

The Ferrophiliac Column Conducted by Just A. Ferronut

January 1993

Welcome to 1993 and all the best for the coming year. I would like to thank everyone who sent in information or questions over the last year. I must apologize for not answering all of them, although I can assure you they are finding their way into my computer's data banks. With the help of our Toronto staff and a bit of better organisation on my part these computer records are both growing and become better indexed. This year, since I have received sizable amounts of new information, I plan to do updates on a number of rail sites that we have written about in the past, such as Napanee, Renfrew and Orillia.

It looks like I spoke too soon last month when I mentioned about the lack of books on Maritime Railways. You guessed it, another book has been released. This book, *Railways of New Brunswick* is written by David Nason, a retired Canadian Pacific Railway employee. It is, to paraphrase him, a primer on the railways of Canada's picture province by the sea. Mr. Nason points out that at its peak, New Brunswick had more miles of railway per capita, than any other area in the western world. While this book is not a complete history, and there are a few misleading statements, it is a worthwhile addition to any rail enthusiast's library. *Railways of New Brunswick* is published by New Ireland Press, 217 Aberdeen Street, Fredericton E3B 1R6, and is for sale at \$12.95 from Coles' bookstores in New Brunswick.

Santa also favoured me with a couple of other railway books. One is Elizabeth A. Wilmot's *When Any Time Was Train Time*. This book, like her earlier works is a photo-journalistic book for browsing and the coffee table. Ms. Wilmot has selected a few dozen central Canada communities with railways and presents a capsulized nostalgic look at their early days and life around the railway with plenty of appropriate photos. The other book that I got is still somewhat of a mystery. It is a soft covered book of railway verse named *Songs of a Roadhog* by Wendall Morrell. The mystery is that it doesn't carry any information as to who the publisher is. This book is Canadian and the writer has covered a broad range of topics in his verses. Perhaps one of our readers can supply more information.

George Horner has forwarded some extra data on the former Canadian Northern/Canadian National Sellwood subdivision/branch near Capreol, Ontario, that we wrote about a couple of times last year. George not only confirms that Sellwood was spelled with both a single and double 'l' in various railway documents, but as the following indicates, he wonders whether Canadian National had difficulty in deciding which to use. A 1923 timetable shows one passenger train and one mixed train making a round trip between Milnet and Sellwood. A 1924 timetable shows the same spelling but only one mixed train making the round trip. However, the Canadian National Railway *List of Stations and Designating Numbers*, dated July 1, 1924 shows: Selwood Subdivision – 3351 Milnet, 3352 International, 3353 Selwood, Ontario. These designations and spelling also appear in the July 1, 1927 issue of *List of Stations and Designating Numbers*. The *Canadian Official Railway Guide* for June 1932, states that Selwood is 7 miles away from the nearest train service (passenger – JAC) at Milnet. The Canadian National *List of Stations and Designating Numbers*, dated July 1, 1947 lists: Ruel Subdivision – 3351 Milnet, 3353 Sellwood Branch. Twelve years later, the June 1, 1958 list reads: Ruel Subdivision – 52692 Capreol, 52811 Lowphos Junction Switch, 52848 Milnet; Lowphos Spur – 52811 Lowphos Junction Switch,

52818 Moose Mountain. The July 1, 1967 list makes no mention of a spur or branch. It just shows: Ruel Subdivision – 52818 Moose Mountain, 52848 Milnet.

George closed with a couple of questions relating to the Sellwood area. One is straight mathematical – What was the location of Gowganda Junction? The September 18, 1910, Canadian Northern Ontario Railway employees timetable lists Gowganda Junction (mile 315 from Toronto) as 2.8 miles north of Thorlake. George's second question was why was Gowganda Junction called a junction? I mentioned to George that I only reason I could think of would be in relation to the rail line under construction north of Gowganda Junction. Can any of our readers provide us with more information.

The CNR surprised me on the way to New Brunswick for my winter sojourn. Rail traffic between Montréal and Lévis was quiet, not uncommon for daylight hours on a weekday. About 20 miles east of Lévis, at the west switch of the St-Vallier siding, there was a maintainer working, so I didn't expect to see any rail traffic. However, I had barely passed the east turnout of this siding at about mile 89.5 Montmagny Subdivision when I met a westbound Laser train being pulled by 2404 and 2417. I glanced at my watch and noted it was 1355 hours. The surprise came about 10 minutes later when I glanced east along the railway as I passed over it at the west end of the community of Montmagny, about mile 79. Far down the long tangent was the headlight of another westbound. Needless to say, I got off the Autoroute and headed for the nearest level crossing. I got to one at mile 77.77 just as 3 – 9600s flashed by leading another double-stack. My calculation of the distances and our speeds would put these two trains about 25 miles apart.

I got to Edmundston about 1800 hours just as a westbound was snaking through the yard. An eastbound double stack with 9456 on the nose was waiting for clearance.

I always find time on these trips to visit the libraries and browse for some of their secrets. The lack of snow this year also helped in spotting long abandoned road beds.

A lot of details on our railway history seems to like to stay buried and while librarians get plenty of requests about genealogy, they are often a little surprised when one asks about local railway history. However, this research usually pays off with a few more pieces added to the puzzles. In New Brunswick, I have been pursuing the history of railways along the Saint John River for several years. We had a map of the mid-valley area in the November 1991, *Newsletter*, to accompany David Hanson's article on Canadian Pacific's steam operation in the area. This map showed the general location of a couple of abandoned portions of the New Brunswick Railway.

The New Brunswick Railway as you may recall was a valley line that followed the east side of the Saint John River from Devon (Fredericton) to Perth. It crossed the St. John river at Perth-Andover and again at Grand Falls to finally end at Edmundston. This line is leased by CP Rail and the couple of remaining portions have in recent years been operated by its subsidiary, the Canadian Atlantic Railway. These portions have made the news in the last few months as the railway and its main customer, McCains Foods has fought over abandonment which appears to be imminent.

The northern 30 miles of the New Brunswick Railway from Cyr Junction to Edmundston was abandoned

in the early 1930's. I have mentioned locating parts of this abandoned right-of-way various times. This trip with no snow or leaves, I was able to trace almost the full 30 miles, except for a small section near the south edge of Edmundston. It is probably the easiest to spot or locate, working from Cyr Junction northward. The key in following this line is to remember that the present Highway #2 covers the roadbed in several places.

In examining the Grafton area on the east bank of the river at Woodstock, about a half of mile of the original roadbed of the line that was abandoned about 100 years ago is still visible in front of a cemetery and in several front yards.

The original line to Grafton (later connected by a bridge to the New Brunswick and Canada Railway (also leased by CP) in Woodstock) was a spur. The main line ran along the higher ground well back from the Saint John River north to near Hartland where it descended a steep grade to the river's edge. The junction for this spur, called Woodstock Junction, was abandoned about 80 years ago and had a substantial station and other rail facilities, however, its exact location had eluded me. I have now found better information on its location, so a hike is in order for my summer trip to the area.

The second railway in the mid-valley area was the Saint John and Quebec Railway that was planned to connect the Grand Trunk Pacific/National Transcontinental Railway (CNR) near Grand Falls with the harbour at Saint John. This made sense, but I was often puzzled as to why its northern terminal wound up instead at Centreville, in the middle of a potato field near the border with Maine. The SJ&Q was constructed during the teens after years of debate as a line to compete with the CPR. This period was also the heyday of Mackenzie and Mann, who were busy developing their transcontinental railway. They were proposing their rail access to New Brunswick from the area of Sherbrooke, Quebec across northern Maine, similar to, but north of the CPR. It was planned that they would connect to the SJ&Q at Centreville and either acquire the line or running rights to Saint John. Of course the Canadian Northern didn't make many inroads in the east and the SJ&Q remained a dead end branch until it was abandoned in the 1980s, but now one more question answered.

Before I leave the Woodstock – Hartland area, I came across an interesting story about the railway and fire departments in the two communities. Shortly after midnight on a Sunday in the spring of 1907 a major fire engulfed a substantial portion of the Village of Hartland, some 13 rail miles from the Town of Woodstock. The Hartland firefighters quickly agreed they would need help, so a message was sent to Woodstock for assistance. At this time, Woodstock had a horse drawn steam powered pumper for fire fighting. The CPR was contacted, but since it was Sunday night, all their engines were sitting cold in the roundhouse. It was reported that while it took over three hours to get an engine steamed up, loaded with the steam pumper, equipment and men, they made the 13 mile trip including slow orders over two major bridges in 22 minutes. The completely exhausted Hartland firefighters were more than pleased with the arrival of the Woodstock firefighters and their equipment. A closing footnote is that credit was given to the Woodstock firefighters for saving the Hartland covered bridge during this fire.

Another small New Brunswick Railway that I have mentioned several times, is the short lived Albert Southern Railway in the south-east part of the province. This line, constructed from Albert to Alma in Albert County was under-funded and plagued with financial problems from the start. It only operated for a few years in the 1890's and there are many unanswered questions about

it. One answer I found this trip related to the question as to whether it actually connected the Salisbury & Harvey Railway (CNR's former Albert Subdivision) at Albert. I located a plan showing the location of the connecting track and a news clipping of an Dominion Day excursion in 1892, that operated from Hillsborough (on the S&H) to Alma (on the ASR). A July, 1890 news clipping indicate that a crew of 70 men were working on the construction of the ASR line, so this narrows down the date of its opening. In discussing this line with a lady from the area, she recalls being told as a child of an accident involving a bridge collapse that helped cause the early demise of this line. Should you be in Alma, their village information centre used to have a photo of a ASR locomotive working a local lumber yard.

Winter Carnivals are taken for granted in many Canadian communities, but as a Montréal Gazette article that Doug Brown passed along, there were times when even the major railways objected to them. The Gazette refers to an article it originally carried on December 7, 1907. At that time the City of Montréal was trying to organise a winter carnival. It had held seven such carnivals in the 1880s, but none in the intervening years. The 1907 article continues "If the two great Canadian railways (Grand Trunk & Canadian Pacific – JAC) have anything to do with it, there will be no winter carnival in Montréal this winter They have for many years past been spending huge sums to advertise Canada as a country of fertile farms and splendid wheat-growing climate, and after years of patient and expensive work have gradually worn down the ancient idea that prevailed in England and Europe that Canada was a country of ice and snow, most undesirable as a place to live in. After doing all this work, they are loath to see it undone by the winter carnival which, they say, would advertise the Dominion to the world once more as a place where the frost king reigns supreme most of the year."

Moving west into Ontario, Howard Smith has written and asked whether the Toronto & York Radial Railway ever had any spurs west of its main line south of Keswick in the area at the south end of Cook Bay of Lake Simcoe. I can't locate any record of such a rail line but as a double check, we decided to ask the interurban specialists. Howard came across a suspicious embankment with a row of utility poles along it that appears as if it may have been a railway roadbed, but in the wrong place for the main-line of the T&YRR, hence the question. This embankment is located near the west end of York County Road #32 west of County Road #12, getting near the alignment of Bayview Avenue and heads north towards Keswick. This is over two concessions west of the interurban's mainline, that was east of County Road #8 (Woodbine Avenue) at this location. So, perhaps some readers can advise whether there may have been a spur in this area or not.

Doug Page, our Hamilton man sent along an article from the Spectator concerning the recycling of the CN Station at Jarvis. This 81 year old station was built with double bay windows since Jarvis was at the junction of the Great Western's "Airline," (CN's Cayuga Subdivision) and the Hamilton & Lake Erie Railway's line from Hamilton to Port Dover (CN's Hagersville Subdivision). The alignment of this line at the junction changed with the formation of the Canadian National. The 9.1 mile portion of this line from Jarvis to Port Dover was abandoned late in 1932. In the early 1980's CN realigned its Hagersville Subdivision between Garnet and Jarvis to provide a better access to the new industrial growth centre of Nanticoke. CN, based on Ontario's proposal for a gigantic industrial city, purchased enough land as part of their track re-alignment for the future construction of a small hump yard. The Spectator points out that the last passenger train used the Jarvis

station in 1957.

This depot has been used by various railway forces over the years, but with the 1985 purchase of the Canada Southern, rail traffic and maintenance patterns started to change. CN operates about one train a day on the Hagersville Subdivision and the Cayuga Subdivision relies on Norfolk Southern's four train movements per day for its existence. Doug advises that these NS trains are numbers 327 & 328 in the morning and 145 & 146 in the evening.

Ms. Pat Payne, president of the Jarvis Board of Trade indicated that the townfolk cherish this country station and were concerned that it would be demolished, but fate has ruled otherwise. Sam and Annemiek Gowling had operated a bookstore in Cayuga for years and when their landlord cancelled their lease and they weren't sure where to go. On speculation, they contacted CN Rail, and to their surprise a rental agreement was put in place and the station has become The Neat Little Bookshop. The shop keepers have converted the old freight room to hold – what else? – train books and non-fiction books. The waiting room now is filled with romance books and Mrs. Gowling has set up an office in the south operator's bay with a view along the Cayuga Subdivision.

GO Transit is requesting CN obtain approval to permit them to purchase its Maple station on the Newmarket Subdivision on the northern outskirts of Toronto. This station was originally constructed 140 years ago and was remodelled 90 years ago. GO Transit would like to renovate the station to fit their current needs, but would like to own the structure before doing so.

Three other Ontario stations that are setting bureaucratic limbo are CASO Essex, CN West Toronto and CN St. Clair Avenue. The Town of Essex has been trying to purchase the Canada Southern station in their community, but approval has not yet been given to the railway for its sale. The West Toronto station, a decaying redundant structure is the worse off, caught in what I would call a monetary/bureaucratic limbo. In addition, its location, squeezed between the CN Weston and CP MacTier subdivisions doesn't help. Interest has been expressed in the depot by different groups over the years, but lack of committed money has prevented any action. Federal authorities prefer to see resolution and agreement between the railway and local parties on the various issues before making a ruling. This agreement has not been pushed mainly due to the current economy, so the building sits deteriorating. The CN St. Clair Avenue Station, being a newer station has been better able to sit out the current recession. At present, since it is not causing any problems, there has been no pressure to attempt to obtain approvals to dispose of it.

Next Month:

CP LaSalle station still standing
CP station at Woodstock - roof etc.