

THE PENDRAGON

Vol 30, No 1

Jan-Mar 2020

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

(From the December 7, 1910, edition of the Brookfield Courier)

Dec. 5.—The Unadilla Valley Railroad Company is preparing for the winter season and is making some notable additions to its equipment. With wise forethought the officials have added to the rolling stock a new snow



plow and flanger which has arrived at the yards of the company in New Berlin and will be placed in commission shortly [pictured above]. It was purchased from the Russell Snow Plow Company of Ridgeway, Pa., and is an imposing piece of mechanism. Staunchly constructed and a model of its kind, having many modern improvements and being operated by air pressure. Its weight is 50,000 pounds, and the cost we are informed was somewhat in excess of \$2,500. Those who have inspected it are not slow to express their admiration, and believe that it will prove effective in its contention with the snow drifts. Superintendent Perkins is as proud of the acquisition as a boy with a new sled, and his pride is fully justified. Before long the big snow plow will be run over the road, not because its services are needed just at present, but on a trial trip to show the people that the road is armed and equipped with essential facilities for the emergencies that may be expected. The railroad company is giving a demonstration of its ability to "do things." It has given us a fine new depot. Improvements are being steadily effected, and succeed each other so rapidly that one is no sooner noticed than something else demands attention. This week we are promised a new lamp outside the station which will shed its welcome beams in all directions and light the pathway of the traveler across the railroad tracks in safety on the darkest night. Superintendent Perkins says that in due time a lighting system similar to that used in our public places uptown may be installed in the depot, and is now in contemplation in the way of future betterments. All these facts are gladly mentioned for they go to prove that the company is looking out for the interests of its patrons and losing sight of no detail, however slight, that may contribute to the public comfort and convenience. Engine No. 1 will be taken to the locomotive works at Rome this week for a general overhauling. Number 2 will do its work while it is in process of repair, and the business of the road is now more prosperous than at any previous period of its history.

Up and Down the Tracks

*** We have a new member of our organization, Howard Zendle, of Vestal NY. He attended the program in October on the Southern NY Railroad and joined as a Fireman after that. Welcome Aboard, Howard.

*** According to our new By Laws, adopted in October, we will hold an Annual Meeting during April and elect new officers. Watch this space for details.

*** Moving? If you have a change of address, please let us know so we don't waste postage by sending your Pendragon and other mailings to the wrong address.

*** Did you know that you can leave part of your estate to the Unadilla Valley Railway Society & Museum by making your wishes known in your will? Talk with your attorney.

*** Talk to us: send email to UVRs@STNY.RR.COM

*** Be safe as you maneuver up & down the tracks this winter.

*** Do you have a question about the UV? We now have an 'Ask the Expert' section and would be glad to try to find an answer to your question. Send it us by email to uvrs@stny.rr.com or by snail-mail to UVRs&M Ask the Expert, PO Box 751, New Berlin NY 13411. And look for the answer in a future Pendragon.

*** **On the back cover:** This is the Unadilla Valley Railway Station at New Berlin. The time is probably from about 1960.

If you have pictures, videos, stories or memories of the UV Railroad, we'd like a copy of them. If we could borrow the photos, we'll scan them in and add them to our picture data base. If you have memories, please write them down and send them to our email address: uvrs@stny.rr.com .

Thank you for recent presentations



October 19: Paul Straney presented "The SNY RR at West Oneonta" at the regular monthly meeting of the UVRs&M at the First United Methodist Church

November 16: Tom DeForest reprised "The Salzberg Companies" at the regular meeting of the UVRs&M at the First United Methodist Church.

December 21: A number of us enjoyed the UV Christmas Party at the home of Alan Fairbrother. Thanks to Alan for hosting it.



Timetable — Schedule of upcoming events

Thu	Jan 2	1:00	Board Meeting	FUMC
Thu	Feb 6	1:00	Board Meeting	FUMC
Thu	Mar 5	1:00	Board Meeting	FUMC
Sat	Mar 21	1:00	Program Meeting Topic and speaker TBA	FUMC

Notes:

FUMC: First United Methodist Church, 51 So Main, New Berlin NY 13411 (park in back. The FUMC is handicapped accessible)

UVRs&M: UVRs&M Museum, 10 Railroad St, New Berlin NY 13411

TBA: to be announced

Check our web site at www.uvrs.org for meeting details and late changes.

Recent Donations

- A set of six silver UV Railway buttons from Katherine Kern of Soulsbyville CA. Her late husband lived in Mt. Upton and was always interested in the UV railroad. Thank you, Kathy, for donating the buttons to the museum.

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UV Locomotives #6 (second) and #7 (second)

Locomotive #6 (second)

As mentioned in the previous installment, UV (Unadilla Valley Railway) locomotives #4 and #5 were somewhat challenged by their limited ability to carry enough coal and water to make the run from New Berlin to Bridgewater and back. Accommodation had been made to slightly increase their coal capacity, but their performance was barely adequate.

However, in 1941 the Salzberg's, now owner of the UV, arranged to purchase the New Berlin branch of the NYO&W (New York, Ontario & Western), effectively doubling the length of the line. As part of the purchase, the UV also acquired a locomotive from the NYO&W, their #272 (which will be covered in a subsequent installment) to supplement the current motive roster. Within two months, the US became embroiled in World War II. The country shifted to a wartime economy. Agriculture products from the Unadilla Valley were needed for the war effort, and shipping on the UV exploded, with tonnage passing over the line doubling between 1940 and 1942.

The increased traffic sorely taxed the three legacy locomotives on the line, #1 (Pendragon), #4 and #5. Even the addition of #272 did not ease the shortage, as the aging locomotives tended to break down frequently. As the owners of the line were in the scrap business, other used locomotives showed up on the line from time to time, but none proved adequate to the needs of the line. After



NYO&W locomotive #42 in South New Berlin in early 1943.

several of the UV locomotives were out of commission with various woes, the UV was forced to rent a locomotive from the NYO&W, their #42, which operated on the UV for over a month in early 1943. Traffic on the line only continued to increase as the war progressed, and by 1944, the UV was forced to purchase two locomotives to supplement their current roster.

The first locomotive purchased was a used Baldwin Locomotive Works 62-Ton "Ten-Wheeler" type 4-6-0 engine, with 56" driving wheels. The builder's number was 37051, and it had been built in 1911. Originally destined for a Mexican railroad, it was instead diverted to the Tampa & Jacksonville (later Jacksonville, Gainesville & Gulf) Railroad, where it served as their #60. After that railroad was dissolved, it was sold to the UV, where it was renumbered as UV #6.



#6 under steam in the New Berlin yard.

#6 was re-lettered for the UV and quickly put into service. The traffic on the UV was at its peak, but this was not to last, as WW II ended in September, 1945. Thereafter, traffic started to fall off, and it was not long before #4, #5, #1 and #272 were retired, leaving #6 and #7 (more on this locomotive next) as the main motive power on the line.



#6 on the turntable at New Berlin Junction. The turntable was manually operated, and required a bit of muscle turn a locomotive, especially in winter.



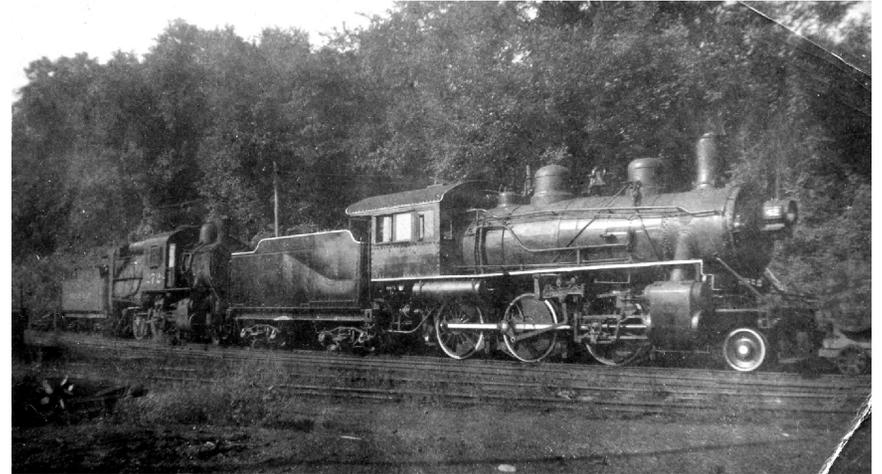
#6 under steam on the main line. Its glory days would be brief, as within 3 years it would be replaced with a pair of 70-Ton G.E. diesel engines, #100 and #200.



On a cold April day in 1956 #6 is towed out of the UV yard behind diesel #200. It would be joined by locomotive #7 on its way to the smelter in Buffalo.

#6 would soldier on for a few more years as backup to the new diesels, alongside #7. #6 made the last steam run on the UV in March of 1956. Just a month later #6 and #7, their boilers cold, would be ignominiously towed off the UV, destined for the smelters of Bethlehem Steel in Buffalo.

Locomotive #7 (second)



#7 in the New Berlin yard. Though it arrived in November, 1944, it would take six months to get the engine into service on the line. In this picture, it has not yet been lettered or numbered for the UV.

As recounted, in 1941 the UV acquired the New Berlin branch of the NYO&W. Even with the addition of locomotive #272, acquired from the NYO&W, the aging fleet of locomotives of the UV were not up to the task of handling increasing traffic over a line that had now doubled in size. When two of their locomotives went out of service in early 1943, they were forced to rent a locomotive from the NYO&W. That locomotive, NYO&W #42, had been replaced in the Sidney yard by a diesel locomotive just the year before, and was surplus to the needs of the NYO&W. A year and a half later, when the UV decided to acquire two locomotives to supplement their locomotive roster, the NYO&W was glad to sell them #42.

NYO&W had purchased #42 new from the Baldwin Locomotive Works. It was a 84-ton NYO&W type "1" 2-6-0 engine, with 63" driving wheels. Builder's number was 30638, it had been built in 1907. It was delivered to the UV in November of 1944, but due to several mishaps, it did not enter service until Summer of 1945. As with #6, it would serve two short years before two new diesels arrived on the line to replace the venerable steam. Both #6 & #7 were kept as backup, but the prohibitive cost to maintain the two aging locomotives was too much for the UV, which was struggling with diminishing revenues, and had no pennies to spare.

Finally, in April of 1956, #6 and #7 made a last journey to Bridgewater, and from there on to Buffalo via Richfield Junction, and the smelters of Bethlehem Steel.

— Paul Straney



#7 on its way up to Edmeston, with a single boxcar and caboose in tow.



By the mid-50's, #7's tender was repurposed on the line, and the locomotive sat by itself in the yard. Local children enjoyed playing on it.

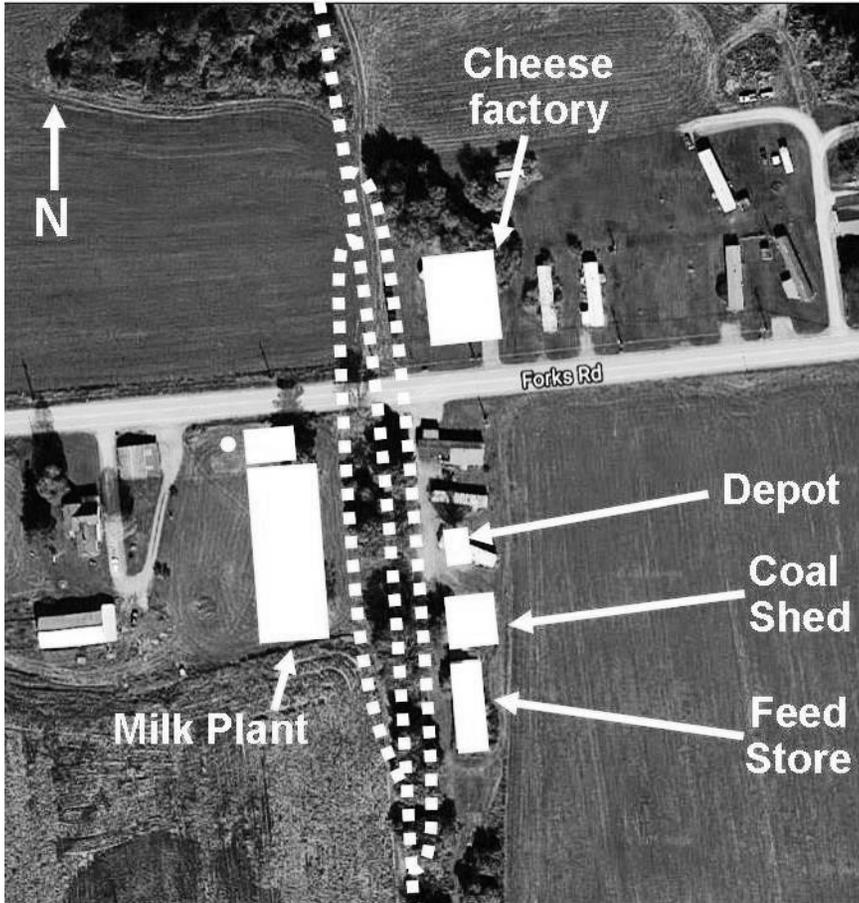


#7 pulls a string of cars on the line. #7 was light enough to be able to operate anywhere on the UV, but powerful enough to pull a long string of cars at a good speed. It was probably as close as possible to being an ideal locomotive for operations on the UV.



#6 & #7 at Richfield Junction, waiting to be picked up and towed to the scrapyards in Buffalo.

The Unadilla Valley Railway at River Forks



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This map shows the location of the top map — on Forks Road between NY-8 on the left and the hamlet of Unadilla Forks on the right.

Figure A at the right clearly shows that there once was a siding to the left of the mainline for the milk plant (which is left of the track). The milk plant burned down in 1933 and was not replaced. Since a later diagram and topographic map from the 1940s show only a siding to the right, it is likely that the siding to the milk plant was removed after the building was gone. On the right is the Watkins Feed store (which is still there) and the Matteson Coal Shed (which is gone). Beyond them is the depot. This view is from the south looking north.



Figure B at the right shows the depot on the left of the locomotive, one of the smallest on the UV line, with the coal shed behind it. To the right of the locomotive is the milk plant. The depot still stands, but has been moved north across the road to a neighbor's yard where it is now used for storage. This view is roughly from the north looking south.



Figure C is the cheese factory which was located on the north side of the road east of the tracks. It was built about 1903 by the Unadilla Forks Dairy Company and was later purchased by the Phenix Cheese company. This building burned in 1922 or 1923 and was not replaced.



Sources: "Unadilla Forks Remembered" by Jerry Jones, 2017, and "Days Along the Buckwheat & Dandelion" by Fred Pugh, 3rd printing. — Tom DeForest

Ask The Experts

Question: Why was the UV station at Unadilla Forks called 'River Forks'?

The short answer is that the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western (DL&W) Railroad already had a station called Unadilla Forks. It would cause confusion to have two different stations, on two different railroads, with the same name. So the UV, being the latecomer, picked a different name, River Forks.

The longer answer is much more interesting. It turns out that the Utica, Chenango and Susquehanna built a branch line from Utica to Bridgewater to Richfield Springs in 1869. The UC&RS leased the line to the DL&W in 1870. The track didn't actually go into Unadilla Forks but passed about two miles north of town. But it was close enough that someone thought it would be a good idea to put a station on the line called Unadilla Forks even though the stop would be two miles north of town.

On the large map on the opposite page, the DL&W tracks and the Unadilla Forks depot are shown on the upper right. The hamlet of Unadilla Forks is actually at the very bottom of the map and the UVs River Forks depot is just to the left of that. Note that the Unadilla Forks depot is actually much closer to Bridgewater than it is to Unadilla Forks.

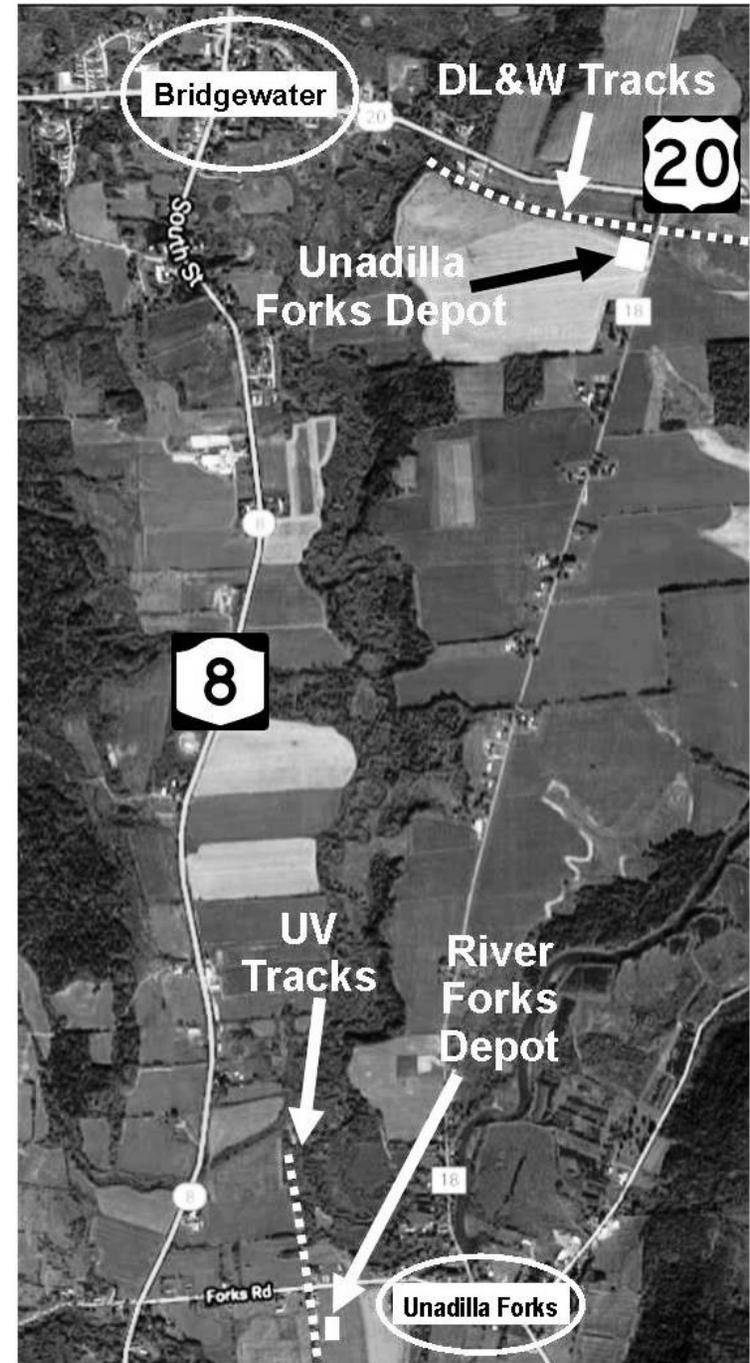


Above is a picture of the actual Unadilla Forks depot. The building still stands and is now used as a private home. The Unadilla Forks sign still hangs over the door on the right.

To make things more interesting, in 1902 the DL&W petitioned the state Board of Railroad Commissioners to abandon the station at Unadilla Forks. The decision was reached that the station could be closed as long as a siding remained for receiving and discharging carloads of freight. So a siding remained and the station was closed in 1902. The UVs station name remained River Forks.

Now you know why the UV station was called River Forks.

Sources: "Unadilla Forks Remembered" by Jerry Jones, 2019, "DL&W History" in Wikipedia. — *Tom DeForest*



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The UV Store

The Life and Times of a Small Railroad, by William S. Young, 2009, 120 pages. A definitive account of the UV Railway. \$30.

Index to Fred Pugh's "Days Along the Buckwheat & Dandelion", by Lee Stone. 11 pages, hundreds of entries. \$6, free shipping.

The Story of the Unadilla Valley Railroad as Told in Newspaper Articles, by Tom DeForest, 2016. 330 articles from over 50 newspapers. 105 pages, includes a 9-page index. \$25.

Topographic Maps of the UV, 29 pages of maps of the whole UV system in full color with a binder, \$20. (Shipping for this item is \$14).

UV & Related Photos. We have put together a set of 32 photos of UV rolling stock, buildings and scenes. These are beautiful, suitable for framing, available for purchase at \$5 each. Find details on our web site: www.uvrs.org, then click on PHOTOS.

Cat's Meow figure of the UV #200 locomotive. Wood, 7" wide, 3.5" high, brand new, \$20. (NOTE: this is not related to the Cat's Meow store in Sherburne NY).

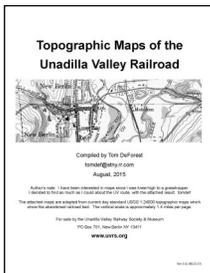
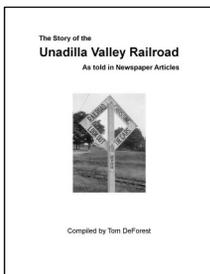
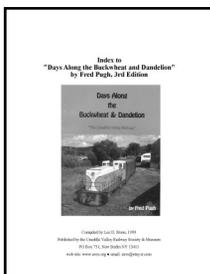
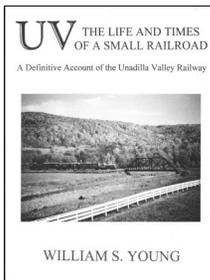
Note Cards of UV Rolling Stock and buildings. \$5 for set of 5 different images. 4 different sets are available (20 different images total).

Orange **UV Hat with logo**, one size fits all, \$12.

(\$4 shipping additional for most items. Add 8% NY sales tax if shipped to a NY address. See our web site for details).

We have a number of articles and reprints for sale. Most are \$3 each. Check our web site: www.uvrs.org.

All of these items can be available at any meeting of the UVR Society. Call Sandy Kilmer, UV Storekeeper, at 607-548-7007.



Unadilla Valley Railway Society & Museum Membership Form

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone () _____

e-mail address _____

Membership Categories:

- Conductor, \$250 / year Fireman, \$50 / year
 Engineer, \$100 / year Brakeman, \$20 / year
 ____ Add'l family members at same address, \$5 each / yr
 Donation \$ _____ **Total enclosed:** \$ _____

A list of member names and categories will be published annually. If you would prefer **not** to be included, please check here:

Dues for new members who join after July 1st cover all of the following calendar year.

Dues are payable on January 1st of each year. Keep your membership up to date to receive copies of our Pendragon newsletter and invitations to all of our meetings and special events.

Make payable to UVRS&M, PO Box 751, New Berlin NY 13411

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The Pendragon is the official publication of the Unadilla Valley Railway Society and Museum. This newsletter is published quarterly by and for the membership. Correspondence on regional railroad history is welcomed. Articles will be considered for future publication in these pages. If you have received this newsletter as a courtesy, please consider joining. Inquiries should be sent to the UVRS&M, PO Box 751, New Berlin NY 13411 or by e-mail to UVRS@stny.rr.com.

The Unadilla Valley Railway Society & Museum was founded in 1995 with headquarters in New Berlin, New York. Since 1995 the organization has held a provisional charter under the New York State Education Department. The Society is a non-profit organization under 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code. Contributions of funds and items, as well as volunteer mileage, may be deductible on your income tax depending on your tax situation.

The Unadilla Valley Railway Society and Museum depends on your support as members, contributors and helpers in other ways. We very much appreciate all of your contributions.

Page 19

