

# Famous Memphis Bridge Over Mississippi Is Longest on Frisco Railroad Today

## Conductor Welch Tells Passengers of Bridge History—10,000 Tons of Steel in Super-Structure

THE Kansas City-Florida Special was pulling into Memphis, Tenn., on a warm night in August. The diner was comfortably filled with guests for the late dinner hour, and the observation car held its share of smiling patrons, idly viewing the scenes of southern plantations, bathed in a flood of moonlight.

Three men sat on the observation end, enjoying their after-dinner cigars. It does not matter what their real names were, but for the sake of identity they shall be known as Mr. Hall, Mr. Brown and Mr. Ray.

The conversation some few miles before the train rolled into Memphis ran something like this:

"Yes, sir," remarked Mr. Ray. "I've been riding this train for the last year. Wouldn't miss it for any other train on any other road I know. I suppose you two gentlemen are acquainted with its schedule?"

"This is my first ride, but I understand we will arrive in Kansas City tomorrow at 9:15 a. m.," answered the second of the trio, Mr. Brown.

"Well, I caught the train at Jacksonville, Florida—I'm headed toward Kansas City, too, and I found it traveled from Jacksonville to Kansas City in about thirty-six hours. That's what I call service," and Mr. Hall took another puff at his cigar.

"Quite an unusual incident happened awhile ago. I was seated in lower 9, car 48. There was an old lady across the aisle. Idly engaged in reading a newspaper, I did not notice that she was crying until the conductor stopped by her seat. In the most diplomatic way I think I ever saw, he secured from her the information that she was not sure her son was to meet her in Memphis. The conductor took the son's name, and early in the afternoon wired him, requesting a return wire at Holly Springs. I took enough interest in the incident to find out if he received an answer. He did, and the appreciation and gratitude that shone in the old lady's face was enough pay for him. I just thought that I'd be mighty grateful if that was my mother receiving such treatment. The old boy has probably been on this run a long time, and he's got a way with his patrons that makes friends of them all."

"That's unusual alright," remarked Mr. Ray, "but from my numerous trips over this line that sounds just about like Frisco service. Every employe

that I have come in contact with, is looking out for my comfort, and I must say I like it."

The train had come to a stop at

*Incidents of unusual service and exceptional courtesy to passengers on the part of our trainmen are constantly encountered by employes. Many of them find their way to this office, and it is our pleasure to pass along the "flowers," so the person to whom they were addressed may receive proper recognition from his officers. Miss Martha Moore, associate editor, wrote the accompanying article, following a trip on the Kansas City-Florida Special. The many friends of Conductor Welch will recognize his genial personality reflected in the story. Information concerning the Memphis bridge was not a part of Welch's required "stock in trade," but he had it just the same. And it served a valuable purpose—not on this one occasion, but on many. And Welch is one of the many Frisco employes who serve over and above the requirements of their position.*

—W. L. H., Jr.

Memphis and Mr. Brown got up and leaned over the observation car railing. For several minutes he studied the passengers as they alighted. "There she is," he exclaimed. "Just saw the old lady, and she met her son, at least she's hugging that boy like he belonged to her."

Both the other men of the trio got up and witnessed the scene.

"I've got a notion to write to an executive of this road and tell him of the interest this conductor takes in his passengers," Mr. Brown remarked, as the three returned to their seats.

For some minutes they sat smoking in silence. The crew, inspecting the train before it left the terminal, attracted their comments and within the space of some twenty minutes, the train slowly glided out of the station on schedule time.

Mr. Ray again leaned over the railing, as the train gained momentum and wound out of the yards. "Here's a whale of a big bridge we're just going to cross," he remarked. "I'd like to know just how long it is. Must be the largest around this part of the country."

Just then the conductor appeared at the observation car door, on his tour

through the train after the stop at Memphis.

Mr. Ray addressed him. "Could you give us some figures on this bridge? We are curious to know its length."

"Certainly," he replied. "I was talking to Col. F. G. Jonah, our chief engineer only a short time ago, as he rode with me, and he gave me some interesting statistics, and I shall be glad to give them to you as soon as I check my train."

Within the space of some few minutes the conductor returned.

"So many people ask about this bridge, that I have taken the time to learn its history," he began. "It is the largest bridge on the Frisco over which trains pass. The old Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis Railway was put in operation to Memphis in 1883 and at that time trains going into Memphis were ferried over the Mississippi River. In 1886, George H. Nettleton, then president of that company, commissioned George S. Morrison to make an examination of the site and report on the cost of a bridge over the Mississippi at Memphis. This report was submitted in 1887 and a bill was introduced in Congress and an act approved in 1888 authorizing the construction of the bridge. This authority was granted to the Kansas City & Memphis Railway and Bridge Co., a corporation organized under the laws of Arkansas. Construction was started November 7, 1888, and the bridge was opened for traffic May 12, 1892. The Frisco Lines acquired the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis Railway in 1903, therefore the bridge became the property of the Frisco at that time."

"Just how long is the bridge," Mr. Ray asked.

"The total length, including the steel viaduct of the west approach, is 3,500 feet, according to Col. Jonah," was the reply. "The clear height of channel spans above high water is 75 feet, and above low water is 110 feet."

"The thing that always interests me, in an engineering job of that kind," mused Mr. Hall, "is the fact that they can make the piers so solid they hold the bridge up, and permit thousands of pounds of steel to continually pass over it."

"That is an interesting feature," replied the conductor. "I remember Col. Jonah saying that the channel piers were constructed with the pneumatic caisson method, and are found-



The longest bridge on Frisco rails—the Memphis Bridge—was constructed in 1892 by the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Memphis Railway. The Frisco purchased this road in 1903, and acquired the bridge. Its length, including the steel viaduct of the west approach, is 3,500 feet and the height of its channel spans above high water is 75 feet. Approximately 10,000 tons of steel went into the superstructure.

ed on a stratum of hard clay, approximately ninety-three feet below low water. He also told me there are approximately 10,000 tons of steel in the superstructure.

Mr. Brown had been waiting for a chance to ask a question. "Were you on this run when the first train went over?"

"No, I was transferred here from another division, but I have talked to several men running out of Memphis, who were here at the time. Memphis held a grand celebration on the opening day. Everybody turned out to see the testing of the bridge, which was done with a train of eighteen of the heaviest locomotives then in service."

"Do you know what it cost—the construction, everything included?" was Mr. Brown's next question.

"I believe Col. Jonah said about \$3,000,000.00," replied the conductor. "One interesting item which any old Memphis resident will tell you of the opening days of the bridge, comes to my mind. About a week after the bridge was formally opened, a high diver arrived in town and made the announcement that on a certain day he would make a jump from the bridge to the river below, a drop of 115 feet. The bridge company and the city police advertised that no such thing would occur. However, the curiosity of a great throng of people had been aroused, and the banks were lined with people, and the bridge with guards. About the time everybody was getting tired and ready to leave, a little old train came creeping over from the Arkansas shore. Mr. High Diver dropped off the rear end, with citizen's clothes on over his tights. A dozen guards jumped for him, but he managed to shed his coat and went

over the rail head first—came up smiling, and swam ashore."

"So they had high divers in those days, and daredevils, too," laughed Mr. Brown.

"The Frisco is contemplating some reinforcements to the bridge. At the time it was built, in 1892, it was built for the heaviest engines then in service or anticipated, but with that tremendous increase in motive power in the last few years, the Frisco has now under way a program for strengthening the bridge, particularly the viaduct approach at the west end, for the heaviest engines in service today. I understand that associated with the Frisco engineers in working out plans for this strengthening, is Mr. Ralph Modjeski, one of the leading bridge engineers of America today and possibly of the world. I am sure you have read or heard of him. He was associated with Mr. Morison, of whom I spoke before, in the erection of this bridge. Many of the original drawings, according to Col. Jonah, bear his signature. He is the son of the famous Polish actress, Madame Modjeski and has had quite an interesting career in his chosen profession," continued the conductor.

"That's an interesting story, and we're grateful to you for the telling. I wonder if you'd give me your name?" Mr. Ray asked, as he took a card and pencil from his pocket.

"Welch—M. D. Welch," was the reply.

"Mine is Ray. I'm glad to know you. This is Mr. Brown and Mr. Hall. We've been enjoying the trip and find you give splendid service."

"Well, sir, that is the slogan of this road—SERVICE, and we all try to do our bit," he replied. "I hope you'll ride with us again. The train is right

on time. We'll be in Kansas City at 9:15 in the morning. I trust you will rest well," and he bid them good-night.

"By George! Just how many conductors would take the time and trouble to learn the history of a bridge—just because it happened to be on their run. That man is an asset to the company and I'm going to give him a little praise," and Mr. Ray carefully wrote down the name which he had been given.

Mr. Brown and Mr. Hall both asserted that the courtesy and service were unusual.

"Well, gentlemen, I think I'll wander in and see if my berth is ready. The nights in the Ozarks are cool, and since I'm from the South, I know I'm going to enjoy this one," and Mr. Ray rose and started toward the door.

"Time for us all to be getting in," Mr. Hall remarked, and both he and Mr. Brown pushed back their chairs. "I hope we can all three meet at breakfast in the morning," and the three men filed through the observation car for a night of peaceful rest on one of the Frisco's finest trains.

#### CARD OF THANKS

I wish to thank the hundreds of Frisco people who were so kind and thoughtful to me and to the memory of my husband, George W. Green. Your kindness will never be forgotten.

(Signed)

MRS. GEORGE W. GREEN.

"Where are you going with that gun?"

"I'm looking for that little bird that tells my girl everything."—Oregon Orange Owl.

# Switch Tracks Damaged in Freakish Cave-in on Memphis River Front

*Ten Billion Cubic Feet of Ground in Frisco Yards Fall Into Mississippi River on July 25th*



**C**RACKING and rumbling its belated warning a freakish cave-in occurred Sunday, July 25, at Memphis, Tennessee, when ten billion cubic feet of ground at the foot of Butler Avenue on the Mississippi bluffs, crumbled downward to a depth of fifty feet.

The switch tracks of the Frisco between Butler and Trezevant Street sank with the entire plant and yards of the West Kentucky Coal Company and a lot of equipment of Pease & Dwyer, feed manufacturers, the destruction combining to an approximated damage of \$250,000.

The caved-in land was approximately eight hundred square feet, running in width from a narrow strip to one hundred and seventy-five feet. The cave-in completely cut off the Frisco main lead track running north into Frisco river front trackage.

During the hour after the first rumblings of the approaching calamity, the mass of earth settled to a depth of fifty feet, although not a foot of the earth went into the river itself.

For more than a year officials at Memphis had expected something of the sort. Cracks in the ground have been visible for twelve months, but not until a few days before the cave-in did they become dangerous. On the day of the cave-in, reports the

Memphis Commercial-Appeal, J. J. O'Neil, superintendent of the Frisco terminals, became convinced of the impending disaster, and began moving equipment and preparing for the cave-in.

"Just before noon on the day of the cave-in we took a level and found that the earth had settled .98 of a foot," Superintendent O'Neil told reporters. "I went to lunch and when I returned the little shanty from which I took the level was fifty feet down in the bosom of the earth. But we had started getting our equipment out of the way a few days before. We had a similar cave-in four years ago down near the roundhouse and lost a bunch of equipment and I didn't want to take any chances. When we ran the last string of cars out at noon I could see the earth giving way ahead of the engine. When I came back from lunch I found our fears multiplied ten fold."

The extent of damage can be learned, partially, from the above picture, which was taken fifteen minutes after the cave-in. The track at the right is the industrial track to the Pease & Dwyer warehouse. It sank with the earth without disturbing the dirt around the ties. A long section of the rail can be seen leaning against the far wall of the bank where it was

torn loose and broken from the ties by the force of the collapse. The track at the left which slid down the bank is the main lead track to the Frisco river front trackage. The Frisco equipment on top of the bank was saved, and no cars or lives were lost.

## A SAMPLE OF EFFICIENCY

It is a known fact that the larger the corporation—the greater its system of efficiency.

On August 3, at 3:05 p. m., L. J. Leysaht, superintendent of shops at Springfield, received a telephone order for four 90-pound rails, twenty-two feet long. The request was urgent, as a repair job was being held up, awaiting the arrival of this material.

James Burt, assistant foreman in charge of rails, was called by a signal whistle and given the order and told to load the material on a flat car.

Twenty minutes later the rails were loaded! Another fifteen minutes and they were billed out of the yard and the car was being moved out, to be placed in a train for handling to destination.

This promptness could not have been accomplished without co-operation and dispatch.

## In Those Good Ol' Days



WE'RE talking to you, Noel Yeary, though you won't understand for a few years just what we mean. Only a few moments ago your picture arrived, sent by your uncle, O. L. Ousley, who is employed in the Frisco telegraph department at Springfield. For ten minutes we've looked at your image, looked at your dog, at your pole and we've admired the good fisherman's attitude you have. There is determination and alertness in your arms and hands as they grasp the pole, Noel Yeary, and we can tell from your intent and anxious attitude that you've just caught one and are expecting another.

There's something about your picture, Noel Yeary, that makes us a little frightened at something we don't understand. Maybe it is because it seems only so few years ago that we had a favorite dog, a trusty bamboo pole and a favorite fishing hole. But those days are gone for us now, Noel Yeary, and they will be gone soon for you.

As we write these lines today high up in a building in St. Louis, the roar of street cars, the wail of motor horns and the scream of sliding rubber tires is shot up to us on stifling billows of air. The heat intensifies the jangling phone—seems to magnify the hum and buzz of busy offices, and yet your picture seems so near, Noel Yeary, so peaceful, so contented.

Oh, those days of barefoot tramping to that gently coursing creek, with "Shep," the bamboo pole, the can of worms, and the cork from mother's vinegar jug "borrowed" for a bobber.

The sober decision to fish under that particular elm with its long thick branches towering above and casting cooling gentle shade below. The calm floating of that bobber in the shallows for minutes and minutes while steady eyes and ready muscles waited for the strike. Then it came—the line tensed, the bobber shot downward, "Shep's" yapping as you jumped to your feet, nerves tingling, goose-flesh popping out all over—a brief play and then the glistening, wriggling bass or crappie—the first catch of the day.

The afternoon wears on and as the shadows of those towering trees lengthen over the stream you proudly inspect the half dozen beautiful specimens on that string tied to the tree root just under water. Then jerk off clothing and shout with unadulterated joy as you plunge from the bank into that soothing, cooling water. Dressing still damp from the plunge you shoulder pole and line, call "Shep" and begin the homeward trek, proudly swinging that string of fish.

But those good old days of irresponsible, carefree boyhood, where are they?

Some day, Noel Yeary, you will read these lines in the scrap book your mother keeps for you. You will have reached man's estate by then, and you will know why the man who writes these lines on a hot July afternoon far up in a building of the teaming city gazed at your picture with longing eyes and itching hands.

For there is nothing like the cool feel of a bamboo pole, the comfort and solitude of a grassy creek-bank, and no man's eyes became tired and lined with care through watching that gently bobbing, lazily drifting cork just before the strike of a hungry bass.

W. L. H., Jr.

## A HEROIC SERVICE

AT about 2:15 on the morning of August 6, Boilermaker Edward Lawrence of Vernon, Texas, discovered a fire in the warehouse of the Martin Lane Company, located on the south side of the Frisco team track and near a large cotton compress.

Lawrence immediately called the fire department and also Wayne Campbell and G. W. Stephens, firemen, who were nearby, and the three of them took local engine 775 from the roundhouse lead track and cleared the track adjacent to the burning building, of a number of loaded and empty cars which had been set out on this track the previous evening by the local.

These three men performed valuable service and if it had not been for their prompt action, the Frisco would have suffered considerable damage through loss of equipment, as the building and contents were an entire loss.

Superintendent J. S. Frazier has given these men recognition for their services.

## THANKS FRISCO FOR AID

Moving the wheat crop on Frisco Lines is requiring more cars every year, but the Frisco officials are co-operating so closely with the different milling concerns and shippers, that the crop is being handled in a most efficient and speedy manner.

The Central Kansas Milling Company with headquarters at Lyons, Kansas, met with an accident recently. An elevator at Saxman, Kansas, collapsed, spilling 100,000 bushels of wheat on the ground.

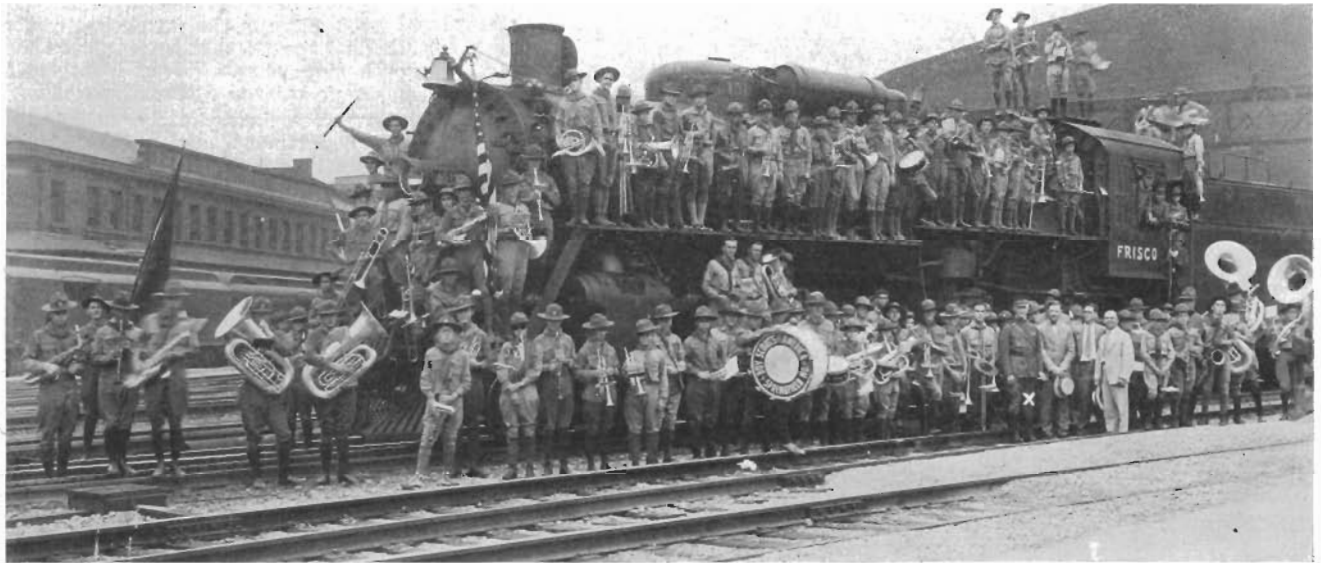
The Frisco came to the rescue and the wheat was reloaded in Frisco cars and moved on with little damage.

The appreciation of the milling company's officials is expressed in the following letter, which was addressed to E. E. Carter, assistant superintendent Alvin Long, secretary and manager of the Central Kansas Milling Company wrote as follows:

"You have no idea how much we appreciated the assistance the Frisco and you gave us at Saxman, but at that we wish to thank you again for this assistance. We appreciate all the favors you have granted us in the way of seeing that empties were set in there promptly and moved promptly for us, as we moved the wheat from the wreck.

"We have the wheat all out of the wreck now except about one carload and we hope to get that out without getting it damaged by water. Thanks to the help you are giving us in the way of canvas."

## Boy Scouts Band of Springfield, Mo., Delights St. Louisans at Theatre Engagement



The famous Boy Scouts of America Band of Springfield, Mo., the largest boy scout band in the world, drew record crowds to Loew's State Theatre in St. Louis during the week of July 25. The boys came with their director, Mr. R. Ritchie Robertson, to play a week's engagement at the theatre.

When the "Texas Special" pulled into Union Station, St. Louis, the morning of July 22, the boys dismounted from their Pullmans to meet a large delegation of admirers, and to face motion picture and "still" cameras. They mounted the sides of Engine No. 1518 and clambered over her running boards as the Frisco Magazine photographer registered the scene. At the city hall, a few moments later, a representative of Mayor Victor Miller presented the keys of the city to Director Robertson, and the boys marched in triumph down Washington Avenue to Loew's Theatre, their home for a week. Director Robertson is indicated by "X" in the above picture. John Lynch, engineer, and E. P. White, fireman, are in the cab of No. 1518.

## Frisco Passenger Trains Ran 95.9 Per Cent on Time During July

**P**ASSENGER trains on Frisco Lines were operated 95.9 per cent on time during July, according to the monthly statement issued from the general manager's office. A total of 5,415 trains traveled the 5,400 miles of Frisco tracks during July, forty-four trains less than in June.

The on-time performance of 95.9 per cent for July was .5 per cent better than July of 1925 and .4 per cent better than July of 1924. In June of 1926, however, the report credited Frisco passenger trains with being 97.4 per cent on time.

The four "crack" divisions of the road again exceeded the railroad's

goal of 98 per cent on time. The western hauled 217 trains, 99.5 per cent on time, and for the first twenty days of the month Superintendent Frazier's men kept their trains 100 per cent on time. The northern division, with a total of 1,333 trains for the month, made the on-time record of 98.6 per cent; and the central, with 620 trains, kept 98.4 per cent of them on schedule. Superintendent Moran's river division record was 705 trains at 98.3 per cent on time.

The southern division had its lowest July in three years when the report for that month of 1926 showed that 744 trains were 96.5 per cent on time.

Although the southwestern division made the on-time percentage of 94.9 during July for its 866 trains, it bettered the performance for the same month of both 1925 and 1924.

The Frisco's Texas Lines have undisputed hold on the "cellar" position for July. Vice-President O. H. McCarty's men dropped to 74.2 per cent on time for 248 trains. The Texas Lines nearest rival was the eastern division, with 682 trains 93.1 per cent on time. The eastern is improving its monthly standing. In June this year they were 92.1 per cent on time and in July of 1925 and 1924, their on-time record was 88.0 and 89.9 per cent, respectively.

DIVISION	TOTAL TRAINS OPERATED			TOTAL TRAINS MAINTAINED SCHEDULE OR MADE UP TIME			PER CENT TRAINS MAINTAINED SCHEDULE OR MADE UP TIME			STANDING OF DIVISIONS		
	July 1926	July 1925	July 1924	July 1926	July 1925	July 1924	July 1926	July 1925	July 1924	July 1926	July 1925	July 1924
Western.....	217	234	248	216	228	246	99.5	97.4	99.2	1	2	1
Northern.....	1333	1442	1302	1314	1396	1251	98.6	96.8	96.1	2	4	5
Central.....	620	806	868	610	782	856	98.4	97.0	98.6	3	3	2
River.....	705	621	550	693	613	536	98.3	98.7	97.5	4	1	4
Southern.....	744	806	806	718	779	788	96.5	96.7	97.7	5	5	3
Southwestern.....	866	868	868	822	810	785	94.9	93.3	90.4	6	6	6
Eastern.....	682	744	612	635	655	550	93.1	88.0	89.9	7	7	7
Total Frisco Proper Operated.....	5167	5521	5254	5008	5263	5012						
Per Cent Operated.....							96.9	95.3	95.4			
Texas Lines.....	248	186	186	184	184	184	74.2	98.9	98.9			
Total System Operated.....	5415	5707	5440	5192	5447	5196						
Per Cent Operated.....							95.9	95.4	95.5			