

NH
SUNDAY
NEWS

CLASSIFIED 1

MANCHESTER, NH



April 14, 1985

The Rhythm Of the Rails

By **DICK CASSELBERRY**
Sunday News Correspondent
ROCHESTER, April 13 — A century ago railroads dominated the landscape and a way of life.

Nearly every hamlet worthy of the name had at least one railroad track leading through its center. Towns battled one another to get the shiny steel rails, and cities owed their existence to the Iron Horse.

This city was no different. Once 20 trains a day could be seen arriving from or departing for parts unknown.

Engineers, seated in their high seats, wearing their striped hats, waved to young children who could only stand and watch as the trains pulled out of the station.

Each day, the Wyandotte Mills, Spaulding Fibre Co., and Champlin Box Mill shipped out manufactured goods from Rochester. Railroad tracks also lead to the nearby Gonvic Manufacturing Co. and to the Cocheco Woolen Mills in East Rochester to deliver raw materials or transport finished goods.

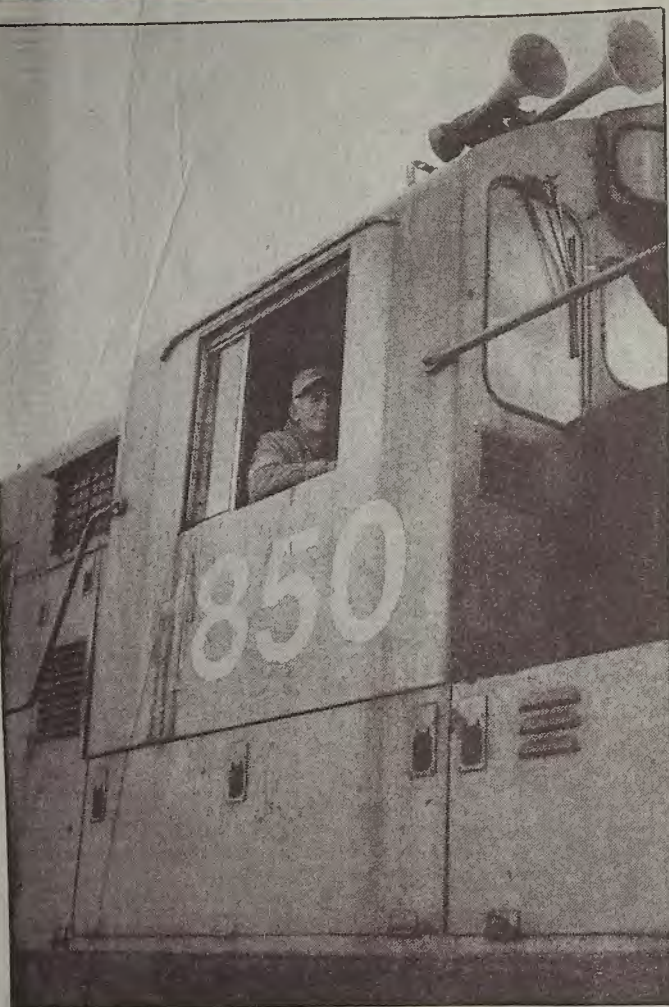
Local farmers and businessmen also made use of the railroads.

It was the traveler who most appreciated the trains. Boarding a train at Rochester Station opened the world trade centers of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York to the well-traveled or the occasional tourist.

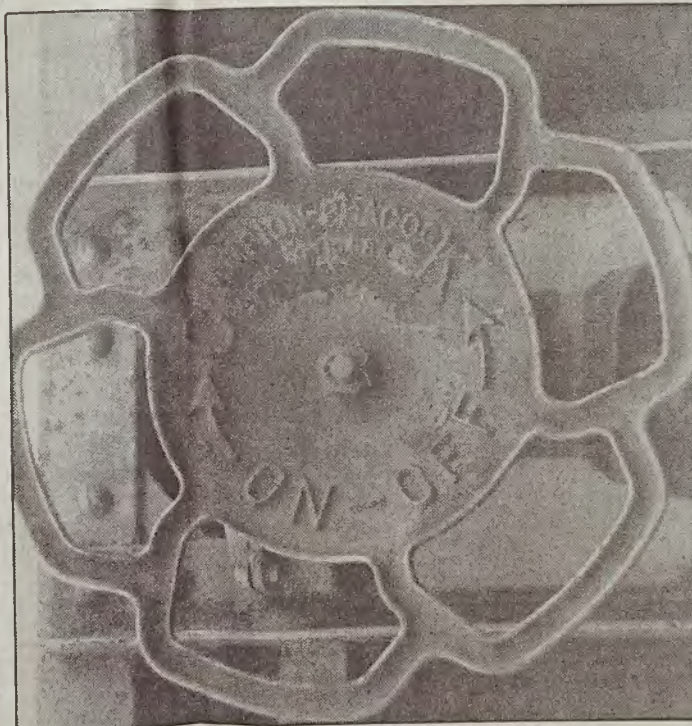
Those fortunate enough to catch an overnight ride on one of the "sleepers" were treated to the utmost in luxury. Trains contained parlor and baggage cars, smokers, buffet and dining cars, each catered by crews of attendants. Many cars were equipped with heaters and gas lights. There were velvet carpets, silk draperies and silk curtains in some cars.

Before automobiles, it was not only "the" way to travel, it was "the only" way, except by horse, to travel.

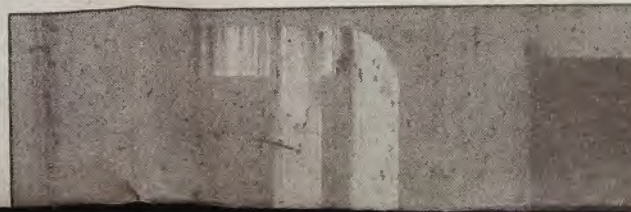
Rochester thrived with the rail-



BRAKEMAN ON ENGINE 1850

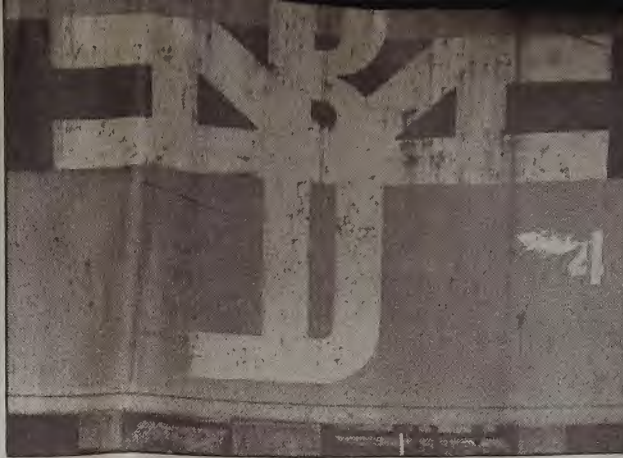


HAND BRAKES STILL ADORN EVERY RAIL CAR





ONLY AN OCCASIONAL FREIGHT TRAIN COMES TO TOWN



*Photos by
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remain because they were associated with the railroads. Signal and Railroad streets are two still remaining. The city sported three hotels that catered to the railroad traveler.

Today most of the rails are rusted and weed-choked from disuse. An occasional freight train passes through, much to the chagrin of impatient motorists. The once-mighty steam locomotive has given way to the diesel.

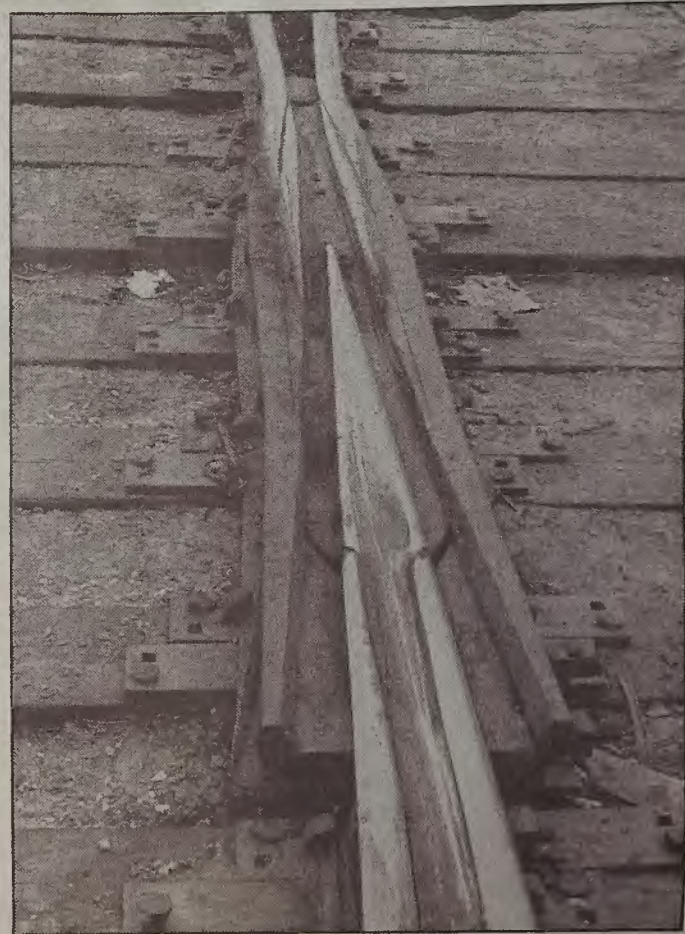
Still, engineers and brakemen on the occasional freight train pass a young child or an old man standing along the tracks, dreaming of far off places and distant times. A smile and wave can still thrill both.

Rochester has many who remember the express trains steaming through town at top speed, snatching the evening mail from the stanchion or hearing the eerie sound of the 12:02 late at night and knowing that all is well.

Still, engineers and brakemen on the occasional freight train pass a young child or an old man standing along the tracks, dreaming of far off places and distant times. A smile and wave can still thrill both.



COUPLER DESIGN NEARLY UNCHANGED IN 100 YEARS



ONLY A FEW TRACKS ARE KEPT SHINY BY USE