

The Ferrophiliac Column *October 1990* Conducted by Just A. Ferronut

It is time to dust off the old keyboard and jot down a few more notes. First, it is time to correct my slips from the last month or so. In my August, 1990 column, I was nattering about a building in the Dawes Road area of Toronto, that apparently had been featured in a Real Estate News as a CNOR station. I questioned the name, and some of its history. Well, Ray Corely, has filled in some details on this structure and the story around it. First, Ray confirmed that the building at 18 Midburn Avenue is NOT a railway station. There was not a station building at this location, but only a stub end 15 car siding east of Dawes Road with its switch points facing east. This siding was on the south side of the mainline. This was listed as mile 3.0 on the Orono Subdivision. Now the interesting story about the structure. In the early part of the century when the CNOR was constructed through this area it was still farm land.

Ray advises research by the East York Historical Society, George Horner and himself, all point to the building as being a station look alike probably constructed in 1897 as a farm house. What now looks like the closed in open areas were no doubt areas for storing and loading farm product, first on wagons then later on trains. The house was part of the Massey Estate.

The next facet of this story relates to at least one of the more recent owners, who took advantage of the looks of his house and started telling people it was a station. This story snowballed and later, even the Real Estate people got roped in and by this time the story had developed to the point where it couldn't be stopped – so it got included in the Real Estate News.

We have received extra data from both Ray Corely and Denis Taylor on the former Harwood, Ontario station now located at Roseneath, north east of Cobourg, as mentioned in the September, 1990 Newsletter. Both Ray & Denis point to the book *Cobourg 1798 – 1948* by Edwin C. Guillet as being the source on the Harwood Station. Guillet writes “The large station at Harwood stood just above the wharf. The station agent and telegraph operator was Robert Craig, and as the building was larger than any other public hall, it was frequently used for dances. When it appeared that the old railway had come to a permanent end, the station was demolished and materials used in erecting the Orange Hall in Roseneath.”

Barry and Sheila Surerus, the Real Estate agents handling the sale of this former station put together some historical data on this building. Their data indicates that the station was constructed in Harwood in the 1850's and was dismantled May-July 1901. The dismantled structure was moved to Roseneath and reconstructed by Mr. A. Copperthwaite. The reconstructed station was used as a dance hall during the mid 1920's. By 1927 the basement, stage (first floor) and extra stairs had been added. Mr H. Kelley installed electricity in 1928-29. 'Moving Pictures' were introduced in 1929 and continued until the mid 1950's when the last one was 'The Last of the Mohicans.' The Roseneath Fair Dance was held here on the 1930 Fair Day. With a history like this, what stories would be told if only the walls could talk.

Denis Taylor, was shown through this old station recently and sent along the following observations; “The building is still outwardly the same as it was in the 1850's. The interior both up stairs and down is now one big room with a stage on the lower floor. The walls on both floors are tongue & groove, floor to ceiling (the original – Surerus). It does not appear that the building was ever used as a dwelling. After its

use as a hall it stood empty for some time and then was used as a small planing mill with some machines on the ground floor and storage on the upper floor.”

While chatting with Ray, he added a few extra comments about the house in Schomberg (September, 1990 Newsletter) that was used as the Schomberg and Aurora interurban station. First, apparently this house which is located the east side of Main Street in Schomberg is up for sale every several years. The rail line from Oak Ridges split somewhat south of the Schomberg station with one line swinging northward to the station. The other line continued northwest and crossed Main Street to a factory on the west side. East of Main Street adjacent to this line was the engine house.

Back in the August, 1990 column, I mentioned that Mike McIlwaine had asked about a couple of TH&B stations being relocated and used for a house. Well Doug Thwaites has sent along confirmation as well as some of the details relating to Mike's question. Doug writes that a Mr. A. Lomax had purchased the TH&B Stoney Creek station during the 1950s and moved it to the Dundas Valley in the First Concession of West Flamborough. Mr. Lomax acquired the Vinemount station in the early 1960s and moved it adjacent to the Stoney Creek station to form his house. Doug advises that the site of combined stations has an excellent view of the Dundas Valley, overlooking the CN mainline and within about a mile of the recently abandoned TH&B Waterford Subdivision. Doug writes that it has been a number of years since he visited the site which he recalls as being set on top of a hill well back from the road and may not be visible to the casual passer-by. Doug now joins Mike and myself in asking can anyone else add to this station story.

Other stories that have shown up include an article from Dave R. Smith, Trenton, Ontario about CNR steam locomotive # 2534 that has been on display in Belleville's west end Zwick's Park since 1967. An article in The Intelligencer, dated September 18, 1990 states that Belleville's Parks and Recreation Committee has decided to have the steam locomotive removed and replaced with another “fitting tribute to the many individuals who worked for the CNR.” The Committee considers the City has been fighting a losing battle ever since this MLW built 2-8-0 was loaned to them as part of Canada's centennial celebrations in 1967. Exposure to the elements and vandals has taken its toll to the point where it is considered almost impossible to even maintain the locomotive in a safe condition, let alone restore it. The Committee considers it “regrettable” but can see no choice but to remove the engine. There is presently no date as to when this display will be moved, since the City must first determine the costs to remove it.

Another steam locomotive in the news, is CNR # 81 at Palmerston, Ontario, but the news here is better. CN's September, 1990, Keeping Track has a letter to the editor about this CLC built 2-6-0 that carried CNR's number and herald for so many years. The letter from 'The Palmerston Railway Heritage Society,' PO Box 68, Palmerston, ON., NOG 2P0 outlines that the group is restoring this engine but are having problems in locating various parts that are presently missing. Their request is for leads from people as to where they may be able to obtain parts for this engine. Got any information? Drop them a line.

While this request may date you, it looks like a worthwhile endeavour that will benefit both our young and

future generations. Dave Stalford has sent along an article from Today's Seniors about a book that is presently being researched.

This book on the role of Canadian National Railways during the Second World War is being compiled by CN and McGill University Press. Since trains were a very important part of Canada's war effort, this book is aimed as portraying its role from – carrying troops, supplies, moving prisoners of wars as well as the general population. So if you rode the train to boot camp, worked on the railway, or worked the entertainment trains for troops, etc., you might want to share any memories or photographs you have of that time. If you had a part in this part of Canada's history, why not write; Gail Dugas, c/o Today's Seniors, 47 Belvedere Crescent, Ottawa, Ontario K1M 0E5.

In several columns this year including the one in the July 1990 Newsletter I included various bits and pieces about abbreviations and codes, etc. Well, George Horner has sent along a few more comments on the subject. George makes reference to some of the station call letters that in the days of open stations with operators graced the pages of employee timetables to identify each station. This call letters usually represented one or two prominent letters from the station name. Common examples included 'MC' for Mimico, 'CR' for Port Credit; 'CA' for Clarkson and 'OA' for Oakville. These are all quite understandable. However, George continued with some of the exceptions that don't appear to be connected to the station name. These oddities often resulted from the station name being changed, but the telegraph call remained the same. Some example of these from Ontario include:

'RK' DANFORTH, from its former name York.
'AN' ORIOLE, from its former name Duncan.
'SQ' BURLINGTON, from its former name

Wellington Square.

'D' ST. CLAIR AVENUE, when the new St. Clair Avenue station opened, the operators moved from the old Davenport station and took their call letter with them.

'HI' CONCORD, from its former name Thornhill.

'RH' MAPLE, from its former name Richmond Hill, MAPLE's call letters changed to 'MA' when the Richmond Hill station opened on the Bala Subdivision.

'SA' TERRA COTTA, from its former name Salmonville.

'DR' INGLEWOOD, from its former name Riverdale.

'CG' SNIDER, these telegraph call letters were selected from the initials of CN's Chief Train Dispatcher at Toronto Yard, when it opened in 1966, Clare Gingerich.

'WK' BLACKWATER JUNCTION, although these letters appear in reverse, they actually come from its former name Wick Junction.

Another exception would be the only known telegraph calls with numbers on the C.N.R.

'B1' BRIDGEBURG, (later named Fort Erie) location of the Traffic Supervisor's Office governing the International Bridge and was located at CN Mile 1.0.

'B2' HARBOUR DRAW, NY., the draw bridge over the Erie Canal, CN Mile 0.3.

As George points out this is by no means a complete list, so perhaps some of our readers can send us a few examples of the exceptions from their area.

Dale Wilson has sent an interesting letter as the result of a comment made in the July 1990 Newsletter about station locations. Dale of course is commenting on the locations of the CP (Kingston and Pembroke) and CN (Grand Trunk) in

downtown Kingston. Dale is correct in pointing out that Grand Trunk's station is a block from the K&P station. Both stations are on the water side of Ontario Street. If you consider Ontario Street as an east-west street, then the K&P station is located in the south-east corner of Ontario and Clarence Streets. GT's station is located a block west in the south-west corner of Ontario and Johnson Streets. Both buildings are still standing with the K&P station being used by the Chamber of Commerce as an information centre. The former GT station is now a restaurant.

While the locals called this downtown Grand Trunk station the 'inner station,' Grand Trunk at the turn of the century defined it as Kingston while its station 2.25 mile north on its main line was called Kingston Junction. Dale advises that there were 10 trains a day shown in the August 16, 1902 public timetables. In the summer of 1908 this 2.25 miles of track seen 18 trains a day from Monday to Saturday with 11 trains on Sundays. By the June 24, 1917 Grand Trunk public timetable shows 5 trains daily except Sunday.

CN Rail for years defined this 2.25 mile spur as the Hanley Spur. The 1907 GTR inventory of structures defines the 20.5 x 22 brick station at Johnson & Ontario Streets as being used by the Grand Trunk but owned by J. P. Hanley. Interesting!

Dale has asked a number of questions. While I may be able to track down answers to a couple of them, I am requesting our readers to help.

Dale's first question relates to the area around the inner Kingston station. While the street entrance was at the Ontario Street level, apparently passengers had to descend a set of steps perhaps 20 feet to board their train. Passenger train tracks were located in back of the station and travelled between the K&P station and the water on its way towards Kingston Junction. Dale was asking if anyone has a layout of this trackage in back of the station or better still any photographs?

The second question is perhaps aimed more at some of our Kingston area members. Apparently Queen's University and one of the Ontario Ministries had an archaeological 'dig' in the area a few years ago. While the 'dig' which was across the street from the present Defense College, it was searching for remnants of the original French Fort Frontenac. Rumours have it that this 'dig' unearthed what seemed to be the foundations of the original Grand Trunk turntable pit. The pit's location suggested that perhaps the GTR line came into the 'downtown' on quite a different alignment than was the case up to track abandonment in recent years. So, gang can anyone shed some light on this matter and what the 'dig' found?

Skipping northward and to Orillia, Ontario. Dale commenting on Jack Knowles comments in the July 1990 Newsletter asked as to whether the Georgian Bay and Seaboard Railway, the Midland Railway of Canada and the Toronto, Simcoe and Muskoka Junction Railway all crossed on same bridge at the Couchiching Narrows (Orillia)?

Jack's comments about railcars being stored during the depression on the Georgian Bay and Seaboard Railway east of Orillia reminded Dale about similar storage in the Sudbury area.

Canadian Pacific Railway had purchased the Algoma Eastern Railway and renamed it as their Nickel Subdivision shortly before the depression. Since this trackage certainly was not needed for traffic, CP used it to store idle rail cars during the depression. This trackage like its counterpart in the south was abandoned with most of it dismantled by the start of the World War II.

Keep the material coming, all information will become useful at some point. Thanks to all contributors, so I'll see you next month.