

# THE MANIFEST

## April 2017



Greetings All:

It was so good to see many of you at our opening run day. The weather was good, no torrential downpours, and at the Burger Shack we had about an average day income wise, all in all it was a great day.

Please be sure to volunteer if you are able and have not already, we can always use more volunteers. ☺

At our last meeting, we voted in a new member, and I would like to welcome Richard Lis, of Shasta Lake, CA. Welcome Richard, hope to see you soon at the park.

### **The Story of Casey Jones**

On the last day of April 1900, the tragic death of Casey Jones occurs. I ran across a couple of articles that were written on the 28th anniversary of the death of Casey Jones, in April 1928. Casey Jones, in the minds of many, the most famous of a long line of locomotive engineer heroes who have died at their post.

I first became aware of the name, as I'm sure many of you as well, as a child through lyrics and verses written about him. I did not know at the time, that they were written, at least in large part from what I can find out, by a friend and coworker of Casey Jones, Wallace Saunders. All of the information I read said that he was an "engine wiper" and

that he was a "Negro". His race makes no difference to me, but in the era that he lived, I'm sure it did.

When one of the articles was written in 1928, Mrs. Casey Jones was alive and living in Jackson, TN. . She and Casey had two sons and a daughter.

Mrs. Jones said that her husband's given names was John Luther Jones, of Irish decent. According to her, he stood about 6 feet 4 1/1 inches in height, which I'm sure made him a commanding figure at his post.

From all accounts that I have read, he was a very likeable fellow, loved by his fellow railroaders, and certainly his friend Wallace Saunders.

I had always wondered how he got the name "Casey", come to find out it was simply from a town near his home in Kentucky where he was born, Cayce, Kentucky.

According to accounts from Mrs. Jones, Wallace Saunders idolized her husband and would brag on him often.

Casey Jones well known among railroad men, for his odd, let's say unique skill with a locomotive whistle.

t was a kind of long-drawn-out note that he created, starting softly, rising, then dying away almost to a whisper.

Many people, including Mrs. Jones, apparently, as per the article in the "**Erie Railroad Magazine**" Vol 24 (April 1928), No 2, pp. 13,44, believed that "*People living along the Illinois Central right of way between Jackson and Water Valley would turn over in their beds late at night and say: 'There goes Casey Jones,' as he roared by.*"

Casey put in several years as a freight and passenger engineer running between Jackson and Water Valley,

MS. Then, in early 1900, Casey was transferred early in the Memphis-Canton (Miss.) run as throttle-puller of the Illinois Central's crack "Cannonball" train.

As the story goes, Casey and his fireman, Sim Webb, rolled into Memphis from Canton about 10 o'clock on a Sunday night, April 29, 1900. They were both checking out and getting ready to head home, when they heard that another engineer, a Joe Lewis, had taken ill and couldn't take his train out that night. So Casey volunteered to "double back" and take Lewis' Old No.638 that night.

Casey and Sim Webb, took the engine out of the station and through the South Memphis yards that night at about 11:00.

About 4:00 a.m. or so the next morning, April 30, 1900, they were approaching Vaughn, MS., Just above the town was a long winding curve and sidetrack that began about where the curve ended.

According to accounts in the **"Erie Railroad Magazine" Vol 24 (April 1928), No 2, pp. 13,44.**, Casey yelled to Sim something to the effect that there was a freight train on the siding. However, Casey knew the siding was quite long and having passed freight trains on it before, not an uncommon practice, he figured he could do simply pass it and continue on.

However, there was two separate sections of a long train on the sidetrack that night, and the rear one was a little too long to get all the way off the main track onto the siding.

The freight train crew was planning a "sawing by" s soon as the passenger train passed the front part of the first

train, then it could move forward and the rear end could move up off of the main track

It is believed that the freight crews did not anticipate Casey's coming in as fast as he did, which was purportedly about 50 miles an hour. When the old 638 was within a hundred feet or so of the end of the siding, Casey Jones and Sim Webb must have been horrified to see the looming shape of several boxcars in motion, crossing the main line to the sidetrack. I know I'd been horrified.

Sim Webb later reported that he and Casey, being veteran railroad men, knew that a crash was inevitable and Casey told him to jump and save himself.. Casey through the engine in reverse, and hit the air brakes (what else could he do at this point), and he rode the old 638 into a horrific crash, wood splintering like match boxes. Sim did jump and fell into some bushes, but was not injured seriously.

Legend has it that when they recovered Casey's body from the wreckage, which must have been an undertaking to say the least, as the old 638 had crashed through the cars and the caboose and ended up on her side, they found Casey with one hand on the whistle cord and the other on the air-brake lever.

"I remember," Sim Webb told Casey's widow, "that as I jumped Casey held down the whistle in a long, piercing scream. I think he must have had in mind to warn the freight conductor in the caboose so he could jump."

Wallace Saunders took the news of his old friend's death hard, and just a few days later he was going about singing a song to a melody all his own. The only way Wallace felt he could pay tribute to his old friend was through his melodies, he had no idea how they would inspire songs that would capture the hearts of children and railroad

lovers all over America and the world. In 1902 another writer hearing the songs changed the words, he retained the lilting refrain and the name Casey Jones, and those are the songs we know today.

Also, Stephanie Hellinga gave me a cute little tidbit for the newsletter as follows:

Once upon a time there were four people, their names were everybody, somebody, nobody and anybody. Whenever there was an important job to be done, everybody was sure that somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but nobody did it. When nobody did it, everybody got angry because it was everybody's job. Everybody thought that somebody would do it, but nobody realized that nobody would do it. So, consequently everybody blamed somebody when nobody did what anybody could have done in the first place.

As members of a non-profit organization and all of us being volunteers, we need to keep this bit of wisdom Stephanie has shared with us in mind.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
MINUTES  
4/11/17

Southern Oregon Railway Historical Society  
Board of Directors  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes of April 11, 2017

1. Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Bruce Kelly
2. Roll Call: Bruce Kelly, Allen Dobney, Jerry Hellinga, Chris Manley and 9 other members were present.

3. Consent of the Agenda: The agenda was approved by consensus.
4. Approval of March Minutes.... Approved, Motion by Allen Dobney, second by Jerry Hellinga
- 5.
6. Treasurer's Report: Jerry Hellinga presented the Treasurer's Report Allen Dobney moved to accept the treasurer's report. Chris Manley seconded. Motion passed.
7. Committee Reports:
  - a. Medco 4: Jerry Hellinga reported he is just getting back to working on it, after having to take some time off to recover from surgery.
  - b. Burger Shack: Nothing new, except changed price of water from \$.50 to \$1.00.
  - c. Excess Sales: No update.
  - d. Web Site – No updates
  - e. Butte Falls – No updates
  - f. Parking – No reports of any problems the last run day.
  - g. Membership – Voted in new member, Richard Lis, from Shasta Lake, CA.
8. Old Business:
  - a. 1000.00 was needed to finish the cement work for the station cover.



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## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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## UPCOMING CHAPTER EVENTS

Our entertainment for our meeting on May 9, 2017 will be presented by Allen Dobney, "Railroaders" This film was produced by the National Film Board of Canada in 1958. It covers the people and operations of the Canadian Pacific RR in the Rockies in the winter.

*If you know of any other events that should be added to our newsletter, please email, me at ([chrismanleysteam@gmail.com](mailto:chrismanleysteam@gmail.com))/ call, (541-291-1705), with the details.*



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