

The Ferrophiliac Column Conducted by Just A. Ferronut

June 1991

Starting off are a few comments from Ray Corley about the articles in the May [Newsletter](#) concerning the last runs of the 'Cannonball Express' from Port Hope, Ontario. Ray points out the "corner" of the envelope mailed to Stu Westland is, in fact, almost full-size, with only the edges trimmed. It was one of two mailed as the last two RPO mailings at Port Hope by Ray – one to Mr. Westland, the other to himself.

Ray pointed out that train 92 left Peterborough 12:30 PM, 12 minutes off its scheduled 12:18 PM departure, losing an extra 8 minutes on its trip to Port Hope arriving there at 1:45 instead of its listed time of 1:25 PM. Northbound, 95 always connected with CN pool train 5, "The LaSalle," due at Port Hope at 3:54 PM. The "The LaSalle" didn't arrive until 5:02 PM on that fateful Thursday afternoon of May 31, 1951. With the transfer of passengers, baggage, mail, and express to look after, 95 didn't leave 5:16 PM as noted. This Port Hope departure was four minutes after its scheduled arrival at Peterborough of 5:12 PM. The normal start for this one hour and seven minute trip was 4:05 PM.

With the photographs and the influx of passengers at Walton Street station, Port Hope, train 95 did not leave this downtown stop until 5:24 PM instead of its scheduled 4:09 PM.

While a number of other UCRS members rode the train as mentioned in the articles, Ray tells us that he rode 92 into Port Hope, then followed train 95 on its trip back north by car from Port Hope to Millbrook, taking several photos where he could "catch" the 'Cannonball.' Among these photographs that Ray Corley took is the adjoining one taken of the last 95 heading north at Walton Street station Port Hope. This train as indicated in last month's articles was headed by engine 5575, with mail and express 7798, express car 8777, and coach 5036.

Ray closes his notes by pointing out that the first train of the PHL&B ran the 42.17 miles from Port Hope via Millbrook and Omeme to Lindsay (South Junction) on October 16, 1857. See the adjoining map. The PHL&B at the same time were having a branch line built from Millbrook the 12.91 miles to Peterborough. This branch was opened May 12, 1858, with inaugural runs on May 20/21/24/31. Regular service was commenced on starting June 7, 1858. This line, the Peterborough Branch Railway, was initially operated by the contractors, Tate and Fowler, as lessees. This now provided a 'Y' track formation without a top "link" between Peterborough and Omeme.

While the PHL&B changed its name to the Midland Railway of Canada by a provincial act in December 1869 and built some 80 odd miles of extensions to its system during the 1870s, the 14.51 mile section between Peterborough and Omeme remained the "missing link." It was not until 1882 that the Midland Railway of Canada built this link under the charter of the charter of the Toronto and Ottawa Railway Company. Following the opening of link from Peterborough to Omeme on November 23, 1883, the original line from Millbrook to Omeme (West) became a "branch," and all Lindsay – Port Hope main trains operated via Peterborough.

The branch, from Millbrook to Omeme West became the Bethany Subdivision. Rail operation on it lasted up until the days of Canadian National and saw its last train on September 25, 1927.

The Simcoe stations on the Canada Air Line Railway, CN's Cayuga Subdivision have had a few words said about them in recent columns. Well Bill Thomson of Bath has sent along the adjacent photograph of the small Simcoe station that Jack

Maclean made comments about in the April column. This photograph is looking to the south west along the Air Line and as Bill points out this was a "classic" small station. As we have said this station site has seen its share of stations of all shapes and sizes from the large storey and a half structures with lots of gingerbread trim or multi-turrets to the present metal box.

A little digging has turned up an interesting twist about this station the Bill Thomson had photographed in 1969 at Simcoe with a Simcoe station board on it. The June 14, 1984 *Simcoe Reformer* carried a 1928 photo of a group of railway employees standing in front of a small station. The caption stated these were Canadian National Railway employees and the name of the station was Renton and except for a small eyebrow window about half way up the end slope of the roof it looked identical to Bill's photo. Renton is 4.5 miles east of Simcoe on the Air Line. This 1984 article continued, that yes the Renton station had been relocated to Simcoe. This article stated that the relocation took place in 1943. But since the article had a date prior to Bill's photo for the station's demolition, I must wonder about the relocation date. I support this since I note the Board of Transport Commissioners issued an Order dated September 6, 1947 approving the location and details of a station to be erected by Canadian National at Simcoe. So readers, who can fill in a few more details to help complete this story. [The Grand Trunk 1907 Bridge and Building Inventory](#) lists the Renton station as being a single storey 14 x 20 foot station built in 1905.

While in the Simcoe area, a couple of extra station items as the result of my digging through the Simcoe Library. The August 17, 1973 *Simcoe Reformer* carried an article about the sale of four CN stations (buildings). This article stated that the ones at Hagersville, Cayuga, Delhi and Simcoe as being up for sale and removal from CN property. The photograph with the article confirmed that the building in Simcoe was the freight house built in 1905 along with the station that was replacing the structures burned in November 1904. The measurements given for the structure at Cayuga also fit the sizes for the freight shed built as a 2nd class structure in 1876 by the Great Western Railway. The measurements given for Hagersville building didn't match any building listed in the [Grand Trunk 1907 Bridge and Building Inventory](#). For the age of the building at Delhi an article in the September 28, 1916 *Simcoe Reformer* sets its. This 1916 article states that about noon on Wednesday September 27, 1916, the freight shed at Delhi was set on fire by flying sparks from a passing train. This fire also destroyed the depot and the agent's house as well as two freight cars standing on a siding near the station. A strong wind threatened to spread this fire to other non-railway buildings. Since most newspapers carry obituary, this article would be the one for these four railway freight houses.

Before we leave the southern Ontario station scene, a recent trip through Waterford revealed that the exterior restoration work on this former Michigan Central, nee Canada Southern station is progressing quite well. Another Michigan Central station on the Canada Southern that is starting to make news again is the one storey field stone station in Essex. This station with its turret and multi-dormers at the junction of the Windsor cut-off that the Vanderbilts built following their take over of the Michigan Central must have at least nine lives. The MCRR tried to demolish it in August 1907 when 5,000 pounds of improperly cured dynamite exploded as a train ran over nitroglycerine that had dripped on the rails in front of the station.

Although most of the roof was blown off and some of the stone walls flattened, the station was reconstructed and continued to serve passenger trains on into the 1960's. In the 1970s it survived a mill fire and a massive blaze that partially destroyed nearby businesses. It also survived the February 1980 gas explosion in Essex. The CRHA had leased the station for a number of years in hopes of restoring it to circa 1920 condition. Now the Town of Essex has approached the present owners, CNCP Niagara – Detroit partnership in an attempt to purchase this station. They want to restore this landmark and include it in the Town's heritage inventory.

Skipping back east to Cobourg, Denis Taylor has made an interesting comment following our mention of the former C&P station in that town that is presently used as a two family home on Stuart Street. He mentioned that many of these old stations are difficult to spot unless someone knows about them since in the early days no one knew what a station should look like, so often they followed the plans used locally for houses. Denis continued that a proposal is now being pushed in Cobourg for the redevelopment of land on the waterfront that will include at least part of the old C&P yard area. It should be interesting to see what the environmental and archaeological reviews may disclose.

The verdict of the coroner's jury held in the Canada Southern reading room at St. Thomas on Monday, April 7, 1879 was that the deceased, John Anderson, had been killed in consequence of having been run over by a eastbound railway train early on Sunday, April 6, 1879. The sum of the witnesses' evidence was that the deceased man was about twenty three years of age and belonged to Kingston. It appeared that he was a sailor by profession, and that he had been tramping through the country for some time past. Various other unflattering statements were uttered about this accident victim.

This would normally appear to be one of many such unfortunate events that occurred during this era of history. However, John Anderson it would appear didn't agree with the way he had been dealt with, so the Tillsonburg Observer in their issue of April 25, 1879 stated that in the three weeks since the above noted accident a few miles east of St. Thomas, several trains have been stopped by a green lantern swung by an invisible hand, and the weak minded believe the line is haunted. Of course, no rail enthusiast would believe such a story.

Max MacLeod has an interesting article in the June 1991, issue of The Atlantic Advocate about the steam locomotive "Samson." This short article covers many facets of the life of this 142 year old locomotive.

The 17 ton Samson was built in Newcastle, England by Timothy Hackworth and was shipped to Pictou in 1839. From then until 1879 this locomotive with its 13 foot long boiler and three pairs of driving wheels shuttled back and forth over the six miles between the Albion Mines in Stellarton to the loading docks at Pictou Harbour. Its boiler held 540 gallons of water and track sanding was in the form of the crew throwing sand by hand from buckets as needed.

In 1883 this locomotive was taken to the Chicago Exposition of Railway Appliances. After the hoopla of a big city fair, the 17 tons were returned to Stellarton, to set in the scrap heap for almost 10 years. I guess maybe the Chicagoans liked this little Canadian engine because she was taken off the scrap heap, given a little polish and shipped back to the windy city in 1893 for the Chicago World's Fair.

This engine must have really caught the eye of the American Railroads at the fair, for the Samson spent the next 35 years being owned by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The

B&O shipped the Samson around the States for various displays.

Eventually, the Nova Scotians apparently got tired of seeing their historic locomotive being controlled and displayed by a major American Railroad. So after considerable negotiation the 'Bluenosers' and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad reached an agreement for the return of the Samson. So in 1928, a Baltimore and Ohio steel gondola car arrived in Halifax carrying a refurbished and repainted 17 ton cargo – the Samson.

The Samson was displayed in a corner at the Halifax station of Canadian National during World War II.

The Halifax streets were graced as this venerable locomotive was carried on a flatbed trailer over them during Halifax's Bicentennial in 1949.

The next year the Samson was moved back to Pictou County and was placed in a replica of a log cabin next to the Canadian National station and offices in New Glasgow. for the last number of years many will recall seeing the Samson in its sturdy glass shelter on Archimedes Street in New Glasgow.

Pictou County's most popular tourist attraction has now been moved to what is hoped will be its last and permanent home at the new Museum of Industry in Stellarton, about two miles from its New Glasgow location.

This old attraction in its new surroundings sounds like its worth a visit on your next trip east.

Mr. MacLeod's article also carried an interesting comment about the Westray Coal Company Inc. This company is building a new coal mine near the location where the Samson started to haul coal some 150 years ago. Westray Coal has announced that coal from its new mine near Stellarton, will be hauled to the generating plant in nearby Trenton by rail. Therefore, I will close like Max MacLeod, "The more things change, the more they remain the same."