

A GLOSSARY OF TERMS YOU MAY
HEAR ALONG THE IRON PIKE

When railroading was new, there were few terms that would pertain to the various movements of a train, so the ingenuity of the men of that time had to come to the rescue. Following is a glossary of some of the terms that were in use before the 1940's.

AIR MONKEY - A workman skilled in the repair of air-brakes.

ALLEY - Any track in a switching yard that has no cars on it.

ARMSTRONG - A locomotive that must be stoked by hand; any job that must be done by hand.

BEEHIVE - Yard Office.

BEND THE IRON - To change the position of a switch.

BIG HOLE - Emergency air-brake application.

BIG HOOK - Largest wrecking crane.

BINDER - Hand brake, usually located on top of car on one end.

BLAZER - An overheated journal box.

BLEED - Drain the air on a cars brake system.

BLEEDER - The valve which drains the brake system of a car.

BOARD - A fixed signal to regulate rail traffic.

BOOMER - A worker that drifts from one job to another.

BRAIN PLATE - The badge worn by trainmen.

BRASS HAT - Railroad official.

BRASS POUNDER - Telegrapher.

BUG TORCH - The lantern carried by trainmen.

BULL - Railroad policeman.

CAPTAIN - Conductor

CAR KNOCKER - Car Inspector.

CAR TOAD - Car repairman.

CATWALK - The walkway over the tops of cars.

CLOSED SWITCH - When a switch is closed the main line is uninterrupted.

COCK LOFT - Caboose cupola.

CONSIST - Freight train makeup.