

# PENDRAGON

Vol. VI · Number 1 The Newsletter of the Unadilla Valley Railway Society & Museum · PO Box 751, New Berlin, NY 13411

Winter 2002

## News & Notes

### Winter Meetings

Our usual winter meetings feature a video. Our latest meeting offered Mike Holdridge as speaker along with his video on the "WAG." Unfortunately, the evening of this meeting was also the middle of a blizzard, so we had to cancel. Mr. Holdridge has agreed to re-schedule his presentation for another month, but he could not promise an exact date. Therefore, any of the next few months might be the one when we get this treat. Don't be the one to miss it.

A reminder: Our meetings are at 7:00 p.m. the first Monday of each month unless that date is a holiday, in which case the meeting is the second Monday. Our April meeting will be on the 8th.

### Stewart's Shops Supports Us

Stewart's Shops has generously donated \$210 to the Society for the purchase of display cases for our museum.

### UVRS on the Web

The Unadilla Valley Railway Society's home page on the World Wide Web can be found at [www.trainweb.org/uvrs/index.html](http://www.trainweb.org/uvrs/index.html). On the site are articles about area railroads and the mission of the UVRS museum, and an order form for Fred Pugh's book "Days Along the Buckwheat and Dandelion." There are also lots of links to other railroad sites.

### Hats On!

If you haven't yet purchased your UVRS hat, now's a great time to catch up. The "Salzberg Orange" beauties are sold at every Society meeting for \$6.00 each, or you can send \$6.00 plus \$1.00 postage to UVRS Hats, P.O. Box 751, New Berlin NY 13411.



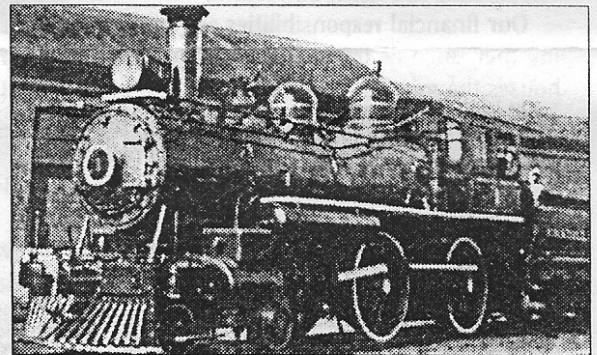
### Items for Publication

If you have an item or photo you would like to submit for publication, write to The Editor, UV Railway Society and Museum, PO Box 751, New Berlin NY 13411.

## RAILWAY HISTORY

# Railway's Origins Recounted Upon Final Run in 1960

*[This article is excerpted from a New Berlin Gazette account of the history of the Unadilla Valley Railway that was published Sept. 22, 1960, after the railway's final run on Saturday, Sept. 17. The Gazette used UVRR scrap-books as sources for the article. Incidentally, copies of the Gazette sold for 10 cents at that time, and subscriptions for the weekly were \$3 per year.—Ed.]*



Engine No. 1, The "Pendragon"

In the early 1890s more and more public demand for a railroad was voiced. Arrangements were made to hold a public meeting in Leonardsville in September 1891 for the people living along the line of the proposed road. Deep interest was shown by the large number of people who gathered.

The following proposition was agreed upon: "The people of the valley will secure the right of way at a cost not to exceed \$35,000..." Suitable terminals at New Berlin and Bridgewater; depots at Leonardsville, Unadilla Forks, West Edmeston, and South Edmeston; and side tracks between Sweets and Pages were decided upon.

Early in 1892 committees were named to obtain subscriptions from area residents. The people of the valley raised \$22,000 and Utica city was asked to subscribe for the balance. G.M. Rustling was named contractor for the railroad.

Italian immigrant laborers were hired as construction crew. At various times during the building, from 60 to 150 Italians worked along the right-of-way. They lived in labor camps set up at the job and, being a rather independent lot, many times decided not to work "because it was too hot, too cold, too wet, or too dry."

In spite of labor difficulties, a construc-

tion train was put on the railroad the week of November 1, 1892 and the first sections of track were laid. Officials of the Utica and Unadilla Valley Railroad Company made an inspection of the line in May 1893.

Work began with renewed vigor in April 1894 after a very slow winter when rumors were circulated that the road had been abandoned because of the business depression. The line at this time was completed five miles from Bridgewater to Leonardsville and the heavier part of the excavating and filling-in had been done on the balance of the line.

Newspapers in 1894 referred to the railroad as the "Dilly-Dally" Railroad because in four years of planning and construction, only nine miles of the 19-mile length had been completed.

On October 15, 1894, the official opening of the route from West Edmeston (then known as "Coon Town") to Bridgewater took place amid wild cheers, cannons' roar, and band music. Two trains each way daily except Sundays were scheduled. Tickets for the first ride were offered at auction and brought sums up to \$20 each.

The first mail transported on the local train was carried by Fred Palmer. The first engine purchased for use by the railroad was called "Pendragon."

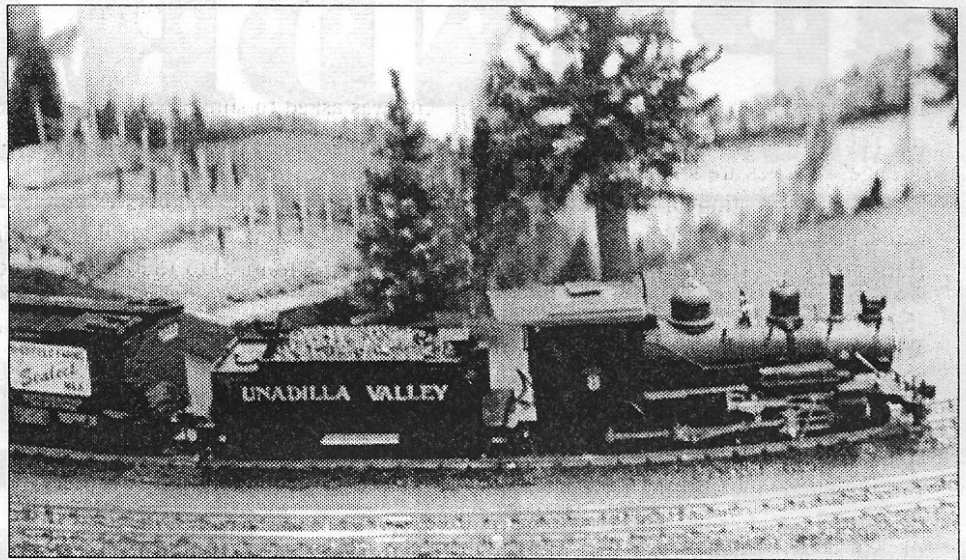
## Society Needs a "Shot in the Arm"

We had a meeting of the officers of the Unadilla Valley Railway Society Monday evening, January 14.

Several topics of interest to the membership were discussed. One of the most urgent was that though we had had a high of 83 members less than a year ago, there has been a dramatic free-fall in non-renewals so that our revenue has taken a nosedive.

Our financial responsibilities are still being met, such as taxes on the depot which houses the museum (we don't hold the title yet), electric, water rent, heating oil, and insurance. We need a "shot in the arm" of new members to replace those who have died or lost interest.

If any one of you has an idea that might spark interest in the society to increase attendance and participation, please contact me, Sam Senn, at P.O. Box 243, New Berlin,



One of our members, Gordon Davis of Liverpool, sent us this photo. It is a Bachman 10th Anniversary ten-wheeler that he had custom weathered and lettered.

NY 13411, or call me by phone at 607-847-8137.

I want to remind you that if any one of you have any memorabilia concerning the Unadilla Valley Railway (or any other railroad) that you would like to either donate or loan

to the museum, please contact me or the society at our regular address.

Let me invite you to come and see what we already have at our museum. You may be pleasantly surprised.

—SAMUEL SENN

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