

## Iowans on the M&StL

Of all Iowa towns Oskaloosa is probably more of an "M&StL community" than any other within the state. Being an important junction point and division center, Oskaloosa is vital to the Minneapolis & St. Louis: the railway is one of the largest employers in town. Moreover, this thriving seat of Mahaska County has provided its full share of the road's officials.

Back in 1925 a tall, lanky lad just out of high school handed a letter to the Railway Post Office clerk on the *North Star Limited* as it halted at Oskaloosa's station. The writer was Charles Leroy Fuller; the letter was a query about a job. Two days later a telegram came to him from Dexter Denison, freight traffic manager of the M&StL. It was a notice to report to work as a stenographer in Minneapolis; a "wire pass" for transportation accompanied the note. "Skeet" Fuller took the job. He has been with the road ever since.

Roy Fuller (born in Oskaloosa, March 24, 1905) liked railroading and subsequently became traffic agent in Des Moines, then traveling agent working out of Cincinnati, and in 1935 general agent in Indianapolis. A year later he came in from off-line territory to the general agency in

Minneapolis. Promotions followed: general freight agent, assistant traffic manager, and, in 1950, freight traffic manager. One of the tallest men on the railroad (he is, in his own words, "5 feet, 17½ inches") Roy Fuller is also outstanding because of his pleasing personality and sunny disposition. He likes to play pocket and three cushion billiards in which he is proficient. He married Susan Dale Riley; the Fullers have a boy and a girl. Mr. Fuller asserts he is "non-partisan in politics"; he is a Congregationalist, and holds membership in the Traffic Club of Minneapolis, Army Transportation Association, and the Minneapolis Athletic, Optimist, and Toastmasters clubs.

Another Oskaloosan — and a veteran on the Louie — is Purchasing Agent Fred B. Matthews. Born in "Oskey" May 19, 1890, young Fred looked to the Iowa Central for employment after finishing high school and the Oskaloosa Business College. His rail career began as receiving clerk in the home town freight depot. That was, he recalls, "back in December 15, 1908." He subsequently became assistant timekeeper, then chief timekeeper. In 1916 he left Oskaloosa for a stint at chief clerking: first in the O. S. & D. (Over, Short and Damaged) Department at Minneapolis; then a like position with E. E. Kerwin, superintendent at Watertown, South Dakota. When the Watertown superintendency was abolished late in 1917, Matthews was made assistant chief clerk to C. P. Stembel

and shortly afterward chief clerk to Robert E. Ryan (both superintendents) back in Minneapolis. On April 15, 1935, he was appointed purchasing agent.

Mr. Matthews married Nancy Jane Klepper of Oskaloosa; they have one living son, their other boy lost his life in the late war. Fred Matthews is fond of hunting and fishing although he finds little time to do either. When in Iowa he had quite a reputation as second tenor in the Knights of Pythias Glee Club, and sang at many social engagements.

Up until 1910 Centerville was an Iowa Central point, for the Albia & Centerville Railway was operated by the former road. Around train-time at the Centerville depot, town folk of all ages came to see the trains depart. Among these was a youngster, one of the Sandahl kids, called Oscar. He was, however, more fascinated by the sound of the telegraph key than the commotion of a departing train. Oscar, in short, decided he'd be a telegrapher. Moreover, he backed up his decision with well-directed training.

In town the Methodist minister's boy had the same idea — and a new telegraph set. Oscar managed to get some old battery jars and a key; a friendly lineman helped string second-hand telephone wires between the parsonage and the Sandahl residence, and both boys started pounding the keys. Whatever additional aid was needed

Oscar's brother, Carl, who was then an "op" for the Iowa Central, gladly proffered. Came the day when Carl was transferred from Centerville to Moravia, and brother Oscar promptly applied for his old job. On November 1, 1904, when only fifteen (he was born January 11, 1889, in Centerville), Oscar Sandahl started railroading on the local road at \$25 a month.

After some two years on the Hook he switched to the Kansas City Division of the Milwaukee — the pay was better. By midsummer of 1909 he was back on an Iowa road — the Des Moines Union — at the state capital, as operator. Sensing greater advancement in traffic work he went with the New York Central as stenographer and solicitor in Des Moines. After a stint in the army during World War I, Oscar Sandahl returned to railroading, this time with the M&StL as clerk and solicitor at Des Moines. Advancement to traveling agent soon followed, along with better jobs at the off-line points of Chicago, Detroit, and Boston. On May 1, 1937, Mr. Sandahl was summoned to Minneapolis as assistant general freight agent. Other promotions came, and by the end of 1943 he was appointed freight traffic manager.

Mr. Sandahl married Ruth Tilton of Des Moines; they have a son and a daughter. He likes to sing and remembers the day when the brothers Sandahl (Carl, Paul, Fred, and Oscar) had an amateur quartet which had engagements in Iowa

and in the East. Mr. Sandahl is a Republican, a member of the Traffic Club of Minneapolis, and the Minneapolis Athletic and Golf clubs.

In the Executive Department of the M&StL, Iowa is represented by Merle E. Eaton, assistant to the president. Born in Chester, May 4, 1892, Eaton was educated at Cresco High School and the Minnesota School of Business, Minneapolis. He came to the M&StL in 1923 as secretary to William H. Bremner, then president and receiver. Mr. Eaton was subsequently made chief clerk in the receiver's office. When L. C. Sprague succeeded Bremner as head of the road in 1935, Merle Eaton was made assistant secretary of the company; three years later he became secretary. In 1943 he was appointed assistant to the president and assistant secretary.

Methodical and businesslike, he has a quiet sense of humor and enjoys nothing better than to harmonize with a group of singers at the piano. When a schoolboy he excelled in basketball — he still likes the game — but now enjoys the less arduous sport of billiards. He was married to the late Helen Hayes; his daughter lives near Minneapolis; his son died in World War II. Mr. Eaton married Luella Hauser in 1950. He is a Shriner, a Republican, and holds membership in the Traffic Club of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Athletic and the Golden Valley Golf clubs.

The youngest Iowan in the official brackets is

William J. Powell, general attorney for the railway. Although born in Floris, November 22, 1914, he spent his boyhood at Ottumwa where his father, William H. Powell, and his uncle, James F. Powell, had both edited the *Ottumwa Courier*. Educated at Carleton College, Bill Powell chose the law as a career and received an LL. B. from the University of Minnesota in 1938. He practiced in Spring Valley, Minnesota, where at the age of twenty-eight he was elected president of the Tenth Judicial District Bar Association. He came with the M&StL in 1947 as general attorney.

In spite of the fact that he went to the University of Minnesota, Bill Powell stoutly avers he always cheers for the Hawkeye team whenever Minnesota plays the State University of Iowa. His fondness for Iowa and his dry wit are two noticeable characteristics. His avocations include "gardening in the summer; snow shoveling in winter." He married Meredith Burnap; the Powells have a son and a daughter, in that order. Mr. Powell is a Republican, an Episcopalian, and a member of the Minnesota Bar Association and the Minneapolis Athletic Club.

It is an odd coincidence that in reviewing the former executives of the M&StL one finds the longest and the shortest terms were held by Iowa men. William H. Bremner, mentioned elsewhere in this article, was president of the road from 1917 to 1934 except for a year and a half during World

War I when he was federal manager. Born in Marshalltown October 24, 1869, Bremner, after passing his bar examination, hung up his shingle in the state capital. Before entering the M&StL's law department he had been city solicitor for Des Moines.

In contrast to Bremner's long tenure, Edward L. Brown held the presidency for less than half a year. Serious illness forced his untimely resignation, but after a period of convalescence at the Mayo Clinic his health improved; he later headed the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad. Brown was born in Iowa January 3, 1864; he began his rail career as a messenger boy on the Rock Island. After rising to become train dispatcher on that road, he went with the St. Paul & Duluth (now the Northern Pacific), becoming superintendent in 1896. Six years afterward he changed to the Great Northern. He relinquished a superintendency on the GN to head the M&StL late in 1916. Brown died in 1921, and his body was taken by special car to his old home in Pella for burial.

Probably the most distinguished ex-M&StL official is Judge Matthew M. Joyce. Judge Joyce was born in Emmetsburg April 29, 1877; he took his law degree from the University of Michigan in 1900, and practiced in Missoula, Montana, and in Fort Dodge. Coming with the M&StL as general solicitor in 1917, he was subsequently made general counsel. In 1932 he left the railroad when ap-

pointed judge of the United States District Court in Minneapolis, which office he still holds.

Another Iowan held in high esteem on the M&StL was the late John H. Reinholdt. Born at Manning, November 23, 1883, and educated at Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania, Reinholdt had a long and varied engineering career. Beginning as roadman on the Chicago Great Western in 1901, he later held responsible engineering positions on the New York Central Railroad, Easton Transit Company, and the Lehigh Valley Railroad. Reinholdt left the latter road to become the M&StL's assistant engineer in 1909. He went with the Kansas City Terminal Railway as general roadmaster early in 1917 but returned to the Louie by summer to become chief engineer. In 1920 he was made superintendent at Fort Dodge. Three years afterward Reinholdt left the M&StL to go into the contracting business for himself. He died in 1935.

Iowa's role in the M&StL looms large. Why? Because the M&StL has more mileage in the Hawkeye State than in Minnesota, South Dakota, and Illinois combined. Operating as it does 1,400 miles from Leola, South Dakota, to Peoria, Illinois, the bulk of the "north and south main line" is still in Iowa. Since the seventies the Marshalltown shops have been in continuous operation; they are now and have been for many years the repair headquarters for freight cars on the entire Min-

neapolis & St. Louis system. The shop's payroll provides a livelihood for 135 employees. Marshalltown also has a new Diesel service building, the most modern on the railroad. Finally, in the just-completed \$1,000,000 M&StL office building in Minneapolis there are many officials who are proud of the fact that they were born and raised in Iowa.