

GREAT WESTERN

HAMILTON
TO
TORONTO

Toronto Union Station, the morning of January 2nd, 1884, Engineer John Kennedy had the small suburban train ready at Union Station. James Gaskin was the fireman and James Carter was the Conductor. There were forty three people on board to head to the western suburbs, or more specifically the Bolt Works at the Humber. Seven o'clock Kennedy took the little train out but as he was going through the yards a problem came up. A freight had attempted to run into a siding and fouled the mainline for a minute but was now clear. The way was clear or so Kennedy thought, but the switch-tender hadn't thrown the switch properly and on the "come ahead" the suburban was derailed on the switch. It took about ten minutes to rerail the Dummy. Now they were off finally but twenty minutes late, they cleared the yard and were now running at the official speed, west, no passenger stop at Hyde Park, starting into the curve, when in a brief moment Engineer Kennedy looked up and there coming right at him was the heavy special freight No. 420. Whistles blasted, but it was too late, for with only feet the trains smashed into each other. The crew in the Dummy were thrown out.

The impact was severe, the freight engine drove the pint-sized Dummy backwards all the way through the first coach, crushing, splintering, maiming and killing. The Dummy boiler in a moment after collision exploded. Now the two wrecked coaches were on fire. Forty six people were inside.

The human carnage was extreme. The fires consumed many of the dead but also many of the trapped living. Screams and shrieks came out of the debris. The railroad engineers were safe, fireman Wells on the freight was dead. When the fires ceased there were twenty-nine people dead, father, sons and brothers, just yards from their work.

What had happened? The special freight west had orders to pass a passenger at Queen's Wharf, Toronto, it hadn't stopped at Mimico. Both Jeffery and Barber claimed to have no knowledge about the Suburban Train, for they claimed that it wasn't on the regular timetable. Officials would then point out that suburban service was shown on a foldout extension to the timetable and the five trains listed as accommodation trains.

Engineer Kennedy blamed the switchtender that threw the wrong switch in the yards, for in his carelessness the Suburban would have been on time twenty minutes early. There would have been no passengers in two minutes for all the passengers were bound for the Bolt Works on the west side of the Humber. One week later after the inquest, that naïve crew of the special freight Barber and Jeffery were arrested for manslaughter.

HUMBER

JANUARY 17, 1886

January 17th, 1886 at five o'clock in the morning a Grand Trunk train divided in two, going up the grade, at the Humber River, outside of Toronto. The engine proceeded not knowing part of his train was left on the mainline. A second freight came bowling along when they saw the abandoned van and cars. The engine smashed into the van.

PORT CREDIT

OCTOBER 19, 1887

Two freight trains left Hamilton on the morning of October 19th, 1887 both bound for Toronto. One was a special freight train, while the other was second No. 38 a regular freight. The special arrived at Port Credit at 4:30 in the morning, the fog was thick this morning, and while standing on the main track, near the western end of the Port Credit yard, the No. 38 came rattling along out of the mist and smashed into the back of the train. The semaphore had not been raised.

BRONTE

NOVEMBER 7, 1890

The No. 14 evening Express due at Bronte station at 7:30 on the evening of November 7th, 1890 consisted an express fruit car, an express car, a baggage-mail car, a smoker, two coaches, a parlour car and an empty sleeper. Engineer John Ross looking ahead saw that ~~a~~ a freight train was fouling the main track.

MIMICO

JULY 30, 1906

July 1906, the Grand Trunk ran train 49, The Muskoka Express, a night train that ran from Buffalo, New York, to the Muskoka resort; area one hundred miles north of Toronto. The train on this day was a short baggage car, coach and two Pullmans.

Engine 1004 was new, Engineer Denis Lynch and fireman Kenneth Campbell were in the cab. They left Toronto at midnight; ran along the lake, and were approaching the large Mimico freight yards

Five loaded freight cars, a whole string, had run out of Mimico yard and were free, they started rolling down the grade. Downhill they went.

They smashed into engine 1004 and the Muskoka Express. Fireman Kenneth Campbell was killed

MIMICO

MAY 16, 1907

Canadian Pacific express left Toronto at 9:45, on the morning of May 16th, 1907 bound for Hamilton, over the Grand Trunk tracks. Engineer Shields was reported having his engine running at forty-five miles per hour between New Toronto and Mimico.

In Mimico signal cabin, towerman George was able to survey all the tracks below. He looked up the mainline and could see the CPR express approaching the yard from the west, then, he looked down, a Grand Trunk freight was suddenly moving, moving onto the mainline. He ran down, crossing tracks, he ran beside the freight engine and told them they were fouling the mainline and that the express was coming fast. The engineer threw the quadrant into reverse, but it was slow, the freight moved just a little, when the passenger smashed into the freight. Engineer Shields had stuck to his post, applying the air-brakes, he would perish.

BURLINGTON

NOVEMBER 20, 1907

A Grand Trunk engine ran into a standing CPR freight at the Burlington junction. Both were west-bound.

MIMICO

OCTOBER 1, 1908

October first, 1908 Canadian Pacific passenger train No. 811 was to leave Toronto Union Station at seven o'clock bound for Hamilton, but it was late fifteen minutes. Engineer William Quinn was putting on extra speed to make up time along the lakehore, past Sunnyside, over the Humber, Mimico ahead. The passenger took the first Mimico siding clear, but when it struck the second siding to the north it tore away the switch frog, cut the south rail in two. Quinn jammed the airbrake over. The CPR crashed into the tender of a standing Grand Trunk doubleheader. Quinn was thrown from the cab to his death. The first passenger car derailed and telescoped but the two Pullman cars were fine. Willis Jarvis and John Smith while crushed in the cab of the GTR engine, were alive.

TORONTO

JANUARY 18, 1908

Dufferin Street, Toronto on the Toronto to Hamilton line, is one of the entrances to the large Canadian National Exhibition grounds, and it is close to the end junction the Great Western had approaching Toronto Union Station.

On Saturday January 18th, 1908 at four o'clock in the afternoon a Grand Trunk westbound freight was sitting on the siding at the Exhibition. At the rear of the train, were two boarding cars housing twelve telegraph repair crews from Montreal on their way to repair the telegraph wire at Hagersville damaged in a recent ice storm. The French-Canadian men were sitting around the hot stove playing cards on this cold winter day. In the wood van at the end of the freight was Conductor Marks. The freight was waiting for the Buffalo Express to pass and when it did the freight train pulled out of the siding but, it was stopped by a red semaphore, just west of Dufferin Street, until No. 21 had passed.

At the Toronto engine terminal Engineer Alexander Bryce had been given orders to take light engine GTR 931 and run it from Toronto to the Mimico terminal following train 21. They didn't bother to turn engine 931, it was a short trip, so she would run backwards, tender first.

Off the light engine went gathering speed through the terminal switches, Bryce would later complain that the smoke was blowing into the cab and that there was a lot of coal dust. Visibility was difficult, but the speed didn't slacken. Conductor Marks hadn't bothered to put out a flag. Light engine 931 smashed into the rear of the train, smashing and splintering wood everywhere. The van was thrown to one side and the engine smashed through the work and boarding cars.

In the boarding car the men were taken by surprise and many escaped but some were trapped. The hot stove now set the car and wreckage on fire. A fellow, Zacinth Laroque was killed in the wreck.

Engineer Bryce and Conductor Marks were soon dismissed.

CLARKSON

SEPTEMBER 23, 1908

Clarkson, a very small village, near Oakville, September 23rd, 1908 was wrapped in a morning fog at 6:30 when out of the west came train 76, a fruit special, engine 647, pulled into the station. The fog was so dense the engine crew had trouble seeing the signals or finding switches. Shortly a following train from the west, No. 418, engine 811, came out of the fog, engineer Henry McHarg of London, saw the vān of No. 76 just at the last moment. He shut off steam applied the air brakes then jumped for his life. No. 418 crashed into the rear of the standing train, the engine 811 was thrown across the track.

Seventeen loaded Grand Trunk freight cars derailed and were thrown down the embankment west of the Humber River sunday Febrary 27th, 1911. The through freight Port Huron, Michigan to Portland, Maine was a twenty-nine car train. As the engine was just on the Humber Bridge a flang broke on one of the wheels of a freight car.

MIMICO

SEPTEMBER 5, 1912

A Canadian Pacific exhibition special overtook and crashed into a light Grand trunk engine two miles east of Mimico yards at eleven o'clock at night. The light engine had been running from Toronto Union Station to the Mimico roundhouse.

OAKVILLE

SEPTEMBER 27, 1915

The Grand Trunk International Limited was speeding east-bound September 27th, 1915, fifty miles per hour were flying by, through Burlington, over Bronte Creek, Oakville the next station. 7:58 A.M., a rumble and dust, the last two cars of the solid steel Limited derailed. The rear Pullman and the classic steel open observation had hit a broken rail, jumped the track and were dragged for seventy-five yards. The Pullman laying across the track and the steel observation down in the ditch. Ten passengers were injured, but the steel construction had saved lives.

MIMICO

JANUARY 18, 1918

January, 1918, Mimco yards were full of cars of coal and merchandise. On the 18th there was an extreme blinding snow storm. A freight train stopped Conductor Moise and his brakeman Barnham sat in the warmth of their wooden caboose. It was the morning, then a heavy freight train came charging out of the white blizzard and crashed into the rear of a standing freight train waiting at a switch. The engine plowed through the caboose. All in the van died.

A very short train an engine, one stock car filled with fifty pigs, and a caboose were running light from Mimico yard to Toronto. They were taking the one car to the meat packing plant in the city. It was January 14th, 1916, at 9:45 AM when at the Dunn Avenue bridge they were overtake by a fast running light engine No. 118 that smashed into the rear of the train.

PORT CREDIT

MARCH 23, 1916

Port Credit, March 23rd, 1916, was a very small village, east of Toronto, where the Credit River emptied into Lake Ontario, a small harbour, all very quiet. The Grand Trunk station was on the double-tracked mainline, and there were a few passing tracks and sidings. That March morning, in a siding sat a westbound freight, engine 574, one of those big GTR Mikado's. They were to wait for the passing of a passenger train, No. 16.

Grand Trunk engine 235, a Pacific type was streaking east with No. 16, the Detroit Flyer, Engineer Overend; a veteran had his hand on the throttle. Through Junction Cut, Burlington, Bronte, Oakville, Port Credit next stop. A passenger train west came through Port Credit, the Toronto to Buffalo train. The crew in engine 574 thought that was what they ~~as~~ were waiting for, a switch was thrown and the freight started out for the west. It was the wrong train. Train No. 16 racing along slammed into the freight hog. When the dust had settled three railroad men were dead, E. H. Overend, engineer on 235; W. O. Anderson, locomotive foreman on 574, and S. W. Martin the freight brakeman.

PORT CREDIT

APRIL 8, 1917

One mile east of Port Credit a Canadian Pacific train derailed when a broken brake beam fell on the track.

BRONTE

MAY 13, 1918

Engineer Campbell and Conductor Ellis had twelve cars derail on there train at six in the morning.

OAKVILLE

FEBRUARY 13, 1919

A small derailment at Oakville.

SUNNYSIDE

JUNE 17, 1919

Sunnyside station, on the familiar four track raceway between Toronto and Mimico along the Lake Ontario shore. June 17th, 1919 the hard morning work had begun for a track gang, repairing and replacing the heavy steel rails.

At nine o'clock the International Limited, the crack Grand trunk flyer was just leaving Toronto Union Station. Veteran Engineer John McMillan was in the cab of the big GTR engine 226, a Pacific type. Through the terminal switches they went past the Bathurst Street signal cabin out past the Exhibition on to the raceway. It was 9:15 twenty going to thirty m per hour when the Engineer looking ahead saw a man running up his track. It was a workman. Soon he realized that a rail was missing. The track gang had removed a rail without proper flag protection. The big engine jumped the space and ploughed its way for over one hundred yards through the roadbed. The engine remained upright, one baggage car and two coaches were off the rails, only one steel coach was tilted over. There were no injuries this day.

PORT CREDIT

DECEMBER 2, 1927

Ernest Newman, Canadian Pacific engineer was on the eastbound CPR passenger train December 2nd, 1927 bound for Hamilton. He passed Port Credit station and as he looked ahead he could see the headlight of an approaching Canadian National freight. On double track, together they came, and then in the distance, Newman saw something wrong. The CNR was derailing, far back in the freight cars were coming off. His mainline would be fouled, air brakes applied, he slowed his train quickly enough that when impact came the damage was minimal.

MIMICO

JUNE 2, 1935

Sunday, the first week in June of 1935, a CNR extra engine and van were running tender and van first; east away from Mimco, passing the block signals that were 200 yards east of the yard limits. This train ran backwards into the rear of a standing freight. It was the cabooses that smashed together. Brakeman Fred J Coombs was standing on the platform of a caboose when the collision occurred and was killed.

ALDERSHOT

OCTOBER 4, 1928

A heavy fog laid over the land on the morning of October 4th, 1928. Canadian Pacific had assembled a freight train at the West Toronto yards. CPR locomotive 3643, a heavy N-4 class 2-8-0 pulled out. Engineer Reesor was in the cab and Conductor C. Curtis was in the caboose. The freight left the Lambton yard west to Islington where it switched south to Obico where the train switched on to the Canadian National mainline behind the Mimico yard. It travelled west over the CNR past Burlington through the orchards and farmlands approaching Aldershot station. Engineer Curtis looked out to see the small bridge ahead as Canadian National's fast train No. 14 The International Limited was steaming fast toward him on the double track. Suddenly there was a loud crash. One of the freight cars had derailed, followed by six more and they smashed or sideswipped the passing passenger train coaches. Brakes were applied. Engineer Wright on the CNR slammed on the brakes of his heavy locomotive stopping on the high embankment near the Dominion Sewer Pipe. A coach CNR 4861 had had its steel side ripped off and was laying on the ground. A quick check found that no one was killed, but there were many injured. The passenger train was still on the tracks and because of the very high embankment it was thought wise to pull the train to Burlington station where ambulances could reach the injured. Trains were detoured over the CNR's Burlington Beach cut-off.

CN 6024

OAKVILLE

AUGUST 10, 1944

Canadian National small mogul 941 was backing into a siding east of Oakville by the 7th Line subway, August 10th, 1944 when it failed to clear the main-line. CNR Northern 6156 rushing by on a fast wartime freight hit the mogul and threw it in the ditch.

MIMICO

SEPTEMBER 12, 1950

Canadian National commanded most of the fruit traffic coming out of the orchards of the Niagara Region. Special extra fruit express trains rolled from Niagara Falls through to special fruit shipping sheds at Vineland, Beamsville, Grimsby and Stoney Creek. The fast trains rolled over the Burlington Beach Strip rejoining the mainline at Burlington. On September 12th, 1950, engineer Murray Davis was in command of CNR Mikado 3505 with ten cars of perishable freight running over the mainline at 40 to 45 miles per hour. A freight hog running like a passenger greyhound. Up ahead was the Mimico yard. At 18th Street, the west end of the Mimico yard; a switch had been left open from a switching operation. The 3505 rammed into the open siding and smashed into the steam yard engine 7467 tender just sitting on the siding. In the cab of the sitting yard engine was Engineer Gordon Bailey, fireman Earl Ogilive and yard foreman George Lesnik. The young fireman Ogilive was killed.

OAKVILLE

OCTOBER 1, 1956

The days of the steam locomotive on both the Canadian National and the Canadian Pacific were coming to an end. On Saturday morning, October the first 1956, heavy CPR Mikado 5397 was pulling a 49 car freight train west towards Hamilton. One mile east of Oakville, near the 8th line crossing, it hit or side-swiped a Canadian National freight train of 18 cars.

OAKVILLE

FEBRUARY 27, 1957

A more serious accident occurred once again to one of those big CPR P-2 class Mikado engines, only five months later. For on February 27th, 1957 Engineer Harold Yeo 45 car freight was following a Canadian National freight on the mainline, The CNR took to the siding outside of Oakville as it was supposed to, Yeo was to have had the through track, the CPR passed the rear of the freight on the mainline, but then a surprise. The CNR didn't fully stop. so it split the switch and came rolling back out of the siding at the other end, on to the main-line. The CPR smashed into the freight cars. One of the freight cars contained naptha gas and it violently exploded around the Steam engine. Engineer Yeo was thrown from the cab as was fireman J. Wardell. The engineer survived the collision and explosion but fireman Wardell did not.

SUNNYSIDE

OCTOBER 19, 1963

A head-on collision occurred between two heavily loaded CNR freight trains a half mile west of Sunnyside station early in the morning of October 19th, 1963. A westbound freight was preparing to pull into the Mimco yards at about five o'clock in the morning after running south from North Bay. It was running at about only ten miles per hour when it was struck by a train heading east. The westbound had 65 cars and the eastbound had 33 cars. This is a four track mainline and nobody could understand how the collision could occur. Six diesels were wrecked and eight crewmen were sent to a nearby hospital. Oil spewed from the diesels not only on the track but the adjacent Gardiner Expressway. The Expressway into downtown Toronto had to be closed. Fire erupted quickly from the fuel oil and it took firemen more than an hour to put the fire out. Two of the tracks were shifted out of place.

The Engineer of the Mimco bound freight was William Stevens and the Conductor was Don Marquis. The Engineer of the out-going freight was Melvin Dollar. The other trainmen were Robert Rudd, James Cunningham, Joe Tierney, Herbert Diez, Tommy Clark, all brakemen. All of these men were sent to the hospital.

The Diesels that were destroyed and written off were 3725, 4453, 4459, 4531. Diesel 4457 was repaired.

PORT CREDIT

NOVEMBER 11, 1965

On Remembrance Day, 1965, Canadian Pacific Railway Hamilton to Toronto freight with 105 cars plowed into the rear of a slow moving Canadian National way-freight right on the Highway 10 over-pass. Twenty cars derailed, one of the boxcars, on impact was thrown over the bridge railing and landed onto Highway 10. The CPR train had Alco-MLW units 8575, 8445, and 8426, 8575 was heavily damaged. CPR engineer Joseph A. Cassidy and CNR conductor John F. O'Donnell were killed.