Joel S. Coffin, Outstanding Railway Supply Trade Executive, Dies

Regarded as one of the industry's progressive and constructive leaders, he exercised an important influence on the development of the modern steam locomotive

JOEL STEPHEN COFFIN, or Joe Coffin, as he was more familiarly know in the railway world, died at Miami Beach, Fla., on Monday, March 11. He was identified with the railway and railway supply business throughout his entire business life and for the past quarter century has been regarded one of the most progressive and constructive leaders in the railway supply industry. The group of companies with which he was associated have specialized largely upon the steam locomotive and its appurtenances, and it is not too much to say that these particular companies, through their activities in research and the development of new designs and devices, as well as their promotion and servicing, have played a leading part in the remarkable development of the modern steam locomotive. Mr. Coffin had the ability to surround himself with strong executives and engineering experts of unusual ability.

Joel Stephen Coffin

Mr. Coffin was born in 1861 in Wales Township, St. Clair County, Mich., and his boyhood was spent in Elm Hall, Mich. His father was born in New Hampshire, his forebears being among the early settlers of Nantucket Island. His mother was born in Michigan. At 18 years of age Mr. Coffin became a machinist apprentice in the shops of the Chicago & West Michigan Railroad at Muskegon, Mich. He left that occupation, apparently before he completed his apprenticeship, in order to become a locomotive fireman and then a locomotive engineer on the same road. In 1885 he entered the service of the Wisconsin Central Railroad as a locomotive engineer, and in 1890 was promoted to road foreman of engines on that road.

Became Associated with Supply Industry in 1892

In 1892 Mr. Coffin entered the employ of the Galena Signal Oil Company, as a member of its mechanical expert staff. He was advanced to the position of manager of that department in 1895, and in 1907 was elected vice-president of the company. He resigned in 1909 to become a vice-president of the American Brake Shoe & Foundry Company, with headquarters in New York.

Meanwhile, in 1902, while with Galena Company, he, with Samuel G. Allen, who has been associated with him ever since, organized the Franklin Railway Supply Company. In 1910, while with the American Brake Shoe & Foundry Company, he organized the American Arch Company. He also took an active part in the development of the Locomotive Superheater Company.

In 1911 he resigned from the American Brake Shoe & Foundry Company, to devote his entire time to the Franklin Railway Supply Company, the American Arch Company, the Locomotive Superheater Company, and other companies which later became associated with these organizations. In 1916 he became chairman of the board of the Lima Locomotive Works, Inc.

At the time of his death Mr. Coffin was chairman of the board of the American Arch Company, the Franklin Railway Supply Company and the Lima Locomotive Works, Inc. He was chairman of the executive committee of the Superheater Company and a director of the American Brake Shoe & Foundry Company, the G. M. Basford Company, the Locomotive Feedwater Heater Company, Rome Iron Mills, Inc., the Venango Manufacturing Company, and other organizations.

Took Keen Interest in Civic Affairs

Mr. Coffin took great pride in retaining his membership in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. He lived in Englewood, N. J., and took a keen interest in civic affairs. He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Harriet Delilah Coffin, and two sons, Charles William Floyd Coffin, vice-president of the Franklin Railway Supply Company, and Joel Stephen Coffin, president of the J. S. Coffin, Jr., Company.

THE 1935 ROADWAY-REHABILITATION and equipment-building program of the London, Midland & Scottish of Great Britain contemplates an expenditure of approximately $46,000,000 according to a recent announcement by T. R. Dester, general traffic manager, Associated British Railway, Inc., New York. The program includes the construction or rebuilding of 287 locomotives, 627 passenger cars, 10,050 freight cars and two steamships; also track and roadway work will be carried out on 600 mi. of line.