

MEMORIES OF NEW BERN

WILLIAM JOSEPH "BILL" EDWARDS

INTERVIEW 1507

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This tape recording is a monologue or self-conducted interview recounting the memories of one William Joseph "Bill" Edwards, a resident of New Bern, and the tape is designated Number 1507. It is being recorded on February 13, 1993 in New Bern, North Carolina. This tape is being recorded for the Transportation Task Force of the Memories of New Bern Committee.

I was born in Sanford, N.C. on March 5, 1919 in the "new" Monroe Hospital in Sanford, one of the first babies born in the hospital started and operated by our family physician, Dr. John Monroe. My parents were Harry Powell Edwards and May Cross Edwards. I was named for my paternal grandfather who was one of the founders of Sanford.

My father began work for the Atlantic & Western Railroad that was started by my grandfather and ran from Sanford to Lillington. It was originally planned to run to Jacksonville but funding ran out at Lillington so that is where it stopped. My father went to work on the A&W as a track foreman but later became general manager of the A&W beginning virtually a lifetime career in railroading. In about 1920, he started the Edwards Motor Car Company in Sanford, a company that manufactured railway motor cars. These were initially buses with flanged wheels that ran on railroad tracks and were devised to allow short line railroads - such as the A&W - to haul passengers and light freight at a much lower cost than could be accomplished with a steam locomotive pulling freight and passenger cars.

This idea caught on and the company began designing the cars from

the ground up and they became much bigger and more sophisticated. Some of the later cars had twin engines and on short line railroads, often pulled a freight car. These cars were sold to many railroads in the United States, Mexico, and South and Central America. The largest American customer was the Chicago Burlington and Quincy railroad which used the cars on their commuter runs out of Chicago.

My brother, Winslow, and I - then about eight and six years old respectively - were frequent visitors to the A&W railroad freight station and to the Edwards Motor Car Company, much to the chagrin of my father.

We had played "post office" in the A&W freight station one day, pulling freight tags off all of the freight, using these tags as "mail", when Dad furiously asked the train crew, "Why hasn't his train gone out?" They reluctantly told him it took two hours to get the freight properly identified after we had rearranged the labels.

On another occasion, at the motor car plant, we set fire to a pile of shavings in the woodworking shop to prove that the new fire extinguishers would work; fortunately they did. But we wondered why Dad told Mom to, "Get those Katzenjammers out of here!"

When the market for these cars faded, my father took the job of general manager of the Atlanta & St. Andrews Bay Railroad in Panama City, Florida. He obtained this job through Minor C. Keith, president of the United Fruit Company which imported a large quantity of fruit from South America. Mr. Keith and my father had become friends when the Edwards Motor Car Company had built a private office car for Mr.

Keith.

There on the shores of the beautiful St. Andrews Bay, we spent five idyllic years. Unfortunately the railroad was sold and my dad was replaced by the new owner.

We returned to Sanford where my dad had bought a farm before going to Florida, foreseeing that a depression might be in the offing. While we lived on that farm, my dad conceived the idea of leasing the Atlantic and North Carolina Railroad that runs from Goldsboro to Morehead City - and was known as the "Mullet Line".

The majority of the stock in the road was owned by the State of North Carolina and the railroad had been losing money steadily for several years. This prompted the state to hire H. P. Crowell from Maine, who had been dubbed the "Doctor of Sick Railroads", to operate the A&NC. Unfortunately the patient remained sick, so the state, with the approval of Governor Kerr Scott, readily agreed to lease the A&NC to my dad and his brother-in-law, E. R. Buchan, also from Sanford.

My dad and Buchan made a good team, with Dad furnishing the operating know how and Buchan providing the public relations necessary to sell the railroad's service to the public.

The 25 year lease of the A&NC Railroad became effective in September of 1939 and provided for rental payment of \$25,000 a year plus a percentage of any profits.

The leasing company was named for Atlantic & East Carolina Railway Company and the motto was changed to the "Tobacco Belt Line" to reflect the lines major commodity. Tobacco was big business in Kinston at

that time, and many hogsheads originated there headed all over the world. The A&EC never failed to meet its rental payment, and after the first few years, always paid more than \$25,000 a year.

This tape is a story of a short line railroad - a short line railroad in my railroading days was (and I presume still is) a railroad under 100 miles in length. Such a story would be incomplete without some of the sounds that are distinctly railroad sounds, and since many of the people who can be expected to listen to this tape will not be familiar with the sounds, I will give a brief description of the sounds on this tape.

The steam whistle has been the trademark of railroads for many years, and though it has been superceded by the diesel horn, it has not been replaced in the minds of those of us who fondly remember the lonesome wail of the steam whistle, or the hand operated bell now replaced by the air operated diesel bell.

There has been a whistle code on railroads almost since the "Best Friend of Charleston" pulled one of the first trains ever to haul passengers in the United States. Whistle sounds are used for the locomotive engineer to communicate with the train crew - today as much as 100 cars away - and with the public, particularly at road crossings.

There are a number of whistle sounds in common use but we will dwell on only one on this tape.

This most common whistle sound is used to warn any vehicles approaching a road crossing, and is two long notes followed by one short and another long.

Another common sound is the clickety clack of train wheels hitting the track joints, and no sound recording would be complete without the exhaust of the steam engine as it starts a heavy load or roars by with a string of cars. Occasionally the engine will slip its wheels on the track and this can be identified when a slow exhaust speeds up very quickly then slows down again just as quickly.

The A&NC Railroad offices were then (1939) located in Morehead City but were shortly moved to New Bern into the passenger station where they remained until the lease was sold to the Southern Railway in 1957. Traffic and accounting offices were in Kinston under Mr. Buchan's guidance.

An interesting sidelight to this move involved an oil painting that graced a wall of the Morehead City office. This painting - four feet high by about fifteen feet long - portrays eastern North Carolina as far west as Raleigh as it might have been viewed from an airplane at an altitude of several thousand feet. It showed all of the major towns in eastern North Carolina in their correct geographical locations.

According to the story, the painting was done by an unemployed artist during the depression of the 1930's who agreed to paint the picture if someone would keep him supplied with whiskey. The railroad management supplied the whiskey and received a beautiful painting in return. The painting, at this writing (February 1993), is in the old passenger station at the corner of Hancock and Queen Streets. An attempt is being made to remove the painting to some safe place for

storage but this had not been accomplished when I last heard.

I was enrolled in Chemical Engineering at N.C. State College when lease negotiations for the A&EC were in progress, and during summer vacation made several trips to New Bern and Morehead City with my dad to inspect the railroad. Our first trip was in early 1939, and I remember vividly having lunch at the Sanitary Fish Market which was then one small building - the present site of Dee Gee's - with meals being served at a bar or counter. All of the cooking was done on a two-burner gasoline stove, including Tony Seamon's and Ted Garner's famous hush puppies. I think I had my first, but by no means my last, clam chowder that day.

My mother was to drive the car to New Bern that day while Dad and I rode the engine of the passenger train. That was a memorable ride. I sat on the fireman's seat holding on for dear life to keep from being thrown from the seat; the track was that rough. How the firemen managed to stand up and shovel coal into the boiler, I'll never know. We later walked that section of track and pulled out track spikes with our hands. The speed at that point was limited to 15 miles per hour.

The United States was beginning to become involved in the war in Europe (World War II) so the Marine Corps began looking for a site along the east coast for a Marine Corps Air Station, and with considerable help from Representative Graham Barden, they chose Cherry Point.

To say that this was a boom for the A&EC railroad would be an

understatement, but it also presented severe problems because of the enormous amount of construction materials that had to be moved into Cherry Point by rail, over tracks from which spikes could be pulled with the fingers.

By means of a loan from the Navy, the A&EC was able to rebuild the tracks from about Kinston to Cherry Point, putting in relay rail or used rail and sand ballast. No new rail was available despite the military importance of Cherry Point.

Fifty to seventy-five carloads of marl were moved from Belgrade on the Atlantic Coast Line via the A&EC every day for many months as a base for the airport runways. In addition, many carloads of other freight required one or more extra trains almost every day to Cherry Point. Then after the base was established and the first troops trained, troop trains started moving several times a week.

Once the runways were usable, planes - largely B-25 bombers - flew out of Cherry Point almost constantly carrying depth charges to be dropped on German submarines operating off the North Carolina coast.

These bombers had replaced the Civil Air Patrol volunteers who flew many sorties out of Beaufort, spotting and harassing the submarines, but with virtually no fire power to fight them. One of the leading Civil Air Patrol pilots was Bennie Baxter of New Bern. Since I was in the Army while this patrolling was going on, Bennie Baxter is the only pilot I knew who flew this submarine run.

Tracks were not the only problem faced by the A&EC. More locomotives were needed and were also in short supply because of wartime

traffic. Fortunately, we were able to purchase two heavy but old steam locomotives from a northern railroad, and this enabled the A&EC to keep the freight moving in and out of Cherry Point.

Shortly after Cherry Point was started, the A&EC bought two small diesel switching locomotives. The reliability and savings that these locomotives demonstrated, prompted my dad to look into the purchase of two mainline diesel-electric locomotives manufactured by General Motors to LaGrange, Illinois. These four locomotives, plus two more switching locomotives made the A&EC the first one hundred percent dieselized short line in the country. The locomotive you just heard as an ALCO, or American Locomotive Co. diesel switcher, and probably was identical to the one we used on New Bern yard.

These diesel locomotives saved considerable money for the railroad and required only maintenance that could be performed between runs.

I was mustered out of the Army in 1943 and returned to New Bern to work for the railroad in various jobs. Then went to work at Cherry Point and later for a company in Kinston, just about the time the war in Europe ended.

Upon learning that the A&EC was going to be dieselized, I went to N.C. State and took a special course in diesel maintenance, then went to the General Motors factory in Illinois for a special course on the particular locomotives we were to get.

I went to work in the railroad shop in 1946 as a diesel mechanic. This was an exciting experience except for working at night while

the engines laid over.

These engines were very complicated both mechanically and electrically. The wiring diagram was about four feet high and about twenty feet long.

On night soon after we started operating these locomotives, I received a call saying that one of the engines had broken down at Best, a few miles outside Goldsboro. So we called a train crew, fired up the standby steam engine and headed for Best to rescue the diesel.

We found the tracks covered with snow and ice in Kinston, so we spent about two hours chopping our way through Kinston.

Fortunately when we got through Kinston the ice became snow so we had little trouble from there on. We coupled on to the diesel and pulled the train back to New Bern.

The next day we began searching for the problem. A saying had developed among railroad people, that when trouble developed on a steam engine it took five minutes to find the problem and five hours to fix it; whereas on a diesel it took five hours to find the problem and five minutes to fix it.

Finding nothing that would cause the problem, we called General Motors and were advised that we had probably wrung off a drive gear.

This too proved not to be the problem. After searching for three days and studying the huge wiring diagram constantly, I had an idea.

The engine was equipped with a wheel slip light which went on and in turn cut the power when the wheel slipped, then restored power when the wheel stopped slipping. After three days I noticed that at times

the light would come on and stay on. This and the wiring diagram told me that battery power was getting to the wheel slip light by some means, so I went to the electrical contacts that served to cut the power, scraped corrosion off the contacts and immediately the problem was solved.

Three days to find the problem and two minutes to fix it. You can bet we checked those contacts regularly after that experience.

A commodity that was shipped regularly over the A&EC until some time in the 1950's was acid fish scrap from Morehead City. This was a very foul smelling product, one that we found it necessary to park on the New Bern yard at times. Since this yard was only a block and a half from National Avenue, we could count on a call from Dr. Joseph Latham - he lived on the corner of National Avenue and Avenue C - every time a car of fish scrap was left on the yard. For that reason, we tried to park any fish scrap car as far out on the west end of the yard as possible.

Because of the heavy traffic into Cherry Point and our inability to get the materials needed to repair the tracks, derailments - train wrecks the public called them - were fairly frequent; fortunately, few were very serious. Several of the serious derailments I remember very clearly.

Not long after we began operating the streamline type diesels, the Navy was shipping numerous carloads of jet fuel from Radio Island at Morehead City to Cherry Point virtually every day. One day in about 1950, as I remember it, we received a call telling us that 8 or 10

cars of jet fuel had left the track about opposite the present location of Carteret County Hospital.

The first step in such a situation was to get the derailment team and equipment together. This equipment consisted of a 50 ton steam powered crane, a flat car that held various wooden blocks and chains and a dormitory car, or "shanty" car as it was called in railroad lingo.

A shop crew and I went on ahead by car to assess the damage. On arriving at the site, we found the tank cars and a couple of boxcars scattered over almost a block square area. We promptly notified Navy Supply at Cherry Point and were told that the jet fuel was highly explosive. This aroused fears of a major explosion and fire in a populated area.

The Navy dispatched an officer to the scene immediately to assist in clearing the wreck. We waited for an hour or so while he surveyed the situation. He wanted to wait for a Navy crew to come from Norfolk but we decided we had to clear our mainline and proceeded to pick up the cars over his objection; fortunately without incident, but not with a great deal of trepidation and anxiety.

The prime objective in a derailment was, and still is, to clear the main line. The procedure is to move any cars aside that are blocking the main line, then build a temporary track through the derailment area so that trains could pass, then proceed to pick up the derailed cars somewhat at leisure. In this particular case it took 36 hours to make a path for the main line. The cars were picked up and placed on their wheels just so they could be hauled to Cherry Point to be

emptied, then on to New Bern for further repairs and finally on to a major repair point for complete repairs.

Another derailment that stands out in my mind occurred at Best near Goldsboro. This derailment involved a tank car of butane gas destined for New Bern. The car was lying on its side with the coupler of a gondola car sticking in one end of the tank. Again we were concerned with a possible explosion, so I called Ralph Morris to whose company the car was consigned and was assured that there was no danger. Not being satisfied however, I also called the shipper who had loaded the car and was further assured that the danger was minimal. This calmed our fears somewhat but we were still jittery. The car had to be moved however, so we hooked a chain to the gondola car and prepared to lift it away from the tank car. Butane gas is normally odorless, so a foul smelling chemical is added to it so that a leak can be quickly detected.

These tank cars are double-walled, but we didn't know whether the coupler had penetrated the inner wall, so we had a man placed in the end of the gondola car to watch for a possible leak when we lifted the gondola car and told him to warn us if he smelled the gas odor.

As the 50 ton wrecker began to lift the gondola car, the chain slipped and the gondola fell back, with the coupler again penetrating the tank car. As the coupler of the gondola car fell back into the tank car, our watchman yelled, "I smell something!"

Buck Barrington, the crane operator who was standing with flames from the crane boiler almost under his feet, answered in his deep, southern drawl, "I know by God you smell something 'cause I'm standing in it."

This remark brought a hearty laugh from all of us and broke the tension. So we proceeded to clear the cars without incident. A few days later we read in the newspaper where a carload of butane gas ran off a trestle in Florida and exploded, killing two people and injuring several others in a nearby park. We said our prayers extra carefully that night.

Picking up a wreck was dangerous work under the best of circumstances since men had to crawl under the cars while they were held suspended to place blocks to secure the lift. Fortunately we never had a serious injury while clearing a wreck.

We used chains for these lifts for a good many years but finally changed to cables which were much safer.

One day we were clearing a wreck at Croatan where Catfish Lake Road crosses the A&EC tracks. Since it was on a public road we had attracted a number of people curious to see what was going on. A highway patrolman came up shortly after we started and was keeping people back a safe distance from the scene, something we appreciated.

We were still using chains at that time and as we were lifting a boxcar, a chain broke sending a large, heavy chain link zinnnnning past the patrolman's ear. A few moments later we looked around for the patrolman but he was nowhere to be seen.

During one period when we were hauling 50 to 75 carloads of marl to Cherry Point every day with which they were rebuilding and extending a runway, the locomotives were having a difficult time getting these heavy trains started out of New Bern yard. Once they got them rolling, there was no problem. One particular day as an engine was struggling

to get a train started, Henry Alford, yardmaster, commented, "That stuff sure is heavy." Standing beside him I said, "Yes. I guess you know that a ton of that rock weighs more than a ton of anything else."

Without giving this remark serious thought, he said, "Does it really?"

I left before he could launch his clipboard at my head.

Picking up derailed cars was not the only dangerous part of railroading, unfortunately, since train crews often had to step between cars to uncouple them and quite often had to align couplers so that the cars would couple; they also had to jump on and off moving cars.

We lost two train crewmen on New Bern yard and two car inspectors.

One of these accidents is etched in my memory because I was trainmaster at the time and received a call late one night from Yardmaster, Henry Alford -- all of our switching was done at night in New Bern -- saying that a trainman named Harrington had been killed on the yard. He advised that Raymond Pollock, who was a mortician and also County Coroner, had been called, and Raymond arrived just about the time I did. We proceeded toward the west end of the yard where the accident had occurred, and Raymond began picking up body parts and placing them in a body bag he had brought with him, identifying each part as he picked it up. After a couple of identifications, I had to excuse myself to relieve a bout of nausea. I was able to help carry the body back to the yard office; however, it was several years before I could wipe the memory from my mind.

We later examined the boxcar on top of which Harrington was riding and saw footprints leading to the gap between two cars where they ended.

None of us could explain why he had apparently walked off the end of the car and fallen between the two cars.

I had several close calls myself while jumping on or off a moving train. One incident still comes to mind even after thirty- some years.

There was a boxcar placed on the river track between Middle and Craven Streets and it was blocking truck traffic on the road that ran parallel to the track. Rather than go to the expense of calling a switch crew to move the car, I decided to push it a short distance with our pickup and delivery truck. I had our warehouseman back up to the car and told him to start pushing, then stop when I yelled. I gave the "go" signal and he started the car moving but apparently failed to hear my call to stop. The car was headed for Craven Street and a possible collision with an automobile, so I tried to stop it by sticking a two-by-four under the wheel only to have the wheel chop the two-by-four in two as fast as I stuck it under. So I decided to climb up the ladder and apply the hand brake. The ladder was on the far side of the car and I had to climb across the coupler to get to the ladder. Just as I crossed the coupler my hand slipped and I fell toward the track.

Luckily I was able to grab an air pipe just before I would have fallen under the car, righted myself, climbed the ladder, tightened the brake and stopped the car just short of Craven Street. It took me several minutes to stop shaking as I envisioned my leg in place of the two-by-four.

A car inspector was required to inspect all cars that came onto the New Bern yard for possible damage that could lead to an injury

to trainmen or anyone working around these cars. This inspection was carried on while trains were being classified, so the inspector had to be extremely careful not to go between or under a car that might be moved while he was there. (The sounds you just heard were from an ALCO, or American Locomotive Co. switch engine, one which was used on the New Bern yard.) Unfortunately two car inspectors were apparently not careful enough, since two of them were killed while doing their jobs.

I would like to say that these were the only deaths that occurred on the railroad while my family was involved in its operation, but some people insist on challenging trains at road crossings. Two or three didn't make it.

An incident that occurred at a street crossing in Kinston illustrates the perversity of people. A trainman was standing where the railroad crosses Queen Street in Kinston. It was at night and the trainman had his lantern to signal the engineer of the switch engine and to warn any approaching automobiles. He noticed an automobile coming up Queen Street just before the cars being switched would block the crossing. He waved his lantern vigorously, standing almost in the path of the automobile. At the last moment he saw that the automobile was not going to stop and had to jump clear to avoid being run over. He just had time to slam his lantern into the window of the car as it sailed by. The car did not stop and he had to return to the freight office to get another lantern.

My dad had always had an ambition to be a millionaire - that was

before the days of billionaires - and he finally decided he would not make his million but he was intent on enjoying some of the luxuries of a millionaire. His lifelong ambition had been to own a private railroad car such as J. P. Morgan, Gould, Jim Fisk, railroad magnets of his day, had enjoyed. So, on learning that the Norfolk Southern had such a car that had been damaged by fire and retired from service, he immediately negotiated to purchase the car. He had the car brought to New Bern to the A&EC shop where it was repaired, put back in good shape and renamed the "Carolina." This car, so we were told, had belonged to John Ringling North of Ringling Brothers Circus fame. It had been built around the turn of the century and had all of the beautiful mahogany panelling and fancy gold filigree decoration that was common to that era. It had, as I remember, six double berths with pull down bunks above facing seats that also converted into bunks at night. It had a kitchen, a tiny shower, and a large lounge area at the rear. Outside the back door was the conventional observation platform.

This car was frequently used to take dignitaries, including Governor Kerr Scott, and military brass at times, on inspection trips over the railroad.

Within the last few years, this car was donated by the Norfolk Southern (formerly Southern) Railroad to the Railroad Museum at Spencer, North Carolina where I understand it is being restored. Spencer was once a major repair and overhaul shop for the Southern Railway System that has been converted into a railroad museum.

Railroads were one of the first agencies to make an organized effort to attract industry to locate in the communities they served, and the A&EC was no exception. Competition among railroads was fierce at times and they employed "salesmen" who traveled constantly seeking to induce shippers to send and receive freight by their lines. They became quite upset when a competing line "stole" a carload being sent or received by one of their regular customers.

Small railroads did not have double tracks, two-way radio or block signals that automatically controlled train movements, so they had a train dispatcher who issued orders for train movements that were not on the regular schedule, a schedule known in railroad lingo as a "timetable".

These orders were transmitted by telegraph to stations along the route, to be handed up to the engineer as he passed. Later we had our own telephone system with telephones at all freight offices for relaying orders or passing other official messages. Because of the precise times required in operating trains, train conductors and engineers were required to have a standard watch and to have it inspected at specified intervals by a certified watch maker. Most trainmen, particularly on passenger trains, proudly displayed their heavy gold watch chains and their watches.

Excursion trains were being run on Saturday and Sunday from Goldsboro to Morehead City when the A&EC took over operation of the railroad, but this was later reduced to one train each way each day.

Then about 1947 or 1948, automobiles and buses took over people

movements, so passenger service was abandoned altogether.

In the early days of railroading, railroads employed a young man who acted as a "call boy", whose duty it was to notify train crews at their particular runs since there were few telephones in homes in those days. This practice lasted into the early days of the A&EC, finally becoming the duty of the train dispatcher. It was the call boy's job to call train crews to be sure that they reported for work when scheduled.

One day I was in the shop office when an engineer showed up late for work and was complaining that no one had called to remind him to report for work. An old timer sitting nearby remarked, "If his job don't call him, let him sleep."

On another occasion I heard a trainman complain about having to "work in the rain." The trainmaster overheard this remark and said, "You knew this railroad didn't have no roof over it when you took the job, so get back to work." Railroaders were a tough lot in those days.

About 1953, I took the job of freight agent at New Bern and my office was in the freight warehouse located on the shore of Trent River at the foot of Hancock Street. This was a large wood-frame building covered with corrugated iron, or tin as some people call it. The office was in the front.

A track branched off from the main line just north of South Front Street (later to become Tryon Palace Drive). This track followed the rivershore eastward across Middle and Craven Streets and terminated at Union Point. The track served Maxwell Company, a wholesale grocery

and hardware company located on the west side of Middle Street and was operated by Harold Maxwell.

Moving eastward, the next business was New Bern Building Supply Company at the foot of Craven Street operated by Mark Stevenson. Across the track from New Bern Building Supply Co. and extending out over the river was Baugh Fertilizer Company. Next on this line was Sinclair Oil Company operated by George Roberts, at one time mayor of New Bern.

I clearly remember every time I called Sinclair to inquire about cars or any other matter, Mr. Roberts would answer the phone "Sin-c-l-a-i-r." Then came Brinson Shipyard owned by Capt. Walter Brinson and supervised by Clyde Mason. This track terminated at Union Point where it served a plywood company; the name I don't remember.

I will recount one other incident before I conclude my comments about railroads. My dad started what we called the "Santa Claus Train" in Panama City, Florida and he decided that we would run such a train on the A&EC. A month or so before Christmas, the office sent out a letter to all employees asking them to furnish the manager's office with the name, sex, and age of each of their children under the age of twelve. When these names were received, Dad had Etheridge Ricks, the railroad storekeeper (later mayor of New Bern) and his helpers, buy a present for each child, matched by age and sex, and wrapped them for delivery.

The day before Christmas, James Jerrit, a railroad "salesman", put on his Santa Claus costume and boarded the train to pass out presents to the kids. As the train arrived in Goldsboro, the kids and their

parents were out in force. The kids were a little hesitant to approach the train at first, but when they saw Santa, they crowded around the train eager to hear their name called. Santa called out each name and passed out the presents, much to the delight of the kids. They were surprised that Santa knew each child's name.

Emmett Kelly, the famous clown, lived in Goldsboro then and boarded the train for the trip to Morehead City, delighting the kids and grown-ups alike with his antics.

The Goldsboro scene was repeated at each station, and we arrived in Morehead City late in the afternoon after a tiring but deeply satisfying day.

I will conclude my railroad memories with one of whistles on steam engines. One particular engine had a very sweet sounding whistle, and one particular engineer, Durwood Bizzell, could almost make that whistle talk. When the evening freight train was coming in from Goldsboro and had reached the outskirts of New Bern, just past where the railroad crosses Highway 70, he would start his evening concert.

There were trees on each side of the track from the Oaks Road crossing to the west end of the yard that lent beautiful acoustics to the whistle sounds. It was just under a mile, so the mournful, lonesome, but oh so pleasing concert, lasted five or ten minutes, bringing up visions of far-away places and fascinating travels. Diesel horns have never been able to match that beautiful steam whistle sound, so they fail to arouse the nostalgia many people associate with steam trains.

So now with this, I will imagine that I am standing on the back

platform of the private car "Carolina" waving farewell to my friends who might be interested in railroading, and with this will conclude my memories of railroading in New Bern and surrounding area.