

East Falls Past--Mr. Green, Falls Stationmaster

The Falls, December 2011, by Wendy Moody

In his 40th year as station agent at the Reading Railroad's East Falls Station in 1926, the congenial William Green was interviewed by the *East Falls Herald*:

This smiling man arrived in 1886 to take charge of the Falls Station, which was then at the foot of Bowman Street. It was a little house on the west side of the tracks with a 100 yard long wooden platform. Part of the station was fixed as a dwelling and it was here that Mr. Green first made his home, later moving to Midvale Avenue.

The stationmaster has seen many changes in his long years of service, especially the growth of Queen Lane Manor, which he remembers as open fields and woods.

In 1886, the railroad's only competition was a horse-drawn line on Ridge Road. Today (i.e. 1926) the locality is served by three competing street car lines – those on Ridge, Midvale, and Allegheny.

While stationmaster there, Mr. Green served as telegrapher, ticket-clerk, baggage master, freight agent and was, in fact, the general factotum, working from 6am to midnight.

Since the erection of the current station on Midvale, Mr. Green has a porter and three assistants, who work 8 hours a day.

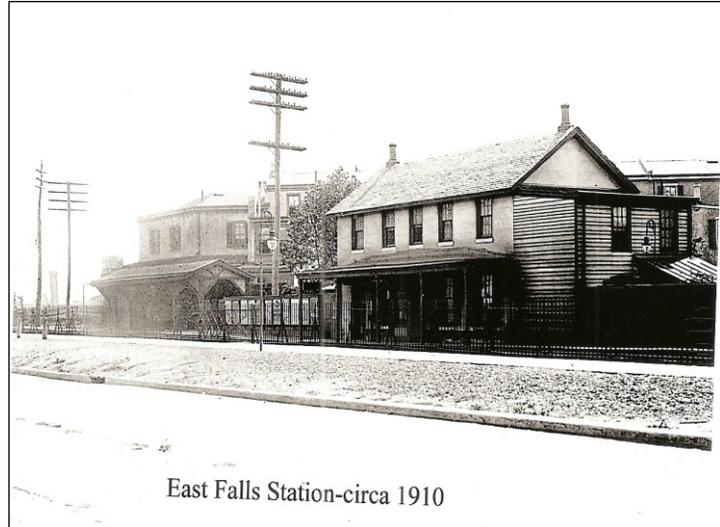
The old station, where Mr. Green served for 27 years, was the scene of many accidents, few safety devices then being in evidence. There is now a dividing fence between the tracks which extends from Queen Lane almost to Calumet Street.

The mail, which was formerly received by a messenger from the postal headquarters on Ridge, is now under the care of the station agent, since the new station is within the requisite distance of the present post office on Midvale Avenue.

Mr. Green recalled that one of the messengers hauled the mail back and forth in a little jaunting cart drawn by a diminutive donkey.

Schuetzen Park, in the old days, was situated on the present site of the Queen Lane filter plant, and great crowds used the trains to go to the park.

The station agent says the designation of the station, East Falls, came about through the confusion which arose whenever anyone addressed parcels to Falls of Schuylkill, when no such name appeared upon the tariff schedules of either the railroad or express companies. Inasmuch as there were two other towns in Pennsylvania called Falls, the goods shipped to this point often traveled around to all three towns before reaching the proper destination. To obviate this, the railroad company decided to call the station East Falls to differentiate from a station on the west side of the river called West Falls.



The recent miners' strike, says Mr. Green, was the first time in his memory that a condition arose which compelled them to use soft coal to heat the station."

Footnote: Mr. Green retired in 1932 after 51 years of service to Reading Company.