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Showing postings 1 - 8 of 8 in the thread: History of Union Station.

Posting:	History of Union Station	Posting 1
Poster:	Dagmar Noll	
Date:	31 March 2006 7:02 PM	

I was just standing with some folks at the site of Willimantic's Union Station and we were trying to figure out when it was demolished, and how that related to the end date of passenger rail traffic in Willimantic.

Does anyone know?

Dagmar

Posting:	Re: History of Union Station	Posting 2
Poster:	Tom	
Date:	1 April 2006 5:40 AM	

I believe that the Union Depot was demolished in 1954, the year after some serious flood damaged railroad lines, and ended passenger service. Tom Nanos might be able to confirm that or provide an accurate year.

It took a long time to build back in the 1880s, because the three railroad companies with trains going through Willi could not agree upon its location. Their hands were forced though when several people were killed in 1882 whilst crossing busy lines to get to the old "union" depot. You can see this old depot on the 1876 Bird's Eye View of Willimantic.

Below is a Chronicle article announcing the opening of the new depot, and below that are two of my favorite depot pictures.

The first is a 1910 postcard view, and the second shows the Connecticut National Guard soldiers leaving Willimantic in June 1916 to go to Arizona as part of the US military expedition to chase Pancho Villa across Mexico.

November 21, 1883.

OPENING OF THE NEW DEPOT.--The new depot was opened to the public the first time last Sunday and is now doing regular service as the New York & New England station. It has been a long, tedious and tiresome wait, but now that the public demand has been recognized and a building erected our people are appeased although they are not satisfied that the railroad has given so important a station as this its just deserts in the way of a building. The public was decidedly in favor of a union depot, and the failure of the various roads to come to some sort of terms whereby this end might be realized has not gained for them the good will of our inhabitants. However the New England people have bowed to the public demand and for so much as we have got we are thankful. The new depot is neatly furnished inside with hard pine throughout. At the east end is located the ladies' and gents' waiting room both in one. The ticket office occupies the centre of the building on the side and in the same apartment will be the Western Union telegraph office. In the rear are toilet rooms accessible from the waiting rooms. The baggage room is conveniently reached through a window from a lobby in the passengers' room. The west end has been reserved for refreshments and the railroad company is anxious to grant a lease of this department to any responsible party at the annual rental of \$1,000. Stationmaster Anderson is now domiciled in pleasanter quarters and he will now be able to impress the general public even more than he has already done that he is one of the most accommodating and efficient station superintendents that we have ever had here.



Posting: Re: History of Union Station  
Poster: Dagmar Noll  
Date: 1 April 2006 6:33 AM

Posting 3

Thanks, Tom!

The photo of the CT National Guard is a favorite of mine as well.

Mr. Nanos - any further insight?

Cheers,

Dagmar

Posting: Re: History of Union Station  
Poster: John Tormey  
Date: 3 April 2006 5:23 PM

Posting 4

During the fall of '54 and the Spring of '55 I travelled by rail back home from Back Bay Station (Boston University) sporadically to Willimantic. A bunch of us Windham-High-ites holidayed home by rail. The service ended and my folks bought me a '39 Pontiac coupe which did the trick just fine. Wish I still had that beauty. My buddies in Boston called it "the Ark." I called the "The Mayflower" because so many Puritans came across in it. But I digress ...  
jt

Posting: Re: History of Union Station  
Poster: Tom Nanos  
Date: 4 April 2006 9:49 AM

Posting 5

Well, jeez, I feel special... :-)

I'm waiting for the answer on the actual demolition of the station, but it looks like passenger service ended in 1955 due to the flood wasing out some key structures in Putnam.

Either way, it's all well before my time (born in 1969)... :-)

-Tom Nanos

Posting: Re: History of Union Station  
Poster: Mary Lee Bradley  
Date: 5 April 2006 10:01 AM

Posting 6

The station was demolished in '55, I think. I worked at the Sears order office and we had two very large windows that overlooked the station.  
One day they blasted and a large rock came through one of the windows.  
Luckily no one was hurt.

Posting: Re: History of Union Station  
Poster: Ada  
Date: 5 April 2006 3:33 PM

Posting 7

I had thought that the station was there for longer after rail service was suspended, but I certainly could be wrong. It was no doubt reported in the Chronicle, if someone had the time to look through the archives.

Posting: Re: History of Union Station  
Poster: Dagmar Noll  
Date: 5 April 2006 4:24 PM

Posting 8

What great stories. John, you're a riot!

Mary-- what building were you working in?

Best,

Dagmar