



This Lima 2-8-0 (so named for the wheel configuration, 2 small front wheels, eight drive wheels and no rear trailers) was one of two rod engines operated by the Alabama & Tombigbee Railroad, Scotch Lumber Company's line. It was shipped to Fulton in November 1915 and named "Billy II." Billy Harrigan was the son of Scotch owner William D. Harrigan and would be an owner and lead the company in later years. It would be sidelined after the mill burned in 1930 and was sold in 1941 to a Montgomery gravel company where it worked for a time being, being scrapped. This is a Lima company photo and is attributed to the P. E. Percy Collection in the book "Logging Railroads of Alabama".

Pioneers of timber industry once rode the rails

RAILROAD LOGGING

BY JIM COX
The Clarke County Democrat

Timber has been harvested in Clarke County commercially since the late 1800s. In the days before modern diesel- and gasoline-powered trucks and good highways, steam-powered locomotives and railroads were the means of getting logs from the woods to the mills.

The old Scotch Lumber Co.'s roots date to 1888 and by the 1890s it established a railroad company with the exclusive purpose of delivering logs from the far corners of the region to the Fulton sawmill.

Alabama & Tombigbee

The Alabama and Tombigbee Railroad Co. was created in 1896 as an extension or subsidiary of Scotch Lumber Co. The company was later disbanded but the rail lines and rolling equipment still operated for Scotch's benefit.

Scotch's first engine was a small one dubbed the 1 Spot. By

1905, it was joined by the 2 Spot and many others.

At the height of Scotch's railroading years, six engines were in operation — four Shays and two rod engines. The Shays were smaller, gear-driven engines designed especially for their pulling abilities and were favored for use on the logging spurts. The rod engines were the ones more commonly thought of when you think of steam locomotives with horizontal drive arms. They were used on the main lines to haul carloads of logs back to the mill.

Records show that the 8 Spot was purchased on Dec. 1, 1922, and was termed a Class 70-3 Truck Lima Shay Geared Loco which cost \$21,390. That's nearly \$327,000 in today's dollars.

Henry Steele was the first engineer of the "8 Spot."

Other engineers included Tollie Knight, Robert Smith, Glover Oliver, Tom Holloway, Robert Holloway, G.T. Reid, Ellis Roberts, Clifford Conn, T.E. Brown, Ervin

Lambert, Claude Counselman and Webb Estes.

Engineer's job was big

An engineer's job was a glorified one and one of the best paying positions in the company. Engineers started out making 90 cents a day and advanced to \$4 to \$6 a day. It doesn't sound like much but \$6 a day equates to nearly \$92 today.

Tom Holloway operated the 12 Spot, a big rod engine used on the main line. Because of its size, it was the best known of the locomotives and Holloway, by extension, the best known engineer.

Knight, one of the engineers, was interviewed for a story in a special edition when Scotch celebrated its 100th anniversary in 1988.

As a teenager, Knight had done odd jobs around the logging camps and in 1923 he was pulled in to start doing night maintenance work on the engines — "night hostelling," he called it.

All the maintenance had to be done at night since the company couldn't afford for a locomotive to be idle during the day.

Knight said the trains returned to the camps at 5 o'clock every afternoon and the locomotives were cooled down completely and the fire boxes were cleaned out daily. Scotch was the only company to do this. Most other companies simply banked the fires in the engines at night.

Knight said he was up at 2:30 every morning to start new fires to heat the boilers. The Shays pulled out for the woods at 5 o'clock every morning.

Mitt Fendley, assistant woods superintendent, saw that the trains left precisely at 5 "or he'd throw a fit," Knight said.

The 12 Spot would arrive from Fulton with empty log cars about 6:30.

Knight's night maintenance work required him to learn the drives and he would drive them around the camp yards at night.

In 1924, Lambert, the engineer on the 8 Spot, came and got him, telling him his fireman, Bush Hicks, had quit to take a similar job with the Southern Railroad.

Keep it hot or else!

Lambert told Knight, "Bo, you are going to fire this 8 Spot for me. ... You are going to keep this 8 Spot hot or I'm going to take a paddle to you." Knight was 16 years old.

Despite his initial reservations, Knight got along fine with Lambert and learned a lot. In about a year, Lambert announced, in a way similar to how he hired Knight, "Bo, I'm going to make an engineer out of you."

He started out spotting the loader, moving the train forward and backward for the steam loader then operated from one of the railcars picking up logs and loading them on adjoining cars. It was important not to jerk

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