
Wayne McKy, Hugo Railroad Man: 1951 - 1955

Foreman/Gang Boss He's just what the name says.

Ambulance A caboose.

Bull Railroad policeman.

Section Gang Section Crews or Section Gangs as they were commonly known, were responsible for a (large) section of track. They typically rode hand cars (later motorcars) to look for and replace bad ties, tamp loose spikes, and tighten bolts.

Extra Gang The crew of track laborers assigned to maintenance work at various points on a railroad right-of-way. These employees may live in camp (bunk) cars where they are provided lodging and meals at a nominal cost.

B&B Bridge and Building department.

Boomer Itinerant railroad workers.

Dozer Bulldozer operator.

Gandy Dancer A track worker assigned to work on an extra-gang. The name came from the 1800's Gandy Manufacturing Company of Chicago, Illinois who made many of the track tools.

Snipe Track worker (section laborer).

Ballast Gravel, slag or other heavy material used as a road bed to support cross ties and rails.

Blue Goose A high-rail car used by management to get out of the office and look important.

High-Rail A vehicle, usually a pickup truck, with small rail wheels used to carry maintenance workers.

Jigger Speeder motorcar.

Motor Car a.k.a Speeder. A motor-driven railway inspection or work car which rides on the rails and is operated by maintenance of way employees to minimize time spent traveling while on duty.

MW Maintenance of Way Department

Rintail A hobo.

Southern Pacific Railroad

Pusher Team leader responsible for seeing that work gets done on schedule, or a locomotive built to help trains up steep grades by pushing from behind.

Putt-putt Speeder motorcar.

Road Bed The foundation on which the rails and ties of a railroad are placed.

Speeder Small, low rail vehicle with gasoline engine used to transport work crews; sometimes known as a jigger, motorcar, or putt-putt.

Sperry Car Railroad car used by Sperry Rail Service to detect weakened or cracked rails.

Spreader Rail vehicle used to push gravel or snow away from the outsides of the rails

Weedburner Flame thrower vehicle which rides on the tracks and is used to kill weeds along the track right-of way.

Work Train A train engaged in company service for which no revenue is received.

Tools of the Trade

Shovel Short No. 2 Shovel.

Spike Bar Long crowbar used to pull up old, damaged spikes from track.

Spike Maul or Spike Driver A sledge hammer, but designed with a longer, slimmer head to specifically seat spikes up against a section of rail.

Tie Tongs Large tool, looking much like ice-tongs, used by workers to drag or carry individual cross ties.

Torpedo A Railway Detonator (called a torpedo in North America) is a device used to make a loud sound as a warning signal to train drivers.

Track Bolt Wrench is a hand tool with an enclosed opening that grips the faces of the bolt or nut.

Section Gang Terms

Hugo Section Gang: 1950s A group of laborers organized together on one job or under one foreman: a railroad gang. The Southern Pacific, like every railroad, has to maintain the line 24/7 - this task falls to the Maintenance-of-Way crew also known as the "Gang", or "Section Gang".

Hardware

Cross Tie Usually made of creosote treated lumber about 6'-8' long, but today concrete ties are becoming an increasingly popular alternative.

Rail Bolt Used with rail plates to join sections of rail together.

Rail Clip Placed under rail on either side of a cross tie to keep it from "wandering" over time.

Spike Large nail driven through tie plate into cross tie used to hold rail sections in place.

Tie Plate Placed between rail and cross tie, helps to keep spikes from becoming loose and crosstie from splitting.

Rail Section Heavy section of iron that provides the actual "wheel to iron" surface of the railroad track.

Angle Bar or Rail Bar Joiner bar inserted where rail sections join together, and bolted through both sections of rail.

Welded Rail Long continuous section of rail which requires no bolting together. Welds are used where the long sections meet.

More information Contact an officer of the *Hugo Neighborhood* on how you can become involved in your community's land use, and/or history projects.

Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society's Mission

This information brochure is one of a series of documents published by the *Hugo Neighborhood*. We are a nonprofit charitable and educational association composed of a voluntary group of citizens interested in both the land use and history of the Hugo area, which is located in Josephine County, Oregon.

Land Use & History

Its land use mission is to promote the social welfare of the citizens of the area by working to educate, preserve, protect, and enhance the livability and economic viability of its farms, forests, and rural neighbors.

Its history mission is to educate, collect, preserve, interpret, and research its local history and to encourage public interest in the history of the Hugo area.

Send us your email address if you want to know what we are doing; email does not cost us money, just time and effort.

Hugo Neighborhood

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Foreman/Section Boss

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Railroad Terms



Wayne McKy Using Tie Tongs

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