

The Ghost Train Journal



Photo Credit: Turner Railroad Collection/Connecticut Historical Society



Taken 2/25/08 this shows the progress to date on the turntable. The next step should involve putting the rail down across the bridge. (Robert A. LaMay Photo)



Truck from Willimantic Waste drops a dumpster off at museum to collect excess junk material. (Robert A. LaMay Photo)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:
 3/2/08 - Monthly business meeting at Windham Memorial Hospital - 7:00PM
 3/16/08 - Monthly Membership meeting with speaker - Bruce Clouette on Norwich & Worcester
 4/6/08 - Monthly business meeting at Windham Memorial Hospital - 7:00PM
 4/13/08 - Model Train & Die Cast Show - Windham High 10:00AM - 3:00PM
 5/3/08 - Museum Opens with Heritage Metal Fest 9:00AM
 6/8/08 - Turntable Dedication Ceremony Sunday 1:30PM - More details in future issues GTJ
 6/14/08 - Photo Night Shoot - Look for more details in future issues of GTJ

Connecticut Eastern Chapter, NRHS, Inc.
 Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum
 PO Box 665
 Willimantic, CT 06226

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The next scheduled meeting of the Connecticut Eastern Chapter, National Railway Historical Society will be held at Windham Memorial Hospital on

Sunday, Mar. 16, 2008 @ 7:00 PM

Speaker – Bruce Clouette will present a show entitled – Norwich & Worcester Ry. – A Connecticut Interurban Line.

Next monthly business meeting will be held on Sunday April 6, 2008 at the Windham Memorial Hospital at 7:00 PM. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend.

N M R A Convention Comes To Connecticut July 5 – 11, 2009

The Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford, CT. will become home to the 2009 National Model Railroaders Assn. Convention. There will be rail clinics, prototype tours of various railroad facilities, model tours, plus non-rail activities. While in the area take advantage of the numerous tourist and common carrier lines in the region, such as steam, diesel, and electric powered trains. Watch future issues of GTJ or visit www.hn2009.org for more information.

Willimantic Linen and the Helen B.

By Peter Roos

In the last Ghost train Journal Editor Robert LaMay commented on the dual-gauge track in the yard of the Willimantic Linen Company (later American Thread). This is part of a narrow gauge in-plant

railroad that ran on this site before 1900 or possibly a bit later, but there is no sign

Chapter Leadership

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of it on 1924 insurance maps covering the Thread Company area. Possibly the best known photo shows the locomotive 'Helen B.' for Helen Boss, the daughter of mill agent General Eugene Boss. The image of this diminutive 0-4-2 rear tank engine has been used on the CERM Museum calendar, in several books on Willimantic and is one of the murals around the parking lot near the garden Bridge.

Several other images show more distant views of a locomotive and one or more flat cars, or just of the narrow gauge tracks running across the front of the mill buildings (and through the arch under what now is the Garden bridge) and on the bridge across the river to mill #4. According to the caption in "Mills and Meadows" by Stave and Palmer, the train carried cotton from the standard gauge sidings to mill #4. The "Images of America" series volume on Windham and Willimantic by Robillard has the Helen B. photo along with one of the same part of the mill yard (Mill #1) as in the last

issue of Ghost Train Journal, but this time (possibly the Helen B.) can be seen steaming on one of the tracks (page 29). The same book has a photo of Mill#4 with the tracks crossing the bridge and running through the mill yard clearly visible on page 33.

There are many entries on the line concerning the Willimantic Linen Company, including the following excerpt from History of Windham County, Connecticut, by Richard M. Bayles, WW Preston, New York, 1889, which describes the in-plant railroad. "The yards of all these mills are contiguous, and nos. 1, 2 and 4 mills are connected by a private railroad, with small locomotive, which runs from one to another as occasion requires, supplying each with material or taking away from the products to points of shipment by one or another of the railroads which concentrate in this town. Each of the mills is furnished with steam engines sufficient to run it when the water power fails."



Photo of Helen B. in front of mill building. Submitted by Pieter Roos.





Photo Credit: Turner Railroad Collection/Connecticut Historical Society

This distant view of Willimantic Linen Company shows train approaching arch bridge. Submitted by Pieter Roos.

Progress Photos of Turntable Bridge



Duke York works on the new planking for the turntable (R. A. LaMay Photo)



Walt Dumas also works on the new planking being put on the turntable bridge. (R.A. LaMay Photo)



Winter 2007

Mark Granville and Duke York work on the new planking on the turntable bridge – (R.A. LaMay Photo)



Bill Voorvaart tosses first piece of junk into our newly delivered dumpster. (Robert A. LaMay Photo)

Turn of the Century

The date has been set for our next major event. It's a special ceremony to dedicate the completion of the turntable. A special committee is currently planning the day's events and a schedule will be published in the next GTJ. The ceremony is scheduled to take place at 1:30PM on Sunday June 8, 2008. The restored standard gauge Armstrong turntable and associated roundhouse at our museum will become one of only a few such working combinations in the United States.



The above view shows completion to date. The planking is just about completed and the rail should go on very shortly. Watch for next issue of GTJ. (Robert A. LaMay Photo)

Don't Forget to attend the Metal Fest on opening day – May 3, 2008



Here is a photo submitted by Pieter Roos of the Helen B. which was painted as a mural on the wall that surrounds the parking lot near the garden bridge.



While there is a lot of activity going on around the turntable pit, more work is continuing inside the roundhouse on Pit #4. (Robert A. LaMay Photo)



Jeff Laverty works on putting new pavers down inside the Columbia Junction Roundhouse. (Robert A. LaMay Photo)

Train Show Arriving
Sunday April 13,
2008

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Be on track and Attend



This shows the latest progress on our Vintage Blacksmith Shop – Come see it on Saturday May 3, 2008. (Robert A. LaMay Photo)



Once the turntable project is completed the next on the restoration lists is the CV #4052 caboose. It will be moved inside the roundhouse where the restoration will begin. (Robert A. LaMay Photo)



This view from next to the roundhouse shows the rest of the Columbia Junction Village area with section house on left and freight house with box car on siding on right. (Robert A. LaMay Photo)

Winter 2007



Sometime during the mid 1990's a New England Central Inspection train passed southbound through town as seen in this photo taken from the footbridge. (Robert A. LaMay Photo)



This undated photo shows the museum ex New Haven caboose C618 as it rolls past the power plant in New Haven, CT. (Note – this power plant was recently razed.)



P&W local crosses Natchaug River in photo taken from Rte 14 bridge – (Robert A. LaMay Photo)

Please send news, photos, and captions to

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