

## **A Crossing at Haley**

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The first crossing of two railroads at what is now known as “the Haleys” was first accomplished by an agreement between the existing Evansville & Crawfordsville Railroad, which ran north/south, and the Indianapolis & St. Louis Railroad, who were building westward towards St. Louis.

This agreement, signed on October 27<sup>th</sup> 1869 authorized the Indianapolis & St. Louis Railroad to construct their road across the track and grounds of the Evansville & Crawfordsville at a point in Vigo County designated on the plat of the Indianapolis & St. Louis Railroad, with the Indianapolis & St. Louis binding themselves to furnishing and maintaining the frog and crossing.

On January 30<sup>th</sup> 1890, an agreement was signed by the successor railroads (Chicago & Eastern Illinois succeeding the Evansville & Crawfordsville and Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis succeeding the Indianapolis & St. Louis) to establish, construct and maintain an interlocking system at the crossing of their respective railroads in accordance with the plans drawn up by The Union Switch & Signal Company and accepted by both, and that both parties would pay one-half the cost of both the interlocking plant and signal system.

The agreement also stated that future maintenance and operation would be in charge of the Chicago & Eastern Illinois, with the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis paying one-half the cost. This also included the operator’s wages, with the operators being carried on the payrolls of both railroads with each road paying half of the salaries.

The Union Switch & Signal Company, in a proposal dated January 20, 1890, outlined a plan to provide and fix in a tower erected by the railway company a Saxby-Farmer interlocking machine having seven levers and one spare space, for the operation of four switches and four locks, and eight signals and four bars. Also, to provide and fix the signals and their connections, the locks and their connections, and the connections to the switches, at a cost of \$2,204.00.

For an additional \$750.00 they would (if desired) furnish the material and erect a neat frame tower, 12’ 2” x 12’ 2” x 13’ to the second floor.

The plans were approved by both the Auditor of the State of Indiana and the Auditor of Vigo County on April 22, 1890.

This then became the first tower to stand at the crossing of these two railroads, although it is unclear if it was built by the C&E I, or by Union Switch & Signal.

## **A Crossing at Haley – Part Two**

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The present Haley Tower was built by the Chicago & Eastern Illinois Railroad in the spring/summer of 1926 and a new GRS Model 2 Interlocking Machine having 35 working levers and 3 spare spaces was installed.

This tower and a new crossover added in the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis main track was constructed according to plans and specifications submitted to the Indiana Public Service Commission on April 14, 1926. It was inspected by Mr. J. K. Smith, Inspector for the Commission, who recommended the formal approval of the application for an Operation Order.

The approval was granted by an order certified by Mr. Howell Ellis, the Secretary of the Commission, on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of October 1926. The new tower was actually placed in service on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October, as evidenced by a memo from H.H. Orr of the C&EI to F.R. Austin of the Big Four, which accompanied a copy of the Order, stating "A new inspection was necessary account of the fact that we built a new tower and installed a new interlocking machine, which was put into service on the 13<sup>th</sup>". This order was filed by both railroads as contract no. 482-B.

The new Haley tower is a two story brick structure with outside measurements of 16 by 20 feet. The floors on both levels are concrete, with the ground floor containing the heating plant, a relay room and a small toilet. The upper level contains the GRS interlocking machine, the operator's desk and a telephone switchboard on the back wall. This switchboard allowed the operator to talk to other stations and trackside call boxes by telephone. It also carried AT&T traffic in the area for a time.

In 1929, a pole line was installed from Haley to a point 170 feet west (south) of Third Avenue and then an underground cable was installed to Locust Street to govern the signals of the respective railroads (possibly relating to operations at the C&EI's Locust Street Yard that operated on that site until 1959).

Through the years Haley continued to operate as usual while the railroads went through a series of changes of ownership.

C&EI went to Missouri Pacific, L&N, Family Lines and finally CSX, while the Big Four changed to the New York Central, Penn Central, Conrail and finally CSX.

The first mention of automating Haley was during the L&N/Penn Central era in late August of 1974 in a letter from the L&N Superintendent of Signals to the Penn Central Transportation Department stating the problems to be resolved before automation would be possible.

Discussions went on during the next fifteen years until CSX came up with a plan in 1989 to eliminate the tower and operator position and realign the trackage to

allow a fifteen mile per hour increase in train speed through the interlocking citing the age of the interlocking machine, the fact that replacement parts were becoming hard to come by and the constant expense involved in maintaining the facilities. With CSX's takeover of Conrail Haley's fate was sealed, it was scheduled to be closed at the end of October 1999 after 73 years of service.

Happily, Haley was not to share the fate of other closed towers. A group of railfans that had considered Haley as a second home got together and formed the Haley Tower Historical & Technical Society in order to save the tower. They bought adjacent land and after months of negotiating with CSX bought Haley Tower for \$1.00. The group then secured a grant from the Lilly Endowment to fund moving it and hired MCF Movers of Newburgh, Indiana to move it.

On Friday, October 22, 1999, at 6 am local time, the tower was officially taken out of service and work was begun to move it about fifty feet to the west, off railroad property. By nightfall, it had been moved, one full day ahead of CSX's deadline for moving it off their property. On January 14, 2000, it was moved to its permanent site as the cornerstone of the Wabash Valley Railroader's Museum, about fifty feet from where it had sat for 73 years.

On Saturday, August 26, 2000, a ceremony was held to officially open Haley Tower to the public.