

GREAT WESTERN

TORONTO JUNCTION

JUNCTION CUT

BAYVIEW JUNCTION

JUNCTION CUT

FEBRUARY 5, 1854

Saturday evening, February 5th, 1854, a collision occurred between a freight train from Detroit and a gravel train going up the Dundas grade. The accident happened half way between Hamilton and Dundas. The down freight was propelled by the engine Kent and had ten boxcars containing 90 barrels of flour in each car.

The driver of the freight engine Kent when he arrived at Paris at 4:45 PM received an order to proceed. The freight left Paris and proceeded down grade past the Dundas station. A short while later the freight ran into the locomotive Ontario pulling a gravel train on its way to Dundas. The Ontario was running without lights, the crew saw the approaching engine but this was not the case on the engine Kent. It was luck that out of this affair there were only slight injuries.

It would appear that the Superintendant at Hamilton thought that the freight would be late and sent the gravel train up the hill thinking it would make Dundas before the arrival of the eastbound freight.

It was a freezing cold morning January 8th, 1857, the Great Western eastbound Mail Express was late, really late arriving at the Dundas Station. It should have arrived at three in the morning and now as eight o'clock came, it still hadn't arrived. In the Hamilton station sat an eight car freight bound west. Hamilton was impatient, the Hamilton dispatcher telegraphed the Dundas operator had the Mail arrived; and if it had not to but out the signal to stop the mail at Dundas, for the freight was going to leave now. Station operator Andrew Nisbet agreed, without consulting the station master George Olds. Nisbet then told Thomas Greer to put out the signal to stop the Mail Train for the freight was now leaving Hamilton. Greer went out side for the purpose of setting the switches to put the Mail in the siding. Station master Olds had arrived in the front office was his dwelling at the rear of the station, Nesbit and Olds were in conversation about the morning events when they looked out and saw the Mail leaving Dundas. They ran out and questioned switch-tender Greer why he let the Mail pass; and by all accounts, it would appear that he was totally befuddled. Greer stood on the station platform waving a red flag to the back of the train. The Mail train was now on the down-grade. The telegraph operator ran into the station and wired Hamilton to hold the upbound freight. The return reply was that the freight had left. It was 8:00 AM.

The Mail Train this day consisted of the engine, a baggage car, a mail and express car, one second class coach and three first class coaches. In the locomotive cab were engineer John Tory, fireman Charles Betts. M. T. Bridgewater was the Conductor.

The collision occurred on the embankment over the site of the old Desjardins Canal, at a point today known as West Hamilton Junction.

The engines smashed together, the baggage car was thrown on top of the Mail car and at the same time the second class car ran through the Mail car. The dead and dying were pulled out of the wreckage. GWR employee S. M. Keeler was found dead, Hiram Everson the express messenger and fireman Charles Betts would die later in the day. Engineer Tory was scalded.

HAMILTON

APRIL 10, 1872

Monday evening at seven o'clock on April 10th, 1872 the westbound train had only left Hamilton two miles behind and was swinging into the abrupt curve on its way to Dundas, when it ran off the track at the point known today as Hamilton Junction. The coupling broke between the passenger cars, the baggage car left the track, and the other cars were derailed. The Wagner Sleeping car at the rear was derailed and damaged. The patrons in the sleeping were quickly evacuated, for as the conductor quickly informed them that a freight was following closely. The last passengers had cleared the Wagner Car when the freight came around the curve and blindly smashed into the rear of the standing train.

JUNCTION CUT

FEBRUARY 17, 1883

February 17th, 1883; Train No, 7 the Grand Trunk "Pacific Express", the New York to Chicago Limited was running late. Engineer Peter Temple and fireman James Hamilton had boarded at Niagara Falls but by Hamilton were two hours late. It was a very heavy train, with Express car, Baggage cars and smokers there were sixteen cars total. A pilot or an assist engine was really required to assault the Dundas grade. A pilot engine was attached, to assist to Paris, Engineer Ed or Teddy, Mason and fireman Frederic Williams were in the cab. The Day Express from the west had not arrived. It was late, they expected it to be stopped at Dundas. Off No. 7 went, two engines chugging through the junctions switches and starting to build up steam for the grade ahead. There was a dense fog on the land.

The Day Express, a baggage, smoker and three coaches, was running eight minutes late, it didn't stop at Dundas. Down the hill the train went, Engineer Hofford was at the throttle and Conductor Thorpe was back in the cars.

Three miles west of Hamilton near the York Road bridge there is a curve and up grade is just beginning. Some track men standing beside the track could tell a collision was about to take place. One of the workmen Baker ran towards the down train waving a red handkerchief. They saw the danger. Engine crews slammed on air brakes, whistles screaming, throwing their engines into reverse. Engineers Hofford and Temple and their firemen bailed from their engines. Teddy Mason stuck to his post. The trains crashed, but at reduced speed by the York Road bridge. Teddy Mason was dead in his crushed cab.

JUNCTION CUT

DECEMBER 2, 1886

Engineer William Newcombe and fireman Henry Lovell were assigned to GTR locomotive 917, a pilot or helper engine. In the late afternoon of December 2nd, 1886 they helped to shove a freight train out of the Hamilton yard and out through Junction Cut on the Toronto line as far as Waterdown. The Engineer with orders to keep out of the way of regular trains just guessed that the Express had gone through before he had left for Waterdown. The Express was eight minutes late this day. Newcombe set out with the 917 running tender first back to Hamilton.

Engine driver William Durden was on the Express and after passing the telegraph office at Junction Cut got down out of his cab and stood on the steps looking ahead. In a flash he saw the light engine coming at him and with the crash was thrown down to the bottom of the embankment just a few hundred yards west of the Junction. His fireman Robert Lee ad stayed in the cab and was safe. The collision had caused the Express to buckle on impact throwing the tender into the air and smashing into the end of the baggage car. The surprise was there were two deaths, not the crew, but two young men that had stole a ride on the platform of the crushed baggage car.

Engineer Thomas Hutchison boarded the cab of his engine, fireman Robert Archibald was on deck at Toronto Union Station the morning of February 16th, 1888. He looked back on his train, No. 5, a mail, baggage, smoker, two coaches and a Parlour car. Conductor John Edmontone gave the signal and they were off to Sarnia.

Meanwhile just after midnight a freight train of twenty cars No. 254 had been assembled at the Point Edward Yards, next to Sarnia. The crew consisted of engine driver John Cooper Robinson, fireman Thomas Hawe, Conductor David Vince, and brakeman Robert Peacock. The train was bound for Toronto via Junction Cut. It would be a long day ahead. This was single track all the way to Toronto. Meets after meets, it took twelve hours to reach the telegraph office at Junction Cut. The freight arrived at the telegraph office at 1:30 P.M. They had orders to wait for passenger No. 5. Engineer Robinson took this wait to uncouple his engine and went round to the water tank on the other side of the wye to take on water in the tender. From a distance he may have thought a passenger train may have passed. He returned after five minutes, coupled his train then got down from the engine cab and wandered over to the telegraph office. Conductor Vince was coming out and he was a little unclear so he asked Vince if the Passenger had gone by. Conductor Vince said it had and ordered Robinson "to go ahead." Robinson back in the cab, pulled the throttle back, slowly they cleared the junction switch and were off to Toronto.

Strong winds were about that winter day, Engineer Hutchinson on Passenger No. 5 found it difficult to maintain time and was seven minutes behind schedule leaving Waterdown. The engine was working heavily, they got her up to 30 mph on the straight track, the passenger train hit the curve when fireman Archibald yelled across the deck. "Train coming!" Hutchison looked out, but they were still in the curve so he crossed the deck. There was the freight, No. 254, pushing to pick up speed. Hutchison said they tried to jump.

On the high embankment the trains collided. Hutchison was thrown out in one direction, the baggage car smashed into the tender and was shot, thrown, and rolled down the fifty foot embankment over

fireman Robert Archibald with baggageman Thomas Peden inside the car. The Express car caught fire, Archibald and Peden died. The fault, Engineer Robinson had seen from at a distance a passenger train, but it was the earlier Hamilton train. The telegraph operator and Conductor Vince should have known but it was a cold windy day and the "to go ahead," cost two lives.

JUNCTION CUT

APRIL 28, 1889

The morning of April 28th, 1889 Passenger Express No. 52 eastbound was driving through rain and wind down the Dundas grade to reach Hamilton for seven o'clock. Express No. 52 east was pulled by engine 758, two baggage cars a smoker, a C> car, a Wabash coach, Pullman car "Eloise", and three Wagner sleeping cars the "Fitchburg, Montpelier, and Messina." In the cab of engine 758 that morning was engineer Joseph Watson and fireman E. Chapman. Nearing the bottom of the grade they hit the curve and running straight at twenty-five miles per hour, they could see the West (Hamilton) Junction switch, it was aligned in the proper manor to allow them to take the west side of the wye into Hamilton. The engine just passed the switch, a bang, a shake, Watson slammed the air-brake then in an instant the engine jumped off the track and did a complete sommersault hitting very hard the base of the watertank inside the wye. The tanks wooden timber foundations shattered on impact. The water tank collapsed, 30,000 gallons of water fell on the engine, the cab with fireman Chapman was swept out and over the high embankment to the bottom of the ravine. Engineer Watson found he had survived too.

The passenger train- the first baggage car was still on the rails and just rolled by, but the second baggage car derailed and slammed into the wrecked locomotive and took fire, the smoker ran into the baggage car and splintered as the Wabash coach telescoped into the smoker. The other cars derailed but were safe. The wretched cars were now a blaze. The were survivors, there were wounded and there were dead and then there were the trapped, trapped as the fire gave the spectre of live cremation. Some water was made available from the pump house at the bottom of the embankment but it was enough.

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The fire kept burning until two o'clock in the afternoon. The wreck was pulled apart, eighteen charred bodies were found. Many couldn't be identified, they would be buried in a mass grave in Hamilton. The cause was the cast pilot wheel had cracked in two at the west Junction switch.

JUNCTION CUT

NOVEMBER 6, 1889

It would have been a dark November night, at eleven o'clock at the Junction Cut telegraph office for a eighteen year old operator Ernest Stephenson. He had just started at this location, a lot of responsibility for such a young age. The operator maned the telegraph key and threw the switches. This night he threw the wrong switch and extra 268. went onto the Toronto branch.

JUNCTION CUT

MARCH 31, 1895

A Sunday morning disaster march 31st, 1895 at 3:30 A.M. freight 422 London to Toronto stopped at the wye to do some shunting.

A second eastbound freight 418 at this time had stopped just west of the wye on the high embankment where just west of that is a deep cut and a curve. The van and the rear of the train were in this cut and could not be seen. Train 418 should have followed the rules and sent a man back with a red lantern to flag, they did not.

A third train No. 420 also east-bound came down the downgrade and hit the rear of train 418. Eleven cars were splintered

JUNCTION CUT

NOVEMBER 15, 1912

Grand Trunk train No. 11 was an accommodation train running from Niagara Falls to Windsor making all the stops at every flagstop and station. Engineer George Cook of Niagara Falls, and his fireman, that November day was Samuel Sault crewed No. 11. Engine 1913 was even, at this date, one of those old typical Grand Trunk flat boilered moguls. The train had arrived and left Hamilton by 8:10 that morning crossed the Desjardins Canal, passed the Canadian Pacific junction, and took the old western leg of the wye, West Hamilton Junction lay ahead, when there was a terrific explosion. Heard for miles! Engine 1913, just blew up, a boiler explosion. The crown sheet had been allowed to become dry, the fireman hadn't checked. The explosion had thrown the boiler right off the locomotive frame and drivers thirty feet or more ahead of the frame. The frame and driving wheels were still on the track and were still rolling slightly with the momentum. Engineer Cook was scalded by the steam but hit the embankment. But poor fireman Samuel Sault was thrown back out of the cab, over the tender smashing into the end baggage car door.

JUNCTION CUT

MAY 20, 1898

The overhead bridge on the townline road which crosses the Toronto Branch of the Grand Trunk east of Junction Cut was the scene of a railway accident at three o'clock on the morning of May 20th, 1898. A westbound freight train came flying around the curve from Toronto when the journal or axle broke on one of the freight cars and threw the car off the track which hit the middle posts of the wood bridge knocking down the whole bridge on the train. Many cars were derailed with five destroyed.

JUNCTION CUT

NOVEMBER 11, 1901

A freight train running from Port Huron to Montreal derailed west of Junction Cut, November 11th, 1901.

JUNCTION CUT

JANUARY 6, 1907

A Grand Trunk through freight from London to Toronto had just cleared the mainline switch at Junction Cut and was on the Toronto Branch when it collided with a standing light engine. The crews jumped safely before the impact. January the sixth, 1907.

JUNCTION CUT

MAY 2, 1914

Six cars of a Grand Trunk freight train derailed at Junction Cut at six on the morning of May 2nd, 1914. The engineer was Watt, and the conductor was Blewes.

HAMILTON JUNCTION

APRIL 11, 1913

The Canadian Pacific had a morning train that ran Hamilton to Guelph over their newly constructed route north. Just before the switch that connects the CPR, at a point the CPR called Grand Junction, just before Hamilton Junction, to the Grand Trunk is the switch to the Guelph line. On the morning of April 11th, 1913 engineer Bruce left the TH&B Hamilton station at 9:40 AM and in a few minutes crossed the Desjardins Canal and came upon the Grand Junction, while the signal displayed a clear track the switch actually was set for the Grand Trunk tracks. The engine 641, a D-10 4-6-0 was thrown into the ditch along with a baggage car.

STONEY CREEK

DECEMBER 18, 1917

Stoney Creek December 18th, 1917. The fast New York and Chicago Express was running nearly three hours late, it was scheduled to pass Stoney Creek station at 2:45 in the early morning hours. At five o'clock it hadn't arrived. In the cab of the Express were Engineer William Walsh of Sarnia, and his fireman Percy Ramsay. The morning fog off nearby Lake Ontario was heavy.

At Stoney Creek station Engineer Wilson had his freight train on a siding by the station. He had permission to come out of the switch, cross the mainline crossover, to go onto the north track. Signals were set to protect this movement. The Grand Trunk freight hog was the 659, this was a Montreal Locomotive Works 2-8-0 built in 1906, it would become Canadian National 2523 and survive till 1958. With the signals set, Wilson pulled back on the throttle and 659 started through the crossover. 5:04 AM, the Chicago Express stormed out of the fog and smashed into the middle of the 659 on the crossover right in front of the station. The Express engine was thrown off the track and its boiler burst in the collision. Walsh and Ramsay in the cab of the Express were killed. It was believed that the Express running fast couldn't see the approach signal for the fog.

JUNCTION CUT

MAY 10, 1918

May 10th, 1918, the end of World War I would be over the horizon. At 3 P.M. a heavy train from the west came down the Dundas grade and slowed to a standstill; to await orders or a favourable semaphore at Junction Cut.

Running behind this freight was another eastbound Grand Trunk pulled by heavy GTR engine 563 with sixty-five heavy cars. In the cab Engineer William Oldfield and Fireman Bruce Rau both from Sarnia. Freight 563 rounded the sharp curve saw the freight ahead and applied the brakes-no effect- the throttle slammed closed, the steam shut off; the train was on the down grade. The crew jumped. Engine 563 crashed into the rear of the standing train just before West Hamilton Junction at the Guelph Road bridge. Sixteenj freight cars were wrecked.

GRAND JUNCTION

SEPTEMBER 10, 1919

A Canadian Pacific fast freight from Toronto on September the 10th, 1919 had cleared both Junction Cut and Hamilton Junction and was entering the TH&B trackage at Grand Junction the pilot wheel froze in the journal of the locomotive and threw the engine off the rails just before crossing the CPR bridge over the Desjardins Canal under the High Level Bridge. The engine just stopped short of plunging into the Canal. Three freight cars were thrown across the Grand Trunk's adjoining tracks.

Just before eleven in the morning, on June 20th, 1923, a heavy freight train of fifty hopper cars carrying about 4000 tons of iron ore from the Sarnia ore dock was east-bound for the Steel Company of Canada's blast furnaces at Hamilton. The train was hauled by a big Grand Trunk Mikado 2-8-2 engine 562. The crew were Engineer Firth, Fireman J. Hamilton, Conductor Leslie and Brakesmen S.F. Smith and C Foster. It was a long heavy train that slowed and stopped at Dundas station, uncoupled and picked up some more heavy cars of stone. The train then left Dundas down grade. Engineer Firth some realized something was wrong with the air brakes and the brakes refused to work. Down the grade the train was going, it was stated that the train was going at nearly sixty miles per hour down the mountain. Engineer Firth pluckily stuck to his post, reversing the engine, slamming at the brake valve, giving it sand. A runaway train. Nothing seemed to slow the black mammoth. Hamilton West Junction, the switches were thrown and aligned for Hamilton, and the train continued to push through at speed, past Hamilton Junction and the CPR crossover, over the Desjardins Canal and now into the west end of the Hamilton yard. Fireman Hamilton jumped. Up ahead was the Hamilton Stuart Street station. On the mainline in front of the station was a standing freight train. The 562 smashed into it head first, flung around and stopped. Thirteen heavy were piled on top of each other, with iron ore thrown all over the tracks. The pilot of the engine was torn off. The tracks were torn up and rails were smashed. The 562 was still bearing Grand Trunk lettering and numbers despite the fact this was now Canadian National.

HAMILTON JUNCTION

MAY 23, 1927

Canadian Pacific, Dundurn Street Roundhouse Hamilton, the morning before Victoria Day, 1927. Two engines ; CPR 2029, a E class 4-6-0, and 3696, a N class 2-8-0 were given the assignment of running a freight north to Guelph. The doubleheader backed down to the Aberdeen yards and coupled on to ththeir freight. The freight lugged off through the TH&B wye, back of Dundurn Street, the slowing under the High Level Bridge they approached the CPR- CNR crossover at Hamilton Junction, This shouldn't be a problem for they were headed north. The green signal told them to proceed. While the signal was set for the CPR, the switches were set for the CNR. The doubleheader unexpectedly swung towards the CNR line and both engines overturned flat on their sides. It was 8:30 AM. The engines fell over onto the Canadian National double track line, between Hamilton Junction tower and the Desjardins Canal, thus tying up traffic of both major railways

HAMILTON WEST JUNCTION

MARCH 28, 1949

Canadian National engine 6309 was running from Sarnia to Hamilton with an eleven car train of machinery March 28th, 1949. Coming down the Dundas grade, the Northern slowed and stopped at the signal; west of Hamilton West Junction. Given their signal; Engineer John Egan of Port Huron, started the engine and at only three miles per hour the locomotive derailed and ploughed a rut thirty feet long and six feet deep until it toppled over. Fireman Lloyd McPherson and brakeman McLeod jumped from the cab but Egan rode the engine down. No one was hurt.

BAYVIEW JUNCTION

JUNE 28, 1951

The green and gold General Motors F-Units were very new to the Canadian National Railways on the evening of Thursday June 28th, 1951. They were running on the fast Sarnia to Mimico freight trains. In the cab of the brand new F-7 9036 were Engineer J. Hawk with his fireman W. C. Baker, they came down the Dundas grade and rolled up to the signal at Bayview and stopped. A Canadian Pacific Toronto to Hamilton Passenger train came steaming through the junction. It had the right of way. The signal turned green and the diesels responded through the crossover switches but it would seem that one of the switches wasn't thrown properly and the 9036 derailed right on the cross over switch tearing up about one hundred yards of track. The damage wasn't severe and no one was injured, but the Canadian railway system was thrown into confusion for a day while track repairs were done. CNR trains were routed over the Beach Strip and CPR trains went north to Guelph Junction. 9036 started its first days in a wreck and ended its days in a wreck February 28th, 1969 when it ended up in the Fraser River near Hope, British Columbia.

BURLINGTON

JUNE 29TH, 1951

A second wreck in 24 hours, June 29th 1951. Engineer C. D. Crawford had brought his westbound CNR wayfreight into the Burlington station, stopped to take water there. Meanwhile an extra freight train, a double header with a big 6300 class Northern had been routed over the Beach Strip, H. McCrea engineer and W. J. Collins was the conductor. The train bound for Mimico took the curve in the wye and was travelling too fast to stop and the wayfreight's van fouled the mainline switch. The extra smashed the caboose to kindling wood.

BAYVIEW STATION

April 28th, 1930; the Canadian National Railway had inaugurated a fast train between Chicago and Montreal. Racing across Ontario it would swing though Bayview Junction. Hamilton was excluded. This was totally unacceptable to the City of Hamilton, the birthplace of the Great Western Railway. The CNR installed a cinder platform and a small shelter at Bayview and a two car shuttle train left Hamilton at 9:40 PM every evening and carried Hamilton passengers to Bayview station, where the Limited would then make a regular stop.

Sketch shewing the
Proposed Toronto & Hamilton Railroad
in the neighbourhood of
Burlington Heights
Hamilton -

Scale 1000 feet to an Inch

(Initialed) B. A. Wickham
Lieut. R. E.

