

Just A. Ferronut's *June 1997*

Railway Archaeology

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The past month or so has seen a trip to Corning, New York, one to Moncton, as well as several local sojourns! So as always, where to start? But first, a couple of corrections.

In my April column on **GTR Relocations**, being asleep at the switch is the only excuse I can find for missing the "I" in "Colbright". Colbright is the Combination of adjacent station names – **Colborne** and **Brighton**.

Ray Corley also pointed out that the Canadian Northern line from Todmorden (Toronto) to Trenton that had been called the Trenton Subdivision by the Canadian Northern in their time-tables, was called the Orono Subdivision by the CNR in June 1919, prior to abandonment, after which the eastern portion that was kept was renamed the Deseronto Subdivision.

In 1918, Colbright does not appear in the Canadian Northern Time-table, while in CN's 1919 time-table, there was one Canadian National train a day stopping at Colbright, CNoR Mile 92.5.

Perhaps getting a little too detailed, but I have come across the information about the Regulatory Orders that were issued by the Board of Railway Commissioners for the relocation of the Grand Trunk Railway to permit the construction of the CNoR underpass, that started at Mile 239.2. These orders were No. 11872 and 11873, dated October 4, 1910.

In the third column on page 8, I mentioned the 5.4-mile relocation just west of Bowmanville. Ray has confirmed that this relocation was done as part of the double tracking program.

Local Trips

A few weeks ago, Stu Westland, John Thompson and myself spent a sunny Saturday poking around the fast disappearing rail lines north of Metro Toronto. We started along the old Hamilton & North Western just south of Allandale, primarily locating and looking over the old Grand Trunk Station at Vine, Ontario. This one and a half storey station combined section house is now owned by a Mr. Andy Galton and has been turned and moved off the old right-of-way to parallel the Concession 9-10 Road. Mr. Galton was telling us that he is planning to do some restoration on the depot. Apparently the original Hamilton & North Western depot was replaced in 1891 by a single storey frame Grand Trunk station. This 1891 depot burned during the First World War. The Grand Trunk then replaced it about 1918 with the present station. This second station was listed in 1907 as Mile 90.50 of the G.T.R.'s 13th Division. By 1914, the Grand Trunk had changed the mileage to 86.09 of their Burlington Junction Subdivision. The 1914 Timetable also carried the footnote that "Engineers on Northbound trains are required to test brakes passing Vine. By 1954, CN Rail had renamed this line to the Milton Subdivision, and started its mileage at the junction with the Oakville Subdivision at Burlington. This changed the mileage of Vine to 79.3. The name of this subdivision would change one more time, with the opening of Toronto Yard in 1965, and the construction

of the west access line, etc., the portion of Georgetown north was renamed the Beeton Subdivision, but the previous mileages were maintained. Mr. Galton indicated that CN Rail, after the agency, etc., was closed, sold the present depot about 1962, when it was relocated to its present site. It is good to see another station being recycled, and we wish Mr. Galton all the best in his endeavour.

After a quick trip around Allandale and Barrie, we went west along CN's Meadford Subdivision to Colwell, the junction with CN's former Penetang Subdivision. While the 1891 station at Colwell is long gone, a structure generally fitting the Agent's dwelling is still standing.

The 33.65 mile Penetang Subdivision was constructed by the North Simcoe Railway Company that had been incorporated in 1874. However, construction was not undertaken until the Northern Railway leased their franchise. Construction of the line from Colwell, five miles west of Allandale to Penetanguishene was started in the spring of 1878 and the line was opened late in 1878. In 1893, this company was absorbed into the Grand Trunk Railway.

The Penetang line had two features that were unique. This first was the Flos Tramway. This operation was instigated by E. B. Osler and his associates who had timber holdings in a large portion of Flos Township. This company, incorporated March 5, 1880, first operated using horse drawn equipment over its 2 to 4 mile line that started operating in 1880. The Flos Tramway company entered into an agreement, dated July 4, 1882, with the Northern Railway whereby they would build the roadbed and the Northern Railway would rent them the rails and operate the spur from Elmvale into the village of Hillsdale. The Flos Tramway at that time had one locomotive. The line, 8.25 miles long, was acquired by the Northern Railway effective January 2, 1883. By 1913, the Grand Trunk was using the name "Hillsdale Tramway" to define this line in its Time-tables. With the depletion of good timber, the greater part of this line was abandoned in 1917, with the remainder being dismantled in 1927.

The second interesting feature of the Penetang line was that it provided access to the short-lived 8.85 mile Wyebridge Subdivision that extended from Birch Junction (Mile 27.0 Penetang) through Wyebridge, across to Tay (Mile 71.9 Midland). Shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, the Grand Trunk Railway ever cognizant of the competition from the Canadian Pacific, decided to construct their Wyebridge connecting track. The Grand Trunk opened their cut-off line in 1911, a year prior to CP's opening of their line into Port McNicholl. This GTR cut-off had a wye at both Birch and Tay.

This new cut-off provided a more direct route for the large quantities of lumber and grain that were moving from the Georgian Bay harbours and area to Toronto and beyond. The June 1913 G.T.R. Time-table, indicated a daily, except Sunday, midday train from Tay to Birch and return. At the same time the

Penetang Subdivision had a daily Passenger, Express and Mail train. A time-table footnote advises that No. 23, the Mail Train will handle freight when necessary. This passenger service changed to mixed trains and was discontinued on January 14, 1917. Freight service continued until September 30th, 1930. The rails between Birch and near Tay were lifted between July 4 and 12, 1932. A portion of the old main line and east leg of wye were kept at Tay for turning equipment. Faster main line trains, improvements to water shipping through the Welland Canal, etc., all contributed to the demise by both railways of their short-cuts from Georgian Bay ports.

The Penetang Subdivision itself continued as a branch line, until 1975, when the CNR was permitted to abandon the northern 15.29 miles back to Elmvale, Mile 18.35, with the issuing of Railway Transport Committee Order R-20180, dated February 2, 1975.

The next 7.35 miles south to Hendrie, Mile 11.85 was approved for abandonment five months later when RTC Order R-20932, dated July 14, 1975 was issued.

The track to Hendrie survived for almost another 11 years. Government order R-39042, dated February 14, 1986 permitted the abandonment of 9.85 miles back to Mile 2.0, including the diamond crossing of the CPR's McTier Subdivision.

The trackage from Colwell Junction to Mile 2.0 remains to provide access for any heavy shipments to Ontario Hydro's plant, situated on the west side of the Penetang line north of Highway 90.

Our next stop was a couple of miles farther west on the Meadford Subdivision at Utopia. This is also a crossing of CP's McTier Subdivision. With CN's Meadford Subdivision on their disposal list, we were interested in seeing what may be happening here. This once busy junction is now barren and quiet. Rumours have been drifting about a short-line take over, and possible track changes at this interlocker. But except for a new-appearance signal bungalow along the CPR, there are no other signs of any pending changes.

Our final destination for the day was Orillia. The CNR's Newmarket from the north and east is still in place down through Orillia to about James Street in the south end. Some of the support trackage in town has been removed, and even the west leg of the old wye at the CNR station has been unspiked. The Midland Subdivision stub ends near a factory on the end of Orillia. Indications are that like Barrie, there are ongoing discussions as to the future of the trackage around Orillia. Time will tell.

Southern Tier in New York

With the current scuttle-butt that Conrail is heading for extinction, and the chest thumping of Canadian Railways over what they would like to do with Conrail's so-called Southern Tier line from Buffalo down through Hornell, Corning and Binghamton, etc., we figured it was worth a week-end to have a look. So John Carter and I headed out on a Saturday morning. In Buffalo we stopped at Amtrak's suburban station at Depew. Here as Conrail ran their street-cars along the old Water Level route, we met a UCRS member, Bob Sechler and a friend, from Connellsville, Pennsylvania. After an interesting discussion, we headed south towards our goal. Presently this is an interesting line for power mixes. It seems like almost every railway in the east has either trackage rights, direct running

rights, or privileges through someone that does. In addition to Conrail trains there were trains led by Norfolk Southern with St. Lawrence & Hudson trailing. There were pure St. L. & H. and NS sets as well as some led by the Susquehanna. Again it should be interesting to see whether CN gets some use of this line as well as the St. L. & H.

Havelock's "Rock & Rail"

In our last Column, I mentioned that David Hales had passed on some news about Havelock holding what they were calling a "Rock & Rails" festival in support of the community's Historical Society attempting to purchase the former CP station. We visited Havelock during their festival. The station had interesting displays of railway photos, as well displays of the some of the areas rocks that made up the other part of this festival. The high light of this two day festival for railfans were the trips up the freight only branch to Blue Mountain. We went aware that all 2,900 tickets had been sold for the six trips, so we satisfied ourselves with chasing a couple of them.

This rail line, now 20 miles into the Pre-Cambrian shield was constructed to permit the extraction of nepheline syenite (used in production of glass and pottery) that was to be mined and processed by the American Nepheline Company, at Nephton. The line was approved by the Canadian Senate on January 28th, 1954. May, 1954 saw the award of contracts to the Roblindale Quarries Limited of Picton, Ontario to build the first 92 mile section out of Havelock. Their contract to include a 1500 foot siding. Quemont Construction Incorporated, Montreal, was awarded the contract to construct the north portion to Nephton.

January 18th, saw a special train was operated by the CPR from Havelock to Nephton, to officially open this new line. The second DL-700 road-switcher, No. 8463, hauled the train, which consisted of a new curved side combination car, a coach, and three business cars. The question being asked around Havelock was how many passenger cars have been over this line since that January 1955 day?

Equity

One lady with that pioneering spirit is building her own railway, single-handed. So, I stretch the truth a little! A hundred and twenty years ago, the Toronto and Ottawa Railway tried and all they got east of Actinolite, Ontario was some grading. But today, Lesley Bernard, has got her line graded and is presently laying steel near the old Toronto and Ottawa Railway right of way at the junction of Highways 7 and 37 on the outskirts of Actinolite. Perhaps not as ambitious as the Toronto and Ottawa, but Lesley is looking at laying a several hundred feet of track on which to place her pride, VIA Rail's No. 1143, Equity, a 4-Section, 4-Double bedroom, 8-Duplex roomette car. This car was constructed for Canadian National Railways in 1954 by the Pullman Standard Car Manufacturing Company as part of an one hundred and four car order. This order was for a variety of sleeping cars including 51 companion community-named cars to Equity. A note from the March 1954 *Newsletter* states that these sleepers will bear a distinctive new colour scheme, that was also applied to 218 first class coaches. This scheme consists of black below the windows, green around and above the them, three gold stripes running the car's length, and the red CNR maple leaf emblem near the car ends.

Equity arrive at its new Actinolite home on February 28, 1997. While it appears the car had no earth shattering during

its career, it was named for Equity, Alberta. Equity is a community six miles north of Three Hills on the subdivision of the same name that extends north from Calgary (Sarcee Yard). Prior to 1922, Equity was called Ghost Pine. This former name suits the present location of Equity among the pines along the Skootamatta River. Lesley is using Equity as her eastern home on weekends. If you are thinking of visiting Lesley, go prepared, for there are still plenty of spikes to drive and many barrows of ballast to wheel. Also remember there is no adjacent stores and this year there are still plenty of mosquitos to remove a few gallons of your blood. Good luck Lesley!

Eastern Trip

Back in May, while travelling east on the Ocean, I noted that the Laurier Station, Quebec depot is still in place. Laurier Station, about 28 miles west of Levis on the old Drummond County Railway (presently CN's Drummondville Subdivision). On my way east, by car, in June, I stopped to have a closer look. The longish single storey depot is situated on the south side on the tracks and is presently still used by railway maintenance forces.

Driving back through New Brunswick, I looped through Chipman and Minto to follow a part of the old Central Railway of New Brunswick. Between Chipman and Minto there are a couple of crossings of the National Transcontinental Railway. One of these crossings is at Hardwood Ridge. Back amongst some farm buildings was one that caught my eye. It was a square two storey structure, and definitely needs some more research, but noting its location and features, I drove away with the impression that this was probably the original NTR station for Hardwood Ridge.

The former CPR station at Minto has been saved and now serves this coal mining community as a tourist information centre and museum. While heavy on the local mining, it has a reasonable collection of railway memorabilia. I had to tease one of the attendants about their having a CN caboose sitting in front of the station, where I can remember on many occasions awaiting the arrival of a CP oil-electric or short passenger train to arrive from Chipman for a trip back to Woodstock.

Another former CP Rail station in the news on the New Brunswick Railway's Gibson Subdivision north of Fredericton at Keswick. This station has been recycled into a cafe on the first floor and a group of offices on the second floor.

Train Nomenclature

We all have noted at various times the term "Accommodation Train" either in an old Time Card or an article. One definition of an "Accommodation Train" is: a train on which there is no sleeper, no diner, no smoker, no waiter, no ventilation, no porter, and no news butcher. Sounds like we are getting close to all our Canadian trains being "Accommodation Trains"!

Moscow Street Cars - 1922

An announcement in a 1922 issue of the *Canadian Railway & Marine World* noted that the City of Moscow, Russia, had only 142 electric street railway trains fit for service. These trains, consisting of two cars each, could only serve 22% of the city's population and had been reserved for government employees. The highlights of this announcement was that they were going to permit the general public ride the cars, if they could afford them between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. The public ridership at about 2,000 rubles per mile was approximately

750,000 passenger miles per month. Even these high fares only covered about 75% of the operating cost.

Other Station Houses in the News

An update on CP Parry Sound Station. We had mentioned back in March, 1997, that this station was sitting in limbo, with the town wishing something would happen. Well, Charlie Cooper has advised that following a June visit, the station is still boarded up, the railside roof around the centre dormer is starting to deteriorate. Charles also reports that some of the chip board covering the doors and windows has been broken or removed to permit people to enter the depot. Some of the trackage in the adjacent yard is still in place and had a boxcar spotted on the passing track near the north end and some work equipment cars on another track.

Well CN Rail got their St. Clair station torn down early in June. Apparently they advised the federal government that the station was unsafe, and would demolish it shortly unless advised otherwise. No advise can, so the wreckers moved in.

Over at CN Port Colborne, Ontario, a restauranteer from St. Catharines was considering the purchase this former station from the City Of Port Colborne to convert it to a restaurant. Initial roof work (removing the shingles) identified numerous problems, that were going to cost more than he wanted to spend, so apparently he turned it back over to the City. This station has been vacant since we first made reference to it back in our September 1989 column.

Charles Cooper has also sent along an update on another station that we first mentioned in our July 1989 column. This is the CPR Brampton depot that was moved to Creditview/3rd Line between Steeles Avenue and Queen Street West. Now sitting in a private meadow surrounded with many DANGER – NO TRESPASSING SIGNS, and a pair of fierce dogs, it is looking exceedingly sorry for itself. This station had obviously been transported in two sections. The two portions had been pretty well levelled up but it does not look like any work has been done on it since its placement. The railside canopy near "the cut" is in bad shape and sagging. Other than that, it does not look as if the building is about to collapse, but clearly unless some protective work is done on it soon, it can't last. Charles advises that for anyone interested in photographs, they should try to get there in the morning or on a cloudy day. Reasonably good photos can be obtained from the road and from the end of the driveway.