

Just A. Ferronut's Railway Archaeology "Art Clowes"

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I thought it was time for a field trip until the weatherman reminded me with his intense cold warning that it is still winter. So, I'll stay in where it warm and jot down a few more tidbits on Canadian railways.

First, one last addition to the material we have carried over the last few months on the Sellwood branch, near Capreol. While scanning some of the reams of material that Denis Taylor sends me on the Canadian Northern Ontario and related railway history, I noted an article from the November 12, 1909 issue of the Cobourg World, concerning the Ontario and Ottawa Railway. This railway, a Canadian Northern Ontario adventure which, to the best of my knowledge never reached the construction stage, although it did purchase some operating trackage. The story of the Ontario & Ottawa had its root in the Canadian Northern Ontario's failed bid of about 1904 to acquire the Canada Atlantic Railway from Depot Harbour to Lake Champlain. The story of the political and business intrigue surrounding that would fill a sizable volume. For us at present, the Ontario and Ottawa was proposed to be two links in a paralleling route across central Ontario from Georgian Bay to the Ottawa River valley that would permit a connection to the Canadian Northern Quebec Railway and access to seaports on the St. Lawrence River. The 1909 article in the *Cobourg World* indicated that the Ontario and Ottawa Railway was seeking a charter to build its western link from a point on the CNOR's *TORONTO – SELLWOOD* line at or near Lake Couchiching (Orillia) eastward to Snowden Township (Howland). It is interesting to note the reference to the CNOR line (James Bay Railway) as the Toronto – Sellwood line. The O&O was proposing to purchase the Irondale Bancroft and Ottawa Railway as part of its line and build east of Bancroft.

This 1909 article also makes reference to the CNOR's proposed line from Ottawa (CN's Beachburg Subdivision), that was constructed to Capreol, as their Ottawa – French River line. Of course the CNOR had constructed its Key Harbour branch under the James Bay Railway charter to access Georgian Bay two years earlier in the French River area.

Similarly in 1910, two months after the O&O was granted its charter, the CNOR opened their branch line from Udney to the Atherly narrows and a connection with the Georgian Bay and Seaboard Railway (CPR) at the south end of Lake Couchiching.

It is interesting to look back and note the efforts expended in developing lake ports by these railways to compete with the CPR for western traffic. Of course the completion of two extra rail routes across northern Ontario in the second decade of the twentieth century meant the start of the decline of this water-rail routed traffic.

In the November-December column I mentioned that I had started to stumble around some of the old rail lines in the area south of Montréal and included a few notes on their history. Anyway, Sanborn Worthen has come to my aid, and sent along some information and data on this area that he collected during the 35 years that the Montréal south shore was part of his turf. This is appreciated, since I am only starting to learn about the railways of this area and there doesn't seem to be the accumulation of books on Quebec railways that there are on Ontario ones. Therefore, with this new information and a sketch map lets revisit the area of the Champlain and St. Lawrence Rail-Road.

Sandy points out the interesting fact that The Company of Proprietors of the Champlain and St. Lawrence Rail-Road was incorporated in the French

language by Lower Canada in 1832: 2 Wm. IV, Chapter 58. When translated into the English language, "Chemin à rails" became "Rail-Road". It was never "Railway", or "Rail-Way" or "Rail Way".

I had made reference to the original length of this Rail-Road as shown in the Canadian National Railways *Synoptical History*. Sandy writes, that to settle a bet with Omer Lavallée back in the 1960s, he walked it from the site of the former dock at Laprairie to the bank of the Richelieu River at Saint-Jean, then St. Johns and originally Dorchester, Lower Canada and found it to be only 14.5 miles, two miles less than I had quoted. Sandy says he remember this line well including the "S" curve where the "Dorchester" struggled up the little grade to reach the plateau.

At this point it may be worth mentioning that in Québec we have the Office de la Langue Française to ensure everyone speaks and writes properly. This also means that all place names must follow the same rules, hence many place names have changed from their early railway days. Therefore, I will try to remember to define who's spelling, etc. I am using.

As an example, Sandy states that his research indicates that the original charter for the town, at the south or east end of the Victoria bridge, called it – and still calls it – St. Lambert (English) or St-Lambert (French). However documents complying with the Office de la Langue Française rules spell it "Saint-Lambert".

Sandy brings up another interesting point about the junction between the original line and the extension to St. Lambert that I may have misinterpreted. Several of the documents that I reviewed referred to the junction with a capital "J", I took it to have been a defined station at one point. However, Sandy states that his research does not show "... the point where the relocated line to St. Lambert left the original main line of the C. & S.L. RR to Laprairie (Railway/original spelling – JAF) being named "Laprairie Junction". The original main line (to Laprairie – JAF) from the "turn-off" point became redundant – five months after the completion of the Rouses' Point NY "extension", Stevens says (Vol.1, pg. 31) – there was no reason to retain the part of the line from the "turn-off" point to Laprairie" – so it was abandoned in 1852.

Before we leave the Champlain and St. Lawrence Rail-Road, Sandy points out that in 1857, it and the Montreal and New York Railroad Company (Robert Dorman, 1938 uses a hyphenated Rail-Road) amalgamated under the name Montreal & Champlain Railroad Company. The Montreal and New York Railroad Company was formed in 1852 by the amalgamation of the Montreal and Lachine Rail-Road Company that had been incorporated in 1846 and the Lake St. Louis and Province Line Rail-Way Company that was established in 1847. The Montreal and Lachine Rail-Road Company ran between the two named communities on Montréal Island.

The Lake St. Louis and Province Line Rail-Way Company's main line ran from Caughnawaga south through St. Isidore Junction (Railway spelling) to Hemmingford, QC and Mooers Junction, NY, on the Ogdensburg and Lake Champlain Railroad.

The Grand Trunk Railway Company leased the Montreal & Champlain Railroad Company under the terms of an agreement dated January 1, 1864 and the Grand Trunk purchased all assets, rail lines, rolling stock, franchises, etc., of the Montreal & Champlain Railroad

Company in 1872.

The other line that passed through Laprairie that I mentioned was the Montreal and Champlain Junction Railway Company (Note: this company has the word Junction in its title and was defined as a railway). This railway was chartered in 1870 to built from "... a point near St. Remi, Quebec to a point between St. Johns and St. Lambert." Sandy states that he believes the starting point was/is St. Isidore Junction. This line was built to a connection with the relocated C. & St. L. RR at Brossseau. This is the early spelling for "Brossard", that was changed when the urban sprawl overtook it! The Montreal and Champlain Junction Railway Company's charter was revised in 1878, and over the next three to five years built its line southwest from St. Isidore Junction, to Ste. Martine, Howick, Brysons, Ormstown, Huntingdon and St. Agnes, QC, (railway spelling) and on to Fort Covington and Massena, NY. Sandy reminded me that this line never did get to Valleyfield as I had previously mentioned.

The 1907 Grand Trunk Railway System Inventory of Structures lists a single storey wood frame station and freight house at Laprairie. It was defined as a second class structure 20 feet by 83 feet built in 1881. Sandy states that Laprairie latter had an impressive typical two-storey Grand Trunk station, that has been long since demolished.

Speaking of stations, an update on a few of them around the country. In the east, Pugwash, Nova Scotia. That community's two storey brick station was built about 1890 by the Great American & European Short Line Railway. It is now owned by the village of Pugwash and used as their library and is situated next to the Caboose Café, that we mentioned a few months ago. The village of Pugwash is at the end of a 4.6 mile spur off of CN's Oxford Subdivision. Both this subdivision and spur were constructed by the Great American & European Short Line Railway. This company became the Montréal & European Short Line Railway. Later these lines were operated by the Intercolonial Railway as part of the Canadian Government Railways owned lines. The Oxford Subdivision from Pugwash Junction east to Brown's Point, near Pictou has been abandoned and the main remaining rail customer on the line is the salt mine at Pugwash.

New asphalt shingles have been placed on the roof of the CPR station in Woodstock, New Brunswick. The town is in the process of acquiring this station, that has been declared a federal heritage station. Dave Hanson had a wander around this station during the roofing work and commented that the interior had suffered considerable water damage over recent years. Some of the hardwood flooring has buckled and plaster work cracked and spalled. However, having seen the restoration of the Upper Woodstock Court House from a stable and hay barn back to a condition where you expect to find a barrister with his top hat in hand and Ben Franklin spectacles coming down the stairs heading for his horse and buggy.

Going west to the junction of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers in Winnipeg, Manitoba, one finds the large stone station built in 1911 by the Canadian Northern for joint use with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. This four storey station, called the Fort Gary Union Station for part of its existence, has been declared a heritage depot under the federal Heritage Stations Protection Act and is now used by VIA Rail, with CN Rail occupying much of the buildings office space. Gone are the myriad of station and yard tracks from the area between the station and the west bank of the Red River. The few remaining remnants of the former low level freight line are expected to be gone in the next couple of years with the reconstruction of the Main Street bridges over the two rivers, immediately south of the

station. While not much work has been done to the main circular ticket lobby, the waiting room to the rear has had restoration work done, including new seating designed to give the appearance of period benches.

The stables south east of the station used to house the railways' hay-burners during the days when the railways really used horsepower to deliver express has been converted in a market building housing a number of shops, boutiques and restaurants.

Also in the west, it was interesting to note that CN recently published Notice that they want authority to sell their Hanna, Alberta station to the Canadian Northern Society. This one and one half storey frame second class station was built by the Canadian Northern in 1913. It was a divisional point on the Calgary – Saskatoon line and is the dividing point between CN's Oyen and Drumheller Subdivisions. It presently has its windows covered with plywood, while a look around inside shows ample examples of CN's colour scheme on the main floor along with the recently moved out look. A walk up the wooden stairs to the second floor gives the impression of walking back in time. The rooms on the second floor with their half vertical, half steeply sloping walls with the appearance that they had not seen much use except for storage for many years. Charles Bohi in his book, *Canadian National's Western Depots* points out that the Hanna station "... is an example of a later Second Class depot. Gable, rather than hip, dormers make later Second Class buildings appear larger and less rounded than early versions."

Before we leave Hanna, the following is part of an article from *Telegraph Lines*, by Alex Campbell titled, *CN roundhouse lives on – but locomotives are long gone*. The low taxes of a remote town such as Hanna, Alberta, and the alternative uses such a building can be put to (for example, a livestock yard) have contributed to the continued survival of this classic Canadian National Railway roundhouse.

The coal mines at Drumheller are the reason that such a large roundhouse was required at Hanna, for they generated a large amount of traffic for the CNR.

Easily visible is the older, 5-stall section beside the newer, and larger, 10-stall section.

The turntable is still in place, as is the trackwork leading into the roundhouse. The foundations for coal and water towers are still visible as well.

The inside of the building is a maze of holding pens for cattle these days. Such a sight makes it hard to generate a mental image of the building in the days of steam.

Alex continues "... An equally large CNR roundhouse exists at Biggar, Saskatchewan to this day (it is now a turkey barn), but very few other CNR roundhouses exist. The facility at Regina, Saskatchewan fell to the wrecker's ball only last year. The one in Brandon, Manitoba was demolished in the early sixties. The roundhouse at Rivers, Manitoba, was torn down in the late sixties."

BOOKS:

Here are details on how to order any of the three new books that we have become aware of recently. Denis Taylor writes that Peter Wilson, has a new 121 page, 6" x 9" spiral bound book titled *Someone's in the Kitchen with Dinah*. Peter Wilson has collected and edited a series of steam railroad stories as told by retired railroaders from the Trenton, Ontario area. This book, *Someone's in the Kitchen with Dinah*, is available for \$10.00 including taxes and mailing, from the Trent Port Historical Society, The Dufferin Centre, 344 Dufferin Avenue, Trenton, Ontario K8V 5G9.

The next two books will give you a chance to practice your French. These books are also stories of railway life, including a look at the steam age and the men who made sure the trains rolled, rain or shine, but are presently only available in French. These books, *Cheminots Qui Êtes-Vous?* and *Portraits de Cheminots*, were written by Monsieur Jean Gosselin and priced at \$8.00 and \$10.00 respectively plus taxes and shipping. The total price for the two is \$21.25 from Monsieur Jean Gosselin, 3357 Philomène Joubier, Charney (Québec) G6X 1L9.

RAPIDO ESSEX STATION

The Town of Essex has been trying to purchase the Michigan Central station on the original Canada Southern line in their community, but federal approval has not yet been given to the railway for its sale. This field stone depot is still sitting in its original location. This 96 year-old station that survived the August 10, 1907 explosion that demolished numerous adjacent buildings had some work done on it last fall as the town cleaned some of the exterior and repointed the mortar work around the stones. The town, with some provincial funding, hopes to turn the station into a local artist's gallery.

MAPLE STATION PURCHASE

Ian Caie has sent along some information about GO Transit wanting to purchase the 140 year old GTR Maple station on CN's Newmarket Subdivision from CN Rail. GO Transit would like to rehabilitate this station on the northern outskirts of Toronto similar to that they undertook at the former CN Aurora depot. This station was remodelled 90 years ago. GO Transit plan to restore the exterior of the station to its turn-of-the-century Grand Trunk Railway appearance. They would renovate the interior to provide for improved ticket sales and the passenger waiting facilities as well as add washrooms and make the station fully accessible to the physically disabled. Go Transit and CN is in the process of getting federal approval for the proposed sale.

OSHAWA RAILWAY BUILDING DEMOLISHED

Ian Caie also informs us that the Oshawa Railway freight station and offices, located on Athol Street East, in Oshawa were recently demolished. Originally built in 1927, the building had not been used for a number of years. The building still had a track leading to it off CN's Oshawa Railway North Spur at Bruce Street. CN's Oshawa Railway North Spur runs north from CN's Kingston Subdivision (Oshawa Yard). This line, part of the former Oshawa Railway's electric line that went north to connect with the Canadian Northern Ontario Railway's line near Taunton Road and Simcoe Street North, is mainly used to serve GM's Oshawa's North Plant, although the track still extends northward to provide occasional rail service to a north end lumber yard.

Next Month:

CP LaSalle station still standing

East in Alberta, the relocation of CN's Vegreville Subdivision from downtown Fort Saskatchewan (15 miles east of Edmonton) a few years ago has permitted a number of urban changes. The Vegreville Subdivision was constructed by the Canadian Northern Railway and paralleled the main street through Fort Saskatchewan. The town's single storey station was constructed in 1905 on their main street. It was built as one of less than a half of dozen CNOR stations following Special Station Plan 100-19. This station is now in the process of being restored

thanks to the efforts of several groups and businesses.

The one storey brick CN station in Stewiacke, Nova Scotia, while it was turned down for designation as a heritage station is still used by some of the Railway's maintenance forces. This station constructed by the CNR in 1926 sets on the east side of CN's Bedford Subdivision in this Nova Scotia village.