

Oral history with 89 year old male, Whick, Kentucky (Transcription)

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Ron: What about these work trains could you describe them?

<unintelligible text>: When they had a slide on the road, they would haul a ditcher out there to ditch the slide off. If they had any more work to do other than that, unloading rails, balances, and loading rails, just anything they had to do on the line of the road. They would use them instead of a regular schelued frieght train. They would callout on the road and <maybe?> work for a week at the time, all up and down the road. They would have a section man to stay with them to do this work until after quitting, and then returned to the headquarters. They would stay at home, only the train

crew would stay overnight. If they had anything for us to do, they would call us out the next morning. They would take us to unload ties, balances, ties, or just anything along the road. That's what they used the work train for.

Ron: Then the camp car ...

<unintelligible text>: Well, they had extra gangs located along the road, in different places and locations. a bunch of colored men they keep on there. They would service and mind track. They would put up the worst track along the road then switch to another mans territory. Like if I had some rough track about a mile here, if I didn't have enough men, they

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would run them over there and make service there. Then, they would service some for him.

Ron: Would they just have to stay in these till they got their job done?

<unintelligible text>: Yes, sir. Yes, they would move them say they done with the work here at Haddix they would move them to <Altro?>. They would move them to wherever they was going to work. They would have 30 to 35 colored men and extra gang for man. He prepared the food for them. He keep a commissary on the car. He boarded them and board stack them food and keep them on the car. He had shoes, mugs, and overalls, anything they we need right on there. Of course, he would board stock then and get his pay cut of the niggers, you know. That's the way they did it.

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Ira: Would you tell us about the passenger trains that run through here?

<unintelligible text>: They had six passenger trains on the railroad at one time. They had 9 some thing hid No. 4 coming back at 3 something that evening and they had No. 1 and No, 2. Number 1 came in at about 5 o'clock in the morning. Number 2 would come back at 7 that night coming north. Seven and eight, one of them came up at about noon coming south and one coming north at about two o'clock. Three each way, three north and three south. That keep that going to along in the 20's.

Ira: About how many passangers did they haul?

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<unintelligible text>: They had them loaded then. Everybody rode passenger trains. They didn't have no highways and they had to use the passenger trains then. All the employees had passes to ride, didn't costs them to ride. Those it costed had to buy tickets along the line of the road.

Ron: Why did you think they ever cut them out through here?

<unintelligible text>: Well, just here highway cut they cut. Everybody got cars and after this road went through Hazard, whitesburg, and up and down, the people rode cars. All that rode the passenger trains were the pass riders.

Ron: Do you remember any big celebrities, like President's wife that came to <unintelligible text> County on the railroad?

<unintelligible text>: Yes, I do. Franklin D. Roosevelt's wife came here and made a speech down here at the high school, <unintelligible text> High. I know that back when he was President. That was along up in the thirty somethings.

Ron: Mrs. Roosevelt come by train, didn't she?

<unintelligible text>: Yes sir.

Ira: When you started to work did they have any signals on the tracks, lights or anything.

<unintelligible text>: Yes, we didn't any signals like they have now but they have these switch on lamps which were operated by hand, not with electricity as it is now.

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Ron: Well, these gates you were talking about over the railroad. Did you ever hear them not working and causing someone to get hit?

<unintelligible text>: No, they generally work, if they don't work the dispatcher knows if right now down at Ravenna. I shows up on that board some way or another. If those don't work it won't be an hour before they have a signal detail working on it. Only thing sometimes one of these boards will let down as a car comes along and maybe breaks one of them off. Troy <unintelligible text> had a bread truck come through here, about the time that board come down. We saw the train and <unintelligible text> scared and tried to back up and the board fell on the hood of his car. He saw that he had to do something so he back up and broke the board.

Ron: Was you around when they started building the railroad? If so what year was that?

<unintelligible text>: That Was about <1908?> or <1909?>.

Ron: When was the train depot built down here in Jackson?

<unintelligible text>: They had a small one when the railroad first came through. I just couldn't tell you. It must have been built in 1928 or 1929. They cleared the smaller one down and built the new one. You know the <unintelligible text> came through there before the <unintelligible text> came. The <unintelligible text> came in, they brought the <unintelligible text> out. The <unintelligible text> then came up to the Dumont tunnel on account of the Robinson lumber job at quicksand. They had a depot there. That was is far as the road came at that time. Then about 1928 they took the track out and abandoned the depot.

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