

PENDRAGON

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The Newsletter of the Unadilla Valley Railway Society & Museum · PO Box 751, New Berlin, NY 13411

Fall 2003

News & Notes

New Financing

As the Pendragon is being prepared, your officers have been negotiating a mortgage to pay off the balance of the land contract we have been paying for the purchase of the depot housing our museum. The benefactor who has been paying for it each month has told us he can no longer do this.

By switching to a mortgage, we can reduce the size of the payments to a figure we can more easily handle. The interest rate will be lower, and we can take the property off the tax roll.

Hopefully, by the time you read this we will already have paid off the land contract, and the building will be ours, complete with mortgage.

—GEORGE WOLFANGLE
Vice President

Notes from the Minutes

Trustees Meeting, Oct. 13, 2003

■ Letter received from Borden Davis from Liverpool concerning the registration with "Model Railroad Magazine" for free advertisement.

■ We need to make other arrangements in order to meet the monthly payments on the museum building. Will possibly check with bank for a loan.

■ Financial report: Checking acct. \$1050.03. Sch. 1 tax acct. \$232.13

■ Officers discussed investing a larger amount in a money market account.

■ No new members. Remind lapsed members to renew membership.

■ Forms are being completed for annual report to the Board of Regents.

■ Winter weather has knocked the chimney askew along with two boards that need replacing.

A Note to Contributors

The Unadilla Valley Railway Museum & Society is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization chartered by the New York State Board of Regents.

RAILWAY HISTORY

A One-Man Fantrip On the UV Railway

[This article is excerpted from a colorful account of a railfan's excursion on the UV. This story was published in the July 1942 issue of Railroad Magazine. —Ed.]

BY HENRY P. EIGHMEY

Ever since wartime restrictions set the block against fantrips on Class I railroads, I have been wondering where we hobbyists could find an outlet for our enthusiasm. One solution to my problem was the Unadilla Valley Railway, a standard-gage pike which carries freight between New Berlin and Bridgewater in upper New York State. Living at Kingston, N.Y., not far from this twenty-mile line, I was naturally curious to learn more about it. Accordingly, I got in touch with E.H. Cook, the Superintendent of Motive Power, and obtained his permission to ride an engine cab.

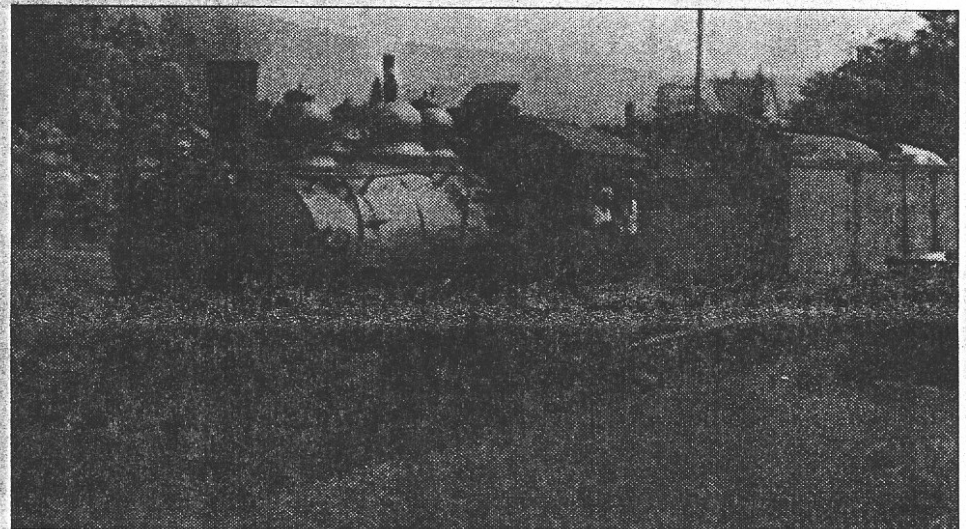
A two-story frame structure houses the Unadilla's business office. Behind it are a four-stall engine-house, a freight depot and several smaller buildings, as well as the sidings which

make up the yard. At the engine-house I came across No. 1, an old American type, on a track leading to the main line. Smoke was rising lazily from her high stack. However, she was not going anywhere at that time. She was just being kept steamed up for use in case of failure of other motive power. In the winter, though, I learned later, this little 4-4-0 does active duty in bucking snow.

Then I saw No. 4, a 2-6-2 type, receiving a complete overhauling; and No. 5, another Prairie type, with steam up, probably ready to haul a train. On a siding outside the engine-house stood the company's only rolling stock—two four-wheeled cabooses, a snow-plow, several work cars, and a number of weather-beaten open-end coaches, relics of the passenger service which the Unadilla Valley boasted in happier days. I queried an engine wiper in the roundhouse as to the schedule.

"We make two round trips a day," he replied. "One in early morning, the other in late afternoon."

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No. 5, the author's ride for a unique railfan excursion, pulling a freight train.

► *Continued from front page*

I elected to ride the cab in the later run, and was told to be on hand about four o'clock the next day. When I arrived, No. 5 had been moved out into the yard, ready for the run. George Moore, the fireman, confided that we would start for Bridgewater, the other end of the line, as soon as a New York, Ontario & Western train pulled in with two milk cars.

Engineer Fred Clark beckoned to me to climb into the cab. We eased out onto the train, coupled on one of the old cabooses, and backed down toward a creamery which adjoins the yard. Here we kicked the caboose into a siding while we picked up several empties. Then we backed down to the NYO&W for the milk cars. At length we highballed out of New Berlin yard with ten cars and the caboose at our tail. This is about the average size train on the UV. Four years ago, the fireman disclosed, they chalked up a record by running a drag of twenty-one cars; nowadays the total seldom exceeds a dozen.

Engineer Clark decided we'd have to roll her if we wanted to connect with the usual Lackawanna train at the terminus. Gathering speed, we passed the last of the sun-bleached

passenger cars beside the track and clattered over the switches of the wye which was used for turning locomotives at New Berlin. The freight cars were now banging along behind the little 2-6-2, and I was bumping up and down in the fireman's seat to the sway of the low-wheeled locomotive. During the few brief spells when my equilibrium was my own I managed to look out the cab window. Although the right-of-way was somewhat overgrown with weeds, I noticed that the lightweight rails were in pretty fair shape, with occasional evidences of recent tie replacements and even a few new concrete culverts.

Our first stop was at South Edmeston, about five miles out, where three of the Unadilla's customers are located—a feed and grain dealer, the cheese works and a big chicken farm. The brakemen deftly cut in two cars from the cheese plant, but neglected to set out two loads we had for the same company.

"We're in too much of a hurry," Fred Clark explained. "We'll drop them off on the return trip."

Six miles further on, at West Edmeston, we halted to fill the tank with water and pick up an empty boxcar. We whizzed past the next station, River Forks, and arrived at Bridge-

water in time for the meet with the Lackawanna freight. Here we cut the engine loose, backed her down a siding until the caboose was on the pilot of No. 5, and pushed the train onto the DL&W tracks. The engine was then turned around on a wye, and the brakemen coupled her onto nine cars which the Lackawanna had brought for the UV.

As we steamed out of Bridgewater a bright moon was shedding romance on the shadowy trees and glistening stream of the Unadilla Valley. We dropped a boxcar and a gondola of coal at Leonardsville, then proceeded to South Edmeston to deliver the two cars which had made a round trip. It was about eight o'clock when the forms of the old passenger cars poking out from the brush along the right-of-way informed me that the trip was almost over.

The train crew then did their last duties of the night, shoving cars on a siding, and turned the locomotive on the wye and placed her in charge of the engine-house mechanic. The men lost no time in setting off eagerly for their homes, but I lingered awhile in the vicinity of the yards, meditating on the thrills I had enjoyed on my one-man fantrip over the Unadilla Valley Railway.

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