

Inside Indianapolis

By Ed Sovola

DESTINATION: Grain cars in the Cleveland Grain Co. yards. Purpose: Get samples of grain for the Indianapolis board of trade inspectors.

Gene Wishmire, sampler, carried a 10-foot wooden ladder, a heavy crowbar, a large wire ring of boxcar seals, a big hunk of canvas, and 20 sample cloth bags.

I was right behind Gene stumbling along with the idiot stick. That's what the men call it—it's not my idea.

The real name of this five-foot, 10-compartment gadget is sampler. It looks like a brass band leader's baton.

"We'll start here with this corn car," Gene said, leaning the ladder against the car.

With the crowbar he tore off the seal. The hair on my head stood on end. Sealed boxcars, I was taught in my youth, were supposed to remain sealed.

"Hey, Gene," I called, waving the idiot stick wildly, "is this O. K.?"

"Sure—we can do this on the job. We keep a record of the seals and after we get our sample we seal them." Gene assured me.

The boxcar door didn't yield immediately so Gene thumped it a couple of times with the crowbar. Then using the bar as a lever he gave a jerk and pulled the door open.

A high board fence affair was in the doorway which kept the corn from spilling out. The ladder was placed against the boards.

"Let me have the idiot stick," Gene said.

Disappears Into Car

VERY DEFTLY Gene tossed the stick through the small opening on top of the car. A sample bag and the canvas cloth followed. Gene scrambled up the ladder and disappeared into the car.

By the time I climbed up and looked in, Gene was spilling the second sample of corn from the idiot stick on the canvas cloth. He has to take five samples from each car. One in the center, on opposite sides of the doors and opposite corners of the car. Sinking up to his knees in corn he started for the end of the car for his third sample.

The idiot stick is designed to take samples of grain at various depths of the car so there's no chance of slipping anything into the car that isn't supposed to be there.

After all the samples are taken the canvas is folded in such a way that the corn pours out easily into the sample bag. Quite a trick to pouring as I found out later.

After the car was resealed Gene said: "As long as you're here, take the crowbar and open up the next three cars so we can get through faster." Sure thing.

The seal came off easily with the help of the bar. The door, however, wouldn't open. Try as hard as I could it wouldn't budge. Thumping it like Gene did, didn't do any good. I was bushed. I had failed.

Gene came over, knocked a latch up and swung the door open.

"Try the next car." Sure thing.

A few minutes later Gene came again and took the bar. I was ready to beat myself over the head with it. He got the door open.

The next car was full of oats.

"How would you like to sample this one?" Sure thing.

Jumping over the boards into the oats I found myself up to my knees in the stuff. And talk about dust—gad. I got the samples all right after much fumbling around but when it came to pouring it into



CORN OFF THE BOXCAR—Buyers are waiting and Inspector George Check rushes a sample through the mixer.

the bag I spilled the whole works. Gene took over from scratch.

While I was pouring oats out of my shoes, trousers, topcoat and digging it out of my eyes he completed the sampling. I had a feeling that I had failed.

Three other Board of Trade samplers converged on us with 19 bags of grain.

Hurries to Get Samples

BYRON CARTER, foreman, told Gene to hurry the samples back to the office. We did.

At the offices, four government licensed inspectors were waiting to process the samples and send them out on the exchange floor for the buyers.

Inspectors A. T. Morris and George Check immediately emptied the bags into mixers. Chris Wishmire, chief inspector, took the corn from the mixer and placed it into small cans to bring up the temperature of the grain before it was tested.

Then the corn was run through the moisture tester. Inspector Tom Dudley poured corn on a light table and counted it for damage. Samples were weighed. All the information about the corn was noted on a slip which was signed by the inspector and the sampler. In no time at all, the corn that had recently been in a boxcar, was in a tray on the exchange floor.

"Gene," Chief Inspector Wishmire said, "go on and sample the 10 cars that just rolled in."

"Well—you see—I've got a hunk of oats in my eye." I answered.

Gene understood.

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Customs Agents

By Frederick C. Othman

WASHINGTON, March 31.—I don't know why congress is worrying about the treasury department firing nearly all the tough babies in the blue uniforms, whose greatest joy is rumpling the suitcases of travelers so they can't be shut again.

This would be a wonderful world without customs agents. I know. They have been making my life miserable on and off now for 20 years. Maybe I look like an international spy. When they see me coming, I get the works.

First time I tangled with 'em was when I drove to Canada. This was during prohibition and I didn't mind so much, it didn't take me long to reassemble my automobile.

Years later I went to Mexico, where the chachacha-boom-chic music got under my skin. I bought a dozen Mexican phonograph records and so help me the man at the border said, "uhuh. I said, why?"

Mexican Records Ruined

HE LOOKED me up and down and said how did he know my records didn't have secret messages on 'em? He said he'd have to play 'em. He did so. He used a rusty nail for a needle and my records never sounded like music again.

Another time on the way home from Mexico I brought a water pitcher of soft, taxco silver. It was a beauty. It had cost me a pretty penny. The customs agent said I'd been stung and then he walked across the room to the scales, banging my pitcher on the metal-topped counter as he went. "Yep," he said, weighing my pitcher. "It's not worth the money."

It wasn't, either, not with the dents he'd put in it. Last year, arriving at Orly airport about noon outside Paris, I discovered the joy of my customs

Busses Are Stars

By Erskine Johnson

HOLLYWOOD, March 31.—Three 25-year-old double-deck rubbernecker busses of New York's glamorized Fifth Avenue coach line pulled to a groaning and wheezing stop at Hollywood and Vine the other day.

They had chugged 3850 miles from New York in 31 days, at the dreary speed of 18 miles an hour, daily hooligan en route the movie, "It Happened on Fifth Avenue."

The three busses had a total capacity of 240 passengers but because of insurance policies only six men made the trip—three drivers, who got \$25 a day, a mechanic, a tour manager, and a press agent.

Eight thousand people got free rides, however, for a block or two in 214 cities along the way.

\$17,000 Budget

A FELLOW in Phoenix, Ariz., got a ride because he said, "I proposed to my wife on a Fifth Avenue bus." But when they tried to photograph him he blushed: "No, thanks. I'm here getting a divorce."

Budget for the trip was \$17,000, with the bill for gasoline and oil amounting to \$1200. There were several breakdowns. One bus got a new engine, but there were no flat tires.

Until their discovery by Hollywood for their publicity value, the three busses, already "retired" by the Fifth Avenue Coach Line, were destined for the scrap heap.

We, the Women

By Ruth Millett

I CAN HARDLY wait for Mother's day to roll around this year. That's the only day left, it seems, out of the 365 days of the year that is absolutely a closed season on motherhood.

On the other 364 days everybody feels free to take a pot shot at Mama.

I, for one, am getting good and tired of running for cover every time somebody decides that mama is responsible for practically everything that is wrong with the world.

Mother Is Ridiculed

ONE DAY they tell her she has failed miserably at her job of "being a woman" because of the shameless divorce rate.

The next day she's told she is a failure because

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SECOND SECTION

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Crazy Inventions Have Thrown Patent Office Behind In Its Work

Searchers Needed to Work on Backlog

By DOUGLAS LARSEN

NEA Staff Writer

WASHINGTON, March 31.—Peace has diverted the concentrated efforts of U. S. inventors from swords to suitcases with wheels.

And the switch from wrinkles for war to contraptions for comfort has been carried out with such enthusiasm since V-J day that the U. S. patent office has been thrown two years behind in its work.

If it is true that Russia is raiding American patents, as some congressmen claim, the Russian people are in for a new revolution. This one should end with them all making borsht in new fangled pressure cookers and sleeping out frigid Moscow nights under thermally controlled electric discovery.

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