

Utica's Union Station



In the early days of the Club, transportation to hikes was often done by train from Union Station. The station will be celebrating its 110th birthday in May of 2024. Today, passengers and those who frequent the station get to walk through the same building as their ancestors, where families bid emotional farewells and welcomed service members home from war. The architects who designed Union Station were Allen H. Stem and Alfred Fellheimer of New York City. Stem was one of the designers of Grand Central Terminal in New York City. Stem and

Fellheimer's original plans for Union Station are dated December 1912 and construction began in March 1913. It was constructed three floors high of Picton granite with columns, pilasters, and window sills made of limestone. The wooden double benches can hold 500 people. A large decline in railway travel in Utica and other locations in New York happened in the 1950's when a major change in the state's transportation system occurred. When the New York State Thruway opened, it greatly jeopardized the station. In the early 1970's the building was in the crosshairs of the wrecking ball. However, there was a tenacious group of people who were not prepared to let the building go without a fight. In 1974 the Landmarks Society of Greater Utica was formed and took the lead to preserve this historic building. By 1975, it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places and therefore was safe from being demolished. In 1978, Oneida County purchased the building, making it eligible for government funding through federal transportation grants. Today, Union Station serves the community in a multitude of ways, including the DMV and other county offices located inside. Oh, the stories those walls could tell if they could talk!

Submitted by Sharon Kaelin