

# Edward Watson: from trains to cattle

By KAREN CURBIE  
Gazette Staff Writer

"I've been working on the railroad all the hvelong day. I've been working on the railroad just to pass the time away."

"Can't you hear the whistle blowing. Rise up so early in the morn..."

After 41 years of railroad service, Edward T. Watson, 65, of 287 Chestnut St., North Dighton, has retired.

"I started with the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad in July, 1945 (at age 24)," he remembered. "I was a locomotive fireman. I kept boilers hot, and threw coal into the steam engine — they used steam engines when I started."

It took him 20 years to rise to the position of locomotive engineer, but in his business, that's not unusual.

"After 20 years of firing, you take examinations," he explained. "Now that time is shorter. I started driving — I became an engineer — in 1966."

"Engineers have to wait for people to leave. Promotion is

through seniority," he added. He enjoyed his first 20 years as a fireman.

"It was challenging," he said. "You had the responsibility to keep a clean fire and keep the steam. Without steam pressure, the train was not able to move."

His fireman's job started to change in 1958 with new technology.

"That was when they started changing over to diesel jobs," he said. "When I was promoted in 1966, they were all diesel. Rather than keeping up steam, the fireman had to run the steam generator to keep the steam heat in the train, and take care of any electrical or mechanical malfunctions."

He found the engineer's job just as challenging.

"When you're running freight trains, you may have 7,000 tons of freight behind you and the train is one mile long, so you're planning one to two miles ahead of the train at all times," he explained. "Passenger trains in this area travel between 90 and 110 miles per hour. The same thing applies (as with freight trains)."

"Through experience and train-

## REGION

ing, you know what to expect," he added.

"He's seen the railroad undergo other changes since hopping aboard."

In 1968, the Pennsylvania, New York, and Central Railroad took over the New York, New Haven, and Hartford Railroad, and in 1974, Conrail took over the freight trains, and Amtrak took over the passenger service.

Watson worked in Amtrak's passenger trains.

As a former engineer, he maintains some appealing benefits.

"Fare is free, but any sleeping accommodations and food we have to pay for," he said. "As long as there are open seats, we can make reservations and travel."

He and his wife have made trips to Florida, New York, and Kansas City. Enroute to Kansas City, they stopped in Chicago and St. Louis.

"My favorite place is the Bahamas," he said. "But I don't go there by train."

He also likes St. Louis.

"We hope to go back in the near future," he said. "People were so hospitable. We stayed at a Holiday Inn, and they gave all kinds of services."

He said his decision to retire from Amtrak on June 4, 1986, was a difficult one to make.

"But after 41 years, you're entitled to retirement," he said. "I enjoyed the work, the job, and the people I worked with."

Since his retirement a month ago, he's been busy.

"So far, I haven't had free time," he said. "I'm busy doing jobs around home — things I've neglected. I'm enjoying every bit of it."

He enjoys farming, and raising cattle.

"I did have some (cattle)," he said. "But the last five years haven't had time. I have seen horses at home — they're son's. I help with them."

He owns 18 acres of land.

"I plan to do more now that I have time," he said. "I raised Black Angus beef cattle — I bred them."

He and his wife, Rita, hope travel.

"We'll winter in the Bahamas he said, although Rita isn't able to retire. "She still has to continue her housework."

He said his dog Max, 10, and his cat Winkie, 23, are glad to have him home.

"But is his wife glad?"

"No comment," he answered chuckling.

# Counseling Center picks chairmen for renovation of Pickens House

MIDDLEBORO — Ruth A. Ger-son and her husband, the late Louis M. Gerson, founder of the Gerson Company, have been named honorary chairmen of the

Counseling Center fund campaign to raise \$30,000 to renovate the Pickens House Clinic on South Main Street.

In making the announcement William Macleod, general chairman, said "Since coming to the Middleboro area 16 years ago, Mr. and Mrs. Gerson developed an outstanding reputation not only for

the operation and success of their family business, but also for their sincere and dedicated concern for the overall welfare and betterment

**COMING SOON...**

Fine Northern Italian Cuisine

**ROSSETTI'S RESTAURANT**

17 School St., Taunton  
824-9233



**Chalot** 424.0123  
CINEMA RITE 138  
6 RAYNHAM