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125 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 1899

FAST HORSES BEATEN RACING ON THE SNOW AT SOMERVILLE *Courier-News, 18 February 1899, p 4*

Horse racing on the snow at Somerville will have no attraction for Plainfield owners of speedy horses this week and they will have to content themselves with the recollection of the surprise that some of them had last Saturday without the chance of getting square. / There was some lively racing there last Saturday ... and young Percy Garretson came out with his new unknown and “took the rag off the bush” much to the surprise of everyone. The horse is one that he bought recently in New York and he matched him against Lewis Bellis’ sorrel pacer, winning out ahead easily. ... Then the unknown went against “Jubilee Wilkes” and beat the latter easily. ... The unknown was out in just a pair of knee boots and made the heats without a break. / There is now fun ahead in Somerville and the sports have set their minds on getting something which will get even with Garretson.

SOMERVILLE TROLLEY ROAD OPEN *Courier-News, 18 February 1899, p 1*

The New Brunswick Traction Company had forty men out with shovels yesterday working on the drifts between New Brunswick and Somerville and succeeded in getting that part of the road opened by today. They have not been able as yet to do much with the Dunellen line to Bound Brook. *Image: Trolley in the Snow, 1905. Images of America: Somerville. Somerville Borough 1998, used w permission*



100 YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 1924

A COMMUTER FOR 50 YEARS RECALLS TRAIN TRAVEL IN 1874 *Courier-News, 2 February 1924, p 2*

A train composed of three coaches, a combination car and an engine, the coaches heated with a stove at one end that the passengers on hand early tried to get near, especially on a cold morning; the conductor gives the signal and each brakeman releases the hand brakes, and the “Somerville” pulls and wheezes, smoke belches out of the old smokestack and off for New York goes a handful of passengers from Somerville. This was the picture that came back to mind of A. C. Stevenson today as he completed 50 years of riding back and forth doing the errands of this community to the “big” city. / **Fifty years ago** the landscape between Somerville and Elizabeth was dotted with farms and very few houses in view. The towns were small and not so numerous as now. ... The trains all stopped at Bound Brook and Plainfield, and then swung over to Scotch Plains, returning to the “main” line about a mile west of Westfield. ... In the early days, every engine was named and all the trim was brass. Names of towns throughout the state were given to the engines and the “Somerville,” “Whitehouse,” “Bound Brook,” “Bloomsbury,” “Asbury,” and other names adorned the side of the locomotives just under the window where the engineer sat. ... Stoves were used to heat the coaches and air-brakes were unheard of. When the whistle blew, the “brakies” had to go out and tighten the brakes to stop the train. Sometimes the train slid past the station and had to back up, and at other times they would go on too quick and the passengers would be brought up standing. ...

MOVE FOR SUNDAY CLOSING. *Courier-News, 6 February 1924, p 11*

Considerable agitation is going the rounds of Hillsborough township in an effort to close up all places of business in Manville Sundays, and a number of petitions have been presented to the Township Committee asking that the members take some action toward that end. The petitions have been circulated among the various churches of the township, and, it is understood, there are a large number of signers. / Manville presents but a little quieter aspect on Sunday than on any day of the week and many stores remain open throughout the day. This is characteristic of a population such as is found in Manville, where the greater number are of foreign extraction, and among whom purchases are made only as needed. Manville itself has three churches, Catholic, Greek, and Protestant, but it is understood that none of the local congregations has taken any part in the effort to close business houses Sundays. / Business men of the rapidly growing town argue that to close certain stores would work a hardship to many of their customers ... On the other hand, the petitioners maintain that Sunday conditions in Manville are notorious and that something should be done to remedy them.

NEW SOMERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL IN USE

Courier-News, 4 February 1923, P 5

The new high school was put in use for the first time this morning when the pupils went to their rooms in the new building and then met in the auditorium for the first assembly. ... Cheers were given for the different speakers, for the United States, and for the flag. The entire assemblage stood in silence for thirty seconds in honor of Ex-President Woodrow Wilson who passed away yesterday morning.

SOMERVILLE ENGINE COMPANY SMOKER STAGED

Courier-News, 27 February 1924, p 7

The long expected entertainment and smoker of Engine Company, No. 1, was held last evening in the Somerville Armory, and one of the most interesting entertainments ever planned for the community was staged. The committee of arrangements provided smokes, pipes and tobacco for the occasion. The entertainment was in two sections. A part was by a noted troupe of vaudeville artists, brought to Somerville direct from Broadway, and a second a number of heated boxing bouts between some well-known boxers.

