

Hal: About a fourth of the first side of this tape is taken up with small talk---"They ain't making autos the way there used to." etc. "My niece married a Russian fellow--very rich." It seems unlikely you would use any of this in the book, so I have chosen not to transcribe it. Fran

EC: Williston, N.D. had the largest lignite coal mine in the world. Now they've struck oil there--they had it on the news the other night.

HR: Didn't they convert or change the fire boxes on the GN engines to use lignite?

EC: Years ago they did. Long time ago. You know anything about lignite coal?

HR: well, we burned it up there in the camp I was in. It was smokey as the dickens and all fell apart.

EC: I've mined it.

HR: we used to pay \$1.50 a ton.

EC: Oh hell, I've sold many, many tons for 50¢ a ton. Where I lived there in North Dakota you could go out there to the Missouri River and that coal will crop out of the bank. When I was a snot-nosed kid, they had the mines about six miles from where we lived. You'd take a team of horses and you'd strip off 6-7 feet of dirt and then you'd have a foot of slack coal in big knots, and then you'd have 6 feet vein of coal and then you'd have a foot and a half bottom vein of coal. It comes in three sections. It was my job to go down and run the pump to pump the water out of the pit. The farmers all around in the summertime would come down and work out their coal money. We'd give them a dollar and a half a day for a man and team. They'd hook up the scrapers and plows and plow and scrape. Then in the fall of the year after harvest was done they'd come down and get their coal.

HR: Is the right word "scoria"? That's the clay on top of the lignite. The lignite might catch fire somehow by lightening and fire the clay up above it? Sort of a brick-colored stuff.

EC: That's right. Used to install it all the way from an inch to a foot thick on top of the roads. Have it on the Camus Prairie--but it's mouse-colored back there, practically white--yellowish white.

HR: What do you think about the way the RRs are running now?

EC: The damned RR. I just throw up my hands. I just don't know what the hell is going on. The whole country's going to hell anyway. That Bible says something about it. It doesn't bother me any at all.

HR: You liked working for the RR, didn't you?

368 EC: ~~Oh yeah, like yesterday, I told you, if I was working for you and you was paying me 25¢ a hour, I'd figure I ought to make you 10¢ a hour profit.~~ Yes, I enjoyed working for the RR. I worked there 47 years and I never missed a payday. They always knew where I was at and I was always there. I went to work the 9th of June 1920 and I was made asst foreman the 1st of July, 1921; and I was foreman Sept 1925. I went right up the ladder. I wasn't doing it by sitting on the fence with my thumb up my ass. ---

382 HR: Were you involved with construction or maintenance or what?

EC: Everything.

HR: (Looking at pictures of bridges). Well, some of these you built then, didn't you?

EC: Hell yes. Let me show you some pictures. We built that line from Orofino up to Headquarters in 1925-26.

45-47

EC: In 1933, around Christmastime, they had 3' snow and then they got a Chinook wind ^{and snow} and it just wiped that whole country out. Changed the creek channel when they rebuilt the line. Hell, we rebuilt and built several bridges. I was the youngest foreman and I had to work nights. They had the crack foreman working days. And they had this engineer who was always drunk, fucking and raising hell. This guy and I didn't get along worth a damn. He says when you need a cutoff, let me know. I said, I don't ever want to see you. I don't want you around me. I don't need your fucking cutoffs. And I'd do twice as much in the nighttime as they would in the daytime and that caused friction. On Easter Sunday we got in a hell of a row. Come noontime, the pile-driver was there ready to go. So I told the other guy to take his crew off for noontime meal. They was gone about two hours and in that time I drove 6 pilings in -- 65 feet long. Then they come back and me and my crew went to eat. We came back in two hours and they were putting the first piling in.

#400 on tape

HR: When you worked at night, what did you use for light?

Tape 438

EC: We had lights on the piledriver and then we had big gas lamps. I had a Delco light plant that generated juice -- 110 volts. Gas engines. Then I had a strong of lights, about a 100 feet long that had lights about every 30 feet. I had ~~x~~ them in my car, I keep that on a reel and just reel it out and stick it up on some poles and hell, it was as bright as daytime.

because I had a lot of night work

HR: Did you work on bridges on the Grangeville line?

Tape 450

EC: Oh yes. All of them.

HR: When did they put that new highway through up near Horseshoe Tunnel?

EC: In 53 or 54--somewhere in there. Because I was supervisor when it was put in.

HR: They had to build a new bridge for the RR, did they?

EC: They built two of them.

HR: How old are the trestles way up above? There are a couple right near each other with a cut between them. - above horseshoe tunnel.

EC: They was built about 1900.

HR: Well, they must have been replaced since then.

EC: Hell yes. There's quite a story with one of them there. Bluit is dead now. You can't say nothing about a dead man, but he wasn't too much of a man. He'd fuck anything that had hair on it. Fighting all the time.

HR: Where's Shanghai Divide?

EC: Its 7 miles the other side of Pierce, Idaho. It's not on the RR. Its about 12 miles from the RR.

(Both of you start looking at pictures now.)

Tape 520

HR: This is bridge #46? EC: Yep, just this side of Cottonwood. *

EC: This is Oxford, thats 14 miles from Pierce. This is the Oxford Ranger Station. We were surveying the road. This was taken east of Oxford. Surveying for a highway--not a railway. We packed in with horses and mules. There's one of the boss. Usually had somebody with him, but this day he didn't. He stooped over to get a drink and his gun fell out of his holster and shoot him in the belly. He fired shoots for help; then he wrote a note to his mother and then he shot himself in the head.

No photo.

31

EC shows another picture. This was taken in 1920. We had a big washout down here. Tied the road up for 31 days. 3 out handcars

7

* HR. you're a good looking guy.
EC. Damn right, I was a good lookin' guy.

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(8) (13)

EC: Here's an engine ^{went into the river} ~~here~~ about 2 miles east of Lawton. We was taking it out of the river.

(21) EC still showing pictures. Here's a weed burner. I had a model T Ford motor car. I borrowed a spray tank from my daddy in law; and we had 4 ^{pink cans with} barrels of water. And we'd go along after the weed burner to put out the fires. ^{sit the motor behind these pretty close,}

56 EC: This is Lawyers(?) Canyon bridge under construction in 1908. Up at Grangeville. That's the only damn picture of know of in the country of that bridge.

X1 EC: (More pictures) There's the Sweetwater depot; here's the highway bridge out of Riperian. This is right through that bridge 20-1. Here's the same one with a picture of the gang. That's me sitting right there. All them guys are dead now.

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his photo

use my photo

EC: That bridge at Ferdinand, that was the first steel bridge that was put in. The little one. When they put that steel in they had three bridge gangs--we was stepping on one another's feet. Then when we put this one in--this one was twice as big--and I had six men and had to put the bridge in with them!

41-42-43

EC: This is bridge 40, I think. ~~No, 39.~~ You go underneath bridge 40 this side of Ferdinand. On bridge 39, when you lift those timbers down you had to put a line over there to pull them timbers. ^{off the bridge.}

1-4-10-24

EC; This is Lawyers Canyon bridge and we're getting ready to renew the ties. Big steel bridge. Bridge 38, 1923.

EC: they sent me over to the NP & this is the wooden ^{Howe} house truss bridge. They were going to replace it with steel. So I took it down. I took it down in a day!

45-47

EC: Here's the 1933 washout. 14 miles above Orofino.

44-46

EC: This one is 5 miles above Orofino. This bridge washed out. It just washed that bridge out completely.

EC: Here are some pictures of rock slides. This happened this side of Reubens on Easter Sunday 1940. That big rock there, we had two crabs and a counterbalance.

29-35

(2)

(14)

EC: this is the station at Reubens and this is that bridge you were talking about awhile ago.

EC: This is a picture of the canyon up around New Craig. Named after a conductor named Craig.

52-

EC: This is that first bridge you go underneath after you leave cul de sac. This is the trial run in 1935.

28

EC: Here are some pictures of a washout. That's when the track was all under water. That's the big bridge at Camia, going across the river. During the spring thaw.

EC: This is bridge #6 I was telling you about. Here's guys excavating by hand--they'd fill up these barrels and then the crane would pick up the barrels and empty them.

25-30

EC: Here--a lady got up early in the morning. And just after a freight train went by she heard a sharp crack of lightening, and the hillside came down and raised particular hell. Nobody got hurt. The rocks were the size of monsters.

54

EC: That picture there --this is that 2nd bridge after you leave Culdesac. The other picture has got the train. Here you go through tunnel #1. You can see the rest of the train up here. That tunnel is 900 feet long.

(50)

* This is up above Pierce M.P. 2 & we was putting a couple of culverts in here.

(77)

Engineer went to sleep.

31 { EC: Did you get a picture of them hand cars?
HR: Yes.
EC: The date was 1920. The sun was behind the clouds for 21 minutes.
Tied the RR up for 31 days.

END

Hal: This was really frustrating to transcribe. If you need additional info about any of the pictures, we can listen to the tape together and I can type out anything of interest to you that I might have missed.

Fran

