the caboose, would start shovelling all the snow we had loosened. They would throw it as high up on the bank as they could.

While we were waiting for them to do this we would be filling the firebox with coal and the boiler with water. The deck of a little hog engine was no place for the fireman to be while charging the snow bank. We would have the blower rasping out of the stack, so the steam pressure would be high when we charged. The further we went into the cut, the deeper became the snow.

My engineer was quite an old man named Daley. Several times we almost became stuck in the snow on account of him not being fast enough in getting the Johnson bar over into the back motion after our forward lunge was stopped. I had to help him after awhile. When we started ahead I would be standing up in the right side of the cab behind him. When we were almost stopped I would reach over and unlatch the Johnson bar. Together we would get it over in the back motion and back out.

Daley was a sort of a person who was contemptuous of others. It irritated him that he had to have help to get that reverse lever over. As the work progressed he had several run-ins with the roadmaster, Chris Nelson, a fine old Swede who had come with us out of Springville. After awhile, due to Daley’s irritable disposition, I would not help him unless he asked me to.

After we had been slamming against the snow for several hours and making little progress, the mixed run came up behind us. We cut off the two little hogs that they had on the head end and put them behind our caboose. Then we had three little hogs to smash at the snow.

We would back down about fifteen car lengths or more and get those engines hot and full of water. Then, after the section men had gotten rid of all the loose snow, Daley would blast twice on the whistle. Each engineer would repeat the signal, and away we would go. As soon as we got stopped each engineer would reverse his engine and wait for three quick blasts from our engine which was the signal to back up. They would then repeat the signal, and we would back up.

This was the procedure. Once Daley couldn’t get the reverse lever over quick enough. Chris Nelson, up on the bank, shouted down at him, “What’s the matter, Jim?”

Daley stopped tugging at the Johnson bar and looked up at him. That irritable contempt was in his voice:

“What’s the matter?” he echoed. “Why we’re stuck in the snow! He screamed. “Just as we have been all day.”

Much profanity passed between them for a few moments.

“Why the hell don’t you whistle ‘back-up’ and let them pull you out?” said the roadmaster.
Much against his will Jim Daley blasted three times, and the two hogs behind us jerked us out.

We worked on that snow bucking job until our time was up, and we still had about a hundred feet to go before we would be through. In the meantime, Joe Stevenson, the traveling engineer and a trainmaster showed up on the scene. Joe relieved Jim Daley, and a section man took my place. Daley and I walked into Eureka, and after a feed we took on a little “hay.”

When our rest was up we were back on the job. We had a few cuts to knock the snow out of between Eureka and Silver City. We were out of coal and needed the fire cleaned. There was an engine watchman stationed at Silver City to watch the passenger train’s engine and to coal it. It was there the trainmaster came very close to firing me.

While the engine watchman and I were getting the fire cleaned the trainmaster had the brakeman and a couple of section men filling our tender with coal from a car that stood alongside. He looked down in the cab and saw us both down there cleaning the fire. He ordered the engine watchman to get up on the car and help coal the engine. He told me to finish cleaning the fire.

The fire was almost cleaned then. He told me to finish the job. I told him it wasn’t part of my job. We had quite a chewing match, and I finally finished cleaning the fire. If he had fired me I have no doubt I would have been reinstated in time. But I couldn’t afford to lose that time. In order for a man to stay on the job in those days he had to do lots of things that were not specifically included in his job. So I did.

That trainmaster afterward became my friend. He was among those who strongly advised me against going to the Utah Railway when I was considering it.

Incidentally, that was the first time I saw snow used for boiler water. We were out of water before we left the engine. Every time we stopped, there would be section men up on the snow bank shovelling snow into our tank. We would blow steam back into the tank to melt the snow. That’s how we continued to have enough water to operate.

By the way, this was one of the examination questions for promotion to engineer: “If you should run out of water in a snow bank would you kill the engine?”

One of the highlights of my career was the time no. 15 stubbed her toe at Colton.

In the spring of 1915 the Rio Grande put on a fast express train between Denver and Salt Lake. When I say fast, I mean just that—fast! It was really too fast for the track, roadbed, and signalling we had at that time.
Departing Denver, this train was just an ordinary local passenger run, but at Grand Junction it was made over into a different one, consisting of four express cars and a coach. And from there it literally took wings and flew. Out of Helper there would usually be two monkey seven hundreds on the point all the way into Salt Lake. The running time between Helper and Soldier Summit was fifty minutes. That was much too fast for the condition of the roadbed at that time, considering the curves and such.

The night before this wreck I was firing the 774 on the sharp end of no. 15. It was customary to take a pool crew at Helper to man the second engine. This second engine was always on the point. Due to the curvature of the tracks at that time between Helper and Kyune, the train usually lost time on the schedule. This was made up across the flats between Kyune and Soldier Summit.

I have watched this train from the vicinity of the depot at Colton come around that sweeping curve east of town. You could remark leisurely to yourself, there she comes! and before you could hardly get those words spoken, you could say, there she goes!

I had noticed what seemed to be a soft spot in the track as we went by the water tank. The night before, as we had hurricaned through Colton with the 774 on no. 15, that soft spot momentarily gave me a sickening feeling. I don't know what I could liken it to. It seemed like the engine was suddenly sinking from under us, then just as suddenly finding its feet again.

On the night of the wreck the 774 was the lead engine, with Frank Ladd as engineer and Jack Johnson scooping the coal. The second engine was either the 771 or the 773, with my old friend Art Campbell at the throttle and Dutch Shafer firing. Art did not have his regular engine, the 768, that night for reasons I do not know.

A year or two earlier, Dutch had told me that if he was ever in a serious wreck, he would take it as a warning and quit railroading. It wasn't long after that I helped get him out of a smashed engine and carried him back to the baggage car when no. 19 smashed into the local in the Jordan Narrows. Poor Dutch! He didn't heed his own advice. He continued on the railroad and had the bad luck to be firing for Art Campbell that night.

The sequence of events surrounding the accident was simple. Number 15 roared into Colton as usual doing probably seventy-five miles per hour. Right where the soft spot was at the water tank the second engine seemed to turn a somersault and crashed into an eleven hundred-class engine that was tied up on the passing track. There were nine hoboes on that engine warming themselves. All of them were killed. Art Campbell was killed instantly and Dutch Schafer died a few minutes after they found him.
The lead engine, the 774, broke loose from its tender and went clattering up the mainline. They got it stopped between the west leg of the wye switch and the stock yards. Neither Frank Ladd or Jack Johnson were hurt. It was the opinion of the officials that the trailing steam hose on the first engine got caught in the frog of the crossover switch to the passing track and thereby derailed the second engine. That may be so, but I still think that soft spot under the water tank spout had something to do with what happened.

The night of that wreck I was firing an eastbound preferred run for engineer Charley Sorenson. We got to Provo and spotted at the water tank. The stop board was out for orders. After taking water I climbed down into the cab. We had not received orders yet. After a few moments of waiting, Charley went back to the telegraph office to see what the delay was. After a while he came back to say, “Number 15 went in the ditch at Colton. Art Campbell is dead and Dutch Shafer is badly injured.”

How feeble is the effort to convey the real feelings that come over a person when he hears news like that concerning men that he has known so intimately. As a boy I had watched old Art Campbell going through town on those little Rome passenger engines. “Old Silver Tip,” we had called him. He had a profuse head of hair, and it was white—white as snow. And now he, too, was gone! That white hair is what had singled him out to me as a boy. And after I was grown I had fired for him—a consummation of my dreams.

And Dutch Shafer! I thought of his words regarding a warning—a warning he had failed to heed.

As soon as the mainline was open we went on through to Helper. It was the middle of a warm afternoon when we passed through Colton going east. From my side of the cab I had a good view of the wreck. That it was awful is very much understating the case. I could see a foot sticking out of the piled-up wreckage, clothing and blankets of dead hoboes, and other little reminders of lives snuffed out. There was a heavy stench in the air—a stench identified with dead bodies not yet recovered. I thought of the words of an unknown railroad poet:

Great God above, Who rules,  
And Who, amidst Thy might of justice,  
Holds man’s destinies.  
Spare us these awful scenes of blood,  
On running wheel; on blades of steel,  
When engines crash!
Can you imagine the feelings of men in the railroad game when accidents of this nature collect their toll of friends and acquaintances? You know that there will be more of the same, and you know that there will be more violent deaths. What you don’t know is where they will occur, or when. Partiality is unknown on the railroad. The old head is just as susceptible as the youngest on the road. Is it any wonder then, that some who are a little weak or are less imbued with the love of the rail may desert to less hazardous means of a livelihood? This happens to some degree in every case.

In those days the trend of life, it seems to me, was less hazardous than it is today. To the ordinary lay people, railroad life was a glorious, romantic, devil-may-care existence. Those in the game were a people set apart. But in these days people pick up a newspaper and read of the commonplace slaughter on the highways; they note that a plane has gone down taking scores of passengers to their deaths. They read of gun battles between outlaws and law men. They shrug it off as something common and usual because every day the papers recount such violence. They view such things as something unavoidable. They take this aspect of life for granted.

If you will allow a reflection of mine, it was not that way when I was a boy. There was not so much violence in the world. Incidents that now occupy a few paragraphs in the newspapers were front page news articles. Heroes and martyrs were made overnight. And the railroad contributed much to this way of life. A railroad accident furnished news, adventure, glamor, and incidents of bravery in the telling of it. An engineer in those days presented the same picture of courage and daring that the airplane pilot does now. So you see, most of the young, red-blooded kids of those days wanted to be engineers. It was a profession a little above the others.

What I mean to convey in simple words is that life was more tranquil, more serene and quiet then than it is now. There were fewer hazards, and life was more simple. In the small towns people with nothing else to do would stroll leisurely down to the depot to see the passenger trains come into town. What hazards and violence that did exist were mostly on the railroads or in the mines. So when anything out of the ordinary did occur, the newspapers gave more space to it than they do now.
Dear Bill:

I could hear the wind—hollowly howling,
And the deep river dashing below.
I could hear the forest leaves rustle;
As the trees by the tempest were fanned.

Have you ever read that railroad classic “Asleep at the Switch?”
Your mother has gone to bed and I am sitting here at the kitchen table getting ready to continue “My Life.” The wind is rustling the trees outside. It moans softly down the stove pipe and intermittently it increases in volume and tempo. I am just in the mood to be enchanted by that sound. I haven’t heard the wind sighing down the chimney for a good many years as it is tonight.

It reminds me of the stanza quoted above. It is from that poem. As a small boy I learned that poem from beginning to end. And as it breathed of the railroad I was always reciting some part of it to myself when alone. Not only was I reciting it, I was singing it. I could sing those words to most of the popular current tunes.

So you will understand what the railroad has always meant to me. I knew from childhood that my life was going to be tangled in some way with the railroad. I always wanted to be an engineer.
The Denver & Rio Grande Western 1200 and 3404 double heading up a mountain grade. April 24, 1938 photo by R. H. Kindig.
It was not uncommon for a man to be approached by slickers, who for a few dollars would furnish a certificate declaring that the bearer had passed the mechanical examination for locomotive engineer on some little-heard-of railroad. If a man could appear at some master mechanic’s office on a railroad that had a sudden increase in traffic and was in great need of enginemen, the theory was that he would be hired with very little in the form of examination. The important thing was being able to show that you were experienced.

I had a man follow me from the roundhouse at Ogden clear up to Twenty-Fifth Street where I roomed. I had just removed my work clothes when there came a knock on the door. There stood the man who had followed me. He was quite an old fellow. The boomer look stood out all over his person.

He began by asking if promotion was fast or slow on the Rio Grande. He then asked how long I had been firing. His talk got around to how I would like to be promoted. Then stepping inside, he told me he could fix me out with a service letter showing that I was an experienced engineer, having worked several years in that capacity, and was now cut off on account of a decrease in business.
That service letter would be from a railroad away down in the deep South where a general office building had burned down, destroying all records of former employees. A man’s service on that railroad could not be verified or denied. A letter like the one he proposed would cost about twenty dollars—asking price, no doubt. If no interest was shown by the prospective buyer, I am reasonably sure the letter could be had for five dollars or less.

I told him I had no desire to change railroads. He became quite insistent, and I finally had to order him out of my room. I doubt that a mountain road such as the Rio Grande would hire a man for engine service without some form of an examination.

I was ready for the engineer examination any time for two or three years before it came my turn to sit for it. I had put in many hours of study getting ready. Then, about two weeks prior to the scheduled date of the exam, Pokey Cowan, my old enemy, approached me. By this time he had been made a traveling engineer. He notified me of the coming event, and asked me how I felt about it. I told him I was ready.

He then reached in his inside coat pocket and brought out some folded sheets of paper. They were the lists of questions asked at the examination.

He said, “You take these and study them and when you’re through with them, bring them back to me.”

That was the first friendly gesture from him toward me in over eight years. I was dumbfounded.

Ten firemen were ordered to appear at the examination car at nine o’clock, January 10, 1917. Five of us showed up. The rest were on the road or away from Salt Lake. Before the examination started the other four candidates told of having been caught suddenly and by surprise by the scheduled test. They would have liked a few more days to study up.

Clarence Rawlins was the chief examiner. I had fired for him quite a bit when he was running an engine. His title was now general air brake instructor. When the others asked for more time he looked at me and said: “What about you, Helen?” (Helen was one of my nicknames on the Rio Grande. It was taken after Helen Gould, the daughter of the infamous Jay Gould. At that time Helen Gould was the major shareholder in the Rio Grande.)

I told him I wanted to take it.

He said, “Do you realize that if you take it alone that you will get every question yourself?”

In the procedure of the exam the questions were asked in rotation. If there were five of us taking it and each man in turn answered his assigned
question correctly, then I would get every fifth question. If I took it alone I would have to answer every question on the list. Obviously the odds favored taking the exam in a group. Nevertheless I told him I still wanted to go on with it.

He smiled and said, “Okay, here we go!”

When the others saw that I was going to take it alone they all made another request: Could they stay and listen? After Clarence conferred a moment with Jack Snyder, he said, “All right, sit down.” It was then about 10:30 or 11 A.M. Clarence started asking questions. What did I know about combustion? I had done some mighty good jobs of firing, that he knew; so before I could give him my answer he passed over that question.

Hour after hour he kept asking questions, and I answered them rather well. About two-thirty in the afternoon, a hired man came in the examination car. He was a boomer. He sat in to take the exam to qualify to go to work as an engineer. From then on I should have received only every other question. But that boomer missed most of his questions, so I was not much better off than when I was the lone candidate.

There were only two questions with which I had any trouble. Clarence asked me, “When does a brake hold the best: when the brake shoe is hot or when it is cold?”

I answered, “When it is hot.”

Clarence looked at me with a doubtful shake of his head. It was the first question I had stumbled on.

I hastily said, “I have heard the old timers tell of how up at Bingham on the Copper Belt, they would drag a car backward and forward with the brake set tight to warm up the shoe and get the ice and snow off it before descending the grade.”

Clarence looked at me and then at Jack Snyder. Then he said, “You’re right, Helen, to a certain extent. In all cases the ice and snow must be off the shoe before it will take good hold. So after that explanation we will have to give you a ‘correct’ on that one.”

A little while later we were talking about automatic slack adjusters in air brakes. My question was: “When does the slack adjuster operate, when the brake is set or when it is released?”

Without giving it too much thought, I answered, “When it is set.”

Again Clarence gave me that doubtful stare. I recovered by saying, “I will explain how it works.”

I started by telling what the automatic slack adjuster was, what it was for, how it was built, and where it was tapped into the brake cylinder and at what point in the travel of the piston. I then went on, “When the brake
piston moves out in the cylinder far enough to uncover the port where the slack adjuster pipe is tapped into the cylinder, air gets into that pipe. It moves up against a smaller piston. This piston moves a pawl over the teeth in the slack adjuster ratchet. The pawl slips over the first tooth in the ratchet and catches on the second tooth. Then when the brake is released the brake piston, by spring action, moves back, uncovering the port in the pipe. Air rushes out to the atmosphere. The slack adjuster spring then moves the piston back, taking the ratchet with it. This takes up the slack in the brake rigging to the amount of the two ratchet teeth."

Clarence looked over at Big Liz West, one of the firemen who was listening in on the session. Big Liz shook his head as much as to say, "It's all mud to me."

Clarence, with a wide smile, said, "That's exactly how it works." Then to me, "Now, when does the automatic slack adjuster operate: when the brake is set or when it is released?"

This time I blandly answered correctly, "When it is released."

Those were the only two questions I had trouble with in a full day of questioning.

Mr Bennett, the master mechanic who had been so disgusted with me at the investigation when Bill Boucher and I had run away down the old Soldier Summit grade, came in and sat listening for about an hour. A few minutes previously, Jack Snyder had left the car. They both came back in together. I will always believe that Snyder went out to get Bennett so he could hear part of the performance. Jack was always a friend to me.

About four-thirty in the afternoon the caller came into the car. He handed me the call book and I signed to go out on an extra east at 6 P.M. That was to be my first trip as a qualified engineer. It was January 10, 1917.

That boomer who came in and took the examination with me was hired on as a switch engineer. This is the point I want to make: No matter how much experience a man has, a mountain railroad such as the Rio Grande would be foolish to put him out on a mainline job unless he could show some knowledge of air brakes.

I had just finished with the air brake part of the examination when I was called for that extra east. I thought I would have to report for the machinery and the transportation examinations later on when there was more time. But I was never called in again. That air brake part was all I ever took on the Rio Grande. A year so later when I went to the Utah Railway I had to pass the transportation part, but that was the end of it.

When business began to pick up on the Rio Grande in the late thirties due to the approach of the Second World War, they called up a number of
men for promotion. One of those men told me of a little incident that happened in that examination.

By that time the form of examining men for engineer had changed greatly from what it was when I took it. About six weeks before they were to be examined each man was given a book of questions to study and to fill in the answers. He kept this book and when all the answers were written out he was called in to talk them over with the examiner. Of course, under these conditions a man could leisurely look up the answers to all the questions and write them in without really knowing what he was writing about.

This man told me that Clarence Rawlins got pretty disgusted with the whole bunch on account of the poor manner in which they were displaying their knowledge. His disgust and anger increased as the session went along. Finally he really got mad. He had all the questionnaire books in front of him. He picked them up and slammed them against the opposite wall.

He rose to his feet and shouted, “This is the dumbest class I ever saw. Some of you guys have been firing an engine for fifteen years or more and you can’t talk on the simplest question. What have you been doing all this time? What do you intend to make of yourselves?”

By that time he was stalking up and down before the class. He paused in mid-stride to say, “I had a man take this examination alone and he answered every question himself. He passed one hundred percent. And here you guys can’t answer more than one question in a row correctly. That man is running an engine right now on the Utah Railway, and his name is Helen Gould.”

I always thought well of Clarence. And apparently he did of me.

When I left that examination car and started home to prepare for that first trip I was walking on air. I felt like stopping every stranger I met to tell him I had just been made an engineer. My boyhood dream had come true.

My first trip as an engineer I remember well. I think an engineer always remembers his first trip better than any others that followed. I don’t think that my first trip could have happened under more trying conditions.

As I have said, I was called out of the examination car just as I had concluded the air brake section. It was about four-thirty or five o’clock, and I was called for six or six-thirty. I had been out of bed from early morning preparing for the test. I was tired but eager. I would not have traded places with the president of the road. It was also the middle of a cold winter, and the fog hung thickly over the entire valley from Salt Lake south to a few miles above Springville. The single track mainline was overcrowded with traffic.

There were three eastbound crews called out of Salt Lake twenty minutes apart. We closed the gaps between us at Midvale. I was on the
middle train. It was so foggy you couldn’t see your hand behind your back, as I heard a brakeman remark.

When we all received orders to proceed over that single track we knew we would have to meet westbound no. 3 before going very far. There were no block signals or other safety devices as there are now, and that dense fog didn’t offer help or comfort in any way. We all arranged between ourselves what procedure we would follow. It was like this:

Smokey Taylor, the engineer on the first train, would take off and go to Mesa for no. 3. I was to wait, as I recall, five minutes, and then take off. I was to go to Olivers for no. 3. The man behind me was to give me a five-minute start and then follow. He would go to Riverton for 3.

According to plan Smokey whistled off and left town. After five minutes I took off behind him. It was so foggy it was hard to distinguish the telegraph poles along the right of way. There was only one thing to do—just pound along as fast as you could go. Once in a while I would recognize some object that would give me an idea of where we were. I dimly noted the mile board at Riverton. A moment later I heard the echoing muffled roar as we passed the section house.

Now would come the most hazardous time for me. I must head in at the next station—Olivers. These stations were only three to four miles apart. I was watching ahead for several things. If that man ahead slowed down or stopped for any reason, he had better hurry and get a flag out. It would have to be done with red fusees. I would never be able to see his caboose markers in time to stop. In fog a red fusee lights up a large area when you are close enough to see it. There is very little chance to get by it.

My main concern after passing the station at Riverton was that I wouldn’t overrun Olivers. While I was straining my eyes ahead for the flare of a red fusee, I was also hoping I would not miss the station mile board. After passing that board I would know I had another mile to go before heading in. If I missed that board I might continue on down the main in the face of no. 3.

I was beginning to wonder if I had gone by that mile board when its ghostly outline came rushing toward me. I now had to judge where to stop. When I finally made the stop I was just an engine length over the switch. I hurriedly backed up that distance, the brakeman lined it for the pass, and I hastily dragged those forty empties into the clear.

I had hardly stopped when we heard the subdued roar and the whistling of that approaching passenger train. That roar grew in volume, but as yet we could distinguish no headlight. Not until that engine was a very few car lengths away could we then see the faint white light that rushed
at us out of the fog. I was surely glad that we had no trouble getting into the clear.

After no. 3’s departure we again rambled out onto the mainline. The only thing that I clearly remember after leaving Olivers was how wonderful it was when a few miles above Springville we came up out of the fog into a land of clear vision. It was like a swimmer breaking out onto the surface into clear sunshine.

During the night the gaps between our three starting trains closed up again, but we plugged along as well as we could under the conditions that prevailed at that time. The forenoon of the next day found all three of us tied up at Colton on account of the sixteen-hour law.

I can remember that no. 5 came up out of Helper with dog catching crews to relieve us. I had tied up behind the caboose of the first train, and, gathering up my possessions, I went into that caboose to ride down to Helper. When I saw the relieving crew climb on the engine I had just left, I went out onto the back platform to see who they were. My brother Marvin was the fireman. He afterwards said that I came out on that platform to show them who the engineer was. Maybe so. I was very proud that I was the engineer, and I didn’t care who knew it.

In those early days when I was a newly promoted runner it was necessary for a man to run an engine in freight service for a year before being qualified for passenger service.

I was called one morning at Helper for no. 5 shortly after I was promoted. I had one of those “monkey” seven hundreds. It was sure a thrill to sit up there on the right side of a passenger engine and speed over the road after dogging along in freight service for some time. It was sure pleasant to feel that engine eating up the miles. You had nothing to look out for except the schedule. All other trains were into clear for you. What could thrill a kid like me more?

I don’t know how they came to call me at Helper when I was just a young newly set-up runner. It may have been that I was the only one available. And again, it was war time, so there may have been other extenuating circumstances. Anyway, I heard no complaints on my performance.

A week or so later I was being called on the telephone one morning for second no. 6. I heard the call boy say, “Wait a minute.”

Then I heard him exchange words with the engine dispatcher. In a moment he came on the phone again, “You’re not okay for passenger are you, Gould?”

I told him I didn’t know if you could call it that but I had fired passenger a good deal and just recently I had brought no. 5 over the road.
I also told him of having run the engine on no. 511 and no. 512 on the Marysvale Branch.

Again he turned and talked to someone in the office for a moment. I thought I heard the voice of my old friend Jack Snyder in the background. In a moment he resumed, “You’re called for second no. 6.”

That was the longest trip I was ever to make in passenger service. Everything went okay until we got to Thistle. There they coupled a big mallet on the head end as a helper. We were about to take off when the telegraph operator came out of the office waving his arm in a stop motion. As we hesitated he told us he had a message to hold us.

He took the conductor into the office with him. In about thirty or forty minutes the conductor handed me and the helper engineer a copy of the message. There had been a derailment in the Red Narrows and the mainline was blocked. We backed down, headed up the San Pete, Marysvale, Branch and backed the whole train down into the yard. We turned the engines and train over to the foreman at Thistle and were released from all responsibilities. This happened at about 1 p.m.
At nightfall we went to bed at the Gordon Rooming House. At about 9 A.M. the following morning we were called to resume duty. When everything was again ready we pulled up the San Pete Branch once more. We still had that mallet on the head end. We backed down the San Pete mainline to clear the coal chute. Both engines were in need of coal and water.

As we backed down the engineer on the mallet tried to spot for coal using the straight air. He stopped alright but in doing so he pulled the entire front end out of the head baggage coach. I was sure glad it was on him instead of me. He was an old head around Thistle. But like most of those old heads at that point on the road he had very little experience handling trains. He was primarily experienced in helper service.

If he had he never would have tried to spot for coal using the straight air while backing down with a big mallet. That mallet stopped right now, but the brakes on the train were all released. That was the first time I had ever seen a break in two in a passenger train.

Of course this caused more delay. We had to set the damaged baggage car over on another track. Then we had to back the whole train down on it. As the damage was on the east end of the car it had to be chained to the rear car in the train. It was about 2 P.M. before we were ready to leave Thistle. We had come into Thistle as second no. 6 on one date and left there as first no. 6 of the following date.

But that wasn’t the end of the delay. When we arrived at the derailment in the Narrows we were held up for better than an hour as the wrecking crew finished opening the eastbound main. That was railroading in those bygone days!

A few weeks prior to this, several other young runners and I had been sent out to Thistle to work the extra board. There were several foremen at outlying points who liked to have a full extra board. There was one of this bent at Thistle: Old Bill Jones.

These men liked to have a large extra board. This condition made it hard for an extra man to make a living. Yet that didn’t bother these roundhouse foremen. They had been up against a shortage of men at one time or another, and they weren’t taking chances of being caught again.

For about two weeks the only work I could get was to help no. 2 with the old 1073, a broken down old mallet 2–8–8–2. This engine was long overdue for the back shop. That’s the reason I was getting the work. This paid me fifty-nine miles a day, which was a little over a half day’s pay. This did little more than pay my expenses, and I had a wife and two kids in Salt Lake.
Gallagher was there with me. About two every morning he would be called to help no. 20 with the 953 or the 955. Every morning we would wait on Bill Jones with a plea to release us to Salt Lake so that we could make a living. Every morning he would turn us down.

It was during my time at Thistle that I called myself for a passenger run. I had been promoted on January 10, 1917. The time was now early in April of the same year. So you see I had only been running an engine a few months. There were several of us extra men sitting on the baggage truck by the depot, just waiting for no. 18 to come into town. We were doing considerable bellyaching and “dynamiting,” which is the same thing. The 714 was purring over on the San Pete mainline. When no. 18 came in the three rear cars would be cut off. The 714 would back down and couple onto them. That would then comprise no. 512’s train down the branch. It would return westbound as no. 511.

The engineer on this run was named Baker. He was quite an elderly man. I had fired for him out of Ogden. He was supposed to be a very good man on an engine. That is, when he wanted to be. He had a little trouble with McKelvy before I fired for him. Something about McKelvy’s attitude angered the old fellow. He started to “hammer” the engine—the 788. That is, he worked the engine at too long a stroke thereby burning more coal than was necessary.

McKelvy was a hot-tempered guy, and he got angry. Going up through Sutro he straightened up and grabbed old man Baker by the neck and forced his head down over the Johnson bar quadrant and told him, “Now you hook her up where she belongs, or you’ll go down in the corner too.”

Of course the old man had to hook that Johnson bar back a few notches. There was quite a fuss over that. Everyone thought that McKelvy would be fired. Why he wasn’t I’ll never know. That was an unpardonable offence.

(I fired for Old Man Baker on nos. 2 and 4 shortly afterwards with that same 788. I must say he was a smooth man with an engine. He used less coal than any engineer in passenger service. He kept telling me all the way over the road that he was handling the engine same as always when McKelvy blew up.)

Old man Baker had put in an appearance on the 714 and had her all ready for the trip. Then while he waited for his train to come in on no. 18 he looked across the cab and saw a student fireman climb aboard. The old fellow saw trouble ahead, and he looked for a way out.
A Thistle engineer who happened to be laying off crossed the track behind the 714 on his way to the depot. Baker saw him and called to him. This engineer’s name was Dan Gull.

Baker told him, “I’ve suddenly taken ill. I wish you would hurry and get your overalls and go out on this job in my place.” He added, “They haven’t got time now to call a man.” Dan was agreeable. He started for his home to get his overalls. As he passed the baggage truck where we were all sitting around giving up old head, he stopped to tell us what he intended to do.

I heard him through, and then I said, “Dan, I’m first out on the extra board. I was sent out here to work. I can get my overalls as quick as you can get yours.”

I slid off that baggage truck and ran as fast as I could up to Effie Gordon’s rooming house. I grabbed my overalls and ran back. By the time I got back, no. 18 had arrived and they had cut off the three rear coaches. Baker had backed the 714 down to a coupling and was dragging them up to the depot.

The conductor, a man named Stowe, was waiting for him. I told Stowe I would be the engineer. I took the orders out of his hand and climbed into the cab when Baker stopped. Baker eased himself onto the ground. I gave the orders a hurried once over, then whistled off. Conductor Stowe gave a puzzled high ball and the 714 started barking. I put my overalls on going up the canyon.

You might well ask who it was that called me for that job. Well, I called myself, and I was quite aware of it all the way down to Marysvale and back. I knew that I would have to make a successful trip or it would be too bad for me. Here I was, just a punk kid with the responsibilities of a passenger engineer tearing over a strange piece of track. I had been down that branch just once and then only as far as Richfield on a snow flanger. Not only that but I had a student fireman as well. His name was Jackson. It was the first time I had laid eyes on him.

Out of Thistle the grade ascends quite sharply for twenty-eight or thirty miles. It is necessary to work the engine hard. The pointer on the steam gauge began to lag. By the time we were at Indianola, about half way to the top of the hill, we were out of steam. We had to stop and “blow up.”

Those 714 series engines had a long, narrow firebox. The boiler back head came clear back to the rear end of the cab. I felt sure that I could have kept that engine hot, but I had other things to do.

I had learned as a fireman that if I shoveled slowly and steadily and bounced the coal off the fire-ring they would steam well. I tried to tell this
student how to fire her, but he couldn’t savvy, as he didn’t have enough experience to understand me.

After we had blown her hot and the boiler was full of water, we started again. We barely made it over the top without stopping to blow her up again.

From Hill Top it is downgrade most of the way, so I let her out a little although I wasn’t familiar with the road. We came into Fairview forty minutes late. While they were unloading baggage and express the conductor came up to the engine and told me the track was in pretty good shape as far as Manti and that I could probably let her out and make up a little time going there. So I let them roll leaving Fairview.

It was a good thing that there were sign boards along the right of way one mile in advance of each station. These mile boards would tell you where the next station stop would be. These were my guides, although it was customary to stop wherever a party waved a hand to flag you down.

At that time the rail was very light from Manti to Marysvale. In fact, it had only been a short time earlier that the operating department had allowed engines the size of the Rome or the hog to go past Manti. The 714 was quite a bit larger than the Rome.

There were some very sharp curves too, especially between Sevier and Marysvale. In one place, you came out of a tunnel onto a very sharp curve and then immediately dodged into another tunnel. Practically all the way from Sevier to Marysvale the flanges kept up a constant squeal like a herd of pigs as they ground their way around the curves.

I know I came into Marysvale ten minutes late. That was pretty good, so the brakeman told me, considering the time lost blowing up on the grade. The conductor put us in, on time.

One thing that seemed funny to me was that the engine behaved as if it were downgrade both ways after we left Manti. On both the going and the return trip, after getting the train started, I could hook the Johnson bar up almost on center, just crack the throttle, and we would roll plenty fast. At least the line must have been very nearly dead level.

At Marysvale I met an old acquaintance. He was the engine watchman at that point. He and I had worked together at the cement works in Salt Lake for several years. To say that he was flabbergasted to see me come into town on the right side of that passenger engine would be a slight understatement. We talked over old times for quite some time, then he fixed us up a bed in the oil house.

I am sorry to say I did that engine watchman a nasty trick. It came about this way: I have told how precious valve oil was in those days and how scant was the measure doled out with which to make a trip. Most
engineers had an extra tallow pot on the engine. I have seen engineers drain what valve oil was left in the lubricator into their private can upon approaching a terminal.

When Old Man Baker had realized someone else was going out on the 714 instead of him, he emptied all the surplus valve oil into his private can and took it with him when he left the engine at Thistle. This left me with no extra valve oil.

That engine watchman friend of mine at Marysvale fixed me up with an extra tallow pot full of valve oil on my promise that I would see that he got the tallow pot and the oil back. I am ashamed to say I disregarded that promise. Valve oil was just too hard to come by to give it away once you had it. In any event if I had tried to send it back with an engine crew I am sure they would have diverted it to their own supply. I never saw him again, and I am sure he never saw that tallow pot again.

That part of the country in those days was quite primitive and, I might add, quite desolate looking. There were lots of Indians settled on poverty-stricken farms. The government had built them small lumber shacks on these farms. I have seen whole Indian families line up alongside these homes to watch the train go by. What would make me laugh was that they would stare straight ahead as the train went by, never moving an inch as long as we were in sight.

That old seven hundred seemed to handle that train as though she were running light on the return trip. We were on time everywhere. At Fairview we were several minutes ahead of time.

As we started the climb to Hill Top the steam gradually got away from the fireman and we came into Hill Top a few minutes late. Before I found out how fast I could go down that grade to make running time I lost a few minutes more.

From somewhere I had obtained a cigar for the occasion. I had saved half of it all the way from Marysvale. I was determined to come into Thistle on time with that cigar stump in my mouth. As we lost time I grew desperate. I let them roll faster than I thought safe in order to pick up some of those lost minutes. To add to my troubles, it was Sunday morning and I had to stop to load passengers who were going somewhere for the day. Anywhere I saw milk cans alongside the track I had to stop and load them into the baggage car.

But by fast rolling I gradually picked up that lost time. I had my heart fully set on coming into Thistle OT—on time—with the last half of that cigar sticking out of my face. While yet a short distance from the depot at Thistle I could see our traveling engineer, Joe Stevenson, standing on the
graveled platform. When I got closer I could see he had his watch in his hand—probably for my benefit.

So I played the game and came in with a flourish—with that cigar stump in my face. I blustered to a stop alongside of him. I did not give him a glance. With a casual and perhaps a little contemptuous look on my mug I withdrew the cigar stump from my face and deliberately but casually spit down at his feet. I tried hard to make it all appear as bored routine.

Out of the corner of my eye I watched his reaction. I can see it yet. He was quite a large man and no longer a youth by a long ways. He put his watch in his pocket, slowly turned his back on me, and without a word he walked away. Knowing Joe as I did I am sure he was trying hard to keep from laughing or at least to hide a smile. I will always, as long as I live, be able to see him as he slowly entered the telegraph office.

Joe Stevenson is dead and lying in his grave at Provo. When he died he was superintendent of motive power on the B & G. Some of the men on the road didn’t like him. But I guess that was natural resentment of his official position. I liked him and always considered him my friend.

When I went up to Ogden to fire passenger we became better acquainted. He found out I was making a study of air brakes, and every once in a while when he would run up against a hard question concerning air brakes he would hand it to me just to test me out. When I left the passenger service to come back to freight at Salt Lake he didn’t like it very well. One day he saw me on an eleven hundred freight engine at Provo with Needham.

He hollered, “Hey, Gouldie, why don’t you go up to Ogden and take that job with Plum Haslet? He needs a good man to fire that 770.”

Needham butted in, “Oh, he’s doing all right here.”

Joe gave him a look that silenced him. I had told Joe that I wanted to get a little experience on freight to prepare for promotion.

He had said, “There’s going to be no promotion around here for a long time. Go on back up to Ogden; anybody can fire those freight engines.”

It sure boosted my ego to have a traveling engineer come out and ask me to go up to Ogden and fire a passenger job. Usually it was the other way about. If you didn’t do a good job of firing on those passenger jobs you were not only asked to leave, you were told to get off them.

I did go up to Ogden shortly thereafter. The call of the passenger work was too strong to resist. Plum Haslet had turned in his fireman, a big fellow named Christler, and they were having a hard time finding a man to cut the buck with that 770. I took that job with Plum Haslet on nos. 1
and 2, with engine 770. Number 2 was a particularly heavy train. It was always eight coaches. That was about all one of those little monkeys would handle alone. Those other eastbound passenger trains usually consisted of nine or ten cars, so they were double headed. Number 2 made fewer stops and was faster.

I remember my first trip with Plum. At Salt Lake Joe Stevenson got on the engine. I know I did a fairly good job firing that old 770. Somewhat to the amazement of Plum and Joe, we were making the time. Coming up out of the Jordan Narrows there is a long tangent about one mile long. It’s on a slight upgrade.

Joe was standing alongside the engineer on the right side. They were both watching the steam gauge. I put forth an extra effort. I wanted that engine to pop. It had been reasonably hot all the way from Salt Lake but it hadn’t popped. I thought that now would be a good time, and just before we got to the switch at Mesa the pop lifted. That pop let go with a loud blast! I can still see Joe Stevenson and Plum Haslet looking at each other as though dumbfounded. I stuck my head out of the left gangway to giggle to myself.

I thought when I was promoted that it would only be for a short time, and that I would be back as a fireman when the business boom that we were experiencing fell off. However, business did not fall off as long as I stayed on the Rio Grande. A score or more of men were promoted, and I began to accumulate a little seniority as an engineer.

One afternoon I was called to go out on an extra west to Ogden. I was twenty-six years old at the time. My fireman was a man named Rass Brown. He must have been sixty years old. He had failed to pass the engineer’s examination twice, and was then set back in seniority to the youngest fireman with a regular job. He would have to work up again to promotion. Failing again, the company had the right to relegate him to some other service.

This rule was not enforced for a long time. Finally the firemen’s organization compelled the company to comply with the rule. This was brought about by the fact that the first ten or twelve firemen on the seniority list were men who had turned down their chances at promotion to hold top seniority on the firemen’s list. Consequently all the good short jobs out of Salt Lake were held by these fixtures, as they were called. A fireman could work up to promotion without ever being able to hold one of these preferred jobs.

The company’s forced compliance with the relegation rule worked a great hardship on some of those old men like Rass Brown. But in the