

Island Line



For information: 1-800-468-5227, www.lcbp.org

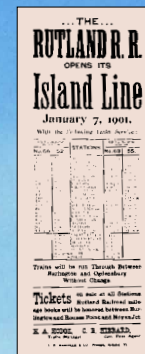
A century ago, a railroad followed this corridor to the St. Lawrence River. It was the Island Line—a railway that took passengers and freight to western New York, where ships finished the trip to ports on the Great Lakes. To traverse Lake Champlain, trains went across three marble causeways that connected the Champlain Islands. This path leads north to the seasonal Bike Ferry that crosses the Winooski River. On the other side, the trail continues on to the first causeway—the "Long Fill."



UVM Special Collections

The Long Fill

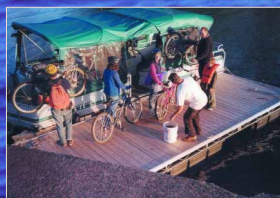
This crew is building the "Long Fill"—three miles of marble causeway from Colchester Point to South Hero Island. It took just over a year to complete and was one of the longest rail bed water crossings in the country. Even so, it was cheaper to construct this long raised road than to build a three-mile-long bridge. Maintenance was not easy. Every winter, workers had to walk along the causeway to hoist ice floes off the tracks.



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All Aboard!

Before this train schedule came out in 1901, you couldn't change trains in Burlington to go to Upstate New York or Canada. Fiercely competing train companies scheduled departures so that passengers simply couldn't make connections. Frustrated, the Rutland Rail Road built its own tracks right where you are standing. For 60 years, the Island Line puffed up and down these tracks every day.



Chapin Spencer

Bike Ferry

The opening of the Winooski River Bike Ferry marks the renaissance of the Island Line by reconnecting the present-day Burlington Bikepath to Colchester's Delta Park, where a 450-foot steel bridge spanned the river until the 1960s.



Burlington Free Press

Rails to Trails

Today, the Island Line is a recreation trail that connects Burlington's bustling downtown to the villages, orchards and parks of the Champlain Islands.



Robert Lyons

Biking on Water

All over the United States, old rail beds are becoming paths for cyclists and walkers. The historic Island Line with its three-mile marble causeway is one of the most spectacular rail trails in the country.

Train photo courtesy Local Motion, Inc.