

## **CLOSE TIES BIND RAILROAD TO HENRY DEMOORS FAMILY 9/19/95**

When I came to Thendara in 1958, the railroad was still active and Louie Fischetti was the foreman of the section gang.

He was an interesting man, well liked by everyone and spoken of with respect. He had a cheerful outlook on life and was a favorite of all the children.

In my endeavor to learn more about this popular individual, I came to talk with Victor DeMoors. Victor had worked with Louie from 1934 through 1936, as a part-time worker. In researching Louie's history, I got sidetracked on the DeMoors family.

There were five children born to Henry and Clara DeMoors, of Thendara. The three girls were Melina Pestolesi and Cecelia Buckley, who still live in Thendara, and their younger sibling, Anna Cowin. The boys were Victor and Art, who while being close neighbors came to know Louie.

The DeMoors children's grandfather was Seth Rozon, who drove the last spike on the M & M Railroad.

The children grew up in hard times and, to make matters worse, the family was abandoned by their father while they were still very young. They were raised by their mother, who cooked at Van Auken's hotel to keep them all together. Things must have been really rough, but there was no reflection of this in talking with them. I was left with the feeling that here was a family full of love who always looked on the bright side of life.

Ceil and Victor recounted the many cold winter evenings spent with their neighbors sledding on "Amelia's Hill." I learned that the hill extended from the house about the state sandpit to where the railroad underpass is now located. The present road did not exist at that time. The group would all gather in the railroad waiting room to get warm and socialize.

Walter Humphrey was a retired baker who had a cabin on the hill between the Green Bridge in Thendara and Nick's Lake. He was good to the local children who took any opportunity to visit him. Gus Lenz, the postmaster, would ask the kids to bring Humphrey's mail to him. They looked forward to this chore because they were always

rewarded with some of his excellent baked goods. Victor recalled that Humphrey could whip up a cake while they were fetching him a couple of pails of water from the spring.

Victor remembered walking track for Louie in the winter months. His beat was the six miles to Carter Station. He carried a shovel, flag and his lunch. His duties were cleaning the crossings and switches of snow and checking the tracks for damage. After starting a fire in the station to thaw his lunch, the flag was used to halt the afternoon train for the trip back to Thendara.

Much of the summer work consisted of mowing the right-of-way on both sides of the track. It was hot, hard work and George Clair was started out as point man because he was considered to be one the hardest workers and he set the pace. Victor was both the youngest and smallest man, so Louie let him bring up the rear of the seven or eight man crew.

I have digressed from my original objective and hope to return to it next week. In that vein, I would like to learn more about Louie and, if possible, obtain the loan of a photograph of him and possibly his wife.

I'll wind this up by asking that anyone who can help in this respect to please contact me at (315) 369-2586. Thank you.