

The Ferrophiliac Column Conducted by Just A. Ferronut

April, 1992

I thought winter had got to me the other day when I was asked by a couple of fans whether I was asleep when I put the material on the Pere Marquette together for the February Column. The question was if perhaps I had got the figures in the date of the timetable reversed? A check of the timetable from Bill Reddy confirmed that the 1942 date shown in February is correct and that there was in fact a mixed train each way, six days a week between Chatham and Blenheim. These trains connected with similar mixed trains that operated on Subdivision No. 1 between Blenheim and Walkerville (Windsor). This trip – less than 50 miles via Canadian National, Canadian Pacific or Highway # 401 – took six or six and half hours via the good old Pere Marquette mixed in 1942. Probably not many through passengers, except rail enthusiasts.

Old timetables are always fun to read. This Pere Marquette timetable for the summer 1942 shows there were six scheduled freight trains a day over the Michigan Central (Canada Southern) line between St. Thomas and East Buffalo. A closer look at the footnotes for Subdivision # 1, (Erieau and Sarnia line) shows an item that lets one dream up several scenarios as to the cause. This subdivision had ten passing tracks listed but the footnote shows that the switch at one end at four of these tracks had been removed. Why? Was this done for material saving as part of the war effort? Or, was it done because of poor maintenance? Or, add your own thoughts.

While we are on the subject of the Pere Marquette, now called the CSX, it should be realised that this line from Walkerville via McGregor, Harrow, Leamington, Blenheim, West Lorne to St. Thomas, is gradually vanishing.

This line, like many roads had a multi-facetted beginning. In 1885, the Lake Erie, Essex and Detroit River Railway Company was federally incorporated to build a railway from Windsor or Sandwich to Kingsville, with branches to Comber, Amherstburg, Charing Cross and Rondeau.

Meanwhile, in 1889 the Amherstburg, Lake Shore and Blenheim Railway Company was provincially incorporated to build a railway from Amherstburg to Harrow, Leamington, Wheatley, the township of Harwich, and to Windsor and Sandwich. A year later the provincial railway became the Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company (a provincial railway).

In 1891, the Lake Erie, Essex and Detroit River Railway Company changed its name to the Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company (under federal charter). One of the clauses of the federal act authorising this name change also permitted this federal railway to acquire its provincial namesake.

With a shiny new rail line along the north shore of Lake Erie completed to St. Thomas, the Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company started to look farther afield to expand.

Their first expansion came on January 1, 1894 when the Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company leased the London and Port Stanley Railway for twenty years. This lease gave the Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company access to London and the harbour at Port Stanley from the end of their own line in St. Thomas. The section of the London and Port Stanley Railway north of St. Thomas also saw Michigan Central trains operating on it into London. The Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company and its successor, the Pere Marquette operated the London and Port Stanley Railway until January 1, 1914, when the management of the L. & P.S. was taken over by the “London

Railway Commission of that City. The Pere Marquette continued to operate the line on a month to month basis while the City was upgrading it and electrifying it. This arrangement continued until the rehabilitated line was officially opened on July 1, 1915.

Meanwhile, back in the 1890s the Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company wanted to extend eastward to the Niagara Peninsula and the markets of Buffalo and New York State. A few cooler heads were starting to realise that railways couldn't just keep building bridge routes across southern Ontario and expect them all to make money. Therefore the Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company like the Wabash settled for running rights on an existing railway. The politics and behind the scene dealings on this matter within this small segment of Ontario would fill a large book.

The Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company acquired these running rights over the Canada Southern. A federal act in 1897 confirmed this agreement. The connecting track constructed to provide the connection between the L. & P.S. and the Canada Southern in St. Thomas as part of this agreement was abandoned by CN Rail along with their Talbot Spur (nee L. & P.S.) from the south of the Canada Southern south to the end of the spur and junction with the Port Stanley Terminal Rail's trackage. The intent of this abandonment was to enable the Province of Ontario to purchase this trackage and land along with other parts of the former L. & P.S. right-of-way in St. Thomas to protect access for the Port Stanley people to a federal railway.

An agreement dated December 29, 1903 with the Michigan Central, the lessee of the Canada Southern, grants the Pere Marquette Railroad Company, as lessee of the Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company use of the railroad of the Canada Southern, “between St. Clair Junction and the junction of the Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company with the Railway of the Canada Southern at Courtright, Lambton County, Ontario; and between St. Clair Junction and the connection of the Canada Southern's road with the New York Central & Hudson River Railroad at or near the easterly end of the Cantilever Bridge, so called, at Suspension Bridge, in the State of New York; and between the junction of the main line with the Fort Erie Division of the said Canada Southern's road at Welland and the point where the Grand Trunk Railway intersects said Fort Erie Division west of the International Bridge, so called.”

This 1903 agreement refers to the previous running rights agreement, dated November 1, 1900 that had been signed by the Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company, Hiram Walker & Sons, Limited as well as Michigan Central and Canada Southern.

The Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company obtained federal permission to acquire the Erie and Huron Railway Company in 1899. This acquisition was confirmed by an Order in Council on June 20, 1901. (**Note:** For details on some of this railway's operations, see *The Little Trains of Long Ago*, By Gordon Shaw in the February, 1992 *Newsletter*). This company was first incorporated in 1873 and was responsible for the construction of the line now thought of as the CSX Subdivision No.2 (Sarnia Subdivision) that connected Erieau on Lake Erie with the Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway Company at Blenheim and then continued north to cross and connect with the Canada Southern/Michigan Central at Fargo and the Great Western Railway (CN Rail) and the Ontario and Quebec Railway (CP Rail) in Chatham. From Chatham the Erie and Huron

Railway continued northward to Dresden and then westward to Wallaceburg and then along the St. Clair River across the Canada Southern at Courtright to Sarnia.

The name of the Pere Marquette Railroad Company starts showing up about 1900 when dealing with the Lake Erie and Detroit Railway Company. The Pere Marquette Railroad was a company established under the laws of the state of Michigan and wanted to obtain a bridge route across southern Ontario. The Pere Marquette Railroad leased the Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway in Ontario for twenty-one years under the terms of an agreement dated October 1, 1903. This agreement was confirmed by an Order in Council on January 23, 1904.

The Pere Marquette went into receivership in 1912 and the Pere Marquette Railway Company was incorporated in 1917, both in Canada and Michigan to take over and operate the holding of the Pere Marquette Railroad. The Pere Marquette Railway was purchased in 1939 by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company as part of a merger. The Pere Marquette Railway was amalgamated with the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway on June 6, 1947. The Pere Marquette name was used until the late 1950s.

With the American railroad reshuffling of the 1980s, the Chesapeake and Ohio became part of what is today called the CSX.

The mid-1980s saw the formal abandonment and removal by the CSX of 24 miles of the Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway between St. Thomas and West Lorne. This abandonment took an agreement with CN Rail and the CNCP Niagara-Detroit partnership for running rights over the Canada Southern from Windsor to St. Thomas.

The late 1980s saw the CSX get mixed up with Canada's new law that a federal railway could not apply to abandon more than 4% of its rail lines in any year. December 21, 1990 saw NTA Order 1990-R-732 issue permitting the CSX to abandon the 6.68 miles of the L.E. & D.R. between Mile 21.0 at Harrow and Mile 27.68 at Arner, effective June 21, 1991.

February 15, 1991 saw Canadian National Railways purchase 6 miles of the L.E. & D.R. from Mile 2.0 Walkerville Junction and Mile 8.0 at Oldcastle. CN Rail removed the diamond crossing with the Canada Southern at Pelton and converted this trackage into two spurs, off its Caso Subdivision. CN Rail as part of this deal also acquired 0.81 miles of the L.E. & D.R. line in Leamington to become its Leamington Industrial Spur off its Leamington Subdivision (former Canada Southern branch from Comber to Leamington (Seacliff)).

The CSX has recently got a ruling from the NTA that declares the old L.E. & D.R. line from Mile 0.0 in Walkerville to Mile 2.0 at Walkerville Junction to be spur trackage. This has permitted the CSX to abandon the first 0.8 miles of the line and sell a portion of the right-of-way to VIA Rail Canada Inc. VIA Rail has constructed a wye track on it for turning their equipment in Windsor (Walkerville) as a replacement to the former CN Rail riverfront yard and turntable.

The remaining 1.2 miles of this spur trackage is presently to be kept to serve several industries via the connection at Walkerville with the Essex Terminal Railways.

While the CSX presently operate on some of the central portion of the old L.E. & D.R. via the E. & H. through Blenheim, it has now issued notice of its intention to abandon a few more miles of the old L.E. & D.R. by cutting back from West Lorne to Rodney. As the L.E. & D.R. becomes a firm centenarian it will no doubt see more abandonments but could also see other changes as the railway picture continues to change in Canada.

Gee, have I rambled on this long to explain one simple question? Don't tell my Editor.

Honestly folks, I had planned to have spent most of this month's column on that portion of Ontario east of Toronto.

Denis Taylor, who I think of as Mr. Canadian Northern has been doing a tremendous amount of research on this road as well as the other ones in his area east of Toronto. He has kept my computer and me snowed under with material that is building in the data banks. In fact, my poor computer complained so much about headaches from memory overload, that I had to get a transplant of a sizeable block of extra memory. Honest! If you don't believe me, ask Chris Spinney who got cornered in helping with the transplant.

Among the goodies that Denis has sent along is a photograph of the CN (ex-GTR) Trenton Junction station taken in the fall of 1939. The photograph taken from a train on CN's Kingston Subdivision shows the frame station in the north east quadrant between the high level Grand Trunk Montréal – Toronto line and the low level Central Ontario line that passes under the GTR. The station had a two storey section at the east end and a single storey to the west. At the west end was a long covered, open sided stairway paralleling the CN/GTR line that provided a passage way leading down to the track level of the CN Maynooth Subdivision (nee-Central Ontario Railway).

On the subject of stations, the restoration of the CPR Peterborough, Ontario station was mentioned a few months ago in the *Column*. Well Denis has sent along a couple of photographs of this structure taken a few days before Christmas 1991. The brickwork has been cleaned back to their original buff colour with the limestone base nicely restored. The gables are painted green and the fascia boards, window trim, etc. are in a chocolate brown. Looks like an A-1 job.

Since I am running out of allotted space, I should stick to a couple of short items – these I look at as how life has changed. From a 1973 book by H. T. Pammett about the history of railways in Emily Township, sent along by Denis. – Late in December 1884 there was an outbreak of smallpox in Hasting County and a person required written permission from the medical health officer to board a train to leave the area.

A second tidbit from the same source is that in 1883, a travelling blacksmith, named Alex Feir, brought 2 milestones, weighing 3,370 lbs., plus the associated machinery for them from Toronto to Omeme via the Midland Railway, the freight cost was \$10.44.

In a totally different vein is this story from the Stratford Beacon Friday, September 10, 1875 telling about the actions of a new manager of the Great Western Railway who had recently been imported from England. Being informed that the road was not paying very well, this functionary struck out to apply his economical principles.

The trackmen who had little potato patches along the line were charged rent for them. Some unfortunate employees near Hamilton had cut and stacked up a little hay by the side of the track; but the manager, generous soul, had the hay taken to Hamilton and sold it. The newspaper had to close wondering if perhaps the Great Western and this individual were not being slightly penny wise and thus foolish. How things have changed! Or have they?

One hundred and ten years young and still going strong – NO this is not me. Dubs & Company of Glasgow, Scotland built a locomotive in April 1882 that was brought to Canada to become part of the fleet of steam engines owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway. Today, most of us think of this engine as No. 3 used by the Vintage Locomotive Society on their Prairie Dog Central excursion train that has been operating since 1970 out of Winnipeg. This elegant lady of steam recently stepped out of CN's Transcona Shops in

Winnipeg after what has been referred to as a “major, major overhaul.” This overhaul at Transcona included manufacturing and replacing the smoke box or chimney as well as retubing. The retubing that is required by law to be done every seven years involved in the case of No. 3, replacing 175 tubes, each 2 inches in diameter and about 12 feet long.

On the book scene, I note that at least here in Toronto, that the book *Last Train to Toronto*, By Terry Pindell that I mentioned last month is available at W. H. Smiths.

The April issue of CN's Keeping Track lists a new book of railway photographs from the west. This book titled *Westbound* By Mike Chandler is a portfolio of black and white photographs that he has taken over the last 30 years. The book can be purchased for \$39.95 (GST included) from Bonaventure Press, P. O. Box 1612, Place Bonaventure, Montréal, Québec H9H 3H2.

Since I am always looking for new books on Canadian Railways and their histories to add to my collections, as I expect others are, how about letting us know about such books published in your area. Often local or regional books are published that contain extensive railway material than never make it to the list of railway books. Your local author would no doubt appreciate a little broader exposure.

Finally, another request, Art and I have been working at putting some of the early Newsletters and Bulletins loaded into the computer and presently would like to get a copy (photocopy is fine) of the UCRS News Letters from October, 1946 # 13 to March 1947 # 17. If you can help it would be appreciated.