

## MEMOIR

JOHN C. NELSON

John C. Nelson, engineer maintenance of way of the Seaboard Air Line, died at Norfolk, Va., on October 6, following an attack of Spanish influenza. He was born at Belton, Texas, on November 3, 1862, and entered railway service with the Richmond & Mecklenburg Railroad, as a rodman on an engineering corps, in July, 1882. From February, 1883, to April of the same year he was a levelman with the Richmond & Danville Railway, from which time until February, 1884, he was resident engineer with the Richmond & Mecklenburg road. From the latter date until March, 1891, he was assistant engineer on the Cincinnati, New Orleans & Texas Pacific and from March, 1891, to May, he was resident engineer on the Louisville Southern. After three months' service with the Cincinnati, New Orleans & Texas Pacific as an assistant engineer he went with the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis as engineer maintenance of way on the Cincinnati division, with headquarters at Springfield, Ohio. In September, 1899, he was appointed division engineer on the eastern division of the New York Central & Hudson River Railroad, with headquarters at New York, where he remained until 1902, when he returned to the Cincinnati, New Orleans & Texas Pacific as roadmaster. In 1907 he was appointed engineer maintenance of way of the Seaboard Air Line, which position he held until the time of his death.

Mr. Nelson was highly esteemed by his associates and his sudden death was a great shock to them. During the eleven years of his connection with the Seaboard Air Line Railway, he had impressed his personality upon his associates in a manner which will long be remembered.

He became a member of the American Railway Bridge and Building Association at Jacksonville, in 1909.

## W. R. LANNING

Wm. R. Lanning was born near Ottumwa, Iowa, on June 25, 1869. He received his education in the public schools, leaving at the age of 15 to learn the carpenter trade. His first railroad experience was gained with the old Chicago, Ft. Madison & Des Moines Railroad; in March, 1893, he was employed by the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway as a carpenter. Shortly after this he left to work at his trade elsewhere and also took up contracting and building. In 1907 he again entered the service of the C. M. & St. P. Ry., being located at Pontis, South Dakota, where the construction of the Puget Sound line was under way. In 1907 he was made carpenter foreman and in August, 1908, he was promoted to the position of chief carpenter, which position he held until March, 1915, when he was obliged to take a leave of absence because of ill health. After a few months he again returned to service as chief carpenter at St. Maries, Idaho, in which position he remained until his death on Apr. 8, 1918.

Mr. Lanning was in poor health for the last few years of his life and his trouble was largely aggravated by exposure during washouts in the Bitter Root mountains near Avery, Idaho, during the latter part of 1917. He died at his home in Missoula, Mont., on April 8, 1918, leaving a wife and three sons, Russell, Burdette and Harold, the latter being a sergeant in the United States army. He was connected with the Christian church of Missoula, Mont., and also belonged to the Fraternal Brotherhood.

Mr. Lanning took a very active part in the work required by the railroad during the fires in the Bitter Root mountains in 1910, and fre-

quently referred to this period as being the most important in his railroad career. The following extract from an article published in Everybody's Magazine of December, 1910, indicates the active part which Mr. Lanning took in that event:

"On the day the fire became unmanageable there were no fewer than 1,000 people along the line of the C. M. & P. S. railroad in the 48 miles between Avery, Idaho, and Haugan, Montana. These were mainly railway employees, their wives and children, and refugees from the interior, although there were many tradespeople in the villages. Four work trains were busy on that stretch of track under the direction of C. H. Marshall and W. R. Lanning, superintendent and chief carpenter, respectively, of the Missoula division. A telephone message to Superintendent Marshall from the girl operator at Kyle, a small station, gave the first alarm of the approaching fire. While they were talking the wires went down.

"Marshall and Lanning at once ordered two of the trains to proceed along the line, picking up everybody. 'Don't pass anybody, no matter who it is, and put every living soul aboard, whether they want to go or not,' was the order given to the trainmen and a few American laborers who, the railroad officials knew from past experience, were the only men in the jumble of nationalities upon whom they could depend.

"Before the trains had gone far the fire was in sight. From mountain to mountain the flames leaped, with the speed of a fast train sowing brands upon the slopes to kindle slower, even more deadly fires. With the fire came the gale. Stones of a pound weight, gravel, dust, debris of the forest, were hurled before it, and soon clouds of smoke, fire-tainted, scorching, thicker than ever, completely obscured the sun.

"More than 400 people were herded into the cars east of the St. Paul Pass tunnel by Lanning and carried into the great tube, which is almost two miles long. There they remained in safety, suffering somewhat from smoke. Under the direction of Superintendent Marshall several hundred were taken out by the way of the east to Haugan. In another, and shorter tunnel, 200 people found refuge. They were pulled there on a train by Engineer Roberts, who ran a blazing bridge, over 700 ft. long and 100 ft. high, to put them there. When they reached the tunnel the fuel oil in the tank was frying.

"But that did not take care of the people. Scattered along the line between the great tunnel and Kyle, Idaho, were many whom it seemed impossible to save. The fire was pouring across the track, many bridges were going. 'We'll make a try for it, just the same,' said Lanning.

"An engineer and a fireman volunteered for the perilous venture, likewise a conductor on one of the work trains. With an engine and three cars they set out. It was apparent to all as they proceeded that they would never be able to return to the big tunnel. When the train reached the refugees huddled along the track, many of them had to be lifted in bodily, cutting from their backs rolls of blankets and any other inflammable material. Water in barrels at the ends of the bridges was boiled and evaporated away, the staves burning down to the level of the water as it sank. Fish in the streams were cooked; for days they floated, by thousands. Ties were burned out of the railroad track, the rails were buckled and kinked like wire. Everything was swept clean to the tunnel's mouths.

"After 48 hours in this hot dungeon, chief carpenter Lanning walked out, to find 19 of his bridges burned in 48 miles of track. He went to work to replace them. With 500 men, working night and day, he labored. In 11½ days he rebuilt 16 bridges, ranging from 360 to 775 ft. in length, and from 16 to 120 ft. high, every one of them standard permanent bridges. It was one of the most stupendous achievements in the history of railroading.

"Besides that, Lanning alone, has to his credit 500 human lives. He hasn't much to say about it; only this: 'An American owes that to his country and his kind.'"

#### EDWARD S. MELOY

Edward S. Meloy, an assistant engineer in the engineering department of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway was born in Waterbury, Connecticut, on March 9, 1860 and died in Chicago, Illinois, on July 8, 1918. He began his railroad career as a rodman with the New York and New England Railroad in 1878, following which he was resident engineer with the N. Y. C. & St. L. Ry., locating engineer with the M. & O. R. R., and in charge of track laying with the B. H. T. & W. R. R., and the C. & N. W. Ry. In the autumn of 1886 he entered the service of the C. M. & St. P., and was located successively at Chillicothe, Mo., Marion, Ia., Milwaukee, Wis., Tomah, Wis., and Chicago, Ill. At the time of his death he was assistant engineer in charge of bridge inspection and bridge erection. In his efficient, loyal and conscientious service of over 30 years he made many friends. The funeral service was conducted by Bishop William O. Shepard of the Methodist Episcopal Church, a warm personal friend of more than 20 years' acquaintance, from whose remarks the following brief abstract is taken:

"Mr. Meloy was a substantial man to lean upon. He was steadfast, loyal, certain and true. You can easily tell that by the fact that he continued in one employment, rising to greater and still greater honor and responsibility, for a third of a century. During all that time he was constant in doing his part, in his place, with increasing efficiency.—doing his part of the necessary work of the world.

"If I were to try to put into a single word what I thought was characteristic of Mr. Meloy, I think that I should have to use the word 'faithfulness,' or the word 'loyal,' or the word 'constancy.' And I should not be quite satisfied with any one of these words, but should wish to bring in some suggestion of his gentleness, and gentlemanliness. He was one upon whom you could depend. He would not make a rash promise at all. But he would make a promise to a friend, and keep it."

#### D. C. ZOOK

Dennis Coder Zook was born March 14, 1852, in Wyandot County, Ohio, son of Daniel and Nancy (Steele) Zook, both natives of Pennsylvania. He received his early education in the common schools in the vicinity where he was born. After a thorough knowledge of carpentry Mr. Zook entered the employ of the Pennsylvania railroad on June 1, 1873. Ten years later he was made foreman of a carpenter gang at Valparaiso, Indiana, which position he retained until 1897 when he received the title of master carpenter in which capacity he served with headquarters at Fort Wayne, Ind., until his death.

Mr. Zook had been in failing health for several years but his condition was not considered serious until a few days before his death, when he was removed to the Deaconess hospital at Indianapolis at which place he slept away apparently without pain on the morning of March 28, 1918, from heart disease.

In his long continuous connection with the Pennsylvania railroad Mr. Zook came to be known and respected as one of the company's most venerable and valued employes. His death ends a long career of efficient and devoted service and represents a deep sorrow to his hosts of acquaintances in railroad and lodge circles in Fort Wayne. He was an ardent member of the Methodist Episcopal church and an esteemed member of the Masonic fraternity. He joined the American Railway Bridge and