BOSTON & MAINE RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

REPORT OF ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2016

To the Board of Directors and Members of the Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society:

The Archives Committee is pleased to submit the following report for the calendar year ended December 31, 2016.

Our archives collection is housed in a secure, climate-controlled environment within the Center for Lowell History, 40 French Street, Lowell. We occupy an area of about 1,000 square feet where we have shelving, cabinet storage, and work space for researchers. Our cooperative agreement with the University of Massachusetts Lowell gives our collection an accessibility that is unmatched by most other railroad historical societies.

At Lowell the visitor will find photographs, slides, negatives, right of way and track maps, valuation surveys, timetables, books, periodicals, mechanical drawings of structures and equipment, and a wealth of data organized alphabetically by subject—Abandonments, Accidents, Baggage, etc. Researchers may browse the collection or arrange to meet with the Archives Chairman for assistance. The staff at the Center for Lowell History give valuable assistance to researchers and the Committee. We are very appreciative of what they do for us. The current hours are Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The Center is usually open one Saturday a month to enable us to continue our Saturday work sessions.

We also maintain an annex in North Chelmsford that is used for document storage and cataloging. There we house a variety of B&M records and drawings, including material from the Executive, Accounting, Engineering, Law, Operating, Traffic, and Mechanical Departments.

We collect material related to the Boston and Maine Railroad, its predecessors and successors, and other New England railroads. The collection is owned by the Society and managed by the Archives Committee, made up of volunteers who are interested in railroad history and the preservation of historical materials. Active committee members are Len Bachelder, Steve Butterworth, Carl Byron, Rick Conard, Jack Dziadul, Eric DiVirgilio, Bob Farrenkopf, Mark Fecteau, Rick Hurst, Alan LePain, Rick Nowell, Keith Scarlett, Mal Sockol, Will Scopa, Henry Taves, Al Taylor, Gareth Thomas, and Earl Tuson.

Ellis Walker, Archives Committee Member Emeritus, died October 28, 2016 at Concord, Mass. He was 91. Ellis joined the Society back in the 1970s and was a long-time member of the Archives Committee. Rick Conard recalls how Ellis’ entertaining, low key way of talking and his wealth of personal recollections greatly added to our Archives meetings. He will be remembered by his fellow Society members as a soft spoken, knowledgeable gentlemen who was an outstanding representative of the railfan community.

We held 10 work sessions in 2016. This compares with 11 work sessions in 2015, 11 sessions in 2014, and 10 in 2013. The average attendance at our work sessions, inclusive of guests, was 8 in 2016, as compared to 6 in 2015, 5 in 2014, and 8 in 2013. At our work sessions we research requests for information, organize our collection, and process and file new acquisitions. Our meetings always include a lively exchange of railroad information.

In addition to work accomplished at our monthly meetings, Committee and Society members gave assistance at other times. Carl Byron, Rick Conard, Alan LePain, and Paul Kosciolek answered a variety of historical inquiries. Rick Hurst donated his time to organizing and preserving records at North Chelmsford and picked up donations for processing. Jim Nigzus continued his valuable help with our accommodations at Chelmsford. Jack Dziadul and Mark Fecteau took on Archives projects from their homes in North Carolina and Washington State respectively. Mal Sockol took charge of the Archives calendar on the web site. Gareth Thomas assisted with photo scanning for our on-line archives.

We logged in a total of 73 donations in 2016, as compared with 58 donations in 2015, 62 in 2014, and 68 in 2013. Donors in 2016 included Jerilyn F. Marjerison, Karen L. Staley, Carl R. Byron, Earl Tuson, Mark Paradis, Christine Quagan, Jim Nigzus, Seashore Trolley Museum, Alden Dreyer, South Shore Model Railroad Club, Bob and Andrea Vibbert, Pat Parsons, Peter Spencer Gray, James H. H. Lampert, Lloyd E. Neal, Jr., Cynthia King, Dale O. Russell, Wayne M. Gagnon, Gregory I. Stevens, David Sanderson, Joseph A. Kavanagh, Jonelle DeFelice, Dan Riley, Carolyn Ohlemeier, Becky Carter, Tim Lewis, Hilma Wolf, Estate of Vincent H. Bernard, Shirley Binari (courtesy of Lavinia Miller), Woburn (Mass.) Public Library, Jennifer M. Allocca, Alex Lu, Estate of Lester H. Stephenson, Jr., Lou Stylos, Steve Vezeau, Russ Munroe, Gloria Stowe, Thomas V. Clasby, Volker Antoni, Sara D. Urban, Robert F. Wilner, Linda Jones, Kathy Winiarz, Dan Hyde, Ed Hiller, Robert Warren, Kevin Curtis, Bill Greenwood, Double Play Hobby Consignments, Ted Anderson (courtesy Bob Warren), Los Angeles (Calif.) Public Library, Bill Coffey, Hank Binney, Scott Batson, William Drury, Richard Marion, Robert Simon, Paul Chapman, David A. Shaw, Dan Beach, Mike Lennon, and Rick Hurst.

Our outreach program includes answering reference questions submitted by inquirers from all over the world. We generally do not charge for answering requests for information, but we do charge for photo reproduction and copying large documents, and we remind inquirers that we take donations.

Another area of outreach includes our online photo archive, flickr.com/photos/bmrrhs, which is designed to bring our photo collection into the homes of our members. There are presently 1,259 images on the site, up from 958 in 2015, 727 in 2014, and 306 in 2013). Carl Byron has helped again this year with photo editing.

Other Committee activities during the year:

* Wrote and supplied articles and archival documents for mailing with the Society’s *Newsletters.*
* Continued to organize B&MRR records at North Chelmsford. General records are organized by issuing department. Bridge plans are organized by valuation section. AFE records are organized by AFE number. Material to be cataloged is organized by donor name and lot number.
* Continued to move high interest items from Chelmsford to Lowell.
* Updated our on-line catalog which now has 12,547 entries, compared to 12,377 in 2015, and 12,240 in 2014. We also updated our Valuation Plan Index and other finding aids to reflect the acquisition of new material.
* Updated our Employee Data Base. There are now 17,402 entries, compared to 17,263 in 2015, and 17,232 in 2014.
* Posted a variety of items for viewing on the “On-Line Archives” section of bmmhs.org. We added a Maine Central section to the on-line Archives.
* Committee member Jack Dziadul compiled an up-to-date, searchable index to Modelers Notes.
* Committee member Mark Fecteau assisted with data entry of catalog information as well as transcribing Authority for Expenditure records.
* We repainted a water-damaged wall at Lowell. We moved various unhung framed photos from Lowell to North Chelmsford.
* I met with employees of Keolis on July 7, to give advice concerning storage and disposition of materials.

With a $10,000 appropriation from the Preston S. Johnson bequest, we have begun digitizing Archives materials. A limited amount of work on this was accomplished on an experimental basis using the resources of UMass Lowell and its student interns toward the end of 2016 and we hope to report more progress in 2017.

Our Committee welcomes new members. We need researchers, catalogers, and organizers. No experience required—just an interest in railroad history. Get started by attending one of our monthly meetings. Contact the chairman for details and times. Your chairman is, as always, impressed and inspired by how much can be done by volunteers.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Nowell

Frederick N. Nowell, III

Chairman, Archives Committee

Boston & Maine Railroad Historical Society

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