

2023 Calendar

Historic Railroad Scenes of Franklin County

Massachusetts





WASHOUT AT THE STATE LINE - JANUARY 22, 1910

A serious service disruption right on the Massachusetts - Vermont border. The South Vernon, Vermont, depot is on the left. The locomotives on the right may well be in Massachusetts and the new East Northfield station is just out of the photograph to the right. Looking northeast, the line by the depot runs across the Connecticut River to Keene, New Hampshire. The line to the west of the depot is the Central Vermont to Brattleboro and on into Canada. Fortunately this washout was discovered before a train derailed. Probably trains were moving again within a couple of hours with a temporary wooden cribbing fix. A permanent culvert would be built later in the year.

December '22

2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31						

February '23

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28								

January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6 	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	Notes				



ZOAR STATION LOOKING WEST NEAR HOOSAC TUNNEL CA 1915

At this time, Zoar was 130.81 miles west of Boston and 11.58 miles east of North Adams. Zoar is located in West Charlemont and is famous for this long sweeping curve along the Deerfield River that was featured in widely dispersed advertising for decades. From "Mudsuckers" 2-10-2s built in 1920, to new Diesel-electric FTs in 1943, to solid gasoline trains during WW2, this was the location to use for stunning photos. What is interesting here is the 45 degree Rule 86 indication on the westbound train order signal. That meant an operator was on duty and an inferior train was being authorized to proceed on the time of a following superior train without obtaining train orders. Or it notified a superior train, more likely at this location, that an inferior train was running ahead without train orders.

January '23

	S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30	31					

March '23

	S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30	31		

February 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5 	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17	18
19	20 Presidents' Day 	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 	28	1	2	3	4
5	6	Notes				



OVERFLOW FROM AN ICE JAM IN BUCKLAND CA 1920

This photograph came labeled “The East End of Buckland Middle”. Always skeptical, it seems right, and likely solves something that had puzzled me regarding Buckland Depot pole line. Why had the pole line been moved from the river side of the track (right) to the field side? That was a major project. I thought of floods, but they rarely wipe out pole lines. Ice is a different matter. Here the Deerfield River moves quite slowly and ice jams are still an occasional problem. It is likely this ice broke the pole with its telegraph wires. A century ago, the railroad was limited in the tools it had to move ice. It was likely that rail-mounted clam shell cranes were used, along with a lot of hand work. But what happens when ice takes out a pole line? Trains can't run until some means of communication is reestablished. In the 1920s, the railroad could use the Bell system in an emergency, but it was a pricey, and probably not overly reliable option. Hello, operator?

February '23

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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

April '23

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						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

March 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Daylight Savings Time Begins	13	14	15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18
19	20 First day of Spring	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	Notes				



THE LAST EAST DEERFIELD ROUNDHOUSE – APRIL 19, 1981

Doug Moore of Belchertown took this aerial photo on Easter Sunday 1981, which explains the large number of locomotives visible. The rectangular building is the 1917 machine shop which was reconfigured after the steam era to maintain diesel-electric locomotives. And it is still performing that function today. The roundhouse was the third one, possibly there were more, at East Deerfield. The Fitchburg RR (FRR) had two roundhouses along River Road, but when the B&M purchased the FRR in 1901, everything changed. The East Deerfield Branch was built and the yard expanded to replace yards in Northampton and Greenfield. A new locomotive facility was built on the north side of the yard and the FRR facilities area used for transloading rail to road vehicles. When diesels took over, the roundhouse shown here was converted to maintaining and storing work equipment. It was destroyed in an October 2020 windstorm.

March '23

2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

May '23

8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2 Palm Sunday	3	4	5	6 Passover	7 Good Friday	8
9 Easter	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	1	Notes				



MILLERS FALL YARD CA 1910

The view is looking southwest in Millers Falls. The overhead bridge is the highway to North Amherst, now Route 63. When the New London Northern came to town in 1867, it crossed the Vermont & Massachusetts RR at grade a few miles south of our photographer. This did not please the Massachusetts RR Commissioners, so eventually the Central Vermont was elevated at great expense to cross over both the Fitchburg RR and the highway. You can see the beginning of the flyover - the right track beneath the bridge. It looks like the Brattleboro to Palmer CV local is in town working the yard out of sight to the right, which contained the depot and freight house. Note the style B semaphore which indicates the next two blocks are clear of traffic. And the middle track on the B&M which could be used by trains in either direction to clear superior trains, or for routine maintenance like fire cleaning, fixing hotboxes or dragging brake equipment.

April '23

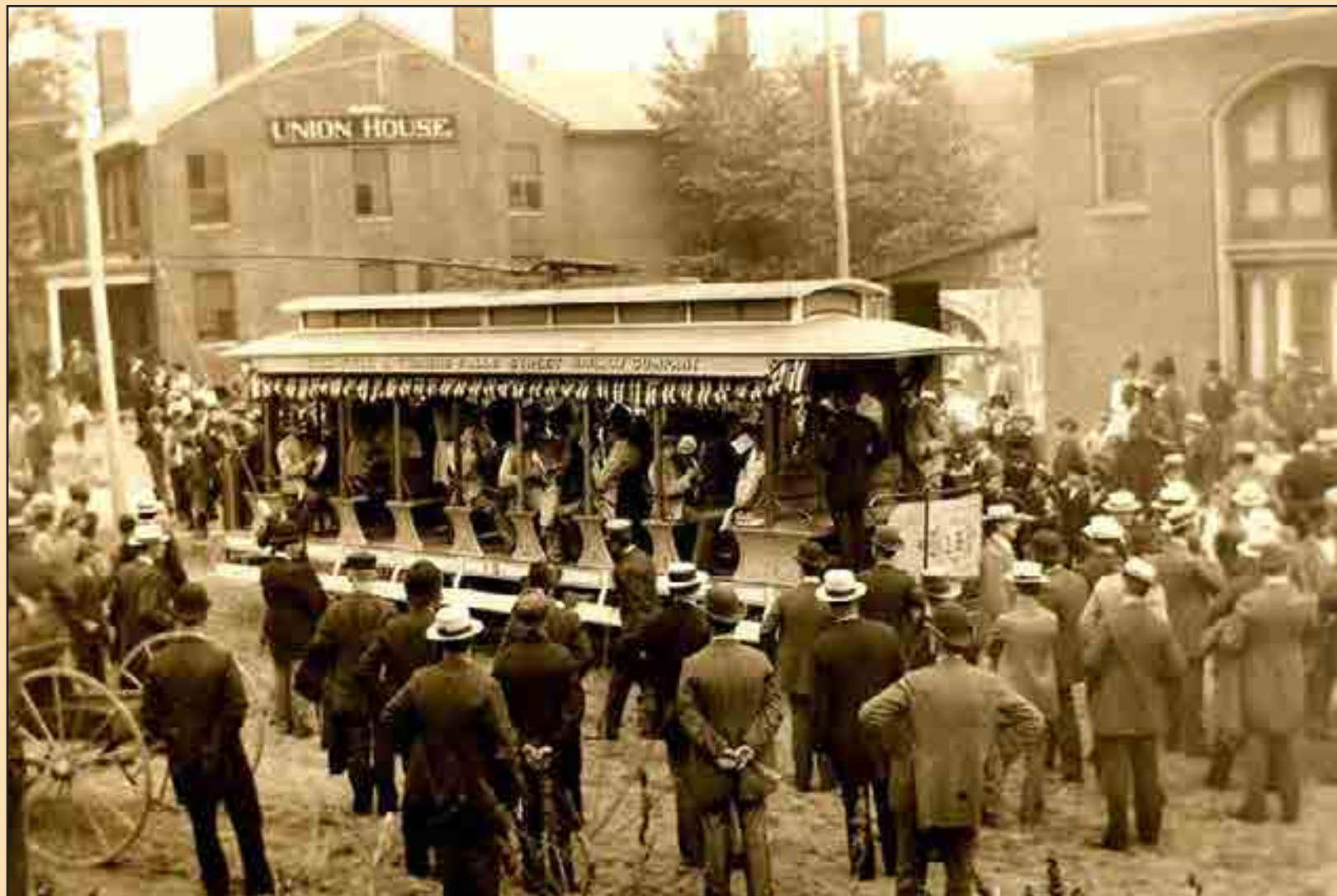
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

June '23

4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
30	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14 Mother's Day	15	16	17	18	19	20	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29 Memorial Day	30	31	1	2	3	
4	5	Notes					



OPENING DAY - GREENFIELD & MONTAGUE STREET RAILWAY JUNE 22, 1895

Your complimentary ticket read *"Dear Sir: The Pierce Construction Company request the pleasure of your presence at the opening of the Greenfield & Turners Falls and the Montague Street Railways. Cars will leave Union House, Greenfield, at two o'clock, Saturday, June 22, '95. H.L. PIERCE, President."* And so began the Greenfield and Montague trolley lines. Montague and Turners Falls had more trackage to begin with, but rails would eventually expand to a 44 mile system serving Millers Falls, Amherst and Northampton. In Greenfield, the line went up Bank Row, west on Main to Conway Street, then up Conway to Silver Street. Another route went up Federal Street and west on Silver to the intersection with Chapman Street. The beginning of the end came in 1924 with the bankruptcy of the Connecticut Valley Street Railway. The Greenfield & Montague Transportation Area emerged from the chaos, tried hard to succeed, but the last trolley ran on July 7th, 1934.

May '23

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

July '23

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29 Memorial Day	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Flag Day	15	16	17
18 Father's Day	19	20	21 First Day of Summer	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	1
2	3	Notes				



GREENFIELD RAIL FACILITIES - CA 1910

This is a very nice view of the Greenfield yards, looking northwest. It is difficult to pin a date on a photograph such as this, but there are two clues. The train order signal on the station was probably erected in 1908 as provided for in the system rule book effective June 21, 1909. And the curving track leading to the water tank was gone by 1913, when the still existing Fitchburg Division headquarters building was built there.

The little shanty in the middle of the photo was for the switchtenders who handled turnouts for through trains and controlled a half dozen non-interlocked semaphore signals that were pulled by wires. With about 100 trains a day passing on the Fitchburg and Connecticut River Divisions, they must have been busy men. Switching crews would have their own men to handle turnouts. Note the Union House on the left side where trolley service began in 1895. That building is long gone. The site now has the NAPA Auto Parts store. See also the June calendar page.

June '23

2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31						

July 2023

August '23

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31					

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
25	26	27	28	29	30	1	
2	3	4 Independence Day	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
30	31	Notes					



GREENFIELD TUNNEL UNDER MAIN STREET CA 1890

The railroad first arrived in Greenfield in 1846 coming from Northampton. This arch bridge was built in 1847 and still stands today, largely unchanged. This view is to the south. A large cut would have been made, side walls erected, and then a strong wooden framework built inside to hold the stones until the arch was completed. The tunnel is 68 feet long, about 25 feet wide, and has sufficient clearance now for a 19 foot tall rail car. The turnout inside the arch was the end of double track that began in Springfield. In 1913, the B&M decided to extend double track as far as East Northfield. The 50 car Allen Street siding was extended and double track reached Silver Street and went no further as the economy collapsed with the sinking of the Titanic in 1915. This tunnel was a bottleneck and rather than have switches on both sides, which would delay trains, a gauntlet track was built controlled by automatic block signals. Such a track has four rails, two frogs, but no moving parts. In 1931, the automatic signals were replaced with controlled interlocking signals so First Class trains could be given precedence. In 1964, the gauntlet was retired, a single track only ran up from Russell Street interlocking to a spring switch installed at the north end of the tunnel. Now there is a single track from the south end of the tunnel to Brattleboro, Vermont.

July '23

2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September '23

1	2					
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

August 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4 Labor Day	Notes				



ROWE RAIL FACILITIES CA 1925

This is a fine overview of the Rowe facilities where the electric power was fed for the trains to pass through the Hoosac Tunnel. The east portal of the Hoosac Tunnel is just around the curve in the misty distance. This is dated about 1925 as the wire pulled semaphore signal was replaced by 1930 when the tower was converted from a mechanical to an electro-mechanical interlocking. Railroad fan excursions to this locale did not begin until 1934. So what is going on here that has men standing at attention for a formal photo? A guess: Might be this is 1920 and a first test run of a new 2-10-2 “Mudsucker” Santa Fe type locomotive? But the photo is too murky to tell. What is clear is the meticulously maintained tower campus with its many pipe-activated turnouts and carefully crafted catenary. When the photographer is finished, the electric motors will move away and the train will proceed to East Deerfield.

August '23

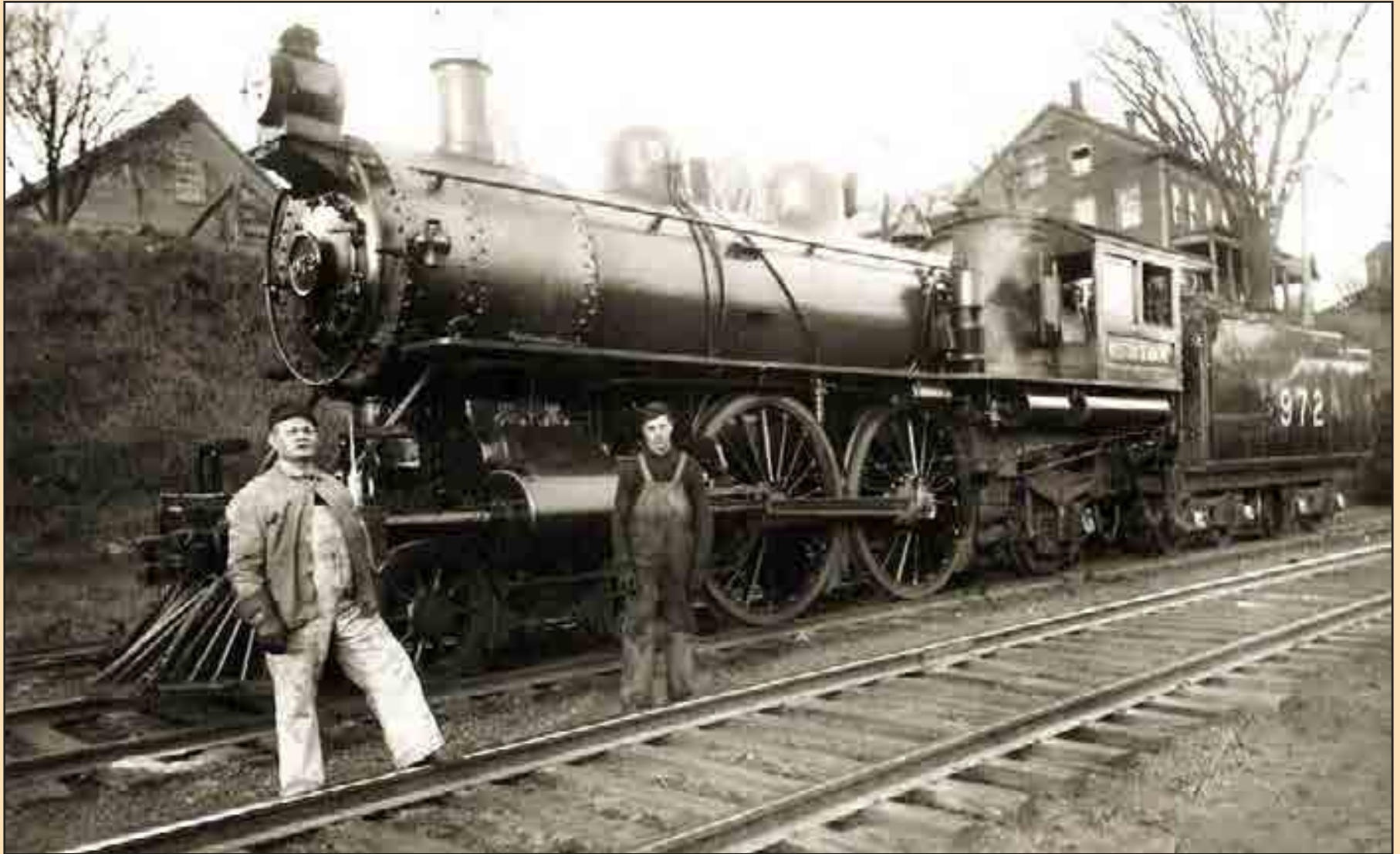
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9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

October '23

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

September 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4 Labor Day	5	6 	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 	15	16 Rosh Hashanah
17	18	19	20	21	22 	23 First Day of Fall
24	25 Yom Kippur	26	27	28	29 	30
1	2	Notes				



B&M RR ENGINE No. 972 – CA 1905

All we know about this photo is what you see. The photographer may have been O.C. Leonard, who took many photos of crews and their locomotives. The locale may be on the Connecticut River division in Greenfield west of Hope Street. Thanks to Harry Frye's definitive book "Minuteman Steam," we do know that No. 972 was built by Schenectady in May 1902, renumbered to No. 3208 in 1911, and scrapped on Nov. 17, 1927. With a capable boiler and cylinders and 79 inch drivers, it was ideally suited for running short and fast passenger trains the 36 miles back and forth between Greenfield and Springfield, where there are no grades of any significance. How fast? According to the Conn. & Pass. Division Timetable No. 26 of Oct. 10, 1910, No. 98 was allowed 58 minutes, with three stops at South Deerfield, Northampton and Holyoke. The Valley Flyer Amtrak schedule of summer 2022 requires 68 minutes, with no stop at South Deerfield, and all stations now have high-level platforms for quick station stops.

September '23

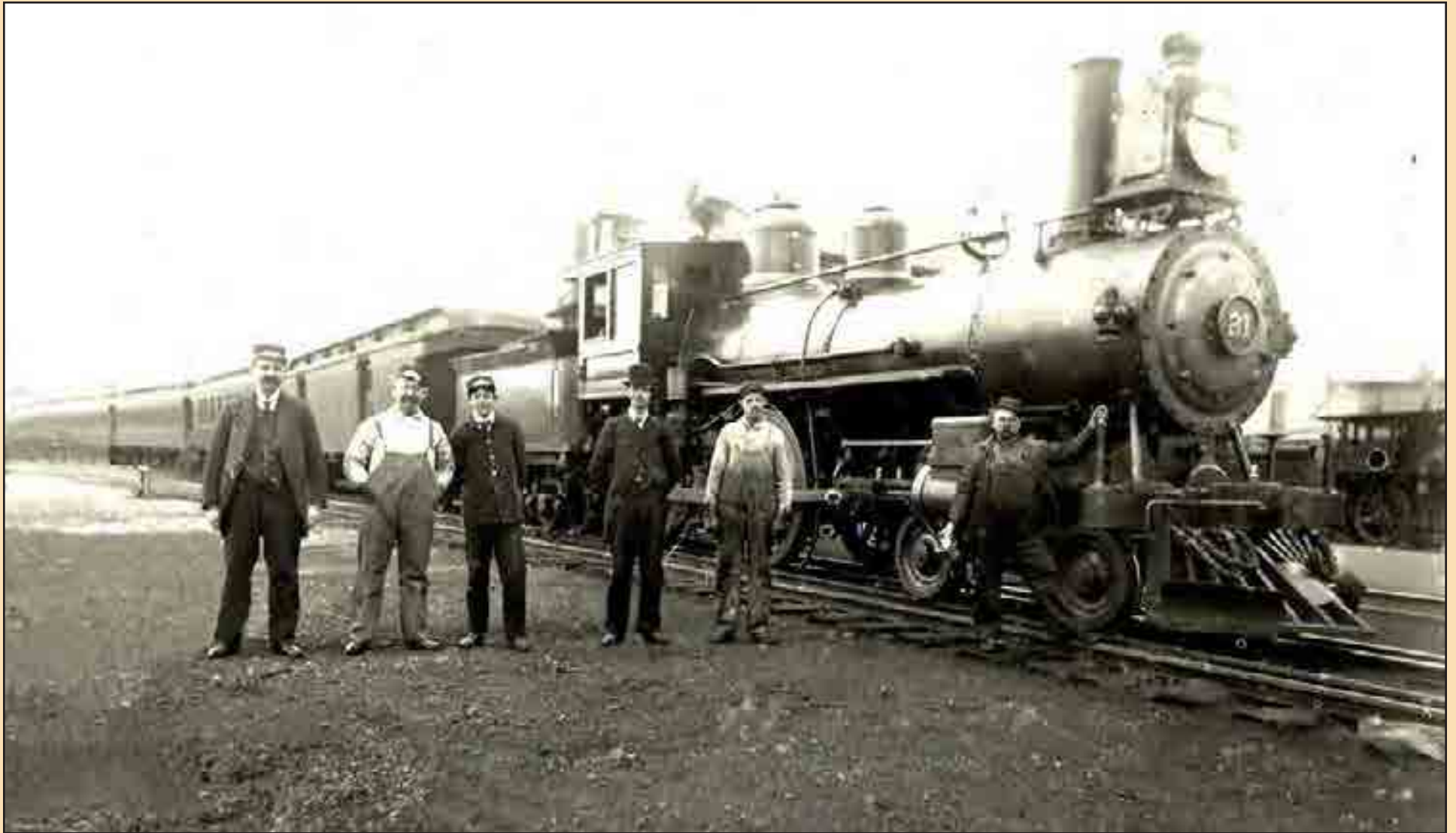
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30			

November '23

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30		

October 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6 	7
8	9 Columbus Day	10	11	12	13	14 
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 
22	23	24	25	26	27	28 
29	30	31 Halloween	1	2	3	4
 Daylight Savings Time Ends		Notes				



O.C. LEONARD PHOTO OF TRAIN CREW IN GREENFIELD - CA 1900

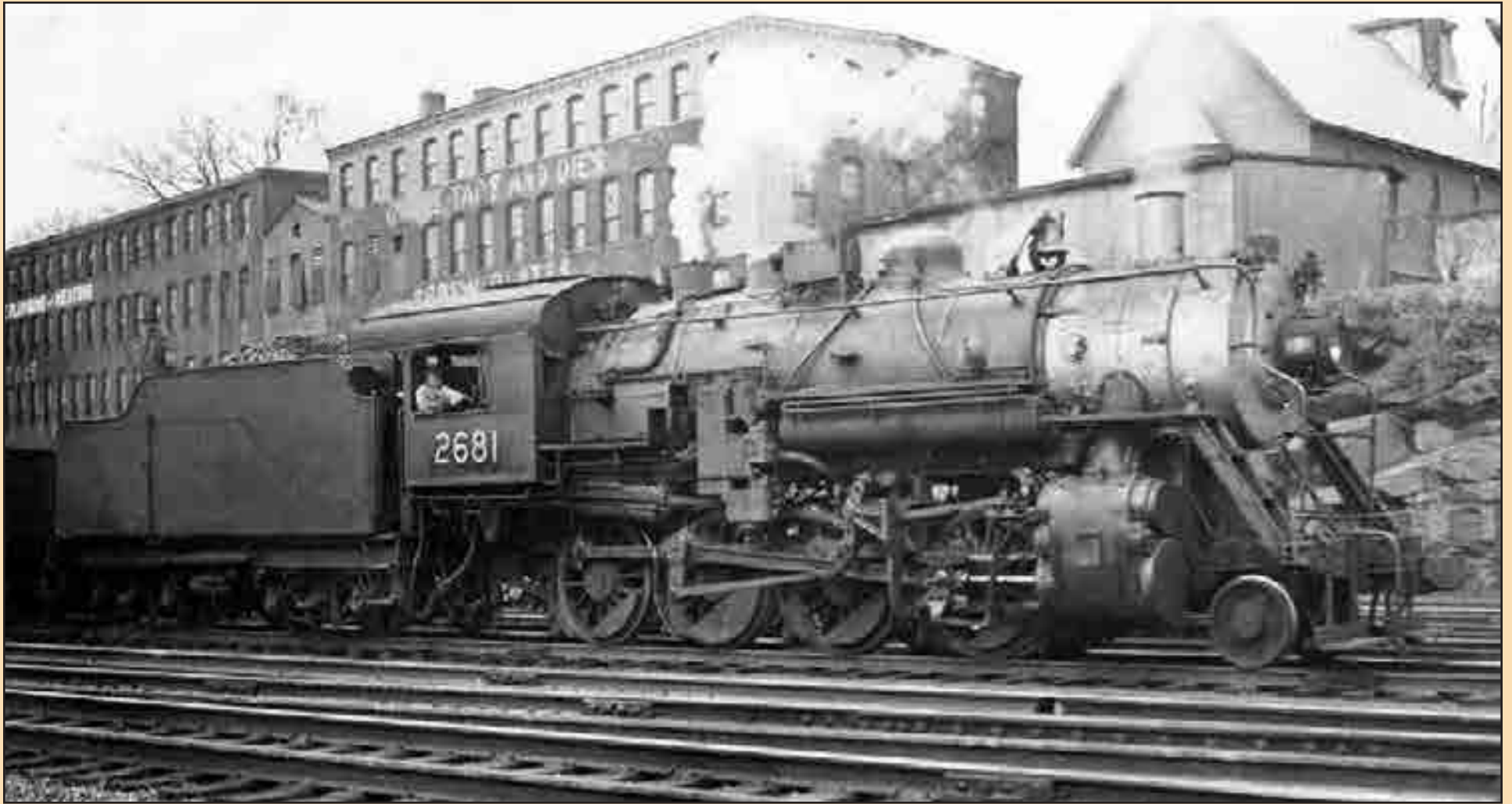
O.C. Leonard of Leverett took many photographs like this. Whether he did so on request and sold prints to willing crew members, we do not know. Fitchburg RR Engine No. 21 was built by Taunton in June 1888 with 18 by 24 inch cylinders and numbered No.183 when built. This photo is dated as 1900 as that is when slotted couplers came into use. The engine would be renumbered 145, then 945, and finally 825 and scrapped in October 1912. The crew, left to right, would be the conductor, baggage man, flagman, railroad special agent (police) guarding the express car, fireman and engineer. Note all had mustaches except the flagman. The eastbound train number in the glass on the oil headlamp is not decipherable, but likely is No. 12, the National Express and Passenger, due out of Troy at 11:35 AM, with arrival at Greenfield at 2:50 PM, departing at 3:00 PM.

October '23						
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

December '23						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

November 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31 Halloween	1	2	3	4
5 Daylight Savings Time Ends 	6	7	8	9	10	11 Veterans Day
12	13 	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 	21	22	23 Thanksgiving	24	25
26	27 	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	Notes				



B&M ENGINE 2681 IN GREENFIELD – MAY 1924

B&MRRHS Historian Harry Frye, called the 2-8-0s the unsung heroes of the B&M. And he was correct. Except for the lightest of branch lines, these machines moved virtually all the freight from 1900 until 1920. And then for the next 35 years or so, K-8s could be found doing whatever task they were asked to perform. Whether doubleheading to haul main line freights, pushing trains east and west out of East Deerfield, running locals, switching cars, and even pulling commuter trains out of Boston. They were well balanced and reportedly could run twice as fast as the track-destroying 2-10-2s that arrived in 1920 and were limited to 35 MPH. No. 2681 was built by Baldwin in Feb. 1913 and scrapped in May 1939. The footboards on the pilot show it was set up for switching and local freight service. The rectangular box on top of the boiler was for cab signal equipment used between Greenfield and Boston. The contraption on the side of the boiler over the main driver is a Worthington Feedwater Heater, which warmed water from the tender before it was forced into the boiler. The main buildings shown here on Hope Street have been repurposed and are still in use nearly a century later. Photo by L.P. Cornwall.

November '23

S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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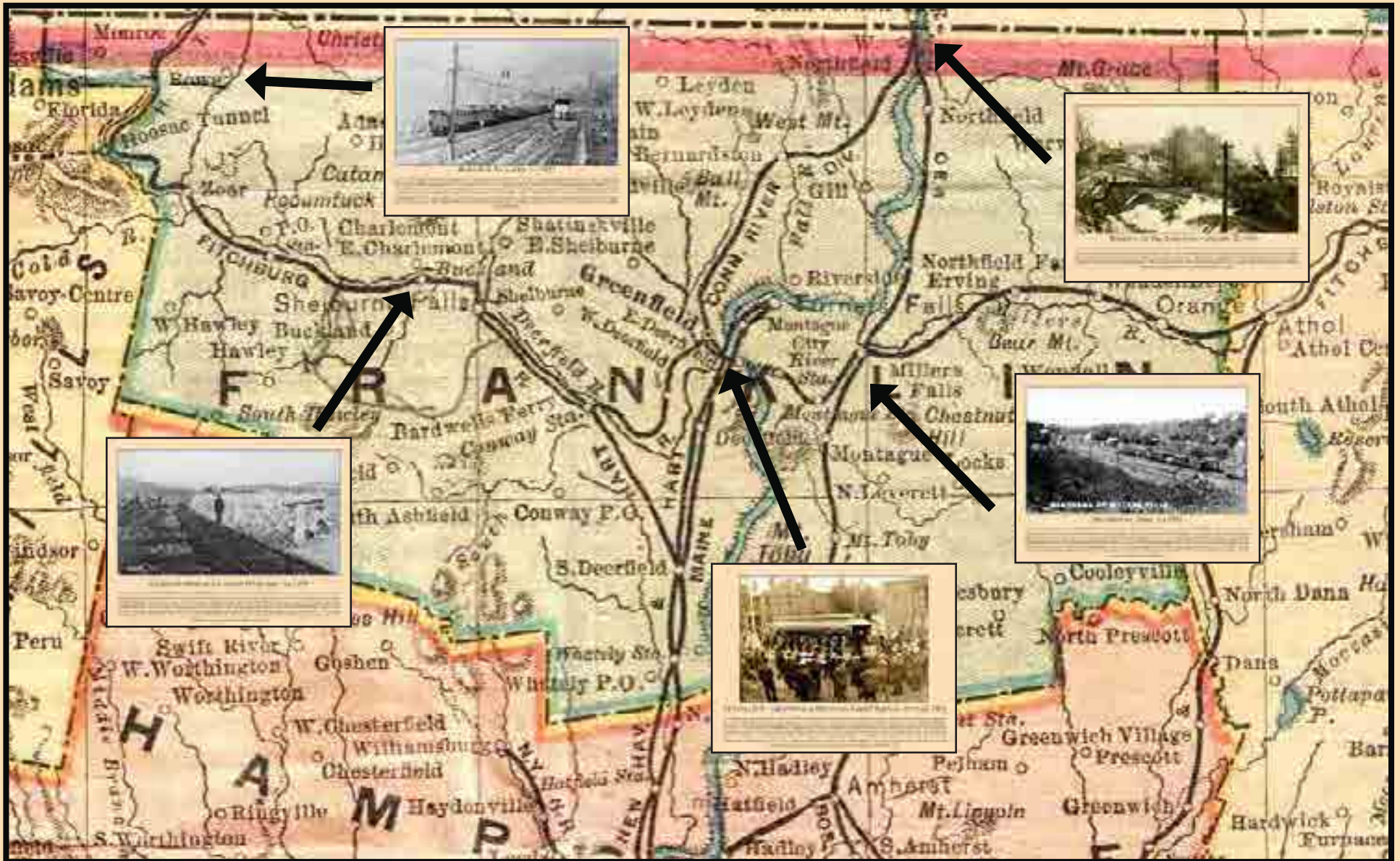
January '24

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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
3	4	5 	6	7 Hanukkah begins	8	9
10	11	12 	13	14	15	16
17	18	19 	20	21 First Day of Winter	22	23
24	25 Christmas Day	26 	27	28	29	30
31 New Year's Eve		Notes				

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.

January 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
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February 2023						
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March 2023						
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April 2023						
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May 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

June 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

July 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

September 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

October 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

November 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

December 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Historic Railroad Scenes - 2023 Calendar Franklin County, Massachusetts

Who are these men? It seems likely that some of these stout fellows have descendants still living in the area. Yes? If anyone can help with names - or even guesses - please email aldenfreyer@gmail.com. Please reference the Calendar page.



COVER: GREENFIELD ROUNDHOUSE AT OLIVE STREET CA 1910

The late Peter Miller, who provided the majority of the photos we use, insisted this was the Olive Street B&M RR Roundhouse. Because of space constraints, I have thought this is more likely the roundhouse at Coombs Avenue. The 593 was a Schenectady ten wheeler built on July 1st, 1904. Built on the same date, were sister locomotives 913 and 934, so this may be either of those. The turntable was powered by compressed air from the locomotives. The man second from the left on the ground has his hand on the locking mechanism that secured the movable rails to the ground rails. Regardless of the location, this is a fine study of hardworking men. The tall man fifth from the right was a Mr. Newnan, who may have provided the photograph.



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



Railroad history researched and provided by Alden Dreyer, Shelburne, Massachusetts, aldenfreyer@gmail.com
Most photographs are from the collection of the late Peter S. Miller. We lost Peter in 2021 and we miss him. Peter's enthusiasm for local history was indispensable to the publishing of the Franklin County Railroad Calendars since 2008.

Calendar website: www.whist.com/calendars/railfranklin

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