2. From Newsboy to Roundhouse: Starting to Work

go, and the push car would come to a stop. When they were ready to quit for the day they would coast down the grade to the section house. Our entire family would ride the push car in this manner when we went to Eureka on Sundays.

One day Dad and his gang were riding into Eureka in this way behind the passenger train. Before reaching the depot there was a short spur that led off the mainline to Adam's Lumber Yard. For a distance of about fifteen or more car lengths the track was almost level. As the engine would be working real hard on the heavy grade, as soon as it hit this level spot the speed would pick up considerably. This morning when the speed attained its highest value the old push car stubbed its toe on the frog of that spur. There was quite a commotion before they could get the car stopped. Those gandy dancers were considerably shook up in the process. Fortunately no one was hurt.

This same place near Adam's Lumber Yard was the scene of a spectacular crash to which I happened to be a witness. The mine-run crew was switching out some cars at that place when a loaded box car got away from the depot area. It was sure rolling when it hit the cars attached to the mine-run engine! I just happened to be looking down that way at the time. When I saw that car clipping down the grade, I knew what was going to happen. The mine-run crew saw it coming and stood still to take the shock. When that loaded car hit, it was just like an explosion. It seemed to bounce into the air about forty feet, then settle down in a cloud of dust. It was a most spectacular sight!

While at Silver City Junction my folks were going deeper and deeper into debt at the Mammoth Mercantile. It took a lot of grub to feed that hungry section gang. Mother set a very good table, and the sixteen dollars a month that we charged each hand for board did not quite meet the bills that were coming in each month.

Mother and Dad wanted to be where we kids could go to school. So my dad was continually heckling the roadmaster for a change of assignment. Finally his efforts brought forth results—we were to be relocated to Cedar Fort.

The roadmaster had painted a glowing picture of how wonderful it was going to be at Cedar Fort—how much better it would be for all of us. He said the town was only a mile or so away from where we were to live; that there were little ranches all along the road to town; that we could always find someone to give us a ride to and from Cedar Fort. Consequently, we had high expectations when we stepped off the train at our new location.

What we saw was a town about two and a half miles away. The road to town was just a cow trail. The nice little ranches he spoke of were just

hay and grain fields scattered along the path. We were surely a disappointed family as we looked around at our new surroundings.

At the station there was a water tank, a pump house, and the section house where we were to live. This house stood very close to the track. A short board walk led from our front door to the end of the ties. Our front room also served as a waiting room for passengers expecting to catch the afternoon train for Salt Lake. There was also a tool and car shed and a long passing track.

A man named John Anderson came out from Lehi on the morning passenger train every other day to pump the tank full of water. A young boy rode a horse down from Cedar Fort with the outgoing mail pouch to put on the train and to take the incoming mail up into the town. Those were the two people we saw most often.

While at Silver City Junction we had a dog. We had raised it from a pup. When we moved we left the dog there. After we had been at Cedar Fort a short time, we developed such a longing for our dog that mother wrote a note addressed to one of the section hands at Silver City Junction, asking if he would find our dog and put it on the train and send it to us. We also made arrangements with the baggage man to bring the dog along.

That evening we wishfully watched that train come tearing along the straight piece of track toward our home. We hoped it would stop and let off our dog—no such luck! I believe that train went past us even faster than usual. There was so much dust that it almost obscured the train as it went by. We were downhearted. We weren't going to get our dog! Then, as the dust cleared away, there was our dog standing down the bank a little ways from the track with its tail between its legs. She had apparently been thrown from the train. If you can imagine a dog displaying a bewildered attitude, you have the picture of that dog.

Then we called to her: "Flory! Flory!" At first she just looked at us with that bewildered stare. Then as she recognized us, she started yelping and running toward us as fast as she could cover the ground. That dog displayed all the emotions of which any human is capable. She would jump and run around in circles. She would tear off down the tracks barking and yelping, then she would turn sharply and race back. I never saw any creature display the pleasure that dog did that day. I am sure she was just as glad to see us as we were to see her. Later that baggage man told us that while still at our former home, she would stand beside the track just looking wistfully up at the train each time it passed. So we got our dog!

Every morning that little Tintic passenger train stopped at our water tank to fill her tender. Those little diamond stacked eight-wheelers were sure a beautiful sight to see! The boiler had a shine that would dazzle your eyes.

Spick and span, they glittered from the point of the cowcatcher back to the cab. As they stood there at the water tank with their pumps churning away it was for all the world like a race horse panting for breath after a brisk run.

After the passenger train had departed to the west, it was followed shortly thereafter by the morning freight train. It too would stop for water. After they left the tank westbound the track was straight for about a mile before it circled to the left and then vanished around the foothills on its way to Fairfield.

One morning a double header, a train with two engines, stopped for water and then took off to the west. It hadn't covered more than half the distance to the curve when the head engine let go a series of short sharp blasts of the whistle, after which the train came to a stop. There seemed to be some confusion. Dad just happened to be ready to follow the freight train. Sensing something unusual, I tagged along. The train was still standing when we arrived. When we reached the head end we discovered that they had run into a herd of cows. It developed that they had killed eleven head. Those animals had been cut up pretty badly, and the stench was awfully strong.

I heard Dad remark to the engineer on the head engine that killing eleven head of cattle was quite something. The engineer's answer was, "That's nothing. I killed over seventy head of sheep the other day."

I thought to myself, "Boy, you sure are bloodthirsty!"

(I recently visited an old friend, Barnsey Cook, at Cedar Fort. We drove down to where our house once stood—the "station" as the townspeople used to call it. I looked up along the old grade, now devoid of tracks, and remarked about the time, now sixty years past, when that catastrophe took place. Barnsey remembered it with some bitterness. He has been a cattleman all his life. I was about to tell him of a time when I had killed fourteen head, but I thought better of it. A cattleman can't understand why an engineer kills his stock. He can't recognize the fact that a rolling train cannot stop on a dime.)

One morning while the freight train was standing at the water tank, Father stepped out on the short platform that led away from our front door to the tracks. He looked up toward the top of the train. A man's foot was hanging over the top of a box car. The conductor came walking along the side of the train about that time.

Dad pointed to the foot hanging over the top of the box car and said, "That's a funny way for a hobo to be riding."

The conductor climbed up the ladder to find it was the head brakeman. His head had been smashed, and he was dead.

There was much speculation among the tight little group of men that formed at the foot of the box car ladder. The verdict was that he had been standing up on top of that car when the train had gone under the bridge that spans the Rio Grande tracks between Mesa and Lehi. Not knowing that the train was approaching a low clearance obstacle he had been taken unawares and received the fatal blow to the head from the bridge structure. His foot was caught in the grab iron on top of the car and had held him on the car until the train arrived at Cedar Fort. Maybe the poor fellow had not died instantly and had purposely wedged his foot in that position to hold him on the train.

The conductor asked Dad to ride on top of that car to Fairfield to see that the body did not fall off. There was a company doctor at Fairfield who could attest to the cause of death and do all else necessary to properly report the matter. In those days a conductor had the authority to call upon the section boss for assistance when necessary. Dad did this without any qualms. I guess his army life in India and the fighting at the Khyber Pass had conditioned him for this.

We were at Cedar Fort a little over a year. Dad must have had a little of the boomer blood in his veins, because he wasn't satisfied at Cedar Fort. He kept asking for a change, so the roadmaster finally moved him back to Salt Lake as a section hand. He also worked later for the Rio Grande as a section hand at Salt Lake. A section man in those days got a dollar and a quarter or a dollar and a half for a ten hour work day. A section boss got a flat sixty dollars a month. He was not paid for overtime. That sixty dollars was his salary. If he was unlucky enough to get his hand car smashed by a train, he got nothing for one full month.

Many years ago a similar policy applied to men in engine service. But that was before my time. I would hate to think that I would have had to pay for everything that I had broken or damaged.

I have heard the story of an engineer who bent a main rod on his engine—probably too much water in the cylinders. The company took the price of it out of his pay, then straightened the main rod and put it back in service. The engineer cut his initials in the main rod together with other data pertinent to the incident. After the company had used it for some time, he brought suit against them for using his property. He won a considerable amount of money in settlement, or so the story goes. That lawsuit was credited with having stopped the practice of having railroad employees pay for damaged equipment.

Along about 1914 or 1915 the labor organizations were trying to get a car limit bill through the state legislature. One of the men, an engineer

who was lobbying for this bill, told me this story: A train in charge of a conductor named Connely dropped a journal bearing on the axle of a car. A "hot box" is caused when an axle journal bearing is run too long without lubrication. In such a case the journal overheats and breaks off from the remainder of the wheel and axle assembly. The company fired Connely for lack of attention to duty. The lobbyists in a meeting with a group of state senators told them of this incident. A question was asked of the senators; "Do you think the company was justified in firing this man?" One of the legislators answered: "No, I don't think so, not if Connely was willing to pay for the damage." This shows the primitive state of labor relations on the railroads in those days. We have come a long way since, perhaps a way too far.

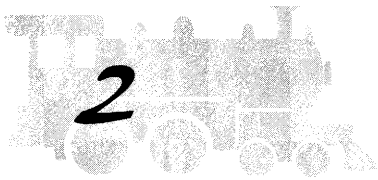
We returned to Salt Lake and lived in a little three-room adobe affair arranged in a row with other similar houses at South Temple and Fourth West. That area is now all Union Pacific railroad yards. At that time it was a poor residential district. A narrow gauge railroad owned by the Oregon Short Line went by our door. There was a depot at First South and Fourth West. There was also quite a little business community on those four corners.

A narrow gauge passenger train left that depot every morning, returning later in the evening. A freight train also ran each way during the daylight hours. The other end of this little railroad was at Stockton, to the southwest of the Great Salt Lake and about forty-five or fifty miles away.

Their engines were identical with the Oregon Short Line's motive power, only smaller. Their yard extended along Fourth West between First South and South Temple. They also had a lot of storage tracks just south of First South. There was an engine house that would hold about six engines. At one time this railroad had quite a large volume of passenger traffic. They operated a resort comparable to Saltair at Garfield. At the time I write about, the resort had been closed, and all the excursion passenger cars were stored on the storage tracks. There were four or five little narrow gauge engines stored in the engine house.

When the freight train returned at night they did a lot of switching along Fourth West. Pat and I, if we could get out, would jump on the pilot of the backing engine and ride it until it stopped. Then we would get off and walk up to where they started to back up again. We had a lot of fun doing this until one night Dad caught up with us. We were gleefully riding on the pilot of a backing engine when he appeared out of nowhere and jerked us off the footboard. We started running for home. He was right behind us, kicking us ahead of him at every step.

We didn't get a chance to hook a ride again. We were confined to the house whenever the switching operations were in progress.



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From Newsboy to Roundhouse: Starting to Work

It was during this time that I started selling newspapers. I had heard kids say that they could get two papers for five cents and sell them for a nickel apiece. I couldn't believe this. Why would anyone give five cents for something that cost only half as much? The whole idea of profit didn't make sense to me. When I got a nickel one afternoon I found my way up to the distributing office of the *Deseret Evening News*, right about where the Hotel Utah now stands. I bought two papers with my nickel. I was so surprised that I ran all the way home to show Mother. She asked me what I was going to do with them. That was something I hadn't thought about at all. She thought I should sell them. That seemed to be a pretty good idea. She suggested that a good way to sell them would be to go back up town with them. After thinking it over for a while I agreed.

What a feeling came over me when I realized that I had doubled my money! I now had two nickels where before I had only one. Instead of getting more papers to sell, I again ran home to show Mother what I had done. But I gradually learned that the more papers I sold the more money I made.

There was no newsboys' union when I first began selling papers, and the newsboys weren't out on strike. Yet it was then that I first heard that I was a scab. I didn't know what that epithet meant, but I was soon to understand that in this situation it applied to a beginner—someone who was an outsider cutting in on the trade. So for a few months I was a scab. Gradually that term wore off, and I was accepted as a regular.

If you had a favorable place to sell your papers it was because you fought for it and were thereby able to hold it. If you couldn't lick the guy who wanted your corner, you just moved off and hunted another place. I had very little trouble holding the northwest corner of First South and Main in the evenings, and the southeast corner in the mornings.

As a rule I made very little money in the evenings—maybe twenty or twenty-five cents—unless something of singular interest developed. But in the mornings I very often made as much or sometimes even more than did my dad. There was a reason for this: I would be roused out of bed at 4:30 or 5:00 every morning. Mother would fix me a hot breakfast and send me on my way. In the winter she would bundle me up so that I would not feel the cold.

I would get up town before the streetcars started to run. Both the *Tribune* and the *Herald* had a few bundles of papers to be placed on the first car leaving for Murray. I was the boy who carried the papers from the pressroom and placed them on the streetcars. For this little chore I received most of my papers gratis.

The man in charge at the *Tribune* was not as liberal with me as the one at the *Herald*. He always gave me four papers for my work, while the guy at the *Herald* just reached over and grabbed a handful, maybe fifteen or twenty, and passed them through to me. So on my first round everything I sold was clear profit.

Another reason for the favorable earnings in the mornings was that there were very few newsboys on the street that early in the morning. The market was divided between fewer sellers. I would meet the streetcars as they came out of the car barns and sell most of my papers to the streetcar men. If I had any left after the cars were all out, I would finish up at the corner of First South and Main. Then I would hike home and go to school.

We also made a nickel or two now and then by swiping beer bottles from the freight platform of the OSL Railroad and selling them, three for a nickel, at the back door of the Hurry Back Saloon. The same price was paid for empty whiskey flasks. So you see there were many ways for an active kid to get an occasional nickel or dime.

During the summer months we would find ourselves headed for the Jordan River. It was there in that sluggish stream that I first learned to swim. But in the process of learning I was almost drowned.

A gang of us smaller kids were splashing around near the edge one day. A much bigger boy came along the bank with a ball bat. He threw it out into the middle of the river and said, "Anyone who gets it can have it."

I don't believe any of us could swim, but we all started after that ball bat. I was walking along in the river. The water was up to my armpits. All at once I stepped into a hole, a "chuck off," as we called them, for which the Jordan River was famous. The water came up over my head. I kicked and splashed around frantically and vigorously. I think I swallowed a good portion of the Jordan River. I got a glimpse of the big kid on the bank. He seemed to be getting rid of his clothes in a hurry.

They say that a drowning person sees his past life come up before him. From experience I know that to be a fact. I sure thought I was a goner. I again saw the features of a drowned boy that I had looked upon with awe at Sandy. I didn't give up. I kept going under and kicking my way up again. Finally, with great relief, I felt ground under my feet again, and the boy who had thrown the bat was almost to me. I was glad to take hold of his hand and walk out. I don't know if anyone got the bat, and at the time I didn't much care.

I then made a silent vow that I would stay away from the Jordan River. But you know how kids are. In a few days I was back again. If my folks had known what had happened you can bet that I would not have been there, then or ever.

I had another terrifying experience in that same vicinity. My brother Pat also shared in this one. We were playing with our friends on the bridge that carried the narrow gauge rails over the river. Some of the kids, those who could swim, were diving off the bridge. The rest of us were merely bluffing. All at once a whistle sounded, and the narrow gauge passenger train came puffing up only a short distance away. I was in the middle of the bridge. Pat was closer to the end. There was a great clamoring among those kids when that little engine let go with a series of short, terrifying blasts of the whistle.

Those who could swim hesitated no longer and immediately dove into the river to swim ashore. I remember looking to where I had last seen Pat. He was walking deliberately and calmly toward the end of the bridge; it looked like he could make it in time. I knew that I and several other kids caught in mid-span could never make it to either end.

In playing around the bridge we had often slipped down beneath the ties to climb among the under-timbers. This is what we did now. I heard that engine hit the end of the bridge as I cowered under the ties. There was no other place to go. Above would be death under the wheels of that engine, and below death from drowning in the river.

Although it wasn't evident to my young mind at the time, we were quite safe where we were if we didn't fall into the river. I believe that engineer had his train well under control as he went over that bridge, for it seemed to me a long time that the engine and cars rumbled overhead. At last the ordeal was over, and we poked our heads above the ties to see the rear of that train gathering speed as it vanished into the distance.

Now that the danger was over, it was time for much hysterical laughter again. But believe me, I lived it over again several times during the night. I could still see the front end of that little engine bearing down upon us for a long time to come.

We later organized a newsboys' union in Salt Lake City. I held office in this union under the impressive title of sergeant at arms. I don't know who thought that up, but my duties were to keep order at the meetings.

There were newsboys at those meetings whom we never had seen on the streets with a bundle of papers in their hands. Our meetings, if I remember rightly, were held one night a week in the Federation of Labor Hall on West Temple and Second South.

The president we elected was a boy named Tom Claypool. I think he was elected because he had more gab and was the biggest bully in the union. (Not an uncommon event in anybody's union.) If he was a newsboy it must have been before my time, because I don't ever remember him as a newsboy.

He was very crude and had none of the finesse of one you would expect in that office. I remember one meeting when we had a couple of visiting delegates from one of the building trade unions in attendance to give us talks on unionism. After their delegates had made their speeches and settled back in their chairs, this president of ours suddenly jumped to his feet and exclaimed:

"How many of you G—— d—— kids want me for president?"

I can still see the slightly amused looks on the faces of our visitors as most of the kids screamed out their approval. Some few had nerve enough to object. There was bedlam for a few minutes, but in the final event Tom Claypool was sustained as president.

The *Deseret News* was for a long time the only evening newspaper. Eventually another afternoon paper made its appearance. It was called the *Salt Lake Telegram*. The *Telegram* was a more popular paper for a while

than the *Deseret News*. It played up the news in a more vivid, sensational, and scary manner than did the others. But I think it over-spiced the content of the paper, for it soon got the reputation of being unreliable in its presentation of the news.

The *Deseret News* sold for five cents a copy. The *Telegram* sold for three cents a copy. That is, it was supposed to sell for that price. The only trouble was that we newskids always seemed to be out of pennies when it came to making change. Unless a customer presented three pennies in exact change he would usually wind up paying a nickel or going without his paper. It eventually got to the point where we refused to sell the paper for less than a nickel.

The management of the paper soon got wise and started to clamp down on us. They refused to let us have papers unless we could show that we had a handful of pennies with which to make change. I think this rule was what caused us to organize the union. We boycotted the *Telegram*. If any kid showed up on the street with those papers, he had them taken away and torn to pieces by the goon squad. After a few days of this the *Telegram* changed its advertised price to five cents a copy.

Our union did not survive for very long after our victory over the *Telegram*. I think when the novelty started to fade, so did the interest. Before it did, our union arranged for two kids to lead a big yellow dog between two lines of marchers during a Labor Day parade. This dog was carrying a placard on each side which read, "A yellow dog is better than a scab." I don't think we kids knew the full meaning of that term. However, it went over big with the other labor organizations. The morning papers featured it as one of the highlights of the parade.

One morning while riding to get my papers—it must have been about 4:30 or 5:00 in the morning, because it was still dark—the sky seemed to explode into a bright light. Up ahead flames were pouring out of the upper windows of the buildings of the Atlas Block. These buildings were just east of where the Capitol Theater now stands on Second South between Main Street and West Temple. Before I could get to it I could hear the fire bells clanging, and the fire apparatus soon came into view.

I still think that one of the greatest spectacles that anyone could witness would be those three very large and fine-looking horses galloping up those old dirt roads as fast as they could go with that black smoke belching from the stack of the fire engine behind them.

When I was about fourteen, I thought I was getting too big to be a newsboy. One morning as I was walking down Second South after selling

all my papers a very nice guy stopped me. He asked me if I would like a job. I told him I would. That same day I started working for the Salt Lake News and Book Store, located at 72 West Second South. My pay was four dollars a week. My job was to work around the store and deliver out-of-town newspapers to regular customers. We sold office supplies, books, stationary, and other such lines.

At first I tried to hold onto my newspaper job as well, but after a few months I gave up as a newsboy. It was too much. My pay of four dollars a week was much less than I could make as a newsboy, but I thought the job was more respectable, so I kept the position at the bookstore.

I worked at that job for a full year. Then one day I landed a job as a janitor and part-time pin setter in a bowling alley at 222 South West Temple. The pay was one dollar a day. That was more like it! But it had one drawback: the job lasted just four days. It was well into the summer and business was not too good. The St. Louis World's Fair was then in progress; the two owners of this place decided to close up for the summer and go back and see the fair. So I was out of a job at the age of fifteen.

My dad was working at the cement works on Fifth West and Eighth South at the time. He talked to the superintendent, and I was hired on as a roustabout. I worked at odd jobs around the mill for ten cents an hour, twelve hours a shift. I tapped clinkers into the conveyor from a storage tank to be sent to the grinding mills. I cleaned up with a wheelbarrow, and I helped the blacksmith, swinging a light sledge hammer. If the work demanded the use of a heavier hammer, a man from the mill took my place. After about six months of this kind of work, I was assigned to the laboratory.

My job then was to gather samples and test them: samples of clinkers as they came from the kilns, samples of crushed and refined rock, and samples of finished cement. My pay was raised to sixty-two dollars on the basis of a thirty-one-day month. I worked thirteen hours a day, usually every day of the week. I did this for about a year on the night shift exclusively. The hours were from six at night to seven in the morning.

The Rio Grande Western passenger depot at that time was at Second South close to Sixth West. All trains passed my west windows. They whistled for that Ninth South Pedro crossing, where the tracks of the San Pedro, Los Angeles, and Salt Lake Railroad crossed those of the Rio Grande, and I got so I could usually tell the engine number before it came in sight by the sound of the whistle—especially if it were one of the little Rome ten-wheelers.

There was an engineer on the Manti passenger "plug run" who had a peculiar way of whistling for the crossing. When I first heard it, I thought

he must be blowing that way over the entire length of his run over the road. I afterward learned that he only whistled in that way when approaching town. I also learned that the object of that mode of whistling was to let his wife know he was returning safely. Some of the wags said it was no such thing! It was only to give his wife a chance to get the other guy out of the house. It would be hard to describe that whistle, but I will try: ———— ——, ————. —— —, —— —. The long marks denote long sounds, the shorter ones short blasts.

There were several engineers at different points who had a mode of whistling all their own to notify their wives of their arrival when coming into town. An abuse of this practice at times led to misunderstandings and hard feelings. Some smart alec engineer, thinking he was doing something funny, would imitate a fellow engineer's special whistling style when he knew his friend was still up the hill. The dutiful wife would prepare the dinner only to have her engineer husband fail to show up.

(This also happened on our railroad. Ratliff had the habit of whistling for his dinner when coming down out of the tunnel at Martin. Some wag imitated his whistle. His wife, thinking it was her husband doing the whistling, got dinner ready. Then Ratliff didn't show up for several hours. It seemed Ratliff didn't like his dinner cold and would become quite angry.)

But no matter how they whistled, I always got a thrill out of watching those little Rome ten-wheelers. There were almost always two of them double heading on the through passenger trains.

They would come dashing up to the Pedro crossing where they had to stop. They would shut off about the time they went over the Eighth South crossing. The firemen would have their fireboxes loaded, so when the engines were shut off each fireman would open his firebox door in the hope his engine wouldn't "pop" (safety valves lift). Each fireman would be down on the deck with the door chain in his hand. As soon as the stop was made the head engine would whistle off and the engine stacks would start blasting.

The firemen would then get busy "flashing the door." This was the practice of alternately opening and closing the fire door between each scoop of coal thrown on the grates. The flash from the inferno of the furnace or firebox would light up the back part of the engine and, at night, the entire sky. It was quite a sight!

Those trains going by my window at the cement works were a stimulus to my thoughts of railroading. I was about eighteen when I decided to do something about it.

I was on night shift at the time. I would wake up in the early afternoon and sometimes wander uptown. One afternoon my wanderings took me

out to the Oregon Short Line yards and roundhouse. I wanted a job as fireman or any other job that would lead to it. I approached the roundhouse half fearful to seek out the foreman. When I finally found him there were two other guys with him. When he asked what I wanted I was tongue-tied. For a while I couldn't say a word. Finally I blurted out that I wanted to be a fireman.

He answered, "I've got plenty of firemen." I think I detected a note of amusement in his answer. Also something seemed to amuse those other two guys that were with him. After all, I was only eighteen and looked about sixteen. I turned away with a heavy heart.

I broached the subject of getting a job on the Rio Grande Western to my dad. He was night watchman in the Rio Grande yards. He said he would see what he could do. Of course I would have to work in the roundhouse for a while. A few days later Dad told me he had spoken to the night roundhouse foreman. He had agreed to hire me as hostler helper. ("Hostlers" were in charge of servicing and moving engines in the yard and roundhouse.) I was delighted. At last I was on my way to being a fireman. The goal was in sight.

I went around to see the night foreman. He looked me over and I think he regretted his promise. However, he had the clerk make out a note of acceptance. This piece of paper I was to present to the general foreman for his approval in the morning. With high hopes I found that official the next day. It would only be a short time now until I would be a fireman—peaked cap over one eye, red bandanna loosely knotted around my neck, high gauntleted gloves on my hands and a gold watch in my bib pocket. Oh, boy!

I handed the note to the general foreman. He read it and looked me over critically. He slowly shook his head in disapproval.

"How old are you, boy?" he inquired.

I was fearful of this. I answered softly: "Going on for twenty-one."

He smiled and again shook his head slowly. He placed a hand on my shoulder. "Young man, you come back in a couple of years," he said.

He turned away, slowly tearing that note that I had prized so highly into little pieces, little pieces that slowly fluttered in the breeze and out of my life.

I had told my girlfriend just yesterday that I was going to be a fireman soon. She had looked a little sad. I had detected a tear in her eye. Was she crying? What for?

"I would rather see you go to the mines," she faltered. "You'll get killed on the trains."

Well, I still had my job at the cement works. I could tell her now that the firing job was off for awhile. Yes, I still had a job. But as it turned out it was not for long.

In the spring of 1908 the demand for cement took a flop. There had been a depression in the country during the latter part of 1907. The storage bins at the cement works were overflowing, with few buyers in sight. The decision was to close down the plant for awhile. On the last day of the operation a big farewell party was held in the machine shop. The company furnished the refreshment, which included two kegs of beer. The officials told of their hopes that business would shortly pick up, and that soon we would all be back on the job again. We all toasted that. Others got to their feet and told what a swell bunch of guys we were, and of the good fellowship that prevailed. We toasted that also. Then a Scotsman got to his feet and sang "Annie Laurie." We all joined in and then disbanded.

My days at the cement works were over.

That night I walked uptown. I met a man I had formerly known as an electrician at the cement works. I told him I was out of a job. At that time he was chief electrician at the Boston Consolidation Mill at Garfield. He told me that if I would meet the train that left Salt Lake shortly for Garfield he would take me out there and give me a job helping electricians. I rushed home, got some blankets rolled up, and met the train. He was there.

This was a workers' train. It left Salt Lake in time for the men to make the midnight shift. Trains left the OSL depot on regular schedules so that those who worked at Garfield and wanted to live in Salt Lake could do so by riding the workers' trains to and from work.

I was put to work on the switch board at the mill. My job was to record the readings on the different gauges. I was called several times during a shift by telephone and asked to hold a switch in place while some kind of a test was made somewhere out in the mill complex.

After several weeks on the job I was promoted to electrician's helper on the day shift. We bunked in company houses. Four bunks to a tent. We ate at the company boarding house for a dollar a day—three meals. I must say that they fed very well at this boarding house. Good grub and plenty of it. But there are always some who are hard to please. I heard several complaints flung at the attendants that I thought were way out of line. My own opinion was that those meals approached banquet quality, in a rough sort of way.

I worked eight hours on the day shift and rambled over the hills when off duty. In my rambles I discovered a reservoir up in back of the mill. This was great! After getting up a sweat climbing the mountain I would strip off

and plunge in the reservoir for a swim. It wasn't too long until others found out what I was doing, and from then on that reservoir was well patronized.

I liked it very well at Garfield, and I liked the work. However, I hadn't given up the idea of becoming a fireman. I was just biding my time until I could land a job on the railroad. That time came sooner than I had expected.

One night there was a big electrical storm. A motor was burned out or shorted. We, the daylight crew, were called out to remove the motor and replace it with a spare. We had removed the damaged motor and had the good one up in the air over the place where it belonged. I was guiding it into position as it was being slowly lowered. I happened to have one finger under the base when it finally settled into place. That motor came down on my finger. I screamed in pain. It seemed like hours that I was in agony before they finally raised the motor sufficiently for me to get my finger out from under it.

There was a man who was acting as foreman to whom I was beginning to take a dislike. He had hired on there after I did. I was assigned to be his helper. He didn't have a dime when he arrived. I fed him on my "pie book" several times. A "pie book" is a small pocket-sized book of coupons for prepaid meals at railroad eating houses or beaneries. When he had worked long enough to get a pie book of his own I thought he would pay me back. But he made no offer to do so.

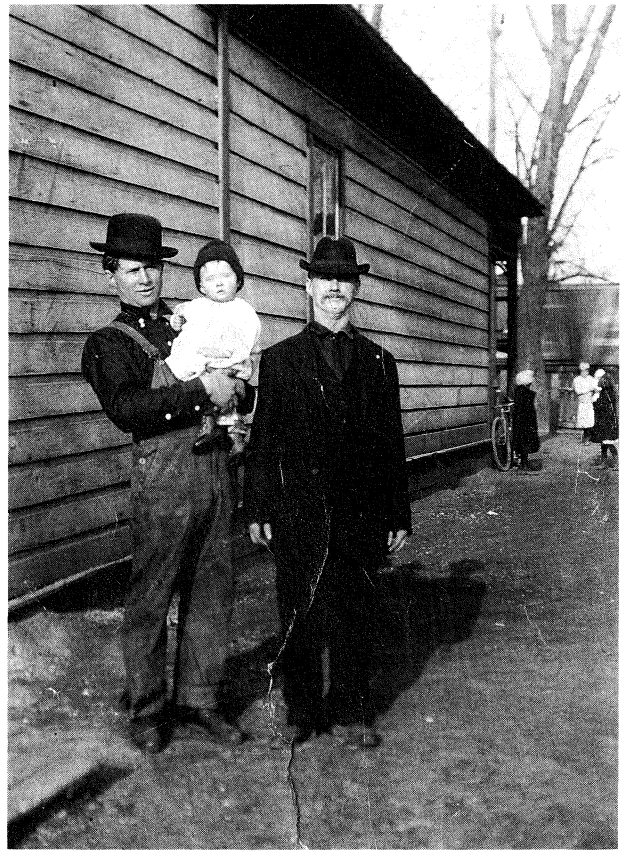
When they finally released my finger I was in a frenzy with pain. I didn't know exactly what I was doing. I saw the face of this guy before me and I struck out with all I had behind me. I guess I socked him with a pretty hard jolt. I wouldn't have done it if I hadn't been crazy with pain.

Well, that ended my apprenticeship as an electrician. The big boss heard about it and I was on my way home in the morning. I got home and was out of a job again. Dad told me to take it easy for a while.

After three days of loafing I was hired as supply man in the Rio Grande Western roundhouse at Salt Lake. My duties were to supply outgoing engines with tools and oil. The guy that had this job before me was promoted to fire lighter. He was glad to get off the supply job, and I soon found out why.

During the depression of 1907 the Rio Grande had "white-leaded" (laid up) the engines that were not needed because of reduced traffic. They had been stripped of all tools and supplies and had been relegated to the "white-lead line," also called the "dead line."

Now business was getting better, and almost every day engines were being taken off the dead line and placed in service. All their original tools



Gilbert Gould, his daughter, Pauline, and his father, Richard John Gould. Photo from the W. J. G. Gould collection.

and other supplies had been long since used to supply engines in active service. The storehouse had not anticipated this condition and therefore had not prepared for it. The result was that I had to rob engines coming in off the road to supply those going out. I had even gone down to the dump and rescued tomato cans, or anything else that would hold oil, to supply outgoing engines.

This did not make a hit with the engine crews, and I was necessarily the scapegoat. They wouldn't believe me when I protested that there were no supplies to be had. When they complained to the roundhouse foreman, that courageous individual merely sent them back to me. He was just passing the buck. He knew as well as I did that there was nothing I could do but rob incoming engines to supply those called for the road. I did the best I could even though I made a lot of enemies among the engine crews, who would later try to take it out of my hide.