

THE **Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society**
Incorporated

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."

May – June 2021

Meeting/Membership Telephone Number (978) 454-3600

www.bmrrhs.org

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***Boston & Maine Alco S5 864 at New Boston Terminal, Somerville, MA - July 16, 1954. Robert E. Chaffin Photo - Boston and Maine Railroad Historical Society Collection; part of the Robert E. Chaffin Collection now being scanned and digitized.
A fascinating restoration effort for this locomotive has emerged - Find the story on Page 10.***

TIMETABLE OF UPCOMING EVENTS

All upcoming Society meetings and events are tentatively suspended on account of the COVID-19 pandemic. Updates can be found on our website, www.bmrrhs.org, on our Facebook page, and by calling the Society phone number, (978) 454-3600.

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 and 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.

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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
22 Country Club Dr. Apt. 33
Manchester, NH, 03102

or email rickkfoury51@gmail.com.

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. © 2021 B&MRRHS.

MEMBERSHIP AND DUES

Join us on-line or renew your membership on-line at bmrrhs.org. Credit cards may be used if you join or renew on-line (via PayPal). 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

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Notices are sent monthly based on members' renewal dates. Envelopes are clearly marked "RENEWAL NOTICE." If a member does not pay within the renewal month, he or she may receive two reminder letters. Not responding may 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.)
- Please review your label for the renewal date. Refer questions to the Membership Secretary.
- Renew by credit card at bmrrhs.org. Renew by mail using check or money order. You may pay by cash at a membership meeting or trains show at which the Society is present.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please advise the Membership Secretary of your new address before you move. Returned and forwarded mail costs the Society money. Write Kathy LaValley, Membership Secretary, B&MRRHS, P.O. Box 9116, Lowell, MA 01853.

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DIRECTIONS TO SOCIETY MEETINGS

Meetings in Lowell are usually held at Rogers Hall

- From I-495 take exit 38 and go north on Mass. Route 38; this is Rogers Street. Approximately 1.3 miles from I-495, Rogers St. forks to the left at a stop light, so bear to the left here. Rogers Hall (white pillars) is about 3/10 of a mile farther on your right. Directly across the street is Rogers Park where parking is available.
- From Mass. Route 133 (which is Andover St., Lowell, coming west from Tewksbury): Follow Route 133 west. After going straight through the intersection of Route 38 take your third left on to High Street. Take a left on to Rogers St. Rogers Hall will be on your left. Directly across the street is Rogers Park where parking is available.
- From Mass. Route 38 or Mass. Route 113 in Dracut: Get off at the overhead traffic circle as if going to Saints Hospital. Follow this to the intersection of Routes 38 and 133, take a right on to Andover St., and take your third left on to High Street. Take a left on to Rogers St, Rogers Hall will be on your left. Directly across the street is Rogers Park where parking is available.
- By MBTA commuter rail from Lowell: If you come to Lowell by train, take the LRTA Route 2 "Belvidere" bus from Gallagher Transportation Center. This bus stops at Rogers Hall.

NEW MEMBERS

We would like to take the opportunity to our welcome new members who have joined the Society since the last *Newsletter* and through late January:

- Adam Burns, Littleton, MA
- Michael Connolly, Porter, IN
- Randy Leclair, Kennebunk, ME
- Kenneth Oriol, Halfmoon, NY
- Gregory Antonuccio, Medway, MA
- Alan Baer, Oceanside, NY
- David Curtis, Jamaica Plain, NY
- Martin J. Dugan, Jr., Manchester, NH
- Joseph Landry, Cumberland, RI
- Michael Smith, Gilmanton, NH
- Jeffrey Turcotte, Leominster, MA
- Lawrence P. Aiello, Andover, MA
- Marshall E. Carter III, Virginia Beach, VA
- Michael Medaglia, Groveland, MA
- Daniel Raymond, Haverhill, MA
- Edward Sauers, Mystic, CT
- Paul H. Williams, Arlington, MA

MEMBERSHIP BADGES AVAILABLE

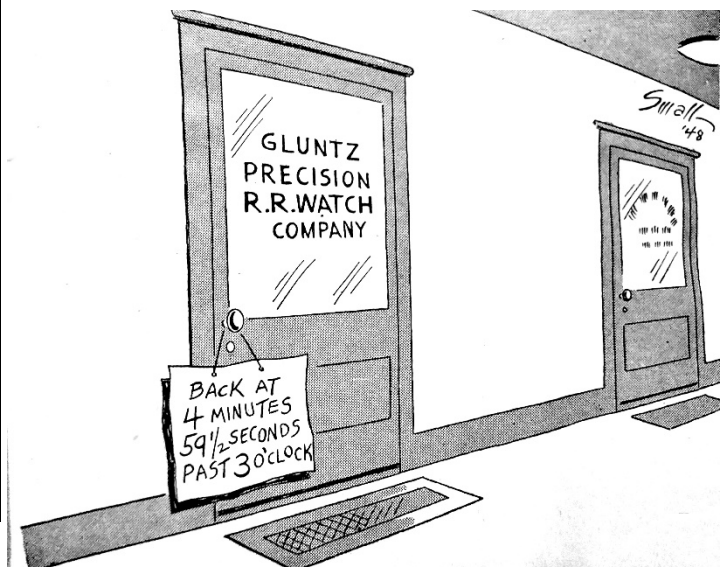
B&MRRHS members are entitled to wear the official membership badge at all society events. The badge is an attractive shade of blue with white lettering, 3 inches wide by 2 inches tall. The badge has a secure magnetic attachment system that eliminates pinholes from shirts and sweater. The Society sells 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.

EDITOR'S NOTE

As I write this in early April, things have been getting brighter on so many fronts including the global health crisis. While the B&MRRHS is still exercising caution to help keep the community safe, we are looking forward to being able to hold in-person events again. In the meantime we remain busy as ever with many projects, so be sure to follow our efforts through our new podcast *High Green*, the *Minuteman Tales* videos, and our Facebook page and website news. We have a great issue of the *Newsletter* for you, with a special report from our president Jim Nizgus, an announcement of a new Society book on the Monadnock, Steamtown & Northern Railroad, and reports from our committees. Meanwhile, the community watches the sale of Pan Am Railways (and the B&M Corporation) with great interest. The next chapter of the Boston & Maine will no doubt prove historic, and we certainly hope whatever happens will lead to brighter futures for rail in all corners of the old B&M system. Let's keep em' rolling.

Enjoy, stay safe, and we will see you soon!

– Rick Kfoury, Newsletter Editor





FROM THE ARCHIVES

B&MRRHS Archives Report
Rick Nowell, Archives Chairman

TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MEMBERS OF THE BOSTON & MAINE RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY:
The Archives Committee is pleased to submit the following report for the year ended December 31, 2020.

March 29, 2021

Work continues on the special project of scanning the photo negatives of the Robert E. Chaffin Collection under the supervision of Brad Kippen and Rick Kfoury. Volunteers are needed to edit the negatives at home using open-source photo software. Several volunteers have already been enlisted for the work. The project will include creation of a catalog of the negatives and preservation of the originals. If you are interested in helping with this, please email Brad at fbk3amtk@aol.com, and cc directors Rick Nowell at fnowell3@gmail.com and Rick Kfoury at rickkfoury51@gmail.com.

We have enjoyed working with our first intern, Matthew Donovan, a graduate student in Education at UMass Lowell, who is taking the University's Introduction to Archives Course. During his twelve-hour internship spread over six sessions, Matt performed an inventory of Boston and Lowell Railroad contracts, repaired documents for preservation, entered data into our digital catalog, processed photos from the Towle/Teed Collection, and scanned glass plate negatives.

Jim Nigzus is helping us address a squirrel problem at North Chelmsford. Working with the landlord, Jim closed up the suspected entry point, and no further evidence of squirrel incursions has been discovered.

We will resume small group work sessions at North Chelmsford on March 31. We are fully booked for this session and will schedule others.

Respectfully submitted,
Rick Nowell
Archives Chairman

HARDWARE COMMITTEE REPORTS, FEB. AND MAR. 2021



**Hardware Committee Chairman, Daniel Hyde
Hardware Committee Curator, Richard Nichols**



The following donations have been received:

Donation by; Amesbury Carriage Museum, Amesbury, MA.
HO-scale B&MRR Model of Amesbury Roundhouse

Donation by; The South Shore Model Railroad Club
3 Black & White paper framed photographs; size 22 x 26”
The Mountaineer – The Pine Tree Limited & B&M/MEC Bus Service.

Donation by; Peter Conlon
Brass Baggage Checks: B&MRR #12266 / Fitchburg Railroad Hudson #525 & Lancaster #24
Brass Baggage Check: St. John’s & New-Bedford MS Montreal & Boston Air Lines #8

B&MRRHS Web-Site Hardware Collection:
Updated the Display Case Collection 2021
Addition: B&MRR Train Wreck “Red Wing” 1954

Wednesday, February 24, 2021 Hardware Committee Meeting:

Fred Brown and Richard Nichols worked on the B&M Hardware Collection, displaying Market Lights, Lanterns, an assortment of Oil Cans & Milk Cans, located on the shelves behind the Baggage Wagon, stored a number of small photographs from the Henry Marrec collection in the two wooden Storage Boxes that came from the Wilbur Frey locomotives for safe storage.

Wednesday, March 3, 2021 Hardware Committee Meeting:

Fred Brown and Richard Nichols empty two Mahogany Book cases that will be sold alongwith a Maple Hutch, scrap 3 Metal Display cases two allow more room in the Hardware and Archives Departments.

Members Mal Sockol & Richard Nichols cleaned & repaired the two models of B&M locomotives built by Wilbur Frey and on loan from Paul T. Kosciolk: Boston & Maine 2-6-0 Mogul #1451 and 4-6-2 Pacific Locomotive #3669.



2,366 items have been registered in the Hardware Collection since July 2013.

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Nichols
Curator, Hardware Committee
Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society

B&M FREIGHT CAR DATA PROJECT

My name is Ken Akerboom, and I'm working on the B&M Freight car data section on the B&MRRHS web site. I hope to make these web pages a "one stop shop" to find all the information available about every freight car series the B&M ever owned (and reported in the Official Railway Equipment Registers – "ORERs"). Prototype information, drawings, builder's photos, etc., and references to photos, magazine articles, blogs or whatever – anything that I can find (no matter how obscure)

In particular, I am looking for the B&M ORER data for all 4 ORER issued in 2010, and also January 2011 (which would complete from 1948 to the last B&M ORER listing in Jan 2012). While right now it starts with the classes per the B&M renumbering of (approx.) 1893, I do intend to cover to the earliest ORERs (starting in 1884-1885) and also cover the predecessor railroads (B&L, Eastern, Fitchburg, Conn River, etc.) once I get the data from all the ORERs.

I would appreciate any feedback/corrections/additions/questions/whatever. If you know of articles (prototype or modeling) that cover any of these cars (either the B&M cars specifically, or that "class" of cars – e.g. "PS-1" boxcars), or other photographs, web sites, blog posts or whatever, please let me know – my email is ken-akerboom@rochester.rr.com.

Also, for builder's photos that I can legally post on these pages. (Note: I'm not sure if I want these pages to compete with the other "photo" sites, so I'd prefer just the builder's photos. Only if we can't find a builder's photo would I be interested good "illustrative" photo for the class.)

If anyone is interested in helping me, I would also like to expand the data to include:

- Cabooses
- Engines (both steam and diesel)
- Passenger cars

But I would need help – there's a LOT of data out there in these other areas!

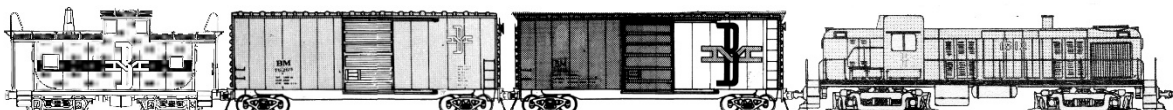
Note: I generally post when I've made major (?) updates to a <https://groups.io/g/BM-RR> message.

Please note that there are also some off-shoots of this effort that have been posted on the "main" B&MRRHS "Archives" page: <https://www.bmrrhs.org/on-line-archives>. These include:

- Car Record Books (both scanned originals and transcribed to Excel / PDF)
 - o Car Acquisition Books (1899-1917) [just purchases]
 - o Car Books (1923 - 1960) [purchase/renumber/scrap/destroyed]
- Freight Car Classification books

Just the pages that are not included in the individual freight car listings ("index" and caboose pages)

Anyway, I hope you enjoy (and find useful) what I have so far and hope to expand and "finish" it once we're able to travel and I'm able to get the data for the ORERs that I'm missing. Note the freight car web pages work better if you make your browser window as wide as possible!



BRENT S. MICHIELS

APRIL 26, 1948 – MARCH 7, 2021



Prominent New Hampshire railroad historian and photographer Brent S. Michiels passed away March 7, 2021, after a prolonged battle with heart problems. Over the years, Brent provided in-depth information and photos to many B&MRRHS books and *Bulletin* articles. He was a friend and mentor to many.

Brent was born on April 26, 1948, in Manchester, NH to Constance (Kelley) Michiels and George Michiels. He was predeceased by his brother Bruce. Brent once recalled one of his earliest memories of riding the steam-powered Portsmouth Local train between Manchester and Concord, likely in the early 1950s. He also recalled riding behind an E-Unit to Weirs.

Brent attended local schools, graduating from Pembroke Academy in the class of 1966. He then worked at Emerson Lounge before joining the U.S. Army in 1968. After a tour of duty in Vietnam, he returned to work at Emerson Lounge until they closed. In 1980, he started working for the Pembroke School District, where he spent 26 years at a job that he thoroughly enjoyed. He was selected as Employee of the Year.

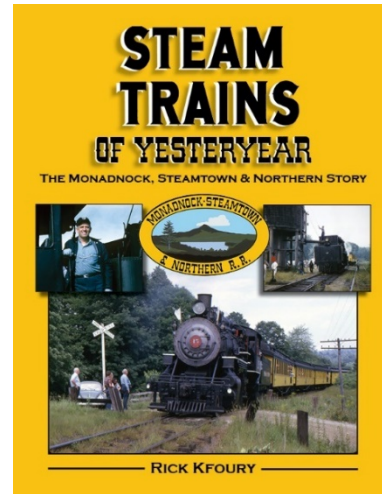
Brent's love of the railroad was well known. Many people relied on Brent for his depth of knowledge regarding the railroad history of New Hampshire. Brent was perhaps the most knowledgeable individual regarding the history of the Suncook Valley Railroad and provided essential assistance to the book published in 1985 on its history, *The Blueberry Express*.

Despite his battle with health issues, Brent could recall railroad information right up to his last days. If he did not know the answer to a question, he was not afraid to ask others and do the research to find the correct information. Organization and keeping impeccable records were his strengths. In recent years he was often seen around Concord railfanning the New England Southern and Pan Am Railways. He was friendly with both train crews and railfans alike.

A friend to all, Brent had a difficult time saying no to special requests. His commonsense approach to problem solving was refreshing. Brent will be missed by all. A dry sense of humor was his hallmark. "Keep your stick on the ice!"

(Adapted from Bennett Funeral Home website.)

NEW BMRHS BOOK!



A new book titled *Steam Trains of Yesteryear: The Monadnock, Steamtown & Northern Story* by Rick Kfoury is the next book offering from the B&MRRHS. This is the story of the start of steam tourist operation on the B&M and surrounding lines in the exciting early '60s – a subject not often covered in detail.

The book is a comprehensive history of the Monadnock, Steamtown & Northern Railroad from its inception in 1960 and 1961 to its dissolution and transfer into the Steamtown Foundation in 1971. The MS&N was F. Nelson Blount's standard-gauge steam tourist railroad and eventually served as the separate excursion operator for Blount's museum, Steamtown USA. The MS&N is notable for being the first steam tourist railroad to operate on former and current B&M rails and the last breath of steam power on several branch lines.

Discussed at length are the MS&N's early roving operations on the Claremont & Concord Railway near Lake Sunapee, the Boston & Maine's Cheshire Branch and the former Rutland Railroad in Vermont. *Steam Trains of Yesteryear* dives further into the facts and human element of these topics than ever before. Also discussed are the subsequent political negotiations involving the search for a permanent home for Blount's museum "Steamtown USA", and the start of his freight-hauling shortline, the Green Mountain Railroad.

Scores of rare photographs - many in color and never published - from premier photographers and collections throughout New England illustrate the history. Extensive research was conducted with newspaper and document archives as well as with the Blount family, historical societies, Steamtown NHS, and individuals who worked with Blount personally.

Perhaps most importantly, *Steam Trains of Yesteryear* sets out to provide clarity, correction, and colorful detail on the crucial and often-forgotten New England roots of the MS&N, Steamtown, and F. Nelson Blount. It is expected to be available through the B&MRRHS by late spring, so be sure to check the website and Facebook page for updates!

Saturday Night Sing- Alongs on the Boston & Maine!

By Richard W. Symmes



#6204. The engineer was one Wally Dunningham, and there was also a brakeman. I often got to ride, “up front” to view the track ahead.



BM 6204 seen here on the Western Route Main Line at Reading Highlands, Reading, MA - June 10, 1962. Leroy C. Hutchinson Photo - Walker Transportation Collection.

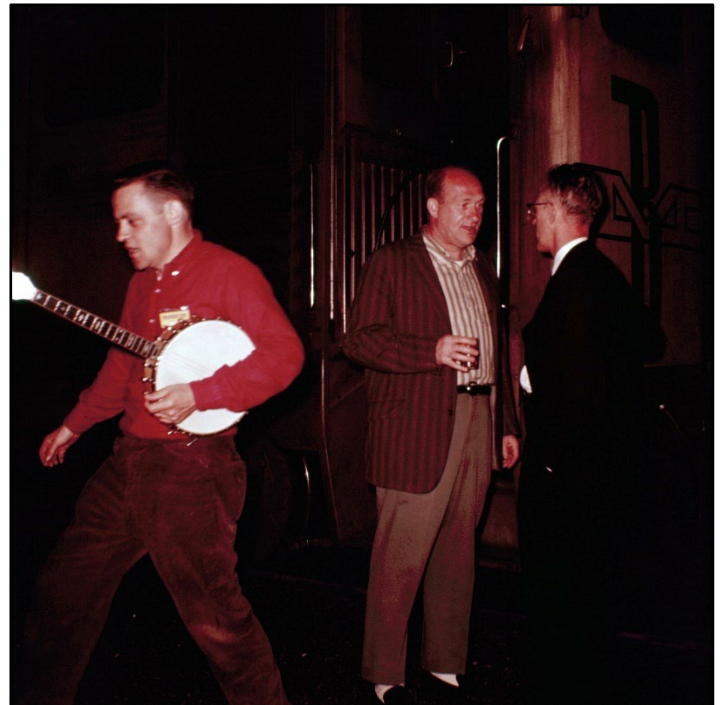
At 8 p.m. the train would arrive at Beverly where we’d board. At that time on a Saturday there were few passengers; perhaps a dozen at most. The boys would sit down in two facing seats and begin singing, which surprised and delighted the passengers. Now, quite honestly, the quality of their singing was not all that great. They did it for fun. However, they did secure a slot on local radio station WESX in Salem, Mass., for a weekly 15-minute show. They had to come up with a name, and after some deliberation they called themselves, “The Garden City Four”. Garden City was the historical name for Beverly, based on its agricultural background.

A unique series of events happened on Saturday evening commuter rail trains to Newburyport in the early 1960s. I was there. Here’s the story.

My father, Lewis Symmes, and three friends had formed a barbershop quartet in the mid- 1950’s. They got together once a week on Saturday evenings to harmonize and enjoy themselves over a beer or two! The other members were Paul Hubbard, a commercial artist in Beverly, Arthur “Buddy” Ross, who worked for New England Electric Company, and Arthur Mersereau, a conductor on the Boston & Maine.

At some point, conductor Mersereau was put on the Saturday evening run from Boston to Newburyport, thus breaking up the group’s weekly sing-along sessions. What to do? Why, get on the train at Beverly and ride to Newburyport and back, singing as they went. There was a 45-minute layover at Newburyport, during which the quartet would repair to an adjacent “watering hole” to have a couple of beers and do more singing, which would entertain the patrons at the bar.

I often tagged along just to ride the train, which was always a single Buddliner. In most cases it was an RDC-2 which was a coach / baggage combine. And more often than not it was



These trips were especially fun for me in the summertime, as while riding up front, the side door windows were down letting in the warm air and letting the clatter of the wheels under us set a jolly cadence, punctuated now and then by the bell or horn at grade crossings. Sometimes I was allowed to perform those two actions!

At the time, I was working as an artist at a print shop in Beverly. The owner was a very outgoing guy who played the banjo and liked to “party”. I had mentioned these Saturday night excursions to him, and he asked if he and his friends might come along one time. I told him, “the more the merrier.” And so, a date was set a few Saturdays hence. At that date, a moderate size group of merry makers had gathered at Beverly depot awaiting the 8 p.m. arrival of the train. Some men brought their wives along too.

After everyone had boarded and the Buddliner resumed its trip, the singing began in earnest. Accompanied by my boss on his banjo, the combined voices of all the guests soon put the TV show, “Sing Along with Mitch”, in danger of being outdone!



Once at Newburyport, they all bailed out and headed for the trackside bar where the singing continued, becoming increasingly fueled by alcohol! They returned when the horn announced the departure back to Beverly (and Boston). The return trip usually had no passengers at that time of night. So, the sing-a-long was now enjoyed only by the participants. There was joking, back slapping and carrying on. Cans of beer from the bar had mysteriously appeared on the train where it was consumed in large quantities. All too soon we arrived back at Beverly where everyone piled off except conductor Mersereau who had remained sober as his job dictated. He would go on to Boston.

I’ve often related this story to people but have never written it down until now. Did any other such incidents happen on the B&M? Who knows, but if our readers know of something similar, please contact the editor about possibly submitting it.

- Richard W. Symmes

RESTORING BOSTON & MAINE ALCO S5 #864



BM 864 at Boston, MA - December 22, 1957. Robert E. Chaffin Photo - Boston and Maine Railroad Historical Society Collection

In 1954 American Locomotive Company unveiled a new line of diesel switching locomotives to replace the S-3 and S-4 locomotives previously offered. This new locomotive, the S-5, bore a striking resemblance to the earlier offerings with one major difference. Under the hood sat a brand-new prime mover, the 251A engine. The 251 engine, having just recently been developed as a replacement for the outgoing 244 engine, was first offered up in a production locomotive in the S-5. Alco built one demonstrator, followed by an order of six locomotives for the Boston & Maine. The S-5s produced 800 horsepower, however shortly after these seven locomotives were built Alco engineers improved on the engine design with the introduction of a water to air aftercooler and other modifications. The new 251B engine now made 900 horsepower and this upgrade resulted in a new locomotive model, the S-6. Alco would go on to build 126 of these locomotives.

The S-5 and S-6 locomotives from the exterior were practically identical. These two models were improvements on the earlier S-1 through S-4 models and not total redesigns. The underframe and cab was similar to the S-4. The arrangement of machinery under the hood, however, was much different. The 251 engine was still arranged with the main generator closest to the cab, however the turbocharger was placed at the opposite end resulting in a much more forward located stack. The air compressor, which previously had been placed between the main generator and electrical cabinet now sat in front of the prime mover. The most obvious change was the elimination of the vertically mounted side radiators in favor of a horizontally mounted radiator with a front facing fan and louvers. There were other incremental design changes as a result of improved construction techniques. Most prominent among them was the usage of welding to replace riveting on the entire locomotive. However, not all of the improvements were as well received. The new models had much more steeply inclined corner steps which made getting on and off the locomotive a little more difficult.

The original S-5 demonstrator was sold to the Island Creek Fuel & Transportation Co. as their 102. The six that went to the Boston & Maine were numbered 860-865. Two years after delivery their original 251A engines would be swapped out for the improved 251B engines. Later still the B&M rebuilt the 860, 861, 862 and 865 into "S-5m"s (obviously a B&M created designation) and renumbered them 1280-1283. Contemporary reports state that the horsepower of the S5ms were increased to 1000 HP, however that has not been verified as accurate. The 863 and 864 lived out their lives on the B&M as unmodified S-5s.

The 863 and 1281 were sold to National Iron & Metal for scrap in November 1973. In July 1976 the 864 was sold to George Silcott, a locomotive broker. Finally, the 1280, 1282 and 1283 went to NI&M in 1984. Silcott resold the 864 to the North Star Steel Co. mini mill in Monroe, Michigan in late 1979. The 864 worked at North Star Steel for several years

until the connecting rod bearing failed on the No.1 cylinder, which permanently took it out of service. The 864 was then acquired by the Mad River & NKP Railroad Museum and moved to Bellevue, OH, taking up residency in the museum's coach yard. The 864 was not considered a part of the museum's collection since it had no significance to the museum's mission. It was acquired merely to save a rare locomotive from scrap.

In September 2016, the Youngstown Steel Heritage Foundation approached the Mad River & NKP Railroad Museum with a proposal to acquire and preserve the 864. YSH's mission mainly involves preserving steel industry equipment and technology primarily focusing on the Youngstown, OH area, however, also owns a pair of Alco S-2s formerly used at the US Steel Ohio Works. 864, having worked as a steel mill switcher fits into YSH's collection focus, and North Star Steel Co. did have a plant in Youngstown.

On October 3, 2016, the donation agreement was signed by representatives of Mad River & NKP and Youngstown Steel Heritage. The agreement provides for continued storage of the 864 in Bellevue. In November of 2019, Railroad Equipment Associates, LLC and YSH entered into an agreement where REA took ownership of the B&M 864 and will endeavor to return the locomotive to operation and repatriate it back to the Northeast and, ideally, New England.

To pay homage to the fact that the locomotive is the only surviving S-5 as well as the oldest Alco product built with a 251 engine, the 864 will be painted in the dark green and yellow demonstrator scheme in the interim. REA intends to stabilize the 864, restore the 864 cosmetically to its as-delivered Boston & Maine paint, return the 864 to service and repatriate the 864 to New England. *Adapted from an article from the Boston & Maine 864 Facebook page.*

Early in 2021, a GoFundMe effort successfully raised nearly \$2,450 to begin cosmetically restoring the locomotive. Additionally, a set of Pyle -National classification lights were donated. The group is looking for various items, and there are multiple ways one can get involved. See their Facebook page, "Boston & Maine 864", or email bmrr864@gmail.com for more information!

BOSTON & MAINE OSGOOD-BRADLEY COACH 4590

The Twin Forks Chapter NRHS at Riverhead, NY continues stabilization and restoration efforts on their ex-Boston & Maine Osgood-Bradley "American Flyer" passenger coach #4590. In March they put up the final horizontal support beam on the south side of #4590 and will soon focus on the Southeast trap area, and then finally reskin the south side! Be sure to visit their website www.twinforksnrhs.org and check out the podcast episode we recorded with them about the project right on the B&MRRHS website.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

March 29, 2021

I hope this letter finds all our members and their families healthy and well during these trying times. We have been working very hard to keep the society vibrant and functioning as best as possible. The volunteers associated with the *Bulletin*, *Newsletter*, Modeler's Notes, Website, Minuteman Tales, Podcasts, Archives, Hardware, 410 Restoration, show merchandise sales, and all other functions of the society have worked extremely hard to keep these projects on track. We sincerely appreciate the support of our membership.

Mail order and online sales have been extremely important this year, and very successful, considering we have not been able to attend any train shows for over a year. Our General Fund drive continues to bring in donations, which helps with the regular monthly operating expenses. We thank everyone who so graciously supported this cause.

Looking forward, it is our hope to start getting back to normal events in the near future, until then stay safe. Thank you all for your continued support of the Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society.

Jim Nigzus

President

ONLINE COMMITTEE REPORT

The B&MRRHS online committee has been busy, and in the last few months we continue to edit new episodes of *Minuteman Tales* for release. We have been supporting the creation and release of our new podcast, *High Green*, with recent episodes featuring interviews of Russell F. Munroe and B&M author Robert Willoughby Jones. If you have not checked the podcast out yet, you can find all episodes on our website or on Google Podcasts, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Stitcher. We also recently shot new episodes of our web series *Minuteman Tales* in the North Country of New Hampshire, specifically in Woodsville, Whitefield, and Berlin. Those episodes are currently in post-production and will be uploaded to our YouTube channel, Facebook page, and website very soon! Our Facebook currently has 3,537 likes. Our YouTube channel is at 305 subscribers. On our website, the Online Archives, Freight Car Data, and the podcast are the three highest-viewed pages. We are constantly looking for new ideas for online content – please send us an email if you have any new ideas!

James P. Nigzus

Chairman, Online Committee

THE LETTERS OF BILL FLETCHER

Edited by Rick Nowell

William (Bill) Fletcher of Worcester, Mass., was the author of a series of letters detailing incidents on the B&M and predecessor railroads. A former B&M Fireman, Fletcher seems to have had an uncanny memory for events, names, and dates. Twenty-eight of his letters, written in the mid-1960s and early 1970s to B&M Engineer Fred Hatfield and others, were donated to the Society by Chief Dispatcher Preston S. Johnson in 2002. (B&MRRHS Archives Cat. No. 2002.34.1)

Letter to Fred Hatfield, November 28, 1965.

I have just been looking at the seniority list of Engineers and Firemen on the Fitchburg Division in 1907. There was no Engr by the name of Mombo listed, but there was a Perley Mandigo and he ran out of Bellows Falls for years. I think he is the one you mean. He was discharged in the summer of 1913 and after[wards] he hired out as an Engineer on the Central Vermont. I fired on the CV too and I remember him running the 418 compound on a regular freight between Brattleboro and White River. I also remember the morning he run his orders. It is quite a story.

He and Pat Metzeler, Fireman, were returning light to Bellows Falls after helping a job to Winchendon. At Keene they received an order "No. 528 and Extra 2106 meet Extra 1356 at Walpole." At Walpole Mandigo pulled in on the siding soon after 528 arrived and pulled down the Main. Arty Wells was Engineer and Mike Walsh was the Conductor [on 528]. Mandigo and Metzeler forgot about the 2106 and pulled out and started for the Falls to clear 514. The block at Huntington's Curve was red. (That is where Engineer A.W. Brigham died suddenly on train 513. Leon Flint was firing for him and he ran the train into the Falls. This happened in the fall of 1906. Hagar and Brigham became Engineers in July 1892. Hagar went firing in 1888, but Brigham was a Cheshire [R.R.] man and went firing in 1884.)

Well, getting back to Perley Mandigo, he stopped for the red block and pulled slowly around the curve. When they got near Riverside, Metzler hollered, "There is a new engine down there at Cold River taking water." It come to Mandigo right off, "We should have stayed at Walpole and met the Ex 2106." 514 was due by now, so Bob Miller Engr. and Patty Ryan had to pull in at Cold River. The crew on 528 saw Mandigo leave Walpole and so did Agent and Operator St. George. He [St. George] withheld news from the Dispatcher with the hope that Mandigo would back up back to Walpole; he was almost fired and got black marked. Mandigo was suspended; then he got a call from Bill Green at the Falls to deadhead to Keene on 502 and bring back the switcher 107 from the Shop to the Falls. Everything went alright until Perley went into Jim Farrell at Keene and asked for orders to run to the Falls. He was told to return to the Falls and that ended his days on the B&M.

I have wrote quite a lot before I come to tell you about the fireman who lost his hand.

On Tues. Mar. 13th, 1907 Train 207 left Charlestown at 12 o'clock midnight. They left Fitchburg at 3 a.m. with 26 loaded cars and the buggy. Jim Henry was Engineer (entered service Jan. 16, 1902, promoted Nov. 26, 1906). Henry Bickford was Fireman. He started firing Mar. 4, 1904. At the time of this accident his home was in Medford. Right after they left Fitchburg they began to have trouble with their engine, the 1169, not steaming in the cut between Wachusett and Westminster. They stalled and had to blew [blow?] up steam. Engineer Henry got down on the ground and see [saw] the ash pan was dragging on the track. Henry hollered to Bickford, "Bring down the tools," and then he crawled between the drivers to a place under the engine. Bickford crawled part way between the drivers; his body laid across the rail. The head brakeman was in there trying to help, too. He saw Bickford and hollered, "Get up out of there. If the slack runs back you will get run over."

At this time Flagman Sheehan had gone back and stopped an engine and buggy; they pulled up behind 207's buggy. Right behind them was Ex 1171. They ran into the buggy and engine and forced them in[to] the rear of 207, pushing them ahead 100 feet. Bickford got almost clear of the rails after the brakeman told him to get out, but not quick enough so his hand was on the rail and got cut off. Henry held on to the ashpan and was dragged along and hurt. It must have been Perley Mandigo on the Bellows Falls Job that hit the buggy run and forced 207 ahead. Several cars were wrecked. You speak about Fireman Keating being in this wreck and losing his hand. You will see it was Bickford. Do you remember him?



"Line of the Minute Man"

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Dear Fellow Employees:

The Advisory Board has approved the sale of commuter property to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, which brings us a giant step closer to consummating the first part of B&M's reorganization plan. We hope to complete the sale before the end of this year.

Since ConRail's birth on April 1 of this year, our relationship and cooperative effort to provide good service to our customers has been most satisfactory. Although we are a vital link, together with the Delaware & Hudson and Norfolk and Western to provide service which is competitive with ConRail, we also rely on ConRail to handle promptly and safely a considerable volume of traffic which we interchange with them. It is too early to accurately evaluate ConRail's long-term capabilities, but so far they have done well in most cases.

We need a strong ConRail as well as a strong Delaware and Hudson. We need a strong rail system throughout the nation if we expect to carry out the tremendous obligations which will ultimately be placed on us as the people who direct this nation's progress finally come to their senses and exploit rail transportation. We must be physically prepared to accept this responsibility and challenge when it comes.

We on the B&M have a lot to be proud of: the fact that we have remained independent in spite of adverse circumstances; the fact that we have not "sold our soul" to the United States government in exchange for taxpayer grants to keep operating; the fact that we are a New England railroad, responsive to our customers' needs; the fact that we have made significant improvements to plant and equipment on our own; and the fact that our people have not experienced massive job losses and forced moves to other states due to a loss of independence. I guess we are "Damn Yankees" at heart with a determination to remain free.

The importance and priority of the back pay commitment to our employees has not been minimized. We are anxious to make these payments as soon as our cash situation permits. However, if that obligation were fulfilled now, it would probably be a most welcome check from the B&M -- but it could well be your last.

B&M is a family business with many second- and third-generation employees. It makes sense to work to strengthen and improve the system. The person that does less than a day's work for a day's pay is directly undermining the effort to preserve this railroad for ourselves as well as future generations of employees, some of whom might be your children, carrying on this tradition.

Sincerely,



LETTER FROM PRESIDENT ALAN G. DUSTIN, FROM B&M COMPANY NEWSLETTER, SEPT. 1976

ANDREW'S EXCURSIONS #7

ERVING, MA – LOST IN PLAIN SIGHT

B&MRRHS MEMBER ANDREW RIEDL



Erving depot seen on a cloudy day last summer. The depot building currently houses a candy store after being home to a restaurant for many years. The pink coat of paint is a recent update, but aside from this color change, the building seems true to its B&M roots. It dates back to 1898, and served passengers until 1959. It is located directly alongside MA Route 2 and is well worth a visit. Andrew Riedl Photo August 2, 2020

It's not exclusively the abandoned Boston & Maine lines that yield the most interesting finds. Many times, there are great pieces of history to see located right along active main lines. These items and locations are hints of the B&M's rich history not just connecting the cities of Northern New England but serving the small towns in between as well. It's often history like this that can get lost in plain sight.

Erving, MA is a prime example of this. Located 91 miles west of Boston on the Fitchburg Division main line, this small town at one point hosted several different mills and factories that gave the railroad much local business. While Pan Am trains still run through Erving daily, the town has taken a large step back from the railroad spotlight. Despite the reduction of industry in the town, however, there is still plenty here to delight a B&M enthusiast.

When you arrive in Erving heading west on MA Route 2, you will likely first notice the large paper mill on the left side of the highway coming down the hill. This is one of the last industries still operating in the town and I believe does still receive rail service. After passing the mill complex, you will soon then notice the large former B&M freight house on the left which is now an antiques store. The size of the freight house indicates how expansive business was at one point in time. Just beyond the freight house, the main railroad attraction in Erving is the former passenger depot, which dates to 1898 and lives on as a candy store. Its cheerful pink paint color is a recent update, and while it is a far cry from the traditional B&M maroon and gold, it's certainly a delight to its visitors, young and old.

My interest in this little depot dates back quite some time. I first saw a photo of Erving depot in Robert Willoughby Jones' book "Boston & Maine: Three Colorful Decades of New England Railroading" with a large eastbound freight train behind multiple "Bluebird" units on a summer day in 1962. Passenger service had ended several years prior to this photo, and the depot was already looking a bit tired in the image.

Fast forward to the late summer of 1999, I was able to visit Erving myself, and at the time the depot was



occupied by the Boxcar Restaurant. I

remember walking over to where the platform once sat and gazed both left and right down the double

tracked main line. The platform was gone, and the order board blades had long been removed, but on this warm, late September afternoon, Erving still seemed to be very much a prominent location on the Fitchburg Division.

Over the past few months, I have driven through Erving several times, and each time I have stopped in at the little depot. During one visit last August, I could not believe how much the scene has changed in two decades as far as nature

encroaching on the right of way. Vegetation now grows liberally around the tracks, despite still having daily freight trains passing through. The opposite side



from the depot looks more like a jungle than a railroad right of way, and the little "Erving" sign I remember so vividly from 1999, is either lost in the woods or simply gone entirely. Erving seems to be slowly fading away from the fabric of the railroad, yet still conjures memories of a proud, happier past.

I have never seen an actual train pass through Erving, and to this day it remains an item on my ever-growing B&M bucket list. I will continue to stop in at Erving when my travels take me past it, as seeing it continue to stand proudly between Route 2 and the main line always activates my imagination as to the busy Fitchburg Division of days past. I invite anyone reading this to do the same when they're in the area and appreciate this small slice of rural B&M nostalgia. Happy Explorations! - AR



The Boston & Maine's Boston Engine Terminal and surrounding facilities at East Somerville, MA, circa 1957. Note the "Budd House" which has just been completed, is awaiting the installation of track.

B&MRR photo preserved by Alan E. MacMillan. Donated by David Hutchinson. B&MRRHS Cat. No. 2005.7.8.

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