

LOUIE FISCHETTI WAS POPULAR AND DEVOTED TO THE RAILROAD

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Events leading up to Louis Fischetti prior to arriving in the Old Forge area are sketchy. How and when he arrived here from his native Italy are vague. As near as I was able to determine, his early years were spent in Utica with relatives.

There were two things about Louie which were no mystery: His popularity, especially with young people, and dedication to his work. He always attended the local ball games, usually accompanied by a flock of neighborhood kids. He loved kids and it must have been sad for him never having had any of his own.

When it came to his work as a railroad section foreman he was all business. Fischetti started his career in Utica and was transferred to Big Moose before finally being assigned to Thendara.

The railroad in those days was very active and vital to the local economy. A great many local people were dependent on it for their livelihood.

Somewhere along the line, Louie did a stint in the U.S. Army during World War I. At another point, his mother decided it was time for him to marry and found him a wife. Like a dutiful son, he returned home to marry and then came back to Thendara with his new bride.

From what little I was able to learn, they both had relatives in Utica, and aside from occasional visits with them, never really socialized with their neighbors to any extent. Louie learned enough English to communicate fairly well. Mrs. Fischetti never did.

They were frugal people, living very simply in a railroad section house across from the Thendara station in what is now the present railroad parking lot. An automobile seemed to be their only luxury.

Louie was very predictable in his actions in both work and daily life.

Before venturing forth in his car, he would don a pair of leather gloves. Each finger was precisely placed and then the whole glove was pulled on snugly around his wrist. He would then spit into each palm and with a flourish, smack

them together with a quick rub and purposefully place his hands firmly on the steering wheel. Only then was he ready to drive.

After lunch Louie always took a short nap before starting work again. The crew was as quiet as possible hoping he would sleep past the noon hour. He never did. He would rise up exactly on time and urge everyone back to work.

When asked where they were going and what they were about to do, his invariable reply was: "Never mind, get your shovel and come with me; you find out."

When they broke for lunch or to let an incoming train pass, Louie insisted the crew move well away from the tracks to avoid any possibility of danger.

Bob Gaudin was sent home one morning to change his sweater. It was red and Louie wanted no possibility of a northbound train thinking it was being flagged. The train might stop and then be unable to proceed again on an uphill grade.

Mrs. Fischetti died in the late 50s and soon after, Louie returned to his homeland to enjoy the respect and admiration of several nieces and nephews.

He communicated with Bill Pulling for awhile, who relayed what information he received about Louie.

To make a long story short, Louie was a good man, well remembered by all who knew him and deserving of mention to those who did not.