



# THE NEWSLETTER

“Every foot of track on the B&M, mainline or branch, rain or shine, was the scene of legitimate human endeavor.”  
– Robert W. Jones, *Boston and Maine: Three Colorful Decades of New England Railroading*.

## July-August 2023

Meeting/Membership Telephone Number (978) 454-3600

[www.bmrrhs.org](http://www.bmrrhs.org)

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*White River Junction, VT, 1978. Boston & Maine GP9s 1719 and 1715 rest in the B&M Yard. B&MRRHS Archives.*

### TIMETABLE OF UPCOMING EVENTS

#### July 28-30:

##### **Lowell Folk Festival**

The B&MRRHS will have combination coach #1244 at Dutton Street open to the public throughout the weekend with railroad exhibits and a working model railroad. We will also have volunteers on hand to chat and answer questions about the Society and the Boston & Maine. Be sure to stop and visit during the festivities!

#### Sunday, August 20:

##### **Concord Model Railroad Club Show**

Everett Arena, Loudon Road, Concord, NH, 03301  
10 AM – 3:30 PM

We will be at the show with merchandise, clothing, books, and DVDs. We hope to see you at the show!

**BOSTON & MAINE RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization composed of people who want to share their knowledge, and learn more about, the history and operations of the Boston and Maine Railroad, its predecessors, and successors. Formed in 1971 by a group of interested B&M employees and railfans, the B&MRRHS now has nearly one thousand active members.

Our principal activities are publication of our journal, the *B&M Bulletin*, and our *Newsletter*, monthly speakers, archives and hardware preservation, preservation of the B&M 0-6-0 switcher No. 410 and coach-baggage combine No. 1244, participation in railroad shows, and maintaining two web sites: [www.bmrrhs.org](http://www.bmrrhs.org) and [www.flickr.com/photos/bmrrhs](http://www.flickr.com/photos/bmrrhs). If you would like to join the Society, you can join on-line or download an application at [www.bmrrhs.org](http://www.bmrrhs.org).

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<b>Vice President</b>	Rick Kfoury
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**About the Newsletter**

The Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society *Newsletter* is published six times a year. We welcome your articles, photographs, and news items about the Society, the Boston & Maine Railroad, and current railroad events in New England. It is best to query the editor before writing articles. Please address correspondence to the Newsletter Editor at:

*Rick Kfoury, B&MRRHS Newsletter*  
*B&MRRHS, P.O. Box 9116,*  
*Lowell, MA 01853*  
or email [rkfoury@bmrrhs.org](mailto:rkfoury@bmrrhs.org).

Opinions expressed in the *Newsletter* do not necessarily represent the views of the Society, its officers, or members. Reference in the *Newsletter* to products or services is for the convenience of readers and does not constitute an endorsement by the Society. © 2023 B&MRRHS.

**MEMBERSHIP AND DUES**

Join us on-line or renew your membership on-line at [bmrrhs.org](http://bmrrhs.org). Credit cards may be used if you join or renew on-line. Dues are also payable by check, money order, postal money order, or cash (in person only). All payments in U.S. dollars. Please allow four to six weeks for processing.

Basic Individual - \$40	Basic & Spouse - \$43
Contributing - \$50	Sustaining - \$55
Supporting - \$80	*Canada & Overseas - \$75
Benefactor - \$100	Corporate - \$500

\* *Canada & Overseas members please pay via PayPal*

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

Notices are sent monthly based on members' renewal dates. If we have an email on file for you, a renewal reminder will be sent via email. Envelopes are clearly marked "RENEWAL NOTICE." Not responding will result in removal from the member list.

- When members renew, typically the month of renewal does not change. (A member with a 06/19 renewal date who pays in August would have a 06/20 update to renew.)
- The label on your *Newsletter* envelope shows your renewal date.
- Refer questions to the Membership Secretary Stephen DeFrancesco at [bmrrhsmembership@gmail.com](mailto:bmrrhsmembership@gmail.com).

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

Please advise Membership Secretary of new address before you move. Returned and forwarded mail costs the Society money. Write *Stephen DeFrancesco, Membership Secretary, B&MRRHS, P.O. Box 1438, Tewksbury, MA 01876.*

### NEW MEMBERS

We would like to take the opportunity to welcome new members who have joined the Society since the last *Newsletter*.

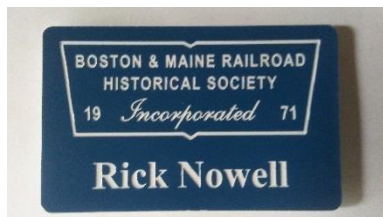
David Laskey; Bolton, MA  
David Sockol; Mount Kisco, NY  
Karen Sughrue; New York, NY  
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William Layton; Boston, MA  
Robert F. Beckman; Exeter, NH  
Jon Spence; Holderness, NH  
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Leon Kenison; Meredith, NH  
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**Welcome Aboard!**



### MEMBERSHIP BADGES AVAILABLE

B&MRRHS members are entitled to wear the official membership badge at all society events. The badge is an attractive shade of blue with white lettering, 3 inches wide by 2 inches tall. The badge has a secure magnetic attachment system that eliminates pinholes from shirts and sweater. The Society sells and mails badges at cost. Please make checks for \$12 payable to B&MRRHS and send to: Name Badge, B&MRRHS, P.O. Box 9116, Lowell, MA, 01853. Please specify name for the badge. NOTE: Magnets are known to be harmful to those who utilize Pacemakers.



### NEW MAILING ADDRESS FOR MEMBERSHIPS

Please be advised that we have moved our P.O. Box for new and renewed memberships, and we are **no longer using** the Derry, NH P.O. Box address. Our current P.O. Box address is:

Membership Secretary, B&MRRHS  
P.O. Box 1438,  
Tewksbury, MA 01876

### WEBMASTER'S REPORT

As the summer months have approached, the Online Committee has been busy monitoring our YouTube channel and maintaining the website. We also uploaded video recordings of our April meeting in Lowell featuring presenter Nathaniel Hurst. And our May meeting in Plymouth, New Hampshire, featuring presenter Bruce Davison. Our YouTube channel currently has 2,130 subscribers (up from 2,000 at last *Newsletter*). We hope you have been enjoying! Thank you, and stay tuned!

– James P. Nizsus, Webmaster

### EDITOR'S NOTE

Happy summer! It was great to see so many of you (over 75!) at our Plymouth meeting in May. As we round out the first half of another year, we have a great edition of the *Newsletter* for you heading into the dog days of summer. Read ahead to find updates on Society business, some interesting photo selections from the B&MRRHS Archives, and an incredible memoir account of riding passenger trains on the Ashuelot Branch. I hope that you enjoy the summer weather, and be sure to be safe in all your traveling and summer activities. As always, thank you for all your support and cooperation in what we do. ☸

– Rick Kfoury, Newsletter Editor



"You can come in, but don't look at the place. I just got out of bed."



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

B&MRRHS Archives Report  
Rick Nowell, Archives Chairman

June 10, 2023

We held a work session on June 7 at Lowell. We had a good turnout; eight volunteers were present, which is just about all that can comfortably work at Lowell.

Volunteers Brad Blodget, Steve Butterworth, Paul Burke, and Mal Sockol shelved magazines, documents, and photographs. Larry Kemp returned many steam locomotive drawings back to file and straightened out the overflow materials on top of the file. Jack Madden began an inventory, or shelf list, of our extensive collection of B&M RR employee timetables. This will help to avoid duplication when we receive donations.

Rick Conard continued his inventory of the tube files that contain extra-long mechanical drawings. His partial inventory is available on the on-line archives <https://www.bmrrhs.org/archives>.

Since our last report we have received the following donations:

2023.21	Bill Cross
2023.22	Ann Bourke
2023.23	Daniel Howard
2023.24	Norman Johnsen
2023.25	David D. Sias
2023.36	Jeanne M. Madden
2023.27	Bradford G. Blodget

We have updated our catalog of large format scans. The catalog, a PDF list of 2,640 images made since we acquired our scanner in 2018, is available on the On-Line Archives page. The largest categories are Bridges (771 files) followed by Valplans (277 files), Track Plans Other than Valplans (185 files), and Mechanical Department Drawings (140). There are also 495 drawings that fall into the Not Otherwise Classified category. Many of the latter are freight train performance sheets from about 1970.

New volunteers are always welcome. Volunteers to are needed to organize, catalogue, and preserve photographs and other paper materials. Also, we need data entry assistance that can be done anywhere. No experience required. Contact Rick Nowell, Archives Chairman, [fnowell3@gmail.com](mailto:fnowell3@gmail.com).

Respectfully submitted,  
Rick Nowell  
Archives Chairman



**FREIGHT EQUIPMENT**

Type	Series	No. Owned	Nominal Inside Length	Door Opening	Year Built	Capacity
Box Steel	67000-67039	40	40'-6"	7'	1947 Note 4	100,000
Box Steel	68999	4	40'-6"	6'	1940	100,000
Box Steel	69700-70987	1282	40'-6"	6'	1929-1930 Note 1	80,000
Box Steel	70988-70989	13	40'-6"	6'	1929 Note 2	80,000
Box Steel	71000-71053	133	40'-6"	6'	1929-1930	80,000
Box Steel	71954-71974	10	40'-6"	6'	1929-1930	80,000
Box Steel	71975-71995	5	40'-6"	6'	1929-1930	80,000
Box Steel	71996-71999	2	40'-6"	6'	1929-1930	80,000
Box Steel	72000-72899	130	40'-6"	6'	1942	80,000
Box Steel	73000-73199	196	40'-6"	6'	1942	80,000
Box Steel	74000-74499	448	40'-6"	7'	1947	100,000
Box Steel	75000-75749	733	40'-6"	7'	1951 Note 3	100,000
Box Steel Roller Bearing	76000-76538	539	40'-6"	8'	1957	100,000
Box Steel Roller Bearing	77000-77999	1000	50'-6"	9'	1956	100,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>4531</b>				
Steel Gondola Solid Bottom	(9200-9201-9204) 9205-9207-9208 9210-9211	8	41'-6"		1937	100,000
Steel Gondola Solid Bottom	9202-9203-9208	3	41'-6"		1942	100,000
Steel Gondola Drop Bottom	9200-92749	308	41'-6"		1937 Note 5	100,000
Steel Gondola Drop Bottom	92750-93249	190	41'-6"		1942	100,000
Steel Gondola Solid Bottom	9600-9899	300	41'-6"		1942 Note 6	100,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>1159</b>				
Covered Steel Hoppers	5500-5519	14	29'-3"		1946	140,000
Covered Steel Hoppers (Roller Bearing)	5520-5545	26	29'-3"		1956	140,000
Open Top Steel Hopper	5700-5799	1	33'-0"		1941	100,000
Open Top Steel Hopper	7100-7199	98	33'-0"		1941	100,000
Open Top Steel Hopper (Roller Bearing)	8000-8999	230	40'-5"		1929-1930	140,000
Open Top Steel Hopper (Roller Bearing)	10000-10299	300	42'-10"		1957	140,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>669</b>				
Flat Steel	33200-33799	76	42'-1"		1923	110,000
Flat Steel (roller bearings)	34000-34089	90	53'-6"		1927	100,000
Well Steel	3500-3006	6	Note 7		1941	100,000
Well Steel	5010	1	44'-8"		1938	100,000
Flat Depressed Steel	5100-5103	4	Note 8		1941	160,000
Flat Bulkhead (Gypsum) Steel (Roller Bearings)	5300-5309	10	36'-6"		1923	110,000
Flat Bulkhead (Gypsum) Steel (Roller Bearings)	5320-5329	10	48'-6"		1957	100,000
Pulpwood Steel	5400-5411	12	45'-9"		1954	100,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>209</b>				
Cherokee Steel U-Frame	103001-103003	3			1942	
Wood Body U-Frame	103501-103502	2			1897-1903	
Wood Body Center Sills	104000-104415	77			1891-1907	
Cherokee Steel U-Frame	104600-104649	43			1921	
Cherokee Steel U-Frame	C-1-C-10	13			1942	
Cherokee All Steel	C-11-C-34	24			1932	
Cherokee All Steel	C-40-C-49	10			1944	
<b>Total</b>		<b>169</b>				

**Grand Total**..... 6737

Note 1—Reconditioned 1955-1957 Under Sale and Lease Back Arrangement, 498 cars International Railway Car Co.  
 Note 2—Reconditioned 1956 Under Sale and Lease Back Arrangement Hyman Michaels Co.  
 Note 3—Leased from Equitable Life Assurance Society.  
 Note 4—Equipped with roof hatches for grain loading.  
 Note 5—Reconditioned 1956-1957 Under Sale and Lease Back Arrangement International Railway Car Co.  
 Note 6—Reconditioned 1956-1957 Under Sale and Lease Back Arrangement Hyman Michaels Co.  
 Note 7—Inside of Well 14' 0" L x 7' 0" W roof loading.  
 Note 8—Inside of Well 19' 4" L x 3' 11" W.

**PASSENGER EQUIPMENT**

Series	Type	Year Built	No. Owned	Total	Seating Capacity	End Const.	Remarks
1200-1220	Suburban Coaches	1935	21	21	96	OY	8 side fans
1225-1226	Suburban Coaches	1927	12	12	96	OY	10 side fans
4500-4505	Standard Coaches	1916	6	6	88	2V	Equipped with fans
4509-4514	Standard Coaches	1923	6	6	88	2V	Equipped with fans
4515-4529	Standard Coaches	1923	14	14	84	2V	Equipped with fans
4530-4537	Standard Coaches	1923	1	1	84	2V	Equipped with fans
4531-4537	Standard Coaches	1923	25	25	88	2V	Equipped with fans
4538-4544	Standard Coaches	1923	19	19	88	2V	Equipped with fans
4545-4594	Standard Coaches	1935	10	10	88	2V	Equipped with fans
4595-4614	Standard Coaches	1937	20	20	84	2V	Equipped with fans
4620-4625	Standard Coaches	1935	8	8	84	2V	Equipped with fans
4400-4407	Standard Coaches	1923	8	8	65	BV	
4425	Standard Coaches	1935	1	1	82	2V	
4561-4563	Standard Coaches	1923	4	4	88	2V	
3800-3801	Standard Coaches	1923	2	2	88	2V	
3800-3808	Standard Coaches	1923	6	6	46	2V	
3608-3609	Standard Coaches	1922-1925	3	3	44	2V	
3671-3674	Standard Coaches	1922-1925	3	3	56	OY	
3678-3695	Standard Coaches	1922-1925	5	5	56	OY	
<b>Total Coach Equipment</b>			<b>83</b>	<b>50</b>			
Manitowish—Maskell	Sleeping Cars	1916		2		2V	10 Sections; 1 Dr. Rm.; 2 Comp.
Manitowish—Maskell	Sleeping Cars	1917		1		BV	12 Sections; 2 Dbl. Bedrooms
Manitowish—Maskell	Sleeping Cars	1920		1		BV	12 Sections; 1 Dr. Rm.
Manitowish—Maskell	Sleeping Cars	1923		1		2V	12 Sections; 1 Dr. Rm.
Manitowish—Maskell	Sleeping Cars	1924		2		2V	3 Dr. Rms; 6 Comp.
Manitowish—Maskell	Sleeping Cars	1925		1		2V	12 Sections; 1 Dr. Rm.
Manitowish—Maskell	Sleeping Cars	1926		4		BV	6 Sections; 4 Dbl. Bed-rooms; 6 Roomettes
Manitowish—Maskell	Sleeping Cars	1927		4		BV	14 Seats Lounge
Manitowish—Maskell	Sleeping Cars	1928		1		2B	22 Seats Dining
<b>Total Sleeping, Parlor, Dining Cars</b>			<b>10</b>	<b>53</b>			
3010-3015	Railway Post Office	1915	5	5		2B	
3101-3133-3137	Railway Post Office	1914	4	4		2B	
3153	Railway Post Office	1915	1	1		2B	
3150-3151	Railway Post Office	1916	2	2		2B	
3138-3152	Railway Post Office	1918	2	2		2B	
3110-3114	Railway Post Office	1922	4	4		2B	
3115-3121	Railway Post Office	1929	7	7		2B	
3200-3212	Full Baggage	1916-1918	9	9		2B	4000# Cap.
3225-3249	Full Baggage	1946	25	25		2B	Conv. from Troop Stp. 1948-5100# Cap Stp.
3250-3268	Full Baggage	1943	9	9		2B	Conv. from Troop Stp. 1949-5100# Cap.

\*In Government storage.  
 †Leased to Pullman Company.

**BOSTON AND MAINE RAILROAD**

**Summary of EQUIPMENT**

May 1, 1957

## VOLUNTEERS FOR B&M 410

We are continually maintaining and B&M 0-6-0 steam locomotive 410 and combine coach 1244 in downtown Lowell and are always looking for new volunteers. This year we will be doing some cleaning and painting. If you would like to help, contact 410 Committee chairman Jim Nigzus at 978-866-8504. Thank you!

## B&MRRHS MAY MEETING PLYMOUTH, NH



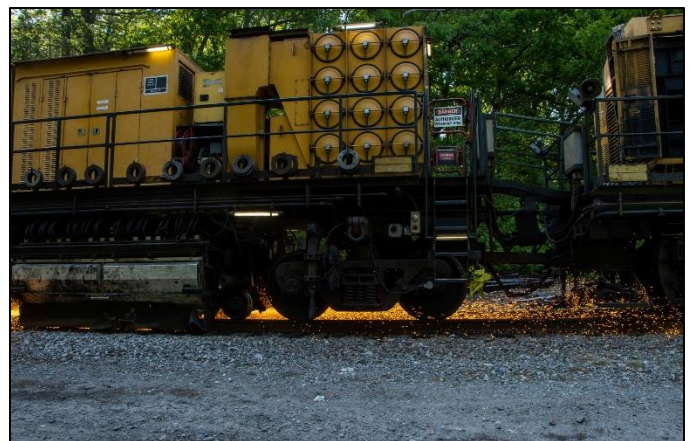
PLYMOUTH, NH – On May 6, 2023 Bruce Davison was our guest speaker for our monthly meeting, this month was held at the former B&M Railroad Station in Plymouth, NH. Bruce's presentation covered the former B&M White Mountain Division during the period that The Wolfeboro Railroad operated the line. Bruce shared many great photos and stories about his time on the line. We had a great turnout of guests, approximately 75 people who thoroughly enjoyed the show. Bruce also brought along his famous loaves of banana bread and cookies.

I would like to thank Jerry Kelley, Hank Binney, James Nigzus, Rick Kfoury, Paul Kosciolk and all the other volunteers who helped set up the hall. And a big thank you to Gail Hansen, Director of the Plymouth Senior Center for allowing us to use the spectacular former B&M station for our meeting.

*Submitted by Jim Nigzus*

## LORAM RAIL GRINDER WORKS ON THE FORMER BOSTON & MAINE

WESTFORD, MA – As part of their rehabilitation of the former Pan Am Railways system, CSX Transportation contracted with Loram to use their rail grinder on parts of the railroad. In late May, the grinder was seen working on the Stony Brook Branch at Gilson Road in Littleton, MA. Sawyer Pedersen provides photos. ☘







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## **FORMER BOSTON & MAINE SW9 1228 GETS MORE TLC**

Volunteers affiliated with New Hampshire's Milford & Bennington Railroad have continued to work on their SW9 #1228. Recent work has included finishing the application of primer and temporary protective paint, reinstalling headlight housings and headlights, and the re-installation of the locomotive's signature B&M switcher numberboard housings. The locomotive is safely stored on private property. ☘

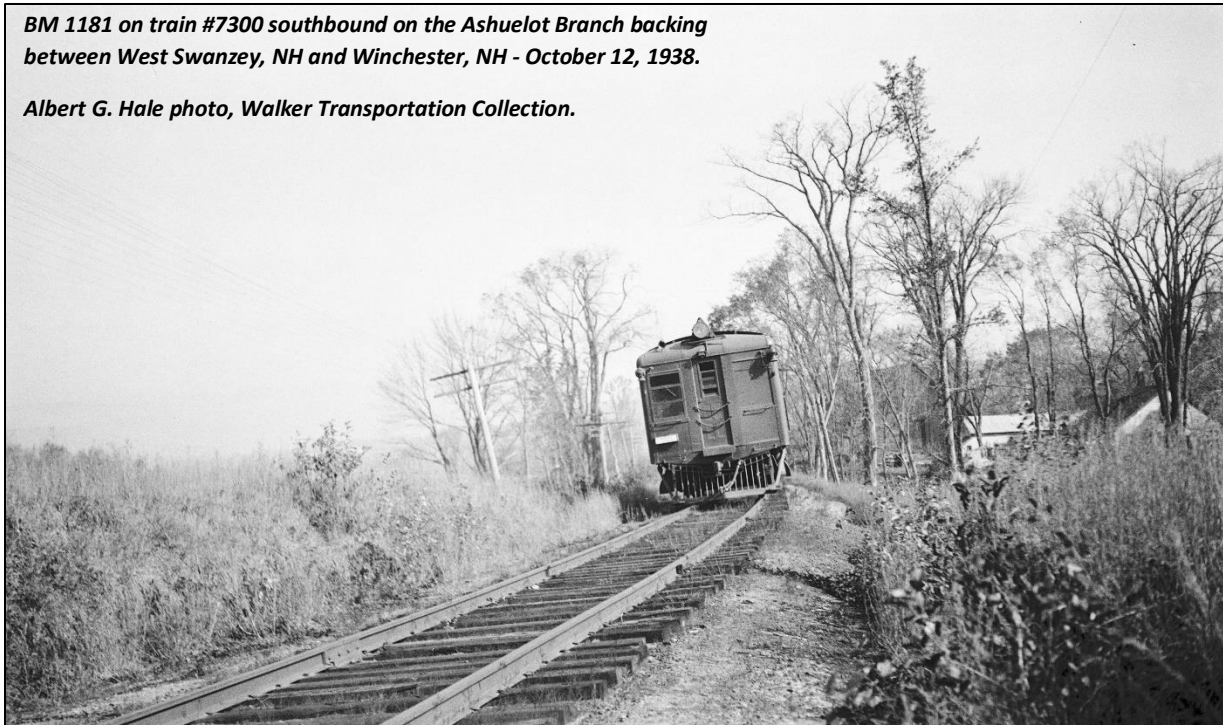


**“Line of the Minute Man”**

## VICTOR M. ZOLINSKY'S MEMORIES OF RIDING THE ASHUELOT BRANCH

**BM 1181 on train #7300 southbound on the Ashuelot Branch backing between West Swanzey, NH and Winchester, NH - October 12, 1938.**

**Albert G. Hale photo, Walker Transportation Collection.**



I used to visit my grandfather in Keene between 1941 and 1951 and we came up (from New York) on New Haven Train 54 the *Cigar Valley* to Springfield, MA. The last car that was a through car to White River Jct., Vt. This car returned to New York on Train 74 the *Day White Mountains Express*.

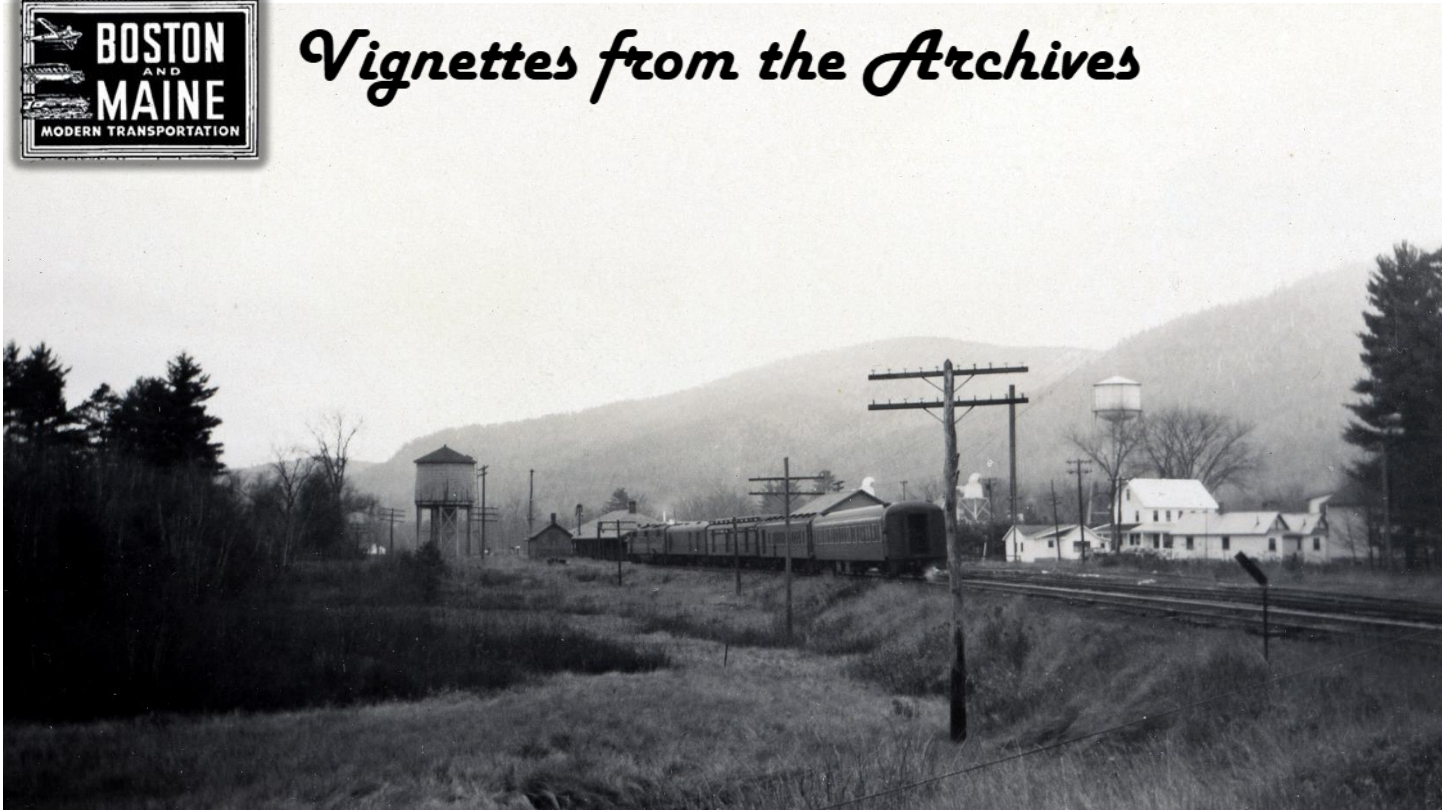
The last car was taken off Train 54 at Springfield and placed as the last car on Train 717, the only train that stopped at Vernon, Vt. Northbound. When we got to East Northfield, MA, we got off to take the “doodlebug” (self-propelled gas electric car) to Keene, NH over the Ashuelot Branch. Arriving at East Northfield, the gas car was always on the turntable lead between the B&M and Central Vermont mainlines south of the overhead road bridge at East Northfield. The turntable lead was off the B&M mainline south of the station. After Train 717 left to go up the CV mainline to Vernon and Brattleboro, the doodlebug would come into the station with the power end facing north. There was a gasoline engine in the front end of the car. The cars could be heard far in the distance because of the distinct sound from the stacks over the engine. We would get aboard and leave for Keene via Dole Junction as Train 7303. At Dole Junction we stopped at the Ashuelot Branch hand-throws switch and signed the register book in the shanty. We then moved onto the Ashuelot Branch, normalized the switch behind us for the mainline, and headed for Keene, 21.75 miles out. At a maximum speed of 35 mph, it was a 51-minute ride, with stops at Hinsdale, Ashuelot, Winchester, Westport (if needed), West Swanzey, and Swanzey. The train handled baggage for passengers as required with a three-man crew of conductor, engineer, and flagman/brakeman. The car and crew made two round trips between Keene and East Northfield each day.

Upon arrival in Keene, the conductor registered in the station as required. The car was unloaded, and the seats reversed. A hostler would take the car back to the house for the night to be serviced and refueled. During my years in Keene, three stalls at the east end of the roundhouse were still in use — one for the doodlebug, one for the Keene switcher, and one as a spare. In the summertime there were days when there were campers traveling from New York to Winchester and Keene and the doodlebug would have an extra coach added to handle the campers. At these times, the doodlebug had to run around its trailing coach to return to Keene. The doodlebug usually ran north with the power end north. I used to ride with the engineer from Keene to East Northfield and that’s when I pulled my first whistle for a crossing. I remember Joe Peach, who was the engineer for a long time. *Provided to the Newsletter by Brad Blodget.*





## Vignettes from the Archives



**Above:** A Boston-bound passenger train behind an E7 pulls into the station at Mt. Whittier (West Ossipee) on the Conway Branch, as seen from the Freedom Road crossing. At the rear is one of the B&M's "American Flyer coaches"; as Mike Lennon explains, these air-conditioned cars were always used on the Conway Branch runs, as they were the longest runs on the Portland Division! Official crossing survey photo by the Boston & Maine in conj. with NH Highway Department, B&MRRHS Archives.

**Below:** A pair of Canadian Pacific MLW FA-1s rest at the Boston & Maine's Westboro engine terminal in West Lebanon, NH, along with a B&M E7 and a GP7. The Canadian Pacific power was used on their run from Newport, VT to White River Junction. 1950s. Official Boston & Maine Railroad photo, MacMillan/Hutchinson Collection, B&MRRHS Archives.



## ANDREW'S EXCURSIONS #20

### A GEM ON THE POMPY

B&MRRHS DIRECTOR ANDREW RIEDL



*Engine #201 of VRS leads the excursion train north through Ely on June 15th, 2019. The depot proudly stands with much of its B&M era infrastructure still intact. The train did not stop this time, but later in the day when it returned south, trip participants were able to get off here for photos. While the "Pompy" line still has many of its old passenger stations intact, Ely is arguably the most recognizable and unique. Andrew Riedl photo June 15th, 2019*

**M**uch like a few months ago when I came to the abrupt realization that I had yet to write an article about exploring a rock cut, I also recently discovered that I've yet to feature a Boston and Maine location in the beautiful Green Mountain state of Vermont. While it is true that the bulk of B&M trackage was concentrated in Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire, Vermont played a critical role in the development of the railroad's north country lines.

I've always been drawn to the Connecticut River main line which travels north through the extremely scenic and fertile river valley from the city of Springfield, MA all the way up to Wells River in northern Vermont within the town of Newbury. A total distance of 163 miles, this route serves everything from the large city at its starting point to gritty mill towns just to the north and expansive lush green Vermont farmland. The Conn River line serves a broad diversity of locations along its route, and it is also still (fairly) well utilized to this day for both passenger trains (Springfield to White River Junction) and freight service. The Conn River line has always had a bit of an element of mystery for me since it's so far from the Boston nucleus of the B&M. In some ways seems a bit removed from the eastern parts of the system.

Much of the land that the Conn River line travels through is on the rural side, especially once the line heads north out of White River Junction. The towns it passes

through on the 40 miles to Wells River get smaller, and the farmland seems ever vaster as if that is even possible. This section of the line is nicknamed the "Pompy" which comes from the abbreviation of the Ompompanoosuc River that runs through the countryside before entering the Connecticut River north of White River Junction. Back in the B&M days, these 40 miles became a critical link after the White Mountains main line was severed between Plymouth and Blackmount in 1954. Traffic was rerouted over the Northern main line to White River Junction and up to Wells River, providing service to the paper mills of New Hampshire's north country in Berlin and Groveton.

Along this 40-mile stretch of track within the town of Fairlee, VT, a unique station in the village of Ely (pronounced E-LEE) had always caught my eye when doing research. Sitting alongside the tracks as well as U.S. Route 5, the building seems grossly oversized for the immediate area that it served. Farmland abounds on the west side of the tracks and the road, (including an old wooden caboose in a farm field that's in very rough shape but bears "Boston and Maine" markings. I'd love to know the backstory on this piece of former rolling stock, in case anyone reading this happens to know), and on the east side of the track a lumber company sits between the railroad and the Connecticut River.

The station itself is a two-story structure built in 1900 and most recently renovated around the year 2000 by private owners. While the building initially seems out of proportion, it includes a freight house attached to it, and the second floor of the depot would have housed the station agent and their family at one point in time. A truly consolidated structure that was a somewhat common aspect of rural railroading. Passenger service lasted until 1961, when all B&M passenger service to the North Country ended. The building remains in fairly good shape to this day with everything from the order board to the station sign still in place. The wooden platform remains as well but could use a refresh for sure. It is great to see that the owners of the building have continued to keep it true to its B&M heritage.

On June 15th, 2019, I had the opportunity to finally catch a train going through Ely after having visited it a few years prior with no trains in sight. A group of Dartmouth College alumni chartered a special passenger train to run the length of the Pompy line from White River Junction to Wells River and back. Upon hearing about this trip and having had very limited photo opportunities along this extremely scenic line, I decided to make the trip up from Melrose in my family's brand-new Subaru Forester and chase the train the whole 80 miles. This would be a



long day for me, but it would also end up being one of my more rewarding train chases.

I began the chase at the historic White River Junction station where the train sat on the Pompy line facing north. From there I had mapped out multiple photo stops since the train would never be far from Route 5 and the line would pass through some of the most scenic locations in the Upper Valley. Driving north on the rural two-lane highway I made one stop before arriving in Ely, for what I was hoping would be the prize shot of this trip. I parked on the side road off of Route 5 and, being fairly certain that I had a few minutes before the train would arrive, I took a good look at the elegant depot. In many ways it felt like I had stepped back in time as Ely likely has not changed too much over the years. The depot looked very inviting, and the current owner has a great appreciation of not only the B&M history of the building but also of beautiful flowers and landscaping. Pots of marigolds abounded on the former wooden platform and added to the overall welcoming and cheerful appearance of the location.

About ten minutes after I arrived, a headlight appeared in the distance, and the excitement inside me started to build. I had always wanted to photograph a train on the Pompy line and here it was, approaching me quickly on this fine mid-June morning! The train came closer and closer, and I could see that it was going at a decent speed. It certainly wouldn't stop to smell the flowers on the platform! The red-and-white striped Vermont Railway engine #201 raced by me pulling the coaches and leaving a trail of dust behind it from the gravel crossing. I was able to snap multiple shots of the train and to this day, looking at these photos always brings back fond memories of this trip.

That wasn't all in Ely, however. After running the power around at Wells River, the train headed south that afternoon, and of course I made sure to pull into Ely again to catch it on its way south. Upon my arrival, I saw that the bay door down on the south end of the building which was once the attached freight house was open, and a

pristine vintage Buick Eight from the 1940's was parked on the lawn next to the building. It's worth noting that the bay door was added to the freight house after the 2000 renovation as it seems the owners converted the freight house into a garage. Truly a small piece of history captured in time! I took some pictures of the car with the station in the background and then prepared for the second arrival of the train at Ely that day. I expected it to race through just as swiftly as it had that morning and braced myself for another cloud of dust when I saw the headlight approaching once again.

Much to my surprise, #201 slowed to a stop in front of the Ely depot, and a crowd disembarked for photos. The train did a run-by for the attendees, and everything seemed to come together in this iconic Vermont railroad location. After so many years of wanting to experience trains on the Pompy, this would be a day long remembered!

From that point on, I took no more pictures as I began my long drive home, but my objective for the day was achieved, and I was finally able to capture a remote B&M location that not long before had seemed inaccessible. You also can't help but imagine what life on the railroad must have been like at this rural location for the stationmaster and their family back when the train was the main connection to the outside world. Ely is certainly worth the additional drive from White River Junction, and I encourage anyone who's ever been inspired by a photo of it to go see it for themselves. It will not disappoint and truly is a gem on the Pompy line!

Happy Explorations! - AR

*Directly across U.S. Route 5 from the Ely depot sits this old B&M wooden "caboose" in a farm field. While it looks to be in rough shape, it includes details that captures the attention of the observant railfan. I would be very interested to know more about this if anyone has any further information. Andrew Riedl photo June 15th, 2019*







“From T.F. Joyce, Assistant Vice President of the Boston & Maine Railroad (For use in AM’s Saturday, May 18)

Shipment of huge West Coast timbers for re-sparring of “Old Ironsides” at Charlestown Navy Yard, as received in Boston & Maine Railroad freight yards after trip across continent. These fir timbers — some 109 feet long — have been greeted with special programs by local officials, patriotic societies, and school children in 28 communities en route — including Troy, North Adams, Greenfield, Fitchburg, and Ayer on the Boston & Maine — and will be received today with elaborate ceremonies at the Navy Yard. Donated by lumbermen of Oregon and Washington, these timbers were transported free by railroads, including the Boston and Maine, as their share in the rehabilitation of the famous frigate “Constitution”.

Undated; the *USS Constitution* was rehabilitated between 1927 and 1931. Official Boston & Maine Railroad photo from the MacMillan/Hutchinson Collection B&MRRHS Archives.



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