

Bethinking of Old Orleans

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STEAM, SPEED AND PASSENGERS



The photograph shown here was taken in 1900 at the Medina Depot on the New York Central R.R. It surely indicates great activity with the number of people using passenger cars. Both these trains shown, were taking people back and forth to the Orleans County Fair in Albion. By using a train during the last century people could get places as fast as we can now by car.

The Rochester, Lockport and Niagara Falls, N.Y. R.R. was organized April 24, 1834 with a Capital stock of \$175,000. The officers included Alexis Ward and Roswell Burrows of Albion and others from Rochester and Brockport.

On May 15, 1837 the Legislature of the State of New York passed an "act to provide for the construction of a railroad from Rochester to Lockport." The capital stock should be \$400,000 divided into shares of fifty dollars each. Among the provisions of this act were the following requirements:

"The corporation may charge not to exceed four cents per mile for passengers and baggage. They must commence work and spend \$150,000 within two years and shall finish and be in operation within five years from the passage of this act. Also during such time as the Erie Canal shall be navigable the corporation shall pay to the canal commissioners such tolls on all goods and property transported upon such road except the baggage of passengers, as are charged upon like property on said canal and the canal board shall prescribe the mode of such payments."

But like so many things, it took a lot more time than the original expectations. It was not until June 1, 1852 that the first timetable was published. It

listed three trains each way daily except Sunday on which day there would be two. On June 25, 1852 the first train was run over the road from Rochester to Holley. It was in charge of conductor Goodale, drawn by Engine - Niagara No. 153 with James E. Baker as the engineer and was a mixed train of passengers and freight cars. On June 30 of that year the first real passenger train covered the whole line. The train contained the officers and directors, Rochester city officials and the press and was greeted along the line with cannons and cheering people at all the stations. It was in charge of George H. Burroughs, Conductor, drawn by Engine "Willenk" No. 137 with Mark Wells, engineer. The entire line was seventy-seven miles long. The last passenger service was discontinued on November 26, 1957.

On that day the conclusion came to a colorful history which began 104 years before. It was an official act of burial, ordered by the Public Service Commission. For many years the New York Central sent a single coach each way to maintain its franchise. In 1901 a seven-coach passenger train stopped in Albion every hour on the hour from 5 a.m. to midnight. The depots in Holley, Fancher, Albion, Eagle Harbor, Knowlesville and Medina were often teeming with people seeking the trains east and west. From a diary of the 1880s it is mentioned on several occasions that a local family went to Rochester and back in a single day for shopping and business reasons. No doubt they spent 45 to 60 minutes in transit which we haven't been able to thus far improve upon 100 years later.