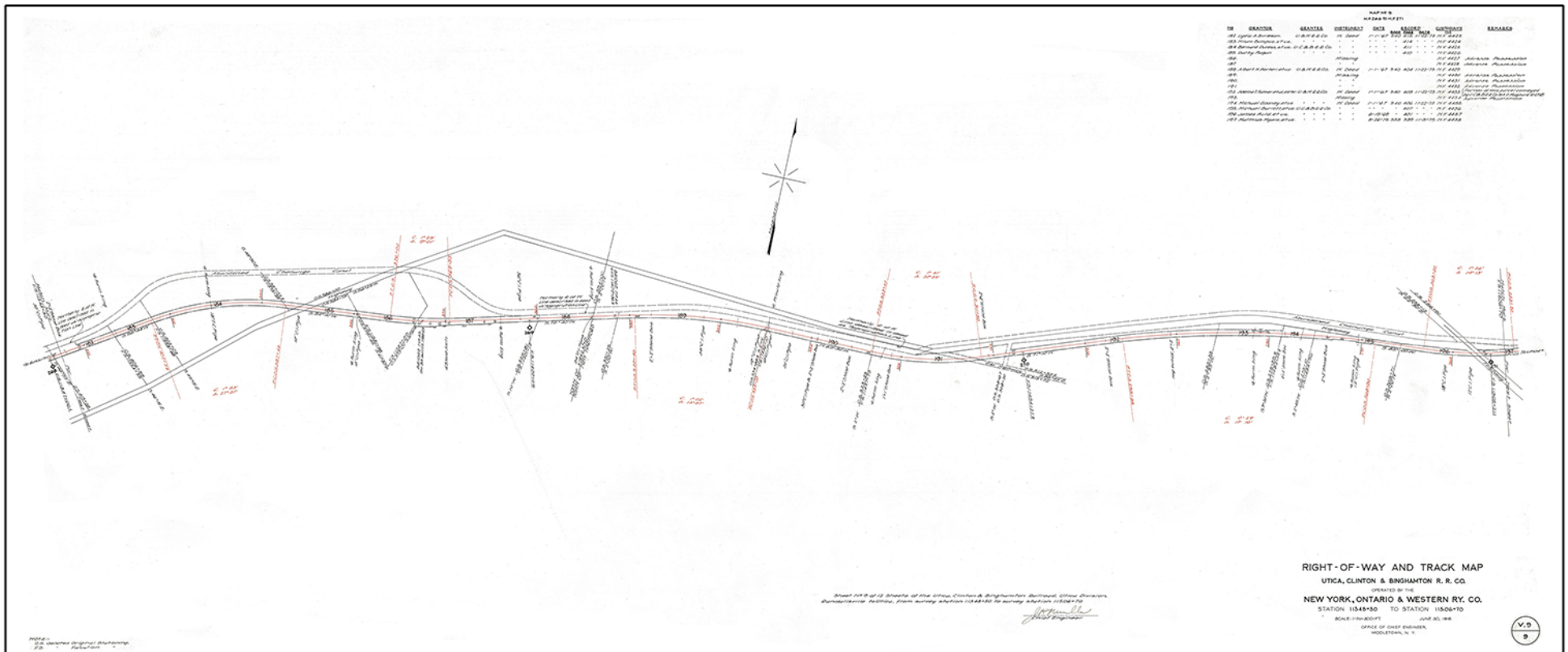


Digging Deeper With Doug Ellison - Number 4 in a Series - Mystery UC&B Connector

By Douglas J. Ellison

Introduction

While writing a manuscript on the history of the DL&W's Utica and Richfield Springs branches (now looking for a publisher) there were many interrelationships noted between the predecessor companies (UC&B and UC&SV) and their successors (NYO&W and DL&W) and later into EL, Conrail and NYS&W operations. It is an interwoven history that has brought to light many interesting facts and observations. One of these relates to the UC&B's desired entry into downtown Utica with steam power and connection with the New York Central, via trackage rights over the UC&SV, in the late 1860's, which created a physical but never used connector track. This side light of history has created a bit of wonder and mystery which has also highlighted the rarely reported fact that a portion of the original extension of the UC&B's steam route was realigned and was used as the main line of the New York, Westshore & Buffalo when they came to town in 1883. So presented here is for your enjoyment is a little sleuthing and research in trying to figure out just where that unused connector might have been located and some of the reasons why it was never used.



NYO&W Val Map from MP 268 to MP 271 (south of New Hartford).

History is full of intriguing mysteries and sometimes even with extensive sleuthing there still doesn't seem to be clear-cut answers. As related to railroading there is what someone once observed; what the train crew reported, what the dispatcher recorded and what really happened. Such is the problem in digging up the past and trying to piece it together to recreate an event or better understand one's knowledge of certain subject matter. Hence is the case of the mysterious unused connector between the Utica Clinton & Binghamton Railroad and the Utica Chenango and Susquehanna Valley south of Utica, NY in the late 1860's.

To better understand what we are talking about, it is best to refresh the events and particulars leading up to the connector in the first place. The genesis of the NYO&W's Utica Division that ran from a connection with the main line at Randallville (originally called Smith's Valley) into Utica to the New York Central was the Utica City Railroad Company incorporated on July 24, 1862 with John Butterfield as President. Utica was already served by the New York Central formed in 1853 by the combination of several smaller lines parallel to the Erie Canal from Albany to Buffalo, and the Black River & Utica which had attained Boonville to the north in 1855. What Utica wanted was a connection south to the coal fields of Pennsylvania to enhance their manufacturing capabilities and growth, and what towns to the south wanted was a connection to Utica and the greater outside world via the New York Central or the Erie Canal. John Butterfield was already well known for his Overland Mail stage service from Memphis and St. Louis to San Francisco and for stringing telegraph lines all over New York State and founding the American Express Company. He was a true mover and shaker and transportation and communication entrepreneur.

The Utica City Railroad laid track down Genesee Street on an easement granted by the City of Utica and ran the first horse car from Baggs Square, near the New York Central depot, south to New Hartford on December 5, 1863. Seeking to expand south, the company changed its name to the Utica & Waterville Railroad on April 13, 1864. This new name connoted a possible terminal in Waterville, but the initial focus and goal was to reach Clinton. The Genesee Street trackage was restricted to horse power, but the idea was to provide a steam railroad connection to Clinton. In January 1865 the company bought a steam dummy, a locomotive, passenger car and baggage car all in one compact unit. This steam dummy was test run over the New York Central to Rome and received very favorably.

Construction on the Clinton Extension began on January 3, 1866 and opened on September 3rd. However, it was not really a true through route since horses had to provide the mode of power between the steam dummy connection at New Hartford and Baggs Square in downtown Utica. Although the principals of the U&W were well connected within the City of Utica, the road was viewed with some contempt as the poor bastard stepchild road as opposed to the UC&SV (later DL&W), which was incorporated early in 1866 with plans to build south for a direct rail connection to the coalfields of Pennsylvania. The UC&SV was granted an easement down Schuyler Street in West Utica for access south and up the Sauquoit Creek valley. By November 1867 the UC&SV had reached Waterville and so the U&W had a change of plan, or at least name, becoming the Utica, Clinton & Binghamton Railroad on March 25, 1868. Waterville was off their destination list as the UC&SV had already beat them there, but the towns to the south of Clinton along the Chenango Canal and into the Chenango Valley were ripe for a railroad. However, once again their plans were foiled in that by 1868 the UC&SV was already down to Sherburne and the New York & Oswego Midland was building their line, which would cut through Chenango County as it went from Oswego to Norwich, Sidney and then into the Catskills towards New York. The Midland and UC&B would meet at Smith's Valley when the UC&B arrived there in September 1870 and that would be the termination of the UC&B and any greater dreams they may have harbored.

Sometime after the name change to UC&B, the directors understood that the key to their success, if not

survival was to be able to get a steam connection into Utica and connect with the New York Central. Passenger coaches and even some freight cars traveled through from Utica to Clinton and points south as the railroad was built getting a change from steam to horse power for the final journey from the horse car barn located near the present site of Oneida Warehouse, down to Genesee Street, over the Sauquoit Creek and up into the City on the double tracked Genesee Street trackage.

Towards this end, sometime circa 1869 an agreement was made between the UC&SV and UC&B for a connector that would allow the UC&B steam operations into the City via UC&SV trackage rights. This may not have been as difficult as first imagined as there were certain key people that were members of each other's board of directors. John Butterfield was the President of the UC&B, but was also on the board of the UC&SV. Lewis Lawrence was the President of the UC&SV, and also a board member of the UC&B. It was essentially a Utica good ole boys network, competing but unified in bringing to Utica the cheap coal, and lines of rail communication needed to make it a great city, and making a few bucks on it also.

Now for a little mystery, this connector was built, but never used. Why would this be? This is where we have to do some sleuthing. I'll put forth my best effort, but if anyone has additional information or clues, maybe we together can create the conclusive story.

While both roads were under the management of the local Utica boys and events in their growth were still transpiring, there was room for accommodation. The UC&SV made no bones about their goal being to bring cheap coal to the Sauquoit Valley and Utica. UC&SV's strategy seems to have been to woo both the DL&W and D&H, the two major coal and transportation companies and see whom they could lure in. Towards that end, they built south towards Chenango County where at the southern end of that Valley was the Syracuse, Binghamton & New York Railroad with connections to DL&W coal, and also built out towards Otsego County and Richfield Springs with plans to connect with D&H coal. Originally the plan was for the "Susquehanna Division" to connect with the planned Rondout & Oswego at Colliers(ville) for a water connection of D&H coal off the D&H Canal. When the R&O failed to progress their construction the goal changed to Oneonta for a connection to the A&S which would get D&H coal via the new Jefferson Railroad.

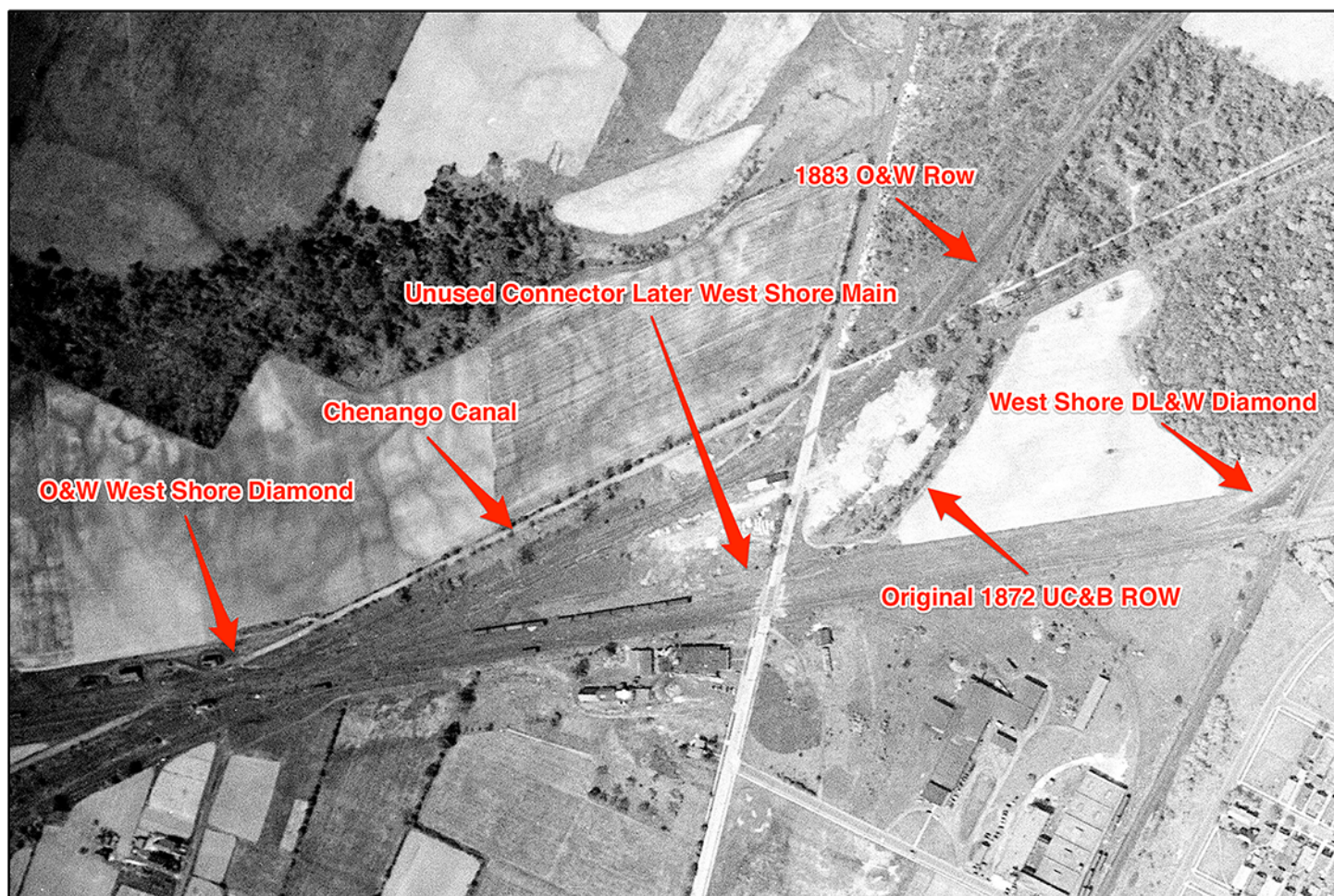
The UC&B was a little more nebulous in purpose, looking to connect communities more like Butterfield had done with his local stage lines. Clintonites, for example, were enthusiastic about Uticans coming down for peace, tranquility, fresh air and relaxation, and other communities were eager for a rail connection to enhance their commercial enterprises and quicken the pace of transport over that of the lock ridden northern section of the seasonal Chenango Canal, poor roads and expensive turnpikes.

It is now evident to us today that by late 1869 the UC&SV and DL&W were in serious discussions about a connection at Chenango Forks with the SB&NY. It would also be evident by early 1870 that the planned terminus in Oneonta would never be achieved as DL&W was in no way interested in rival D&H getting any of the coal action. With the DL&W leasing the UC&SV in April 1870, the UC&B was then forced to look to the Midland who would be their southern connection. The Midland was allied with the D&H through the connection at Sidney Plains, and the UC&B was a conduit for rival D&H coal into Utica and the Mohawk Valley. Indeed by mid 1870 the heads of the UC&B, Midland and D&H were meeting with just that intent. With these quickly evolving state of affairs, and perhaps a timing of the connection being built in mid to later 1869, it is likely that Sam Sloan of the DL&W nixed any idea of executing the rights of use of the UC&B over the UC&SV. There is considerable speculation here, and without specific dates and timing it seems at least plausible. The local boys now had higher masters who would have substantial investments in their properties.

Also by June 1870, the City was getting frustrated with the Genesee Street street running, even if it was only

by horses. The light also probably went on in their heads that with the April announcement of the DL&W lease of the UC&SV and the potential of rival competitive D&H coal it would be advantageous on their part if they allowed the UC&B access for a steam connection. This they did and it all came together when in January 1871 the stockholders and board of the UC&B agreed for their road to be leased by the NY&OM and the lease guaranteed by the D&H Co. Survey and easement agreements were made, and the main line extended from a point in New Hartford into Utica for a connection with the New York Central and a passenger station at the American Hotel. This route extended northerly from where the Clinton Extension line turned towards Genesee Street leaving the route alongside the Canal. Upon completion of this extension on December 28, 1871 and the first train over the line on January 4, 1872, the UC&B was leased to the NY&OM on January 15th.

Now for trying to solve where the unused connector was located and understanding a subtle nuance of this new steam connection. The new line ran parallel to the Chenango Canal and into Capron, a section of New Hartford where it turned east towards French's then north to the Canal. Later in 1882 – 1883 when the West Shore was surveyed and built, the section where they turned east and then north by French's was bought by the West Shore and partially adopted for their main line in the vicinity of the current French Road. The UC&B was shifted on a straighter alignment to the north with a different Chenango Canal Crossing. What is interesting about this, is that the original alignment was built with a kink or reverse curves if you will which seems odd to start with.



An aerial photo from 1941 shows the area between the O&W -West Shore Diamond (to the left) and the DL&W - West Shore diamond (to the right). It also shows the new post 1883 O&W alignment to the Chenango Canal crossing used until 1971 by O&W / DL&W / EL and the pre-1883 alignment as a tree line just east of the French Road crossing. Detail from Image in O&WRHS Archives.

A review of both O&W and West Shore Val Maps reveals this alignment change with property acquisition dates and also gives a clue to the possible unused connector. While it is clear that the UC&B had two alignments and the change was made upon the construction of the West Shore in 1883, the West Shore maps show property purchased from the UC&B east of present French Road crossing and considerably east of where the UC&B had turned north to the original canal crossing. So why would the UC&B own any property here which all but connected to the UC&SV at the approximate location of the 1883 UC&SV (DL&W) and West Shore diamond? Well, unless this was the route of the unused connector. That too might explain the strangely curved original alignment crossing the canal. If the mysterious unused connector had indeed turned east at what would become the O&W / West Shore diamond, then the new steam connection may have taken off that alignment, but had to curve left or north away from the direct line to the UC&SV in order to cross the canal and forge their way into the Canal Branch area on the way to downtown.



CR 2293 is seen from the embankment of the Route 12 overpass looking east towards the West Shore - DL&W diamond in 1981. This train is shoving back from the O&W the other side of the bridge. The view looks towards the French Road crossing on the alignment of the original UC&B steam connection into Utica, later taken over by the West Shore Main Line. Evidence suggests that the unused connector extended straight beyond French Road just north of the West Shore centerline track alignment to the diamond with the UC&SV, later DL&W. In the distance beyond the diamond the West Shore cut across South Utica until the 1971 consolidation after which they used the EL track via Schuyler Street and a turnout at the former WS - DL&W diamond. Here we see the Conrail ex EL crew shoving back towards the ex DL&W / EL main to the switch which will take them out to the former EL main.

The Val Maps and property dates seem to justify that conclusion on several counts:

The dates associated with the steam extension into Utica.

The dates associated with the construction of the West Shore.

But nothing seems to correlate to the 1866 extension to Clinton, nor do the dates along the easement that became the West Shore correlate with an earlier than 1871 route.

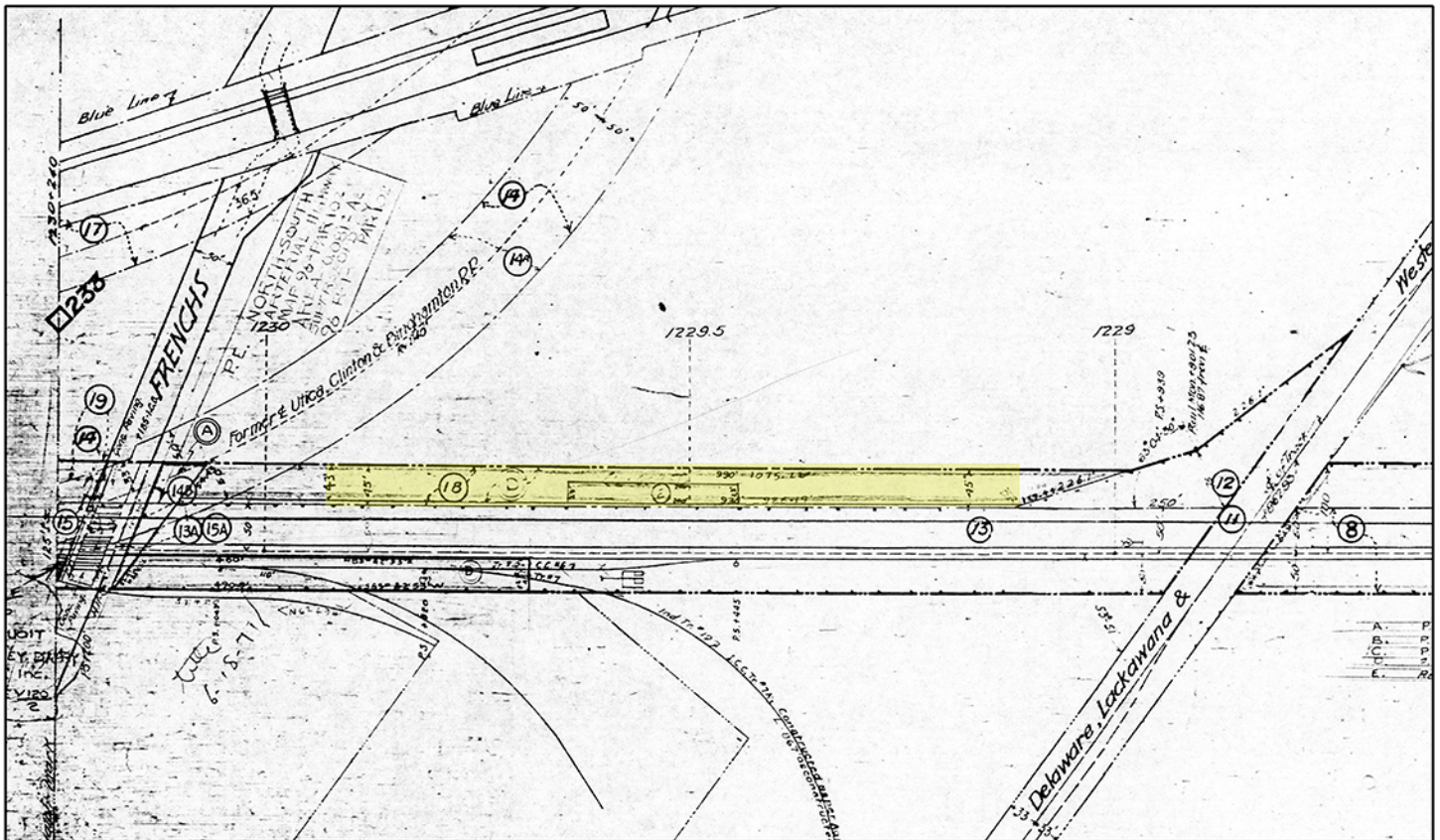
Number	Grantor	Grantee	Date	Conveyance	Record	Covenants & Remarks
Serial	Number					
1	929	Elizabeth L. Van Vorst & H. N.Y.C. & H.R.R. Co.	7-15-1862	Var. Deed	418-112	
	932	N.Y.C. & H.R.R. Co.		Grant		Right to construct & operate street surface Ry. upon Auburn Avenue.
2	930	Town of New Hartford	12-2-1862	Supr. Crt. Order		
	931	U.C. & B.R.R. Co.	11-23-1862	Grant		Right to cross U.C. & B. tracks.
3	933	William H. Watson, et al.	6-16-1863	Supr. Crt. Order	418-160	
4						Arnold Avenue. See Note Map #1.
5	901	Amey J. Perkins, et al.	1-27-1863	Supr. Crt. Order	418-149	
6	935	William H. Watson, et al.	6-16-1863	Supr. Crt. Order	418-160	
7	934	William H. Watson, et al.	6-16-1863	Supr. Crt. Order	418-160	
8	900	Amey J. Perkins, et al.	1-27-1863	Supr. Crt. Order	418-149	
9	936A	Cliver A. Kingsbury, Exec.	11-5-1906	Ex. Deed	626-36	
	936	Utica Trust & Deposit Co.	4-19-1907	Q.C. Deed	631-168	
10	937	Amey J. Perkins	10-8-1863	Var. Deed	418-112	
11	947	D.L. & W.R.R. Co. Lessee	9-20-1862	Grant		Right to cross U.C. & B.R.R. Co. tracks.
12	940	John French & W.	4-21-1864	Var. Deed	418-21	
13	939	John French & W.	3-6-1862	Var. Deed	409-161	Grantor reserves crossings.
14	946	U.C. & B.R.R. Co.	2-2-1865	Deed	423-140	
	946	Delaware & Hudson Canal Co.	10-3-1864	Q.C. Deed	423-136	
	946	Theodore Houston & W.	2-11-1865	Deed	418-29	
	946	Ashtel Green	11-16-1867	Deed	418-30	
15	945	U.C. & B.R.R. Co.	2-2-1865	Deed	423-142	
	945	Delaware & Hudson Canal Co.	10-3-1864	Q.C. Deed	423-138	
16	944	John French & W.	3-6-1862	Var. Deed	411-376	
	944	Edward F. Winslow & W.	2-21-1863	Deed	423-134	
17	943	John French & W.	3-6-1862	Var. Deed	411-376	
	943	Edward F. Winslow & W.	2-21-1863	Deed	423-134	
A	2988	N.Y.C.R.R. Co.	11-4-1980	Approp. P.E.		State Map 95 R-1 Pct. 102 0.081A

MAP No 10 M.R.271 TO M.R.274									
NO	GRANTOR	GRANTEE	INSTRUMENT	DATE	BOOK	PAGE	RECORD DATE	CUSTODIAN'S NO	REMARKS
197	Matthias Myers, et ux.	U.C. & B.R.R. Co.	Var. Deed	8-26-75	358	389	11-5-75	N.Y. 4438	
198	Louis T. Sherrill, et ux.	" " "	"	10-15-81	415	155	3-28-82	N.Y. 4439	
199	Lewis Sherrill, et ux.	" " "	"	10-0-68	340	325	11-22-73	N.Y. 4441	2nd Parcel.
200	Thomas Kelly, et ux.	" " "	"	1-1-67	"	398	"	N.Y. 4440	
201	Lewis Sherrill, et ux.	" " "	"	10-0-68	"	395	"	N.Y. 4441	1st Parcel, Right to take gravel.
202	Francis Butler, et ux.	U.C. & B.R.R. Co.	"	1-1-67	"	400	"	N.Y. 4442	
203	Joseph A. Steadman, et ux.	U.C. & B.R.R. Co.	"	4-24-72	341	411	12-20-73	N.Y. 4443	
204			Missing						
205	Squire M. Mason	" " "	Var. Deed	10-17-73	"	393	"	N.Y. 4444	
206	Joseph M. Laughlin, et ux.	" " "	"	9-12-71	"	400	"	N.Y. 4445	Portion of this parcel was conveyed by U.C. & B.R.R. Co. to N.Y.W.S. & B.R. Co. 2-2-85 and by D. & H.C. Co. to N.Y.W.S. & B.R. Co. 10-3-84
207	James McKie, et ux.	" " "	"	"	"	398	"	N.Y. 4446	1st Parcel.
208	Edward F. Winslow, et ux.	" " "	Deed	2-21-83	423	134	2-4-85	N.Y. 4493	
209	John French, et ux.	" " "	Var. Deed	8-20-71	341	414	12-20-73	N.Y. 4447	Portion of this parcel was conveyed by U.C. & B.R.R. Co. to N.Y.W.S. & B.R. Co. 2-2-85 and by D. & H.C. Co. to N.Y.W.S. & B.R. Co. 10-3-84 also to Theodore Houston by U.C. & B.R. Co. 2-2-85 and by D. & H.C. Co. 10-3-84.
210	Supt. of Public Works.	D. & H.C. Co.	Grant	5-28-82				N.Y. 3918	Permission to change location of bridge over Chenango Canal.
211	Edward F. Winslow, et ux.	U.C. & B.R.R. Co.	Deed	2-21-83	423	134	2-4-85	N.Y. 4493	2nd Parcel.
212	James Benton, et ux.	" " "	Var. Deed	8-25-71	341	401	12-20-73	N.Y. 4448	
213			Missing					N.Y. 4449	
214			"						
215	Aurilla B. Clark, et al.	" " "	Var. Deed	10-17-72	341	423	12-20-73	N.Y. 4450	
216	Daniel H. Craze, et ux.	D. & H.C. Co.	"	8-27-83	426	208	9-15-83	N.Y. 1356	
217	Leonard K. Beebe, et ux.	U.C. & B.R.R. Co.	Q.C. Deed	9-13-71	341	425	12-20-73	N.Y. 4451	Releases claims for damages for laying track in Hamilton St.
	William B. Taylor, et ux.	" " "	"	"	"	426	"	N.Y. 4452	

MAP No 9 M.R.266 TO M.R.271									
NO	GRANTOR	GRANTEE	INSTRUMENT	DATE	BOOK	PAGE	RECORD DATE	CUSTODIAN'S NO	REMARKS
182	Lydell A. Burleson.	U. & H.R.R. Co.	Var. Deed	1-1-67	340	415	11-22-73	N.Y. 4423	
183	Hiram Bumpus, et ux.	" " "	"	"	"	414	"	N.Y. 4424	
184	Bernard Duress, et ux.	U.C. & B.R.R. Co.	"	"	"	411	"	N.Y. 4425	
185	Darby Reigan	" " "	"	"	"	410	"	N.Y. 4426	
186			Missing					N.Y. 4427	Adverse Possession
187			"					N.Y. 4428	Adverse Possession
188	Albert H. Porter, et ux.	U. & H.R.R. Co.	Var. Deed	1-1-67	340	404	11-22-73	N.Y. 4429	
189			Missing					N.Y. 4430	Adverse Possession
190			"					N.Y. 4431	Adverse Possession
191			"					N.Y. 4432	Adverse Possession
192	Adeline T. Palmer, et ux.	U. & H.R.R. Co.	Var. Deed	1-1-67	340	403	11-22-73	N.Y. 4433	Portion of this parcel conveyed by U.C. & B.R.R. Co. to D. Maynard 10-27-80
193			Missing					N.Y. 4434	Adverse Possession
194	Michael Gooney, et ux.	" " "	Var. Deed	1-1-67	340	406	11-22-73	N.Y. 4435	
195	Michael Barrett, et ux.	U.C. & B.R.R. Co.	"	"	"	407	"	N.Y. 4436	
196	James Auld, et ux.	" " "	"	6-15-60	"	401	"	N.Y. 4437	
197	Matthias Myers, et ux.	" " "	"	8-26-75	358	389	11-5-75	N.Y. 4438	

So is the conclusion valid ? Some things are still a mystery and when the layers are peeled back more mysteries cloud the search for the answer. The Utica Weekly Herald newspaper of August 5, 1871 says the iron of the unused connector was to be torn up and reused. So we know it existed and was still there in 1871 when the steam extension construction was commenced. That news article also gives a precise description of the new route complete with the twists and turns as presented on the Val Maps, but also states, that “the line of the extension leaves the present road about one mile from New Hartford village. This is some distance beyond the cut-off built sometime since to connect with the Utica, Chenango & Susquehanna Valley, and never used.”

Is this quote a key piece to the puzzle ? What does it mean ? Does it negate the presumption of the route of the unused connector ? If so, then why did the UC&B end up selling Property #18 on Val Section 120 Map 1 to the West Shore ? Why did the UC&B even own it if it were not related to the connector ?



A zoomed view of the West Shore Val Map at the diamond of the DL&W. This shows property bought by the West Shore from the UC&B interests that was east of French Road and abutting the UC&SV.

When the extension to Utica was completed in 1871, the original line connecting to Genesee Street was torn out sometime probably in 1872. In early 1898 the New Hartford Canning Company which was involved with seasonal canning activity (mainly sweet corn) decided to build a can plant which would be an all year operation to supplement their canning business. It appears the new can plant was on or very near the site of the Utica Street Railway horse barns and the probable change point between horse power and steam power. Therefore the “cinder path” which had been the old railroad was rebuilt to serve this business.

Today it is part of the NYS&W’s New Hartford Industrial track. The DL&W and EL called the switch back route the Campion Spur, and today it serves Oneida Warehouse, the location of the 1898 built can factory.

Where the two lines meet was known as Shermans, as the canning factory was near that location and by the canal. Mr. Sherman who owned it was the father of John S. Sherman, Vice President of the U.S. under

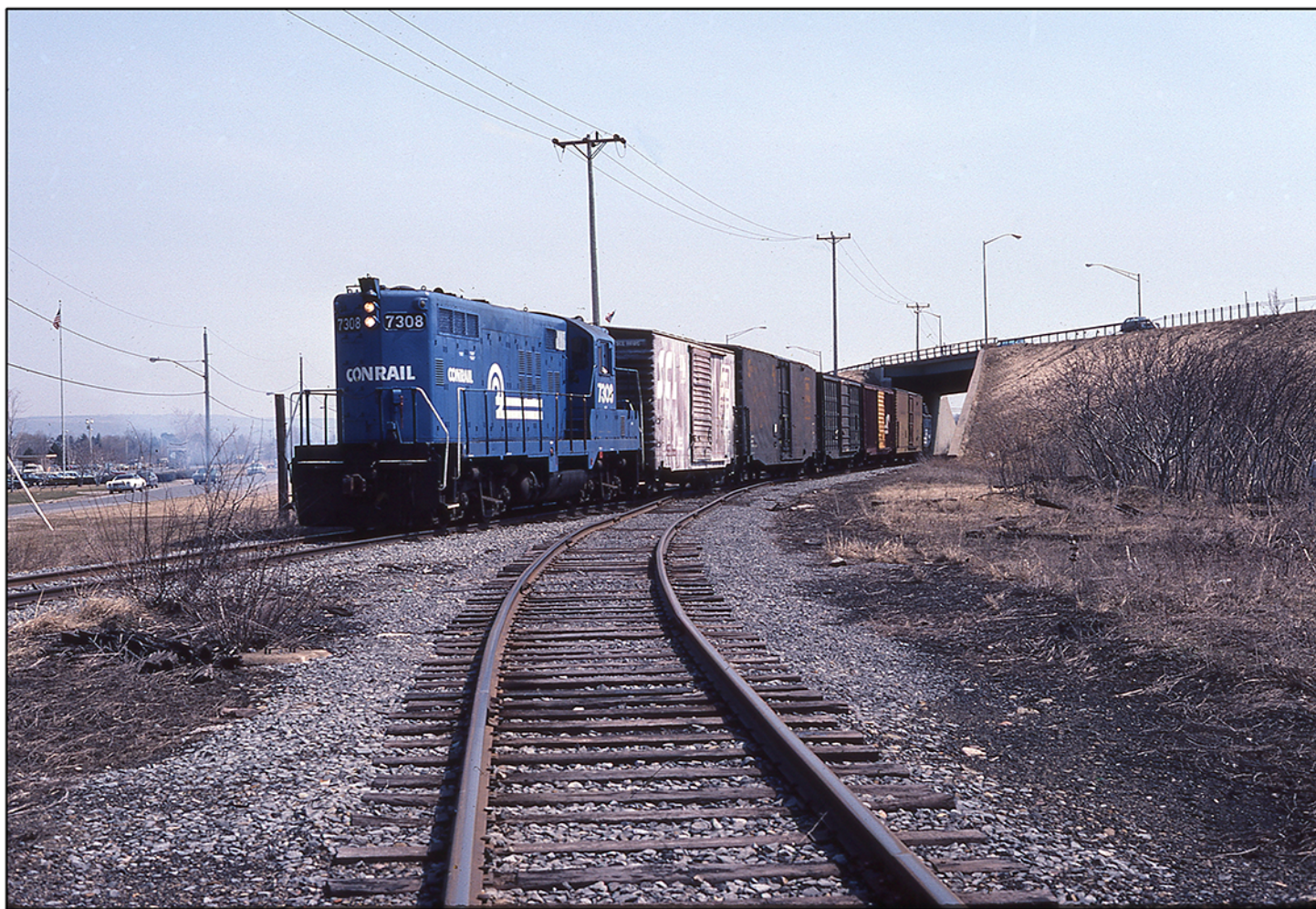
William Howard Taft. Taft was a Republican, and so was J.S. Sherman, but the old man happened to be a staunch Democrat.



CR 7308 is backing down the Campion Spur. This is the location known as Shermans where the steam connection diverged from the old Genesee Street route. The Campion Spur the train is backing down was the route of trains coming up from Clinton and curving away from the Canal and heading down to Genesee Street. Straight ahead would be the route into Utica for steam power. April 16, 1982, last run of Conrail. Doug Ellison photo.



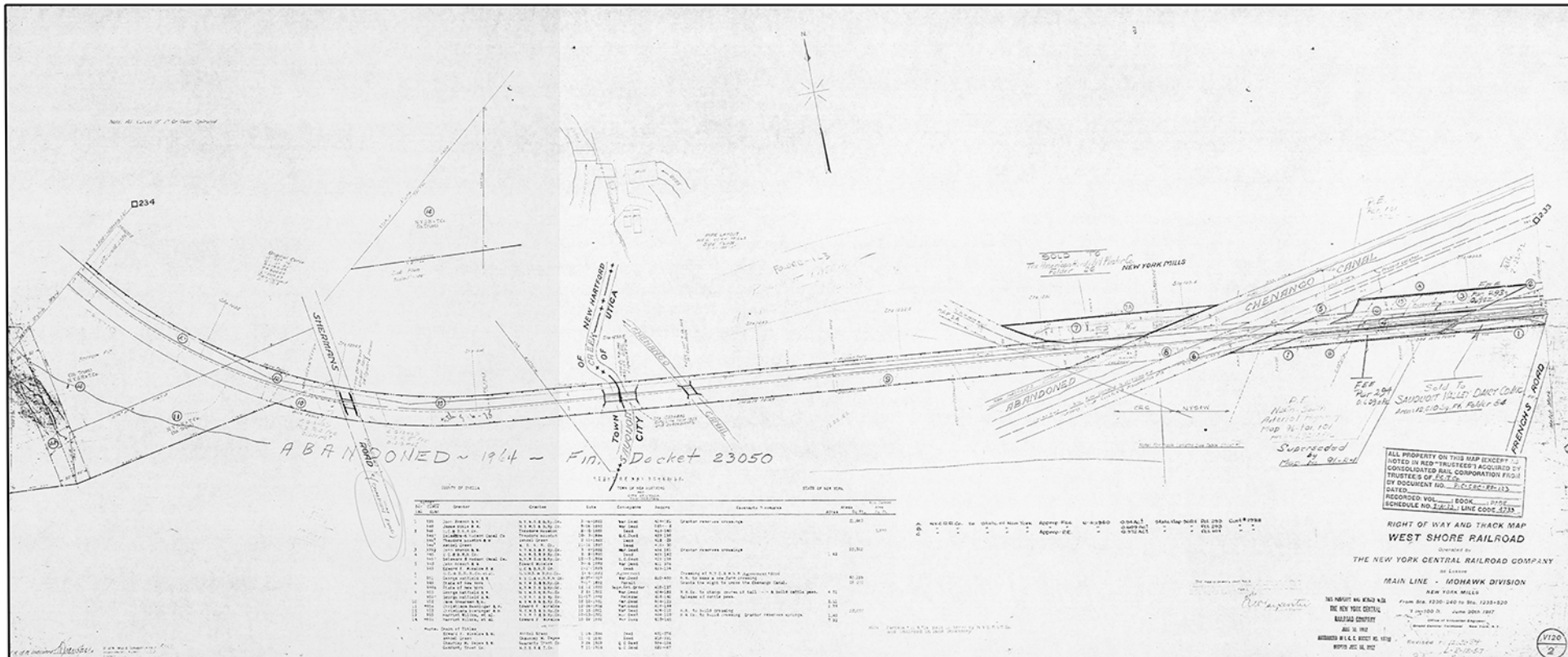
A view the same day as the train is at Mohawk Containers (now Oneida Warehouse) just north of Genesee Street and near the location of the old horse stables and transfer point between horse and steam power. Doug Ellison photo



CR 7308 is at the site of the former NYO&W - West Shore diamond heading for New York Mills on the West Shore on the last day of Conrail operations of these lines before NYS&W took over, April 16, 1982. The diamond was removed in 1971 and a connector switch installed so that the EL's O&W line to New Hartford could be accessed off the West Shore. Doug Ellison photo

If the route of the unused connector is correct, it is interesting to note that it actually exists and is used today by the NYSW. That is because in 1971 the Erie Lackawanna and Penn Central entered into an agreement to consolidate some Utica area trackage. The PC's former West Shore main cut right across South Utica with many at grade crossings and residential areas. By abandoning this trackage, much to the pleasure of the City of Utica and local residents and businesses, the PC could serve the remaining business west of the City on the New York Mills branch via a route down the EL's Schuyler Street running tracks to the former diamond, and then via a switch turn off to the west on their own railroad once again for the short hop over to the Mills Branch. The line west of the New York Mills branch junction had been abandoned in the mid 1960's so this line was now a long dead end spur. This consolidation would get rid of five miles of the former West Shore main, and the many grade crossings. The EL's benefit would be that they could abandon almost a mile of the worn out ex O&W trackage from Canal Branch to the West Shore Diamond. EL trains bound for the ex O&W rails would continue through Canal Branch on the former DL&W to the West Shore diamond, branch off on the new connecting switch and take a short run over the West Shore, then turn left via a new connector switch at the site of the former West Shore diamond and on to the O&W.

If the presumption of the location of the connector is correct, then 100 years after the original connector, unused, was torn out trains would take that route and use it to this day. If the presumption is incorrect, then we still have an unsolved mystery.



New York Central / West Shore Val Map Section 120, Map 2 – French Road west to O&W diamond and to New York Mills.