

THE MILK AND HONEY ROUTE (1930)

Dean Stiff (Nels Anderson)

Short Biography of Nels Anderson by Arthur J. Vidich

Nels Anderson's study, *The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man*, published as Vol. I of the Sociological Series of the University of Chicago in 1923, was based in part on his personal experience of the hobo world. Anderson, who arrived at the University in 1921, had some experience in hobo life, and his teachers were alert to encourage him to capitalize on his unique firsthand knowledge. They saw an obvious opportunity to connect one of the most characteristic urban districts, the hobo area, with a broader sociological interest in movement, isolation and disorganization.

Nels Anderson knew life in the bummery at first hand. He was a migratory worker in the frontier West for more than ten years, during which he lived in the world of the hobo, tramp, bum, gandy-dancer, skinner, bridge snake, jungle buzzard, panhandler, notch house and shanty queen. It was a world that he has neither idealized nor morally rejected, but has reported as an observer who understood that the hobo was an essential part of the frontier labor market; only later and not by Anderson has the frontier been romanticized. The authenticity and durability of his study rests much less on the interviewing he did in the Madison Street area of Chicago than on his earlier experiences in life.

During the 1920s worked in Chicago for the Home for the Incurables and the Juvenile Protective Association, participated in the Hobo College and was associated with the Municipal Lodging House. He took classes at New York University and received his Ph.D. in 1930 at the age of forty.

During the great economic depression of the 1930s he worked in Albany, New York for then Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry Hopkins: to organize a program for the homeless in Buffalo under the State Relief Administration. Later, during the depression, when Harry Hopkins became head of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in Washington, Anderson went with him and was appointed Labor Relations Officer in that agency.

THE MILK AND HONEY ROUTE

II

THE ROAD TO ROAM

*We hear the merry jingle,
The rumble and the roar,
As she dashes through the woodland,
As she creeps along the shore.
We hear the engine's whistle
And the hardy hobos call,
As we ride the rods and brakebeams
On the Wabash Cannonball.*

From a hobo road song.

SOMETIMES the hobo is assumed to be a hiker on the railroad. That is a mistake. In the main, hobos are riding animals, just as much fixtures of the railroads as the wheels under the box cars. If they differ from one another, it is in the manner of riding or the speed with which they get over the country. Some travel much and others little, some fast and some slow, some ride the freights and others the cannonballs; but they all ride. To the hobo the railroad is a secondary system of circulation.

An excellent confirmation of the above point is the intimacy existing between the hobo and the railroad. He knows his railroads as the gangster knows the street corner. His intimacy is revealed in the pet names he has for the different roads of his acquaintance. He nicknames them in the light of his experience with them, or with the natives along their routes. Sit down beside the track with an old timer and listen while he rattles off the names of the box cars that pass. He sees a D. & R. G. car from the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad and he calls out "Damn Rotten Grub." A Toledo, Peoria and Western car reminds him of the common reputation that the Illinois jerk-water line has, and the initials become a warning, "Take Patience and Walk." The F. W. & D. C. reminds him of a strip of steel stretched across the desert from Fort Worth to Denver and he is reminded of "Foul Water and Dirty Cars." Certainly, the hobo is not a walking animal.

While we are on railroad initials, it may be in order to give a few more. Take the M. K. T., or the "Katy," the Bible-belt railroad of Missouri, Kansas and Texas. It is aptly known among hobos as "Moral, Klannish and Theological." As for the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul, that becomes "Canned Milk and Stale Punk (bread)." The Lake Shore and Michigan Southern, with its reputation for speed, is called "Less Sleep and More Speed." The Grand Trunk Pacific is said to "Give Tie Passes." Thus the hobo, in his attempts to use a railroad or to live along its route, tends to associate the name of the road with his experience on it. This being true, it is easy to understand why the Oberlin, Hampton and Eastern becomes the "Original Ham and Egg Route," and the Boston and Maine is known as the "Bread and Milk Route."

It is no accident that the hobo identifies his natural highway, the railroad, with gastronomic associations. A good example of this is a short branch line running into the mining camps of Montana. This railroad is still called the "Jawbone," after the manner of its building. The rawjawed teameos and muckers, dynoes and shantymen who built that railroad got little or no hard cash. They got their tobacco and chuck, and credit in the company store, but nothing more. Credit like that was known as "Jawbone." To this day most of them have never received a red cent in real money, so the Jawbone lives in bitter memory.

Often the hobos speak of a railroad as a "milk and honey route." The original milk and honey route was a railroad from Salt Lake City southward through the valleys of Utah. Along this line were the Mormon villages so euphoniouly named, Moroni, Manti, Nephi, Lehi and Juab. In the early days, before the Latter Day Saints got disillusioned by the great influx of bums and yeggs, or, what is worse, the auto tramps, this was the greatest feeding ground for hobos. Hence the name, milk and honey route, which has since become a household term among hobos. Any railroad running through a valley of plenty may be called a milk and honey line. But this is a transient term; what may be a milk and honey route to one hobo may not be so to another. A hobo may fare well on a route one time and another time fare ill. Again, it may be milk and honey for a road kid but not for an old timer. For Jewish hobos, the trombenicks of the road, every road is always milk and honey, which explains in part why Jews never lack partners on the road.

What has just been said about milk and honey routes may lead to a false notion about the interests of the hobo in railroads. This may seem to be contradictory to later descriptions of the hobo as a migratory worker. It is true that the hobo is a worker, but he is not a walking, beaten worker. He travels a great deal, going from job to job. He travels from town to job and from job to town. Often he travels from town to town. When not in a town or on a job he is en route between them. If he has to travel a goodly part of his time, whether a third, a half or even two-thirds of his time, he is none the less a migratory worker. When traveling he has to live, indeed he has to live well, and he does. How he manages to keep his body fit and his mind alert while seeking and testing these milk and honey routes is discussed in the chapter on panhandling.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to tell the young novice how to get over the road. That would be like telling

the groundling how to fly. If your foot is swift, your hand deft and your eye keen, the rest will come easy. To roam the roads of Hobohemia you need to be ready of wit, for ill fares the witless hobo. You may be as sure of yourself as any greenling, but too often self-confidence backed only by desire may outstrip your sanity and lead you to grief.

It is on this subject of getting over the road that the hobo "authorities" have confused the facts most. If you listen to them the hobo's life is one merry train ride after another, full of hazards but never discouraging. They would have you flipping trains going thirty miles an hour, flipping from a standing start at twenty miles an hour, and piling off without skinned shins at forty miles an hour. Those things do happen, but they are the exception rather than the rule.

There are many ways of riding a train and the preferences differ with different hobos. Some like the trucks and bumpers, while others prefer the blinds or the deck. Road kids may be found riding the tool boxes, the ice boxes or the Pullman steps; again we find them crawling into the pilot. Some expert riders claim they can ride the hot boxes with sprinklers in their hands, or on the side of the box car dressed like a Swift Ham or the trade mark of Old Dutch Cleanser. It would be folly to undertake here to tell you how to become a train rider. You will have to develop your own style. If you want to take your style second-hand from a book then you must be content to remain a second-class hobo.

But there are things that the novice can learn in advance. He can learn in advance that in getting over the road it is better to avoid the train crews than to get in their way. A great many hobo writers who like to tell about their own adventures are full ready to tell the novice how to outwit the brakemen, or shacks. If you listen to me, you will keep out of sight. It is not necessary for the hobo ever to meet the engineer of the train, known among our kind as the "hogger," or "hoghead." Sometimes you will meet the fireman, or "tallowpot." Tallowpots are only interested in hobos to exploit them. They will put you to work pulling down coal. Sometimes, if the rest of the crew is hostile, this is the only way of getting over the road. Sometimes you may meet a good tallowpot who between jobs is a hobo himself.

As for the shacks and cons, or conductors, they are not all grafters demanding a dollar a division. Occasionally you meet a real boomer hobo among them. For the sake of these the hobo while riding should observe at least one little courtesy, that is, to keep out of sight. While going through the small towns it is the height of bad manners for a hobo to ride hanging his feet out of the side door of a box car, sitting in full view on top, or riding conspicuously in open gondolas.

On this matter of paying graft to the shacks: it should not be encouraged. The good hobo can ride without paying; indeed, if he knows the art, he can get along well without any money. If he doesn't know the art, not only is he going to be exploited if he has money, but his money will do him little good and he will make the going harder for others.

Traveling involves a certain previous knowledge of geography, but not as much as is sometimes assumed. Sometimes you find a hobo with a pocketful of timetables and railroad maps, studying them as though he were a general planning a campaign. This is a sure sign that he is a greenling in the business. The real hobo follows his nose and he needs no other map, for any road he takes is the right road. Since he has no objective, as the term is used by the natives, one direction is as good as any other. This is not so absurd as it may seem, for actually the intuitive hobo gets more of the milk and honey than the map-reader.

The road the real hobo follows is never ending. It is always heading into the sunset of promise but it never fully keeps its promise. Thus the road the hobo roams always beckons him on, much as does the undealt card in a game of stud. Every new bend of the road is disillusioning but never disappointing, so that once you get the spirit of the hobo you never reach the stone wall of utter disillusionment. You follow on hopefully from one bend of the road to another, until in the end you step off the cliff.

Nels Anderson's GLOSSARY OF HOBO TERMS

This list of words and phrases is in no sense complete. Nor is it solely hobo slang. Many terms began in Hobohemia and were taken up in time by other groups. Other terms are found among both hobo and other groups, but in each case with a different meaning. Indeed, you will find a hobo term with one meaning on the Pacific and another on the Atlantic Seaboard, and still another in the Southland. In this book I have made no strained effort to use much of this freightyard folklore. This is opposite to the practice of many contemporary hobo writers. They think by the use of slang to add a bona fide touch to the fiction they weave. I am including this glossary largely for the information of those of you who may be interested, and for reference if you want to test some of the "authorities" in this field.

Accommodation - A local freight train. It may carry passengers.

Adam and Eve on a raft - Two fried eggs on toast. "Wreck 'em" if they are scrambled. "With their eyes open," if not.

Alligator bait - Fried or stewed liver. Too costly now for hobos.

Anchor - A pick. Companion tool of the shovel or *banjo*.

Angel - A person who gives more than you expect. One who takes an interest without trying to reform you.

Angel food - Mission preaching about the Bread of Life.

Angelina - *Punk* or *road kid* acting as a hobo's companion.

A-No-1 - A famous tramp who writes his name "on everything like J. B. King." He writes books about his alleged adventures. Many young hobos write this monicker on water tanks, and chalk it on box cars.

Auntie - *Angelina* grown older.

Axle grease - Butter. Sometimes called *plaster*.

Baldy - Generally an old man "with a high forehead".

Balloon - A roll of bedding carried on the back; a bundle.

Barnacle - A fellow who sticks to one job a year or more.

Banjo - A short-handled shovel.

Bazoo - Mouth. A term of derision. "Shut your bazoo!"

Beefer - One who whines. Sometimes an informer.

Belly robber - A boarding boss who tries to save money on food.

Benny - An overcoat. A vest used to be called a *ben*.

Big four - A duck egg omelet. See chapter on food.

Big Ole - The fellow who tries to show the boss how strong he is. He'll do all your work if you praise him.

Big school or house - The state penitentiary. (*The stir*.)

Bindle - Bedding roll slung on the back.

Biscuit shooter - Camp waiter or hash slinger. Also a *flunkey*.

Bit or jolt - A term in prison. A long *stretch* is the opposite of a short term or *sleep*.

Bitch - A tin-can lamp with a shirt-tail wick. See *bug*. Also more recently a *lamb* or *preshun*.

Black bottle - Poison allegedly given hobos in hospitals. Many hobos believe this bottle exists.

Blanket stiff - Western type of hobo who carries his bed. He is also called a *bindle bum*.

Blinds - False door at end of baggage car. Hobo ridingplace.

Blinkey - A blind hobo, or one who is "practically blind."

Block, Mr. - The original John Dubb. The man who believes that the police mean well and that *sharks* are good fellows.

Bohunk - A Polish or other Slavic laborer.

Boil up - To cook one's clothes, or merely to wash clothes.

Bone polisher - A vicious dog. Also called a *tailor's helper*.

Boneyard - Any graveyard. Also refers to a hospital, or to a medical college where they practice on the bodies of departed hobos.

Boodle - Cheap grafting, generally a term of the yeggs.

Boodle jail - A jail that may be worked for a good winter's lodging.

Boomer - A hobo who is always on the go. He has a travel itch.

Boston bum - One of those superior fellows, a highbrow poser. Many of them do come from Boston or thereabouts.

Bottle wagon - An iron coal-car.

Bouncer - The strong man who throws the sleepers and drunks out of the mission. He is usually a *mission stiff*.

Bowery barometer - Curbstone philosopher from the New York *main stem*. General information bureau but not a highbrow.

Bridal chamber - *Flop house* where the guests lie on the floor. It is also a mining term meaning the miner's workplace.

Broad or *brod* - A woman, generally young and opposite of *bat* or *blister*, which means an old woman.

Browning Sisters - The *Angelina* sorority. "He belongs to the Browning Sisters" or "to the Brown Family."

Buck - A Catholic priest good for a dollar.

Bug - Same as *bitch*. These are lamps for the jungle.

Bull artist - A hobo with the gift of gab. Becoming a parlor term.

Bull cook - Camp *flunkey* doing the heavy work for the chef.

Bum - Amply defined in the book. It is a term of many meanings, but in its most authoritative uses it refers to the lowest of vagrants.

Bumpers - Couplings between freight cars upon which hobos sometimes ride if there are no empties on the train.

Bundle tosser - Hobo harvest hand who pitches bundles or *bouquets*.

Butts - The stem of a cigar picked up on the street.

Cacklers - White collar workers.

Cages - The cubicle rooms in the cheap lodging houses.

Cake eater - The nice boy of the town. Not used much by hobos.

Calaboose - The police station or the village lock-up.

California blankets - Newspapers when used to sleep on.

Call - Hobo dish: Baked potato mashed with butter and served with liverwurst and onions.

Candle eaters - Term sometimes used for the Russians.

Candy - *Candy kid* is the fellow who gets the good breaks. *Candy job* is the pleasant job. *Candy team* is the favorite span of mules in the outfit.

Cannon ball - A fast train. "The Wabash Cannon Ball" is the mythical hobo train that travels everywhere.

Captain - Hobo salutation of the head man or *big shot*.

Card man - A union man or a hobo with a red I. W. W. card.

Carry the banner - To walk the street all night for want of shelter. Sometimes it is called *to lead Bruno*.

Cat house - A brothel, which is sometimes called a *notch house*.

Cat wagon - A brothel on wheels visiting the chaste villages of the middle west or following the harvest crews.

Checker-board crew - A mixed gang of white and negro workers.

Cheesy - To be filthy with dirt.

Chicken in the clay - Fowl rolled in mud for roasting. See chapter on food.

Chow - Becoming now a common word meaning food.

Christ killing - To speak from the soap box giving the *economic argument*.

Chuck a dummy - To pretend a fainting fit.

Coffin nail - A vanishing term for cigarettes.

Collar and shoulder style - Everything is put on the table and the hobo guest helps himself.

Combination stew - An ordinary jungle dish of vegetables and meat.

Combination train - A mixed passenger and freight local train. Is also called an *accommodation*, or *peddler*.

Come-on guy - A fellow who boosts things along on the job, for which the boss gives him on the sly a little more pay.

Come to Jesus - A *come-to-Jesus* manner means to feign piety. A *come-to-Jesus* collar is one worn by a preacher.

Con - A *con* is a tubercular person. *The con* is the conductor on a train. An *ex-con* is a former convict.

Con game - This refers to any kind of graft involving trickery.

Con man - A grafter or trickster. It may mean ex-convict.

Connect - To make a *touch*. The reward for good *panhandling*.

Cooke - The second in command to the main stew-builder.

Cousin Jack - Generally refers to a Cornish miner, but, like the term *Cockney*, may be applied to any Englishman.

Croaker or *croacus* - A member of the medical fraternity, a *pill peddler*.

Crooked arm - Signal the boss gives when he wants more speed.

Crum boss - Man who builds fires in the bunk houses.

Crum up - Same as *boil up*.

Crummy - To be lousy. Also refers to the caboose on a train.

Crums - What the hobo may get but never keeps: lice. Also called *gray backs* and *seam squirrels*.

Cushions, Riding the - Riding *de luxe* in a passenger train.

Damper - Cash till or cash register.

Dead one - A drunken hobo. Also a hobo who has just spent all his money.

Dead picker - A yegg who robs a drunk or *dead one*. He kicks him first to see if he is dead to the world and then robs him.

Dead soldier - An empty whiskey bottle lying beside the road.

Deck 'em - To ride the top of a passenger train.

Decorate the mahogany - To buy the drinks; to line the bar with thirsty throats and brimming glasses.

Dick or fly cop - A detective either in public or private employ.

Dinke skinner - The man who runs a dinkey engine on construction jobs.

Dipsy - Workhouse sentence. See *give him the works*.

Discard artist - One who carries around or wears picked-up clothes.

Dog robber - Boarding house keeper, sometimes a flunkey.

Doughnut philosopher - A fellow who is satisfied with the price of a *coffee and feed*. He does not object to the doughnut hole getting larger because it will take more dough to go around it. He is the original *breadline optimist*.

Drag - A long, slow-moving freight train.

Drag - Hobo term for the main street of the town, as distinguished from the *main stem*. But a *drag* is also a homosexuals' party.

Ducket - A ticket, or a card good for a feed or a flop.

Dump or joint - Hobo hangout or gathering place. It also applies to a restaurant or *flophouse*.

Dyno or dino - A rock man who handles dynamite. On the Coast he is a *front and back man* who carries his blanket on his back like a western hobo and his cooking cans in front like an Australian tramp.

Eat snowballs - To stay up North during the winter.

Economic argument - Soap-box talk about economics. Generally opposed to the religious argument called *angel food*.

Evil eye - Some people are supposed to have an eye for wishing bad luck. Panhandlers try to avoid such.

Exhibition meal - A *handout* eaten on the doorstep. The madam wants the neighbors to witness her generosity.

Extra gang - A crew that works on the railroad track.

Eye doctor - A panhandler who can catch the eye of his client and hold it without quailing. Also a pederast.

Eye opener - An early morning drink, often begged from the bartender when he opens up in the morning.

Faded bogey - Negro acting as an informer.

Fagot or fag - A *road kid* with homosexual tendencies.

Fall guy - The *goat*. The fellow who gets caught. In the world of crime he is one who *takes the rap* without *squealing*.

Fanner or fan - To be hit on the soles while sleeping on a park bench. To *get a fanner* is to be moved on by the police.

Fink - A scab. One who takes a striker's job. Good hobos frown upon this practice.

Fish - Jail term for new prisoners.

Fisheries - Missions along the *main stem*.

Flagged - It may mean to be driven out of town, to be turned down or to be hailed by someone.

Flannel mouth - An Irishman. Sometimes called a *chaw*.

Flicker - To faint or simulate fainting.

Flipping a rattler - Boarding a moving box-car.

Floater - Same as *boomer*, only the *floater* is more casual. To *get a floater* is to be turned loose by the judge.

Flop - To sleep or a place to sleep. To *prone the body*.

Flop house - A cheap lodging house or any hobo hotel.

Flunkey - Camp waiter. Always male. A woman is a *hasher*.

Fly-away - A deserter from the army or navy.

Forty-fives - Monicker for navy beans, givers of energy.

Frisk or shakedown - To search. It usually means search by the police. But train crews also *go through* the hobos.

Frog or frog eater - A Frenchman. A Canadian Frenchman is a *pea soup*.

Front - A whole layout of new clothes. "Put on a front."

Fuzz tail - Name for unpopular fellow. He is also a *ring tail*. Such hobos are often under suspicion.

Galway - A priest.

Gandy dancer - Hobo track laborer, tie tamper and rail layer.

Gandy gumbo - Hobo dish described in the chapter on food.

Gay cat - Tenderfoot among the hobos.

Gentry - The leading natives of a place, the socially elect.

Ghost story - Plausible tale told to the housewife.

Gin mill - Very old hobo term for a speakeasy.

Give him the works - To be given a job by a social agency, or sent to the rock pile by the judge.

Glauming - Refers to crop gathering. We have *berry glauming*, *apple glauming* or *knocking*, *cherry glauming*, etc.

Go-getter - Hobo who worries the social workers by writing to or calling on the wealthy contributors.

Go with the birds - To go south for the winter.

Going by hand - To walk. Hiking to the next water tank.

Going on the farm - When a train goes on the sidetrack. Also a railroad term.

Gooseberry bush - The clothes line. *Gooseberries* are the garments that adorn the line in the moonlight.

Goy - Hobo who can work the Jewish agencies. Plural, *goyem*.

Graveyard shift - Night work, usually in the small hours.

Graveyard stew - Hot milk and toast.

Gummy - A hanger-on. A bum who goes along with the crowd but never contributes. A sort of *dead head*.

Gunnells or guts - The *rods* or *trucks* of the train where hobos ride.

Gypso - A sub-contractor with poor equipment, but who may be good to work for.

Handout - A parcel of food given out by the housewife. A *lump*.

Hard tails - Mules, usually old ones. So named because they show little response to the *skinner's* whip. Young mules are *shavetails*.

Harness bull - A policeman who wears a uniform.

Haywire - When everything is balled up. A *haywire outfit* is something that is all tied and patched together.

Head end - The front of the train. In front of or near the engine.

High ball - Signal for a train to pull out of town.

High diver - Yegg who picks pockets.

High jacker - Yegg who robs hobos with a gun or by brute strength.

His Nibs - The police magistrate.

Hit the ball - To speed up on the job.

Hitch - Prison term or army term. Same as *bit*.

Hitting the grit - To be forced off a fast moving train.

Hobo - The highest form of the genus vagrant.

Hobohemia - Universe of the hobo.

Hoghead or hogger - The engineer. This is also a railroad term.

Home guard - A fellow who always stays in town. Some live their lives on a single block in the *main stem*.

Honey dipping - Working as a *shovel stiff* in a sewer, or any kind of unpleasant shovel work.

Hoosegow - Same as *calaboose*. Often called *the can*.

Hoosier - The natives, generally simple fellows. Also called *yaps*, *hicks* or *rubes*.

Hot - A person is *hot* when he is wanted by the *law*. No hobo will travel with a man who is *hot*.

Hot shot - A fast freight or passenger train.

Hot stuff - Stolen goods. Something that must be dropped.

Hotel de Gink - A charitable or a municipal lodging house.

House dog - A fellow who goes about hunting jobs, cleaning windows, beating carpets, etc.

How strong are you? - Meaning, How much money have you? If you have a *pile* you answer, "So strong, I

stink."

Hump - "Over the hump" means to cross the mountains to the West Coast. It also refers to the elevation in the freight yards for switching cars, a railroad term.

Hundred proof - Meaning whiskey of the *purest*.

Hunt a wampus - A wild goose chase. The *wampus* is a black cat with a white tail and it lives in the tall timber.

Hunkydory - Everything is fine. The term is getting into popular usage.

Jake or *George* - The same as *hunkydory*.

Jail bird - A fellow who brags about his *vag* record.

Jawbone - Credit. To buy in the company store against one's pay.

J. B. - J. B. Stetson hat. Prized among hobos because the band may be sold for half a dollar.

Jerries - Men who work on the section gang. They do maintenance work while *gandy dancers* work on contract jobs.

Jesus guy - A *mission stiff*. Sometimes called a *faith man*.

Jocker - A hobo who goes about with a *road kid* or *punk*.

John Family - This term is sometimes applied to the farmers, sometimes to the police and again to the yeggs.

Jungle - Hobo's summer home. See the first chapter.

Jungle buzzard - A bum who loafes about the jungle begging from the hobos.

Junker or *junky* - A fellow who uses drugs, called *junk*.

Kangaroo court - Mock court held in jail for the purpose of forcing new prisoners to divide their money.

Keister - A suit case. Not often carried by hobos.

Kick - A pocket in the trousers.

Kicks - Shoes. Also called *slides*.

Knowledge box - Country school house where hobos sometimes sleep.

Lamb - Boy tramp or *road kid*. Boy companion of the *wolf*.

Lambing - To herd sheep, a job avoided by respectable hobos.

Leather poke - A wallet.

Lee of a reefer - The ice-box in a refrigerator car.

Library birds - Down and outers who loaf or *roost* in libraries.

Lighthouse - Stingy person. A procurer for a house of sin. Also one who is placed to watch for the *bulls*.

Limpy - A cripple. If he has a wooden leg he is *peg*.

Little red wagon - A dump wagon. Driving one is a favorite job.

Little school - Reformatory or house of correction.

Lizzie tramps - Sometimes refers to the hitch-hikers and again to wandering families traveling in automobiles.

Louse - A fellow who will steal the shoes of a hobo who befriends him.

Lump - Food received at the back door; a *handout*.

M. & C. - "Marmon and Cadillac," meaning morphine and cocaine.

Main guy - Same as *captain*. Refers to the person in charge.

Main stem - The chief hobo street in town.

Making a riffle - Same as to *connect*, to get the money.

Manana - Spanish for "tomorrow." Means put it off and embodies the spirit of postponement.

Man-catcher - The *shark's* assistant who urges a job on the hobo - usually to fill a shipment of men.

Manifest - Fast freight carrying fruit or cattle.

Mark - A *mark* is a person or place good for food, clothes or money, but not advice.

Mission stiff - Man who gets "saved" for food and a *flop*.

Mix me a hike - Meaning "pay me off," or "give it to me."

Moll - A woman who pals with hobos. This term is not used much by the hobos.

Monicker - The hobo's informal name, his *handle*.

Monkey chasers - West Indians or other Negroes from the tropics.

Mooching - A low form of begging. See chapter on subject.

Moper - A bum who is even lower than a *moocher*.

Mop Mary - A scrub woman.

Mouthpiece - The name the yeggs apply to lawyers.

Mud - Strong coffee mixed with weak milk.

Munie - Familiar term for a municipal lodging house.

Mushfaker - A go-about repair man. He may solder pots or mend umbrellas. Sometimes hobos follow the art.

Nickel note - Five-dollar bill.

Noch - Hebrew shelter for homeless men. From *hochnosis orchim*, which means a place to make welcome. They treat you fine if you know how to get by the gate.

Nose bag - Lunch handed out in a paper sack.

Nuttery - Hospital for the insane. Also a *nut factory*.

O. B. U. - One Big Union. The ideal of the soap boxers.

Odd fellows - Fraternal symbol: three doughnuts and coffee.

On the hummer - Being on the bum but not down and out.

On the uppers - Being on the bum and nearly down and out.

One-Eyed Connolly - A gate crusher. Term refers to the famous no-pay fight fan by that name. He has hobo imitators.

Packing the mustard - Carrying the hod.

Padding the hoof - Going by foot. A practice good hobos avoid.

Palooka - A roving boxer who lives in the past.

Panhandling - Read the chapter on the subject.

Paul Bunyan - A chronic, but none the less interesting, liar.

Pay station - Social welfare agency that gives out money. Very rare.

Pay streak - To have a job that pays well.

Peanut farm - Workhouse where the inmates crack stones.

Pea soup - French Canadian or *Canuck*. Often a lumber jack.

Peddler or *bob tail* - A short local freight train.

Peg house - A place where, if the hobo wishes, he may meet *Angelina*.

Pennsylvania salve - Apple butter.

Peoria - Thin soup. Generally potato water with salt.

Phoney man - Fellow who peddles cheap jewelry.

Pie card - One who hangs around and lives on a *remittance man* or some other person with money.

Pig's vest with buttons - Sow belly, or any fat bacon.

Pile driver or *Java* - Coffee, but good strong coffee.

Pill peddler - The camp doctor. The label may fit any M. D.

P. K. - The principal keeper of the *little school*.

Pogey - The workhouse. Sometimes the poor farm.

Poke - A leather wallet. Also a *gin mill*.

Possesh - *Road kid*. The hobo's boy companion.

Possum belly - The boxes under passenger cars where hobos sometimes ride.

Potatoes and with it - Western jungle dish. See chapter on food.

Pound your ear - To sleep in a bed.

Preshun - Same as *punk* or *possesh*.

Prone the body - To lie down and rest.

Punk - *Road kid*. Often used in derision.

Punk - Bread. Southern bread is called *pone*.

Punk and gut - Bread and sausage.

Punk and plaster route - Traveling among the Pennsylvania Dutch.

Pusher - The straw boss. One in charge of the job.

Rank cats - Lowest of the genus bum.

Rattler - A fast train, same as *cannonball*. In the West a box-car.

Razor back - Circus roustabout. Also an Arkansas hog.

Read your shirt - To examine your clothes for *crums*.

Red ball - Fast fruit train. Good for long rides.

Reefer - A refrigerator car. Like many another railroad term it also belongs to the hobo's lingo.

Remittance man - Hobo paid by his family to stay away from home.

Road kid - The boy apprentice among the hobos.

Robbing the mail - Snatching food and milk delivered at the doorstep early in the morning.

Rods - The nether structure of a freight car. Modern cars do not have *rods*. A *rod* is a gun.

Roll - To *roll* means to rob a sleeping drunk.

Roll in the sawdust - In the *barrel house*, now extinct, they put sawdust on the floor for the convenience of the drunks.

Sagebrush philosopher - Gabby fellow from the West.

Sallies - Salvation Army hotels and industrial workshops.

Salve eater - A snuff-chewing Swede. He is also a *roundhead*.

Sap - The policeman's persuader. *To get sapped* means to be clubbed by the *bulls*.

Scissorbill - Hobo who believes he can become President. He never gets next to himself, or anyone else.

Scoffing - To eat. *To scoff regularly* means to miss no meals.

Scrape the pavement - To get a shave.

Scrapers' school - Barber college where students practice on hobos.

Screw your nut - Get wise to yourself.

Sea food - A sailor.

Set-down - To eat with your feet under the table. The reverse of the *handout*.

Sewer hogs - Ditch diggers.

Shack - A brakeman. Railroad term.

Shack fever - Tired feeling that comes in the spring. It is also called *itching feet*.

Shakedown - Same as *frisk*.

Shanty man - Same as *gyppo* contractor.

Shanty queen - Wife of the *shanty man*. Any woman around a camp.

Shark - A man who sells jobs to the hobos. His assistant is called a *man catcher*.

Shatting on the uppers - To be broke, penniless or *clean*.

Shavetail - Young mules. See *hard tail*. A young army officer of low rank is also a *shavetail*.

Sheets - Newspapers for a bed.

Shellacker - Booster or promoter who *puts on the varnish*.

Shine - A Negro. Also called a *burr head*.

Shiner - A ten-cent piece.

Shiv - Razor. A blade but never a safety razor.

Shoo fly - A railroad detour, when a track is built around some obstacle. Also means to avoid passing through a town if the police are hostile.

Side door pullman - A box car. Hobo's home en route.

Skinner - One who drives mules. Especially on construction jobs.

Skinner's delight - Hobo jungle dish. See chapter on food.

Sky pilot - A highbrow preacher. Not one of the mission kind.

Slave market - That part of the *main stem* where jobs are sold.

Sleep - A short term in the workhouse or jail. *To be buried deep* is a long term.

Slob sister - A *moocher* who weeps to his clients.

Sloughed - To be arrested; pronounced "slowed."

Slum - Derisive term for an uninviting stew or *slumgullion*.

Smoke - Strong liquor. Denatured alcohol.

Smoke wagon or *gat* - Same as *rod*, a gun. Rarely carried by hobos.

Snake - Hobo and railroad term for switchman. A *snake* is more friendly than a *shack* to the hobos.

Snapper rig - Second-hand suit of clothes.

Snipe - Section hand or *jerry*. A section boss is a *king snipe*.

Snipe or *navy* - *Butts* of cigarettes and cigars.

Snipe shooting - To hunt for *snipes* in the gutter.

Snowbirds - A *junker*, or a person who uses drugs.

Son of Adam - Hobo willing to do a chore for a handout.

Song and dance - To give the madam at the backdoor an interesting and entertaining argument.

Soup - Liquid explosives for blowing safes. Used by yeggs.

Spearing biscuits - To fish food out of garbage cans.

Speed balls - Sherry wine. These days it may be any wine, even *dago red*.

Spider - A small frying-pan with a long handle. It may be an improvised one.

Spittoon philosopher - A hanger-on about the gin mill or along the curbstone, but an opinionated fellow withal.

Splinter belly - A man who works on bridges and trestles.

Stable dog - A man who looks after the camp stables. He is often called *chambermaid to the mules*.

Stack of bones - Cheap hash-house dish, mostly boiled spare ribs.

Stake - Money in the pocket after leaving the job. The *pile*.

Stall - Any excuse that meets the difficulty. It also refers to the yegg assisting the *high diver* or pickpocket.

Stemming - Panhandling or mooching along the streets.

Sterno - Dangerous alcoholic drink made by heating sterno can.

Stew builder - A hobo camp cook, a *kitchen mechanic*.

Stew bum - Booze fighting bums that never leave the *stem*.

Stiff - A hobo worker. There are *harvest stiffs*, *bridge stiffs*, *hospital stiffs*, and many others.

Stir - State prison. The *big house* or *big school*.

Stool pigeon - An informer, a *rat*, one who betrays to the police.

Straight and narrow - The way to eternal life and salvation.

Sugan - Bed comforter. Usually the old style quilts.

Swamper - Fellow who cleans out the bar-room.

Sweat board - Concrete mixing by hand.

Sweet back - Hobo sheik who is only sampling hobo life.

Tallow pot - The fireman on the train.

Tally - Meaning, "I understand," or "Count me in on it."

Tear baby - Fellow who bums women or men with women. Often puts up a pitiful story, even weeps.

Three Star Hennessy - Good old brand of liquor.

Thin ones - Small coins; dimes, nickels and pennies.

Throw your feet - Same as *stemming* or *panhandling*.

Throw your guts - To squeal. To give information to the *bulls*.

Tie pass - Fictitious permit from the railroad president to walk over the ties.

Timber wolf - A worker in the woods, a logger, or *wood tick*.

Tin horn - A petty sport hanging around the *main stem*. He is sometimes called a *rustler*.

Tin roof - A free drink. So-called because it is "on the house."

Tip the office - To warn a fellow hobo by giving some signal.

Toot the ringer - To ring backdoor bells.

Toppings - Dessert. Something toothsome to touch off a meal.

Town clown - The village constable.

Tramps - Migrating non-working vagrants. A grade higher than *scenery bums*, *dingoes*.

Trapeze artist - A hobo who rides the *gunnells* or *rods*.

Trombenick - A Jewish hobo. They are scarce as hen's teeth.

Trombo - Refers to a hobo pugilist, or one who hopes to be.

Turkey - A bundle, a suitcase or a canvas bag.

Twist a dream - To roll a cigarette.

Underslung - To get *underslung* means to ride under a train and have the *shacks* throw things at you, or to have them drag a piece of iron on a string under the car so that, bounding up and down, it will punish you plenty.

Vag or *vag 'em* - To be jailed or *fanned* out of town for being a *vag*.

Wagon tramps - Families who travel in covered wagons or *schooners*.

Wallies - Town bums who never lose sight of the city walls.

White mule - Old-fashioned white corn whiskey.

Willies - The Good Will Industries of the Methodists.

Wingey - Hobo with one arm or crippled arm. Also *army*.

Winoes - Those who drink the *dago red* wine of California.

Wobblies - Hobos who belong to the I. W. W.

Wolf - Older hobo exploiting the *road kid*. The pair is known as *the wolf and the lamb*.

Wood butcher - A carpenter. A hobo who can do odd repair jobs.

Wood tick - Same as *timber wolf*.

Woolies - Sbeep. *Going with the woolies* means to take a job as sheep herder.

Working for Jesus - The job of being a *mission stiff*. To be actively engaged around the *fisheries* or missions.

Yahoo - A *hoosier* who has no apologies for his ignorance.

Yard dick - Private policeman of the railroads who makes it his business to keep hobos off the trains.

Yeggs - The crooks of *Hobohemia*; too mean to be *bums* and too lazy to be good *tramps*.

Y. M. C. A. - You Must Come Across. The hobo expects nothing from the *Y. M. C. A.* that is not paid for.
