

PENND RAGON

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

July, 2007

Unadilla Valley Railway
Museum
Monthly Meetings
May thru September --at the
Railroad Museum
October thru April New Berlin
Public Library, Main Street,
New Berlin, NY
Time 7 pm
Next Meeting: Jan. 7th 2008
Annual New Year's Party
Pat Gifford's Home 6:30 pm
9 Lake Street, New Berlin, NY
Program: Railroad Video
TRACKING THE BIG APPLE
Business meeting, refreshments

Dear members of the Unadilla Valley Railway Museum and Society,
It has been a long busy summer getting our Museum into fine shape. When you enter our museum show room you will see the carefully placed signs explaining the many new items. Many artifacts that have been in storage are now properly placed on display, along with newly purchased and generously donated memorabilia. Many volunteer hours of cleaning, restoring, and arranging are visible to our guest. The doors are open with free guided tours every Saturday afternoon from 1 to 5 pm during summer months and by appointment. New Berlin is Celebrating it's Bicentennial this year. We

have had a busy year working with the 2007 Bicentennial Committee. Among the many events we helped with was hosting the big June event in our spacious rooms of our railroad Museum. Several people of railroad heritage were among the participants. The local members worked together to prepare the rooms including some walls and lighting, windows, floors and show cases were all cleaned and pictures were hung in the conference rooms. The main museum rooms were polished up and the displays were carefully cleaned and some rearranged. Several new items were obtained during the past year and proudly displayed.

The following articles were taken from the newspapers before our event...
The Unadilla Valley Railway Society will host author William S. Young, noted Railroad Historian and Author, at its June 9th Open House at the UVRV'S Museum located on Railroad Avenue in the Village of New Berlin. Mr. Young's book, *UV, THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A SMALL RAILROAD*; A Definitive account of the UVRV will be published in early 2008.

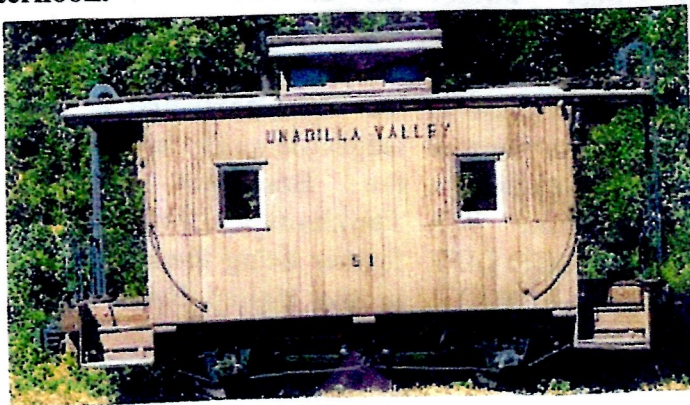
In addition, former local resident, Michael Holdridge will make a presentation of local and shortline railroad history. The public is invited to attend the open house and both presentations. Although Mr. Young resides in Susquehanna, PA he is a life long student and enthusiast about upstate New York railroads. Educated as a journalist, one of his first interests was a small obscure shortline railroad in upstate New York known as the "UV". In an exclusive interview with Mr. Young, he mentioned a mid 1940's ride on the UV between Sidney and New Berlin as his first memory of the local railroad. Mr. Young's book about the Unadilla Valley Railway is not his first about railroading. For many years he was the editor of the popular "Railroading" magazine. He has also edited various railroad publications over the years and is author of a number of railroad books. He is particularly knowledgeable on the history of both the Starrucca, and the Tunkhannock viaducts, the former being the largest bridge in the United States, and the Tunkhannock viaducts, the largest concrete arch bridge in the world. Mr. Young has

appeared at numerous railroad history conventions, meetings, and conferences.

In addition to his presentation he plans to be personally available for much of the afternoon and will answer questions on an informal basis. His presentation will also feature historic slides of the UV as well as other short line railroads. Without giving away parts of Mr. Young's presentation, participant in the June Open House will be pleasantly surprised at the early history of the UV, New Berlin, and local personages.

Mr. Mike Holdridge, formally from New Berlin will be speaking at 3 and will concentrate on the Addison Railroad as well as answer question from the audience. Mike is respected for his vast knowledge of the various railroads and comes here often to be with his parents.

These and other articles and posters about the event drew a crowd that filled our rooms. Approximately 80 people attend the special guest speakers afternoon.

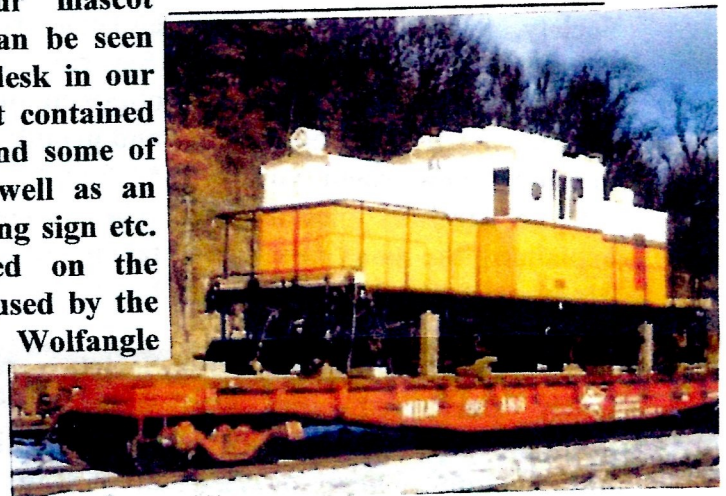


Someday our "Half-Car" may look like this??

Much interest was shown to the scale model Victorian Village of Handmade buildings, created and shown in person by our faithful member The Rev. Ernest E. Clemens. His 7 buildings all made by him included a church, blacksmith shop, barn, tenant house, grocery store and hardware store. One building, the tenant house has over 5,000 hand made shingles on the roof alone.

Ernie continues to be a faithful member of the R R Society and attends the monthly meeting as well as helps with our many projects. Recently he drove his 1928 Model A car in the big New Berlin Days parade with our Museum's float entry. He was assisted by several members and riding in the car with him was our mascot (mannequin) that can be seen at the main office desk in our Museum. The float contained two model trains and some of Ernie's houses as well as an original R R Crossing sign etc. all neatly arranged on the luggage cart, once used by the railroad. George Wolfangle

and Ralph Scopo walked with the display and Don Rickard drove his tractor pulling the entry thru the streets lined with thousands of people waiting now for the siren signal to start. They found their spot among the 80 plus entries and stood proud but did notice a large black cloud coming into our area. The parade started and as our float was approaching the judges stand, lightning came, rain and wind hit and our soaked crew headed with float in tow for the shortest way to the museum. Unlike the previous two years when we were trophy winners, we didn't get a trophy this year. The float and Ernie's car as well as members who participated were drenched by the time they arrived at the station.



Mark January 7th on your calendar and plan on the New Year Meeting at Pat Gifford's home for a night of fun and viewing a good film of the local railroad. This meeting is scheduled for 6:30 P.M. All are Welcome so please show up and start the New Year off right. Pat's phone number is 847-9484. No Reservations are necessary, just come and enjoy planning for the great 2008 year.

Bits and pieces from here and there*****

*From The New Berlin Gazette Dec.7th, 2007 issue under Sixty Years ago- "describing the UV morning train.. There was a bright yellow Katy reefer, a black painted Lackawanna box car various orange fruit cars from the Epee; a brace of milk tanks belonging to Sheffield Farms a pearl-gray Lehigh and New England Cement Hopper and at the end a little red caboose. Taken from Mixed Trains Daily by Lucins Beebe."

**The "half-car" that has been sitting in back of the land near the Museum was recently moved to our property on the rail side after hours of work organized by Ralph Scopo. He along with other members, worked hours getting it ready for the big move. Our good fortune came when two new members, Stan and Steve Sapinski brought their heavy equipment and moved the train to it's currant location. Several years have come and gone while this project seemed too big for anyone. Needless to say Steve and Stan made the project look easy as they do have experience with their heavy equipment. Thank you both.

**Eighty years ago.. From The New Berlin Gazette Nov. 2007 issue "Patrons of the UV are now afforded thru-service to Utica."

**Our oldest member, Milton Moore, now 98 has not missed a meeting in over two years.

**From a small booklet 'BABY RAILROAD' available for \$2.00 at the UVRR Museum.. This soft cover pamphlet of pictures and articles comes the following..."can you remember how many blasts the whistle sounded when backing up or to move forward or when approaching a crossing...hear the mournful whistle... the wafting smoke spiraling up and trailing back and dissipating in the air, the clacking of the wheels as they pass over each rail-joint, the engineer, fireman or brakeman waving as you passed the train or it passed you....and very seldom the later...Did you ever have to wait as the slow moving engine, string of cars and caboose crossed Sweets Crossing?" ...a detailed ride from New Berlin to Bridgewater along with many pictures...makes the stories of business and people and reminiscing so real to us older?? Folks.

**From DAYS ALONG THE BUCKWHEAT & DANDELION by Fred Pugh.. also available at UVRR Museum This approximately 200 pages of wonderful stories and a large number of great photographs on each page and the U & V on the front cover...is a must for a railroad enthusiast as a gift. A few left for only \$45.00.

**A SHORT LINE book written by William Young is on hand for sale.... \$12.00.

***A special invitation to all-- Please fill out the form on the last page and return it to show your support for the future of the UVRS&M. Memberships are needed as well as support donations to continue growing.

**If you have articles of interest that you would like to share, please send them to Pat Gifford, 9 Lake Street in New Berlin, NY, 13411 for our next PENDRAGON.

** William (Bill) Young will have his new book "THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A SMALL RAILROAD available to us to take orders. This is a Definitive account of the Unadilla Valley Railway and will be available to us in the near future.

**Other items available for sale at the Museum are; orange plastic train key chains with UV on for \$1.00, Orange Caps (adjustable size one fits all) with our emblem and name for \$6.00, Orange tee shirts that match the hats for \$12.00.

**Rennie Elliott, Morris NY, sent us snapshots of the UVRR that he purchased over 10 years ago. He said that he liked the action shots rather than the pictures we usually see of equipment sitting "dead" somewhere. Thanks for the five pictures

A Note To Contributors

The Unadilla Valley Railway Museum & Society is a 501(c)3 tax-exempt organization chartered by the New York State Board of Regents. Checks payable to Unadilla Valley Railway Society & Museum may be sent to P.O. Box 751, New Berlin, NY 13411.

**A special thanks to Mr. William Beardslee for writing several articles and his correspondence in helping with the big event of 2007, our OPEN HOUSE. His help with the newspaper coverage, letters to our guest speakers and knowledge of the New Berlin Railroad's past has been extremely helpful. Mr. Beardslee is a well known Historian from our area. He and his wife Nancy live in Fort Collins, Colorado for most of the year. They do come to their home in New Berlin while on vacations. William continues to practice law, and also occasionally teaches American History at the University of Northern Colorado. The local history column is published weekly in the GAZETTE and has been written by him since 1997. Once a year he writes a serious history article in a selected historic journal. We feel proud to have "Bill" as a member of our Society.

**Since 1995 we have 118 members paying at least one year of dues. We want to update our membership and would appreciate hearing from you. If you no longer want to receive the Pen-dragon please let us know as well. See the form in this news letter.

**Work continues at our Round House on Saturdays. Bushes, trees, grass etc. have been removed and the yard is looking much better. Plans for renovation are on hold as we need more funds to restore the wonderful historical building where the UV once turned around in New Berlin. Some recent work volunteers include Sam Senn, Ralph Scopo, Don Rickard, Ernie Clemens and Milton Moore.

**Our newest members, Stan and Steve Sapinski were recently written up in the local newspaper for their generous donation of moving the "Half Car". They are in the Excavation, salvage and refuge hauling business. Their phone number is 607-847-9292. Call them if you need help.

Wrecked Engine Won't Budge, Track Built Around It

Binghamton Press Bureau

Thanks to Renee Elliott for this article written February 1948

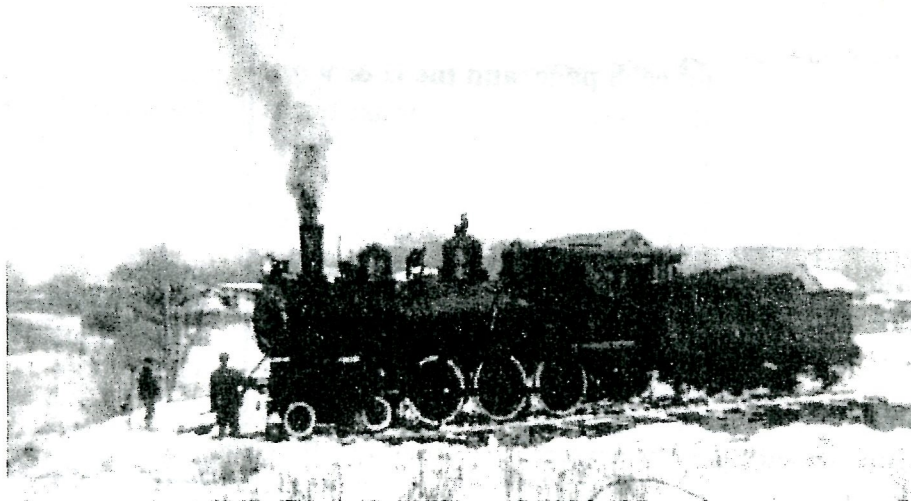
Norwich-- A Unadilla Valley Railroad diesel engine derailed at 2 a.m. Saturday at South New Berlin, still was resting crossways on the tracks this morning.

A derailed box car and cabooses have been removed. Workmen worked all day Saturday and Sunday at the scene of the wreck to open the tracks for traffic.

Roy Reidenbach, Superintendent, said a track is being built around the derailed engine and that traffic between East Guilford and New Berlin will be resumed tomorrow.

He said the cause of the accident is undetermined but that it probably was caused by ice on the crossing at South New Berlin.

No one was injured in the wreck.



July 9th 2007

Interesting note from William S. Young

A little-known fact about New Berlin's past is just how long ago it was that railroad construction first took place in the village. The Unadilla Valley Railway reached New Berlin in 1895, the New York & Oswego Midland arrived in 1870, and a group led by prominent citizen Horace O. Moss tried without success to charter a rail company in 1865. But there was an attempt made to build a railroad even before that.

During the 1830's New York was swept for the first time by railroad fever. A number of charters were sought, few of them met with success. One plan that did succeed was for a line across the Southern Tier counties, from the Hudson to Lake Erie. The New York & Erie Railroad was chartered for this purpose in 1832. The next day a charter was granted to a company called the Utica & Susquehanna, to build a line from Utica to a connection with the New York & Erie. This was done when no east-west rail route through Utica had yet been chartered and even the Chenango Canal was still waiting for approval.

The Utica & Susquehanna began selling stock in 1834. When its directors met in Utica on April 7, 1835, they chose a president and a chief engineer, and also acted on a proposal from the village trustees of New Berlin offering the railroad a right of way down Main Street.

The directors named a two-man committee to pursue the matter, Augustus C. Welch and Joseph Morse. Welch was a leading citizen of New Berlin, a merchant, had recently moved to the village from White Store.

A week after the directors' meeting on April 15th 1835, Joseph Morse supervised the surveying of a short part of the line on South Main Street in New Berlin, by civil engineer Henry J. Sexton. To hold the franchise, a few feet of wooden rails were laid down at once; they were supposed to be topped with iron later on. Engineer Sexton was paid \$25 for this job, and an axeman was paid \$1. During the next year part of the railroad's proposed route out of Utica was surveyed by Joseph D. Allen, a native of Burlington.

The New York & Erie broke ground at Deposit six months later, but its construction forces did not reach the Susquehanna Valley until the mid-1840s. By then its intended connection, the Utica & Susquehanna, was only a memory. The token bit of railroad construction at New Berlin in 1835 was the first for miles around and the last in the neighborhood for another 35 years.

When the UV Railway opened in 1895, 87-year-old Horace Moss, as a leading supporter, rode in a carriage during the inaugural parade. That day he told people about the token laying of wooden rails that had taken place at New Berlin 60 years before.

Had a railroad actually been built down Main Street, it would long since have become a hazard to motor traffic.

William S. Young

Unadilla Valley Railway Museum and Society

Membership Form

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail address _____

Single Member.....\$15.00 per year.....()

Family Member...\$25.00 per year.....()

Life Membership..\$150.00.....()

Donation only.....\$ _____

All renewals received thru January 2008 will cover you for the year 2008. A membership card along with the Pendragon publications will be sent to you. The next membership drive will be in 2009. All memberships paid during the 2007 year will cover you, as your membership card shows.

The UVRM is a 501 © 3 tax exempt organization chartered by the N/AS board of Regents and is tax free.

Send to: Don Rickard, Secretary-Treasurer at 1188 Butternut Road, Unadilla, NY 13849 or UVRM PO Box 751, New Berlin, NY 13411



OUR FAMOUS "HALF-CAR"
Left to right; Milton Moore, Don Rickard, Stan Sapinski, Steve Sapinski, Ralph Scopo, in front is George Wolfangle

Unadilla Valley Railway Officers
President George Wolfangle
Vice President Sam Senn
Director Pat Gifford
Cor. Sec'y Rev. Ernest Clemens
Secretary-Treasurer Don Rickard
Recently added Trustee Ralph Scopo