McCullin's private school and later went to Seagrave's academy, which was located at Thirteenth and Farnam street. While at this school he had as his playmates the children of the leading families of Omaha and still numbers among his Omaha friends a number of men who were boys in school at that time. Later, when Colonel Park found it more convenient to have his family near his work, he moved to North Platte, at which time young Park attended public school, and later took a course in Baylie's Commercial college at Keokuk, Ia.

Colonel Park was associated with Guy C. Barton in several business ventures, and one night they were called upon to rescue from the hands of an indignant mob, the editors of a pioneer newspaper that had become too personal. During the period when Colonel Park retained the newspaper, which extended over several years, young Park obtained a good knowledge of the printer's craft and newspaper work. It is conceded that Mr. Park's ability to put his ideas on paper in magazine or newspaper work, as well as in business letters, has been a strong factor in his success. He looks back with much satisfaction to his apprenticeship as a "devil" and the print shop as one of the best schools he ever attended.

Training for the Future

Ever mindful of his chosen profession—railroading—young Park took up, among other studies at Baylie's college, a course in telegraphy. Although attaining the ordinary proficiency of a beginner, he decided to take up train service as affording the most advantages in acquiring a thorough knowledge of railroading from the ground up. Entering the service of the Union Pacific as a brakeman, he rose rapidly to a position as freight conductor, in which capacity he was employed at the age of 18, and as a passenger conductor at 22, running between North Platte and Laramie, Wyo. There was at this time but one Overland passenger train across the continent and its charge was considered one of great responsibility and no little honor. Mr. Park was transferred to the Denver line at the opening of the Julesburg cut-off in 1882, and returned to the main line when the first Overland Limited train in the west was installed, running from Council Bluffs to Cheyenne, Wyo.

While in the train service Mr. Park took up the reading of law and employed his time generously in other studies, in the acquirement of general knowledge, as well as a more extended knowledge of railroad work. The new standard rules for the operation of railroads came into effect in 1886, and after an examination of Park by the superintendent, the latter walked into the office of the chief dispatcher and throwing the book on his desk, said: "If you lose that book, Park can write you another, he knows the whole thing verbatim."

Mr. Park was married to Miss Laura Frances Dill at North Platte, December 24, 1882. Three boys, Edward A., P. Jay and W. Lee, and two daughters, Evalyne and Myra, compose the family, all residing at the Park home in the Hanscom park district, with the exception of the oldest son, who is married and lives at Sterling, Colo.

Mr. Park was one of the youngest officials of the Union Pacific, having been appointed assistant superintendent of the Nebraska division at the age of 30. In 1900 he was transferred to the Wyoming division as superintendent, some very difficult operating problems having arisen through the reconstruction of the line in that territory. In June, 1904, Mr. Park was made general superintendent of the Union Pacific, which position he now holds.

Originator of Mileage Pay

While employed as conductor W. L. Park, as chairman of the general committee, representing the conductors and brakemen, arranged with S. T. Smith, then general superintendent, the first mileage basis of pay for trainmen. The brakemen of Wyoming repudiated the settlement, and went out on a strike, which was quickly settled by showing the men interested in the advantage of this method. Employees of other roads saw the advantages of this system and it soon spread over all the railroads of the United States and has been satisfactory to both the railroads and the employes ever since.

Having thus represented the men and the stockholders as well and sat in conferences on both sides of the table, Mr. Park has acquired an expert knowledge of wage schedules and the adjustment of differences. His fair dealing endears him to the men in his service and it is said that no employe has ever been dismissed unjustly by his direction or consent. While a strict disciplinarian, and believing in military application of the rules of safety, he is extremely well thought of by the rank and file. He is constantly hunting out those



WILLIAM L. PARK.

who show a capacity for increased responsibilities and encouraging Park is there. He is a broad-minded man, with a thorough and to climb. Many have gotten out of the ranks through his practical knowledge of all railroad questions. He rose from the kindly assistance, and no railroad, in the country can boast of greater loyalty or a better esprit de corps than the Union Pacific, which is reflected in its efficiency and safety in travel.

The feeling of the men toward him found expression last week when two men, representing the largest bodies of employes of the road, happened to be in Omaha. W. A. Jameson, general chairman of the conductors of the Union Pacific, said: "The men always the brightest railroad men I ever met. His consideration for employes they have a friend in the councils of the officials when W. L. ginemen, when they are asking for reinstatement, borders upon gen-

Annual Festival of the Oireachtas

DUBLIN, Sept. 1.—The Oireachtas or national Gaelic festival given here recently is the chief annual event of the Gaelic movement which at present is stimulating all Ireland, and reaching out its influence to every land wherein the exiled Gael has made his home or abiding place.

Founded by seven men in 1892, the Gaelic league set itself to carry out a task which to many seemed hopeless, "the preservation of Irish as the national language of Ireland and the extension of its use as a spoken tongue; also the preservation of existing Irish literature and the production of a modern literature in Irish." A second clause declares it to be nonpolitical and nonsectarian.

This latter fact is of extreme significance in a country where for generations the people have been divided into distinct groups of politics or creed without common ground for meeting or communion. In the Gaelic league all party has been swept aside and for the first time in many centuries the sons and daughters of Erin have found themselves united by a common thought, a common ideal, a common bond of brotherhood.

In the Gaelic league all Ireland is applied to the support of the national language, pealed to, and every type of citizen has rallied to the restoration of native culture. Here are banded together rich and poor, high and low, merchant and mechanic, law-giver and country gentleman. It includes Catholic, Protestant and dissenter; unionist, nationalist and parliamentarian; Milesian, Gael and Cromwellian planter.

And even the barriers of sex have been demolished, for men and women alike vote at its councils, debate in its parliament and hold office under its constitution, while in the work of propaganda the league points with pride to the achievements of such women as Miss Agnes O'Farrelly, M. A., head of the Gaelic industrial school at Clonaneely, and of the Misses Gleeson and Yeats, whose industrial guilds at Dundrum have given a new impetus to the higher forms of craftsmanship and who are employing dozens of girls to whom they have taught rug and tapestry weaving, printing, embroidery, etc.

It is this industrial phase of the league's work that is of especial interest and import to the outside world. It matters little to

people of America whether the Donegal farmers and the Dublin shopkeeper salute each other in Gaelic or in English; it matters much that in the family of nations one more land is awakening to a sense of national self-consciousness and is reaching out toward the things which make for national, and as a direct outcome, international prosperity.

Remote as may appear to be the connection between language and industries in Ireland, it has been demonstrated to be direct and vital. The spirit of a nation lies imbedded in its tongue and its traditions. Revive that tongue, that spirit, call out the national pride which hangs upon national traditions, and a new racial vitality ensues.

A true Gaelic leaguer not only speaks Irish, but thinks Irish, feels Irish, exploits all that is Irish. Every member of the Gaelic league is pledged to give preference to Irish manufacturers so far as is reasonably possible, and this action has materially assisted, and may even be said to have largely contributed to, the great industrial revival that is at present going on in Ireland.

The cry everywhere is "Irish manufactures for the Irish consumer," and it is due to the efforts of the league that there has recently come into being an Irish trademark which bears the Gaelic legend, "Deanta in Eirinn" (made in Ireland). This increased demand for Irish products bids fair to realize the dream of the instigators that a flourishing commerce may soon be reared in Ireland; while already existing plants are finding themselves taxed to their utmost to fill the orders which come pouring in and new industries are springing up everywhere.

In America the results are likewise apparent, for the tide of emigration, which has been annually sending 40,000 exiles from Erin to this country, is being stayed. No longer do the tenants of small farms, too small to support an extensive family, and the underdog population of Dublin or Belfast look to America as their only hope. Work is everywhere about them, whether at tweed, linen or carpet loom, at press, desk or counter, or in fields rendered doubly arable by a newly awakened intelligence.

It is a healthy, normal employment, growing out of the normal needs of the country, and not, like lace-making and embroidery, dependent upon the prosperity or the whim of a foreign purchaser.

erosity, tempered with justice. His requirements are sometimes exacting, but they always tend toward the betterment of the service. I look upon him as one of the ablest railroad men in the world today. He is a progressive man in the broad sense, a man valuable to the world at large, a man who from his experience and ability would be difficult to replace. He may be hard and exacting at times, but is always fair, and the most harmonious relations exist between the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the Union Pacific."

Once Had a Holdup

Before going to the Wyoming division Superintendent Park experienced a holdup in his jurisdiction of one of the Overland trains at Brady Island. Within an hour Mr. Park was out of North Platte with a light engine and a sheriff's posse. They picked up the trail before daylight, which resulted in the capture of the outlaws, their trial and conviction and incarceration in the Nebraska penitentiary for ten years, all within less than a week. Several events of this character had previously occurred in Wyoming and Mr. Park made up his mind it was better to prevent them altogether, so he immediately organized a well trained force of both guards and horses. With inside information and quick communication with all parts of the "get away country" everything was held in readiness at all times to go at a moment's notice anywhere on the line and as far into the mountains as the "holdups" could. His lieutenants, Canada and Kellher, entered into the spirit of the plans and since its inception the Union Pacific has been free from depredations, as this "wild bunch" have means of knowing of such preparedness and hesitate to go up against a sure fight or a never ending and relentless chase. It is said that no train robber has ever escaped the Union Pacific. The horses assigned to this service were used in accompanying President Roosevelt from Laramie to Cheyenne on his sixty-two-mile horseback ride. Mr. Park was selected as one of the ten personal guards of the chief magistrate on that occasion.

Mr. Park has taken more than an ordinary interest in the welfare of Nebraska, particularly in the western portion, where he is interested in several irrigation canals, having promoted one of the larger ditches and assisted others in the formation period. He owns the third water right in the oldest ditch from the Platte river and is very proud of his success in bringing under a high state of cultivation a fine body of land in Lincoln county. He has some thirteen miles of apple trees now eleven or twelve years old which are just beginning to bear and which will soon yield a large income.

Mr. Park is perhaps one of the best posted officials in the history of the Union Pacific and has a fund of historical and interesting events in stock. One, which has never been in print, is as follows:

"In the earlier days of the Union Pacific the operation of trains was frequently interfered with by hostile bands of Sioux Indians, making it necessary to carry guns and ammunition in the cabooses, at stations and on the handcars of the section laborers.

"A treaty was made immediately after the close of the civil war, confining the white men to the country south of the North Platte river and the red men to that north, with the object of stopping interference by the aborigines. Notwithstanding the treaty, marauding parties of young Sioux bucks frequently invaded the white man's territory, committing various crimes, which consisted generally of a raid on some isolated ranch, the running away of stock, and, quite often, the killing of unwary travelers in the prairie schooner, which were at this time wending their way westward in great numbers.

Squaw Men and Operators

"The 'squaw men' among the Indians were the remnant of the French trappers, who had married Indian wives, remaining with the tribes when their fellows had drifted to the north in search of more lucrative fur fields. These 'squaw men' were the instigators of most of the serious depredations, the natives not having the ingenuity necessary to accomplish anything more conspicuous than murders or horse stealing. When the telegraph wire was discovered cut and fastened together with a buckskin string to stop the flow of electricity and at the same time puzzle the linemen, it was known that the 'squaw man,' or his progeny, the half-breed, was about.

"In the summer of 1865 the spikes were pulled from the rails several miles west of Plum Creek (now known as Lexington), the rails lifted on ties high enough to permit their ends to enter the cylinders of the engine and a most complete wrecking of a freight train was accomplished, the engineer and fireman were killed and the conductor scalped by the Indians. The train was plundered and then set on fire, the Indians riding around the conflagration with long strings of silk and other costly cloth streaming from their horses' tails. Shortly thereafter another train was wrecked near Old Alkali, thirty-five miles west of North Platte, but they were driven off before they had secured the coveted booty. By reason of these occurrences the dispatchers, agents, train and engine men were very much on the alert and extra precautions were taken to safeguard themselves and others.

"J. K. Painter, then chief dispatcher of the Lodge Pole division, was sitting at his desk in Cheyenne one morning when he heard the operator at Pine Bluffs frantically calling 'N' office. Painter went to the key and answered the operator, who informed him that a large band of Indians could be seen on the hills south of town and asked that help be sent immediately.

"A messenger was quickly dispatched to Fort D. A. Russell, an engine ordered and a special train gotten ready to transport the troops as soon as they reached the depot. After arranging these preliminaries, the chief dispatcher again called up Pine Bluffs. The operator informed him that the Indians were moving in the direction of the station, and a little later that they were riding in a detour around it, probably reconnoitering. The troops having arrived at Cheyenne, they were hurried aboard, and, the superintendent accompanying the train, it pulled out to the scene of the trouble, forty miles distant.

Rescue at Pine Bluffs

"The operator at Pine Bluffs began another frantic appeal for assistance, his sending was erratic and disconnected; for short intervals the key would be left open—almost indicating either great fear or intense excitement. At last his sending became somewhat more intelligible and Painter drew out of him that the Indians were within a short distance of the building, were becoming more bold, having probably satisfied themselves that they would meet with little or no resistance. The operator was quiet for a few minutes; then commenced sending rapidly: "They are on the depot platform! Some are looking in at door! They are coming in! My God!!"—then all was silent; the wire was dead, and despite the efforts of the excited office force, nothing could be done or suggested other than to await developments upon the arrival of the United States troops. In the meantime the operators along the line had given the "O. S." for the special at Hillsdale and Egbert, and they would soon reach the scene.

"Stopping a respectable distance from the depot, which, much to the surprise of the captain in command and the superintendent, had not been burned, the troops were disembarked and marched cautiously in its direction, prepared for an ambush, not understanding the unearthly quietness and absence of the usual scene attending such depredations. Reaching the platform, the superintendent and commanding officer walked along to the open door. Upon the floor, with his face upturned to the sunlight, which was streaming through a broken window pane, lay the poor operator dead—drunk."

Times have changed and it is now understood that drinking is not tolerated among the men who have anything to do with the handling of trains. "Bill" Park, as he is called by his hunting companions, is a great lover of the outdoor life and each year he takes his vacation either in hunting or fishing. Last year he fished for tarpons in the Gulf of Mexico, the year before he hunted bear in the mountains and this year is liable to be found looking for chicken on the prairies of Nebraska. Park is a powerfully built man, over six feet tall and a tireless hunter, just as he is in his everyday work. Mr. Park is a member of the Order of Elks, a Shriner and Knight Templar and a member of the Loyal Legion.

(Continued on Page Three.)