

## Train

1-05-2018 By Harry Zirkelbach  
Stars and Sun Date 34996

### An aside.

Asked when the Writers group meet, the answer is Unanimous. Yet not that long ago each United States community set their own time. In 11-18-1883 Standard time began; but was not US Law until 3-18-1918. Standard Time demand began with the Railroads; Imagine, the times schedules RRs had to include in just the Denver to New Your City trip when each stop kept their own time.

Now some reality.

As a small child I have vivid memory of our family of four riding the Pennsylvania Railroad from Freedom to Sharpsburgh, Pa. with whistle stops in between. And later on the rails from Erie Pa. to Detroit Michigan and back, over the three years I attended the University of Detroit.

Then in the Navy 1945, one of four Ensigns ordered from Washington D.C. to San Francisco, spent much of three days west of Chicago, holed up in our private stateroom playing bridge, ignoring scenery across the Great Plains, until that morning the train had a lengthy stop in Utah and we exited to see the West for the first time. Those Mountains east, tower above us. None of us west of Chicago earlier, were astounded. The remainder of the journey to California in our compartment with the curtains open, so we might 'ooh' and 'aah' at this new land, between our bridge games.

This was repeated, alone, when returning home three years later, taking in all the scenery possible. This would not be my last train ride; but they have been few since.

With the passage of yeas Barbara and I married in Denver, rode the train to Kansas City for our Honeymoon.

That beginning brought me to meet her father William J Foley after a number of years. He did not attend our wedding, having abandoned his wife and four children in the early 1930s. Having failed to support his family, Mrs Foley went to work, became the family provider. "Bill" continued to live in Denver, alone.

He seldom acknowledged our invitation to any birth, family celebration. He never presented a gift to any of our family, or his other three children when they lived in Denver to later had moved to Washington D.C.

Bill Foley's mother had been domineering. He had yearned to be a Railroad Engineer; she refused to allow that. He had to own his own company.

But railroad nut he remained all his life. He built an operational a small steam locomotive, laid track in his yard, gave the neighbors train rides around his circle, but didn't extended this offer to his children, grandchildren.

While still a family man in the late a92early 1930 years, he would get the schedule for some freight train leaving Denver on the next week end, meet the Engineer and crew. The on the scheduled day would drive the family to where that train would pass at a specific hour. At a railroad crossing the Foley six would await the train, Bill wearing a Railroad hat and jacket, and as the train came into sight, the family waving at the crew, who employed the whistle, a side of steam to friend Bill and his family.

To the businessman Bill Foley, this was the week highlight.  
Repeated often, any weather.

Shortly before Bill Foley died in 1995, he contacted a railroad enthusiast in Goodland Kansan, sold his engine, several cars, and all the track, set up his train in that Kansan's ample yard. Still, Bill kept this engineer cap and jacket.

One other view of my Father-in-law.

He called Barbara, demanded she provide our house for a party to celebrate his 50th wedding anniversary and his wife's 75th birthday. He chose the list of invitees, all Grace Foley's friends whom he knew slightly. All this thirty years after walking out on the family, and eight years after Grace Foley had died.

When I first listened to the faults of Bill Foley, I expected to meet a man less sinister. Turns out, the family was always kind to Bill in their comments..

Bill Foley was a son-of-a-bitch salute yeas I knew him  
and I can averse never did anything to improve image of him.

Today in our condo, we have a iron one foot section of narrow gauge track given by Bill, a constant reminder to me of his ugly approach to his progeny every day of his life.

In his last years, he called Barbara when he was ill, day or night.

No Doctor or Hospital would accept him as a patient, he was always violent with them and never paid a bill. He would insist she get him admitted for attention, then likely as not tell whoever would listen that she regularly stole from him.