

Progress and Personalities

Once the novelty had worn off, the Manchester & Oneida settled down to the economy of operating a railroad in a businesslike manner. Although a beginner in the field, the M & O was more realistic than many short lines in that it did not overbuild nor overcapitalize; and, whereas its employees received moderate wages, its officers got nothing, or at best a mere stipend. Moreover, it held out for a one-third "division" on freight routed through the gateways of Chicago, the Twin Cities, Omaha, and Kansas City. By the sufferance of A. B. Stickney the M & O was also given an "arbitrary" of 30 per cent on passenger tickets from Manchester to these gateways in conjunction with the Great Western.

While there was some talk of pushing the road on to Colesburg, ten miles northeast of Oneida, this plan never materialized. In fine, the Manchester & Oneida was built and operated to do just one thing. That was to give the county seat an independent outlet via Oneida with the two railroads "which should have come to Manchester" (to quote the major), but did not. By the same token connections meant everything.

Slowly the local road turned into a full-

fledged, albeit a diminutive carrier in its own right. At the outset it had to borrow motive power and passenger equipment, but soon afterward its own high-stacked American-type locomotive, or 4-4-0, polished the rails. [In the Whyte system of engine classification the first number indicates the leading wheels, the second driving wheels, and the last trailing wheels.] The No. 1, as the road designated it, was said to be a Baldwin, purchased second-hand from the Milwaukee. Formerly a popular all-purpose engine, the "American" even before 1900 had largely given way in road freight service to specialized types. The latter types usually had only two leading wheels, more and lower dimension drivers, and trailing wheels. On the M & O, however, no such division was feasible, so the one engine served both for passenger and freight. No great "puller," the No. 1 had the virtue of being easy on light rails. At the same time it kept passenger trains on schedule and moved short freights over the road with dispatch.

By the end of October, 1901, the newspapers commented on the newly-arrived passenger-and-express car purchased from the Milwaukee Road. In December the Postal Telegraph was completed to Manchester and the M & O's telephone line likewise placed in operation. Manchester's new depot was athrob with activity.

Having to live by and with its connections, all

the M & O's passenger runs were carded to meet its neighboring roads' trains at Oneida. Starting with the first run, leaving Manchester at 5 a.m., it connected with Great Western No. 5 for Oelwein, Rochester, and the Twin Cities; also Waterloo, Des Moines, and Kansas City; and (by 1904) with Fort Dodge, Council Bluffs, and Omaha.

The M & O's 7 o'clock train met the CGW No. 7, the *Chicago Special* via Dubuque. The 8 o'clock afforded passengers time to board the Milwaukee's train No. 22, for Calmar and points north. At two in the afternoon the M & O's one-car local connected with the CGW No. 4 going East, and its No. 9 West. Its final train of the day puffed out of Manchester at 4:20 p.m. Its riders were assured of a comfortable "meet" with the Milwaukee's No. 21, going to Cedar Rapids with connections down the line to other orange cars bound for Davenport. Like the needle of a compass, the M & O met limiteds and locals going in all directions. One of the smallest of towns, Oneida nonetheless boasted of being the only community in Delaware County served by three railroads.

Major Carr's dream being fulfilled, he gave up the presidency to become chairman of the general managing committee. This committee, later called the general managing board, was composed of five men associated with the road. It met infor-

mally and often on short notice to discuss and act upon matters pertaining to the railway. Carr's new post was in reality that of an elder statesman, and to the end of his days he never failed to give the road the benefit of his counsel and experience.

Albert Hollister, a director of the M & O since its inception, became president in 1902. Born in East Delavan, Wisconsin, in 1854, head of the Hollister Lumber Company and an active Mason, Hollister was prominent in business, civic, and social activities. A tall man with good bearing and of a decided "outgoing" nature, he made many friends for the M & O and lifted much of the executive routine from the shoulders of Carr.

Meanwhile the railway proved moderately prosperous. A curious aspect of the short line was its relatively high passenger revenue. Both in relation to its size and to its freight revenue, earnings from "varnish" held up exceptionally well. Part of this may be ascribed to the favorable share received on through tickets sold in conjunction with the Great Western. Of equal significance was the aggressive manner in which the CGW solicited traffic and worked with the M & O to get long-distance riders, excursionists, and "drummers," as commercial travelers were called. For all intents and purposes, the M & O was regarded as a branch of the Chicago Great West-

ern; and it appeared on the latter's maps in solid black lines, like the rest of the system. Furthermore, the CGW would schedule an excursion or run a special at a moment's notice. The M & O would respond to such excursions with No. 1 steamed up to make the "connection," sometimes with borrowed cars, more often with its own modest coach.

According to *Poor's Manual of Railroads*, passenger earnings rose from \$5,001 for the year ended June 30, 1902, to an all-time high of \$8,640 in 1914. Generally speaking, the revenue from passenger operation increased steadily year after year. Freight netted \$8,158 in 1902 and increased almost annually to \$15,328 in 1912; thence it slumped to \$12,219 in 1914. Net earnings showed greater fluctuations, although each year showed a surplus with the exception of 1907 and 1913 when the road went in the red to the extent of \$3,576 and \$652 respectively.

Terminating as it did on Grant Highway in downtown Manchester, the M & O served the best industrial sites in town. Just inside the city there were always cars to be "spotted" at the always busy "Quaker Mill." Nearby, in downtown Manchester, there was a cluster of lumber, grain, oil, and produce firms. With one or two exceptions, all the chief industries were on M & O rails. The Illinois Central, serving the lower rim of the city, had few plant sites. Since

it was about a half mile south of the M & O's depot, there was never any physical connection between the two roads.

During the pre-World War I years nearly all cattle were shipped by rail, with the M & O getting better than three-fourths of the local shipments. A. B. Stickney catered to this business, running non-stop stock trains from many points on the CGW. He was most cooperative in picking up cars set out by M & O crews and highballing them into Chicago the same night. This policy was followed by his successor, Samuel M. Felton, who block-signaled and rehabilitated the old Maple Leaf Route. The Milwaukee, too, while only having a branch connection, worked closely with the M & O to expedite the moving of livestock.

One, nevertheless, cannot ignore the fact that Manchester needed more and diversified industry. Carr attempted to better the outlook — and get more traffic for the M & O — by organizing the Dairy City Creamery Company. Located next to the depot, it did much to increase dairy and poultry movements.

In 1905 Hollister resigned as president, and his place was filled by Joseph Hutchinson, the road's auditor. Born in London, England, on May 11, 1852, Hutchinson had had a story-book career. The son of an English sea captain, he emigrated to America on his father's boat at the age of five.

He was educated at Manchester High School, and he pursued a varied and successful career as a merchant, farmer, banker, and miller. Owner of the Manchester Flour Mills, vice president of the Delaware County State Bank, and title-holder of enough land in and about Manchester to form a good-sized ranch, Hutchinson was a very capable businessman. Dignified, proper and reserved, on the surface he seemed to have little in common with Carr. But the two worked together nicely as each respected the other's ability, judgment, and integrity. They were together much of the time, for the law offices of Carr were next to the business headquarters of Hutchinson, and their buildings on south Franklin Street were interconnected.

The M & O No. 1 engine carried on, but it was supplemented by another "American," likewise said to have been from the Milwaukee. At a later date the M & O purchased its third engine from the Milwaukee, but details about these early locomotives are hard to find. Although the traditional 4-4-0, which came with the first railroads in Iowa and went on to conquer the West, was always a favorite on the little prairie line, Engine No. 4 was an exception. This time the short liners went to the Illinois Central and bought a 2-4-4 Forney tank engine. Compact and fast, with street-car-like acceleration, the stubby locomotive powered the IC's brisk Chicago commuter trains.

Since the engine and tender were made a unit with pilots at each end and headlights fore and aft, it could operate with equal agility in either direction.

Not having much in the way of repair equipment, the M & O "deadheaded" engines to the Milwaukee's Dubuque Shops or to the Great Western's extensive facilities at Oelwein for overhauling. Sending an engine to "Dubuque" or "Oelwein" meant a fortnight out of the running and was only resorted to when absolutely necessary.

To fill in on light passenger runs, the M & O tried operating a Fairbanks-Morse inspection motor car, but this vehicle proved unsuitable and was withdrawn. For a passenger car, the company went to the IC again and selected a "combination" with rococo woodwork, arch brow windows, and ornamental iron trappings. The M & O never went shopping for freight cars. Like many small roads, it found it cheaper to hire cars on a per diem basis than to tie up money in freight equipment.

Under Hutchinson's stewardship the road operated on an even keel, but there were breakers ahead. In 1912 the connecting roads reduced the M & O's division from one-third to one-quarter. This hurt. By this time Sam Felton had succeeded A. B. Stickney as president of the Great Western. Felton did not have Stickney's pater-

nal interest in the M & O. Eventually the old rate of division was restored, but this was not until the mid-20's.

In the summer of 1914 the road was the recipient of a new "suburban" station at Terrill Park. Located about a half mile north of the Manchester depot, the concrete enclosed "halt" was the gift of Director R. W. Terrill, who likewise donated the park to the city.

After operating for fifteen years without an accident, the road's first mishap occurred on February 17, 1916. Engineer Harry Purvis pulled the throttle back another notch as the 8:15 a.m. train gathered speed near the Franklin Street crossing. Here the road veered eastward for the open country beyond the city limits. Suddenly the locomotive trembled as the left driving rod broke and threatened to reduce the cab to kindling wood. Will Accord, the extra fireman, jumped as the engine left the rails. In jumping he fractured his leg and suffered minor head injuries. The coach remained on the rails, and there were no others injured. This is believed to be the only accident of any consequence in the road's history.

When war was declared on Germany and the railroads subsequently taken over by the Government, it meant hard going for the M & O. John Barton Payne, general counsel of the United States Railroad Administration, queried C. J.

Seeds — "Does your company desire to be under Federal control?" The veteran auditor (he switched from treasurer to auditor in 1906) answered with some prophetic misgivings, "Yes, if it is given a living contract."

Actually, control of many of the short lines, including the M & O, was soon relinquished to their owners, for the USRRA wanted only trunk lines and other strategic properties. As a consequence, the small roads had to shift for themselves with no priorities, little traffic, and less consideration. Such was the fate of the M & O until federal laws were provided to save the relinquished roads from bankruptcy.

Hard put to get men and materials to points of embarkation, the government favored the main routes and those under direct jurisdiction of the USRRA. In line with this policy, freight for Manchester was generally routed over the Illinois Central even though the route might be miles longer than shipping over the Great Western, or the Milwaukee, and the M & O. No matter; Uncle Sam, traffic manager, had his way.

Again, the M & O had extreme difficulty in getting coal. In 1918, for example, the road had to cease running for a few days because of empty tenders. The following year all Sunday passenger service was discontinued, partly to conserve fuel but mostly on account of declining patronage.

When the M & O applied for its "guaranteed

return" as outlined under the Transportation Act of 1920, the government had one figure, the railway another. On roads big and small this was the classical position. Less typical, however, was the M & O's prospect of getting any money. Letters sent to the USRRA in Washington were not answered. Telephone and telegraph communications fared no better. Finally, the Major's son, Hubert Carr, who was general passenger agent, and C. J. Boardway, traffic manager, went to the nation's capital to find out "where we stood." Hearing from reliable sources that it was useless to query the clerks and supervisors, they sought the head man. To quote Hubert Carr, "We waited all morning but were told the person we wanted to see was 'in conference.' Returning after lunch, he was still 'in conference.' The 'conference' lasted until 5:30."

Determined to sit it out all the next day, they bought a stack of magazines and newspapers and waited. Finally they did get to see the officer in question. He was most cordial. "How are things in Iowa?" he asked. He pushed a button for the file on the M & O. But the desired material could not be found. He continued to talk about everything except the Manchester & Oneida Railway. Plainly the USRRA was so far behind in its work it had not done much about short lines. "Just write me a letter explaining what you want and we'll attend to it," were his parting words,

Hubert Carr recalls, "and say hello to our friends in Ioway."

Again a letter was dispatched; again no response. The Carrs finally evolved a novel plan of action. They would hold the money accumulated from interline freight billings until the government came to an agreement on the M & O's share of the "guaranteed return." Actually, not much could be done with the sequestered money, because divisions were not fully established and accounting departments were broken up under federal control. This came about through the inauguration of the Universal Waybill, providing for a tariff from origin to destination. Heretofore shipments had been re-billed at the gateways. Having a tidy credit balance, the M & O was in a position to do the talking — and the bargaining.

"It was just like trading horses," Hubert Carr recalls with a chuckle, "but we got our 'guaranteed return' and at the same time did not have to settle individually on the back divisions with about sixty roads. The government took care of that as part of the trade."

It may be added parenthetically that Delaware County's only other independent short line was a war casualty. This was the Chicago, Anamosa & Northern Railroad, locally known as the CAN because of its initials. This ill-fated line passed through the southwestern tip of the county, serving the village of Robinson, on its way from Ana-

mosa to Quasqueton in Buchanan County. At no time was the CAN profitable, and in 1917, after a fitful existence, the 33-mile road was junked.

The war years saw the M & O's new traffic manager, Clarence J. Boardway, become expert in operating the road under the most trying conditions. "C. J." was practically brought up on the line. Born on a farm near Manchester on May 17, 1880, he threw in his lot with the M & O the first year it operated. Always good at figures — he went on to study business administration at St. John's University, Collegeville, Minnesota — railway accounting came to him naturally. In 1905 he left the M & O to become chief clerk and cashier for the Great Western at Fort Dodge. Returning to the local road in 1906, he became its accountant and from 1910-1945 served as traffic manager.

Heretofore this top, full-time position had been filled with varying success by short-term incumbents. Sullivan, the first traffic manager (actually titled general manager), was succeeded by J. L. Kelsey in 1904, and he in turn was followed by E. E. Brewer, who served from 1907 to 1910. In 1912 F. L. Edwards held the post, and a year later the position was filled by W. F. Grossman, who remained until drafted in World War I.

The new, tall, slender, mild-mannered traffic manager showed every indication of sticking with

the road and the job. His knowledge of all phases of railroading and his ability to get things done quietly pleased the Major. He was just the one needed to keep the road solvent when costs were rising, traffic was thin, and man and nature seemed to be combining against the little carrier.

After the hostilities were over business took a slump. Postwar deficits rose to \$7,835 in 1920. The following February the road was forced to declare a ten per cent reduction in the wages of all employees. The year 1921, however, ended with the railroad only \$111 in the red. The next year the debt went up alarmingly to \$8,604. The board of managers held many a grim session in Carrs' law office to find ways and means of keeping the property solvent. In 1923 the directors moved that the trains be operated with three men, presumably engineer, fireman, and conductor-brakeman. Then, two years later, came the worst flood in Manchester's history.

Ordinarily the Maquoketa River is a pleasant, innocuous waterway, ideal for canoeing, good for fishing, and useful in providing power. In mid-June of 1925, however, due to incessant rains, it became a swirling, angry torrent, overflowing its banks and destroying everything in its way. Manchester's damage was put at \$200,000, and the M & O's loss pegged at \$10,000. A carload of eggs on the short line from Lovett & Daniels Produce Company was overturned, the road's

depot was half covered with water, the track washed out and two culverts destroyed. Damage to the Great Western, from which the M & O derived most of its traffic, was even greater. According to the newspapers the CGW had "twenty-three bridges out between Oneida and Dubuque" and another thirteen swept away from Oneida to Oelwein.

With token payments for their part-time work causing the officers more worry and concern than did the full-time enterprises from which they derived their livelihood, they wondered why they were staying in the railroad business. But the Major knew the town still needed its own railroad and ordered Boardway to get the line open. The M & O cautiously resumed freight operation in about nine days after the catastrophe. The Great Western needed almost a fortnight before through service was restored and then only after 3,000 cars of ballast had replaced its washed-out roadbed.

After nine years of continuous deficits Chairman Carr believed in 1926 that the M & O was on the upswing. And it was. That year showed a net profit from operations and a \$2,292 surplus; 1927 revealed much higher figures in both categories; and finally in 1928 the road achieved financial stability with net earnings of \$11,277 and a comfortable \$6,582 surplus.

Noting the success of rail motor cars on the

Great Western, the M & O decided to try one on its line. According to James W. Holden, writing in the April, 1941, *Railroad Magazine*, the contraption was "a Model T chassis dragged out to the proportions of a narrow-gauge boxcar, with a bus body seating fourteen at the front-end, and behind it an open express bin. Of the 4-2-4 wheel arrangement, she boasted a two-speed axle, a strip iron pilot, front-end bell and stove."

A wonderous vehicle to look at, it was an adventure to ride on. Watching it loping, bounding, and jumping along, the natives called it the *Goat*. Due to its light weight and its poor riding qualities it kept its operator, Bill Philipp, and whatever passengers it chanced to have, in a constant state of agitation, both physically and mentally. Finally, one day in rounding the curve coming down the hill into Oneida, it took to the cornfields. No one was hurt, but that ended the *Goat's* career.

Following this incident the road took steps for motor vehicle operation to supplant passenger trains. It formed a highway subsidiary, and from 1930 until the road's abandonment, panel trucks with varied modifications carried mail, express, and passengers.

In the summer of 1932 the road obtained its fifth engine. Built by Rhode Island in 1882, No. 5 had already seen fifty years service on the Milwaukee Road. In 1936 a companion Rhode Is-



Railroad Magazine photo

Passenger train about 1910. Standing at left is Managing Board Chairman E. M. Carr with President Joseph Hutchinson. In front of tender is Traffic Manager C. J. Boardway.



Daniel K. Peterson photo

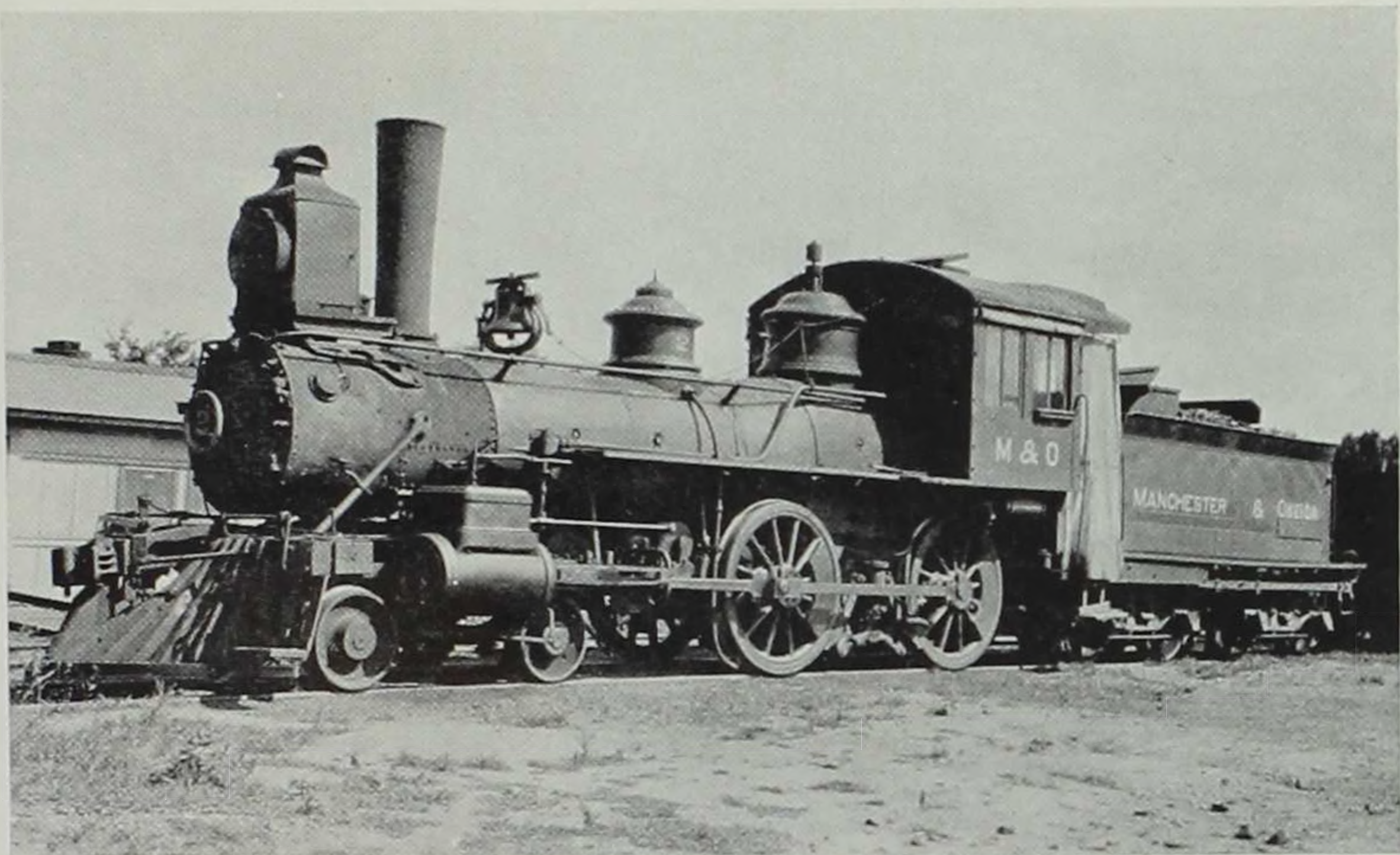
Manchester yards showing enginehouse in background. Flat car between engines Nos. 5 and 6 used only in on-line service.



M. C. Poor & Daniel K. Peterson photo
 Manchester station showing Traffic Manager Boardway on right. Panel truck (left) used to haul passengers, mail and express. Carload freight went by rail.

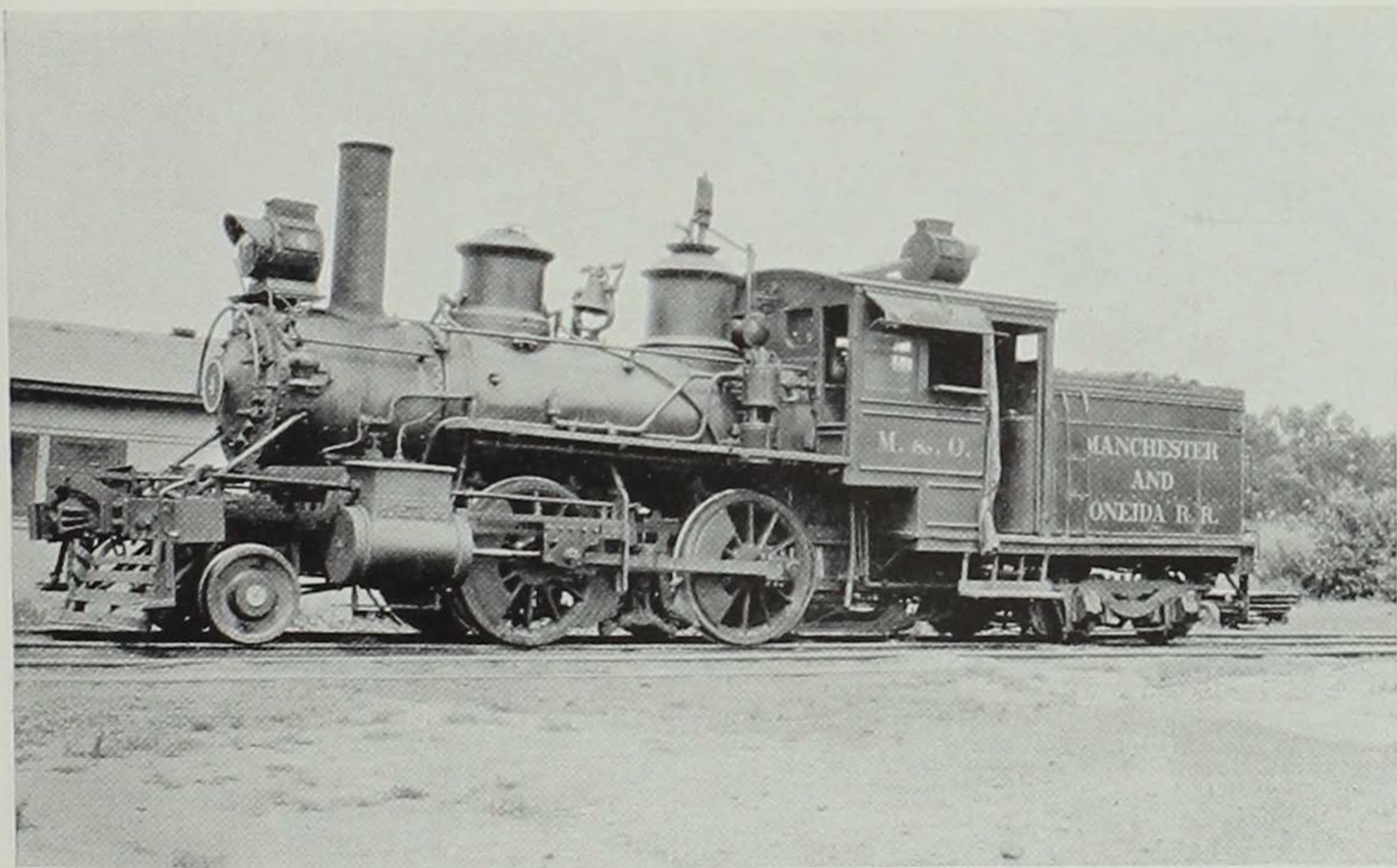


Railroad Magazine photo
 Jerry Howe (left), Milwaukee agent at Oneida Jct., talking with George Tesmer, M & O agent stationed at Manchester. Track left is M & O; on right, Milwaukee's Calmar-Cedar Rapids Branch.



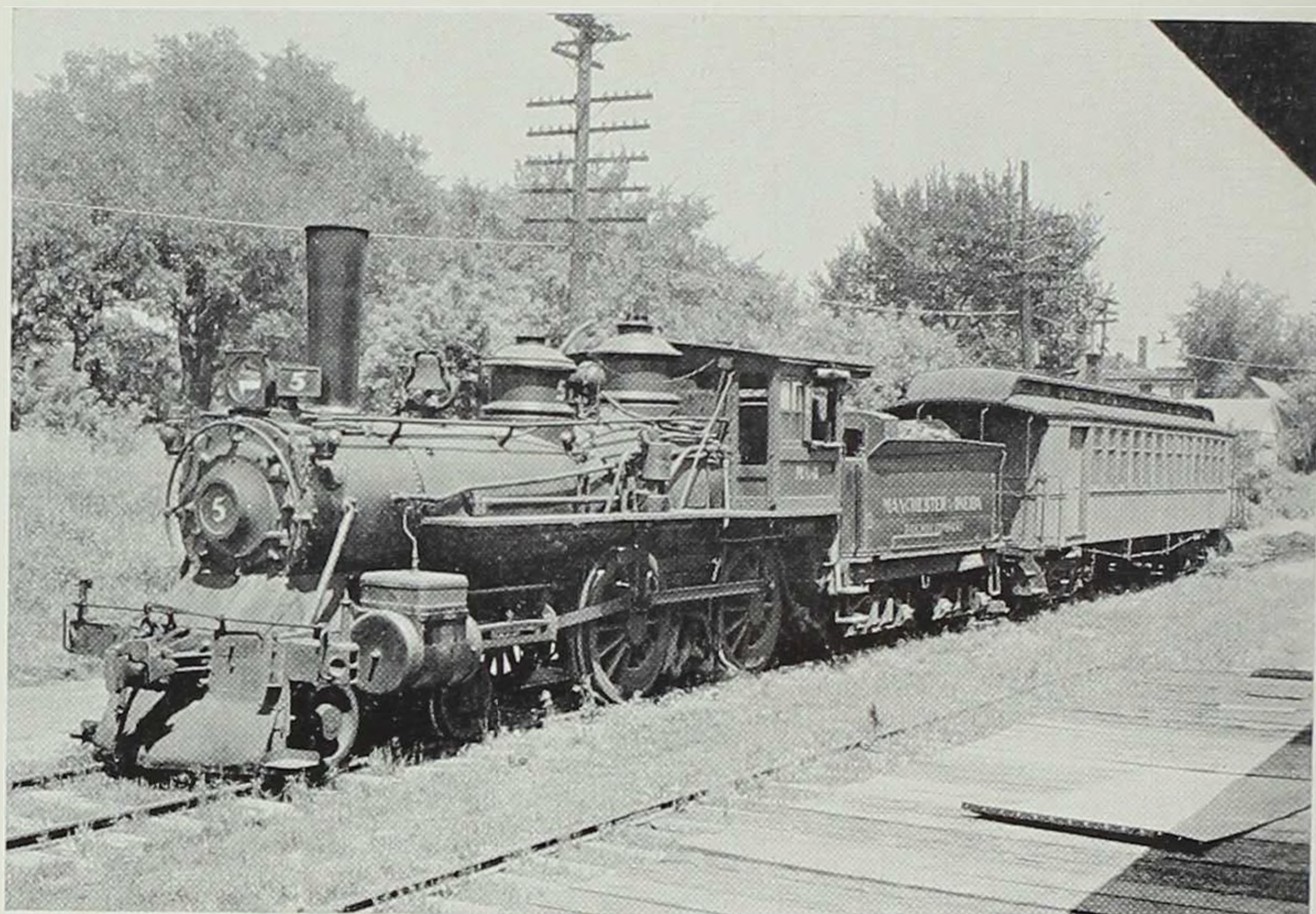
O. H. Means photo; courtesy M. C. Poor

M & O's No. 2 as it looked in 1931. Note extended smokebox suggesting engine was a rebuilt wood-burner. Outshopped by Baldwin in 1876, the big kerosene headlamp is indicative of its age.



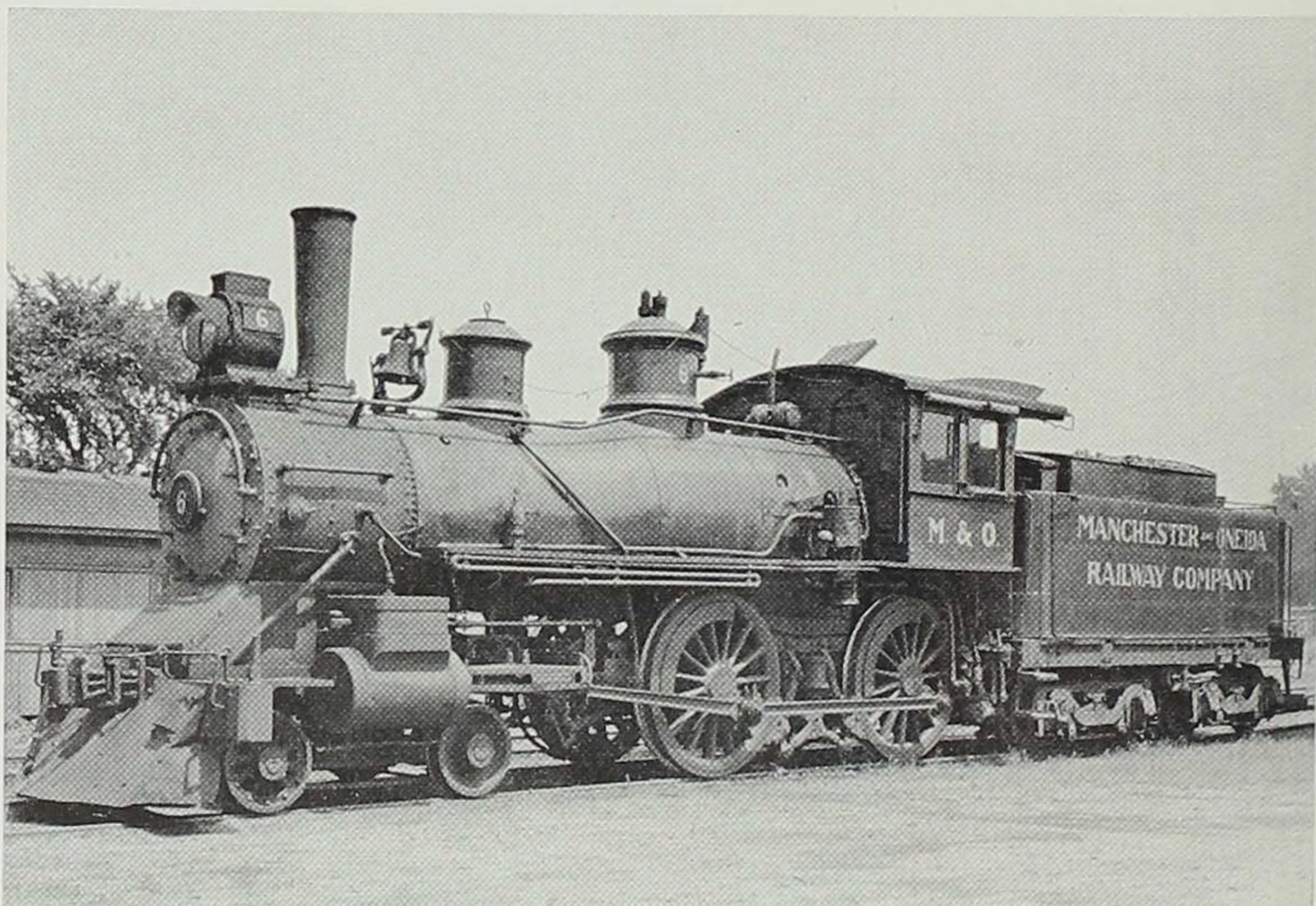
O. H. Means photo; courtesy M. C. Poor

Before coming to the M & O, No. 4 hauled Illinois Central commuter trains in Chicago suburban service. High back-up headlights characterize the IC-built Forney tank-engines.



Daniel K. Peterson photo

This ancient engine with its old wooden coach provided passenger service until that function was taken over by a panel truck. The swinging iron gates on car once kept IC's Chicago commuters from falling off platforms.

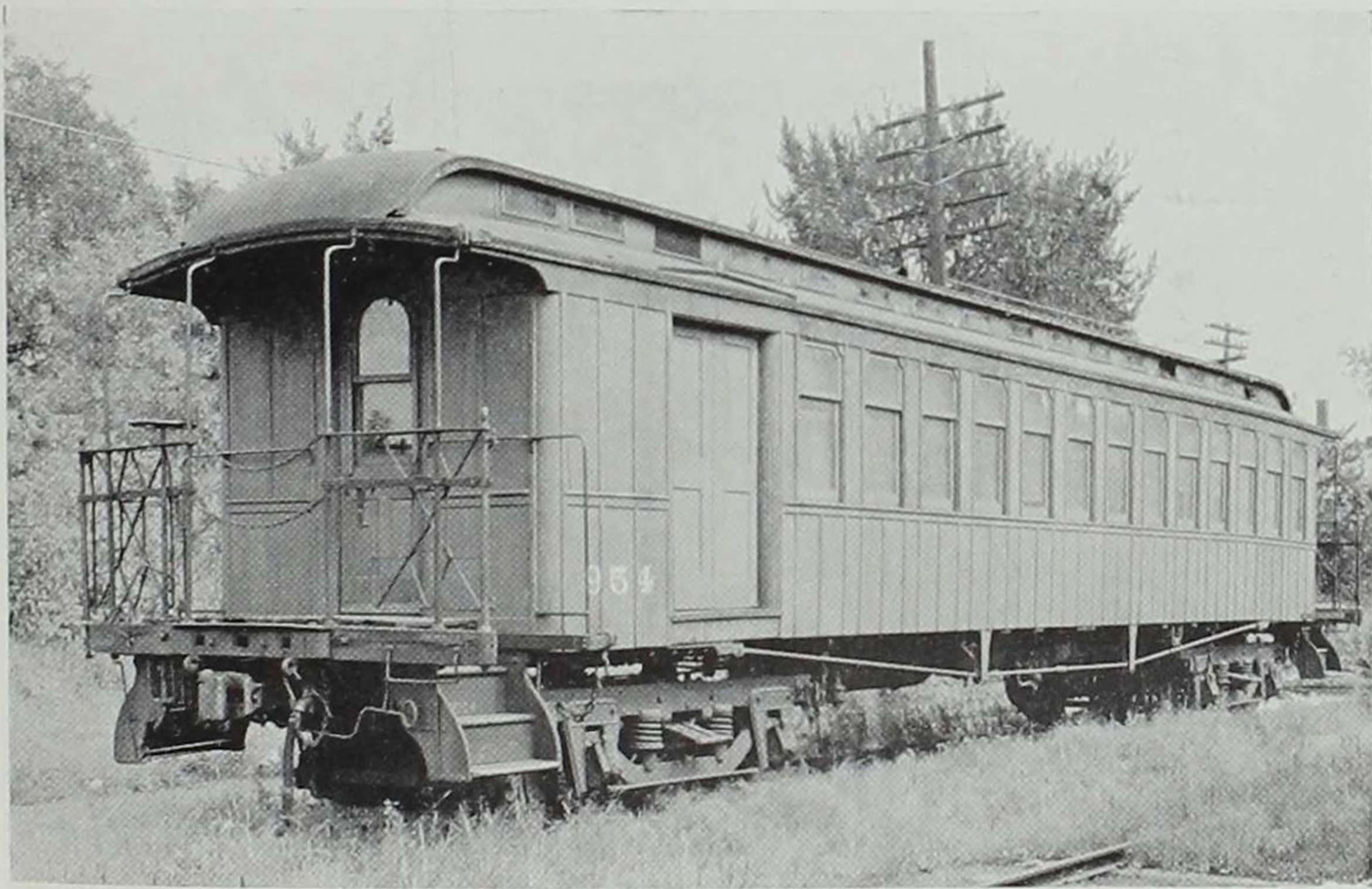


Daniel K. Peterson photo

Trim, well-kept No. 6 belies her age. Built in 1886; rebuilt in Burlington's Galesburg Shops 30 years later; she was sold to the Atlantic Northern in 1929. Bought by M & O in 1936.



This Mogul, the last locomotive purchased by the M & O, was too heavy for the road's light rails. After constant derailments she was scrapped.



M. C. Poor photo

The road's passenger coach was formerly used in Chicago suburban service on the Illinois Central before coming to the M & O.

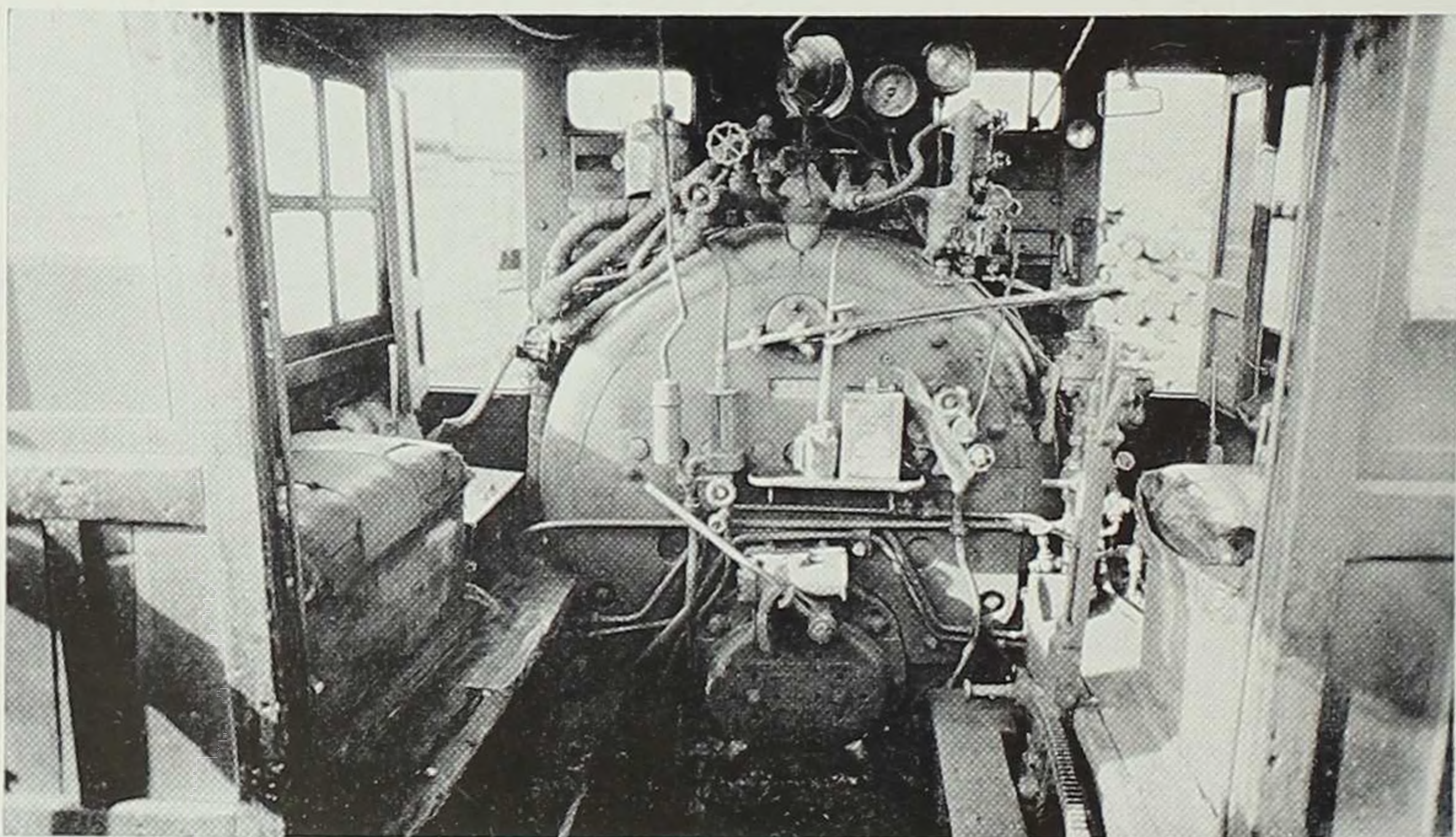


Top — Engineer John Toussaint painting pilot beam of old No. 5.

James W. Holden photo;
courtesy *Railroad Magazine*

Bottom — Inside cab of No. 5. Hand reverse lever at right. Upward slant of throttle (horizontal bar) proclaim it a veteran of the last century. Franklin fire-door, at bottom, is a modern adjunct.

M. C. Poor photo



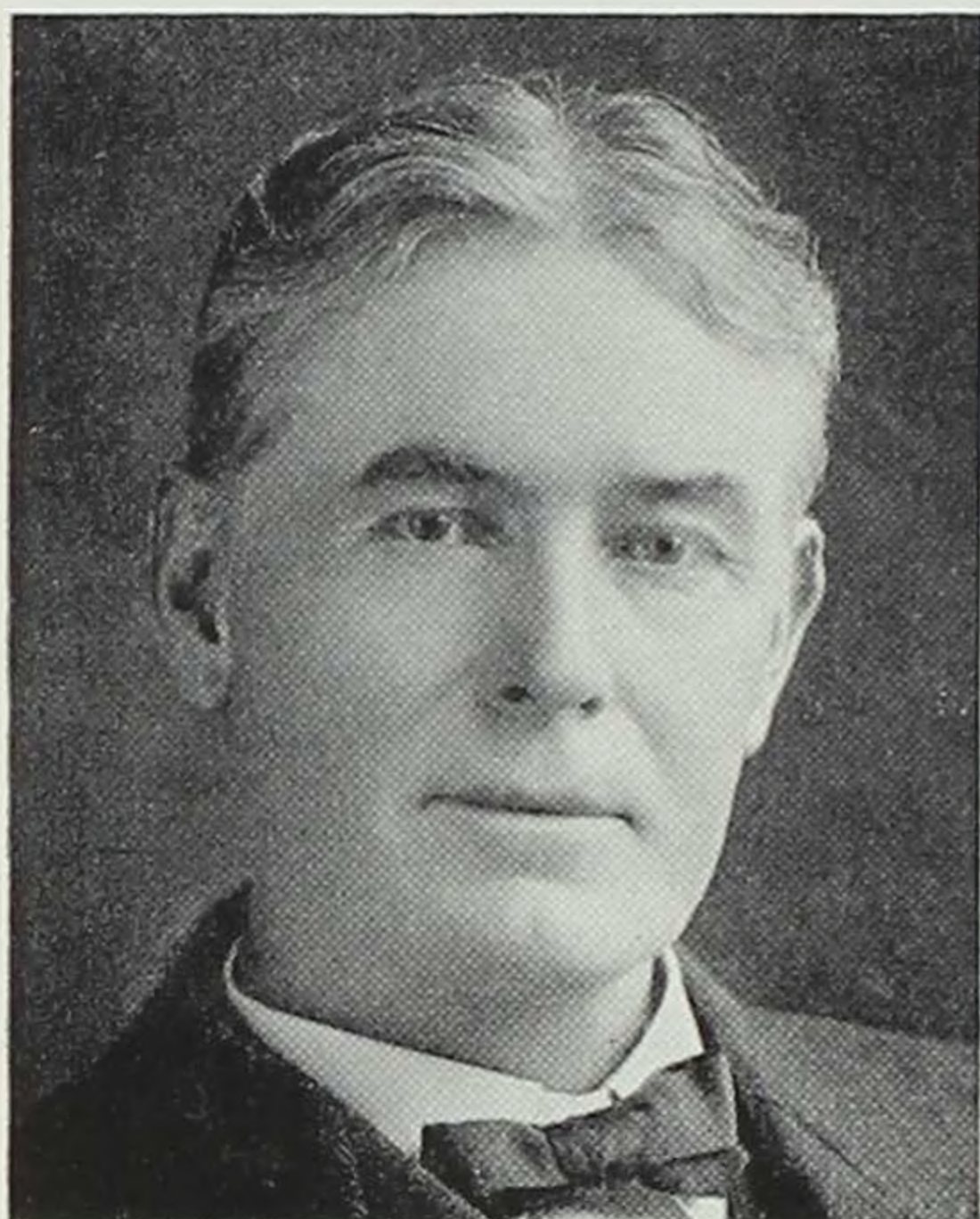


Board meeting in Carr law library. Left to right: Director C. J. Boardway, President Hubert Carr, Vice President and Secretary Charles McCormick, Treasurer F. B. Wilson and Director Thomas H. Tracey.



President Carr giving enginemen final orders during ceremony marking closing of road. Left to right: Will Matthews, C. J. Boardway, Charles McCormick and Lee Joslyn. Carr at microphone handing orders to Engineer Frank O'Leary (right) and Fireman Jim Dows.

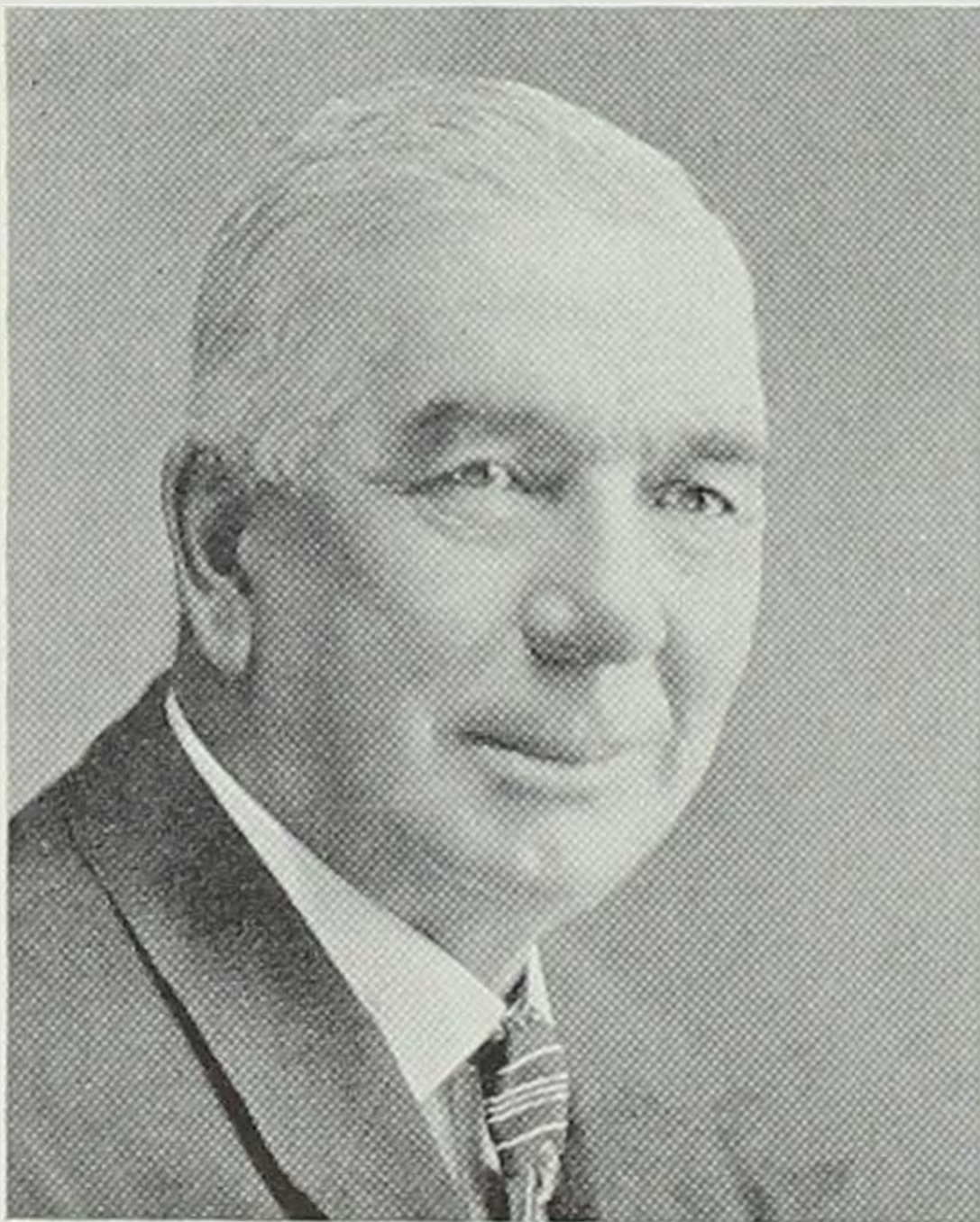
PRESIDENTS OF THE M & O



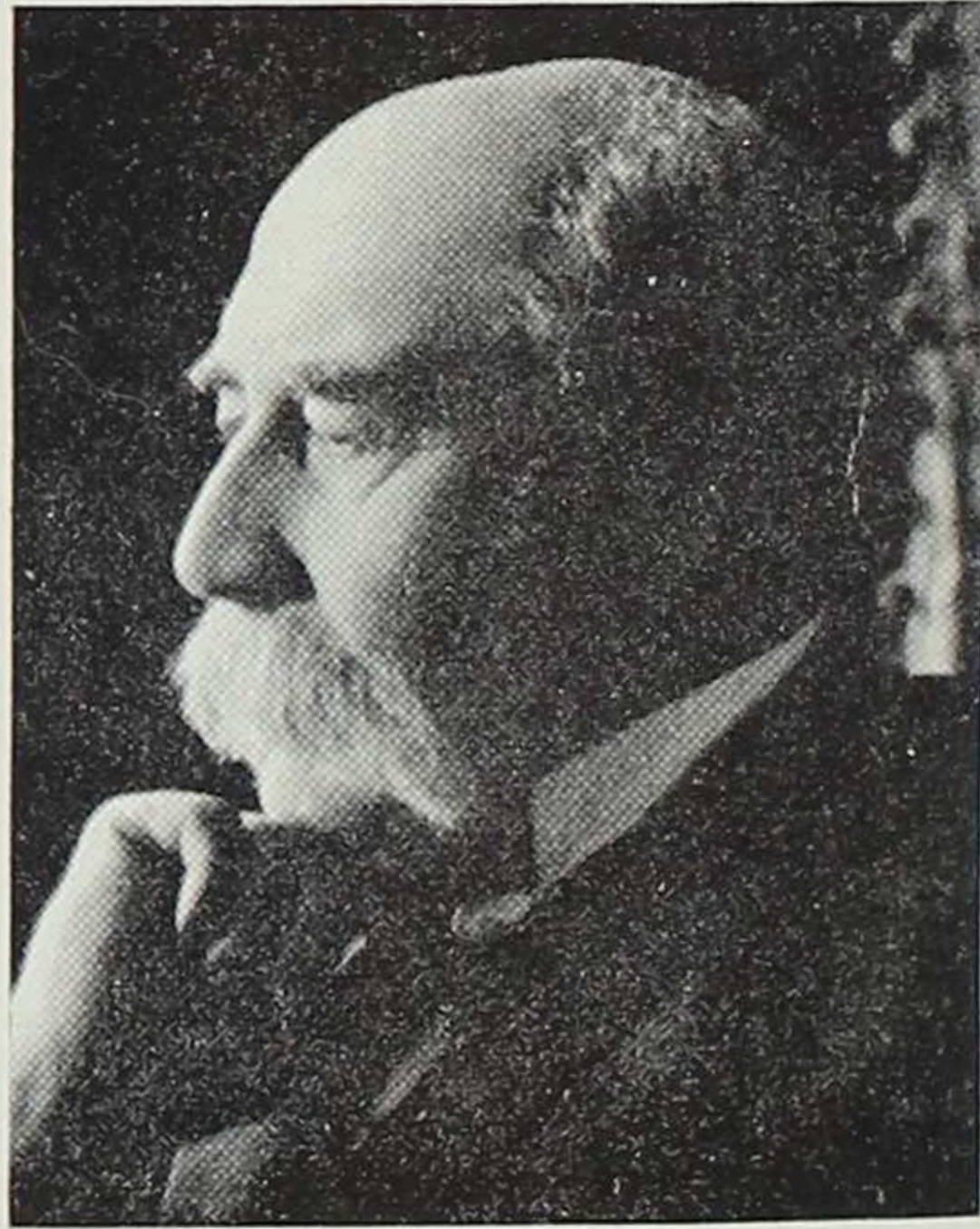
E. M. CARR



HUBERT CARR



ALBERT HOLLISTER



JOSEPH HUTCHINSON

land "American," from the late Atlantic Northern Railway in southwestern Iowa, was added to the roster. This veteran locomotive had taken to the rails in 1886 as the Chicago, Burlington & Northern's No. 3. In 1916 she was rebuilt in the Burlington's Galesburg Shops, and in 1929 she became the property of the Atlantic Northern. After being purchased by the M & O she was given new flues and put in tip-top running order.

The thirties saw many changes in the executive staff. Joseph Hutchinson died in 1935 after 30 years as president. He was succeeded by Hubert Carr. No stranger to the M & O, the younger Carr had become a director in 1910, general passenger agent in 1921, and, after the passing of Vice President E. H. Hoyt in 1926, had filled that position. Then, because of his father's failing health, Hubert Carr was elected Chairman of the General Managing Board in 1932.

Unlike the Major, Hubert Carr is tall and spare, but he has a merry twinkle in his eyes which is said to resemble his father's. Careerwise both Carrs followed much the same pattern in different eras and in altered circumstances. Born in Manchester September 9, 1877, young Hubert went to the State University of Iowa and then to Drake, where he received his LL.B. in 1901. Again, like his father, he practiced law in Manchester after receiving his sheepskin. In later years he took over much of his father's work on the *Democrat*

and was part-owner of the paper. He also served as president of the Manchester Electric Company. The family's strong interest in social welfare, which led the Major to hold the post of Commissioner of Insanity, carried over to the son, and he became a member of the Commission in Delaware County. The Carrs likewise were very active in the Democratic party.

During the second Carr regime the M & O received a pleasing windfall. The state embarked upon an important road construction program, repaving U.S. 20 in the vicinity of Manchester; and it fell to the M & O to deliver the materials. The M & O hired a locomotive from the Milwaukee Road and had a crew constantly at work moving machinery and supplies. "We spotted 651 cars in 57 days," Hubert Carr stated, "and realized a substantial profit on the operation."

In the latter part of the thirties the road purchased 90-pound second-hand rail from Hyman-Michaels to replace some of its 50-pounders. Its financial position was strengthened by junking engines Nos. 3 and 4, which had been made obsolete by the more newly-purchased motive power. Taken as a whole, the thirties saw money in the till, reasonably good traffic, and conservative growth.

FRANK P. DONOVAN, JR.