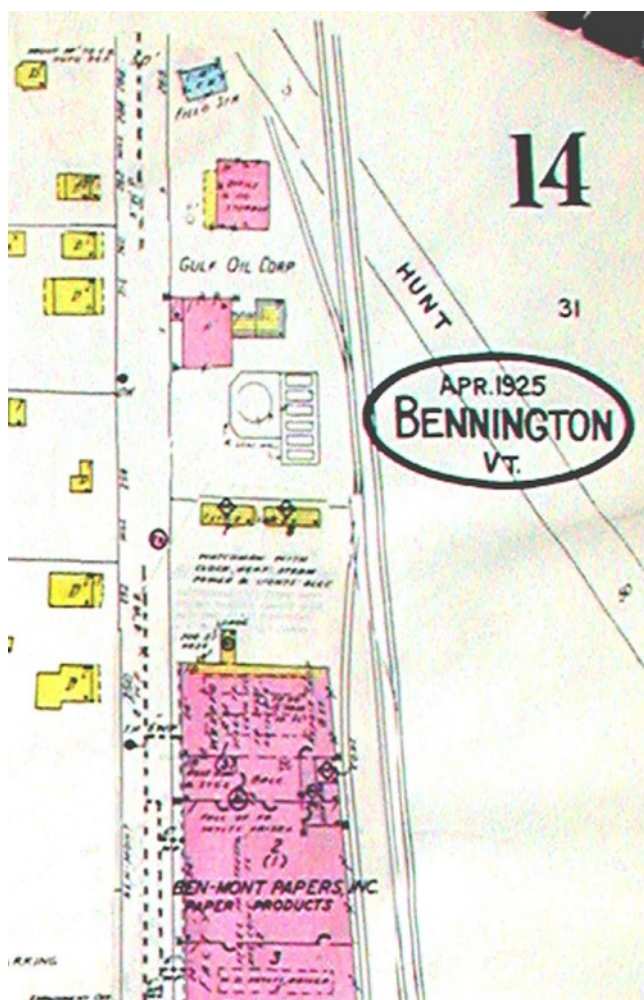


Table of Contents

Table of contents.	Page 1.
Project overview and introduction.	Page 2.
A Short History of the Rutland Railroad.	Page 3.
A Short History of the Corkscrew Division.	Page 5.
A Short History of the Bennington & Glazenbury Railroad	Page 7.
A Snippet of Industrial History of Bennington	Page 8.
Remembrances along the Bennington Pathway: Exchange Club Trips	Page 11.
Francis T. Poulin, a Visionary with a Camera	Page 13.
Poulin's and others images of Bennington, VT.	Page 14.
Important Dates and Statistics of the Rutland Railroad	Page 27.
A Chart Showing the Traffic Levels for Various Shippers and Commodities in Bennington	Page 28.
Sources	Page 29.
Maps	Page 30.



Above: Sanborn Insurance Map (Base map ca. 1925 with update ca. 1957). [From the collection of and courtesy of the Bennington Museum] Cover photo: Rutland Railroad bunkhouse in Bennington ca. 1953, near the end of the steam locomotive era. [From the Poulin Collection courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society]

Project Overview And Introduction

The Town of Bennington Vermont contracted with Vanasse Hangen and Brustlin, Inc. to provide professional design and engineering services for a project known as the Bennington Pathway.

This 3 kilometer long, multi-use trail will extend from the Bennington Elementary School on Park Street to the Molly Stark School on Willow Road.

The treadway for the trail will utilize a segment of the right-of-way of the old Rutland Railroad's corridor within the village. The State of Vermont (VTrans) owns the corridor today and the Vermont Rail Systems holds the lease to operate on the corridor. The rail, ties and other railroad infrastructure is still intact, but largely unused for over 20 years. The track structure will not change.

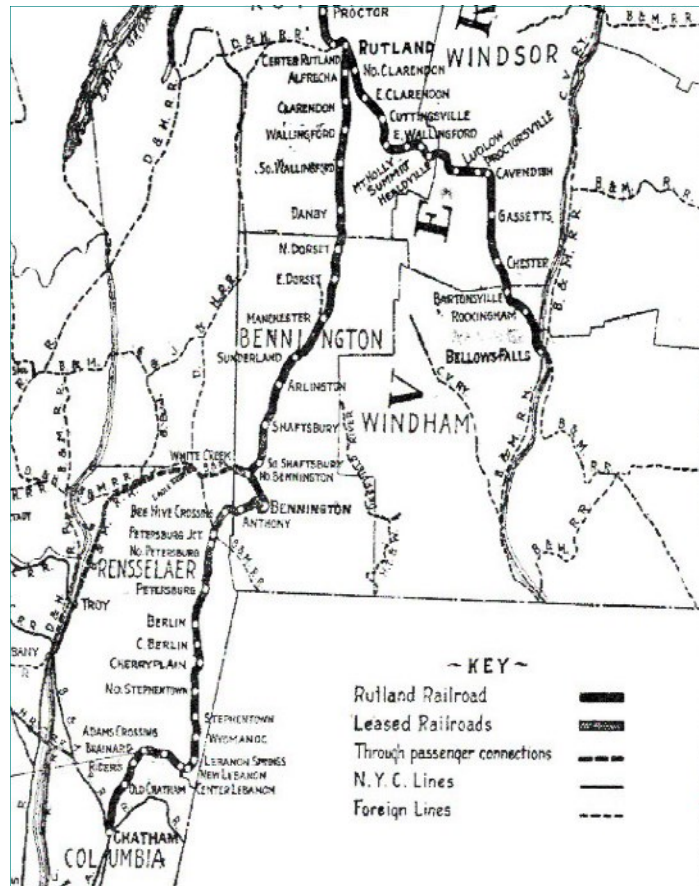
The Bennington Pathway project will not negatively impact any future restoration of rail service. The rail corridor used to have at least two tracks for much of the distance within the scope of this project and the trail will use one, allowing the other to be easily used for rail transport in the future.

I was contracted to provide the project with the following items:

1. Text & pictures for historic context so that future informational kiosks might be easily built along the trail.
2. Public outreach into the neighborhoods and schools along the trail thus bringing the forgotten corridor back to life again by providing a unique window into the recent past of Bennington.

Craig P. Della Penna

New England Representative
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy



Southern most area served by the Rutland Railroad ca. 1934. [Courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society]



RUTLAND

A Short History of the Rutland Railroad

The idea of a railroad through Vermont began in 1831 when talk of a line connecting Boston with Ogdensburg, New York was taken seriously. Such a line, if ever constructed, would take traffic from the Great Lakes, (then going by ship), to the "Hub", (as Boston was known as), with much greater speed. Perhaps most importantly, the Massachusetts and New York components of such a line was already under construction.

In Vermont, two routes were proposed and both had powerful backers. The first proposed route was to follow the White and Onion Rivers from the Connecticut River Valley to Lake Ontario. It had the political benefit of passing through the capital, Montpelier as well. The lead proponent here was Charles Paine. The other route was from Burlington to the Williams River to the Connecticut River. The connection to New York was to be made by way of a steam boat across Lake Champlain. The lead proponent of this second route was a steam boat operator by the name of Timothy Follet.

Interestingly, both ideas were given a charter from the state of Vermont in 1843. Paine's route became the Vermont Central Railroad and the other became the Champlain and Connecticut River Railroad. Shortly after construction of the C&C RR began, it became the Rutland and Burlington RR. On December 18, 1849 the R and B became operational and by the next summer, a daily train between Boston and Burlington was advertised. The cost of such a journey was \$6 dollars and it took 11

hours to complete. At the same time, the competing VC RR was building their line and they in fact built out a unique floating bridge to cross Lake Champlain at Rouses Point. The Vermont Central Railroad was operational by January 1852.

By the mid 1850s though, both railroads were in dire financial straits and the R and B Railroad was eventually reorganized by 1867, into a new entity, the Rutland Railroad. Around this time the VC RR became worried by the growth of its major competitor, and so they leased the entire Rutland in 1871. This created the largest railroad in New England with over 900 miles of lines from Ogdensburg New York and St. Jean Quebec to New London Connecticut.

This merger was a mistake and the combined system was a drag on the corporate coffers of the Vermont Central Railroad. By 1873, the VC was bankrupt and it was reorganized as the Central Vermont Railroad. Around this same time, a connection was built to the south out of Bennington, Vermont to reach Chatham, New York. This was known as the 'Corkscrew Division' in reference to the tight curves and steep grades needed to make the route.

By the late 1890s, and after a couple of other short-lived corporate marriages to both the New York Central and the Delaware and Hudson Railroads, the Rutland became a separate entity and the competitor Central Vermont became owned by the

Grand Trunk Railroad, a Canadian held company.

When finally owned by Vermonters who cared about the communities served by the railroad, the Rutland's new owners attempted one last grandiose building project. They bought the line at Ogdensburg, in order to connect with both the New York Central and Lake Ontario. To get to this new extension, the Rutland needed to share some of the mileage and revenue with the CV on their



line to Rouses Point. In order to bypass the CV, the Rutland decided to build a new line to get to Rouses Point. They built a causeway into Lake Champlain out of marble blocks and got to Rouses Point the hard way, hop scotching all the islands of the lake. This project was one of the largest water crossing of a railroad in the country and was not only an engineering marvel, but also

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)
a maintenance headache.

The year 1909 saw the first milk train on the Rutland. This train would be made up by stopping at scores of small dairies along the way from Ogdensburg to Rutland and picking up milk containers from the farmers. Sometimes the train would have 40 cars by the time the train reached Rutland and was divided—some cars for the Boston market, while the majority being routed to New York City by way of the Corkscrew Division.

By the 1920s, it became apparent that the company had too many miles of line to maintain for the revenues received so some trimming became the order of the day. The Addison Branch with its unusual—and unsafe—floating bridge was the first to be abandoned. Passenger service on the Corkscrew Division ended in 1925, but a bus entity was created to maintain a semblance of service. This too ceased by 1931.

The Flood of 1927 damaged all the railroads in Vermont, but the Rutland was in precarious financial straits when the rains came and the railroad never really recovered from the devastating washouts. It went into bankruptcy a few years later in 1937.

Labor troubles surfaced at this time as well with the bankruptcy trustees imposing a wage cut on the rank and file employees. It limped along in receivership, nearly going out of business a couple of times, until reorganized as the Rutland Railway in 1950.

With this new, local, (and capable), management, things looked good for the Rutland. One of the first things they did was to stress efficiency and this meant converting to diesel locomotives as soon as possible. To help finance this major purchase, the Corkscrew Division was aban-

doned in 1953 and the rails sold as scrap.

One of the efficiencies of converting to diesel from steam, meant that not as many employees would be needed to run the railroad. The layoffs caused a strike in 1953. The first in the company's history. After the strike was settled in a few weeks, the Rutland was given permission to cease passenger train operations. Ironically, this caused an even larger job loss, than the conversion to diesels.

In the mid 1950s, things looked very good indeed with little debt to carry and even some dividends being paid to investors. Then the wheels fell off. In 1958, the Federal government decreed that Vermont milk could not be sold in New York. This meant that the most profitable train of the Rutland Railway, that old milk train to Chatham, (now being rerouted on some Boston & Maine RR tracks by way of Troy, New York) would cease to exist. More belt tightening ensued and storm clouds brewed.

One of the more creative proposals for efficiency was to change the crew transfer points. The unions saw this move as another one intended to reduce their numbers so after many meetings that were fruitless, a strike was called on September 15, 1960. After a federally imposed "cooling-off" period of one year, there was no movement on either side so the strike resumed in September of 1961.

The management of the Rutland then petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission for permission to abandon the entire railroad. This was the largest abandonment request ever seen by the ICC and it set off alarm bells all the way from Montpelier to Washington DC. After many public hearings and meetings, the ICC agree to let the abandonment take place except for the portions of the Rutland Railway in New York which were sold to other railroads or the communities themselves. The right-of-way through the islands of Lake Champlain was largely sold to adjoining landowners, but the state of Vermont bought the causeways

themselves.

In August of 1963, the portions in Vermont were purchased by the state of Vermont and two new entities, the Green Mountain Railroad and the Vermont Railroad were the designated operators. They proceeded to start up service and never looked back.

These two entities themselves merged in 1999 as Vermont Rail Systems and today it continues to provide quality service to the industries of Vermont. They still have a couple of the old Rutland Railway's original diesel locomotives that are largely used to pull tourist-trains through the scenic vistas on the routes that were first laid out in the 1840s.



A Short History of the Corkscrew Division.

In 1899, the Rutland reached their goal of a good connection into Canada at the St. Lawrence River in Ogdensburg, NY, by purchasing control of the Ogdensburg & Lake Champlain Railroad, (O&L.C.)

Soon after, they built the amazing causeway through Lake Champlain which brought the line north from Burlington, into Alburgh and a connection with the O. & L.C.

They then turned their gaze to the south. Where they looked for a way to get into New York City. They didn't have to look too far from their southern most terminus at Bennington.

Flashing back about 50 years, in 1852, an undercapitalized and largely unbuilt entity known as the New York and Bennington Railroad went dormant and their charter was taken over by a new company called the Lebanon Springs Railroad.

This company built from Chatham (where connections east, west and south already existed), to the north at Lebanon Springs. Unfortunately, they too went out of business before the entire route could be built to Bennington.

In 1870, the owners of the Bennington & Rutland Railroad (forerunner of the Rutland Railroad), were also very interested in seeing this connection get built, so they stepped in and leased it with the intention of seeing it through. Unfortunately, geography got in the way because there lies a series of small mountains be-

tween Bennington and Chatham. The route that was finally hacked though the mountains became known as the Corkscrew Route because of the curves needed to avoid the Taconics.

Such a twisted route makes for difficult train operations and thus the line never achieved the expectation of the owners. In 1877, the lease was allowed to run out and another company was formed to operate it and that entity too failed. In fact, another two operators attempted to make a go of it, but they all failed.

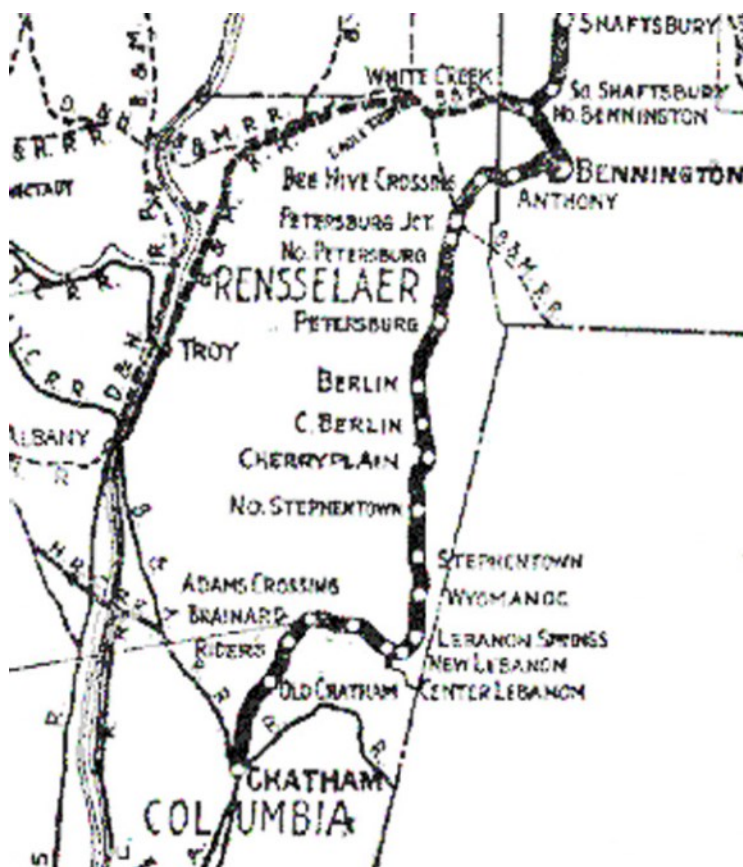
With the coming of the new century in 1899, the Rutland saw the potential of the route for a way to get milk from Rutland direct

served creameries overnight into New York City. They started to investigate the possibility of acquiring the run down and poorly built line.

In 1900, the Rutland then made the move to acquire the entire Corkscrew Route, (by this time, known as Chatham and Lebanon Valley Railroad—another lightly financed company), and fold it into their system.

This was the apex of the range operated by the Rutland system. From the Great Lakes, (via Rutland owned freighters), to friendly connections near to NYC, the Rutland became one of the larger rail-

(Continued on page 6)



A Short History of the Corkscrew Division

(Continued from page 5)
roads in the region.

The year 1925, saw the 6 passenger trains between Bennington and Chatham discontinued and service converted to buses. The thinking was that buses being more flexible in routing (and scheduling), could be profitable where the train could not. Well, after five years, in 1931, this too was shut down. The only thing that seemed to work, was the milk trains, which ran with longer and longer consists to the milk terminals in NYC on the Harlem River Line.

In the spring of 1933, the Rutland attempted to abandon passenger service from Bennington to points north, but local residents petitioned the state Public Service Commission in opposition, stating *"that the operation of it railroad and the conduct of its business by said company without the passenger train service hereinbefore specified are not reasonable or expedient. . ."* Service was abandoned and by the summer, buses were the only way to get to North Bennington.

In the early 1950s, things took a turn for the worse and management of the railroad began looking for ways to save money. The major cost saving item available for railroads at that time was converting to diesel locomotives.

Operating with much greater efficiency compared to the steam locomotives, diesels were becoming available at favorable prices and the Rutland needed to get on board

density branch lines and through the operating efficiencies and the sale of scrap, a regional railroad like the Rutland could afford to purchase a fleet of diesels.

The obvious choice for abandonment was the old Corkscrew Division and the request for formal abandonment was approved in December 1952.


The all important milk, (and other southbound through-merchandise), trains were rerouted over the Boston & Maine Railroad into Troy and then south to NYC.

The last revenue train ran on May 19, 1953 and the track and all other infrastructure was removed during that summer.

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A Short History of the Bennington and Glastenbury Railroad

In 1872, a small short line railroad, the Bennington and Glastenbury Railroad was built coming off of the mainline at the Bennington Yard and headed east along County St. and eventually terminated about 8 miles out at a Kaolin ore mine.

When the line opened in 1873, the main daily traffic off the mountain was four to twelve cars of timber and 30,000 bushels of charcoal.

In addition to the hauling the materials needed to serve the ore mine, such as alcohol, charcoal and fire wood, this line was built to also haul lumber and logs from the forest.

The mine and the logging operations ceased by 1895 and the line the taken over by a new entity, the Bennington and Woodford Railroad. The corridor was electrified for excursion traffic and saw many patrons using the line to get to the newly built hotels, dance halls, and casinos in Woodford.

In 1898, a major rain storm caused the Roaring Branch to pour out of its banks and washed away major sections of the line. It was never rebuilt. Interestingly, the B&W was the only railroad in Vermont to start as a steam road and become electrified.

If you travel east out of Bennington today along Rte 9, you will see bits and pieces of the right-of-way of the long, gone Bennington and Glastenbury Railroad.

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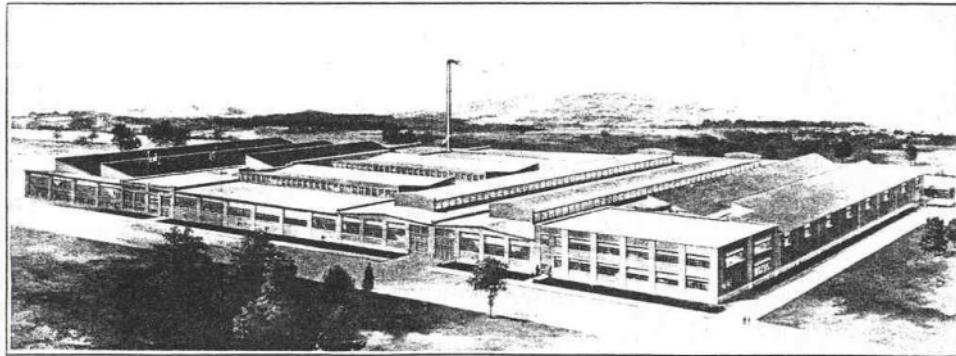
H. W. SPAFFORD, G. P. A.

Rutland, - - - Vermont.

A Snippet of Industrial History of Bennington

Situated north-west of the downtown area of Bennington, the Holden-Leonard Mill Complex sits along the west side of Benmont Avenue, (ex Mill Street), with the Walloomsac River at the rear of the parcel. The significant feature here is the architectural character of the ca. 1865, Big Mill. This is one of Vermont's best examples of a mid nineteenth century, multi-story brick mill. The four story main brick façade complemented by the seven story stair and bell tower are not seen anymore in Vermont. Indeed this site has been called the best of its type in Vermont because it is the only one left that has most of the related buildings still intact. In virtually all over locations around the state, modernization and reuse has substantially changed not only the footprint of the structures, but the character as well.

When the railroad came to Bennington, it made it possible for not only quicker shipment of various goods, but also a much better pricing. With a few embryonic textile mills already in business locally, some out of town businessmen, brought to Bennington bigger ide-



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as along with the capital needed to create them .

In 1865, the firm of Seth B. Hunt and Philip Tillinghast built for \$575,000 the first and largest building in the complex for their textile and clothing manufacturing business. Unfortunately their product line was in decline and they quickly went out of business. After a series of other owners and companies of varying degrees of success, the complex was auctioned off in 1889, to John S. Holden Manufacturing Co. for the bargain price of \$43,000 dollars.

Shortly after, Mr. Charles Leonard of Newtonville, Massachusetts joined the firm and it became known as the Holden-Leonard Company. Together

(Continued on page 9)

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(Continued from page 8)

they proceeded to gradually build it into southern Vermont's largest employer and the leading manufacturer of knit goods.

By 1891, over 200 people were employed there and by 1895, they became the largest industry in the region. After Mr. Holden died in 1907, the company incorporated and became known as Holden-Leonard Co. Inc. During


1920s, this business employed about 25% of Bennington's workers and it was certainly the major player in textiles in Vermont.

When the depression came

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WWI they manufactured the clothing for the U.S. Army soldiers and they expanded the number of buildings within the complex. At its peak, in the

in the 1930s, Bennington's textile industry was hard hit and the Holden-Leonard Co. shut down operations for a couple of years then started up again at limited

INDUSTRIAL BENNINGTON

Bennington manufactures a wide variety of high class products. Its main contribution as a manufacturing community is in the textile industry. This industry predominates through the manufacture of woolen cloth and knitted wear. The manufacture of paper products and furniture are two other industries well represented in Bennington.

Other lines of manufacture in the Bennington area are brushes, fancy papers, clay products, dairy products, hardware, hosiery, machinery, needles, offset process printing, toys, novelties, waists, underwear, batteries and electronic equipment.

Bennington's location in the southwestern corner of Vermont near to the large population centers of the east, yet far enough away to eliminate disturbing labor troubles make it an ideal community to locate industries.

The following pages are devoted to a description of some of the leading manufacturers of the area:

	Page
Ben-Mont Papers, Fancy Papers.....	56
H. E. Bradford Co., Underwear.....	56
Charles Cooper Co., Knitting Needles.....	57
E-Z Mills, Underwear.....	5
Old Bennington Weavers, Woolens.....	59
Sprague Electric Co.....	63
Vermont Tissue Mills Inc., Tissue Paper.....	60

It is on the main line of the Rutland Railroad between New York City and Montreal with direct connections only a few miles away with the N. Y. Central R. R., the Delaware and Hudson R. R. and the Boston and Maine R. R. Being at the crossroads of two trunk highways north and south and east and west, it provides excellent trucking facilities to all the large markets of the east.

capacity until shutting down again in 1938. In June of 1939, the entire business and complex of buildings were sold to a Rhode Island company, Joseph Benn Textiles, Inc.

Many thought that the new owners would inject some cash and start operations once again, but instead everything, including the building was auctioned off in August of 1939. This came as a great shock to the community, but another concern came in and started manufacturing knit goods under the name of Bennington Mills. This was merely a fraction of the former size of the Holden-Leonard Co. and it only lasted for about 10 years before ceasing operations in 1949. That was the last time textiles were manufactured in the building.

(Continued from page 9)

The complex was then subdivided in 1951 and the larger section was purchased by Ben-Mont Papers who manufactured various grades of wax papers. (The name of Mill Street was changed to Benmont Ave at this time—though sometime written as Ben-Mont.)

Ben-Mont used the old Holden-Leonard complex to make wrapping papers. They ceased operations in 1984 and the complex is now largely in the hands of the Bennington County Industrial Corporation is being marketed for light industrial uses.

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Remembrances along the Bennington Pathway:

Exchange Club sponsored
Steam-Train Trips to Bennington

Each autumn from 1948 through 1951 the Rutland Railroad would revive passenger service for one day on the "Corkscrew Division" by hosting an excursion for the Exchange Club of Greater

Reverend Walter F. Smith. Both articles make for enjoyable reading about an era that is remembered fondly.



Chatham, New York.

The trips would feature Rutland steam power and a virtual museum of wooden passenger cars and cabooses. With the exception of the first trip in 1948, all the trips ran from Chatham to Rutland, Vermont and return.

The 1948 trip only ventured as far as Manchester, Vermont. That year's trip featured a stop at North Bennington, Vermont to allow viewing and photographing the classic station there which had been recently featured in a Norman Rockwell cover of The Saturday Evening Post.

Those who would like to know more about the Exchange Club Specials are directed to the Spring, 1997 issue of the Rutland Newsliner which features two excellent, first-hand accounts of these trips, one by Paul W. Hackett and the other by

[Photos on page 11 and 12 show the 1951 train at North Bennington. Photographer unknown. From the collection of Jim Dufour. Text from his website found at <http://www.ultranet.com/~jimdu4/RRHS/rrhs.htm>.]

Remembrances along the Bennington Pathway:

Exchange Club sponsored
Steam-Train Trips to Bennington

Special Train Tour Draws 845 Riders October 1, 1951.

Thirteen passenger cars and two cabooses loaded with 845 train, camera and foliage enthusiasts passed through Bennington just before noon Sunday, September 30th on the one day a year passenger trip over the Chatham branch of the Rutland Railroad.

Scores of local people and motorists from other nearby towns gathered at the stations in Bennington, North Bennington and Manchester to extend greetings to the visitor as they hung on the sides of the engine as well as on the steps of the cars.

This was known as the "Gay Nineties" third annual excursion, but it may be the last of that nature due to the old steam engines giving way to the diesels.

This has caused the Rutland Railroad to already start removing the turntable and water towers along the route which are essential to steam engine operations.

Sunday's old fashioned train equipment included a combination baggage and passenger car with old kerosene lamps

Among the passengers from this section were Fred Welling of North Bennington and Ted Goddard of Old Bennington, avid fans, who have made the journey each of the three years.

There was a German band aboard, also a Polish Falcon children's band which got aboard at Lebanon Springs N.Y.

The trip was sponsored by the Exchange Club of Chatham, N.Y. and several of their members appeared in old fashioned costumes of cut-away coats and tall silks hats and their wives in gay nineties dress. They danced the old fashioned dances about the train with all the curtsies. Others had carpet bags and many other elements of the olden days.

There was one impersonator of Governor Thomas E. Dewey and other depicted characters of days gone by. There were travelers aboard from Buffalo, NY, North Carolina, Philadelphia and many other distant places.

As the train stopped at several sections, the communities were awakened by the placing of torpedoes under the wheels and these attracted attention.



North Bennington and Manchester residents were disappointed that the train didn't make usual stops in these two places. This year however, emphasis was given to the end of the run in Rutland where Mayor Daniel F. Healy and other officials joined in welcome ceremonies and assisted in awarding costume prizes.

Local enthusiasts and others more interested in the trains took advantage of the two-hour stop-over in Rutland to visit the Rutland Railroad roundhouse and yards and inspect the general equipment. Several railroad officials including the president of the road were aboard the train.

[Text from the archives of the Bennington Banner Newspaper.]

Francis T. Poulin

a Visionary with a Camera.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Mr. Francis T. Poulin of Schenectady New York, had an unusual hobby. He walked every mile of the Rutland Railroad and photographed every inch of the right-of-way.

Not only did he take pictures of trains along the way, but he took pictures of every station, every freight house, every siding, every industry, tower, signal, grade crossing etc.

Not only did he do this in a thorough fashion, but he also accomplished 100% coverage as well. That is to say that objects that are in the distant background one picture are in the foreground in the next.

This endeavor has to rank up there with one of the most visionary projects ever attempted by a single man and a camera.

The photos themselves are done in black and white and are currently stored in about 24 3-ring binders each being 4 inches thick. The total collection of prints is over 5,000 images.

He also made a slide of each image as well by photographing each image with a special appliance that allowed him to make slides from prints. This made it possible for Mr. Poulin to do slide presentations on the subject up through the 1970s.

When Mr. Poulin passed away in the mid 1990s, his collection was acquired by a railroadiana dealer,

who kept it largely intact until the Rutland Railroad Historical Society could vote to acquire the treasure. The society voted to purchase the collection in May of 1996.

It has been stored in a secure and humidity controlled location in a member's house and negotiations are underway with one of Vermont's colleges to gain a permanent home where it can be properly cataloged.

At some point, the Poulin collection will be made available to the general public for research and purchase of copy prints. This largely unknown collection was graciously made available for this project by the Rutland Railroad Historical Society.

The Rutland Railroad Historical Society is a non-profit historical and educational organization dedicated to the preservation of the memory of the Rutland Railroad. The Society publishes a quarterly magazine, The Rutland Newsliner, as a benefit of membership. The Society also hosts an annual convention which is held each spring at a location along the route of the former Rutland Railroad.

The membership fee is \$15.00 per year and is due in January of each year. Dues, applications for membership, or requests for back issues of the Newsliner should be addressed to the RRHS c/o:

Bruce P. Curry, Membership

Secy.

*23 Andrea Crescent
Nepean, ON, Canada K2J 1G8
Tel: 613-825-4948
Email: bcurry@cyberus.ca*



Francis T. Poulin's Lens remembers the Rutland Railroad in Bennington



Above is view of the Route 7 grade crossing looking north. Note the white mile-marker across the road and to the left of the warning lights. A close up of this is below and to the right. Bottom left is a view of the same scene from across the road. Taken by Mr. Poulin in the spring of 1962. *[From the Poulin Collection courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society].*



Francis T. Poulin's Lens remembers the Rutland Railroad in Bennington



Above: Looking south at the Rte 7 grade crossing toward the Ben-Mont Company. Ben-Mont switch is just across the road. Below: clear evidence of the third track—with rail removed, ties still in place here in the spring of 1962. *[From the Poulin Collection courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society].*



Francis T. Poulin's Lens remembers the Rutland Railroad in Bennington



Above: looking south at the end of double track in the spring of 1962. Middle: is the branch parallel to County Street at Bennington Pottery. Bottom: East looking view at the railroad station. *[From the Poulin Collection courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society].*



Francis T. Poulin's Lens remembers the Rutland Railroad in Bennington



Above is looking south towards County Street which is just beyond the hip roofed Rutland Railroad Freight House. The track leading to the right of the freight house and curving onto County Street is the old Bennington and Glastonbury Railroad later Bennington and Woodford Electric Railway. Bottom is a similar view taken earlier that winter of 1962. *[From the Poulin Collection courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society].*



Francis T. Poulin's Lens remembers the Rutland Railroad in Bennington



Above is a northbound view of the Rutland yard ca. 1962 during the last strike. Bottom is a view of the passenger station with its REA Express Agency sign during the same era. *[From the Poulin Collection courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society].*



Francis T. Poulin's Lens remembers the Rutland Railroad in Bennington



Top is 4-6-0 locomotive #52 in 1952 looking north into the yard. Bottom photo shows locomotive #74 approaching the “armstrong” turntable in the yard in the spring of 1953. *[Both photos from the Poulin Collection courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society].*



Francis T. Poulin's Lens remembers the Rutland Railroad in Bennington



Top: Another view of #74 in that same early spring of 1953. This time at the Bennington Station.
Bottom: Looking north at the station and beyond into the yard in 1953. *[From the Poulin Collection courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society].*



Francis T. Poulin's Lens remembers the Rutland Railroad in Bennington



Top: View of County Street on April 21, 1962 during the strike of the Rutland Railroad. Bottom: Crossing North Street and looking east in the Bennington Village area of County Street. This is the roadbed of the former Bennington and Glastonbury Railroad later Bennington and Woodford Electric Railway. *[From the Poulin Collection courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society].*



Francis T. Poulin's Lens remembers the Rutland Railroad in Bennington



Top: Another view along County Street looking east with the tracks easing to the north side of the street. Bottom: Looking west along County Street at North Street. *[From the Poulin Collection courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society].*



Francis T. Poulin's Lens remembers the Rutland Railroad in Bennington



Top: Looking south along North Street at County Street, April 1962 during the strike. [From the Poulin Collection courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society]. Bottom: Advertisement found in town directory ca. 1895.

R. S. BUSS,
— FANCY —
HORSESHOEING
AND GENERAL JOBBING.
PARTICULAR ATTENTION GIVEN TO INTERFERING HORSES.
Carriage Repairing of all kinds done at short notice.
269 Union St., **Bennington, Vt.**

Francis T. Poulin's Lens remembers the Rutland Railroad in Bennington



Both views are of the old freight house in Bennington in the yard near County Street. Bottom: Looks south from County Street area with a view of railcars local to the area. *[From the Poulin Collection courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society].*



Francis T. Poulin's Lens remembers the Rutland Railroad in Bennington



Top and bottom show differing perspectives of the same area within the Bennington Yard *[From the Poulin Collection courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society]*.



Remembrances along the Bennington Pathway: A photo collage from the archives of the Bennington Banner Newspaper



Demolition of the water tower within Bennington yard, ca. spring of 1954. *[Courtesy of the Bennington Banner Newspaper].*



Important Dates and Statistics of the Rutland Railroad

1843 Rutland & Burlington Railroad is chartered by the state of Vermont

1845 The Western Vermont RR is chartered to build from Rutland to Bennington, Vt.

1851 The Milk Car is born: the Northern RR (O&LC) begins shipping butter to Boston in purpose-built freight cars cooling the contents with ice.

1857 The Troy & Bennington RR, a subsidiary of the Troy & Boston RR signs a 10 year lease for the Western Vermont RR.

1865 Independent again, the Western Vermont RR becomes the Bennington & Rutland RR.

1867 Rutland & Burlington reorganized to form the Rutland Railroad Company,

1891 Rutland RR leased to Central Vermont for 99 years

1896 Rutland RR returned to independence when the Central Vermont enters receivership.

1898 To circumvent the Central Vermont, the Rutland RR begins building the "Champlain Island Extension" north from Burlington across Lake Champlain.

1899 The Champlain Island Extension is completed.

1904 The New York Central RR assumes control of the Rutland.

1911 The New York Central sells one-half of its controlling interest in the Rutland to the New Haven RR.

1915 The Panama Canal Act forces the Rutland to divest itself of the Rutland Transit Company, its Great Lakes shipping operation.

1916 On January 27 Burlington's Union Station opens.

1917 The Rutland discontinues operations of its floating bridge between Larrabee's Point, Vt. and Ticonderoga, N.Y.

1927 In November, floods ravage much of Vermont, crippling the Rutland.

1938 On May 5 the Rutland Railroad enters into receivership for the first time.

In July, the "Save the Rutland Club" is formed.

In August, on the verge of total abandonment, the Rutland is given a reprieve when union employees agree to a wage reduction.

1939 In January "*The Whippet*" fast freight debuts in an attempt to win back freight business.

1946 Four new Mountain-type 4-8-2 steam locomotives arrive from the Alco Locomotive Works Schenectady, New York. Painted a brilliant green and dubbed "*Green Hornets*" by Rutland crews, these will be the last new steam locomotives ever purchased by the Rutland.

1948 On April 14, Trains #57 and #46, the Rutland-Alburgh locals, make their last runs.

1950 Rutland Railroad reorganized as Rutland Railway

1951 On May 21, the last train, a mixed passenger and freight train, runs on the Addison Branch.

1952 In December, permission is granted by the ICC to abandon the Chatham Branch. (from Chatham to Bennington.)

1953 Beginning June 26, a three week strike, the first in the railroad's history, shuts down the Rutland. It spells the end of passenger service. During the summer, scrap crews remove the "Corkscrew Division" between Chatham, N.Y. and Bennington, Vt. They reach Bennington on August 7.

1961 Final strike begins on September 25. On December 4 the Rutland applies to the ICC for total abandonment

1962 ICC holds abandonment hearings during March and April. In September the ICC approves abandonment effective January 29, 1963

1963 Abandonment date postponed to May 20. On May 29, the state of Vermont passes a bill providing for the purchase of sections of the Rutland including the segment in Bennington. The transaction takes place in August.

A Chart Showing the Traffic Levels for Various Shippers and Commodities in Bennington During the Last Years of the Rutland Railroad.

Receiver	Commodity	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Ben Mont Papers	Paper, Coal, Drums	172	135	155	165	97	81
T.A. Carpenter	Bldg. Materials	17	14	9	15	17	7
Deerfield Valley Farmers	Cement	11	11	10	9	3	0
A.J.Dewey Company	Bldg. Materials	11	7	10	6	6	9
W.H. Eddington	Autos	58	29	58	49	11	1
Fairdale Farms	Feed	20	20	14	16	9	7
Morse Blocks	Cement	85	92	59	47	10	1
H.W. Myers Inc.	Coal	40	29	14	0	0	0
National Carbon	Coal	60	35	44	38	29	14
Olin's Feed	Feed	26	27	17	18	18	18
Ploude & Daigneault	Autos	9	6	1	8	3	0
State of Vermont	Salt, Asphalt	36	27	29	26	33	17
Stone Mill Feed Store	Feed	115	108	98	87	56	41
Strobridge Co.	Feed, Fertilizer	29	26	20	21	24	19
H.N. Tuttle Company	Cement, Coal	130	110	107	104	80	57
Vt. Gas Corp.	LP Gas	54	51	30	47	33	30
Williams & Bugbee	Autos	3	4	6	10	11	2
Totals		876	731	681	666	440	304

Shipper	Commodity	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Ben Mont Papers	Paper Products	48	47	117	221	175	230

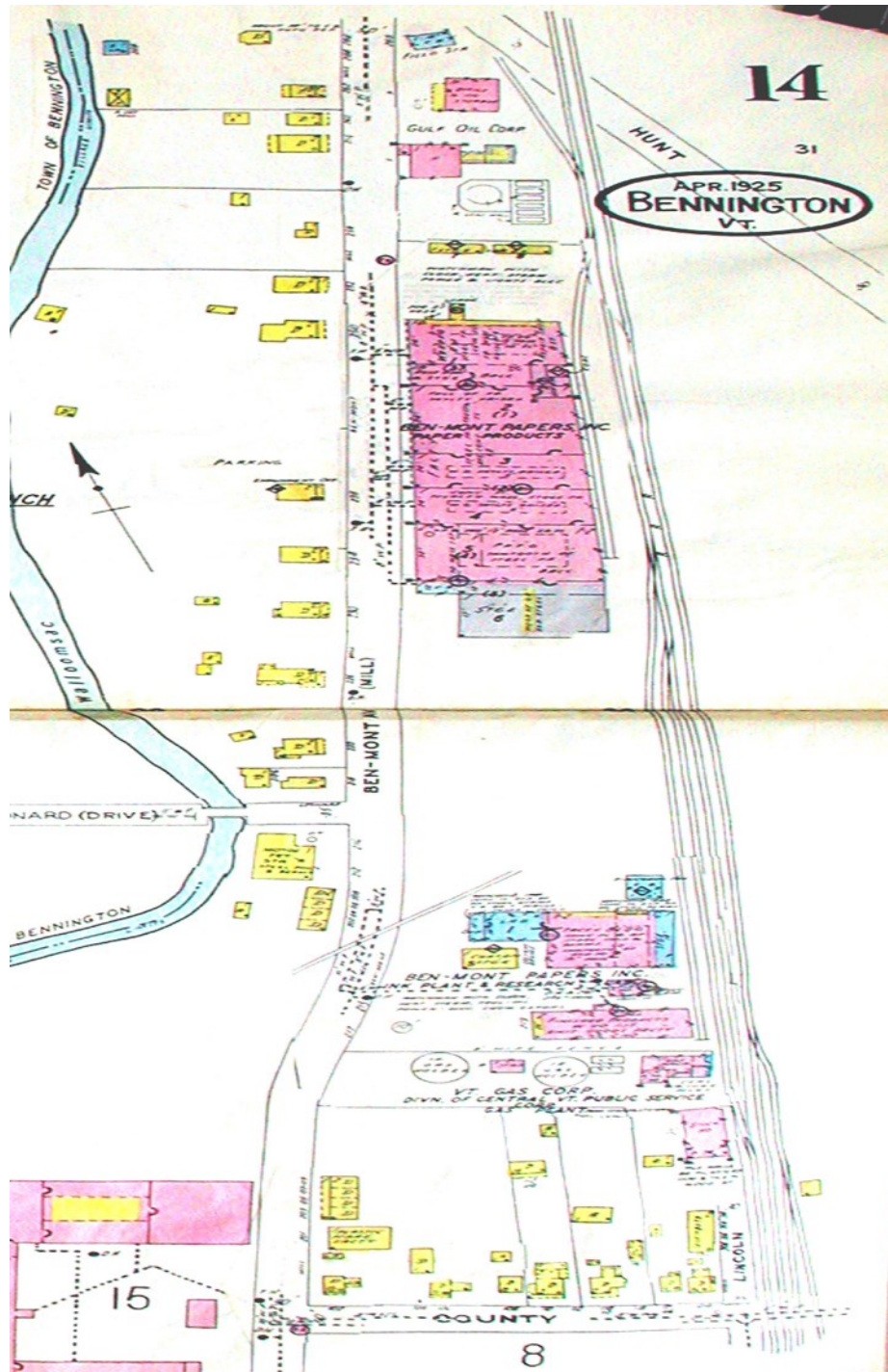
[From the Rutland Railroad Historical Society]



Sources

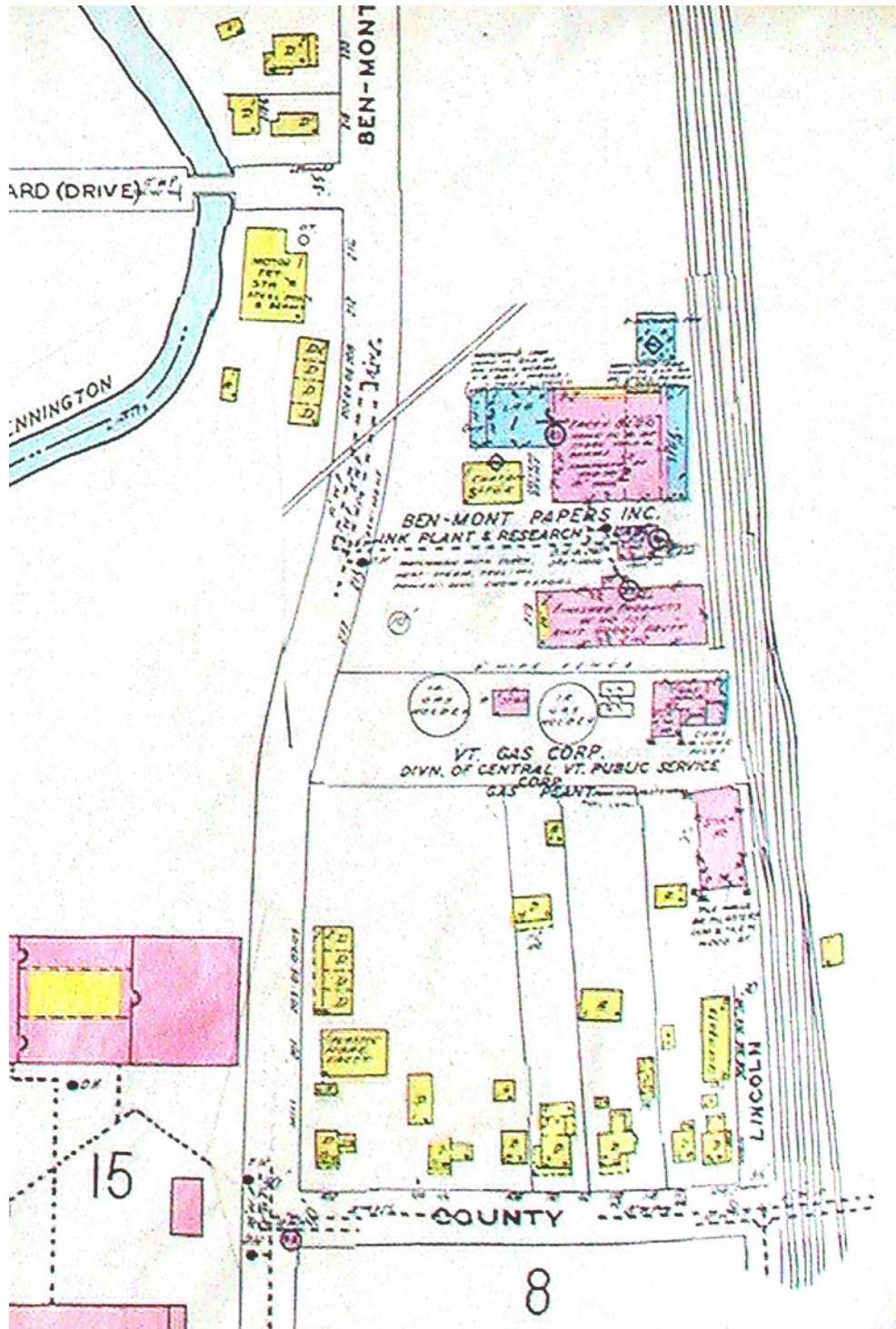
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- Various items from the Rutland Railroad History page maintained by Jim Dufour. <http://www.ultranet.com/~jimdu4/RRHS/rrhs.htm>
- Conversations with Tyler Resch of the Bennington Museum.
- Conversations with Ann Mook and other staff at the Bennington Free Library.
- Conversations with and remembrances from Sal Santarcangelo of Ideal Fuels, Bennington.
- Conversations with John Dostal of the Bennington Historical Society.
- Conversations with Randy Laframboise of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society.
- Conversations with Michael Sparks of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society.
- Conversations with Babette Ryder of the Chatham Courier Newspaper in Chatham, New York.
- Some technical assistance provided by Christie Nevius.
- Photos as noted.

Sanborn Maps ca. 1957

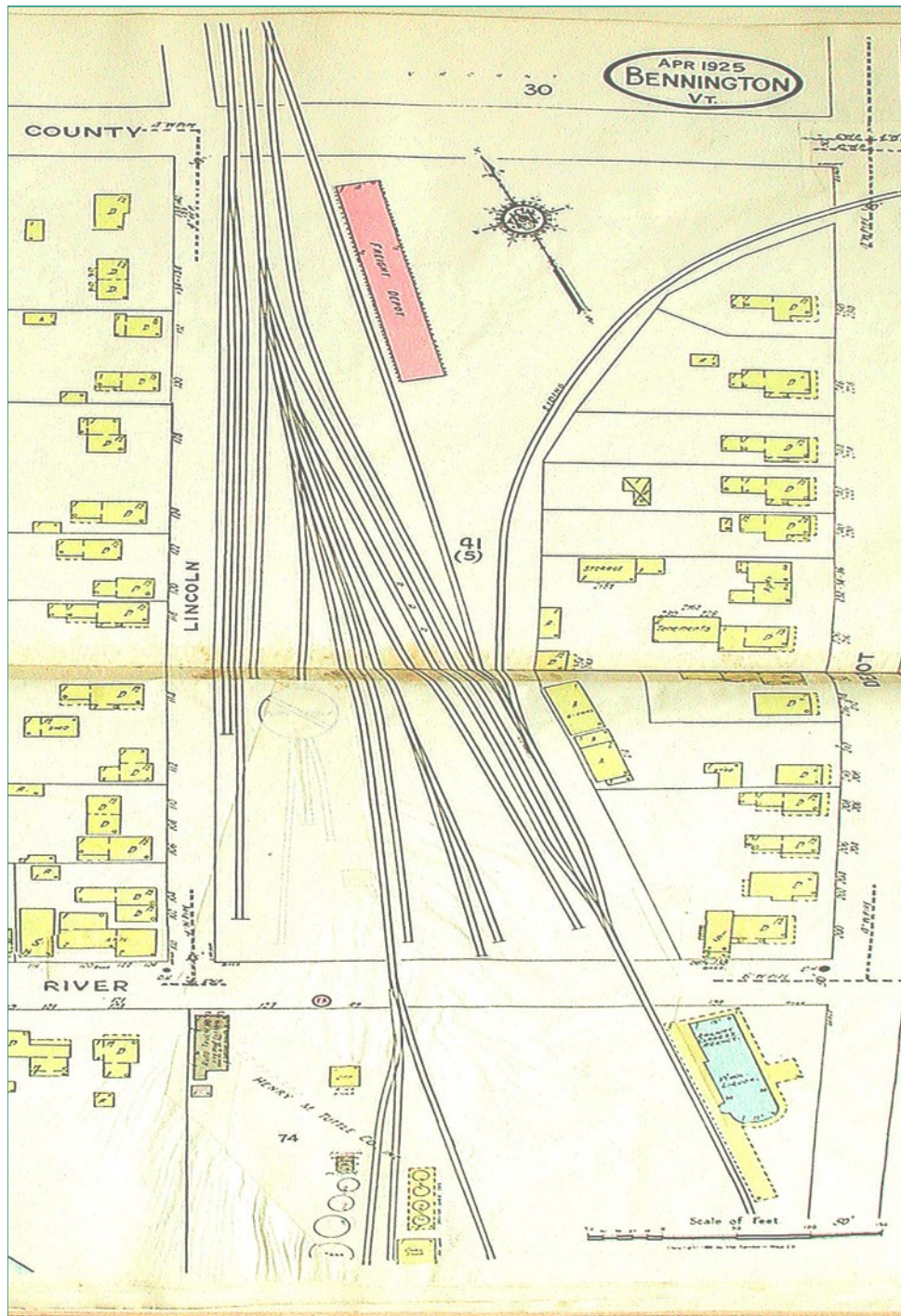


[All Sanborn Maps courtesy of the Bennington Museum]

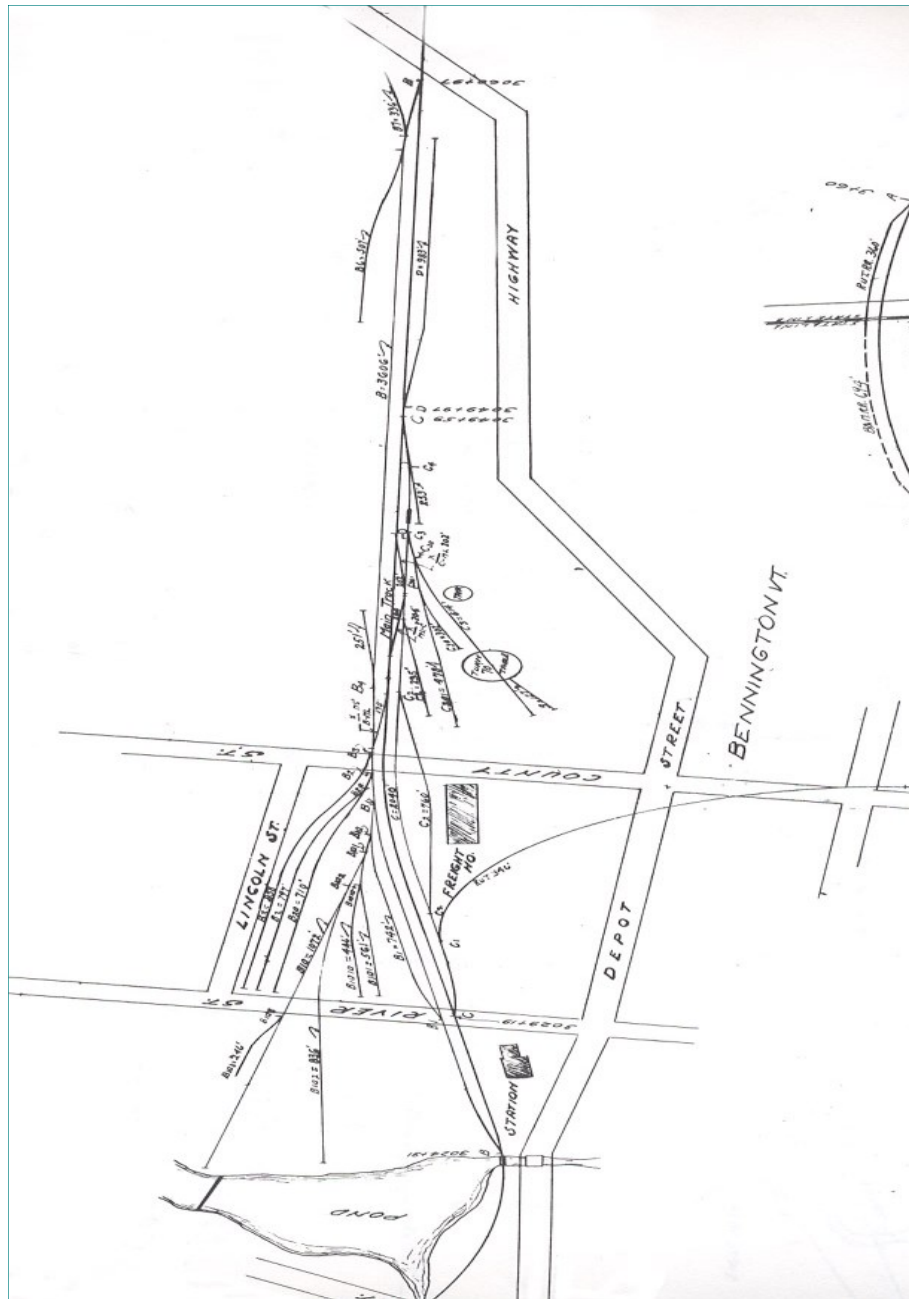
Sanborn Maps ca. 1957



Sanborn Maps ca. 1957

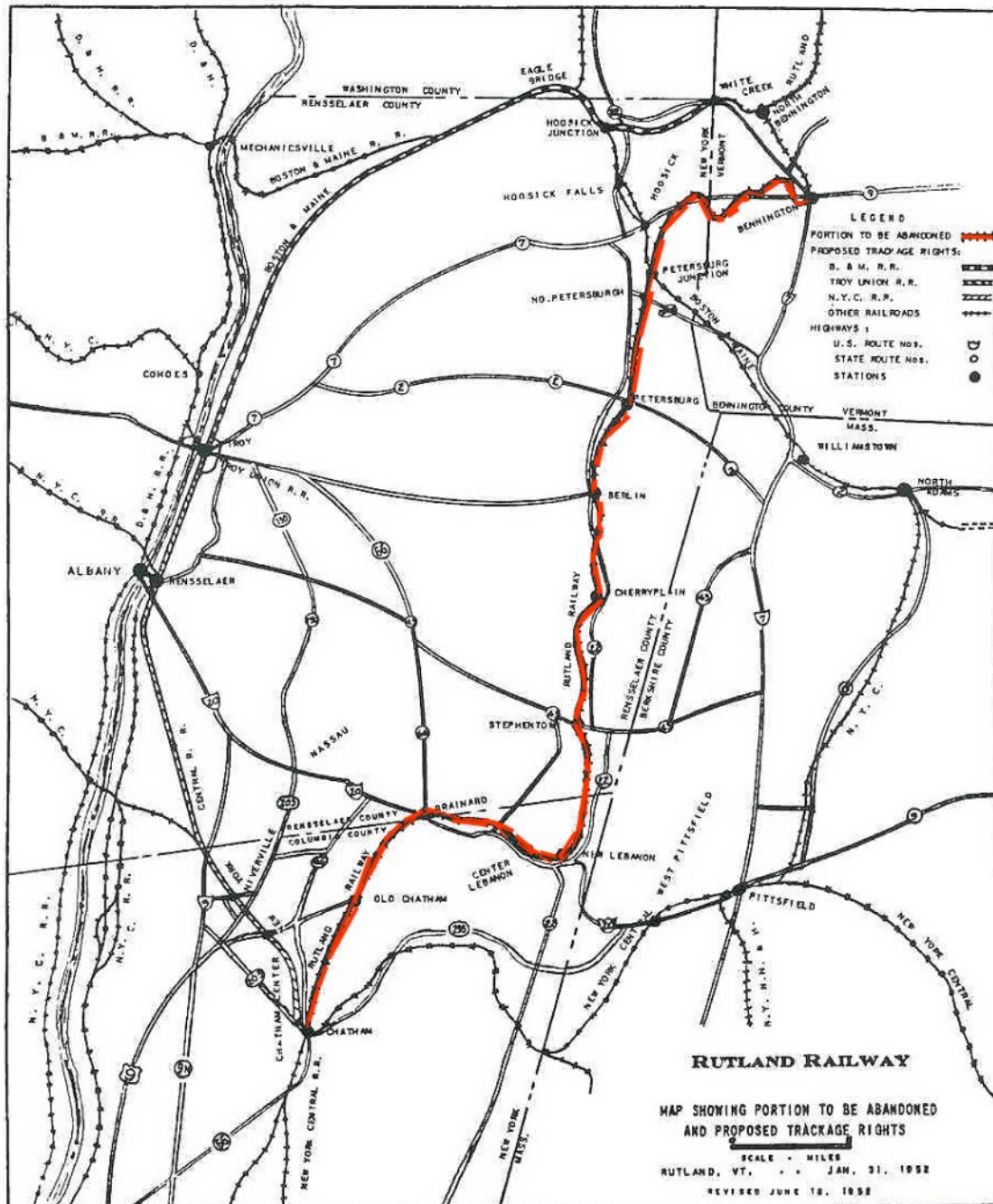


Rutland Railroad Company Map of downtown Bennington ca. 1934



[This map courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society]

Map of the Proposed Abandonment of the Corkscrew Division, ca. 1952.



[This map courtesy of the Rutland Railroad Historical Society]