REGISTER

RAILROADS
1870s-2001

2 boxes
RAILROADS

HISTORY
Woods Hole Branch

The railroad was brought to Woods Hole by the combined influences of Prince Sears Crowell of Dennis and the Pacific Guano Company in Woods Hole, John Murray Forbes of Naushon Island and Joseph Story Fay, Woods Hole’s most prominent citizen, who sold much of his coastal land from Falmouth to Woods Hole for its tracks.

The Cape Cod Railroad had offered to extend its line to Woods Hole if they could get enough stock subscribed for and sold. John Murray Forbes and Joseph Story Fay bought 300 shares apiece at $70 per share and the planning began.

A plan was announced by the Cape Cod Railroad on September 8, 1871 to build a line from Cohasset Narrows (presently the Buzzards Bay end of the Cape Cod Canal) to Woods Hole. Three days later construction began. The state legislature authorized the Old Colony & Newport Railroad Company and the Cape Cod Railroad to unite as one on March 27, 1872. The resulting entity was the Old Colony Railroad Company.

The first train arrived in Woods Hole on July 18, 1872.

The local line ran along the shore north of Falmouth, then inland and again along the shore and among marshes and woods to Little Harbor and terminated at Great Harbor where the steamships sailed to Martha’s Vineyard, Nantucket and New Bedford. The Island Home met the first train and for many decades Woods Hole was the shortest route to reach Martha’s Vineyard and Nantucket.

“The Dude” Train, a subscription train run as an express from Boston to Woods Hole, began in 1884. It had been initiated by businessmen of Boston (including locals such as Forbes, Beebe and Fay) to take themselves, their friends and families to their summer homes. It ran from June to October until 1916. Its famous conductor was Augustus Messer.

In 1893 the Old Colony became a division of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. The last train ran to Woods Hole in 1964.

SCOPE

The Collection is fortunate to have some original ephemera from the Old Colony Railroad and also from the New Haven era. Longtime Board member Avis Blomberg donated many items which belonged to her father Robert C. Neal, station master for the New Haven at Woods Hole, where he began work in 1922. Included were baggage tags, station keys, her father’s lantern and his book of employee rules for the New Haven. In addition there are original Annual Reports of the Old Colony Railroad for 1868, 1879, 1884 and 1890. Other original items include Employees’ Working Schedule of 1888,
several advertising brochures of the 1890s and original school-term tickets for teenagers taking the train from Woods Hole to high school in Falmouth.

Other original items include a large number of tickets for the Cape Cod Railroad. There are some articles included which cover the local history of the railroad and also items of general railroad interest, contributed by railroad enthusiasts.

There are a small number of railroad photographs which were formerly stored with the paper items in this catalog. Since they have been made into digital formats the photos were removed to a fire-proof cabinet along with the rest of the Collection’s photos. Most of these photos are copy photos along with a few originals. The most significant railroad photos are of the 1890s-early 1900s done by Baldwin Coolidge on glass plates and printed out at approximately 8 x 10 as contact prints. The detail shown in these is notable. The Coolidge images are kept in the fire-proof file under his name, not in “Railroads”. See below.

**SEE ALSO, in photos:**
Baldwin Coolidge (digital images 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2639, 2674, 2709, 2710, 2711)
Railroad (digital images 1557-1590)
Oversized photos
RAILROADS

BOX 1: Files

OLD COLONY DIVISION-OLD COLONY RAILROAD

1-1. Histories of the Old Colony Railroad.
   b. Typewritten material on Nathan Carruth, first president of Old Colony.
   c. Excerpt from An Anthology of Naushon 1833-1917 re John Murray Forbes and the beginning of the Old Colony Division to Woods Hole. Xerox copy.


1-6. Timetable. Old Colony Railroad and Fall River Line, Central and Cape Cod Divisions, Time Table for Passenger Trains, takes effect Wednesday, August 1, 1888. Reproduction of original, 1985.

**RAILROADS**

**NEW YORK, NEW HAVEN AND HARTFORD RAILROAD**

   c. Monthly receipts of cash payments for freight, Old Colony Division, Woods Hole, 1911.
1-14. Train schedule. Woods Hole to Boston, September 30, 1945, Cut from newspaper (New Bedford Standard-Times?)

1-17. Booklets.


1-19. Newsclippings

1-20. Notes.


CAPE COD RAILROAD

“Dedicated to Railroad Workers of the Past, An Historical View”.

CAPE COD AND AREA RAILROAD INFORMATION


MISCELLANEOUS RAILROAD INFORMATION (Not Cape Cod)


RAILROADS

BOX 2: Ephemera and Artifacts

2-2. Framed photograph. Copy photo of the narrow-gauge railroad at Oak Bluffs, Locomotive “Active” and Steamer Monohansett. C. 1880s-1890s.