

Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society
Incorporated

NEWSLETTER

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B&MRRHS Newsletter
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JUNE 1, 1991, Saturday will take us to **Lincoln, New Hampshire** for what has become our annual **Rainfans Day** at the **Hobo Railroad**. This was one of the high points of the season last year, as those Society members who were there last year will testify. The Hobo Railroad runs its trains including a former B&M switcher along track of the former B&M's Pemigewasset Branch. Don't miss this one.

JULY 27 and 28, many a B&MRRHS member will help staff the combine outside the **Mack building** during the annual, lively **Lowell Folk Festival**. Other members will drop by and say hello. We expect to display much of our hardware collection which is not often displayed publicly. This is a wonderful opportunity for your Society to get a lot of visibility and publicity in our new hometown of Lowell. If you can help, give Jim Nigzus at the Society phone number above a call. It should be a memorable occasion for all of us.

THERE WILL BE NO JULY MEETING IN LOWELL!!

The Society will be manning the combine Lowell Folk Festival on Friday evening 5-7 P.M., Saturday & Sunday from 12-5 P.M. Edaville Railroad has also arranged to haul a narrow gauge steam locomotive to Lowell by flat-bed trailer. They will have the locomotive fired as well as demonstrating how locomotive wheels are changed.

AUGUST 10th is the date of our annual meeting with the 470 Club at **North Conway, New Hampshire**. With the **Conway Scenic Railroad** providing the setting, this meeting is always a favorite. Don't miss it.

Looking ahead **September** takes us to **Amesbury, Mass.**, for a joint meeting with the **Salisbury Point Railroad Historical Society**. Date is not set at press time, but watch the next issue of the Newsletter for more details.

October is the tentative schedule for the **B&MRRHS 20th Anniversary** banquet. At this time, it appears that the event will be held at the Beverly (MA) Depot Restaurant, date unknown, but most likely a Saturday. You won't want to miss this historical event in the life of the B&MRRHS. More on this later.

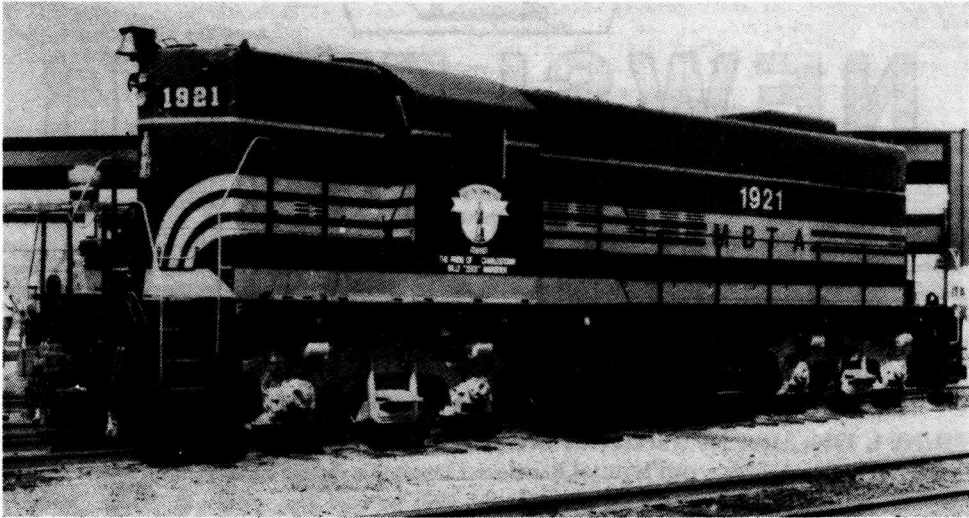


Photo by Skip Clark, Mass. Bay RRE

MBTA #1921 EMERGES IN MINUTEMAN LIVERY

The MBTA's GP-9, formerly in Burlington Northern green displaying its heritage for many years, has emerged from a few months absence wearing a maroon and gold livery. Its appearance will be familiar to those remembering the livery on the Geeps and some F-units in the late 40s and in the 50s.

Because the Boston & Maine remains a viable carrier of Guilford Transportation Industries, Inc., no reference could be made, of course, to the B&M. But the likeness appears authentic. With the three gold stripes rising from the front edge of the long hood, the letters M B T A appear midway along the hood. The former B&M "Minuteman" herald under the cab windows has had its lettering appropriately altered to read "Boston Commuter Service." Under the herald, the letters read, "The Pride of Charlestown." It is expected that MBTA #1921 will resume regular commuter service on the North Side by the time you read this.

WHOOOPS IN CHARLEMONT!

CHARLEMONT (AP) — Authorities investigated the derailment of a Boston & Maine freight train that spilled up to 2,000 gallons of diesel fuel into the Deerfield River.

Crews cleaned oil off the river and pumped fuel from the diesel tanks soon after the May 6th accident said firefighter Robert Burrington.

The freight train, which did not have passengers, derailed in Charlemont at about 4:30 p.m. while traveling near

South River Road, across from the town center, Burrington said.

He said between five and seven cars went off the track and five plunged down an embankment into the river.

The extent of the spill and the cause of the accident were not immediately available. New railroad tracks may have been related to the train's derailment about ten miles west of Greenfield, Burrington said.

[Salem Evening News, 5/6/91]

PORTLAND/BOSTON AMTRAK SERVICE???

Establishing Amtrak service between Portland, Maine, and Boston would require substantial track improvements and \$19 million worth of equipment, according to an Amtrak study requested by the Maine Department of Transportation and the U.S. Congress. As part of the study, Amtrak prepared a draft service plan outlining how it might schedule three daily roundtrips between Portland and Boston, which a Maine DOT-sponsored feasibility study had identified as the best corridor for possible resumption of intercity passenger service to the Pine Tree State.

The proposed service would operate over MBTA-controlled track between Boston and Haverhill to the New Hampshire state line, thence over the B&M via Exeter and Dover, NH, and Saco-Biddeford, Maine, to Portland. Stops at all of the above points are assumed in a 2½ draft train schedule. Two sets of equipment, plus protection equipment, would be required to operate the three daily roundtrips. Equipment would lay over at Portland, with the schedule providing a daily window for equipment to be serviced in Boston on an alternate-day basis. Amtrak would have to make arrangements for equipment to be turned at Portland and to be maintained on MBTA property in Boston, probably at Boston Engine Terminal.

Amtrak's operating-engineering task force, which toured the line on a special train during late October, reported that the B&M trackage north of the Mass/NH state line is in generally poor condition, needing rail, ties and ballast and lacking any passenger-handling facilities. The estimated capital cost of upgrading the line, changing crossing circuits and building stations is \$30 million in 1990 dollars. Trains should be able to travel at 79 mph over the B&M once needed work is done. The task force reported that the MBTA track appears to be in generally satisfactory condition but that additional study to determine exact capital needs is necessary.

Based on one locomotive, three coaches and a food-service car for each set, Amtrak estimates needing three locomotives and 10 cars at a total cost of \$19 million. The study states an assumption that the Portland trains would be a 403(b) service and that Maine's DOT would pay 100 percent of the capital costs, including equipment. It is also noted that cost-sharing arrangements with Guilford would be needed for maintenance of way at such time as the track were upgraded to 79 mph.

[NNL 4/91]

SOCIETY MEMBER HONORED BY HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

On May 9, 1991, Don Provencher, long time B&MRRHS member, was honored on the floor of the house of representatives by Congressmen Swett and Zeliff, both of NH. Both Congressmen are strong rail proponents and are officially on record as opposing the use of "Triple" tractor trailers on our nation's highways.

Mr. Provencher was honored for being a prominent rail proponent in the state of NH. He was presented with a plawue and official proclamation May 13, 1991 in Concord, NH. Mr. Provencher, after spending 20 years as a

dispatcher for state police tropp F, became a marketing consultant for the NH&VT Railroad. He is also a senior member of National Country Council on Transportation, Director of the Gorham, NH Historical Society, and an overseer of the locomotive restoration in Gorham, NH. He was also responsible for bringing the National Operation Lifesaver to NH in 1983. The Society extends it's most heartfelt congratulations to Don on the receipt of this honor, and thank him for his efforts.

RAIL STRIKE SPARES GTI CARRIERS

The national rail strike that occurred Wednesday morning, April 17, when the employees on 98 railroads, which move more than one-third of all intercity freight traffic, effectively shut down the nation's freight lines, and upset commuter service from Baltimore to San Francisco. Moving across the nation with the rise of the sun, picket lines went up at about 7:00 a.m. local time.

By midafternoon, the only railroads free of picket lines were the non-union Florida East Coast, the Fox River Valley, the Green Bay and Western, the Indiana Harbor Belt, and the carriers of Guilford Transportation Industries, Inc. A couple of other railroads, the Grand Trunk & Western, and the Terminal railroad Association of St. Louis, were also free of pickets, but closed down because of their inability to interchange traffic with the shut carriers. The Kansas City Southern, relying on management crews, reported that it kept at least half of its trains on schedule.

On the passenger side, nearly all Amtrak long-distance trains were idle,

with service limited to trains that move only on its own tracks in the Northeast Corridor. While the unions did not make the commuter lines a direct target of their job action, other commuter lines felt the sting of the walkout.

[Editor's note: All of the former B&M lines running on the north side out of North Station operated by the MBTA maintained schedule without incident. The MBTA's Framingham line, formerly the old Boston & Albany did experience non-violent service disruption and quickly substituted bus service along that line. The Framingham line, once operated by B&M crews about a decade ago, is owned by Conrail which still serves the Beacon Park yard in Allston and the Grand Junction cross-town line to the Chelsea Produce Center.]

It was the first system-wide work stoppage in nine years, as organized labor made good on its promise to strike when a mandated cooling-off period ended.

[Traffic World, 4/22/91]

REVIVAL OF TRAINS THROUGH CRAWFORD NOTCH IS PROMISING

William Hunscher Sr., a Manchester, NH businessman, announced April 5 that he would purchase 23 miles of the former Maine Central Railroad "Mountain Division" line through historic Crawford Notch, NH from Guilford Transportation Industries. Mr. Hunscher made his announcement at a press conference in Bartlett, NH, accompanied by Governor Judd Gregg. While Mr. Hunscher made no firm promises for restored service, he indicated that diesel-powered trains of classic coaches might be running from Bartlett through Crawford Notch to Bretton Woods, NH by June 1992.

The December agreement between Mr. Hunscher and GTI would convey the rail line from Chandler's Field, near the Attitash Ski Area in Lower Bartlett, to Bretton Woods, just beyond the restored Fabyans depot. Reportedly Mr. Hunscher and GTI agreed separately for trackage rights between Fabyans and Whitefield, where trains could connect with the New Hampshire & Vermont RR. Mr. Hunscher did not disclose the purchase price or his financing arrangements.

GTI said that it would begin formal abandonment proceedings soon for the Mountain Division line, and expected that this would take 30-60 days. Last year GTI notified towns along the ex-MEC line from Westbrook, ME to Whitefield that it intended to abandon the railroad. While New Hampshire has a first refusal to purchase abandoned rail rights of way, state transportation commissioner Charles O'Leary said the state would waive this right in favor of Mr. Hunscher's project.

The Crawford Notch line has been out of service since September 1984, when a last GTI work extra ran from St. Johnsbury, VT to Rigby Yard in Portland, ME. Once the MEC's western outlet to Canadian connections, the line was downgraded after GTI purchased the Boston & Maine and rerouted westbound traffic via Mechanicville and Rouses Point, NY.

At least two landslides, one major washout, and a fallen boulder currently obstruct the Crawford Notch tracks. Mr. Hunscher said that he had inspected the line on foot, and that repair work would begin this summer. He indicated that the project would create 40-100 new jobs in the area.

"We're just at the beginning of the process," Mr. Hunscher told his audience at the Bartlett Elementary School. Both he and Gov. Gregg described the Crawford line as "a world-class scenic attraction" rivaling Disneyland in quality. Gov. Gregg added that "Disney does not have what the Mountain Division does have, a spectacular natural vista. They have to build theirs out of cement and fake trees. We have it here — for real."

GTI President David Fisk said that the railroad had been committed to finding a way to preserve the Mountain Division since rail service ceased in 1984. "We're very pleased that this purchase and sale agreement and completion of abandonment proceedings will pave the way for the revitalization of rail service through Crawford Notch," Mr. Fisk added.

Mr. Hunscher's plans call for a two-hour round trip between Bartlett and Fabyans. Although the purchase includes the remaining MEC buildings in the Bartlett area, it was not clear whether the yards would be developed as a base station complex or a new facility constructed. Reportedly, a zoning variance would be necessary, since the yard area now lies in a residential zone. Mr. Hunscher did not announce any plans to bring restored steam locomotives to the Mountain Division.

IMBRR CALLBOY 5/91]

ICC REFUSES TO ORDER GUILFORD TO ESTABLISH ESCROW ACCOUNT

The Interstate Commerce Commission has refused to require Guilford Transportation Industries to establish an escrow fund for the payment of back wages and benefits it has been ordered to pay employees that struck the company.

In an April 9 decision, the ICC said it has the authority to order establishment of such a fund, but that no need had been shown.

The agency noted that one of the parties initially favoring the escrow account, the Railway Labor Executives Association, had agreed with this assessment in a Feb. 19 letter to ICC Chairman Edward J. Philbin.

In that letter the RLEA said that in light of the ICC's Feb. 12 decision limiting Guilford's make-whole payments to 75 days, establishment of an escrow fund to secure payments of claims "would serve no useful purpose."

Other parties that had asked for the escrow account were the United Transportation Union and the ICC's Office of Compliance and Consumer Assistance. Guilford opposed the escrow requirement.

"On this record there is nothing to support the view that GTI cannot or will not undertake to satisfy the meritorious labor protection claims of its employees," the ICC said.

In a footnote, the commission responded to complaints from the Boston & Maine Railroad, Maine Central Railway and Springfield Terminal Railway that its use of Guilford and GTI to refer to the carriers is incorrect.

"We will continue to refer to GTI or Guilford as a convenient short hand way of referring to its carrier subsidiaries in this decision and in any subsequent decisions," the agency said.

[Traffic World/April 15, 1991]

SPRINGFIELD TERMINAL SIGHTINGS

Apparently Billerica will be taken back by the MBTA this year the storage lines remain virtually untouched, some units are too crippled to move without spending money on them. Their fate remains a mystery.

East Deerfield formerly a place that keeps the fleet running in tune has been transferred to Car Department, repair shops, the turntable seeing limited use, the hump job sees six-axle units for their tricks. The west end switcher also doubles as ED-5 occasionally winds up heading south on the Connecticut River. FI-1 abolished last year has been resurrected as FI-2, an evening job. Many times runs to Ayer bringing and picking up cars.

The first week of May DH-WA derailed at Charlemont, MA. about 24 miles west of Deerfield. Over a half dozen cars left the tracks, five wound up in the Deerfield River. It has been reported that the roadbed was previously repaired and in good condition. (See related story.)

ST 1407's short-term used as the Boston switcher came to an end the first of May. It was determined that for the work on the mains that the switcher

had to do, it would be better handled with a GP7 or GP9. Currently ST 16 (formerly 572 MEC) is assigned, and coming as no surprise the 1407 has returned to Woodlands (Maine).

Switchers are: Salem GP40 #332, Boston SW-3 #1407 and GP39-2 #361, BO-1 GP40 #331, Boston shop GP40 #334, LA-1 GP40 #340, Haverhill GP40 #327, NA-BO/Nashua GP39-2 #353, Portsmouth GP39-2 #355, DO-2/Biddeford GP40 #326 and NA-2 Nashua GP39-2 #357. B&M Caboose 480 still appears just as good as it did when it left Billerica car shops after overhaul many years ago. It is used exclusively with the Boston switcher on the East Boston branch.

Shopped at Waterville: 329, 600, 325, 337, 407, 310. Awaiting repairs in the engine house: 316 & 601 for ring jobs. 52 for traction motor, 58 for bearings. 311 for electrical problems. 470 remains stored with fire damage, U18 B 405 returned to service after a long stay in the shops. 4/17/91 the FRA crippled DH-WA power at Mohawk. (3 units) The locomotive count by the second week of May is down to 76 active units.

[Don LeJeune 5/8/91]

FURTHER RIFs IN E. DEERFIELD

At the beginning of April the head of Guilford said that the number of workers at the East Deerfield rail yard will be reduced in upcoming weeks, but the yard will not be shut down. This reduction consists of four or five workers including two supervisors. The reduction stems from a decision to eliminate a switching crew in the yard. When asked about a more-than-two mile-long line of empty boxcars which have been sitting idle on a siding along the Deerfield River in Charlemont, Colin Pease said the cars are general-purpose vehicles which are not currently in demand. Pease said the company has long-term plans to upgrade the box

cars to fit the prevailing markets. Rehabilitation of boxcars is one of the primary functions of the East Deerfield yard, with from six to 11 box cars processed daily, he said.

As for the overall B&M picture, Pease contended that the B&M has been in the black every year and continues to be so this year. In January and February, he said, business was down and the company was not on its budget target, but in March things evened up and so far business is continuing to rise in April.

[Springfield Union News via Jack Smallwood, 470 5/91]

REVIVING MAINE RAILROAD ROUTES PAYS OFF

Six years ago, state transportation commissioner Dana F. Connors called the policy of spending public money on abandoned rail lines the "one final shot" at saving short-line railroads in Maine.

Today, as state officials prepare to choose an operator for 127 miles of state-owned track between Brewer and Calais, the policy is paying off.

When the Down East route is running, probably in early 1992, it will be the second abandoned branch line to be revived since 1985, when voters narrowly approved spending \$850,000 to buy track abandoned by the Maine Central Railroad.

The other line purchased with the 1985 money, the 52-mile Brunswick-to-Rockland line, saw the return of freight service last year. Maine Coast Railroad, owned by Massachusetts Central Railroad, is hauling perlite ore to a Thomaston processor from a Maine Central switching yard in Brunswick. The ore, which comes by train from Colorado and the Midwest, is used in filters and insulation.

The trend toward state-owned and privately operated railroads will continue as the state works to develop a balance between railroads and highways in Maine's transportation network, said Michael Murray, the transportation department's rail specialist.

More than 100 miles of track, much of it in rural areas where Maine Central has found it tough to turn a profit, could become available in coming years as the railroad begins to formally abandon additional portions of unused track in its 600-mile Maine network.

Transportation department officials used \$4.5 million in voter-approved bond money in 1990 to buy 33.5 miles of rail between Brunswick and Augusta.

And, when money becomes available, the state hopes to resume negotiations with Guilford Transportation Industries Inc., the parent of Maine Cen-

tral, for 44 miles of the so-called Mountain Division between Westbrook and Fryeburg in western Maine.

Two firms — New England Southern Railroad of Concord, N.H., and St. Croix and Union River Co., whose owners are from Maine and elsewhere — have submitted proposals to run on the Brewer-to-Calais line, Murray said. State officials expect to select an operator next month.

The track has not been used in years and needs repairs.

St. Croix and Union River bases its proposal around a narrow-gauge tourist excursion train between Ellsworth and Washington Junction, with freight service to be developed on the remainder of the route over time.

A third rail would have to be added to accommodate the narrow-gauge equipment.

New England Southern plans initially to run freight service on about 60 miles between Brewer and Cherryfield. A tourish line would then be established on a 5½-mile scenic stretch between North Ellsworth and East Holden.

Small regional railroads have shown significant growth throughout the nation since the early 1980s, when federal deregulation enabled larger carriers to abandon marginal routes and small railroads to start up without restrictive labor rules and tariffs.

Thomas Heckard, an official with Regional Railroads of America in Washington, D.C., said more than 210 short lines have started up since the early 1980s, bringing economic relief to many rural areas.

"This trend has really saved a lot of small towns . . . it really serves as a lifeline for the commodities they produce," he said. "If the smaller lines don't grow and do well, the only other option is to abandon the lines, and that ends up killing small towns."

[Portland Press Herald 4/24/91]