

RHS Civil War Driving / Walking Tour

Rutland Fairgrounds

The fairgrounds existed in the mid-1800s, and provided a convenient location for activities that required significant space and facilities, including the following Civil War events:

Mustering and encampment of the 1st Vermont Regiment (May, 1861)

Fortunately, this took place in late spring, so it was possible to encamp the unit on the site of the present-day race track. No barracks were necessary. Very little training was done on site, and the unit shipped out within two weeks.

Mustering, encampment and training of the 7th Vermont Regiment (February, 1862)

As this encampment was during the heart of winter, considerable planning, refitting and construction was necessary. Most of this was arranged and funded by Horace Henry Baxter, financier and Rutland citizen. (More on H. H. Baxter in the Baxter Bank Building stop).

Sharpshooter qualification

The Fairgrounds was one of five sites in the state at which qualification for the Sharpshooters special units took place.

The local competition was supervised by William Y. W. Ripley, veteran of the Peninsula Campaign and Medal of Honor awardee. (More on William Y. W. Ripley in the Ripley Opera House stop).

Artist rendition of the Civil War era Fairgrounds (Angela Hinchey)

