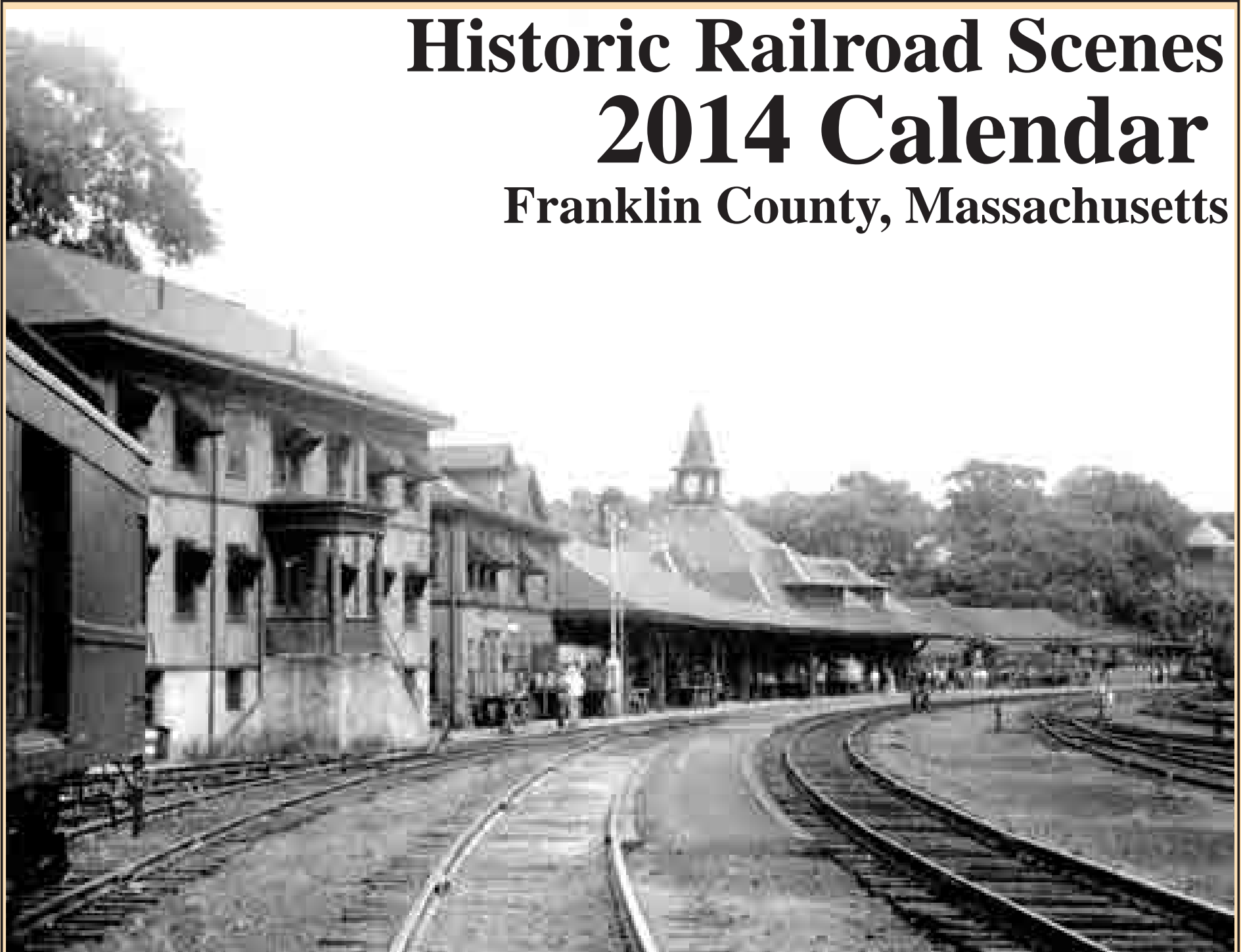


Historic Railroad Scenes

2014 Calendar

Franklin County, Massachusetts





CENTRAL VERMONT DEPOT - NORTHFIELD - CA 1900

Wait! I wrote NORTHFIELD STATION CA 1900 for last year's calendar (September 2013), which emphasizes the amount of guesswork involved. This charming photograph is a Howes Brothers' work. We know they were active at the turn of the century, so we'll change the date of last year's station to circa 1890. Why the older depot was replaced has yet to be determined. It may have burned, been damaged in a derailment, or replaced by a more attractive building as Northfield became a major tourist destination. Here we are looking towards the northeast at the end of what is now Parker Avenue..

The gentleman on the left may very well be the station agent. Ashfield Historical Society photograph.

JANUARY 2014

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ORANGE FLOOD, VALENTINE'S DAY - 1900

Here we are with a westbound passenger train unloading into a flooded Millers River. There is an eastbound track between the train and the depot. Is the crowd on the "bridge" there to watch the water, or because the man in the top hat on the baggage cart is somebody special? Or both? The man steadying the baggage cart wheel was R.D. Crosby, who was the agent in Orange for 42 years. Steam locomotives could operate in as much as two feet of water above the rail, depending upon their design. With diesel-electrics, two inches or less can cause serious damage. The Birch Hill Dam in South Royalston, completed in 1942, has made a repeat of water over the rails here quite unlikely. Orange Historical Society photograph.

FEBRUARY 2014

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EAST DEERFIELD HUMPS SWITCHER - CA 1920

The man standing on the tender was Archie F. Spencer, 1882-1966, who worked in B&M engine service for 49 years, retiring on 30 June 1953. Spencer lived on 10 Sanderson Street in Greenfield, in the house where his grandson, our calendar photofinder, Peter Miller, lives today. The lettering on the cab tells us that this was a jack-of-all trades, ubiquitous 2-6-0 built for the Fitchburg Railroad in the 1890's, most likely by the Schenectady Locomotive Works. Why use an ancient wood cab Mogul? Most folks think of hump locomotives as huge articulateds, or multiple diesel-electrics, shoving entire trains up a steep grade where cars are cut loose to roll freely downhill. But the East Deerfield hump is an impostor; lower and with gentler grades than a real hump, and until the early 1980's was served by a stub track that could only handle 15 to 20 cars safely. So the Mogul was an appropriate machine for this job. You can visit a B&M Mogul today at the Danbury, CT RR Museum.

MARCH 2014

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McCLELLAN FARM ROAD, EAST DEERFIELD - CA 1940

This fine photograph is difficult to date. The huge YMCA building on the left opened in 1920 to accommodate railway and agricultural workers. The tower on the right was formerly at Turners Falls Junction, just a quarter mile to the west. When the Montague City Connecticut River bridge was condemned for use by the B&M in 1925, the railroad built a connection to the New Haven track just to the left of the photo. The then redundant tower was moved to the railroad yard to serve the signal department. The covered bridge was replaced in 1951 with the current bridge, which is known as the “Railfan’s Bridge”. It is to the credit of the architect and builders of the YMCA, as well as the Deerfield Fire Department, that repeated attempts in the early 1970’s by vandals to burn the building came to naught. This writer recalls ringing the yardmaster to ask him to call the DFD because “The YMCA is on fire, again.” The YMCA was finally torn down around 1974.

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GREENFIELD, RUSSELL STREET AREA - 6 MAY 1966

The sign on the tender reads: "Ride STEAM TRAINS of STEAMTOWN Yesteryear. BELLOWS FALLS, VERMONT." Millionaire Nelson Blount moved his locomotive collection to the former Rutland RR yard at Riverside in Bellows Falls in 1963 and opened the site to the public in 1964. This was apparently an excursion to Greenfield with hopes of generating publicity. Unfortunately, Blount died when his private plane crashed in 1967 and Steamtown lost its steam. Eventually the collection was moved to Scranton, Pennsylvania, where it is now under the care of the National Park Service with the STEAMTOWN name retained. Mogul type 2-6-0 No.89 has had a fascinating life: built by the Canadian Locomotive Works in 1910 for the Grand Trunk, and then owned by Blount's Green Mountain RR. It was not part of STEAMTOWN and was sold in 1972 to the Strasburg RR in Pennsylvania. Submerged by Hurricane Agnes in Wilkes-Barre in June 1972, it was restored to operational status in March 1973, and is running today, as far as I know.

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CHARLEMONT - CA 1948

Again, very difficult to date this photo. Note the water plug behind the coach. Most trains were diesel by 1946, but steam locomotives were still used on helpers, work trains and the occasional passenger service when it was necessary to swap out with the Rutland RR in Troy until the 1950's. These natty gentlemen appear to be friends, which is a good thing as they probably spent a lot of time together. If this is Train No.54, the train crew went on duty about 5:15 AM for a 5:45 AM departure from Albany, stopping in Charlemont at 9:03 AM. The April 1948 time table calls for a 12:55 PM arrival in Boston which meant an 8 hour tour of duty when everything went well. With 32 stops, there was little time to relax. Then, as now, the railroad paid well. It was 196.6 miles from Albany to Boston, and train crew members received a day's pay for every 150 miles. But if you calculate the hours you were away from home six days a week, you would see that the money was earned. Still, for most it was a fun job. Fitchburg Division Passenger Conductor, William Grinnell, was still on the job at age 77, with 62 years of service.

JUNE 2014

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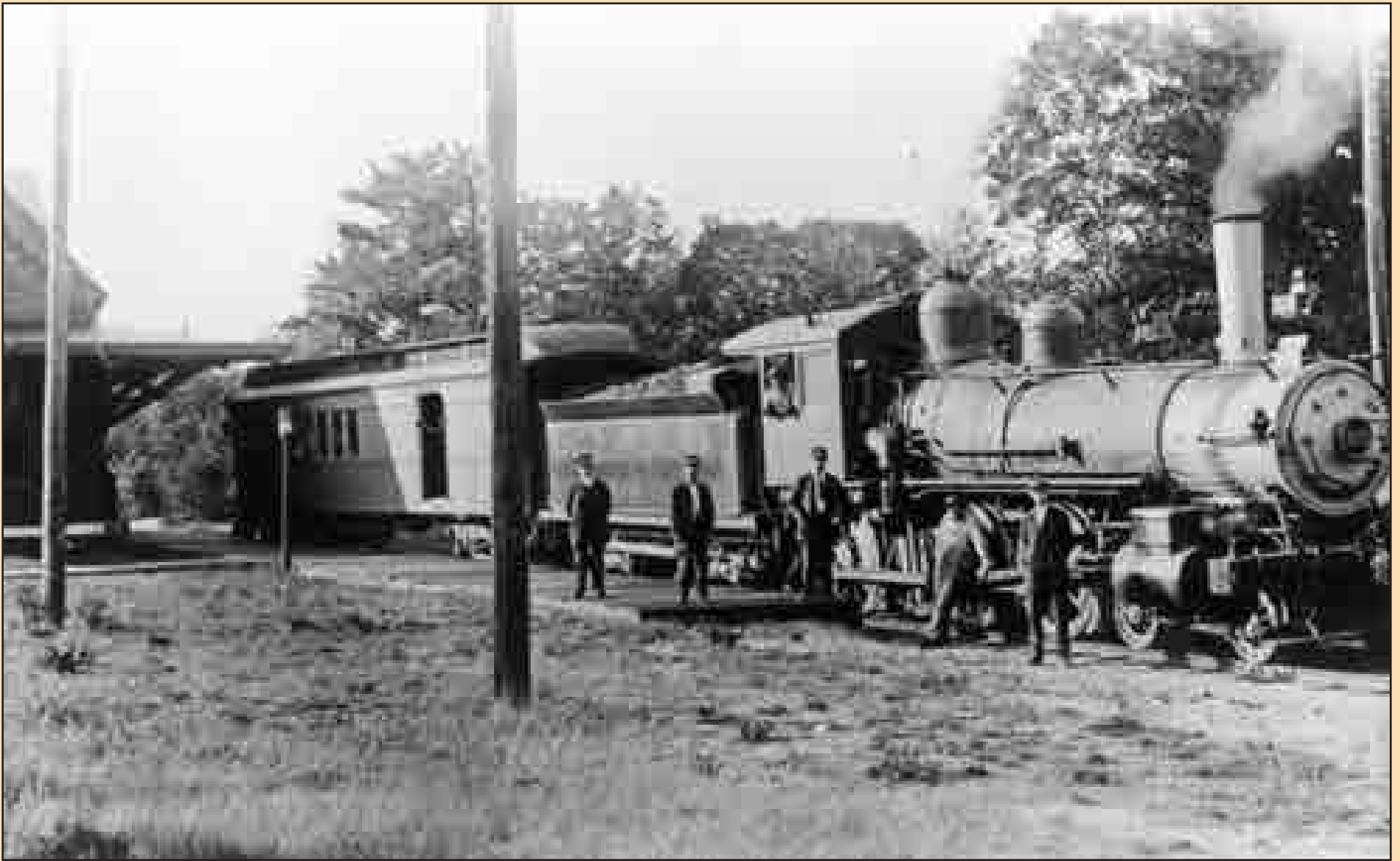


EAST DEERFIELD FREIGHT YARD - CA 1890

This is the Fitchburg RR roundhouse and yard about 125 years ago. The roundhouse is roughly where the asphalt plant used to be. The barn and white house in the distance are on Greenfield Road in Montague across the Connecticut River. What looks like a covered bridge, is an elevated trestle to dump coal from hopper cars for the locomotives. Of the three houses on the right, the middle one is gone, the other two are still lived in. The current owners of the one story house tell me it was once a railroad boarding house. When the B&M took over the FRR in 1900, a new roundhouse was built on the north side of the yard. And then another. A section of one is still in use for track equipment. As locomotives grew longer, it was more cost effective to build a new roundhouse in a new location rather than try to rebuild one while in use. The pasture from which this photo was taken is now deep woods. O.C. Leonard Photograph.

JULY 2014

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CONWAY STATION - CA 1910

I believe this is the New York, New Haven & Hartford RR Company Train No.1113 at Conway Station at 4:29 PM, after leaving Shelburne Falls at 4:15 PM, due to arrive New Haven at 7:40 PM. In a minute, the crew will board, whistle off, and soon cross the highest railway bridge in New England, constructed in 1881. No.925 was built with 66 inch drivers by the Rogers Locomotive Works in Paterson, NJ in 1889 as a passenger locomotive for the Housatonic Railroad. The New Haven replaced those with 56 inch drivers to make a more versatile machine, as smaller drivers could handle heavier trains. The high bridge was dismantled in 1922, rail service to Conway ended in 1923, and No.925 was scrapped in May of that year.

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FIVE MEN ON A SPEEDER - CA 1920

A New Haven RR section crew takes a break on their motor car, usually called a speeder, in the clear, probably waiting for a train to pass by. It is the hatless young man on the left that is of interest. Jim Cleary was born in Deerfield in 1902, and graduated from Deerfield Academy in 1919. His father was a New Haven RR section foreman and I am guessing his territory ran from South Deerfield to Shelburne Junction. Jim told me (at his Greenfield home late in his life) that he worked with his father during summers and perhaps for a year or two. It was when he was out on the Conway High Bridge, and looked down, that he decided that he was not suited for railway work. In 1928, he opened Cleary's Jewelry Store, which is still in business on Main Street in Greenfield. Jim became the official area watch inspector for the B&M RR, a position he held until he retired. He was a talented violinist, president of the Pioneer Valley Symphony Orchestra and lived to age 95. Deerfield Academy Archives Photograph.

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EAST DEERFIELD GROUP PORTRAIT - 16 JULY 1924

This large professional photograph notes that these are the locomotive and car shop forces at East Deerfield on the above date. To fit the calendar, the photo was cropped at both sides, leaving about half of the staff not shown, including Peter Miller's grandfather, Charles F. Miller, and his brother-in-law, Amie Dionne. As you can see, if you were female, or a person of color, your chances of being hired here were slim to none. Still, probably half of the current population in Franklin County is related to someone in the photo. You can see the complete photograph at the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum, or on the calendar web site. Mudsucker 2-10-2 No.3007 was built in Schenectady in July 1920 and scrapped in September 1946.

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DEERFIELD DEPOT - CA 1950

The B&M's Deerfield public facilities were located on Steam Mill Road just south of the circa 1846 stone arch bridge that carries the railroad over the road that goes up to Eaglebrook School. The station was located on the village side of the tracks and was an easy walk for Deerfield Academy students who were shown here awaiting a train to take them to an athletic event. Judging by the shadows, they were waiting for Train No.720, due at 9:05 AM, which will have them 32.7 miles south into Springfield at 9:55 AM, and New York at 1:03 PM. The fall 1950 time table shows no northbound trains stopping at Deerfield, but a telephone call to Miles Street from DA Headmaster Frank Boyden would probably get any train to stop there. All B&M passenger trains on these tracks ended in March 1967 and this building disappeared about that time. Deerfield Academy Archive photo.

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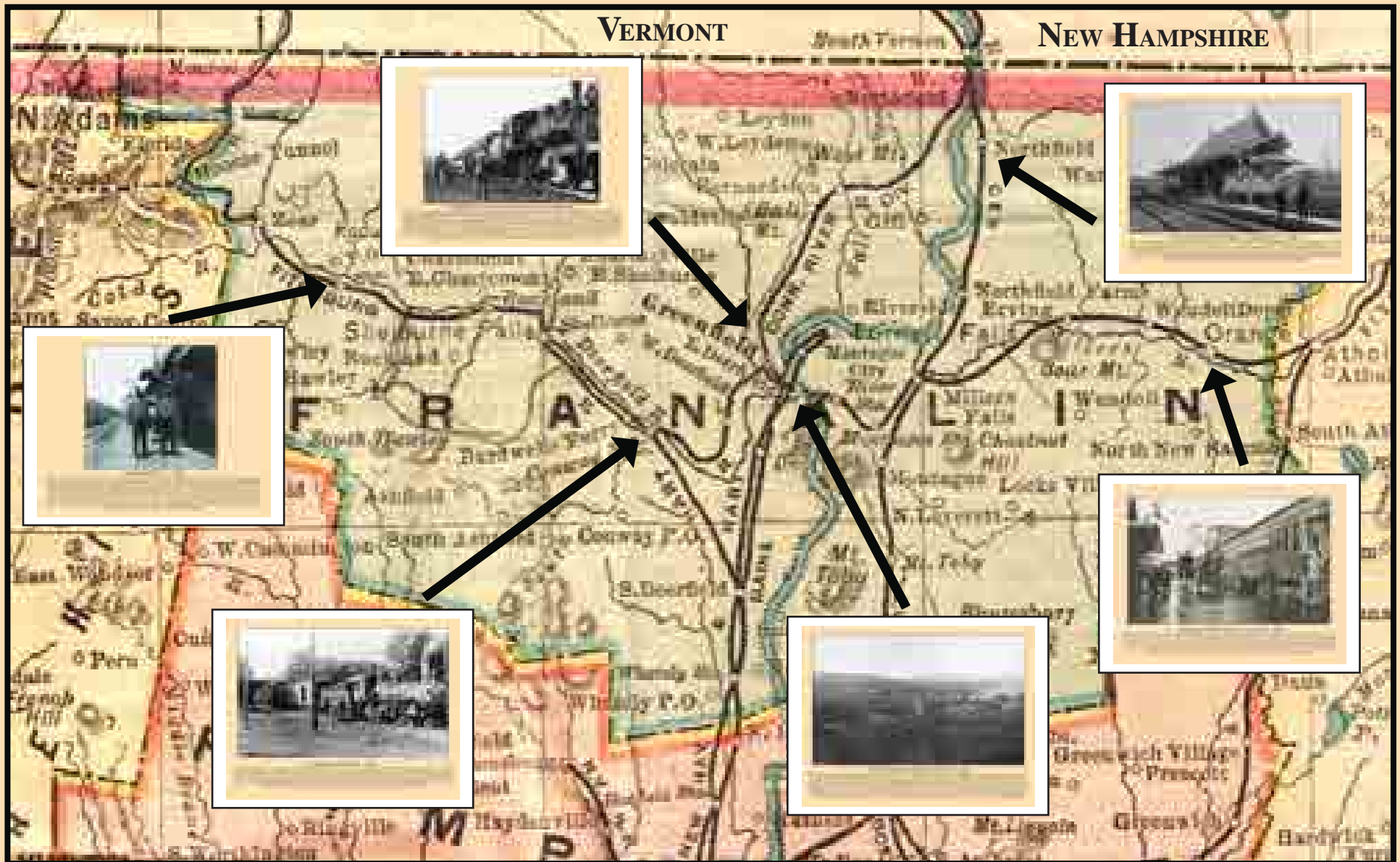
ERVING PAPER MILL WRECK - DECEMBER 1920

On Sunday, 05 December 1920, the Northampton to Ayer freight train, extra 2730 east, pulled in on Erving Middle and was passed by late running passenger train No.66. That train roared on eastward towards Boston and the freight opened up and followed. As the freight pulled off the Middle, the locomotive passed the Paper Mill Dam, where high water had weakened the roadbed, unknown to anyone. The 2730 toppled into the flood and three crew men drowned around 10:45 PM. Here we have the scene looking eastward, possibly as early as Monday, with the Millers River now free flowing with a drained mill pond. Boston wrecker M3360 stands ready to assist the East Deerfield M3363 with the 2730, after the pile driver, working on the left, finishes reinforcing the embankment. If the roadbed had collapsed under the fast running passenger train, instead of the slow moving freight, the number of lives lost could have been many more.

DECEMBER 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																								
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MAP OF FRANKLIN COUNTY - 1899



The 1899 map shows the rail stations (small circles) illustrated on this calendar along with a sampling of photos. You can see why Franklin County's railroads are important - three major lines passed through here. Most of these railroads still exist. The Central Vermont came north from Amherst through Millers Falls to Vernon, Vermont and then on to Canada. The New York, New Haven and Hartford came from Northampton to Conway, with a branch line from South Deerfield to Turners Falls. The Fitchburg Railroad (B&M) passed east-west from Boston through Greenfield to the Hoosac Tunnel and points beyond.

There is an error on this charming old map: it shows two rail lines along the Deerfield River going westerly to Shelburne Falls. There was actually only one - the B & M. The NY, NH & HRR never had a rail line north of Conway.

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Historic Railroad Scenes - 2014 Calendar Franklin County, Massachusetts



Cover: GREENFIELD DEPOT AREA -- CIRCA 1950. From left to right: The Boston & Maine's Fitchburg Division Administration Building, the divisional engineering, signaling and communications building, the baggage wing on the depot, the 1881 depot at the foot of Miles Street. The administration building opened on March 1, 1914, with officials and dispatchers upstairs, clerks below on the first floor and the finished basement. The building was locked for the first time on April 15, 1972 by Alden Dreyer.



The included 1899 Map of Franklin County shows all the railroads and station locations.



Railroad history researched and provided by Alden Dreyer, Shelburne, Massachusetts. Photographs courtesy of Peter S. Miller, Greenfield, Massachusetts. Calendar website: www.whist.com/calendars/railfranklin

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