

The Black Diamond

Official Newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society

November 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

The November 2020 edition of "The Black Diamond" features full details about all Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society events during the year. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the 44th Annual Lehigh Valley Railroad Memorial Night and all of the 2020 Station Museum open houses scheduled from May to October were canceled. Please send any Society news and/or historical articles about the Lehigh Valley Railroad to me by U. S. Mail at P. O. Box RR, Manchester, NY 14504 or by e-mail at kemay59@hotmail.com. Thank you for your contributions.

Ken May, Editor/Trustee

LVERRHS FACEBOOK PAGE

The Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society established a Facebook page last year. Ken May has posted historic photographs and postcards of Upstate New York mainline and branch line depots, Manchester Yard, and the 1911 Manchester passenger train wreck in the photos section. Note that you do not have to sign up for Facebook to view the page. Contact Ken to contribute material for our Facebook page.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

If you have not already renewed your membership for 2020, we hope that you will renew now. Memberships received after September 30 will be considered good through 2021. We thank all of our members for their continued support of the Society.

DONATIONS NEEDED

Please consider making a donation to the Society when renewing your membership. We did not have any income from gift shop sales and donations by visitors because the station museum was closed for the 2020 season. Thank you for your generosity.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

We are actively seeking new members for the Society. Please ask anyone that you know with an interest in railroads to join our group. They can print and fill out the membership application from the Join section of our website. Thank you for your support.

LVERRHS WEBSITE

Visit the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society website at www.lverrhs.org for the latest information about Society activities.

LAWN CARE DONATION

Thanks to Joe Colasacco and his landscape business, Kingdom Proprietors, for mowing the station museum lawn during 2020.

LVRHS INFORMATION

"The Black Diamond" is published by the Lehigh Valley Railroad Historical Society, P. O. Box RR, Manchester, NY 14504-0200. Displays and archives are located at 8 E. High St., Shortsville, NY. Hours by appointment. Contact the museum at 585-289-9149 and leave a message for a return call.

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1911 Manchester Train Wreck Photograph



From the Albert R. Stone Negative Collection, Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester, N.Y.

Rail Lines in the Finger Lakes Region of New York State Historical Quick Facts Compiled by Paul Shinal of Seneca Falls, NY

Lehigh Valley Railroad Auburn Branch
Sayre to Owego to Freeville to Auburn to North Fair Haven:

Initially chartered in 1852 as the Lake Ontario, Auburn & New York RR to connect with the Cayuga & Susquehanna RR, the line was graded between Fair Haven and Auburn before the Civil War. In 1865, a revised line idea created the Southern Central Railroad. On March 5, 1870, the line from Owego to Auburn was completed. Freight service began March 8 and passenger service on April 4, 1870. Initially, the railroad shared the New York Central Auburn Road depot in Auburn. A line from the Lehigh Valley in Athens, PA, to Owego was constructed and in service by January 3, 1871. The line from Auburn to Fair Haven was opened on December 1, 1871. The first coal train to run from Athens to the new North Fair Haven trestle on the Southern Central Railroad was on May 16, 1872. The southern terminus across the state line eventually became Sayre. By 1872, a new Southern Central depot was opened in Auburn on Washington Street next to the crossing of the NYC Auburn Road. By 1893, the Southern Central was referred to as the Auburn Division of the Lehigh Valley.

Passenger service ended to Fair Haven in 1938 and to Auburn on March 20, 1948. Abandonments were as follows: August 1937: Fair Haven to North Fair Haven; January 1953: Cato to Fair Haven; August 1957: Throop to Cato; January 1961: Auburn to Throop; April 1966: Moravia to Fleming; 1971: Fleming to Auburn; 1976: Locke to Moravia; 1978: Dryden to Locke; 1979: Harford Mills to Dryden; April 1976: Sayre to Owego. The line from Owego to Harford Mills is still active.

Lehigh Valley Railroad Elmira & Cortland Branch
Elmira to East Ithaca to Freeville to Cortland to Camden:

This line involved many charters, visions, and track arrangements. The first section opened in the spring of 1871 between Freeville and East Ithaca (Cornell) and by late that year from Freeville to Cortland. The next section opened between Horseheads and Park Station in the fall of 1872. By late 1873, the two gorges at Swartwood Hill were spanned and the rails now went to Van Etten. On December 11, 1875, what would be later called the Brooktondale trestle was completed and the track was now open from Horseheads to Cortland. In 1876, a station at East Ithaca was built. In late 1878, with the inclusion of the Cazenovia & Canastota RR (opened in 1870), the Cazenovia & DeRuyter RR (opened in 1878) and the defunct New York & Oswego Midland RR trackage between Cortland and DeRuyter (opened in 1872), the railroad now ran from Horseheads to Canastota via East Ithaca and Freeville. In 1881, the Canal Railroad was completed, bringing the line into Elmira with eventually one final extension to a new terminal at Fifth Street in 1883. The line from Elmira to Canastota became the Elmira, Cortland & Northern RR in March 1884. Lastly, in August 1887, the line was extended from Canastota to Camden with the completion of the Canastota Northern. In 1905, the line formally became part of the Lehigh Valley as the Elmira & Cortland Branch.

Passenger service (gas-electric car) ended September 1, 1948. Abandonments were as follows: 1932: Van Etten to Spencer (used the Ithaca Branch track); May 1935: Spencer to East Ithaca; June 1938: Horseheads to Van Etten; August 1938: Canastota to Camden; December 1967: River to Canastota; 1972: Cortland Jct. To River; 1972: East Ithaca to Freeville embargoed, removed in 1978; April 1976: Freeville into Cortland, some industry trackage retained; December 1975: Elmira to Horseheads.

Lehigh Valley Railroad Ithaca Branch (Passenger Mainline)
Sayre to Ithaca to Geneva:

In the summer of 1871, the line opened from Southern Central Junction (renamed "Sayre" in 1873) to Ithaca, as Ezra Cornell's Ithaca & Athens RR (I&A). The Geneva & Ithaca RR opened its line from the NYC Auburn Road in Geneva to the I&A in Ithaca in September 1873. In May 1874, the lines merged to become the Geneva, Ithaca & Athens RR Co. In receivership, the line was purchased by the Lehigh Valley in October 1876 & reorganized as the Geneva, Ithaca & Sayre RR. In 1890, it became the Ithaca Branch of the Lehigh Valley.

Local passenger train service ended in November 1949. The last through passenger trains, Nos. 7 & 8, the Maple Leaf, operated during a blinding snowstorm on February 4, 1961. In September 1961, the last freight train cleared the line of cars between Trumansburg and Ithaca with the tracks being removed in 1963. The line from Trumansburg to Geneva Junction was abandoned in 1967. The rail line still exists today from Sayre to Ithaca.

Lehigh Valley Railroad Auburn & Ithaca Branch
Ithaca to Cayuga Junction to Auburn:

Financed by Henry Wells & Col. Edwin D. Morgan of Aurora, the line opened on January 31, 1873, as the Cayuga Lake RR. The railroad went from the NYC Auburn Road in Cayuga to the Ithaca & Athens RR in Ithaca. Due to financial failures and restructuring, its name changed to the Cayuga Railroad, then the Cayuga Southern Railroad and was finally made a branch of the Geneva, Ithaca & Sayre RR. In early 1890, under the ownership of the newly formed Auburn & Ithaca Railway, the line was extended from Cayuga (Cayuga Junction) to Genoa Junction. Track already existed from Genoa Junction into Auburn, connecting to the Auburn Branch at Ithaca Junction. Later in 1890, the entire line from Ithaca to Auburn by way of Cayuga Junction became the Auburn & Ithaca Branch of the Lehigh Valley.

As passenger patronage waned, only gas-electric cars were in use. Passenger service ended on September 1, 1948. The line between Auburn and Cayuga Junction was abandoned in 1969 with the rest of the line north of the electric plant in Milliken completely abandoned by 1971. The line still exists from Ithaca to a stone quarry north of the Milliken electric plant.

Lehigh Valley Railroad Willard Branch
Hayt's Corners to Ovid to Willard:

Initially, this 3.8-mile line was a narrow gauge railroad. The Hayt's Corners, Ovid & Willard Railroad opened in 1883 and leased it to the Geneva, Ithaca & Sayre Railroad. In 1890, the Lehigh Valley acquired it and made it a dual gauge line. When the new mainline was built between Van Etenville and Buffalo, the branch connected to it in Willard. It became a bridge line between the mainline and the Ithaca Branch. In 1936, the line between Willard and Ovid was abandoned with the remaining portion taken out of service in 1959.

Lehigh Valley Railroad Mainline
New York City to Sayre to Buffalo:

In 1892, the Lehigh Valley's contract with the Erie RR to operate its trains from Waverly to Buffalo would expire. The Lehigh chose to create its own line to Buffalo, which required extending its trackage from Geneva to Buffalo. Because its roadbed from Ithaca to Geneva was far too steep for heavy freight trains, another line from Van Etenville to Geneva was also needed. By late 1891, the new line was graded and a major freight transfer yard neared completion in Manchester, NY. The entire new trackage opened in September 1892.

Passenger service ended on February 4, 1961, with the final runs of the Maple Leaf in a blinding snowstorm. On April 1, 1976, Conrail silenced most of the Lehigh Valley's main

line in New York State. The mainline from Victor to just east of Shortsville (where it now connects with the former NYC Auburn Road) and from its former NYC connection in Geneva east to Kendaia (site of the former Seneca Army Depot) are still in use. The mainline (and original Ithaca Branch) still exists from Van Etten south to Sayre.

Lehigh Valley Railroad Rochester Branch Rochester Junction to Rochester:

In 1891, as the new mainline was being completed, a new railroad was being constructed northward from a location named Rochester Junction into downtown Rochester. Controlled by the Lehigh Valley, the 12.9-mile Rochester & Honeoye Valley Railroad opened along with the new mainline trackage in September 1892. Later, the line was extended south from Rochester Junction to Hemlock Lake with the entire 29-mile railway becoming the Lehigh's wholly-owned Rochester Southern Railroad. The extension opened in August 1895.

Passenger service ended in 1938 between Hemlock & Rochester Junction and in 1951 from Rochester Junction to Rochester. Abandonments: 1968: Hemlock Lake to Honeoye Falls; 1981: most of the line from Rochester Junction to Rochester; 1982: Honeoye Falls to Rochester Junction. In Henrietta, part of the line still exists as an industrial spur to the Mortimer connection with CSX (former West Shore).

Lehigh Valley Railroad Naples Branch Naples to Stanley to Geneva:

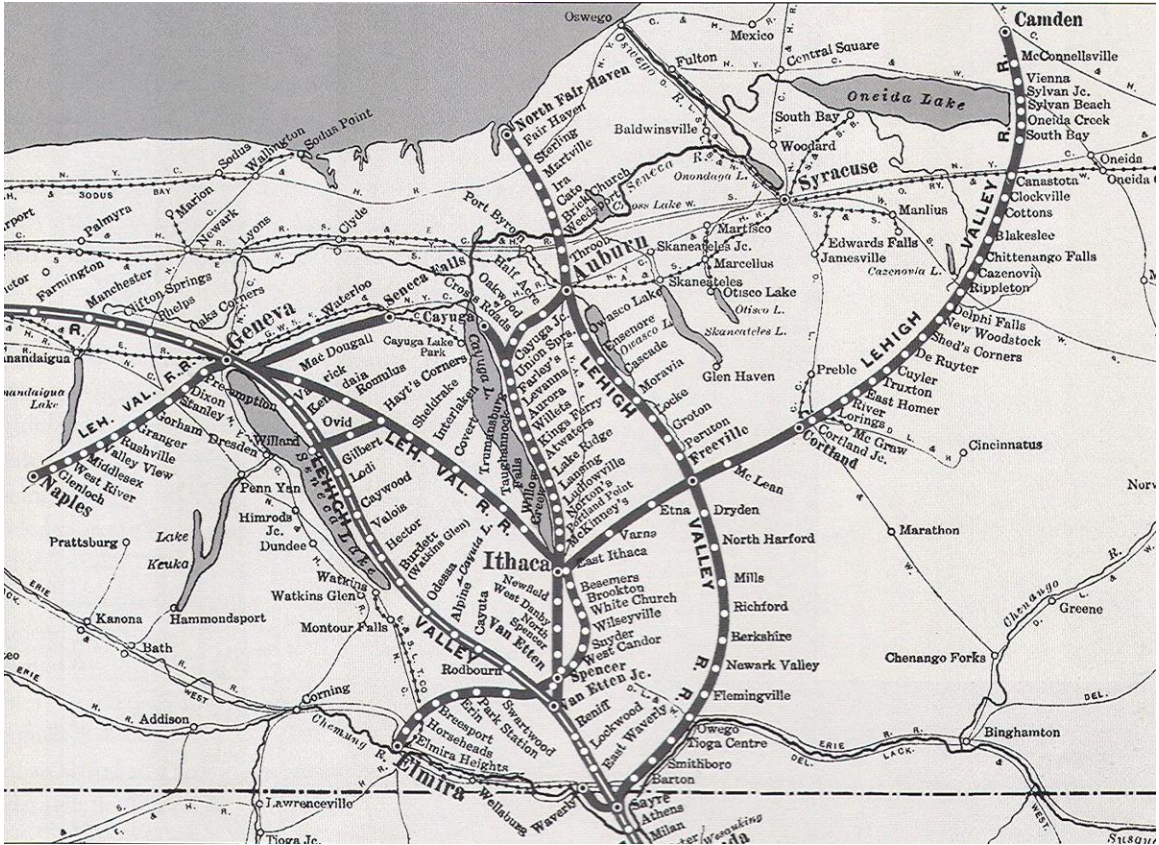
Graded originally by the Geneva and Southwestern Railroad, the 29-mile line was built by the Middlesex Valley Railway in 1894 and acquired by the Lehigh Valley in 1895.

Passenger service ended in 1938. In 1970, the line was abandoned between Naples and Rushville. The line to Geneva was embargoed on February 28, 1973, and abandoned on February 28, 1975, with its tracks removed in 1978.

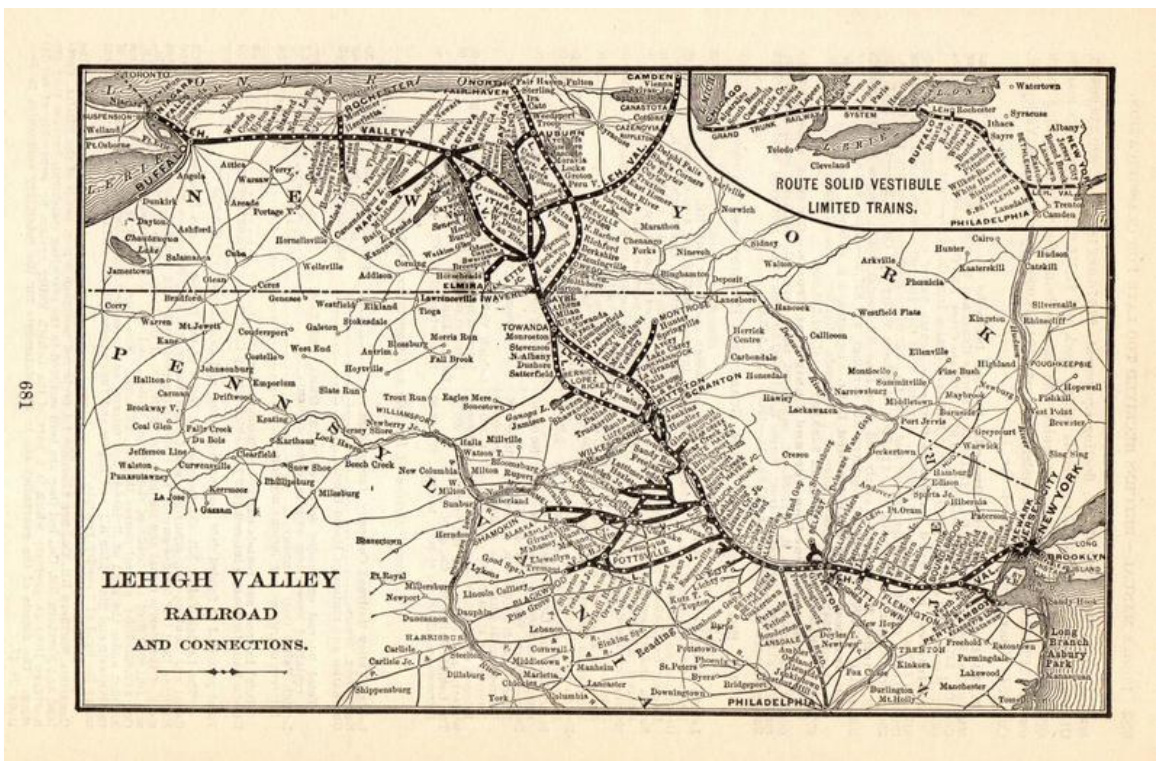
Lehigh Valley Railroad Seneca Falls Branch Geneva (Geneva Junction) to Seneca Falls to Cayuga Junction:

Originally chartered in 1891 as the Seneca County Railway (controlled by the Lehigh Valley), the 8.1-mile line from Geneva Junction on the Lehigh Valley into Seneca Falls was fully opened in early 1898. In August 1903, the line formally became the Seneca Falls Branch of the Lehigh Valley. By 1904, an extension of the branch to Cayuga to connect with the Ithaca & Auburn Branch was contemplated. As a result of the state's pending canal project in Seneca Falls, the Lehigh Valley chose a new route for its planned extension. It started in Seneca Falls at a new switch at Kingdom Road (Seneca Junction) and created a southern loop around the village to a point where it joined the NYC's Auburn Road (Lehigh Valley Junction) near Cayuga Lake. From there it crossed the lake into Cayuga, where it regained its own trackage. This extension opened on July 1, 1914.

While passenger service commenced when the branch opened, patronage was never good. Service was discontinued by the end of September 1914. In 1958, the stub-end of the line from Seneca Junction (Kingdom Road) along the canal into Seneca Falls was abandoned. By 1969, as a part of the Penn Central, the line fell into serious disrepair. In 1971, it was eventually abandoned in favor of using the former NYC's Auburn Road.



1910 Map of Lehigh Valley Railroad Lines in the Finger Lakes



1903 Map of Lehigh Valley Railroad System