

History of the Railroads in Lancaster, NH



H. Arnold Wilder
2002



THE RAILROADS IN LANCASTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

The town of Lancaster received its first encouragement of a railroad in the early 1850s when the Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad, then building north from Portland via Bethel, Maine, Shelburne and Gorham, New Hampshire, conducted surveys through Randolph and the Israel's River headwaters through Jefferson and Lancaster, NH, and the Connecticut River north. A similar survey was made from Gorham north to Berlin, NH site of the Brown Company and its lucrative pulp and paper business, thence northwest to West Milan and the Upper Ammonoosuc River valley through Stark and Groveton, thence north to North Stratford, NH and Island Pond, Vermont.

The principal purpose of the Atlantic & St. Lawrence was to build a railroad northwest to connect with a similar line, the St Lawrence & Atlantic, building south from Montreal, to provide eastern Canada with an ice-free port, for which Portland was noted.

The survey through Jefferson and Lancaster showed more difficult grades than via Berlin and West Milan, so the latter route was chosen. Due to the failure of the road to be built via Lancaster, the town was awarded several thousand dollars in damages, and according to the *History of Lancaster*, this money was used to build the first Lancaster House on the site of the present Lancaster Motel on Main Street.

After completion of the Atlantic & St. Lawrence (which would become the Grand Trunk Railway) in 1853, Lancaster had its first railroad connection at Groveton, about nine miles away. Mr. R. P. Kent, a prominent businessman of this period, noted in his diaries, that it was now possible to travel to Boston via Portland in one day, replacing the tedious travel by stagecoach taking three days or more. It is also worth of note, that the White Mountain Railroad was built into Littleton, NH from Woodsville, NH in 1853, but was still short of Lancaster by 22 miles.

During the following period, which included the years prior to and during the Civil War, little effort was made toward the construction of railroads in the North Country. However, shortly after the end of the war, in 1865, the town north of Littleton showed renewed interest. Meetings were held, and shortly the Boston, Concord & Montreal Railroad, successor to the White Mountains Railroad, entered into an agreement with area towns Littleton, Whitefield, Dalton, and Lancaster which stated "That if the

towns through which the railroad would pass, would grade the road, at no expense to the railroad, the Railroad would then lay the iron, and operate the road."

Apparently the towns concerned took the railroad's word for it, had an acceptable route and grade surveyed, gathered men and teams with dumpcarts, and prepared the roadbed required. The railroad, in turn, laid the iron rails, and in August 1870 ran a special train from Plymouth to Lancaster, coming up through the meadows behind the old courthouse, passing through a wooden covered bridge of the Israel's River, crossing Main Street just above All Saint's Catholic Church, to a station near the present Depot Street. Many Lancaster citizens were present to greet this first train. Speeches were made and the Lancaster Cornet Band offered appropriate selections.

In 1872, the railroad was extended north to Northumberland and Groveton, NH and a connection with the Grand Trunk Railway to Portland, ME or Montreal, Quebec.



Old Map showing B&M routes in heavy lines. Maine Central and Grand Trunk in finer lines. All with named stations.

A station building was erected on the present Depot Street, but was superceded by a larger and more commodious structure in 1895 when the railroad was taken over the Boston & Maine Railroad (B&M).



Boston & Maine Depot, Lancaster, NH. Frank Carbee is just visible in fur coat. Hasty Sedgell with the mail is in the 4-wheel baggage truck. The engine house is in the middle beyond; freight house is on left. (Wilder photo)

Lancaster was also chosen as a branch line terminal, and a three-stall engine house with coal sheds was built north of the station area; a freight house was also erected opposite

the engine house near Kilkenny Street. There was no water tank, as such, but necessary water was provided in the engine house by hose lines during overnight stays by the engines. A wye for turning the locomotives extended from the north end of the engine house toward Causeway Street, the end of which would be the beginning of the Kilkenny Logging Railroad in the 1880s. Three dairy receiving centers were built north of the engine house where farmers from the Lancaster area brought milk each day in 40-quart milk jugs for processing and shipping to Massachusetts locations – Hood, Whiting and Connecticut Valley dairies being remembered.

After 1891 when the Maine Central was built north through Lancaster and crossed the B&M a mile north, a considerable interchange yard was built here, first called "C&M Junction" (Concord & Montreal), and later named Coös Junction.



Station at Coös Junction with Maine Central train #377, engine 352 setting off cars for the Boston & Maine. (Wilder photo)

B&M freights to and from Woodsville exchanged many cars here, including carloads of milk from Colebrook, NH. Maine Central passenger trains from the North Country made close connections with B&M trains headed south in the morning and back at night. B&M locomotives, due to limitations of bridges and wye tracks, were most often of the Mogul 2-6-0 type 1400s for freight, and 4-4-0 type 1000s, for passenger, i.e., engines of light weight. Passenger trains departed south in the morning for connections to Boston or southern points, to return with the mail at noon, thence south again about 1:00 p.m.,

returning about 6:00 p.m. and connections north. The passenger station at such times was a scene of great bustle, with Frank Carbee and his team of horses and conveyance for business travelers; "Hasty" Sedgell and his mail wagon; plus a one-horse express wagon; all making the platform a busy place. Sunday afternoon was an especially remembered occasion when the Sunday papers arrived on the "Milk Train," and were loaded onto Hasty Sedgell's wagon for delivery to P. J. Noyes' Drug Store and to Sullivan's over near the bridge. Included was a package of oysters for Sam Evans' store, the necessary ingredients for many a Sunday night supper.

Due to spring flooding of the Connecticut River on several occasions, the B&M line south of Lancaster down through the meadows to South Lancaster (afterwards called Mountorne), and towards Dalton Station, was often under water and necessary detours had to be made over the Maine Central from Coös Junction east through Riverton to Jefferson Jct., to the B&M Berlin line.



Boston & Maine Railroad Station at Mountorne.

(Wilder photo)

While strange to see at the time, it was a precursor of times to come when in 1932, this old line of the B&M was abandoned and travel over the Maine Central was permanent. A calamity of a different nature occurred in 1915, which attracted many local residents, was the burning of the wooden bridge over the Israel's River, just below Lancaster, and the construction of a new steel bridge, requiring many weeks of detours over the Maine Central until the bridge was completed.

During the "teens and tumultuous twenties," the attractions of the White Mountains grew to be recognized in many city areas, and the summer hotels were

constructed in many places, including Sugar Hill, Franconia, Bethlehem Fabyans, Bretton Woods, and Jefferson. And, the railroads provided many seasonal trains to accommodate them. Lancaster, being just north of these mountain attractions, seemed not to attract large numbers of summer visitors, other than a few families who boarded at farms out "East." Thus the character of B&M passenger service differed little during the summer or winter seasons, although the engines and train crews from the Groveton Branch provided added service to the line to Fabyans, Bretton Woods, and to the Base Station of the Mt. Washington Cog line.

THE PORTLAND & OGDENSBURG, MAINE CENTRAL RAILROAD

The Portland & Ogdensburg Railroad, as its name implied, hoped to build a railroad up through Crawford Notch to St. Johnsbury, VT and on across to Lake Champlain to Ogdensburg, NY on the shores of Lake Ontario, and thus to secure traffic for the city of Portland. However, after reaching Fabyans in 1875, it found itself nearly out of funds. It then secured trackage rights over the Boston, Concord & Montreal through Wing Road and to a place called Scott's Mills on the Lancaster line. It then built a three-mile line across the Connecticut River to Lunenburg, VT and a connection with the St. Johnsbury & Lake Champlain Railroad. A six-stall engine house was erected at Lunenburg, with coaling facilities provided for both railroads until 1912 when the Maine Central leased the line to St. Johnsbury and the engine house was used thereafter to store open observation cars, used in summer through Crawford Notch.

The Upper Coös Railroad, extending from North Stratford up the Connecticut River, through Colebrook, West Stewartstown, NH and Beecher Falls, VT, and into the Lower Quebec Province, had been built by 1887 by interests headed by George VanDyke of Lancaster, to reach rich stands of virgin spruce timber in these valleys. In 1890, this line was leased to the Maine Central, and a new line was built from the St. Johnsbury line at Quebec Junction north through Jefferson Jct. and Riverton and into Lancaster in 1891. The line continued north to Coös Jct., (then called C&M Jct.), crossing the Connecticut River into Guildhall, Maidstone, VT, crossing back into New Hampshire at Masons, to cross the Grand Trunk Railway, and continuing north to connect with their new line at North Stratford. The Maine Central expansion plans, providing connections from

Portland to Montreal and Quebec, envisioned western connections through business to and from Detroit and Midwestern centers.



Maine Central Railroad Depot at Lancaster, NH with Mountain Division office extreme right.
(Wilder postcard)



Maine Central Railroad Station at Lancaster with "town clock."

(Wilder photo)

Servicing facilities enroute were obviously required; Lancaster was just over 100 miles from Portland, a day's run in those days, and so was early chosen as a railroad terminal. A six-stall roundhouse, repair shop and car repair facilities, and coal sheds were early provided, as well as yard trackage, both at Lancaster and at Coös Junction. Shortly after the building of these facilities, the railroad created the Mountain Division, comprising all the line west of Portland, and Division offices of the Superintendent, Train Dispatchers, and related personnel were located here.



Overall scene of the Lancaster Station and water tank. The water tank building had to be heated to keep the water from freezing during the winter. (Wilder photo)

Freight business was always extensive on this line. The familiar "Night Freight" ran for years between Portland and Lancaster, with connection to St. Johnsbury, VT, and heavy tonnage moved through the yards enroute to North Stratford and Grand Trunk connections. A "day" freight made a round trip to North Stratford, turned and picked up cars destined to Portland and east, handling them to Fabyans and Crawfords, returning in the late afternoon with more cars destined north. So called "mixed" trains, passenger and freight, left in early morning for St. Johnsbury and Beecher Falls and performed local

service enroute. Most locomotives used in this service were in the twenties of the ten-wheel type, familiarly known as Class 0, numbered from 351 to 390. The "night freight" for many years used much larger engines, called Mallet type, with four cylinders (two high pressure and two low pressure), numbered 1201 – 1204.



Mallet engine #1201 about 1922. (Wilder photo)

Originally oil burners, these engines had been used in the Hoosac Tunnel in Massachusetts prior to electrification in 1911 and were ponderous machines, limited to not more than twenty miles per hour. Too long to be turned on the Lancaster turntable, a new wye was built at Coös Jct. to turn them. In the late teens, they were converted to coal burning, and thereafter, two firemen were assigned to keep the engines steaming so large were their fireboxes. In turn, these engines were replaced by Mikado type 2-8-2 engines with slightly less pulling power, but with a lot more speed. It was an unusual but pleasant sight to see two engines, the second spaced five cars behind the lead engine, due to excess weight over the Israel's River, near the old brickyard, heading a long string of freight bound for Quebec Jct., Crawfords, and Portland, just at dusk.

Pulp business was a lucrative business in the teens and twenties. And during many winters, a pulp train extra would be operated from Beecher Falls to Crawfords,

handling pulp loaded out of Canada and eastern Vermont. Then, too, many carloads of Christmas trees were shipped from many of the stations up north to supply the needs of city areas at Yuletide. A number of cars would be loaded on the Wharf track, near Wesson Street, from sites "out East." The Thompson Manufacturing Co. used this track to load machinery destined for far places and farmers loaded baled hay into box cars for city customers. Here, too, local automobile dealers unloaded new models, four to a car, to the delight of small boys getting a preview. Roadsters and touring cars were then the rule; sedans were unusual in the teens.

The freight house, opposite the passenger station on Bunker Hill Street, was always interesting with four or five so-called way cars lined up at the various doors and men removing a wide variety of merchandise and provisions for local stores, businesses and individuals. The Frank Smith Company kept several teams busy hauling bulk grain to their Middle Street gristmill, from both B&M and Maine Central yards. F. B. Spaulding for many years operated their gristmill adjacent to the Maine Central yards on Mechanic Street, with Luther Hartford, the miller in charge. Charlie Hartford and the bay horse, Dandy, made regular trips to their Middle Street store. In later years, Spaulding occupied the present mill on Bunker Hill Street, purchased from Horace Holton after the Mechanic Street facility was destroyed by fire.

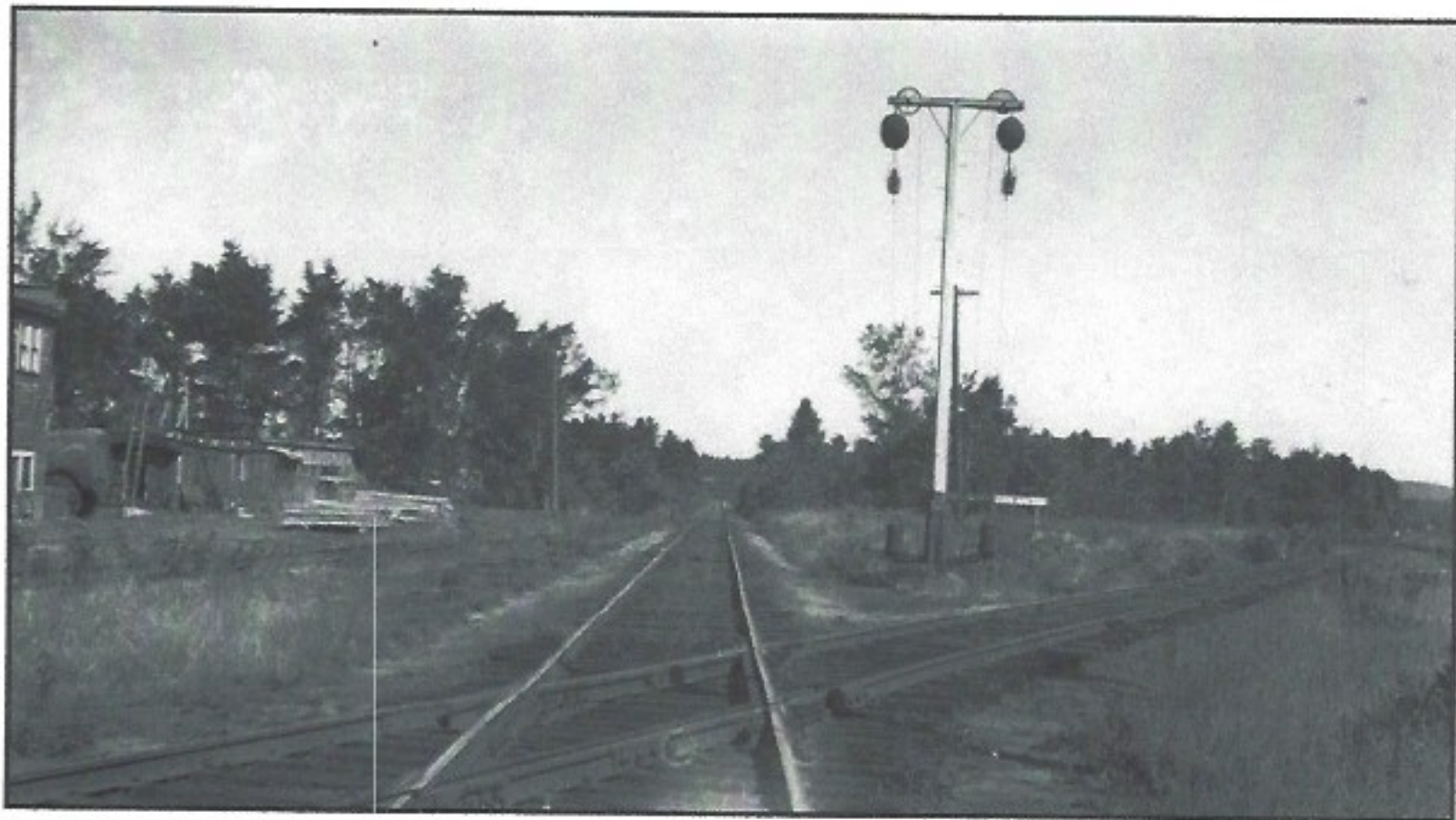
The glamour of the railroad, of course, was the passenger train; and to accommodate the summer surge of city travelers, the Maine Central added many trains to handle them. The morning train, #157, from Beecher Falls through Lancaster about 7:30 a.m. often carried a parlor car for Boston or Portland. A local train for mountain travelers, known locally as the "Scoot Train," arrived from North Conway enroute to Colebrook and Beecher Falls. Then at noon came the Boston train, #161 from the North Country, with coaches and a parlor car. At 1:30 p.m., the through train from Portland to Quebec City appeared with conductor Alphonse Bernier or Peter Letters, coaches and a parlor car, with a dining car on the rear to be exchanged at Colebrook with #224's counterpart, train #225 from Quebec. This train arrived in Lancaster at 3:45 p.m. destined for mountain resorts and Portland. For many years these two trains were assigned the same series of engines, small eight-wheeled type, #193, 194, 195, 197 and 199, due to the light weight of rail in Canada. A familiar sight was one of them being

uncoupled from #225 at the station so that she might take a tank of water from the square water tank on Bunker Hill Street. Men from the round house were often called upon to shovel the coal forward in the tender for the remaining trip to Quebec Jct. and the Fabyans. At 5:15 p.m., train #158 from Portland arrived, to be followed by train #160 at 6:00 p.m. from Boston via Intervale; both trains continuing on to North Stratford and Colebrook, where passengers for the Balsams at Dixville Notch detrained. The return of the "Scoot Train" about 6:30 p.m. headed back to Fabyans and North Conway ended passenger travel for the day, although the arrival of the mixed train from St. Johnsbury, #380, should be counted. All in all, a pretty busy schedule for the North Country.

It was a pleasant sight to observe activity as these trains arrived and departed – the many travelers on the platform, train crewmen and clerical personnel hurrying to and fro, mail, express and baggage being unloaded onto four-wheel trucks and thence to horse-drawn teams for downtown delivery – with the same men performing this service at both Boston & Maine and Maine Central stations.

Winter schedules, usually effective in mid-September, found train service reverting to the accommodation of the all-season travelers and passenger crews returning home in town after a summer season away. Open vestibule coaches again ruled our end of the division; train #165 arrived from the north about 7:30 a.m., having made connection with the Boston & Maine at Coös Jct. for the south, then to lay over in the yard until time to leave at 12:20 p.m. for Quebec Jct. to connect with the Portland-St. Johnsbury train, then back at 1:30 p.m. as the through train to Lime Ridge, P.Q., often with the red flanger on the rear to clean out snow and ice between the rails. Train #225 arrived at 3:45 p.m. from the North Country to continue on over to Riverton and Jefferson Jct., and the brakeman's familiar call, "Change for Cherry Mountain, Randolph, Gorham and Berlin;" then to Quebec Jct., where again connection was made with the heavy St. Johnsbury-Portland train. Train #225 then turned on the wye to return as train #166 at 5:15 p.m. to lay over until 6:10 p.m. in order to connect with the Boston & Maine train from the south before proceeding north of "Guildhall, Maidstone, North Stratford, Colebrook and Beecher Falls." As in summer, mixed trains left in early morning for Beecher Falls and St. Johnsbury, returning in late evening with combination cars on the rear of a string of freight cars.

As an interesting sidelight of this busy era, it may be interesting to mention the extensive use of Ball signals at the crossings of the railroads in the North Country. A tall white pole with cross arms top and bottom stood at each of such junctions, upon which large red signal balls were raised and lowered on cables to permit one line or the other to cross. The rule read, "one Red Ball or one red light at Masthead permits Boston & Maine trains and engines to cross and holds back all Maine Central trains. Two Balls or two red lights at Masthead permits Maine Central trains and engines to cross and holds back all Boston & Maine trains." These picturesque signals were located at Fabyans, Whitefield, Scott's Jct., Jefferson Jct., (now Waumbek Jct.), and Coös Jct. in New Hampshire and at Dudswell Jct., P.Q. on the Quebec Central Railway, and continued in use until the lines concerned were discontinued. Such a signal may still be observed at Whitefield near the highway on Route 3 in somewhat dilapidated condition. The signal formerly at Waumbek Jct. is now restored to its former glory and is on display at the Conway Scenic Railroad in North Conway. Automatic signals of the semaphore type were used at the Mason's crossing of the Grand Trunk south of North Stratford and at Cookshire, P.Q. junction with the Canadian Pacific Railway.



The Ball signals governing the crossing of B&M and Maine Central at Coös Junction. Two balls at masthead permit the Maine Central to Pass. The straightaway is the Maine Central track north. Station sign visible, but freight house gone. About 1952. (Wilder photo)



Train 377, Engine 367 on the "Diamond Crossing" at Coös Junction, 1940s. (Wilder photo)

The height of railroad operation in the North Country is generally conceded to be about 1916, just prior to World War I, when war was declared in 1917. During the War, most summer hotels were closed, related train service discontinued, and the railroads placed under the jurisdiction of the United States War Production Board, under William G. McAdoo. In the process of control, this war board instituted hourly increases in wages which prevailed until the Armistice was signed in 1918, and the railroads returned to their own officers in 1920. Rail equipment had had serious use and was badly in need of refurbishment and repair, and railroad management felt it could not sustain the wage rates implemented during the War, and in 1922 proposed to reduce wages. The Car Inspector's Union objected and called for a nationwide strike to which all members of that union subscribed. Even though the strike was not successful, many of the union members never returned to the railroad. Our family moved to Massachusetts where my father purchased a fruit farm, where we have lived since.

During these many years of railroad activity, it was inevitable that accidents would occur. Several come to mind. One of the most spectacular occurred at Bemis, NH in lower Crawford Notch when a 39-car freight lost its airbrakes due to freezing. The train ran down the mountain grade until the Bemis Curve, just above Bartlett. Here the

engine derailed due to expanded tires caused from excessive engine braking. Most of the wooden cars were badly smashed in the process, and all kinds of commodities scattered around the landscape. Engine #380 derailed just above this same spot during the carmen's strike due to a broken breakbeam, landing upside down in the adjacent highway. In the Lancaster roundhouse in 1919, engine #361, in for a boiler wash, had its fire rebuilt without anyone noticing that the throttle was open. When sufficient steam was raised #361 moved out of the house and plunged into the turntable pit, effectively shutting down the railroad until a wreck train arrived from Portland and lifted the engine out of the pit and back into her stall – somewhat the worse for wear.

After the cessation of hostilities in 1920, the hotels reopened for summer visitors. Special train service was resumed, but it was not the same. New roads were built and fancy new automobiles were to be had. Rail patronage fell off markedly and those trains began to be discontinued. Several big hotels burned - the Profile House in Franconia, the Waumbek at Jefferson; others were torn down. The handwriting appeared to be on the wall, for on October 31, 1925, Maine Central's line between Beecher Falls and Lime Ridge, P.Q. was abandoned. Quickly following, the Mountain Division was consolidated with the Portland Division, and all Division officers and related personnel were transferred to Portland offices.

The Maine Central officers apparently had faith in the future of the Mountain line, for in 1929 a new boiler plant was installed at the Lancaster engine house and an 85-foot turntable, formerly at Thompson's Point, was installed providing capability to turn any Maine Central locomotive. A number of machine tools were installed in the engine repair shop.

These changes were as nothing, however, when in 1932 the stockholders of both railroads approved that the management of both Boston & Maine and Maine Central be placed under one set of officers, with headquarters in the Boston & Maine offices in Boston. Service on the Mountain subdivision, pertaining to Maine Central, was summarily cut to the bone resulting in a single local passenger train from Portland to St. Johnsbury and return, plus a local mixed train between Lancaster and Beecher Falls, VT, and return, with no connection south, the train continuing on to Bartlett as an extra train, thus no servicing at Lancaster. Freight business between Portland and St. Johnsbury

continued to be a lucrative business with connections to Montreal and the Detroit gateway. Former heavy interchange with the Grand Trunk at North Stratford was moved to Danville Jct., Maine, for interchange. All engine house facilities at Lancaster were removed to Portland, the new turntable removed, and the engine house and shop buildings torn down, and the land sold to the State Highway Department.

The Boston & Maine abandoned their line from Whitefield Jct. to Lancaster via Dalton, Mt. Orne, and Lancaster, and between Wing Road and Fabyans, and operated such trains as were left over Maine Central tracks from Whitefield.



Boston & Maine train on Maine Central track. (Wilder photo)

A bit of irony ensued in 1935, when during the scrapping of many small locomotives formerly used on abandoned branch lines, the records showed that engine #195, a small 4-4-0 type, was missing. Search was accordingly made, and the locomotive found to be shoved out back of the old Lancaster car shop. All track had been removed in the process of removing facilities at the engine house. This move was undoubtedly made when the new turntable was installed in 1929. Track had to be laid and cribbing placed in the old turntable pit to enable the removal of the missing engine.



The "missing" Class L behind car shop in Lancaster, NH, 1934. (Wilder photo)

Seeking further economies on the Beecher Falls line, permission was granted to abandon Maine Central track between Coös Junction and North Stratford; trackage rights were obtained over the Grand Trunk from North Stratford to Groveton, and from Boston & Maine from Groveton to Coös Jct., and the rail removed through Guildhall and Maidstone, VT in 1949.

The greatest single element of change in the railroads of the country began in the mid-thirties, when diesel engines were introduced, first as small units used in streamlined trains like the Flying Yankee placed in service between Boston and Bangor, Maine, and by switch engines used in yard operations. Development found the capability of multiple-unit locomotives, similar to rapid transit trains, and continued growth of more powerful engines. Far more economical to operate, the diesel began rapidly to replace steam throughout the country, and after World War II, New England roads were quick to follow the trend. Long lines of obsolete steam engines were to be seen headed for the scrap merchant as diesels took over their former work. Coal towers, cinder pits and water tanks disappeared, and the last use of steam power occurred about 1954, particularly on Maine Central when a final rail fan trip from Portland to Bangor and return by engine #470 marked the close of an era. Today, none of the young people remember the steam locomotive save in a museum.



Diesel approaching Maine Central Station in Lancaster, 1952. (Wilder photo)



Changes of the times at Maine Central Station in Lancaster, 1952. (Wilder photo)



Mixed train coming into Lancaster from Beecher Falls. Spaulding Grain Company in background. (Wilder photo)

Mixed train service continued on the Maine Central between Lancaster and Beecher Falls although with reduced business; the milk business at Colebrook was transferred to trucks, and the only business left was at Beecher Falls where St. Regis Paper Co., shipped logs harvested in Canada, and the Ethan Allen Furniture factory albeit in diminishing amounts. Finally, St. Regis ceased all shipping via rail, and Maine Central petitioned to abandon all service. After much delay, the last Maine Central train left Beecher Falls on Feb. 17, 1977; the line between Coös Jct. and Waumbek Jct. sold to Boston & Maine on Feb. 22, 1977; and the balance of the line from Waumbek Jct.; and the balance of the line from Waumbek Jct. to Quebec Jct. abandoned. Thus ended all Maine Central service in Lancaster. The Boston & Maine service to Groveton continued a few more years, but with the takeover by Guilford Industries and the abandonment of the Woodville-Wells River bridge, the remaining trackage from Littleton through Whitefield to Lancaster and Groveton became the property of the State of New Hampshire. Paper manufacturing in the North Country has diminished significantly.

With the mills at Berlin going through a reorganization and the plant at Gilman closed indefinitely, the need of rail service in this area is at a real low ebb.

For over 130 years, the railroads played an important part in the economy of Lancaster and the surrounding country. The demand for rail services gradually diminished as the era of improved highways with their accompanying automobiles and trucks provided a faster and more convenient means of transport in the area. While many of our city areas find use of railroads a benefit where the highways are in gridlock, country areas like Lancaster have little use for the old ways of transport. Setting forth items of memory serve as history for a service to be remembered but easily forgotten by changing generations.



H. Arnold Wilder
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MAINE CENTRAL RAILROAD EMPLOYEES – LANCASTER, N.H., circa 1923

ENGINEERS

Charles White
 Frank J. White
 John White
 William E. Bond
 George Bond
 Charles Young
 Clarence Humphrey
 Hermon Ingersoll
 Fred Morton
 Philander Abbott
 William Lawless
 William E. Coates
 Joseph Marchant
 Wilford Moody
 Ola Hensen
 Leonard James
 Frank Washburn
 James Gallagher
 Albert Harvey
 E. C. Harriman
 Charles Bolduc
 Alonzo Stone

FIREMEN

Henry White
 Charles Emerson
 Harry Bond, Hostler
 Henry Ingersoll
 Lawrence Moody
 Carlton Jordan
 Peter Trainor
 Richard T. White
 Clarence Morton
 Chauncey Hutchinson
 "Tarzan" Emerson

RAILWAY EXPRESS MGRS.

Francis Bernier
 Raymond Matson

BOSTON & MAINE EMP.

Irving Willoughby, Engr.
 Edward Nourse, Engr.
 Carl McIntire, Conductor
 Carl Christiensen, Engineer
 George Castonia, Trainman
 Carl Simonds, Hostler

CONDUCTORS

Alphonse Bernier
 Peter Letters
 Dennis McKaig
 Owen Gormley
 Albert Parent
 James O'Dowd
 Hugh Donnelly
 William Gleason
 George Limieux
 Alan Batley
 Frank Libby
 John Kingsley
 John Powers
 Harold Grifftin
 Otis Emory
 Charles Raymond
 Hubbard Hall

TRAINMEN

Julius Martin
 Leo Collins
 Nelson St. Pierre
 Deola Berry
 Frank Pittman
 Glen Gray
 Perley Sanborn
 Jesse Carney

TRACK REPAIR

Arthur Stone, Rd. Mstr.
 William E. Matson, Fore.
 John Sweet
 Carl Sweet
 Michael Laughrey
 Moses Cummings
 Robert McIntosh
 Leslie Huntington

STATION EMPLOYEES

Frank J. Runey, Supt. 1918
 James Arsenault, Supt. 1918-25
 William E. Wheeler, 1925
 Clarence Adams, Dispatcher
 Ira S. Thombs, Dispatcher
 Elmer Haley, Ass't Dispr.
 A. M. Crossman, Dispatcher
 James E. Winslow, Opr.
 Fred Langworthy, Opr.
 Edward Fiske, Station Agent
 Nina Fiske, Clerk
 Maxine Twitchell, Clerk
 William Finnegan, Coös Jct.
 Walter Morton, Jeff. Jct.
 Fay Marshall, Clerk
 Vivian R. Craigie, Clerk
 Joseph Sayward, Tel. Main.

CAR INSPECTORS

Joseph Smith, Car Foreman
 James Gullen
 Alexander Currie
 Henry E. Wilder
 Leslie L. Hall
 Leonard Smith
 Henry Miller
 John Keenan
 Arthur McCaffrey
 Carl Bennett
 Clesen Smith

ENGINE HOUSE PERSONNEL

Timothy Magoon, Fore.
 Joseph James, Hostler
 Irving Noonan, Mech.
 Sam Watson, Blacksmith
 Carl Hartford, Sta. Eng.
 Harry Watson, Blacksmith
 Howard Butcher, Hostler
 Ernest Beech
 Sam Mills
 Tom Connary, Coal psr.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I was born in Lancaster, NH on May 23, 1909, the oldest son of Henry E. and Evelena M. Wilder. We lived on Wesson Street, near the Maine Central Railroad, which would become my chief attraction. My Dad was a Car Inspector in the railroad shops, off upper Middle Street, where I was a frequent visitor. During those "growing-up" years, due to an eye injury, I was permitted to travel with my Dad to many places on the Maine Central line when he was sent to make repairs to freight cars, and thus began a tremendous love of railroading which has endured for a lifetime.

During the Carmen's strike in 1922, my father felt he had had enough railroading and purchased a fruit farm in Massachusetts, where our family moved in 1923 and where we have since lived. Due to the eye injury, I was never able to pursue a vocation on the railroad, but the fascination has never dimmed. Membership in several railroad historical societies, with participation in rail fan trips locally and abroad in this country and Canada, has done nothing to dim that enthusiasm. To create a history of Lancaster's involvement in railroad activity over the years has been made possible through the help of many people in several places; I shall always feel indebted to Wilbur Schurman, a classmate, and Coram Bond, son of George Bond, a locomotive engineer, both of whom shared enthusiasm for the great name of railroading.

Lastly, I am greatly indebted to Mrs. Marilyn Day, director of the Westford (MA) Historical Society, for her effort as a computer whiz in creating the format for this history.

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4 September 2002

