

## Just A. Ferronut's Railway Archaeology

Art Clowes  
234 Canterbury Avenue  
Riverview, NB E1B 2R7  
E-Mail: jaclowes@istar.ca

March 1999

Too bad folks! I suspect many UCRS members were hoping that our recent R&T problems would mean the end of my column! And then of course, I expect that numerous Forest City members will be thinking the same once they have read a column or two! Sorry, no such luck since your editorial staff has asked if I would write a few columns about railway archaeology for Tempo Jr. So, while a portion of Tempo Jr.'s readers are aware of my writings, to others I may be a new character. This column started about ten years ago, almost as a lark. I picked up a few items from the news scrap heap and reported on them. Then I started to fill in some of the details around these items - the result was a column reporting on the details relating to some of the more unusual aspects of our hobby.

For a few columns at least, in fairness to any new readers, I will include a bit more background than usual. This for those readers who may not have earlier issues of Rail & Transit.

New Brunswick over the years had more than its share of railway branch lines. However, while Moncton was considered a major regional railway centre, it only had one branch line that terminated in the city. That line was the Moncton and Buctouche Railway, that extended about thirty miles between Moncton and the village of Buctouche (now spelled Bouctouche), on the Northumberland Straits. A few months ago, I was asked to help a couple of local enthusiasts do some research on this line. The major portion of this line was abandoned in 1965, while another couple of miles had been abandoned in 1918 following its take over by the Canadian Government Railways. Today, about a mile and half of the original line remains to form the basis of CN's Humphrey Spur that serves one of Moncton's industrial parks off of CN's Springhill Subdivision.

Our exploration of this line has become more interesting than any planned treasure hunt could dream of, and has added another dimension to rusty rail fanning. We have turned up the small McKees Mills flag stop station, still with its CN name board on it. One chap had bought this station because he had a use for the pot-bellied stove and the few tons of coal in its storage area. Once he had removed these, he had no use for the station, so sold it to a farmer in the area (for \$6.00) who happened to have a bulldozer doing some work, so was able to skid it up to his farm yard, and there it now sits.

A grand-son of one of the drivers still has grandfather's watch and brass watch fob stamped Moncton & Buctouche Railway. Another chap who spent two and a half days on a storm blocked, derailed train in the winter 1943, joked about their playing cards with a deck that had three cards missing. The locomotive in this derailment, one of the CNR 1100's that seemed most suited for this branch, broke its frame in this wreck.

One can almost imagine being with several young lads, back in the late 1920's as they borrowed a bridge foreman's pump car and went for a joy ride one evening. They pumped the

car about five miles up the grade out of the Buctouche river valley. Then they started back! At first, great, then they realized that no one had hold of the pump handles. At this point no one dared to grab a handle, so they went for a merry ride well past their starting point. Still a vivid memory after seventy years!

Of course it appears that playing around the railway yards wasn't limited to boys! One lady told us that she, her sisters and friends played around the yard and turntable at Buctouche, as teenagers. It would appear that the turntable was an "armstrong" model, and while they were mucking around it, one of the girls slipped and broke a leg. Since this group of girls were all from what we would think of to-day as upper middle class families, their parents were more than slightly upset at their doing such unlady-like things! It was some time before they went back around the rail yards.

So, if you have a long abandoned rail line in your back yard, why not wander along it and knock on a few doors. The surprises that awaits one, can be very worthwhile.

### **Discovery Train car # 220 moved again at Amherst, Nova Scotia**

A recent trip to Amherst, Nova Scotia revealed that the Town has moved Discovery Train Car # 220 again. This car has been used as the Town's Tourist Information centre for the past six years, and has now relocated a mile or so west of its earlier downtown site, nearer the border entry point from New Brunswick. This new location, easier to spot and visit from the Trans-Canada highway, is on the rise near Fort Lawrence and overlooks the old right-of-way of the Chignecto Marine Railway that had been proposed and partially built across the Isthmus of Chignecto. One has to wonder what is planned for this new location.

I first reported on this car back in August 1993. This bright orange rail car first showed up in Amherst back in 1989 after it had been declared surplus to the collection of the National Museum of Canada. Arrangements were made to return it to Amherst in commemoration of the town's Centennial year. We say return, since this car was built for the Canadian Government by Rhodes and Curry Company in Amherst during August 1905. The government called this car the *Alexandra* and assigned it with others to the Governor General.

Back in 1993, we mentioned how the *Alexandra* was saved with great effort for the fire that destroyed the Intercolonial shops in Moncton on February 24, 1906. A car of coal blocked the *Alexandra*, so a crowd of men, which included officials and clerks of the railway, hauled the coal car out of the way and then by great exertion pulled the official car from the rapidly burning building.

Last fall while going through some railway drawings at the local museum here, I came across a plan that helped explain at least part of the reason for a nearly new car being in the Moncton shops. The plan, dated January 4, just a month before the fire, was for a marble top for a

washstand. This little improvement for the “governor” nearly caused his car to wind up as a pile of ashes and bent metal like ICR’s General Manager Pottinger’s private car No. 75. It and several other “expensive coaches,” were destroyed in this 1906 fire.

The *Alexandra* was named for the Danish princess Alexandra that became the queen consort of King Edward VII of Great Britain.

The *Alexandra* remained in government service until June 1929, although it served mainly the Prime Minister for about the last ten years of this ownership. The CNR acquired the car in June 1929, and numbered it 87 for a few weeks, then it became No. 92 in July 1929.

In the summer of 1943, it was renumbered 82, and in the fall of 1943 it was assigned to the General Superintendent at Winnipeg, Manitoba.

In 1975 it became an O.C.S. car CN 15103. In 1978 the government of Canada acquired the car again and used it as Reception Car No. 218 on the Discovery Train for a few months. It was then destined to become Car No. 220 on this same train for its cross country tour. In 1982 the *Alexandra* was turned over to the National Museum of Science and Technology, where it remained until heading back towards Amherst.

#### **CP Stations**

The CPR Smiths Falls, Ontario station has been in the news over the past few weeks, as the CPR is looking for someone to purchase it before March 31, 1999. This date has been set as the deadline for the sale or else the railway will proceed with its demolition. This station has received a bit more than usual amount of air-time on the Internet because of arguments over just how old it is? This points to the advantage of keeping a databases or other records. While I don’t have all the details; however, in recent years several newspaper articles have stated that this rather large brick station was originally constructed in 1887. Then at least one clipping has indicated what may be the key to the recent debate; it stated that the Smith Falls station underwent extensive remodelling about 1946-47. So, perhaps both parties have a basis for their thoughts.

The other CPR station that made news recently was the burning of the CP Mission, British Columbia station on January 25, 1999. This frame station had been acquired by locals who were hoping to raise money to convert it to a museum. The cause was two boys playing with sparklers inside the depot. Mission, CP Mile 87.3 Cascade subdivision is the junction with their Mission subdivision that provides CP Rail with connections with several other area railways.

---

**Canadian National Railways Magazine, Page 48 - March, 1920 - FOLEY - IT WOULD BE** - Railroaders in the old construction days will recall how often those in charge were at their wits’ end to find suitable names for the stopping points along new lines.

The following item is contributed by one who had considerable to do with the selection of names for stations along the Canadian National’s Southern transcontinental line.

#### **FOLEYET, ONTARIO.**

When it came to naming stations  
We had to draw on all the nations,  
We also tried to use, of course,

The names of the construction force.  
Among the men who built the line  
One man named Foley sure did shine  
With such a great and brilliant light,  
That to use his name was only right.  
In fact, no wayside station small  
Was picked for him – but a terminal  
Sir Donald said “by all that’s holy  
We’ll call that first division *Foley*,”  
But – when asked approval for the name  
From Post Department reply came  
“Another town already uses  
The name your company now chooses;  
Therefore we can’t approve the same –  
You must select another name.”  
When this dark word was passed along  
It looked as if we were in wrong;  
But Sir Donald said with warmth, “By heck!  
We’ll use that name, you bet your neck.”  
He, after thought, said “I’ve a hunch  
How we can fool that postal bunch;  
On the name of Foley, I am quite set  
And we’ll call that city Fole-yet,”  
And so’ was done, which goes to teach  
How purpose firm its end will reach.