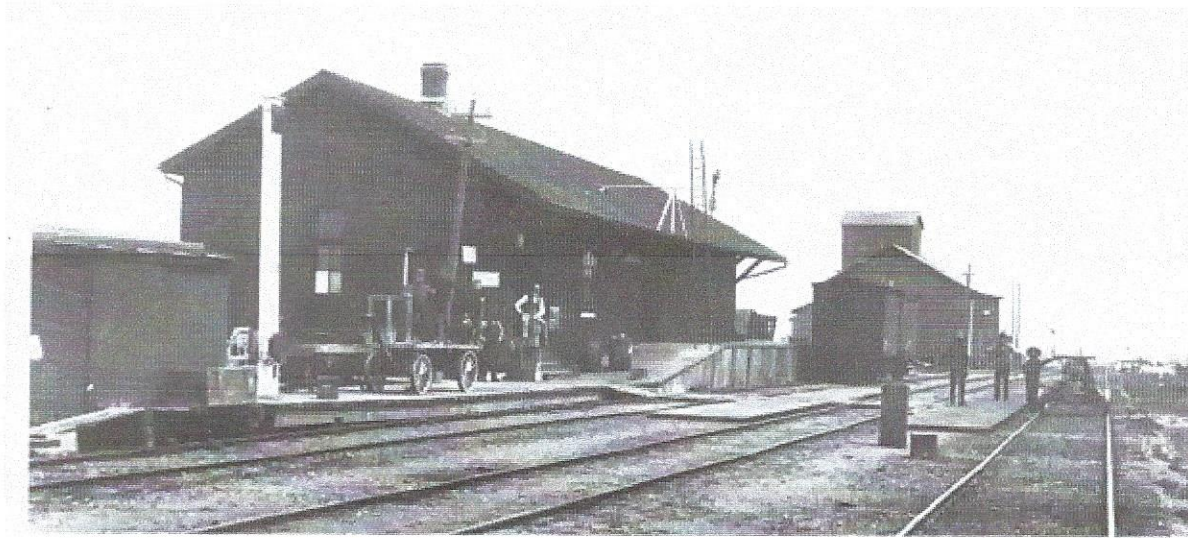
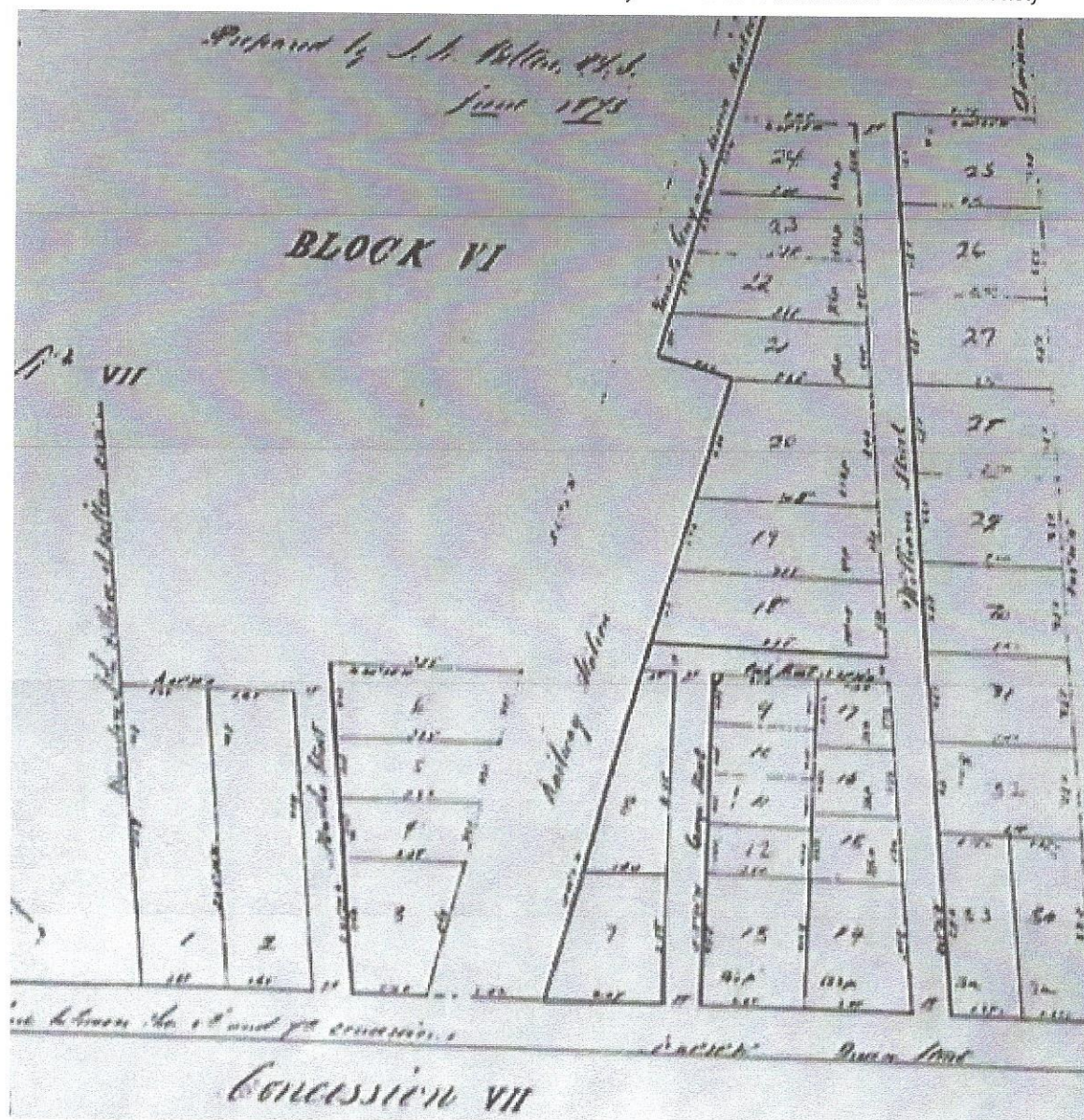


Albion Bolton Historical Society

History of Bolton, formerly part of Albion Township, Ontario, Canada

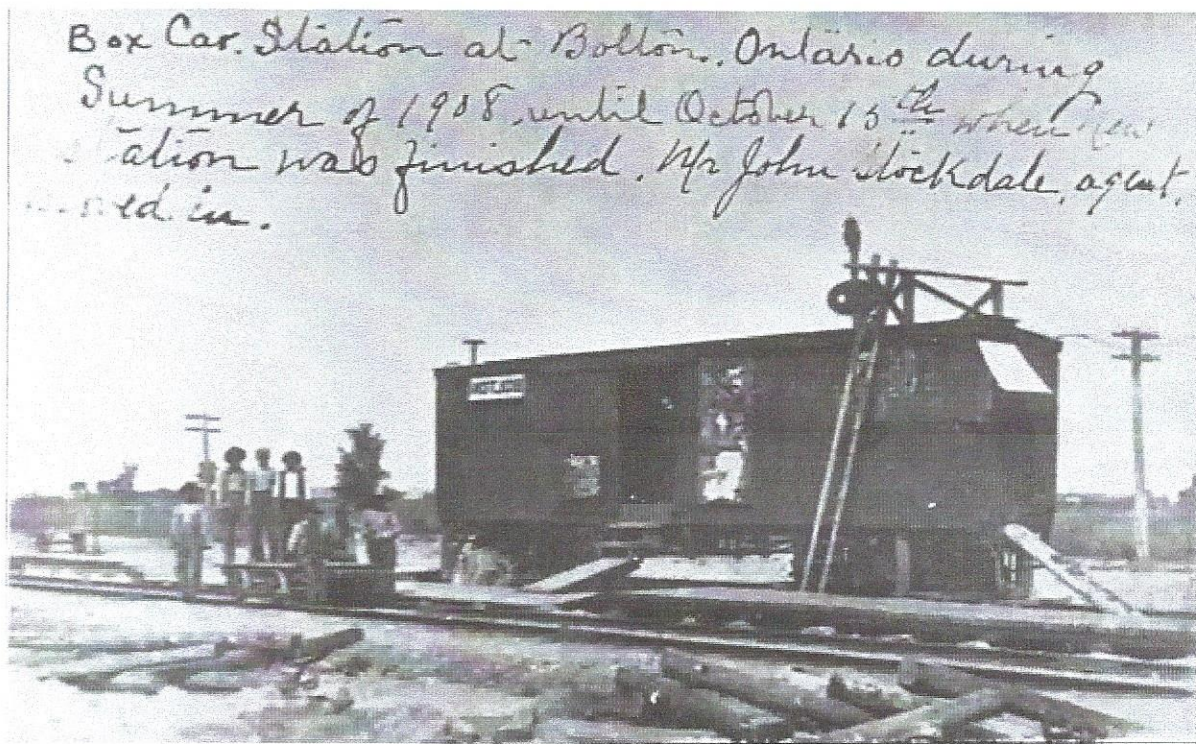


Former Toronto Grey & Bruce Railway Station as seen in 1898

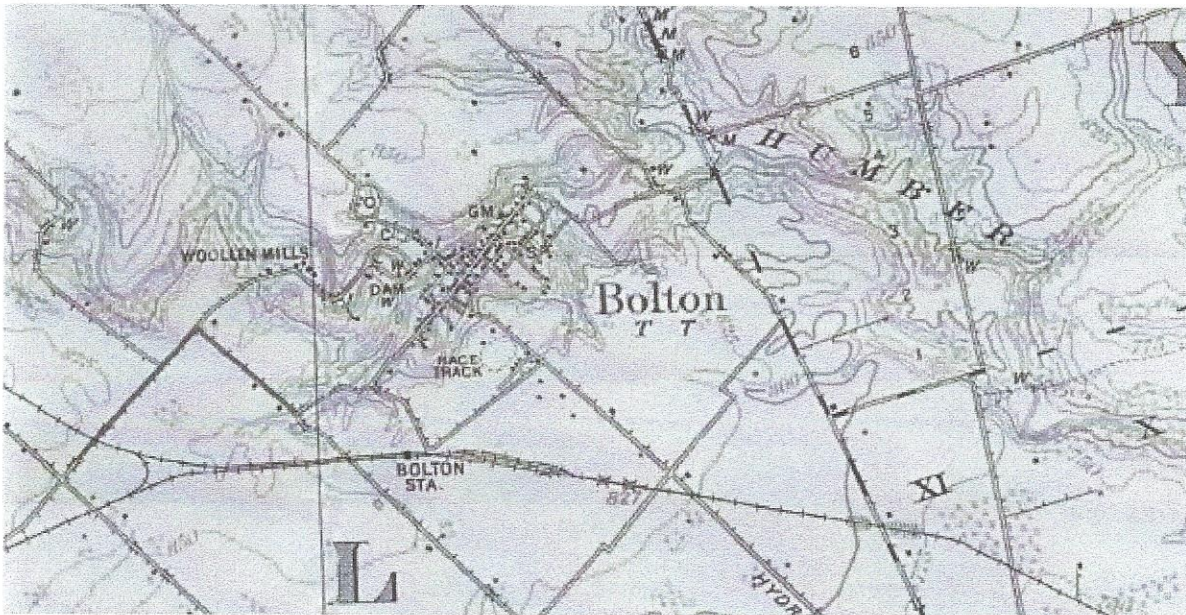




No. 9. The Station. 1897

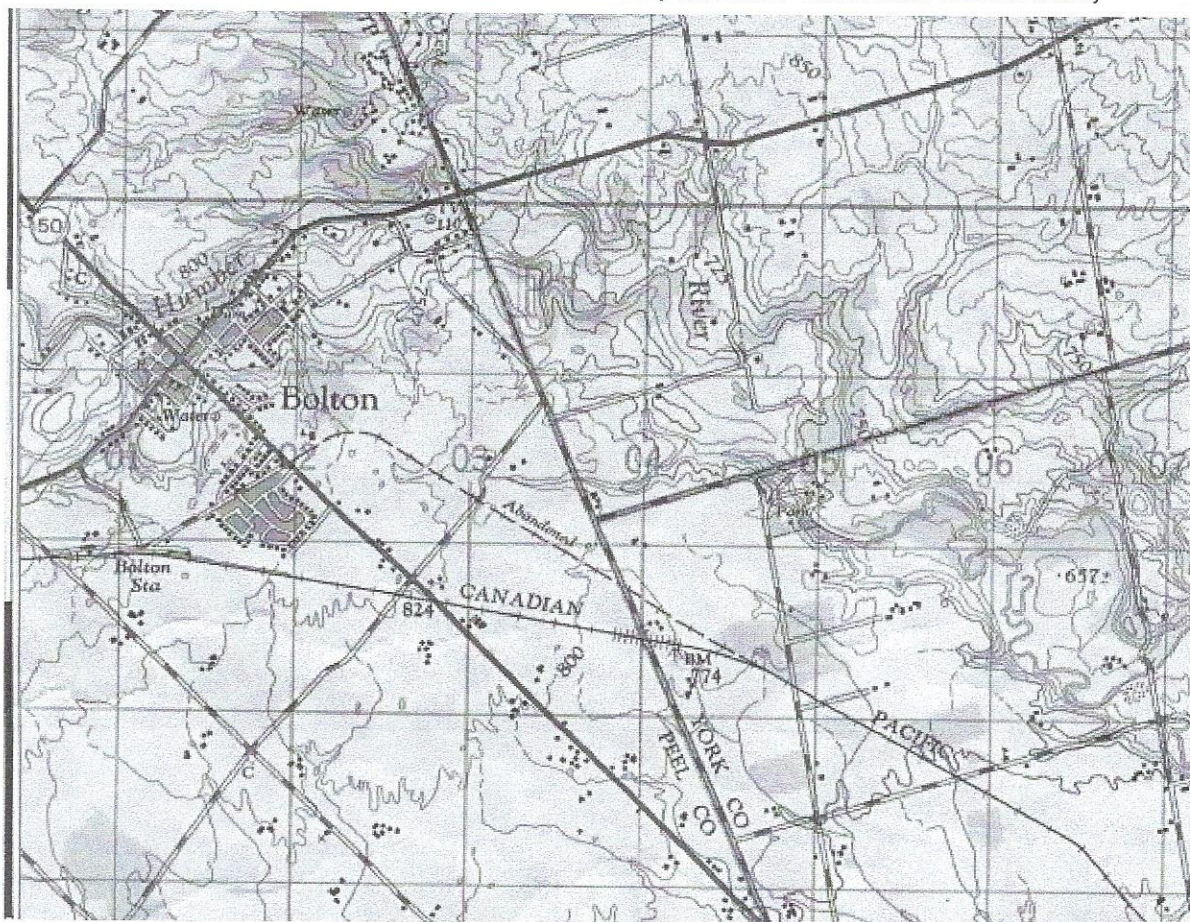


Box Car Station at Bolton, Ontario during Summer of 1908, until October 15th when new station was finished. Mr John Stockdale, agent, moved in.

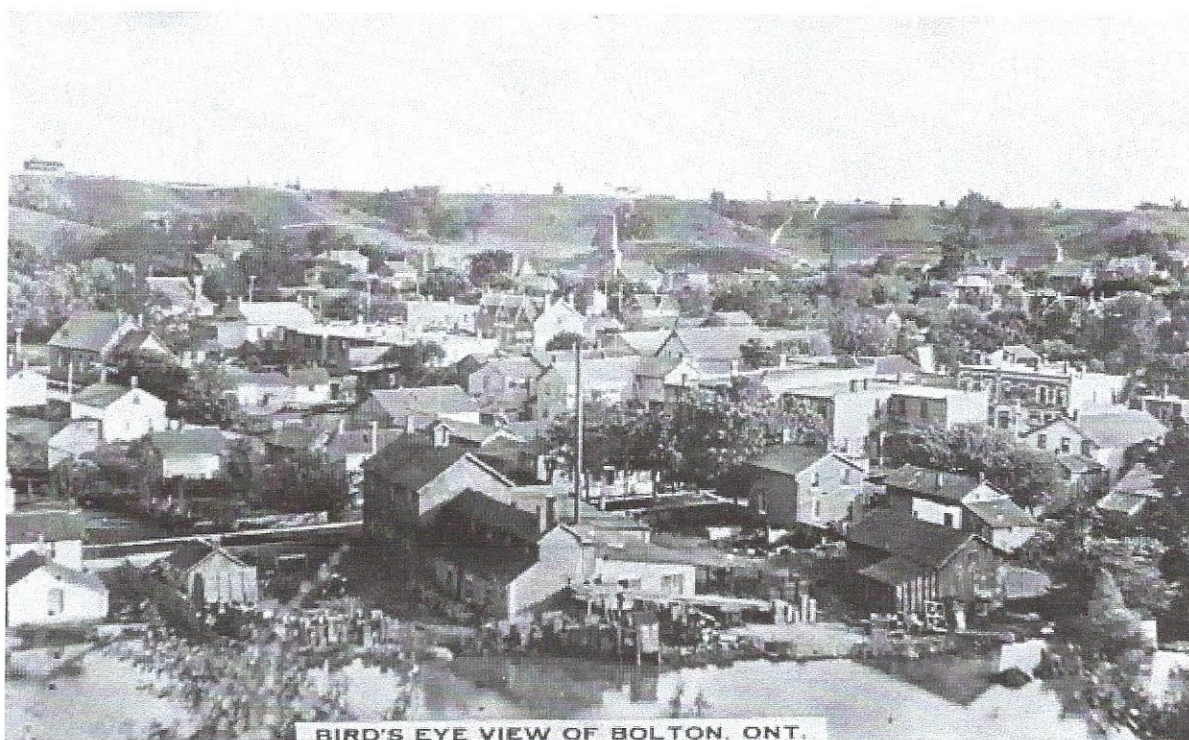


1909 topographical map showing:

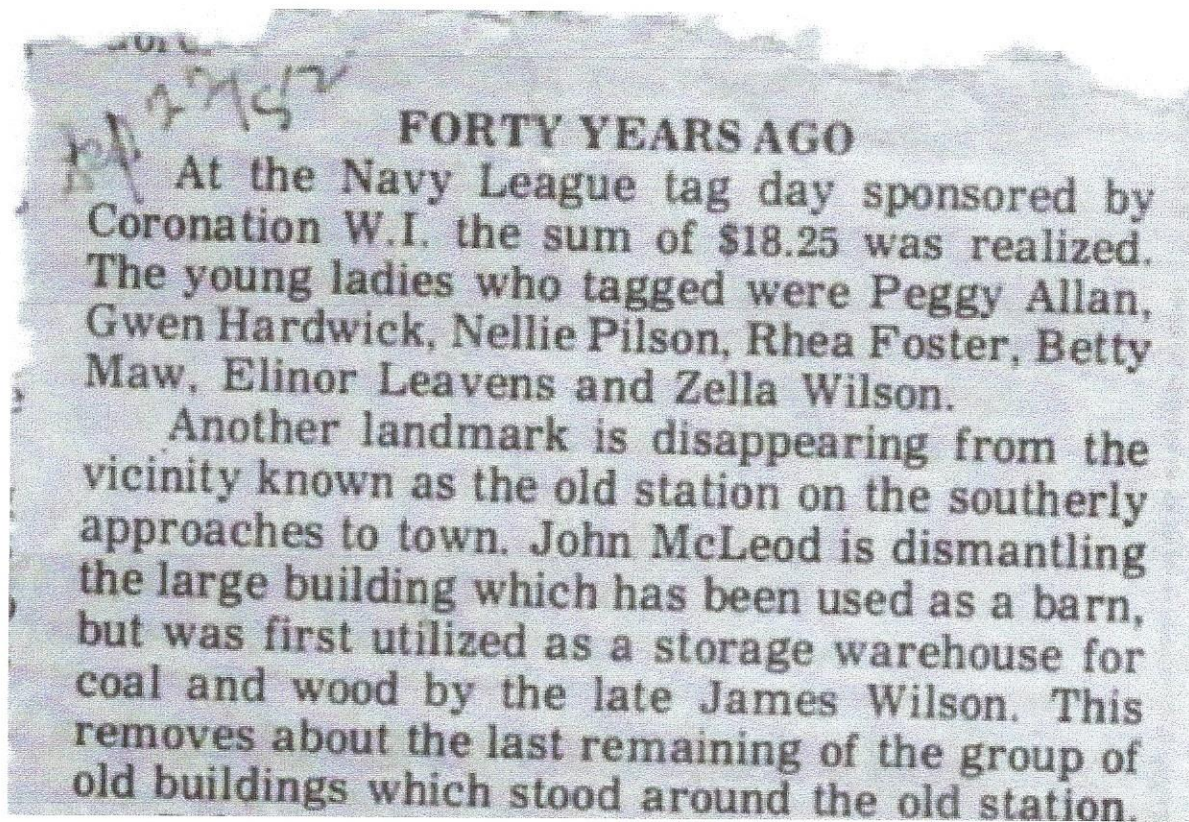
- Site of the CPR Station
- Site of the original TG&B station
- Rail line split at the junction of the TG&B branch line to Owen Sound and the new Sudbury line
- Spur used by businesses to shunt goods to the grain elevator etc before it was removed by CPR



1960 Topographical Map of Bolton showing the c.1907 CPR rail line as well as the abandoned right-of-way of the former Toronto Grey & Bruce Railway



Circa 1910 Grain elevator on the hill in the background. Note the train on the horizon



Toronto Grey & Bruce Railway Era

- Tracks for the much anticipated Toronto Grey and Bruce Railway (TG&B) reached Bolton late in 1870. The narrow gauge line was laid the entire distance from Weston to Bolton in less than a year ¹ _
- The decision to use narrow gauge track was based on reducing the initial costs of construction ² _
- A railway station was erected by TG&B in time for a ceremony commemorating the achievement. The station was relatively small with a single waiting room, a freight room, an office as well as accommodation for the station agent and his family ³ _
- The railway also brought with it telegraph service. Telegraph poles were erected along the edge of the railway lands. TG&B managed daily operations using telegraph communication which introduced a new occupation into railway communities
- The use of telegrams created an entirely new way of rapid communication
- A water tower would have existed from 1870 to fill the boilers of the steam engines
- Passenger service to Toronto started in June 1871 and was extended to Orangeville by September of that year ⁴ _
- Train service consisted of two trains north and two south daily ⁵ _

- Bryan Dowling became station agent in the early 1870s. The position would have required that he be trained as a telegraph operator
- Several of the Dowling children were born in the station and they grew up being able to identify each train, its crew and the sound of its whistle ⁶
- Around 1872, local farmer Edmund Shore saw the need for accommodating train passengers closer to the station and built the 'Toronto Hotel' on Shore Street, adjacent to the TG&B railway station. The hotel was often referred to as the Station Hotel. ⁷
- By 1873, the tracks and service had reached Owen Sound ⁸
- A grain elevator took shape near the station. It was leased by John Gardhouse, the mill owner at the time, from Bryan Dowling who purchased many of the lots in the newly surveyed Block VI
- In the early 1880s, the Grand Trunk Railway (GTR) took control of the TG&B marking the end of the Toronto Grey & Bruce era
- By this time, It had become a requirement in several counties, including Peel, that the tracks be converted to standard gauge to eliminate the bottlenecks that were occurring as freight needed to be transferred from narrow gauge freight cars to standard ⁹
- It fell to GTR to finance the conversion of the TG&B tracks to standard gauge ¹⁰
- However, by 1883, the former TG&B track had been leased to the Ontario & Quebec Railway, a 'paper' proxy company for the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) ¹¹
- In 1884, CPR formalized its association with the O&Q by obtaining a 999 year lease ¹² They also benefitted from obtaining the upgraded TG&B rail systems which their rival Grand Trunk had financed.
- By 1901, John Stockdale was the station agent ¹³
- In 1906, CPR gained approval to build a new train line from Bolton to Sudbury, to join up with their transcontinental line. Starting several kilometers south of Bolton, a new track bed was laid which routed the new tracks and line about 850m west of the original TG&B railway station ¹⁴
- By the summer of 1907, CPR was running a summer resort service to Bala in the heart of the Muskoka Lakes area
- But the routing decision isolated the station, the grain elevator, the Station Hotel and John Arnett's coal and wood business from the new railway tracks ¹⁵. Freight cars destined for these businesses were unhitched from the train and then shunted down what, by then, was effectively a spur created from part of the original rail tracks to Owen Sound
- CPR set up a temporary station using a box car ¹⁶
- A Royal Commission weighed in on where and when a new the station would be built. Part of that dialogue revolved around whose responsibility was it to build a road from the station into the village and who would maintain it
- CPR eventually undertook to build a gravel road (now Station Road) but balked at maintaining it
- They also finally built a large, modern station with two platforms at the terminus of Station Road, sometime in 1908. It was well positioned to service train traffic on the original TG&B line as well as the new rail line to Sudbury.

- Surprisingly spacious living quarters on two floors within the station itself were available for the Station Agent and family
- That year, CPR further endeared themselves to the business community by removing the switch to what had become a spur to the grain elevator and other businesses such as Arnott's coal and wood business. After vocal protests, CPR later restored the switch and agreed to hold off removing the tracks until the summer of 1909¹⁷. The agreement was honoured and the tracks were taken up in May 1909¹⁸.
- In 1910 mill owner Arthur McFall purchased a grain elevator along the CPR line. This elevator, near the new railway station, was constructed by the Canada Grain Company in 1909. He also built a metal storehouse for ready-to-be-shipped flour
- There was a station house further east along the line, beyond the grain elevator, that was occupied by the section foreman of the rail maintenance crew. The house was 1½ storey, clad in insulbrick. In the 1940s, it was occupied by Richard and Mary Boughen

CPR Era

- From this point forward, the former TG&B tracks became a CPR branch line to Owen Sound
- In 1911 a derailment occurred between Bolton and Mono Road. Prisoners on the train showed exemplary behaviour in helping passengers off the train. The full story is related [here](#).
- Expanding automobile ownership in the 1920s made rail service redundant and, in 1932, CPR ended the service to Owen Sound. The tracks from Bolton to Melville were torn up¹⁹
- The impact to service at Bolton's station was minimal as it continued to serve seven trains north to Sudbury and six trains south to Toronto on a daily basis. While CPR's flagship service to the west, 'The Canadian', travelled through Bolton, it did not stop²⁰
- Passenger service on the line ended in 1979 when CN's VIA Rail took over CPR passenger service in Canada²¹
- The train station remained open, as an order office, until station master John Barton retired in the late 1980s²². Although the trains no longer stopped, John would be out with the hoop to pass orders to the engineer. The hoop would be thrown down the track and retrieved²³
- CPR demolished the station in 1990 despite efforts by then Mayor Emil Kolb to save it²⁴
- Today, the Toronto to Sudbury line now under the CP moniker, remains in use through Bolton handling all rail freight from Toronto to the west²⁵. Trains still regularly stop traffic at the level crossings on Coleraine Drive at Old Ellwood Drive and on King Street West east of Humber Station Road

Station Agents (Station Master)

- Bryan Dowling: c. 1872 to 1890s
- John Stockdale: c.1890s to at least 1920s
- Mr. Bradley: 1940s
- Paddy Cesar
- Baden Toman
- John Barton to late 1980s

And the buildings?

- The original Toronto Grey & Bruce Railway station was repurposed into a freight shed once the new CPR station was operational, late in 1908. It was later converted into storage space for Jim Wilson's coal and wood business. The building was taken down in 1942²⁶
- The Toronto Hotel, aka Station Hotel, closed its doors around 1906 after CPR built the new rail line 850 metres west of its location close to the 7th Line (Queen Street). The building's further history is unknown
- CPR removed the original TG&B railway tracks between the 7th Line and the CPR station in the summer of 1909. The abandoned right-of-way has evolved into what is now Ellwood Drive West

A local railway story

In the early 1970s, a local Bolton resident and railway enthusiast recalls waiting at the Nashville rail crossing while a freight train passed heading south. She noted a gap between the freight cars with a tanker car and caboose running loose trailing behind the rest of the freight cars. She headed home, stopping at the Bolton station and reported the incident to the station agent, John Barton, who immediately called for information. It turned out that CPR was aware of the uncoupled cars and advised that the train crew were trying to keep ahead of them while at the same time gradually slowing down the train even as it was going downhill. The result: the crew were able to recouple, without damage, shortly before reaching Woodbridge²⁷.

John Barton, the last station agent

In 2005, Robert and Marco Marrone published '*A Nexus with the Past*' in Canadian Rail Magazine²⁸. The article relates the story of Robert and Marco witnessing the passing of CPR Empress (with steam engine 2816) through Bolton in 2003. This led to a conversation with the last Bolton Station Agent, John Barton, who reminisces about his years in Bolton and tells some earlier history of the railways of Bolton. The article is available [here](#).

1. Thomas McIlwraith, History of the Toronto Grey & Bruce Railway

2. Ralph Beaumont, Steam Trains to the Bruce, Boston Mills Press, p.14

3. TRHA website
4. Toronto Grey & Bruce Railway plaque in Orangeville, Ontario Heritage Foundation
5. TRHA website
6. Esther Heyes, The Story of Albion, The Enterprise, 1968 edition, p. 243
7. For further details go to the following chapter on this website: Commercial section under Inns, Taverns, Hotels, Distillery. Queen and Shore Street, SW corner
8. Orangeville Railway Plaque, *ibid.*
9. Ralph Beaumont, p.14
10. [wikipedia.org/wiki/Toronto,_Grey_and_Bruce_Railway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toronto_Grey_and_Bruce_Railway)
11. *ibid.*
12. Wikipedia
13. Albion Township Census 1901
14. Arthur McFall diaries, McFall Family collection
15. *ibid.*
16. Albion Bolton Historical Society photograph
17. Arthur McFall diaries
18. Bolton Enterprise, May 16 1979 (In Days of Yore, Seventy Years Ago)
19. Wikipedia TG&B history
20. TRHA website
21. *ibid.*
22. Isabelle Bottoms, ABHS member
23. John and Martha Barton were both dispatchers for Bolton Ambulance
24. TRHA website
25. TRHA website
26. Bolton Enterprise April 22, 1982
27. Story courtesy of Isabelle Bottoms
28. Canadian Rail No. 506 May-June 2005, published by the Canadian Railroad Historical Association and copied with permission