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THE SHEPAUG VALLEY RAILROAD:

1866 - 1948

AN AMERICAN STORY

By

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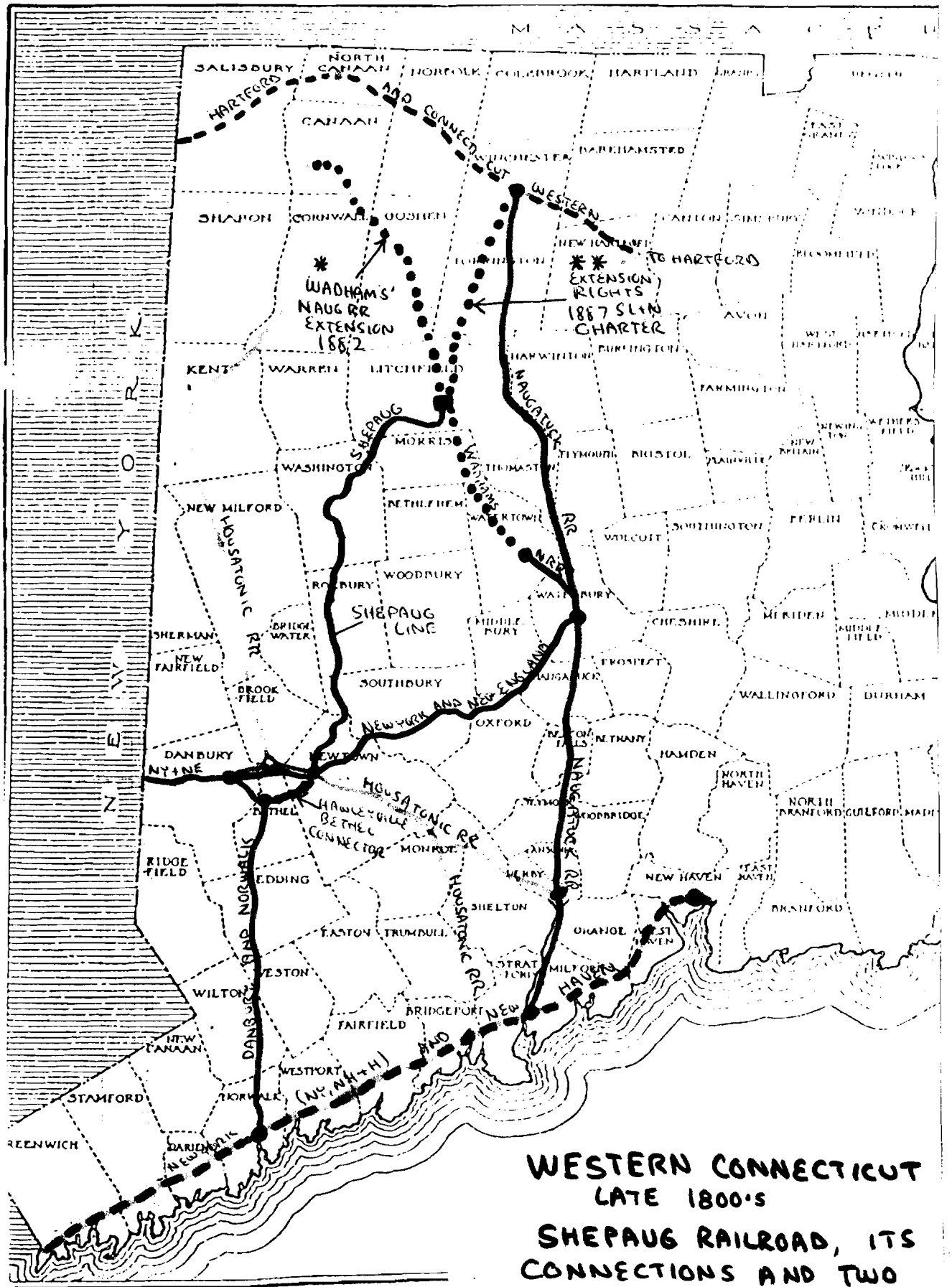
SHEPAUG VALLEY RAILROAD

SERVICE AT GREATEST EXTENT

JULY 1872

Intermediate Mileage	Station
	Litchfield
2.27	
	Lake
.75	
	Bantam
3.31	
	Morris
2.01	
	Romford
3.69	
	New Preston
1.18	
	Washington
4.32	
	Judd's Bridge
2.55	
	Roxbury (Chalybes)
3.73	
	Roxbury Falls
3.63	
	Shepaug (Southbury)
4.84	Hanover Springs
	Hawleyville
6.00	Stoney Hill (Plumtrees)
	Bethel (via Danbury and Norwalk owned tracks, leased to Shepaug)

Source: Shepaug Valley Railroad
Public Timetable
Dated: As above



WESTERN CONNECTICUT
LATE 1800's

SHEPAUG RAILROAD, ITS CONNECTIONS AND TWO EXTENSION PLANS

(RAILROADS IDENTIFIED BY NAME BEFORE INCLUSION INTO NEW YORK, NEW HAVEN & HARTFORD)

A-43

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Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, Litchfield, Connecticut had thrived as a major crossroads of two post-colonial trunk routes, the New Haven to Albany and Hartford to New York turnpikes. This Yankee hill town boasted several good hotels and taverns of reputation, was seat of its namesake county and service center for many surrounding, smaller settlements. The stagecoach lines that travelled the two turnpikes had used Litchfield as a stopover and interchange point and had thus contributed to the town a measure of prosperity. Despite this, the area's isolation, compared to later years, is astonishing.

In 1829, a traveller undertaking a journey from Litchfield to New York by stage had a rigorous two-day ordeal ahead of him. He left Litchfield at three o'clock on Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday morning and made his way through New Milford to Danbury, where he and his fellow passengers passed the night in a hotel. The stage continued at dawn the next day and was scheduled to arrive at the pier in Norwalk that afternoon in time for the steamboat connection to New York. The fare was set at $3.25 and, consuming several day's wages for a working man or clerk, was expensive.[1] Freight shipments were similarly

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[1] Dillistin, Alfred S., "Shepaug Epic" in The Lure of the Litchfield Hills, Vol. X, No. 3, Summer (June) 1949, pp. 5-7.

expensive but were handled even less expeditiously. If Litchfield were to grow, it would need an all-weather, overland, fast and reliable link to the markets its products could exploit.

Water-borne transport was the premier mode of the era but was seasonal and impractical in the Berkshire Hills. Local rivers were too shallow to pass commercially significant navigation and the dramatic vertical drop of the watershed mitigated against efficient canal construction and operation. Consequently, horse-drawn conveyance was the state of transport's art for Litchfield's commerce until 1849, when a very different kind of horse brought new promise to the town.

The railroad was a product of the industrial revolution. Whereas mankind had used water-borne and animal-drawn transport from antiquity, the capture of steam lent itself well to the mechanized commercial impulse of the mid-1800's. Powerful iron horses, running along their own rights-of-way, speedily moved hitherto unheard of weight and bulk with little regard for mud, snow, ice or extreme temperatures. Consequently, as the nation's rail system expanded, enterprise nearer the railheads gained an advantage. It was, therefor, expedient for commercial and civic elites to press for the inclusion of their towns and interests along the burgeoning rail net. In October 1849, the trains first came to Litchfield and the long distance stage coaches, unable to compete, either ceased

operations or were relegated to "feeding" the railroads from areas yet untrod by the iron horses.

The Naugatuck Railroad had first reached Litchfield en route from Devon and Waterbury to Wolcottville (today's Torrington) and Winsted. The economic benefit of the line was a disappointment for Litchfield, however, in great part because geography had played an impish trick on the town, which is large in area and topographically varied. There was some 600 feet of elevation to overcome on the six mile trek between the rail depot in East Litchfield, hard by the Naugatuck River, and the town's commercial center, perched in the highlands. The diseconomies of this arduous, team-drawn connection to the railroad were soon apparent and concerns located along the rail line in the valley prospered, while Litchfield and its hinterland in the hills did not. Without the stages' stimulation, the commercial life of the town center slumped, its vitality gone off to the Naugatuck Valley. The best hope for renewed prosperity, most believed, would be to bring rail service into the town center. Towards this end, Litchfield would certainly have its champions.

In 1860, several leading citizens of Litchfield had approached the General Assembly in Hartford and been granted a charter incorporating the Litchfield County Branch Railroad and were authorized to raise capital for the construction of their road which would run thus:

> "(from) some point at or near the Naugatuck Railroad, in the towns of Plymouth (today's Thomaston), Litchfield or Torrington; thence running westerly to the Housatonic Railroad, passing through the towns of Litchfield, Warren, Washington, New Milford and Kent, or either of them, and reaching said Housatonic Railroad at some point in said towns of New Milford or Kent."[2]

Among the local boosters supporting the new line were Litchfield's Henry R. Coit, George M. Woodruff and Henry W. Buel, all of whom we will hear more later. The charter was granted with the proviso attached that, should the sum of $50,000 not be spent upon the line's construction within three years, the corporation would be void and its authority revoked. In any event, perhaps due to the distractions of the Civil War, the road was never built, but the flame of commercial optimism that had begun to spread across the country prior to the war was never doused. As the tide of the conflict had swung in the Union's favor, men of vision had begun to look beyond the hostilities, marshalling their energies for more gainful pursuits.

In 1863, Edwin McNeill, Major, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, railroad builder, Litchfield native and ambitious, progressively minded modern, had returned from his duties to recuperate in his home town. McNeill viewed the stunted condition of Litchfield's commerce and began to seek support locally for the surveying, construction and operation of a railroad that would serve the Town Center and provide direct passenger and freight connections with the population,

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[2] Private Laws of Connecticut, Vol. V., June 23, 1860, p. 382.

transshipment and industrial centers of Southern Connecticut and New York.

To be fair, the idea of a railroad approaching Litchfield from the south and west dated from 1837, when interested parties had commissioned an exploratory survey of prospective routes. In the 1850's, the Litchfield Branch and other rail surveys were undertaken, but the necessary equation of technology, capital, plan and people did not equal action until the late 1860's. Indeed, the technological and financial wherewithal to build a road through such difficult terrain as the Berkshire Foothills may not have been economically available before the Civil War. Now, thought Major McNeill, the time had come, but his first option was not a Shepaug River route, but one of gentler grades and fewer miles and curves.

McNeill had first sought, under the auspices of the Boston, Hartford and Erie Railroad, to construct a connector line between Litchfield and the Naugatuck Railroad at Waterbury, twenty miles south. This plan had great promise, as the Major sought to run the tracks through Litchfield to Massachusetts, making a connection there with the Boston, Hartford and Erie's line to the West. George Flynn credits McNeill with an understanding of the value to Litchfield of location on a through rail route rather than a stub-ended feeder line, and points out that the Major had always planned routes with immediate or eventual connections at both ends. Regardless, the reasons for the failure of the

Waterbury scheme are hard to ascertain, but there is some evidence that the Naugatuck Railroad, fearing competition for its service at East Litchfield, may have sabotaged the plan.[3]

Stymied here, McNeill went once again to his maps, and settled on a second route for his railroad. It would travel southwest along the natural drainage plan of Bantam Lake, Connecticut's largest natural body of water, and follow the lake's outlet, the Bantam River, to its confluence with the Shepaug. From there it would follow the Shepaug to its mouth on the Housatonic, bridging that, and then follow Pond Brook to Hawleyville, where it would connect with the Housatonic and the New York and New England Railroads. McNeill's efforts were rewarded when this plan was chartered by the General Assembly in 1866.[4] The project was named "the Shepaug Valley Railroad"and work began towards enlisting financial support for construction.

In McNeill's plan, the towns along the line would raise a great share of the railroad's initial capital, partly from private investment, but substantially from municipal subscription. True to the traditions of New England government, this meant passing motions in town meetings. It would seem that simple majorities of those voters present would have sufficed to approve the stock purchases, but the

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[3]See Champlin, John, The Chronicles of Sirrom, pamphlet, in the collection of the Litchfield Historical Society, Litchfield, Connecticut.

[4]Special Laws of Connecticut, Vol. VI, June 30, 1866, p. 96.

General Assembly had stipulated that a two-thirds majority, with the yea voters representing greater than half of the municipality's Grand List, would be necessary for the passage of these motions.

The broadly based support that would be needed to carry these issues would unite progressively minded commercial and civic leaders with surplus generating farmers, whose produce would command a good price in rail served markets. This was the target audience that McNeill intended for his 1868 prospectus:

> "The aggregate fall of the Shepaug River from Bantam Lake to the mouth of the Shepaug is 800 feet. Lakes tributary to the river furnish a natural reservoir of a capacity of 2,000 acres. The volume of water, its great fall and the command without cost of 2,000 acres of flowage, designate this as the best stream in the state for manufacturing purposes. Its close proximity to the Pennsylvania coal fields as compared with other sections of New England, is a reasonable guarantee that the establishment of factories would follow, immediately, the opening of the road."[5]

Existing commerce in the Shepaug Valley would have led no one to dispute McNeill's unabashed boosterism, and the arrival of the railroad could only serve to expand the markets available for local products. Indeed, for a valley supporting fewer than 7,000 inhabitants in the 1870 census, the range of economic activity was impressive.

There was high grade iron in the Litchfield Hills with the operation at Mine Hill in Roxbury yielding the particularly valuable siderite ore, widely sought after for

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[5]Flynn, George J., "Puritan Valley Line" in Railroad Magazine, Vol. 45, No. 3, April 1948, p. 50.

surgical tools and precision instruments. At other sites, extensive deposits of marble and granite were easily accessible near the surface. Well stocked ice houses thrived alongside the 2,000 acres of lake surface advertised in McNeill's prospectus, and a lucrative garnet industry near Roxbury Falls provided pre-carbon paper America with copy transfer capability. Silica was mined for paint, sandpaper and grinding, while many saw mills, numbering ten in Roxbury alone, provided lumber for construction. Yet, all of the valley's commerce was not in raw materials. Manufacturing was considerably developed.

An extensive hatting industry, which had had its main markets in the South disrupted by the Civil War, was once again expanding. A tannery, well capitalized by the heavy war-time demand for saddlery, flourished in Litchfield. From Morris, the Burgess Rifle, a hand held sharpening tool for farm and home improvements, was shipped throughout the country and overseas. The Bronson Plow Company shipped its wares from Roxbury to the homesteaders of the Great Plains and a profitable brass foundry hoped to challenge the Naugatuck Valley from its facilities in the Chalybes section of Roxbury. Other foundries were operating in Bantam, Washington and Litchfield while local coopers supplied much of southern Connecticut with barrels.

Agriculture and tourism played their part in the area's prosperity as well. Locally grown grain kept several grist mills busy and the dairy industry had a surplus of

perishable products that could best move to market in ice-cooled rail cars. In addition, fruit and cigar tobacco were solid cash crops. Vacationers were another "cash crop", as the high lakes and rivers of the area promised "malaria free; no mosquitos" holidays to city dwellers and many inns, camps and lodges had been opened to attract their "custom" or business, as we would say today.[6] This is certainly a picture of a vibrant and healthy region, poised, as its most ambitious supporters had hoped, for "a bright industrial age...which they dreamed would rival the neighboring Naugatuck Valley, the world's brass center, in the strength of its manufacturing output."[7]

Despite this, support for such an expensive and radically new idea as a railroad was slow to develop, and McNeill surveyed the route out of his own pocket. It was here that the Major first met face-to-face with grass roots opposition to his project. Walking along the Shepaug riverbed one morning, several angry farmers, brandishing firearms, challenged his progress. "Come on boys", McNeill is reported to have responded, "I've smelt powder before!"[8] All accounts of the incident record that the farmers did not shoot, and McNeill lived to build his railroad, but

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[6]The New Haven Register, clipping (undated except 1874) in the collection of the Litchfield Historical Society.

[7]Flynn, op. cit., pp. 46-7.

[8]Ibid., p. 47.

first there were some formidable obstacles to overcome.

Although Major McNeill was a man of means and an extraordinary engineer and propagandist for his cause, his expertise was not in finance or business. He was an operations man, comfortable with blueprints, engineering problems and manpower management. McNeill had sufficient business acumen, however, to leave the commercial dimensions of the project to others more exercised in those fields than he. The pro-railroad men who gathered around the cause of the line sought to exploit the Shepaug Valley and, in that, their expertise perfectly complemented McNeill's. This was the braintrust that would mobilize support in the towns and build the railroad, but even such an ambitious group of modernizers would encounter stubborn resistance from many quarters.

Despite the failure of firearms to derail the planning of the road, opposition would prove stiff, falling into three broad categories: religious, "Yankee-practical" and nativist. The anti-railroad camp had tradition and inertia going for it, and overcoming such stasis is always the innovator's burden. On the other hand, the fragmented nature of their camp worked against the opposers, for coalitions against issues are most always more fragile than those of a positive, goal directed nature.

Religion was more of a force in the Connecticut of the 1860's than it is today. Many local residents thought snorting, fire spitting iron horse was of the devil,

spewing brimstone from its stack as it made its way through the once peaceful countryside. Indeed, this group would be nearly impossible for the railroad builders to win over, since, no matter how thoroughly one searched Scripture, there was no mention of railways or steam power to be found.

Another objection, and a typically Yankee one at that, was from farmers who feared that cinders and sparks from the locomotives would set fire to their crops and buildings and that the commotion would spook their livestock. The railroad builders could conceivably persuade these people to not actively work or vote against the railroad, since the railroad could guarantee the value of their property and stock. In addition, profit could be found in expanded markets for produce or the sale of land or materials for railway construction.

The nativist objection to the railroad was, perhaps, the greatest threat to the project, as it played on the fears that the pristine valley would be flooded with "foreigners and 'smart city alecks' bent on relieving" the locals of their cash, farms and way of life.[9] Many foreigners, mostly Germans under labor contracts, had for years been working in the iron mines and furnaces of Roxbury, taking rooms in the then thriving Chalybes section of the town, beneath Mine Hill. These Germans were, by and large, an industrious, law abiding lot. Some were working to amass a nest egg and then return to Germany

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[9]Dillistin, op. cit., p. 6.

when their contract expired. Others had hopes of remaining in America and earning a substantial stake to help them get started in the new land.

Yet, despite this picture of civil and purposeful industry, some local circles harbored keen resentments. Perhaps strange language, religion, ethnic customs or social habits compounded this suspicion of the foreign born. It could be that native tea-totallers objected to the cultural role of intoxicating drink, especially beer for the Germans. Maybe the men folk of Roxbury feared that their women would be led astray by exotic Casanovas. Regardless, a prominent Roxbury resident of the day mentions nothing in his diary of any social contact with anyone of an obviously German surname, despite the fact that the man owned the town's most prosperous saloon in Chalybes.

As far as "smart city alecks" were concerned, the slick, mercenary, jaded values of city life were an anathema to many local residents. This was still an age in which a substantial percentage of the population lived and died within a day's ride of their birthplace. People from New York or New Haven were, except for language, as alien as the Germans. This intrusion into Roxbury's idyllic world was a fearsome thing, a culture shock in an era of limited horizons, and the railroad was threatening to push those horizons back uncomfortably far. To counter these reservations, the railroad builders offered heretofore unimaginable prosperity in a new industrial age,

hoping that many, especially the young, would opt to chance the unknown. Thus, the opposition to the rail project was certainly potent, and may have succeeded in killing it off, had it not been for the skill and perseverence of McNeill and his colleagues.

The cause of the new rail line had, as previously mentioned, found support among civic leaders in Litchfield and, on April 25, 1869, the Shepaug Valley Railroad Company was incorporated in that town. Among the officers and directors elected that day were several archetypal "experts" of what would come to be known as "progressive mind".

President of the line was J. Deming Perkins, who was also serving as President of the Litchfield Village Improvement Society. Perkins, like McNeill, was a man who had no reservation about using his own resources to advance a worthy cause towards modernization. It was Perkins who installed gas lights on the Litchfield Green to prove their efficiency.[10]

Managing the financial affairs of the railroad would be the erstwhile backer of the Litchfield County Branch Railroad, Henry R. Coit, of the National Bank of Litchfield. Coit had previously sold stock subscriptions for the on-going construction of the Union Pacific Railroad in the West, doing so with a naked boosterism that was quite possibly the equal of McNeill's. There is no doubt that Coit's agency on behalf of the Union Pacific did much to

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[10]Flynn, op. cit., p. 50.

bring the idea of railroad related prosperity into the minds of Litchfield's citizens.

But it was McNeill, the civil engineer, who spurned the offer of chairmanship of the board, preferring the title of Superintendent, giving him control of the day to day, "nuts and bolts" operation of the line. As McNeill continued to plan for construction, his colleagues set out to cultivate influential support in the towns along the route.

The railroad would pass through the towns of Litchfield, Morris, Washington, Roxbury, Southbury and Newtown. The last two towns were excused from subscription to the railroad's stock as the new route would offer them little in economic return, serving mainly as a geographic bridge between the four more northern communities and the rail trunk line connection in Newtown.

Newtown, since the 1840's a rail town, would serve the Shepaug at Hawleyville primarily as an interchange with other roads with very little revenue traffic for the new line originating or terminating there. Southbury, on the other hand, would originate traffic at its remote station, to be known as Shepaug, but no agent would be on duty there. The station was to be located near the mouth of the line's namesake river in the trans-Shepaug section of the town. In fact, this area was so poorly accessible from Southbury proper that, in the 1950's, Southbury would cede the entire trans-Shepaug area to

the town of Bridgewater. It is curious that, ninety years before, the Shepaug station had been used mainly by Bridgewater farmers shipping milk and by stagecoach lines that connected there for Southville and the center of Bridgewater. In any case, in return for such marginal service, which would have overwhelmingly benefitted a neighboring town, the railroad builders made no request for Southbury's financial support.

It was Litchfield, Morris, Washington and Roxbury, the towns that had long commercially exploited the Shepaug River watershed, that would be asked to invest, as communities, in the construction of the railroad. In Litchfield, where the initiators of the project led public opinion, the town meeting of December, 1868 passed the railroad funding proposal by a vote of 434 to 151, far better than the mandated two-thirds and with substantially greater than fifty percent of the Grand List having voted on the yea side. What is more, if the nay votes from East Litchfield, near the Naugatuck Railroad, were discounted, the vote would have been nearly twenty to one in favor of the proposition.

Unlike Litchfield, which had passed the bond issue at its first and only town meeting, Washington was to need two votes to approve the expenditure. Despite long standing interest among certain town elites for a railroad, there was a substantial traditional element that had railed against this unwelcome invasion by modernity.

The debate raged in the local press, leading one younger citizen to write that, should the elders of the town want their children and grandchildren to stay on and not move west, more opportunity would have to be forthcoming. Otherwise, he concluded, the children's bones would never rest beside their elders'.[11]

On February 13, 1869, Washington voted, 185 to 120, in favor of the project, but the two-thirds majority was not gained. Buoyed by their near success, however, the supporters called another vote for March 4 and here the measure was approved, 255 to 109, with the Grand List and majority provisos satisfied. McNeill and his associates now had two of the four targeted towns invested in their enterprise, but the final two would not join the fold without protracted and divisive struggles.

Known before 1859 as the South Farms section of Litchfield, Morris had, in that year, been incorporated into a free standing town. Many in South Farms had sought such a move since the late 1700's and local resentment over perceived stalling on their request by Litchfield may have contributed to opposition in Morris towards the Litchfield initiated railroad. It may have been that Litchfield had thwarted the autonomy move from fear of losing tax revenue and now, it seemed, Litchfield's elites were once again sticking their hands in Morris' pockets. What had changed, however, in the scores of years, was the economic profile of the community. Morris had previously been a nearly

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[11]Litchfield Enquirer, initialed letter to editor, February 25, 1869.

exclusive agricultural area, but considerable industry had taken root by the 1860's and a new class of commercial burgher had risen. These people sought to engage the new technology to extend their markets and took on local traditionalists to seek funding for the railroad. It was here, in Morris, that the railroad would find its most lyric champion, John Champlin, who had become so incensed by the intransigence of many of his neighbors that he published, under a pseudonym, a bitingly satirical pamphlet, The Chronicles of Sirrom, in which he ridiculed anti-railroad, anti-modern sentiment. Borrowing from the style of the roman du clef, or "keyed novel", Champlin castigated those who would bring darkness on the "Valley of the Shippog".

Pitting the Ydawaix (wide awakes) and their leader the Rabbi Benhaton against the Oldphogiz (old fogies), led by Rawbutt the Pitchite, Champlin outlined the struggle among the Sirromites (Morrisites) to build the King's Highway (railway) down to the Ouestennuc (Housatonic). Were it never to be built through Morris, Champlin saw ruin for his community. The Chronicles prophesized:

> "And all the lands on the King's Highway
> Flowed with milk and honey, and the
> People thereof ruled all the nations
> Roundabout.
> "But the land of Sirrom was desert and laid waste,
> And there was no habitation of man therein."[12]

Champlin's unflattering references to those against the railroad may well have alienated as many as were rallied to the cause. Prominent opponents of the line were given

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[12]Champlin, op. cit..

such names as "Inryeguzzle the Swampite", "Bilklack the Evertite" and "Aumunstun whose surname is Blowah", commemorating the non-temperance, zealous frugality and stentorian excesses of the targets. There is also allusion to the actions of the "men of the Valley of the Naugatog", who sought to block the Shepaug Railway. Chapter II, Verse 7 of the Chronicles notes:

> "And he (Inryeguzzle the Swampite) gathered
> Together all the hosts of the Oldphogiz
> And all the men of the Valley of the Naugattog
> And arrayed them on the Hill (Litchfield)
> Over against the Ydawaix and the men of the
> Valley of the Shippog."[13]

As socio-political satire, the Chronicles are a treasure of local color. In its thinly veiled references are allusions to attitudes and conspiracies that might well have been lost to history had Champlin not been struck by the muse. Despite this literary torch, however, there were many potent issues to which the anti-railroad bloc could rally in the debate.

First of all, Morris was the least developed of the four towns and the relatively few commercial elements in the small community had had reservations about the plan to run the line's tracks through Smokey Hollow, in the remote northwest, some five miles from the town center. Questions had been raised asking why the rail line could not have swung south of Bantam Lake to serve the town center, rejoining the surveyed route at Smokey Hollow or further south. Records of this particular debate, if any

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[13] Ibid.

survive, have not been recovered, but several thoughts come to mind from the evidence collected. The alternative route would eliminate Bantam, a thriving mill area, and Lake station, the line's proposed major icing point, from mainline service. Morris did not have the developed commerce to tempt Perkins and Coit to a more southerly route. Regardless, the industry Morris did have was located along the Bantam River, which flowed through Smokey Hollow, and had been since the heyday of water driven mills earlier in the century. In addition, sparsely populated and lightly developed Morris may not have had enough of a tax base to underwrite bonds sufficient for the greatly increased track mileage proposed. Finally, unlike other towns on the line, the solidarity of progressively minded elements may have been eroded by the line placement issue, leaving the vote on funding not one of two competing blocs, vying for an in undecided middle, but an amorphous, atomized affair, with individuals voting on the issue for solely particularistic reasons.

With such impediments in place, the process of gaining approval of railway construction expenditures was a prolonged ordeal. Morris had set a negative precedent in May of 1867 by voting down the previously mentioned scheme of McNeill's to build a Waterbury connector through the town for the Boston, Hartford and Erie Railroad. It is ironic that this road would have served the center of Morris and postponed, perhaps forever, the building of a line along

the Shepaug. But, in any event, eighteen months later, in December of 1868, Morris had a town meeting for the express purpose of authorizing the selectmen to buy 213 shares, at $100.00 apiece, of capital stock in the Shepaug Valley Railroad. Speaking in favor of the motion were the satirist Champlin, State Representative William Deming and Monroe Throop, local miller and businessman. In this vote, the yeas carried, 95 to 76, but failed to gain the two-thirds. Encouraged by this near success, the railroad group called another meeting in January of the new year, but this time proposed to subscribe to the railroad in an amount equal to five percent of the Grand List. This was, no doubt, an effort to present a self-limiting device on the expenditures, in that the cash outlay could only increase if property values rose, the rise in real value being a major selling point for the railroad camp. This new strategy, concocted to reassure those whose hesitance was based on fear for their assets, worked part way, with the vote carrying by more than two-thirds, but the Grand List requirement had once again fallen short. This motion lost, the supporters immediately filed a petition, many of the signatories now, for the first time, being non-voting property owners, such as women or non-residents. The great success of this petition led to another town meeting in October of 1869 during which the matter was finally carried by a vote of 91 to 38 with the Grand List requirement satisfied. Yet, the issue was not a closed matter. The town

did not have sufficient liquid cash on hand to buy the shares outright, the money would have to be borrowed at interest, and this last hurdle nearly brought the long struggle to naught.

A town finance meeting was called for December 1869. One can imagine the anxiety Perkins, Coit and McNeill, as well as their local associates, felt as the meeting approached. To their advantage, the two-thirds and fifty percent rules did not apply for this meeting. The initial capitalization of the line was perilously tight, and any income not forthcoming from the towns would have to be made up through an expanded public offering. With the already thin tempers of the town strained over the bitter fight to approve funding, the idea of borrowing money at interest to pay for stock in an unproved enterprise tested Yankee values severely. On a cold, forbidding December night in 1869, the electors of Morris, after acrimonious debate, voted 30 to 29 to authorize the borrowing of money to purchase the originally sought 213 shares. The matter had passed despite the seemingly marginal service and certainly remote depot the town would get for its investment. Perhaps enough Yankee minds had decided that half a loaf was better than none, or that a spur track to the town's commercial center might follow railroad stimulated growth. In any event, Morris bought part of a railroad.

Laura Stoddard Weik, in her 1959 history of the town, recorded the residual bitterness in Morris that lasted

well past the railroad meetings. It seems the town had been in the habit, since 1859, of electing two Democratic and one Republican selectmen. The tally had always been routine, with the Democrats carrying a predictable majority. In the 1870 elections, however, forty Republicans and almost as many Democrats bolted their party tickets. Angry voters, it seems, had punished those running for local office, yet had held to the party line in the voting for statewide offices. According to Mrs. Weik, "this queer political chowder grew out of the railroad difficulties. One lady remarked before the election, 'The Democrats are working day and night to defeat their candidate and the Republicans are just as busy beating their nominee'."[14] But, despite bitter victory in Morris, the railroad's supporters had worse trouble delivering Roxbury into the camp.

Roxbury in 1868 was a prosperous, bustling community with more work to offer than people to do it. The resulting influx of strangers had brought a frontier ambiance to the town, far different from the staid Yankee culture of neighboring communities. As previously mentioned, nativist fears were rampant in Roxbury. The large Baptist church in Chalybes was a font of fundamental religious objection to modernization and the land owning Yankee farmers of the town feared for the value of their property. Despite the commercial promise a railroad line would offer, the considerable strength of the objectors was magnified by the two-thirds

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[14]Weik, Laura Stoddard, One Hundred Years - History of Morris, Connecticut, 1859-1959, Morris Centennial Committee, 1959, p. 21.

rule and their control of much real property in the town. Although incapable of winning a majority against the railroad, the anti-railroad camp seemed to have enough numbers to perpetually block endorsement of the construction bonds. To overcome this, Perkins, Coit and McNeill had to choose clever and resourceful allies.

Colonel Albert L. Hodge was such a man; West Point alumnus, farmer, businessman, road commissioner, retailer, saloon keeper, iron mine director, church elder, state legislator and Roxbury's registrar of voters. There was hardly any local civic or commercial endeavor in which Hodge did not have a hand. He was also a fastidious record keeper and the entries in his day book lend a fascinating perspective on the struggle to bring Roxbury into the railroad camp.

He was meticulous in his job as road commissioner, often travelling as far as Bridgewater, in all weather, to assess road conditions. He kept a well patronized saloon in Chalybes. He owned a dry goods store there and was a fervent marketer of Mine Hill iron and granite, often going to New York, New Haven and Washington, D.C. to secure orders. As a farmer he reported that it had taken him three days to transfer a rail carload of oats from New Milford to his barn in Roxbury.[15] Time was money to a man of Hodge's pursuits, and the new railroad line could only serve to

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[15]Hodge, Albert L., Day Book, in the collection of The Hodge Memorial Library, Roxbury, Connecticut.

make his businesses more efficient and profitable. In mid-1868, Hodge noted that railroad surveyors were working near Chalybes.[16] After that, references to Coit, Perkins and railroad matters appeared increasingly often in the day book and Albert Hodge invested himself in the cause of the railway in what would prove to be a prolonged fight.

Roxbury's first three votes on the railroad funding brought frustration for Colonel Hodge and his associates. On April 24, 1869, voters cast 136 yeas and 86 nays, failing to gain the two-thirds by a swing of twelve votes. On the second vote, May 10, the proposal failed again, but by a swing of only two votes, 157 to 81. A third meeting was scheduled for May 22 and, if the form of the other three towns was to be followed, the next vote would put the railroad camp "over the top". To the astonishment of all, however, the third vote showed a slippage in support, to 153 to 84. Although the decrease was small, the psychological effect must have been significant. No further town meetings were called and the Enquirer, in an editorial of May 27, 1869, expressed its alarm at both the outcome and the apparent paralysis in the railroad camp after the third vote:

> "The result of Saturday's (5/22/69) vote was... a change of three in the wrong direction. We frankly state our surprise at this unexpected result; but we cannot believe that the friends of this measure can let it fail when so near success. We have not heard whether another meeting has yet been called."[17]

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Litchfield Enquirer, May 27, 1869.

Indeed, no further meetings were called until December of that year, a gap of nearly seven months, during which time Hodge and his cohorts may have let local tempers ease while seeking new support for their cause. Finally, on December 11, 1869, Roxbury voted 112 to 42 in favor of the motion. With this, all four towns were now in line for subscription to the railroad, but, even now, all was not finished.

It may have been an afterthought, but the town of Warren had been "odd-man out" in the late 1860's as the Shepaug Valley Railroad began to organize. Having been disappointed by the failure of the Litchfield County Branch road earlier in the decade, local leaders in Warren sought to muster support for a branch line of Major McNeill's railroad, running from the confluence of the Shepaug River and Bee Brook, in Washington, "to some suitable point in Warren".[18] The General Assembly amended the Shepaug Valley's charter in July, 1870 and authorized Warren to subscribe municipally to the venture, but the plan would never come to fruition and Warren remained railroad-less, despite the potential business of the Lake Waramaug resorts.

So, in all, public bonding had pledged $209,000 to stock; $107,000 in Litchfield; $22,000 in Morris; $53,000 in Washington and $27,000 in Roxbury. Edwin McNeill had estimated that it would cost $850,000 to build and start

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[18] Special Laws of Connecticut, Vol. VI, July 10, 1870, p. 790.

operation of the railroad. To meet this figure, stock was offered for public sale to private citizens and the State of Connecticut extended a $400,000 mortgage on the accrued assets of the chartered road. Cash was on hand but now the builders had to secure the right-of-way. Some pro-line individuals donated land for construction but many doubters and opportunists pressed hard bargains on the railroad, with their main stipulations focusing on the fencing-in and maximum width of the right-of-way.

Orin B. Seward of Roxbury demanded that the builders "shall fence the road properly and make me suitable crossing and maintain the fences perpetually".[19] Farmers Thomas Ryan and Oliver Tyrell would cede only 25 and 35 foot widths of passage across their properties, despite the railroad's desire to gain a minimum fifty foot width. Burton Hodge, a descendant of the Colonel, recalled in 1948 that a board fence had, at one time, been in place along the entire route. In fact, the original construction budget allowed $75,000 for such work and, in Roxbury's case, in a town that had taken four votes to pledge only $27,000 to the road's total capitalization. Regardless, Burton Hodge felt that the good citizens of Roxbury had gotten their money's worth out of that fence, as the barrier's integrity was almost always compromised, whether set afire by locomotive sparks or "borrowed by the plank"

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[19]Flynn, op. cit., p. 50.

for structural repairs to local barns and sheds.[20]

McNeill's projected budget of $850,000 was to fall considerably short. Beset with all sorts of cost overruns, the railroad was built to the greater degree on credit, the builders borrowing against the value of the road once opened. With this credit, they now ordered materials and hired work teams. These orders included cross ties from local contractors and rails, to be delivered half to Hawleyville and half to East Litchfield, so construction could commence from both ends-of-line. A sub-contract was let to a Pennsylvania masonry firm and three thirty-ton locomotives built by Rogers of Patterson, New Jersey were ordered, to be named Shepaug, Waramaug and Weantinaug. Deliveries of traprock were made, first by horse cart, so that the gandy dancers (track gangs) would find a ready, stable and well-drained roadbed on which to lay the track. The track width was to be standard, four feet eight and one-half inches, to facilitate interchange with all major trunk lines. On October 26, 1870, construction began out of Hawleyville. Shortly thereafter, the Litchfield based track gang began work, projecting a "meet" somewhere near the Washington -- Roxbury line. The blasting was done for the Steep Rock tunnel in Washington and the crews kept working through the winter, spring and summer of 1871.

The Hawleyville group laid track from the Housatonic Railroad interlocking plant (junction) along and then across

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[20] Ibid., p. 50.

Pond Brook at its mouth on the Housatonic River, bridging the river on a temporary wooden trestle, while workers finished the permanent structure beside it. Once across the river, the track layers reached the location of the Shepaug station in Southbury. Then, gaining elevation as they moved north from the Housatonic, followed an excavated ledge above the west bank of the Shepaug until they reached Roxbury Falls, where they built an agency station. Continuing north along the river, the railroad found easier going as it ran along the Shepaug's flood plain, reaching Chalybes, where Roxbury's main agency station was raised.

Whereas the southern end construction gang had been able to employ a proper locomotive, thanks to the interchange at Hawleyville, the Litchfield based group was at a marked disadvantage, establishing a rail-isolated end-of-line in the center of Litchfield, five miles from the nearest operating railhead. Materials had to be carted overland from East Litchfield on the Naugatuck Railroad and delivered to often poorly accessible locations along the surveyed route. Working in the northern crew's favor, however, was that their work was on a downgrade and loaded railcars could be drawn along the newly laid track by ox or horseteams, with gravity assisting the teamster. The lighter empties were easily returned to Litchfield or intermediate staging points for reloading.

Thus, the Litchfield group was able to make good progress. Leaving the town center, the route swung

southwest across Harris Plains and bridged the Bantam River just north of its source on Bantam Lake. Near here was the large ice supply business of Miss Lucretia Deming and the railroad established its Lake station here to ice its milk cars. The line then continued to Bantam Falls, the thriving mill area, and a depot opened amongst the enterprises that exploited the river's vertical drop there. Keeping to the southern bank of the Bantam, the route curled downgrade and southwest, cutting across the northwestern corner of Morris, where that town's long fought for rail station was established in Smokey Hollow. After that, the railroad held to the southern bank of the river, skirting the base of Mount Tom, and met the Shepaug River at its confluence with the tributary Bantam. Proceeding now along the Shepaug, the rail line wound through the Romford and New Preston sections of Washington, leaving agency stations at both sites. South of here, the river relaxed somewhat, and the building crews found relatively easier going along the flood plain, crossing to the northern bank and following this into the Calhoun district of Washington, to be soon renamed Washington Depot, where an engine fueling and watering point was built next to the town's main agency station.

After this, the route's course witnessed its most dramatic scenery. Leaving Washington's center, the route veered due south, hugging the now west bank of the river until it crossed it again just north of the Shepaug River's

clamshell shaped oxbow beneath 500 foot Steep Rock. The crews did not attempt to follow the river here, but laid the tracks through the curved 140 foot tunnel previously blasted through the southern extension of the Steep Rock outcropping. The tracks then emerged in a downgrade towards the settlement at Judd's Bridge in northern Roxbury, where the line crossed to the west bank and from where the Litchfield based crews could hear their Hawleyville counterparts working some miles to the south. It was October of 1871.

By late November, the two crews were working within sight of each other. One can easily imagine the emotion involved, especially among those who had worked so hard to bring this plan to fruition. It is a pity that no record of a "golden spike" ceremony has been recovered, for it is not hard to believe that Colonel Hodge's Chalybes saloon must have provided some stout refreshment for the occasion. Now, for the first time, the road's locomotives could run through to Litchfield. The Enquirer reported that all the town turned out to witness the arrival of the engine Waramaug in the Litchfield town center. Indeed, McNeill, Perkins and Coit were the toast of the town that Yuletide, but the road could not open for public revenue business until it had been certified by the State Board of Railroad Commissioners. This inspection took place the week after Christmas 1871 and, despite some reservations about the roadbed not having settled fully due to icy conditions,

the report was favorable. Ready or not, the Shepaug Valley Railroad was certified to open to the public on New Year's Day 1872.

Was the railroad opened in haste? Probably so, but this was not an unusual way for the newly built railways of the era to begin operations. Writing in 1890, Civil Engineer Thomas Curtis Clarke, drawing comparisons between English and American practices in railway building observed:

> "There is one thing more which distinguishes the American railway from its English parent, and that is the almost uniform practice of getting the road open for traffic in the cheapest manner and in the least possible time, and then completing it and enlarging its capacity out of its surplus earnings, and from the credit these earnings give it."[21]

Indeed, a good stretch of the line, near Judd's Bridge, had been laid in winter temperatures upon frozen and poorly settled subroadbed which would provide poor foundation for the track and trains that would roll over it. Prudence would have dictated an opening in the warmer months, but the pressing need to generate income, after Clarke's example, had carried the day.

All concerns for the right-of-way notwithstanding, the railroad's first passenger ticket was sold to Mr. E. W. Addis of Litchfield on the morning of January 1, 1872.[22] The capacity of the road's few passenger cars

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[21]Clarke, Thomas Curtis, "The Building of a Railway", in Clarke, et al., The American Railway, Castle Books, Secaucus, New Jersey, 1988 (Facsimile Reprint of Original 1890 edition).

[22]Litchfield Enquirer, January 4, 1872.

was sorely taxed by the enthusiastic throngs who sought to take part in the historic first trips of the new line. The service called for the 32 mile run to be made in two hours and thirty minutes, an average speed of just over twelve miles per hour, a great improvement over 1829's trial by stagecoach. The line's first three engines, all suffixed in "-aug", were said by one local wit to "aug-ur" well for the future of the railroad.[23] It was to be, sadly, Mr. Addis' account of the first trip on the road that would prove, over the years, to have been the more clairvoyant. It seems the first train's conductor, a Mr. Keeler, had heard a strange noise under the coach and, partially descending the steps to look under the moving car, was struck by an overhanging branch and knocked from the train. Addis continued that, except for bruises to his arm and his dignity, the conductor was not hurt and the train had stopped to allow him to climb back on board.

On a more promising note, the Enquirer's Washington correspondent reported, in the January 4 edition, that four car loads of coal had been delivered by the Shepaug Valley to that town. The writer was effusive, stating that, thanks to the railroad, an order could now be sent to New York and the consignment received long before the "lumbering stage brings the bill from New Milford. Who asks if the railroad will pay?"[24] But, in the same edition, there

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

was a report of the first accident on the road. It seems that the tracks had spread on the iced-up roadbed near Judd's Bridge and had derailed two freight cars that were being pushed in front of 2 locomotives. Nevertheless, the mishap had prevented the "train from preceeding (sic) any further, much to the annoyance of the passengers".[25] A gang of gandy dancers was dispatched to realign the trackwork.

Despite this, the Shepaug Valley was acquiring symbols of permanence. The iron and masonry bridge across the Housatonic opened in mid-January and, in July, a six-mile extension from Hawleyville to Bethel, on the Danbury and Norwalk Railroad, was opened, allowing direct service between the Shepaug Valley and New York, via Norwalk. This was especially critical to the economic prospects of the new line as its Hawleyville connection, the Housatonic Railroad, had taken to charging predatory rates on interchange freight. The exhorbitant costs of such shipping prompted the Enquirer to seek its newsprint, once the Bethel extension had opened, from a Norwalk vendor rather than the Bridgeport firm with which it had previously done business. It would have seemed that the Shepaug Valley Railroad was now in charge of its own destiny, but extraneous events would conspire against it.

The Shepaug Valley's economy was changing dramatically in the early 1870's. The great iron works at Roxbury

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[25] Ibid.

failed in 1872, never to produce in volume again. Schemes were laid to transport ore from other sites to the furnaces there, but none of these ever hatched. Iron and steel production had fled west, amidst the coal fields of Pennsylvania, and, with the settlement of the Great Plains, Pittsburgh was days closer for freight than was Connecticut. The very way America did business was changing too, and traditional New England was being left behind.

Einar Carlson and Ken Howell note that New England enterprise, based on personal propriety and passed down through generations of a family, was unable to keep up with the era's advances in technology and management science that the risk taking pioneers of the West so eagerly embraced.[26] The railroad, seen in McNeill's 1868 prospectus as a great exporter of manufactured goods, would turn out to be a net importer, with agricultural products being the overwhelming outbound freight.

Finally, as coup de grace, the nationwide economic depression of 1873 cut revenues so drastically that the railroad could not even pay the interest on a second mortgage that the road had secured in February, 1872 to cover operating expenses. The state foreclosed on the second mortgage and the road was sent into receivership.

The Panic of 1873 had brought a sense of pervasive financial crisis which, no doubt, had kindled impatience

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[26]Carlson, Einar W. and Kenneth T. Howell, Empire Over the Dam, Pequot Press, Old Chester, Connecticut, 1974, p. 207.

in the State Treasurer's Office in Hartford. Despite this, local elites held to optimism over the long term promise the road offered and probably saw the reorganization as a mere financial manouvre. They were, after all, in place and operating and aggressive advertising was underway in the southern Connecticut and New York press, seeking passenger business. In all, twenty-five railroads failed in the United States in 1873, and the Shepaug Valley, having been opened prior to default, was one of the more fortunate of that number. Besides that, what local booster, having staked his town's money and his own reputation, would favor abandoning the town to the second class commercial limbo of railroadlessness. Such was the civic culture as the railroad ended its first life. Its second incarnation, as the Shepaug Railraod, would run until 1887.

The road's next sixteen years would see the maturation of the line's freight and passenger business, and would allow the payment of interest,if not principle, on the staggering debt incurred during construction. This volume of traffic gave fair promise for the Shepaug's continued operation, which must have gladdened the heart of Major McNeill prior to his death in 1875.

Most important for the line's long term prospects, though, was that this began the era of prospective extension. Although saddled with debt, the road had shown that it was able to generate considerable income and, should the end of track in Litchfield be extended to

make a through connection with another road, the Shepaug's future might be a bright one, indeed. But, the Shepaug itself was destitute and, despite the obvious promise of extension, would have been hard pressed to raise any further capital in the post-Panic 1870's. But the road might have had a benefactor who could have provided a connecting road for it.

Albert Wadhams was very much Goshen's equivalent of Roxbury's Colonel Albert Hodge. Civic booster and appreciator of a modern and commercially promising venture, Wadhams undertook a fair amount of research on prospective rail business in Goshen and its northern hinterland. In his An Exhibit of Estimates for a Proposed Extension of the Naugatuck Railroad, Wadham's petitioned that road's board of directors and shareholders to undertake the extension of their road's Waterbury to Watertown branch to East Morris, Litchfield, Goshen, Cornwall Hollow P.O., Huntsville (site of Hunts Lyman Iron Company) and Falls Village, where it would connect with the Housatonic Railroad.[27] By connection at Litchfield, the Shepaug would have a northern outlet, but this was not a primary concern for Wadhams. His figures included heavy iron ladings at Huntsville, but were almost entirely farm products otherwise. The Naugatuck turned the petition down, probably unwilling to build such a long new line at its expense for

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[27]Wadhams, Albert, An Exhibit of Estimates for a Proposed Extension of the Naugatuck Railroad, pamphlet in the collection of the Litchfield Historical Society.

one source of substantial originating traffic at Huntsville. Besides that, the Housatonic Railroad had been shipping Hunts Lyman Iron for decades, the metal being team hauled for five miles to the railhead at Falls Village. In short, the Naugatuck was not interested in such a chancy proposition. But the contrast between Colonel Hodge's and Mr. Wadham's experiences illustrates well how the civic culture had changed in but fifteen years.

First, the railroad hysteria of earlier years had subsided. This iron-horse fever had been so widespread in the immediate post Civil War years that Colonel Hodge and his colleagues had been able to enlist their town's financial support in the capitalization of the railway. But the culture was more sober and hesitant now. The Panic of 1873 had had a lot to do with these changes and criticism of rampant civic commercial venturism had appeared in the press, giving prudent New Englanders cause to reflect on future endeavors. Peter Lyon, in his 1968 book, To Hell in a Day Coach, cites an 1873 New York Times editorial:

> "There has been a railroad mania and the banks have lent large sums of money on railroad bonds ... last year over six thousand miles of new railroads were built, not five hundred miles of which were really needed or can be turned to any profitable use. The foreign markets have been glutted with these schemes. Many gross swindles ... have been foisted upon their markets in the past two years..." [28]

In Connecticut alone, lenders held over $5 million in poorly secured railroad construction bonds and, in 1877,

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[28] The New York Times, quoted in Lyon, Peter, To Hell in a Day Coach, J. B. Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1968, p. 47.

the General Assembly had acted to prohibit all future municipal subscription to the capitalization of railways. By 1882, then, when Mr. Wadhams was prepared to seek a railroad for his town, the only option was to petition existing roads to build new lines. Of the two roads local to Goshen, the Naugatuck volitionally would not and the Shepaug financially could not undertake the Wadhams' proposed line. It would be interesting to know if the Housatonic Railroad was ever approached, although it is hard to imagine why that road would have had reason to extend more than a spur to Huntsville, falling far short of Goshen or Litchfield.

From the Shepaug's point of view, the failure of the Wadhams' plan was a great pity as its success would have fulfilled the ambitions of the late Major McNeill. Yet, despite this disappointment, the hopes of many to somehow work a northern connection for the Shepaug would not die. But, by the mid-1880's, the road had begun to show wear and sufficient cash for maintenance and renewal was hard to come by. The road was still iron-railed in an age where more durable steel was coming into use, and bridges needed repair. The three aging Rogers locomotives needed increasingly frequent attention and the wooden crossties were rotting beneath the track. Yet, despite the debts and troubles that weighed on this little line, powerful and influential men had taken an interest in its fate, although as a footnote to a bigger story.

The move to consolidate Connecticut railroads under one management had begun in 1872, with the formation of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, hereafter called the "New Haven". Building few railroad lines of its own, the New Haven had begun slowly absorbing other lines throughout southern New England in what would become an effort to control all transport in the region. For financially strapped lines like the Shepaug, the promise of new capital was indeed seductive but the price to be paid was the loss of autonomy. For many shareholders of worthless Shepaug Valley or Shepaug issues, however, this subtle distinction was evidently lost. So it was, on April 1, 1887, after a hard winter of high maintenance outlay to keep operating, the Shepaug Railroad defaulted on its interest payments and was taken over by the State Treasurer as trustee for the bondholders who had received the bankrupt line on February 18. In March, 1887, the General Assembly had granted a new charter to those bondholders and, on June 1, 1887, the Shepaug, Litchfield and Northern Railroad came into being. There was, however, some continuity, as the venerable Colonel Hodge was listed as a director of the road and Major McNeill's grandson, Alexander, was in its employ. It was, indeed, amazing that the road had held off foreclosure for so many years. Despite, for instance, respectable net earnings of $19,848 for the year 1880, the road had still been liable on the seven percent bonds and their overdue interest of $98,000.

The continued operation of the line had probably been politically expedient until such time as a substantial reorganization could be arranged. But what of that "and Northern" at the end of the new line's name?

The charter of the Shepaug, Litchfield and Northern Railroad had been granted to a group of men among whom were several names long associated with the road: Edwin and Alexander McNeill (Major's son and grandson), Henry Buel, J. Deming Perkins, Henry Coit and Albert Hodge. These men held fast to Major McNeill's canon that a through line is a successful one, and had persuaded the General Assembly to grant them authority to extend the Shepaug, Litchfield and Northern northward. Sections four and five of the charter stated:

> "Said Shepaug, Litchfield and Northern Railroad Company is hereby authorized and empowered to extend said railroad from its present northern terminus in the Town of Litchfield to intersect with the Hartford and Connecticut Western Railroad at some suitable point in either the Town of Winchester or Norfolk, through any or all of the Towns of Litchfield, Goshen, Torrington, Winchester and Norfolk ...
>
> If said railroad company shall not complete the construction of said extension before the first day of July, 1891, then it shall forfeit its right to make said extension under this charter."[29]

As the deadline approached, no construction had been done, and the General Assembly was considering legislation that would permit the more liberal consolidation of railroads. The hopes for a through route had been dashed, with the wistful "and Northern" being all that remained

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[29] Special Laws of Connecticut, No. 83 (substitute for House Joint Resolution No. 166), March 10, 1887.

of the ambitions of men like Major McNiell and Mr. Wadhams. In fact, this date, July 1, 1891, may have been the moment the Shepaug line was irrevocably doomed to being absorbed by another road.

But, it would be as the S. L. and N. that the line would see its smartest passenger service, in large part thanks to the "easy terms" leasing of the Bethel extension and extra cars from the New Haven to supplement its own modest roster. The little road did own a well-appointed parlor car, for first class travel to and from New York. Getting to and from the Litchfield Hills had never, no doubt, been more comfortable or as swift, taking just over three hours from New York City to the foot of West Street in Litchfield. Seasonal trains were added for summer visitors and special stations opened, such as that for "Holiday House", a lodge above the Shepaug River south of Washington Depot.

New capital was infused into the road, mostly from New Haven and New York sources, and the right-of-way was put into good repair and many improvements were undertaken.

In great part due to the energy and talent of Road-master DeWitt C. Garrison, the line was fairly redone. The approaches to the 152 foot trestles that spanned the mouth of Pond Brook were filled in with stone and earth and the brook itself was bridged by 44 foot iron girders anchored on sturdy stone abutments. The 450 foot bridge across the Housatonic was replanked and three bridges across the

Shepaug River, one at Judd's Bridge and two in Washington, were rebuilt with 110 foot iron girders. By 1893, steel rails had been laid as far north as West Morris and, by 1895, the entire line was steel. Easements were built into many of the sharp curves along the line making for smoother riding but also less wear on the rails themselves. Many sharp curves were "flattened out" by realignment and new excavations and fills reduced several challenging grades along the route. After all, the more than 800 foot vertical drop of which Major McNeill had boasted in his 1868 prospectus made for difficult railroad operation. Despite, however, these gallant efforts of Mr. Garrison and his civil engineers, heavy freights were still obliged to "double the hills", taking half a train up a hill, leaving it on a siding, and then returning downgrade to fetch the other half.

Most problematic in this regard for the locomotive engineer were:

A. Northbound

1. Shepaug Station to Roxbury
2. Judd's Bridge to Steep Rock Tunnel
3. West Morris to Bantam

B. Southbound

1. Housatonic River to Hanover Springs

This "doubling" of heavy loads would continue right up to the road's demise in 1948, but the improved track must have made for smoother travel in the passenger cars.

The S. L. and N. in 1889 rostered five locomotives

and maintained two turntables, at Litchfield and Hawleyville, to turn them. While an engine house was maintained in Litchfield for minor work, heavy repair was relegated to the road's four stall roundhouse at Hawleyville and the attentions of Master Mechanic Andrew J. Broughal, assisted by S. L. and N. locomotive engineer Eugene Meramble. Although the road's offices remained in Litchfield, the transfer of the road's maintenance and support to Hawleyville was the harbinger of things to come.

The S. L. and N. was fast becoming an oddity in Connecticut Railroading. On April 1, 1887, two months before the little road received its new charter, the directors of the Naugatuck Railroad had leased their road to the New Haven for ninety-nine years. Five years later the Danbury and Norwalk and the Housatonic followed suit. From 1892 until 1898, therefore, the Shepaug, Litchfield and Northern operated as a lone wolf, surrounded by the lines of the great New Haven system. It would appear, however, based on the New Haven's generous relations with the smaller road, that the S. L. and N. was continuing as an "independent" road only so long as it might take to get the road's "property" in good order, making it worthy of becoming a branch of the New Haven. Indeed, in the 1890's, New Haven directors J. Pierpont Morgan and William Rockefeller joined Colonel Hodge as directors of the S. L. and N. and the days of independent operation waned. Despite this, these final years of the S. L. and N. were full of

colorful characters whose exploits bring the little road to life for us a century later.

One Jesse A. James played a big part in the S. L. and N.'s days, not as a train robber, as might his namesake, but as the road's venerable agent at Hawleyville. James had entered railroading in 1880 at the Bridgeport freight station but came to Hawleyville as agent in 1891. He was, by all accounts, a dynamo of a man, and round of physique and moustached beneath a balding pate. At one time he was agent not only for the S. L. and N., but also the Housatonic, New York and New England, and New Haven Railroads as well as the Adams and United Express Companies, and all at his depot in Hawleyville. Twenty-four passenger trains of all lines passed his station daily with 129 freights and other movements to keep separated and on time. It was James who, in 1892, while instructing a new S. L. and N. employee on the proper use of a new semaphore, had ascended the signal's pole to demonstrate its operation. His ascent was probably labored due to his great girth, but his descent was no doubt swift and full of invective. It seems, the record states, that while James was aloft, the new S. L. and N. man had accidentally let go the rope that held the semaphore arm in place and it had swung down like a guillotine, gashing James and nearly knocking him from the pole. One can imagine the esteem in which James held the new man after that event.

But these railroaders were a hearty and clever lot.

A year later, the Newtown Bee reported that, due the minor heroism of Conductor Lyman Bristol, and his judicious use of planks and blocks, a derailed train had been put back on the tracks in twelve minutes time, and no trains had been delayed at the busy Hawleyville depot.[30]

These were good times for the little road, and its passenger service offered two trains daily, in each direction, with a third added Sundays only. Extra summer trains were common and the freight business was impressive for such a small line, with the cars of 123 other railroads and express companies being seen along the road, although most freight was, no doubt, incoming rather than outgoing.

But the late years of the S. L. and N. did see one dramatic wreck. On Saturday, September 18, 1897, Engineer Frank Munson took a freight out of Hawleyville bound for Litchfield with Conductor Lyman Bristol, the rerailing hero of 1893, riding in the Caboose. As the locomotive approached the Hanover Springs station in North Newtown, it jumped the tracks just before a short viaduct across Pond Brook, rode across the bridge on the planking and then ran down into a ditch at brookside and was demolished. Engineer Munson and his fireman had jumped for their lives, fearing the impact or a boiler explosion. The locomotive's tender and a coal hopper behind it then toppled into the water. Guard rails on the viaduct kept

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[30]The Newtown Bee, January 27, 1893.

the trailing cars from falling off but Bristol and his crew must have suffered a rather rough stop in the Caboose. The single track line was blocked, but a wrecking crew, probably from the New Haven, was quickly dispatched to the scene and passengers were transferred around the wreck until it was cleared. Despite this, the Shepaug line's first quarter century was a generally safe one. Roadmaster Garrison once remarked that, to the best of his knowledge, only two men had lost their lives as a result of a Shepaug wreck.[31] There were, however, numerous grade crossing incidents involving the line's trains, with the site at Hawleyville being particularly notorious. After great public outcry and long official hearings, the Hawleyville matter was resolved with neither side, the public nor the railroad, especially happy. The companies were obliged to cut back hillsides to provide improved lines of sight, and a crossing guard was posted to warn highway travellers of oncoming trains. These efforts towards greater safety notwithstanding, the 150 daily trains that passed Hawleyville still took a substantial toll of mules, horses and carts, although the human casualties apparently decreased there.[32]

One of the great treasures of the S. L. and N. to survive to this day are the road's business records and

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[31]Garrison, DeWitt C., quoted in the Newtown Bee, January 6, 1893.

[32]Newtown Bee, January 27, 1893.

they give stark testimony to the road's increasing dependence on the New Haven. Various entries in the S. L. and N.'s Ledger and Journal reflect significant payments to the larger road for goods and services. Among these were:

1. March 1896 - purchase "new" locomotive No. 3 - $2,124.46

2. February 1897 - build new ice house in Washington - $528.58

3. November 1897 - repairs to Milk Car No. 26 - $113.77

4. January 1898 - purchase "new" locomotive No. 2 - $4,000.00

5. February 1898 - rent Bethel engine house $76.95

6. May 1898 - repairs at Shepaug station - $74.16

7. June 1898 - repairs to locomotive No. 5 - $2,019.92[33]

It would appear that the S. L. and N. was relying on the New Haven for heavy repairs, replacement or rehabilitation of structures. Replacement motive power was found cheaply in the New Haven's older engines and the letting of work to the big road's construction crews saved the S. L. and N. the expense of retaining its own employees for the limited work available, and conserved the small line's limited capital. It was now a suitable property for inclusion into the New Haven system.

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[33] Shepaug, Litchfield and Northern Railroad, General Ledger and Journal, 1896-98, in the collection of the Hodge Memorial Library.

On July 1, 1898, the Shepaug, Litchfield and Northern was leased to the New Haven for seventy-five years, with the actual takeover occuring eight days later. The book-keeping of the little road, even after its lease, was, as always, meticulous. Chief Clerk Robert T. Bird, working at the Litchfield depot, kept a special collections book detailing the receipts collected by the S. L. and N. employees for the eight day "Interregnum".[34] With Bird's presentation of that book to the New Haven's auditors, the business life of the S. L. and N. came to a close. The road would now be known as the Shepaug or Litchfield Branch of the New Haven with the payroll generated in New Haven.

Apparently, the new owners found it expedient to scrap the greater part of the S. L. and N.'s locomotives and rolling stock. Only two of the line's five locomotives were transferred to the New Haven and, even then, one of those two was scrapped before it saw service for its new owners, a fate which, quite probably, befell much old S. L. and N. equipment.[35]

The S. L. and N.'s final Annual Report, for the year ending June 30, 1898, gives a picture of a property the New Haven might find a source of profit.[36] The small

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[34]Bird, Robert T., Special Collections Book, (S. L. and N. R.R.), in the collection of the Hodge Memorial Library.

[35]Swanberg, J.W., New Haven Power: 1838-1968, (A. F. Staufer, Medina, Ohio), 1988, p. 51.

[36]Shepaug, Litchfield and Northern Railroad, Annual Report to the State Board of Railway Commissioners (year ending June 30, 1898), in the collection of the University of Connecticut Archives, Storrs, Connecticut.

line's capitalization was listed at $600,000, or $18,587.36 per mile of track. Revenue during the final year had also been healthy, with passenger service bringing in $26,792.40 and freight $39,874.56, for a gross income of $66,834.69. In all, 33,742 passengers had been carried in the road's final year of independent operation and there was, in 1898, no apparent reason to believe that this figure would do anything but grow.

So, the New Haven operated its newly leased property, although the weekly ads in the Litchfield Enquirer were still headed Shepaug, Litchfield and Northern Railroad until 1900. The romantic might conclude that the locals just wouldn't give up their little railroad but the pragmatist would probably cite the New Haven's habit of absorbing leased properties by retiring the stocks and charters. This may have taken until 1900 to achieve, and, with it, the last vestiges of the S. L. and N. were gone.

The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad was, by 1900, firmly in the sway of J. Pierpont Morgan. The paradigm of the acquisitive monopoly-seeking capitalist, Morgan had sought to control all transport in New England, be it railroads, street cars, coastal or river boat lines. Towards fulfillment of these ambitions, Morgan appointed Charles S. Mellon as President of the New Haven and set out anew to acquire any transportation properties that had, up to then, eluded his grasp. In their obsession with expansion, the two men made what would turn out to be many

unprofitable investments and would cut back on maintenance, service and safety in the operation of the New Haven. Even the little Shepaug Branch, in these years prior to World War I, would feel the effects of this mismanagement.

In 1906, the branch would suffer another derailment at the Hanover Springs viaduct. By this time, Conductor Bristol must have been getting a reputation as either a man of experience or a jinx. Once again he was in the Caboose as a northbound freight train lost three cars from the middle of the consist into Pond Brook. Inspectors from the State Railroad Commissioner's office fixed the cause as a broken flange on the middle car of the three that derailed, all of which had ended up in Pond Brook. The Newtown Bee's account of the incident cited the enterprise of three young Newtown boys who had salvaged some of the corn and feed spilled into the water, selling it to local farmers at bargain rates.[37] The wreck was cleared and the track repaired in short order, with passengers, once again, having been transferred around the wreck site.

As service went, in those early New Haven years, the timetable dated December 3, 1899 deleted the third daily passenger train that the S. L. and N. had been running, although this may have been a seasonal adjustment. The road would now offer two daily trains in each direction with a third offered Sundays only. Also significant to the overall service, is that all mention of through service

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[37]Newtown Bee, March 30, 1906.

via the Bethel cut off was deleted with this schedule. Passenger trains now ran via Danbury with patrons obliged to change trains there. This was, no doubt, a matter of economy for the railroad but was a marked inconvenience for the traveller to and from the Litchfield Hills. The hand of Morgan, maximizing profit at the expense of service, was beginning to weigh on the little branch.

Connecticut rail historian Gregg Turner agrees that Morgan and Mellen had wrecklessly overextended the company's capital and, with the Panic of 1907, Morgan may have raided the New Haven's treasury to help bail out insolvent friends and acquaintances.[38] The New Haven, in any event, would never rest upon the same financial bedrock it had prior to the Panic and Mellen had begun to make deeper cuts in manpower and maintenance after a severe decline in business starting in 1911. Among the first reductions ordered that year was the now "redundant" Bethel extension that had given the original Shepaug Valley Railroad direct access to the Danbury and Norwalk Railroad and New York City. The line was torn up from Hawleyville south and the Shepaug Branch's approach to Hawleyville was realigned. Now all freight joined passenger service in being routed off the branch and into Danbury, and the Stoney Hill-Plumtrees siding, listed on employee timetables as mid-way between Hawleyville and Bethel, disappeared forever.

Most heinous, however, disregard for safety would bring

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[38]Turner, Gregg, Connecticut Railroads...An Illustrated History, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, 1986, p. 229.

great tragedy to the New Haven and even the little branch would not be a stranger to misery. Cutting maintenance and safety costs everywhere he could, Mellen was now running an operation that had little regard for human life. During 1913, 200 employees and 37 passengers died by the New Haven's hand. These may seem cold remote statistics to us now, but one particular case is so poignant that it merits telling these 76 years later.

Edgar Fairchild Northrop farmed his property on Hanover Road in North Newtown. Northrop was fifty-one and his wife, the former Florence Wetmore of Roxbury, was thirty-six when their first child, a daughter, was born on August 12, 1911. The proud couple named her Aurelia Wetmore Northrop, quite possibly expecting that, due to their ages, she might be their only child. Aurelia survived her first year, a milestone in those days of rampant childhood disease, and there was no reason to believe that the little girl should not have had an uneventful childhood. On April 24, 1913, however, Aurelia, now a curious twenty-month old toddler, wandered through the unmaintained fencing along the right of way and into the path of an oncoming train. Aurelia was buried in the Newtown Village Cemetery on April 26th, perhaps Morgan and Mellen's youngest victim.

Five months later, elsewhere on the New Haven, inadequate signalling in North Haven contributed to the collision of two northbound passenger express trains, costing 21 their lives and injuring scores more. The

public had had enough and the state and local papers reflected the outrage. C. S. Mellen was indicted for manslaughter and J. P. Morgan died in Rome. Shortly afterwards, Morgan's son assumed control of the New Haven's Baord of Directors and pressed for Mellen's quick resignation, insulting his father's lieutenant with an offer of $30,000 per annum for five years to go away.[39] With Mellen's departure, the New Haven began to get its house in order, but it would never regain the financial strength it had known in the late 1800's. Now, as the nation entered the World War I years, the New Haven began to feel the pressure of the automobile, and its smaller branches began to wither.

As the iron horse had eclipsed the horsedrawn stages in the mid-1800's, the horseless carriage was now crowding the iron horse itself. An expensive curiosity at first, mass production had lowered the ownership threshold to a point where millions of Americans began to perceive the mobile freedom of the auto as attainable for their households. When World War I cranked up the American industrial collossus, pumping heretofor unheard of discretionary cash into the pockets of America's workers, the car rush was on. Despite a brief post-war recession, the addictive motor car was a cornerstone of the newly envigorated consumer culture. Various hotels and taverns now advertised special arrangements for auto parties and railroad

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[39] Ibid., p. 230.

passenger patronage fell off drastically. By 1922, with the roaring prosperity of the decade beginning to flower, the New Haven sought to regain some of its lost financial strength by seeking to trim marginal services in a period of general prosperity. The Shepaug Branch's twenty-three year old schedule of two daily and one extra Sunday trains was in jeopardy.

Shepaug line trains were now lightly patronized. To be sure, travellers to New York still went by rail, but most found it faster and more convenient to drive to New Milford to catch the train, rather than to endure the winding Shepaug Branch local to the Danbury connection.

The passenger cars assigned to the Shepaug Branch locals were usually finishing out their service life, having been relegated there from the road's mainline services. They were certainly a far cry from the S. L. and N.'s through parlor car to New York. Finally, in April 1922, the New Haven dropped the passenger trains, and substituted one daily round trip of a 35 passenger, 60 horsepower Mack railbus.

The Macks were truly road buses on railroad wheels and were ungainly at that. Gasoline powered, they were 27 feet 10 inches long and crammed passengers into seven rows of three one side, two the other seating, although, in vivo, the bus was hardly ever more than half full. A baggage compartment occupied the extreme rear of the vehicle and its single rear axle made for rough riding. There was no

restroom and, in the warmer months, the windows could be opened for ventilation. Winter travel must have been an adventure, for the sole source of interior heat was the radiation from the exhaust system. The railbus did, indeed, cost less to operate than a steam passenger train, and required a two man rather than five man crew.[40] So, economic advantage to the railroad had won out over service to the dwindling public. The New Haven was providing service, albeit of a thoroughly minimal nature, but even these economies would be reduced even further as the railroad used the same railbus to cover two marginal lines, the Shepaug and the Danbury to Waterbury "Highland Line".

The Litchfield Enquirer announced the railbus service, reporting that it would leave Litchfield every morning at 8:40 a.m. and would arrive in Danbury at 10:20 a.m.[41] The Mack would then make a mid-day round trip between Danbury and Waterbury and would return to Litchfield from Danbury at 5:50 p.m., arriving at the West Street depot at 7:46 p.m.. The bus would stay overnight in Litchfield and repeat the circuit the next morning.

Perhaps there was some charm in that awkward looking bus on rails, because local residents grudgingly accepted the little Mack, calling it the "Toonerville" or the "dinky",[42]

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[40]Swanberg, op. cit., p. 494.

[41]Litchfield Enquirer, February 2, 1922.

[42]Whitman, Ellen Irwin, The Shepaug Railroad, paper presented to the Woman's Club of Washington, in the collection of the Gunn Memorial Library, Washington, Conn.

but its days would be short and soon it, too, was gone, replaced by an old passenger coach carried in a freight train. This "mixed" train provided the Shepaug Branch's sole passenger service until April 1927 when the New Haven suddenly pulled the coach, leaving the Shepaug line without passenger service for the first time since it was opened. Local legislators and editors led the protest in Hartford and Connecticut Public Utilities Commission Chairman Richard T. Higgins ordered the New Haven to resume the mixed service not later than Monday, November 21, 1927. In a letter to Newtown Bee editor Allison P. Smith, Higgins wrote:

> "Unfortunately, the passenger traffic over this line does not warrant the Commission in ordering the company to operate a regular passenger train, but hope the coach on the mixed train will offer some measure of relief."[43]

The mixed banged and screeched up and down the Shepaug Valley for nearly three more years, but, in April 1930, the New Haven pulled the coach again, this time without a successful protest. Except for the occasional fortunate passenger carried in a Caboose or in special trains of excursionists, the Shepaug Branch would never again carry passengers.

The mid-1920's decline in passenger traffic along the Shepaug had been offset somewhat by continued freight revenues but, with the onset of the Great Depression, these too began to shrink. Soon, the branch would no

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[43]Newtown Bee, November 18, 1927.

longer host daily freights, and motor trucks captured an even greater part of the local freight business, operating on W.P.A. improved highways. By the mid-1930's, the New Haven was retrenching to survive the Depression and many employees were furloughed and hundreds of locomotives and cars had been idled and were in storage. Lines like the Shepaug were listed for discontinuance and, in 1936, application was made to abandon the branch. The proposal was beaten back, possibly because of the implications of the loss of thirty railroad jobs outright and the larger range loss of the stimulus of railroad service for economic recovery. For whatever reason, the Shepaug Branch had survived the Great Depression, although the right of way was, by now, decrepit and in need of major rehabilitation.

By 1942, when America was once again at war, traffic had increased, but track conditions limited speeds to 20 miles per hour along the entire line. Despite this, the World War II years would see the Shepaug's last passenger revival. Wartime rationing had forced Americans out of their cars and onto the rails. Numerous "fresh air" camps were situated around the Valley's lakes and rivers and attracted hundreds of city children who often arrived on chartered trains arranged by the New Haven. In addition, Columbia University has long maintained a field site in Morris and arranged similar trains for faculty and students. Freight service increased as war production was maximized. Foodstuffs and ball bearings manufactured in Bantam were

the major outgoing commodities and thus the Shepaug did its part for victory in 1945, but this service would be soon forgotten after the war.

The lifting of wartime restrictions brought Americans back to the highway and motor trucking proliferated while the post-war recession and coal strike of 1946 hit the New Haven hard. The heavy war days of fat freight tonnage and full coaches had faded and, once again, the road sought to pare its marginal operations. This time the New Haven took a different, more sophisticated approach to trimming its system by spending considerable amounts on public relations. The road stressed its "solid" commitment to providing improved regional, as opposed to local, service, and supported its claims by placing display ads in local newspapers, boasting of its freshly arriving orders of modern stainless steel passenger cars and new freight cars to replace its war weary fleet. One such ad was headlined "Bringing in the Groceries: Bringing in the Guests" and was a thinly veiled plea for the public to cooperate in the elimination of unprofitable branch lines in favor of improved service along selected, profitable trunk lines.[44] But, the Shepaug Valley was not ready to give up its railroad, and skirmish lines were drawn. A coalition of farmers, merchants and manufacturers voiced its fears that the line's abandonment would bring the Valley profound economic hardship. Yet,

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[44]Litchfield Enquirer, February 7, 1946.

the Shepaug Branch had one last dramatic act to play in 1947.

Saturday, January 4, 1947 was cold and grey as Engineer M. J. Stone of Bethel throttled out his steam locomotive and led a freight consist out of Danbury for Litchfield. It was the practice in the late days of the Shepaug Branch for the elderly Mogul engines to top off their water tanks at Danbury, Washington and Litchfield so boiler steam might be maintained in the event of a breakdown or derailment. Fireman Edward T. Fagan had this responsibility this Saturday morning and had climbed atop the tender at Washington to take water, no pleasant task on a wintry day. The train then continued north, its light consist making for an easy day's work for the men in the Caboose; Conductor George Vincent, Brakeman Harry Johnson and Flagman P. J. Ellwanger. By the time the train had cleared Bantam, it had only four cars and a Caboose in tow and was making the allowable speed towards Litchfield, where the crew would turn the locomotive on the 60 foot man-powered "Armstrong" turntable before heading back down line to Danbury. The locomotive never made it.

As the train approached Route 25 (today's U.S. 202) it crossed Butternut Brook and the engineer whistled for the grade crossing at Bissell Road. The locomotive's wheels rode up on packed ice in the crossing's flangeways and the 82 ton Mogul jumped the tracks, taking its tender with it. The engine continued 100 feet beyond the crossing

and ended up fifty feet from the right of way in a meadow. Engineer Stone had been lucky and had ridden the locomotive to its halt, but Fireman Fagan had been thrown from the cab and was pinned beneath the engine. Since the freight cars and Caboose had stayed on the tracks, the rest of the crew was unhurt and ran forward to offer assistance. It was indeed fortunate for Mr. Fagan that the wreck had occured near a main highway and not along the many miles of backwoods the Shepaug traversed, and a passing motorist drove the half mile to the State Police Barracks to summon help. In short time, Fagan was cut free of the wreckage by Bantam welders Guy Zinzer and John Angelovich, who had rushed to the scene after being called by police. Fagan was taken by ambulance to Charlotte Hungerford Hospital in Torrington where he was kept overnight for observation and discharged the next morning to his home on Balmforth Avenue in Danbury, a very lucky man.[45]

For the New Haven's part, this wreck might well have given an earlier company administration the excuse it needed to end service or cut it back to Bantam. In fact, wrecking crews worked swiftly, and the wayward engine was back on the tracks and the line reopened before 9:00 p.m. the next day. The four carloads of freight, a hopper of coal, two tank cars, one gasoline, one fuel oil and a boxcar of undetermined lading, but probably livestock feed, arrived in Litchfield but two days late. Despite these

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[45] Ibid., January 9, 1947.

heroic efforts, however, the Shepaug line had come upon its Armageddon.

As the railroad pressed its desire in early 1947 to abandon the branch, the directors of the Litchfield County Farm Bureau appointed Henry R. Mosle of Goshen to lead a committee that would study the area's options. A meeting was held on Wednesday, January 22, 1947 at 4:00 p.m. and was chaired by Albert W. Clock, President of Progress Incorporated of Litchfield. The meeting was held in the shadow of a recent decision by the U.S. District Court in favor of the New Haven's approaching the Interstate Commerce Commission for permission to abandon.

The main thrust of the local users' arguments was that the line could be profitable if maintained properly with more timely service. The coal, oil, lumber, merchandise, grain and other feeds that arrived at the terminal on West Street were critical to their livelihoods and the overall economy of the area, which had begun to increase in population after a long period of decline.[46]

The railroad, on the other hand, cited the enormous cost of maintaining the 450-foot Housatonic bridge, now dangerously overdue for maintenance that the railroad said would cost nearly $60,000. The traffic patterns, furthermore, reflected a preponderance of incoming rather than outgoing loads along the line, an untenable situation

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[46] Ibid., January 23, 1947.

financially for the New Haven.[47]

In February, Mosle and two dairying colleagues, George DeVoe of Roxbury and Ralph Averill of Washington, submitted their report on the impact the Shepaug's abandonment would have on their operations. Needing 10,000 tons of feed to produce the 15 million quarts of milk they had in 1945, the farmers' report stated that they could ill afford the higher rates of the truckers and feared for their dairies claiming that, with railroad service, feed already amounted to 35 percent of all costs on their farms.[48] In March, the I.C.C. announced that it would hold a hearing on the proposed abandonment on July 2 in Hartford.

The hearing was convened, as scheduled, with I.C.C. Examiner Lucian Jordan presiding. A large delegation from the Shepaug Valley had travelled to Hartford and it appeared most of them intended to testify. As one day proved insufficient to hear all the testimony, the proceedings were adjourned to the next day at the Bryan Town Hall in Washington, where a Shepaug line freight would defiantly bang and screech into town just as the hearing was reconvening less than 100 feet away. Pausing to water its engine and then drop a freight car or two, the engineer gave two short toots on the whistle and eased the train northward. The effect on those at the hearing

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[47] Ibid., July 10, 1947.

[48] Ibid., February 27, 1947.

was not lost, as the Litchfield Enquirer's reporter noted.[49] It was, alas, the line's cause that was lost as the hearings closed.

In the end, Examiner Jordan could not be swayed by the locals' arguments in favor of the line's continued operation. The Litchfield Enquirer of October 23, 1947 headlined that Examiner Jordan "Recommends that Service On Shepaug Be Discontinued" since "all points in the territory in question can be served by motor carriers on improved highways". The report was then sent to the I.C.C. itself for final action, but few expected the body to reject its examiner's report. The line's supporters then attempted one last desperate move to keep their railroad.

Litchfield architect Walter Howe led a group of local boosters who were very much the like of Messrs. Perkins, Coit, McNeill, et al. just eighty years before. Working with Howe were William O. Matthews, Harry Seelye, Raymond P. Atherton, Edmund Switzer and Albert W. Clock and it was their hope that sufficient backing could be found to purchase the line from the New Haven, in effect completing a cycle that dated from the line's pre-1898 operation. The men approached Frank VanWormer Walsh, Jr., of Fairlawn, New Jersey who, along with a group of friends, had shown great interest in reviving marginal lines throughout the Northeast. Walsh intended to purchase the line from the New Haven with the proceeds from a mortgage loan not to

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[49] Ibid., July 10, 1947.

exceed the value of the line's rails. Walsh proposed the purchase of a General Electric 44 ton switching locomotive to provide the motive power on the line but, regrettably, no lending institution was willing to assume the risk at terms that would have allowed the line a fair chance to show an income.[50] The plan fell through and, with the announcement by the I.C.C. on May 3, 1948, that the New Haven would be permitted to close the line promptly. The Enquirer reacted:

> "(It is) a source of deep regret as well as economic concern for people in this area. While the I.C.C. in its wisdom has decided that the ability of the New Haven to serve New England outweighs the local loss, there is no dodging the fact that these (local) merchants face a real problem in readjusting to the new situation."[51]

Given authority to discontinue, the New Haven embargoed the line, but allowed shipments from distant points to be delivered into June. Finally, on June 24, 1948, a diesel-electric bi-directional switch engine, with a Caboose attached, would start up the line to Litchfield, ignore the turntable and then return to Danbury collecting the empty cars spotted out along the line. It is curious that the New Haven sent a public relations man along with the Caboose crew on most of the line's last runs. A photograph in the June 17, 1948 New Milford Times shows the management man running back to the Caboose, obviously having delivered the company line to the paper's reporter

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[50]The New Milford Times, June 17, 1948.

[51]Litchfield Enquirer, May 13, 1948.

and photographer. The train is northbound, and sits just up the line from the Roxbury depot, which still stands today. Accompanying photos picture the train's crew, Conductor F. J. Herbst, Engineer Robert Baird, Fireman Edward A. Hynes and Road Foreman Denis T. Spaulding in diesel switcher No. 945 and the Caboose -- such modernity and attention from the New Haven for the little line's swansong. By July 1, only wrecking and inspection movements travelled its rails and, by Christmas, the rails were gone, sold for scrap. The Shepaug was finished as an operating railroad.

Epilogue

The Shepaug Railroad was an outstanding expression of the civic booster culture in the small New England communities it served. Despite the failure of the Shepaug River Valley to develop industrially as had the neighboring Naugatuck, the Shepaug line's continued operation was held by local elites, even up to 1948, as critical to the overall well-being of the towns' commerce and agriculture. The line's eventual demise was brought about by the proliferation of motor vehicles and the extension of the state's network of paved and/or improved highways maintained at public expense. On the other hand, the nearly $60,000 expense towards rehabilitating the Housatonic railroad bridge on the Shepaug line would have been borne entirely by the New Haven Railroad which was, in 1948, struggling to recapitalize itself with new equipment and right-of-way work. The road's promise of improved service on the neighboring Housatonic line sealed the Shepaug's fate but, to be fair, the pledge held up, with that service lasting into the 1970's.

But what is left of the old Shepaug? Remarkably enough, rail is still in use on a short segment of the line's approach to Hawleyville. Used as an industrial siding by a lumber firm, the turnout and a short length of track are still laid upon the old line's right-of-way. All other track along the Shepaug is gone, however, and, with the passing of years, relics like tieplates or spikes

are becoming harder to find along the road's erstwhile route. The line's embankments and sturdy masonry work survive for the most part, although much of its length is now posted as private property and is not accessible for the casual stroller. Few of the Shepaug's structures survive to this day, but the road's last freight office does business in Litchfield as a cafe. Just to its south, on Russell Street, the coal bins filled by Shepaug carried hopper cars stand, boarded up and derelict. Heading down the line, highway construction in 1988 claimed the mid-stream pier of the Butternut Brook viaduct adjacent to U.S. Route 202, but, just down the road, the impressive stone abutments that carried the line across the Bantam River still stand behind the plant of PTC Aerospace.

Further along, the clearing where the Bantam station once stood is still open ground just east of Connecticut Route 209 where it crosses the Bantam River and the line's right-of-way, just south of the bridge, recently served the residents of Trumbull Street in Bantam as their only vehicular egress during the 1986 rebuilding of their bridge to Route 202.

Further down the line, the Morris Historical Society has placed a bronze plaque at the site of the town's old station at Smokey Hollow, and, beyond that, the platform and foundations at New Preston Station grace the front yard of a private home on Route 47 in Washington. In Washington Depot, the old station was lifted from its

foundations and relocated some yards away, serving today as an American Legion Hall. Shortly after leaving Washington Depot, the old line enters what is today the Steep Rock Reservation, in which the right-of-way has been preserved as a hiking and bridle path. The abandoned piers of the old suspension bridge to Holiday House had supported a foot bridge until the early 1970's but now stand unused, and just to the south, the curved Steep Rock Tunnel still beckons the brave, but beware of falling rock, dripping water and bats.

South of here, the embankment can be easily found and followed through Judd's Bridge to Roxbury Station where the depot building still stands, serving as a storage house for lumber. South of here, at the grade crossing on Route 67, the line wanders downgrade to Roxbury Falls, where the remnants of the silica and garnet industries that fed the line can be found. Beyond this, the right-of-way descends into the deep waters of Lake Lillinonah, created in 1955 when the Shepaug Hydroelectric Dam on the Housatonic River flooded the valleys behind it, inundating the site of the road's old Shepaug station and the piers of the dismantled bridge that crossed the Housatonic. The route does not re-emerge from the Lake's waters until Hanover Springs, near the public boat launch on Hanover Road in Newtown, but the starcrossed viaduct across Pond Brook, so well known to the late Conductor Bristol, still stands off Pond Brook Road, near Hanover.

The line can then be followed to Hawleyville, but much is, again, private property, including the driveway of a fortunate Currituck Road homeowner who has used an old Shepaug culvert and length of embankment to get to a modern, post-railroad house, the living room of which lies astride the old right-of-way. Beyond this, the roadbed continues until the stub-ended siding at the lumber company, and disappears into today's Conrail single track at Hawleyville.

So, today, the Shepaug remains as marks on the landscape or in masonry cairns along its route. Yet, there is a local legend that in the late 1800's a wrecked freight car was buried somewhere between Bantam and Morris stations. If this is true, perhaps a great relic of a past age will be found to excite the imaginations of future generations. If it is only legend, or is never found, then it will always belong to us all in the Shepaug Valley, as if it were yet shuttling milk between our towns and the cities, with Conductor Bristol waving to our children at trackside.

APPENDIX 1

PRO-RAILROAD PROPERTY OWNING PETITIONERS
LITCHFIELD, CONNECTICUT, OCTOBER 3, 1870
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING ON MUNICIPAL SUBSCRIPTION
TO ADDITIONAL SHEPAUG VALLEY RAILROAD STOCK
IN AMOUNT OF ONE PERCENT OF TOWN GRAND LIST

McNeill, Edwin
A.S. Wright and Company
Adams, Charles
Adams, Henry W.
Beach, S.G.
Braman, F.J.
Braman, William H.
Bray, Michael B.
Bronson, S.N.
Brown, F.W.
Buell, William R.
Bulkley, David C.
Coit, H.R.
Crossman, William H.
Curtiss, D.
Deming, Lucretia
Dunn, H.C.
F.D. McNeil and Company
G. Sanford and Son
Gates, H.E.
Hale, F.M.
Judd, Jesse L.
Kirchberger, Charles G.
Lewis, M.A.
Lord, George F.
McNeil, F.D.
Meafoy, L.O.
Merriman, Hiram
Phelps, L.C.
Richards, Thomas H.
Sanford, Garwood
Sanford, S.M.
Sedgwick, Theodore S.
Seymour, O.S.
Treadway, J.J.
Welch, J.H.
Wessills and Gates
Wheeler, George
Wheeler, J.W.
Williams, Robert
Woodruff, George C.
Wright, A.S.
Thumway, A.B.
Trowbridge, Stephen
White, James L.
Woodruff, H.L.

(Brake)?, John P.
(Grbbrd)?, H.B.
(Mouthrop)?, Erastus P.
Amts, B.
Baldwin, George H.
Baldwin, Mrs. H.M.
Barker, Catherine E.
Barnes, Nelson H.
Beckwith, J.G.
Belden, Charles O.
Benton, Amos C.
Bishop, C.B.
Bishop and Sedgwick
Bissell, William
Bostwick, D.E.
Bronson, E.P.
Buell, Charles T.
Crane, Esther M.
Deming, C.T.
Dwyer, Edward
Fuller, Almon E.
Fuller, J.E.
Ganung, James
Gould, Julia
Harney, Thomas
Hickox, G.A.
Hubbard, John H.
Johnson, L.M.
Johnson, S.B.
Kenney, George
Lord, A.A.
Marsh, Frederick A.
Merriman, Charles
Merriman, H. and C.
Merriman, Joseph
Morse, Jacob
Munger, Sheldon
Parmalee, Caroline
Parmalee, Sally
Peck, William L.
Ray, C.F.
Staples, Edson
Stevens, Robert
Stone, Alva
Stone, Leonard
Tharp, Joel A.

(Hadsell?), Lewis
Andrews, Charles B.
Andrews, Hubbard L.
Baldwin, Sr., Horace
Baldwin, William F.
Barber, E.O.
Beach, Milo
Beach, Samuel
Biglow, J.W.
Bissell, Amos
Braman, Samuel G.
Brennan, John
Cable, Henry T.
Catlin, (Cyrus?)
Catlin, Arthur D.
Coe, Henry L.
Coe, Levi
Colvocoresses, George M.
DeForest, David
Granger, Warden A.
Mason, George W.
McCall, Benjamin A.
Miller, Timothy E.
Miller, William G.
Morse, Arabel H.
Morse, George E.
Morse, Harley
Norton, William
Osborn, John
Osborn, Myron
Osborn, W.S.
Peck, J.B.
Prescott, George
Prescott, H.H.
Saltonstall, Thomas L.
Seymour, E.W.
Sharp, Homer
Smith, Rufus
Stoddard, F.S.
Taylor, Isaac
Wadhams, F. and F.
Webster, Benjamin
Webster, C.B.
Webster, William M.
Welch, Mark
Wessells, L.W.
Wheeler, David M.
Williamson, John
Wood, David M.
Woodruff, George M.
Wright, S. and E.H.

Baldwin, Theodore E.
Beach, Lucy
Benton, Horatio
Bishop, H.L.
Bissell, Charles
Bissell, Henry B.
Bissell, Lawrence
Bissell, Nathaniel
Bissell, Sally
Buell, Mary T.
Candee, John B.
Child, Elizabeth P.
Clemons, H.
Clock, Samuel
Dickinson, E.P.
Dudley, S.H.
Frisbie, L.M.
Graham, G.W.
Grant, David M.
Grant, Harriet L.
Hand, F.B.
Hutchinson, Isaac H.
Keeler, William R.
Kilbourn, Eliada
Kilbourn, Ethan
Litchfield Land and (?) Company, by E. McNeill, President
Marsh, Clarissa A.
Marsh, Harriel L.
Marsh, Mary
Marsh, Rhoda
Marsh, William L.
Merriman, George
Neville, D.
Perkins, J. Deming
Peters, John T.
Potter, G.G.
Powers, Michael
Richards, A.M.
Richards, Rev. Goerge
Ruwet, Nicholas
Sanford, Derick V.
Stevens, Seymour
Thrall, Charles L.
Van Winkle, Edgar L.
Wheeler, Charles D.
Wheeler, T.L.
White, John Jay
Woodruff, John A.
Woodruff, L.B.
Wright, E.H.

(Moltrop?), S.
Baldwin, Henry
Beach, A.B.
Beach, A.G.
Beach, H.
Bishop, Charles
Bissell, E.B.
Bissell, W.W.
Bradley, Fred
Bradley, H.
Buel, Henry W.
Buel, Henry W. (Exec. extate of Dr. Samuel Buel)
Buel, Minerva
Cheney, Mary
Cheney, Silas E.
Conklin, S.R.
Conklin, Sarah E.
Crandall, R.C.
Crossman, Edward
Grannis, A.L.
Griswold, H.P.
Hotchkiss, Hurlbert H.
Hotchkiss, Lewis C.
Hutchinson, Lewis
Hutchinson, Lewis E.
Keeler, S.C.
Landon, F.C.
Marsh, (Rivesius?)
Morris, John N.
Morse, Aaron
Morse, H.O.
Nichols, Horace
O'Brion, William
Osborn, N.L.
Palmer, William H.
Peck, Charles J.
Peck, E.M.
Quigley, Felix
Roraback, John
Smith, H.D.
Smith, F.L.
Tompkins, Jackson
Tompkins, Mrs. Phebe L.
Tracy, Malachi
Wadhams, John M.
Wadhams, Maria L.
Warner, Elizabeth
Weeks, Eli D.
Welch, Clarissa per J.H.W.
Beach, David H.
Bell, Thomas
Botsford, H.A.
Buell, Lucretia
Camp, D.B.W.
Cullen, R.D.
Frisbie, Henry
Lane, Mrs. Susan B.
Litchfield Carriage Company, by F.W. Hand, President
Tharp, George
Tyrell, George
Wentworth, Henry T.
Whitney, Almira

SOURCE: LITCHFIELD, CONNECTICUT TOWN RECORDS, Volume 49 (Minutes of Town Meetings and Posting of Legal Notices and Petitions)

Compiled and databased by Mark E. Anderson, Bantam, Connecticut; November and December, 1988.

APPENDIX 2

PRO-RAILROAD LANDOWNING PETITIONERS
ROXBURY, CONNECTICUT: DECEMBER 11, 1869
SPECIAL TOWN MEETING ON MUNICIPAL SUBSCRIPTION TO STOCK
IN THE SHEPAUG VALLEY RAILROAD

_____, Frederick
Beardsley, Charles
Berr_____, William P.
Bradley, Edson
Brailley, Henry E.
Bronson, Daniel G.
Bronson, Daniel G.
Bronson, William
Brothers, Judson
Brothers, Judson
Camp, Ophelia R.
Camp, Ophelia R.
Davidson, Treat
Fenn, Aaron W.
Fisbee, Harman
Frisbee, Harman
Gillette, Daniel M.
Graham, George W.
Hoag, Edwin
Hoag, Edwin
Hodge, Albert L.
Isham, Austin
Judd, Daniel
Judd, Lewis
Leavenworth, Edwin
Lineham, William
Meeker, Henry
Noble, George H.
Noble, George H.
Peck, John
Prindle, Cyrus
Prindle, Edwin
Randall, Celia A.
Randall, Celia A.
Randall, Charles
Randall, Charles
Randall, Delia B.
Randall, M. Helen
Randall, M. Helen
Sawyer, Allen
Smith, George
Smith, Levi
Vees, Frederick
Warner, Silas
Wetmore, Cyrus E.
Wetmore, Frank E.

American Silver Steel Co.
Beardsley, Julius C.
Beers, Chauncy A.
Beers, Philo
Bennitt, William P.
Bissell, John E.
Boland, Eugene R.
Botsford, Charles
Botsford, George
Botsford, Mary Ann
Bronson, William
Buckingham, Botsford W.
Call, George W.
Camp, Sheldon
Davis, Charles O.
Dickinson, Henry H.
Goram, Aaron
Goram, William H.
Hawley, John C.
Hodge, Albert L.
Judd, Joel W.
Keeler, Hiram and Daniel
Keeler, James H.
Langdon, Patrick
Leavenworth, Edwin
Leavenworth, J.B.
Mallett, Henry W.
Minor, Sherman
Mitchell, Simeon
Moore, James
Nicholson, Cyrus T.
Northrup, George A.
Northrup, H.C.
Phipping, J.M.
Randall, Henry
Roswell, Samuel
Rowe, E.P.
Seward, Orin B.
Shephard, Truman
Swank, W.B.
Tyrell, Amos
Tyrell, Charles T.
Tyrell, Hiram
Tyrell, Oliver S.
Tyrell, Stephen
Tyrell, Thomas

APPENDIX 3

PRO-RAILROAD LANDOWNING PETITIONERS MORRIS, CONNECTICUT: OCTOBER 21, 1869 SPECIAL TOWN MEETING ON MUNICIPAL SUBSCRIPTION TO STOCK IN THE SHEPAUG VALLEY RAILROAD

Adams, S.M.
Alvord, C.H.
Alvord, Edgar
Bostwick, Ammon
Brown, Shelton J.
Buell, Charles
Buell, Orson
Bull, Jay J.
Bunnell, H.D.
Chase, Willis
Curtis, Orson
Curtis, Russell
Derby, Dexter E.
Edmonds, Nelson
Edmonds, Walter M.
Flynn, John
Forster, Charles
Glover, (P)?. H.
Grannis, Lucinda
Green, William
Hall, William L.
Hand, F.B.
Hand, F.B. (admin. estate of Leman Stone)
Hard, George W.
Judd, L.P. (admin. estate of Arthur Judd)
Keeler, William R.
Ludington, Margaret
Martin, Henry J. and Mary E. Smith (exec. estate of Bateman Smith)
Munroe, Aaron
Peck, Sidney
Stoddard, George
Stoughton, Cicero
Thompson, A.
Thompson, John
Todd, M.S.
Waugh, Grace (admin. estate of S.W. Waugh)
Waugh, H.H.
Waugh, T.L.
Weed, Averis M.
Weed, Orson
Westover, John
Westover, Linus
Wickwire, Charles
Wickwire, Cynthia
Ames, William B.
Babbitt, John
Baldwin, Henry
Baldwin, Judson
Bates, Frederick
Benton, Horatio
Benton, Sarah
Brown, William E.
Cables, James T.
Carpenter, Lucy A.
Cheney, Silas E.
Clock, Samuel
Deming, William
Dewez, V.
Emmons, Ehiel
Emmons, Ira A.
Griswold, Dwight
Griswold, L.L.
Hall, Beebe S.
Hall, Emeline
Hays, Ephraim
Hinnman(?), Nathan B.
Holohan, Thomas
Hotchkiss, Elihu
Hubbard, Joseph S.
Jordan, Timothy C.
Marsh, Frederick A.
Marsh, John
Munson, Abijah
Munson, S.L.
Nobles, Charles
Palmer, Abner B.
Peck, Charles J.
Pratt, F.H.
Randall, P.B.
Ray, John
Ray, Sheldon B.
Roots, Stanley
Russell, Edward B.
Smith, H.N.
Smith, Simeon
Sullivan, James
Thompson, D.W.
Throop, Dan
Throop, George
Throop, Monroe
Turkington, David
Wagoner, D.W.
Watts, Adam

Barnes, George
Barnes, George I.
Barnes, Nelson
Bates, James
Blackman, Leander
Bradley, Eli N.
Bristol, Isaac B.
Bronson, John T.
Burritt, Lewis B.
Camp, D.C.
Camp, Oliver G.
Camp, William
Coad, Samuel
Cole, C.D.
Downs, Myron
Evans, John
Fairchild, H.L.
Garlick, Earl H.
Garlick, Edmond E.
Garlick, George E.
Garlick, H.C.
Gillette, Horace D.
Gorman, Joseph
Harris, George E.
Hawley, Isaac A.
Hodge and Edwards
Hurlburt, George W.
Hurlburt, Henry S.
Morris, Winthrop
Patterson, Roswell B.
Picket, William
Pickett, David
Pickett, Michael
Pierce, David
Preston, B.S.
Preston, B.S. (adm. estate of Mary B. Whittlesey)
Prindle, Cyrus E.
Prindle, Edwin C.
Prindle, Horace F.
Sanford, Charles
Sanford, Stephen
Seeley, Edwin G.
Smith, G.W.
Smith, John S.
Smith, Nathan R.
Smith, Sheldon B.
Stiles, David G.
Thomas, Charles
Thomas, George W.
Trowbridge, Henry W.
Ward, Albin
Wright, David V.

Addis, Seth
Albin, George M.
Baker Weirs(?), Daniel
Beardsley, Charles
Bradley, Maria P.
Brismade(?), F.A.
Bryan, Ursula H.
Camp, Albert
Castle, Erastus
Clark, James
Davenport, Benjamin
Eastman, Herman B.
Elwell, Hiram
Fenn, Henry W.
Frisbie, Lucy
Garlick, Earl H. and Henry E.
Hatch, Mark T.
Hickox, Orestus
Hollister, Seth
Hurlburt, George
Isham, Chester A.
Keefe, Patrick
Leavenworth, George F.
Leavenworth, Sarah J.
Leavenworth, Theodore
Masters, Almarine
Meramble, Bronson
Minor, Nathaniel
Odell, Myron
Potter, Collis I.
Prindle, Isaac B.
Sanford, Watson G.
Sherman, Ann
Smith, W.B.
Squire, Eunice
Squire, Levi T.
Stoddard, Betsey
Teeple, Levi R.
Thomas, Mary
Twitchell, Mary
Warner, Betsey Ann
Warner, C.H. and H.N.(?)
Warner, Henry
Woodruff, Enoch
Wray, George B.
Whitehead, Alonzo
Whitehead, Hubbell
Warner, George
Warner, Leroy S.
Watson, John
Whelan, James
Whelan, Patrick
Wilmot, Daniel

SOURCE: ROXBURY, CONNECTICUT TOWN RECORDS, Volume One (Minutes of Town Meetings and Posting of Legal Notices and Petitions)

Compiled and databased by Mark E. Anderson, Bantam, Connecticut; November and December, 1988.

Baldwin, Isaac
Benton, Amos C.
Bissell, Melissa P.
Bissell, Nathaniel
Brayman, William A.
Burgess, Asa
Burgess, Asa and Truman O. Sanford, in lo
Burgess, Junius (?)
Burgess, William L.
Burns, Martin
Canfield, T.S.
Catlin, Mary A.
Catlin, Truman
Clemons, Harry
Crandall, R.C.
Cook, C.N. (exec. estate of H.J. Hand, deceased)
Emmons, A.M.
Emmons, Orson
Ensign, Samuel M.
Fogg, Nicholas H.
Goslee, C.C. and T.C.
Griswold, Chalres
Griswold, Silas M.
Hall, Beebe S. (admin. estate of H.J. Peck)
Hall, L.B.
Hallock, A.B.
Hard, George M.
Harrison, Rollin H.
Hubbard, Benjamin
Kilbourn, David P.
Kilbourn, R.F.
Laurens, William H.
Laurens and Smedley
Ludington, Frederick L.
Miner, Garry H.
Morse, Arabel H.
Moss, Eliza
Ray, Henry R.
Ray, William by H.R. Ray, executor
Sanford, Joseph
Sanford, Truman O.
Sedgwick, Theodore R.
Smedley, William L.
Stoddard, Homer
Stoddard, Jesse R.
Stone, Cornelia
Throop Brothers
Tracy, A.C.
Tracy, Malachi
Waugh, Anah
Waugh, H.
Waugh, L.J.
Weeks, Ezra E.
Westover, Lavina
Wetmore, Edward
Wheeler, S.M. by J.W. Wheeler, guardian
Wheeler, William S.
Wilmot, Lucius
Wilson, Charles

SOURCE: MORRIS, CONNECTICUT TOWN RECORDS, Volume One (Minutes of Town Meetings and Posting of Legal Notices and Petitions)

Compiled and databased by Mark E. Anderson, Bantam, Connecticut; November and December, 1988.

APPENDIX 4

WASHINGTON, CONNECTICUT PROPERTY OWNERS
GRANTING RIGHT OF WAY FOR CONSTRUCTION
AND OPERATION OF THE SHEPAUG VALLEY RAILROAD:
1870 TO 1872

Titus, J. Sherman	January 4, 1870
Platt, Simeon D.	December 28, 1870
Bishop, Joel	December 28, 1870
Ford, Romulus W.	December 30, 1870
Brinsmade, T.F. and S.L.	January 23, 1871
Kinney, Elias C.	January 9, 1871
Richmond, Amos T.	December 26, 1870
The "Babcock Heirs: Phebe Babcock Homer W. Babcock John K. Cady Mary J. Cady Guy C. Ford, guardian to Laura, William R. and Robert Babcock, minors	December 23, 1870
Seeley, Edson S.	January 18, 1871
Mealia, Richard	January 23, 1871
Ford, Polly L. and Candace G. Seeley	January 28, 1871
Ford, Simeon D.	January 14, 1871
Hurlburt, Erastus J.	December 28, 1870
Bronson, Daniel G. and John H.	February 3, 1871
Burgess, Alanson A.	January 30, 1871
Bryan, Richard A.	January 13, 1871
Hickox, George A.	January 7, 1871
Mitchell, Simeon H.	March 2, 1871
Hickox, Charles L.	December 28, 1870
Bronson, Garradus N.	February 8, 1871
Kinney, Mary E., guardian to Sarah E. Kinney	January 25, 1871
Seymour, Origen	February 11, 1871
Burgess, Asa	January 19, 1871
Wedge, George	February 10, 1871
Ford, Simeon and Guy C.	January 27, 1871
Woodruff, Merritt S.	January 7, 1871
Hodge, Albert L., conservator to Elliot Lucas	December 26, 1870
Hickox, Orestes	July 3, 1871
The New Milford Savings Bank, mortgage holder on property of Armond Olmsted, at his request /s/ John S. Turrill, treasurer	June 24, 1871

Olmsted, Armond	April 11, 1871
Titus, Sarah W., John W. and Joseph (right to lay pipes across their property to watering station)	September 9, 1871
Hurlburt, George	February 7, 1871
Titus, J. Sherman	February 1, 1872
Bryan, Richard A.	August 25, 1871

SOURCE: WASHINGTON, CONNECTICUT LAND RECORDS: Volume 22.

APPENDIX 5

FOREIGN CAR MOVEMENTS
SHEPAUG, LITCHFIELD AND NORTHERN RAILROAD
JULY 1895 THROUGH JUNE 1898

Allegheny Valley Railroad
Alton Terminal Railroad
Ann Arbor Railroad
Armour Car Lines
Arms Palace Horse Car Company
Atlantic Coast Line Railroad
Baltimore and Ohio Railroad
Baltimore and Ohio Southwestern Railway
Bangor and Aroostook Railroad
Beech Creek Railroad
Blue Line
Boston and Albany Railroad
Boston and Maine
Buffalo, Rochester and Pittsburgh Railroad
Buffalo and Susquehanna Railroad
Burlington and Missouri River Railroad in Nebraska
Burton Stock Car Company
Canada Atlantic
Canada Southern Line
Canadian Pacific Despatch
Canadian Pacific Railroad
Cape Fear and Yadkin Valley Railway
Central Railroad of New Jersey
Central Vermont Railway
Chesapeake, Ohio and Southwestern
Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad
Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad
Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati and St. Louis Railroad
Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad
Chicago, Peoria and St. Louis Railroad
Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad
Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railway
Chicago and Alton
Chicago and Erie Railroad
Chicago and Grand Trunk
Chicago and Northwestern Railroad
Chicago and Western Michigan Railway
Chicago Great Western Railway
Chicago Refrigerator Car Line
Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railway
Cleveland, Akron and Columbus Railroad
Commerce Despatch Line
Concord and Montreal Railroad
Cumberland Valley Railroad
Delaware and Hudson Canal Company
Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railway
Duluth, South Shore and Atlantic Railway

Empire Line
Erie and Wyoming Valley
Erie Despatch Company
Erie Railroad
Evansville and Terre Haute
Excelsior Horse Car Line
Fall Brook Railway Company
Fitchburg Railroad
Flint and Pere Marquette
Florence Railroad of the Atlantic Coast Line
Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad
Grand Trunk
Great Central Route Blue Line
Great Northern Railway
Illinois Central Railroad
Indiana, Decatur and Western
Iowa Central
Kansas City, Pittsburgh and Gulf Railroad
Lake Shore and Michigan Southern
Lehigh and Hudson River
Lehigh Valley
Louisville, New Albany and Chicago Railway
Louisville and Nashville
Madison, Alton and Chicago Railroad
Maine Central
Mather Horse and Stock Car Company
Memphis and Charleston Railroad
Merchants Despatch Transfer Company
Michigan Central Railroad
Midland Line
MInneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie Railroad
Minneapolis and St. Louis Railroad
Narragansett Pier Railroad
National Despatch Line
New York, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad
New York, Lake Erie and Western
New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad
New York, Ontario and Western
New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio
New York, PHiladelphia and Norfolk Railroad
New York and New England
New York Central and Hudson River
Norfolk and Western
Northern Pacific Railroad
Ohio River Railroad
Ohio Southern Railroad
Pennsylvania Company
The New England Railroad
Pennsylvania Railroad
Peoria, Decatur and Evansville Railroad
Philadelphia, Reading and New England
Philadelphia and Reading Railroad
Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis

Pittsburgh, Shenaugo and Lake Erie Railroad
Red Line
Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg Railroad
Rutland Railway
South Manchester Railroad
Southern Pacific Railroad
Southern Railway
St. Louis, Chicago and St. Paul Railway of ILlinois
Streets Western Stable Car Line
Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad
Toledo, St. Louis and Kansas City Railroad
Vandalia Line
Venice Transportation Line
Vinton Colliery Company
Wabash Railroad
West Shore Railroad
Western Equipment and Car Company
Western New York and Pennsylvania
Westmoreland Coal Company
Wheeling and Lake Erie Railway
White Line Central Transit Company
Wisconsin Central Lines
Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Company

SOURCE: SHEPAUG, LITCHFIELD AND NORTHERN RAILROAD CAR SERVICE VOUCHER TOOK: 1895 TO 1898: HODGE MEMORIAL LIBRARY, ROXBURY, CONNECTICUT

Compiled and databased by Mark E. Anderson, Bantam, Connecticut; Fall 1988.

APPENDIX 6

EXCERPTS FROM SHEPAUG, LITCHFIELD AND NORTHERN RAILROAD ANNUAL REPORT, 1898, PREPARED BY CHIEF CLERK ROBERT T. BIRD

A. PASSENGERS CARRIED BY MONTH, FISCAL YEAR:

July 1897	3,949	January 1898	1,519
August 1897	5,652	February	1,272
September 1897	4,280	March 1898	1,707
October 1897	3,570	April 1898	1,779
November 1897	2,116	May 1898	2,388
December 1897	1,544	June 1898	3,968

NB The justification for the extra summer season passenger train is quite apparent.

B. BOARD OF DIRECTORS, S.L. AND N. RR; JUNE 30, 1898:

Charles P. Clark	New Haven, Connecticut
John M. Hall	New Haven, Connecticut
William E. Barnett	New Haven, Connecticut
S. E. Merwin	New Haven, Connecticut
Alexander McNeill	New York, New York
J. Pierpont Morgan	New York, New York
William Rockefeller	New York, New York
George MacCulloch Miller	New York, New York
J. Deming Perkins	Litchfield, Connecticut

C. OFFICERS, S.L. AND N. RR, JUNE 30, 1898:

President	John M. Hall	New Haven
Vice-President	Charles P. Clark	New Haven
Secretary	William E. Barnett	New Haven
Treasurer	Phillip P. Hubbard	Litchfield
Chief Clerk	Robert T. Bird	Litchfield
General Mgr.	Charles H. Platt	New Haven
Superintendent	J. E. Martin	Danbury

D. CAPITALIZATION, JUNE 30, 1898:

12 thousand shares at $50.00 per share
TOTAL: $600,000.

E. FREIGHT COMMODITIES AS PERCENT OF TOTAL HAULAGE - 7/97 - 6/98:

Grain	13.45%	General Manufactures	3.26%
Flour	1.18%	Cement,Brick,Lime & Sand	4.25%
Fruit & Veg.	.87%	Wines,Liquors,Beer	.65%
Livestock	.78%	Merchandise	2.42%
Dressed Meats	2.29%	Miscellaneous	1.91%
Milk	20.38%		
Anthracite	16.08%	TOTAL TONNAGE:	
Stone	23.52%	Outbound	21,017 tons
Lumber	8.26%	Inbound	17,547 tons
Petroleum	.70%	Total Hauled	38,564 tons

F. S.L. AND N. R.R. ROLLING STOCK, JUNE 30, 1868:

1. Five Locomotives - 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2. Four Milk Cars - 24, 26, 28, 30
3. Seven Passenger-Baggage Cars -
   a. Combine #1
   b. Combine #2
   c. Coach #3
   d. Caboose #5
   e. "Old" Baggage #4 (remodeled from old milk car)
   f. Coach #6
   g. Combine #7
4. Thirty-two flat cars (one "old style" #63, wrecked and deleted) -
   a. "Old" style, poor condition (13) - 25, 27, 29, 33, 35, 37, 41, 43, 47, 53, 55, 59, 61
   b. "New" style, top condition (19) - 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, 91, 93, 95, 97, 99, 101

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