

# **THE PENDRAGON**

Vol 30, No 2

Apr-Jun 2020

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

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## **Did You Know???**

Did you know that at least one piece of former UV rolling stock still exists? It's the old UV Bobber Caboose #51. It has been restored and is now on display at the Delaware & Ulster Railroad station in Arkville NY.

In 1906, the New York, Ontario & Western (O&W) Railroad built 4-wheel caboose #8206. In 1924, the O&W sold this caboose to the UV, which renumbered it to UV #51. The UV sold it to someone on Long Island in 1941. The Delaware & Ulster Railroad Historical Society in Arkville acquired it in 1983 and restored it to O&W #8206 in 1988. It has been on display there since (shown below).

Some folks of the UVRS&M are thinking about planning a road trip to go visit our old caboose some time this summer. We'd love to have you join us. Watch our web site for details.



## Up and Down the Tracks

\*\*\* Life member G. William (Bill) Beardslee passed away on Feb 1. Bill and his wife, Nancy, lived in Colorado. We send deepest condolences to his family.

\*\*\* We have a new member, Sandy Jones. Sandy lives in Morris and rejoins us after an absence of a few years. Welcome Back, Sandy.

\*\*\* Welcome to our newest Sponsor: NYCM Insurance of Edmeston NY. See information about them on page 13.

\*\*\* We have a query from member Joel Normal who is interested in communicating with anyone about modeling the UV Railroad. If you would be interested in an email exchange, an online forum, or phone calls about modeling the UV, send us an email at [uvrs@stny.rr.com](mailto:uvrs@stny.rr.com).

\*\*\* On Thursday, May 14th, we held our Annual Meeting and elected board members via conference call. We now have two new board members: Denny Hoxie and Sandy Jones. We'll elect officers from the board members at our next meeting, either regular meeting or conference call in June or July. WEL-COE Denny Hoxie and Sandy Jones to the board.

\*\*\* 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](mailto:UVRS@STNY.RR.COM)

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

\*\*\* 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](mailto: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:

The locomotive pictured on the back cover is an 'NW2'. This is UV #113, acquired from the New York, Ontario & Western (O&W) Railroad in 1957 and used as backup to UV #200. See the whole story starting on page 4 of this issue.

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](mailto:uvrs@stny.rr.com) .

## Timetable — Schedule of upcoming events

**ALL EVENTS ARE CANCELED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. AS SOON AS THIS CHANGES, INFORMATION WILL BE POSTED ON OUR WEB SITE: [www.uvrs.org](http://www.uvrs.org)**

### 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

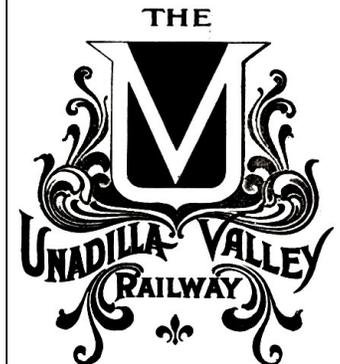
Check our web site at [www.uvrs.org](http://www.uvrs.org) for meeting details and late changes.

## Recent Donations

- We have received a number of train-related books and magazines from member Harold Rodman. We'll be sorting through these and adding them to the UV library or have some of them to sell to anyone interested. Thank You, Harold, for the donation.

## Leaders & \*Board Members

\*President.....Paul Straney  
\*Vice President.....Glady Slentz  
\*Secretary .....Edna Straney  
\*Treasurer..... (Paul Straney, acting)  
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Correspondence.....Glady Slentz  
Pendragon Editor.....Tom DeForest  
Website & Publications.....Tom DeForest  
Website.....[www.uvrs.org](http://www.uvrs.org)



## ***The Unadilla Valley Railway Had Expansion in Mind***

It was the summer of 1958, I was 9 years old and living in West Edmeston, NY. The Unadilla Valley Railway passed through the West edge of town, and by now ran only several times a week, and usually ran on Saturday too.

This particular Saturday morning was no different than the others and the train trundled through town, running North, to Bridgewater, where it left empty box-cars and empty coal hopper cars at the Delaware Lackawanna & Western Railroad interchange. It will return with coal and feed and other supplies, which could also include a flatcar or two of farm machinery to be delivered in Edmeston in the Wharton Valley, or New Berlin or Mt. Upton, in the Unadilla Valley, or any combination.

Well, as I went about my day, I'd completely forgotten about the train, and didn't notice that it hadn't returned from Bridgewater.

Much later on in that quiet Saturday afternoon, to the distant North, I began hearing the familiar noises of the train's clackity-clacking over the rails, getting louder and louder as it approached, which snapped me back to attention.... and now it was my main interest again. I really needed to go watch the train and see what was going on.

I couldn't get a clear view of the train from my house, because the houses across the street pretty much obscured the view, except for one narrow spot between the Belden's and Mrs. Tice's, where I got a glance at the UV's locomotive #200 which briefly came into view, moving very slowly with what was seemingly a pretty big freight, (by UV standards).

Happy because of the slow speed of the train, I had an ample amount of time to reach my favored location to view the train up close, like I always liked to do when I could.

So it was down the stairs (as I lived over Holdridge's Store), jumped off the porch, scooted to the corner, crossed the side street, and ran up the road at a faster pace, as I reached and started crossing the Unadilla River bridge. At that point, I quickly turned my head right and looked off my right shoulder as I ran, taking a fast view across the river dam and pond, to see the locomotive showing just above the cattails, while breaking the bend for its final approach to the county road crossing that I was running on. Those railroad tracks crossed the county road, after clearing the Milk Station, on the side hill, which was directly



*Above is West Ed circa 1910-20. By 1958, not much had changed except for the trees and the cars. I would have been standing down left in the foreground.*



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across from the Ice House I was closing in on. The closed West Edmeston Station, was just across the highway on the South side of the road.

At this point, the train disappeared from my sight, as my view of the train was blocked by the old Ice House, (which became a big storage barn for farm equipment after icing years passed).

As I continued to run off the West side of the bridge, I now had just moments left for me to find a good place to stand and watch the train pass by. My perfect spot ended up being the middle of a road which went between the river and the train station, which ran down to the feed store. The road was reasonably safe to stand on as the feed store closed at noon on Saturday.

And, there I stood. Perfectly framing the anticipated view between the Ice House in the foreground, and the Milk Station on the hill rise in the background, with the railroad tracks splitting the space between them and passing South, by the far side of the station.



*In a similar scene to the one I witnessed, UV #200 passes between the Milk Station and the Ice House in West Ed.*

In just moments the UV locomotive #200 presented itself, pulling a boxcar and another boxcar and then,.... to my great surprise, one New York Ontario & Western Railroad EMD, NW-2 locomotive showed itself, then a boxcar, and then, My Gosh.... a second O&W NW-2 locomotive made its appearance, then another boxcar, and then, Holy Smokes ..... a third NYO&W NW-2 locomotive became visible, in all of its immense size and glory! This whole affair had just rumbled past before my unbelieving eyes, and my head was spinning from what I'd just seen.

That was three O&W switching Locomotives #'s 111, 112 & 113, all coupled into one train, interspersed between boxcars, and no less, punctuated by an ex-O&W caboose to boot, which already belonged to the UV Railway (having been purchased from the O&W RR some years before), trailing along on the end of this overwhelming sight. I mean it. After that scene disappeared from my sight, I walked home in sort of a daze, just stunned at what I had witnessed.

Being age 9 at the time, it was many years before I knew the reason these three big 1000 Hp locomotives came to the Unadilla Valley Railroad, (by comparison, the UV RR Locomotive #200 was a small 70 ton, 600 Hp unit).

## **R.P.I.** Appraisal

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*barbara185@rocketmail.com*

From what I've learned, and have heard and discussed with other UV railroad folks, the owners of the Unadilla Valley Railway company, the H. E. Salzberg Co., desired a link from New Berlin Junction (East Guilford, NY) to Sidney, NY, to connect with the Delaware & Hudson Railroad, and also to reach to Norwich, NY, for connection with the DL&W RR. The very recently abandoned but still-intact O&W rail line between Sidney, NY, and Norwich, NY, with the connection to the Unadilla Valley Railway Company, which already at New Berlin Junction.

As understood, these three ex-O&W NW-2 locomotives, built by the Electro-Motive Division of General Motors for the NYO&W, were purchased by the UV with the express reason to operate on the not-yet-acquired ("Southwestern Division" if you will), for a possible expansion of the Unadilla Valley Railway.

It was an interesting idea, but it never materialized in the end, and the three O&W locomotives harbored in the UV rail yard, unused, in New Berlin.

These 3 O&W units were actually rail yard switchers that were also designed as over the road multi-duty functional locomotives for main line use. Each of these 3 "Beasts" weighed 123 tons and had a 1000 Hp diesel, where the UV #200, built by General Electric's locomotive division, in Erie PA., weighed in at 70 tons and had a 600 Hp diesel under its hood.



Here is #113 as delivered to the O&W from General Motors EMD.

UV #200 did a remarkably good job on the Unadilla Valley Railway, and this was clearly illustrated, as after their arrival to the Unadilla Valley rail line, #200, and its twin, #100, were able to move a stable of steam engines onto retirement on the dead line track, in a short time.

In addition to their efficiency and the railroad's specific business profile, they discovered that operations could be handled by a single diesel locomotive. So with the need for only one, UV #100 was sent to another Salzberg owned shortline, the Des Moines & Central Iowa Railway, early on in UV #100s history. From that point on, UV #200 was the sole power on the UV Railway for many years.

This is where the story takes a big twist.

It was actually a very good thing that these ex-O&W switchers were on UV property, as a week before the Christmas of 1958, through the many years of



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dependable service, UV #200 broke its crankshaft. It was a major and lengthy repair putting it out of service for just shy of two whole months. I remember this when not seeing any trains for over a week. Empty cars on the line, shipments waiting for delivery, that were sitting at Bridgewater junction, all this was going to start costing the UV railroad money. Why all this wait? Well, as it turned out, there was no wait at the UV railroad shop in New Berlin. They just went out to the line up of NW-2s, selected a unit, which happened to be O&W #113, got it into the shop, did mechanical work to make it operational, from being a stored unit, and as they were doing that, they also cleaned, prepped it, and removed that big red metal O&W herald from the front of the locomotive, and painted out the O&W scheme, while applying a bright Salzberg railroad paint job of Orange and Cream with black trim (see the back cover of this Pendragon).

Please note too, for all of its service on the UV railroad, as fill-in power for UV #200, it was never lettered, or numbered for operation. With this locomotion problem solved, another problem arose that could not be overlooked. It was UV #113's hefty weight. Remember, UV #200, 70 tons, UV #113, 123 tons.

This 53 ton increase in one locomotive, was not the best news for an old light weight 70 lb. rail system that filled the UV rail yard, and the original UV Railway line, from New Berlin to Bridgewater, which included all switch sidings in between, and the wye at Bridgewater. Now, that being said, the rails that connected Edmeston to New Berlin, including the old New Berlin O&W Yard, (yes there were 2 railroad yards in New Berlin before 1957), and the entire rail line from New Berlin to New Berlin Junction, where the UV Ry connected with the NYO&W railroad when it was in operation, was a heavier 84 lb rail.

To recall, this branch of the O&W, New Berlin Jct. at East Guilford, NY, to Edmeston, NY, was purchased in 1941 from the O&W, (a Class 1 railroad), by the UV Railway, (a small shortline railroad), as the O&W deemed it a money loser for them, but was then operated by the UV Ry until its demise in 1960.



*ex--O&W 113, painted in Salzberg orange & cream operating on the Unadilla Valley Railway. The shot shows the quonset building behind the locomotive, which means this photo is the old O&W rail yard in New Berlin, NY. The train is heading South out of town towards Mt. Upton.*

So, UV #113 was pressed into service as soon as the paint dried, to keep rail operations as regular as possible for its customers. UV #113 had an advantage on the old original O&W Edmeston to New Berlin Jct. connection because of the heavier 84 lb. rail used. A no-problem situation, became a problem though, when it came to the connection from the O&W yard up and across Route 80 to




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the Unadilla Valley's rail yard. That's when things got a bit dicey. UV #113 began causing a lot of trouble by snapping track pretty much everywhere, on this light 70 lb. rail, which kept the UV Ry track gang more than busy while it filled in for UV #200.

As mentioned previously, UV's Southwestern expansion never materialized and the hefty switchers became useless surplus to the UV Railway Co., and all three NW-2's left the Unadilla Valley by rail, on March 21st, 1959, again on a Saturday, and the same way they arrived, (very slowly). The worst part of this event was, even though it was on a Saturday, I never got to see it. This time I have no clue where I was, I just know I would not have missed it if I'd been home in West Ed.



*It was nice to see them arrive... but sad, (as shown as above), to see them depart. Having just passed from Chenango to Madison County, #200 has just crossed Yaw Bridge road, creeping North with the NW-2s in tow, again interspersed between boxcars as it heads to Bridgewater, the first step in their trip to their new home with the Rock Island Line. The photographer is standing on the Yaw Bridge, which still remains, but has been closed to traffic for years.*

All three locomotives were sold to the Rock Island railroad, and were put right to work there.

Well, here we are, but it's still not quite the end of the story...

It is known from photographs, and railfan talk, that the UV colors of orange & cream lived on for a while in the Rock Island Railroad yards. As UV #113 was to be put right into service on arrival, the Rock Island paint shop quickly repainted just the engineer's cab... in black, and then applied the new RI assigned number, along with an RI emblem, to each side of the engineer's cab, under the side windows... But, that big hood that covered that 1000 Hp. diesel engine out front, remained in the UV colors of orange & cream with black trim for a noticeable length of time while the Rock Island yard crews and railfans of the era took notice and were drawn to the bright and unusual color scheme on the hood. Eventually the locomotive was completely repainted in a standard reddish brown Rock Island yard color. Then, with the bright specialty painted away, it became just another NW-2 yard switcher. (Continued on page 14)

## The impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the UVRS&M

We are very thankful that we have not heard of any of our members or their families contracting the COVID-19 virus. But the pandemic has affected our organization in a number of ways.

This issue of the Pendragon normally would have been mailed before April 1st. But the completion of the main story was delayed by the pandemic, and it was finally replaced by the story about the NW2s on page 4. The next problem was that the printer that prints the Pendragon was closed by New York's order for businesses to shut down. The current plan is to have this issue printed in Ohio (would you believe?).

We had program meetings scheduled for March 21 and April 18, both of which were cancelled out of an abundance of caution. Hopefully both programs can be rescheduled later during the year.

At our April board meeting, we were supposed to elect board members and new officers. The board meeting was canceled, so that did not happen either. We're looking at having a conference call as a board meeting soon, and to postpone the elections for a future board meeting, perhaps in June or July. These are trying times, indeed.

# Thank You, New York.



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#111 and #112 on a storage track in the UV yard in New Berlin. These two locomotives spent much of their time just sitting in the yard. Of note, they are facing north. When these locomotives arrived, they were facing south, so that at some time they were turned, either on the wye, or taken to the turntable in either Edmeston or New Berlin Junction.



#113 on the Rock Island, now as #797 in CRIP colors, 1960s.

by

**D. Michael Holdridge**

*with my thanks to Paul Straney & Jay Winn for sharing their time and knowledge.*



**Unadilla Valley Railway Society & Museum Membership Form**

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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](mailto: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.

