

67 St. Johnsbury Railroad Depot

Town of St. Johnsbury, Caledonia County, Vermont

During the 1800s, St. Johnsbury, Vermont was a central crossroads for a bustling north-south, east-west railroad industry, transporting passengers and goods from Boston to Quebec, Maine to Vermont. As a result of the heightened traffic, commerce and prosperity, the St. Johnsbury Railroad Depot was built in 1883, as a commanding brick building, standing two and one half stories high and designed in a vernacular Chateausque style.



The St. Johnsbury Railroad Depot was built as the union station, serving as the connection between the Connecticut-Passumpsic Rivers Railroad and the St. Johnsbury and Lake Champlain Railroad. These lines connected southern New England with Quebec and the western part of Vermont with Maine. The most important passenger line to pass through St. Johnsbury Depot was the Connecticut-Passumpsic Rivers Railroad's Air Line Express, which ferried passengers from Boston to Quebec.

In 1887, control of the north-south line was handed over to the Boston and Maine Railroad, and then to the Canadian Pacific Railroad in 1926. During the mid-1950s, railroad travel waned with the increasing popularity of the highway system. This trend continued until 1964 when the last line to operate through St. Johnsbury, the Boston-to-Montreal passenger line, was abandoned. However, Canadian Pacific Railroad continued to use the Depot for its freight agency years after the passenger lines were abandoned.

The Depot is part of the Railroad Street Historic District in St. Johnsbury, which was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974, and it's the oldest building in the Railroad Street Historic District. In 2006, a two-year \$800,000 renovation project was initiated to update the Depot, gutting the first floor and rebuilding the stationmaster's office, remodeling the second floor and installing new fire alarm and sprinkler systems.

Today, a Welcome Center is located in the Depot, along with the Rural Community Transportation system and several businesses, demonstrating that adaptive re-use can be an effective way of preserving our historically significant buildings. The Welcome Center is located at 51 Depot Square.

Sources:

"Historic Train Stations." *Railroads*. Connecticut River Byway Council. Web. Accessed 18 March 2013.

<<http://www.ctrivertravel.net/railroads.htm>>

National Register of Historic Places. Railroad Street Historic District. Town of St. Johnsbury. Caledonia County. Vermont. National Register Reference # 74000354.

<<http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accd/files/Documents/strongcommunities/historic/StJohnsburyRailroadAveHD.pdf>>

Reed, Taylor. "Renovated St. Johnsbury Welcome Center Unveiled." *Newsroom*. Bernie Sanders: U.S. Senator for Vermont. 13 August 2008. Web. Accessed 18 March 2013.

<<http://www.sanders.senate.gov/newsroom/news/?id=bfd507f4-9f4a-4bf6-afc3-64100b3af200>>