



SALVATION BY TROLLEY

EXAMPLES OF WHAT EXTENSION AND OPERATION OF STREET RAILWAYS UNDER RAILROAD OWNERSHIP HAVE DONE FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES WITH INDICATIONS OF GREATER GOOD WHICH YET MAY BE HAD FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ENGLAND RESOURCES AND THE CONSERVATION OF NEW ENGLAND CHARACTER

By Sylvester Baxter

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The following article is devoted to a general exposition of the principles and considerations involved in a unified ownership of trolley lines and steam railroads, such as would necessarily be entailed by the proposition to merge the Springfield and the Berkshire Street Railway Companies, the latter now being owned by the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company. The publication of this article in no way commits the Springfield Board of Trade or this magazine to a holding of the views herein, but is made solely because of the interesting information which it affords our readers. We shall be glad to publish opposing views at any time.

A certain trolley line—the Lost Valley & Hoping Hill Electric, let us call it—ran through a lean country. It was a losing proposition. Then a great railroad company took it over. It continued to show more loss than profit. Nevertheless the railroad management kept on and acquired a number of other trolley lines of that unprofitable sort. Furthermore it even constructed various new lines through the same sort of country, built twice as good as a trolley company would venture to. Sound policy, the management maintained; it could well afford to lose money by these lines for the sake of the net profit from the operation.

This involves a question that puzzles nearly everybody it is put to. Some orthodox economists—and even some who label themselves "progressive"—declare it impossible. Of course the rule that "two negatives make an affirmative" can't apply here. You can't put two pints of nothing into a quart pot and expect to take out a quart of something. So if a trolley company cannot make a certain trolley line pay, and if a railroad company cannot make it a paying proposition, is it not the veriest nonsense for the railroad company to claim that it can make money out of what it loses money by?

Yet a certain great railroad company does that very thing. It is not in business "for its health," nor yet as a matter of benevolence. Its purpose is to make money for its stockholders. But its source of profit lies in performing a public service. A sagacious management knows that in the long run it cannot expect to profit either by milking the public or skinning its own property. It realizes that it

has the biggest sort of stake in the community which it serves. To serve it well helps immensely to make it a prosperous community and correspondingly profitable to serve. So the great transportation interest that now serves nearly all New England aims in this way to fortify New England as a self-sustaining community. By extending the best of trolley-line facilities to sections that its steam lines cannot reach, it is helping immensely toward that end.

That brings us back to our trolley-line paradox of profit and loss. Some of our orthodox economists also found it equally puzzling when it was asserted that a railroad operating at a loss might double its capitalization with money put into improvements—better tracks and better equipment—and then make a handsome profit on the same amount of business as before. The answer was simple enough: The costly improvements made it possible to operate with greater economy and consequently with a profit.

The trolley case is similar. A railroad's territory is its own asset as much as its roadbed and its tracks are. By equipping its territory with the better transportation that the trolleys imply, its territory is made a higher source of profit. Take fares, for instance: A passenger pays a nickel or a dime for his trolley trip. There is little enough in that—an independent trolley company would starve on all the nickels and dimes it could collect from such a field. But for the railroad many of these individual nickels and dimes also mean that a dollar, two dollars, three dollars and upward are expended for long distance fares which it

THE HOPE OF THE HILL TOWNS

SOME HINTS OF THE POSSIBILITIES IN WESTERN HAMPSHIRE AND OF WHAT TROLLY EXTENSION INTO THIS SECTION WILL MEAN—A COUNTRY RICH IN GORGEOUS SCENERY, SOIL FERTILITY, WATER POWER AND OTHER RESOURCES.

By John Dayton Willard.



MY TEXT is found on the east branch of the Westfield River, in the town of Cummington, and the village known as West Cummington. For a good literal translation of the original Hebrew see Jer. 12:11* and Isa. 61:4†.

The text consists of a good-sized paper mill, abandoned; a fair little village of twenty-five houses, comprising perhaps thirty tenements, some of which are vacant; and a goodly stock of tradition and not very ancient history of days of prosperity and



IN WEST CUMMINGTON

plenty. The mill is the property of the L. L. Brown Company of Adams, and until five years ago was in operation. Up to the time of the closing of the mill the tenements were all occupied and the people were sure of steady employment. The pay-roll of the mill, together with other incomes which accompanied the industry, represented from ten to twenty thousand dollars annually. But the mill was sixteen



ABANDONED PAPER MILL IN WEST CUMMINGTON

miles from Adams; and as the raw materials were hauled by team fifteen miles over the mountains of Savoy and Cheshire and as the product of the mill was hauled sixteen miles back again, it became evident that there was no profit in the effort, and the mill was closed. It still stands closed. The village still remains at the foot of Deer Hill Reservation, and is still occupied, but its life is gone. Deprived of



WEST CUMMINGTON VILLAGE

the regular income from the mill many of the people find the struggle for existence severe, and community life and initiative are gone. In the narrow valley there is no opportunity for agriculture. Until the manufacturing life is renewed there can be no progress—not even a standing still—nothing but retrogression. West Cummington is a community that died for lack of connection with the outside world—for lack of transportation facilities. The village possesses an unusual supply of pure water for either paper or woolen manufacture; it has water power; it has comfortable homes; but because of the cost of transportation West Cummington is economically dead.

*In consideration of the business man whose Bible may not be at hand we quote from the above reference: "They have made it a desolation; it mourneth unto me, being desolate; the whole land is made desolate, because no man layeth it to heart."
†"And they shall build the old wastes: they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolation of many generations."



It is my purpose in this article to deal with the possibilities in the Western Hampshire towns; with conditions as they are, and as they may be; all for the purpose of showing the wonderful opportunity which now awaits them in the proposed Cummington extension of the Springfield Street Railway. In order that the situation may be clarified let us

bear in mind that the proposed extension follows the east branch of the Westfield River from Huntington to Cummington. In surveying the territory we will begin at West Cummington and follow down the river to Huntington, with digressions to the towns on either side.

As we leave West Cummington we also leave the existing railroad farther behind. On the stage road we pass the remnants of three mills below the paper mill, each with its dependent hamlet. Some of the houses are occupied, others are vacant. Of the various industries that flourished on the river between East Windsor and Cummington Village, but one has survived. Paper mill, woodworking mill, textile shop are gone, and a small output of whetstones represents the entire manufactured product of this section. We notice while driving toward Cummington from West Cummington that all the roads on the left lead to Plainfield on the north, and those on the right to Cummington Hill, best known as the home of William Cullen Bryant.

Plainfield—Beautiful and Fertile

Plainfield is the northernmost of the towns directly concerned in the proposed trolley extension. The bulk of the town lies on the slopes of several valleys opening toward the Westfield River, thus having a pleasant southerly exposure. The central village, seventeen hundred feet above sea level, is one of the most beautiful places in the hills. The view to the east and south is unobstructed, and from the main street the hills of Cummington, Worthington and Chesterfield



A GLIMPSE OF CUMMINGTON STREET



WINTER VIEW OF AN UNUSED WEST CUMMINGTON WATER POWER

stretch in a wonderful panorama. There are excellent farms in Plainfield, and also comfortable homes; but Plainfield is far from the railroad. Those who live in the northerly part of the town find a shipping point on the Fitchburg division in Charlemont, a distance of seven to

ten miles, while those in the central and southern parts of the town must go to Dalton, Hinsdale, or Williamsburg, ten to fifteen miles. Roads are not the best, nor can they be; and to exchange a book at the Northampton Library, or to do a half hour's shopping in the city requires a whole day's time. That Plainfield is not wholly forsaken nor hopeless is proven by the fact that it still has a population of three hundred and seventy-five; that it has over there thousand of its fifteen thousand acres under cultivation; that it produces one million three hundred thousand quarts of milk annually. Nor do these figures more than suggest the truth. But on the other hand a comparison with figures fifty years ago shows a great loss. Here in Plainfield Moses Hallock conducted his academy, an institution that sent over three hundred

boys to higher institutions, an institution commemorated by a tombstone on the lawn of the old school building, now used as a store. Although the proposed railroad would not enter the town it would furnish a convenient outlet at Cummington, about four miles to the south, and would prove a mighty help in the regeneration of the town. It is a comparatively easy road from Plainfield to Cummington, and in the handling of incoming grain, coal and fertilizer, and of outgoing crops, an inestimable saving would be effected with sidings in Cummington where box and refrigerator cars could be loaded and coal cars emptied.

Cummington Hill

Cummington Hill to the right and south as we travel the stage road is the farming section of the town of Cummington. Here are as good farms and as comfortable homes as can be found anywhere in the hills. The land is unusually adapted to apple



NOTE—The small illustrations used in this article without explanatory title lines are all from photographs taken on the Curtis Farm in Worthington. There more than ordinary results are obtained from a farm where a dozen or more different sources of revenue have been successfully tapped. Among these is the raising of blooded dogs.



STANTON MANUFACTURING COMPANY, WEST CHESTERFIELD
Makers of whip butts and banjo hoops.



CUMMINGTON CREAMERY
In spite of the isolation of the Hill Towns great quantities of fine dairy products are annually sent out.



BALL'S MILL, EAST WINDSOR
A type of the woodworking plants still common along the rivers in the Hill Towns.



ORCHARD ON THE WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT PLACE



WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT, HOMESTEAD, CUMMINGTON
Original from
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



culture and the apple crop is a most important factor in both present and future agriculture of the section. But on Cummington Hill are good farms that lie idle, —houses occupied, but acreage and orcharding unused. There are, however, some large and well conducted farms. The upper and lower Bryant places are broad and clear. There are excel-

lent orchards and healthy cornfields. The same is true of the Ferguson places and of others. But we meet on all hands the complaint that it is so difficult to move crops to market. In point of isolation Cummington Hill is as stranded as Plainfield, and we can hardly blame the younger generation for wishing to be nearer to the rest of the world.

Cummington Village

Following again the course of the Westfield River we pass through the hamlet of "Lightning Bug" or "The Bug" as it is more commonly called, and arrive at the Bryant Library and the Cummington Creamery, outposts of Cummington Village. In this village we find town hall, churches, parsonage, stores, hotels, and a wood-working mill. Cummington is the natural centre of the isolated territory, and here are held many gatherings—fairs, grange meetings, clubs, and so forth. The natural outlet from Cummington is over the Goshen Ridge to Williamsburg, twelve miles, up one stairway and down another. Let us follow this stage road a part of the way to Goshen, for we will find many things of interest on the way. We still parallel the Westfield River, though not by the surveyed trolley route, and observe that the river is quite a respectable stream. At Swift River we reach the famous place where the water appears to run up hill owing to the peculiar angle of confluence of the Westfield and Swift Rivers. Here, too, is a mill that bears a striking resemblance to a church, and the older residents tell us of the time when this building was indeed the old meeting house on Cummington Hill. Now there is no trace of the old church on the hill, and those left in the old town centre worship in the church in Cummington Village. Near Swift River we cross the line into Goshen, coming to the



THE WESTFIELD RIVER IS NOT ALWAYS TRANQUIL



A GLIMPSE OF THE WESTFIELD RIVER AT CUMMINGTON

village of Lithia; and turning again, to the north, we come to the village of Spruce Corners in Ashfield. These two villages on the Swift River would find a natural shipping point in Cummington as it would involve no climbing; whereas to reach Williamsburg necessitates the crossing of Goshen Ridge. Thus we find that the benefit of the proposed trolley road reaches out beyond the four central towns of the group, and lessens the hauling distance to parts of two others.

Chesterfield Mount—Power Possibilities

Returning toward Cummington through Swift River we look in vain beside the river for a location whereon the railway might be built. This is indeed a remarkable bit of country; three miles of deep gorge, and natural beauty untouched by man; here also is a site for power development, as a fall of seventy feet can be secured at the shoulder of the hill, but there is no room in the deep gorge for the roadbed. Because of this the survey diverges somewhat from the river bed back in Cummington Village, following another valley up a gentle grade to the Hillside Fair Grounds where the annual Cummington Fair is held. From the fair ground the survey crosses a remote angle of the town of Worthington and then passes into the town of Chesterfield, following a little brook to the Westfield River again at West Chesterfield. From this point onward the roadbed is never at any distance from the stream. In this journey from Cummington to West Chesterfield we have passed, on our left, a most unique bit of country known as Chesterfield Mount. It is a high table-land sharply cut off from the rest of the world by our valley on the west and by the valley of the Westfield River on the east. Access to the Mount may be had from the ends in Cummington and West Chesterfield. On this table-land was once a prosperous little community of more than a dozen families. Here were good farms and a school. The western fever seized the people, and now the farms are with three exceptions deserted. The inaccessibility has prevented its reoccupation; but with the



BLACK BIRCH TO BE DISTILLED



SWIFT RIVER, CUMMINGTON

Here, near the junction of the Swift with the Westfield River an excellent small water power was in use seventy-five years ago.

assurance of an outlet by rail at Cummington and West Chesterfield these farms will be in operation again, and the cemetery will not hold such an absolute monopoly on the census.

We have left Cummington behind, and perhaps a word in summary is in order. Cummington has today a population of about seven hundred and fifty. It contains fifteen thousand acres of which three thousand are in tillage and five thousand five hundred in cleared pasture. But what was true of Plainfield is equally true of Cummington; it is a skeleton of its former self, both in point of population and productivity. Its manufactures are also but a small part of what they formerly were. But Cummington has great possibilities, evident to the most casual observer; and once given a means of transportation the proof of the possibility would not be long delayed.

Chesterfield—Industries and Possibilities

West Chesterfield is a busy little settlement deep in the valley, at the junction of the Stevens Brook with the Westfield River. Here are the mills of the Healy Brothers, manufacturers of saw and plane handles; of the Stanton Brothers, manufacturers of whip butts and banjo hoops; and of Charles Higgins, manufacturer of factory baskets. West Chesterfield is a distributing point on the Worthington-Williamsburg stage line which comes down the hill from Worthington and climbs the opposite hill to Chesterfield Centre on the east. In this village on the hill are the "meeting house" and store, town hall and hotel. Quite a summer colony gathers here year after year. From the church we see scattered farms to the north and east, and



in the distance the roofs of the houses in Goshen Street. To the southwest and south are the better farming lands of the town, and also another busy hamlet known as Bisbee Post Office where are a grist and a saw mill. Returning to West Chesterfield we may climb to Ireland Street, so called from the colony of

Scotch-Irish who first inhabited it. This, too, contains excellent farms and has great possibilities of development, but its distance from the railroad is its great drawback.



The Gem of the Western Hills

If we follow the stage road to the west from West Chesterfield the road parallels the Stevens Brook to Stevensville where are the neat mills of the Stevens Brothers and of A. C. Stevens. This little hamlet with five comfortable houses is one of the most picturesque in the hills, with its glassy mill pond and rocky falls. A mile beyond Stevensville the stage leaves the brook and climbs the last sharp hill to Worthington Post Office. This last mile is long and tiresome, but one is well rewarded at the end—especially if the course terminates in Landlord Trow's dining room at the inn. Worthington Corners is a village on a superb rolling upland, in the midst of excellent farms and comfortable homes. The village itself is picturesque with its substantial homes and comfortable cottages. A mile beyond is the centre village with its single street, town hall, church and store. Here we notice a feature unusual in the hills—fire hydrants. Worthington has just installed a new system of water supply, of unusually good quality. We of Worthington do not hesitate to say that our town is the gem of the western hills in beauty, agricultural possibility, and sturdy character; and when you have visited us you will surely agree with us. But do not come by stage expecting to see the town and return the same day. Three days at least will be needed. You will leave Williamsburg by stage at two-thirty, and barring accidents will arrive in Worthington at six-thirty or later. There is but one stage a day from Williamsburg. You will find excellent accommodation at the inn, and the next day you will spend in visiting the Centre and South Worthington and Parnassus and Bashan Hill and the West Worthington Gorge. You will return to the inn and eat tremendously and sleep tremendously. And then, not long after you have retired, you will hear the tattoo on your door and will dress by lamp light and breakfast by lamp light (at this time of year) and at 6 A. M. will shiver



MAIN STREET, CUMMINGTON



LOOKING SOUTH FROM PACKARD'S STORE, CUMMINGTON

into one of the three vehicles that are waiting to take Uncle Sam's mail to Williamsburg, Huntington or Hinsdale respectively.

A Sample of Inaccessibility

Stages leave Worthington but once a day, and early in the morning. You may perhaps decide to make your exit through Hinsdale as the postmaster tells you that it is but ten miles to that post office. But when you have climbed Buffington Hill and have gone down the other side, and have climbed Lindsay Hill and have gone down on the other side and have climbed East Hill in Peru and have

gone down on the other side, and have at last attained Peru Hill with its church, store and town hall two thousand and eighty feet above sea level—and have gone down the other side and have finally arrived in Hinsdale, after crossing other nameless ridges, you wonder whether it was after all any shorter than the fourteen-mile drive to Huntington or the twelve-mile drive to Williamsburg. And when you leave Worthington it must be by one of these roads—or a worse one.



SHEEP ON THE HILLS OF CUMMINGTON



Beauty and Power

But to return once more to our trolley route at West Chesterfield. Just south of the post office is the gorge, with its lone abutment of a bridge built before revolutionary times, shown in the picture on the cover of this number.

Here is another spot of rare beauty, and as fate

would have it another excellent site for power development. South of the gorge, and below the Nutshell, presided over by Chandler Bicknell (be sure to stop and visit him), we enter "the Wilderness," fitly named. Here we pass other undeveloped powers on the river, and see more of nature untouched by man. Past Taylor Bridge and Indian Hollow, we come to the outlet of Worthington's Little River, and must take an hour to drive up to South Worthington, visiting the summer homes of Nathan Bill and Russell Conwell. In this village we find several little industries that are only waiting a better outlet to increase their work and prosperity. Back again to Indian Hollow, and here we are reminded that we passed, on our left, excellent granite quarries, deserted because the eight-mile haul to the Boston & Albany precluded profit on an output as heavy as stone. From Indian Hollow to Huntington, a distance of six miles, we find but little noticeable grade. At Knightville we notice projecting cliffs which once gave foothold to a dam, long since washed away by the floods of the spring. With proper solidity of construction an excellent power can be developed here, and Knightville, too, will be regenerated. Below Knightville we pass Stowells' Flats, with another opportunity for the development of power. Hydraulic surveys show the possibility of developing from twelve to seventeen thousand horsepower in this branch of the Westfield River between Huntington and Cummington.

If you have followed this irregular and fragmentary itinerary you will have gained some idea of the territory which is awaiting the opportunity of development. A recapitulation, taken from the last agricultural census, shows in the four towns of Worthington, Cummington, Chesterfield and Plainfield a total of seventy thousand acres of which fourteen thousand are under cultivation, thirty thousand are woodland, and the remainder pasture. We have seen the possibility of power-development, and have noticed the industries already in existence and operation. There are in these hills quarries of granite and other marketable minerals. There are prosperous farms, and

others that might be prosperous if the odds in the game were not so unfavorable; for as Professor Bailey of Cornell says in his work on "The Country Life Movement," . . . "the value of land for farming will depend very much on its accessibility and its nearness to market. Even though it is possible to raise two hundred and fifty bushels of potatoes on a distant hilltop it does not necessarily follow that it is profitable to raise them there."



IN THE VILLAGE OF WEST CHESTERFIELD

hoss shay." It will mean the possibility of moving crops promptly in season without the risk of freezing, and with less tax to owner and buyer. It will mean the reviving of industry and manufacture. It will mean added prosperity from the financial standpoint, and added comfort, convenience, hope and contentment in life.

There is one other phase of the matter which I must mention before closing. The proposed Cummington extension will penetrate the heart of this territory and will stop there for the present; but it will not long be left a dead end. It will be continued. There are possible outlets and routes through Peru and Windsor to Hinsdale or Dalton; through Savoy and Cheshire to Adams; through Ashfield to Conway and Greenfield, or through Goshen to Williamsburg. There is no telling at present which route will be



A GLIMPSE OF WORTHINGTON CORNERS

There is already a population that comes for the summer and fall—a population as large as that which lives in the hills the year round; and this population will constantly increase.

What Does the Trolly Mean?

And you ask how a trolly road with freight privileges will benefit this section? It will mean that the Worthington minister and his neighbors can burn coal which does not cost over eleven dollars a ton as at present. It means that it will not be necessary to add four dollars per ton to the cost of all incoming freight, and that it will not be necessary to deduct four dollars per ton from the profit on potatoes, apples, hay and all outgoing products. It will mean that the Worthington minister and his friends can visit a good library in Springfield, or do a day's shopping, without spending six hours on the road in a "one-



THE WORTHINGTON STAGE

It takes not less than four hours by this, the only public conveyance, to reach Worthington from the nearest railroad or trolly line.



POTATO FIELD, CURTIS FARM, WORTHINGTON



SHEEP ON THE CURTIS FARM, WORTHINGTON



the ultimate benefit to Windsor, Peru, Savoy, or whatever towns may be traversed by future extension. This territory is one which has suffered as many and as keen disappointments as any in matters of railroading. The Boston & Albany attempted to find a passage through this valley, and a route was surveyed, but another was chosen. The Troy & Greenfield was on the point of building through Cummington Village

followed, but that one or more of them will be built seems a certainty. I have said but little of the benefit accruing at once to parts of Goshen and Ashfield; nothing of the certain benefit to Huntington; and nothing whatever of

but political engineering turned it to the north. The Hampshire & Western, and Central Massachusetts both made surveys on our hills. The Northampton Street Railway held for six years a charter to build over Goshen Hill, but never built beyond Williamsburg. A local company known as the Huntington & Westfield River Company was incorporated and made surveys for the development of the region, but with the death of Mr. Whittlesey the project was abandoned. This present project is backed by larger capital than any of the former, and more examples are now available of what can be done by a trolley line in the way of developing a country. Would that we did not have to refer to the trolley "project." Here's hoping that all Springfield and Western Massachusetts will come by trolley to visit us in 1914!



WEST CHESTERFIELD: HEALY BROTHERS' FACTORY IN THE FOREGROUND
Here are made handles for saws and planes.