

high plains living magazine

May, 1979
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1979 DALE FOSS

"MADAME QUEEN"



Engineer John Morris Price. At 26 years old Price said, "On looking back, how the hell did a boy like me run a thing that big. To me it was the biggest giant in the world and I guess it always will be." The photo was taken in 1950 in the Canadian yards, Canadian, Texas. The brakes are set, and an airbrake test is being taken. The engine is number 5000 the Madame Queen, and the photographer was Homer Tepe.

Most books are dedicated in some way, but rarely are articles dedicated. This history is one of those rare writings that deserves a special dedication.

I would like to dedicate this article to men like John M. Price, retired engineer of the Santa Fe Railway. It was men such as Price who worked over thirty years on local freight jobs of 16 hours a day in length. These men braved the elements of nature and gave up their home life for a job they couldn't exactly say they loved. But, they couldn't leave the railroad once it got under their skin. This piece is dedicated to my dad, who is a survivor of those days and those rails who have passed on to the great beyond.

By: Frank R Price

The years of 1897 and '98 were hard times for the cattlemen of Texas and New Mexico. If the ranchers were able to raise any good beef, frequently the trip to the rail head for shipping to market would toll heavily on their pocket book since many cattle might not survive the over-land journey.

In those days several minor lines of railroad traffic existed in the Panhandle. But, there had never been an attempt to secure a railroad which would serve the west coast across Texas and to the Chicago cattle markets. In 1898 that line was not far from coming to the Amarillo area.

J.J. Hagerman was a New Mexico developer. He had founded several towns along the Pecos River Valley and he had built up his railroad, The Pecos Valley and North Eastern. This railroad ran between Roswell, New Mexico and Pecos, Texas, at that point it met other railroads for continued eastern service. But the cattlemen did not like the idea of shipping their cattle over the middle of Texas and then to market. So, efforts were made by Hagerman to secure funding on territory to add onto his present system.

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Our Cover for May

Photo of the "Madame Queen" number 5000, was taken by 16 year old Dale Foss. This photograph won top honors in the 4-H Fair competition in Potter county. Dale is a student at North Heights School, and a member of the Potter County 4-H group.

Mr. & Mrs. Wendell Sims give the following account of the park and the location of the "Madame Queen".

Since Amarillo was the Division Point for The Western Lines of the Santa Fe, they (the Santa Fe Railroad Company) decided to place the 5000 on display in the park at the local depot. The site was several thousand yards from the regular industrial track. The "Madame Queen" was brought as far as possible on already existing track and then a "shoo-fly" was built. This consisted of a bed of earth and gravel several feet thick upon which were placed ties and rails. This was done because her enormous weight would have broken up the existing brick streets.

After her placement at the park location, shoo-fly was removed and the area landscaped. For

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several months you could walk up to the locomotive, touch her, climb into the cab and ring the bell. You could experience the sensations an engineer might have felt. As time passed, it became necessary to place a fence around her to protect her.

A final honor has been bestowed upon the "Madame Queen". She has the honor of becoming an Historical Monument in the state of Texas. They called her a queen and queen she is.

Editors Note: Also see the story of the life of the "Madame Queen" By Frank Price.

Editor's Corner

We have a new member on the staff of High Plains Living Magazine: Joe Gaylor, who will be with our sales staff. Welcome aboard Joe. There is also another article by Frank Price, former editor of the Amarillo College News Paper. There is a short poem by Frank in this issue along with that story on "Madame Queen." Frank wrote this poem while listening to a tape recording sent by his father. The recording is of one of the last 'Steam' runs made

News Stand Price: \$1.00 a copy. This is a complimentary copy - not for sale.

in California. The lonesome whistle background stirred Frank to write this poem while on Okinawa in 1977.

Before I forget. We have a new mailing address. It is: High Plains Living Magazine, Box 10151, Amarillo, Texas 79106. Tell all you meet, I saw it in High Plains Living Magazine.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Kelly,

Enclosed are a poem and short story. The short story is a real-life drama written by my daughter and myself. All the details are true as they relate to her getting lost in the east Texas forest country and her heart condition and lupus. The happy ending not included in the story is that Rosalie suffered no ill effects from her experience and did not end up in the hospital with a flare-up of lupus as could have easily happened. Glad to see your magazine doing so well.

Mrs. Jean Galloway

Editor:

Thanks for the submission. The story is included on page 18 of this issue.

Dear Editor,

I especially enjoyed Geneva Berry's and Jean Galloway's contributions. Geveva's story "These Tree She's Got a Fence", in the March issue is a classic. I enjoyed it more than once. Here is \$6.00 for a year's subscription of the High Plains Living Magazine.

Stella Hill
Canyon, Texas

Editor:

The best part is we can be expecting more stories like this from these authors. Thanks for the words of encouragement and the subscription.

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Page 3

<p>WB'S CASUAL SHOES FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY</p>  <p>Hush Puppies SHOES</p> <p>The Purchase Of Your Choice With This Ad</p> <p>10% OFF</p> <p>Offer Good Through May 31st</p> <p>3440 BELL (PUCKETT PLAZA) 353-0423</p>	<p>Iron Works etc.</p> <p>Custom Design Metalcraft Engraving and Gift Wrapping By Tom Warren, Stan Harrison, Joyce Dyson Artists</p>  <p>3405 Western Suite 102</p> <p>Amarillo, Texas 359-5215</p>
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Since cattlemen had shown a desire to drive their cattle to Amarillo or Clovis for shipping, Hagerman began a campaign to establish a rail head in the area. Hagerman's choice was the site of Washburn, but his efforts to secure a deal on 'his' terms fell through when R.E. Montgomery of the Washburn vicinity refused to turn over half interest in the proposed town site and pay Hagerman a sum of \$20,000 cash. Instead Montgomery offered to give the land up for a terminal only. Negotiations immediately broke down.

Amarillo city officials were aware of the Washburn problems and H.B. Sanborn, noted civic leader, saw that if Amarillo were to have a chance for survival something must be done to block the Washburn interests. Sanborn dispatched his attorney, S.H. Madden to Chicago where the lawyer met with Hagerman's largest backers, the Atchinson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad.

Amarillo lobbied for the new rail head and eventually offered the AT&SF a cash bonus in a sufficient amount to cover the cost of building a joint terminal facility for the AT&SF and the Pecos Valley and North Eastern.

The AT&SF dispatched James Dunn, chief engineer of the railroad, to the area to look over the situation and report back to Chicago. Whether Dunn was influenced in some way while in the area will never be known, but his report was the basis for the AT&SF recommendation to build the Amarillo connection. E.P. Ripley, AT&SF president, announced the decision to build and in 1898 the line was completed. But, the rail head was in Canyon City, not Amarillo.

Apparently the Canyon City rail head was preferred over the Washburn

idea and Amarillo. Merchants soon built branch stores in Canyon to serve their regular customers. Prior to this time Amarillo merchants had to freight their goods by wagon to the South Plains.

On May 10, 1898 the AT&SF connected three railroads by buying up other railroad rights and by leasing from the Fort Worth and Denver Railway. The AT&SF and the Fort Worth and Denver from that point for 12 years would share the Amarillo FW&D terminal for service.

While the Santa Fe worried with building empires east, Hagerman's dream-child, the Pecos Valley and North Eastern, had caught up with Amarillo from the west. The AT&SF immediately bought the new line upon completion and on March 1, 1899 full service west was possible from Amarillo, but no lines connected the two cities of Canyon and Amarillo. Panhandle and Washburn had been caught up on the eastward moves and the city of Panhandle served as the AT&SF general offices for the branch lines.

On October 1, 1899 the AT&SF extended its tentacles south and Amarillo connected with Salton and the general offices were moved to Amarillo. Canyon, losing the position as rail head, suffered. No more moves were made again until 1908, when the AT&SF built its own line between Amarillo and Panhandle, and Washburn was cut off. Hagerman's dream of a Washburn rail head would never be realized.

In that same year, 1908, the Santa Fe built a new line between Texico, New Mexico and Belen connecting with the westward portions of the Pecos Valley line. Since the Pecos Valley Railway had routes to the west

coast, the Santa Fe secured the rights for rail usage. For the first time after the 1897 'ideas' of panhandle rail service, those dreams were realized. And, those dreams would never fade; they would change with the moving of time, but the railroad had come to Amarillo for good.

But things did change. Today nothing much is left of the days of smoke and steam. Nothing but a few faded memories and one old black engine which has as much a personality as those who remember her.

Her name is the 'Madame Queen' and she is a proud lady with the honor of forever bearing upon her frame the histories of the Panhandle days of rail service. Her history is interesting and her legends are simple truths.

Described in the history books as the biggest, the first and the most magnificent of her time, this 'Texas' type locomotive is simply one of a kind. Her predecessors proved the need for such a large engine, her proto-type proved her possible construction, but the 'Madame Queen', engine number 5000, proved herself. Her development was begun on October 26, 1917. She was built in 1930.

In 1917 the AT&SF ordered the conversion of a 2-10-2 type locomotive to a specification designated as a 2-10-4, or an engine with 2 pilot wheels, 10 driving wheels and 4 trailing wheels; this was the first attempt of this kind. Engine 3829 received this honor, and proved that the design was feasible and practical. (Engine -3829 was sold for scrap 8-9-55 to a Chicago scrap works.)

It wasn't until 1930; however, that the Santa Fe moved to develop a heavy duty engine suited for hard service. The engine 5000 was thus

cont'd next pg.

"Queen" from pg. 5

designated as the first 'true' 2-10-4 Texas type locomotive, and she was put into construction in that same year. This engine is the 'Queen'.

"This was an improved model over the 3800 engine," said John Price, retired engineer and past crew member of the 'Madame Queen'. "This engine has a 5000 ton draw bar with friction bearings, and was one of a kind." he said.

The development of the 5000 gave the Santa Fe improvements over previous engines by cutting the weight by 30 tons and adding forty pounds more working pressure. Through the more practical design the 5000 gained 2000 more tractive effort of pulling power.

According to the consenses of all the engineers who ever ran the big engine, this tractive power is what stood out in their minds.

In an interview with the Amarillo Globe News in 1957, Mike O'Neal, now deseased said, "the 'Madame Queen' was the strongest, had the most tractive force of any two cylinder single expansion engine ever to operate in the United States. She was the most powerful engine I ever was on."

And Walter J. Hopper, now retired and running his own private railroad museum on South Washington said, "Mike O'Neal died in 1975...at that time I believe he was the best engineer on the line and if he said it, 'it' was true. The thing I remember most myself was its starting power. It started better and could pull easier than any of its day."

"I liked to catch that big engine, she was stout and could handle a big train," said J.M. Price. "But, the way this engine was designed, she was too stout for her own good. She'd tear herself up - she was just that stout - if she was worked too hard she would strip herself out. It would pull about all the tonnage you could put behind her, she was a real box car hauling engine."

The 5000 would stand apart from her 34 sons who would follow. The 'Madame Queen' was unique in several ways. The 5000 was cast as 'one' solid piece and it became one of the largest cast metal products in

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twentieth century America. All the cylinders were cast intergal along with mounting holes and valve pedestals. The engine weighed 665,000 pounds loaded, it is 162 feet long, 180 inches wide, 300 pounds of steam pressure, 20,000 gallons of water, and 7,100 gallons of fuel oil. Her driving wheels are 69 inches and her cost was \$133,902.80 total. She had a full valve travel which made her more powerful than any other locomotive in her day. The fact that she carried her name as a title set her apart. Tradition in the 1800's - the advent of mass transportation - took away the names and handed out numbers.

The 'Madame Queen' name, while lending to glamour and vaired visions by the admirer was the result of 'period' humor.

In the 1930's, radio was big and radis shows depicted every walk of life. The Amos and Andy radio show known for the thick black dialect of southern origin portrayed the black race poorly but never the less was popular. This show named the 5000.

In the lives the romances of Amos and Andy, 'Madame Queen' who was depicted as the biggest, blackest, most powerful force in their lives, was a natural for the satirical humor of the railroader, whose humor was hard and wry at times.

Thus named somewhere by someone, the 'Madame Queen' she became. Her form was probably the brunt of many ethnic jokes of the period, and no doubt the fact that the engine received such a ribald

reputation probably added much to her legend. She automatically became part human, because of Amos and Andy, and she gained character and reputation. The biggest, blackest locomotive of the Santa Fe was named forever the 'Madame Queen', engine number 5000.

Not all was roses for the 5000. The engine came out experimentally and her problems plagues her service record throughout her career.

"Being an experimental engine type, the 5000 had a lot of difficulty," said W.J. Hopper. "That 'Madame Queen' was a very rough riding engine. It had a tendency to go to pieces because of the experimental portions. It wasn't all machined to exact specifications like the later models were. It was truly built only for an experimental job. It was never in top condition all the time. Crews detested to catch that engine because of this."

And John Price seems to confirm this in his statements, "It was a real good engine...but the Santa Fe worked it so hard and handled it so bad that it would tear up all the time." This engine would be rebuilt quite often. She just had so much power, that after she was mishandled she would tear herself apart."

According to both Hopper and Price, the 5000 had problems after she was converted to oil from coal in the early thirties.

"The old timers said she was a good steamer in the early days." said Price. "When she came out in oil she was still

Cont'd next Pg.

"Queen" from pg. 6

a good engine, but, no one knew how to run her - few men did know how to run the engine."

Why wasn't this problem recognized by the AT&SF? Probably, to some extent, it was; but motive power was in short supply. (This may be an explanation as to why the 5000 was put out of service in 1953 and didn't continue in service to 1956 like the other 5000 number locomotives.)

Price went further, "Apparently, to the AT&SF officials the 5000 looked like any other locomotive and to anyone else that doesn't know her, she looks common. But she had these 'cute' things about her."

Hopper went further, "Compared to the 5011 class (produced later) the 5000 was obsolete even then compared to those newer and even bigger engines." (A common myth surrounding the 5000 is the idea that she is the biggest engine ever made. However, her claim to fame lies not in the biggest, but rather in being the 'first' of the big engines. She changed rail history.)

Many of the problems the 5000 experienced were mechanical quirks.

"If you didn't know how to run the 'Madame Queen', it would suck the water right out of the engine, and an explosion was possible," said Price. "She had so much power that too much steam could be let into the cylinders. You had to adjust the 5000 steam pressure more closely than any other engine," he said.

"You had to know what you were doing. You had to nearly be able to tune a fiddle so to speak to know how to run that particular engine. The 'Madame Queen' was so different from the other engines you would run. It had a water pump different from the others. It had a different break valve. It didn't have as good of air pressure as the others - some people claimed these engines were all alike, but there is not one in the world like the 5000. And, each time you went to run this engine, you had to know and remember these characteristics," said Price.

"Just like two people, these engines had a character all their own," he said. "I can remember by engine number today some of the others which were in the 5000 series which had problems,

like the 5009 and the 5034. They were both known to slop water over the pistons and wash the lubrication off, then you would lose power. You just didn't forget these things."

One of the big problems and probably most dangerous on the 5000 was her tendency to lose water, this was aggravated by engineer trouble. Price recalled an incident when the 'Madame Queen' came close to blowing up.

"We were in Wynoka, Oklahoma, and I was firing for an engineer who had bad sinus problems. He would occasionally drink on and off duty. Well this night, he came to the train a little under the weather and he wasn't in too good of shape to run a locomotive. He finally made it out of Wynoka and a little ways out he messed up on the running of the engine and from that point on it was a fight to keep water and fire at a balance in the engine. We finally made it to Woodward after a very difficult time."

"Sitting there in Woodward, the steam started coming in this engineer's window and bothering his sinuses. So, he just reaches up and turns off the fountain valve which allows steam to help push the water to the boiler. The boiler was running hot. The 'Madame Queen' started, and about 400 or 500 yards down the track the engine ran out of water. I quickly run over to turn on the steam. When I looked and saw that there wasn't any water in the boiler, I jumped down from the top of the cab and hit the safety valve which closed the flow of oil to the boiler. I bailed out and headed for the rear of the train."

"A few minutes later the brakeman wakes up; he'd been dozing all night. He asked the engineer, 'Where's old John?' he says, and the engineer said, 'He thinks this engine might blow up and I'm not so damned sure it's not a goin' to!' That brakeman came flying out of the cab and came back to where I was at. The train was stopped and I was at the caboose."

"This brakeman puts his arm around me and says, 'Now John, I'm a light sleeper. Now anytime you get ready to go, you punch me as you go by and I'll be ready to go...' 20 or 30 minutes later we returned to the engine and things were normal again and the

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By DR. TERRY FLEETWOOD

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The chiropractor is a student of the body's vast nervous system. Medical science knows that bodily functions are controlled by nerve energy impulses from the brain through the spinal cord to all parts of the body.

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engineer was sober," said Price.

"This water problem happened all the time with the 5000 and it doesn't take long to blow one up. It can take just a few seconds. That incident at Woodward is the first and last time I got scared enough to leave an engine. I wanted to, several times, but that is the only time."

Apparently there was a story on the 5000 every trip, and there were probably thousands of crewmen who cursed her and praised her. Engineers are known to talk to engines like stroking a fine horse, telling her when

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Page 7

"Big Silver" from Pg. 11

"The old man wants to see you," said Sam.

"Later," said Dan as he went down the dock steps, I'm going to have that refrigeration checked, and I've got to see my insurance man."

"Breaker one nine for that garbage man . . ."

Mack had tried to raise a Casey driver since they left Roswell. It was past noon. They had made good time.

"This is Big Silver. Come in you garbage haulers." Mack turned the volume down on the CB after a few minutes.

"We'll stay around Ruidoso an hour. If Johnny don't pull in, we'll go ahead. He'll be on the CB if he talked to Dan." Waco usually did his thinking aloud, but in the last hours he had not been talkative. "It ain't hard to see what might be hapenin'," he scratched his chin thoughtfully, "The thing is, who?"

"I've coffeed with the drivers from all the other produce outfits," Mack said, "and I didn't get a whisper."

"Joe's wreck could be just that," said Waco, "but if it was deliberate, that ain't likely."

"Well, they're callin' the shots," said Mack, "but it's just a matter of hours and the whole story will be up and down 70-80 and I - 40. In a day or two it will be all over the country."

"Yeah, musclin' a man's haul is bad," said Waco, "but when they start tryin' to kill drivers, the fun is over."

Chapter 3

The idea was simple. Mack spotted the telephone pole in the back of the old man's wrecking yard.

"It'll work," he said to Waco.

"You're crazy," Waco looked doubtful.

"Round up all the heavy chain you can find," Mack ordered Waco without seeming to hear his friend's doubt.

Cont'd Pg. 16

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"Queen" from Pg. 7

she's good and cussing her when she is bad. But since the days of steam are gone, what does an engineer say or think when he sees the 'Madame Queen' sitting high and dry in the Santa Fe Park like she is?

John Price looks at her and says what comes to mind is probably that, "Well, old girl, one of us made it to the end (his retirement) and one of us didn't." It is almost a challenge.

Price explained the philosophy of talking to trains. "Well, everybody, when they would go up to the engine, looked at it as part human. You'd go to get on one and say, 'Old gal, looks like a good one.' or you'd say, 'It looks like a tough night tonight,' or it's 'Right tonight,' and then I have said some 'unkind' things to them, too. I've talked to them real bad. Especially when the weather was bad."

In 1953 the 'Madame Queen' was taken out of service. She had served her last working days on the Santa Fe Railroad. Her retirement was now news and her face did not grace the terminals she had known for many years.

In 1954, a small story appeared in the Febuary 28 edition of the Globe News. In that story the AT&SF was credited with releasing the information that "154 engines parked at strategic locations throughout the southwest marks the end of the era of steam on the Santa Fe Railway - replaced by the diesel." The story goes on to state that the engines were stored for some future transportation emergency such as running out of power or in the event of a major war.

D.J. Everett, shop superintendent was in charge of storing facilities and said the operations began in the late part of 1950. The shop in New Mexico was the last steam shop of the AT&SF.

The trains which were stored at the 'strategic' locations were drained of all fluids and any parts which might be bothered by weather were covered up. The 5000 sat idle such as this from 1953 until 1957.

The passing of the steam days took their toll on all steam engineers, and Walter Hopper said, "When they gave up the steam engine we lost the thrill of railroading...Lots of people were glad to see it because the diesel is

Cont'd Pg. 17

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Queen" from Pg. 15

cleaner and faster, and pays a little more per mile, but when the steam went, so did the thrill of railroading."

And Price recalls this, "The last steam engine I had was a 2900 class from Clovis to Amarillo. I nearly blew the whistle off of her because I knew that when I got her in she was going to the bone yard...I liked those old engines and I liked to make 'em cry. This was the last steam engine I ever saw in operation."

"I've always been partial to the steam engine and hated to see them go more than anyone. I always liked to run them, and when they took them away, they took all the romance out of railroading. There was a great love between the engineer and the engine in those days."

In 1957, on April the 9th, the

'Madame Queen' was pulled from her 4 year resting place in the Clovis Roundhouse. All her outside repairs had been taken care of and she was in better shape than at anytime she had been in operation on the Plains Division. The old engine was placed behind engine -413, a diesel, and she was trailed by a string of freight cars just like in her years of dedicated service. The engineer on -413 was W.J. Hopper. Number 5000 was towed by a diesel which had helped take her job. She was never started after 1953.

"Mechanically," said Hopper, "the 5000 was in better condition than any day it run on the Santa Fe line. Everything was painted, it was shined up to no end. They had her looking good. The only comment I would make is it was in a hell of a lot better shape when I towed it than it was

when I run it. They had been getting it ready for months and she looked good."

After a short trip from Clovis at 20 miles an hour, the 'Madame Queen' came home to Amarillo to stay. And though she may have had her own problems as they were, she represents an era and a life style which made Amarillo, and has been a boost to the American way of life.

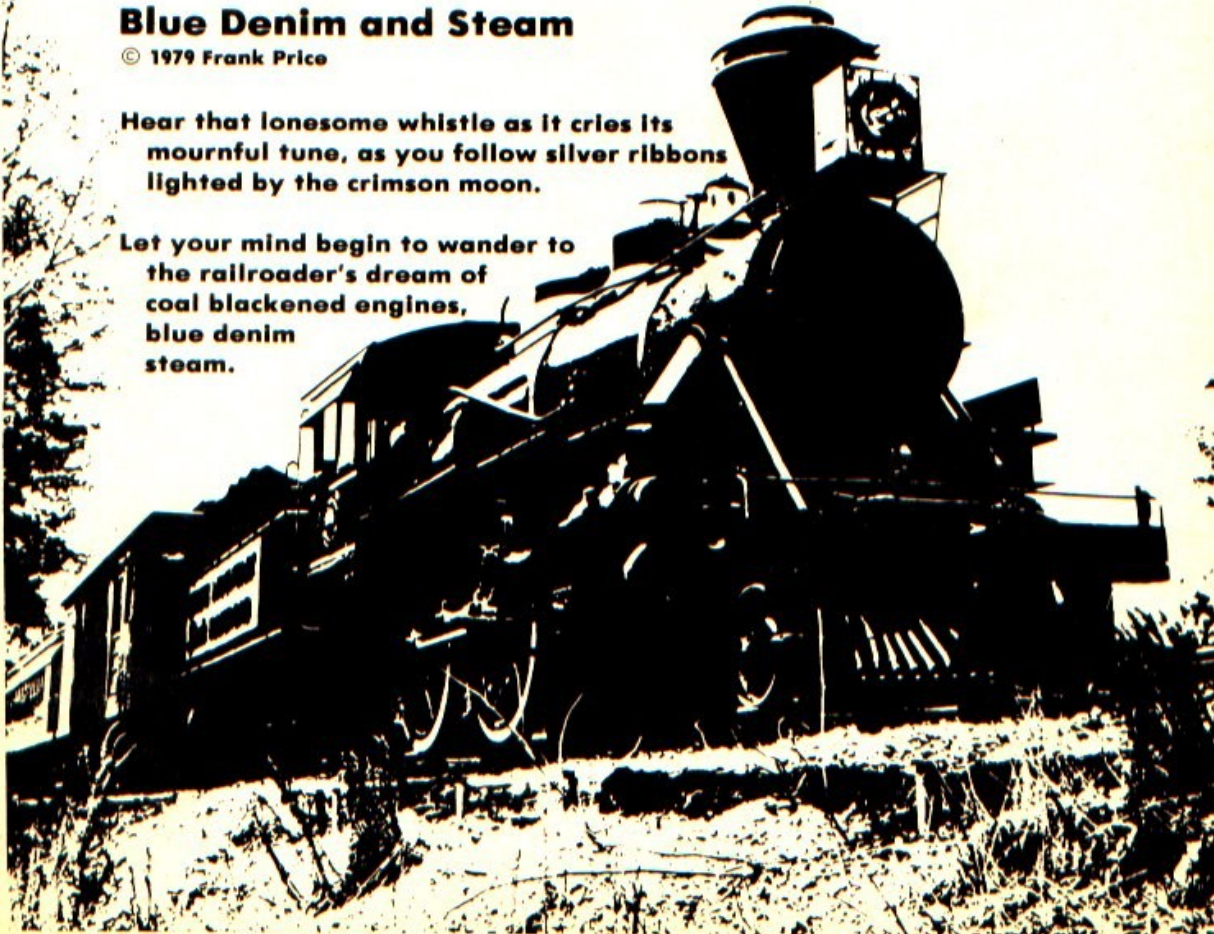
The 'Madame Queen' is deserving of respect and care for posterity sake. and, as John Price said, "She stands as a monument to the men who gave up their own lives for the railroad. The men who remember the coveralls, the red bandannas, gauntlet gloves and the romance of railroading. Won't ever forget the steam engine days and the romance of the 'Madame Queen', and the railroading days."

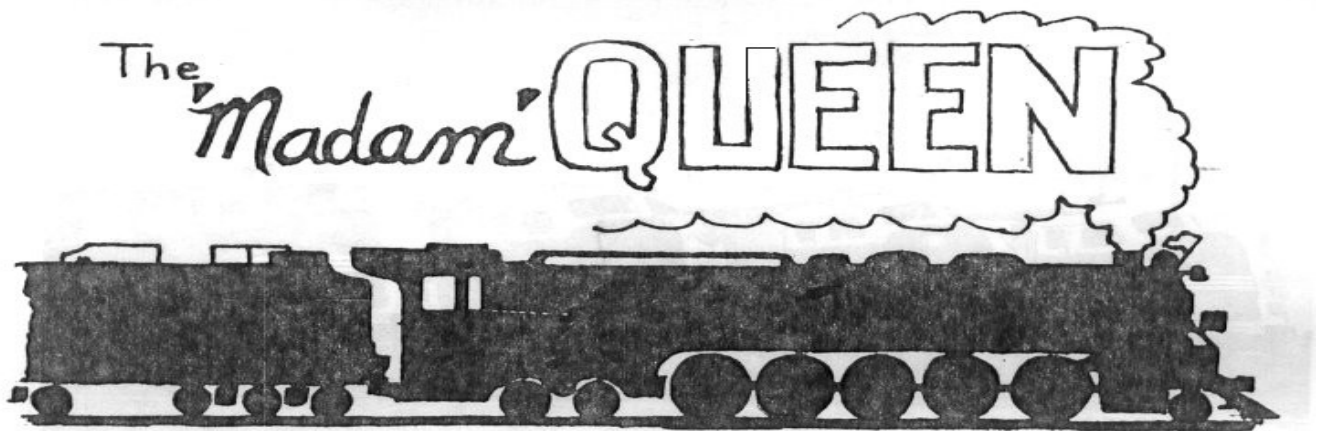
Blue Denim and Steam

© 1979 Frank Price

Hear that lonesome whistle as it cries its mournful tune, as you follow silver ribbons lighted by the crimson moon.

Let your mind begin to wander to the railroader's dream of coal blackened engines, blue denim steam.





Welcome to the history train; this is the story behind the story

This article was a last minute idea. Kelly Foss was a long long time Newspaperman in Amarillo and was very well liked. Like all of us he wasn't perfect; but he had 'heart' and 'by God that is enough to get the job done'. I liked Kelly a whole bunch. He always had a keen interest in history and news and he could get you excited just telling you a story.

The Ranger; Amarillo College's Newspaper had to go to bed on Friday so it could be there for the typesetters on Monday and do layout on Monday night and send it to the press by midnight and get it back all brand spanking new and black and white. Just the way the news is supposed to be. Kelly and I liked that. Anyway Kelly wasn't working in news anywhere but he was putting this little magazine out called High Plains Living Magazine.

As usual I stayed at Amarillo College til way after 10 pm working on the paper that Friday night.

You want something done right – do it yourself. When everybody else goes home get busy. When there is hell to pay...well you just say; “I did it”.

Well I did see Kelly working in the typesetters late too. Night owl ink runs through the blood of all newspaperman, railroaders, truck drivers and their related families.

I'd intended on tossing the stuff in the mail slot and go on home. But, with Kelly there I knocked on the door and he let me in and we had a good visit. Yes he was tired, old, and worn out he said but this damn magazine had to go out by the next day. Laying there was the photo on the front page taken by his son. And that was one proud dad! Anyway he had about two paragraphs on the locomotive. I couldn't resist and offered to write the article for free. We couldn't let a fine photo like that go to waste and not have the history of the Queen done poorly. Hell I thought that train was my sister. Or, one of them anyway.

The article got written and it only took 6 pots of coffee, 12 hours of interviews and three days to write it about 200 miles driving and nagging from the wife. Hell. It was worth every damn minute. - *FRP*