

Charles R. Bush

(- 30 Aug 1939)

Bush, Charles R. Suddenly on Wednesday, August 30, 1939 at his home, 922 F street n.e., Charles R. Bush, beloved husband of Mary E. Bush and father of Misses Grace and Mary Louise Bush and Rudolph M. and Charles R. Bush, jr. Remains resting at the Lee funeral home, 4th street and Massachusetts avenue n.e. where services will be held on Friday, September 1 at 2 p.m. Relatives and friends invited. Interment Congressional Cemetery.

The Evening Star, August 31, 1939, p. A12

Charles Bush, Dean Emeritus of Railroad Engineers, Dies **Piloted Trains on New York - D.C. Run For 45 Years**

Union Station was a sadder place this morning. Most of the corps of railroad men had learned that Charlie Bush, dean emeritus of railroad engineers, had died late yesterday afternoon at his home at 922 F street N.E. -- just within earshot of the train sounds he'd known for half a century.

Since December 1937, Mr. Bush had been living in retirement -- after driving trains some 3,650,000 miles without a major accident over the "Pennsy's" Washington-New York run.

When he retired he went down to his little farm in his native North Carolina. But after a year he began to miss the sounds of whirling steel on steel, the familiar snort of the electric locomotive's horn and chats with old friends at Union Station.

Mr. Bush would have been 72 next November, though his looks belied his age. He had an alertness that comes from watching the track ahead for 50 years.

Came Here at 19

At 19 he first came to Washington to work for the Pennsylvania Railroad as a brakeman. The following five years were spent in learning the work of a brakeman and a fireman and the regular railroad routine. Then came 45 years in the cabs of the crack trains on the Washington-New York run. For many years Mr. Bush had been at the throttle of the Congressional Limited and was the first man to drive the train from Washington to New York in a flat five hours. This might be considered a snail's pace today when the run is made in 3 hours and 35 minutes, but Mr. Bush could recall the time when eight hours was considered breath-taking.

His final trip before retirement was his most trying run. Bound to bring his train into Union Station on time, he got off from Pennsylvania Station in New York City a minute late. There were five stops and eight minutes to make them in on the scheduled run of 226 miles in 215 minutes.

At Trenton, the minute was made up and Mr. Bush was one ahead of schedule. Three minutes were lost in two Philadelphia stops. He had run into drizzle and darkness, and it was pitch dark when the engine pounded into Wilmington six minutes late. Three minutes were made up and then an order to pick up four passengers at Elkton -- a stop which would mean being shunted to a siding from the main tracks. Out of Elkton with the four passengers aboard and nine minutes gone. Charlie Bush bore down on Baltimore. There he had just 1 minutes to bring his train over the 40-mile stretch to Washington. The engine whirled along the rails and the 1,800 passengers on the 16-coach holiday train of November 28, 1937, all unaware, were pulled into Union Station 30 seconds ahead of time.

A Literal-mined Neophyte

Mr. Bush liked to recall his early days as a brakeman. Having had little schooling, he couldn't spell the name of his own position. When he was told to "brake" a car he said he took his boss literally, uncoupled the car and let it roll down hill. At the bottom it ran into a time shed.

"If you call breaking up cars 'braking,' you're good at it." he recorded the boss as saying.

Mr. Bush was a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the Epworth Methodist Church, where he was very active.

Surviving are his widow, Mary; two daughters, Mary Louise and Grace Bush, and two sons, Charles R., jr., and Rudolph M. Bush.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. tomorrow at the Lee funeral home, with burial in Congressional Cemetery.

The Washington Post, September 1, 1939, p. 24

Rites Set Today For C.R. Bush, Ace Rail Engineer

Services for Charles R. Bush, dean emeritus of Washington railroad engineers, credited with 3,650,000 miles of piloting trains on the Pennsylvania's New York-Washington run without a single major accident, will be held at 2 p.m. today at the Lee funeral home, Fourth street and Massachusetts avenue northeast, followed by interment in Congressional Cemetery. The 71-year-old former railroad man died at his home, 922 F street northeast, late Wednesday afternoon.

Retiring from active service in 1937, Mr. Bush spent a year on his farm in North Carolina before returning to make his home in Washington.

He was active in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the Epworth Methodist Church.

Surviving him are his widow, Mary; two daughters, Mary Louise and Grace Bush, and two sons, Charles R., jr., and Rudolph M., all of Washington.