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1866

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the area to combine in an association called the Producers' Marble Company, a selling organization set up to control price-setting and agency problems, and other competitive activities. The association was limited to a life of five years, and after its expiration Proctor was able to acquire, one after another, most of the larger companies.

For years the Vermont Marble Company did the lion's share of marble business in Vermont. It had quarries in Alaska, Colorado, and other states, and in good years shipped a million cubic feet of marble and employed 2,500 workers. Be sure to visit the museum in Proctor.

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Rutland's Railroad

The Rutland Railroad had its beginnings as the Rutland and Burlington Railroad Company. Three contracts were awarded – one for each section. Construction began in May 1847 on all three sections: Burlington to Brandon; Bellows Falls to Mt. Holly; and Mt. Holly to Brandon. The work progressed very quickly, and the first train ran over the entire road on December 18, 1849. Later, the Rutland acquired lines from Rutland to Bennington and from

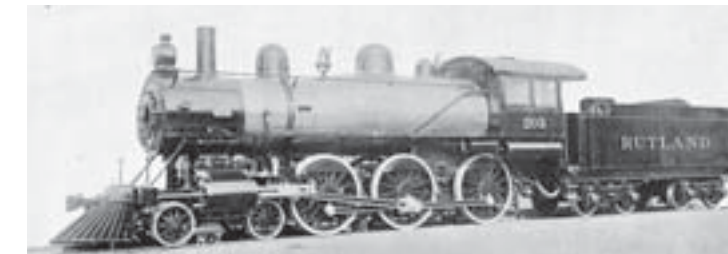
Bennington to Chatham, New York. The Clarendon and Pittsford Railroad was organized to serve the marble industry. This line remained busy and helped the Rutland Railroad through difficult financial times, and was still in use up until strikes ended the Rutland Railroad. The key importance to the Rutland Railroad, however, was that it was a hub of many railroads intersecting, all making their way from one water body to another – from the Great Lakes to the ocean.

In 1870, the Rutland Railroad was leased to the Vermont Central for twenty years at \$376,000 per year. Although the Vermont Central suffered difficulties, especially trying to establish a smooth and profitable route from Montreal to New York, the first decade of the century represented the Rutland Railroad's financial glory years. In 1904, the New York Central (a Vanderbilt empire) gained controlling interest in the Rutland Railroad: a positive situation that lasted for several years. At this time, the island-hopping route through Lake Champlain was created.

The Rutland Railroad was created with the main intent to serve Rutland's booming industry. The marble industry was a significant



1879



Train engine, circa 1902.

and long-term patron of the Rutland's freight service. Rutland also had heavy industry that utilized the Rutland's freight service – namely the Howe Scale Company. Both companies were located right along the Rutland's lines. Along with the marble industry and Rutland's heavy industry, the milk train was another large asset to the Rutland. At one time, it was even called the "Million Dollar Train." There was a passenger service, but it truly was the freight service to Rutland's industry and the milk train that made up the most significant portion of the Rutland Railroad's profits.

As with any transport service, the Rutland Railroad had its share of accidents. A fire damaged the Rutland Railroad station on February 23, 1909. The event drew a crowd that arrived by foot, by horse, by trolley, and by automobile. Later, a southbound freight met Train 165, the "Green Mountain Flyer," head-on about three miles north of Bellows Falls on March 14, 1920. Poor penmanship on the train orders resulted in the orders being misread – a mistake with the tragic results of the death of Con Sullivan, the engineer of the passenger train.

The Rutland Railroad also helped Vermont communities in disastrous times. For example, the Connecticut River went on a rampage in early November 1927, as did all the other rivers and streams in the state. This flood was undoubtedly the greatest natural disaster in the state's history. In Bellows Falls, the Rutland Railroad's enginehouse was flooded, and loaded cars were put on the Canal Bridge to weigh it down so that it could better survive the force of the swirling water and debris.

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