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Forman H. Craton - 1938 - 1939 - Diary

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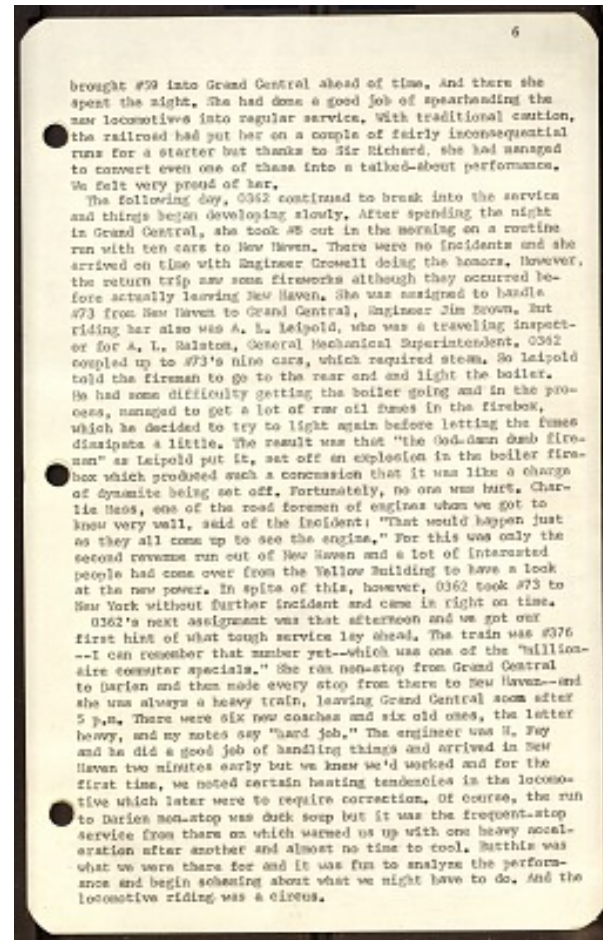
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brought #59 into Grand Central ahead of time. And there she spent the night. She had done a good job of spearheading the new locomotives into regular service. With traditional caution, the railroad had put her on a couple of fairly inconsequential runs for a starter but thanks to Sir Richard, she had managed to convert even one of these into a talked-about performance. We felt very proud of her.

The following day, 0362 continued to break into the service and things began developing slowly. After spending the night in Grand Central, she took #8 out in the morning on a routine run with ten cars to New Haven. There were no incidents and she arrived on time with Engineer Crowell doing the honors. However, the return trip saw some fireworks although they occurred before actually leaving New Haven. She was assigned to handle #73 from New Haven to Grand Central, Engineer Jim Brown. But riding her also was A. L. Leipold, who was a traveling inspector for A. L. Ralston, General Mechanical Superintendent. 0362 coupled up to #73's nine cars, which required steam. So Leipold told the fireman to go to the rear end and light the boiler. He had some difficulty getting the boiler going and in the process, managed to get a lot of raw old fumes in the firebox, which he decided to try to light again before letting the fumes dissipate a little. The result was that "the God-damn dumb fireman" as Leipold put it, set off an explosion in the boiler firebox which produced such a concussion that it was like a charge of dynamite being set off. Fortunately, no one was hurt. Charlie Hess, one of the road foremen of engines whom we got to know very well, said of the incident: "That would happen just as they all come up to see the engine." For this was only the second revenue run out of New Haven and a lot of interested people had come over from the Yellow Building to have a look at the new power. In spite of this, however, 0362 took #73 to New York without further incident and came in right on time.

0362's next assignment was that afternoon and we got our first hint of what tough service lay ahead. The train was #376--I can remember that number yet--which was one of the "millionaire commuter specials." She ran non-stop from Grand Central to Darien and then made every stop from there to New Haven--and she was always a heavy train, leaving Grand Central soon after 5 p.m. There were six new coaches and six old ones, the latter heavy, and my notes say "hard job." The engineer was H. Fay and he did a good job of handling things and arrived in New Haven two minutes early but we knew we'd worked and for the first time, we noted certain heating tendencies in the locomotive which later were to require correction. Of course, the run to Darien non-stop was duck soup but it was the frequent-stop service from there on which warmed us up with one heavy acceleration after another and almost no time to cool. But this was what we were there for and it was fun to analyze the performance and begin scheming about what we might have to do. And the locomotive riding was a circus.



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