

Culture

Railroaders by virtue of long and irregular hours, time spent away from home and other demands of their employment have, through no fault of their own, missed out on some of the finer and enriching experiences in life. One objective of this web site is to try and fill this void. We launch this non-government funded educational effort with Poetry from the Eastern Iowa Division. Read carefully and study well for there is a message here – especially for operating employees. There may even be a test!

Beckwith and the “Breeze”

They were ordered out of Boone and there were no stars in sight. The thermometer stood at 10 below. It was a terrible night.	He had no time to think of home, he had no time to sneeze. So he reached over quickly and widened on the breeze.
Beckwith got the waybills and with a gait somewhat slow, he started for the hind end a-wading through the snow.	And, then he waded back and at last he got the gate. The Streamliner roared by LaMoille just 14 minutes late.
McDevitt gave a highball then jumped into the shack, and leaned against the red-hot stove to warm his lazy back.	Beckwith looked out the window at the cold and drifting snow. Then, he peeked up at the air gauge and saw the hand was on the “O.”
Charles Speer opened up the throttle; you could hear that old hog moan. Faverty had her on the peg; they were headed straight for home.	He began to pace the way car and the air was black and blue. "When I lay my hands on ‘Rattlesnake,’ I will break him right in two!"
Duling came to for just a moment and he stuck out his bean, Saying: "You can widen on her, Charlie, the high one just went green."	Beckwith gathered up the outfit, took the hammer, wrench and jack, and twenty foot of log chain, and hung it on McDevitt's back.
They pulled out on the main line and Charlie Speer looked back, and saw the markers bobbing on the rear end of the hack.	After four hours of profanity a working in the snow, they got the train together and they were ready then to go.
They went down into Ames just as fast as they could spin, McDevitt on the platform knocking icicles off his chin.	They called McDevitt in the office and dressed him out for fair. Now, he says he’s loaded up on reaching for the air.
They came down into Lamoille just as fast as they could fly. They had to head in down there to let the Streamliner by.	It’s nice to be a Conductor and run those time freight trains. But, if you want to do it, brakeman, you had better get some brains.
The way car rolled in over the switch as fast as it could glide. McDevitt was on the platform, Conductor Beckwith was inside.	It is fine to be ambitious but some cold and snowy day, you may pull a stunt like this one and someone will stop your pay.
Now, McDevitt is pretty clever, he is just as smooth as glass.	So, if you like cookies in the pantry and you like pie and Switzer cheese,

He knew if he unloaded,
he would surely hit the grass.

you'd better take this fool's advice:
"Keep your darn hands off the breeze."

The Collaborators...

Conductor Dwight A. Beckwith – Brakemans date: 05/15/1906

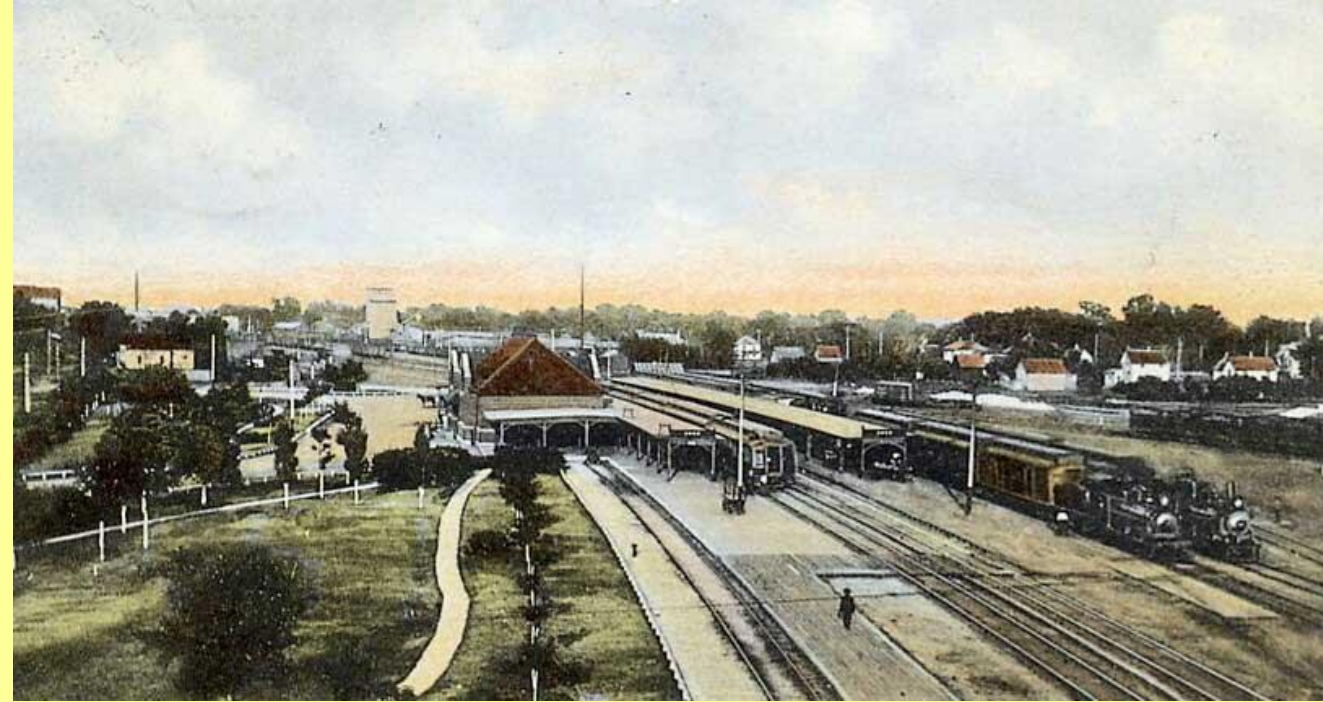
Brakeman Charles L. McDevitt – Brakemans date: 07/04/1914

Brakeman Fred W. Duling – Brakemans date: 07/10/1919

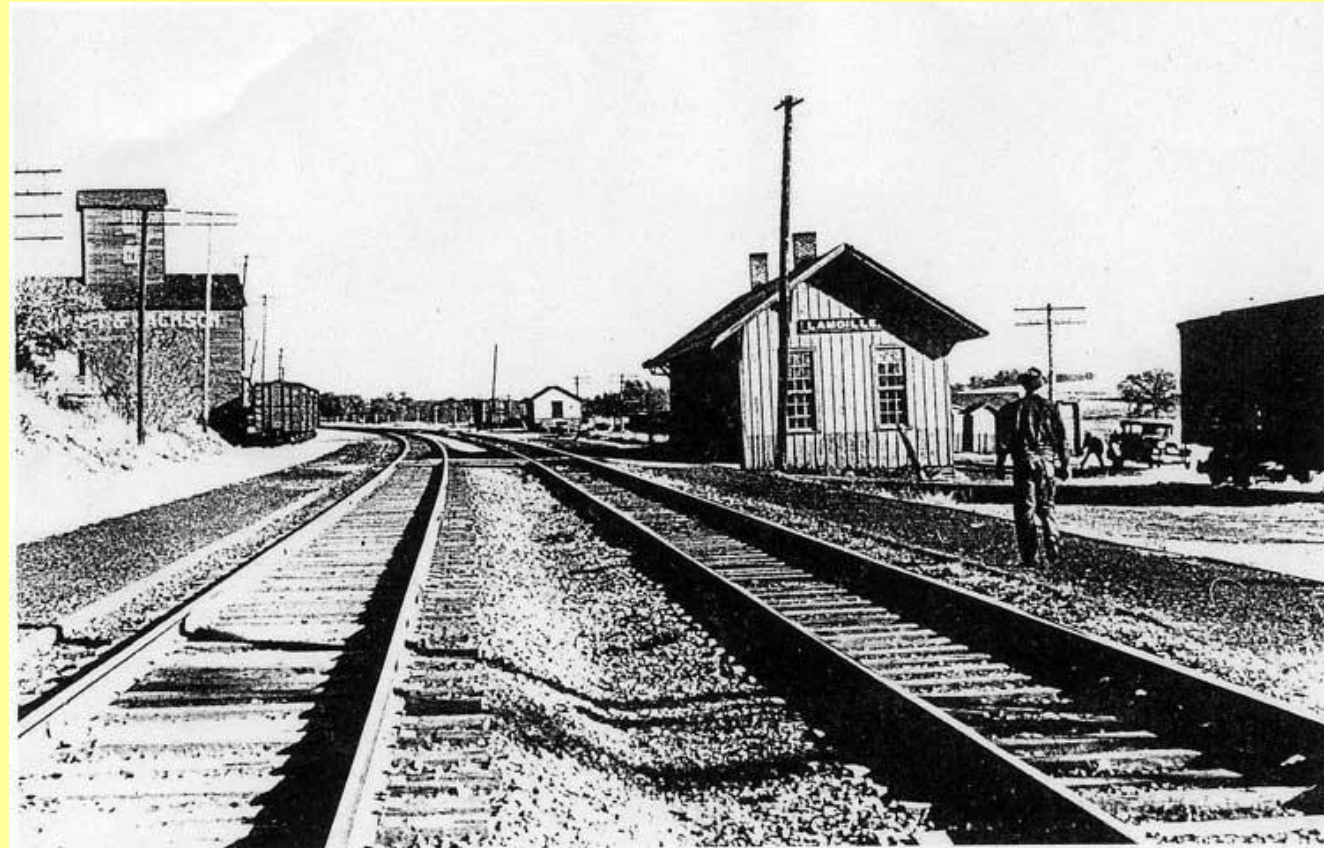
Engineer Charles B. Speer – Engineers date: 01/13/1909

Fireman Marion L. Faverty – Engineers date: 01/01/1918

...all of whom vouch for the accuracy and authenticity of the foregoing. Names have not been changed to protect the innocent.



“They went down into Ames just as fast as they could spin....”



Photograph provided courtesy of Merrill Price

“They came down into Lamoille just as fast as they could fly...”

Revised: 08/30/04