

History Corner

LOCAL RAILS TO TRAILS



In 1853, a railroad line was proposed to connect the New York Central line in Utica with the New York & Erie line in Binghamton. Several routes were studied which created rivalries between the communities of the Chenango, Oriskany, and Sauquoit Valleys. However, the Civil War intervened in 1861, so the line wasn't started until 1866 when it was extended from New Hartford to Clinton. In 1868, regular passenger service to Deansboro (at that time known as Deansville) was started. The line was again extended to Oriskany Falls and passenger service there began in February 1869. This was originally the Utica, Clinton, and

Chenango Valley Railroad and eventually became the Auburn Branch of the New York, Ontario and Western Railway which operated until 1957. The tracks and old ties were torn up sometime later, but luckily for future hikers, bikers, and skiers, the cinder bed remained.

The old railroad route is now overseen by Kirkland Trails Inc. which is hoping to connect the trail to other railroad and canal trails in the area and also possibly the Empire State Trail which runs from Albany west to Buffalo and New York City north to Rouses Point on the Canadian border.

Submitted by George Fogg