

Casey Jones, "Poet" Who Got a Bump!

VERSION OF THE ORIGINAL OF A FAMOUS RAILROAD CLASSIC

Peter Mulligan Tells Who Wrote It, How and Why It was Written.

Come all you rounders if you want to hear
A story about a brave engineer.
Casey Jones was the rounder's name,
On a six-eight wheeler, boys, he won his fame.
The caller called Casey at half past four—
Kissed his wife at the station door,
Mounted to the cabin with his orders in his hand,
And took his farewell trip to that promised land.

CHORUS.

Casey Jones mounted to the cabin,
Casey Jones with his orders in his hand.
Casey Jones mounted to the cabin,
And he took his farewell trip to that promised land.

Put in your water, and shovel in your coal,
Put your head out the window, watch them drivers roll.
I'll run her till she leaves the rail,
'Cause I'm eight hours late with that Western mail.
He looked at his watch, and his watch was slow,
He looked at the water, and the water was low;
He turned to the fireman and he said:
"We're going to reach Frisco, but we'll be dead."

CHORUS.

Casey Jones going to reach Frisco,
Casey Jones, but we'll all be dead.
Casey Jones going to reach Frisco,
We're going to reach Frisco, but we'll all be dead.

Casey pulled up that Reno hill,
He tooted for the crossing with an awful shrill;
The switchman knew by the engine's moans
That the man at the throttle was Casey Jones.
He pulled up within two miles of the place,
Number Four staring him right in the face.
He turned to the fireman, said, "Boy, you'd better jump.
'Cause there's two locomotives that's a going to bump."

CHORUS.

Casey Jones, two locomotives,
Casey Jones, that's a going to bump.
Casey Jones, two locomotives,
There's two locomotives that's a going to bump.

Casey Jones said just before he died:
"There's two more roads that I'd like to ride."
Fireman said, "What could they be?"
"The Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe."
Mrs. Jones sat on her bed a sighing,
Just received a message that Casey was dying.
Said, "Go to bed, children, and hush your crying,
'Cause you got another papa on the Salt Lake Line."

CHORUS.

Casey Jones! got another papa,
Mrs. Casey Jones on that Salt Lake Line.
Mrs. Casey Jones got another papa,
And you've got another papa on that Salt Lake Line.

Some genius with a pastime gincer named John Luther Jones, for figures estimates that the old railroad song "Casey Jones"—perhaps the most popular song in America to-day among those who like lilt and humor in their music—has been rendered over ten million times. It is not on record how this genius made his estimate, but the chances are that he is somewhat short of the correct figure.

'Who was Casey Jones?' 'How came he to be the hero of this toe-tling melody?' 'Where did the song originate?'

These questions have been hurled at the Railroad Man's Magazine for more than two years.

The writer, in taking up the editor's burden to find out, asked a dozen men who should have known, and in turn, he was told to 'Ask Sweeney!'

Then he asked the authors of the song as it is known to-day. T. Lawrence Seibert wrote the words and Eddie Newton composed the music. These gentlemen state that they wrote 'Casey Jones' from an old negro song.

'Nobody knows how many verses it had,' the authors tell us, 'and as near as we can trace it back, it started about an old en-

better known from coast to coast as Casey Jones. He was born in Cayce, Kentucky, in 1863, and lived on a farm until he was nineteen years of age, then he went firing on the M. and O. Railroad, and later on the I. C.

'In 1890 he was promoted to engineer, which position he held until his death. He was transferred from Water Valley, Mississippi, and ran a freight-engine until he went on the Chicago and New Orleans Limited. On this run, at midnight, March 18, 1900, he was killed in a rear-end collision with a freight train at Vaughans, Mississippi.'

'This is his history, as near as we can trace it. We have searched back, and so far as we can learn, an old darky by the name of Wallace Saunders, working in a round house, started the first of the Casey Jones song. We took the old song and made a new one from it, and to-day it is the greatest song hit that has ever been published. The song was two years old on April 1, 1911.'

There is no doubt that Casey Jones has existed as a waif of the rails for many years, is the positive declaration of scores of old railroad men, and each has a separate and distinct version as

to its origin and the occurrence which it is supposed to commemorate.

An S. P. Legend.

Along the Southern Pacific, in California and Nevada, there is a legend that Casey Jones, hero of the song, lies buried at the foot of the Reno Hill, so feelingly referred to, underneath the ruins of a '68 wheeler' which left the rails on that grade one night away back in the eighties.

It appears from the story that something did in reality 'bump,' and that the engineer, whose name was Casey Jones, was so effectively buried with his engine that the company did not think it worth while to disinter the remains of either.

This tale, however, is something on a par with the numerous lost engine stories current throughout the West, and has a very hazy substance at best.

Casey Jones has been heard of so many times that it is open to doubt whether he was really killed so early in his interesting career.

Living in Oakland, California. In Oakland, California, Casey Jones resides in the flesh, at 754 Sixtieth Street and runs a menial denkey-engine on the docks.

For twenty-five years Mr. Jones was an engineer on the Southern Pacific, much of the time running a pilot-engine up and down the slope of the Sierras. He claims to be the original Casey Jones, in the sense that every hobo along the line knowing him and his reputation, for daredevil runs—I'll run her till she leaves the rail, as the song narrates—made up the song and passed it along to the brakemen and switchmen, who whistled it in their cabs and shanties.

Casey Jones, of Oakland, admits that the plaintive wail has no foundation in fact, asserting that during his whole career he never had a serious accident, and never at any time figured particularly on taking 'passage to the promised land.'

Numerous other railway lines claim the honor of furnishing the original Casey Jones.

John Luther Jones

Down on the Mobile and Ohio, John Luther Jones is remembered as a brave engineer. The record is that he pulled the New Orleans Limited for many years between Memphis and Canton, and finally lost his life when his engine collided with a freight train at Vaughans, Mississippi, the night of March 18, 1900. It is asserted that the 'bump' of that collision is the identical one referred to in the song now so popular, which, it is maintained, was first written by the negro fireman soon after the accident. This is as Messrs. Newton and Seibert state.

The fact that Casey Jones of the song, as it appears to-day, in his dying throes, expressed regret that he had never ridden the Southern Pacific or the Santa Fe is pointed to as proof that the accident in reality took place on some system distant from those lines.

Casey is supposed to have been a nickname by which John Luther Jones was known to his associates.

The song written by the colored rimer, whose name is remembered as Wallace Saunders, contained a score or two of verses, after the manner of railroad and cowboy doggerel, the first stanza running as follows:

Through the South Memphis yards, on the fly,
Fireboy said, "You've got a white eye,"
The switchman knew by the engine's moans,
The man at the throttle was Casey Jones.

The old Kansas City, Fort Scott and Memphis Railroad claims to have been the scene of the historic 'bump,' the hero at the throttle being none other than Peter Martin Jones, who, for some apparent unknown reason, was known along the line as 'K. C.' Jones. Possibly he resided at Kansas City.

Peter Martin Jones drove a passenger engine for a number of years between Springfield, Missouri, and Hoxie, Arkansas, taking the trip to the 'promised land' in a wreck near Monmouth, Springs, Arkansas, about ten years ago.

Was He K. C. Jones?

An old-timer on that line declares that the song appeared spontaneously in the shops and cabs on that system soon after the tragic death of K. C. Jones. This old-timer says that he first heard it in the roundhouse at Thayer, Missouri. The text of the song was quite different from the present version, no reference being made to Reno Hill or Frisco. The first verse ran as follows:

Come all you rounders if you want to hear
The story of a brave engineer;
K. C. Jones was the hero's name,
He lived without fear and he died with
out blame.

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BABES IN THE WOOD

We give space to the following by request. The only local interest it has is, that it was composed by G. D. Blois, father of Mr. Nelson Blois, Young Street, Truro.—Ed.

(Two little children, Jane Elizabeth and Margaret Meagher, strayed from their home on the Preston Road, Halifax County, April 11th, 1842. Their lifeless bodies were found on the 17th April. The following verses were written in commemoration of the tragic event.)

Good people read these verses that I have written here,
And when you have perused them you can't but shed a tear;
In eighteen hundred and forty two, April the 11th day,
Two little girls from Preston Road into the woods did stray.

Their father and their mother were sick in bed all day,
Whilst those two little children about the door did play;
Hand and hand together, they saw them leave the door,
The eldest was but six years old, the youngest only four.

Jane Elizabeth and Margaret were their pretty names,
Two fairer creatures never did dame nature ever frame;
They walk'd abroad together and cheerfully did play,
But mark what followed after how soon they lost their way.

There in the lonely wilderness they spent a dismal day,
The night came on, they thought of home, their streaming eyes gave
way;

The frosty gale blew very hard, not a star to yield them light,
The beasts of prey they feared all day, and the screeching owls by
night.

They might have been discovered, but for that simple race;
You Preston Negroes wash your hands, and wipe off your disgrace;
You cruel Brown that heard them cry and did not take them in,
May God reward, or punish you according to your sin.

But when the shocking news did reach the neighboring town,
Each manly heart with pity swell'd and thus for grief atoned,
Saying, poor Meagher your b-boys are lost and you are left forlorn,
How true it is, as Burns remark'd, that man was made to mourn.
Early the next morning went out one hundred men,
And there they found poor Meagher and wife searching the lonely
glen.

First casting their eyes to Heaven and then upon the grove,
With prayers and groans and touching cries, distress'd as they rove.
All that week they hunted, but alas 'twas all in vain,
So in the lonely wilderness those infants did remain,
Though oft they stopp'd to listen, they ne'er could hear their sound:
At twelve o'clock on Thursday a bloody rag was found.

Think, gentle reader, what a sight, if we could them behold,
Dying in the wilderness, with hunger, fright and cold;
Not a mother by to close an eye, nor a friend to wipe a tear,
Pharaoh's heart would surely melt, their dying cries to hear.

On the 17th of April went out a valiant crew,
To search the woods and dreary plains as hunters used to do;
From Halifax and Dartmouth, Preston and Porter's Lake,
Twelve hundred men assembled, a final search to make.

'Twas Peter Curry found them at twelve o'clock that day,
On Melancholy Mountain, but lumps of breathless clay;
The hair was dragged out of their heads, their clothes in pieces tore,
Their tender flesh from head to foot the prickly thorns did gore.

The frost it stole upon their hearts, their blood began to chill,
Their feeble nerves could not obey, with all their heart and skill;
Headlong they fell, their souls unwillingly took their way,
And left their tender bodies on a dismal rock to lay.

No longer did they leave them for the birds and beasts to tear,
On decent biers they laid them, and graced with a tear,
To their father's house they carried them for their mother to behold
She kissed them both a thousand times though they were dead and
cold.

Their father quite distracted was, and overcome with grief,
His neighbors tried to comfort him, but could yield him no relief
The cries of their poor mother were terrible to hear,
To think that death had bereft of those she lov'd so dear.

On the nineteenth day of April they were in one coffin laid,
Between Ellen Vane and Allan's Farm their little grave was made,
Where thousands did assemble a last farewell to take,
Both rich and poor lamented sore for the poor children's sake.

The rain was fast a falling, most dismal was the day,
While gazing on Elizabeth, methinks I heard her say—
Farewell my loving neighbors, return dry up your tears,
Let us two lay in this cold clay, till Christ himself appears.

Five pounds reward was offered to the man that did them find,
But Curry he refused it as a Christian just and kind;
May God forever bless him and grant him length of days,
Your humble poet D. G. B. will ever sing his praise.

You gentle folks of Halifax that did turn out so kind,
I hope in Heaven hereafter a full reward you'll find;
Not forgetting Dartmouth, that turn'd out, rich and poor,
And likewise those of Preston, and round the Eastern Shore.

Now to conclude and make an end of this my mournful song,
I beg you will excuse me for writing it so long,
That I another theme like this may never have to pen,
This is the first, I hope the last, God grant it so, AMEN.

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