

WILBERT KENDALL RETIRES

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Ann Arbor's Only Crossing Watchman To Be Retired

Flashing lights and clanging bells are replacing the warning "flags" in the hands of city railroad crossing watchmen, and Ann Arbor's only crossing flagman soon will be retired.

Willbert D. Kendall, who has been flagging down automobiles and pedestrians at the Hoover Ave. crossing of the Ann Arbor railroad for almost 11 years, expects to be relieved of his "Stop" signal any day now, and although his work will not be done by a mechanical warning signal, the adoption of the flasher signal plays a part in his retirement.

His place at the Ann Arbor crossing will be taken by an Owosso watchman, whose crossing is now protected by a light signal. Because of the Owosso man's seniority as a flagman, he will be transferred here, and Kendall, who is 72 years old, will be retired.

Last On Road

Kendall believes he is the last crossing watchman on the Ann Arbor road. He has been with the railroad for 21 years and can't recall having missed a day's work because of sickness.

His job is to see that the double track at the crossing is kept clear when freight and passenger trains approach and during the movement of switch engines over the crossing. Kendall is on the job from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. seven days a week. He doesn't know how many times a day he is called upon to halt traffic on Hoover Ave., but he kept count one day between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. and found that he used his stop signal 45 times.

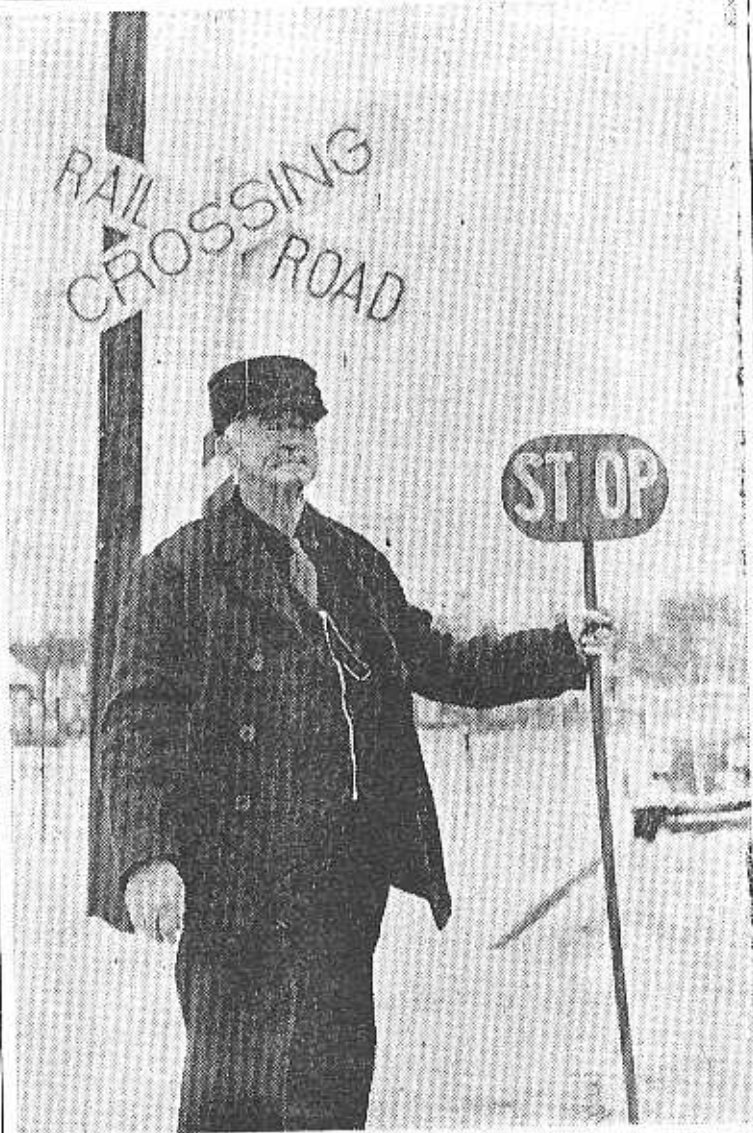
Kendall finds that people are co-operative; they don't try to rush through and "beat" the train.

"I don't remember of anyone ever addressing a harsh word to me on the job," he said.

On Emergency Crew

The crossing watchman began working for the railroad as a section hand in an emergency crew. He was one of a number of men called into service to clear the tracks of four feet of snow in the Harlan area in Manistee county. That was 21 years ago. In addition to his service with the Ann Arbor railroad, he had three years of "railroading" with the old Manistee and Northeastern.

He began his present job Feb. 25, 1930. He has roomed at various places in the neighborhood of the crossing and for a time commuted from Saline where Mrs. Kendall resides. Three years ago he purchased a house trailer and parked it near the watchman's "shanty" at the crossing. A few weeks ago the trailer was de-



WILL BE RETIRED: Willbert D. Kendall, who has been flagging traffic on the Hoover Ave. crossing of the Ann Arbor Railroad for almost 11 years, expects to be retired soon and his place taken by a flagman from Owosso, where a flasher warning has been installed to do the watchman's work. Kendall, a familiar figure to hundreds of factory men and others who daily pass his shanty, is shown with his stop signal.

stroyed by fire during Kendall's absence, and since then he has rented a room in the neighborhood.

His shanty is small but comfortable. It is equipped with a coal burning stove on which Kendall does some of his cooking, and his fuel is furnished by the railroad. He has built an ice box in one corner. There are windows on three sides to provide a clear view of the tracks in both directions.

The shanty is only a few feet from the fence bordering Wines field, but as Kendall is not a sports fan he doesn't regard his daytime home as a "grandstand seat" for the high school's athletic program.

Only one of his 11 children is "working on the railroad." That one is Orin C. Kendall of Whitmore Lake, a section hand for the Ann Arbor road. Kendall has 25 grandchildren.