

Just A. Ferronut's Railway Archaeology

Art Clowes
Suite 2406
50 Alexander Street
Toronto, ON
M4Y 1B6

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With the sunny fall days drifting by, I am finally starting to get back to wandering around southern Ontario. So, I guess this means I am getting settled in my Toronto digs, and hopefully will get back to putting some more meaningful columns together.

Joys of research?

As I was mentioning last month, I spend considerable time playing with my electronic scrapbook. In looking for new goodies, I periodically go through some of the index cards that were prepared by J. G. Côté from the volumes of notes that researchers collected for Colonel Stevens in preparation for the writing of his books on the Canadian National Railways. The mix-up on one card was so comical that I must pass it on. I am not quite sure where the confusion started, but it definitely points out how easy it is to arrive at a totally erroneous conclusion.

At many times in our column, mention has been made of the Albert Railway (Salisbury & Harvey Railway). This line, in south-eastern New Brunswick, ran from Salisbury, (about 15 west of Moncton) on the old European & North American Railway, south through Albert County to Albert, (about 45 miles and opened October 4, 1877) with a 72 mile extension opened in 1883 to Harvey (Bank).

Now during the 1880's, the company we know as the Canadian Pacific was constructing a section of railway between Mattawamkeag, Maine and Mégantic, Québec to joint existing railways to form the C.P.R. "Short Line" – Montréal to Saint John, that was opened in June 1889. In New Brunswick this line transverses the south-western portion via McAdam to Saint John. As part of this project the C.P.R. had made numerous statements, etc., about extending their line to Halifax, Nova Scotia. In New Brunswick, the strongest proposal for this projected C.P.R. line to Halifax was from Harvey (Station), about 20 miles east of McAdam, via Fredericton and then across the central portion of New Brunswick to meet the European & North American Railway at or near Salisbury. This is the same Salisbury that was the northern terminus of the Salisbury & Harvey Railway. Of course this projected C.P.R. line was not built.

By this time, you have probably guessed the boo-boo! Somewhere within Colonel Steven's research team, they confused the Salisbury & Harvey Railway, part of which became part of the C.N.R. with the projected C.P.R. line that had one terminus the same, but in using the shortened names of the other community (Harvey Bank, versus Harvey Station) totally confused the rail line in question. The other smile comes from the researchers using 45 miles as the distance from Salisbury to Harvey Station. In fact it is about 125 miles, and the 45 miles is the length of portion of the Salisbury & Harvey Railway that became part of the C.N.R. since the 7½ miles between Albert and Harvey Bank was abandoned in 1910, with the removal of the rails in 1916.

How easy is it to reach an incorrect conclusion if one does not pay attention to all the details.

Station Houses, etc., in the News

One station that I should of mentioned last month, but didn't, was the former C.P.R. station in Hudson, Québec. This station was constructed by the Montreal and Ottawa Railway Company in 1890. The Montreal and Ottawa Railway Company had started life in 1884 as the Vaudreuil and Prescott Railway Company. By deed dated November 15, 1892, the Canadian Pacific Railway leased the Montreal and Ottawa Railway Company in perpetuity. The line was completed to Ottawa in 1898. During the 1980s Canadian Pacific abandoned and removed the line from the outskirts of Ottawa south-east to Rigaud. Rigaud, a few miles north-west of Hudson is the current end of the M&O, and is also the western terminal of the commuter service from Montréal.

The Hudson station was closed in 1992, and requires substantial repairs. A group of Hudson residents, led by Ron Ritchie formed Heritage Hudson and have negotiated a lease of the station from the railway. The lease started July 1, 1996, and has the proviso that the group can purchase the station at such time the railway no longer requires it. Heritage Hudson has replaced the windows and installed lighting around the building. They will be replacing the roofing and installing a new heating system.

Being a stop on the commuter line, Heritage Hudson's present plans are to restore the outside of the building to its original glory. Inside they propose to modernize the washrooms for public use and perhaps add a snack bar.

In the last issue, I mentioned that the Montréal executive committee was reviewing proposals for the former C.P.R. Park Avenue station. Well, Doug Brown has forwarded their decision, the October 19th news account tells us that Loblaw's proposal got the nod. They will pay the city \$3 million for the property, that the city had purchased in 1984 for \$2 million.

Loblaws plan to convert the former depot into their Québec corporate headquarters, and have indicated they will spend \$2.5 million for this work. They also plan to build a "superstore" with underground parking on the site. Included in this phase with be the construction of a public park, (presumably part of the green space between the front of the station and Jean Talon – JAC).

However, don't expect to see any work until at least next summer, since while this proposal has executive committee approval, it must also have city council approval, and they have until next spring to agree with the executive committee.

Also, I used a wrong date for the end of VIA service at Park Avenue in my ramblings last month. Richard Carroll spotted the error, and pointed out that the last VIA train was on Saturday, April 28, 1984. Tom Box, from Montreal, forwarded the following notation from a VIA Rail Notice of the time: VIA'S CONVENIENT CONNECTION AT CENTRAL STATION - As an added convenience to our passengers, effective Sunday April 29, 1984, VIA's passenger trains between Québec City (Ste-Foy) and Montréal via Trois Rivières will use Montréal's modern Central Station. This will

facilitate more convenient connections with VIA's trains to and from Ottawa, Toronto and Western Canada. Thanks to both.

Another Montréal area station in the news is the former CP Valois, on their West Island commuter line. The St. Lawrence & Hudson in a program to dispose of some of their older stations, has handed the Valois station to the local municipality to be used for community purposes.

CP Valois is in the city of Point Claire, and at present two community service organizations are using it for their offices, etc. Again thanks to Doug Brown.

Before we leave the Montréal area, we should throw in a few words about some of the current discussions concerning the Canadian Pacific Angus Locomotive Shop. The Angus Shops, in the Rosemont district of Montreal that most of us recall, dated from 1904, although like most industrial complexes, they become like living organisms and evolve over time. A spin-off of these shops that had a work-force of 12,000 during World War II, was the Rachel Street community, home to many of the shop workers. Canadian Pacific built a library, hospital and fire and police stations for its employees.

After a transformation from an industrial complex for building, to one of maintaining railway equipment, the Canadian Pacific closed these shops with their 900 employees in 1992. This closing not only permitted the removal of most of the shop support trackage, but also a number of buildings in the complex. The vacated land permitted the construction of housing units on the eastern portion and making the western portion available for light industrial. This left the quarter-mile long locomotive shop along Rachel Street and the maintenance building north of it outside these plans.

The current argument between the Canadian Pacific and the various heritage groups is the historical value and future uses for the three block long locomotive shop. Canadian Pacific is proposing that a portion of the shop is all that is needed as a monument, and therefore would like to demolish parts of the shop, to form three separate buildings with space for roads between them. Of course the heritage groups are campaigning for the retention of the complete building. As one urban-geography professor in response to the fact that complete locomotives were built in the one shop, said, "It was an industrial city." The heritage groups have made several suggestions for the buildings use, including the relocation of the Canadian Railway Museum from Saint-Constant. Since Doug Brown sent along this article, perhaps he will keep us posted as the Saga of Angus Shops unfolds.

Moving farther east, the Woodstock, New Brunswick *Bugle* has announced that the former Canadian Pacific station in their community, presently owned by the Irving group is being offered to the town. This single storey brick station, a heritage station under the federal Heritage Stations Protection Act, while built by the Canadian Pacific apparently became Irving property when they acquired the lands of the New Brunswick and Canada Railway and Land Company. This station was built in 1911 and for years was the northern terminus for Woodstock, McAdam, St. Andrews daily. In the latter years, CP Jubilees, often 2926, was the motive power on this run that would spend its nights in the Woodstock roundhouse. The other daily that called the Woodstock roundhouse home was the train over the "Gibson" line to Minto and Chipman. At its peak in the late 1940s and 1950s, service over this line was with an oil-electric and trailer. Woodstock was also the stop of the daily passenger that operated between St. Andrews and Edmundston. Passenger service at Woodstock had totally

ended about 1963.

The Gibson line acquired its nick-name from its owner – Alexander Gibson, the promoter and owner of the New Brunswick Railway. This narrow gauge line constructed on the east side of the St. John River, extended from (Gibson) now Fredericton North, to Northampton (Grafton) opposite Woodstock and then northward to Edmundston, NB. This railway along with the New Brunswick and Canada Railway and Land Company were acquired by the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1890.

While Woodstock has been attempting to get control of this station, at present it has not finalized plans for its future use in the community.

Skipping back to Ontario, word has arrived that the former Michigan Central station in Windsor, was destroyed by fire on Friday, November 15. This station was purchased by the CNCP Niagara-Detroit Partnership and was renamed for use by CN as Windsor South. This station, was built in 1910, last saw passenger service in 1979, when Amtrak's Niagara Rainbow stopped there.

The operators' positions which had controlled the Detroit River Railway tunnel operation had been housed in this building until it was moved to Toronto a few years ago. The track department had been using the depot until a few months ago.

After five hours, only the walls remain and the fire was still burning. The fire department was reportedly have water difficulties which didn't help. CP and CN road freights were held while the blaze was fought. Thanks to Ken Garber.

During a recent outing to the Niagara peninsula with Gordon Shaw, we left the freeways at Grimsby and headed cross country towards Welland Ontario. We picked Grimsby, since Gordon wasn't aware that one of the oldest frame railway buildings in Ontario still exists there. It is a Great Western building constructed around 1855. While some has referenced it as a station, based on the maps of the period, I would consider it was more likely associated with freight traffic. This single storey building is south (escarpment side) of the present CNR mainline, just in back of where the former G.T.R. station, that burned December 31, 1994 was situated. Early maps show a small rail yard at Grimsby, a passenger shelter on the north side of the tracks. This map shows a G.W.R. building adjacent to the south yard track that would appear to be this building that is currently used as a warehouse.

We then scooted up the escarpment and headed for Smithville on the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway. Our goal was to get a look at the former TH&B station there that is in its final state of restoration. We were in luck and were privileged to get a tour.

The Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway was incorporated under Ontario act, 47 Victoria, Chapter 75 on March 25, 1884 to build a railway from Toronto, via Hamilton, to the International Bridge on the Niagara River. The proposed work sat dormant for five years. In 1889, under the influence of Mr. Vanderbilt, and the railways he controlled, the charter was revived, authorising the construction of a main line from Hamilton to Welland and a branch line from Hamilton to Brantford. A year later, the charter was amended so that the TH&B could be leased to either the Michigan Central or Canada Southern Railways (Vanderbilt controlled). The TH&B became a pawn in Vanderbilt's attempts to penetrate the Grand Trunk network to access Toronto that resulted deal making with the Canadian Pacific that gave both companies access to desirable terminals, i.e. Toronto and Buffalo.

At Smithville a station was built in time for the start of

rail service in 1895. On May 30, 1897, through Toronto-Buffalo passenger service was inaugurated by the CPR-TH&B-NYC.

The first Smithville station was struck by lightning and burned. This resulted in the present one being built about 1903.

The importance of Smithville as a railway community increased following the May 27, 1914 incorporation of the Erie and Ontario Railway Company to build a rail line from this community south through Dunnville to Port Maitland.

The E&O was amalgamated with the TH&B, December 24, 1914, the day after the official opening of the 14.9 miles from Smithville to Dunnville. This occasion on, December 23, 1914, was marked by a special TH&B train that was run from Hamilton over the line to a dinner at Dunnville.

The TH&B line in the vicinity of Smithville had 105 lb. rails and rock ballast placed in the fall of 1924.

Canadian Pacific acquired 100% ownership of the TH&B on April 19, 1977.

Four years later, April 25, 1981 is marked as the date of the last regularly scheduled passenger train service through Smithville, by this time, a joint VIA – Conrail, Toronto – Hamilton – Buffalo RDC service.

The Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo Railway Company ceased to exist as a legal and separate entity on March 3, 1987, when it was absorbed into the CP system.

The single storey frame station at Smithville with its decorative turret and ginger-bread trim had sat decaying until 1990 when the West Lincoln Council purchased the station and property from Canadian Pacific. They arranged to move the building back from the railway right-of-way, and place it on a new concrete basement. The Local Architecture Conservation Advisory Committee arranged to have it designated, provincially, as a structure of historical and architectural significance.

In December 1993, the West Lincoln Historical Society purchased the station house and then got prepared to spend thousands of hours of love and care (hard work) and plenty of loonies in creating a structure reflecting the features the station had in 1903. Part of the funds were from the sale of a local history book the Society published. While the result doesn't have the smell of dustbane to greet you and the spittoons are missing, it doesn't take much imaginative to see the ladies in long dresses milling about the depot waiting for a train, or well groomed commercial travellers arranging with the baggagemaster to unload his sample trunks from the horse-drawn wagon in preparation for his travel to the next town. Then there was the agent instructing the delivery boy on taking a telegram over to a certain community business.

The Historical Society started with trim from one door as a pattern to recreate enough material to encase all the other doors and windows. Walls were stripped and where possible the original material kept, where this was not possible, new material was milled to match to represent the styles of the period. Definitely a must visit for those who are interested in such restoration work.

It is hoped that some of you may have joined the West Lincoln Historical Society at their Christmas open house that was held on November 30, and December 1, 1996. If not, we will try to get a better announcement out on future open houses.

Gord and I finished our outing in Fort Erie. The Michigan Central/New York Central station is showing its lack of care. It is difficult from looking at the C.N.R. yard to visualize how massive a rail operation once existed here. A drive along Thompson Road under the west end of the yard area reveals that

the bridge span for the former Pere Marquette Yard trackage has been removed from the group of track carrying structures. On the river front at Lavinia Street, south of the International bridge, the semi-flattened road-bed of the Erie and Ontario Railroad is quite conspicuous from its station and wharf site through the park. In fact the track alignment and old road-bed is obvious as its sweeps around of the river side of the Fort Erie railway museum/display.

Other Ontario Wanderings

To get myself back up to speed on the Ontario rail scene, I spent an afternoon with Denis Taylor and Dave Savage sipping tea at the restaurant in the Cobourg station discussing their area. I spent a Sunday afternoon with John Thompson interviewing some former railroaders at Palmerston, and in addition to our own meetings here in Toronto, Scott Haskill and I went to a Hamilton Chapter meeting, and I have been down to pester the Forest City gang in London.

Montréal transit

Among the recent clipping from Doug Brown were a couple on Montréal transit. The timing of one on the Mount Royal Incline Railway was perfect, since I had just put an 1885 *Railroad Gazette* item in the electronic scrap book.

The November 1996 article in the *Montréal Gazette* quotes 1884 the opening date of this cable railroad, while the September 25, 1885 issue of the *Railroad Gazette* states: "The cable railroad or elevator by which the summit of Mt. Royal, back of Montreal, is reached, has now been in successful operation nearly a week." Also, since I believe this incline was part of the Montréal Park and Island Railway, and 1885 was the year it was incorporated.

The two 5 foot gauge rail lines had a 403 foot horizontal measurement, with a rise of 275 feet. The length of each track was 510 feet, and ascended the mountain at about a 33° degree angle. The cars are drawn to the top by means of a stationary engine of 75 horse-power at the top of the mountain.

The 1996 *Gazette* article is woven around an interview with a Ruby Lydia Pennock (Mrs. Clifford Pennock), who in 1898, at the age of 8 years went with her father for a trip on the incline. They rode the Park Avenue street car to the base of the mountain, where everyone transferred to "a quite differently designed car." There was a bench at the back of it but, as Mrs. Pennock remembered, no one sat down.

As they started to rise "a hush" fell over the passengers. No one spoke. Then came a sudden "sound of astonishment" as the magnificent view spread out before them. It was a clear day; they could "see for miles."

To a child, it seemed as if they were hanging on the face of a cliff, but soon the car slowed as they neared the top, then stopped with a "a lurch."

There was a lookout near the upper station of the railway. The lookout had seats and with a roof over them, it was claimed that on a good day it was possible to see for more than 100 miles.

Mrs. Pennock remembered "the heavy machinery" of the railway. Its huge wheels awed her. She recalled that there was a "strong smell of heat and oil." This machinery included, sheaves, 6 feet in diameter that guided the two operating cables to drums of wood and iron 10 feet in diameter. These were used to directly pull the cars. There was a third cable, a centre or safety rope that ran independently of the engine, and was attached to both cars, so that, in the event of the two outside ropes breaking, the centre one would hold the cars in check, beside which the large wheel of 11

feet diameter is provided with brakes which may be applied from the platform at the top of the incline by the engineer.

Both articles agree that the fare was cheap. It cost 5 cents to go up and 3 cents, to come down. Children's fare was 3 cents up, one cent down.

The Incline Railway was used by millions during its years of operation. With age and declining business, it closed in 1918. It stood rusting for a year, then it was sold for scrap metal.

I think, I am going to keep Doug's other transit article for another month.

Opening - Galt and Preston Annotation - Back in our March 1996 column we covered some of the early railways along the Grand River Valley. I had used the date of Wednesday, November 28, 1855 as the date for the opening of the 4 miles of this railway Company's line between Galt and Preston.

Our historian, Ray Corley has sent along a clipping from the February, 1958 issue of *The Railway and Locomotive Historical Society* bulletin reporting that this date should be November 26. The R&LHS article credited the *American, Railroad Journal*, of December 22, 1855, who credited the *Montreal Post* as its source. The article as published:

"The Hamilton & Toronto Railroad was opened for traffic on Monday, December 3rd, arrangements having been made to run three trains a day. The road is 40 miles in length. The Great Western of Canada have leased the road. The railway between Galt and Preston was opened for business on the 26th on which occasion the inhabitants of Preston got up a grand celebration in honour of the event."

Both the Stratford *Beacon* and Brantford *Spectator* confirms the opening of the Toronto branch. A check of the Brantford *Spectator* indicates: "This undertaking was opened on the 26th November, to the great delight of the people in that prosperous and well-favoured locality. The iron horse, harnessed to one baggage and two passenger cars, left Preston that morning, and after having completed a journey to Fairchild's Creek, returned safely, about twelve o'clock, to the former place, where a sumptuous Lunch was prepared. The repast was partaken of by the leading inhabitants of the town, and a number of friends of the Road from other places. A number of toasts were proposed and drank with great enthusiasm, after which the party dispersed. The Railway from Galt to Preston is about 4 miles in length."

So another one put to bed, thanks to Ray.

Fort Whyte Annotation - Last issue I was mentioning a couple of items about the near battle between the railways at "Fort Whyte", Manitoba. Since then I have noted, that for those with a copy of D. B. Hanna's *Trains of Recollection*, there is an expanded version of this story. The other point that may be of interest is, that William Whyte had started his railway career as a brakeman on the Credit Valley Railway. Here he worked his way up to superintendent, and in 1885 was sent to Winnipeg as superintendent of the western lines of the C.P.R. William Whyte was to later become Sir William Whyte.

Information Network - Item 72

Tom Box's item in the last issue on the 140th anniversary of the start of regular through passenger service between Montreal to Toronto, etc., brought to mind a number of other little tidbits about the early days of Grand Trunk service. First, since the "opening" date, is often a point of discussion, it is probably timely to remember that there can be up to four openings of a rail line.

– The arrival of the builder's first locomotive/train.

– In some cases, the start of train service, freight and/or passenger by the builder. This service did not always occur.

– The takeover and/or start of train service by the railway owners.

– The official opening of a line.

While Tom was concentrating on the inaugural run of the through passenger service, the Grand Trunk's timetable dated, October 18, 1856 lists three local trains on the Toronto - Montreal line. There was a "local" train that left Brockville at 8:30 a.m. for Montreal, returning from Montreal at 3:30 p.m.

The second train ran between Belleville and Brockville. This train left Belleville at 7:00 a.m., arriving back in Belleville at 3:15 p.m.

The third train left Cobourg for Toronto at 6:30 a.m. returning from Toronto at 4:45 p.m.

It is interesting to note that this early local service left a gap between Belleville and Cobourg. This early timetable also advised that: "Freight trains will not run between Brockville and Toronto during the first week."

Tom also mentioned that the Grand Trunk was operating on Montreal time. The G.T.R. listed that Montreal time was:

82 minutes faster than Brockville time

12 minutes faster than Kingston time

14½ minutes faster than Belleville time

23 minutes faster than Toronto time

In a Canadian National Railways Magazine article, in 1931 marking the 75th anniversary, F. E. D. McDowell, wondered how many people missed their trains because of this differential.

From the western side of Toronto, while October 27 is general used as the date to start regular passenger service, the official opening at Stratford was held on Wednesday, October 8, 1856. It would appear from accounts in the *Stratford Beacon*, of Friday, October 24, 1856 that: "The travel on the Grand Trunk Railway from this town eastward is increasing wonderfully, considering that no public advertisement of the opening of the line has been published. Surely the Grand Trunk Company can afford to let the public know in the usual way that the line is open to Stratford for passenger traffic? For the benefit of our readers at a distance, we may inform them that the line of the Grand Trunk is regularly opened to Stratford; and that the time of the train leaving is a quarter past one o'clock in the afternoon, and the time of arrival one o'clock. We see it stated in the *Leader* (Toronto) that the first train from Montreal to Toronto reached the latter city on Monday last (October 20, 1856). The road will be formally opened on Monday next (October 27, 1856); but the Montreal celebration on the occasion will not take place till November 12 and 13, 1856." These November celebrations included the usual parades, banquets, etc., but also had a torch light parade and steamboat excursion to the Victoria bridge.

The western leg from Toronto to Stratford was opened in sections. The Woodstock, New Brunswick, *Carleton Sentinel* of Saturday, October 20, 1855 advised that the Grand Trunk Railway started operating trains between Toronto and Brampton, Ontario, on Thursday, October 18, 1855.

The Berlin (Kitchener) *Chronicle* of February 6, 1856 indicated that a train containing our Provincial Nabobs has run over the line from Toronto to Guelph. This was an inspection train looking at the line's progress in order to evaluate the amount of the next government grant.

The Kitchener paper of Wednesday, June 18, 1856

quotes from the Toronto *Leader* that: “The first trip of the passenger cars on the Grand Trunk Railway has been remarkably successful. The train from Guelph this morning brought down nearly 150 passengers.”

The *Stratford Beacon* of Friday, September 5, 1856 carried two items about the Grand Trunk.

– The track of the Grand Trunk is now laid beyond the Stratford Station. The iron horse made his *debut* into town on Wednesday last, in the presence of a number of spectators.

– We understand that Mr. J. J. Lowndes has received a supply of goods on the Grand Trunk to Stratford - We also understand that I. N. Hall has received a stock of Watches and Jewellery by the Grand Trunk.

I throw these tidbits out, not to cloud the issue, but to show how cloudy the issue of railway opening dates can be. So have fun!

Finally, Tom mentioned some of the realignments as the double tracking of the Montréal – Toronto line. Our September 1995 Column mentioned the problems that the G.T.R. was having in 1899 with their new large locomotives not being able to get through the old tubular bridge at St. Annes, and that they would be replacing it. Well the October 27, 1899 issue of the *Railroad Gazette*, published the following item about the elimination of their last tubular bridge: “The Grand Trunk Railway during the past few months has been double tracking the line between Vaudreuil and St. Annes stations, Quebec, a distance of 4 miles, building at the same time double track bridges in place of the former single track structures across the two branches of the Ottawa River at Vaudreuil and St. Annes, the intervening space being an island known as Ile Perrot. The rebuilding of the bridge at St. Annes has done away with the last tubular bridge on the line of this company.”