

The Ferrophiatic Column Conducted by Just A. Ferronut

May 1992

Libraries, museums, etc. along Ontario roads, look out, for spring is here and I am on the loose. Mainly because of an announcement I expect to make next month, I have been visiting different areas over the last few weekends trying to get answers to a number of questions. Lots of data is piling up and a few questions are getting answered but many more are stacking up.

One extra comment on the CSX material from last month. I had mentioned that they had given notice of their intent to abandon about four miles of the old L.E. & D.R. from West Lorne westward to Rodney. The NTA have turned down CSX's request, so these few miles of track are safe for a while yet.

A few months ago, I was asked what I knew about the original Hamilton and North Western Railway trackage in Georgetown and the changes that were made following its take over by the Grand Trunk Railway.

The Hamilton and North Western after numerous ups and downs including a union in 1875 with the Hamilton and Lake Erie Railway arrived at Georgetown. The Georgetown *Herald* reported in October 1877, that the H&NW had reached Clarksville. This community known today as Beeton had used the name Tecumseth in between these names. This 1877 article states that while freight trains would run from Georgetown north to Clarksville (Beeton) but there would be no passenger service north of Georgetown until the line was completed to Barrie.

An agreement dated June 6, 1879 between the Hamilton and North Western Railway and the Northern Railway Company of Canada consolidated the two companies under the name of the North and North-Western Railway which was operated by a Joint Executive Committee. This consolidation was not an amalgamation as each Company retained their own corporate identity.

These two Companies along with The Grand Trunk Railway were amalgamated under the name of the GTR effective February 24, 1888.

The H&NW as constructed came north from Hamilton and entered Georgetown on the west side of town. It crossed over the Grand Trunk on the west side of the present Highway 7 bridge over the CNR (GTR). Since the Grand Trunk had been in this location since the mid-1850's the H&NW probably to avoid the usual problems and costs of diamond crossings and interlocker went over the top of the GTR on a bridge. Charles Cooper in his book *Rails to the Lakes* states that the H&NW bridge over the GTR was 25 feet above the GTR. The H&NW station was at the junction of the two railways on the west side of Highway 7 (or the north end of Main Street). Based on an agreement, as contained in Charles Cooper's book, between the two railways dated October 31, 1879 the station was on the east side of the H&NW south of the GTR as shown on the map. From the crossing the H&NW went north on the west side of Highway 7, crossing it where this highway swings west today at the intersection of Wildwood Drive. The H&NW continued north and crossed Silver Creek and continued north on the west side of the Credit River. Charles Cooper in his book states that the north abutment of the old H&NW bridge over Silver Creek was still visible about 1980. Since this area is now an overgrown ravine, these remains may still be standing. They would be located south of Wildwood Drive almost directly in line of the intersection of the 8th Line Road.

A trip to the Georgetown Library showed an interesting twist to the track changes made following the amalgamation with the GTR. This map dated 1858 shows a

railway spur, with a west facing switch, opposite the GTR station and extending northwest along the east bank of Silver Creek. This spur line extended about three miles northward and appears to have been built to obtain gravel (ballast?) during the construction of the GTR. An 1879 map clearly shows the H&NW in its original alignment through Georgetown, but no sign of this earlier GTR spur.

My CNR track records indicate that in June 1891 there was a track diversion at Georgetown that added about 1½ miles of trackage to the GTR system. Checking various records has revealed a few extra details on this diversion. The Georgetown *Herald* in a couple of short items in late March and early April 1891 states that the GTR plans to build a wye opposite their station and double track the GTR line from the Georgetown west to Georgetown Junction (presently known as CN Silver) (the junction with the old H&NW line southward to Milton and Hamilton). I have not been able to confirm the completion of these works during 1891. The GTR bridge over Silver Creek west of the Georgetown station was reconstructed in 1900. The Acton Free Press in their July 2, 1891 edition state that "Georgetown – Our travelling public will do well to note the changes in the timetable brought about by the Northern trains now running into the union station (GTR station presently used by VIA and GO). The new line was finished Saturday, June 27, 1891, and the switches were turned connecting it with the main line (GTR) on Sunday, so that some important changes have occurred. Also note the changes in our mail service by the time table posted in the Post Office." This same paper the following week, July 2, 1891 states that the old H&NW station is being torn down.

So with the date of the diversion confirmed, let's see if we can trace some of the physical track changes. Looking at the topography and present alignment of the H&NW (presently known as CN's Halton Subdivision) track, I was first thinking the H&NW crossing of the GTR would have been west of the present junction. However, the connection constructed in 1891 actually swung west of the H&NW as shown on the map and the present junction is about where the old H&NW bridge would have been. This alignment is confirmed on a 1913 map, revised to 1928 that shows a section of the old H&NW roadbed south of the GTR.

The alignment of the track diversion from the GTR station northwest to its connection with the original alignment of the H&NW north of Wildwood Drive (see the map) appears to be at least on the right-of-way, if not the roadbed of the old GTR spur. My 1913 map shows the full wye north of the main line at the GTR station and double track on the GTR from Georgetown Junction to well east of the station. It also shows that there was a second track from the north end of the wye about two-thirds of the distance to Wildwood Drive. As mentioned this 1913 map was updated to 1928 and hence shows the alignment of the Toronto Suburban Railway wandering it way across this portion of the country on its way to Guelph.

Mentioning the Toronto Suburban leads me to a question to some of our interurban enthusiasts about the TSR station on south Main Street in Acton. Since this station was converted into a residence following abandonment, is it the two storey brick house on the north side of the old roadbed about 500 feet east of Main Street?

The Acton Free Press reported that two GTR freight trains had collided on September 26, 1879 about mid-way between Guelph and Rockwood. One of the injured was a tramp named Bracket. The October 23, issue of the Acton paper states that Bracket, the tramp is suing the

GTR for \$5,000. He says that even if it was stealing a ride, the railway had no business smashing him up.

A couple of trips through south-west Ontario has turned up several interesting things including some old stations. First, in Woodstock, VIA is working on some restoration work of this brick 2 storey station. This GTR station was constructed in the late 1880's a few years after the amalgamation with and take over of this Great Western line. VIA has removed the old addition on the westside and were busy replacing deteriorated brick. We will keep you posted on this work.

North of Woodstock, in the village of Hickson, we found records that stated that the station from the Port Dover & Lake Huron Railway was relocated in the early 1960's and was converted to a house. This station is now located a couple of miles south west of town on Lot 16 in Concession X. It is on the north side of the sideroad a short distance west of the road between Concession X and XI. The turret is gone and the baggage room section has been removed but the bottom portion of the turret and the operator's bay window are still very visible, albeit somewhat disguised behind buff coloured brick and aluminum siding.

A second relocated railway building in Tavistock is still in existence. A few months ago we mentioned the GTR station that was relocated to Jacob Street East. Well at 246 Hope Street East, still hiding under its red clay tile roof is the former GTR express building.

A little farther north, while it took two trips, I have spotted sections of the Stratford and Lake Huron Railway's (Port Dover & Lake Huron) long abandoned roadbed between Palmerston and Harriston. Knowing that this railway's and the Wellington, Grey and Bruce's (Southern Extension) right-of-ways are immediately adjacent between Listowel and Palmerston, I guess I was expecting the same north of Palmerston. However, this is not the case, it is in fact about 500 feet or so west of the W.G.&B for most of the way between these villages. The W.G.&B was opened to Harriston in December, 1871. The Southern Extension from Palmerston to Listowel was opened in late 1874. The Stratford and Lake Huron didn't complete its northward trek to Harriston from Stratford until December 1877. March, 1881, the Stratford and Lake Huron, the Port Dover & Lake Huron and the Georgian Bay and Wellington Railways were amalgamated under the name Grand Trunk, Georgian Bay and Lake Erie Railway. Twelve years later in 1893 both of the rail lines between Listowel and Harriston were amalgamated into the Grand Trunk. The Stratford and Lake Huron Railway soon was abandoned north of Listowel and now 99 years later the traces are getting sparse.

A trip to Petrolia has raised another question that perhaps some of our readers may be able to shed some light on. A 1880 period map of Lambton county shows a few miles west of Watford on the Great Western (presently CN's Strathroy Subdivision) a short rail line. It extends north from the Great Western and is labelled Kingstons Tram. Does anyone know whether this line actually existed or was it simply a proposed line?

A mistake on a recent trip to Oshawa led me to the Canadian Northern Ontario's Oshawa North station. This former 2 storey frame structure is now located on the north side of Wayne Avenue at civic number 64-68. Wayne Avenue is on the west side of Simcoe Street a couple of blocks south of Canadian Northern's line on the south side of Taunton Road. The station has been converted into a residential duplex. The bottom storey has a brick veneer around it, but the second storey is basically unchanged from its days as a station. The one gable and two dustpan dormers are still in place as are the two second storey windows on the ends of the station.

Denis Taylor has forwarded a few comments

about the Carmagner Station on CN's old Port Hope, Lindsay & Beaverton Railway line. Even before 1920, farmers brought their milk several miles to Omemee or Bests station for shipment, and in 1929 they requested the CNR to locate a new flag stop one and three quarter miles west of Bests where the track crosses Concession 3 of Emily Township. The Lindsay *Post* in a 1969 article noted: "In 1930 some square timbers were laid parallel with the track on the north side and 7 carloads of cinders were dumped. The farmers had a "bee" assisting the trackmen in spreading them to make a platform. The railway provided a shelter 8 feet square and also a truck (baggage wagon) for handling the milk cans. This shelter became a favourite stop for hoboes in depression days. The flag stop was known as McCague's (there was a David McKeague on Lot 19 of the 3rd Concession on 1867 map) for the first year, but on September 27, 1931, it was changed to Carmagner, in recognition of the three delegates who had promoted the idea, Sam Carew, Stan Magee and Elwood Faulkner. Each morning about 30 cans of milk were loaded on the 8:40 a.m. train to Toronto, and empty cans returned on the 8:30 p.m. train. However, by 1947, the township was ploughing roads in the winter and milk trucks picked up the milk right at the farm, and the Carmagner flag stop disappeared in 1955.

Changing over to the book scene, I note that at least here in Toronto, the book *Last Train to Toronto*, By Terry Pindell that I mentioned a couple of months ago is available at W. H. Smiths and Coles.

The April issue of CN's Keeping Track lists a book of railway photographs from the west. This book titled *Westbound* By Mike Chandler is a portfolio of black and white photographs that he has taken over the last 30 years. The book can be purchased for \$39.95 (GST included) from Bonaventure Press, P. O. Box 1612, Place Bonaventure, Montréal, Québec H9H 3H2.

Since I am always looking for new books on Canadian Railways and their histories to add to my collection, as I expect others are, how about letting us know about such books published in your area. Often local or regional books are published that contain extensive railway material, but never make it to the list of railway books. Your local author would no doubt appreciate a little broader exposure.