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History of the old Bangor, Old Town, and Milford railroad 1836-1869

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History

of the old

Bangor, Old Town, and Milford Railroad

1836 - 1869.

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Mrs. Mary H. Curran, compiler.

1915.

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Sketch of the

Bangor, Old Town & Milford Railroad

by

Nathan T. Swan

The original name under which the road was built in 1836 and operated until about '53 was "The Bangor, Piscataquis Canal and R. R. Co." After '53 the name was changed to Bangor, Old Town and Milford R. R. and extended to Milford. It was known as such until Nov. 30th, 1869, which was the last trip over the road after being sold to the E. & A. It was sometimes called the Veazie Road as it was bought about '53 by Gen. Sam'l Veazie who owned and controlled it.

The road was built by laying an iron strap along a hard pine timber 6 in. square. The straps were 12 feet long, 2 1/2 in. wide and 3/8 of an inch thick, but in '49 it was laid over with what was called a chair rail which they bought from the New Jersey and Penn. R. R., the rails being changed to heavier ones as they bought heavier engines.

The wheels of the first two engines were of wood, except the tires and hubs which were of iron, as also were the first passenger coaches which were built in England. The doors of the coaches were on the sides and the conductor, in collecting fares, walked along a foot-board corresponding to the footboard of an open trolley car.

On the completion of the road they bought two engines in England said to weigh 7 1/2 tons each. They were built by Robert Stephenson at Newcastle-on-the-Tyne and brought across the Atlantic on the deck of one of the old Black Ball line Packets. The engine was a four wheeler, its tender and flues were of copper. There was no cab. They had no names only ones given them after reaching here and no number on the plate that I can recollect. We called the first one the "Pioneer" and the other "No. 6."

About '48 they bought in Boston a four wheeled engine, named the "Boston." It was poor and used but little. Do not know the maker. About '55 they bought another second hand eight wheeled engine in Boston called "John Elliott," which was made by Hinckly & Drury, Boston, and was in use until the road closed Nov. 30th, 1869.

About '58 they bought a new eight-wheeled engine made by the Portland Locomotive works, Portland, Maine, named "Aroostook," and in '60 one called the "St. Louis," both being in use when Road was sold. It was bought by the E. & A. R. R. The first trip over the old road was run Nov. 6, 1836. Last trip Nov. 30, 1869.

First conductor

Sawyer

Second "

Stacey

Third "

Nathan Swan, who worked nineteen

years in Station for Co. and made the last run Nov. 30, 1869.

Second Railroad in America - the First was Baltimore and Ohio.*

* Mistake in name of first railroad.

Obituary Notice

from Bangor Daily Commercial, Sept. 3, 1909.

Death of N. T. Swan.

Widely known railroad man died Thursday night.

Conductor 50 years.

When he retired was oldest conductor on duty in
United States. Man of sterling character.

Nathan T. Swan, one of the last survivors of the old-time railroad men of the state, died at his home in this city Thursday night, about 11 o'clock. He was 58 years of age, and while he had been in feeble health for about a year and a half, death was not expected so soon. He had returned from Northport camp-ground, where he spent the summer and was apparently no weaker than he had been for some time.

He is survived by a wife, two sons, Frank T. and Fred P^r, and a daughter, Miss Florence R. Swan.

Few men were better known than Mr. Swan. For years he was a conductor on the Bangor and Piscataquis railroad, running on that line when its northern terminus was at Blanchard. He continued with the road till it extended to Greenville and saw it extend into the great Bangor and Aroostook system.

He was one of the old-time conductors in the days when most of the passengers were intimately acquainted with the conductor, and he knew about every one that lived along his run. Mr. Swan spent a long and active life rail-roading, and was considered one of the company's most valued employees.

While he was running as conductor on the Bangor and Piscataquis he made hosts of friends who will regret to learn that he is dead. He had always been an active man and did not retire from his work until about ten years ago, when he was nearly 78 years of age.

Nathan T. Swan was born at Poor's Mills, near Belfast, Feb. 10, 1821, and spent a greater part of his youth in that place. He went to Old Town when still a young man and became connected with the old Veazie railroad as inspector and section hand and later was transferred to the freight house in that town working there for several years. In 1851 he moved to Bangor and went to work for the Bangor, Old Town and Milford Railroad* as conductor and followed that occupation until he retired about ten years ago. Dec. 1, 1869, when the road was absorbed by the E. & N. A. R. R., he was transferred to that road and in March of 1890 was again transferred as conductor to the Bangor & Piscataquis Railroad and worked with that road until the Bangor and Aroostook was organized and took over the B. & P. R. R.

At the time Mr. Swan retired, about ten years ago, he was the oldest conductor on duty in the United States, being 78 years old, and in spite of his age was active and considered one of the best and most valued employees on the road. Starting as he did on the old Veazie railroad, he saw the road expand and enlarge, until tracks were laid to Moosehead Lake and Mr. Swan had the distinction of taking the first train over the road to the town of Greenville. He saw the road push northward to Dover, later to Guilford and Monson Junction, to Blanchard in 1881 and Greenville in 1886.

So far as can be ascertained, Mr. Swan was the last survivor of the employees who went to work on the Bangor & Piscataquis Railroad

*B. O. & M. R. R. same as Veazie R. R.

at the time he did, in about 1851. Frank T. Swan, eldest son of Mr. Swan, who has followed railroading for nearly 50 years and is now storekeeper for the Maine Central Railroad, worked with his father on the Bangor & Piscataquis in 1869 and to his memory the employees who worked on the road at the time his father established himself with it have all passed away.

On the old Veazie railroad Mr. Swan was conductor, ticket agent, superintendent and general boss of the service. He sold the tickets before the train started and, locking the office, collected them on the train and the money he placed in a large leather pocket book, depositing the amount in the bank each week. On the B. & B. to which he went next he was under the superintendency of Luther H. Eaton, now deceased and when he was conductor on the E. & N. A. R. R., M. H. Angell was the superintendent of that road. Arthur Brown, now living in this city, was superintendent of the B. & P. when that retook the E. & N. A. R. R. and he was under F. W. Cram when the B. & A. took possession.

It is a remarkable fact that in the 50 odd years of railroading, Mr. Swan never was hurt and no passenger or train man on his train were ever injured. His train was never in collision and the best of decorum was always maintained in his passenger coaches. In the old days of railroading, conductors and trainmen had considerable difficulty with tramps, who would engage in fights on the trains, but Mr. Swan never found his equal and his giant frame was respected by all.

Mr. Swan always lived on Center Street while a resident of Bangor and for 60 years was a familiar figure about the city. He attended the Congregational Church, but since retiring was afflicted with deafness which precluded him the pleasure of attending the services.

While a resident of Old Town, before moving to Bangor in 1861,

he was one of the organizers of the Tarratine Lodge of Odd Fellows and was ever active in the work of the order. At the time of his death he was the only living member of the Lodge.

Mr. Swan was a man of sterling character and held the respect of all who knew him. His work necessarily brought him into contact with a great many people and he, probably, had the widest acquaintance of any railroad man in the state. In his work he was faithful to the last degree and the officers of any of the roads for which he worked, never had any occasion to admonish or reprimand him. In his home he was a faithful husband and father, and spent practically all his time off duty by his own fireside and with his family.

At Northport, where he had a cottage, Mr. Swan was a familiar figure and since retiring has spent the summers there, going down early in May or June and being one of the last to return. He will be greatly missed by the cottagers who have been accustomed to seeing him there.

Mr. Swan married Silvia Shaw of Augusta, who survives him.*

*She died Dec. 16, 1913, aged 92.

Bangor and Old Town Railroads.

As the account of the railroads with which Mr. Swan was connected seems a little confusing in the Obituary notice the following statement will explain it.

1. The Bangor, Piscataquis Canal and Railroad Company.

Opened November 30, 1836. Sold to Gen. Samuel Veazie about 1850. (afterwards often called the "Veazie road") About 1869, road was sold to the European and North American R. R. Co. and the last trip over the road was made Nov. 30, 1869.

2. European & North American. Opened to Old Town 1868 — to Vanceboro 1871.

3. Bangor and Piscataquis R. R. Begun 1869, first built to Blanchard and in 1886 completed to Greenville.

Story of the old B. O. and M.

Maine's first railroad was the Bangor, Old Town and Milford, opened for traffic in 1836, and in continuous operation until December, 1869. So much of the railroad history of the country is settled, but there are other much-mooted questions concerning the early days of steam land transportation in this country. By many of the old residents of Bangor and vicinity it is claimed that this ancient Maine road was the first in the country to carry passengers, while others are equally certain it was the second road built in the United States.

It is difficult to say at this time whether they are right or wrong. That eminent historians disagree as to which was the first road built and which the first to transport passengers is well known. This makes it possible that those who claim these honors for the old B. O. & M. are correct after all.

Most historians state that the Baltimore & Ohio was the first road to be built in the country, the others locate the initial railroad in Massachusetts, a road constructed for the purpose of transporting stone from a quarry to tide water. Still others say it was at a point in South Carolina. Neither of these really enter into the discussion. It is of but little consequence if the roads in Massachusetts or South Carolina were built first. Those who give them the honor of being first usually explain that they were not steam railroads. Horses furnished their motive power. Nearly all agree that the first steam propelled railroad was the B. & O. The writer, however, has in his possession a lithograph, printed during the early eighties, which professes to illustrate the first train, first steamboat, first locomotive

and the first telegraph instrument, which differs with these other authorities to a certain degree.

This states that the first passenger railroad built in America was between Albany and Schenectady, N. Y., a distance of 16 miles, which began operations in 1831, five years prior to the opening of this Maine road.

A reproduction of the picture of this first passenger train over the New York road is presented along with this article in connection with pictures concerning the original Maine line.

In view of these contradictory statements of supposed authorities it seems fairly reasonable to accept as a fact that the B. O. & M. was probably the second passenger road in the United States.

This first Maine road was, judging from accounts of other first railroads, and by present observation of the old right-of-way, coupled with information secured from men who worked upon the old road and who are today alive and engaged in railroading, built with greater attention to grading than most of the original lines.

For a good part of the distance between the city of Bangor, and the city of Old Town the right of way of the old road can easily be traced and except that it is grass and bush grown and the rails have been removed, it remains unchanged from its condition when abandoned as an active part of Maine's commercial life. A surprising thing about the old right of way is the manner in which it has retained its surface. Along the top of the fills it runs very smooth, depressions being very few and but very little work would be required to put it in condition for use as a roadbed for a line today. The old bridge abutments can be found at all streams and

rivers which the line crossed. Some of these are in a dilapidated condition, because frost and years have worked greater havoc with them than with the grading of the roadbed.

Among the best preserved of these abutments are those of the bridge which crossed the Stillwater branch of the Penobscot river. They are in very good condition, as are the foundations of the piers which support the bridge in the center of the stream.

At several points the old road bed has been converted into a highway. One of these is between Stillwater and the city of Old Town. When the bicycle craze was at its tip-top about 1896-7, the Bangor Bicycle Club erected a big club house on the shores of Pushaw Lake, ten miles from the city and constructed a bicycle path to that point. About half of the path was the old B. O. & M. line. This path is now used as a road by teams and automobiles.

Concerning the First Railroad.

It was in 1832 that the Maine legislature granted a charter to the Oldtown Railway Co. to build a railroad between Bangor village and Oldtown village. Work was begun that year on the line. The road bed was graded for part of the distance between Bangor and Orono and a number of the bridge piers across the rivers and streams constructed. Then the company stopped. They sold their charter and such of the right of way as was completed, to the Bangor & Piscataquis County Railroad Co., for \$50,000.

But this did not complete the road. In Maine, then, as in other parts of the country where railroad projects were on, there were rival concerns and interests and cut-throating was in order. In 1833 the

legislature granted another charter. This was for a railroad and canal from Bangor to the Piscataquis river. This company did not begin work until 1835, when construction was started. There was a bitter rivalry between the two companies, which finally resulted in the absorption by the railroad and canal company of the B. & P. C. When this consolidation was completed the work of construction was pushed rapidly forward and on Thanksgiving day, 1836, the line was opened for business between Bangor and Old Town. The road cost \$500,000. or an average of about \$40,000 per mile for stations, cars and bridges and grading.

Compared to the railroads of today this was a mighty crude one. Its rails were two-inch planks, 14 feet in length, with a strap of 1/4 inch iron two inches in width spiked to the top surface. These straps had a tendency to spring or draw up, curling like a hoop and pulling the spikes out of the planks. Sometimes this resulted in a rail striking the bottom of a car and penetrating it, when there was disaster and trouble.

The section men always carried a bag filled with pine plugs on their trips over the line. These plugs were used to drive into spike holes when spikes drew out. The spike would then be driven back and the plug would make it hold tighter.

After a time these wooden rails, with their shoe of strap iron gave way to a rail which was known as the chair rail, which was followed by the double chair rail. These rails were 14 feet long and weighed 36 pounds to the yard. Later the "T" rail was introduced. This is the type of rail now used upon railroads, but those of the old B. O. & M. were very much lighter, weighing only about 45 pounds to the yard. Today the rails of main lines weigh from 80 to 120 pounds to the yard.

The Locomotives

The first locomotive which was used on this road was named the Pioneer. It was built in Newcastle, Eng., by Stephenson in 1832, and brought to this country on a sailing ship. Its total weight was $7\frac{1}{2}$ tons, scarcely as much as the driving wheels of some of the big machines used upon present-day Maine railroads. This weight was when the Pioneer was ready to pull out with a train behind it. At that, there is no question but what it was a greater curiosity to the people along the 12 miles of road between Bangor and Old Town than a big present-day engine of the articulating type would be along the line in Maine. It was of the old, original drop hook type and had no cut off -- it had to go ahead or back at full speed. This, probably, explains why the engine was never used for switching purposes in the yards at terminals. The Pioneer had no cab, the engineer and fireman standing out exposed to all weathers. The bell was located inside upon the bulk head.

There were no truck frames and but two pony wheels, one on each side set into housings. It had a single pair of driving wheels, one on each side as in the case of the ponies. The wheels were all of wood with iron rims or tires. There was no brake upon the locomotive wheels, but there was on the tender. This brake was placed at the side, as on the old stage coaches, and operated in the same manner. The accompanying cut gives a better idea of how the old machine looked, than does a description.

It was not a part of the engineer's duty to watch the track ahead for signals and obstructions as is now done. This was done by a man who rode on top of the first car (the baggage car). If this lookout saw anything which required stopping the train he notified the engineer

by pulling a cord attached to the bell.

Upon the arrival of the train at terminals the locomotive was detached, placed in the round house and the section men and freight handlers did the shifting about of cars and made up the train for the return trip.

The fire box of the engine was 2 x 4 feet and the crown was of copper. When the old engine was scrapped the copper in the construction sold for \$900. The heating surface of this engine was not so great as it ought to have been. This was true of all the early locomotives. Because of this the water had to be heated before it went into the boilers of the machine, because they would not make steam from cold water. In order that they might be assured of a supply of warm water all water tanks were built with a chimney passing up through the center and a fire was kept in a huge stove below. In winter a very brisk fire had to be maintained for this purpose, but in summer only a moderate one was required.

XThe next locomotive which the road had was No. 6, better known as "Bib Smith." This machine met with an accident, very early in its career, went over an embankment and was seen no more.

Then came the Boston, a drop hook machine, which was afterward reconstructed into a link motion, the work being done by Joseph Merritt, master mechanic. This was done in 1859. At that time its name was changed to the John Elliott. The John Elliott went to the E. & N. A. when that road took over the original road and was changed from a 4 ft. 8½ inch gauge to 5 ft. 6 in., the broad gauge of the newer line. The engine is now at the University of Maine. Its name plate, or one of them, is in the possession of Frank T. Swan, one of the old employees of the road, who is now assistant to the superintendent of the Maine Central round house at Bangor.

Following the Boston the road bought the Arcostock. This was the first outside connection locomotive to be brought into Maine and attracted a great deal of attention. Next came the General Veazie named for General Samuel Veazie, who had purchased the controlling interest of the road. Later these two engines were sold to the Maine Central and for years used in the Waterville yard as switch engines. The other locomotives of the road were taken over by the European & North American Railway when it bought the road in 1869, and were used by them.

Other Equipment of the Road

The rest of this old road's equipment was just as interesting from a present-day view point, as were the engines. The passenger cars were similar to those on all the early railroads of this country and England. They were little more than stage coaches hung upon a different running gear from the average stage coach. These cars were 18 feet long. Passengers were locked in and the conductor took the tickets through the windows.

About half an hour before the train was due to start, in winter, two ten-gallon cans filled with boiling water were placed in each car. When the train was ready to start these were taken out and two more, each full of boiling water, put in their places. This was the heat of the car for the twelve-mile run to Old Town.

Freight cars were, originally, 14 feet long, but gradually increased to 30 feet, and in 1868, year before the road ceased operation, one 32 feet long was built. A second one of this length was never made.

When the road shut down, its car equipment consisted of a baggage car, two passenger cars, nine 14-foot flat cars, ten 18-foot flat cars,

one 30 and one 32-foot flat and nine 10-foot box cars.

Practically none of these freight cars were equipped with brakes. The means used to stop them was to shove a stout stick between the spokes of the wheel and let it come up against the sill of the car thereby stopping the motion. Passenger cars had side brakes similar to those on stage coaches.

The running time of the trains was an hour and a half for the 12 miles between Bangor and Old Town, and a train usually consisted of four to six cars, both passenger and freight. All baggage was marked with chalk. The fare was $37\frac{1}{2}$ cents between the two terminals. Nathan T. Swan, who was conductor on the road sold the tickets at one end, took them up on the run and at the other end they were resold for the return trip.

The first time-table of the road was printed upon a piece of paper about 6x3 inches. The trains had neither numbers nor names, those innovations not having arrived in the railroad world at that time. It simply gave the time of departure of the three trains each way per day from all stations. The first train left Bangor in the morning at 7 o'clock and arrived back at 9.30. The second departed at 11.30 A. M., and arrived back at 2.30. The last train left at 5 P. M., and returned at 7.30 P. M.

Had Many Odd Experiences

In those days the railroad men had many odd experiences and their resources were as frequently tested, perhaps more frequently, than are those of these days. Then they had no telegraphic communication with headquarters. If they got into trouble on the road it was a case of

get out of it themselves or tramp to Bangor or Old Town, whichever chanced to be the handiest.

The first stop of the train after leaving Bangor was six miles out, at Hogtown. This name is still retained by the locality, but it is doubtful if any of those who live there now have the slightest idea of how it came to be so designated. When the road was first built one of the first trains run struck and killed a hog owned by a Mrs. Newman, who lived there. She endeavored to secure pay for the animal, but was unable to.

Mrs. Newman was a resourceful woman, according to those who hand down the traditions of the region. She tried out the grease from the carcass of the hog and with it daubed the rails of the road for a distance of about two miles.

When next the Pioneer, with its train, came puffing briskly along it met trouble. It ran for a short distance on the greased track, then stopped. Its wheels flew 'round and 'round under the efforts of the steam in the cylinders, but the train wouldn't budge ahead for an inch. Then there was trouble. The train crew speculated and the passengers offered suggestions, even as passengers of today do, when something occurs. In time gravel was placed along the two miles and the train got across the stretch. Later the rails were scraped, but it was a long time before the Pioneer and her load could get across that stretch at scheduled speed.

Just outside of Bangor was a big bog. This is about where the Bangor Driving Club now has a speedway. At the time the railroad was in operation there was a mill on this bog. One day as the train came along, the lookout perched on top the baggage car saw a man making frantic signals. He gave the bell cord a vigorous jerk, the engineer

stopped the train and inquiry was made of the man who gave the signal.

"My team's stuck," said he, "will y'r give'm a lift?"

The railroaders were accommodating. A rope was gotten out. One end was made fast to his load, the other to the engine, then the throttle was opened and the load pulled out of the mire.

With the heartfelt thanks of the teamster ringing in the ears of the train crew, the train moved away.

Another time the train stopped near this mill. While the trainmen were busy with their duties some of the mill men of humerous turn of mind were also busy. They took a heavy rope, made one end fast to the last car of the train, the other to a big pine stump. When the train was ready to leave Conductor Swan gave the signal and the engineer started the train. It went about a dozen feet and stopped with a jerk. The two drivers of the engine were whirling at a great rate, but there was no further go ahead. The combination of stump and rope held the train fast.

Business of the Road

The chief business of this railroad was the transportation of clapboards, shingles and laths and passengers. The lumber went from the mills at Milford, Old Town and Stillwater. All the long lumber produced at those mills was made into rafts and floated down the Penobscot to Bangor. That from Milford and Old Town went direct by the main river, while that from Stillwater was floated down the Stillwater branch of the Penobscot to what is now Old Town, where it passed through the old canal and out into the main river at Basin Mills.

At Bangor, the station, round-house and terminal of the road

was located at Centre street.* From that point through Harlow and Exchange streets to City Point, at that time the great lumber docks of the city, but now the site of the Union station, there was a railway track and the lumber cars were hauled along to the point. They were dragged by horses, the locomotives not being used for that purpose.

In 1865, the road built a three-span bridge across the Penobscot between Old Town and Milford, so that the lumber could be loaded direct upon the cars. Previous to that time it had been teamed across the highway bridge.

Among the well-known residents of Milford at that time was Paul Hathorne, a lumberman quite well along in years. He conceived a fear of this bridge and refused to ride across it on one of the trains. When he was going to Bangor, he would walk to the Old Town station. The trouble with this arrangement was that he would keep busy in Milford until just before it was train time, when he would start for Old Town. Before he reached the other town station, the train would cross the bridge, pass him and leave the station. Then he would make sundry vigorous remarks and wait until the next train left.

The Old River Boats

While this is the story of Maine's original railroad, and steamboats had been known in the State for a number of years before this road went into operation, it seems rather fitting that a few words should be said about the old line of steamers which operated between

*Mistake. The buildings were erected at head of Howard Lane (from Cumberland street to Curve.) M.H.C.

Old Town to Medway then called Nicasious and connected with the old road.

These boats were of the type known as wheelbarrow boats; that is they had a great wheel at stern, similar to those used on shallow rivers at this time and on the Kennebec between Gardiner and Augusta at this time. In times of high water these boats ran to Mattawankeag. On their trips up and down the river boats passed the falls at Howland through locks, similar to those used on canals.

Tom Gulliver was a character of those days in Old Town. He took a great interest in both the boats and the railroad, when they were started. The first trip of the boats up the river Tom was at the wharf. He watched the craft as it moved away, a cloud of smoke pouring from its funnels and the big wheel at the stern churning the water into a great white foam. At last he looked around.

"You can talk," said he with decision, "as much as you're a mind to about steam driving that boat, but I think that that wheel has as much to do with its going as anything."

Afterward Tom was asked whether the boat had a high or low pressure boiler. He wanted to be safe so answered, "I think its medium."

These boats continued to ply up and down the river for a few years after the B. O. & M. was discontinued. They and the old railroad were important factors in the development of that country, for they did away with a haul of 60 miles by tote teams of lumbering and farm supplies.

Men of the Old Road.

In eastern Maine, today, among railroad men the names of some of the men who worked upon the old road are well remembered and one of them, Nathan S. Swan, is known and remembered by every man in the State who is entitled to the distinction of an old time railroader. He began work on the B. O. & M. in 1836, and did not quit it until 1869, 33 years later, being the last one of the employees to do a day's work upon the road. During the greater part of this time he was the big man of the road — next to Gen. Veazie. He was the general manager; also the conductor who ran the train. He was conductor of the last train which ran over the road, this means both regular and specials. The last regular train ran on Dec. 31, 1869. At the end of that day the Bangor, Old Town & Milford Railway ceased to be a factor in the transportation facilities of Maine.

For some time after that trains were run over the old line. They were wrecking trains and their purpose was tearing up the track and taking the rails to a point where they were turned over to the European & North American Railway. Mr. Swan had charge of these trains and it was not until the road was completely dismantled that he quit work thereon.

When he was through with the work he entered the services of the Bangor and Piscataquis, now a part of the Bangor & Aroostook and remained in the employ of those roads for 31 years. He was one of the best known of the old-time railroad men. For years and years the train which he ran between Old Town and Greenville on the old B. & P. was known as "Nat Swan's train."

Mr. Swan ran his last train and answered the last call which the Grand Superintendent of the universe sent, a good many years ago, but railroad men, old ones especially, keep his memory green and always enjoy telling stories of "Nat."

Joseph Merritt was master mechanic of the road from 1859 to 1869 and in that position had much to do with the welfare of the road. After leaving the railroad he was for many years engineer of the steam fire engines of the city of Bangor.

John Brown was the master car builder, and Joseph W. Taney was the civil engineer of the road, while Edward Farrar was freight agent at Bangor. During the 33 years in which the B. O. & N. was in operation, Albert Plummer was the station agent at Stillwater. There were two stations in Old Town, the upper and lower. Asa DeWitt was the agent at the upper station, while a man named Farrar had charge of the lower station. In connection with his duties as station agent, he carried on a barber shop. All of these men have been dead many years.

Still in the Railroad Game.

Of the men who worked upon the road but two, so far as known, are alive at this time. These are Joseph Page and Frank T. Swan of Bangor. Both of them are actively employed on the Maine Central Railroad.

Mr. Page* is now 60 years of age, hale and hearty, and full of yarns of the old days of railroading in Maine. He has charge of the big timetable at the Bangor yard of the company. As a young man he entered the service of the B. O. & N. as a freight handler. Then he went on to a locomotive as fireman and after a few years was made engineer. He worked in that capacity until the road shut down and was

*Mr. Joseph Page died July 29, 1913.

engaged with Nathan Swan upon the wrecking train which tore up the rails and sleepers of the old road. Mr. Swan was conductor on the last trains run over the road. Mr. Page was the engineer.

From the old road he went to the European & North American as an engineer. He ran on the road for a few years and then took the Exchange St., Bangor, yard shifting engine, This was No. 75. He was the only engineer on the road who was willing to take the machine. In 1881, the Maine Central took over the E. & N. A. After some years in the yard Mr. Page was called upon to take an extra out over the road to Vanceboro. "I ought to have known better", said he in telling of the incident, "but it didn't seem to me I would forget the road so quickly, but I had. The trip was made in the night and I had so forgotten the landmarks that I whistled for South Lincoln a-mile-and-a-half before reaching the station!"

Frank T. Swan, son of Nathan, began railroading as a very young man. He worked on the Bangor, Oldtown & Milford, being yard master at Oldtown when the road shut down. After that he went to the E. & N. A., and the Maine Central. He is now with the Maine Central and has an important position at the round house of that company in Bangor, being assistant to the superintendent. To him the writer is indebted for the information concerning the old road, which has furnished the foundation for this article.

Prophecy which Failed.

An incident connected with the last day of the first railroad in Maine is of interest at this time. It suggests how little do the best of the railroad men of to-day grasp the future of railroading.

To learn the viewpoint of the biggest men in the business of that day and see the wonderful changes which have taken place cannot but cause one to wonder if men of these times have any conception as to what railroading will be fifty years hence.

On the afternoon of Dec. 31, 1869, the last day on which the old railroad was a part of the transportation scheme of Maine, the employees of the Bangor, Old Town & Milford Railroad were entertained at a banquet in the Penobscot Exchange, Bangor, by the European & North American Railway Co., which had purchased the franchise and equipment of the old road. John J. Gerrish, superintendent of the E. & N. A. represented the company and during the speech making period of the affair discussed railroading, past, present and future.

Among other things Mr. Gerrish told those about him that they would never see a railroad train of over 100 tons weight!

A train of more than that weight, he explained, would be so heavy that it could not be controlled.

Mr. Gerrish was one of the ablest railroad men of his day and yet how little he foresaw the future of American railroading. The air brake, the automatic coupler, the block signal, air train signal and steam heat train were then unheard of. Under conditions which he knew, his prophecy was correct, but the inventive mind of America did not permit the railroad to stand still.¹ It forced it to forge ahead. To-day locomotives weigh more than the weight of entire trains of those days; exceed the weight which he predicted as the maximum which railroads would ever be able to haul. Trains of a total weight of over 500 and 600 tons are common.

The air brake and improved rolling stock and rails have brought this about. What may not the future do for railroading?

Herewith are presented photographs showing the first locomotive which ever ran in Maine; of parts of the original railroad, of the men who worked on that road; also photographs of modern machines, together with a picture of the first passenger train in America. These are worthy of much study. Compare them and observe the great steps forward which have been made and then see if you can, in your own mind, forecast the changes which will come before the year 1936, the centennial of the completion of Maine's first railroad.

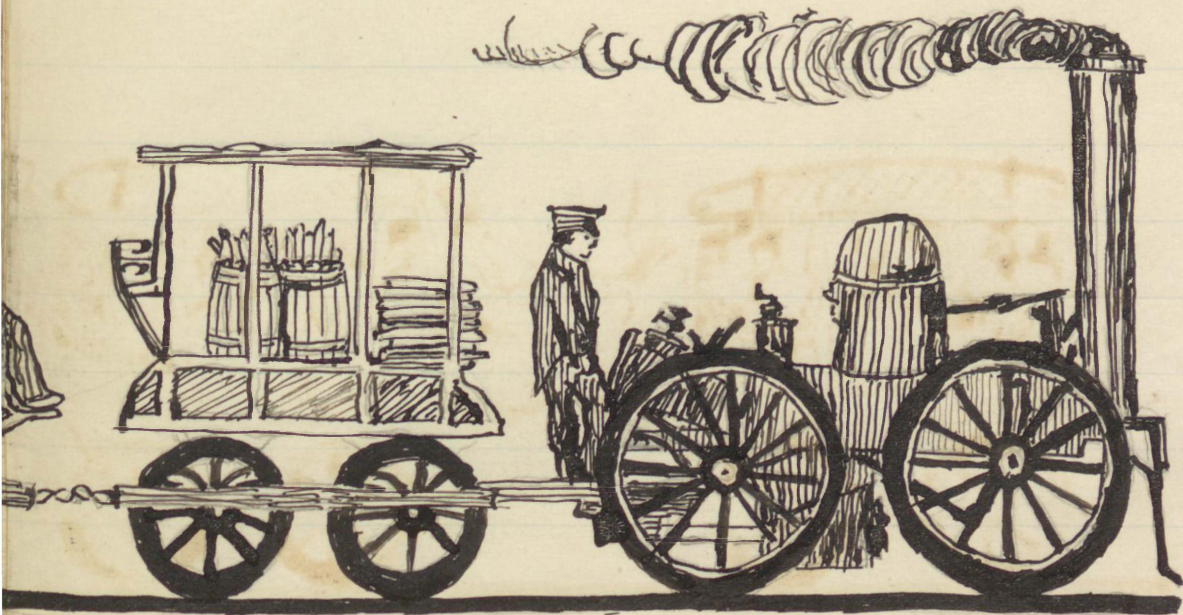
Sam E. Conner.

(Copied from the Lewiston Journal Magazine Section October 4, 1913)



THE FIRST PASSENGER TRAIN

One of the illustrations of the Story of the first Passenger train in America, but the car
Other pictures printed in the Lewiston Journal



TRAIN RUN IN AMERICA

FROM AN OLD WOODCUT

old B. O. and M. The picture is of the
were similar to those used on the B. O. and M.
have been omitted from this history.



THE FIRST PASSENGER TRAIN RUN IN AMERICA

FROM AN OLD WOODCUT

One of the illustrations of the Story of the old B. O. and M. The picture is of the first Passenger train in America, but the cars were similar to those used on the B. O. and M. Other pictures printed in the Lewiston Journal have been omitted from this history.

**The first Steam Railroad in Maine
and probably in New England,
by Joseph W. Porter**

**(from Bangor Historical Magazine
vol. 7, pages 29-30.)**

By an act of the Legislature, approved Feb. 8, 1833, the Bangor and Piscataquis Canal and Railroad Company was incorporated. Its incorporators were Moses Greenleaf, Henry W. Fuller, Benjamin P. Gilman, Joseph Lee, Francis Brown, Ebenezer Greenleaf, Stephen Palmer, David Shepherd, Mark G. Pitaan, and Henry K. Adams, all, I believe, of Piscataquis County. Its object was to build a railroad from any place or places, on or near tide waters of Penobscot River in the town of Bangor, or any place on said tide waters, to any or all of the quarries or natural deposits of Slate in the town of Williamsburgh, either by a continuous line of railroad or by any other natural or artificial communication. The capital stock was \$300,000. which was afterwards increased to \$330,000.

This stock was largely taken by Boston parties, and most of the leading officers were Massachusetts men. The first list of officers was as follows: President, Eliphalet Williams, Boston; treasurer, William Hale, Boston; superintendent, Hon. William Jackson, Newton, Mass; engineer, A. W. Hoyt, Deerfield, Mass.; assistant treasurer and secretary, John Boardman, Bangor.

The real promoters were Edward and Samuel Smith, two of the most enterprising men ever residents of Bangor. They built Smith's Block and the Central Bridge among their many enterprises. The rails were wooden with three-fourths inch thick flat iron bar, spiked on top.

The rolling stock consisted of two six-ton engines built by Stevenson, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England, which cost \$6,000. each, named the Pioneer and No. 6. There was no cab attached to them. Three passenger cars built at Cambridge, Mass., costing \$1,200. each, the entrance to which was at the sides and the brakemen were seated on top.

The length of the road was about twelve miles and was completed to Old Town and formally opened Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 28, 1836 and regular trains run Nov. 30. The station in Bangor was near what is now Howard Lane. Elbridge Harris was the agent for many years. For many years it did a large business. A track being laid down Harlow and Exchange streets in Bangor, lumber was shipped direct from the mills in Old Town to the wharves in Bangor. This continued till 1847 or '48, when, owing to the complaint of the citizens against having a railroad track in their principal streets, it was abandoned.

After the road had been in operation about fifteen years it was sold by the original stockholders to Gen. Samuel Veazie, of Bangor, for a small sum, and by him extended through the village of Old Town, and by the building of a bridge across the Penobscot river to Milford, and the name changed to the Bangor, Old Town & Milford Railroad, in 1849.

After acquiring this railroad, he built a bridge across the Penobscot, at his own expense, 1852-3, and run his trains to Milford where they continued to run till the E. & N. A. Railway bought the road and franchise.

Gen. Veazie ran the road until his death, March 12, 1868 and his heirs continued to run it until it was sold to the E. & N. A. Railway in 1869. The last train was run June, 1870.

Roads, Railroads, and Telegraphs.

History of Penobscot County, page 92.

Railroads.

The project of building the first iron road constructed in the Penobscot Valley was mooted soon after the railway system was introduced into this country. It was the Bangor, Oldtown & Milford Railroad, which has been discontinued for many years, but whose old station-house, now a dwelling, still stands on the bluff in Bangor, and the long-disused track can still be traced at intervals stretching thence away into the country. The line kept on the high ground, instead of following the lower levels near the river, as does the present railroad to Oldtown; and, when it was desired to use a road to that place as an important link in a chain of iron ways to reach the Northeastward and Northwestward, this track was found to be too far in the interior to accommodate the traffic from the growing towns along the river; and it was consequently abandoned for the route now in use.

The Bangor, Oldtown & Milford Railroad Company was chartered by the State Legislature on the 8th of March, 1832, but was not fully organized until three years afterwards. So enthusiastic was the local public over this new departure in methods of transportation, that the stock of the company sold at 18 per cent. premium before a blow had been struck upon the line. Messrs. Rufus Dwinel, Ira Wadleigh, and Asa W. Babcock, were the chief promoters of the enterprise. Work upon the road-bed was begun in June; but the charter proved to be so fatally defective that it was possible for every landholder on the line to prosecute every railway employee coming upon his premises; and the

work had to be temporarily abandoned. By and by the Bangor & Piscataquis Canal and Railroad Company, which had been chartered February 8, 1833, to build a canal or railroad, or both, from Bangor to the Slate quarries of Piscataquis county, bought up the franchises of the older company, and without special difficulty completed the road from Bangor to Oldtown, by way of upper Stillwater. It was constructed in 1835-36, and laid with strap rail; and was opened in the latter year. After a time a track was laid down the hill in Bangor, and along the streets to a wharf on Exchange street, upon which large quantities of lumber and other products -- but especially lumber, -- were transported directly to the vessels on the Penobscot.

From Annals of Bangor

by

Hon. John E. Godfrey.

(History of Penobscot County, pages 695-696.)

The Bangor & Piscataquis Railroad was so far completed that its cars commenced running regularly November 30 (1836.) The Bangor station was on the hill southerly of Meadow Brook and the course of the road to Oldtown averaged perhaps a mile from the Penobscot River. Mr. Eldridge Harris was its agent. This road was the result of two energetic and adventurous speculators, Edward and Samuel Smith. These persons accomplished a great deal of labor during the few years of their career, were the employers of many men, and the disbursers of large sums of money, but none at last was found in their possession. Some monuments of their enterprise are in existence, but the railroad is not one, "Smith's Block", at the foot of Hammond Street, however, is.

History of Penobscot County, p. 776.

(Bangor Biographies.)

General Samuel Veazie.

"About the time of his removal to Bangor, the railroad was built from Bangor to Oldtown, one of the very first railroads in America. In 1850 the track was extended across his land to the river at Oldtown, which led to a grave lawsuit on the question of damages, which was tried before a jury on the premises, and resulted in a verdict for \$17,000. Other suits followed, which finally resulted in a purchase of the road and charter by Mr. Veazie, on such favorable terms that it became one of the General's most profitable investments. This road he continued to operate until he died. (March 12, 1868.) The necessity of having a railroad up the valley of the Penobscot impressed itself on his mind, and he placed himself in the way of helping it on and sharing largely in its benefits. At his own expense he built the bridge across the river, at the head of the falls, and run his cars to Milford. Unexpected difficulties came in the way, which prevented the road being extended beyond that point before his death. The European & North American Railroad coming to be built soon after, along the shore from Bangor, his heirs sold out their road and franchise to it, and thus ended the whole thing."

Notes

by Mrs. Mary H. Curran

The old station of the railroad was on the left hand side of Howard Lane. (Howard Lane is on the left hand side of Cumberland Street, the first street after leaving Harlow Street.) One dwelling house was on the left hand side of the Lane and next above that was the station. At first the cars ran down Harlow Street, probably through what is known as Curve Street. Mrs. Ebenezer T. Fox told me that she was married and came to Bangor about the time the railroad was opened. She well remembered the trains passing through Harlow Street where she lived. She said, at first they used locomotives but soon changed them for horses, as the locomotives frightened the horses on the street.

Edward and Samuel Smith were great speculators, and made many improvements, Smith's Block (now called Smith Block, 21-33 Hammond St.) and Central Street bridge being among them. They also erected a building for a Female Academy. It was on a lot of land now belonging to the writer of these notes, between Pine and Essex Streets, on the northerly side of Penobscot Street. It was a two-story wooden building with a cupola in which was a bell which was afterwards given by Franklin Adams to the Universalist Society in East Eddington. The Smith brothers paid all the expenses of running the Academy. They were seriously affected by the hard times of 1836-7 and lost all of their property. The land on which the schoolhouse was erected belonged to George W. Pickering, I believe, and the City of Bangor used the schoolhouse for public schools until 1843, when the "new and elegant"

(as I once saw it described) brick schoolhouse on the corner of State and Pine Streets was erected and the schools were transferred to that building. Mr. Franklin Adams, who lived on the next lot, between the schoolhouse lot and Essex Street, erected a building for a woodshed which was some feet over on the schoolhouse lot. A lawsuit was the result and Mr. Adams purchased the property. The Academy was purchased by Mr. Dresser who kept a clothing establishment on Exchange Street a little north of the Penobscot Exchange. A flag with his name floated from the cupola for a sign. After some years, probably when the Penobscot Exchange was enlarged, the building was moved back on French Street back of Waterman's clothing store. I saw it a few years ago from a back window in the store and also went into it from French Street.

The late Daniel M. Howard was clerk for E. and S. Smith, and always kept one of their blank checks. It had in one upper corner a picture of the cars of the B. & O. R. R. train. He showed it to me some years ago and promised to give it to the Bangor Historical Society. After his death, his son, Fred Howard gave it to me for the Society, but it was destroyed in the great fire of 1911.

Dr. Alfred Walton, of this city, lived, when a boy in a town adjoining Old Town, and well remembers the great excitement when the railroad trains came into Old Town and were met by all the boys in the vicinity. He said the boiler of the locomotive was covered with slabs of wood. They show plainly in the picture of the locomotive presented to the Bangor Historical Society by Nathaniel Lord.

Howard Lane was formerly called Howard Street and often known as Depot Street or Depot Hill.

The old railroad station was destroyed by fire. It stood on the corner of Howard Lane and Curve Street, the left hand side. (This is a mistake. see p. 40. M. H. C.)

Where the road crossed Center Street, the street was carried over the road which ran underneath. A favorite amusement for school children was to place two pins, crossed, on the track on the approach of a train, which would be found afterwards to be welded together.

Railroad Record.

It is held by Conductor Swan of Bangor.

Marvelous Career of this Famous Traveller.

About to Celebrate his Birthday and Retire
from Service.

Conductor Nathan T. Swan, of the Bangor & Aroostook railroad, will on Friday, Feb. 10, celebrate his 78th birthday; on the following Saturday he will complete his 30th year of service on the Bangor & Piscataquis railroad. On the latter day he will cease to be an active railroad man, for already he has handed in his resignation to take effect upon that date.

For several years Conductor Swan has enjoyed the distinction of being the oldest conductor, in point of service, in the United States, and his friends say that he has undoubtedly been a train manager longer than any other man in the whole railroad world. During all these years he has formed many friendships among the travelling public and all the people who have been his passengers more or less during his long connection with the B. & P. division, will regret to hear of his departure.

Belfast is the birthplace of Conductor Swan, but when he was 14 years old he moved with his parents to Old Town. The Bangor and Milford railroad was then one of the wonders of the age, for it was the second road built in America. Old Town was as important a terminus as Bangor, and to be station agent of even that small road in those

days of comparative commercial inactivity, was a decided compliment to the business ability of the person chosen.

Station Agent at Old Town

It was as an official of this road that Conductor Swan began his long and successful career as a railroad man. When only 19 years old he was appointed agent at Old Town. He filled this position acceptably until 1851, when he was made a conductor. In the year of his promotion he moved to Bangor and ever since he has lived in this city.

For 18 years he held the position of conductor on the Bangor & Old Town line, when, upon the completion of the Bangor & Piscataquis road, he was offered a like position on one of the trains of the new company.

Since the day of his appointment, Conductor Swan has been running steadily on various trains. The longest time he was ever off duty on account of illness was three weeks; he was forced to take that involuntary leave in last December on account of an attack of the grip.

Enviably Record.

To be a conductor for 48 years and never to meet with a serious accident or have a passenger killed or even seriously injured, is an unusual and an enviable record, and that is the account that Conductor Swan can give of his service. Such a record speaks far more strongly than words of the ability, the cautiousness, and the extreme care which Conductor Swan has already exercised.

Slight accidents, of the kind that are inevitable no matter who

the conductor or engineer may be, have occurred to Conductor Swan's train but never has a passenger been fatally injured in any of the slight mishaps. There have been one or two cases where men have been struck by the engine in attempting to cross the tracks, but in each case the blame could be attached only to the rashness or carelessness of the men themselves.

Conductor Swan's record is a source of pride to all his fellow officials and is unequalled for the road. He, however, talks reluctantly of his career and bears his well deserved honors with exceptional modesty.

Changes in Railroading.

With few men has the growth of the railroad been so constantly studied as with Conductor Swan. When he began his duties as railroad employee, the "Veazie road", as it was persistently termed, was looked upon with wonderment by all New Englanders, and it, together with the Baltimore & Ohio line, (the first to be built in America), was known of and talked about throughout the country. The imperfect road-bed, the unsatisfactory rails, wooden with metal straps, the coaches and, most of all, the queerly built little Stephenson locomotive of seven and one-half tons, were all considered marvelous, while travelers could think of nothing more comfortable than the carriages. Doubtless they were a pleasant change from the road vehicles of those days.

The accompanying illustration is a good reproduction of a photograph of the engine and train, in possession of Conductor Swan. The machine was constructed at the works of the famous Rob't Stephenson, at Newcastle-on-the-Tyne, England, and was brought across the Atlantic

on the deck of one of the old Black Ball line packets.

The engine, as will be seen, was a four-wheeler and its tender to carry wood for fuel was also four-wheeled. The flues were of copper. Upon the surface of the boiler was an escape pipe and a whistle. There was no cab and the engineer was exposed to the inclemencies of weather both in summer and winter. The tender was equipped with a brake operated by the foot of the engineer. The weight of the engine was seven and one-half tons, - hardly to be compared with the 90 ton machines of the present day.

The cars were built in England and looked very much like the old-fashioned stage. The doors were upon the sides and the conductor, in collecting fares, walked along a board on the side, corresponding to the footboard of an open trolley car. The length of the vehicles was 12 feet.

There is no need of comparing the monster engines of from 85 to 125 tons with the miniature locomotives of the time of the Veazie railroad, and travellers will readily appreciate the modern passenger coach and the elegant Pullmans when they think of the then luxurious coaches of less than 50 years ago.

The Old Veazie Road.

Bangor people generally know of the old railroad and its 11-mile route from Bangor to Old Town. The road-bed is in good condition even at the present time and the fact that it is now used as the Niben club bicycle path is evidence that the building crews did their work well.

The purpose of building the road was to bring the products of the upriver mills down to Bangor for shipment by vessels. Although there

were great hopes for the success of the enterprise, it did not pay its running expenses and finally, on account of the rapid strides made by inventors and builders and of the advance of improved machinery, the road passed into disuse.

(Bangor Commercial February 4, 1899.)

Notes.

Questions by Mrs. Curran answered by Miss Evans who has always lived on Howard Street (now called Howard Lane.) The questions were answered January 27, 1916. Miss Evans obtained some of her information from two former employes of the railroad.

Questions and Answers.

1. Where was the old Old Town railroad station?

I know it was on Howard Lane but not the exact location.

Miss Evans gave me a plan of the lots in that vicinity which is copied on page . A flight of steps was built from Harlow Street to the top of the hill where the railroad buildings were, very near Curve Street. The ticket office is marked by a cross X on the westerly end of the Depot Lot.

2. Were the station buildings burned and when?

The Old Town Station, part of which is still standing was never burned.

(Several have told me that the buildings were burned.)

3. Was it made over into a house or stable?

It was made over into a house.

4. Is any part of the old station still standing and for what used?

What was known as the "Ticket Office" of the old station is still standing, the rest being torn down. This part of the station was made into a house.

5. I have been told there was an old well which supplied water for the locomotives. Is it still in existence?

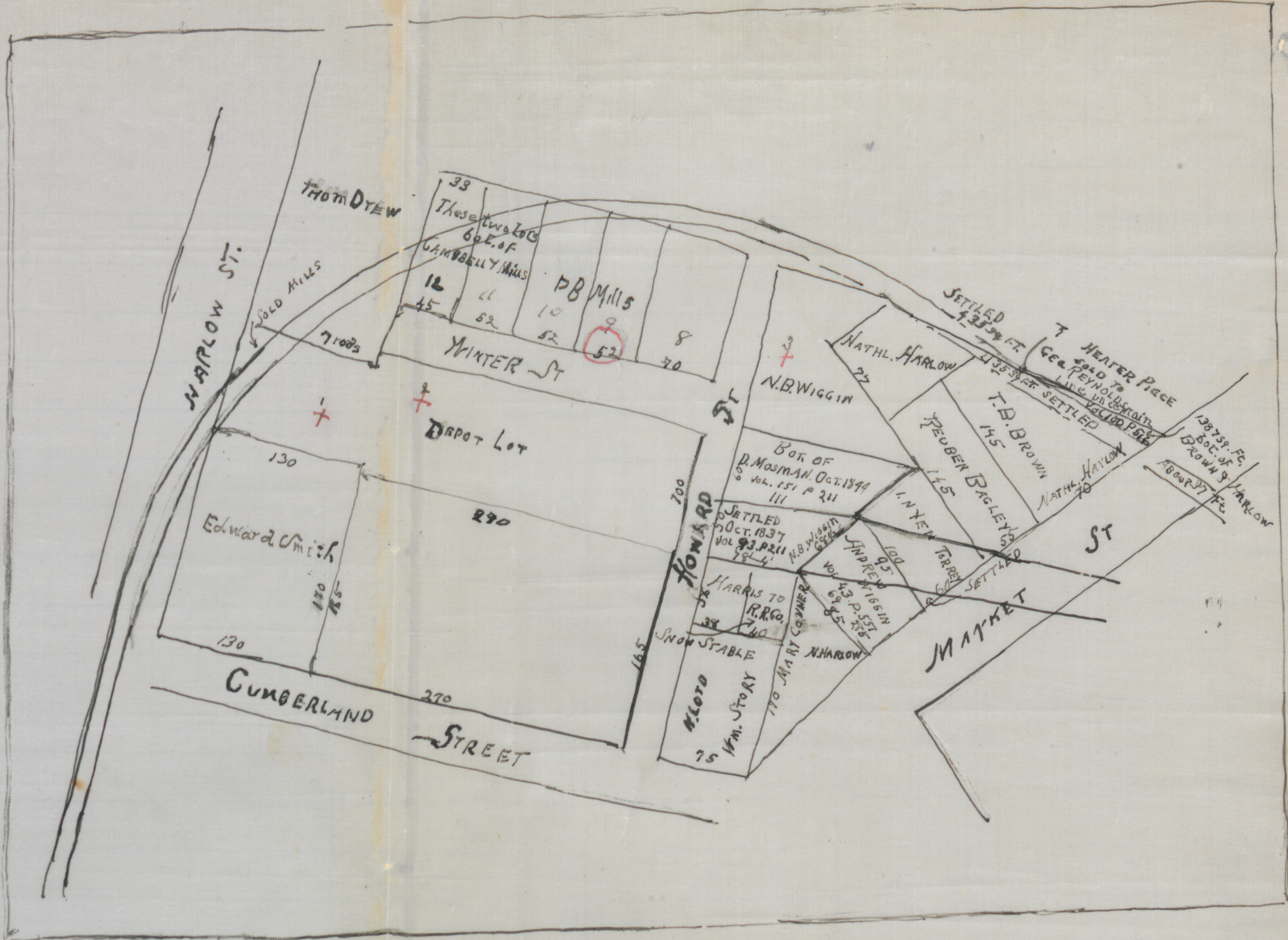
The old well which supplies water to the locomotives is still being used.

(Miss Evans also said that it was not used as drinking water now, although people formerly came from far and near for water for drinking purposes.)

Miss Evans also writes - "I have asked a number of people in regard to the buildings being burned, or made into dwellings or stables and I find, with the exception of one, they were all torn down after the railroad was discontinued. This one was a freight house and stable, and afterwards was turned into a stable." (This does not refer to the "Ticket Office" but to the building on right hand side of Howard St. marked on the plan "Snow Stable.")

Miss Evans is Miss Anna May Evans is the daughter of John Evans, who lives on the right hand side of Howard Lane, lot marked N. B. Wiggin on map.

For note regarding the 4 wheels of the tender of the "Pioneer" the first locomotive, see Sprague's Journal of Main History. Feb.-Apr., 1919. v. 6, p. 176-77.



- + Red cross 1 Old ticket office
 + " " 2 Wells
 + " " 3 House of John Evans
 O " in lot 52 Round house