

Railroad show in Westford

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WESTFORD — An exhibit of railroad memorabilia, focusing on the early days of the Stony Brook Railroad, is now on display at the Westford Museum.

H. Arnold Wilder, a well-known local railroad buff, arranged this exhibit, much of which is from his own extensive collection.

A locomotive bell used on an engine traversing the Stony Brook line, old porcelain Westford station signs and numerous photographs and framed railroad posters are included in the exhibition.

The museum is open each Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m., and Wilder will be on hand to enlighten visitors about the days of steam engines chugging up and down Stony Brook Valley. Admission is free.

The short Stony Brook line is a most important connecting link for freight coming from the west, heading for Maine and lower New Hampshire. Its 10.5 miles runs along the Stony Brook Valley from Ayer to North Chelmsford. There were four combined passenger, freight and express stations in Westford.

The formation of the Stony Brook Railroad was backed by several affluent local citizens, including the Abbots, who purchased stock in the new enterprise. The year was 1848.

Wilder's display shows that at one time there were three railroad lines passing through Westford territory.

In addition to the Stony Brook line, the New Haven ran from



H. Arnold Wilder with some of his railroad memorabilia

Concord Junction through the southern part of town to Lowell. The Nashua, Acton & Boston started at Concord, came through the western part of town, passing alongside the present Westford Academy grounds, to Dunstable, then

Nashua, N.H.. Interestingly, this line, abandoned in 1925, never touched an established community, no matter how small, on its run of 24 miles. This line was called the "Red Line" because traffic was so limited the rails always showed rust.