



Hamden Co-operative Creamery and Borden's photos courtesy of:
Delaware County Historical Association
46549 State Highway 10
Delhi, NY 13753

A smaller creamery, the first in Hamden, was built just north of the future Borden's location in 1891 by the Howell Brothers of Goshen, NY. Future owners included W. C. A. Hitt & Co., McDermott-Bunger and Whitehouse Milk & Cream.

The small storehouse, which also handled coal, was built by Combs Brothers in 1882.

At the north end of the village, the Hamden Co-operative Creamery Company opened a creamery in 1902 (near the present site of this kiosk). In 1912 a milk sugar plant was built adjacent to that creamery to utilize the milk by-products it generated. Ferndale Farms acquired this facility in 1931 and would operate it until 1964.



Hamden Station and Borden's/Hamden station/
Crawford feed mill photos courtesy of :
Delaware County Historical Association
<http://www.dcha-ny.org>

If you are interested in learning more about the O&W, becoming a member, sharing railroad information with us, purchasing some of our many O&W publications, or would like to make a donation, please write, email or visit our website.

THE ONTARIO & WESTERN RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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THE O&W RAILWAY IN HAMDEN

RAILROAD HISTORY

The New York & Oswego Midland Railroad was incorporated in 1866. The route chosen stretched from Oswego on Lake Ontario to Jersey City, NJ -- a ferry ride across the Hudson River from Manhattan. Construction began in 1868 and was completed in 1873.

When the panic of 1873 hit, the Midland entered bankruptcy. In 1880 a new group of investors bought the bankrupt line and created the New York, Ontario & Western Railway.

Coal traffic from a branch line to Scranton PA, combined with growing business hauling milk from upstate New York to New York City and transporting summer tourists from the city to retreats in Sullivan and Delaware counties, sustained the O&W into the late 1920's. Over the next decade, these three revenue sources would decline. Coal strikes, mine failure and a gradual shift to oil for home heating hurt the coal business while an improving road network and better trucks and automobiles siphoned the milk and tourist business. The O&W entered bankruptcy in 1937, never to emerge, and in March 1957 became the first US Class 1 railroad to be abandoned.

The New York, Ontario & Western Railway In Hamden

THE DELHI BRANCH

HISTORY

The 17-mile branch was completed in early 1872. Connecting to the main line in Walton, it ran through Colchester Station, Hawleys, Hamden, Delancey and Fraser to Delhi.

Serving these communities, the branch was vital in providing supplies that the farmers and communities needed, and in transporting the farmers' output to city markets. It became the most prolific milk shipping segment of the railroad once milk train service started in the 1880's.

PASSENGER SERVICE

Over the years, passenger service was provided by up to four trains each way daily (including "mixed trains" - freight or milk trains with a passenger coach or two added). Such frequent service was essential in the days of dirt roads, even for travel among the branch villages. Regular passenger service on the branch ended in 1930 and passenger service on the mixed train ceased in 1948. Connections at Walton with all these trains provided service to other towns, including those of other railroads via connections elsewhere on the O&W.

SPECIAL TRAINS

The O&W ran excursion trains to such destinations as the Thousand Islands, New York City, Coney Island, and Washington D.C., with Delhi Branch passengers connecting to them at Walton. Excursion trains specific to the Delhi Branch carried passengers to county fairs in Delhi

or Walton, the Ringling Brothers circus, GAR gatherings, Masonic meetings and other events.

On several occasions trains with demonstrator cars were run in cooperation with the New York State College of Agriculture and the Farm Bureau. These trains provided displays on such topics as the care and maintenance of sheep; dairying, farm crops and poultry; and home economics. The trains would stop at Walton, Hamden and Delhi for several hours each to allow residents to view the exhibits in the cars.

FREIGHT SERVICE

Freight service was provided by a daily mixed train each way, with extra trains provided when traffic required them. The train traffic reflected the agrarian nature of the branch.

Initial inbound freight brought feed and other dry goods, mercantile goods, groceries, fruit and coal -- all at reduced prices and with greater variety than was previously available. Post 1930, most inbound freight consisted of coal (to creameries & feed dealers), sand and gravel (to state and local highway departments), feed, cement, oil, lumber and building materials -- mostly bulk commodities better transported by rail than by truck.

The first outbound freight was mainly butter, select crops and cattle. Soon stone docks were added near most of the stations to provide for the transport of blue stone from local quarries. Milk and cream became the dominant outbound freight, particularly after many creameries were built from the 1890's into the early 1900's. Ownership of these included Borden's, regional and local firms, local farmers' co-operatives, and the O&W itself, which leased a creamery at Colchester Station to other firms.

HAMDEN

RAILROAD FACILITIES

Hamden was a busy stop for many years. It was one of the few locations on the O&W, and by far the smallest, where the track ran in the street. It did so for nearly a mile on the east side of Route 10, shortly after entering the village from the south.

The wood-frame passenger/freight station, built in 1872 and closed in 1954, was at the south end of the village. In the late 1800's significant shipments of butter and veal were shipped from the station by firms such as Wm. Lewis & Son and Combs Brothers.

LOCAL INDUSTRIES

The bulk of Hamden's industries served by railroad sidings were clustered near the railroad station. These consisted of a feed business, two creameries and a storehouse.

The feed business, started by Malcolm Crawford in 1895, became Crawford Brothers, a large wholesale feed dealer, which included plants in Walton starting in 1907.

Borden's built a large creamery and ice house in 1900 at the south end of Hamden. This plant did a large business and became a "show plant" in Borden advertising literature. It burned in 1925 and was not rebuilt. The brick wall of the loading ramp that was located in front of the creamery still stands.