

THOUSAND ISLANDS RAILWAY

An Historical Sketch

By A. A. Merrilees

One of Canada's shortest railways is the Thousand Islands Railway, only 6.33 miles long, and connecting the Toronto-Montreal main line of the Canadian National Railways with the pleasant manufacturing and resort town of Gananoque on the St. Lawrence River.

The company was incorporated on February 15, 1871, as the Gananoque & Rideau Railway, and the name was changed to the present one on March 25, 1884. Construction began in 1888, and in the same year the company took over the Gananoque Perth & James Bay Railway, a "paper" company. The line was opened for traffic in 1889.

The promoter and builder of the line was the Rathbun Company, of Deseronto, who at that time were one of the largest lumber operators in this part of Ontario, being responsible for heavy cuts of timber on the watersheds of the Moira and other rivers flowing into Lake Ontario at various points in the eastern part of the province.

In addition to their extensive forest operations, this company had, in the closing years of the nineteenth century, a very diversified industrial empire at their headquarters at Deseronto, including a cement plant, brick yards, a high-capacity sawmill, iron smelter, and a railway car-building plant. They sponsored several railways from various points on the lake into the interior, with the prime object of bringing out their timber. One of these, the Bay of Quinte Railway, was built from Deseronto inland, while two others, the Oshawa Railway, and the Thousand Islands Railway, were also incorporated with wide charter powers, but never succeeded in building more than a scant few miles of track apiece.

By the year 1911 the timber reserves held by the Rathbuns had become almost exhausted, and the elder members of the family had passed away. The company gradually liquidated its industrial empire, selling the Bay of Quinte Railway to the Canadian Northern, and its other two railway properties to the Grand Trunk. The G.T.R. issued 4% capital stock in payment, and both small lines have since been operated by the G.T.R. and its successor, the Canadian National Railways.

The original junction between the Thousand Islands Railway and the Grand Trunk was at the point where the two lines meet. However, the main line is here on a steep grade, and trains experienced considerable trouble in re-starting after the stop at the junction. In 1912, therefore, the station of Gananoque Junction was resited some three miles east of the original location, and an additional track for the use of T.I.Ry. trains was built along the south side of the main line.



Locomotives

- 1,3 4-4-0 Rhode Island. Bay of Quinte Railway engines assigned to the Thousand Islands Railway by the Rathbun Company during construction and for five years thereafter.
- 3 0-4-2T Dickson compound. Purchased in 1894 from the Intramural Railway of the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago. Sold in 1912 to the Point Anne Quarries Limited, near Belleville, where it finished its days.
- 4 2-4-2T Baldwin. Purchased in 1894 from the Manhattan Elevated Railway, which had electrified its line the previous year. Same disposal as No. 3.
- 100 4-4-0 Hinkley, 1883. Supplied by the Grand Trunk Railway in June, 1912, to replace 3 and 4. Formerly GT 2177. Returned to the CNR in 1925 for scrap.
- 101 A former Grand Trunk engine, identity unknown. Was used on the T.I.Ry. for only a short time. Assigned the number 101 in T.I.Ry. roster, but probably never actually carried this number.
- 102 4-4-0 Schenectady, 1873. Supplied by the CNR in 1925 to replace 100. Formerly CN 242; originally GT 2001. Returned to CNR in December, 1927.
- 241 4-4-0 Schenectady, 1873. Similar to 102. Supplied by CNR in June, 1926, as a standby for 102. Formerly CN 241; originally GT 2000. Returned to CNR in December, 1927.
- 44 4-4-2T Built in G.T.R. Pointe St. Charles Shops, 1892. One of the Montreal Vaudreuil suburban tank engines. Formerly CN 44. Scrapped Gananoque, 1931.
- 500 Steeple-cab diesel-electric (originally gas-electric) locomotive, built in Oshawa Railway shops, 1930. Used on O.R. until March, 1931, and transferred to the T.I.Ry., on which it has been the sole motive power ever since.

OTHER MOTIVE POWER USED ON THE LINE AT VARIOUS TIMES, BUT NOT ASSIGNED TO IT:

- CN 43 4-4-2T, similar to 44, was used at various times to relieve 44.
- CN 77 Oil-electric switcher, formerly No. 7700, occasionally relieves 500.
- CN 1071 4-6-0, and the heaviest type of power allowed, is used at various times to handle the snow plow over the line.
- CN 15832 Oil-electric passenger motor car, was used once to relieve 500, but was very unsuccessful, as it could handle only one heavy load or two light loads up the grade from Gananoque to the junction.

Cars

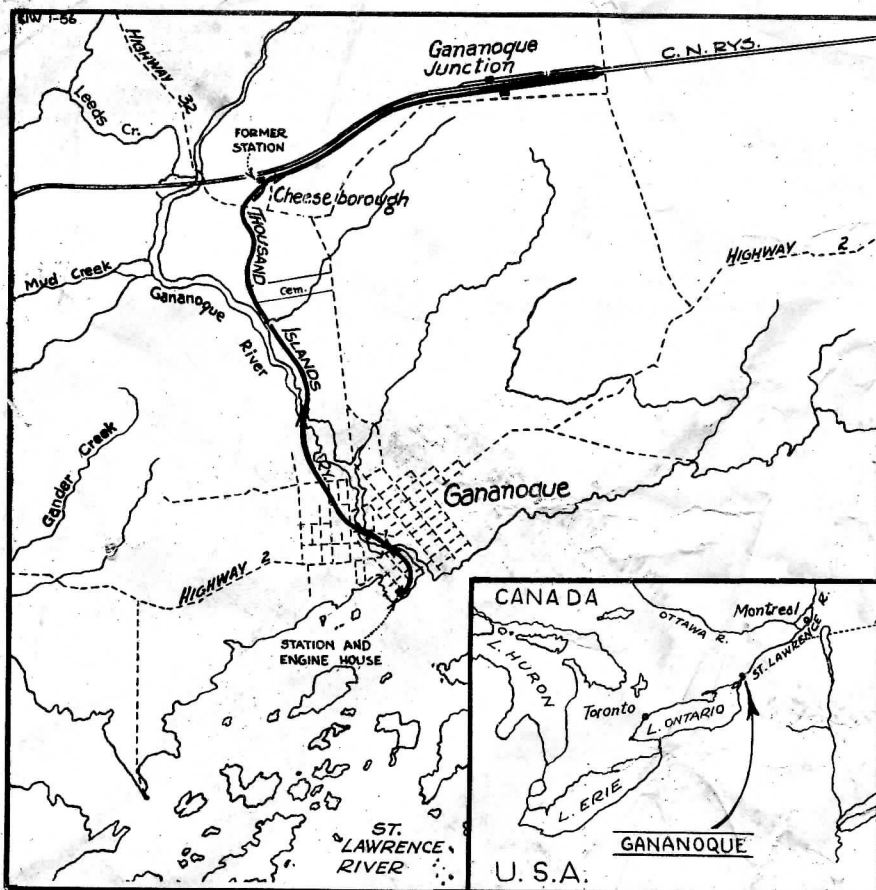
- 200 Open-platform wooden combination passenger-baggage cars, all reported to have been built about 1898. 200 was in service until about 1949. 201 was scrapped in the twenties. 202 was scrapped at Kingston in 1945, after underframe broke while being moved in freight train to London Reclamation Yard for scrapping. Had not been used for years.
- CN 7206 Wooden combine with closed vestibule, used after 1949.

Work equipment comprises one snow plow, one flanger, and one flat car.

All cars were received at one time or another from the Grand Trunk Railway or its successor, the Canadian National Railways.

Contributed by George W. Horner

In the days before good roads the railway performed many errands of mercy in winter, hauling supplies to homesteads isolated by snow storms, and bringing out those in need of medical attention.



Although the line's employees belong to the big railway Brotherhoods, there is never any labour trouble, in spite of the fact that they draw lower rates of pay than the men on the main line railways. Nobody is unhappy about this, however, for this is one of the few railways on which everyone can sleep in his own bed every night, and eat his dinner at home every day into the bargain.

In recent years locomotive 500, a small diesel-electric job built at Oshawa has handled all the work on the line except on the rare occasions when heavy repairs are needed which cannot be performed at Gananoque, when its place is usually taken by CNR number 77, an odd-looking oil-electric job which usually puts in its time at Montreal.

The usual passenger train comprises the 500 and one combination baggage and passenger car, which, since 1949, has been borrowed from the parent CNR, the line's own venerable cars having all been scrapped.

Freight trains are not heavy, as the 500 is rated at only 22%, and it is an uphill pull all the way from the town to the junction. Three pieces of work equipment complete the roster.

SINGLE		EXCURSION		CHILD		RETURN	
GAYANODUKE ST.		CHEESEBORO		CEMETERY		GAYANODUKE ST.	
BETWEEN							

THE THOUSAND ISLANDS RAILWAY COMPANY

CASH FARE

This Duplex Ticket must be punched before it is separated and this half given to passenger. Punch marks must indicate amount paid, also stations from, and to which travelling. Good for continuous passage only. **Not Transferable.**

Baggage will be transported subject to tariff regulations.

Form S. C. 55 E. B. WALKER,
General Superintendent

Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	X	X	X	X	X
1 9 0 0											
AND											
43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	FARE CENTS		
10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50			



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