

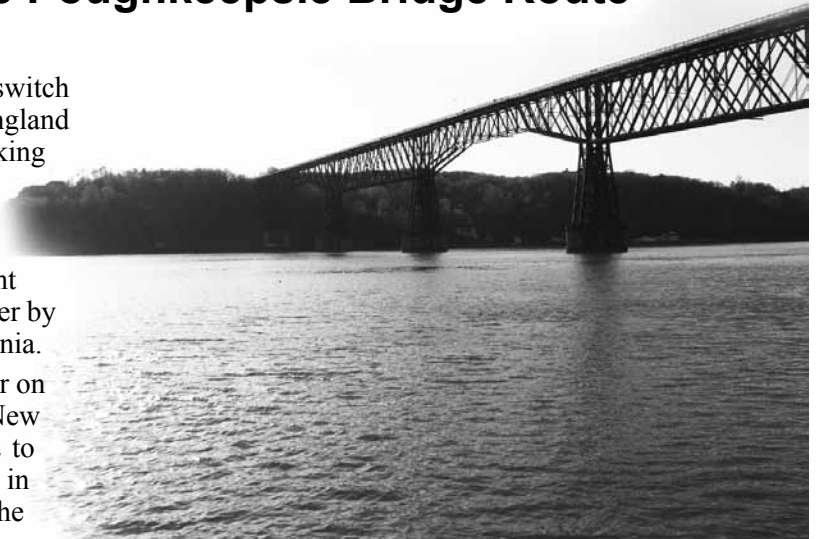
# Central New England Railway Cast Switch Lock

## An Unusual Example from the Poughkeepsie Bridge Route

By Phil Simms

The cast “CNE RR” brass (bronze), 2 1/2 inch width switch lock pictured below was used on the Central New England *Railway*. Stamped on the front of the shackle is the marking “T.S. LOCK & M. CO.” over “NEWARK, N.J.” This is a later, and perhaps the last, hallmark for the Thomas Slight Lock and Manufacturing Company. Thomas Slight’s firm was in business under several different names from 1851 through 1903, when it was taken over by the S.R. Slaymaker company of Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

The Central New England Railway was the successor on January 12, 1899 to the Philadelphia, Reading and New England Railroad, which existed from July 28, 1892 to January 12, 1899. This line was an important link in the “Poughkeepsie Bridge Route” that connected the railroads of New England with the Erie RR, the New York, Ontario & Western, the Lehigh & Hudson River Ry, and other regional carriers. The railroad’s mainline ran from Hartford, CT, across the massive Poughkeepsie Bridge over



*Opened for through train traffic on July 29, 1889, the Poughkeepsie Bridge was an important link in several routes joining New England with the south and west. Abandoned in 1974, it has now been restored as a pedestrian walkway. Dave Hamilton photo.*



*An interesting cast back lock from the Central New England Railway, also known as the Poughkeepsie Bridge Route. It is unusual to find a cast lock made by Thomas Slight, and the use of the “RR” initials instead of the correct “RY” is also somewhat odd. From the collection of Phil Simms.*

the Hudson River, to Campbell Hall, NY. It also operated connecting Danbury, Rhinecliff and ND&C Divisions, and a branch to Springfield, Ma. Coming under the control of the New Haven in 1904, the Central New England Railway was officially taken over by the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad on May 10, 1927.

Using the incorporation date of the Central New England Railway of January 12, 1899, and the 1903 takeover date of Slight by Slaymaker, we can safely conclude that this lock was manufactured sometime during this period.

I find this lock to be interesting, as it is the only one that I have seen with a cast marking that was manufactured by T. Slight. It is odd that the new railroad corporation would likely have had to pay more for cast locks, to only have them

produced with incorrect initials (RR for “Railroad” instead of RY for “Railway”). Then the Central New England also purchased more of these same cast locks from Slaymaker, after their takeover of Slight in 1903.

As always, additional information and comments from other Key, Lock & Lantern members would be appreciated. *Editor’s Note: Reports of other cast railroad markings on any type of Thomas Slight lock can be sent to the Key, Lock & Lantern editor at [transportsim@aol.com](mailto:transportsim@aol.com). We would also be interested in hearing about other examples of Central New England Railway locks & keys, and their markings.*



*The front of the shackle on this Central New England lock contains the “T.S. LOCK & M. CO.” hallmark, which may be the last version of the marking before the company was taken over by S. R. Slaymaker. Collection of Phil Simms.*