MANCHESTER, N.H.

Richard K. Hurst
with special appreciation to Gary L. Webster

BIG LEAGUE MAIN LINE STEAM returned to Manchester in the fall of 1973, using former Nickel Plate Road 2-8-4 759 operated under Steamtown auspices. On Saturday, October 27 it ran from North Station, Boston to White River Jct. over the B&M, thence from there to Montpelier Jct. over the Central Vermont. The return trip back to Boston was made on Sunday, October 28.

In anticipation of the major track re-location project set for 1975, the railroad carried out a plant rationalization program in Manchester during the summer of 1974. Many interlocked switches became hand throw, with their corresponding signals retired. Effective at 10:01am, Friday, September 27, 1974, the Manchester Train Order Signal was retired from service, but the mast was never removed. It still stands today, surrounded by brush and overgrowth as a reminder of Manchester's railroad past!

Bulletin Order NE-150, dated October 8, 1974, lays out the following details: "Manchester, N.H.- Effective 7:01am Wednesday, October 9, 1974 and continuing until completed, signal control machine (in MA Tower) will be transferred to Billerica Dispatchers Office." The next morning, spring switch #S5 laying at the south end of the Southward Passing Track and dwarf signal LD-4 governing southward operations over the spring switch were retired and removed.

Thus the interlockings at Tie Plant, Merrimack, Reeds Ferry, S. Manchester, Manchester, Amoskeag, Martins North, Hooksett South, and Bow would now be remotely controlled by the train dispatcher in North Billerica, Mass. Rheal Bouchard was one of the last Train Directors to work the tower.

Preamble Express, the forerunner of the *American Freedom Train*, visited Manchester on July 9, 1974. The consist was Delaware & Hudson U25B 2312 and four coaches numbered 1, 2, 3, and 4, which became *Freedom Train* cars in 1975.

The *American Freedom Train* arrived in Manchester from White River Jct. late in the day on April 13, 1975 behind steam, with ex-Reading 4-8-4 2101 as the motive power. The train would be on display at Manchester April 14 and 15, parked on the northbound track of the New Hampshire main line by the Bridge St. overhead bridge. It departed the city for Portland, Me. on April 16. This special train was at the beginning of a two-year cross-country journey in celebration of the nation's bicentennial. The baggage cars on the special, fitted with historical displays featuring key milestones in the country's history, were opened to visitors.

A major urban renewal project was undertaken in the city of Manchester in the early-to-mid-1970's. This would first see the removal of accumulated material from the 4800-foot upper canal, dropping 140,000 yards of special fill into the 19-foot-deep canal, relocation of the double-track B&M mainline onto a new single-track right-of-way over the canal's footprint, and, finally, the widening of Canal Street as a major thoroughfare. One of the first things to be done was to drain the water from the upper canal. This was underway by April, 1971. The lower canal was also later drained and filled in.

The railroad's scope of work as detailed in a B&M internal document, dated April 29, 1974, shows the following: the area of construction is between the railroad's Manchester Yard Office to the south, running northerly to the Chauncey Avenue Crossing, which was north of Amoskeag station. The work, under the auspices of the Manchester Housing Authority, continued into 1975 and 1976 (see *B&M Bulletin* v. XXVIII, no.1, pp. 28-31).

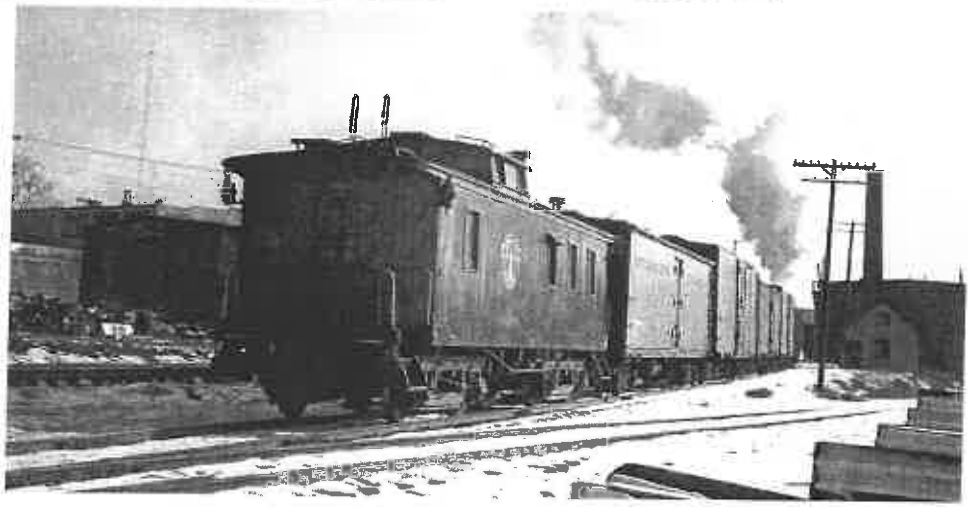
This project entailed: retiring the existing northbound main and existing southbound main, essentially, between Manchester Interlocking and Amoskeag, extending the northbound main, installing new mainline track on a new alignment on the filled-in upper canal bed, installing a new #20 connection with southbound to northbound and retiring old connection, installing new signalization, installing seven new grade crossings with AHCP (automatic highway crossing protection), widening Granite St. and relocating AHCP, retiring four crossings, retiring the upper canal track, and relocating Amoskeag interlocking to a new location south of its original site, hence its new name, Amoskeag South.

The railroad ran out the ties and jointed rail onto the filled upper canal, dumped stone, surfaced and lined it, and connected it at both ends to the southward main. The track was now ready to receive the strings of continuous welded rail off the rail train.

Thirty-nine-foot 115-lb. rails from Bethlehem Steel had been welded at the B&M's North Billerica, Mass. rail welding plant. Some 27 sections would be welded together into strings 1,053 feet long, and rolled onto a 26-car train specially adapted to move welded rail. On May 14, 1975, the rail train dropped the welded rail in place on the new line.

Both photos, Dwight A. Smith

Mogul 1496 departs Manchester, above, with the Lawrence local in January, 1953. Once the local clears, G-11-b 442 will go back to work. The Carpenter Hotel looms in the background, to the right of the signal mast. The signal survived for decades, though Manchester's skyline has changed drastically over the past 60 years.
Right, buggy 104175 brings up the rear of another Lawrence local that same month, this time hauled by B-15 1388.



The *New Hampshire Sunday News* ran a Maurice McQuillen piece in the issue of May 18, 1975, describing this activity. A photo of GP9 1723 and the rail train at the switch from the southbound main to the new single-track line accompanies the article.

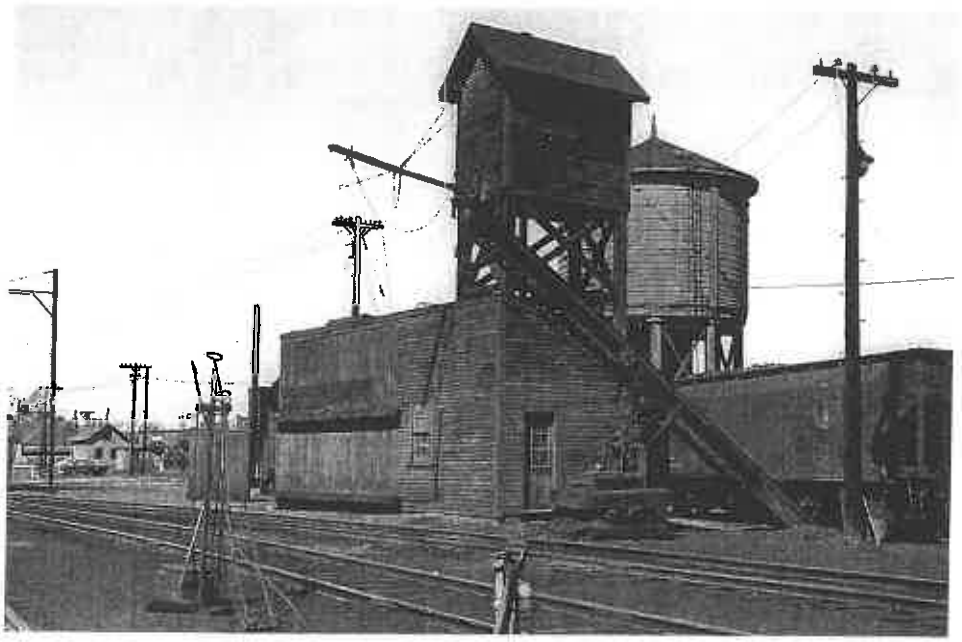
Effective at 0801 hours, Monday, September 8, 1975, Bulletin Order B-115 put the new alignment into service. It generally took the existing northward and southward main tracks between Manchester Interlocking and Amoskeag Interlocking out of service. A portion of the former northward main track between Manchester and a point 400 feet north was designated as "other than main track."

A new single main track was put into service between Manchester Interlocking and Amoskeag Interlocking, using portions of the former southward main track and the newly-constructed track. A new interlocking designated Amoskeag South at MP 56.9 was put into service. This work had the effect of single-tracking the railroad between Manchester Interlocking and Amoskeag South.

A photo of the "first freight train in 25 years" to run all the way up Commercial Street in the Amoskeag Millyard appeared in an undated article in the *Union Leader*, but believed to be about 1975. Shown were flat cars carrying 20-foot long sections of concrete pipe eight feet in diameter to be used for a new storm drain in the Christian Brook area of Manchester. The pipe was manufactured in Maryland and rode the rails to Manchester. This work was part of the Amoskeag Millyard Urban Renewal Project.

At a March 5, 1976 meeting with the B&M, Mayor Stanton requested the railroad repair the Lower Millyard road, known as Commercial St., within the bounds of its 17-foot right-of- way and around all connections (switches). Complaints, from millyard workers and truckers, over exposed railroad track, ruts, and potholes on Commercial Street prompted the Mayor's request.

Actually, the railroad had attempted to abandon this millyard track in 1973. But it would have required Habitant Soup to take its shipments at the public delivery facilities in the yard off Elm Street and truck them in. At that time the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission wanted to keep rail service going here, and the B&M backed off.



Dwight Smith snapped this view of the Manchester steam locomotive facilities in 1953. With the passenger depot northward in the background, the B&M provided for water, sand, coal, and ashes at this simple installation, by this date mostly servicing yard and local power, as N.H. Div. mainline service had been largely dieselized.

But here was an opportunity to avoid spending funds which would bring no benefit to the railroad. A meeting of the B&M's engineering, transportation, marketing, and real estate people, working with the Manchester Housing Authority, which oversaw the Amoskeag Urban Renewal Project, devised a plan acceptable to all parties to remove the rails from Commercial Street back to the south side of Granite Street.

This would mean cancellation of a sidetrack agreement with Public Service Company of New Hampshire (PSNH) at the very north end of the millyard, which used to receive coal at its former Amoskeag power plant. At some point, some track had been removed at Bridge Street which effectively blocked any service. A sidetrack agreement with Pandora Sweaters (Michael Schwer Realty Corporation) would also have to be cancelled.

In a first step of track removal by the B&M, Bulletin B-160 dated September 17, 1976 took the track to the Lower Millyard, Commercial St., Manchester, out of service from a point 200 feet north of switch to Habitant Soup to end of track. Habitant was located about at Stark Street. It was a start.

In a *Union Leader* article for which we have no date, it is reported that the railroad "this weekend is making its last Commercial Street siding delivery to Habitant Soup Company. After the last two cars are unloaded and hauled away, the B&M will abandon the siding, which meanders back and forth across Commercial Street." Thus the railroad would now be cut back to the south side of Granite Street.

On June 12, 1978, the Bow unit coal train carried what was believed to be the heaviest load ever on the B&M: 114 loaded 100-ton coal hoppers. The train had B&M units 208 and 302 and Conrail units 8179, 2293, 2721, and 2911 on the point, and B&M 1744, 1716, and 1745 as helpers on the rear.

On the afternoon of April 15, 1982, northbound loaded coal train UB52C derailed 19 cars of coal at Eve St. in the north end of Manchester. A rash of Bow unit coal train derailments prompted the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission to investigate and a hearing was held on August 16, 1982. There were six New Hampshire derailments as follows: June 5, 1976, 17 cars; June 28, 1978, 8 cars; May 22, 1978, 6 cars; April 12, 1981, 9 cars; April 15, 1982, 19 cars; and August 16, 1982, 12 cars. All of these derailments occurred in the about ten-mile stretch between Manchester and Hooksett. Two were caused by broken rails, two by equipment failure, one by a sun kink, and the other undetermined at the time.

The B&M proved that their inspections exceeded FRA regulations and the chief FRA track inspector for Region 1 (all of New England, New York, and New Jersey) agreed. He noted that the Bow coal train was the most heavily inspected unit train in his region. All parties agreed that the accident record was high. There had been other derailments of the trains with two at Royalston, three at Ayer, and seven at Mechanicville.

On January 14, 1985, Guilford leased to the New England Southern Railroad (NEGS) its railroad between Penacook, Concord, and Manchester. The lease also included a portion of the former Claremont & Concord within Concord's city limits. New England Southern had been operating the ex-B&M White Mountain Branch under a contract with the State of New Hampshire. It would now handle all switching in Concord and the territory between Manchester and Concord, but it would not switch Manchester proper. Guilford would continue performing that function.

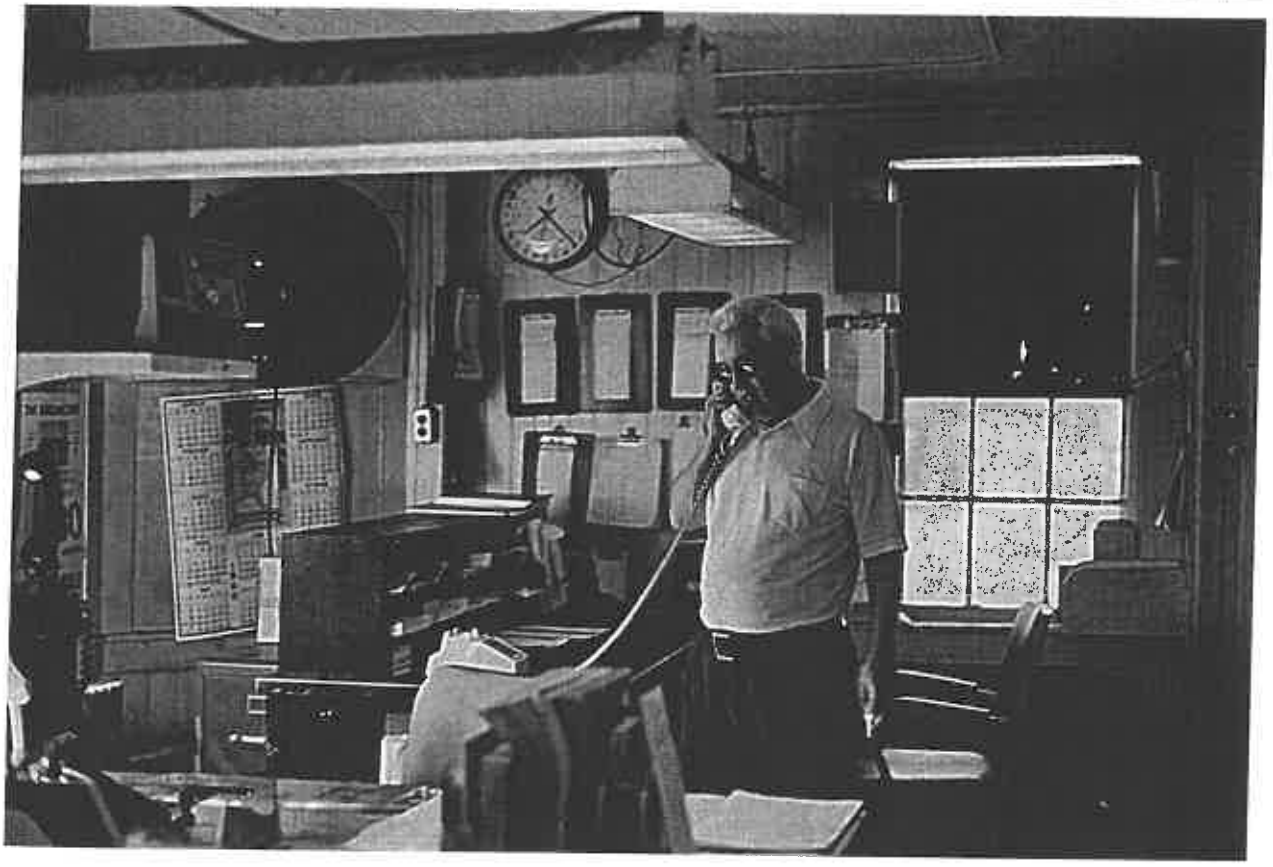
It would not be until July 14, 1985 that the first NEGS train would operate to Manchester, this with leased Maine Central Geep 581. The Guilford-operated Bow coal train would, of course, continue to operate over this line. After 1986, the former Concord Tower housed NEGS operations.

Manchester became the new interchange point between the two roads. At startup, Ledges yard, south of the tower on the east side of the main tracks, was the designated interchange location. The interchange point changed over the years to accommodate various track retirements. To the end of NEGS service, the remnant of the old northbound main, south of Granite Street to the former Manchester interlocking, was the interchange track.

During the week of June 18, 1987, the brick railroad building once part of the enginehouse complex was demolished by the Jones Wrecking Co. This was the last standing building in

B&M Yardmaster Arthur Lynch, right, presided over Manchester's freight operations for many years, and his Yard Office was the center of activity after the closure of MA Tower.
Below, Mr. Lynch is seen at work one last time, on his retirement day, June 30, 1982. The office was torn down almost exactly four years later, June 26, 1986.

Both photos, Richard Anderson



The New Hampshire passenger service experiment was a colorful addition to Manchester's rail scene. Above, British Leyland railbus LEV1 heads north at Granite Street, Manchester, on a test run, January 28, 1980. Ostensibly the reason for the MBTA trial service to New Hampshire, this vehicle was supplanted by a larger version, LEV2, when revenue service began. LEV2 was painted white, with Federal Railway Administration, US DOT, and New Hampshire commuter rail authority logos. It's service life was cut short when the railbus suffered a fatal collision with a car at a South Manchester crossing. Below, an earlier test train, using conventional equipment, scouted out the line on May 3, 1979, prior to the reintroduction of service north of Lowell, Mass. Shiny clean MBTA F10 1103 was living up to its "Easter Egg" nickname.

Both photos, Gary Webster

Gary Webster photo

Train #1032, above, heads south after its Manchester stop on August 2, 1980, with the F40PH/ Pullman coach consists typical of the service. The long-standing wooden Manchester Yard Office can be seen to the far left. The weekend trains were timed for the casual traveler, unlike the weekday trains which left Concord in the 5:am hour. As seen here, the Manchester platform was located immediately north of the Granite Street crossing, with little more than a curb built of railroad ties, and a simple sign, right, to mark the location.

Richard Anderson photo

Gary Webster photo

Manchester, Passengers and Pigs: Above, train #32 heads south through Manchester's Millyard District on a lovely May 20, 1980 morning. Though the T usually assigned the newer F40PH locomotives and Pullman coaches to the New Hampshire trains, depowered RDC's hauled by B&M Geeps were also common. Unfortunately, the healthy five-car consist is more reflective of the heavy passenger loads from Lowell, Mass. and southward, rather than high demand from New Hampshire riders. The service ended with the last evening northbound on February 28, 1981.

Illustrating the vibrancy of the freight scene in Manchester at the start of the Eighties, the Manchester Switcher, below, B&M 1567 this day, handles TOFC business for Manchester on January 23, 1981. With the departure of the passenger trains, and the arrival of Guilford, it is startling how quickly Manchester was downgraded as a source of railroad traffic. Soon there will no longer be a need for a switcher here.

Richard Anderson photo

the yard and had been gutted by fire two years previously. This left only the two wood-frame section houses at the north end of the yard. One was intact, while the other one was gutted by fire in May of that year. They were both ultimately removed.

Early in July, 1987, a fibre optic train was stationed at Manchester. This new communication line had come down from White River Jct. and was heading into Massachusetts. On July 5, this train was comprised of P&W M420W locomotive 2003, six cars, and P&W caboose 4003, and was engaged in installing the fibre optic cable on the New Hampshire main line between Nashua and Manchester.

Manchester's new baseball stadium, built on the area formerly occupied by the enginehouse, turntable, and some locomotive servicing tracks, was constructed in 2004-2005.

After several years of dueling with the Surface Transportation Board (regulatory successor to the ICC), Pan Am Railways evicted the New England Southern from its Concord-Manchester route during the fall of 2010, and it resumed mainline service by extending a Nashua local northward from Manchester to Concord, which became the new interchange point with the NEGS (the shortline continued to hold the state contract to operate the old White Mountain Division trackage northward from the state capital).

MA Tower

Manchester's operating center was undoubtedly Manchester Tower, or "MA." It was a one-story brick building with basement, which had been constructed in 1944 to replace two traditional wooden towers. It was located alongside the M&L, a short distance from the junction switch with the New Hampshire main line south of Union Station and just south of the yard office. Round-the-clock Train Directors controlled the railroad using a "Manchester-Type" control machine, the first of its type, manufactured and installed by Union Switch & Signal. As he worked the control machine, the towerman faced west toward the New Hampshire main line and the river, with his back to the M&L.

MA controlled the double track New Hampshire main line from a point just south of West Mitchell St. crossing through

Prior to the construction of MA Tower and modern signalling for Manchester's plant in 1944, facilities in the Queen City included north and south towers, and a maze of semaphores. Looking southward, right, in 1941, the roundhouse is visible on the far right, in addition to the two wooden towers. Below right, the 1944 brick MA Tower is seen, looking north toward the Manchester Yard Office, which survived until it was torn down in 1986. In recent years, MA has been used by the B&M/Guilford/Pan Am Signal Dept. for storage. Below left, Wendell Palmer covers MA on the morning of July 15, 1964. Note the added wing on the right side of the model board, a result of the 1950 N.H. Division single-tracking project.

Dan Twomey photo

Harry Frye Collection, B&MRRHS Archives

Gary Webster photo

the Manchester yards and station north of the city. It also controlled the switches and signals to and from the three branches which terminated in Manchester: the Manchester & Lawrence, the Portsmouth, and the Goffstown. The Portsmouth connected with the M&L within a half mile of the Tower.

With the 1950 single-tracking project between Nashua and Manchester and Manchester and Concord, Manchester Tower assumed control of these new territories. Wings were added to each side of the control machine to accommodate these additional territories north and south of Manchester.

Boston Division Bulletin Order #200 outlines the track and signal changes on the Manchester and Lawrence and the Manchester and Portsmouth Branches at Manchester, N.H. commencing at 9:00am, Tuesday, December 29, 1964:

The two 2-light dwarf signals opposite the Manchester Tower governing northward and southward movements on the Manchester and Lawrence Branch will be permanently discontinued.

The interlocked switches and dwarf signals just south of the Elm Street Bridge will be permanently discontinued.

Hand throw switch stands will be installed on the two former interlocked switches. These switches will be set normal for movements on the Portsmouth Branch.

Communication was always vital between train crews, train directors, and train dispatchers. In these days before radio, rail-

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Both photos, Bruce Nelson

Above, B&M switcher 802 works the Woods Yard in September, 1971. There was still significant carload traffic to New Hampshire's principal cities throughout the 1970's, and Manchester, in addition to Concord and Nashua, still boasted multiple switch jobs to handle it.
Below, a southbound Bow coal train occupies the main in August of 1973. Until the 1990's, this train was the domain of four-motor engines, and the usual lash-up of run-through power included Penn Central/Conrail GP38's and GP40's, in addition to whatever B&M power was available. Here, the train is hauled by a pair of PC GP38's with 7939 in the lead, a B&M Geep, and an F unit. The track in the foreground is the lead to the Woods yard, while the Goffstown Branch heads to the left.

road telephones provided the necessary tool. If the Train Director needed to contact yard crews, he would use the Maintainer Call Button on his signal model board. This would activate a horn at various signal cases in the terminal area to get their attention. It was especially helpful if the crews were working down in the "New Yard" or the "Woods" Yard, some distance away. They would then call him using the railroad telephone. This was also the way that the Train Director could contact the signal maintainers if he was experiencing signal problems.

Queen City Passenger Operations

By 1925, service between Boston and Montreal via Manchester was being showcased in the B&M public timetable. Both the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National/Central Vermont scheduled a daytime train and an overnight sleeping car train, an arrangement that would continue well into the 1950's.

Names for these Boston to Montreal trains appeared by the timetable of June 25, 1928. The CP day train was named *Alouette*, the night train, *Red Wing*. The CN/CV day train was *Ambassador*, the night train, *New Englander*.

There was something new to see at Manchester station starting in late October,1930---Central Vermont steam locomotives. At that time, the B&M and the Central Vermont Railway instituted a run-through arrangement using each other's steam locomotives on the 329-mile route between Boston and Montreal. The power was assigned to the *Ambassador* and the *New Englander*. This marked the first time that B&M locomotives had operated into Canada, although only certain engines were equipped for Canadian operation. Thus CV power would operate south of White River Jct. through Manchester to Boston. Central Vermont 600-series 4-8-2 Mountain types were usually assigned.

An early Great Depression economy move was to combine the *Alouette* and the *Ambassador* into one train between Boston and Concord. Similarly, the *Red Wing* and the *New Englander* were combined into one between Boston and White River Jct. These changes, which took effect November 22, 1931, were expected to save the B&M more than 500,000 passenger train-miles per year.

Preston Johnson rode #325 *Red Wing* from Boston to Montreal on Friday evening, May 7, 1948. In this steam-to-diesel transition time, it had departed Boston with B&M A-cab 4224 and a B unit to provide the steam heat. When he got off the train in the morning at Montreal, there was B&M P-2 Pacific 3654 on the head end. It had replaced the diesels at White River. It is presumed that a comparable CP steam locomotive handled the other side of the job.

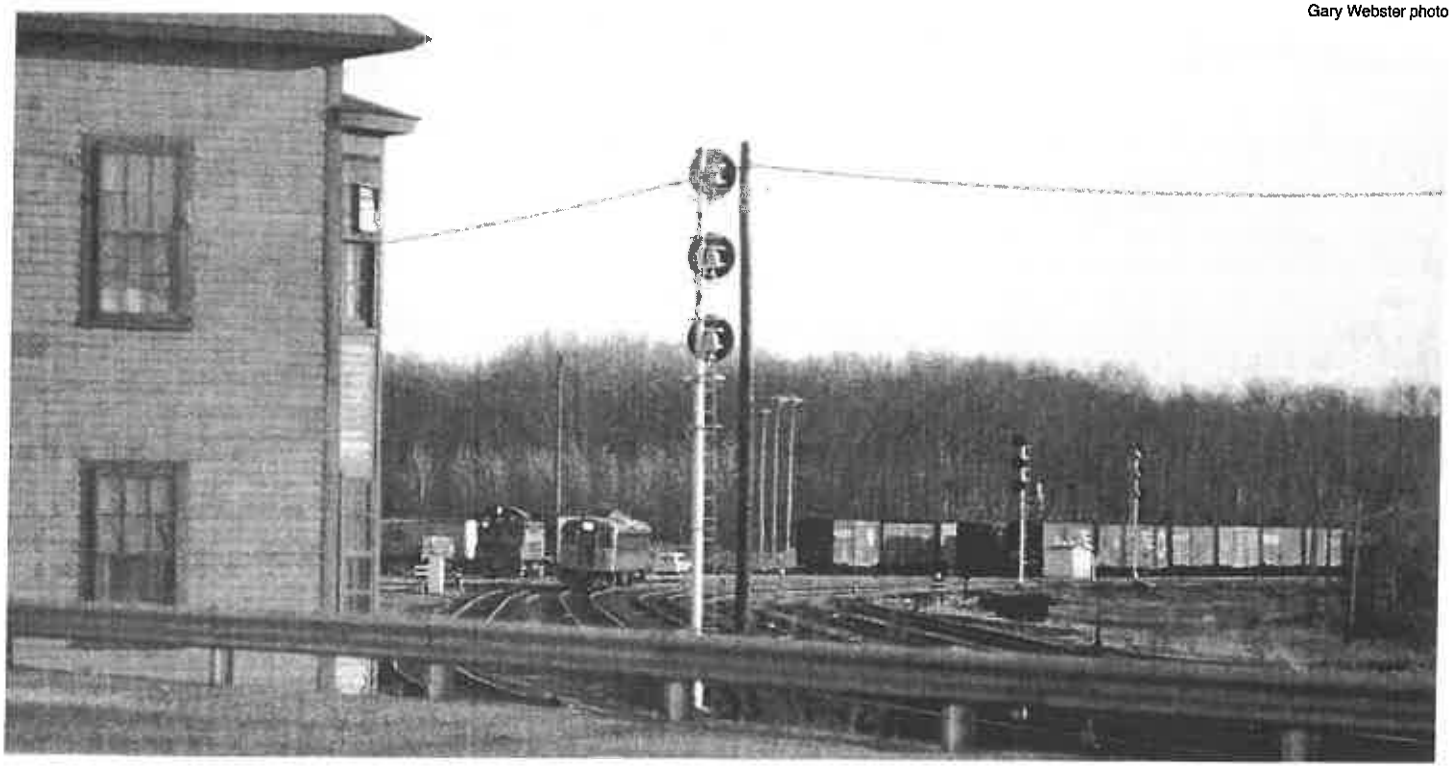
Similar arrangements were made between the B&M and the Canadian Pacific. It was common to see CP 2200-series Pacifics running through Manchester. But the change in the status quo came when Canadian Pacific E8 diesels started operating through between Montreal and Boston on the *Alouette* on December 15, 1949. At this time, Boston & Maine E-units started operating through to Montreal.

About 1950, Preston got to ride a Class R-1 4100 freight locomotive on a passenger train! It was on the Concord-Boston portion of #302, *Red Wing*, from Montreal. This was a very unusual occurrence. He also saw an ex-DL&W passenger Pacific class P-5 on the *Red Wing*.

The R.G. Sullivan 7-20-4 Cigar Factory for many years into the early 1950's would charter a passenger train for its employees and their families on a summer Saturday from Manchester to Old Orchard Beach, Me. The cigar factory was very close to Union Station. Bobby Howe (see p. 6) worked the job on a few occasions as a spare brakeman off the Boston passenger board. He recalls a Mogul steam locomotive and about six,

Northbound train #43 makes its way through the yard and past a switcher at 6:46pm on May 8, 1967. The Yard Office stands to the left.

Gary Webster photo



Both pages Gary Webster

Above, it is 7:05am on May Day, 1964, and RDC1 6141 brings a morning inbound into Manchester. Its regulars are folding up their newspapers and finishing off their cigarettes prior to boarding the train on their way to work. In seven months, these commuters will have but one train from which to choose. Seen here in 1966, right, the "McGinnis-style" depot served Manchester for only a few short years before all service to the Queen City ended in June, 1967. Unfortunately, this depot, as well as its counterpart in Concord, will not be available for use when the 1980-81 passenger service experiment brings trains back to Manchester for eighteen months.

maybe seven of the old open-platform coaches.

Bobby would deadhead from Lowell to Wilmington, Mass., walking to the nearby enginehouse, where the equipment was stored to make up their train. They would deadhead to Manchester, turn the power, load the train and head to Lowell, Lowell Junction, and highball to Old Orchard. After laying over in Portland, they would head back to Old Orchard to pick up the families and bring them back to Manchester. After unloading, they would deadhead back to Wilmington to put the equipment away. He thinks this lasted into the early 1950's.

Manchester was the home to groups known as "Snowshoe Clubs," which were part sports activities and part social clubs. These winter sports folks would leave the city on regularly-scheduled passenger trains to a destination in the greater Montreal area. Bobby Howe remembers them standing three-deep on the platform as #307, *Ambassador*, arrived northbound. Some could have taken #5 *Alouette* on their travels.

Budd rail diesel cars in scheduled passenger service came to Manchester about May 28, 1952, when an RDC-1 and RDC-3 started running as train #308 departing White River Jct. at 6:15am for Boston, stopping at Manchester at 8:27am, arriving in Boston at 9:30am. Its return trip departed Boston as #305 at 10:30am, stopping in Manchester at 11:38am, arriving in White River Jct. at 1:50pm.

These were among three of the self-propelled rail cars manufactured by the Budd Company of Philadelphia for the B&M at this time. By 1958, however, the railroad had acquired 109 of these cars, which had allowed it to improve its passenger service offerings, but also to reduce costs and to institute operating efficiencies by discontinuing steam locomotives and their attendant roundhouses, water towers, coal handling facilities, and labor.

Since the Budds could be operated from either end of the train, crews could now change ends in a terminal and go back out onto the road, making another trip, without shoving back to the yard, a slow and costly process. After the large 1955 delivery of Budds, they quickly became synonymous with Boston & Maine passenger service.

Manchester lost its Canadian National Boston-Montreal sleeping car by September 27, 1953. This meant that all Montreal sleeping car passengers would now be using the Canadian Pacific car exclusively. Concurrent with this change the

The last day of service: June 30, 1967. RDC-1 6128, above left, will head south from Manchester once train #30 has finished loading its passengers at 7:15am. Above right, after the discontinuance of all other service through Manchester in early 1965, the train information board in the Manchester depot for the last year and a half of passenger service is sparse, indeed. A filthy 6131 leads 6209, right, as train #43 departs Manchester for the last time at 6:55pm. As the RDC's make their way toward Concord, this train (plus the remaining Dover, N.H. roundtrip also making its last runs today) represents the last scheduled interstate passenger service that the B&M will operate for its own account. Manchester's depot has served its last customers, and the passenger future for the railroad is in the hands of the MBTA from here on out.

name *New Englander* was dropped and the train became exclusively *Red Wing*.

Canadian Pacific home-built *Grove*-series sleeping cars were regularly assigned to Red Wing with the timetable of October 31, 1954 (revised to December 27, 1954.) These 10-roomette, 5-double bedroom cars replaced the elderly Pullman sleeper *Butler University* (12-section, 2-double bedrooms) which had been heavily damaged in the Nashua derailment of November 12, 1954.

Manchester lost one round trip to/from Montreal with the timetable of October 28, 1956. On that date, Budd cars replaced conventional equipment which had been operating on the CP's *Alouette* and the CV/CN *Ambassador*. Both trains were combined on the latter's schedule between Boston and White River Junction. The Budd cars continued to Montreal over the Canadian Pacific to Montreal. Passengers using the CV/CN had to change to a conventional train at White River Jct. because the CV did not use Budd cars.

On Monday, January 5, 1959, B&M Budds started operating through between Boston and Montreal over the Central Vermont/Canadian National. Manchester's Montreal passengers once again had the ability to run through on both routes without changing trains at White River Jct. By June 27, 1960 the Budd-cars-on-CV experiment had ended, and it was once again necessary for CV/CN passengers to change at White River Jct.

The last southbound *Red Wing* #30 operated on Friday, October 23, 1959. Its northbound counterpart, the final #29, left North Station for Manchester and Montreal on Saturday, October 24, 1959. This would also have been the date of the final sleeping car calling at Manchester, probably a Canadian Pacific *Grove*-series car. Thus the last scheduled B&M conventional passenger train operated through Manchester.

Congress passed the *Transportation Act of 1958*, which gave the railroads an alternative to dealing with the various state regulatory commissions. On Wednesday, October 18, 1961, the railroad posted section 13a(1) notices with the Interstate Commerce Commission covering the discontinuance of several interstate passenger trains between Lowell, Mass. and White River Jct., Vt. The ICC decided not to investigate the discontinuance and the trains came off Monday, November 20, 1961. Among other changes, there is now just one train per

day in each direction north of Concord to White River Jct. This is the daytime through-service with Budd cars between Boston and Montreal, trains #31 and #32.

In its order issued Thursday, December 31, 1964, the Interstate Commerce Commission authorized the railroad to discontinue all interstate passenger operations in and out of Boston, with very few exceptions. Supplement #3 to timetable #8 set the discontinuance of some 33 interstate trains for 2:00am, Monday, January 4, 1965.

The Commission was persuaded to allow discontinuance with only a few day's notice. A bond issue was coming due in August, 1965. Said the ICC, "it is unquestionable that the Boston & Maine is, as it claims, suffering heavy losses in providing passenger service...Obviously the carrier has been living on depreciation and the proceeds from the sale of its assets... Indeed, the collapse of the Boston & Maine is close at hand."

In addition to losing its daily service to and from Montreal (#31 and #32), Manchester also lost two round-trips to Laconia and the Lakes Region, as well as multiple frequencies between Concord-Manchester-Lowell-Boston and return. In one fell swoop, the city was left with only one morning train to Boston and one evening train back.

On Sunday, January 3, 1965, the last train #31 with three Budds had departed fifteen minutes late due to much baggage and a capacity crowd, with standees, and a group of college students in the baggage section of car 6305. The return as #32 was to have been made with three cars, but they were so jammed with passengers that the conductor got 6305 coupled back on for the final southbound trip!

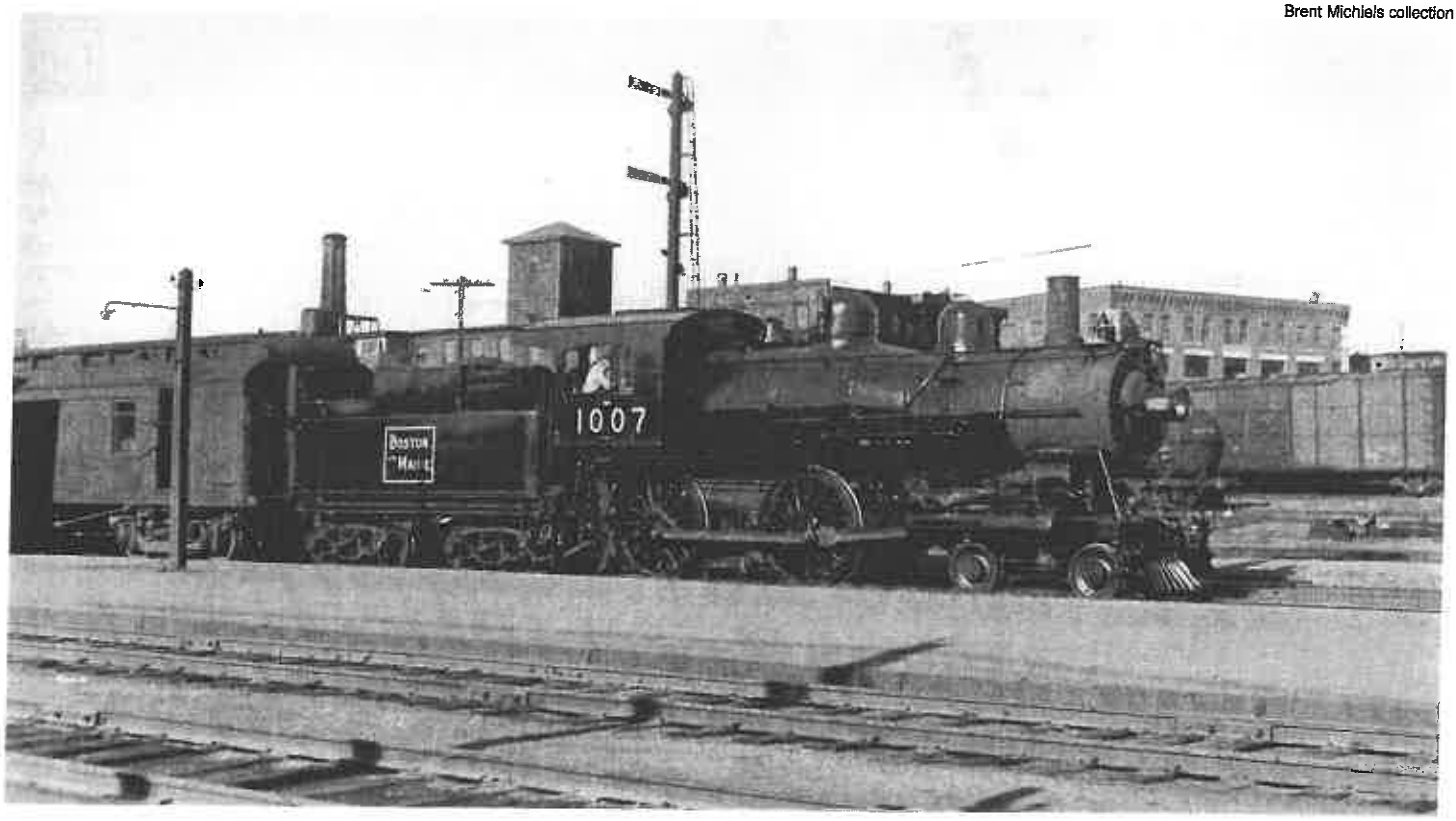
An exception was made by the ICC in that they required the continued operation of one daily round trip between Boston and Concord, N.H. (and one daily round trip between Boston and Dover, N.H., plus the Boston-Newburyport portion of the former Boston-Portsmouth, N.H. service.)

The B&M continued its push for discontinuance and had filed statements relating to the proposed discontinuance of these remaining trains on December 30, 1965. The State of New Hampshire, on March 2, 1966, agreed to withdraw its protests in all pending actions involving discontinuance of the railroad's passenger operations in the state, both the Concord trains and the Connecticut River service. The railroad for its part agreed to continue operation of its present passenger service between Boston and Concord, N.H. (and Boston and Dover, N.H.) through June 30, 1967. The B&M's 1965 *Annual Report* states that "the extension will afford the New Hampshire legislature adequate time to determine what requirements exist for passenger service and to consider such steps as may be appropriate to subsidize the service after June 30, 1967."

With the outlook for financial support of the remaining passenger trains by the State of New Hampshire looking bleak, Friday, June 30, 1967 became the last day of B&M passenger train service to Manchester and Concord, N.H. Budd 6131 in the lead followed by RDC-2 6209 made up the final #43. Some accounts say that upon arrival at Concord, the equipment returned to Boston. But for several months after the discontinuance, Budd 6131 sat in Concord yard for reasons nobody seems to recall. Richard Anderson took a photo of it in Concord in September, 1967!

A-41-f class American, looking shiny and fresh out of the shop, is ready to depart Manchester on a passenger train, likely a local or branch run, within a few hundred yards of the place of her birth in 1909, Alco-Manchester. She lasted in service on the B&M for 31 years, much modernized over those decades

Brent Michiels collection



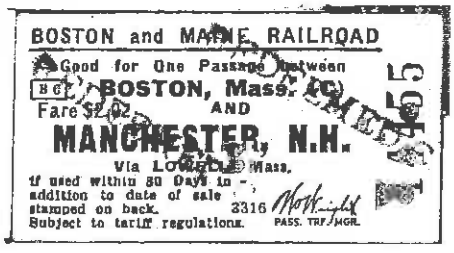
A test run of a commuter train was operated between Boston and Concord and return on Thursday, May 3, 1979. Assigned equipment was MBTA F10 cab locomotive 1103 and four of the brand-new Pullman-Standard passenger cars in push-pull operation. An extra train operated over the same territory on Friday, May 4 for a special group using a consist of F40PH 1009 and coaches 301-302-303-1301. This was during the time of negotiations for the regularly-scheduled service which would begin in January, 1980.

New Hampshire received special Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) grant money to start a new rail commuter demonstration service between Concord, Manchester, Nashua, and Boston. The sudden appearance of the grant money was widely seen at the time as a reward for the pro-passenger rail New Hampshire governor, Hugh J. Gallen, a major political supporter of President Jimmy Carter, who was locked in battle with Massachusetts senator Ted Kennedy (ironically, also very pro-passenger) for the N.H. primary nod in early 1980 (Carter won). A special train ran on Friday, January 25, 1980 operating Boston to Concord, at which time a reception was held at the State Capitol. Regular service started on Monday, January 28, 1980, using Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority F40PH diesel locomotives and Pullman-Standard coaches, on a single daily round trip. B&M GP7's heading de-motored Budd consists also made their appearance from time to time. With Concord departure times as early as 5:00am, the outbound trains laid over in the Concord yard overnight. Minimal platform facilities were provided at Concord, Manchster, Nashua, and, added later, Merrimack, N.H. With even the McGinnis-era depot gone by this time, Manchester's platform, little more than a curb formed with railroad ties and an overhead street light, was located adjacent the Granite Street crossing, across Canal Street from the city's modern central bus terminal and cab stand.

One of the purported justifications for the FRA program with New Hampshire included the testing of different equipment. British-built Leyland Experimental Vehicles, basically a bus body on a railcar chassis riding on four wheels, came in two versions, LEV-1 and LEV-2, both operating in test mode. On October 30, 1980, LEV-2 operated from Boston to Concord for Governor Gallen and other officials. It went into regular service between Concord and Lowell on Monday, December 1, 1980, providing a second daily round trip. Budd's SPV-2000 demonstrator also tested in the N.H. service, briefly.

LEV-2, operating northbound just fifteen days after being placed in service, struck a private vehicle at West Mitchell Street crossing, South Manchester, causing the death of two occupants. There was enough damage to the railcar that it was sent to Billerica Shop. A highway bus covered this part of the service, leaving the single train frequency.

The short-lived New Hampshire service experiment came to an end on February 28, 1981, when the Federal funding ran out. An extra crew was to have deadheaded to Concord on the final train #1031, for the purpose of running a passenger extra from Concord to Lowell, in order to position the equipment for #308 on Monday morning, March 2, 1981.•



Acknowledgements

We wish to acknowledge the assistance with pictures and/or information from the following individuals and organizations:

Richard Anderson, Rick Conard, Bruce Davison, Len Gilmore, Roland Goulet, Preston Johnson, Phil Kelley, John Kempton, Mike Lennon, Edward T. Levay, William Maine, Dane Malcolm, James P. McGill, Brent Michiels, Richard E. Miller, John Mitton, Bruce Nelson, Rick Nowell, Dwight Smith, Lester Stephenson, Gary Webster, and Buddy Winiarz, Bob's Photo, Boston and Maine Railroad Historical Society Archives, *Callboy*, Manchester Historic Association, and Manchester Public Library. A special thanks to Manchester Historic Association also for making available to us photographs of Manchester Union Station.

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