

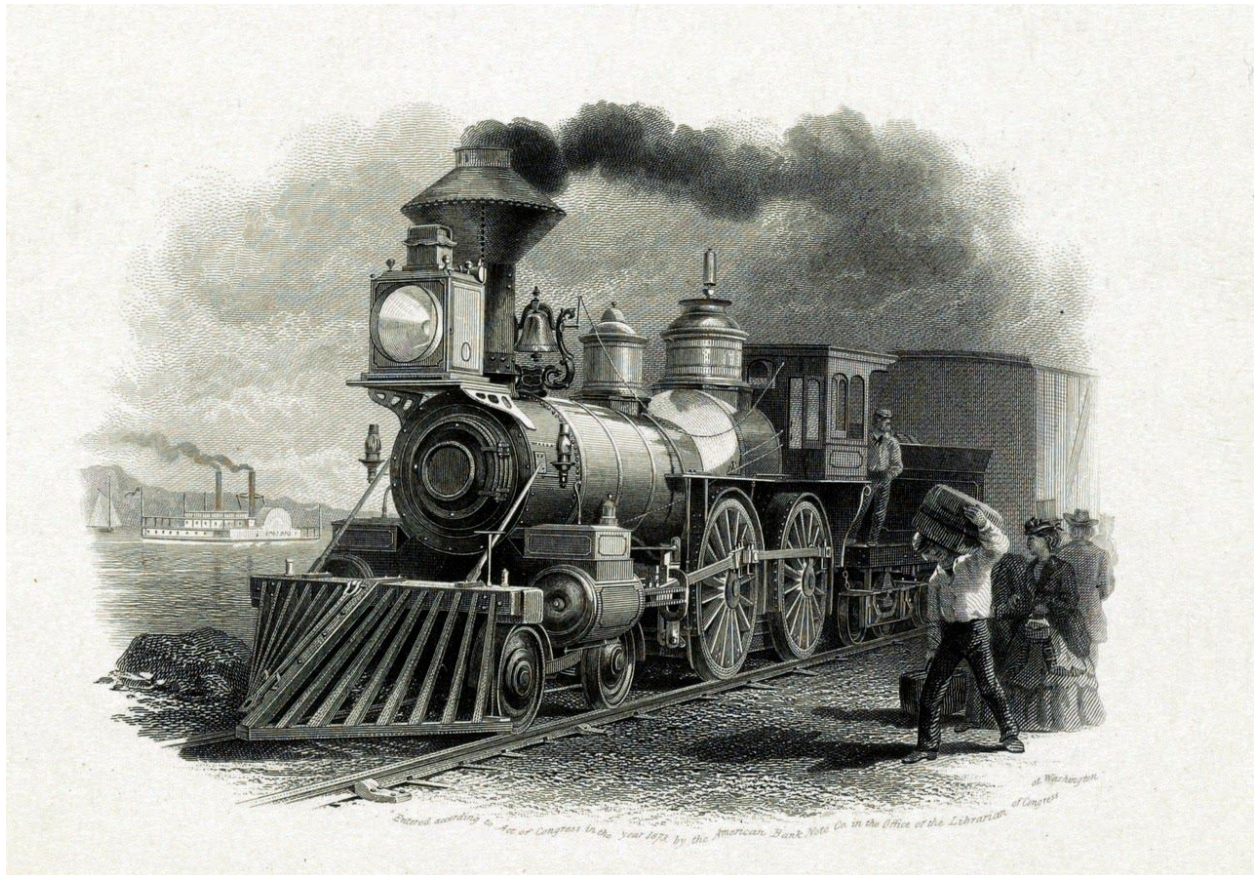


The rail line that runs from Saratoga Springs to North Creek played a vital role in the expansion of industry in Adirondack Park and more specifically, The Gore Region. Thomas Clark Durant was at the helm of the railroad company during this time of growth.

Thomas C. Durant was an American financier and railroad promoter with Union Pacific Railroad. He was born on February 6, 1820, in Lee, Massachusetts. After graduating from Albany Medical College, Durant briefly served as an assistant professor of surgery. Upon retiring, Durant became a director of his uncle's grain exporting company: Durant, Lathrop, and Company in New York City.

It was here Durant discovered a need for improved transportation. Utilizing the traditional means, horse and buggy or steamboat were proving to be too slow. In 1853 Durant teamed up with New York philanthropist and railroad President Henry Farnam to create Mississippi and Missouri Railroad known as M&M.

Abraham Lincoln was just starting out as a lawyer when his path crossed Durant's. After signing the Pacific Railroad Act in 1862, Lincoln would remember Durant and hire the M&M to construct the transcontinental rail system. By this time, Durant had moved up the ranks and become Vice President of Union-Pacific Railroad.



Just a year later in 1863, America was in the height of the Civil War and Durant knew that after the war people would need to rebuild. This wide-spread construction would require lumber and once factories re-opened they would need iron ore. Durant knew that both of these resources could be found in The Adirondack Mountains. Durant quietly purchased millions of acres in The Adirondacks while attention was pointed at the transcontinental railroad (completed in Promontory Point, Utah, in 1869).

By 1865 the Adirondack rail line was already up and running between Saratoga Springs and North Creek. The land in the region was mostly flat and allowed for an easy build. The more northern leg of the rail line was located on a steeper incline that harbored rocky ledges. With debt mounting, it was decided that North Creek would remain the terminus of the line.





Durant would lose his fortune during the recession of 1873 but he retained the Adirondack Railroad. He and his family (wife Heloise, son William and daughter Ella) moved to the bank of the Hudson River, not far from the Depot. William Durant swiftly took over the rail company which included 700 acres of land.

On October 5, 1885, Thomas Durant died of peritonitis at his home in North Creek. He will be remembered as a pioneer of the railroads and as being instrumental in the growth of the Adirondacks, especially the Gore Region.

You can learn more about Thomas Durant and his ties to the Gore Region at [The North Creek Depot Museum](#), located at 5 Railroad Place, North Creek, New York, 12853.