

THE FUNERAL TRAIN OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN

REMINISCENCES BY WM. H. H. GOULD.*

On the evening of April 14, 1865, the date President Lincoln was shot, I had finished my round trip and was tired and went to bed early. The morning of the 15th of April I walked over to the Calvert Street Railway Station, Baltimore, arriving there about 7 A. M. When I reached the rear entrance to the station I noticed that all traffic on the railroad was at a standstill. I asked the gateman, Simon Goldstein, why no trains were running. He said:

"Mine Gott, don' you hear de news?"

"No," I said. "What is the news?"

"Lincoln was kilt last night," said Goldstein, "and Stanton is kilt, and everybody is kilt, and you done it, git out of here."

I did get out and began to observe what was going on. The station was crowded with soldiers; they had taken charge of it. People were allowed to go into the station but no one was allowed to leave. About noon an order was received from Washington to release the people, who numbered several hundred. In the afternoon trains began to run again.

After Goldstein had accused me of being guilty of the death of Lincoln and others, I began to study about the matter and thought I had better go home. To learn of the murder of President Lincoln very much depressed me, and to be accused of it made me feel much worse. I went home and lay down on the bed. I told my wife if any one called for me to tell them I was out. After I had rested for about half an hour I began to feel better and went out

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on the street. Noticing many buildings and flags draped in black, I went home and hung out my flag, draped in black. By this time I felt normal and had a mind to go and see Goldstein and tell him what I thought, but reconsidered.

Conductors in those days took their regular turn, and it just so happened that on the morning of April 21, 1865, I was next out. About 12:30 p. m. I was notified by the station master that I was to act as conductor on the special train that was to carry President Lincoln's body from Baltimore to Harrisburg. At the time I gave no special importance to this run, but since then I have been exceedingly gratified that I had it. The car in which President Lincoln's body was carried was built by a Mr. Lamson at Alexandria, Va. It was built on the lines of our present-day parlor cars, but much less elaborate. The outside of the car was painted dark brown, and the inside was varnished, showing the grain of the wood. There were no fixed seats in the car, but there were several easy chairs.

The train was made up of an engine that burned coal, one baggage car, seven first-class passenger cars, and in the rear was the funeral car. The train was equipped with hand brakes. In the baggage car we carried the remains of William Wallace Lincoln, the 12-year-old son of the President, who died in February, 1862, and had been buried in a cemetery at Georgetown.

In the train crew was the engineer, two firemen, one baggage man, two brakemen, one conductor and myself. So far as I know, I am the only living member of that crew, and fifty years time has erased all their names from my memory. Capt. George W. Hambright had general supervision of the pilot train and funeral train. The engine and cars of the train were decked in the habiliments of mourning.

The coffin in which President Lincoln's body lay rested on three trestles securely fastened to the floor of the car. Over these was crepe. Straps were fastened to the trestles and buckled around the coffin to hold it secure. The coffin was very large and appeared to be about seven feet long and fully three feet wide. It was covered with black

cloth, and, besides the four silver handles on either side, there was considerable silver decoration in the form of wreaths. On the lid of the coffin was an engraved silver plate, which read:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,
16th President of the United States.
Born Feb. 12, 1809.
Died April 15, 1865.

I was in the funeral car at various times in my line of duty. A part of the time the face lid was removed from the coffin, and I had several opportunities of seeing the face of the martyred President. His face was calm and peaceful. He looked as if he were asleep in pleasant dreams. The body was dressed in black, with white shirt and black tie. I was informed that the suit he had on was the suit he wore at his first inauguration.

None of the train crew was in uniform—in fact, in those days no uniform was worn by passenger train crews. I wore a black suit of clothes and black hat. On the front of my hat I wore a plate marked "Conductor."

There were about 75 people on the train beside the train crew. There were no women on the train. During the trip the men moved back and forth through the train. They were a distinguished looking group of men, but sad and solemn. Practically all of their talk was of the greatness and goodness of Lincoln, and his untimely death. There were many men on the train who were soldiers, but none was in uniform.

Each member of the train crew, and all of those who were entitled to ride on the train, wore a special badge. This badge was their ticket of transportation. Of course, I was very careful to see that every person riding on the train was entitled to do so.

Ten minutes before the special train pulled out of Baltimore, a pilot engine and one passenger car, in charge of Capt. George B. Kaufman and brakeman, with a crew started ahead of the special train for Harrisburg. Just at

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3 o'clock on the afternoon of April 21, 1865, I gave the engineer the signal to start for Harrisburg. The engine gave a shrill whistle and the train slowly passed the depot. There was an immense crowd around the station at Baltimore to see the train leave, but they were very quiet.

As we left Baltimore the weather was cloudy and warm. Our first stop out of Baltimore was Parkton, Md., for water. The next stop was at York, Pa., again for water. These two stops were the only stops made between Baltimore and Harrisburg.

When the train stopped at York, a delegation of six ladies were allowed to enter the funeral car and lay a large wreath on the coffin. At every cross road there were crowds of people, and as the funeral train passed them the men took off their hats, and I noticed many, both men and women, who shed tears as the train passed. It was the most solemn trip I ever took on a train. Everybody on the train was solemn and everybody the train passed was solemn.

Just at 8 o'clock the train pulled into Harrisburg. The sky was cloudy, and there was a fine drizzle of rain. It seemed to me that nature was weeping because of Lincoln's death.

After pulling into the station I remained in charge of the train until the President's body was taken from the funeral car to be taken to the State Capitol in Harrisburg; then I was relieved by the yard crew.