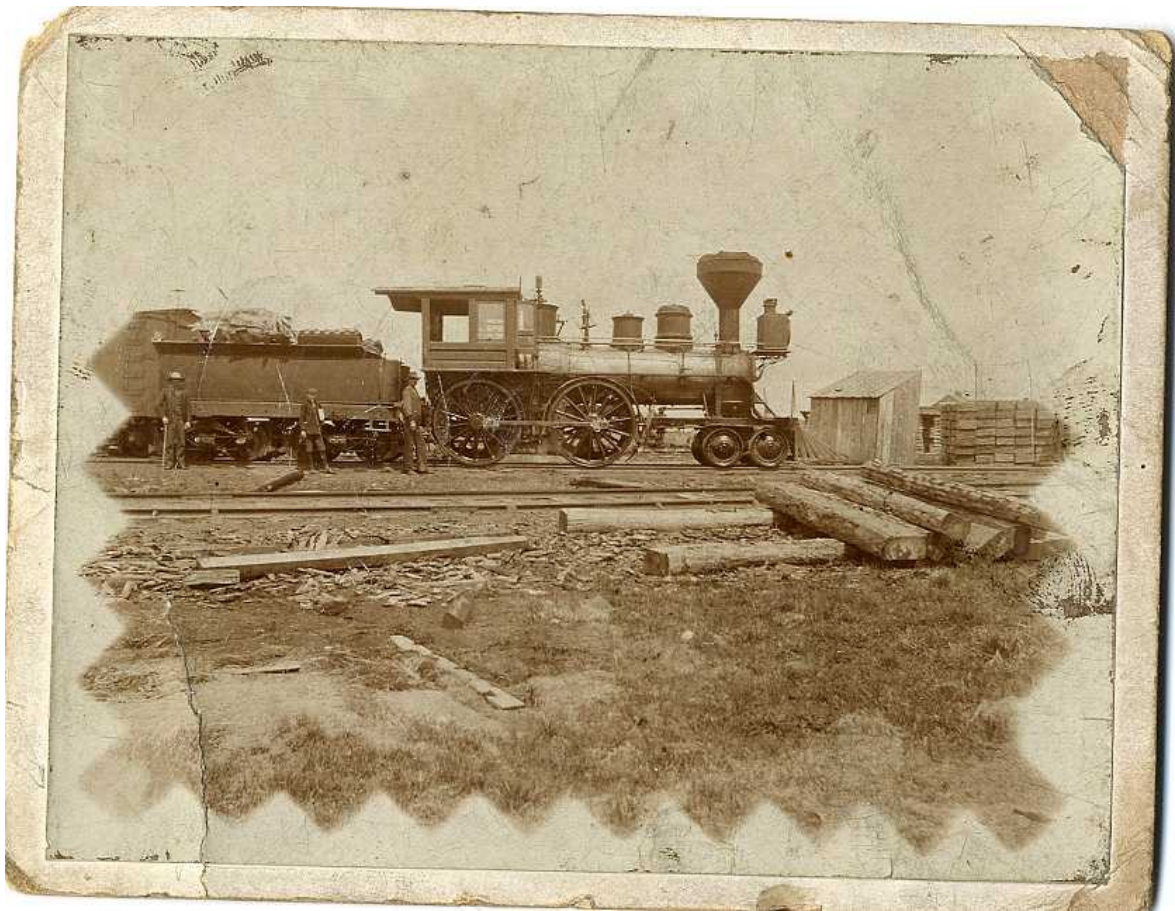


“Old Vanderbilt”

Upham Lumber & Furniture Company’s First Locomotive



“Old Vanderbilt” at the Upham Manufacturing Plant Yard in Marshfield in this photo from a glass-plate negative. The lack of cylinders, closely spaced lead wheels and no visible main rods are a giveaway that Old Van was an inside-connected locomotive; Cylinders, Main Rods and Valve Gear were sandwiched in, in between the longitudinal frame members. The Caption on the back is dated “1901”, which would be impossible as Old Van was dismantled from her frame in 1898 after she was retired that year.

“Old Vanderbilt” (A.k.a., “Old Van”) was an interesting piece of equipment in its own right, and proof that, occasionally, someone got the “better” of William H. Upham.

“Old Van” was an “American Standard”-type locomotive. “American Standard” was the term applied to the 4-4-0 wheel arrangement, which meant four leading wheels, four driving wheel and no trailing wheels. The 4-4-0 type locomotive literally built the United States’ railroads in the mid-19th Century; thousands of this wheel arrangement was built for every railroad in existence or those already operating. The 4-4-0 type was a very versatile design---they could be used as switching engines, “fast” passenger engines, or freight engines. Every locomotive builder in the United States started out, or began building later on, the 4-4-0. This locomotive type was the main stable of every railroad engine roster from the 1840’s into the early 1900’s. If one was forced to designate a “Typical American Steam Locomotive”, it would be the 4-4-0 type. Like the later Electro-Motive model “GP” diesel unit, they were everywhere.

What became “Old Van” was built by the Taunton Manufacturing Company in Taunton, Mass., in 1847, for the New York, Providence & Boston Railroad, a predecessor of the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad (Later to be known as just the “New Haven”) becoming that roads number 1 and named “Oregon”. It was Taunton Builder’s number 7. At some point, Old Van became property of New York Central & Hudson

River Railroad (no year given), was rebuilt, renumbered to # 47 and also renamed to the, "**Cornelius Vanderbilt**" after the curmudgeonly head of the railroad (Also known by the nickname "**Commodore**" in reference to his dealings in the ship trade, where he got his business start). Supposedly, "Old Van" was used as a "fast" passenger engine in her day; given how small Old Van was, and a driver diameter of 60", one can only imagine that a break-neck speed of 50 mph was quite the fast ride in the 1850-1869 periods, and about the upper limit of Old Van's speed curve. Three or four passenger cars of the period would have been a big train for Old Van. By the end of the Civil War, Old Van had already been downgraded to local and switching duties with only "occasional" use in main line freight or passenger services. By 1880, Old Van was stored and for sale; enter the Wisconsin Central Railway, then a-building their railroad across Wisconsin. WC needed locomotives; as the railroad built, business literally flowed to its rails. In 1882, WC purchased the NYC&HR RR engine mostly for use in constructing the railroad. Its use in other services was extremely limited.

At 35 years of age, "Old Van" was an old locomotive when the WC acquired it. Old Van was an inside-connected locomotive---that meant the Cylinders, main rods and valve gear was all **inside** the constrictions of space **between** the main frame members. The first driver axle also served as the crank pin, and was shaped like a crankshaft. It was "Quartered" to allow Old Vanderbilt to start forward (Or backward as the case may have been) from a dead stop. Old Van was built with 16X20 cylinders, and 60" drivers. Her total weight (approximate) was 66,000 lbs, which would have given Old Van a tractive power of roughly 9,964 lbs. Keep in mind, there were diesel switchers introduced in the 1930's to take advantage of the "90,000 pound rule" where it had been agreed upon by Unions and the Railroads that any locomotive **under** 90,000 pounds didn't require a fireman----were slightly shorter than Old Van but weighed much more---and had a much, much higher starting tractive effort. Old Van **may** have developed 10,000 lb. of Tractive Power for her size. It is a far better bet that Old Van developed around 9500 lb. of tractive power. Old Van would have been about 1/4th the overall size of 2442 in Wildwood Park, and the size of but a pimple compared to Union Pacific Railroad's gargantuan 4-8-8-4 the "**Big Boy**" built in 1944, nearly 100 years later after Old Van's construction. It was a small engine to say the least, as was quite typical of steam locomotives built before the Civil War. Old Van was approximately the same size as Historical Western & Atlantic Railroad locomotive No. 3, "**The General**", famed from the "Great Locomotive Chase" that occurred in 1862 by "Andrews Raiders" during the Civil War.

Wisconsin Central had renumbered "Old Van" to their First # 47 upon purchase of the engine. By 1886, Old Van was used as a "Lease Engine" and was leased for use to the Upham Furniture and Lumber Company. Prior to that, Old Van spent time stored more than used because of a nasty nature to be "cantankerous" and "unpredictable"----somewhat like the man she had been named after. William H. Upham of the Upham Manufacturing Company in Marshfield, Wisconsin, had decided by 1887 that he needed a locomotive to do switching chores around his mill in Marshfield, and to haul logging trains to his factory from lines stretching east-southeast (the "Marshfield & Texas" line) and from a spot located roughly fourteen miles west of Marshfield on a line that became part of the Wisconsin Central's line to Greenwood. Upham purchased WC first # 47 in 1887 (but no month given).

Apparently, Upham was quite taken with Old Van; it was he that nicknamed the Engine "Old Vanderbilt" to "honor" the Commodore. It is here that we find that Upham had great admiration, even hero worship, for Commodore Vanderbilt; perhaps, in his own way, Upham may have felt he might become a second Commodore, or a shadow of the Commodore's Son, William Henry Vanderbilt. In any case, the Nickname, "Old Vanderbilt" stuck with the engine, even though it retained its former Wisconsin Central number, 47.

Therein, comes the "mystery" surrounding Old Van. Was Old Van in Marshfield **at the time of** the great fire of 1887, or did she come afterwards? Old Van had some nasty habits:

1. She liked to break her crankshaft/first axle with tireless regularity;
2. Being a wood-burning locomotive, Old Van was known, as all wood-burning engines were, to

“throw” burning sparks, thereby creating line-side fires. Could Old Van be the culprit in the Marshfield Fire? There is really no way to know for certain, and it seemed to be easier to blame the affair on the Wisconsin Central.

3. Wood-burning locomotives were not fed a steady diet of “good” wood to fire them, which contributed to the proclivity to allow hot sparks to blow out of their stacks. Like the coal-burning locomotives that would follow, wood burning engines got whatever wood fuel was cheapest and easily had. Old Van had a “Cabbage”-type stack, with wire mesh across the opening, but that didn’t stop smaller hot sparks from finding their way out and where they could start a fire. Photographs of Old Van show her with a tender full of slab wood, which would be typical; it is said Old Van drew her fuel from the “cast-offs” pile outside Upham’s sawmill, end pieces, side cuttings and the like not really usable for anything, most often containing the bark still hanging on it. The Engine crew most likely simply filled their tender with whatever was deemed “the right size” to fit through the firebox door and didn’t worry about what type of wood it was. Old Van, like all wood-burning locomotives, could have her tender piled full of slab wood containing Pines, Birch, Maples, Oaks, Cherry, Balsam and assorted other wood from trees felled and used by Upham to build furniture, whatever had been cut how long before that was out on the slab pile.

4. Frank Upham reported that a “Wisconsin Central” locomotive was the cause of the fire; given photographic evidence, Old Van **was** in Marshfield **before** the fire, with the lettering on her tender, “WISCONSIN CENTRAL” in evidence. If Old Van was still on lease to Upham in June of 1887, we really don’t know. Frank Upham could well have made the mistake of assuming Old Van being a WC engine (which, technically, it was at the time of the fire) and it was always easier to blame the larger, faceless company, but one would be remiss in thinking Frank Upham making that kind of mistake given his awareness of the Company’s dealings.

Also, the Wisconsin Central’s Master Mechanic had suggested to the Board of Directors of the Company in early 1880 that Wisconsin Central convert to Coal Burning locomotives. By 1882 the WC was doing just that, buying new engines built to burn coal, while sidelining other wood-burning engines that weren’t worth spending the money to convert from wood burning to coal. This was another reason Old Van was put up for sale. It seems amazing the WC would have purchased a third-hand wood burning locomotive after the decision had been made to conversion to coal burning.



Post-card type view of Old Vanderbilt with Logging Train on the Marshfield & Texas Spur, at approximately what is now Park Street. The photo is dated “January 10th, 1886”, which pre-dates the sale of Old Van to Upham by over a year. This begs two questions: was Old Van leased to Upham at the time of this photograph, or were records switched to show Old Van being sold at a later date because she might have been the culprit of the Marshfield Fire? Frank Upham reported it was a Wisconsin Central engine that was the cause of the fire, and if Old Van still sported this tender with it’s partially, poorly blanked-out “WISCONSIN CENTRAL” lettering, it may well have been Old Van that started the Marshfield Fire. Unfortunately, we will never know for certain. Lettering on the cab reads, “MARSHFIELD”, although records never mention Old Van being named “Marshfield”.

Once Old Van was in service for Upham, she gave mostly spotty service due to her proclivity to breaking her crankshaft on the first axle, or one of her main rods. Old Van spent an almost equal amount of time in the shop being worked on as she did hauling logging trains; as Old Van aged, maintenance to keep her running became more than a routine task. Keep in mind, when Old Van was working for Upham, she hauled trains of not more than nine loaded cars and a Caboose. For an engine the size of Old Van that was a big train and she normally struggled with that. Nine flat cars loaded with large logs was quite a heavy train for an engine the size of Old Van to handle. The cars used to haul logs for Upham appear to be "Russel" skeleton log cars of about 20-to-30' in length with "Bunks" added to the car to hold logs. It may be possible that Upham used "Disconnect Logging Trucks" for his trains, which were no more than a pair of freight car trucks with couplers and bunks. They had no long body, the bunk held the log and the log, in effect, became the "frame" or "body". In this way, any length log could be carried as the trucks could be adjusted for length since they had no frame.



Link and Pin couplers were used on the logging cars and "Old Van" of the Upham railroad, called the Marshfield & Texas. This 1888 photo shows the train at a landing in the woods, possibly on the "Clark County" railroad, with the woods gang posing for the camera. Courtesy State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Roy L. Martin collection.

Old Van approximately 1888, out along the Greenwood Line, possibly on the spur off the WC at Milepost 8. As small as Old Van's cab was, it makes one wonder where the engineer put his feet, or did he sit crossways?

*At this point I tend to giggle; W.H. Upham, who has been characterized as being "shady" in his own business dealings (depending upon your source of information), but apparently thought he was "wise" enough to spot someone trying to take advantage of him, procured a locomotive from the Wisconsin Central that WC felt the New York Central had sold them a "bill of goods". WC, in turn, sold a piece of equipment held in less than high regard, to a good line-side customer in Upham's lumber and furniture company, who thought, initially, he was making a "good deal" only to realize that Wisconsin Central had sold **him** a "bill of goods!" However, selling Old Van to Upham made sense. Old Van had been leased to Upham and was a familiar quantity.*

Old Van had her moments in the Spotlight during her career for Upham; she became a sort of local celebrity. It seemed she was called to emergency service when needed, and two events added to her "legend":

- *Old Van was called to the scene of a derailment of a WC engine at Spencer; A WC Train hit a farmer's*



Old "Vanderbilt" was pulling a logging train for the Upham Mfg. Co. in 1890 near Marshfield, Wisconsin. The cylinders and drive rods were inside the frame on this 1847 product of the Taunton Locomotive Works. Ed Upham was the engineer and Frank Welch was the fireman. Courtesy State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Roy L. Martin collection, negative no. WHI M302 11 or WHI M304 96.

Old Van out on the Greenwood Line ca. 1890. Most railroads were extremely lenient in allowing Logging Roads to operate over their tracks. In the case of Upham operating over what became Wisconsin Central's Greenwood Line, Upham "leased" the first 8-1/2 miles to the Wisconsin Central in the WC's abortive attempt to build "the Marshfield Cut-Off", from Marshfield to Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Included in the lease agreement was provision for Upham to "use" the first 8-1/2 miles to bring logs in to his factory.

wagon loaded with logs. Farmer and logs went flying, and the team of horses ran off. The WC engine ended up off the track with her tender at cross-purposes to the track. Wisconsin Central requested Upham assist, and after fighting with Old Van to get steam up in the boiler, Old Van and crew took off willy-nilly to Spencer, where Old Van attempted to pull the larger WC 4-4-0 back onto the track. Alas, Old Van simply didn't have enough tractive power to pull the larger locomotive back onto the track, testament of her lightness of weight because of her small size. A sort of "Little Engine That Could" story, but in the end, couldn't.

- *In the summer of 1896, a child had disappeared in the wild country north of Marshfield while picking blueberries. Nine year old Mattie Weber grew tired of the task and started back to the buggy that had brought him. That was the last seen of him for two days. When the child could not be located, search parties were organized and the next day Mrs. Upham got personally involved with the search for this missing child, and in the absence of, and speaking on behalf of her husband, offered the services of Old Van and the logging train. Old Van was steamed up "in a relatively short period of time" and engineer Frank Luckenbach had Old Van making steam and at 1:30 p.m., Old Van coupled to "a lot of side-door Pullmans", the search party left Marshfield to the north to form search parties to locate the child. Arriving at the scene, the men formed a line about four feet apart and the order, "MARCH!" was given. When the child was not located that day, a larger search party was formed the next day. Governor Upham had arrived during the afternoon and, like his wife, took a deep interest in the matter. "Without hesitation he gave orders to close*

down his entire plant and make use of Old Van and the logging train for the accommodation of all those who would join the search party.” It was a happy ending as the boy was located and returned to his family.

One can only guess that, in trying to get a fire burning in Old Van’s cold boiler, the engineer and fireman had to borrow the bellows from the Blacksmith Shop on Upham’s factory property and work like mad, with the smoke box door wide open, to make a draft strong enough to keep a fire burning. This was before air brakes, so Old Van probably didn’t have an air pump aboard, which meant Old Van didn’t have a blower to create an artificial draft through the boiler. The idea of a blower to create an artificial draft hadn’t been conceived at the time Old Van was built in 1847 (Air Brakes weren’t even invented yet), and it appears Old Van was never equipped with an Air Pump. “Braking” was effected by having the lumbermen riding the train tighten down the hand brakes on the cars in the train, as well as tightening down the brakes on Old Van’s tender. It was quite common in the days of wood-burning locomotives to allow the fire to die down to nothing and burn out. This is probably what contributed to Old Van having her copper firebox side sheets wearing out later on.

Governor Upham’s brother, Ed, was engineer on Old Van almost continuously during her time in her employ for the Upham Manufacturing Company.

It’s surprising that Upham got the life out of Old Van that he did. Old Van was used until 1898, when the engine was retired after one-too-many failures, the last supposedly being the breaking of one of her main rods; closer inspection revealed her copper firebox side sheets were also wearing out. Upham had approached the Wisconsin Central about repairing Old Van, which the WC would have been happy to do on a contract basis, but, apparently, the quote they gave Upham for the work made Upham blanch. Old Van was set aside, and the boiler stripped off the frame and running gear. The Boiler was reused as a heating plant within one of Upham’s buildings, and no more is known of Old Van’s boiler after 1914. Other sources state Old Van’s Boiler being used at another firm located in Wisconsin at the same time period. No explanation is to be found clearing this discrepancy up. All we know for certain is Old Van’s boiler was used sans frame. How long and where remain a bit of a mystery.

As a locomotive, Old Van was in service for 51 years. That’s a long time for any piece of equipment. The boiler went on for another 10 years at least, for a surprising total of 61 years in operation.

*Upham, apparently unhappy about Wisconsin Central’s quote for work on Old Van, went to the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railroad (later to become part of the Chicago & North Western Railroad) in 1899 and purchased another 4-4-0 to replace Old Van. This locomotive became Upham’s “999”, numbered in honor of a New York Central engine of the same number that once held the world’s record for the fastest “unofficial” timed run, 112.5 mph, between two designated points on the New York Central with the famed, **Empire State Express**. Upham’s replacement locomotive for Old Van was built for the C.St.P.M&O. in March 1873 as their number 26, by the Baldwin Locomotive Works, Baldwin Builder’s number 3162. It had 16 x 24 cylinders, and 59” drivers. It weighed in at 70,000 pounds. It had been Class C-4 on the C.St.P.M&O. 999 was only slightly larger than Old Vanderbilt by 4,000 pounds, but two tons of extra weight in railroading make a lot of difference. With a slightly smaller driver diameter, 999 should have been a good pulling locomotive. Upham’s #999 bore only the wheel arrangement in common with New York Central # 999. NYC’s version was a much more modern version of the 4-4-0, and was equipped with 86” drivers (which were later replaced with a smaller diameter driver) for speed. Unlike Old Vanderbilt, #999 was an outside connected locomotive with Stephenson Valve Gear, which meant the cylinders and main rods were outside of the frame (like 2442), but the valve gear was still in between the frame. Upham’s # 999 was a wood-burning locomotive like Old Van was.*

Upham had need for a second locomotive in addition to # 999, and in January 1900 purchased Wisconsin Central # 28, another product of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, built in 1880, Baldwin Builders Number 5116. It had 17x24 cylinders and weighed in at 74,350 pounds. Upham renumbered this locomotive 1000. It

was used on the line to Goodrich, Wisconsin from Athens, and because of it being a newer locomotive, WC allowed Upham to run logging trains over the WC between Abbotsford and Marshfield.



Upham's second locomotive was purchased from the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha in 1899. As a replacement for *Old Van*, she worked mainly in the woods on the Athens branch after logging ceased in the Marshfield area. Shown at Marshfield, near Upham's Banner Mills on the Walnut Street siding, ca. 1899. Courtesy State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Copy negative no. WHi (X3) 6021.

Upham's second locomotive, ex-Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha wood burning Baldwin Locomotive Works built-4-4-0 # 26. Upham had a "fetish" for anything that had to do with the New York Central Railroad; hence, he numbered his second locomotive in honor of a New York Central engine of that same number, credited in 1893 with making the fastest unofficial timed run between two selected points of 112.5 mph. The only thing Upham's # 999 shared with the New York Central engine of the same number was the wheel arrangement.

By the time Upham purchased # 999, the timber on his logging lines were playing out. The Marshfield & Texas line was pulled back to the former location of the old Municipal Power Plant in 1899. Upham took up the short spur off the WC's Greenwood Line in 1902.

*Upham's logging operations wound up by 1907 when Upham abandoned the line to Goodrich from Athens, Wisconsin and vacated his trackage rights over the former Abbotsford & North Eastern from Abbotsford to Athens. *Old Van* almost made it to the end. Both #999 and #1000 were sold on May 1, 1907 to the Copper River Land Company, a Division of the United States Leather Company, and moved to Rib Lake, Wisconsin. No further information is known about #999; #1000 was scrapped in 1911.*

Upham still shipped trainloads of logs to his factory as late as 1925, but they were handled by the then-Soo Line Railroad in regular freight train movements from Athens to Abbotsford and thence to Marshfield. Old newspaper accounts mention "Logging Trains" being handled to Marshfield by the Soo, and it could be so. Soo Line may have shaved the price for handling because of previous agreements between Upham and the Wisconsin Central. In any case, by 1925 the "Grand Days" of log trains ceased.



Upham's logging operations north of Athens, Wisconsin were done by rail. Spurs off the Athens – Goodrich mainline were constructed by crews like this one, shown in 1903. No. 1000 was originally Wisconsin Central No. 28. Flat car No. 581 was built in July 1882 by the railroad. It has been "modernized" with new couplers. The stencil on the near end reads, "Williamson & Price, Draw Bar Attachments, Pat'd March 3, 1897." Courtesy State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Copy negative no. WHi (M305) 116.

Upham's third locomotive, #1000, out along the logging line between Athens and Goodrich, Wisconsin, ca, 1900. Note that #1000 uses her former Wisconsin Central number plate on the smoke box front, and that the numerals were changed. Note the use of Wisconsin Central flat cars to haul logs; U.S. Government regulations passed in the 1890's specified air brakes and knuckle couplers. The old "link and pin" couplers that Upham used up until that time were out, especially in light of running his logging trains over a class-1 carrier subject to Government regulations.

Also see story on [Upham Manufacturing Store](#)

If you have any additional information (including pictures) regarding this business or location, we would really appreciate you contacting us and sharing. We will add information whenever possible.

For questions, or for sharing additional information, please contact us at schnitzl@charter.net. Please include what story the information relates to. Attach your text information in the form of a word document, please no PDF's. Photos should preferably be in jpeg format.

For additional stories on the historical sights and businesses of Marshfield, visit our website at: <http://www.marshfieldgenealogy.com/OR-Codes-of-Historical-Marshfield.html>.