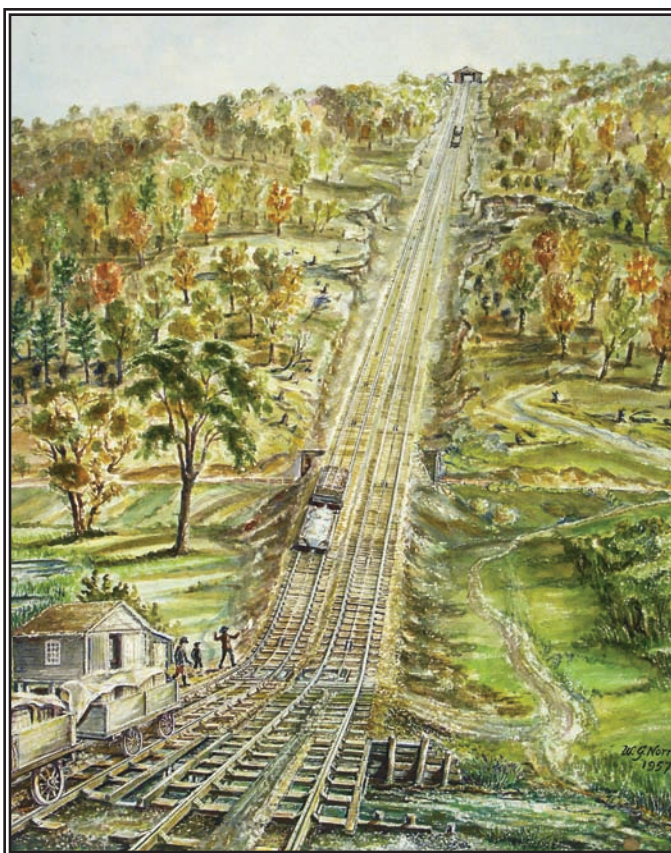


A HISTORY OF

RAILROADS

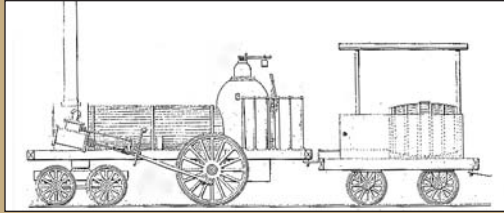
IN TOMPKINS COUNTY



By **HARDY CAMPBELL LEE**

Revised and Expanded by
WINTON G. ROSSITER
and JOHN MARCHAM

Third Edition 2008



The beginning: "Old Puff," built for the Ithaca & Owego RR in 1840.

Seven+ Routes

This history follows the start-and-stop growth of railroads in Tompkins County from 1833 until the beginning of the twenty-first century. It's a potentially confusing story as told chronologically, but less so if one considers that more than fifty separate railroad corporate names came and went, but were parts of just seven distinct routes through the county.

The map on the next page is intended to help a reader understand how the fifty named railroads fit into these routes. In addition, the book contains an alphabetical list of the railroad names on page 69, a list of rail abandonments on page 79, and a full index on page 81.



Apex of railroading in the county: Lehigh Valley 2089 waits at Ithaca in the early 1940s for another engine to help pull the crack "Black Diamond" passenger train out of the the Cayuga Lake valley.

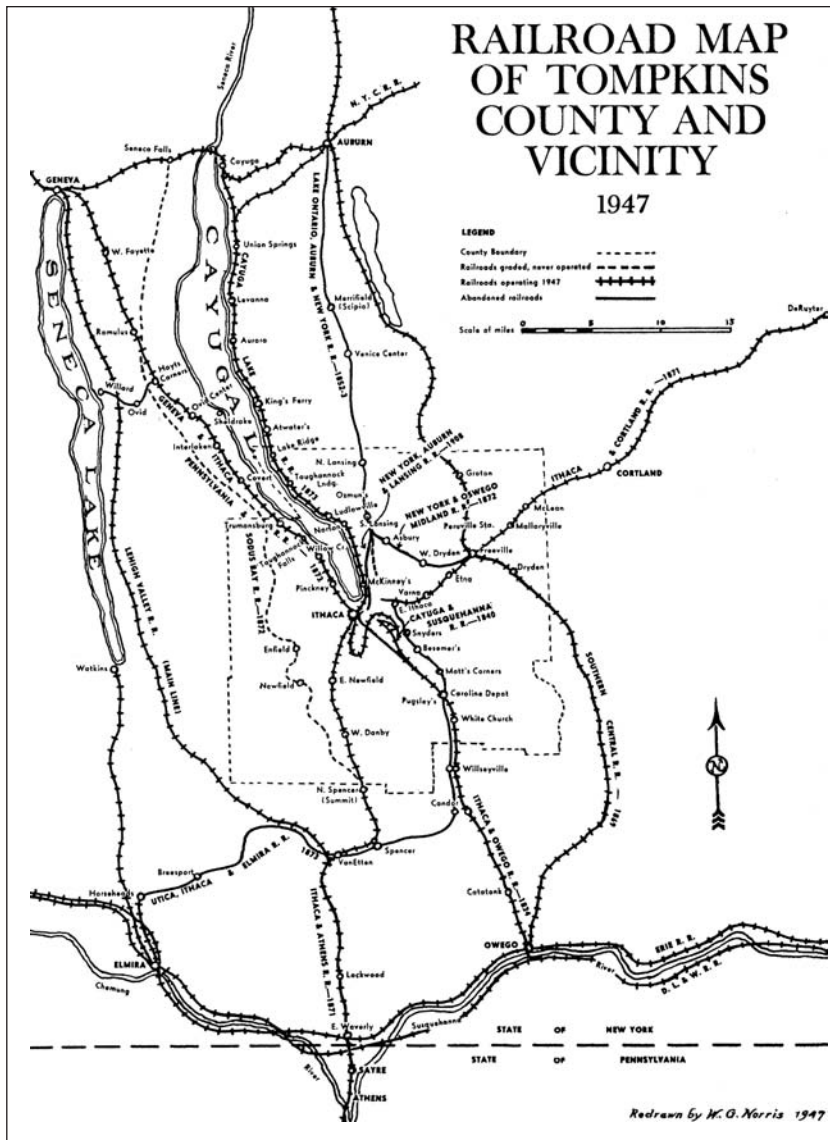


Tompkins County Railroad Routes

- 1 Ithaca-Owego (Ithaca-Owego RR; Cayuga & Susquehanna; Delaware, Lackawanna & Western).
- 2 Sayre-Owego-Freeville-Auburn-N. Fairhaven (Southern Central; Lehigh Valley).
- 3 Sayre-Ithaca-Geneva (Ithaca & Athens; Geneva & Ithaca; Geneva, Ithaca & Sayre; Lehigh Valley; Conrail; Norfolk Southern).
- 4 Elmira-E. Ithaca-Cortland-Camden (Ithaca & Cortland; Utica, Ithaca & Elmira; Elmira, Cortland & Northern; Lehigh Valley).
- 5 Ithaca-Auburn (Cayuga Lake; Lehigh Valley; Norfolk Southern).
- 6 "Midland" (New York & Oswego Midland).
- 7 Ithaca-Auburn Short Line (Lake Ontario, Auburn & New York; NY, Auburn & Lansing; Central NY Southern).
- 8 N. Spencer-Sodus Bay (Pennsylvania & Sodus Bay).

1947

County Boundary
Railroads graded, never operated
Railroads operating 1947
Abandoned railroads



Redrawn by H. O. Norris 1947

Tompkins County rail routes in use in 1947, plus others considered, built, and abandoned in earlier years.

A History of Railroads in Tompkins County

By Hardy C. Lee

revised and expanded by
Winton G. Rossiter
and John Marcham

DeWitt Historical Society
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Cover: A painting of the lower inclined plane of the original Ithaca & Owego Railroad on Ithaca's South Hill, by W. Glenn Norris, Tompkins County clerk and longtime director of the DeWitt Historical Society; dated 1947.

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In 1898, before automobiles, a Lehigh Valley train disgorges people and bicycles at Dryden for the village's annual Agricultural Fair. An estimated ten thousand adults and children attended for the four days of the fair, the second largest in the state at the time. Carriages wait to take fairgoers the eight to ten blocks to the fairgrounds for exhibits, contests, and other entertainment.



Prefaces

One method of public transportation succeeds another: the train lessened travel by boat; the motor-bus and the airplane are now lessening travel by rail. Many of us whose recollections go back to the [nineteenth] century have known old persons who never rode a train; many now know young persons who have never yet ridden on a train. In the indefinite gap between these two generations of “untrained” persons lay the great period of railway enterprise, when public interest and public spirit joined forces with active effort and professional skill, and not infrequently with overconfidence, manipulation, and litigation leading to disaster.

The extent to which Tompkins County was affected by this wave (or tide) of railway dreaming, planning, and building is shown in this book. Here are brought together from a wide variety of sources, from records public and private, innumerable data about the railroads by which the county profited and about those roads which served their day, suspended operations, and were abandoned. The amount of detailed information herein made available is truly noteworthy. Many readers will doubtless be surprised to learn on what a scale and in how many directions Ithaca was concerned with railway projects, successes, and failures during the greater part of a century. Here lies the immediate interest of the book. But it has higher value too. For historical purposes [Hardy Campbell] Lee’s admirable work, with accompanying tables, bibliography, and illustrations, will be of genuine and lasting usefulness.

First edition
Benton S. Monroe, 1947

In 1947, Hardy Campbell Lee completed the original version of this booklet, covering the development of local railroads from their beginnings through the period of World War II. In the intervening thirty years the presence of the railroad in this county—as in the country—has sadly faded. Consequently, before reprinting Mr. Lee’s estimable work (which has been too long out of print), the DeWitt Historical Society felt it should be updated, but Mr. Lee, who now lives in California, found it would be impracticable for him to undertake that task. Happily, another railroad buff came forward. Winton Rossiter, a native Ithacan and a student of history at Cornell, has revised the original, adding the last three chapters of the present text.

In 1947, after the withdrawal of most railroad service, the disappearance or conversion of so many facilities, and the removal of so much track, interest in Tompkins County railroads must necessarily focus less on railroad operations and more on railroad history and “remains.” Particularly to meet the latter interest, this booklet includes a fold-out map by David Rossiter, not only showing past and present railroad lines but also locating and describing remnants of roadbeds, abutments of bridges, and traces of sta-

tions and other facilities. May the railroad devotee enjoy his quest for these vestiges of the past and perhaps even hear an echo of “the wheel, the whistle, and the bell.”

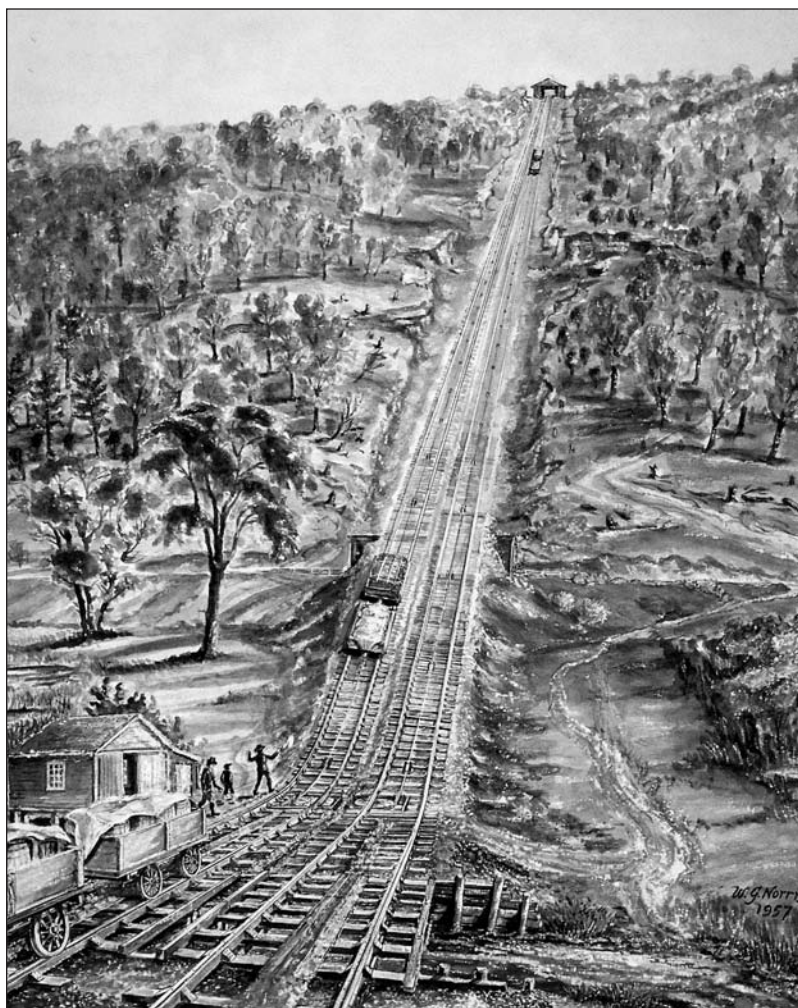
Second edition
G. Ferris Cronkhite, 1977

The only rail line in use in our county in 2008 is the former Lehigh Valley track from its mainline at VanEtten Junction to just south of the former Ithaca station, and thence along the east shore of Cayuga Lake to Lake Ridge. On these rails, the Norfolk Southern today hauls rock salt from Myers for Cargill Inc. and coal to Lake Ridge for the former NYSE&G power plant. All the more reason to follow editor Ferris Cronkhite’s suggestion in the second edition that we do our best to enjoy the rich history and remaining traces of our pioneering railroad past.

This edition reproduces the text from the second edition, with style, headline, and caption changes, and minor corrections where needed. We also add a number of new photos that became available after 1977, explained in Acknowledgements on page 65.

Because the story is told chronologically and involves more than fifty railroad names, we added an index and a 2008 map that reflects the basic routes railroads took through the county. We have added numbers [Rte. 1] or [1], [2], etc. when the seven routes are introduced in the text.

Third edition
John Marcham, 2008



The lower inclined plane on Ithaca's South Hill, used by the Ithaca & Owego RR and its successor line from 1833 until the early 1850s. In this 1947 painting by W. Glenn Norris, the weight of two loaded freight cars pulls two others up to a wayshed. At the wayshed, horses turn a wheel that winches cars uphill when no counter-balancing cars are available. A second plane above rises to the hilltop, from where the track continues gradually downhill southward to Owego.

In the *Ithaca Journal* for April 25, 1825, the following letter appeared: “The internal improvements ready to burst upon our happy country are incalculable. The spirit for making Rail Roads, at present prevailing in England and throughout Europe, must and **will** soon reach our country...Rail Roads can be made wherever needed. I have lately read some valuable essays, etc., on the utility, expense and mode of constructing Rail Roads, and take great pleasure in forwarding them to you for publication in your useful paper; with a hope that our section of the country may be among the first to avail itself of this grand improvement. (*Signed*) B.”

At that date there was no public railroad in America, yet such was the interest of Ithacans in railroads that several of Mr. “B’s” documents were published and a notice appeared the following December that application was to be made for incorporating a “Cayuga and Susquehannah Rail Road” to connect the head of Cayuga Lake with the Susquehanna River near Athens. This particular project was discarded in favor of a previous canal proposal, but it may be regarded as the genesis of the Ithaca and Owego Rail Road [Rte.1].

In 1827, after the failure of the canal proposal (described later), the question of building a railroad was again discussed, and public meetings were held at Owego and Ithaca at which it was agreed that “a good and sufficient railway can undoubtedly be constructed...at about one half of the estimated cost of the Chemung Canal.”

As a result of this decision the *Ithaca Journal* published a further series of articles on this new and comparatively unknown system of transportation.

If we adopt the conception of “railway” as comprising three elements—the wheel, a prepared track, and a means for the lateral constraint of the motion—then railways had been in use in Europe for several centuries, mostly in mines or quarries where large quantities of heavy material had to be moved. In America the first tramroad (or wooden railway), was built on Beacon Hill, Boston, in 1807. By 1825 two other tramroads had been constructed, but the first use of iron strap rail was not made until the following year on the Boston and Quincy Granite Railway and on two coal railways at Mauch Chunk and Honesdale, Pennsylvania.

On all these lines horses provided the power. The steam locomotive, of which there was no example in America, had been mentioned in one of Mr. “B’s” English articles, but not in connection with the Ithaca and Owego proposal. Yet the promoters of that line framed the company’s charter in 1828 to authorize transportation “by the power and force of steam, of animals, or of any mechanical or other power, or of any combination of them.”

The stationary steam engine was then well established and adaptable for cable haulage (which the promoters probably had in mind), but the application of the same principle to a vehicle had met with less success. After the experimental models of Cugnot and Murdock in the eighteenth century, a few unsatisfactory machines were built and it was not until 1813

that practical success was achieved in this form of motivepower by William Hedley and Timothy Hackworth.

The combination of the railway and the locomotive as a means of public transportation was first employed on the Stockton and Darlington Railway in England, opened the same year as the Cayuga and Susquehanna line was proposed. The event which more than any other proved the economic value of the locomotive—the triumph of Stephenson's "Rocket" on the Liverpool and Manchester Railway—took place in 1829, a year after the Ithaca and Owego Rail Road had been chartered. In 1825, therefore, there was no "railway mania," no scrambling for railroad charters, and in fact almost no evidence that a public railway would be an economic proposition. We must look for other motives to justify the action of the men of Ithaca and Owego.

In 1800 the horse wagon and the sailboat may have provided adequate transport in America, but with the expanding production of industry made possible by the development of mechanical power, and with the increased pressure to move westward, a new concept in transportation became a necessity. The first answer was the steamboat, which by chance antedated the locomotive by a decade. The effect of this new wonder was to focus attention on water rather than on land as the medium for bulk transport. Manufacturers and traders were not slow in giving money and support to the grandiose proposals which promised their economic salvation, schemes which envisaged a network of canals supplementing the extensive natural waterways to form a complete system of inland transport.

By 1825, when the Erie Canal from Albany to Buffalo had become a fact, the problem of large scale movement of goods appeared to have been solved. Filling, as they did, an economic gap, the canals were an immediate financial success. The Erie repaid its entire construction cost of over \$7 million by the tolls received during the first nine years of operation.

The future of the canals seemed assured. Towns and villages fortunate enough to be served by waterways foresaw an expansion of their trade and prosperity. Those which were isolated could only hope to envy the better fortune of their neighbors.

The village of Ithaca had access to the Erie Canal to the north through Cayuga Lake and the Seneca River, a circumstance which might prevent her complete economic isolation but which necessitated a link southward to the Susquehanna route if she hoped to capture any through traffic to the Great Lakes. If this thirty-mile gap could be overcome Ithacans predicted that the shipment of Pennsylvania coal north and west in exchange for lumber would make their village a strategic center comparable with Buffalo or Detroit. Shipments of salt and plaster from Ithaca had already been made profitably to Baltimore, in spite of the costly and inefficient road haul to Owego. With almost unlimited markets available a bulk transport connection to the Susquehanna was a vital need.

The first proposal, the obvious one at the time, was to build a canal. Two possible routes were considered, one by way of the valleys of Six Mile Creek and Catatonk Creek, the other by the Inlet Valley and the village of

Spencer. At the same time Seneca Lake interests were developing a rival project, the Chemung Canal, which would link the Chemung Branch of the Susquehanna River at Elmira with Seneca Lake at Watkins. This route, though slightly longer than the Six Mile Creek proposal, had less height to surmount and was therefore the one recommended in the report of the official survey to determine the most practical proposal.

The rejection of their canal project must have been a disappointment to Ithaca businessmen. A more severe blow was the consequent authorization of the Chemung Canal, which threatened to divert all through traffic from Ithaca. For their own preservation Ithacans were forced to adopt any alternative to secure the Susquehanna trade, and the only alternative was the railway.

Proposed Railroads

In 1825 Ebenezer Mack had visited the Boston & Quincy Rail Road and had been impressed by its "happy operation," and within eighteen months of the adverse report on the Ithaca-Owego Canal he and James Pumpelly of Owego had organized local support for the incorporation of the Ithaca & Owego Rail Road Company [Rte. 1]. On November 30, 1827, at Goodley's Hotel in Owego, a committee of the citizens of Tioga and Tompkins counties was appointed to petition the New York State Legislature for an act of incorporation. After favorable preliminary reports the act was passed with little debate on January 28, 1828. (Until the General Railroad Act of 1850 all railroad companies were granted charters by private acts of the Legislature.) The act provided that construction of the road should start within three years and that it should be put into operation within six years. There was to be collected "from every pleasure carriage or carriage used for the conveyance of passengers, three cents per mile, in addition to the toll by weight upon the loading."

This provision was based on the belief that passengers would travel in their own private coaches which would run on the rails or be transported on flat-cars, for, as the charter continued, "all persons paying the toll aforesaid, may, with suitable and proper carriages, use and travel upon the said rail road."

To enable this to be done the use of L-shaped rails was considered but was abandoned in favor of having flanges on the wheels of the cars.

The survey for the road was made by Lt. W. H. Swift of the U. S. Corps of Engineers in the spring and early summer of 1828. The same two routes that had been proposed for the canal were considered for the railroad—the Six Mile Creek route and that of the Inlet Valley. Judged by later knowledge, the latter course would have been preferable. A number of considerations, however, prompted the choice of the Six Mile Creek route. It was found that once the rise from Ithaca to the top of South Hill was surmounted, the descending route from there to Owego could be built at minimum expense. The only costly construction would be the inclined planes which it was proposed to employ in ascending the hill, a device familiar to engineers at the time. Moreover, the Inlet Valley route involved a rise of 679 feet compared with the 593 feet of the Six Mile Creek route.

In the Six Mile Creek Valley Lieutenant Swift investigated two possible locations. One, on the north side, would have involved a difficult crossing of the creek as well as a second inclined plane at a point south of Brooktondale. On this route the plane up East Hill might have utilized the water power of Cascadilla Creek, as proposed to Lieutenant Swift by Mr. [Otis] Eddy, who was proprietor of a cotton mill near the present site of Cascadilla Hall. Eddy was already converting this power for his mill and he suggested that if the water of Cascadilla should prove inadequate an extra supply might be obtained from Fall Creek by digging a canal across what is now the Cornell quadrangle. As an argument in favor of the second, or South Hill, route, Swift calculated that the bulk of the traffic would be from Ithaca to Owego and that on this route the gradient would be easiest in the direction of heaviest traffic, an important factor with horse-drawn trains.

In September 1831, advertisements in the Ithaca papers called for bids for grading the line and supplying material. In the four-year interval since the inception of the scheme both the potential value and the technique of railway construction had progressed. It was realized that railways, though not perhaps supplanting canals, could at least equal them in transportation value by reason of their all-year-round operation and higher speed.

By 1836 charters had been obtained for five separate railway companies serving Ithaca and vicinity. Four of these were to connect the village with, respectively, Catskill, Geneva, Auburn, and Chemung. The fifth, the Ithaca & Port Renwick Rail-Road, was authorized to build a line from Fall Creek to Cayuga Lake. No work was done on any of these projects.

The majority of the early charters, including that of the Ithaca & Owego, were granted for a period of fifty years. That of the Ithaca & Geneva Rail-Road contained in addition a provision granting the state an option to purchase within ten to fifteen years after completion. A similar provision was included in the General Railroad Act of 1848, but by 1850 the idea of the state ownership of railroads had been abandoned.

Contracts for grading the first nine miles of the Ithaca & Owego were signed in February 1832, and work on the two inclined planes at Ithaca was started that month. From the Inlet the route extended in a semi-circle to the foot of the planes, which passed just under the south end of the present Morse Chain Co. building site. They effected a rise of 510 feet in a distance just short of a mile, the lower plane having a grade of about 1 foot in every 4-1/2 feet, the second 1 in 22.

Owing to the delay after incorporation, permission to extend the time of completion by two years was granted by the Legislature in 1832.

The contractor, named Merrill, undertook to complete the work in seven months. It was still unfinished in May 1833, fifteen months later, when Merrill brought an action against the company, complaining that an insufficient number of engineers had been employed "to lay out the work, make estimates, etc.," and that the company had attempted to "throw obstacles in the way of the completion of the job."

In spite of these legal difficulties two miles of railway, from the Inlet to

the foot of the planes, were completed in July 1833. In celebration of this accomplishment a gala was held, with free rides for all. To quote the *Ithaca Journal* again (July 10, 1833):

“From the hour of 3 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. more than 1,000 persons were conveyed in both directions, upwards of 20 trips. One of the horses, drawing a car, made every trip, a total of over 40 miles in four and a half hours, showing that a single horse may convey from 25 to 60 persons on a railroad 40 miles in four and a half hours. This specimen of the Ithaca and Owego Railroad embraces a curve of 2,434-foot radius.”

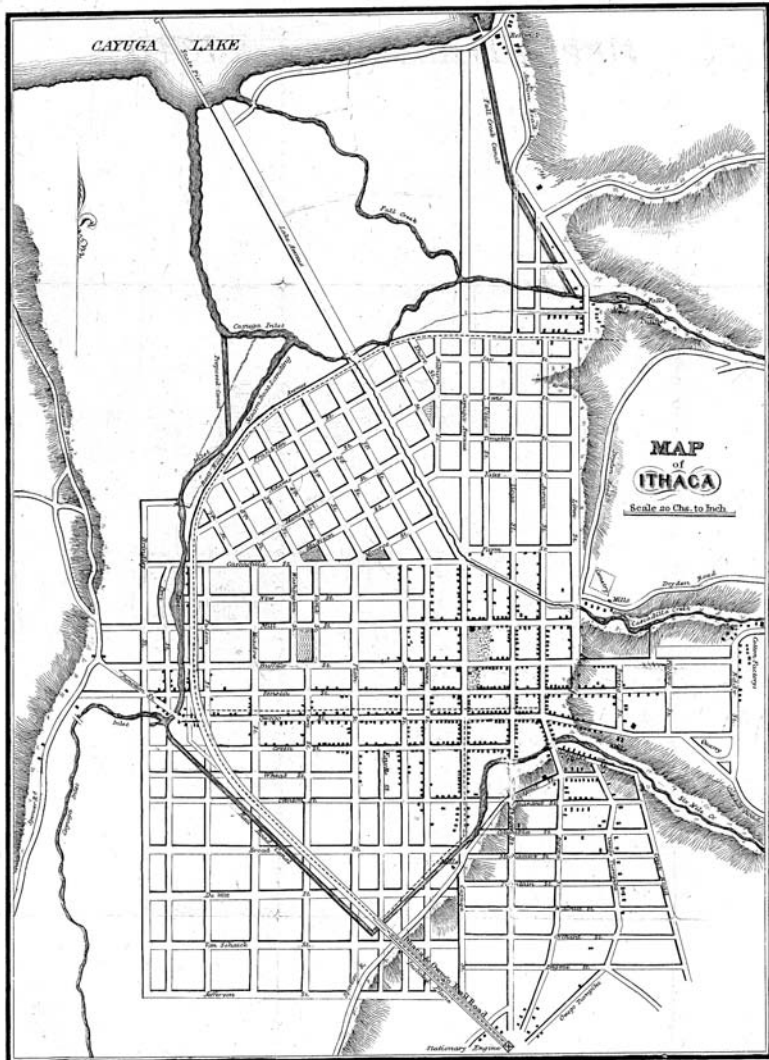
Work on the remainder of the line continued throughout the summer and fall. The official opening took place on April 2, 1834, when a train of 49 cars, 4 of them filled with passengers and 45 loaded with plaster and salt, made the journey to Owego from the top of the planes at Ithaca. An eyewitness of the event wrote in the *Ithaca Chronicle* (April 10):

“... A large number of our citizens, exclusive of those who had taken passage in the cars had assembled to witness their departure. They furnished a grand and imposing procession. For most of the distance the road is a succession of beautiful curves, of large radius, winding through the valley, until it opens upon the plain of the Susquehannah River at Owego. Much of the road is finished in a durable and beautiful manner, furnishing perhaps the finest specimen of Rail Road in the Union.

“On other portions of the road the rails are temporarily laid, answering every purpose for immediate use, the finishing touch to be hereafter given, without, however, interrupting the continued use of the road. The work has been pursued during the last season with an energy and perseverance perhaps seldom equalled—workmen having been sometimes employed during the whole night, and the woods illuminated by hundreds of candles sparkling along the line.

“The passenger cars reached Owego, 29 miles, in about 3 hours exclusive of stoppages. When the whole road is permanently finished and the horses become accustomed to the track, the trip can be performed in much less time. The train was met a few miles this side of Owego by four passenger cars and escorted into the village. Here it was greeted by the cheers of a numerous concourse of citizens who had assembled on the occasion, by the ringing of bells and the discharge of artillery.... This road forms the first direct communication between the Erie Canal and the Susquehannah River—a connection which will be available at all seasons of the year—a connection accomplished by individual enterprise and individual funds, economically expended, and forming a double track which can be maintained in repair at a comparatively trifling cost.”

The optimism was not entirely justified. It was found impossible to keep the road in operation during the winter and the cost of maintaining the track proved heavier than expected. Moreover, the individual funds, though possibly economically expended, were not sufficient for requirements, so that five years later \$288,000 had to be borrowed from the state. But at least the railway was in existence.



Map of Ithaca about 1840 shows the location of the lower inclined plane rising from near the old Spencer Rd. at the foot of South Hill to a point near the intersection of South Aurora St. and present-day Coddington Rd. An early path of Six Mile Creek crosses under the Ithaca & Owego RR track and angles northwest toward the original Cayuga Inlet. The I&O curves northward along the inlet toward a barge terminal on an estuary to the inlet.

The Ithaca & Owego was the second railroad chartered in New York State and the fourth to be opened to the public, being preceded, in 1831, by the Mohawk & Hudson (chartered 1826), and, in 1832, by the Saratoga & Schenectady and one mile of the New York & Harlem.

When the bill for the charter was before the Legislature in 1828 a Select Committee reported that, "believing it to be highly important that the utility of railroads should be fully and fairly tested by experiment, the Committee consider this a favorable opportunity of having this test applied, without the risk of loss or expense to the State."

The Ithaca & Owego [1] was in fact one of the proving grounds where the basic principles of railroading were evolved. For the first few years there were no signals of any sort, nor were there any fixed time schedules, with the result that trains sometimes met on the single track road with no "turnout" available. In such a contingency it was the practice to take the cars of one of the trains off the track. According to Alvin Merrill, a late Tompkins County resident who drove horses on the Ithaca & Owego line when he was a boy, a freight train had priority over a passenger train, the cars of the latter being removed "with the aid of horses and passengers" and replaced when the freight had gone on its way. This custom is also mentioned by the editor of the *Ithaca Journal* in an article on August 17, 1836. He tells how he travelled on the road from Ithaca to Owego and, "derived much pleasure from the excursion. The liftings off and on were performed by the passengers and others with remarkable good humor, and the whole distance accomplished in about six hours."

The most satisfactory form of track was another matter which could be determined only by trial and error. When built, the Ithaca & Owego was equipped with flat strap rail, which consisted of iron strips twelve to sixteen feet in length, 2-1/4 wide and 5/8 of an inch thick, spiked to heavy longitudinal timbers. These timbers were fastened at eight-foot intervals to crosspieces, the forerunners of the crossties of modern track. In his survey of the route Swift had proposed that stone supports be used instead of cross pieces, a suggestion which was not adopted owing to the shortage of stone. However, his suggestion that the gauge of the track be 4 feet, 8 1/2 inches (now standard gauge) was followed. Later, when the line was taken over by the D. L. & W., it was relaid in broad gauge and remained so until 1878.

The strap rail was not satisfactory. With the passage of the cars the iron strips frequently worked loose, resulting either in derailment or at least delay while the rail was replaced. Merrill states that it was unusual to make a trip without some part of the train "jumping the track from one of eight times." As the weight and speed of the trains increased it was no uncommon thing for a loose strip to pierce the floor of a car. Casualties from these "snake-heads" became so numerous that legislation was passed in 1847 requiring all steam operated lines using "flat bar rail" to relay with 56-pound rail.

Two years after the line was opened the editor of the *Journal* wrote, "...the road is at present much out of repair and little or no system is observed on the line, all of which results, however, from the fact that the road was never put in order."

In July 1838, an official publication of the company speaks of a "New arrangement while finishing the road." Even by the standards of that day the line was probably not in a proper condition to bear traffic.

The situation was not improved by the introduction of a locomotive engine in 1840. Merrill gives a vivid description of the first run of "Old Puff," as it was called, with the showers of sparks belching from the high smoke stack. It was customary to water the horses at Luckey's, so it was thought the iron horse should be watered there too. But steam gave out at Gridley's, in spite of the barrel of tar which had been thrown on the pine fuel at Wilseyville, and the engine was hauled ignominiously back to Ithaca behind a team of horses.

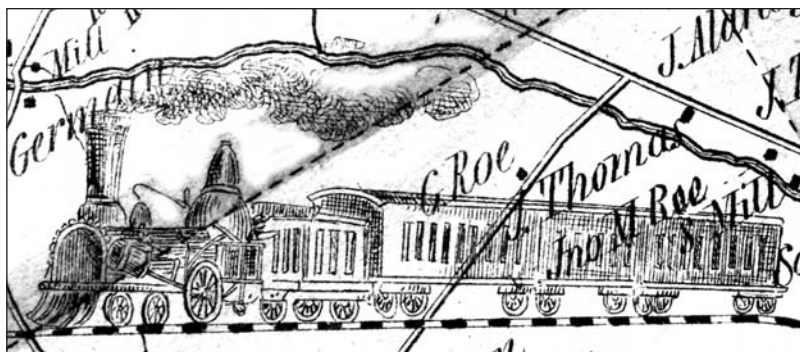
Cattle soon became used to the noise and steam, and often delayed the train by refusing to move from the right of way. Merrill said that this problem was solved by stationing a man on the front of the engine armed with a flintlock musket and a supply of dried peas for ammunition.

When circumstances were favorable the journey could be made in good time. For example, from the *Ithaca Chronicle*, "The locomotive upon the Ithaca & Owego Rail Road on the morning of the 6th July [1840], ran, including all stoppages, over the entire distance, with its passenger train, 1-1/2 hours, thus almost annihilating the distance between the Cayuga Lake and the Susquehanna River. "The scheduled time for the journey was 3-1/2 hours, with stops at Howe's turnout, Whitcomb's and Wiltsey's mills, Booth's crossroads, Candor Corner, Chidsey's and Sackett's mills, and Jones' crossroads."

The normal sixteen-car train, however, proved too heavy for "Old Puff." Alterations were made from time to time to increase its tractive weight, but this resulted in more rapid destruction of the track and culminated in the engine breaking through a trestle at Woodbridge's, just north of Catatonk, in 1847. The engineer and fireman were both killed in the accident.

The undoubtedly poor condition of the line and equipment reflected the financial difficulties with which the company had to contend. The original capital was \$150,000, yet the first nine miles alone were provisionally estimated to cost \$81,000, a figure which was probably exceeded in practice.

By an Act of 1832 the capital was increased to \$300,000 and a further increase to \$450,000 was authorized in 1834, one month after the official opening. During the first six months of operations we are told that the line transported 3,300 passengers and 12,000 tons of freight. These figures, which may have seemed impressive at the time, represent an average train-load, based on one train each way daily, of 10 passengers and 35 tons of freight. This lack of patronage may have been partly due to inefficiency of operation caused by lack of technical knowledge. In addition the promot-



"Old Puff," the first and only locomotive of the Ithaca & Owego, replaced horses and cut the time of a trip over the route from 3-1/2 to 1-1/2 hours in 1840. After the I&O successor Cayuga & Susquehanna RR leased the line to the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western in 1851, Old Puff was sold to the Liggett's Gap RR in Pennsylvania. The sketch is from an 1853 Tompkins County map.

ers, according to [Thomas W.] Burns, in order to ensure adequate traffic for the railway, had been promised by Pennsylvania canal authorities that the Susquehanna River would be dredged from Baltimore to Owego. This was not done. The final setback was the nationwide financial crisis of 1837, as a result of which the Ithaca & Owego could no longer rely on "private enterprise" to finance the permanent improvements which were so badly needed.

In April 1838, the state Legislature was induced to grant a mortgage loan to the company. The terms were that \$250,000 of "The Ithaca & Owego Rail-Road State Stock" was to be issued for every \$500,000 expended by the road in construction and completion of a "single line track of railroad" and "all bridges, culverts, viaducts and inclined planes which may be necessary for a double track on said railroad..." The maximum allowed was \$300,000, of which \$288,000 was taken up, with the stipulation that if interest payments were not maintained the comptroller could sell the company at public auction with power to buy it in for the state. A further loan of \$28,000 was obtained in 1840, which raised the total interest commitment to the State to \$14,000 a year.

An account of the Owego line would not be complete without mentioning the spectacular accident of 1842, which has so often been dramatized by writers on Ithaca history. The following contemporary version is extracted from the *Tompkins Volunteer* of May 3, 1842:

"A FRIGHTFUL YET MIRACULOUS ACCIDENT"

"On Saturday last our Village was nearly panic-struck by the intelligence that the passenger car had accidentally broke loose and gone down the inclined plane. . . [Description of the planes omitted—Ed.] It has been the

practice invariably to let the passenger car down the first plane with the aid of what is called a Brake, with the passengers in. As usual the train arrived from Owego, and after detaching the car from the rest of the train, they proceeded down the plane. After they had gone some one hundred feet Mr. Hatch, the superintendent of the road, and who always stands at the Brake, felt something give way. He spoke to someone near him to assist him, as the car began to move with double rapidity. But he soon discovered that the Brake was of no avail, and he leaped off thinking he could stop it by blocking a wheel. But in jumping off, the car moving with greater velocity than he supposed, threw him and before he could warn the passengers of their danger, the car was out of the hearing of his voice.

“Some of the passengers seeing that all was not right, began to leap out, injuring themselves more or less. Before the car reached the foot of the first plane five or six had jumped out. Judge Dana of this place, and one or two more escaped from their perilous situation after the car had entered the Engine House where the other plane commences. Judge Dana, we understand, had his wrist either broken or sprained, we have not learned which, and one or two more were considerably hurt. A Mr. William D. Legg, one of the passengers deserves unusual praise for his almost unparalleled (sic) presence at mind in saving himself and a Lady who was in the apartment with him. He says he was unconscious of any danger until he happened to look out and saw two or three jumping out and the Lady looking out at the same time exclaimed, ‘Oh we shall all be killed.’ He told her he would save her, and at the same instant clasped her round the waist, opened the car door, carried her out and walked to the back of the car and stood down on the step, and there watched for a favorable place where he could let her fall without coming in contact with the timbers of the road. The car was then under swift motion, and as it entered the Engine House he let her fall, and immediately leaped off himself, when the car was within ten feet of the other plane. He struck on his feet and received no injury whatever, and ran back to help the Lady. He found she had received but little injury, comparatively speaking, but was much frightened. But the worst is to be told.

“The car passed on, and says our informant, so great was its velocity, after it had left the second engine house, that it was scarcely visible, leaving behind it as it were, a pillar of smoke. It kept the track for nearly 1700 feet, when it ran off with a tremendous crash, and went end over end some one hundred feet, and was literally dashed to atoms, not a wheel or any part of the heavy iron works of which it was composed remained whole—they were either twisted or broken to pieces. And what makes this accident miraculous is, that a Mr. Babcock who remained in the car the whole way, was picked up from among the wrecks of the car alive!!—But he was a horrid spectacle—his nose was nearly cut off, his right arm, between the shoulder and the elbow, was broken in two places, his head was mutilated in several places in a shocking manner; but neither of his legs was broken, and we are informed that no internal injury has been discovered, that is of a very serious nature.

“He was immediately conveyed to the nearest house, and Dr. Hawley dressed his wounds. The chance of his recovery is about two to five. . . [He lived—Ed.]

“We do not think that any blame can be attached, either to the Superintendent, Mr. Hatch, or the Company. It has been the custom for years to let the car down in that manner; therefore in our estimation, it can only come under the head of accident, and not carelessness . . . The deed is done, and experience although dearly bought, will, we are in hopes, induce them to abandon forever the practice of trusting passengers to come down on the plane in any vehicle whatever.”

This car may have had a hand-brake, which failed to work. The normal “brakes” of the period are described by Merrill: “... a man went along on the train carrying oak plugs to use as brakes in case the rope cable broke. The plugs were thrown into the car wheel spokes and caught the wheel against the car.”

The accident was probably due to allowing the car to descend without being attached to the cable. The planes were double-tracked so that normally two down-cars would help to raise one up-car. Even after a steam locomotive was acquired in 1840, power for the inclined planes was still supplied by horses yoked to a rotating beam on the ground level of each cable station. The beam turned the cable wheel on the upper floor, level with the top of the plane. To raise (or lower) a train of sixteen cars required over two hours. In less than two years the company defaulted in interest and the inevitable public auction was held at Albany on May 20, 1842. It was asserted by the *Ithaca Chronicle*, a Whig paper, that a number of bidders came with the intention of bidding the road in for scrap at prices ranging upwards of \$50,000, but they were persuaded by a group interested in maintaining the road to accept stock in a reorganized company and that the track and land were therefore sold at the fantastically low price of \$4,500. The Democratic *Ithaca Journal* tried to disparage the value of the road and suggested that even the low figure realized might have been excessive. To which the *Chronicle* replied by quoting an official report of the company to the Legislature showing an average profit of \$8,961.87 per annum for the first seven years of operation, a sum insufficient to pay the interest on the State loans but representing a tidy profit on an investment of \$4,500. The investment was in fact considerably more, for the same combine, which was headed by Archibald McIntyre and Josiah B. Williams, bought the rolling stock and equipment separately for \$13,000.

The *Chronicle* finally asked why the [state] comptroller did not buy the road for the state and was officially informed that it was not state policy to take over ownership of railroads.

The Cayuga & Susquehanna, Then the Lackawanna

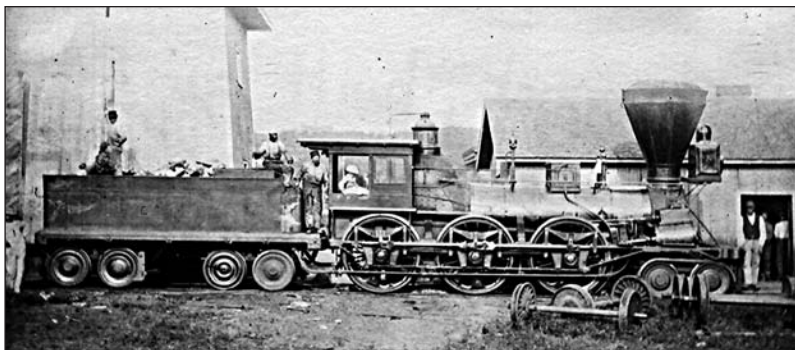
The successor company was granted a charter as the Cayuga & Susquehanna Railroad [1] on April 18, 1843.

After the depression of 1837 and the failure of the Ithaca & Owego most Ithacans were cautious regarding the new venture, and the majority of the capital came from outside the area of the road.

No action was taken towards repairing the road or improving its equipment until 1845, when thoughts were turned towards eliminating the inclined planes. Casey, the company's engineer and a well known railroad surveyor, investigated a route up East Hill and along Six Mile Creek, but his report was not optimistic. It was finally William R. Humphrey, a son of a member of the Legislature who had been instrumental in organizing the Ithaca & Owego Company, who recommended the route by Buttermilk Creek which was later adopted. In a letter to his father dated December 23, 1845, he suggested that there would be a future for the Cayuga & Susquehanna if it were extended to Geneva. He hoped to be able to obtain a favorable report from the engineer on this project, but the superintendent of the line, Mr. Bishop, and the owners were reluctant to embark on such an ambitious scheme. Humphrey reported: "Everybody seems to wish well for the road, but nobody will do anything... in the premises."

Nevertheless the company did obtain authority the following year to construct new track "from any point on the present road within 10 miles of Ithaca" and to increase its capital stock. It was at this time that the Legislature passed the General Act requiring railroads using the flat bar rail to rebuild with modern type rail. The act made provision for companies to borrow money for the purpose, with the stipulation that any company charter would be forfeit if relaying was not completed by January 1, 1850. Two weeks before the General Act the Cayuga & Susquehanna had obtained a private bill for the same purpose which included power to borrow up to \$400,000 on their bonds.

The reconstruction was started in 1849, after a controlling interest in the company had been bought by a group of financiers headed by George W.



The DL&W's "Tunkhannock" in Ithaca in the 1870s, after the original Ithaca & Owego and its successor became the Cayuga Division of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western RR.

Scranton. The only Ithacan in the group was J. B. Williams. Scranton was interested in the Liggett's Gap R.R. in Pennsylvania, later the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western, and owned extensive property in the coal region of the Lackawanna Valley. Under the direction of the energetic William Humphrey, newly appointed superintendent, the line was laid out in its present location.

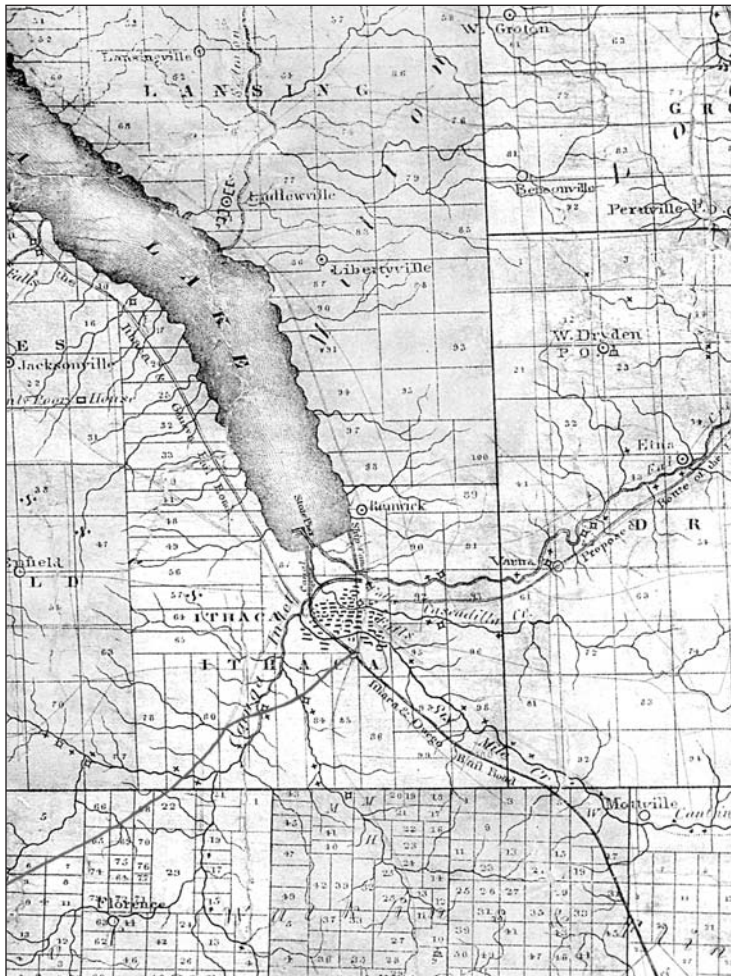
From the steamboat landing it ran up the Inlet Valley to Buttermilk Creek where it swung round on a gravel-filled trestle and started its climb up the hill. To avoid the expense of bridging ravines near the level of Six Mile Creek, a reverse switch in the form of a Z was built on South Hill and the old grade was reached about four miles from the top of the inclined planes. But for this reverse switch, necessitating backing up each train, this would probably have become the through route for the area. Worthington Smith, one of the promoters of a railroads to Auburn, writing to Ezra Cornell in 1852, said that he refused to subject himself "to the inconvenience and delay of passing up [the Ithaca] switches...which must spoil any road in this day of improvements." Humphrey himself had strongly advocated a direct descent of Six Mile Creek with the extension to Geneva to form a link in what might have been the shortest route from New York to Buffalo.

During the reconstruction the Ithaca depot was at the top of the inclined planes, which were abandoned before the new route was completed.

In 1851 connection was made between the southern end of the line and the Liggett's Gap R.R., and in October of that year the first load of coal via the Liggett's Gap, twenty-four cars, was brought into Ithaca with much celebration. The same papers which had belittled the road at the time of its "fraudulent" sale in 1842 now praised its usefulness and extolled the foresight and perseverance of Mr. Williams. For once the enthusiasm was not misplaced. The net receipts rose from a deficit of \$1,279 in 1850 to a profit of \$41,813 in 1851.

With new track, abundant freight, and no competition the road now entered its most profitable period. The demand for coal was in advance of the supply and barges were constantly waiting in the Inlet for loads. The first annual report of the D. L. & W., 1854, referred to Ithaca as "the principal coal depot of the company," and even the *Journal* was impressed by seeing trains of fifty-two loaded cars descend the steep grade of South Hill.

In 1855, when the respective owners were satisfied that the value of the Cayuga & Susquehanna to the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western was up to expectation, a lease in perpetuity was arranged. The company still retained its own corporate name and existence but in practice was referred to as the Cayuga Division of the D. L. & W. [1]. The D. L. & W. later acquired a majority of the line's stock.



The Burr map of Tompkins County in 1839 shows the existing route of the Ithaca & Owego RR at the bottom, and proposed railroads: Ithaca & Geneva (upper left), Ithaca & Auburn (right), and Chemung & Ithaca (lower center).

Out of the railway mania of the 1830s only one line to Ithaca materialized. Although there was not to be another until 1871, midway in this interval a revival of interest in local railroads occurred, the objective being to continue the Cayuga & Susquehanna northward.

Ebenezer Mack's Ithaca & Geneva and Ithaca & Auburn charters of the 1830s had lapsed, but in 1848 his name again appears, this time as one of the promoters of a line from "Auburn to Ithaca, passing through the Towns of Fleming and Scipio and down the valley of Salmon Creek." Both this and the former Auburn route involved impracticable climbs up Salmon Creek and Fall Creek respectively.

Auburn was particularly interested in building a direct line to New York in competition with the New York Central. One of its three proposals was to build via Groton; another involved a connection with the Cayuga & Susquehanna east of Ithaca.

As each new proposal was published others would appear, sponsored by rival communities. Corning hoped to secure some of the Rochester traffic by extending a line to Canandaigua on the New York Central and south to the Erie Railroad. Another concern proposed building from Lake Ontario south to Seneca Falls and to Ithaca. Geneva citizens, on the other hand, wanted a connection with Rochester to the northwest and with Ithaca to the southeast, claiming that such a route to New York would be the shortest of all. This plan—Humphrey's original idea—was favored by the *Ithaca Journal*, which predicted that with a good road, shorter route and so lower fare, much of the Hudson [N. Y. Central] traffic would be diverted by Cayuga & Susquehanna.

The Murdock Line

Only one of these early projects reached the construction stage in the county—the Lake Ontario, Auburn & New York Railroad [7]. The object of this company was to provide a northern outlet for the Cayuga & Susquehanna at Fairhaven on Lake Ontario. The line was to branch from the C. & S. at Pugsley's, about ten miles southeast of Ithaca, keep to the north bank of Six Mile Creek through Brookton, Besemer's, and Snyder's and to reach Ithaca where the East Hill depot is located. It there turned north and after crossing Cascadilla and Fall creeks continued on a level grade until it left the county at North Lansing. The grading of this portion was completed in 1853 except for about five miles northward from Cascadilla Creek. Of the total distance from Pugsley's to Fairhaven about half was graded and of this half two sections in the county were subsequently used by other railroad companies—7-1/2 miles between Pugsley's and East Ithaca by the Utica, Ithaca & Elmira [5], and 16 miles from Ozmun's, near Lansing, to Scipio Center by the New York & Oswego Midland Railroad [6 & 7], and later the Ithaca-

Auburn Short Line.

Worthington Smith, supervisor of the railway's real estate in Tompkins and Cayuga counties, tried to interest Ezra Cornell in the project but without success. Writing on December 28, 1852, he said, "We have five companies south from Auburn at work grading...and shall commence in a few days our grading in Tompkins County. Our entire line is under contract to be graded within one year from last month."

He also mentioned that orders for the delivery of rails and other equipment had been placed and that he had deeds for the right of way from two miles north of Fall Creek to within twelve miles of Auburn. After describing the enthusiasm with which the farmers along the route were supporting the project he continues, "We regret however to say that the Village of Ithaca, almost to a man, are unfriendly to our road," a feeling which he ascribes, as mentioned earlier, to the fact that the company refused to descend to Lake level to join the Cayuga & Susquehanna. The route adopted would have crossed the University Campus approximately on a line where Bailey Hall and Balch Hall now stand.

Work was stopped owing to lack of funds caused by unauthorized town bonding procedure. It was customary for the Legislature to authorize the towns along the route of a proposed railroad to subscribe to the railroad stock as a community, provided certain formalities were complied with. In the case of the Lake Ontario, Auburn & New York bonds the signatures of the taxpayers in the towns of Venice and Genoa were found to have been obtained in an irregular manner and the bonding was declared invalid. The company was reorganized on May 9, 1856, but little further work was done, although it was not until twenty years later that the last act concerning the company's affairs was passed by the state Legislature.

The completed grading has been referred to ever since as the "Murdock Line," after a resident of Venice Center, Lyman Murdock, who was interested in this and subsequent railroad development in the area.

1865-1869

At the close of the Civil War Ithaca was still served by one railway only, the D. L. & W., a branch line handicapped in providing fast schedules by the reverse switch. Traffic to the New York Central and westward was dependent on lake barges, subject to almost certain interruption in winter. It is not surprising therefore that the outstanding benefactor and man of wealth of the village now became interested in the promotion of railways which would help not only to secure future trade but also to provide travel facilities for members of the university which he was then in the process of forming.

Ezra Cornell favored two railway routes through Ithaca, one employing the Inlet Valley to the south and continuing north from Ithaca to Geneva, the other providing communication from the southwest to the northeast.

The first railroad company to be chartered in this period, the Southern Central [2] on September 6, 1865, did not serve Ithaca. Sponsored by an

Auburn syndicate, the route was one which had been under consideration fifteen years earlier—Auburn, Groton, Freeville, Dryden, and Owego—and was naturally regarded by Ithacans with disfavor. William Burt, of Boston, and Lyman Murdock immediately approached Ezra Cornell with suggestions as to alternative routes which would serve Ithaca and which the people of Auburn might be willing to adopt if such routes were shown to involve as easy gradients as the Southern Central, and less mileage.

Burt's proposal involved a railway from Waverly, Pennsylvania, to Cortland, there joining the Syracuse & Binghamton Railroad, which would give access to Syracuse, Utica, and beyond. The route would be through Spencer to Pugsley's on the Cayuga & Susquehanna [1] and from there would utilize the Murdock Line [7] along the north side of Six Mile Creek to Ithaca, East Hill, leaving Ithaca by the valley of Fall Creek and traversing Varna, Dryden, and McLean to Cortland. [4]. Burt believed that if such a line were built the Auburn group would abandon their Southern Central project and use the Murdock Line north of Ithaca to join his road at Ithaca. But the Southern Central Company was already in existence and the Auburn promoters could not be persuaded to alter their plans.

The Towanda Proposal

Ithacans were more interested in a line to the south, a company for which had been chartered in December 1865. This, the Ithaca & Towanda Railroad, had a rival to the east in the Southern Central and one to the west in a proposed Elmira-Seneca Lake Railroad. All three were competing to serve the same Pennsylvania mines and to link with those railways, such as the Lehigh Valley, which might later reach the Pennsylvania State Line from the south. [Towanda is south of Sayre and Athens, Pennsylvania, Rtes. 2 & 3]. The Southern Central was the first to be completed and, in addition to its own line from Fairhaven to Owego, it obtained running powers over the Erie to Waverly. The chartering of the Ithaca & Towanda Company at least ensured that Ithacans would be represented in the negotiations with the Pennsylvania interests on whose decisions the prosperity of any of the three rivals would largely depend. Ithaca could offer the most direct route to the [Great] Lakes, provided a continuing line were built north, and even before this were done freight transshipment to barge at Ithaca would still be possible.

The response to exhortations to buy the Ithaca & Towanda Railroad bonds was not encouraging. By the end of 1868, out of an authorized capital of \$2,000,000, \$35,000 had been subscribed, and the money paid in amounted to only \$3,500. As Ezra Cornell said in the company's belated Annual Report to the Legislature, "We have done so little toward building a railroad that we had forgotten all about reporting . . . Whether anything more will be done, it remains for the future to develop." This apathy may have been due to the indefiniteness of the route to be followed and to the apparent indifference of the Pennsylvania interests as to whether the line were built or not. Some mine owners, for example, supported the abortive

Pennsylvania & Sodus Bay project [8], a fact which prompted the *Ithaca Journal* to accuse them of encouraging railroad duplication in order to benefit from the competition in rates.

But the directors were not to be diverted from their objective—the building of a railroad by Ithacans for Ithacans. Such names on the directorate as William Esty, Alexander King, Ezra Cornell, William Halsey, J. B. Williams, L. L. Treman, Douglass Boardman, and others ensured that the policy of the line would be to benefit the community of which they were prominent members.

In May 1869, a preliminary reconnaissance for the route between Ithaca and Summit (near Spencer) was made, based on the assumption that the continuation north would follow the east shore of Cayuga Lake [5]. Six Mile Creek was to be crossed on a trestle “on a line with Stannard’s house” [on South Hill, a little west of the intersection of South Aurora and Prospect streets], thence north through Parker Place to the ‘Lake corner.’”

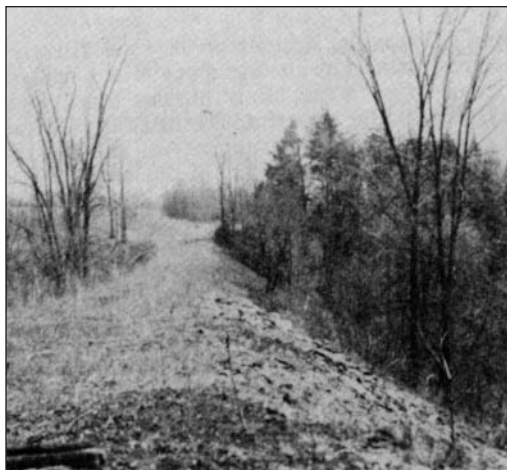
The other section, from Spencer to Waverly [3], was fully surveyed and contracts for grading were signed early in August 1869.

By the end of November other proposals for the route through Ithaca were being considered. The *Ithaca Journal* reported that “the road on the east side of the Lake is dead” and that the latest scheme was to build north on the west side to Big Sodus Bay.

The choice of location immediately south of Ithaca lay between the route as subsequently built and one serving Newfield. This village found itself in a dilemma. The Pennsylvania & Sodus Bay R.R.—a project, then unchartered, sponsored by some Trumansburg men—offered direct connection between Newfield and Towanda to the south (via Ithaca & Towanda R.R. from Summit, when built), and Trumansburg, Seneca Falls, and Lake Ontario, to the north. The Ithaca & Towanda, on the other hand, was committed to serving Ithaca and so by the geography of the district was unable to approach Newfield nearer than a mile. Ithacans were impatient to get their Towanda line under contract, so if the citizens of Newfield wished to be included in that project their decision to bond themselves in aid had to be made at once. They chose the Sodus Bay, with bonding of \$52,000.

The Controversies of 1870

For some years the New York & Oswego Midland Railroad Company [6], which in 1869 was building to Norwich from the east, had been planning to construct a branch to Auburn from Norwich. Although the Midland directors announced that this branch would serve only DeRuyter or Cortland, it was thought that they might be persuaded to build to Ithaca if a connection were offered with Burt’s proposed line to Waverly. It was also rumored that the Midland might continue westward beyond Ithaca to Lake Erie, which gave rise to the belief expressed in the *Ithaca Journal* that “There is no reason why the direct route from San Francisco to New York City may not be through Ithaca.”



A 1947 view of a fill at Gulf Stream gorge in North Lansing where in 1853 the Lake Ontario, Auburn & New York RR built a wooden trestle. The right of way was later used by the Auburn Branch of the New York & Oswego Midland RR, and still later by the Ithaca-Auburn Short Line which constructed this earth-cinder fill. Today its concrete culvert still channels Locke Creek.

In June 1869, a meeting was held at Cortland to incorporate what was called the Western Midland Railroad Company. It was sponsored by the New York & Oswego Midland and was attended by representatives of those counties interested in the Auburn Branch, namely Chenango, Cortland, Tompkins, and Cayuga. To qualify for incorporation \$10,000 had to be subscribed for every mile of railroad proposed and Ezra Cornell stated that when \$80,000 had been raised those interested in a Cortland-Ithaca line would be responsible for the balance.

The Ithaca & Cortland Proposal

The meeting seems to have been a failure from Ithaca's standpoint, for a few days later the Tompkins County group detached themselves from the rest and arranged for the incorporation of the Ithaca & Cortland Railroad. [4] The charter was filed on July 21, 1869, the route proposed being that suggested by William Burt, which crossed the Southern Central at Freeville.

Mr. Cornell intended that this road should only be one section of a through route from the soft coal region of Corning and Blossburg [Pennsylvania] through Elmira, VanEttenville, and Ithaca to Cortland. From there it would utilize running powers over the New York & Oswego Midland to DeRuyter and eventually connect with the New York Central at Utica. To continue the line on the Elmira side of Ithaca, the Utica, Horseheads & Elmira Railroad [5] was chartered in April, 1870, with the initial objective of building or acquiring a railroad from Horseheads to VanEttenville.

In the fall of 1869 engineers surveyed the entire route between Cortland and Elmira and reported that the grades were better for coal transportation than any in the state.

The contract for building the line was signed with Henry V. Poor & Co. of New York on April 25, 1870. Within three days a director wrote from Etna: "The engineers of the Ithaca & Cortland Railroad [5] are staking out work on Robertson's farm today. Shaw & McKenzie, sub-contractors, will begin the work of grading there tomorrow morning."

Progress on this and the Towanda line was reported by the newspapers in detail. By the end of July rails were being laid and in November a trip was arranged for twelve representatives from Ithaca to look over the work that had been done. A dinner was given for the tracklayers and the visitors by the ladies of Etna and, according to the account, the laborers "then returned to work . . . the spikes went home with blows which anyone could tell came directly from chicken pie . . ."

The track had then been completed from Freeville to Etna. East of Freeville the grading extended to within a mile of McLean and was at the same time being pushed west from Cortland.

Advertisements in the *Ithaca Journal*, headed, "Railroad to Ithaca! and Cornell University," and signed by the Superintendent, Ithaca & Cortland R.R., January 1, 1871, spoke of connecting trains over the Auburn Road, and quoted the fare from Auburn at \$1.75 "including carriages to Hotels and private houses in Ithaca."

Only the Southern Central [2] was then operating; the Ithaca & Cortland merely provided road transportation between Freeville and Ithaca. Mention was made of freight being delivered in "narrow gauge cars" which recalls the fact that the D. L. & W. was still a broad gauge (six foot) line, necessitating transshipment of goods whenever standard gauge routes had to be employed.

By May 1871, the Ithaca & Cortland was providing a provisional service from Freeville to a temporary Ithaca terminus at "Point of Rock," probably near the Judd Falls bridge.

Down in the valley the line from Waverly to Summit [3] had been graded during the summer of 1870 and a start made on the section to Ithaca. On February 18 the name Ithaca & Towanda had been changed to Ithaca & Athens, as announced by the *Ithaca Journal* under the heading "Money! Money!! Money!!! Buy Town Bonds."

Rivalry of Sodus Bay with the Geneva & Ithaca R.R.

However, news of the progress of the Ithaca & Athens and Ithaca & Cortland became overshadowed by the controversy caused by the chartering of the Pennsylvania & Sodus Bay R.R. [8] on May 26, 1870, and two weeks later, of the Geneva & Ithaca R.R. [3]. The question whether both the roads could economically exist or, if not, which should be built, produced lively discussion in the Trumansburg and Ithaca papers.

The Geneva & Ithaca was the natural counterpart of the Ithaca & Athens (the two amalgamated in 1874), both having complementary interests and the support of Ezra Cornell. On the side of the Sodus Bay were

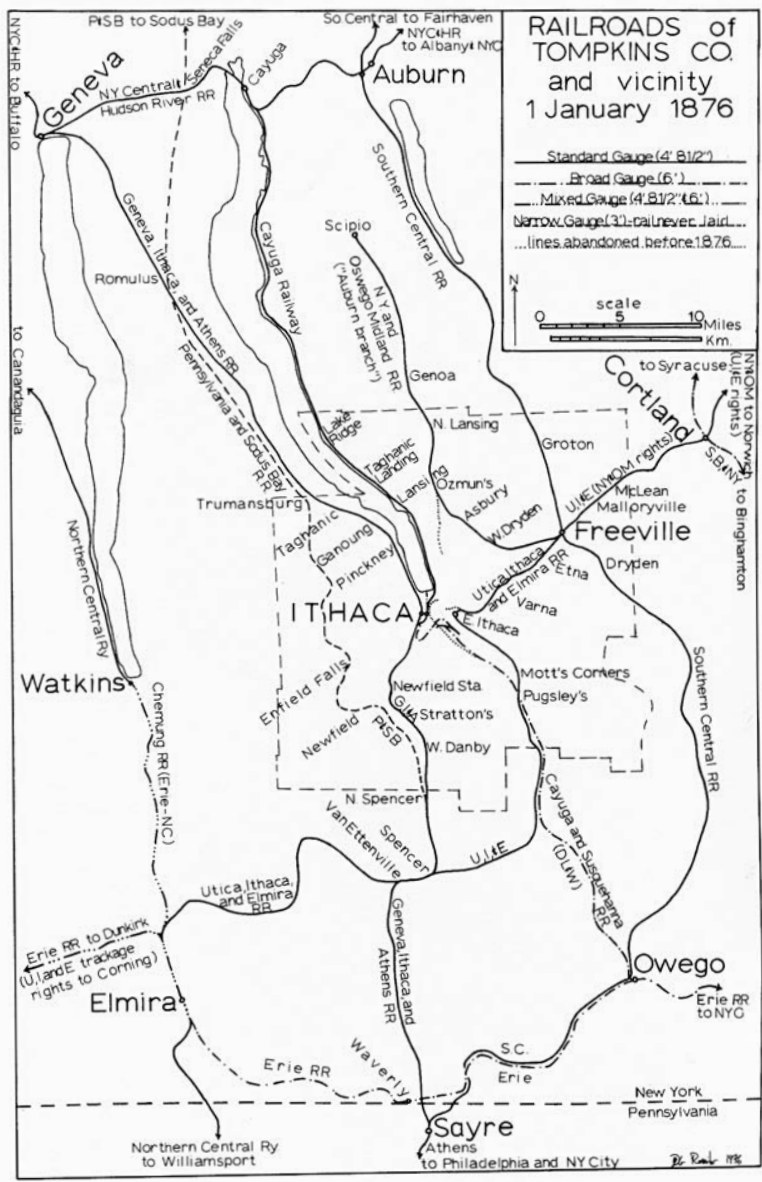
Trumansburg, headed by E. C. Gregg and J. H. Biggs; the nearby villages of Covert and Jacksonville; and Seneca Falls, represented by Judge Miller; and, of course, the towns of Newfield and Enfield which had everything to gain by the project.

Each side had two propositions. The Geneva & Ithaca, acknowledging the importance of Trumansburg, undertook to build their line as near that town as possible (in practice about 3/4 mile); alternatively, a line was surveyed which kept to the west shore of Cayuga Lake almost to Sheldrake before crossing the hill to Geneva. The Sodus Bay route passed through Trumansburg and in general kept to the high ground between Cayuga and Seneca lakes. As a gesture to Ithaca it was prepared to build a branch line to that village from Trumansburg.

The fact that the Geneva & Ithaca had the backing of the Ithaca & Athens weighed heavily in its favor. When built it could expect to handle the bulk of the through traffic carried by the Ithaca & Athens, whereas the Sodus Bay, though even more dependent on the Ithaca & Athens, since it proposed to use that company's track from Athens to Summit, was, in view of its competitive location, less likely to receive any consideration from that line.

One argument in the controversy in favor of the Sodus Bay road was that it would bring relief to the towns of Newfield, Enfield, and Ulysses which are "practically isolated from any public thoroughfare and for four or five months of a year are nearly hermetically sealed by mud or snow." More impelling motives were perhaps the "stupendous and permanently beneficial results" to the towns through which the line was to pass. "As a matter of course," wrote the *Seneca Falls Reveille* in 1869, "Trumansburg and Seneca Falls would become important stations on the route."

While preliminary surveys for both roads were being made during the summer of 1870, an additional factor appeared in the resuscitation of the Cayuga Lake shore project [4], a company for which had been chartered in 1867 but had been neglected in favor of more promising enterprises. An ardent protagonist now appeared in a Mr. Colton from Massachusetts, who pronounced himself alone willing to provide 60 percent of the necessary capital. Ithaca was not relied on for much support, a mere \$25,000 privately subscribed being the limit of expectation. The Town of Lansing, on the other hand, was urged to, and did, bond itself for \$75,000.



The future of railroads in and near Tompkins County in the 1870s.

Eighteen seventy-one was the year of greatest progress for railroads in the county. At the start, eight different companies were preparing active construction, and even the veteran D. L. & W. [1] was rumored to be planning to abolish the South Hill switch. The Ithaca & Cortland was conveying passengers to the Ithaca Town Line in May, a construction train of the Ithaca & Athens, headed by the “Ezra Cornell,” crossed State Street on July 25, and by the end of the year the Cayuga Lake, the Pennsylvania & Sodus Bay [8], and the Geneva & Ithaca [3] had each broken ground, the first celebrating the occasion with a “big time,” the last ostentatiously announcing that there would be no “firing of guns, or noise of fife or drum.”

Work on the Ithaca & Athens [3] was proceeding vigorously. Early in 1871 the grading and bridging were substantially complete and land had been acquired at the Cayuga Inlet for coal trestles, machine shops, and other works. The dredging for the landing stages, the driving of the retaining piles, and the reclamation of land for yards and buildings, were reported in detail in the *Ithaca Journal*, news which served to encourage prospective purchasers of the 6% gold bonds. Laying of track was finished in July and the *Ithaca Democrat* could report that “On the locomotive ‘Leonard Treman’ last Tuesday we had a very pleasant ride to West Danby and back.”

Ithaca & Athens R.R. Opens

Business started officially on August 21, under the management of the superintendent of the contractors. One train was advertised each way daily, calling at Newfield, Stratton’s, West Danby, North Spencer, Spencer, VanEttenville, Bingham’s, Factoryville, Junction and Athens, the journey taking three hours. A few months later a traveler signing himself “Medicus,” wrote, “...The road is smooth and the coaches new, neat and comfortable, the conductor, a gentleman, and a man that is much respected by the travelling public, even the brakemen are tinctured with the elements of manhood and good breeding, which is not always common in Europe, Asia and Africa, nor all the time in this country...” On enquiring whether it would be possible for him to ride on the footplate, he found that there was “a gentleman even in the locomotive.”

There was one circumstance that marred the otherwise satisfactory completion of the Ithaca & Athens. As the construction progressed there had been increasing friction between the contractors and the company over alleged breaches of contract. Soon after the line was opened the contractors brought their complaints into court at Towanda, claiming damages of \$200,000 in that the company had frequently changed the location of the road, and had taken over operation earlier than had been agreed. The trial lasted over a month. In the voluminous evidence presented regarding the

quality of the grading there appears a statement by Peter Quinn, a laborer, that "logs, stumps, etc., were put into the embankments and covered up. In one instance a dead horse was put in, and we covered it up quickly, so that the engineers would not see it."

Most of the directors were called to the witness stand, including Ezra Cornell. William Halsey recounted how he took over the line from the contractors. Boarding the train at Ithaca, he told the contractors' conductor, Church, that the company would take charge of the train and put Mr. Dana in possession. "The train then moved on to Spencer. At this point Church attempted to change the switch and run out a freight train and said the passenger train had gone as far as it would. Church put on the switch; Nichols went on one side, I was on the other; Church went into a ditch and the train passed on to Athens."

In spite of the efforts of Francis M. (later Judge) Finch of Ithaca and Judge Maynard of Williamsport, counsel for the railroad, a verdict of \$62,447.50 was returned for the contractors, a judgment which forced the company to issue second mortgage bonds.

Meanwhile the grading of the Geneva & Ithaca and the Pennsylvania & Sodus Bay had been started. The village of Covert fired a cannon when it bonded itself for the Sodus Bay, and the *Ovid Bee*, reporting that the Sodus Bay directors had decided to build a narrow gauge (three-foot) line, concluded, "There can certainly be no doubt that our railroad is a success and our hopes to be speedily realized."

Connections at Ithaca

On [Ithaca's East] hill, progress had not been so satisfactory. Throughout the period of construction of the Ithaca & Cortland [4] the problem of a suitable connection with other railroads at Ithaca had remained unsolved. Burt's proposal of 1866 contemplated that the D. L. & W. [1] might abandon their South Hill switch, join his route from Waverly at Pugsley's (where the lines were to cross at grade), continue to East Ithaca, and then descend East Hill direct. In 1871, when the situation had become more defined, it was suggested that a line should be built from the Ithaca terminus across Six Mile Creek to join the lower track of the Lackawanna and thereby reach the Inlet.

Another proposal was to run the road across Bryant's Farm from Dwyer's Mill (where Campus Road joins Dryden Road) to the north end of Eddy Street, and across Cascadilla Creek to the top of the tunnel at Fall Creek, there making a curve and continuing down the hill southwest to a union depot of all the roads serving Ithaca. One advantage claimed for this route was that the line could be used as a street railway—an adjunct which the local papers had been demanding since 1869.

Ezra Cornell was in favor of a simpler route. Reaching Ithaca from the east, the Cortland line would continue across Cascadilla Creek at Dwyer's Mill, keep to the north side of the creek and descend the hill direct to Linn

Street, thence continuing along Cascadilla Avenue to a junction with the Ithaca & Athens railroads.

Cornell's proposal was adopted by the company but the Ithaca trustees refused to grant permission for tracks to be laid through the streets.

When on October 25, 1871, the Ithaca & Cortland and the Utica, Horseheads & Elmira Railroad [4] companies were consolidated to form the Utica, Ithaca & Elmira Railroad Company, the route had been determined with the exception of the stretch from Ithaca to VanEttenville, which depended on the outcome of the Ithaca proposals.

The Utica, Ithaca & Elmira on the Cornell Campus

In accordance with Cornell's wishes the line from Cortland was extended over Cascadilla Creek and a small shanty was built on the university grounds near where Bard Hall (Engineering College) now stands. After the line to Horseheads was opened in 1875, through trains had to back into (or out of) the station and this practice continued until [an] East Ithaca depot was opened in 1876, when the idea of building through Ithaca had been reluctantly abandoned.

Besides the shanty there was a small engine house for accommodating the "Cornell University," the company's second locomotive, which was said to have had a view of the university buildings painted on its tender. In December 1872, this engine house burned down, the "Cornell University" luckily having sufficient head of steam to be driven out before being damaged.

The proposal to continue down the hill by Cascadilla Creek was kept alive in various forms till 1876, but was always negatived either by the Ithaca trustees or, after the death of Cornell, by the university authorities. The plan was worked out in detail and was based on the use of a center cog rail, as on mountain railways. A locomotive with a cog on the front axle was actually delivered to the company in February 1875, but was returned to the makers the following year for the reason that "the line over which it was to operate was not to be built and the road had no use for it."

1872 and the Auburn Branch of the Midland

The year 1872 was almost equal to 1871 in railroad activity. The work of grading was continued on the Geneva & Ithaca, the Pennsylvania & Sodus Bay, and the Cayuga Lake Railroad, [3, 8 & 5] which had been begun the previous August, and a new venture was started in connection with the New York & Oswego Midland R.R. [6].

The proposed Auburn Branch of the Midland, previously mentioned, had not developed as anticipated. The building of the Ithaca & Cortland line prompted the Midland promoters to revise their plans. Instead of running their branch from Cortland direct to Auburn, as contemplated by the Auburn Branch Act of 1867, an agreement was reached with the Utica, Ithaca & Elmira whereby the Midland obtained running rights over that

company's line from Cortland to Freeville, from which point eight miles of new construction would enable the road to reach the Murdock Line, a ready-made earthwork which continued to within a few miles of Auburn.

In accordance with this plan the Western Extension Act was passed in 1871, which only differed from the Auburn Branch Act in that the route from Cortland was to serve Tompkins, not Cayuga, county and that the western terminus was not specified—the directors had, by that time, either Buffalo or Niagara in mind. Both acts authorized the bonding of towns on the route [6].

The Murdock Line [7] was bought from a Mr. Wood in 1871, the agreement with the Ithaca & Cortland was signed in March 1872, and by December the railway had been completed from Freeville to the Merrifield Road in Scipio Township, twelve miles short of Auburn. The Murdock grade was utilized north of Ozmun's, a point near South Lansing. The whole line from Norwich to Scipio was usually referred to as the Auburn Branch.

In October 1872, before the line had reached Scipio, a "grand free excursion" was organized to create goodwill for the new branch and, in accordance with the best custom of the times, there was included a "bountiful colation in a mammoth tent." The celebration took place at Venice, a few miles south of Scipio, and was attended by a crowd estimated at 8,000. But when regular passenger service was inaugurated in December the traffic was so far below expectation that it was almost at once reduced to one train a week.

The U. I. & E. Builds South

The agreement between the Midland and the Utica, Ithaca & Elmira [4] in 1872 included a sale provision to the U. I. & E. of that part of the Murdock Line [7] which lay in the Town of Ithaca. The directors of the U. I. & E. had decided that the proposal to build down the hill by Cascadilla Creek to a union depot was not to be speedily accomplished and that they had to secure a route to VanEttenville independent of the Ithaca area. The university had suggested that the campus line might be continued across Cascadilla Creek and Six Mile Creek to join the lower switch of the D. L. & W., but the U. I. & E. preferred to hark back to Burt's proposal of 1867 and use the Murdock Grade to Pugsley's.

Work on this section was begun during 1872, also on the section from VanEttenville to Horseheads and Elmira.

On the other line in the county grading proceeded steadily.

All but about four miles of the Geneva & Ithaca grading was completed by October 1872, after Trumansburg had conceded that the Geneva & Ithaca Road ought not to be asked to reach the Pennsylvania & Sodus Bay Depot near the [village] fairground.

The End of the Sodus Bay

Regarding the Sodus Bay, a Trumansburg diarist wrote on February 23,



Saddletank "Ithaca" serves the Ithaca & Athens starting in 1871, later as the Geneva, Ithaca & Sayre #5, and Lehigh Valley #528.

1872, "The Contractor had his men at work in the east end of our village this week," and by May 5,000 ties had been delivered along the line. But a report in August that the company "has about perfected arrangements" to run trains from Summit to connect with the Lehigh Valley at Athens was quickly denied and in fact work on the Sodus Bay ceased almost at once. It was rumored that rails had been bought; if so, they were never laid in the county.

In 1876 the relics of the Sodus Bay R.R. were bought by Merritt King, an Ithaca lawyer, with the object of completing the line, or at least the section from Seneca Falls to Romulus. The Middle Central Railroad Company was formed for this purpose with capital of \$100 and a "floating debt of about \$15," but nothing happened, and as far as Newfield, Enfield and Ulysses were concerned the Sodus Bay was merely a bad dream, except for the reality of the \$152,000 of bonds, which provided, to quote a Trumansburg authority, "the rough groundwork for a financial headache that lasted a good fifty years."

Travel Facilities, 1872

The end of the year still found the Ithaca & Athens with no connections to the north. It was assumed that the Geneva & Ithaca would fill this gap, the only question being when the happy event would take place. The matter was of some importance to the convenience of Ithacans for, in spite of the acquisition of two new railroads, their position was little better than during the previous twenty years. The D. L. & W. continued to provide leisurely transportation to Owego. The Ithaca & Athens gave an improved service to Philadelphia but was as yet in no position to offer a competitive service to New York, and from East Hill the Utica, Ithaca & Elmira offered spasmodic transport to Freeville, Cortland and such points east as might be operative. Freeville, where travellers changed trains for the Southern Central to Auburn or Owego, or the Midland to Scipio Center, led the county in transport activity, being served by three railroads providing sixteen or more stopping trains daily.

It was therefore welcome news on January 30, 1873, that the last rail on a railroad to the north had been laid—not the Geneva & Ithaca, but the

Cayuga Lake [4], making connection with the New York Central at Cayuga, a proposition which barely three years earlier had been pronounced dead.

The Cayuga Lake Line

Chartered in 1867, the Cayuga Lake Railroad Company was promoted by Henry Morgan, Talmadge Delafield, and other financiers of Aurora and Cayuga.

Contracts for building the road had been signed on August 11, 1871, and barely eighteen months later the opening ceremony took place, an "impromptu celebration" in which the Cayuga Lake directors were joined by prominent members of neighboring lines, including Ezra Cornell, A. McChain, L. L. Treman, and C. L. Grant. This first train into Ithaca "Low Level" from the north was headed by locomotive No. 1, manned by fireman Charles True, who in 1895 was to lose his life on the same lakeshore line when his engine overturned as a result of a cliff fall.

On February 24, 1872, the long-standing dream of running through trains from Athens to Cayuga became a reality. A number of prominent citizens of Philadelphia and other places on the route were invited to take part in an excursion arranged jointly by the Ithaca & Athens and the Cayuga Lake railroads [3 & 4]. A special train left Philadelphia at 8:30 a.m. for Ithaca via the North Pennsylvania, Lehigh Valley, and Ithaca & Athens railroads, thence to Aurora and Cayuga via the Cayuga Lake Railroad, and from there via the New York Central to Rochester and Niagara Falls, where the party spent the following day and returned over the same route. Being primarily for the benefit of the Cayuga Lake R.R., stops were made at every station along that company's line, with speeches and celebrations at each. At Ludlowville, for example, "a cornet band, Asa Smith leading, was with a large crowd at the depot. Cheers, music, guns and flags were the incidents of the occasion while Mr. Bogart and Judge Pierce (both of Philadelphia) made short spicy speeches from the car."

Through excursions were run subsequently during the summer, particularly to Atwaters, a favorite resort. At this time the stations out of Ithaca were Lake View, Lansing, Taughannock Landing, Lake Ridge, Atwaters, Genoa, Long Point . . . Cayuga. Taughannock Landing, on the east side of the lake, was the point where the steamboat was available to take visitors to the falls on the west side—analagous to the application of the name "Ithaca Junction" to Freeville on the timetables of the Southern Central.

It was the general practice to open a railroad officially as soon as there was a continuous rail which would bear the weight of a locomotive. Several weeks of further construction might be required before the ballasting and alignment were adequate to support a loaded train at speed. On the Cayuga Lake Railroad there was the additional work of safeguarding the grading from erosion and unfortunately on April 10, before this was finished, freshets of unusual volume washed away many portions of the new fills. Although the culverts and bridges stood up to the waters, the line had



Geneva & Ithaca's "C. M. Titus," built in 1873, became Gl&S #1 and Lehigh Valley's #524, later rebuilt in the Lehigh's Sayre Shops.

to be closed for three months while the grading was restored.

By August traffic had been resumed and a third rail laid to the D. L. & W. depot (that line retaining the broad gauge until 1878) so that station facilities could be shared. The Ithaca & Athens depot was used when through trains were to travel south on that line, a practice which, for a period, was a daily feature, publicized in the *Ithaca Democrat*. That newspaper, it should be added, was a staunch supporter of the Cayuga Lake and the Sodus Bay railroads in opposition to the Geneva & Ithaca and the Ithaca & Athens. When in 1874 the financial condition of the Cayuga Lake company resulted in a foreclosure sale, the *Democrat* stressed the excellence and usefulness of the road and accused its rivals of having robbed it of business. The purchase price of \$1,205,000, stated as being \$5,000 over its encumbrances, was provided by James Stillman, of New York, who became secretary and director of the new Cayuga Railway Company. The only director from Ithaca was J. Lewis Grant, who was also superintendent of the line.

The subsequent history of the lakeshore line is concerned with its financial structure rather than its contribution to local transportation, and a detailed account would be inappropriate here. After a second foreclosure sale in 1877, when it was reorganized as the Cayuga Southern Railroad, it was finally sold in 1879 to the Geneva, Ithaca & Sayre R.R., part of the Lehigh Valley system.



Workers and railroad officials pose in 1875 at present-day Brooktondale at the new wooden trestle of the Utica, Ithaca & Elmira Railway over Six Mile Creek. The view north from Brookton, formerly known as Mottville and Mott's Corners, is thought to be taken on December 11, the day of completion of the line to Horseheads. The train is headed south.

Completion of the Geneva & Ithaca

By January 1873 the grading on the Geneva & Ithaca [3] was almost finished, but the bridges were still to be built and the track to be laid. The ironwork was brought to Ithaca during the spring and track laying was started in mid-April. As it was laid, the iron for bridging was conveyed over it, so causing delays in progress at Taughannock and other ravines.

During construction work the local lines were generous in loaning their motive power. The Geneva & Ithaca had the use of an Ithaca & Athens engine and of the "Shoo Fly" belonging to the Utica, Ithaca & Elmira. Similarly the Ithaca & Athens had loaned a construction engine to the Cayuga Lake R.R. when building, and periodically helped the U. I. & E. when the "Cornell University" was out of commission.

Two of the Geneva & Ithaca's own locomotives were delivered in June 1873. Named "Geneva" and "C. M. Titus," they were painted vermilion and had the usual highly polished brass cylinder casings, bell mounting, and hand rails, and polished iron cylinder heads. The tenders were "a delicate wine color, with gold leaf stripes and lettering."

Hopes that the line would have reached Taughannock in time to run an excursion there on July 4 were not fulfilled, for on the previous day the tracklayers were only at the Vann School house, about 1-1/2 miles short of the gorge. The "Taghanic" bridge was finally tested on July 23 by running onto it simultaneously the "Geneva" and No. 6 of the Ithaca & Athens, a 10-wheeler named "Geo. W. Schuyler," generally known as the "Big Six." The ceremony of driving the last spike, arranged in customary style with bands, guns, food, and speeches, took place on September 13, 1873, at Romulus and was attended by many local notables, including Charles Titus, Ezra Cornell, and W. L. Bostwick of Ithaca. Only a day or two later the financial structure of the country collapsed in a panic which was to bring eventual bankruptcy to many undertakings, not excepting the Geneva & Ithaca Company.

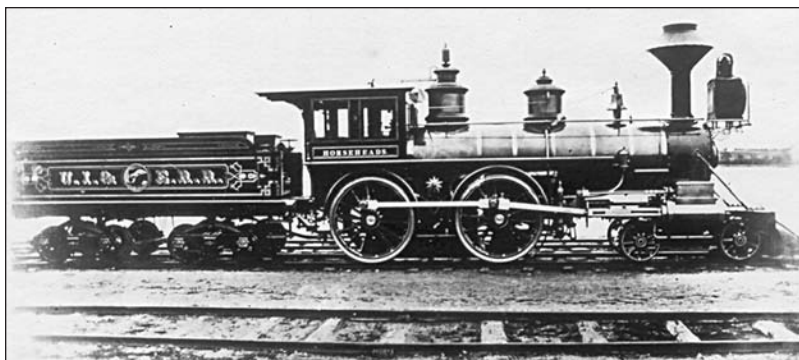
The first schedule of the line became effective November 27. Two passenger trains each way daily were provided, the Express taking 2 hours 5 minutes for the journey, the Accommodation 3 hours, stopping at "Pinckney, Ganoung, Taghanic, Trumansburg, Covert, Farmer, VanLiews, Ovid, Hayt's Corners, Romulus... Geneva."

Bankruptcy of the Midland

In the east of the county the Midland [6], during that summer (1873), had been preparing to build from Scipio on to Buffalo. The Auburn Branch was now to by-pass Auburn and proceed direct from Scipio to Cayuga and the west, but the panic in September effectively curbed the company's activi-



A stagecoach carries passengers between the Utica, Ithaca & Elmira's East Ithaca station and the downtown Ithaca station of the Ithaca & Athens in the early 1870s, making possible a trip from Cortland to Horseheads and beyond.



UI&E's "Horseheads," built in 1871, later became the Elmira, Cortland & Northern's #7, and the Lehigh's #907, renumbered 2528, and scrapped in 1910.

ties or, as the *Ithaca Democrat* politely put it, "the Midland was somewhat affected by the financial crash."

In fact the situation was more than the over-extended Midland empire could bear. The temporary halt at Scipio became permanent and in November the company was placed in the hands of receivers. The uncompleted and unprofitable Auburn Branch was one of the first sections to be sold.

All the property west of Freeville was acquired in 1874 by the Ithaca, Auburn & Western R.R., a company formed for the purpose. This company arranged for the U. I. & E. to operate the road in return for maintaining the physical assets of the company, which then consisted of one first class passenger car, one baggage car, miscellaneous freight vehicles, and permanent way and buildings. While operated by the U. I. & E. the twelve miles to Auburn were completed and the line thereby acquired some nuisance

value to the Southern Central owners, who accordingly leased it in 1883. In 1889 it was acquired outright by the Lehigh Valley (then controllers of the Southern Central), who abandoned it and removed the rails.

The receivership of the remainder of the Midland Company lasted until 1879, when it was reorganized as the New York, Ontario & Western Railroad.

The Auburn Branch gave rise to a volume of litigation out of proportion to its size. The inhabitants of the Town of Lansing, in particular, seem to have been loath to continue paying interest on their railroad bonds after the advantages proved so ephemeral. The legality of the bonding was questioned on the ground that the railroad that was built was neither the Auburn Branch nor the Western Extension and that therefore the town bonding had never been sanctioned by the Legislature, for the Act of 1867 did not authorize a line through Tompkins County, nor did the Western Extension Act authorize one through Cayuga County. The company argued that the acts taken in conjunction were sufficient authorization for the line as built, but the courts did not agree and it was held that the line was, if anything, the Western Extension. Collateral litigation was still continuing at the turn of the century.

The U. I. & E. Completed

One of the final events of 1873 was the opening of the U. I. & E. [4] line from VanEttenville to Horseheads. Much publicity was given to the building of trestles over two gorges, referred to as "Block House Ravine" and "Deep Gorge," and excursions were run to view the progress. The first through train on November 12 used the tracks of the Ithaca & Athens as far as VanEttenville, the line from East Ithaca not being opened till December 1875. The final section from Horseheads to Elmira was completed in 1880 by the Canal Railroad, a lessee of the U. I. & E.

In 1874 Ezra Cornell died. He is reported as having invested \$2 million of his fortune in local railroads. Certainly it was his financial support which made them possible and it is likely that he risked more in the ventures than a less public-spirited man would have considered prudent. As a result of his death and the serious financial condition of the country at the time, the U. I. & E. had an unpropitious start and was soon forced to subject its property to heavy mortgages which the traffic was insufficient to support.

The Elmira, Cortland & Northern

A sale on foreclosure took place in 1878 and again in 1884, when it was bought by Austin Corbin and his associates (who had previously acquired a controlling interest) for \$50,000. Corbin reorganized the company under the name Elmira, Cortland & Northern [4], and, through purchases and leasing arrangements, extended the line to Canastota, Sylvan Beach (on Oneida Lake) and Camden.

In its prime the E. C. & N. ran two express trains daily between Elmira

and Syracuse (via Cortland), making the run in 4-1/2 hours, and facilities were provided for same-day outward and return travel between Albany, Rome, Syracuse, Cortland, Ithaca, and Elmira "with ample time for business."

It was claimed that the passenger department of the road was provided with "elegantly appointed coaches," and that the scenery on the line was "both picturesque and romantic." On the other hand, colloquial names for the line were not always complimentary. The "Shoo Fly Road" was a popular one from the start and was perpetuated as the name of one of the locomotives. The "Empty, Crooked, and Nasty" was a later development.

In February 1896, the Lehigh Valley Railroad Company assumed control of the E. C. & N. through purchase of the entire stock. Actual conveyance of the rights, franchises, and property to the Lehigh Valley System took place in 1905.

Formation of Geneva, Ithaca & Athens R.R.

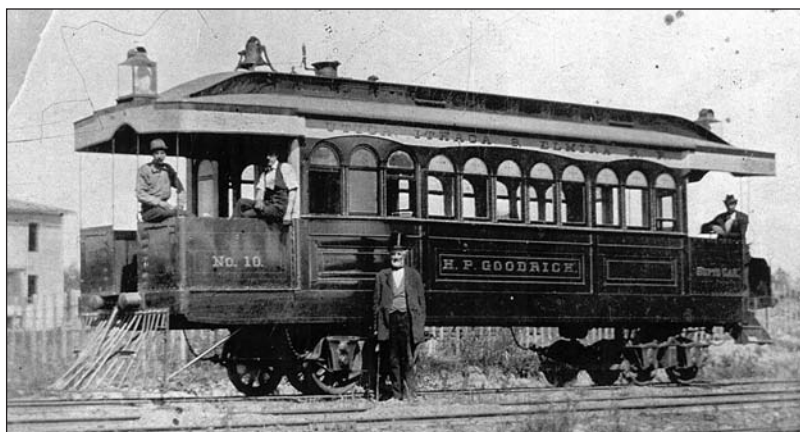
To return finally to the Geneva & Ithaca and Ithaca & Athens railroads [3], the question of the amalgamation of the lines came to a head in 1874. Such a policy would appear to have been obviously desirable, so it is surprising to read that at a directors' meeting of the Ithaca & Athens in February the amalgamation was proposed and soundly defeated. After some diplomatic substitution of the dissenting directors, the motion was finally passed, and the two lines united on May 25, 1874, to form the Geneva, Ithaca & Athens Railroad. The dissenters had the *Ithaca Democrat* as mouthpiece and for many months took every opportunity of decrying the merger, suggesting that the Cayuga Lake line was the obvious northern counterpart of the Ithaca & Athens and that the scheme was merely designed to lower the value of the Ithaca & Athens bonds, so adding increased burdens on local taxpayers. As reorganized, all but three of the officers and directors were Ithaca men. Ezra Cornell was elected president; Charles M. Titus, who had associations with the Lehigh Valley, vice-president; George McChain, treasurer; Charles Blair, secretary; and F. C. Cornell, F[rancis] M. Finch, John Gauntlett, John Rumsey, and Rufus Bates, directors.

Even before the amalgamation the two companies had shared station buildings at Ithaca. Now they could combine all facilities, including carriage works, roundhouse, and repair shop.

Among the holders of Geneva & Ithaca bonds was the Philadelphia Bridge Company, which had accepted in that form part of the consideration for their work, and in 1876, when the dividend payments to bondholders had lapsed, it was the Bridge Company that brought a foreclosure action against the Geneva, Ithaca & Athens. At the subsequent sale the lines were auctioned separately, that to Athens on September 2 and that to Geneva the following day. The Ithaca & Athens went to Asa Packer for \$60,000, which caused the *Journal* to complain that the \$300,000 of bonds held by Ithaca were being completely wiped out—a form of misfortune which was not unique at that period. In the Geneva & Ithaca sale the Bridge Company



The first UI&E train crosses Deep Gorge between VanEtten and Horseheads on Nov. 11, 1873. Railroad financier Ezra Cornell stands on the track in front of the engine "Horseheads" with his foot on the timber guard. Fellow Ithacan John C. Gauntlett stands on the tender. Cornell founded the university that bears his name.



UI&E car 10, the "H. P. Goodrich," is powered by steam from a vertical boiler behind the first and second windows. It is named for the railroad's superintendent, and placed in service as his and his paymaster's car in 1875. Goodrich, a prominent Cortland businessman, is believed to be the man in front. The car could carry 35 passengers.

PENN'A & N. Y. C. & R. R. CO.									
SOUTHERN CENTRAL DIVISION.									
Arrangement of Passenger Trains taking effect June 24, 1888.									
SOUTHWARD.									
STATIONS	21	7	85	9	13	15			
	A M	A M	.....	A M	P. M.	P. M.			
Oswego....	7 45	.....	.....	.....	12 35	5 30			
N.F. Haven	8 15	.....	.....	.....	1 30	5 55			
Fair Haven	8 19	.....	.....	.....	1 33	5 59			
Sterling....	8 24	.....	.....	.....	1 37	6 05			
Martville....	8 33	.....	.....	.....	1 45	6 17			
Ira....	8 48	.....	.....	.....	1 55	6 26			
Cato....	8 53	.....	.....	.....	2 05	6 35			
Brk Church	*9 04	.....	.....	.....	*2 15	*6 45			
Weedsport	9 15	.....	.....	.....	2 25	6 54			
Throop....	*9 30	.....	.....	.....	*2 40	*7 06			
Auburn....	9 40	.....	.....	.....	3 00	7 30			
Wyckoffs....	.....	*9 30	10 20	11 05	.....	*7 35			
Esenore....	.....	8 37	10 34	*11 28	.....	*7 44			
Cascade....	.....	*8 43	10 45	*11 38	.....	*7 53			
Moravia....	.....	8 50	11 15	11 45	.....	8 00			
Locke....	.....	8 57	11 32	11 54	.....	8 08			
GROTON....	.....	9 09	12 09	12 09	.....	8 23			
Peruville....	.....	*9 14	12*18	12 14	.....	*8 27			
Freeville....	.....	9 20	12 45	12 23	.....	8 35			
Dryden....	.....	9 27	1 05	12 28	.....	8 42			
Harford....	.....	9 41	1 28	12 40	.....	8 55			
Harfd Mills	.....	9 45	1 34	*12 44	.....	8 59			
Richford....	.....	9 55	1 52	12 54	.....	9 09			
Berkshire....	.....	10 03	2 10	1 03	.....	9 17			
Newark Val	.....	10 15	2 40	1 15	.....	9 33			
Flemingvle	.....	*10 29	3 00	*1 25	.....	*9 43			
Owego....	.....	10 40	3 40	1 40	.....	10 00			
Tioga....	.....	.....	4 07	1 53	.....	10 15			
Smithboro.	.....	.....	4 30	*2 01	.....	10 23			
Burton....	.....	.....	4 31	*2 06	.....	*10 28			
Sayre....	.....	.....	5 00	2 20	.....	10 40			
Phila....	.....	.....	.....	10 49	.....	7 04			
New York..	.....	.....	.....	11 35	.....	7 50			
	p. m.	p. m.			a. m.				

Timetables from an 1888 newspaper advertisement. The Lehigh Valley has turned over operation of the Southern Central and Ithaca, Auburn & Western RRs to its subsidiary, the Pennsylvania & New York RR.

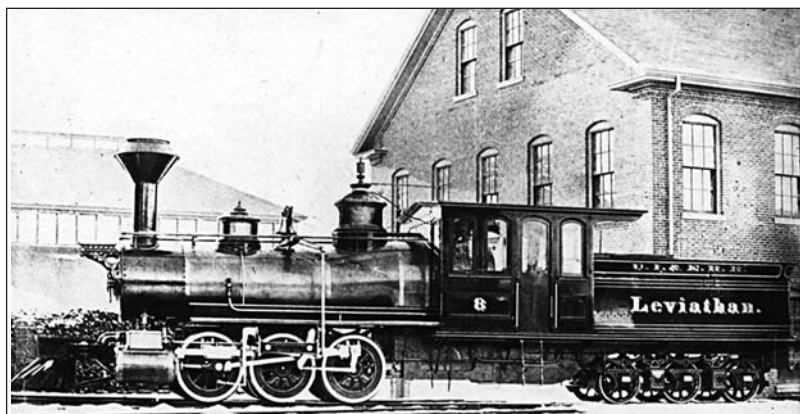
STATIONS.	8	10	12	23	24	2
	A M	A M	A M	A M	P M	A M
New York.	7 00	.....	.....	.....	7 00	8 00
Phila.....	7 30	.....	.....	.....	7 30	9 00
Sayre.....	3 45	7 40	.....	7 45	4 20	5 15
Burton....	4 56	*7 53	.....	8 05	*4 35	*5 30
Smithboro.	4 01	*7 57	.....	8 15	*4 40	5 37
Tioga....	4 09	8 04	.....	8 27	4 48	5 47
Owego....	4 20	8 15	.....	9 20	5 00	6 00
Flemingvle	4 27	*8 23	.....	9 40	*5 10	*6 10
Newark Val	4 36	8 33	.....	10 05	5 30	6 23
Berkshire.	4 46	8 44	.....	10 45	5 45	6 36
Richford..	4 51	8 53	.....	11 05	5 53	6 45
Harfd Mills	5 01	8 59	.....	11 25	6 03	6 55
Harford....	5 04	9 03	.....	11 40	6 09	6 59
Dryden....	5 15	9 14	.....	12 28	6 21	7 12
Freeville..	5 21	9 20	.....	12 45	6 45	7 30
Peruville..	5 25	*9 27	.....	*12 55	*6 51	*7 25
GROTON....	5 30	9 34	.....	1 20	6 58	7 35
Locke....	5 42	9 49	.....	1 47	7 11	7 50
Moravia....	5 48	9 58	.....	2 10	7 2	8 00
Cascade....	5 54	*10 06	.....	2 23	*7 2	*8 18
Esenore....	5 59	10 12	.....	2 45	7 3	8 15
Wyckoffs..	6 05	10 20	.....	2 45	*7 4	*8 24
Auburn....	6 25	10 35	10 50	3 15	8 15	8 40
				22		
Auburn....	.....	.....	.....	4 30	.....	.....
Throop....	6 35	.....	.....	*4 40	*8 25	.....
Weedsport	6 45	.....	11 15	4 52	8 35	.....
Brk Church	6 52	.....	*11 23	*5 01	*8 46	.....
Cato....	7 00	.....	11 33	5 11	8 57	.....
Ira....	7 07	.....	11 43	5 23	9 6	18
Martville..	7 15	.....	11 52	5 33	9 17	p. m.
Sterling....	7 23	.....	12 01	5 41	9 26	6 18
Fair Haven	7 25	.....	12 05	5 45	9 30	6 22
N.F. Haven	7 30	.....	12 08	5 48	9 33	6 25
Oswego....	7 55	.....	12 35	6 25	.....	.....
	a. m.		p. m.	p. m.		p. m.
*Trains stop only on signal.						
†Trains do not stop.						
Trains 15 will run daily, train 24 on Sunday only, and all other trains daily, except Sunday.						
Pullman Buffet Sleeping Cars run between Philadelphia, Pa., and Clayton, N. Y., daily, except Sunday, on trains 8 and 15.						

I. A. & W. Division.

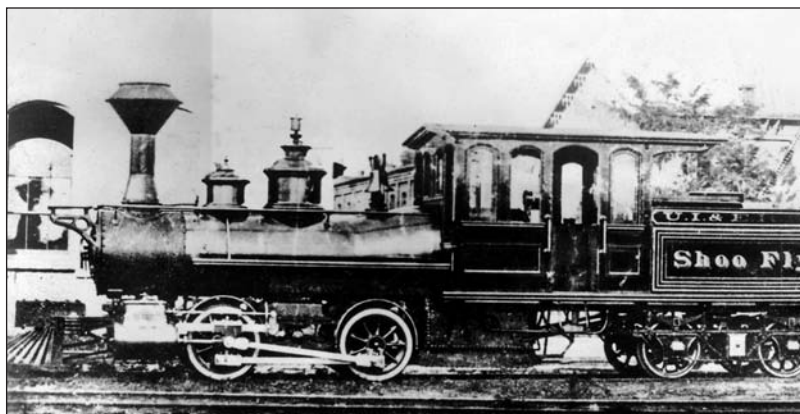
Southward.

Northward.

	81	82
	P M	A M
Auburn	4 00	10 00
Half Acre	4 11	9 48
Douglas	4 20	9 40
Mapleton	4 33	9 30
Kinsler	4 45	9 22
Merrifield	5 00	9 15
Woods	5 08	9 05
Venice Centre	5 22	8 50
Jacksons	5 27	8 35
Myers	5 35	8 20
Genoa	5 50	8 15
Sills	5 58	7 50
North Lansing	6 08	7 45
Ozmuns	6 23	7 22
Asbury	6 35	7 11
West Dryden	6 52	7 00
Seagers	*7 01	6 55
Freeville	7 15	6 45
* Stop only on signal.		



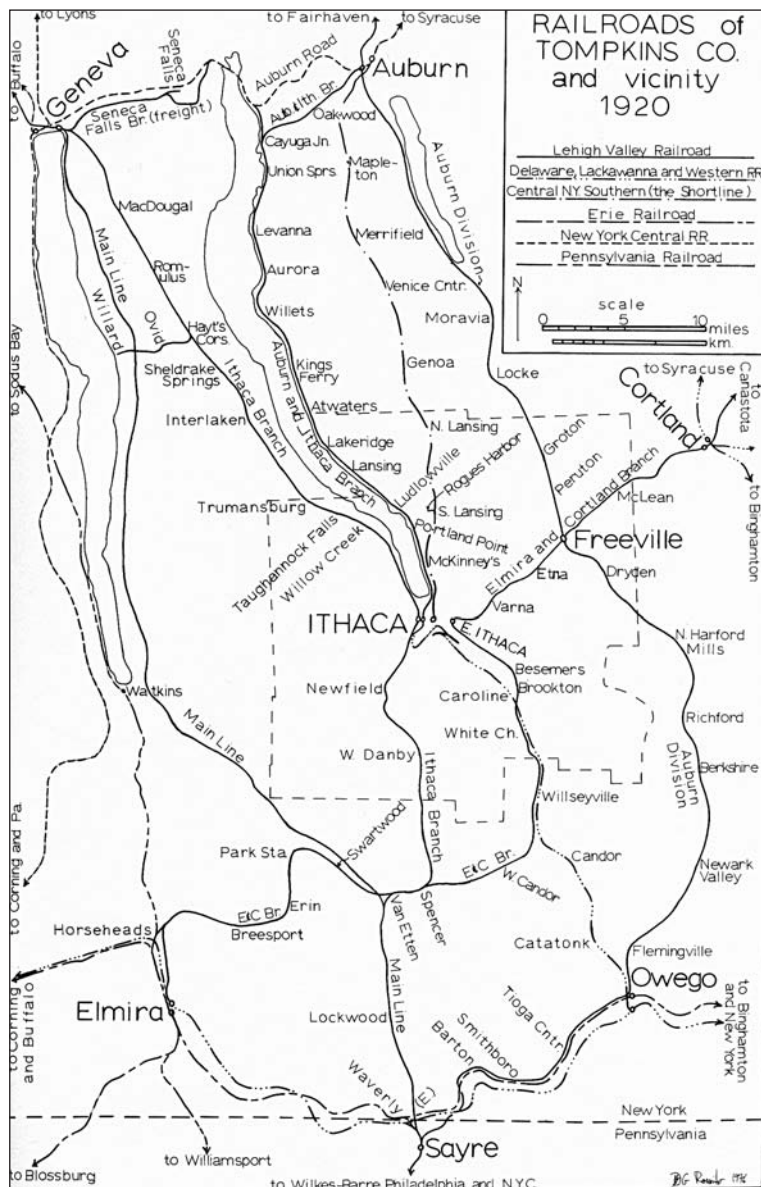
UI&E's "Leviathan," built with a cog wheel on the front axle to negotiate Ithaca's East Hill, part of a dream of its founder to run a line from the railroad's Cornell University campus down East Hill to link with the Ithaca & Athens route to the southwest. After the death of Ezra Cornell, the plan was abandoned and the locomotive returned to its builder.



Another part of Ezra Cornell's planned crosstown link, the UI&E's "Shoo Fly" went to the Geneva & Ithaca RR, which he supported financially and on whose board he served.

again and Packer obtained the Geneva & Ithaca line with a bid of \$50,000.

A month later Packer transferred the titles to his new company, the Geneva, Ithaca & Sayre. Sayre, named after the superintendent of the Lehigh Valley, had in fact been the southern terminus of the Ithaca & Athens since June 1873.



From its formation, the Geneva, Ithaca & Sayre was a Lehigh subsidiary, and this status was confirmed by subsequent reorganizations.

In 1889, after a foreclosure sale, it became the Geneva & Sayre Railroad. Through manipulation of stock, it was transferred in 1890 to the Geneva & VanEttenville Railway (which ran up the east shore of Seneca Lake), then almost at once it went to the Lehigh Valley Rail Way Company, which was leased the following year to the Lehigh Valley Railroad. The last named was the direct descendant of the original Delaware, Lehigh, Schuylkill & Susquehanna Railroad Company, incorporated in 1846. A lease of the Lehigh Valley System to the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad in 1891 was terminated within two years.

The former Geneva & Ithaca and Ithaca & Athens railroads were now referred to simply as the Lehigh Valley Ithaca Branch [3], extending from VanEttenville to Geneva. The Lehigh's mainline between these two points—the former Geneva & VanEttenville—by-passed Tompkins County altogether because the grade running north out of Ithaca was too severe at 1.7% to permit long freights. The grade to the south was also somewhat discouraging, often requiring helper locomotives. Ithaca's hilly terrain had earlier excluded the city from consideration for the D. L. & W. mainline. Had the geography allowed, Ithaca would have had at least one mainline, and so would have grown larger—comparable, perhaps, to Binghamton.

Since the old Cayuga Lake line was part of the Geneva, Ithaca & Sayre, it too was incorporated into the Lehigh System as the Auburn & Ithaca Branch [5]. In 1895, the Southern Central passed to the Lehigh and became the Auburn Division [2]. Finally, the E. C. & N. was acquired by the Lehigh in 1896; the old Shoo Fly Road officially became the Elmira & Cortland Branch [4] in 1905, yet another tentacle of the hungry railroad which had drawn every line in Tompkins County, except the D. L. & W. [1], into itself.

As the industrialized world roared into the twentieth century, trains sped efficiently and purposefully from town to town, bearing the supplies necessary for a burgeoning area. The railroad was the lifeblood of many communities. Coal for home heating and industry was brought from the Pennsylvania coal fields. All manner of finished products came in by rail. Milk, lumber, salt, guns, clocks, and chains were shipped out. To chronicle all the freight traffic in the area would be [to] chronicle local industry itself. If it is true today that everything one has is brought by truck, then surely the same was true of the railroad at the turn of the century. It is upon passenger service, however, that the rest of this chapter will focus.

Passengers and the Ithaca Branch

The Lehigh Valley offered an uninterrupted and often elegant ride to New York and so was the preferred railroad. Even though the Lehigh's mainline,



Inaugural run of the Lehigh Valley's flagship "Black Diamond Express," at Easton, Pennsylvania, from which it travelled to Ithaca and westward on May 18, 1896. The Diamond linked New York City and Buffalo via the Ithaca Branch until May 11, 1959, using various steam and diesel locomotives.

carrying long heavy freights, avoided Ithaca altogether, the Ithaca Branch [3] was still the railroad's predominant—and profitable—passenger route; the discouraging grade leading north out of Ithaca could be conquered by passenger trains (as well as short local freights). The considerable passenger revenues generated by Ithaca made the great effort worthwhile. It was this effort, made by the locomotives, that was responsible for the greatest sight in Ithaca railroading. The engineer had only a few hundred feet to gather momentum before he hit the incline, so when the conductor called "Board!" he notched his throttle all the way down. As an old Ithacan said, "The sight and sound were truly spectacular," as the train sped out under a cloud of steam.

The advent of diesel railroading did not change the scene much. Picture yourself on a summer's day in the fifties, waiting for the train to cross the Perry City Road a few miles north of town. First you would hear a distant rumble, then a faint whine; a headlight would come into view far down the hazy track. The rumble slowly became a chant of pistons working furiously inside the big Alco diesels. The chant turned into a pounding, growing louder as the train climbed towards you; black smoke poured out as if the engines were imitating their steam predecessors. You could almost see them sweat. The multi-tone whistles screamed for the crossing and the earth shook as the red Alcos roared by. As the cars passed, you would catch glimpses of the passengers, oblivious to the great show they were a part of. Then the last car went by, the end markers receding into the haze as the train headed for Buffalo.

From Ithaca, Buffalo was about three hours away, New York eight hours. When the Lehigh dieselized in the late forties, service was speeded up slightly. There was direct sleeper service to the Midwest through the Buffalo gateway (via the Grand Trunk), while cars for Philadelphia were switched onto the Reading at Bethlehem. At one time or another, the Chicagoan (westbound), the New Yorker (eastbound), the Star (west-

No. 7 STATIONS	WESTWARD—FIRST CLASS					
	7	15	11	17	127	9
	Daily	Monday Only	Daily Except Monday	Daily	Daily	Daily
	A. M.	A. M.	A. M.	A. M.	P. M.	P. M.
VAN ETEN JCT.....	2.10	5.52	6.48	8.44	2.43	6.07
VAN ETEN.....	2.11	5.53	6.49	8.45	\$ 2.47	6.08
SPENCER.....	2.14	5.56	6.52	8.48	\$ 2.53	6.11
NORTH SPENCER.....	2.19	6.01	6.57	8.53	2.59	6.16
WEST DANBY.....					\$ 3.06	
NEWFIELD.....	2.28	6.10	7.06	9.02	\$ 3.12	6.26
ITHACA.....	\$ 2.35	\$ 6.17	\$ 7.13	9.10	\$ 3.26	\$ 6.34
WILLOW CREEK.....	2.40	6.23	7.17	9.30	\$ 3.26	6.40
TAUGHANNOCK FALLS.....					F 3.38	
TRUMANSBURG.....	2.58	6.41	7.35	9.48	F 3.42	6.58
COVERT.....					S 3.48	
INTERLAKEN.....	3.06	6.49	7.42	10.00	F 3.53	
SHELDRAKE SPRINGS.....					S 3.59	7.06
HAYTS CORNERS.....	3.12	6.58	7.48	10.10	F 4.04	
ROMULUS.....					S 4.10	7.13
MACDOUGALL.....	3.20	7.07	7.56	10.19	S 4.16	
GENEVA JCT.....	3.25	7.12	8.01	10.24	4.46	7.22
	A. M.	A. M.	A. M.	A. M.	P. M.	P. M.
Ithaca Branch						
No. 7 STATIONS	EASTWARD—FIRST CLASS					
	8	128	10	18	4	
	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	Daily	
	A. M.	A. M.	P. M.	P. M.	P. M.	
GENEVA JCT.....	12.42	9.19	12.15	8.57	10.55	
MACDOUGALL.....	12.49	S 9.33	12.22	9.04	11.02	
ROMULUS.....		S 9.40				
HAYTS CORNERS.....	12.58	S 9.48	12.31	9.14	11.12	
SHELDRAKE SPRINGS.....		F 9.53				
INTERLAKEN.....	1.05	\$ 10.00	12.38	9.21	11.19	
COVERT.....		P 10.29				
TRUMANSBURG.....	1.11	S 10.36	12.44	9.27	11.25	
TAUGHANNOCK FALLS.....		F 10.40				
WILLOW CREEK.....		F 10.44				
ITHACA.....	\$ 1.23	S 10.50	\$ 12.56	\$ 9.38	\$ 11.37	
NEWFIELD.....	1.28	S 11.02	1.02	9.56	11.51	
WEST DANBY.....	1.36	S 11.07	1.10	10.04	11.59	
NORTH SPENCER.....		F 11.17				
SPENCER.....	1.49	S 11.28	1.23	10.17	12.13	
VAN ETEN.....	1.54	S 11.42	1.28	10.22	12.18	
VAN ETEN JCT.....	1.57	S 11.48	1.31	10.25	12.21	
	1.59	11.51	1.33	10.27	12.23	
	A. M.	A. M.	P. M.	P. M.	A. M.	

A March 5, 1944 Lehigh employee timetable shows passenger service near the height of service to Ithaca on the Ithaca Branch.

bound), the Major (eastbound) and the Black Diamond (each way) rolled on the Ithaca branch, as well as a few unnamed expresses.

It was the last named that brought glory to the Lehigh Valley and honor to the towns this famous train served. Every respectable railroad sported a crack piece of “varnish,” and, with the “Black Diamond Express,” the Lehigh was not to be found wanting. From its inception in 1896, this elegant train—respectfully named for the road’s principal revenue source of anthracite—was the pride of the company. (Indeed, the railroad called itself the “Route of the Black Diamond,” and in 1976 still displayed a black diamond on its herald.) The Lehigh ensured that it was “The Handsomest Train in the World” by purchasing successive generations of equipment from the Pullman Palace Car Company, the last word in coachbuilding. The first consist was perhaps the most ornate; from an advertisement of the period we find that “each car on the train is finished in polished Mexican mahogany, with figured mahogany panels and inlaid beveled French plate mirrors. The ceilings are of the new style Empire dome pattern, finished in white and gold.”

And it was made known that “the kitchen is presided over by a corps of competent chefs, skilled in the culinary art...” One could savor competency in the form of little neck clams, broiled bluefish, Welsh rarebit, or one’s choice of tenderloin, sirloin, or porterhouse steak, all offered in an early menu. These were deemed “necessities.” The luxuries included cigars of a special “Black Diamond” brand and a broad selection of local beers brewed in the cities along the railroad. (Genesee was one.)

The train became a favorite with newlyweds on pilgrimages to Niagara Falls, and so earned the sobriquet of “The Honeymoon Express.” (Less glorious was the epithet “The Black Cinder.”) Both the eastbound and the westbound “Diamond” travelled mostly in daylight, so that passengers could enjoy the scenery of what the railroad unblushingly called the “Switzerland of America.” What the night trains—No. 4 eastbound and the Star westbound—lacked in scenic delights, they made up for by offering a most hospitable convenience. Rather than make passengers wait up for No. 4’s arrival in Ithaca at 11:00 p.m., the Lehigh placed a sleeper on a siding earlier in the evening so that patrons could retire at a reasonable hour. The car was cooled or heated as the season required to ensure a sound sleep. If not disturbed when the sleeper was gently attached to No. 4 upon its arrival, the passengers would next awaken in time to disembark at the Pennsylvania Station in New York. The same arrangement could be found on the Star: the sleepers were opened before departure time and at Ithaca were set onto a siding.

On the morning of April 17, 1929, however, the slumbering passengers on the Star were rudely awakened near the Newfield station. Shortly before 7:30 the nine-car express ran into a landslide of mud and clay which blocked the track. The engineer, John Riley, had seen the slide and had thrown on his emergency brakes, but although the train had been slowing for the Newfield depot to pick up mail, there was not enough space to stop. The locomotive left the rails, tore up 200 yards of road bed, plowed through a switch, and went over an embankment into a swamp adjacent to West Danby Creek. The heavy engine sunk to the tops of its driving wheels. It pulled the tender, express car, and a combination mail and baggage car over the embankment with it; the smoking car and two day coaches derailed but stayed on the roadbed; the remaining three sleepers and diner stayed on the rails. The 200 passengers were given a good shaking up, but there were no serious injuries. Since most of the train was intact, it was hauled back to VanEtten, then up the mainline to Buffalo. The Ithaca Branch was closed for a day while three hundred workers repaired the line.

A near disaster was avoided on the night of July 7, 1935, the first day of an epic storm which crippled the Northeast with floods. The *Ithaca Journal* of July 9 tells the story:

“The night train eastward bound with 82 passengers was wheeling down the grade towards Ithaca through a heavy downpour. The engineer sensed something in the vicinity of Willow Creek, and asked the fireman to keep a lookout from the front of the locomotive.



Wrecker goes to work clearing tracks near Newfield on the Ithaca Branch in April 1929 after a landslide derailed the “Star.”

“Suddenly the fireman called back, “For God’s sake, stop.” The train ground to a standstill before a yawning chasm, which by morning was 25 feet deep and 50 feet across.

“The passengers spent the night in the train, while the track beneath was being dangerously undermined. The Pullman coaches were in greatest danger, and the sleeping passengers were awakened and crowded into the forward cars for safety.

“When morning dawned, passengers looking out the west windows were confronted by a 50-foot sheer drop from the rails. Hundreds of tons of rock and debris were lodged underneath the cars.

“The passengers were brought into Ithaca by bus. The train was left stranded, prevented by washouts from moving either forward or backward.”

Besides knocking out the Ithaca Branch, flooding washed out the D. L. & W. tracks completely near Buttermilk Falls, and a rockslide on South Hill buried them under tons of debris. Service was restored on both lines within a week. The Lehigh’s Auburn & Ithaca Branch, hard hit by Cayuga Lake’s record water level, was out of commission for a few weeks.

Since the three or so express trains stopped only at Ithaca between Geneva and Sayre, residents of Willow Creek, “Taughannock Falls,” Trumansburg, Interlaken, Sheldrake, Hayt’s Corners, Romulus, and MacDougall to the north of Ithaca, and Newfield, West Danby, Spencer, and VanEtten to the south, had to wait for one of the three locals. The running time of the local from Ithaca to Geneva (37 miles) was 1:30; Ithaca to Sayre (36 miles) took 1:15.

Cornell University relied on the Lehigh Valley for a variety of services. Besides providing scheduled transportation for travelling professors and administrators, visiting lecturers and performers, the railroad ran student specials—in later years called “Big Red Specials”—to and from New York.



The eastbound Black Diamond stops in Ithaca on a cold day in the 1940s behind a streamlined steam locomotive. Mail and passengers will leave and enter the train during its brief stay.

To keep the throngs of students off the regular expresses, the specials pulled out before the scheduled trains left. Parents coming for commencement would ride a special. Cornell's large and socially active fraternity system profited: house dates would be more inclined to make the trip for Junior Weekend, since they had their own train. A little ritual took place at the station when the girls left. The students would get carried away with their good-byes, which often were said on the train, and when it began to pull out for New York, the gentlemen had to tear themselves away from their dates and jump from the vestibules. The division passenger agent, who had once been young, anticipated this sort of behavior and gave the engineer orders to run slow for a mile or so to avoid broken legs and lawsuits.

Football specials carrying spectators and the Cornell band were run to some of the big away games. There was a direct special to Philadelphia for the Penn game, but parties had to change to regular trains in New York for the Princeton and Yale games. If the Big Red won, the heroes would be welcomed at the station by a jubilant mob and a brass band. In 1939, after Cornell scored a great upset over Ohio State, 5,000 people jammed the station. When the return game was played next year in Ithaca, it seemed as if all Ohio had come to ensure an almost certain revenge: the yards were jammed with over a hundred cars from other railroads, mostly sleepers. (Cornell won anyway.)

When the Lehigh introduced a new carmine paint scheme in 1939, it was evident that the company was as grateful to Cornell as the university was to the railroad: the coaches were attired in "Cornell Red" livery. (This was also appropriate because of Ezra Cornell's involvement with local lines which had since passed to the Lehigh.)

Lying as it did between New York and Buffalo, the Ithaca Branch was

certainly the most vital passenger route into the area. Although the other Lehigh branches did not see as many trains or any varnish, they performed their functions dutifully, and for the most part efficiently.

The Elmira & Cortland Branch

By 1930, the scheduled operations on the various Ithaca lines were declining. The Elmira & Cortland Branch [4] ran only two trains each way over the entire 118 miles between Elmira and Canastota, one train between East Ithaca and Cortland, and another between Cortland and Canastota. From Canastota, passengers could continue on another Lehigh branch to Camden, 20 miles northeast; passengers headed east for Albany and New England could change to the New York Central. Connections with the D. L. & W. for Syracuse could be made at Cortland. Stops in the area were at



Table 19

Auburn Division—Elmira and Cortland Branch

[illegible]

Above, crossing point of the Auburn and the Elmira and Cortland branches of the Lehigh Valley at Freeville, where trains from four directions meet twice a day and exchange passengers. Left, a September 1924 public timetable of the Elmira and Cortland Branch.

VanEtten, Spencer, West Candor, Snyder, Willseyville, White Church, Brookton, Besemer's, East Ithaca, Varna, Etna, Freeville, McLean, and Cortland. Running time from Elmira to East Ithaca (50 miles) was a little under two hours; the 68 miles from East Ithaca to Canastota took about 2:45; Freeville to East Ithaca (9 miles) took twenty minutes.

The year 1930 was also the last for trolley service, begun in 1893, between East Ithaca station on the hill and the Ithaca station downtown. Coming from downtown, the trolleys turned up Oak Avenue (in Collegetown) on a spur from the street railway's main line and continued up Maple Avenue to the East Ithaca depot. The trolleys between the stations were replaced by scheduled taxis, operated under the auspices of the Lehigh Valley.

As with the Ithaca Branch, the Cornell teams travelled over the line on their way to do battle with their foes, in this case Dartmouth and Harvard. And the usual celebration would occur upon the arrival of the victorious heroes. An alumnus, Romeyn Berry, remembers this one in the thirties: "There was a turnout on Sunday morning to meet the team when it rolled in to East Ithaca at 7:45 on its return from Hanover. Some twenty-five members of the band braved the rigors of a zero morning to play the battered fighters back to quarters. Pajamas peeked out between the tops of galoshes and the bottoms of fur coats, steam rose from every running nose, the sliphorn was frozen up and out of commission, but there was never played sweeter or more heartwarming music than that emitted by these gallant troubadours at the old E. C. & N. station on Sunday morning."

In the thirties (if not earlier), the East Ithaca-Horseheads portion of the

Cortland Branch						
WESTWARD			No. 7 STATIONS	EASTWARD		
Second Class	First Class			First Class	Second Class	
325	323	327		322	324	
Daily Except Sunday & Holidays	Daily	Daily		Daily	Daily Except Sunday & Holidays	
A.M.	P.M.	A.M.		P.M.	P.M.	
.....	2.30	.....	EAST ITHACA	\$12.30	.....
.....	F 2.42	.....	ETNA	F12.15	.....
.....	F 3.05	.....	FREEVILLE	12.05	.....
.....	F 3.13	.....	McLEAN	\$11.53	.....
10.00	S 3.30	9.00	CORTLAND	F11.45	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	11.30	.....
.....	.....	.....	.....	\$11.15	\$ 5.25
10.10	.....	9.02	CORTLAND JCT.	11.12	.....
F10.25	.....	F 9.18	EAST HOMER	F11.00	F 5.08
F10.35	.....	F 9.30	TRUXTON	\$10.45	F 4.59
F10.42	.....	F 9.42	CUYLER	F10.28	F 4.50
F10.50	.....	S 9.50	DeRUYTER	10.20	F 4.40
.....	
F11.01	.....	.....	SHEDS CORNERS	.....	F 4.30
F11.12	.....	.....	NEW WOODSTOCK	.....	F 4.20
F11.15	.....	.....	DELPHI FALLS	.....	F 3.59
F11.55	.....	.....	CAZENOVIA	.....	F 3.55
12.05	.....	.....	MATS SIDING	.....	3.20
.....	
F12.20	.....	.....	BLAKESLEE	.....	F 3.15
\$12.50	.....	.....	CANASTOTA	.....	2.50
.....	
P.M.	P.M.	A.M.	.....	A.M.	P.M.

Nos. 322, 323, 324, 325, and 327 available for passengers.

Nos. 322, 323, 324, 325, and 327 available for passengers.

A March 1944 employee timetable of the remains of the Elmira and Cortland Branch shows how service has shrunk since 1924.

line was proving to be a liability for the Lehigh. Ezra Cornell's dream of the line's becoming a through route for coal had remained a dream. Service between VanEtten and Spencer was discontinued in 1933, that between East Ithaca and Spencer in 1935, and from Horseheads to VanEtten in 1938, leaving in operation only the section from East Ithaca to Canastota, and the five miles from Elmira to Horseheads (freight only).

The Auburn Division

In 1930, the Lehigh's Auburn Division had two trains in each direction between Auburn and Sayre [2] (the 83 miles took about three hours) and one train north from Freeville through Auburn to North Fairhaven, the northern terminus on Lake Ontario. Stops in the area were at Owego, Flemingville, Newark Valley, Berkshire, Richford, Harford Mills, North Harford, Dryden, Freeville, Peruton, Groton, Locke, and Moravia. Passengers could change to the New York Central at Auburn or to the Elmira & Cortland Branch at the Union Station in Freeville.

An Auburn & Ithaca Branch

The Lehigh used the Auburn & Ithaca Branch [5] in conjunction with the Ithaca Branch and its mainline. Thus, in 1930, in addition to the one train between only Auburn and Ithaca, there were two trains from Sayre through Ithaca to Auburn, and a southbound from Auburn through Ithaca to Sayre. One wandering southbound travelled from North Fairhaven to Auburn on the Auburn Division, to Ithaca on the Auburn & Ithaca Branch, and to its terminus in Sayre on the Ithaca Branch and main line! The train from Ithaca to Auburn (43 miles), barring rockslides and floodwaters, took 1:45. Local stops were at McKinney's, Portland Point, "Ludlowville" (Myers), Lansing, Lake Ridge, Atwaters, King Ferry, Willets, and Aurora. There was a connection with the New York Central at Auburn.

The fact that the line ran right along Cayuga Lake's shoreline made it ideal for watching the Cornell crew races in spring. Spectators replete with pennants, bonnets, and binoculars paid \$5 and boarded special gondolas, each with four rows of tiered benches, at the Fulton Street yard. (This was the D. L. & W.'s main yard and the Lehigh's auxiliary yard, its main yard being located to the north of the Ithaca station.) These observation trains consisted of from eight to fifteen cars, depending on the popularity of the race. A locomotive was on each end, a push-pull affair which made the back-and-forth operation easier. To avoid showering the spectators with cinders, the railroad made a point of burning only hard coal in the locomotives.

The mobile grandstand was clearly the best method of watching a race: as the crews blasted off the starting line just south of Portland Point, the train began to move at a speed approximating that of the shells and stayed with them to the finish at McKinney's, three miles to the south. Thus, one saw everything from start to finish, and there was almost always cause for



Lehigh Valley employees marshal crew race fans onto flatcars equipped with bleachers on Fulton St., near the Ithaca station in the early 1900s. A train with an engine at either end follows Cornell crew races along the east shore of Cayuga Lake. The raised stand is for judges. In a later year, below, bleachers mounted on gondola cars make for safer rides.



celebration, as the Cornell crews were very good. (Perhaps they performed so well because of the trainload of spectators urging them on for the entire race.) The first event of the day was the freshman race, after which the train would go back up to the starting line and repeat the procedure for the junior varsity and varsity races. This arrangement ended in 1936.

For several years just before World War II, a pair of cars from the Big Red Special made journeys to and from Aurora. The story goes that A. N. Williams, president of the Lehigh Valley, had a daughter studying at Wells College. Accordingly, arrangements were made to switch two Wells cars off the Special upon its arrival in Ithaca and send them up the lake. Miss Williams and her classmates were thus saved the annoyance of changing in Ithaca.



A last rowing observation train heads north from Ithaca in 1936. Cars line the highway to Auburn. Rough water cancelled the day's events. The year ended four decades of race-watching by rail along Cayuga Lake.



The DL&W line out of Ithaca heads straight south before it will climb the switch-backs on South Hill on the way to Owego and the railroad's mainline. At right is Auburn Junction on the Lehigh Valley, where the Auburn and Ithaca Branch, bottom left, having crossed the Lackawanna, joins the Ithaca Branch. Trains from Auburn go onto the tracks at right, then back to the Ithaca station.

The D. L. & W. Cayuga Division

At the opening of the twentieth century, Tompkins County had an essential and thorough passenger service. The travelling Ithacan had a choice of three trains to Owego on the D. L. & W.'s Cayuga Division [1] with connections there for New York over the mainline. The thirty-five-mile trip took 1:20, with stops at Caroline, Wilseyville, Candor, and Catatonk.

Since a great number of Cornell students came from the New York area, the railroad ran student specials at the beginning and end of each semester and for holidays. These specials made only service stops, and it was not necessary to change trains at Owego. But the resident Ithacan had to suffer this inconvenience, as well as the tiresome process of leaving the valley by the reverse switch on South Hill. (The switching process had at least one advantage; fraternity men would meet their dates at the top of the incline and pitch woo as the lingering descent was made to the station.)

And the Short Line to Auburn

The only interurban line actually built was the New York, Auburn & Lansing Railroad, commonly known as the Ithaca-Auburn Short Line [7], promoted by Albert H. Flint. Flint proposed to lay his rails over the old Murdock Line once again, while the rival Auburn & Ithaca Electric Railway of Sherman Collins would have run near the old Ridge Road (now Route 34B), about three miles further west, serving King Ferry, Poplar Ridge, and Scipioville. That both lines should be built was out of the question; the sparse on-line population and the skimpy through-traffic could not possibly support them, especially with the two Lehigh Valley lines from Auburn paralleling them on either side. Collins's bid for the route failed in the end, probably because any electric interurban would find it necessary to enter Ithaca on a trolley line, and E. G. Wyckoff, president of the Ithaca Street Railway, sided with the Flint line. Furthermore, Flint bought a controlling interest in the Ithaca Street Railway in 1907.

As first conceived, the entire Short Line was to be powered by electricity, but this plan was never realized because of its great expense. Steam therefore became the motive power for most of the line even though the entire 36 miles from Ithaca to Auburn had been laid with extra-length ties in anticipation of an electrified third rail. Thus the whole point of an interurban—that of fast and frequent service through a well-populated area and with low operating costs (using electric railcars)—was missed altogether, and this was perhaps what doomed the railroad from its inception.

The completed line did have an electrified portion, using trolley wires, from the terminus near State Street in Ithaca (the waiting room was on the...site of the [former] First National Bank), north along Tioga Street,



A DL&W freight train makes its way through Ithaca in the 1940s.

TO AND FROM ITHACA VIA OWEGO									
Read Down					Read Up				
	3 Daily	15 Daily	Miles	TABLE 13		92 Daily	6 Daily		
	AM	AM		New York		AM	PM		
				Hudson Tunnels—					
.....	9 54	+	.....	Lv. 33rd St. & 6th Ave. . .	Ar		7 24	.....
				(Fare 10c)					
.....	10 02	+	.....	Hudson Terminal Bldg.—			7 22	.....
				Cortlandt St. (Fare 8c)					
				D. L. & W. Ferries—					
				West 23d Street . . .					
.....	10 00	1c00	.....	Barclay Street . . .			7 25	.....
				Christopher Street . .					
.....	10 20	1 25	1.0	Hoboken.			7 05	.....
.....	10 35		8.8	Newark		d6	46	.....
.....	10 40		11.6	Brick Church		d6	41	.....
.....	10 52		21.1	Summit		e6	27	.....
.....	11 07		30.8	Morristown		e6	15	.....
.....	11 24		39.1	Dover		d6	01	.....
.....				Lv. Philadelphia P. R. R. .		Ar	8 17	.....
.....				Lv. Philadelphia P.&R.Ry. .		Ar			
.....	1 55	5 05	134.1	Lv. Scranton		Ar	3 30	.....
.....	3 20	7 00	192.7	Binghamton		Ar	2 10	.....
.....	3 48	7 42	213.4	Ar. Owego		Lv	10 05	1 43	.....
	953	971				952	956		
	PM	AM				AM	PM		
.....	3 50	10 10	213.4	Lv. Owego		Ar	9 35	1 37	.....
.....	14 00	10 22	218.8	Catatunk		Ar	9 13	1 22	.....
.....	4 13	10 32	224.1	Candor		Ar	9 00	1 12	.....
.....	14 22	10 42	229.4	Willseyville		Ar	8 41	1 02	.....
.....	4 34	10 53	235.3	Caroline		Ar	8 31	12 52	.....
.....	5 10	11 20	247.4	Ar. Ithaca		Lv	8 05	12 30	.....
	PM	AM				AM	PM		

A December 20, 1939 Lackawanna RR public timetable shows the four trains a day between Ithaca and Owego, connecting to the DL&W's mainline.



An Ithaca-Auburn Short Line excursion train, consisting of Engine 1 and a former New Jersey Central coach, stops at Genoa in Cayuga County in August 1909. The line ran as the New York, Auburn & Lansing RR from 1908 until 1914 when a successor line took over.

past Percy Field (where the Ithaca High School is today) and Renwick Park (Stewart Park), up the hill, parallel to and just below today's Route 13, and as far as its junction with the Murdock Line at South Lansing—about seven miles north of Ithaca, and just south of the junction of the Midland grade at Ozmun's. This use of electric power did not represent so much the progressive spirit of the company as the inability of the steam locomotives to climb the steep grade out of Ithaca. Once at South Lansing, passengers changed to a steam train to take them on to Auburn.

During construction, which began in 1906, builders launched a fresh assault on the Gulf Stream gorge near North Lansing. The two previous railroads to use the Murdock Grade had traversed the gorge by means of a wooden trestle. Evidently Short Line engineers looked warily upon such a structure, for almost a year was spent filling the considerable void with quantities of earth and cinders.

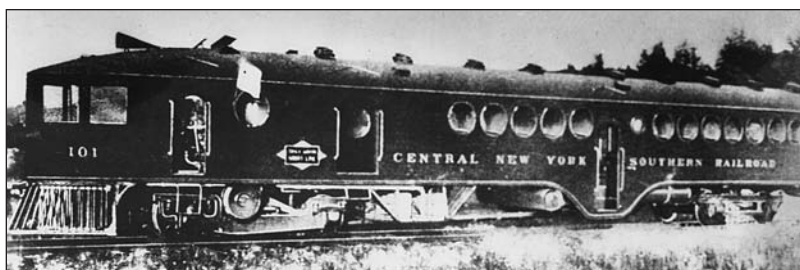
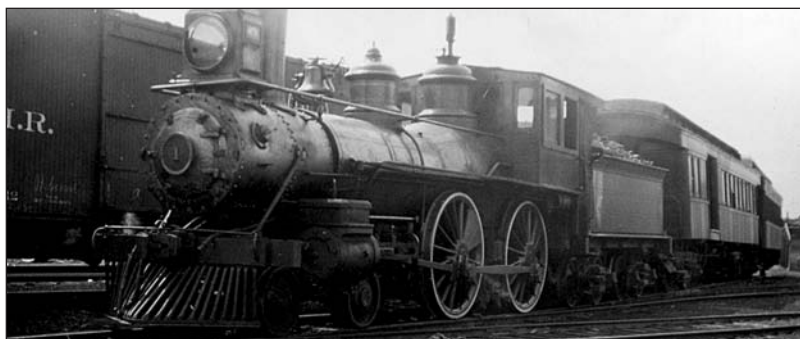
The Auburn-South Lansing portion was completed first, and freight operations between these two points began March 1, 1908, passenger service starting in June. On December 12, 1908, the entire line was officially opened with a silver spike ceremony at Esty Glen; passenger service between Ithaca and Auburn commenced January 1, 1909. Freight came on and off line at Remington, near Renwick Park, where there was an interchange track with the Lehigh Valley's Auburn & Ithaca Branch.

The Short Line owned five steam locomotives. For the electrified por-

tion of the line, streetcars were leased from the Ithaca Street Railway. While this application of electric power to the steep part of the Short Line solved an operating problem for the company, it caused frequent inconvenience to Ithacans. Since the power plant for the Ithaca Street Railway also served the city, power there would diminish and lights dim (as some Ithacans recall) when a heavy load of freight was hauled. Heavy freight was anything that exceeded one boxcar. In effect, that meant two cars, for three loaded cars were too much for the streetcars' tractive effort on the grade.

Soon after the company began operations, an excellent illustration was given of the railroad's importance before the era of the automobile. Colonel J. V. McIntyre, proprietor of the Rogues Harbor Hotel in South Lansing, could see trains from the east windows of his establishment, running a half mile away. Not a little distressed that the passengers on these trains had no means of reaching his hotel, he put his resourceful mind (and equally sound financial resources) to work and by the summer of 1909 was the sole owner of a 0.49 mile railroad between his business and the South Lansing depot. Actually, one could ride straight from the hotel to Ithaca on the trolley without having to change at the depot, for there were four to six such round-trips per day. Thus a journey to the hotel for a night of drinking, dancing, and merrymaking became a somewhat popular pastime among Ithacans. Travellers from Auburn could find refreshment by changing at the South Lansing station to the waiting trolley and could even enjoy the convenience of spending the night at the hotel and making the half-hour trip into Ithaca the next morning.

The Short Line itself was, of course, in direct competition with the Lehigh Valley's Auburn & Ithaca Branch. The through freight business rested squarely in the Lehigh's domain: most cars coming through Ithaca rolled on Lehigh rails and accordingly stayed on them to Auburn; furthermore, the Short Line's meagre two-car limit up the grade to South Lansing prohibited all but local shipments. But competition for passengers was much keener. Although the Short Line boasted the shortest distance between Ithaca and Auburn (this was how the road acquired its nickname), running time on both lines was about 1:45. Still, the Short Line apparently held an advantage because it offered four trains a day to the Lehigh's two. The Lehigh branch, however, outlived its competitor by a good many years, for it had a healthy freight operation as well as the support of a strong railroad company to help it weather the large problem endemic to both lines at the time: each other. The Short Line, with the additional problem of frequent operating difficulties (especially in winter, when snow would freeze movements for days), had nothing to hold it up, and it soon collapsed. The line went into receivership in 1912 and in 1914 was reorganized as the Central New York Southern Railroad Company, owned by bondholders. Despite all this, it was still the same Short Line, in substance as well as informal name: the personnel from the previous company was retained, along with all the problems involved in the first collapse.



Above, Short Line #1 switches cars in Auburn. Steam powers the northern end of the line; electricity from South Lansing to Ithaca. Below, one of two 70-foot gasoline-powered railcars of successor to the Short Line, the Central NY Southern RR, which closed operation in 1923.

In an attempt to speed up service and thereby improve its competitive standing, the line purchased two McKeen gasoline rail-cars, forerunners of today's diesel engines. Each car could hold eighty-three passengers, but fortunately this number never boarded, for a fully-loaded car might not have made it out of Ithaca. Even as it was, railcars required a running start from their terminus at Percy Field; all trolley cars had to clear the track at Renwick Park and everyone held his breath as the McKeens shot past in true Ithaca railroading fashion.

But, ironically, as long as the cars could make it up the grade, the Short Line was not carrying enough passengers to remain solvent. The company filed for abandonment in 1923. The Rogues Harbor spur saw its last trolley on October 19, 1920. The mainline closed down operations on October 31, 1923; formal abandonment came in May 1924 and all trackage was torn up in 1925, except for a segment from Ithaca to the powerhouse at Remington, which was operated by the trolley company until 1931.



A funeral demolition train backs south across the Brooktondale trestle about 1936, an early part of the gradual abandonment of the Elmira and Cortland Branch of the Lehigh Valley RR.

The U. I. & E. Completed

The failure of the Short Line and the later abandonment of the Lehigh's East Ithaca-Horseheads line [4] is testimony that railroad density in the area had reached its saturation point. In the 1930s, even non-redundant trackage, here and across the nation, was not as necessary as it had once been. There were now established alternatives: people could travel more privately in their automobiles, faster in airplanes, and more cheaply in motorbuses; freight traffic was liberated by trucks from the constraints of steel rails. By the fifties, this formidable competition, along with the problems of poor management, a labor vise, and myopic governmental regulation, had brought the iron horse to his knees.

In Tompkins County, this decline was confirmed in 1942 when the D. L. & W. [1] discontinued passenger service between Ithaca and Owego, although freight lasted until 1956. In 1976 all that remains of the 124-year-old line is a short spur up South Hill to the Morse Chain factory, which was transferred to the Lehigh.

A glance at a 1944 Lehigh Valley passenger schedule indicates service was also deteriorating on the other local lines. The Ithaca Branch [3] had just one local a day, stopping only at Interlaken and Hayt's Corners. There was but one train on the Auburn & Ithaca Branch [5], and it didn't run on Sundays. (These trains consisted of a gas-electric rail-coach and trailer.) The Cortland Branch [4] offered an eastbound from East Ithaca to Cortland, and a westbound from De Ruyter to East Ithaca in the form of a mixed train, a combination of freight and passenger cars. This ran "subject to delay," as did the daily mixed train from Auburn to Sayre on the Auburn Branch [2]. Passengers were few on all these trains.

The last passenger cars rolled over the Cortland and Auburn Branches [5 & 2] about 1949. The lines themselves remained in their entirety until 1967, when the tracks between Canastota and Cortland and between Moravia and Fleming (near Auburn) were taken up.

Passenger service on the Auburn & Ithaca Branch ended in 1948. The Aurora-Ludlowville segment was abandoned in 1950, but six miles of track were soon relaid north from Ludlowville to Lake Ridge to transport coal to the New York State Electric and Gas Corporation's new Milliken power station there. In 1971 the northern portion of the old Auburn & Ithaca Branch from Cayuga Junction to Aurora was abandoned.

Local service on the Ithaca Branch ended in 1949, leaving only two express trains in each direction to fulfill Ithaca's passenger needs. And these "needs" continued to dwindle through the fifties, until 1959, when the Lehigh Valley, claiming an annual loss of \$5 million from its passenger operations, sought permission from the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) to discontinue all passenger trains. Various local agencies expressed



Motor 16 delivers passengers, mail, baggage, and express at Ithaca, the eastern end of its Ithaca Branch run to and from Interlaken in the 1940s. Engineer Henry Sims stands by the heavy duty 600 HP gas-electric, one of four used by the Lehigh to handle heavier passenger jobs, particularly those moving milk and less-than-carload cars on steep grades. See the locomotive notes on page 78 for more details.

dismay at this proposal; the Ithaca Chamber of Commerce, for instance, claimed it “would be a serious detriment to the future growth of our community, county and the entire Finger Lakes area of New York State.” But the fact of the matter was that only a small number of passengers got on or off any train in Ithaca (except student specials). The only valid argument for continuing the trains was that Ithaca weather often adversely affected air and bus service, particularly in the winter; when these services were cancelled, travellers flocked to the Ithaca station, for the trains always ran, even if a little late. But this did not satisfy the ICC.

A decision was handed down on May 6, 1959, allowing the railroad to discontinue its remaining trains through Ithaca, although it had to retain the Maple Leaf express, which ran over the main line around Ithaca. On May 11, the venerable Black Diamond made its final trip. Its passing did not go un-lamented. Cedric A. Major, president of the Lehigh, said: “I rode the Black Diamond when I went to Cornell. It hurts me to have to cut it off.” Passenger service returned to Ithaca two weeks later, when the Maple Leaf was rerouted over the Ithaca Branch. After noting that the eastbound’s arrival was scheduled at 1:49 a.m. and the westbound at 3:17 a.m., the *Ithaca Journal* concluded that “the Lehigh’s schedule seems to indicate an attempt at discouraging ridership.” The railroad had decided that if no one rode its trains, the ICC would have to let them be cut. Finally, in January of

1961, the ICC sanctioned the discontinuance of all Lehigh Valley passenger service, and on February 3 Ithaca saw its last train, this time truly forever.

In August, the last freight train ran between Ithaca and Trumansburg; official abandonment came a year later, leaving Tompkins County with its present figure of about sixty-four miles of track. The remaining trackage to Geneva stayed in operation until 1967, when the ICC reluctantly allowed its abandonment. Traffic was sufficient between Van Etten and Ithaca to retain that part of the Ithaca Branch.

Views of the Present and Future in 1977

In the seventies, rail service in Tompkins County—in comparison with past performance—is suffering. But it is surviving. The Lehigh's sixty-eight-mile branch to Moravia from Sayre [2] handle 2,000 freight cars a year, almost half of which are filled with propane gas, which is stored by the Atlantic-Richfield Co. in Harford Mills during the summer and shipped to home heating markets in New York and New England in the winter. Other customers include Baker-Miller Lumber of Groton (which ships in lumber), Honey Butter of Freeville (containers and honey brought in), Dryden Implement (farm machinery), Dryden Agway (bulk feed), and a Dryden egg shipper.

Freight on the nineteen-mile Freeville-Cortland branch [4] had dwindled to about 200 cars a year. On April 1, 1976 service was officially discontinued. By the end of 1976 the bankrupt Lehigh Valley had initiated legal procedures leading to abandonment. The nine-mile branch west from Freeville to East Ithaca which carried 250-300 cars of coal a year to the Cornell heating plant, lost a section of track near Varna in heavy rains in June 1972. After that Cornell's coal had to come by truck. Since 1974 a washout between Etna and Freeville has kept NYSE&G at Etna from receiving its utility poles and pipes by rail. The Lehigh, for lack of money, was unable to repair the track, but state legislation passed in June of 1975 made funds available for that purpose. Cornell is spending \$3 million to upgrade its plant. When this is completed and the track restored, an estimated 450 coal cars a year will come into East Ithaca.

This traffic is meager when compared with that on the twenty-one-mile Van Etten-Ithaca branch, which is operated with the fourteen-mile line to Lake Ridge [3 & 5]. This is the only other line in Tompkins County, and it carries about 17,000 cars a year, more than eight times the number on the Moravia and Cortland branches. Ithaca itself accounts for only about 100 of these, which transport scrap metal from Morse Chain and Wallace Steel, scrap paper from Ithaca Scrap, bulk feed and limestone to Agway, and lumber to Grossman's and Robinson & Carpenter. The Cargill rock salt mines at Myers are responsible for a respectable 3,500 carloads. But even this performance is dwarfed by the 800,000 tons of coal transported in 13,500 cars each year from Pennsylvania to the Milliken station.

The green Cargill hoppers and the long cuts of coal are a familiar sight

to every Ithaca motorist who has waited impatiently as the train creaks slowly through the West End. Pulling their burden are two EMD switchers based in the Ithaca yard, which, in 1966, was moved to just south of West Clinton Street from its previous location north of the station in order to make room for a flood control channel and other developments. A train powered by road-switchers runs from Sayre to Ithaca a few times every week, leaving empty salt hoppers and loaded coal cars and returning with loaded hoppers and empty coal cars.

The shape of the future [in 1977] in local railroading is now evolving out of the decline and death of the Lehigh Valley. For reasons touched on previously, the railroad's profits after World War II began to shrink. Since the Lehigh was built on "black diamonds," the drastic decline in anthracite traffic (due to more attractive energy sources) hastened the process. All this, coupled with the continued operation of the nearly empty passenger trains, was enough in 1956 to put the company in the red.

But it was the Pennsylvania Railroad's ledgers that really turned red, as it had owned about 45% of Lehigh stock since the early thirties. In 1962, when holdings jumped to 90%, the "Leaky Valley" passed to active Pennsylvania control. When the Pennsylvania and the New York Central merged in 1968 to form the Penn Central, 97% of Lehigh stock went with it. In the past, the Pennsy had always helped the Lehigh to cover its operating expenses but the Penn Central had its own troubles, and this aid stopped. In 1970, the Lehigh filed for reorganization under Section 77 of the Federal Bankruptcy Act. The request was granted and the company followed the Penn Central into receivership. This allowed the railroad to let certain debts go unpaid for the time being. Two trustees were appointed by a federal court to oversee operations. By 1973, the bankrupt Lehigh was losing \$900,000 a month, and, as it could not even gross enough money to pay out-of-pocket expenses, it asked permission to close down. To keep the trains running, the government was obliged to grant money to the railroad.

Most of the other companies in the Northeast were in similar straits, including the vital Penn Central. Something had to be done, and the government was looked to for the answer. The Railroad Reorganization Act of 1973 created the United States Railway Administration (USRA), and empowered it to form one large viable freight network from the current mess, to be financed by the government and operated as a quasi-public organization called Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail).

After much study, the final Conrail plan passed Congress in November 1975. When it took effect on April 1, 1976, the Lehigh Valley died, and its body passed to the new Conrail. The USRA had set itself the goal of eliminating redundant track and lines with little traffic. A victim of this policy was that considerable section of the Lehigh main line between VanEtten and Buffalo.

Closer to home, the Moravia and Cortland branches were excluded from Conrail because USRA felt they did not provide vital service or carry enough traffic to justify their continuance. Concerned shippers, county leg-



Weeds in the roadbed foretell the end of service from East Ithaca. What's left of an all-purpose milk and passenger train has no milk cars on June 7, 1942. Tracks south to Elmira were removed in 1936. Engine 1131 prepares to return to Freeville to pick up several cars from the Auburn Branch milk train, then leave them between Freeville and DeRuyter before returning to Cortland.

isolators, and chambers of commerce in Tompkins, Tioga, Cayuga and Cortland counties felt otherwise. Organizing in 1973 into the Four County Committee for the Preservation of Essential Railroads, they believed rail service was vital and that local economies would suffer if business had to rely on trucks for all shipment. Though the committee agreed that the Freeville-Cortland segment should be abandoned because of meager traffic, it was convinced that, with proper management, the Owego-Locke-Moravia line could show a profit. For a while it appeared that the Chessie System—a well-managed and solvent railroad that stayed out of Conrail—might take over and operate the line, but that plan did not materialize. On April 1, 1976, Conrail began operating the line for a two-year period with a federal subsidy. In the meantime, the Four County Committee is working on plans for the line to operate as an independent short line, financed by shippers. Furthermore, the State of New York has shown its concern for these lines and others throughout the state; money has been appropriated for upgrading track, and the state's Department of Transportation is seeking long-term solutions to the branch-line problem.

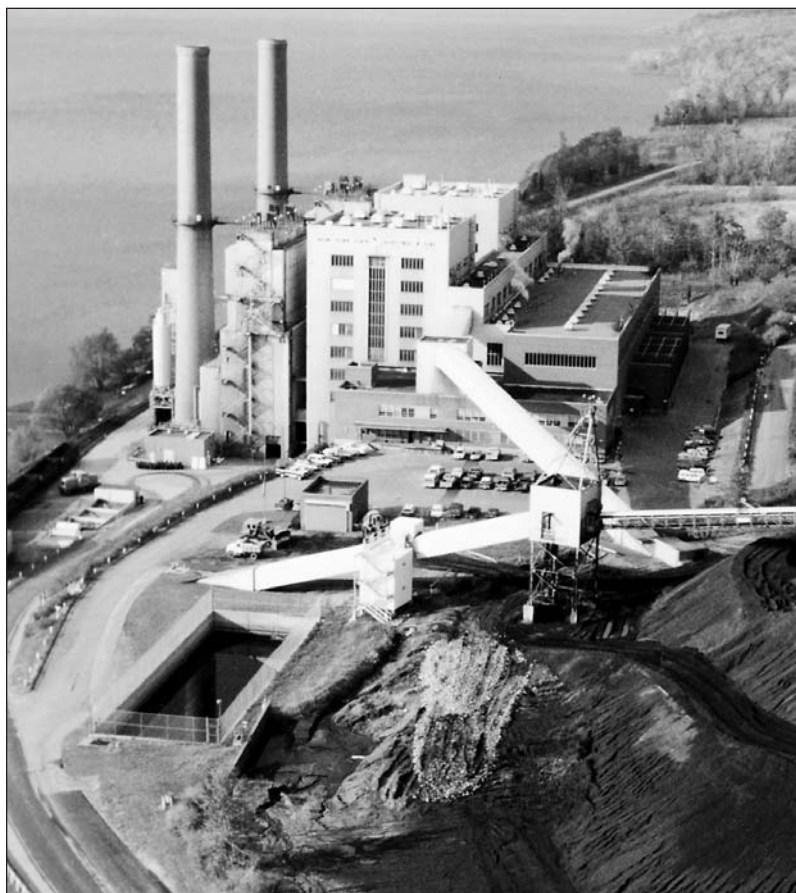
With such interest being taken, the future of railroading in Tompkins County appears secure. Still more heartening is that the Lehigh's Ithaca



Train on the Lehigh's Auburn and Ithaca Branch pulls empty salt hopper cars to the Cargill mine at Portland Point on Oct. 8, 1973. Cayuga Lake is at right and the remains of a Penn-Dixie cement plant are in the distance. The branch also carries loaded coal hopper cars to the Milliken steam generating plant at Lake Ridgely. These practices continue in 2008, on the sole active line in the county.

branch, with its considerable traffic to Lake Ridge, has been included in Conrail. Even though freight figures for the mid-1970s were too low, USRA would probably have kept the line to Lake Ridge, because NYSE&G hopes to have by 1982 a new coal-fired power plant adjacent to its present facility to meet future energy demands. If environmental standards are satisfied, the plant will be built, tripling the fuel demand to 2.8 million tons of coal a year for the two stations! In 1976 James Carrigg, local manager of NYSE&G, speculated that there would be just one all-coal unit train a day to Milliken consisting of over 100 cars. Tracks would have to be upgraded for faster trains, and Ithaca city planners may decide to bridge this considerable obstacle in the West End with a four-lane highway overpass, since a major alteration of the main auto routes in that area is already being considered.

For now, the delayed motorist must continue to suffer the indignity of waiting for a slow freight train to clear his path. But while he waits, let him think back—with affection, but without fulsome nostalgia—to the days



Key industry served by rail in the county in 2008 is the AES Cayuga (former NYSE&G) steam generating plant at Lake Ridge. At left, out of the picture, is a rotary car dump where coal hoppers are unloaded and their contents transferred to the coal pile by the lower inclined conveyor. The two steam units built in the 1950s burn 800,000 tons of bituminous coal a year.

Norfolk Southern Ry. serves the plant on track of the former Lehigh Valley A&I Branch and Conrail.

when the sleek Black Diamond would make him pause as he does now, when hordes of Cornellians piled off their specials or Ithacans piled on for the crew races, when freights would race through to attack the hill; in short, when the railway was really the only way.



Trees and grass begin to take over roadbed of the Lehigh's Auburn Branch north of Freeville after service has dwindled.

Epilogue

The physicist Niels Bohr is reputed to have said, "Prediction is very difficult, especially if it's about the future," and that certainly applies to what was written in 1977 in the second edition of this book.

What actually happened was that Conrail upgraded the Cayuga Lake line to mainline standards in the summer of 1984, allowing unit coal trains to run with road power to Milliken station. In 1999 Conrail was split, with local lines being acquired by powerful Norfolk Southern Railway, which has continued to maintain the line at high standards. Salt from Cargill salt mine is also an important bulk traffic.

None of the other railroads in Tompkins County could be saved, although the Southern Central line from Owego in Tioga County to the propane storage facility at Harford Mills in Cortland County has remained in operation under several operators. For the foreseeable future, fossil wealth (Carboniferous coal coming in and Silurian salt going out) are the lifeblood of railroading in Tompkins County.

David Rossiter, 2008

Notes

Acknowledgements

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Hardy Campbell Lee, 1947

Second edition: In preparing this enlargement of the original text, the author and the editor are indebted to many. Particular thanks are due to David Rossiter for the maps [on pages 22 and 38 in this third edition] and for the [18 1/2 x 24] fold-out map with its descriptive information; to Tompkins County Planning Department for use of the basic county map; to Richard F. Palmer and Herbert Trice for compiling the Locomotive Summary; to Richard Palmer again for reading the manuscript of chapters [6-8]; to two members of the DeWitt Historical Society staff: Annita Andrick for archival assistance and Alice Hemenway for typing the manuscript; and to the New York State Revolution Bicentennial Commission for a grant to help meet publication costs. The author thanks also Art Clark, Barbara Bell and others at the *Ithaca Journal*; Frank Monek of the Lehigh Valley Railroad; James Carrigg of NYSE&G; Bruce LaForse; James Follett; Harris Dates; John E. Perry, Jr.; and Mary Rossiter Buyoucos.

Winton Rossiter, 1977

This **third edition** of *A History of Railroads in Tompkins County* adds to the original and second editions new photos, an index, and a new map of rail routes in the county.

Thanks for the new photos from their excellent collections go to Herbert V. Trice of Auburn, Richard F. Palmer of Syracuse, my brother David Marcham of Quincy, Massachusetts, and The History Center in Tompkins County. Thanks also to Herb Trice for collecting new old photos for his book *Gangly Country Cousin*, the late designer Phil Wilson for the painstaking recovery of details from those photos, and Stefanie Green of Ithaca for this book's new map, design, and production.

Further thanks are in order for Donna Eschenbrenner of The History Center and Dick Palmer for their hard work, research, and corrections, and to local historian Chris Grandy of Syracuse Lithography Company for photo scans from *Cousin*. And we are in debt to Prof. J. Robert Cooke of

the Internet-First University Press at Cornell University for including The History Center in their new publishing program.

The original shapers of this history were virtually anonymous in the first two editions. Three have since died, Hardy Lee, author, and Benton Monroe, editor of the first edition; and Ferris Cronkhite, editor of the second edition. Winton Rossiter, author of additions, and David Rossiter, mapmaker of the second edition, are still with us.

Lee, a Cornell law student at the time, was later an attorney; Monroe, a professor of English at Cornell; and Cronkhite a professor of English at Ithaca College. Both Rossiters are native Ithacans and Cornell graduates; Winton is an entrepreneur in London, England, and David an agronomist in the Netherlands and Ithaca. I too am a native Ithacan, Cornell graduate, and a retired newspaper, magazine, and book editor in Ithaca.

Since the second edition of *A History*, the DeWitt Historical Society of Tompkins County has become The History Center in Tompkins County. Books published by the Center continue, under the imprint DeWitt Historical Society. See the inside back cover for instructions on how to order additional DeWitt/History Center book, two of which are also railroad histories of the Finger Lakes region.

John Marcham, 2008

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Illustrations

The page or location in the book appears first, followed by the name (or an abbreviation) of the holder of the illustration, and the name of the photographer or illustrator if known. Where a page has more than one illustration (/), they are listed top to bottom.

Abbreviations

Collection of:

CUL Cornell University, Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Ithaca NY

DM David Marcham, Quincy MA

HVT Herbert V. Trice, Auburn NY

RFP Richard F. Palmer, Syracuse NY

THC The History Center in Tompkins County, Ithaca, followed by catalog numbers for ordering prints.

Cover 1: THC by W. Glenn Norris

Cover 1A: RFP from May 30, 1902 Rail Road Gazette/DM by DM

Cover 1B: THC by Stefanie Green, Ithaca

Cover 2: THC by W. Glenn Norris

Preface: iv & v, HVT from Dryden Historical Society

Chapter 1: viii, THC T15.216 by W. Glenn Norris

Chapter 2: 6, THC; 9, THC from 1853 Map of Tompkins County by Horace & Charles T. Smith publishers, Philadelphia; 12, THC X15.80

Chapter 3: 14 & 19, THC

Chapter 4: 20, THC by David Rossiter;

27, THC T15.2; 29, THC X15.104

Chapter 5: 30, THC T15.32; 32, THC/THC X15.79 from J. Lavelle; 35, THC T15.33/RFP from James Donnelly; 36, HVT from Ronald Sampson; 37, THC 15.81 from J. Lavelle/HVT

Chapter 6: 38, THC by David Rossiter; 40, THC from RFP; 41, DM; 43, THC by John Perry Jr.; 44, DM by F. G. Marcham; 45, Rails North, Central NY Chapter, National Railway Historical Society; 46, DM; 48, CUL/CUL by John Troy; 49, CUL by Troy

Chapter 7: 50, HVT from Lansing Historical Society; 52, DM; 53, THC T15.171 from HVT; 55, HVT/THC T15.104 from RFP

Chapter 8: 56, Town of Caroline from Arthur Volbrecht; 57, DM by F. G. Marcham; 61, HVT by David Field; 62, HVT by David Templeton; 63, HVT from NYS Electric & Gas Corp.

Notes: 64, DM

Sources: 77, TCH T15.214

78, HVT

Index: 80, HVT from Jean True

Fold-out map: THC by David Rossiter

Sources

Railroad Corporations

in Tompkins County, N.Y., showing date of incorporation and subsequent disposition.

1. Auburn and Ithaca Railway Company: Oct. 8, 1889; conveyed to 18, May 13, 1890.
2. The Auburn and Ithaca Traction Company: Mar. 10, 1905; not built.
3. Catskill and Ithaca Rail-Road Company: Apr. 21, 1828; not built.
4. The Cayuga and Susquehanna Rail-Road Company: Apr. 18, 1843; leased to 14, Jan. 1, 1855.
5. Cayuga Lake Electric Railway Company: Feb. 8, 1894; street railway.
6. Cayuga Lake and Ithaca Railroad Company: Oct. 8, 1904; not built. (Proposed extension of D. L. & W.)
7. The Cayuga Lake Railroad Company: July 1, 1867; conveyed to 9, Oct. 1, 1874.
8. Cayuga Midland Railroad Company: Feb. 10, 1871; not built; dissolved in 1873.
9. The Cayuga Railway Company: Oct. 1, 1874; conveyed to 10, Sept. 25, 1877.
10. The Cayuga Southern Railroad Company: Sept. 25, 1877; conveyed to 20, Apr. 16, 1879.
11. The Central New York Southern Railroad Corporation: Mar. 28, 1914; discontinued Oct. 25, 1923; abandoned May 29, 1924.
12. The Chemung and Ithaca Rail-Road Company: May 16, 1837; not built.
13. Consolidated Railroad Corporation (ConRail): April 1, 1976; sold to 47, June 1, 1999.
14. The Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Company: Apr. 7, 1832 as the Liggett's Gap Railroad Company.
15. The Elmira, Cortland and Northern Railroad Company: Mar. 7, 1884; conveyed to 43, Feb. 17, 1905.
16. The Geneva and Ithaca Rail Road Company: June 7, 1870; consolidated with 21 to form 19, May 25, 1874.
17. Geneva and Sayre Railroad Company: Aug. 28, 1889; conveyed to 18, May 13, 1890.
18. Geneva and VanEttenville Railway Company: Mar. 7, 1889; consolidated with Buffalo and Geneva Railway Company and 42 to form 43, June 23, 1890.
19. Geneva, Ithaca and Athens Railroad Company: May 25, 1874; conveyed to 20, Sept. 30, 1876.
20. The Geneva, Ithaca and Sayre Rail Road Company: Oct. 2, 1876; conveyed to 17, Aug. 27, 1889.
21. Ithaca and Athens Rail Road Company: Feb. 18, 1870; consolidated

- with 16 to form 19, May 25, 1874.
22. Ithaca and Auburn Electric Railway Company: July 9, 1903; not built; conveyed to 2, June 16, 1905.
 23. The Ithaca and Auburn Rail-Road Company: May 21, 1836; not built.
 24. Ithaca and Cayuga Heights Railway: Oct. 6, 1904; street railway.
 25. Ithaca and Cortland Rail Road Company: July 21, 1869; consolidated with 50 to form 51, Oct. 25, 1871.
 26. Ithaca and Geneva Rail-Road Company: Apr. 9, 1832; not built.
 27. Ithaca and Owego Rail-Road Company: Jan. 28, 1828; conveyed to 4, June 6, 1843.
 28. The Ithaca and Port Renwick Rail-Road Company: Apr. 16, 1834; not built.
 29. The Ithaca and Seneca Falls Interurban Railroad Company: Jan. 17, 1907; not built.
 30. The Ithaca and Towanda Rail Road Company: Dec. 22, 1865; name changed to 21, Feb. 18, 1870.
 31. The Ithaca, Auburn and Western Railway Company: Sept. 20, 1876; leased to 49, Jan. 4, 1883; abandoned Oct. 7, 1889.
[“The Ithaca-Auburn Short Line;” see 46.]
 32. Ithaca-Cortland Traction Company: June 27, 1903; not built.
 33. Ithaca-Owego Traction Company: Jan. 31, 1907; not built.
 34. Ithaca Railway Incorporated: Jan. 25, 1929; street railway.
 35. Ithaca Street Railway Company: Nov. 29, 1884; conveyed to 37, Mar. 29, 1914; street railway.
 36. Ithaca Suburban Railway Company: Sept. 24, 1904.
 37. Ithaca Traction Corporation: Mar. 30, 1914; street railway.
 38. The Lake Ontario, Auburn and New York Railroad Company: Aug. 23, 1852; not completed; conveyed to 39, Mar. 23, 1856.
 39. The Lake Ontario and Auburn Railroad Company: May 23, 1856; not completed; conveyed to 45, Jan. 1, 1871.
 40. Lehigh and New York Railroad Company: Aug. 24, 1895; leased to 41, Aug. 24, 1895.
 41. Lehigh Valley Railroad Company: April 21, 1846, as the Delaware, Lehigh, Schuylkill and Susquehanna Railroad Company.
Consolidated with other lines to form 13, Apr. 1, 1976.
 42. Lehigh Valley Railway Company: Mar. 23, 1882; consolidated with Buffalo and Geneva Railroad Company and 18 to form 43, June 23, 1890.
 43. The Lehigh Valley Rail Way Company: June 23, 1890; leased to 41, Jan. 1, 1891.
 44. Middle Central Railroad Company: Mar. 29, 1878; organized to acquire 48.
 45. New York and Oswego Midland Railroad Company: Jan. 11, 1866; reorganized as New York, Ontario and Western Railway Company, Nov. 14, 1879.
 46. New York, Auburn and Lansing Railroad Company [The Auburn-

- Ithaca Short Line]: Mar. 16, 1900; conveyed to 11, July 14, 1914.
47. Norfolk Southern Railway: June 1, 1999.
 48. Pennsylvania and Sodus Bay Railroad Company: May 24, 1870; not completed.
 49. The Southern Central Railroad Company: Sept. 6, 1865; conveyed to 40, Aug. 24, 1895.
 50. Utica, Horseheads and Elmira Rail Road Company: Apr. 2, 1870; consolidated with 25 to form 51, Oct 25, 1871.
 51. Utica, Ithaca and Elmira Railroad Company: Oct. 25, 1871; conveyed to 52, May 11, 1878.
 52. The Utica, Ithaca and Elmira Railroad Company of the State of New York: May 10, 1878; conveyed to 15, Mar. 12, 1884.

Locomotive Summaries of Railroads in Tompkins County

The following data on locomotives have been compiled by Richard Palmer of Syracuse, N.Y. and Herbert Trice of Auburn, N.Y. It is based on builders' records, information from the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society, local newspapers and scattered company records. List is by number and name, wheel arrangement, builder and construction number, cylinder bore and stroke and driving wheels. Weight shown is total weight of engine and tender. LV stands for Lehigh Valley. NYC&HR stands for New York Central & Hudson River. D.C.&Co. is Danforth Cooke & Co., and R.K.&G. is Rogers, Ketchum & Grosvenor, locomotive builders, Paterson, N.J.).

Ithaca & Owego

1. "Pioneer" 4-2-0 Walter McQueen, Albany, 1840. 9x16 54 9 tons Nicknamed "Old Puff." Rebuilt with cylinders 14-inch bore and 18-inch stroke, new weight 10 tons. Originally standard gauge. Wrecked, May 21, 1847 near Catatonk. Sold to Liggett's Gap Railroad, 1849 and rebuilt to 6-foot gauge. Out of service by 1855.

Cayuga & Susquehanna

1 "W. R. Humphrey"	4-4-0	R.K.&G. #196 1849 15x20 72 14,000 lbs. Renamed "Lackawanna" by 1852.
2 "G. W. Scranton"	4-4-0	R.K.&G. #197 1849 16x20 60 47,000 lbs. Scrapped 1878.
2 "Col. Wells"	4-4-0	D.C.&Co. 1855 15x22 63 52,000 lbs. ex-Lackawanna & Bloomsburg #6. To C&S in 1878 after gauge change. DL&W 109. Scrapped 1899.
3 "Simeon DeWitt"	4-4-0	R.K.&G. #211 1850 16x20 60 62,000 lbs. Scrapped 1878.
3 "Shawnee"	4-4-0	D.C. & Co. 1855 15x22 63 60, 500 lbs From Lackawanna & Bloomsburg

		#3, 1878. To DL&W #108. Scrapped 1901.
4 "Ithaca"	4-4-0	R.K. &G. #250 1851 15x20 72 46,000 lbs. Sold to Lackawanna & Western #2, 1851.
4 "Tunkhannock"	4-6-0	R.K. &G. #266 1851 18x20 60 67,000 lbs. Came from the main line. Rebuilt Ithaca shop 1878 to standard gauge.
4 "Tunkhannock"	4-4-0	D.C. & Co. 1870 17x22 47 74,000 lbs. Later D.L. & W. #46. Scrapped 1909.
5 "Cayuga"	4-4-0	Utica shops, DL&W 1873 17x24 62 53,000 lbs. Later DL&W #142. Scrapped 1902.
6 "Pocono"	4-6-0	D.C. & Co. 1853 16x24 54 66,000 lbs. Disposition unknown.
6 "Muscontecong"	4-6-0	R.K. & G. #772 1857 Later DL & W #211
7 "Ithaca"	2-6-0	Dickson #186 1879 18x24 56 81,200 lbs. Later DL&W #346. Scrapped 1902.
7 "Wyalusing"	4-6-0	D.C. & Co. 1853 17x24 54 66,000 lbs. Later DL&W #403.
7 "Genesee"	4-6-0	R.K. G. #329 1852 17x24 56 84,000 lbs. Later DL&W #390. Scrapped 1901.

Ithaca & Cortland and Utica, Ithaca & Elmira

1	"Amherst College"	4-4-0	Hinkley 1870 16x22, inside connected.
1	"Cazenovia"	4-4-0	Schenectady #645 8-1870 15x22-57 ex-Cazenovia & Canastota RR to EC&N #1.
2	"Normal School"	0-4-0	Mason #274 1868 ex-Skaneateles R.R. #1, "Skaneateles." Purchased 1870.
2	"Canastota"	4-4-0	Schenectady #647 8-1870 15x22-57 ex-Cazenovia & Canastota RR to EC&N #2.
3	"Shoo Fly"	0-4-4	Mason #506 8-1873 12x16- 33. Originally built for Cascadilla Gorge cog railway which was never built. Later Geneva, Ithaca & Sayre #9, LV #532.
4	"Horseheads"	4-4-0	Portland #301 9-1871 16x24-62.
5	"Cornell University"	4-4-0	Portland #226 10-1872 16x24-62

		Later EC&N #3.
6	4-4-0	Portland #301 6-1874 16x24-62
7		Renumbered from "Amherst College"
8	"Leviathan" 0-6-6	Mason #547 2-1875 16x24-42 Originally built for proposed Cascadilla Gorge cog railway. Pinion equipped on front driving axle for rack rail. Returned to manufacturer.
9	2-6-0	Hinkley 1879 19x24
10	"H. P. Goodrich"	Superintendent's car, 2-truck, Clark, Boston, 1875.
11		Unknown.
12	2-6-0	Rogers 1883 Became EC & N #10.
13	4-4-0	Brooks #352 1879 16x24-62. To EC & N #4.
14	2-6-0	Hinkley 1879 19x24.

Elmira, Cortland & Northern

1	4-4-0	ex-CC&D #1 Scrapped by 1895
2	4-4-0	ex-CC&D #2 Scrapped by 1895
3	4-4-0	ex-UI&E #5 Scrapped by 1895
4	4-4-0	ex-UI&E #13; later LV904-2522. Sold 1906 to New York, Auburn & Lansing.
5	4-4-0	ex-UI&E #6; later LV 905-2523, scrapped 1905.
6	4-4-0	ex-UI&E #8; later LV 906-2535, scrapped 1910.
7	4-4-0	ex-UI&E #4; later LV 907-2528, scrapped 1910.
8	4-4-0	12 T. switcher
9	4-6-0	Cooke #1568 3-1884 20x24-56. Originally EC&N #13.
10	2-6-0	ex-UI&E #12.
11	0-4-0	No other information.
12	4-6-0	Cooke #1567 3-1884; later LV 912-1714 Rebuilt to 2-6-0 Scrapped 1911.
13	4-6-0	Rogers #3291 6-1883 18x24-54; later LV 913-1037 Scrapped 1911.
14	4-6-0	Cooke #1569 3-1884 10x24-56; later LV 914-3450. Rebuilt as 0-6-0. Scrapped 1916.
15	4-6-0	Cooke #1602 6-1884 20x24-56; later LV 915-1168 Scrapped 1911.
16	4-6-0	Cooke #1603 6-1884 20x24-56;

		later LV 916-1719 Rebuilt to 2-6-0 Scrapped 1909.
17	4-6-0	Cooke #1604 6-1884 20x24-56; later LV 917-3451 Rebuilt as 0-6-0. Scrapped 1933.
18	4-6-0	Cooke #1605 6-1884 20x24-56; later LV 918-1721 Scrapped in 1910.
19	4-6-0	Cooke #1710 3-1886 20x24-56; later LV 919-1170.
20	4-6-0	Cooke #1711 1886 20x24-56; later LV 920-1718 Rebuilt to 2-6-0 Scrapped 1911.
21	4-6-0	Cooke #1712 1886 20x24-56; later LV 921-1720 Rebuilt to 2-6-0 Scrapped 1912.
22	4-6-0	Cooke #1713 1886 20x24-56; later LV 922-1722 Rebuilt to 2-6-0 Scrapped 1909.
23	2-8-0	Grant #1683 1886 20x24-51; later LV 923-515. Scrapped 1911.
24	2-8-0	Grant #1684 1886 20x24-51; later LV 924-516.

Geneva & Ithaca

1	"Geneva"	4-4-0	Brooks #186 4-1873 16x24-62 to GI&S #7; later LV #530.
2	"C. M. Titus"	4-4-0	Brooks #187 6-1873 16x24-62 to GI&S #8; later LV #531.

Ithaca & Athens

1	"Ezra Cornell"	4-4-0	Baldwin #2396 3-1871 16x24-61; later GI&S #1; LV 524-2543. Rebuilt Sayre 1889. Scrapped 1910.
2	"C. L. Grant"	4-4-0	Baldwin #2429 4-1871 16x24-61; later GI&S #2; LV 525-2544 Rebuilt Sayre 1889; Scrapped 1912.
3	"Joseph Esty"	4-4-0	Baldwin #2430 4-1871 16x24-61; later GI&S #3; LV 526-2545. Rebuilt Sayre 1889. Scrapped 1913.
4	"Leonard Treman"	4-4-0	Baldwin #2435 5-1871 16x24-61; later GI&S #4, "Col. J. H. Horton"; LV 527-2546. Rebuilt Sayre 1889 Scrapped 1910.
5	"Ithaca"	2-4-0	(saddle tank) Baldwin #2387 3-1871 14x22-50; later GI&S 5, LV 528.
6	"George W. Schuyler"	4-6-0	Baldwin #2802 5-1872 18x24-56;

later GI&S 6, LV 529-1032. Rebuilt
Sayre 1888. Scrapped 1912.

Geneva, Ithaca & Sayre

1-6	ex-Ithaca & Athens	1-6	
7-8	ex-Geneva & Ithaca	1-2	
9	ex-UI&E	3	
10		2-6-0	Baldwin #3546 7-1873 11x16-34; later reno. #13, LV 536. Rebuilt Sayre, 1883 to 0-6-0.
10	(2nd)	4-6-0	Mason #513 9-1873 17x24-48; originally LV #194, "Raritan," to Pa. & N.Y., 1874 and then to GI&S. Rebuilt South Easton 1888. Gone by 1905.
11	"Dove"	4-4-0	Baldwin #3602 1874 15x24-62; later LV 534
12	(1st) "Fawn"	4-4-0	Baldwin #3604 1874 15x24-62
12	(2d) "Fawn"	4-4-0	Hinkley 1872 15x22-62 ex-Cayuga Lake RR
13			ex- (1st) 10.

Cayuga Lake, later Cayuga Southern

1-6		4-4-0	Hinkley #1116-1121 July and August 1872 62" drivers delivered or completed in July and August 1872 One sold 1878 to GI&S (2nd #12). One sold 1878 to NYC&HR, West. Div. #162. One sold 1880 to Southern Central. One sold to LV #499. Two sold 1881 to IA & W.
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Ithaca, Auburn & Western

1	"Lyman Murdock"	4-4-0	Hinkley 1872 from Cayuga Southern 1881
2	"Charles P. Wood"	4-4-0	Hinkley 1872 from Cayuga Southern 1881

Ithaca-Auburn Short Line

(New York, Auburn & Lansing, Central New York Southern)

1	Baldwin	4-4-0	Ex-Cumberland Valley-Pennsylvania R.R. arrived in Auburn, May 13, 1906. 38 tons. Used during construction and later in regular passenger service. Scrapped in 1925.
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2	Brooks #352	4-4-0	Ex-LV #2522. Pulled company's first pay car, July 5, 1906. Scrapped 1916.
3		4-4-0	No information available. Ex-New York Central. Received in Auburn, May 11, 1907. Used only during construction and then scrapped. Described by Ben Webster as "a 100 percent cabbage cutter and was always falling apart."
4		2-6-0	Richmond #2498 1895 56-1/2 tons. Built as Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac (4th) No. 13. Used mostly in freight and snowplow service. Used in dismantling of line between Auburn and South Lansing, 1924.
5		4-4-0	Pennsylvania RR Altoona Shops #1531 6-1890. Ex-PRR #2114-1776. 18x24-68. Used in dismantling electric division in 1924.
6		2-6-0	P.R.R. Altoona #2053 11-1898. 73 tons. Purchased 1916. Scrapped 1925.
101 and 102			McKeen Motor Car Omaha, 1914 seating for 83 persons. 72' 10": long, 74,000 pounds, 200 horsepower six cylinder water-cooled engine. Baggage capacity for 53 milk cans.

Southern Central

5	"C. C. Dennis"	4-4-0	Rogers #1610 5-1869 16x24 54.
10	"Tioga"	4-4-0	Rogers #1713 4-1870 16x24 60.
15	"Cayuga"	4-4-0	Rogers #1761 8-1870 16x24 60.
20	"Auburn"	4-4-0	Taunton #491 3-1870 15x22 66 To LV #475.
25	"Owego"	4-4-0	Taunton #492 4-1870 15x22 66 To LV #476.
30	"Tompkins"	4-4-0	Rogers #1940 12-1871 16x24 60 To LV #448.
35	"Cortland"	4-4-0	Mason #431 10-1871 16x24 60 To LV #450.
40	"Bradford"	4-4-0	Mason #449 3-1872 16x24 60 To LV #464.
45	"Fair Haven"	2-6-0	Rogers #2068 9-1872 18x24 54 To LV #254-1704 Sold, Southern Iron & Equipment Co., Atlanta, Ga., 1-1905.

50	“Lehigh Valley”	2-6-0	Rogers #2089 10-1872 18x24 54 To LV #299.
55	(2nd) “C. C. Dennis”	4-4-0	Rogers #2096 11-1872 16x24 66 To LV #465.
60	“Richford”	2-6-0	Rogers #2475 1-1878 18x24 54 To LV #477.
65	“Owasco”	2-6-0	Rogers #2476 1-1878 18x24 54 To LV #478.
70	“Kansas”	4-6-0	Baldwin #5145 6-1880 18x24 56 To LV #253-1029 Scrapped 1910.
	“Erastus Corning”	4-6-0	Baldwin #2111 1870 18x24 56 35 tons. Purchased 11-1880 from Fall Creek & Bituminous Coal Co. To LV #500. Rebuilt Sayre 1/1888. Gone by 1905.*
75	“Sayre”	2-6-0	Rogers #2755 5-1881 18x24 56 To LV #479.
80	“Cato”	2-6-0	Rogers #2756 5-1881 18x24 56 To LV #48.

In 1875 the Southern Central secured five locomotives from the U.S. Rolling Stock Co. Three were returned in 1878.* Newspapers mention engines “Brattleboro” (later “Weedsport”), No. 5, “Union,” and “Advance.”

* Source: *Auburn News & Bulletin*, Nov. 9, 1880; *Syracuse Courier*, Nov. 10, 1880. Articles also mention purchase of a locomotive from the Cayuga Lake Railroad.



“Col. Wells,” the first Locomotive #2 of the Cayuga Division of the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western RR. The DL&W division absorbed the county’s first railroad, the Ithaca & Owego, and its successor, the Cayuga & Susquehanna.

Lehigh Valley Locomotives

Although the Lehigh always sported a variety of motive power, 4-4-0s and ten-wheelers were predominant in the nineteenth century, while Mikados (generally used for heavy freights) and Pacifics (for both passenger runs and fast freights) characterized [the twentieth] century. Ten-wheelers hauled both freight and passengers on main line locals and branch lines; in the late twenties, the local passenger runs were usurped by the more efficient gas rail cars, made by ACF and Electro-Motive, among others.

Builders of steam locomotives for the Lehigh included Baldwin, Alco, Mason and Norris. The road helped develop (and sometimes built) several types of locomotive to meet the demands of the line's varying geography. Its most renowned innovation was the powerful Consolidation, built to the company's specifications by Baldwin in 1866; many other roads adopted this workhorse to handle their heavy freights.

Between 1948 and 1951, the Lehigh quickly replaced steam power with an all-diesel roster. Switchers performed yard work, road-switchers handled branch line and local freights, and the larger units were used for main line operations. Four of the five major builders—Baldwin, EMD, Alco, and General Electric—sent out their products wearing Cornell red.

—From the second edition of this book



Maintenance-of-way crew stops next to the Borden Creamery in Dryden. Foreman Joe Basl is in front, his brother John at right, the other man unidentified, and Rockwell's coal sheds in the background.

Railroad Abandonments

in Tompkins County, N.Y., showing date of disposition.

Lehigh Valley (former Elmira, Cortland and Northern)

Mileage	Date	
Spencer to Van Etten	2.5	1933
East Ithaca to Spencer	23.0	1935
Van Etten to Horseheads	19.6	1938
Canastota to Camden	20.8	1938
Cortland to Canastota	48.1	1967
East Ithaca to Freeville	9.2	1972-1977

Ithaca Branch (former Geneva, Ithaca & Sayre)

Ithaca to Trumansburg	10.9	1962
Trumansburg to Geneva Junction	27.3	1967

Auburn and Ithaca Branch (former Cayuga Lake R.R.)

Aurora to Cayuga Junction	8.6	1971
Ludlowville to Aurora	18.2	1950
<i>(6.5 miles reactivated about 1954 to Milliken Station of NYSE&G)</i>		
Cayuga Junction to Auburn	7.3	1969
Cayuga to Cayuga Junction	3.8	1971

Delaware, Lackawanna & Western

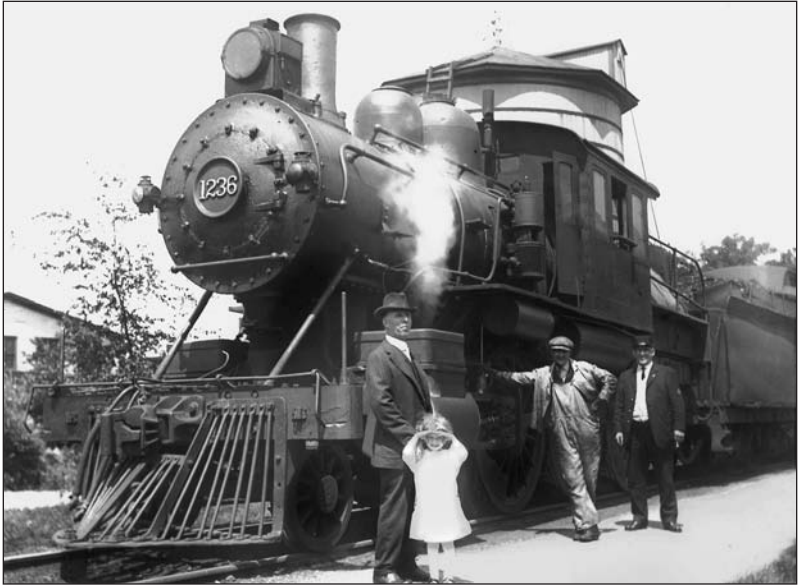
Ithaca to Owego	34.2	1956
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Ithaca, Auburn & Western

Freeville to Genoa	17.0	1889
Genoa to Genoa Junction (Auburn)	20.0	1891

Ithaca and Auburn Shortline

Auburn to South Lansing	29.1	1923
South Lansing to Ithaca (electric)	7.3	1923



Dr. George Albon returns to Groton after visiting a patient in Auburn Hospital, about 1906. Engineer Dan Silke had given the physician's daughter Marjorie a ride in the cab.

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After considering water routes to overcome Tompkins County's location in a deep valley, investors turned in 1833 to inclined planes and horse-drawn freight and passenger coaches on rails. Steam locomotives soon replaced horsepower.

Amid wild speculation and financial crises, more than fifty different railroad corporations were formed, which evolved into seven separate routes through the county. Over time, prosperity waxed and waned for its miners, manufacturers, dairy farmers, merchants, and higher education.

But after World War II the auto, truck, and airlines put most smaller American railroads out of business.

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