

## Just A. Ferronut's Railway Archaeology

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Yes the above is correct, I am moving again! This has been part of my long term plan for several years now. I am afraid, my year here in Toronto with no direct access to many of my files has shown in some columns. So I am now looking forward to being able to cover in proper detail numerous topics I have not been able to cover over the past year or so. Anyway we will open the mail bag one more time here in Toronto.

### A Few Corrections

Last month, I make reference to the former CP station at Keswick, New Brunswick as being restored. A site inspection has confirmed that this station is actually the large two storey wood at Butt's Corner. This depot, constructed in 1926, is presently in the process of being restored. A new concrete slab-floor has been placed and on my visit the first floor was being used as a local market. The interior of the first floor had been gutted so that the exterior walls could be insulated. The exterior canopy for passenger protection has been maintained and the second storey walls have had their wooden shingles replaced, as well as the asphalt ones of the roof. The upper windows have been replaced, and of course this portion of the former CP Gibson Subdivision is part of the New Brunswick Trail system. While the second floor is still vacant, I expect my information about it being turned into offices will take place. Similarly, I expect a cafe will eventually be added on the first floor.

Back in our March 1996 column, yes 1996, we covered the history of the short-lived Preston and Berlin Railway and the associated rail lines along this portion of the Grand River. I had used a reference from an older *Newsletter* for the abandonment date of CN's Waterloo Subdivision. Our sharp-eyed Ray Corley, noted this, and questioned the date. Well now I have finally tracked down the abandonment of this CN line on the west side of the Grand River from Galt, north across the then under construction Highway 401, towards Doon. We knew that Highway 401 was opened on November 9, 1961, and that the track was gone shortly before that. What made this particular abandonment difficult to track down was that it didn't follow the normal time frame used during the 1960s. After several visits to Galt and their archives, we finally put most of the story together.

On February 25, 1960 the Board of Transport Commissioners issued an order for the CNR to install highway warning devices at the proposed crossing of Highway 401 at CN Mile 8.4 Waterloo Subdivision.

Unlike most communities, the local papers carried practically nothing on the pending abandonment. The *Evening Reporter* of Saturday, October 28, 1961 had a photo of CN crane 50147 with the caption that "the CN tracks were finally being lifted."

It wasn't until I got into the minutes of the city's council meetings that I was able to determine more about the abandonment. Apparently the provincial government had not bothered to ask CN about the status of this line. A local M.P. had apparently been attempting for a number of years to get rid of the

rail line to permit the expansion of Dickson Park (a local park) as well as permitting the improvements of Blair Road. These points were brought up at a city council meeting on June 5, 1961. It was then determined that the W. I. Reid Lumber Company Limited was the only user of the line and that CN was prepared to apply for permission to abandon the operations over this line south of Doon.

On September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1961, the city council received and filed a certified copy of the Regulatory Order permitting the abandonment of operations over the southern end of the CN Waterloo Subdivision. While we still haven't got the exact date, we now know that it should be recorded as about the end of August 1961, not the earlier date that I had used.

### High Ratio of recycled station houses

The Napanee, Tamworth & Quebec Railway Company started to build the rail line authorized by their 1879 charter from Napanee towards the Ottawa River near Point Alexander. In 1890, it changed its name to "The Kingston, Napanee and Western Railway Company". Under these two names, these companies succeeded in opening 57.28 miles of rail line although it was somewhat disjointed. Meanwhile in 1881, the Bay of Quinte Railway and Navigation Company was incorporated, and this company had by 1893 added another 4.17 miles of railway that provided a large "Y" north of Napanee, with a line to Harrowsmith, as well as a line from Yarker to Tweed. It also had 3.76 miles from Deseronto Junction to Deseronto.

These lines were amalgamated into the Bay of Quinte Railway, effective January 1, 1897, and of course in 1910 they became part of the Canadian Northern Railway.

The interesting thing in looking at this area is that on the 47.9 miles of track from Napanee via Yarker to Tweed there were 13 stations. The line from Yarker to Tweed was abandoned in the 1930's. There was also a track diversion at Newburgh (Newburg in CNoR Time Table) to move the line to higher ground away from the river flood plain. But of these 13 stations, at least 5 of them are still in existence! They are all based on the same plan and 4 of the five are now used as residences.

A couple of years ago, Dan McConnachie, had mentioned that the station at Newburgh still existed in its original location. A recent trip confirmed this as well as it was like the other larger stations on this line. It also brought home the use made by the Rathbun's of concrete.

Back in my June 1990 column, I had mentioned that Marlbank was named for it being a source of marl, used in making cement. Marlbank like Newburgh is still in its original location and both still have their exposed concrete walks and platforms.

So in addition to Newburgh, now converted into apartments, this line still sports stations at Tamsworth, Marlbank and Stocco, all being used as residences. In addition the station at Erwinville was converted into a Legion Hall.

If this story has a morale, it would probably be that lines that were abandoned quite early often seen more of their structures recycled.

#### **Other Station Houses in the News**

Brighton, Ontario – Back in our May 1997 column, I mentioned that restoration efforts were underway at the Grand Trunk station in this community on CN's Kingston Subdivision. Well things are moving on this project called "Memory Junction". Since our May report, Ralph Bangay, the projects chief promoter has spear-headed besides general site clean-up, interior station work of cleaning and painting the ladies' waiting room (west-end of station on track side), as well as the express agent's office (centre rear). Work on doing the same to the larger general waiting room across the east end of the station is progressing more slowly.

The most visible change to the train rider has been the arrival of CN caboose # ??? from Trenton in the second half of July. While the cupola had to be removed (for clearance reasons) for its move by highway, it has now been placed back on its trucks on a former team track in behind the station. The cupola has been replaced and wrapped in heavy plastic pending more permanent restoration. The plans are to make double use of the caboose. One will be as a local information centre, so the side facing the parking lot will carry the name "Memory Junction" and the track side is to be painted authentic CN colour from the 1950's complete with a maple leaf for the photo fans.

Ralph's other pending project is the moving of CN Consolidation 2534, from Zwick's Park. The City of Belleville has agreed to grant extra time for the move, if needed. The plan still is to move this engine by road transport. The present route when considering the weight and clearance problems works out to be about 40 miles.

Before I leave Brighton, Denis Taylor, Cobourg, who is presently at home and making a good progress from his stroke, sent me along a copy of a booklet "Brighton – 100 Years of Railroad History" by Bonnie Browne. This 72 page booklet, while leaning heavily towards the G.T.R./C.N.R. side of railway activities, does have a three chapters (22 pages) on other railways and their stations in the area. While I don't have a price on this booklet, anyone interested can contact Bonnie Browne, Box 1027, Brighton, ON K0K 1H0, or telephone (613)-475-0915.

Caledonia, Ontario – Like Brighton, a group of local people are busy with the restoration of this station that had been purchased by local businessman Ron Clark a couple of year ago. Again, we first mentioned this station project back in our February 1997 column.

The Grand Trunk Railway called their old Buffalo, Brantford and Goderich line, the 20<sup>th</sup> District. The original station at Caledonia, was a single storey frame structure, on timber foundation and with a shingled roof. This station was 20 x 64 feet in size and was replaced by the present station in 1913.

While the station and most of the other structures at Caledonia were considered 3<sup>rd</sup> class in 1907, the coal house, a 12 x 18 x 6 foot building, constructed in 1880 was listed as 2<sup>nd</sup> class and the stock pens and water tank were listed as 1<sup>st</sup> class. The two stock pens had been constructed in 1906 and were 66 x 41, with a double deck chute. The timber water tank, with its sheet iron roof, was 18 x 24, and could hold 50,748 gallons. This tank built in 1896 had a Poage stand pipe for filling the locomotives.

Caledonia had a sizable railway presence early in the century, also supporting two freight sheds, 2 hand car houses, section house, a kitchen, and of course a couple of closets in addition to the previously listed structures.

It would appear that Caledonia last saw passenger service in the fall of 1957. Luckily, the railway had a need for the structure, mainly for storage and use by a CN section gang.

A Special Projects Committee of the Caledonia Regional Chamber of Commerce became the spearhead for the restoration work.

On a recent visit, while the station was closed, a look around revealed that the structure has had some foundation work done to help level it. Exterior work has seen the replacement of windows including one in the opening that had been cut for an Express/Freight door in the south wall. Other exterior work includes replacing the wood wainscoting or dado, belt rails, and clapboard siding. The first portion of a replacement platform in from of the station has been completed.

On the interior, while I could only view it from the windows, it appears that both the east end and main waiting rooms have had their false ceilings removed and have been painted including a stencilled paint designs bordering the original plaster walls just above the vertical tongue-n-groove wainscoting.

Indications are that the group is still looking for additional information about this station and the two rail lines that crossed in Caledonia or memorabilia relating to their operation.

Blewett, Saskatchewan – Greg Salmers, a Librarian, in Estavan, SK., had sent out an inquiry concerning some information on the Canadian Northern Station at Blewett, SK. Blewett, was at CNoR mile 89.2 Radville Subdivision, latter to become CN's Lampman Subdivision. This subdivision extended from Carlyle westward in a southernly arc to Radville approximately 102 miles to the west. Greg advised that the station has been moved from Blewett to a point on Highway No. 47, 14 kilometres north of Estevan. A local resident and his wife have been restoring the old CN Station, which is now virtually complete and customers are coming to their tea house and gift shop. In addition the couple have historical rooms in the station covering some of the areas local history.

Lunenburg, Nova Scotia – Perhaps some of our readers can help on this one. While I have not been able to locate any data in the press, radio announced over the weekend of August 16, 1997 that the Lunenburg station had been converted into a "Country Music Hall of Fame," and in particular was honouring Hank Snow. The Eastern press did however mention that the Windsor and Hantsport Railway were operating a new Tourist Train called the "Evangeline Express" for excursions over some of its line in the historic area around Minas Basin.

Eastern reports indicate that both the Windsor and Hantsport as well as the Salem and Hillsborough Tourist railways have seen an increase in ridership during 1997.

#### **A Member's Question**

Our member Dave Hanson wrote in a couple of months ago about a collision on July 19, 1963 between CN's *Scotian* and some loose rail cars that tried to occupy the same track at the same time at Derby Junction, NB on the outskirts of Newcastle (now the City of Miramichi).

While I have been able to track down one article on

this collision, I am not sure that I can add too much information on this incident.

Derby Junction is near the junction of the Southwest and Northwest Miramichi rivers. The original Intercolonial Railway main line between Moncton and Campbellton crossed both of these rivers with a short section of track between them. After the Intercolonial Railway, in October 1904, acquired the Canada Eastern Railway, a line from Loggieville (about 13.5 miles east of the ICR on the south shore of the Miramichi River) to Gibson (opposite the City of Fredericton), they relocated the approximately 24 miles of railway between Blackville and the ICR main line. This relocation permitted the removal of one crossing of the Southwest Miramichi river, the new line followed the north shore of the river to Derby Junction.

On Friday, July 19, 1963, at about 3:35 a.m., the *Scotian*, northbound on the Newcastle Subdivision (ICR main line) had slowed for the crossing of the two large through truss bridges over the Miramichi rivers. This was probably one of the saving features in this accident. As the *Scotian* crossed the Southwest Miramichi bridge, eyewitnesses said only the engine and two of the cars of the passenger train were clear of the bridge when the engine collided with a flat car, one of three unattended cars that had rolled out on the main line. The grades in the area are such that any cars wanting to wander would tend to head southward, opposite to the direction of the *Scotian's* movement.

The diesel engine climbed the rear of a flat car, which in turn ploughed into the first of the two attached box cars. The force of collision tore open doors on several baggage and express cars and ripped one door completely off. However, while some passengers were shaken up, and a few bruises reported, no passengers were seriously injured.

The fireman, sustained a broken leg and the engineer received a badly cut knee. It took the auxiliary crews from Moncton and Campbellton, about 12 hours to clear the line. From the fuzzy newspaper photo it would appear that the lead unit was either 6794? or 6784?

#### **Remember When?**

Every community had one or several hotels near or associated with their railway station. These were the privately owned ones that relied heavily on railway passengers for their business. Many of them started at a location near the depot where they could also serve meals to the early travellers, especially on rail lines where the trains didn't have dining car service. These hotels played a major role in the development of railways and the communities along them.

But, one group of these hotels had an extra distinction. Every town of reasonable size had a railway hotel that was the destination of the commercial traveller who travelled the country side by train with their big trunks of samples. These hotels had what they called sample rooms, and it always seemed that there was one or two commercial travellers staying at these hotels showing their wares to the merchants of the area. Delivery wagons or trucks would meet the trains to transfer the sample trunks to the hotel. The travellers would collect some of the local merchants, show them what the various manufacturers were promoting that season, then take them to the hotel's dining room to wine and dine them. Since each traveller had a speciality, like clothing, toys, hardware, jewellery or trinkets, it meant that a steady flow of these travelling salesmen.

After promoting their wares for a few days, they would pack up, have their trunks taken back to the train and then with their trunks move on to the next town on the rail line. Today, these are but a memory.

#### **A Tip of the Hat**

Some comments made last spring at a London Forest City Railway Club meeting and a follow-up discussion started me thinking about the roles we play in railway history. As one digs more and more into railway history, one realizes that we follow several generations who were mixed up in the subject. I am sorry folks, but I am not going to discuss our present rail and transit historians, etc., for I know I would miss many if I started, so I will focus on the earlier generations.

Recorded Railway history started with those who were there during the actual construction, and who took time to record their work, Sanford Fleming and David Hanna come to mind.

The generation of doers was supported or followed by newspaper reporters, who filled columns in their publications with railway facts and their interpretations of transportation events.

Today, present rail & transit fans, often tend to forget the work done by the generations of fans, etc., that separate us from those early recorders of history. Rail and transit history, like all history, is an evolution and we are part of that process.

Following the builders and the newspaper people, and while time becomes blurred, we were soon to see people interested primarily in rail and transit subjects starting to write about them. Most of this group were retired railroaders telling stories about their early days with a railway. Yes, they may have shown a wrong date, or have mixed up a location, but the general setting of their stories and the details of the local conditions of the time make these stories come alive in a way that make us stop just to visualize them from their earlier perspective.

It was probably the gap between the First and Second World Wars that saw the first major group of people not directly involved in either railroading or the news business that began to seriously study guided ground transportation and write about it. It is this group to which I would like to tip my hat and say thanks! Probably the two most prolific writers of Canadian railway historical subjects were, Robert R. Brown and Omer S. A. Lavallée. A skim through my collection of Canadian railway articles from publications like the *Railway and Locomotive Historical Society*, etc., also shows names like Charles E. Fisher, John Loye, Mary G. S. Cummings, Lawrence Doherty, W. M. Spriggs along with others in their bylines. Locally, we had Andrew Merrilees and Douglas W. Knowles that spent many hours digging and recording the events related to rail and transit subjects. The east had Major C. Warren Anderson, busily collecting railway information. And while, I don't have that much on western Canada, I expect they have a few names that helped lay the base for the present generations to work from.

As I mentioned it is not my intent to slight any of the people who today that are engaged in building the data banks of railway data for the next generations. Also, I am certain I have missed many of our predecessors, but I do consider, we should remember that the walls of rail and transit knowledge were started many moons ago, and let's not forget those people who took the time to record the events of our hobby.

This may well be a good place to raise a related topic

– Electronic Data Banks. Don't let the words scare you! Most of you probably guessed long ago the role we have been using the electronic median in the production of *Rail & Transit*, and that I have been working for some time at putting more and more rail and transit history data on computer.

While I had concerns about prematurely publicizing some of our goals, a recent telephone conversation brought into focus the fact that perhaps the earlier we raise the subject the better.

One of my chief concerns has been in what form to put our computer data in order that it will be the most useful to the most people. I believe we have a fair part of this learning curve behind us! So where do we go? While I will be contacting a number of people directly, I would also like to throw this out to our readers in general. Let us hear your views on the subject. What should be the scope of any Electronic Data Bank? To pull the covers back just a little, to date we have the Society's first 25 Bulletins with graphics as well as about 20 years of Newsletters with graphics on CD. We also have numerous news items from newspapers, early CN magazines and Canadian Railway and Marine World. Hopefully this will be one way to pass on the hours of research of that various researchers and fans have several over the past generation of so! What's your comments?