A History of the Salisbury Branch
Chronology Part 1

1846 – 1886
The Eastern Railroad
Salisbury, Massachusetts
The History of the Salisbury Branch

- **History:**
  - Amesbury was settled in 1655 as part of Salisbury, but was separated from Salisbury in 1666 and incorporated as the town of Amesbury in 1868. Originally the boundary between Amesbury and Salisbury was the Powwow River.
  - Beginning as a modest family community, it developed an aggressive maritime and industrial economy. The Powwow River provided water power for sawmills and gristmills. Shipbuildings, shipping and fishing.
  - In the 19th century, textile mills were built at the falls, as was a mechanized nail-making factory. The Merrimac Hat Company produced more hats than any of its competitors. Beginning in 1853, Amesbury became famous for building carriages, axles, springs, lamps, leather, a trade which evolved into the manufacture of automobile bodies. Amesbury also produced *Hoyt’s Buffalo Brand Peanut Butter Kisses*.
  - In 1846 the Eastern Railroad Surveyed the building of the Salisbury Branch, 3.85 miles from the East Salisbury main line.
  - The Salisbury Branch was completed at a cost of $70,000.00 and the line was put into service on January 1, 1848.
In March 1840, the Eastern Railroad erected a new passage with two road beds, one above the other to accommodate both the railroad on the upper road and carriages and foot passengers on the lower road. Due to the strain of the frequent passenger and freight trains, a new railroad bed just upriver of the bridge was completed in 1866.
Year 1840
The Eastern Railroad built a Covered Bridge across the Merrimac River, the bridge with the rail bed on top. Inside the covered bridge was used for carts, carriages and for foot passengers. The first Train passed over the bridge on October 28, 1840. The road was open to public travel on November 9, 1840.
In 1846 a Draw Bridge was added.
In 1866 because of the heavy strain on the bridge which had been subject to from the heavy freight trains, it became necessary to erect a second bridge for passengers parallel to the railroad.
On and after Monday, August 20, 1849, Trains leave Eastern Railroad Depot, Eastern Avenue, Commercial Street Station, daily, (Sundays excepted,)

Salisbury Mills, 9 1-4 A.M.

*Or on arrival from the East.
Salisbury Mills for East Salisbury, 7.20, 9 1-4 A.M., 4, 5 -3-4 P.M.
East Salisbury for Salisbury Mills, 8.50 A.M., 2, 4.20, 6.20 P.M.
Freight Train each way daily.

Office 17 Merchants Row, Station
John Kinsman, Sup’t,
Salem, August 16, 1849
Eastern Railroad
Winter Arrangement
On and After Dec 4, 1854

From Boston
Salisbury, 7:30 a.m. 12:15, 4:30 p.m.
Amesbury, 7:30 a.m. 12:15, 4:30 p.m.

For Boston From
Salisbury, 7:15, 11:23 a.m. 5:48 p.m.
Amesbury, 7:15, 9:30 a.m. 5:20 p.m.
View of the East Salisbury Station, 1880’s
Eastern Railroad – Maine Line facing north, Salisbury, Mass
East Salisbury Station – Circa 1880’s

- East Salisbury Station:
- Located at the East Salisbury Station, the type of Signal used was the “High Ball or Red Lanterns”.
- High Ball – Two Balls or Two Red Lanterns at masthead gave the track to trains on the main line.
- One Ball or one Red Lantern allows the branch trains to enter or leave the main line.
- When no Balls or Lights are seen, all trains must stop.
- When passenger trains are due from Newburyport, all Balls and Lights will be lowered, an order to give notice to inward trains.
View of Salisbury Mills Station & Freight House – Circa 1870’s
Salisbury Mills Station – Eastern Railroad

• In 1847 – The Eastern Railroad built the Salisbury Mill Station.
• Originally intended to be located across Back River Trestle on Water Street.

• The Station was built in the Railroad yard.
• The structure was 72 feet in length & 50 feet wide with 12 foot overhang.

• Contained:
• Two Passenger Rooms - Ticket Office - Baggage Room - Water Closet
Eastern Railroad 4-4-0 American Type #108

In front of the Salisbury Mills Station as Train No. 243 in 1884
Salisbury Mills Station – Circa 1870’s
Eastern Railroad Passenger Train with Baggage Car
View of the Eastern Railroad yard at Salisbury Mills 1882

L/R – Biddle & Smart Carriage Factory – Carriages covered with Muslin on platform cars.
Center – Salisbury Mills Station, Transfer Shed and Freight House.
Right - String of 36’ Wooden Trussrod Box Cars and empty 34’ platform cars
Salisbury Mills / Eastern Railroad 1884
Boston & Maine Railroad
December 2, 1884 to January 13, 1888

• December 2, 1884 - The consolidation of the Eastern Railroad Corporation with the Boston & Maine Railroad was signed. The stockholders of the Eastern Railroad were guaranteed six percent in place of no dividends.

• June 29, 1885 – 6 Passenger Trains were scheduled in and out daily on the Salisbury Branch.

• October 12, 1885 – There was 9 Passenger Trains scheduled in and out daily on the Salisbury Branch.

• October 16, 1885 – Currier & Alexander was contracted to build a new 4 Stall Engine House at the cost of $1,500.00.

• July 1, 1886 – The Boundary lines were moved between Amesbury & Salisbury from east of the Powwow River to Rabbit Road, one mile east.

• July 22, 1887 – The Boston & Maine Railroad moved the Amesbury Station across Back River near Water Street.

• January 13, 1888 – A new Freight Office 80’x 20’ was built on the site of the former Railroad Station, by the Boston & Maine Railroad.
In 1886 the erection of a four-story & basement wooden building 90’ x 40’ off Water St, near the Boston & Maine Railroad, where they had better facilities for shipping their carriages.
July 1st 1886

• The Boundary Lines were moved:

• Originally the boundary between Amesbury and Salisbury was the Powwow River. In 1876 Merrimac was created out of West Amesbury.

• On July 1, 1886 the Boundary Lines were moved between Amesbury and Salisbury from east of the Powwow River to Rabbit Road, one mile east.

• This move put the Salisbury Point Station now in Amesbury and the mail to the Station was changed by making the name of the station on the mailing one word instead of two, so not to get mixed up with the East Salisbury Station.
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Acknowledgements
Photographs & Information

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• Submitted by;
  Richard Nichols
  Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society