



# MILL STREET BRIDGE



## BOSTON & MAINE RAILROAD. BUILT c.1919, REBUILT 1938, REMOVED 2018



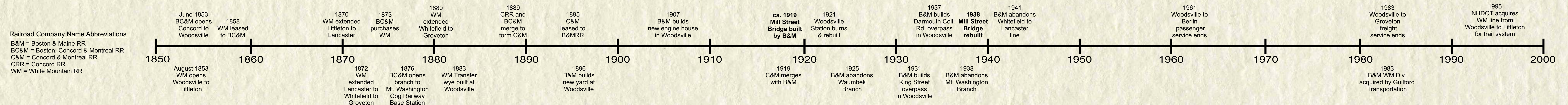
**1.** Mill Street Bridge was of the bridge type known as a wood frame trestle. It consisted of seven wood stringer spans carried on six cross-braced wood piers known as frame bents. Trestle bridges are among the oldest bridge types. They were widely used during the 19th century by the railroads for their low cost of materials and quick construction with common labor. Advances in the pressure-treatment of wood with creosote to prevent decay greatly increased their service life, keeping them popular into the 20th century. The Mill Street trestle was replaced with a precast concrete arch tunnel, designed to accommodate modern trains should the rail line be reactivated. Photo by Rob Tucher.



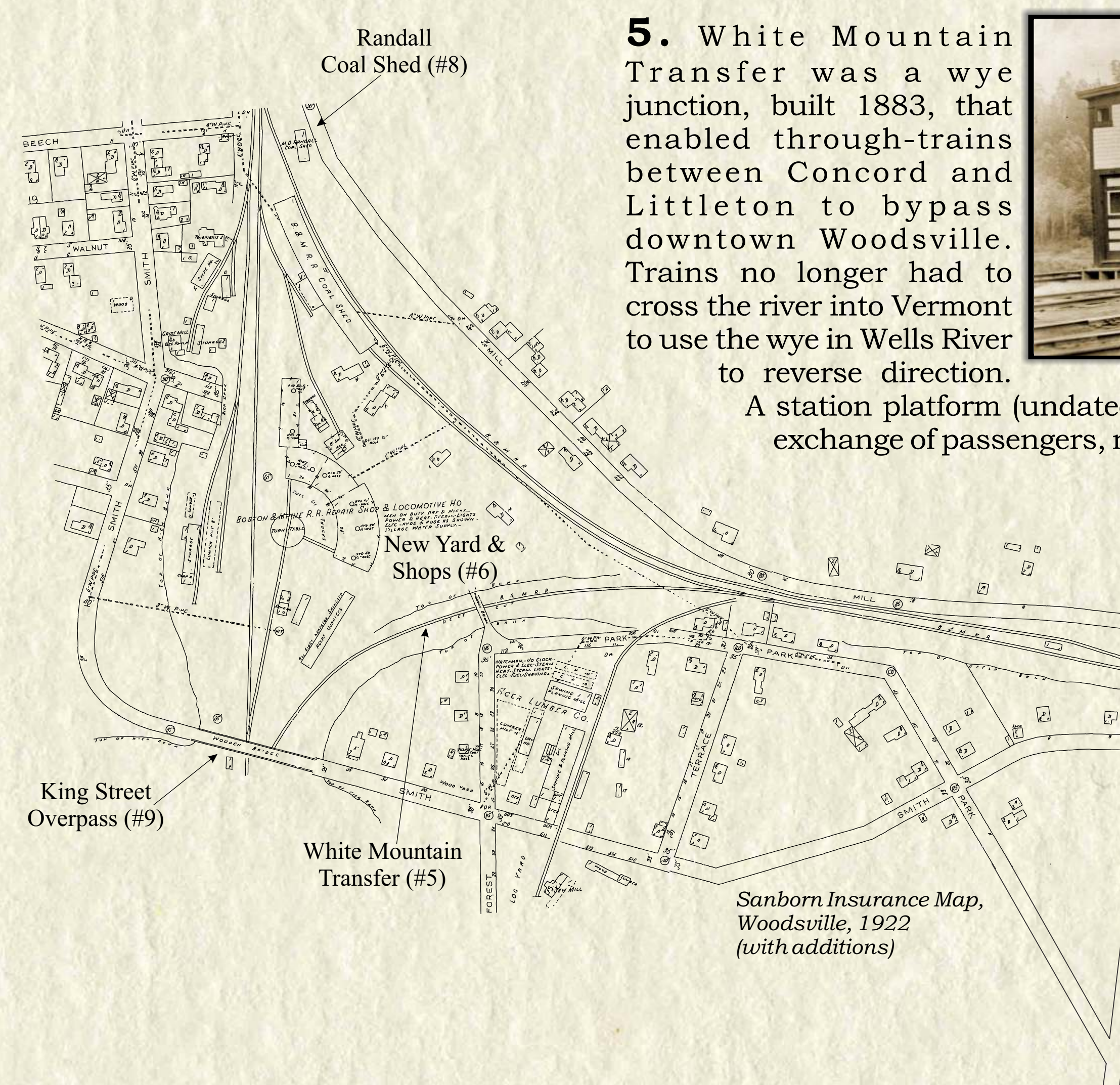
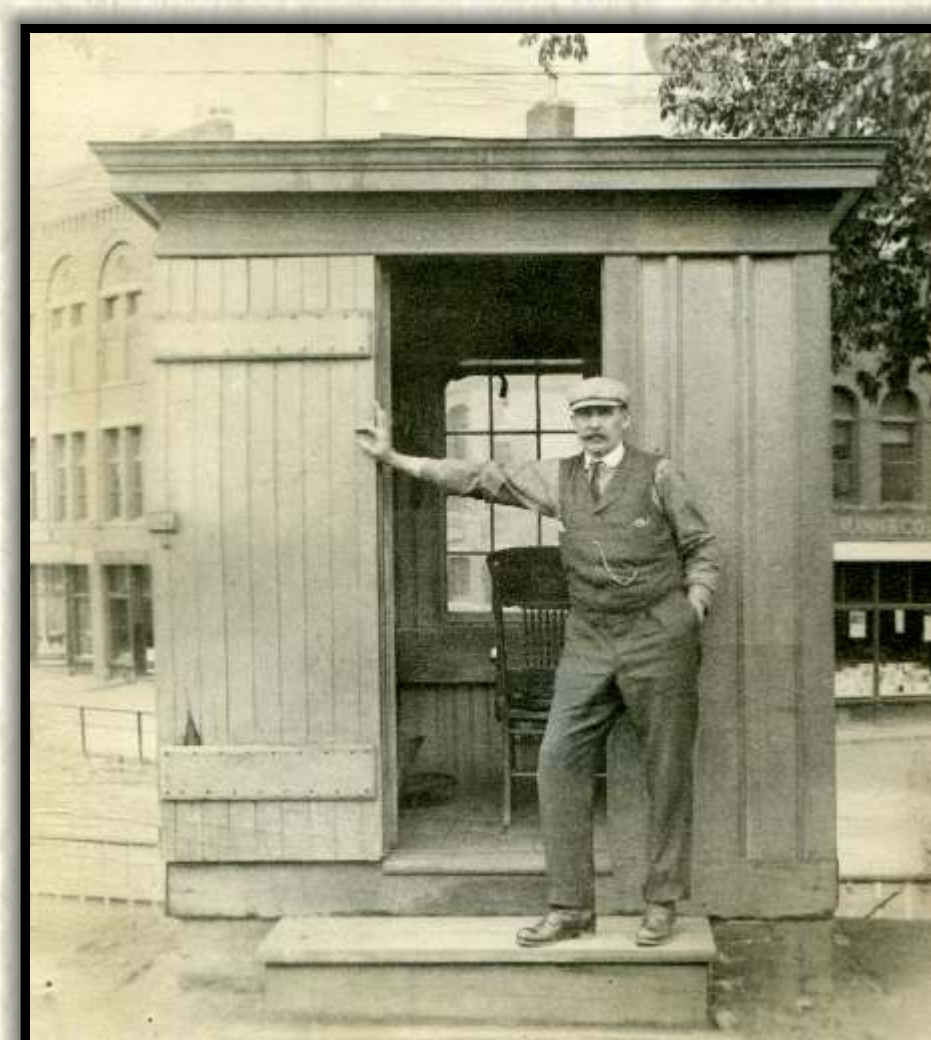
**2.** The bents next to the tracks were 34' high and known as two-story frames, each consisting of four posts, a cap beam and two cross braces. As the state's tallest and longest existing highway trestle, it was found eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a rare surviving example of its type. Photo by R. Casella



**3.** B&M Railroad is noted for the quality of its stonework across New England. Mill Street Bridge rested on footings and abutments of precisely cut granite blocks, some seven feet long and weighing 5000 pounds. The blocks were salvaged during demolition and a few placed along the roadway above. Photo by R. Casella.



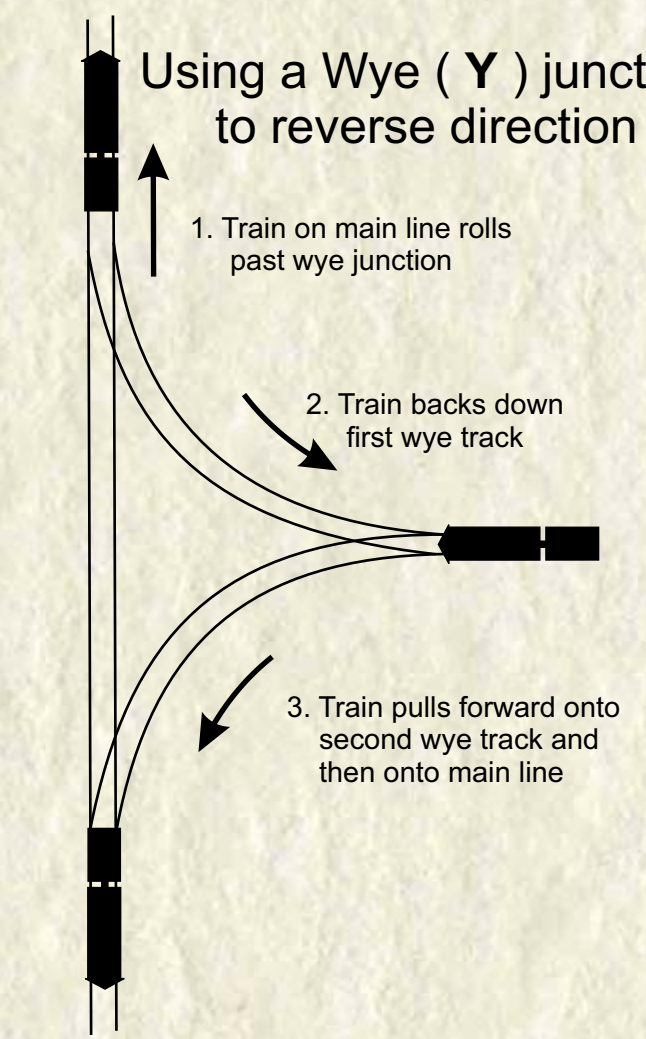
**4.** The Boston, Concord & Montreal Railroad reached Woodsville in 1853 to connect with the White Mountain Railroad and lines in Wells River, Vermont. In 1884 the BC&M moved its headquarters to Woodsville, by then the greatest railroad center in northern New Hampshire. Woodsville native Edward F. Mann (undated photo at right) started work with the railroad in the 1860s, rising to serve as General Superintendent of the road from 1889 to 1892.



**5.** White Mountain Transfer was a wye junction, built 1883, that enabled through-trains between Concord and Littleton to bypass downtown Woodsville. Trains no longer had to cross the river into Vermont to use the wye in Wells River to reverse direction.



A station platform (undated photo above) was later added enabling the sheltered exchange of passengers, mail and freight between different railroad companies.

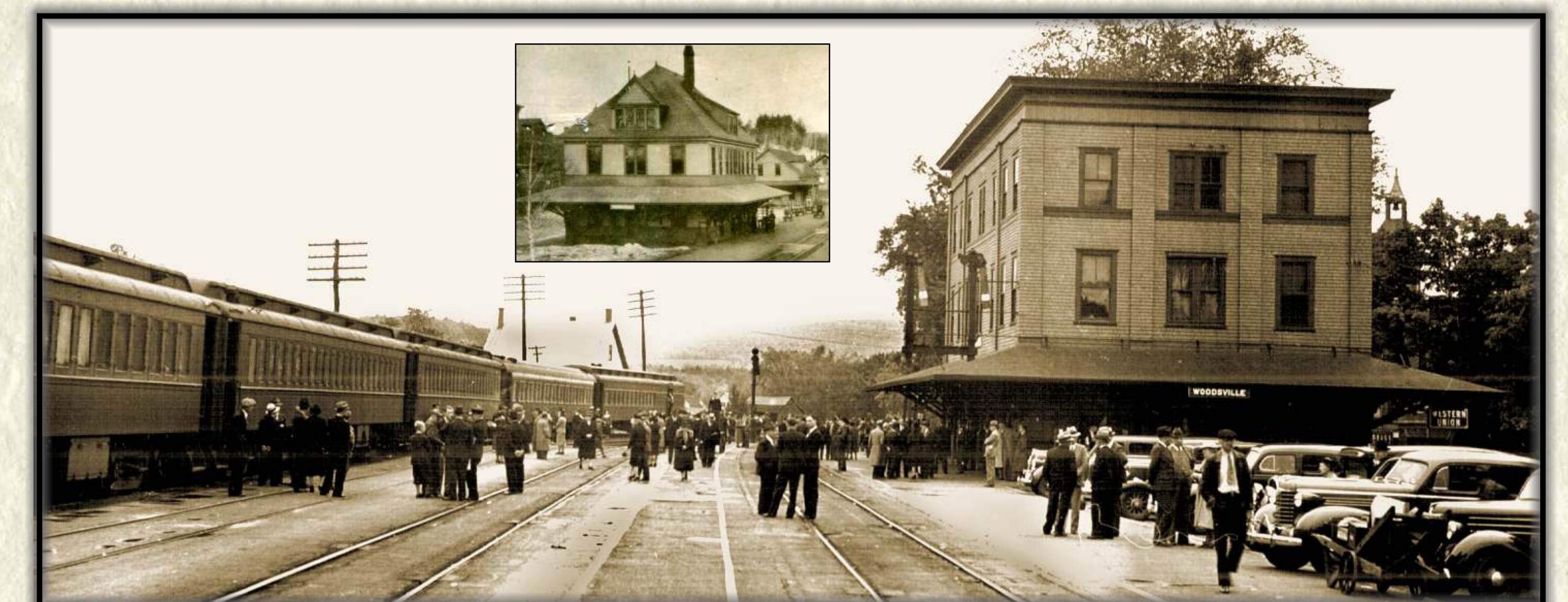
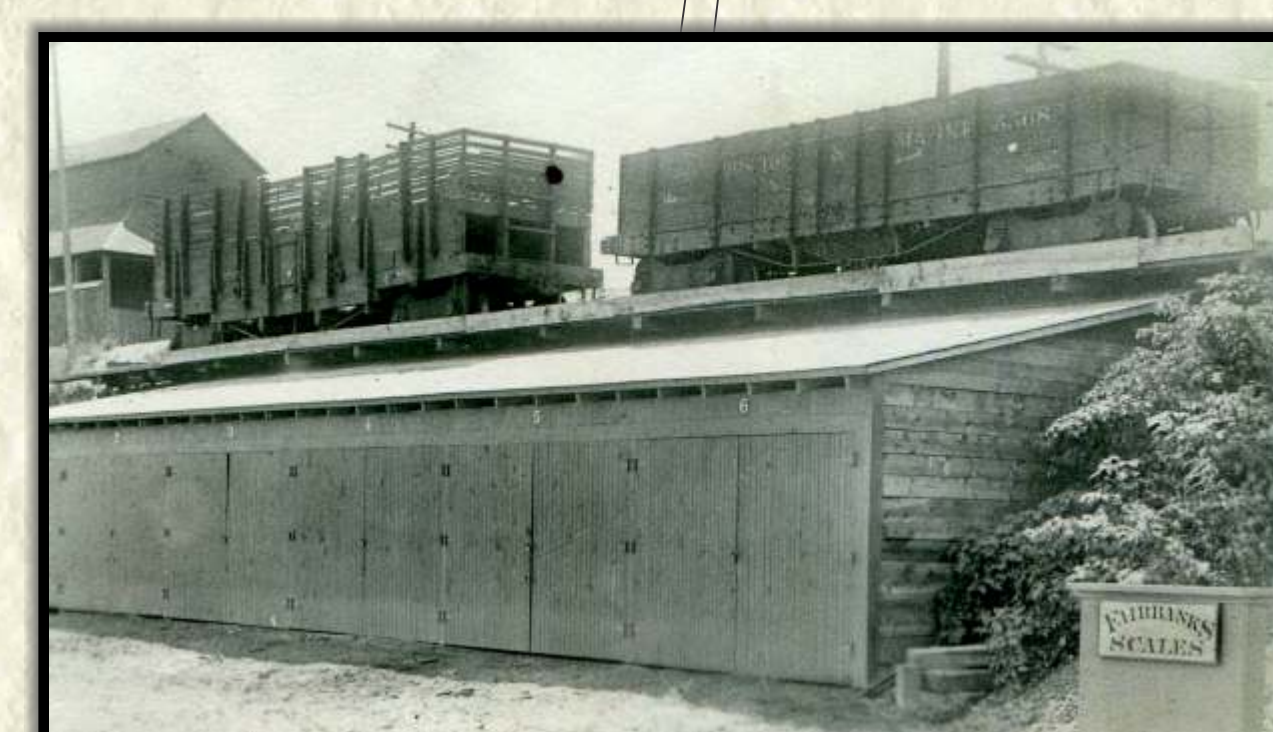


**6.** The B&M took control of the Boston, Concord & Montreal Railroad in 1895. A new engine house and freight yard was built south of town in 1907. By 1920, the B&M employed two-thirds of the town's population. The engine shops provided many highly-skilled jobs for mechanics, machinists and metalworkers. Engine and crew at Woodsville in undated photo above.



**9.** King Street Overpass, shown in 1940, was built by the B&M Railroad over their tracks in 1931. Like Mill Street Bridge, its purpose was to eliminate a dangerous "grade crossing" where the street crossed directly over the tracks. Motor vehicle collisions with trains at grade crossings were common, with thousands killed or injured annually. When demolished in the 1980s, the 267' ten-span frame highway trestle was B&M's longest. Courtesy NH Department of Transportation.

**8.** Coal was the railroad's largest commodity, fueling locomotives and factories and heating homes and shops. In 1897 the B&M built a massive coal shed 400' long in Woodsville. C.E. Randall established a retail coal business on Mill Street near B&M's shed (undated photo, right). After his death in 1912, wife Mary, 54, carried on, loading customers trucks with 50 pound bags of coal, finally retiring in 1937. The concrete foundation of Randall Coal remains.



**7.** Woodsville Station was built in 1890 with two stories (inset photo), then rebuilt with a third story and a flat roof following a fire in 1921. It stands today appearing as it did in the 1950's photo above. The B&M ran passenger trains through Woodsville until 1961 and freight trains until 1983. The state purchased nineteen miles of the line from Woodsville to Littleton in 1995 to create the Ammonoosuc Recreational Trail.