

Just A. Ferronut's Railway Archaeology April 1994 "Art Clowes"

I am not sure whether to set my calendar by the radio announcers comments of trips to the maple sugar bush, or my still thawing body and our almost daily snow storms. While, to me, it has been a great winter, I won't object to its end. Anyway, it is time to get back to write a column, instead of making our Editor try to translate one from a few notes. In the January column, I wrote of chasing trains, in the cold east – well, that must of affected me, for I repeated the process in western Canada. Most workers consider the best vacation is to go south and lay on a beach for three weeks. Well, you guessed it, I came back from a western business only to leave the next day for a three week tour of the west by car.

Cold And Clear - North of the 49th:

Chris Martin, a fellow railfan from London planned the trip around the expectation that while it may be cold, the weather is usually clear at the full moon in January. So, while we left London in the middle of a heavy rain, the temperature was well below freezing when we arrived in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. This was to be the start of the leg that would take us along the Canadian rail lines to Lethbridge, Alberta. The intent was to loop from Lethbridge south through the States and return home along a more southern and hopefully warmer route. While I have always found railfanning in the States colourful and offering numerous staged events, I must admit that this trip provided the opportunity to compare and realize just how diversified and colourful the Canadian rail scene is.

Saturday, dawned in Sault Ste. Marie, sunny and cold. The target of the day was to pace and photograph Algoma Central's passenger train in its winter environment. Also, with the up-coming take over of this Railway, we considered it was a chance to make sure we got Algoma's current paint scheme. ACR's GP38-2, No. 200 with a steam generator, 2 baggage cars and 3 coaches backed through the frozen air to the station. The few steam leaks were enough to surround the head-end cars and totally block the view down the platform. We left ahead of the train to be in place for photographs along the Highway 17 near Heydon. While there is no sign of station or platform, two men were waiting trackside at Heydon with their winter gear, to go north to their winter camp. The winter road conditions left us with only a grab-shot of the train on the Bellevue Viaduct over Highway 556. As we stopped a few miles north, the road got the better part of Chris. Lying on the road is not the desired place for picture taking, but the winter clothing pads the fall. We went north as far as Searchmont, 31.5 miles from Sault Ste. Marie for a few shots of the passengers boarding the train. As the ACR Geep headed north we doubled back to Heydon and drove north on Highway 17 to Wawa and into Hawk Junction. Being ahead of the train we stayed south of the village and worked through the deep snow to a suitable open location. Being the first day out, the cold coupled with the train being a bit late made it tempting to head back to the car. Finally the train came around the curve, cameras clicked and then it was off to the yard at Hawk Junction for a few more photos.

The January, 1913, *Canadian Railway & Marine World*, carried the notation that the Board of Railway Commissioners had authorized the Algoma Central and Hudson Bay Railway to open its main line from mileage 93 (north side of

Montreal River) to Hawk Lake Junction, 164.5 miles from Sault Ste. Marie, ON.

With our ACR mission accomplished we drove west to White River, ON, in time to meet the in-bound VIA Budd cars. Their twilight arrival required the use of time exposures. The cold caused the station's furnace exhaust to appear as inverted icicles in the pictures.

White River has a replica of a single storey station for their tourist information centre. This building is situated at the junction of the main street into the village and Highway 17. Between photographing three east bound CP freights near the station on Sunday, we also noted box car CP 410012 that is fitted with two roof brackets for removing icicles from the tunnels along their line.

Before heading west, we stopped by the CP station to see what we might expect. This was one of the weekends that CN had a derailment in Northern Ontario, so VIA was diverting the *Canadian* over the ACR from Oba south to Franz to permit it to use the CPR over to Sudbury. As always Chris was trying to get us in trouble (read leading us to temptation). He was wearing a CN Rail toque, so entering the CP domain we were asked if we were the VIA relief crew to pilot the *Canadian*? After looking at each other, we decided to say no!

CP Rail traffic was light and we only met one east bound west of Schreiber. Late in the afternoon we photographed a west bound CN west bound on their long Blende River viaduct, north of Thunder Bay, mile 173.1 Kinghorn Subdivision. The day ended with us at Atikokan.

Another bright sunny and cold day greeted us on Monday as we looked around the rail plant in Atikokan. Atikokan, now a mining town was established by the Canadian Northern as a divisional point in this isolated part of the country at the turn of the century. A ceremony on December 30, 1902, marked the official opening of the line. Mackenzie and Mann had pulled together the Ontario and Rainy River Railway, Minnesota & Ontario Bridge Company, Minnesota and Manitoba Railroad and Manitoba and South Eastern Railway to form the rail line from Thunder Bay to Winnipeg. This community remained reliant on the railway for connection to the outside world until the completion of Highway 11 to Thunder Bay in 1954. Atikokan was the destination for the so-called "Mercy Train" that was probably the only train to move during the bitter railway strike in the summer of 1950. A six-car freight train loaded with 40 tons of food and medical supplies was run to Atikokan to supply it and the surrounding area.

This divisional point continued to increase in importance even during the trouble latter days of the Canadian Northern. In 1918 a new ten-stall round house was constructed and a 86'-6" turntable installed. The major portion of the existing boarded-up single storey frame station was constructed in 1923 to replace the original station that was located some 600 metres to the east. The station was expanded eastward with a 40 foot addition in 1949. This station has been reviewed under the Heritage Stations Protection Act but has been recently turned down. In addition, Atikokan, like numerous other division points had "The Beanery" to serve as railway restaurant with a few hotel rooms. This institution built in 1915 at a cost of \$4,000, was demolished in 1967. The roundhouse, which was located

near the station was demolished in 1963.

With frosty snow crunching underfoot we wandered around to get a few photos of the frost enhanced clouds of humidity from the mine plants forming fog like effects along the tracks. It was then westward along Highway 11 towards Fort Frances, ON.

As we neared Fort Frances, we started meeting the parade of CN eastbounds that would have left Winnipeg earlier that morning. We remained in the Fort Frances area for the rest of the day photographing freights along the frozen lakes and in the community with backdrops of clouds of humidity from the pulp and paper mills. Power units were sporting a mix of paint schemes including some in DP&P colours.

Fort Frances is also on the former Canadian Northern Thunder Bay - Winnipeg line. This border community is the junction with the Duluth, Winnipeg and Pacific Railway through International Falls, Minnesota. The single storey brick station in this border community was constructed in 1913 using a design prepared by the CNoR engineering department. The Fort Frances station is presently being used for community activities.

After a night in Fort Frances, we woke up to realize that the weather wasn't getting warmer, we were getting colder. A few more photos around the terminal on Tuesday morning and then west. Rail traffic remained reasonable and at Rainy River, ON, we got one west bound scooping another for the run over the 45 miles of the CN Spague Subdivision (nee Minnesota and Manitoba Railroad) that runs through Minnesota.

The Rainy River station, a storey and one half brick building is slightly more ornate than the one at Fort Frances. This station built by the CNoR in 1918 has been taken over by Rainy River for their municipal offices. West of the station is an information centre with ex-CN 2-10-2 # 4008 and ex-CN caboose # 79574 on display.

We continued along the Canadian Northern line through Minnesota and southeastern Manitoba (CN Sprague Subdivision) to the outskirts of Winnipeg then swung west to follow CN's Rivers Subdivision to Portage la Prairie, MB.

Today, Portage la Prairie still has both CN (Rivers Subdivision) and CP (Carberry Subdivision) main lines through their community as well as being the junction for one secondary line from each railway. Portage la Prairie also still has two stations in use. The CP station is a single storey buff coloured brick structure with a limestone dado that was built in 1892. The large white on black "CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY" sign attached to the dormer is a flash-back to the 1950s. A couple of hundred metres to the southwest is the CN/VIA station. This structure is a single storey red brick building with a couple of full dormers breaking the lines of the hip roof. This depot built in the early 1900s has been refurbished for continued use by VIA.

We spent the night in Portage la Prairie with the plan to photograph the east bound VIA *Canadian* due in the area on Wednesday morning. Things looked great on Wednesday morning as we burned up film on passing CN and CP freights. About 1000 hours (local time) a CN westbound arrived in Portage la Prairie led by SD40 5072, followed by HR616 2119 and GMD1m 1171 trailing. The scanner chatter indicated that it was waiting for an eastbound freight that was then finishing up some switching at CN Bloom, about 9 miles west of Portage la Prairie on the Rivers Subdivision.

About 1020 hours, the scanner came alive with comments about a train fire west of town. Since the lines of the

two railways are close there was some confusion as to which railway had the fire. It soon became clear that it was the CN train that had been switching Bloom. Luck permitted us to arrive at the scene ahead of the emergency vehicles. Sitting on the main line near a sideroad crossing about 6 miles west of town was CN SD50F 5432 and SD40 5043. They were uncoupled from their train that was some 100 metres behind them. It soon became clear that as the train was pulling out of Bloom, the lead unit caught fire. Jodi Ferguson of *The Daily Graphic* carried the following in her write-up of the incident. "Some spilled motor oil caught on fire. However, none of the diesel fuel which actually powers the locomotive engine was threatened."

"Because the blaze was contained in an enclosed space it was out almost as quickly as it began, but not before throwing a scare into the train's crew. The engineer reported he had flames shooting eight feet above the engine."

The town's fire department spent well over an hour ensuring everything was secure to enable the units to be moved.

Meanwhile the eastbound *Canadian* led by F40PH-2 6403 and 6454 had arrived in the area and was stopped at Bloom. While we didn't note all of the equipment on this train is was interesting to note that the tail section of the *Canadian* was made up of the same cars that I travelled on in British Columbia during January (See article in February-March *Rail & Transit*).

While the fire fighters were doing their work, negotiations were underway to arrange to get the power from the westbound sitting in Portage la Prairie to rescue the stranded eastbound to permit the *Canadian* to get on its way. About 1300 hours the power from the west bound had arrived at the fire scene and put together the pieces ready to head east into Portage la Prairie. You have probably guessed what has happened – yes the GMD1m 1171 was leading! Needless to comment on film consumption in the next few minutes. It was getting on to 1345 hours when VIA got its passengers moving east again. Definitely a worthwhile delay in our westward trek.

CP favoured us with a meet at Broadview, SK near their boarded-up single storey brick station that was constructed in 1913. Darkness overtook us before we reached Regina.

Regina favoured us with a GMD1 switching a spur and more shuffling around CN's yard on Thursday morning. Before leaving Regina we drove down to look at and photograph the now nearly vacant 3 storey stone union station. The single storey east wing still sports a large VIA sign over the door.

Nearing Moose Jaw the scanner told us to get track side for some rail traffic. We went back to Pasqua Junction some 6 miles east of Moose Jaw. CP's Weyburn Subdivision from North Portal (international boundary and junction with SOO) some 20 miles southeast Estavan connects with CP's Indian Head Subdivision at Pasqua Junction. In addition to a eastbound freight heading down the Weyburn Subdivision, SD40-2 5906 & 5873 were switching some OCS cars at Pasqua Junction. The openness of the prairies lets the wind add its effect to the cold clear weather. This showed as a CP track crew were trying to throw a switch to a siding. They were using a six - eight foot piece of pipe as an extension on the switch lever to get enough leverage to throw the ice and snow clogged switch. North of the roadway along the tracks at Pasqua Junction is the relocated frame Canadian Northern station from Truax, SK. This two storey boxy frame station has a caboose, ex-CN 79880 near it.

While we didn't stop, a sign along Highway 1 at

Herbert, SK, mile 82.6 CP Indian Head Subdivision indicated that the CP station in this community has been restored.

The single storey brick CP station with its hip roof at Swift Current is still used. This depot has a track side dormer that also has a hip roof. An extra plus at Swift Current was CP SD40-2F 9000 in their new Yankee-Pacific paint scheme sitting as the lead on a eastbound waiting for a new crew.

It was into Lethbridge, AB, for Thursday night with the hope of getting some eastbound traffic on CP's High Level Bridge in the morning light of Friday. This famous structure over the Oldman (nee-Belly) River was opened to rail traffic in the fall of 1909. The last girder in this 5327.6 foot bridge was placed on June 22, 1909. The bridge is 314 feet above the river bed. Friday morning was clear and sunny, but no indication of any CP traffic. After a few pictures of the empty bridge, we were heading a few blocks east to look at the old CP station when the scanner came alive. Un-printable words were said about the one-way streets as we scrambled back towards the bridge. We won and got a series of photographs as SD40-2 5905 led 6080, 5714, and 5876 with a eastbound freight crossed the High Level Bridge at 0925 hours. This train headed south on the Stirling Subdivision, no doubt destined for Coutts and Sweet Grass, Montana and connection with the Burlington Northern.

The former CP station in Lethbridge is now a health care centre. The rail yards were relocated in the 1980's and the area redeveloped. The large station is a focal point in the area with a low stone dado supporting the red brick walls of the first storey. The main centre portion of the depot has a second storey of frame construction clad in wide white clapboard type siding. The street side of the station has a brick clad octagonal tower extending the full two storeys with a steep octagonal roof. This is set off by a series of hip roofed dormers across the centre portion of the structure.

It was southward for one of the highlights of the trip, to spent a night at the Izaak Walton Inn in Essex, Montana on the old Great Northern (now Burlington Northern) line over Marias Pass at the south edge of Glacier National (U.S.) Park.

The Izaak Walton is a three storey frame building constructed in 1939 as a crew hostel for the Great Northern. It has been converted to a hotel with railfans, hikers and skiers being its main clientele. It is a step back in time, as there are no TV's in the rooms and most rooms share common bath facilities. However, it is full of railway mementos, including many small items that were once common around railways. All the items on the menus have railway names included in their titles. The relaxing atmosphere was a great climax to our week long trek across Canada's frozen prairies. I now sit at home sipping on a cup of hot cocoa, still shivering as I flash slides on the screen, and yes it is still snowing out.

Correction to A Correction

Have you ever undertaken something only to find that it seems like you can never get everything right – well that me on the subject of the Discovery Train car No. 220 used as a tourist bureau by the Town of Amherst, NS. This started last August when we used the newspaper spelling for the name of this car, then in November we got the car *Alexandra* named properly thanks to Messrs. Norman Lowe and Leonard A. Seton. My problem was that I had removed a letter from the car name, but I guess I wanted to keep the letter count the same so added it to Mr. Seton's name. So to those who may have wondered if there was a new name among the railfan fraternity, no, this is the

same Leonard A. Seton who has been interested in and writing about the Canadian rail scene since his university days in the 1930s.

The Source of A Station Name

Dave Hanson has sent along some comments from Mr. Bryon Wood about the origin of New Brunswick & Canada Railway & Land Company's station, Toby Guzzle, that we were discussing awhile back.

"At the time of that Toby Guzzle got its name the NB&C line extended about 8 miles north of Barber Dam, NB. There was one industry at this location – a saw mill, and the entire population of the area consisted of the employees of the mill, who all lived at a boarding house conducted by a man named "Toby". The arrival of the train naturally was the big event of the day, and although the time of its appearance varied from day to day, it quite frequently showed up about mid-day when the crew of the mill were at dinner. At such times Toby, who always kept a sharp lookout, would rush to the dining room & call to the men, "guzzle your grub boys, she'e a-comin." The same expression was used so often that the boarding house became known as "Toby's guzzle," and from this the name was adopted by the Railway Company, and in time appeared on the official Time-table."

The Company's October 6, 1862 timetable lists Toby Guzzle between Barber Dam and Maudslay. Comparing various mileages in this 1863 timetable with those listed in 1978, would place Toby Guzzle a half to three-quarters of a mile south of the present McAdam Junction. Maudslay was shown as 3 miles north of Toby Guzzle or slightly over 2 miles north of the present McAdam Junction.

Time For Questions

Canadian Railway Hotels and YMCAs are two topics that have not had too many articles written about them. We have been discussing the possibility of doing something in the way of a general review on these interesting aspects of the railways in this country. My request is to ask for a copy of any bits of information you may have on these subjects or of the names of any publications with material on railway hotels or YMCAs.

I received a mail tube a few weeks ago with a copy of the *Cape Breton Magazine* in it. One end of the tube was missing, so I am not sure if there was any letter enclosed or not. It was mailed from Toronto in January. Therefore, if you forwarded this magazine, I would appreciate receiving a note so I can thank you or return the magazine.