

JIM SKEEVERS OBJECT LESSONS ON RAILROADING FOR RAILROADERS pdf

1: Full text of "Jim Skeevers' Object Lessons on Railroading for Railroaders"

Jim Skeevers' Object Lessons On Railroading for Railroaders John A. Hill American Machinist Press New York

Did you ever notice how things go by threes? Jim Skeevers went down to the roundhouse one night last summer, fell in a pit, and was carried home - that was three on Skeevers. While Jim was laid up the general officers of the Midland visited the shops. When the general manager is absent, Massey, the general master mechanic, always speaks in the first person - "I" did so-and-so, "I" made this change and "I" saved so much. It was an "I" day, and Massey showed up all the kinks devised by Skeevers and said "I" every time. The Midland people were impressed with the results, and, being progressive and not averse to "taking men away" if they could better their own service, the manager wrote Massey an offer of the position of superintendent of motive power of the Midland at better pay than he was getting where he was. Massey had no idea of going, but thought - short-sighted man - that the G. Wider congratulated him so hard and advised him so strongly to take it, saying that he and Skeevers would worry along somehow, that really Massey had no choice but to accept - that was three on Massey. It was also three on the Midland. He wrote a notice that the position of M. Then he wrote another that James Skeevers was appointed superintendent of M. Skinny was sitting in one chair on the porch, nursing his leg in another, reading. After the usual courtesies, the old man pulled out a copy of the notice and handed it to Skeevers, with much the same feeling that a man has when presenting a child with a new toy. Skeevers knew what the notice said well enough, but he read it through gravely, and, turning to the general manager, said: Wider, I thank you for the compliment paid me in this appointment, but before accepting it I want to talk with you about it a little; I have never said anything about wages before, but may I ask what your intentions are as to pay? The heads of this department do more work, take more responsibility, have to have a longer training and more experience than for any other job on the railroad, and - get less pay for it. He looked at Skeevers for ten seconds, and then said: These officials have a larger force of men under them than all other officers combined. They can save or waste more money than any other officers, and every one of them has introduced reforms within a year that save more than their wages, yet you think that they are well paid. Do you remember when we took him over the road and you tried to tell him how much we saved by some shop changes, and how he stopped you and what he said? Come to me with them. Your object lesson on pay is good enough, but I tell ye there must be some net to show for this - some object lessons. Wider; you come up to the shops next Saturday week, and I will show you one object lesson, if not two, that will help pay this extra; and, by the way, I should like very much to notify my master mechanics of their raise in pay - you to approve letter. In due course Skeevers notified his three master mechanics that "on account of faithful services and the intelligent use of their brains, they had shown themselves worth more to the company, and the company was pleased to notify them that hereafter their pay would be increased," etc. Skeevers had saved four men, counting Green, by the deal. That pleased the old man, for the pay-roll was the bane of his life, and the one thing that the "Sphinx" looked into and commented on - wanted to know where the net was. As Skeevers steered him toward the roundhouse they went through the boiler room. We built a framework in there of old bridge timbers and planked it over on an incline, and now all the coal dumped slides ahead to shoveling distance. At the sandhouse Skeevers pushed the door open and disclosed an old, crippled pensioner sitting before the drier. We elevate it by air and draw it into sand-boxes instead of putting it in by hand with buckets. All this man does is to keep up the fire and move a lever now and then. This belt of buckets fills the drier, and the dry sand runs to the pressure tank, from which it is elevated - saved the work of three men. I meant to get those sanders before you knew it from the saving here; but here we are; this is what I wanted to show you. For all that time, night and day, two men, and sometimes three, have been working at this cinder pit. When the pile got so big it was in the way, some cars were pushed into this side track over here, 20 feet away, then the cinders were shoveled up into them and hauled out into a siding. When there were ten loads the road department, after much telephoning, would consent to take them out where they wanted them and unload the

JIM SKEEVERS OBJECT LESSONS ON RAILROADING FOR RAILROADERS pdf

cars. Five to seven handlings, depending on the weather; for in winter the wet cinders froze in the pit, the pile and the cars. I dug this pit with the cinder-pit men and the laborers I saved in the sandhouse and boiler room. Those cast-iron posts on one side Massey had made for the purpose more than a year ago, feeling you would let him put in the pit. You refused, and he hid the castings. One man cleans the fires and hoes all the cinders into the cars as fast as taken out - no frozen cinder pit, no shoveling or piling up of ashes. When these two cars are filled, and we find they are filled in about three days - we take an engine and throw them out into that spur. Wider, it seems to me the object lesson lies in that fact. I would call your attention to your letters, showing that at five different times you have refused to fix this pit. Massey asked your approval of or your permission to do everything. His only idea of getting the pit fixed was to have trackmen dig the pit and lay the track, masons to build the wall and engineers to plan - I did the whole job with my own laborers. You have refused to build the pit, but never refused to let us do it ourselves. To ask advice calls for criticism, discussion, argument and delay. I am best fitted of your officials to say what we need in the way of a cinder pit; I knew you would refuse to spend money on it, and I have built it out of savings elsewhere; it has cost the company practically nothing. I propose to keep below that expense month by month, and make some needed changes without money outlay before winter sets in. I feel sure the best way is for me to go ahead on that line and not bother you with details. Of course, any change that costs extra money should go to you first; but about things like this, what do you say - the Lady or the Tiger? The only if you ought to care about is if the head of this department is capable of taking care of it.

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2: Sixty-nine Years of Useless Work on a Clinker Pit

Full text of "Jim Skeevers' Object Lessons on Railroading for Railroaders" See other formats.

Jim Skeevers had been general foreman of the main shops just one month to a day when the general manager came up to see what was going on. Skeevers and the G. I had not been in the shop two days before I had figured out ten changes in the shop, marked two or three drones for dismissal, spotted two apprentices for promotion, and contemplated changes that would cost the company some thousands of dollars. I had it all down pat, made up my mind - and dropped it all in 15 minutes. I made up my mind then and there to go slow. In the first place, the road is not earning anything above operating expenses and fixed charges; there is no business to make from; if it comes out ahead it must save the amount - I am going to try to save something. Look around, study conditions, cause and effect, and perhaps you will find a reason why some things are different than you would advise or expect. A fairly well organized place will run itself for a while; you simply get aboard and ride, but keep your eyes open. Never make a reform or change except for economy, safety or increased efficiency - never for the mere sake of change. That made me drop several things I had in mind. He is off three days after every pay day on a drunk; he is lazy and slow and quarrelsome - spends more time in nagging apprentices than in doing work. But I found out that he is the only man in the place that can set valves. Slocum and he came from the same shop; they believed in keeping trade secrets, and out of nearly a hundred machinists, mostly made here, not one can set valves, or at least none have had experience. I was for moving the fire pit, but found out that it affected our insurance rate - that old wooden car shop is so near. What is it, anyway? I want to know which is best. You are like all other managers. You and the directors look at the pay-roll when you want to cut down. There, now, you see we are in the center of the shop and 6 feet above the floor. You can see every tool. Now, look down that double line of lathes - how many are idle? The others are idle because the men have gone to the blacksmith shop to get their tools dressed, or are at the stone grinding them. They are willing to keep their tools going, but there is no other way now than the way they do. Some of the old-timers will cry for their pet clearance, or rake, or something; but when one and all do their work with standard shapes - all will that stay - I figure we could do a third more work. I want to get the row of cripples in the graveyard track reduced; but with 20 per cent. Let me know how the grinder goes. I almost forgot what I came up for. I heard he got thirty days. Economy - so called - made Jack try to keep inside his limit. His engine was new and snug, and the time fast. Allow me to observe, perhaps you never thought of it, but did it ever occur to you that it was impossible to use too much oil on a locomotive? All the oil you can use is better for the engine and more economical for the road; but oil on the outside is wasted money. Every bearing ought to be flooded with oil at some part of its movement. I started that oil-saving scheme myself. We did waste too much oil, and some of it needed saving; but the road would have been money in pocket if there had never been any row made about it. A little quiet work by a live traveling engineer would have cut down the waste - for, as I said, the more you use the better. I was looking the matter up last night. Our performance sheet - awful lot of guessing, by the way - shows that of the three men on the flyer, Barney Conners is the slickest man on oil, then comes Murray, then Sandy Macdonald. If he is blameless, he deserves his full pay; if not to blame, let him stay off his thirty days.

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3: CHECK OUT AMERICAN PICKERS TV SHOW | O Gauge Railroading On Line Forum

Get this from a library! Jim Skeevers' object lessons on railroading for railroaders. [John A Hill].

Box of wagon labels One hundred and twenty photographs, all regions. Handbook for Steam Locomotive Enginemen. Pair of LMS coach lamps in working order. Ninety five Coronation Class photographs, some vintage postcards. Road Marshall chrome on brass road roller. Box of photographs of diesels, stations etc. One hundred black and white photographs. Sixty five large photographs, steam, diesel, some excellent shots of diesels and warships etc. Album of black and white diesel photographs. Ninety six black and white postcard size steam railway photographs. Box of black and white photographs. Reproduction Southern Railway carriage print "Isle of Wight". Carriage print "River Wharfe, Ilkley". Wagon plate - E 21 Tons NER light luncheon box. NER "Catch Points" board. Thirty four Cundalls catalogues. Thirteen auction catalogues, enamel signs and quantity of advertising, all items illustrated, excellent reference books. Signed print "Exchange Station, Bradford" by Stuart Walton together with another signed and number print by the same artist. BR Passenger Network quad royal map Four mounted "Oxo" posters. Four railway posters including "Collectors Corner". LMS sepia carriage panel "Killarney". Two London Underground posters. Wooden sign advertising "Tootsie Rolls. Delicious Chewy Candy", an enamel "Hydrant" sign and a cast iron flare lamp. Bibby Line passenger list for S. S Oxfordshire and a Bibby Line postcard of the ship. Quantity of posters and photographs. Four "Oxo" promotional model cars. Lithographed tin plate "Cherry Blossom Shoe Polish" advertising sign. Platform lamp marked "Goathland" and a cast iron bracket. Two tail lamps with bullseye lenses one in original condition. Cravens Railway builders plate and a bag of small cast iron cant number plates. Box of sundry lamps and parts. Piecrust-top handlamp with brass plate "NER". Piecrust-top handlamp with wire handle and brass plate "NER". Two square lamps with bullseye lenses. LNER "Kesick" china plate and a glass funnel. LMS handlamp painted in maroon and cream. Red painted bullseye tail lamp. Two road signs "York Lane: Ken Broadbent framed clock parts collage " Tank Loco". Three Inter Repair plates: LMS 20 Ton Registration plate: Display case, ideal for model loco, 39" x 11" x 9". Royal Mail First Day cover - Trains , a set of postcards, mint stamps, loco details ready for your address. Signal repeater "Arm and Slot On". Coach plate - Pressed Steel Lot No Barrow plate - M Handlamp, square general purpose with pie crust top to chimney. LNWR cast iron Trespass sign, restored. MR cast iron bridge restriction notice, restored. BR leather drivers bag. Signal box diagram "Ardsley South Box" Signal box diagram "Farnley Jcn" Four Model Rail construction kits, a box of assorted model railway items and a box of 20 motors. Box of assorted postcards and a Flying Scotsman Certificate, two locomotive paintings and a set of locomotive table mats. Old glass paperweight "York Minster". Old glass paperweight "Bootham Bar". Medallion "Wear Valley Extension Railway" on a silver watch chain. Tyers No 6 fibre tablet "Silksworth Junction 8" - Sunderland line, home to some of the last workings of steam. Large enamel NER viaduct arch number "2". Cow bell style with tapper removed by BR. NER pyramid platform lamp vessel ex Co. Durham, stamped LNER on burner. The rack is shaped to look like fishbelly rail. Box of toy cars including Corgi etc. Collection of Dinky toys, Military boxed: Collection of unboxed Dinky toys - 5. Cast iron sign "Shut This Gate". Box of aircraft books including Spitfire, Lancaster, Vulcan, Mosquito etc. Box of Ian Allan railway books including: Gouache on canvas "Newton Heath" by Bernard Jones - study of one of the last remaining BR steam sheds in the North West in the mid s with locos and being prepared for the days work. Bernard Jones is a member of the Guild of Railway Artists and has been painting railway scenes since Framed 30" x 20", nicely balanced picture in very good condition. Early signal box telephone - wood "New Phonophore" dates from s with trumpet separate phonophore sounder, phonophore speak in carbon granule transmitter and hand held early straight sided separate ear piece. This early telephone is mounted on original one piece backboard. Telephone is complete and stamped "NER Co". Early porcelain large mug with early train from - 50s shows early loco carriages in coloured sepia view, ornate pattern marked on base Railway. Wooden cased railway telephone. Quantity of

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various items of railway paperwork and documents. Full title cast iron Great Central Railway trespass notice. Cast iron NER bridge plate No British Railways cast iron bridge plate No Easingwold and Alne unused Season Ticket, in very good condition. Collection of diesel locomotive drivers manuals. LNER large brass paper holder. Pair of "The Blue Train" antimacassars. Silver plated "Pullman" milk tot. Silver plated "Pullman" small coffee pot. China "Pullman" sugar bowl by Dunn Bennet. Pair of original Concorde aircraft butter pats. Collection of 7 LNER share certificates, different. Large collection of GNER table ware. Small teaspoon, marked "Pullman". Large wallet containing 48 railway tickets. Box of miscellaneous railwayana.

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4: Skeevers Runs Up Against a New General Manager

A collection of humorous short stories published first as articles in the periodical Locomotive Engineering, then collected in book form and copyrighted in.

Even towns of modest size—for example, wayside Red Cloud—might have at least one eastbound and one westbound trunk-line stop each day. Yet the fact that trains are casually omnipresent, as routine as windows, walls, and doors are to rooms, does not make them non-essential. They are not there for the herpetologist and the ironmonger. They are bursts of literary light on the ordinary topography of the narrative, wholly teachable moments most of us theme-writing drudges can grasp. The new American second nature, according to Cather, is less about the use and ownership of the land than it is about movement across the landscape. In , during the Columbian Exposition, the American Historical Association heard from Frederick Jackson Turner that the essence of the American story was in the union of the ideas of wilderness and westward settlement. Chicago was the city through which the mineral, agricultural, and human wealth of the West moved in direction of the industrial, financial, and cultural centers of the East. In material terms, Chicago was originally dependent on its geographical relationship to waterways—lakes and rivers, later the canal—and it continued to thrive when as a major rail center it became a twentieth-century metropolis. Nineteenth-century Chicago, in other words, was a city of profound adaptations to environment and events. For example, at midcentury it was a dank and sprawling shantytown of wooden structures, but after the fire in Chicago rebuilt as a city of stone and steel; architects vied to endow the ambitious capital of the heartland with unique and ever more imposing buildings. Cronon argues that the rise of the rail network of which Chicago was a hub is more than a merely economic narrative. In fact, trains made the Midwest inhabitable for the new settler population; they were means of moving safely in the cold of winter and the heat of summer, and of moving at all in the muds of spring. Within a generation of the Civil War, settlement and social patterns in the upper Midwest depended entirely on the railroads. Cather, I believe, had an entire and intuitive grasp of this transformation, as the railroad became a ubiquitous and unobtrusive trope for narrative effects as varied as transfer, estrangement, correspondence, serendipity, and fate in her works, up to and including *Death Comes for the Archbishop* and, arguably, *Lucy Gayheart*. Or, to embellish my analogy, as tracks are laid and trains move over them, so moves the mythos. Moreover, the historical context for trains is as complex as the already rich narratives of migration. The limits of her life also correspond to the age of rail. Cather was born four years after the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, and by the time she died the railroads were already beginning to wane, giving way to highways, and even air travel was becoming commonplace in the late s. What comparable freight or passengers might not a train carry? A peripatetic midwesterner with cosmopolitan ambitions, Cather traveled much and her letters often refer to train travel, which almost invariably includes a change of trains—with its challenges to comfort and tranquillity—in Chicago. As early as , only a few hours after arriving in sooty Pittsburgh, she writes to Mariel Gere about how she began to feel happy once her train was east of Chicago and she saw hills, streams, and trees Jewell and Stout Later in life, when established as editor and novelist, Cather traveled more. Letters ran ahead of her travels, as when, for example, in summer of she wrote to Charles Cather from the Brown Hotel in Denver to ask that a deposit check be sent ahead to the La Salle Hotel in Chicago, adding that her night on the train was pleasantly cool Jewell and Stout These are details of a sort that anyone traveling in that day might have reported. Indeed, when Cather traveled to Red Cloud or points further west, invariably she would have traveled by the Pennsylvania Railroad or New York Central to Chicago and there changed to the Burlington through Nebraska or the Santa Fe to the southwest. For example, on 9 June she wrote to brother Roscoe to say she soon was leaving Chicago on the Burlington no. After the change in Chicago, travel was slower, grimmer, noisier, smellier, and—for the storyteller—more portentous. From the moment of her earliest stories, Cather was able to exploit the metaphoric resonances of the railroads. Windermere, with his Wildean name when the story appears in *The Troll Garden*, he is

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less-obtrusively named Everett, is the spitting image of his brother, Adriance, a celebrated pianist whose student and paramour, Katharine Gaylord, is dying. When the story opens she can still ride in a phaeton about the high plains, or else she would not have seen Windermere, whose resemblance to his brother readers have already learned. Katharine otherwise lives sequestered in a music room packed with memories of a brief and brilliant European career. Taken to Katharine by her brother, compassionate Windermere lengthens his stay while she declines. Adriance is a genius, however; Windermere is, by contrast, merely moral. In this respect, Katharine Gaylord is surely a predecessor to Thea Kronborg, whose talent is comparable and whose self-reliance and luck are far greater. She is also a predecessor to Lucy Gayheart, whose last name is remarkably similar and whose inability to get to New York, much less establish herself in Europe, proves fatal. Similarly, Windermere, in his capacity for self-effacement and in his life as an itinerant witness who gets off the train where the story happens to be, prefigures the more developed Jim Burden. The train emerges within a natural horizon on which the human hold is fragile, requiring constant grip to prevent the shifting ground from obliterating all effort: Perhaps this is landscape as disease pathology. One could be tempted to conclude that the moral is that Katharine Gaylord, whose tuberculosis delivers her to the desert, finds that nature first coats, then desiccates, and finally obliterates her talent and her passion. This grotesque embodiment of insatiable appetite believes Windermere to be his brother, the second crucial misidentification of the story. In other words, this chance arrest at rail-side in Wyoming only seems to be about nature and chance; more deeply, and pessimistically, it is about human inability to travel beyond the reach of the necessity imposed on us by our character and circumstances. The trains that can carry the body do not, tragically, carry one back to youth or into gentler and more prosperous lives. Indeed, at moments the train is radically destructive. Could not a train deliver one to a richer story, if not to a more optimistic one? In what appears to be a unique instance, Cather does not allude to the direction the train is moving when they meet. Is the conversation thickened by recently refreshed memories and does the change to a more comfortable express in Chicago await? Or have they already shifted to slower and rougher track, are they trying to contain their dismay at the approach Black Hawk by imagining a story larger and more compelling than the ordinary and cramped existence they may soon need to endure? The reader can only guess. Months later Burden comes east with a manuscript. Presumably that anonymous author is a woman as she was explicitly in early edition, herself a native of Black Hawk, and a rail traveler as well. Yet she writes nothing. Nothing that reductiveâ€”nothing that binaryâ€”is at work. He grasps who she was and who she has become, comprehends her essential virtuousness, and, and in spite of differences of gender and class, renders her in a prose adequate to the task of carrying her story intact from Webster County to New York City. By contrast, in most other Cather narratives, eastbound trains tend to exhaust, corrupt, vitiate, or even annihilate the traveler, making Thea Kronborg in *The Song of the Lark* or Cather herself stark exceptions to the rule. The westbound journey is usually more promising. For Jim Burden, the orphan, the journey is a rich, if anxious, adventure: I had been sleeping, curled up in a red plush seat, for a long while when we reached Black Hawk. Jake roused me and took me by the hand. We stumbled down from the train to a wooden siding, where men were running about with lanterns. The engine was panting heavily after its long run. In the red glow from the firebox, a group of people stood huddled together on the platform, encumbered by bundles and boxes. I knew this must be the immigrant family the conductor had told us about. The woman wore a fringed shawl tied over her head, and she carried a little tin trunk in her arms, hugging it as if it were a baby. For an instant, the surrounding darkness is complete; the light is red and creates deep shadows. Later, the image of the black plow against the red horizon will demonstrate the completion of their arrival in the new country. Young, an orphan, coming to the still place at the end of a long, jolting journey, he experiences a complete sense of tranquillity that comes from his sense of effacement. By contrast, *A Lost Lady* tends to suggest that Cather understood the closing of the prairie, its domestication and degradation, as one and the same with the growth of the railroads, or a process the traces of which lie adjacent to the rails. As a result of the growth of the railroad, the character of rural life begins to change. To the locals, however, especially the youths for whom Mrs. Forrester is nearly a

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paragon, the house represents a magnificence and intimacy the interior of which they long to inhabit. Ironically, as life becomes more limited in Sweet Water, the Forresters actually spend more time there. The Captain putters and the lady of the house entertains locals; it would appear that the plains were destined to impose their slow regularity of life upon the fancy house and its owners. He is meanness personified, and he looks like a lizard: He plans for such vileness. The trains bring his tools to him. The bird struggles as the other boys watch, appalled: Presently it managed to get its feet on the same limb where it had been struck, and seemed to recognize that perch. Niel tries to go up to put it out of its misery, but he falls and hurts himself. For the rest of the novel his efforts to intervene in the corruption of Sweet Water are comparably futile. When in the arc of the novel Ivy Peters supplants the Captain, the once virile builder of railroads who went flabby and died, Niel Herbert reckons the end of the transformation of the pioneer prairie. The modern world has settled in. Meanness, once an emotional hazard of hanging on when the prairie was newly settled, becomes now that the railroad is an ordinary fixture of life a permanent quality that defines people who get what they want. The blinded female bird that first links Ivy Peters to Mrs. Forrester is one of many clear examples of his point. As tropes, trains provide similar density but are scarcely occluded; rather, they represent a differently lucid vehicle for Cather, for trains tend to represent the acceleration of the actual. They may redirect or re-pace the story. Tellingly, most of these trains begin or end in Chicago. Making a transfer in Chicago, an unavoidable hassle one hopes to survive, tests the traveler, who must muster much stoicism, or have a dear and accommodating friend like Irene Miner Weisz. Chicago is the site of crucial symbolic transferences. Thea has talent, voice, and a native shrewdness and pragmatism that keep her unsentimentally focused on her goal. For her, Chicago is hornbook and preparation. This is the Chicago of Louis Marcellus nouveau riche and nouveau gout; crass, vigorous, and often inanely eclectic, like the big Spanish-Norwegian house named Outland. Cather makes the metaphor of the city darkest for Godfrey St. Peter, her one character who actually settles nearby, though given his attitude toward his increasingly vulgar university it might be appropriate to say he misses his train and gets stuck there. In this respect, the geography of Hamilton is especially interesting. Somewhere on Lake Michigan, well south of Milwaukee and a bit north of Chicago, Hamilton is home to a burgeoning and crass state university; it connects to the rest of the country and world by rail. Finally, Chicago is the nearby metropolis where in a fictionalized Blackstone Hotel the Professor looks out over Lake Michigan and gloomily recognizes the materialism of one daughter and the bitterness of the other. The city, in other words, is not merely a large industrial, commercial, and cultural center; it is also a metaphor for an exsanguinating new nature that the Professor cannot resist and which worsens his nostalgia and melancholy. Even in Hamilton, at the far margins of the metropolis, he must go to the top of his house and stare toward the distant horizons to get a sense of where he is from or where he would prefer to be.

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5: Buford, Georgia - Wikipedia

Title / Author Type Language Date / Edition Publication; 1. Jim Skeevers' object lessons on railroading for railroaders: 1.

Stories from Trackage Sometimes, memories without cameras to help preserve them are the most vivid of all. In an earlier post I discussed memories and nostalgia as it relates to our leisure pastimes. Maybe this will inspire you to dust off your own recollections and relive some of those magic moments of your own.

Sledding and Surprises It was the winter of and I was a senior in high school. I had a good friend, Curt, and the two of us were oddly obsessed with snow and sledding on it. One Saturday morning we decided to load up his VW and go west until we found something white to slide on. Not our first such attempt; on a previous occasion we had gotten clear up into the Indian Peaks wilderness west of Boulder in a vain attempt to find snow. Now, a couple of months later, we reckoned that we had a better shot at it. I guided the expedition to a place west of Rollinsville, in the upper reaches of South Boulder Canyon. We followed the snowy gravel road through the steadily-falling snow past Tolland and pulled over just east of a railroad overpass. We were just a couple miles east of the tunnel and it was a good hillside for sledding. This was no mean task considering the deep and drifting snow, the cold air, and the elevation right at 9,000 feet. A rolled-up piece of stiff plastic with a hole for a handle in one end, suitable for getting oneself intimately acquainted with the ground, and getting killed during the introductions. They were almost large enough to hold a fourth-grader, or to cover everything between my collarbone and my knees, if I were careful. Anyway, the snow was falling in huge flakes and we were completely covered in it. The day was dim due to the thickness of the clouds and density of the snowfall. And yet, not long after our arrival, I was able to plainly hear the muffled call of train horns down the valley to the east. The tracks here follow a sweeping S curve that brings them from the south to the north side of the broad valley, climbing all the while to reach the upper bench where the tunnel is located. Much of that climb is hidden back in the trees, so when the headlights finally shone through the snowflakes I was amazed to see that the train was led by an F unit. A string of F units! In beautiful golden orange paint. I can see the scene now, some forty years later, like a movie playing in my head. Mixed in with the power was something that looked like a steam locomotive tender. I stood dumbfounded at this relic from the past, and recorded the scene in memory as it clattered around the curve towards Moffat and was lost from sight. Later I learned that this was the Ski Train; the F units were the F9 trio normally assigned to the Rio Grande Zephyr; that the strange car shaped like a tender was in fact a steam generator car. This is why the F units were on the Ski Train that day.

Nocturnes When we were newlyweds in Boulder, night-time drives in the mountains were often a thing. Not infrequently these would put us in the proximity of railroad tracks. This is hard to believe of me, I know, but nonetheless true. Two such excursions come to my mind, brief little episodes that I still see in my memory. One such evening, guessing early, we drove up above Boulder and onto the Gross Dam road. Shockingly considering my luck most of the time, we soon heard a westbound train approaching in the darkness. Even more shockingly, I remember most of the details. It had several locomotives up front, 38 piggyback flatcars, and a helper shoving on the rear. A lot of power for not much train, I remember thinking. Too dark to see much of anything, but the scene conveyed the message that the business and drama of railroading goes on continuously, even in dark, remote places. Another meeting was more deliberately designed. This is definitely early, probably February. South cheek of the mouth? Right canine tooth of the mouth? Sorry, I got lost in the mixed metaphors. Same location, same locomotive, different train, different time and date. OK, back to Blue Mountain road. From there you can watch trains descending from Tunnel One and loop around the canyon mouth until they pass you and round the corner towards Clay siding. We parked on the south side of the track and watched the show. Finally the train passed close by with headlights on, Mars light flashing, and white class lights illuminated on F9 No. Why the class lights were on I do not know, but I swear they were. Maybe just to get more illumination on the front of the train? Within a couple of months the Rio Grande Zephyr was no more. Though we lived in Boulder, we had won some contest on a radio station for free ice cream cones

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down in Westminster at a shop I no longer remember. As dead broke as we were, any chance for something to do was welcome. By now we were driving an incredibly unreliable Renault R This car is worthy of a blog post of its ownâ€” the adventures we had in that vehicle when it broke down at the most inconvenient times would fill a book. Well, this night Kato was operating within parameters and we collected our free ice cream cones without incident. The night was young so I decided to go visit North Yard. I drove right up onto the gravel road along the west side of the yard and we just watched and listened to the activity for a while. The sun was down but the yard was brightly lit by the floodlight towers; the steady throb of diesels and the rattle and pop of yard activity formed a constant background of sounds. As we sat there, we noticed a caboose rolling along to the north, all by its lonesome the switcher must have kicked it down the track. This looks interesting, we thought, so I began pacing it next to the tracks. The caboose was perhaps a dozen tracks from our side of the yard, not terribly close to us; the yard was fairly clear of cars and obstructions that night. I mean, it was really moving when it reached its train. Now, I realize that rolling stock is pretty durable and all that, but this seemed a bitâ€” sloppyâ€” on the part of the switch crew. Business Train at Coal Creek Have you ever made a decision that later had you asking yourself, What the heck was I thinking? April â€” We were visiting family in Boulder again. We went up to Coal Creek as usual, parked and walked up near Tunnel One. I stood there dumbfounded and watched a pair of GPseries locomotives lead a train consisting of three gold-painted streamlined passenger cars. A vista dome, a flattop car [I now know it was a diner], and a very familiar-looking observation car. And there I stood, thirty feet from trackside, watching this priceless photo-op roll past me, with no freaking camera! Thanks for rubbing in the salt, Cuz. Yeah, sure, I saw this trio many times on the Ski Train in subsequent years. But not like this. I learned my lesson about taking a camera with me, after that. The rails were very, very quiet that day. A brief vignette, this. Being adjacent to the Joint Line, one would expect that there would be constant trains going by, but that was not the case. I haunted the tracks for a half hour one day when I had some free time, with no success. Then, the final morning of our stay, I happened to hear the rumble of approaching diesels, and ran for the car where I thought the camera was. Turned out I had left it in the room on the second floor. I knew I did not have time to retrieve it before the train arrived from the south, so I simply ran across the street and watched the train. Nine were Southern Pacific and mostly pretty tattered-looking. I noted their numbers: The SP units were far too numerous and frankly not interesting enough for me to note all their numbers or even their types, other than being pretty much all EMD products. The Rio Grande being my first railroad love, I paid more attention to these two. After this time those two units spent most of their time around Helper, Utah, where I managed to photograph the in November , five years later. Such camera-less moments happen rarely these days. Back when incomes were less and film was a real cost to consider, it was far more likely for one to get caught short. As it is, I am hoping that I actually remember all these stories aright.

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6: Meet the Other Jim Loomis. | TRAINS & TRAVEL WITH JIM LOOMIS

Jim Skeevers' object lessons on railroading for railroaders / By John Alexander Hill. Abstract. Mode of access: Internet Topics: Railroad.

Well, Skeevers has had trouble since then. The first-off everything went well. Skeevers captured all the staybolt taps on the system, and sent the new ones in their places. All the bolts were made at headquarters, and the subject seemed settled, and settled right. But one morning last winter an engine came out of the house draped in black and white. Soberly, solemnly, slowly, silently it took its place on the turntable, and as slowly and silently moved down the yard. Another and another draped in the same way crept out into the daylight and the cold and moved away. The Old Man had been promoted. The genial, bluff, honest old general manager had had a tussle with pneumonia and been defeated. Like many another man, he was a martyr to his inherent desire to lead. He went out with a snow-bucking brigade and met the enemy. For, mind you, corporations wear no crape, mourn no dead, nor do they miss anyone very much. In due time a new general manager came on from the East. He made a great many people connected with the G. Being authorized to put M. The first day he came to the shop he shook hands with Skeevers warmly, said he always liked to meet a mechanic, was a mechanic himself, graduate from Slightem, and asked Skeevers what "tech. Skeevers pointed to a long freight train that was toiling up the grade just beyond the shops and the long line of narrowing ribbons of steel that stretched away toward Granger and the setting sun, and remarked, laconically, "That. This made Skeevers itchy; if Mr. Wider had been there he would have demanded his engine back, but Skeevers was past that now; he must remain superintendent of motive power or nothing. One day, six weeks ago, Mr. He was hunting for something to order changed. They had got through the blacksmith shop, and the new G. Skeevers, but this is all based on a theory that is radically wrong. How dare a man do it? Once rid of his visitor, Skeevers went right back to the smith shop, he sorted out several pieces of staybolt iron himself, marked them, had each one heated as he wanted it and headed them up in the machine. He carried them himself to a planer hand and had them carefully planed half in two and polished, then he took them to old Jimmy Simpson in the tool-room and went to his office. Topping was anxious to see Skeevers. The fact that Skeevers, his master mechanic, was liable to write a book on metalology seemed to impress him, and, truth to tell, he hardly knew whether Skeevers was about to make a fool of himself or be admitted to the circle of immortals who write technical books, but he leaned strongly to the fool theory. Skeevers unrolled his samples of staybolts and, with a twinkle in his eye, said: I must confess I could not answer you then, for I did not know. But, sir, this is an important matter, one on which my reputation and yours, the reputation of the company and the possibility of its losing lots of money on a misjudgment depends. Skeevers, but" - "This," said Skeevers, interrupting "will, I think, settle that question. These experiments cover all the irons we can use and all the ways we can upset it; now, you be the judge. This specimen, numbered 1, both on the bolt itself, and this print taken from the face, was etched on a bolt of Taylor staybolt iron upset with one blow at white heat - our regular practice. But Skeevers is a tactful man, and he was beginning to understand the weak places in the G. Wider could; he would never pat Skeevers on the back or brag on him if he ran the engines ten miles on a pound of coal. Skeevers aimed lower, and before his opponent could fire a shot. Dix, superintendent of the Mathematical Bridge Works, in the car coming down this morning, and asked him if they used upset threaded ends for truss rods, etc. Dix is a graduate of the Slightem Polytechnic - the G. It is a good thing, and as nearly perfect as anything I have found here. Queer chap, is Skeevers. When Skeevers sat down at his desk the first thing that met his eye was a letter from Owens, at Granger, saying they were in trouble about staybolts for the "" After some preliminaries, he wrote: Evidently the test plate with hole tapped by standard tap is worn by constantly screwing bolts into it, and has allowed the operator to let his dies wear large - what shall we do? Before Skeevers could go to Granger he was called East by a death in the family, and while in New England made up his mind to see a few men and a few shops he had long wanted to visit. It so turned out that within a week from the time the G. We

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struck a snag the day before I left. This male plug is hardened and ground twelve threads to the inch, United States standard, and gets no wear, for it is only used to test the size of the adjustable female gage. This is only used after the error is enough to notice; and a new tap is asked for at once. If your man at Granger had one of these he could have gone right along, corrected his work, kept to standard, and only bothered you for a new tap. All the staybolt business from A to Izzard had to be explained to him - he never heard of Skeevers - he never reads. Your company sells coal and lets you waste money on your engines. We have to watch every cent, have to spend money for these tools to save money in the work and repairs. Second, we save money. We save more than half their cost by cutting them all at one place especially fitted up for it. Skeevers stopped talking and lit a cigar - the old man was asleep.

7: Eastern Shore Herald, December 3, | The Countryside Transformed:

Jim Skeevers' object lessons on railroading for railroaders / By John Alexander Hill. Abstract. Mode of access: Internet. 1 Topics: Railroad repair shops.

8: WCA: Volume 9: Willa Cather and Modern Cultures

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9: The New York Susquehanna & Western Technical & Historical Society Inc. - Reflector Library

Jim Skeevers had been general foreman of the main shops just one month to a day when the general manager came up to see what was going on. He is quite interested in Skeevers' way of doing things.

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