

Well, it is another month and while I did promise the second part of a trip to the north east of Toronto, I am going to beg you indulgence to bring this months comments from our readers. I didn't realize how much interest one little comment about an invitation could create - but my May comment about Port Dover has sure done it.

First, George W. Horner sends the following comments about Port Dover and its stations. In Charles Cooper's book Rails To The Lakes, he gives quite a bit of information on the two railway stations at Port Dover, (Hamilton & Lake Erie on east side of river and the Port Dover & Lake Huron on the west side – JAF) both of these stations burned in 1896, and were replaced by a single Grand Trunk station, to be called a "Union" station. - Thanks George.

Our very knowledge historian, Bob Sandusky forwards the following on Port Dover.

There still seems to be some confusion on Port Dover stations, so let me throw in my two-bits worth to help clarify it. Three events lend potential for confusion:

1. The Lake Erie and Northern Railway used the Grand Trunk (later CN) depot from 1917 to 1946.
2. The L.E.& N. built a new station in 1946 which CN used for a while after L.E.& N. abandonment.
3. The former Grand Trunk depot was relocated after 1960. The original comment in the May 1989 Newsletter about a frame station being built in the '50 or early '60s is incorrect. (More on this mystery later – JAF).

Let's go through the historic sequence. Around 1896 the Grand Trunk built a single-storey frame structure on the waterfront at Port Dover in front of what is now Henry Misner fish plant. (This station was in the north east corner of Harbour and Main Streets, setting at a slight angle. Also see Newsletter 477 – JAF). This station was built because both the original Port Dover and Lake Huron Railway and Hamilton and Lake Erie Railway stations burned. The Grand Trunk decided to extend the H.& L.E. line from Jarvis across the Lynn River from the old terminus site on the east side, and connect with the P.D.& L.H. line directly east of the new depot site. The station was used by CN until around 1960. Some UCRS members will recall being on the last mixed train into the station on October 26, 1957.

Superimposed on this time period was the late arrival of the Lake Erie and Northern Railway at Port Dover in 1916. To avoid going down town streets, they negotiated with the G.T.R. to use the last kilometre of their line down to the G.T.R. depot. This arrangement lasted until 1946 when trackage rights ended and the L.E.& N. built their own depot up the hill (as referred to by Jack Knowles). Several hundred NRHA (and UCRS) members were on hand for the last passenger run (excursion) into this depot on May 1, 1955. Express traffic on the L.E.& N. south of Simcoe went to truck after that and the L.E.& N. to Port Dover was closed in 1962. I suggest that the Newsletter 477 reference to the "New CNR Depot" would be their move from the G.T.R. frame depot to the former L.E.& N. brick siding depot just north of Chapman Street.

Changes were proposed and made to improve the Port Dover waterfront. It was and continues to be a busy town (largest freshwater fishing industry anywhere). A new high level lift bridge over the

Lynn River was built in 1971 for Highway 6. This cut the CN line down the hill to the waterfront and the tracks south of that point were removed in 1974.

At some later date (I do not have details) the G.T.R. depot, or at least the west 2/3 of it, was moved from its original site to a point a short block north, at 34 Walker Street. Prior to its present antique shop status it was the “Dover Car Wash”, if you can imagine that!

Meanwhile, sometime prior to 1972 the CN gave up use of the ex L.E.& N. Chapman Street depot. The property was securely fenced off and became the Town’s works yard. (The September 15, 1972, Port Dover “Maple Leaf” reported that the Town of Port Dover had purchased the depot and were erecting a chain link fence around it. – JAF). The depot survives as a storage building at the time of writing.

I was there in July, 1988 when the CN line removal contractor had piled all the ties from the Simcoe - Port Dover abandonment along the fence by the L.E. & N. depot. They were a one-time vantage point for photographing the former station.

An additional reference to the G.T.R. (and H.& L.E.) depot may be found on pages 50-53 of Rails to the Lakes by Charles Cooper.

How interesting that a two sentence mention of Port Dover can give rise to two (that so far – JAF) mini-articles on its stations. (This is a good example of one of the Newsletter’s multi-faceted purposes – ED.)

(While I haven’t got all the answers to the 1960 CN mystery station, I have started to get some more pieces to the puzzle. Yes, there was a sod turning in Port Dover for a new \$10,000. station on November 1, 1960. The Simcoe Reformer of November 2, carried a photograph of the mayor and two CN officers in their tan trench coats with a shovel. This station was to be a single storey 20’ x 30’ with a low gable roof, insul brick siding, plywood interior panels and located downtown on the site of the G.T.R. “Union” station. The building was to be set back from the corner and was to have freight and express rooms to handle the some 40 car loads of traffic a month for Port Dover. Ivey’s, the local florists were responsible for shipping a lot of flowers to markets like Toronto. It presently looks like this was an aborted project. Any further details would be appreciated.

The Port Dover Maple Leaf states that the L.E.& N. Main Street crossing station (shelter?) was demolished by the railway during the week of July 20, 1956.

One last comment on Port Dover for this month is that the river that divides the town has three recorded names, Lynn River, Black Creek and in earlier times Patterson’s Creek. – JAF).

As we leave Port Dover, we will switch back to Bob Sandusky and his closing remark on Port Dover. Now that I have Port Dover off my chest (I visit it at least once a year) here are some other notes on stations and lines, observed this summer.

Hespeler (Cambridge) – Both the CNR and Grand River Railway depots survive intact, within sight of each other and both are unused. The CN station retains its platform, name boards and some

ornamental woodwork. The G.R.R. brick depot is on an active spur which serves a factory on the east side of Highway 24. (CP and the Ministry Transportation Ontario is looking at having this spur converted to a private siding and connected to the CN to permit the abandonment of the west end of it to avoid building a bridge for the Highway 24 By-pass over it. – JAF).

Galt – The ex-CP Guelph station the pieces of which had been assembled for reconstruction by Churchill Park (at the southern city limit) has disappeared. Only a long abandoned concrete foundation remains. One assumes the preservation plans came to naught. (Five or so years ago some of Cambridge's staff had indicated that the group planning this reconstruction as well as wanting a short tourist rail line to Lynden couldn't get support and had folded, so it looked like the city would have to clean up the Churchill Park site. – JAF).

The CP Galt station remains intact though rundown.

The CN line which formerly ran south to Lynden has now been cut back to the north side of the Highway 24 level crossing. The highway here has been reconstructed and only CP rails cross it. The CN now ends in a simple switch connection to CP behind Babcock Wilcox.

Montebello, Quebec – This spectacular log station is being moved off its present foundation to a new location beside Route 148 at the west end of the town business section. The move (which may have occurred by the time you read this) is comparable to that of Orangeville. The old foundation is poured concrete and at the time of observation was being laced with a continuous line of drilled holes to give a line of separation. The lower half of the building is constructed of stone and mortar (as well as the large chimney); a heavy load indeed!

Petawawa – The VIA station is actually a steel, CP section house with a waiting room in one end and a small, boardwalk platform out to the track.

Mattawa – The large frame station has a gaping hole in the eaves where the order board was (no aesthetics !) and is a little shabby but with a good roof. VIA uses the west end. The branch to Temiscaming crosses the Ottawa River on a bridge with 12 plate girder spans plus 3 spans of Pratt design.

Brantford – The CN Tillsonburg line (former Burford Subdivision – JAF) has been cut at Colborne Street West but is intact beyond that. As of July 28, 1989 the line had been removed from Tillsonburg to a point east of Norwich. (See Railway Colour Swap on page 11 of September 1988 Newsletter for some details of the changes around Brantford – JAF).

Port Colborne – The CNR depot is intact but apparently unused. Also, contrary to what is published by Pathfinder Maps, all N.S.& T. trackage on or beside Elm Street is long gone, as well as the Canada Cement spur which crossed it. (The approximately mile long Elm Street spur as it was called ran in the middle of the street north from the B.B.& G. (former Dunnville Subdivision). This spur was relocated in the early 1980's. This was an interesting relocation since CN constructed a new spur (Port Colborne spur) **for approximately a mile south of Forks Road using the abandoned N.S.& T. right of way.** This new spur extends from the Canada Air Line (Canal Subdivision) just north of Forks Road and parallels Elm Street southward for a mile or so, then it

swings eastward across Elm Street to serve a Canada Starch plant and on down to serve the flour mill. This plant was previously served from the former Elm Street spur. – JAF).

Welland – A short section of N.S.& T. track remains beside Highway 58 from Lincoln Street West, south to a connection with the former Michigan Central Mainlines. This N.S.& T. trackage is used as a switchback for trackage to a local industry and is served by CN from their Canal Subdivision in Welland (east of the old canal). Well, Bob as always can pass on some extra knowledge on our railways and their histories. Many thanks.

While still on the subject of stations, our man Dale Wilson, Sudbury sends the following.

Sudbury – The major change in the recent refurbishing of the CP station has been the sandblasting of paint from the brick and stone, restoring the general appearance of the structure as built in 1907. Doors were replaced but not the windows, and the roof was redone. CPR refurbished this building in 1947, at that time closing the upper portion of the windows and doors and painting the brick and stone. A later CP revision was moving the ticket office from the front bay window to the side as well as replacement of the restaurant with baggage facilities, the latter being moved from the building next door. It seems that major work is done on stations about every 40 years.

In the July issue I made reference to a couple of eating establishments that fed railfans more than just food and asked to hear about others. Well it looks like Douglas Brown, St. Bruno, Quebec knows the Montreal eating spots that have extra items of interest to fans and sends the following report on them.

Le Tramway – 1122 St. Catherines Street West - just west of Peel Street. Its Montreal Transit Commission (MTC) motif starts with its entrance doors which resemble old tramway doors. The interior includes many items from the MTC era along with splendid photographs. Their menu has route numbers for each item so you order a Route 83 to 14 or whatever. The food is good and reasonably priced. From the front window you can almost imagine the passing trains on St. Catherine Street. At this point the rails were still in the street until a major road reconstruction a few years ago. In looking up the phone book for the address I note there are also two other restaurants with similar names - Le Tramway 7275 Sherbrooke Street East and Le Tramway, St. Laurent, 1800 Cote Vertu. I am not familiar with these two so must go and investigate them.

Sammys Restaurant (formerly Victoria Station) – 7500 Victoria Avenue just north of Jean Talon. This restaurant is very unique as it's comprised of several actual boxcars and cabooses joined together so that each unit is a room in itself. The closed in centre part is new construction and is the entrance hall and cocktail lounge. Unfortunately the exterior has been painted in non-railway colours but there is no mistaking where the "buildings" came from.

The interiors have been decorated with various items from British Rail and its former namesakes. This includes photographs, station name boards, signals, locomotive name plates, etc. I have not visited the restaurant since they changed ownership a few years ago so I don't know if these interiors still exist. The food is BBQ style and is moderately expensive.

Near St. Lambert Station is an excellent old fashioned ice cream parlour which makes it a favourite

spot after several hours of train watching on a hot summer day. Unfortunately the nearby M. & S.C. shops was gutted by fire several years ago and is now a storage yard for chain link fencing.

Le Choo Choo – Central Station located in a shopping passageway that connects the eastern and western entrances to Place Ville Marie from the Station concourse. Another entrance is beside the Information Counter. The restaurant is actually behind the VIA ticket counter. A switch stand is at the entrance to the restaurant. The walls have interesting steam era photographs to help you eat. On Tuesdays at lunch many Montreal area railway enthusiasts meet. The Government Liquor store opposite the restaurant has a full wall mural of 6060!

Doug signs off his Montreal report about another fine establishment... “Well this is enough about restaurants so will go and have dinner at “1305” (his home) which is not near the railways unless I play s railway video as entertainment.” Well thanks to Doug, it looks like Mr. Eastman is going to be pressured into another excursion to Montreal and include some of these interesting sounding spots in our itinerary.

Well gang many thanks for the material that has been sent in and keep it coming. We would like to see material from other parts of Canada as well. Since my creaking joints tell me I can not bomb all over the country all the time, we are relying on you, so don't be bashful about what you send us in the way of odds and sods about our hobby as I am sure we have some ferrophiliacs that are interested. So let's see what this month's mail will bring.

P.S. – A couple of short observations; The former TTC PCC streetcar on the south side of Highway 2, in front of a restaurant in Langford, Ontario (near Brantford) appears to be getting a new coat of paint, or at least the start. Work was being done at the Mt. Pleasant L.E.& N. station on September 9. and how about someone giving a clipping or so on the opening of the restored Orillia station.