

TWO FOR THE ROAD



After having run the sump pump from two rainy days in late February, Twyla and I were ready to hit the road on the first sunny day. Our destination was Dade and Barton Counties. We had read about Rader's Store in Lockwood some months back and Twyla said she'd like to visit. It was I who wisely suggested we pair the trip with a visit to Cooky's Café in Golden City.

Rader's Store is advertised as a small, family owned store that's been in business since 1938. We found the store to have shelves full of men's and women's clothes, shoes and boots, notions, thingamajigs, whatchamacallits, and lots of fabric. Twyla handily exceeded her imaginary budget in spite of Valentine's month discounts on items red and I exited the store with a discounted bright red farm-friendly "Key" handkerchief.

From there we motored the easy eight miles to Golden City. Our destination was lunch at Cooky's Café located at 519 Main St. Upon entering Cooky's, the first thing to catch your eye is a table lined with Cooky's pies. If you wondered if there's really a pie heaven—this is it. Check this out: Dutch peach, Dutch blueberry, Dutch apple, Dutch blackberry, chocolate pecan, butterscotch cream, and the list goes on. Today's special was beans and cornbread, which we happily requested. I had the Dutch-peach and Twyla the chocolate-pecan—warmed. If anywhere near Golden City, I encourage you to stop in at Cooky's Café, a very delightful experience. (FYI: Cooky's does not accept credit cards—cash and check only.)

A pleasant drive with beautiful weather, it was a very delightful day for "two for the road." ■



Man does not live by burgers alone, sometimes you need pie. Cooky's offers delicious homemade pies made daily.

Working on the Railroad

BY REV. C. J. GREER

Once I got a job on the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad as a brakeman. The short time I got to work on the railroads was fraught with danger and mishaps.

One night during a blizzard, we were chugging through the storm and when we came to Moorcroft, Wyoming, we started getting into trouble. Beginning a short distance out of Moorcroft, there is a five mile grade. I'm on the top of a locomotive, trying to tamp down more sand on the rails for traction. Finally, the long train comes to a halt. We can't make it.

We back down the grade, and then we cut the train in half and pull the hill with that part of the load. We go until we find a side track to park it on. Then we back down the grade, and pick up the other half, and we make the hill, and I get off where the other is parked, and the crew goes on to where they can back up, and I'll connect the train together again. I'm talking about a train that is close to a mile long, so you see how far I am from the caboose that I'll catch as they go on.

I signal with my railroad lantern that the connection is made, and start running back to the caboose. I haven't gone far when the train starts moving. They expect me to catch the caboose as it comes by. I think to myself, "They are starting up too quickly." The snow is deep and I'm running against the blizzard. Now you can swing onto the train when it's going ten to fifteen miles per hour, some, but not many brakemen can catch it at twenty miles per hour.

The train keeps getting faster and faster. All at once I know I have to catch it now, or never. I turn and run along the side of the train, trying desperately to make my move. It's going too fast for me, I have on too many clothes, and the snow is too deep.

I start giving the washout signal with my lantern. The train keeps going faster and faster. Finally, the caboose goes by in a whirl of snow. "My Lord, and my God, they are going to leave me." I keep running after the train, waving my lantern. If they don't see me, I'm dead. There is no way I can survive this blizzard. There is no sign of a ranch house for the next fifty miles. It is over five miles back to Moorcroft, and I would be facing the blizzard. There's no way I could do it."



C. J. Greer, (1921–2013) recalled this story as well as many others while writing his memoirs by an oil lamp. Rev. Greer, my father-in-law, was a real cowboy from Gillette, Wyoming, and founding pastor of Highway Assembly of God church in Brighton, Missouri.

You talk about praying, I'm so fearful of this dark cold night, I'm shouting out at God to "SAVE ME," at the top of my lungs. I can barely see the taillights come on at the caboose, but it flashes red, and I know it's going to stop! "Praise the good Lord, forever and ever!" Even as I recall this nightmare experience it brings goose bumps to my body, and tears to my eyes.

What had happened was, the rear brakeman, in the caboose, just 'happened,' (I'm sure the Lord turned his neck), to turn around and caught a glimpse of my lantern giving the washout sign. Then the conductor pulled the emergency cord that sets all the brakes on the train. It still took them a quarter mile to get stopped. The rear brakeman and conductor thought I had gone back to the locomotive, and the engineer and fireman thought I had gone back and was on the caboose.

I don't think I was ever more frightened as an adult than I was on that lonesome, cold night. When I stumbled and pulled myself into that caboose, a flood of thankfulness and appreciation flooded over me. I felt akin to the Psalmist who wrote in Psalms 118:5, "I called upon the Lord in distress; the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place, the Lord is on my side." Praise His name forever! ■

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