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*AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF LOCAL
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EARLY RAILROADS IN BOSTON.

WHAT changes the builders of railroads have wrought in the landscape of our country! No factor has been so important as the steam locomotive in the development of our nation. In fact it is to this mighty power that we owe our undivided territory; our large and valuable cities, which embrace within their boundary lines, hundreds of thousands of inhabitants; our numerous villages studded with churches, decked with schools and filled with happy and comfortable homes and budding souls. The activity of man is quickened by the railroad, while it sends energy and vitality where before were silence and barrenness.

But few years have passed since our fathers feared that on account of its vast extent of territory and the consequently diverse interests of its different sections, our fair country would be divided. This fear is not to be wondered at when we consider the meagre means of transportation on which they depended for social and business intercourse. But it is this great diversity of interest, coupled with an essential likeness of the people, which constitutes the peculiar strength of the United States; this world within our borders, all saluting the one flag, draws the bond of our union more closely.

Each state was commercially divided, so much so that the trader from the western part was seldom seen in the eastern market. Of course this condition of affairs

could not last and Boston maintain its flourishing condition, had not railroads come into use; and we believe that if it had not been for the persistent opposition to this means of transportation by the colonial type of legislators who were the leaders in the landed interest of the state—and the landed interest was the most important at the time—Boston would not have surrendered so much of her commerce to New York. This time spent in educating the public opinion, as Boston was compelled to do, gave an opportunity for other states to forge ahead with their railroads, in consequence of which Boston lost the railroad lead, which in all probability she will never regain.

Less than half a century ago, the farmer depended upon water communication to carry his produce to market, therefore only the land which bordered upon the streams and canals was valuable. Seated, as Massachusetts is, upon the sea, and favored with a number of sheltering harbors always open to a ready intercourse with foreign countries, yet she was almost destitute of internal navigation.

The Merrimac River had in the early days threatened to be to Boston what the Connecticut was in 1825. Immediate steps had to be taken by the people of the Bay State in order to keep New Hampshire from making Portsmouth, instead of Boston, its distributing centre. Shortly after the declara-

tion of peace and the establishment of our independence, the people turned their attention toward internal improvements. It was then that the idea of the Middlesex canal, which connected the upper waters of the Merrimac with Boston harbor, was conceived.

Governor Hancock signed the act incorporating the company authorized to build this canal in June, 1793. The original plan of the promoters was to connect the Merrimac at some point in Chelmsford with the Mystic River at a point in Medford, but the charter was subsequently so amended that the southern outlet was at tide water in Charlestown on the Charles. The surveys were made by an English engineer named Weston, and the whole process of the work was superintended by Col. Loammi Baldwin, senior, who, when surveying the route of this canal in Wilmington, chanced across an apple tree, the fruit of which so pleased him that he took great pains to grow an orchard from that tree at his home in Woburn, which thus became the progenitor of the famous Baldwin apple.

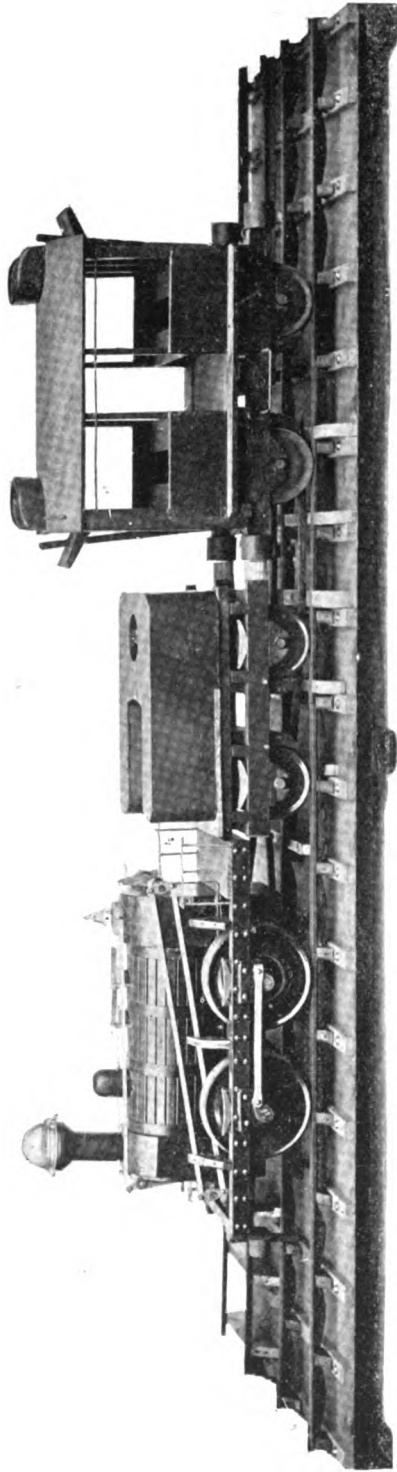
It was not, however, until the early part of the present century that the subject of railroads was advocated in this country, the foremost spirit in the enterprise being Mr. John Stevens, the inventor of a steamboat which he exhibited in 1804. Some time later the movement was begun in Massachusetts.

The first railroad aside from the "Granite" railway received its charter in 1830. This was the Boston, Providence & Taunton

Railway Company; but in 1831 they were succeeded by the Boston & Providence and the Boston & Taunton Railroad Company. The Boston & Worcester Railroad Corporation was established in 1831, and the charter of the Boston & Lowell, which was granted the preceding year, being amended, these companies were organized by the subscription of the required amount of capital — the Boston & Worcester conditionally, with the reservation of the right of the subscribers to withdraw upon receiving the report of definite surveys and estimates. The charter of the Boston & Worcester Railroad was the first to contain the express grant of authority to transport passengers and merchandise on account of the corporation and to purchase and hold locomotives and other rolling stock.

Boston was now entering the transitory state from a provincial to a metropolitan city. Previous to 1835, the city was little more than a large town but still the provincial New England capital. True, the population yearly increased, but the territorial limits remained the same. With the introduction of the railroad, business methods were completely revolutionized. Old-time merchants could not understand the change and cried out against it, predicting decay of trade. The interior of the country was fast being opened up and Boston was becoming a commercial centre and daily business exchange for merchants who had their homes in adjacent cities.

Riding into Boston for Christmas bargains is not what it used to be half a century or more ago.



THE FIRST ENGINE, TENDER AND PASSENGER COACH USED ON THE BOSTON & LOWELL RAILROAD.

It is hard for the busy men and women of our own day to realize that there ever was a time when Boston was a two days' round trip from Lowell in a most uncomfortable stage coach that bounded and lurched over the ground in a most aggravating manner, when neither comfort nor speed were thought of in public conveyances, when only the most urgent reasons would entice a lady so far from home, and when traveling for pleasure was indulged in only by the most hardy of men. And there are those living to-day who tell of these early days and the sensations of a first ride in a conveyance propelled by other motive power than horse flesh. They can tell how uncomfortable it all was. These old citizens all their lives used to love to make their journeys by stage or private carriage, and stopping *en route* at the conventional and hospitable inns—where they leisurely and comfortably partook of such refreshments as the house afforded—could not tolerate the stuffy and crowded coaches, the smoke and cinders, the promiscuous mingling of all classes on the uncomfortable seats.

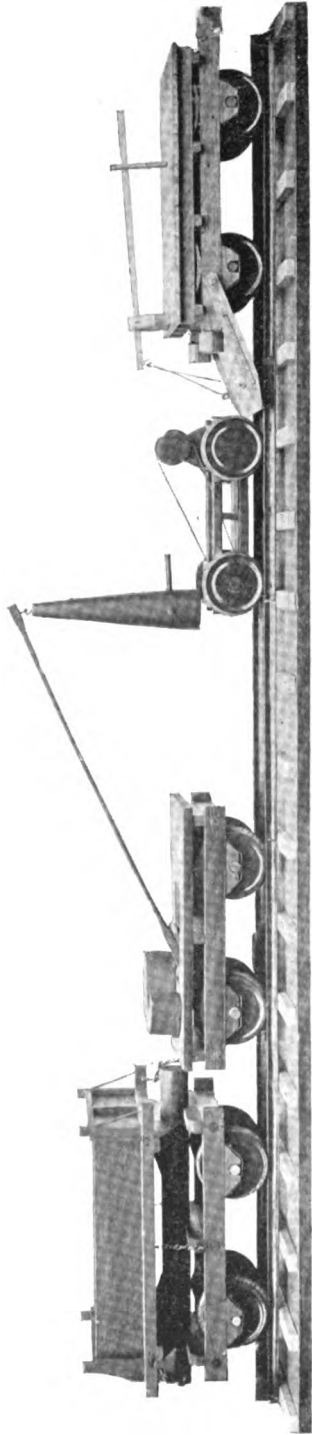
The average speed attained on most of these first railroads was about the same as a good roadster, i. e., ten miles an hour. When ascending a grade the speed was much less, but on the down grade it was increased as high as fifteen to twenty miles an hour. Farmers and berry-pickers and girls with country produce would station themselves along the up grade and pass their wares to the conductor who would sell the articles in the city. The wheels were not

braked, and when a down grade was reached, a stick of wood was inserted under the wheels which prevented them from revolving.

It is a significant fact that the second railroad to get into operation in New England, and indeed the first one of considerable length, should be laid from Boston to Lowell, a town but ten years old and just seeking its city charter. No wonder Lowell has made phenomenal growth, having as it did in its early days, such energetic and far-seeing founders and patrons as the Appetons, Lawrences, and others whose names were prominent in their own city of Boston, and were household words here in their foster-child city of Lowell. George Stephenson's wonderful exploits in England had hardly got noised abroad, when the mill owners began to investigate the subject of transportation of merchandise from their mills to Boston, finding out how much tonnage went down the old Middlesex canal, how much was carried by the two freight carriers, Samuel Wood and Joseph Tapley, and the number of passengers carried by stage. With *data* from these three sources and from their own output, it was calculated that three engines and less than a score of cars would meet the demands of trade between Boston and Lowell for years indefinite.

The charter was obtained through the influence of Massachusetts' greatest statesman, Daniel Webster, providing among other things that no road should be built parallel with it for thirty years, and calling for passenger fares at 75 cents.

It is needless to say that the



THE ORIGINAL GRAVEL CAR, CONSTRUCTION CAR WITH MAUL, HAND CAR, AND SNOW PLOW USED ON THE BOSTON & LOWELL RAILROAD.

construction of the roadbed was a much greater undertaking than it would be at the present time, and the methods were very different. The grading was done by hand labor and ox teams, and the blasting by hand drills and common powder; the entire roadbed was completed, including bridges and culverts, before a rail was laid; and the rails were laid on stone "binders" or sleepers, which in turn rested at each end on stone walls set three feet deep to avoid frost effects. The first rails used were what were called "fish-bellies" from their resemblance to the sides of a fish, and were fifteen feet long. The rails were bent or straightened to suit the curve or direct line in which they were to be placed, not drawn into position by the spikes as at the present time; were adjusted with scrupulous nicety at the joints, and whenever a quarter of a mile was laid, a couple of machinists from the old Locks and Canals shop—the present Lowell Machine shop—would go along from joint to joint with a steel straight edge, and if the two rails would not match to the thickness of a sheet of paper they would file them down for a foot or more back to make them match smoothly, and if the difference should occasionally be the thickness of cardboard, the cold chisel would be used previous to filing. Thousands of dollars were uselessly spent in this and other ways as was afterwards proved. The result of all these niceties was that, for a time, the trains would run with a beautiful ease and smoothness, but after a time the heavier loads had racked the

rails and settled the road so that such carefulness was all thrown away.

The roadbed had been made wide enough for a double track but at first only one track was laid. Work was begun at the Lowell and Boston ends simultaneously, and by what seems to have been a curious blunder, each division had laid the right-hand track, so that when they came together a long switch had to be laid to connect the two sections. The building of the road had occupied four years and on Wednesday, May 27, 1835, the rails were used for the first time. The engine, called the "Stephenson," was built by the Robert Stephenson Co., at the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England, in 1834. It was taken apart at Boston, loaded upon a canal boat and brought to Lowell by the old Middlesex canal, whose prestige it was soon to usurp. Here it was again put together, and the trial trip was made from Lowell. In that memorable run the train carried three passengers, Patrick T. Jackson, agent, George W. Whistler, draftsman at the Locks and Canals shop, and James F. Baldwin, the civil engineer who had surveyed the road. They made the 26 miles to Boston in the astonishing time of one hour and seventeen minutes, and the return with twenty-four passengers in one hour and twenty minutes. Mr. Charles S. Storrow, the third agent of the road, is thought to be the only man now living who participated in this first day's trial trips. The train returned to Boston and remained there four weeks. In the latter part of the next

month the following announcement appeared in the various papers :

JUNE 23, 1835.

To-morrow, 24th, cars will commence running between Boston and Lowell. Leave Lowell at 6 and 9.30 A. M. Leave Boston at 3.30 and 5.30 P. M. The company expects to run another engine next week. Additional trains will be put on as fast as the public require ; due notice will be given when the merchandise train will be put on. Fare \$1, tickets at corner Leverett and Brighton Streets, Boston.

GEO. M. DEXTER, *Agent*.

On the following day, Wednesday, June 24, which was the old fashioned " 'Lecture day " and just four weeks after the trial trips, the Boston and Lowell road was opened to the public.

These old engines and cars were queer looking things in the light of modern railroad furniture. A photograph of the original Stephenson or as it was soon nicknamed by the engineers, "John Bull," is very interesting. It had, when built, four large wheels of the same size, but one of the forward wheels being disabled, a small wheel like the tender and car wheels was substituted, being let down far enough to rest on the track, and left to trundle along independently, giving it the ludicrous appearance of a three and a half wheeled engine. The boiler was encased in wooden lagging instead of sheet iron as at the present time and all was painted a vivid green with black bands and stripes.

No whistle was provided at the outset, and the bell was a small one, rung with a cord about eighteen inches long. Nor was there any cab provided for the protection of the engineer and fireman for many years, on any of the engines. The engineer stood with one foot on the machine, the other on the tender, and when the hail or the blustering snows of winter beat down upon him, he shielded his face with a shingle. The first approach to a cab was a single pane of glass adjusted in front of the engineer's face to protect him from cinders ; later, an ingenious engineer by the name of Wing, rigged for himself an adjustable cab that was used in winter and removed in the spring.

As for the cars, they were modelled after that historic vehicle, the stage coach, and seated six persons. The conductor, given by the common people the honorable title of captain, rode on the outside without shelter, in what had previously been the stage driver's seat, and on a corresponding seat at the other end sat the brakeman riding backwards, one at each car.

The first conductor on the road was Mr. John Barrett, and the first engineer, Mr. William Robinson, was imported with the first engine ; he was an English dandy, who lost no opportunity to impose upon the patience and credulity of the wondering Yankees. He brought with him somewhat of a race horse, which he kept at the stables of old Bill Hardy down below Fort Hill, and used to race on the track there. He would not be very particular about train time and would often saunter up to the

depot an hour after his train was due to start, glance unconcernedly around upon the long-suffering and waiting would-be passengers, deliberately fumble his engine over, mount his platform, slowly draw on his kid gloves, and in his own good time start his train toward Boston. He also had a way of suddenly stopping his engine when he got in sight of a station, when he would jump down, look his engine over anxiously, crawl in under it, take off the nut from one of the bolts, look it over, handle it, and then put it back on again. By this time a staring crowd had collected to see the accident that had not happened; the next day the papers would come out with an account of how the engine had broken down on the way but had been skilfully repaired by Engineer Robinson. But it was not long before the management "caught on" and he was replaced by the skilled mechanics of the Locks and Canals Locomotive Works, whence was obtained the supply of engineers for many years.

The pay in those days was \$66.66 per month for conductors and engineers, and \$30 per month for brakemen and firemen; their days were short, no trains being run after sunset. In the early days only Irishmen were employed as firemen, for the characteristic reason that when they had once learned to fire, they were satisfied to work in that capacity as long as they lived, while a Yankee would no sooner learn to fire than he would know all about running an engine and want to be promoted to the position of engineer. This mode of filling the position

was not adopted for a good many years, the step being from the workshop, as previously stated.

The illustrations are as follows:—

An exact representation of the first locomotive that ran on the Boston & Lowell Railroad. It was called the "Stephenson," and was built by Stephenson in England in 1834; taken from Boston to Lowell on the Middlesex Canal; set up; placed on the track, in 1835, and was the only engine used by the company for several years.

Model of tender used with the "Stephenson."

Passenger car; conductor's seat and brake on each end. Made to hold six passengers, but frequently carried eight.

Dump car, used in building and repairing the road.

Hand car; this had wooden wheels, and was run by a leather belt.

Maul, for track laying.

Snow plow.

The models, from which the photographs were made, were constructed by Mr. Waterman Brown, historian of the Boston & Lowell Railroad, now signalman on the Southern Division of the Boston & Maine Railroad, at Woburn. He spent more than a year in building them. No person knows the history of the Boston & Lowell Railroad so completely as does Waterman Brown. He has a wonderfully retentive memory, and is frequently consulted in relation to the building and early operations of the road. Persons who interview him for such facts, find him an interesting narrator.

June 30, the first engine built in Lowell was put upon the rails. There was some discussion about the name to be given this engine, the intention being to name it "Jackson" after Mr. Patrick T. Jackson, the former agent, but it being at the time of "Old Hickory" Jackson's political supremacy, the prevailing Whig element of the management objected to the name on political grounds, so the grave question was compromised and the engine was named "The Patrick." On July 1, Lowell produced her second engine and did herself the honor of giving it her own name, "Lowell."

July 5, the "merchandise" train, corresponding to our freight, was put on, and the "John Bull" was transferred to this, the home-made engines, "Lowell" and "The Patrick," being reserved for the two passenger trains. The first passenger conductor was "Capt." John Barrett, and on the second passenger train was a man by the name of Willards, followed in a few months, on account of a slight accident to his train in the yards, by J. E. Short.

The conductor of the merchandise train was one Calvin Stephens. In those days the freight conductor had almost unlimited control of merchandise and collected the money himself. One day Stephens had taken in over \$500, freight charges, and on reaching Boston, got a "tip" in some way that the old Chelsea Bank was about to go under, took his freight money over to the bank, and bought the money of the bank at a few cents on the dollar and turned in the \$500 to the company

in Chelsea Bank money. The bank failed next day and the railroad held \$500 worth of *worthless* money. Stephens was called up to explain, but merely said the bank was supposed to be sound the day before, when he took the money for freight, so he was let alone, the fact of his being a nephew of the Appletons no doubt helping his case materially.

It is also related that a certain Lowell merchant had been buying oysters in Boston and sending them up by freight. For several weeks he had been troubled by shortages, and one day made up his mind to find out if possible what became of his oysters, so after buying them and billing them by freight, he waited over the passenger train, and came up in the merchandise car with the conductor. Not far out of Boston, the merchant was quite surprised to see the conductor, who did not know who was riding with him, seat himself before the oysters, take out his knife and proceed to open and eat them, at the same time obligingly offering some to his unknown and unsuspected guest. The gentleman declined. On reaching Lowell the matter was reported to the proper authorities of the road, yet again, for some reason or other, doubtless consanguinity with the higher powers, little satisfaction was obtained.

There were no baggage cars or checks; passengers took care of their own "luggage." Later the fare was less by riding in the forward car, where the passengers would have the full benefit of cinders, etc. This car was gener-

ally called the "T. D.," after the famous "T. D." pipe which was very popular with the travellers occupying this car.

Compare this arrangement with the passenger coaches of all first-class railroads equipped with Robinson's Radial car truck.

One of the most important officials of some roads was the road master, whose chief duty was to walk over the lines, looking for protruding spikes which held down the iron straps or rails to the plank. These straps were twelve feet long, two and one-half inches wide and three eighths of an inch thick, and were spiked to stringers of pine plank. The road master was equipped with a hammer and a basket filled with pine plugs; when he found a loose spike he drove it down and then forced in beside it one of the plugs to bind it more firmly. Sometimes after he had been over the line, the strap-iron rail, which had a tendency to curl, would pull a spike, and then the end of this rail, catching the bottom of the cars after the locomotive had passed over, broke through with a crash, throwing the train off the track and causing more or less injury to passengers.

The first merchandise train consisted of fourteen cars about the size of common short coal cars, carrying about three tons and a half to a car. It was noticed that the charter called for 75 cents fare to Boston, while the company's advertisement offered tickets at \$1. The matter was arranged to meet and defeat the requirements of the law in this way. A second class car was put on with no

protection from the weather except a roof, so uncomfortable that none who could afford to pay a dollar would ride in this second-class car, which had facetiously been called the "Belvidere," and was always known by that name. The thrifty merchants of Lowell who had occasion to go to Boston frequently, objected to paying \$1 each way, and at the same time objected still more strongly to riding in the socially tabooed Belvidere, so it got to be at one time a popular thing to miss the passenger train in Boston and ride up on the merchandise train. Of course riding on a freight train free, was infinitely more aristocratic than riding second-class by means of 75 cents honest money, or first-class at a good American dollar; but the company was not fooled long, and charged the dollar just the same on the merchandise train as for first-class, the company no doubt judging rightly that only first-class passengers would stoop to such sharp practice for abating fare.

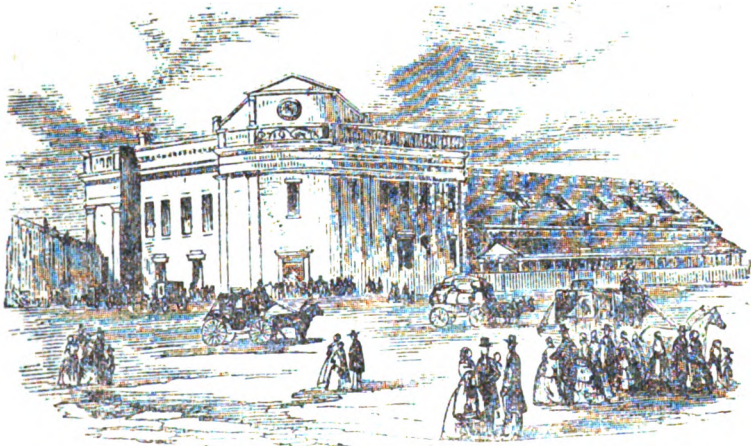
Mr. Brown helped take away Pemberton Hill, from which all the land now occupied by the Boston & Lowell station and yards was made, the place where the hill once was being now called Pemberton Square. The dirt was hauled by 144 teams, of which 59 were drawn by oxen; five months were occupied in doing the work. The Boston station was at the foot of Lowell Street with offices at 11½ Tremont Street, from 1835 to July 30, 1857, when the headquarters were changed to the Haymarket Square site, the depot being built during Mr. Wil-

liam Parker's *regime*. Years later Gen. Stark built the present station over it and then tore the old building out. In May, 1894, it was moved to the elegant new Union Station on Merrimack Street. Of the engineers Mr. William Seaver, well known to Lowell people, is the oldest, having worked for the company thirty years, until he retired in 1875.

The first agent was Patrick T. Jackson, during the four years of construction, followed for one year

road. John B. Winslow succeeded Parker, with the title of superintendent, serving in that capacity about seventeen years. During this time the road leased the Nashua division, General Stark of Manchester, N. H., being general manager, with Winslow as superintendent. After General Stark, Mr. Winslow served as general manager for a month, until his successor, Hocum Hosford of Lowell, was chosen to fill the vacancy.

For many years the manage-



ORIGINAL DEPOT OF THE BOSTON & LOWELL RAILROAD.

by his brother-in-law, George M. Dexter. He was succeeded, for ten or twelve years, by Charles S. Storrow, related by marriage to Dexter; then came Waldo Higginson, cousin to Storrow. William H. Osgood followed as agent pro tem. for six months, when he was superseded by William Parker cousin to Higginson. Parker was a West Point man, very stern and unpopular with his employes; after leaving here, he went to Panama to take charge of a railroad, where he was shot in his office in cold blood, by an under officer of the

ment of the road seems to have been a family affair, but they were all very capable men, and it was no doubt owing to their care and ability that the Boston & Lowell was known for many years, and far and wide, as the "Old Silk Stocking," on account of its fine appointment and service. In fact, for many years the best advertisement a firm could have for the introduction of anything new in railroad furniture or service was to be able to say that the Boston & Lowell had adopted it.

LOUIS P. LORING.