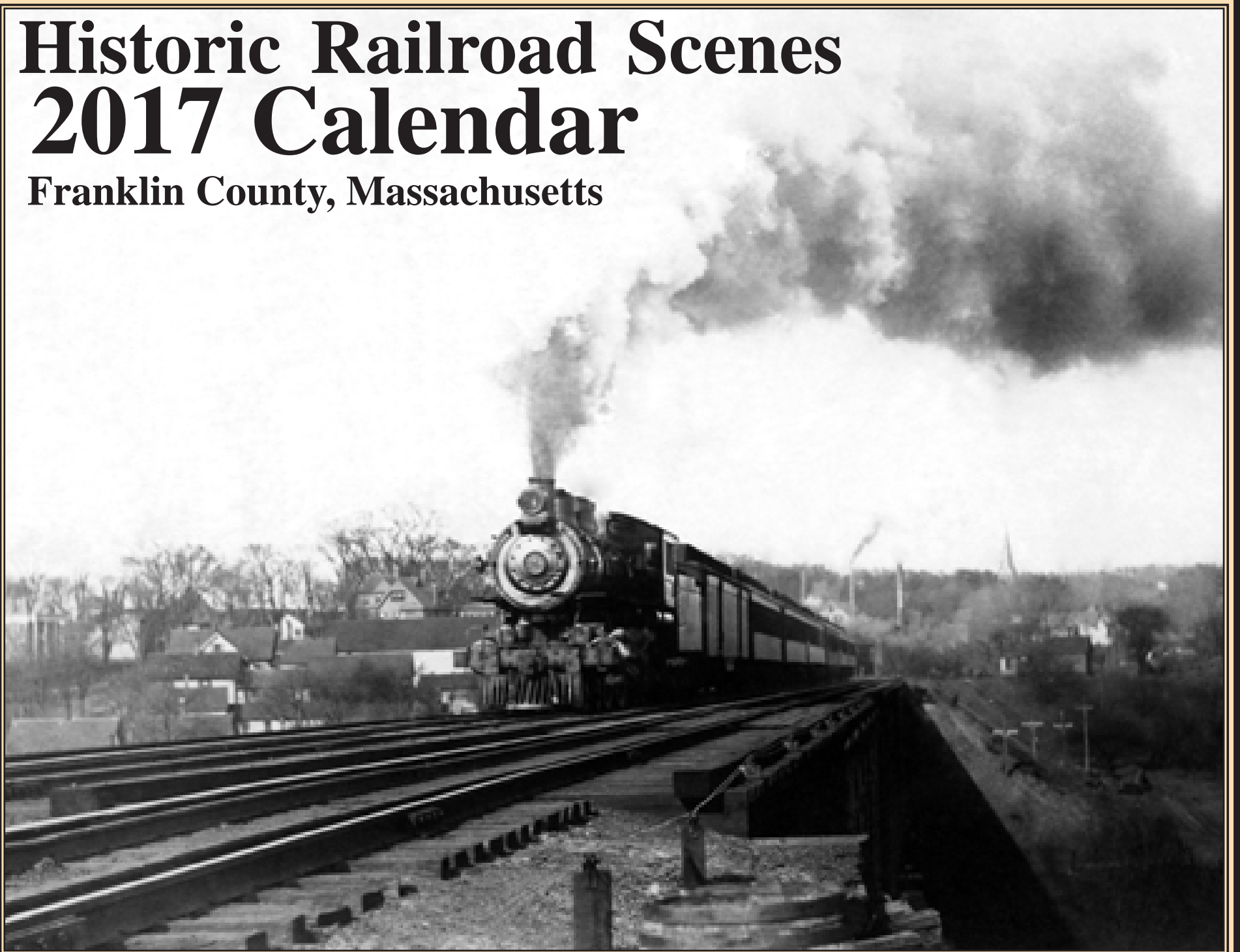


Historic Railroad Scenes 2017 Calendar

Franklin County, Massachusetts





SOUTH VERNON JUNCTION, VERMONT - CA 1910

So why do we have a Vermont photograph in a Franklin County calendar? One, the photographer was nearly standing on the border. Two, the station served many more folks going and coming from Massachusetts than those from Vermont. The Central Vermont RR tracks are on the left, the Boston and Maine RR on the right. The view is facing north. These two companies, and their successors, never did get along as they fought over Connecticut River Valley traffic. At least one case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. The battle continues today as the New England Central and Pan Am Railways duke it out with the U.S. Government as referee. In 1908, there were seven passenger trains each way on the CV side. On the B&M, three trains daily except Sunday to Keene. Now all the tracks and structures are gone except for a single upgraded mainline belonging to the New England Central (left). Two Amtrak and about four freight trains daily keep the rails polished.

JANUARY 2017

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EAST DEERFIELD YARD WRECK - CA. 1900

Fascinating, but the photographer, location and date are unknown, and no names or numbers are legible on the rolling stock. However, that mill looked familiar to me. Samuel Stearns Sprague was born 3 July 1819 and settled in Providence. His business interests morphed into grain handling and he had the mill shown built in the spring of 1890. Sprague died on 11 Nov. 1896 and his business soon did the same. The mill burned in 1903 after being vacant for 5 years. The loss was \$50,000, with no insurance, according to the *The Grain Dealers Journal*. The building near the locomotive stack matches the profile of the East Deerfield Yard office, which would put this location at the east end of the yard, not the west end as I would have expected. It may well be a different building. The locomotive appears to be a Fitchburg RR Standard 4-4-0 and would probably soon be working again. The baggage car would also probably be repaired. Note the coupler with the slot for a link as railways in this era transitioned to automatic couplers per a federal mandate.

FEBRUARY 2017

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ORANGE DEPOT - CA 1955

Orange may well be “The Friendly Town”, but finding out anything about its depot is an exercise in frustration. Even this fuzzy photo has to be labeled as “Best Available”. The immaculate track and Railway Express Agency truck suggest 1955 to me. The station then was still selling tickets and serving about 10 passenger trains daily. Things would change rapidly. Patrick McGinnis became B&M President in 1956 and cut crosstie change outs from 100,000 a year to less than 10,000. Traditional trains were replaced with Budd Rail Diesel cars. As of 24 April 1960, passenger trains were just a memory here as services were cut back to Fitchburg. The depot was a classic 1880’s era with living space for the agent and his family upstairs. The lack of train order blades indicates the railroad no longer found Orange to be operationally important. The Centralized Traffic Control system started just a few miles east of here and ended in East Fitchburg. When, or in what manner, the depot disappeared I do not know. The Hampden Brewing Co. closed in 1957.

MARCH 2017

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CHEAPSIDE BRIDGE - GREENFIELD - 1940

Berkshire-type Eng 4012, a 2-8-4 built in Ohio by the Lima Locomotive Works in May 1928, appears to be working unusually hard heading south over the Deerfield River at Cheapside. Although this may be just an ordinary Connecticut River day freight, it also could be a detour. Following the flood of 1936, B&M trains detoured over the Boston & Albany line between Springfield and Worcester for many weeks while washouts were being repaired. The double track bridge is a deck truss built in 1911 to replace an earlier single track iron bridge. Almost all rail bridges in Franklin County are deck trusses, or girder bridges, which are much preferred over through trusses. Those rarities can be viewed where the Cold River meets the Deerfield, or examined closely on the rail trail that runs from East Deerfield to Montague.

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WAITING FOR THE TRAIN - CHARLEMONT - CA. 1910

The train order semaphores on the station tell us this was after 1908. What is curious is that no horseless carriages are in the parking area. We are looking west and obviously a train is expected. Just an ordinary day in Charlemont, or is something special happening? Why the emphasis on the freight cars? Is that Buffalo, Rochester & Pittsburgh gondola filled with rotting hides to contrast with the ladies in their white dresses? Note the lack of tie plates on the main tracks and the way the rail is cutting into some of the ties. No stone ballast here, just plain gravel, that washed easily and created a lot of dust. Stone ballast began to appear on the Boston to Portland route in the 1920's and eventually was adopted for all B&M main lines. Charlemont had a telegrapher on duty 24/7 in this era, as did Sheburne Falls to the east and East Portal Tower to the west. Train order semaphores would be used to run trains against the current of traffic when needed.

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CEREMONY AT EAST DEERFIELD YARD FARM BUREAU - CA. 1952

It was a big day for Franklin County when the Farm Bureau Association opened their new poultry and dairy feed processing mill off McClelland Farm road in East Deerfield. An estimated 2,500 people showed up for free tours, ice cream, cookies, coffee, Hammond Organ music, door prizes and a dedication ceremony at 2:30 PM. The FBA started as a cooperative in 1921 for bulk purchasing of things farmers buy. In 1933, the first warehouse was opened in Waltham. More warehouses followed in South Weymouth, Lowell, and Worcester, with larger warehouses soon needed in Weymouth and Waltham. In 1949, the FBA began dealing in paints and fertilizers followed in 1951. Sales in 1951 reached \$2,740,000 and ground was broken that year for the state-of-the-art feed mill. The tracks serving the mill were designed so switching would not conflict with other movements in the busy yard. The FBA went out of business, or changed its name, the mill changed hands, but still milled grain into the 1970's. Since then, various small businesses have used the property. Plans to convert it to office space were seemingly derailed by a serious 2015 fire in the main structure.

JUNE 2017

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STEAM LOCOMOTIVE GOING WEST AT THE ZOAR CURVE - 1940

Zoar served as the main depot for Rowe. Hoosac Tunnel Station was closer to that hill town, but the road down Pelham Brook was much more user friendly, especially in winter. At least two trains each way daily stopped at Zoar. You could not buy a ticket, but you would find the waiting room open and heated in winter. What put Zoar on the map was the curve that presented a fabulous photo opportunity and the B&M used it for cover shots on their employees' magazine, both in the steam and diesel eras. Here we see a westbound Lima 4000, No.4014, tackling the .60% grade leaving the curve area that itself was of a lesser grade due to curve resistance. Perhaps 125 cars, likely 80% empties, are behind the Superpower machine, which left its pusher back at the Buckland Middle at the top of Shelburne Hill. The white plume is whistle exhaust. The two heavy wires on the left are the 480 volt lines that powered the signal system, while the cable on the right, supported by a messenger, contains all the wires to control that system. Each individual control needed its own wire back before the code system was invented.

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BEER CAR HEADED TO BOSTON - FALL 1905

Here we are 89 miles west of Boston crossing the Millers River from Wendell to Orange. The B&M crossed the Millers River seven times, and the Fitchburg RR line crossed it nine times. The engine looks like a generic 2-8-0 and the car on the headpin is an Anheuser-Busch Beer Car. That company was a pioneer in beer pasteurization, bottling, mechanical refrigeration and using its own fleet of freight cars. By 1905, the company probably had several thousand of these cars in service and was making about 1.5 million barrels of beer a year.

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A CIRCUS TRAIN ARRIVES IN GREENFIELD - 1935

Reportedly this is the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus founded in 1907 and at one time the 2nd largest circus in the USA after Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey. In fact, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey purchased this Circus in 1929, but due to the economics during the depression, it became the Hagenbeck-Wallace and Forepaugh-Sells Bros. Circus in 1935 and ceased operations in 1938. Circuses began using railroads for transport in the 1840's, and Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey still operate two huge trains in 2017, one of which visits New England's larger cities every year. The location of this photo puzzles me, but I think we are on the west side of Greenfield Farmers Cooperative Exchange up the hill from Deerfield Street. Most of the children in this photo would be into their 90's. Anyone recognize themselves?

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SOUTH END, GREENFIELD STATION PLATFORM - GREENFIELD MA - 1954

The location was no problem for this photo from my files, but I was delighted to have an exact date. Due to its exact composition, I suspect it was taken by a certain railroad friendly RECORDER photographer. A westbound (probably freight) headed to Mechanicville, approaches on the westward track while three railmen hold a conference. The two 3800 passenger motors are in the West Yard. Something is going on. A circus train? Camp train? Certainly it is that time of year for both. Normal passenger trains going in or out of Greenfield would need just one 2,000 horsepower 3800. The 3800 was built in September 1945 and retired in November 1959 when the B&M had little use for passenger engines. Between the locomotives is the Greenfield Farmers Cooperative Exchange, where I began buying feed and tools in 1965. Still do, but you won't find their current store on High Street in a railroad calendar.

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THOMAS MEMORIAL GOLF COURSE - TURNERS FALLS - CA. 1955

The Vermont & Massachusetts RR built a branch from East Greenfield to Turners Falls in 1871. Ten years later, the New Haven & Northampton RR built a second line that went from South Deerfield to Turners Falls passing through East Deerfield. Nearly a century later we are looking towards Turners Falls on the former NH&N, passing through the golf course. In 1925, the B&M bridge over the Connecticut River would no longer support a train, so the B&M began using the New Haven RR branch on a temporary basis. Around 1932 the New Haven ceased operating the branch and the B&M continued until sometime in 1980. Ironically a few months later, a Massachusetts DPU official did an investigation on how many trains a day, or week, were going to Turners Falls without realizing that the Staggers Act of 1980 had taken away the state's power to regulate railroad freight traffic. Here we have B&M RDC-2 No.6212 shortly before abandonment on an official inspection. The 6212 served as the B&M's "business train" since it was the only one of the company's 105 RDC's equipped with a kitchen. The 6212 burned in 1984.

NOVEMBER 2017

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ENGINE 421 & FRIENDS AT EAST DEERFIELD - 1906

This photograph was submitted by Robert Maloy of Shelburne, whose father was a well known career B&M man (“Bill” Maloy of Camp Shelloy fame on Brook Road in Shelburne). Here we have Tom Miller, Mart Scalon, Jack O’Brien (Maloy’s grandfather), Tard Wilson, Danny Joy and Bill Downing posing near the coal shed at East Deerfield. I believe, at the time, this was at the east end of the yard. Railroading is a filthy business, less so now than then. Tom Miller appears to be a foreman, perhaps in the roundhouse, the others all appear to be workers involved in feeding and fixing steam locomotives judging by their outfits. Perhaps only coal miners and oil well drillers could get dirtier. B&M 0-6-0 switcher No.421 was built in Manchester NH in April 1913 and scrapped in April 1952. Note the unusual slope-back tender. The photograph is labeled “Year 1906”. Perhaps 1916 was meant. B&M caboose No.4003 was built in company shops in Lyndonville VT in 1905, modified in 1930 and in use until 1960. It sported a wide monitor, a steel center sill, composite iron and wood trucks and was 34 feet long.

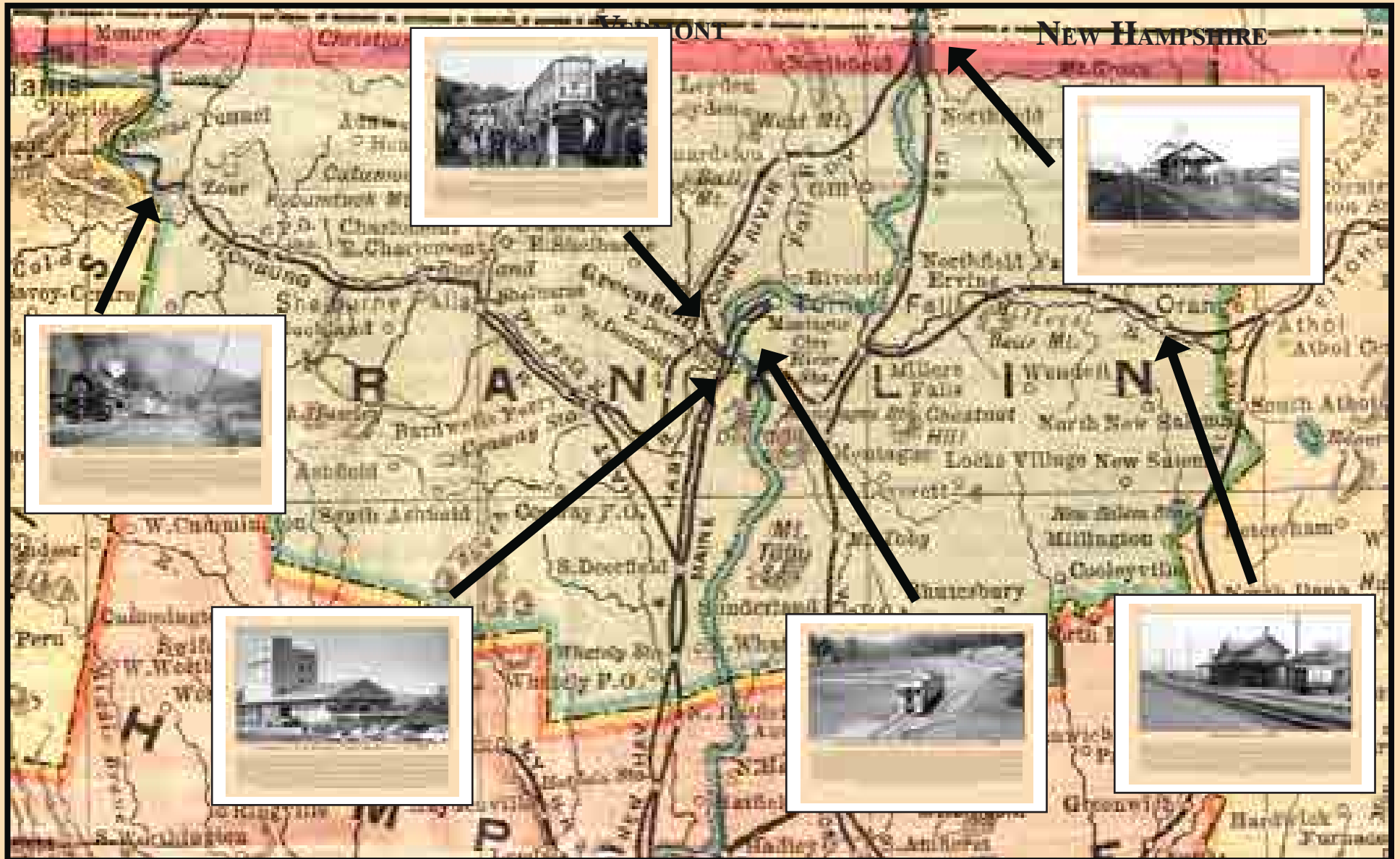
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Pearl Harbor
Remembrance Day

Christmas

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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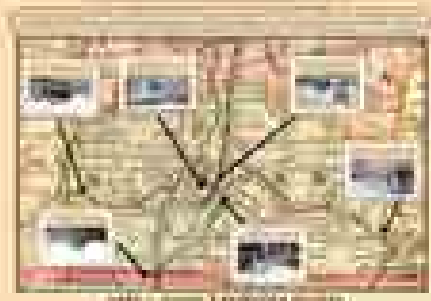
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Historic Railroad Scenes - 2017 Calendar Franklin County, Massachusetts



Cover: GREEN RIVER BRIDGE IN GREENFIELD CA. 1910

Engine 972 leads a westbound passenger train over the Green River bridge, now commonly known as the Dunkin Donuts bridge. The bridge was built in 1881, replaced in 1912 and has served well with just one track for decades. The water barrel was a necessity on all bridges as overheated bearings on freight cars, as well as sparks from brakes and locomotives, could set bridge timbers on fire with disastrous results. The two wires running across the bridge are curious. All other wires would be on the pole line(s) below the bridge. Eng 972 was a 4-4-0 Standard built in Manchester NH in April 1904 and scrapped in February 1935.



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

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

Photograph descriptions courtesy of Alden Dreyer, aldendreyer@gmail.com

Railroad history researched and provided by Alden Dreyer, Shelburne, Massachusetts. Photographs courtesy of Peter S. Miller, Greenfield, Massachusetts.

