



# A Very Grand Debut

Excited townspeople, many of them dressed in their Sunday best—high button shoes, straw “skimmers,” string ties—jostled each other good-naturedly as they peered down the track, waiting for the first sign of Dresden’s first “iron horse.”

History didn’t exactly record that scene, but it could have been such a gala occasion late in November, 1877, when Lark No. 7, its seven-foot drive wheel churning slowly, rounded that last bend for the run into Dresden. Of course, the big celebration also might have come on Dec. 4 when the first passenger train arrived, but each event was a cause for back-slapping and congratulations because the completion of the rails through Dresden was a little doubtful for a while.

Begun in April, 1876, the line which was to extend from Geneva to Corning ran into trouble in the fall and the original contractor was dropped. Frank Swann of Penn Yan, Yates County historian, says the contract to complete the work was awarded to Gen. George Magee, and he directed the work to completion in about a year.

Though work on the station was underway in 1877, the first telegraph instrument was set up in a watchman’s house soon after the first train went through.

A pump station and water tank for years

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## Whistle Stops . . .

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loaded large quantities of water on the through locomotives, said Swann. Seth Youngs, one of the early pump tenders, worked as a pumper for 32 years.

At various times, from two to four large pusher locomotives were kept at Dresden to push the long freight trains headed south over a steep grade. The turntable at Dresden was removed in April of 1903 when a “Y” was installed south of the village to connect the tracks.

About 10 years later the station was moved 15 feet farther away from the tracks, when a small addition was built and steam heat and electricity were installed.

The original line was the Syracuse, Geneva and Corning Railroad, with the spur from Geneva to Lyons coming later. Under direction of the Magee family, it became part of the Fall Brook line about 1884, and in 1892, said Swann, the line was reorganized.

In 1909, the Geneva, Corning and Southern merged several lines, and later the three lines were leased to the New York Central.

Though the station is kept in repair by Penn Central crews, its main use now is for storage.