

Railroad Policeman Says True Hobo Is Getting Scarce As Hen's Teeth

But New Type Is Showing Up

By ROY STEINFORT

Another great era is nearing an end.

Hobos, the wandering knights of the road, are becoming as scarce as model T's, bathtub gin, and hen's teeth.

With their passing there comes a certain amount of sentimental regret, especially from veteran railroad policemen and detectives. "The true hobo was usually a gentleman," says M. B. Harlan, chief of police for the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. "Sure, he'd steal a little food now and then, but that's about all."

But his successor, the punk-kid type, isn't like the easy, lackadaisical character who spent many of his idle hours making mulligan stew in a jungle near some railroad tracks.

Kids More Cunning.

That's Harlan's opinion and he's been a railroad police officer for more than 40 years.

The punk kid, Harlan said, is more cunning and agile "and steals about everything he can get his hands on." And he's increasing in numbers.

In the past six months the number of persons ejected from freight and passenger trains has more than doubled. But it's still not as bad as during the depression days.

Then the railroads carried almost as many free passengers as they did paying ones.

Because of this increase in the number of free riders, train crews have become more cautious in dealing with them.

Illustration Offered.

To illustrate this point, Harlan told this story:

"Less than six months ago the dispatcher at Christianburg in Shelby County called me and said 'two heavily armed foreigners' had boarded an engine when the crew got off to get orders.

"The dispatcher said the crew was afraid to get back on the train. Would I send them some help? The freight train was already late. I knew it would take me quite a while to drive there so I asked the sheriff of Shelby County to go over to Christianburg with a couple of deputies.

"Equipped with rifles and revolvers, the sheriff and his deputies arrived where the crewless train was stopped. They advanced slowly.

Step Down From Cab.

"Reaching the engine, they yelled to the 'two heavily armed foreigners' to 'get out with your hands up!'

"Meekly the 'two heavily armed foreigners' stepped down from the engine cab to the complete surprise of the sheriff and his deputies.

"The two foreigners turned out to be two 14-year-old boys who had run away from a military school in another part of Kentucky.

"The heavy arms—two toy cap pistols and two Boy Scout knives—were surrendered without a shot being fired."

During the days of true hobo-



M. B. HARLAN
Hobos were gentlemen.

ism, railroad police had little to fear. A threatened swing of a night stick and the hobo was gone.

Harlan has known many hobos, but two stand out in his memory: "A No. 1" and "Haystack."

One Was Legendary.

A No. 1 was known by railroad men all over the country, a legendary figure. Everywhere he would go, he would leave his mark in chalk or paint: "A No. 1."

And practically every time A No. 1 would come to Louisville,

he'd stop in and visit with the L. & N. police department, informing them of the latest news from the hobo world.

Haystack was different from the other hobos, Harlan explained. "He was a well-educated fellow, a native of Germany, who claimed he was from a royal family. He got his name from sleeping in haystacks along the railroad tracks.

Haystack was also a regular visitor when he arrived in town on the rods.

Competition Friendly.

In the old days, it was more-or-less friendly competition between the railroad police and the 'bos. Naturally, the police would chase them from railroad property. But the hobo never thought too badly of the police for their actions.

Jeff Davis, who has been king of the hobos since 1908, always has drawn a sharp distinction between a hobo, tramp, and bum. "A hobo will work, a tramp won't, and a bum can't."

Davis recently announced at his home in Cincinnati that no more hobos are riding the rails, adding: "Only a few bums and tramps are left passing themselves off as hobos."

Yes, the end of an era seems at hand!



BE
SURE!

Take no chances—be sure of your eyesight. Protect your precious vision—enhance your appearance. Arrange easy credit.

SINGLE VISION GLASSES from \$9.50
BIFOCAL GLASSES from \$14.50

EASY CREDIT!

Terms arranged to suit your budget

Lewis
CLOTHING & JEWELRY

CORNER FOURTH AND LIBERTY

AUTO
DOOR LOCKS

ROLLER TYPE

for 1937-47 Models

- Chrysler
- Dodge
- Plymouth
- De Soto
- Studebaker
- Nash

AUTO WINDOWS
AND LOCKS
REPAIRED

GLASS COZY WINGS
WINDSHIELDS
DOOR
WINDOWS

replaced in all
makes and models

FURNITURE TOPS

Andy's Glass Shop
706 W. B'dway WA 4749

Check Master

5¢ per check
drawn & item
deposited
Checkbooks
Free!

95th
YEAR

LIBERTY NATIONAL BANK
AND TRUST COMPANY

MEMBER FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION



BROAD
3415