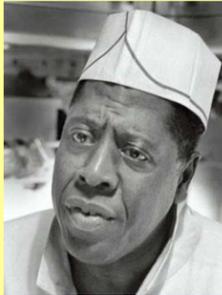




Life Members

Life membership in the Veterans' Association is awarded upon achieving 50 or more years of service. 50-year veterans were once relatively common. As recently as 1979, 77 members had 50 or more years of service. Today, we are down to just 2 - **Leland C. Cain**, better known as "**Sugar**" **Cain**, and **Eddie Yost**, both with 53 years of service. With earlier retirement and buy-outs, it is unlikely we will see anyone else attain 50 years of service.

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"**Sugar**" is well known to visitors to this web site. A full page about "**Sugar**" and his family can be found [here](#). Be sure and check it out if you haven't already seen it. Retiring on February 23, 1996 with 53 years of service, "**Sugar**" is still going strong! Here's part of "**Sugar**" story; the rest can be seen by clicking on the link on the line above.

"**Sugar**," started working for the C&NW as a 4th Cook during the summer school break when he was just 16. 4th Cook, in case you didn't know, meant Dishwasher. That was in 1941. His seniority date as a full time employee is 1/5/1943, shortly after which he volunteered for the army. Upon returning to the C&NW after the war, he was made 3rd Cook. Subsequently working up to 2nd Cook, 1st Cook, Chef and Head Chef, "**Sugar**" worked all the name trains of his era, his first assignment being on Nos. 87 and 88 – The Challenger. Later, he served on the Overland Limited, all four "City" trains, the Minneapolis 400, the Dakota 400, the Capitol 400, the Kate Shelly and the "Yellow Dogs." "Yellow Dog," actually a complimentary term, was the name the employees gave to the streamliners to and from Milwaukee because they were yellow, and because they made the trip so quickly.

"**Sugar**" was in the first dining car crew to work all the way through to Los Angeles on the City of Los Angeles under Chef **William U. Brown** and 1st Cook **McInerney**. "**Sugar**" explained that the Union Pacific would not let the C&NW crews work west of Omaha because the UP felt only their own people could measure up to Union Pacific standards. It took a vigorous protest by the union led by **Leland Cain, Sr.** to change that and immediately following, the North Western men were watched like hawks. The UP was looking for slip-ups. There weren't any!

Many high corporate executives – CEO's and Presidents – had their own private cars and "**Sugar**" worked them in their travels over the C&NW. He also worked numerous Business Trains for **Paul Feucht**, **Ben Heinemann**, **Larry Provo**, **Jim Wolfe**, **Joe Alsop** and **Jim Zito**. With changes in the industry over the years, private car owners were allowed to furnish their own help and "**Sugar**" received an offer to go to work for one of those private car owners. He thought about it, perhaps for about 2 minutes, and declined, saying the North Western was where he belonged.

After several years on the Kenosha Club Run and following the retirement of "**Big Al**" **Jenkins**, "**Sugar**" took over the bar car on the McHenry Club Run. At that time, he and **Warren Sims** (on the Harvard Club Run) were the last two bartenders on the North Western.

"**Sugar**" stayed on that McHenry job until he retired on February 23, 1996 with 53 years of C&NW service. "**Sugar**" told us the best advice he ever had was from his father who told him: "*When you get mad at the chef, and you will – sooner or later, just go out in the vestibule or in the washroom, quietly cuss him out, and then go back to work with a big smile on your face!*"

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Eddie Yost "hung it up" in August 2002 with 53 years of service as an engineer on the Wisconsin Division. **Eddie** was the last man on the Wisconsin Division Engineer's roster to have run steam engines and had the highest seniority of any engineer on the entire Union Pacific Railroad!

The August 22, 2002 Sun-Times had this to say about Ed. "*Hot Chicago nights in the days before air conditioning young Ed Yost would lie with his bedroom window open, listening to the faraway whistles of steam locomotives. He'd spend his 10 cents a week allowance taking the United Motor Coach bus from his Edison Park home to Des Plaines to spend the day watching freight trains go past. He'd sit near the Deval Tower that controlled comings and goings on tracks used by three rail lines: the Soo Line, the Milwaukee Road and the Chicago & North Western Railway. "That was my boyhood dream," to work the big steam locomotives, he said.*

Work them he did, until steam disappeared and he had to settle for running the diesel locomotives that took over on commuter, freight and passenger trains in and out of Chicago. Today his railroad pals will get together at the Chicago Passenger Terminal--the North Western Station to old-timers--for a farewell celebration marking his retirement. He spent 53 years with first the North Western and then the Union Pacific after the lines merged April 26, 1995. "Talk about romance of the rails," Yost said. " I used to love to just sit there and watch a train go by at night. When the fire doors opened up you'd see the flash of light in the sky and you'd know the fireman was putting coal in the fire."

His father didn't want him shoveling coal and said he should be a surveyor. But when Yost graduated from Taft High School in 1949, he took the streetcar downtown and asked for a job with the North Western. He really wanted to run freight trains for the Milwaukee Road, but he didn't have a car to get to Bensenville for an interview.

He started as a section hand repairing tracks and roadbed. After a year he moved over to engine service. He began as a fireman and worked for 18 years before he had enough seniority to become a full-time engineer. He'd barely started when he had to take two years out to serve in the Korean War. The suburban trains converted to diesel by 1956, through passenger and freight trains were also dieselized at that time.

Soon after he started as a fireman Yost began the three years of training needed to become an engineer. Then, besides working as a fireman, he went on the "extra board" and was called to fill in when more engineers were needed. In 1969 he became a full-time engineer. He pulled a lot of commuter duty but found the flat tracks and steady speeds boring. His favorite run was Chicago to Fond du Lac, Wis.

"Once you left Milwaukee there wasn't a straight or a level piece of track. It was uphill, downhill, around a curve to the left, to the right, and that made it more interesting," he said.

Yost pulled a lot of commuter trains, but he preferred freights drawn by steam locomotives. "You had a train about a mile long and sometimes two miles long. It was always different," he said. "I'd like to see them back. It was more challenging."

From Tom Kraemer comes another story about **Ed** from steam days. We can laugh at this one today, but I'll bet it sure wasn't humorous at the time!

Not long after hiring out, Ed was firing a steam powered Chicago - Madison job. Stopping at Harvard for water, Ed climbed up on the tender along with the head brakeman, opened the tank lid and proceeded to wrestle with the water spout to pull it into position over the tank. Problem was, it was frozen in place (along with just about everything else). The engineer was yelling at him to hurry up, so he and the brakeman pulled all the harder on

*the frozen spout. **Ed**, losing his grip and footing on the icy surface, slipped and fell down INTO the tender tank, which was about 1/2 full of near freezing water! The brakeman tried to grab him, but could not hold on as **Eddie** splashed into the hole. Now, on a winter night in Harvard, that's about the last place anybody would want to be!*

*With the aid of the brakeman, **Ed** was fished out of the tank. He immediately removed his soaked overcoat, climbed down into the locomotive cab and opened the firebox doors to try and warm up. The engineer, now fuming mad, had no concern over **Ed's** predicament, saying: "Whatta ya think you're doing? Swimming around in there when we've got work to do! You want to take a swim, at least wait till we get to Madison; then you can swim all you want!"*

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