

The Bulletin

The Railroad Station Historical Society

Volume 54-6

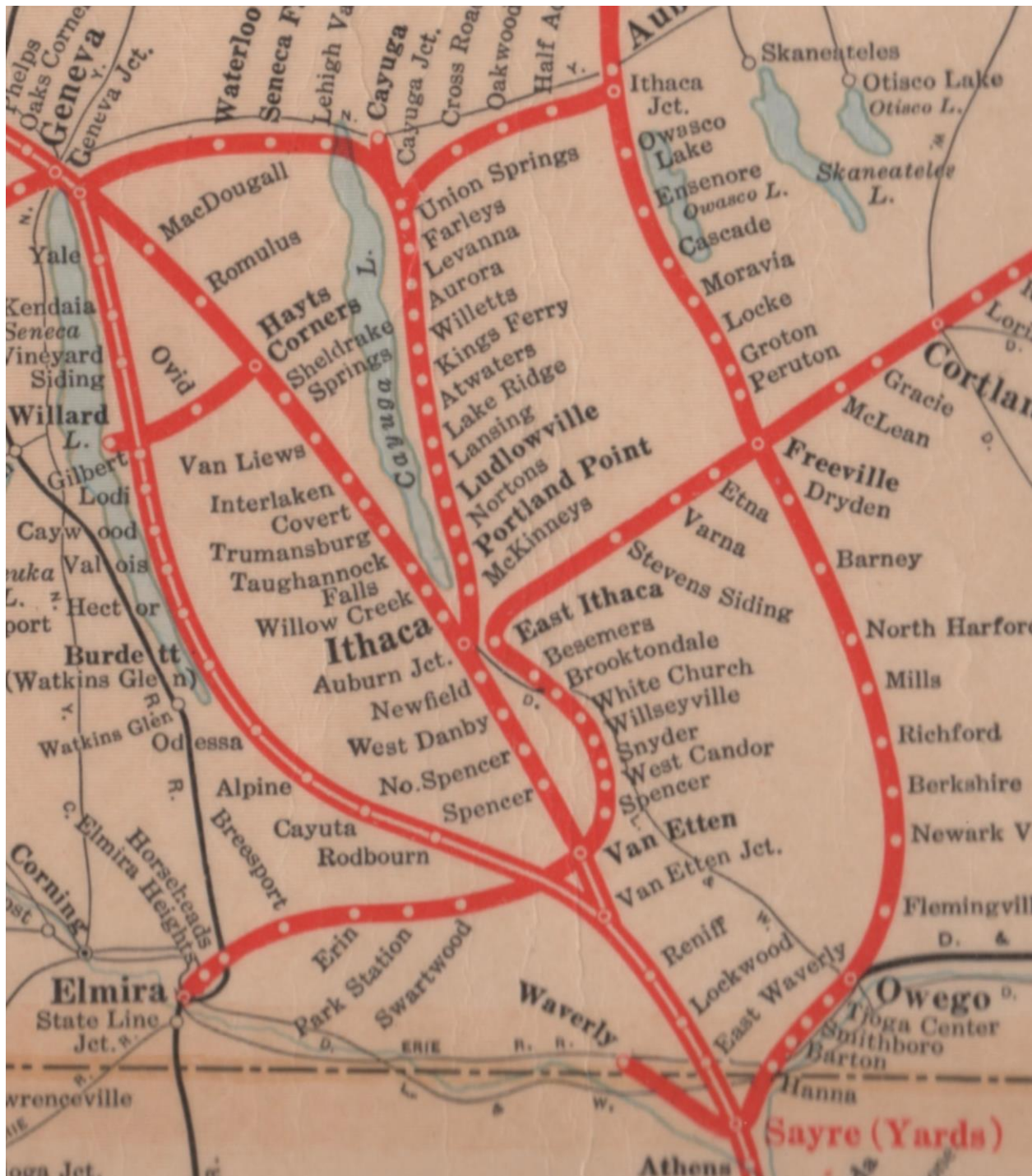
ISSN 0147-0027 Nov-Dec 2021

STATIONS AND OTHER STRUCTURES of the LEHIGH VALLEY RR

Part 7 LV Mainlines north of Sayre, PA to Geneva, NY



The push westward would enable the railroad to vastly increase its outlet for anthracite and bituminous coal in the Great Lakes area. With the lease in 1884 of the Pennsylvania & New York, the LV came close to the New York State border. The ultimate goal of Buffalo would be achieved in incremental steps. An arrangement with the Erie RR forwarded “black diamonds” onward but the railroad increasingly wanted its own line. About 1887 a decision was made to build to Buffalo using consolidation of existing routes and filling in the gaps with new construction. The LVRR would thus have an advantage in new construction which could be well engineered but also a disadvantage with some existing older routes that were often hastily located and not well suited for heavy coal service. The original mainline via Ithaca retained the railroad’s primary passenger services. A built-later bypass route carried through freight. It was very well engineered for coal traffic, located high up the eastern shore of Seneca Lake, one of the several Finger Lakes of New York State. Just south of Geneva, NY the two lines rejoined for the final leg west to Buffalo. *John C. Dahl, July 2021* On the passenger main, Spencer, NY is seen in this historic photo postcard view. Richard Palmer collection.



The map is an excerpt from a vintage system map of the Lehigh Valley Railroad around 1910. The freight main is the double track line at the left along Seneca Lake, opened by 1892 with a maximum grade of 21 feet to the mile near Alpine, NY. The original mainline with rather steep grades in and out of Ithaca continued to host the through passenger services. We will review the railroad's myriad of Upstate branch lines, each of which has rich, interesting histories and structures, in future Bulletin installments after completion of the mainline. Map: Richard Palmer collection.



Van Etten, NY as seen in 1953. The station already appears to have been downsized although the bay windows are not boarded over, probably indicating an agent still manned the office. John C. Dahl collection.



A historic postcard view at Van Etten shows the tower, call letters VN and the former Elmira, Cortland & Northern, which LV acquired in 1896, is at right. Richard Palmer collection.

OLD MAINLINE VIA ITHACA



Spencer, NY around 1953. The LV is still a property making money and under good management as the well maintained right of way and station attests. John C. Dahl collection.



Ithaca, NY and the railroad's crack varnish, The Black Diamond. Note the vintage express truck at left exchanging parcels. This is the last eastbound, May 11, 1959. Station is now an office for Chemung Canal Trust Company (a bank). For more than 40 years prior it was the Station Restaurant. Richard Palmer collection



Ithaca, NY is seen on July 12, 1951 still in railroad passenger service. Today the LVRR track has been removed. Ed Weber photo, RRSHS collection.



Ithaca, NY freight house. This is one of the larger of the freight depots LVRR had in Upstate NY and is a testament to the importance of Ithaca. Undated photo, but appears to be about 1965. Art Peterson photo, RRSHS Collection



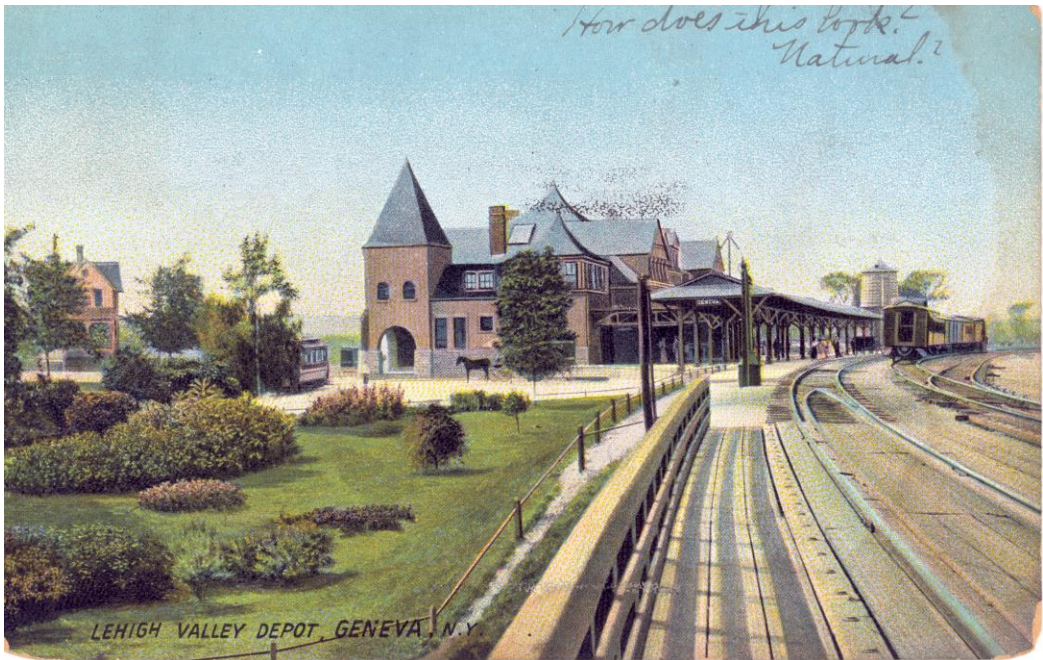
Interlaken, NY is seen in a historic postcard. The collection of vintage autos adds a flavor to this scene of about 1915. The station location original name was Farmer. Richard Palmer Collection.



Romulus, NY is seen in this photo postcard view circa 1910. Train time may be imminent with the number of people gathered on the platform. Richard Palmer collection.



Geneva, NY was a large and unique style of station featuring multiple peaked roofs. Here is the Black Diamond, eastbound. Undated photo, circa 1955. This gem of Victorian building skills still stands in decent condition and has been made into a private home. The double track mainline however is but a memory and the city street viaduct on which the locomotive rests has been removed. Richard Palmer collection.



Geneva, NY in a circa 1910 color postcard view. Lovely gardens and lawns graced the depot. Note the streetcar near the main entrance. John C. Dahl collection



Geneva, NY – Much of the Valley's mainline was grade separated within the Geneva city limits running on an embankment high above city streets. The exact overpass location of this photo has not been determined, perhaps our readers can positively identify the street. Photo is dated 1958 and faded, grimy paint F units are pulling the train. John C. Dahl collection.



Geneva, NY – The station's size is a testament to the importance of the city to the railroad. Geneva was also served by a branch of the New York Central whose line is today operated by the very successful Finger Lakes Railway. Jeff Kovacs collection.

FREIGHT BYPASS LINE ALONG SENECA LAKE



Cayuta, NY is seen in 1953. The depot appears to still have an agent and nearby is a lumber business. John C. Dahl collection.



Cayuta, NY in a historic postcard view. Richard Palmer collection



Alpine, NY. Note the vent stack in the roof which indicates the location of the modern 'indoor plumbing'. The steepest part of the by-pass grade was in Alpine, 21 feet to the mile. Richard Palmer collection.



Odessa, NY circa 1953 John C. Dahl collection.



Odessa, NY with train no.1 in a vintage turn of the century view. Richard Palmer collection.



Burdett, NY is seen about 1910. This structure still stands today. Track at station is gone, ending a short distance north of here (coming in a southerly direction from Geneva). Richard Palmer collection.



Hector, NY about 1907. A gas-electric car appears to be in use on the mainline. Although the photo is somewhat fuzzy, this is a rare view so it was included. Richard Palmer collection.



Caywood, NY is seen in perhaps late winter on account of the small snow patches about 1910. Richard Palmer collection.



Lodi, NY in a photo postcard view as a locomotive simmers on one of the mains. Richard Palmer collection.



Yale, NY Just south of Geneva Junction. A smoky locomotive is passing the depot on the main. Richard Palmer collection. Our next installment will continue the journey westward towards Buffalo, NY.

SHORT NEWS ITEMS



The McComb, Mississippi depot museum that we visited on the last pre-Covid era Society convention (New Orleans, 2019) sadly was the victim of an arson fire and was destroyed May 30, 2021. It was also an Amtrak stop for the *City of New Orleans*. John C. Dahl photo.

BUFFALO, NY EXCHANGE STREET STATION

The 5th generation structure to stand on or near the location of Buffalo's first railway depot opened in November of 2020 amid a low key ceremony on account of the ongoing Covid pandemic. This station is utilized by several daily Amtrak Empire Service trains. While not on the scale or grandeur of Buffalo's Central Terminal or of its distant late 19th century ancestor, the new building is a huge improvement over the early 1950's depot New York Central erected during the relocation of its Niagara branch from downtown Buffalo streets.



BUFFALO, NY EXCHANGE STREET STATION - continued



Trackside view of the station. Its location is nearly beneath Interstate 190 highway overpasses. In the background is the Seneca One tower, at 38 stories, Buffalo's tallest building. All photos, November 14, 2020, John C. Dahl.

ANOTHER STATION ALONG THE BUFFALO & SOUTHWESTERN



Cherry Creek, NY - This station at milepost 48 on the Buffalo & Southwestern branch of the former Erie RR stands today, albeit a bit the worse for wear. A restoration of the 1896 depot into a gift shop for local Amish and others crafts catering to excursion train visitors and general public was completed more than twenty years ago. Unfortunately, the owner has apparently passed on and the status of the building is again uncertain.

A mid-summer railfan 'rare mileage' charter on current track operator New York & Lake Erie RR featured classic Alco FA cab units and an Alco switcher painted in authentic Erie colors. This was one of the first excursion trains to visit the station in many years. All commercial freight business on the line has ceased and future prospects appear to be dim for depot and railroad. August 8, 2021 John C. Dahl photo

This issue of The Bulletin was prepared by assistant Editor, John C. Dahl, with the assistance of Ted Xakellis. PDF copies of the Bulletin are available by contacting Jim Dent.

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