

Just A. Ferronut's May - June 1996

Railway Archaeology

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Several years ago, my friend and our fellow member Keith Pratt asked for some help in trying to locate a replacement copy of a book he had lost. The book was Donald MacKay's *ANTICOSTI – The Untamed Island*. Following the finding of a copy, we were discussing Anticosti, and a bit about its railways. Our discussions raised more questions than either of us were able to answer, so it was time to start collecting information. In addition to the material in Donald MacKay's book, the search turned up a 1973 article by Ray Corley and Major Warren Anderson in the CRHA's *Canadian Rail*. *Canadian Rail* carried another Anticosti article in 1980 by Robert Samson. This digging turned up another book on Anticosti, *Époque des Menier à Anticosti, 1895 - 1926*, by Lionel Lejeune, published in 1987. A request to Doug Brown brought a copy of his father's, Robert R., notes on Anticosti. It was then time to flip through some old magazines. This search showed how small the world is, *Canadian National Railways Magazine*, carried an article on the island and its life style in 1929, but then in the March 1937 issue, they carried an article by none other than Keith Pratt on this forgotten railway. Finally *Canadian Railway and Marine World* came through with a couple of references in 1912 and 1913. So armed with all the information collected by the above people lets go back and have a look at Anticosti Island and its Second Railway.

Anticosti Island was discovered by Cartier in 1534, and in 1680, the King of France granted it as a seigneurie to Louis Jolliet. It remained in the Jolliet family until the fall of New France in 1763. For the next eleven years it was part of Newfoundland, being returned to Canada in 1774. Anticosti, 135 miles (217 km) long and between 10 and 30 miles (16 to 48 km) wide, is larger than Prince Edward Island, (8,000 km² to 5,657 km²), but its rugged terrain, and poorer soil made it less inviting to settlers. These features come from the geological fact that the island is a projecting peak of the old Laurentian chain of mountains, and is still connected to the North Shore by a submerged granite bar across the Jacques Cartier Strait. This strait has been a hazard to marine navigation and between 1870 and 1880 claimed not less than 144 ships.

While our railway story starts about the beginning of the 20th century, the island was the site of mystery and intrigue during the early part of the 19th century. Two individuals were mainly responsible, and while the aurora over the island was dark, one individual was a gentlemen and the other not. Rimouski-born, Louis-Olivier Gamache, a trapper, became a local legend from his efforts to protect, from invading North Shore poachers, the furs that he cached on Anticosti. He spread the rumour that he was able to communicate with the devil, and often worked for him. His sham worked, and the "fame" of his "supernatural" powers, including rumours of him being a pirate, spread along the lower St. Lawrence River. In later years there was much local folklore about Gamache.

Anticosti's real notorious inhabitant, a giant mulatto, arrived along with some forty odd sailors and passengers when the ship *Granicus*, was wrecked on Anticosti in May 1828. The mystery surrounding this missing ship came to light when a rescue party arrived on the island some time later. They found gruesome traces of a massacre. Their search turned up numerous human body

parts. They finally came across the mulatto, lying dead in a hammock, with partially eaten body parts around. They concluded that he died of indigestion from over-eating.

The factual stories, rumours and folk-lore all added to the shrouds surrounding Anticosti.

Attempts were made to colonize Anticosti, but these did not succeed, and a failure in 1872, could be said was what started to open the curtain on our story. Following this 1872 failure, the island was finally sold for \$101,000 to an English businessman named Francis Stockwell. He soon went bankrupt trying to develop the island, for again in an article datelined Ottawa, May 26, 1889 listed the island for sale. In 1895, a French chocolate manufacturer and millionaire, named Senator Henri Menier purchased the island for \$165,000. While our interest is the railway and business side of Menier's investment, his initial interest in Anticosti was mainly for its development as a "sportsman's paradise." Reports state that Senator Menier sent Martin Zédé and a Dr. Schmidt to Anticosti, to check it out. They found the island blanketed with myriads of blood-thirsty mosquitoes. The Doctor's conclusion was that the mosquitoes were starving, and needed feeding, if humans were to survive on the island. Martin Zédé, who was to become Menier's governor of the island imported hares to feed the mosquitoes. Dr. Schmidt's later examination of a hare led him to conclude that, that his theory was correct, since the hare had hundred of mosquitoes bits. While indications are that Senator Menier imported deer, moose, foxes and reindeer to enhance the game population for him and his sportsmen cronies, the local lore was that these imports were to feed the mosquitoes.

With the arrival of Senator Henri Menier, Anticosti, with its few settlers, became his large fiefdom, despite the 1854 law that abolished seigniorial rights in Canada.

The Senator's men first established their main community at English Bay, at the west end of Anticosti, presently called Baie Sainte-Claire. They started work in the spring of 1896 with the construction of the essentials; a saw mill, a few houses and a warehouse. To help communications with the outside world, a small wharf was built for their ships. This short-lived venture boasted Anticosti's first railway. This was about a mile of the 1'-11½" gauge, horse drawn "Decauville" system that connected the wharf with the various parts of village. It was quickly realized that Baie Sainte-Claire did not provide good shelter for ships, so, in 1899, the Senator decided to move his community around the end of the island, and relocate it in Ellis Bay, with its deep water, on the south-west coast. The site selected within the depths of Ellis Bay, that would become Port Menier, had been known as Gamache.

Senator Menier, a true gentleman, and "grand seigneur", immediately commenced the development of his modern community at Port Menier. It would eventually boast in addition to housing, well stocked shops, church, schools, medical facilities, telegraph and telephone services, and a carpenter shop where anything from a box to a schooner could be built. Two major landmarks, a 4000 foot long wharf, and Senator's Menier's luxurious 30-room "Château Menier", were the highlights of this community.

The wharf at Port Menier was constructed in stages, and

Robert Samson in his article outlined the use of another little Decauville narrow gauge railway in the construction of this wharf. This system, received in 1904 a 0-4-0 tank engine from the Decauville Works, Petitbourg, France.

The Standard Gauge Railway

While Senator Menier enjoyed his hunting and fishing that he shared with his associates, the changing world was pressuring the business aspects of his Anticosti investment. The demand for wood and lumber products was outstripping the limited production of their earlier days on the island. Anticosti has many streams and small rivers, great for fishing, but unfortunately, not the best suited for log drives, especially since they all emptied into the Gulf of St. Lawrence around the island. Therefore, the best way to collect the logs for export, was by railway. The thrust of the wood export was on pulp for the paper industry. In 1912, 35,000 cords of pulp were made ready for export, with much of it destined for the United States.

During 1909 and 1910 work was undertaken to construct a standard gauge (4'-8½") railway from Port Menier towards Lake Zédé. The first portion, about 15 miles was completed by October 15, 1910. The October, 1912 issue of *Canadian Railway and Marine World* defines the railway as standard gauge, 15 miles with 4 locomotives, 1 passenger car, 20 dump cars and 1 steam shovel. A report in the August, 1913 of the same magazine reports the railway's main line as being 18 miles, with a 9 mile branch, for a total of 27 miles. The railway was substantially built, with run of pit ballast and steel rails of 50 and 70 pounds. The railway was very crooked with some steep grades.

The rail line extended for the full length of the 4,000 foot wharf on its main level, some 10 or so feet above the water level. A special feature of this wharf was that in addition to the track on the main level, it had a second track, some twenty-odd feet above the main level. This second track was supported on a trestle work that extended for about half the length on the wharf and then sloping down to the main level near the shore. This design permitted a string of dump cars loaded with pulpwood to be pushed up on the upper level where they would automatically discharge their loads into "iron pockets" (hoppers) and thence directly into the hatches of the ships.

While information is sketchy, it can be assumed that as with most railways serving a lumber operation, that spurs and some track alignment would change over the course of the lumbering operation.

The development of the railway and wood industry on Anticosti Island were barely off the ground when they suffered two major blows. In 1913, Senator Henri Menier died, leaving his less pro-Anticosti brother, Gaston in charge. The second blow of course was the Great War (WWI). While these slowed things down on Anticosti, Gaston's interest in the franc over sports, helped ensure the rail operation survival.

The demand for wood kept the Anticosti Island operation going, but not with the care that Senator Henri had given. Finally in July 1926, Gaston Menier's concern for the franc got the better of him, and he sold Anticosti Island including the Château Menier and his brother's collection of art treasures for \$6,500,000 to a group of Canadian companies composed of Wayagamack Pulp and Paper Company, Port Alfred Pulp and Paper Company and Saint Maurice Valley Corporation, part of the Canada Power and Paper Company. Two subsidiary companies were formed, the Anticosti Corporation for the forest operation and island based resources and the Anticosti Shipping Company to take

charge of Menier's marine fleet, that included: *Fleurus*, *Cherisy* and *Jolliet*, and two wood carriers the *Hullman* and the *McKee*. In 1931, the Anticosti Corporation became the Consolidated Paper Corporation Limited and in 1967, the Consolidated-Bathurst Limited. After a number of forest fires and a decline in the production of forest produces in the early 1970s, the island was sold the Province of Quebec in 1974.

Following the death of Senator Henri, the railway struggled on. This struggle can best be gleaned from the locomotive use data, and the extensive storage of locomotives under Gaston Menier probably best reflects his struggle. While the 1926 sale caused some revival, equipment age and the increased wood production would take its toll on the railway. The Anticosti Corporation considered that the island could produce 400,000 cords of pulp per year, while it had only reached about the three-quarter mark. The Anticosti Railway along with the world went in a crash mode in 1929 with the start of the great depression. With no lumbering, there was no need for a railway, and the railway except for about 4,000 feet between the wharf and a warehouse was basically abandoned about 1930, although some limited operation did take place in the early years of the 1930's.

At the start of the depression a second-hand 120 H.P. gas-motor Vulcan locomotive was received from E. B. Eddy Company, Hull, Québec. Within a year, the motor failed, and the locals in the Port Menier shop installed a new 100 H.P. gas-motor in it and it continued to the final end of rail service in the fall of 1947. This modified unit could move 3 car loads of freight. This gas-motor locomotive was also used to carry passengers in the railway's small open passenger coach between the village and the wharf. From its arrival until the mid-1930's this gas-motor was assisted at times by the various Anticosti Railway steam locomotives.

While as indicated the short section of railway near the wharf was kept until the fall of 1947, the five steam locomotives, most of the rail cars, etc., were scrapped in 1939 and shipped off the island late that year.

So, while it can be said that the standard gauge Anticosti Island Railway only had 20 years of substantial operation, it took another 17 to finally kill it.

Before we leave the Anticosti Island Railway, let's have a look at its locomotives and rolling stock. The location of this railway, and its ownership have probably helped to cause a few a few of the discrepancies in these lists.

Anticosti Locomotive Number 1 was built in August 1910 by the Montreal Locomotive Works (Serial No. 48736). This engine was delivered as a wood-burner, and some photographs show it with a spark arrester extension that gives somewhat the appearance of a slender diamond stack. She weighed 44,000 lbs, with 10 x 18" cylinders, 34" drivers and 150 pounds steam pressure. This engine was converted to coal-burning in 1912. At the same time its tender, that had arrived with 4 wheels, was fitted with 2 regular 4 wheel trucks. As indicated she did some switching around Port Menier as late as 1936. This engine was part of the 1939 scrapping.

In 1912, two Heisler engines arrived on Anticosti. Engine No. 2, while not new, was nearly so. This 90,000 pound engine had 33" drivers in a 4+4 wheel arrangement, carried a boiler pressure of 150 lbs. with 12 x 10" cylinders. This engine was stored between late 1921 until 1926. It then resumed service until the 1930 shut down. It like No. 1 was part of the 1939 scrapping.

Engine No. 3, a 100,000 lb. engine, like No. 2, was a Heisler, except it was new and had 36" drivers and 13 x 12" cylinders. No. 3 was out of service between 1923 and 1926. It is reported to have been back in service between 1926 and 1934. Scrapped as part of the 1939 scrapping.

Anticosti No. 4 was a new Baldwin 4-6-0 that arrived new in 1912. This 150,000 lb. locomotive carried 150 lb. boiler pressure, had 17 x 24" cylinders and 44" driving wheels. This engine seen storage from December 1919 to 1926, when it was put back in service until the end of 1930. Scrapped in 1939.

Anticosti No. 5, was a former Quebec and Lake St. John Railway engine. It had been their No. 14, indications are it was rebuilt in 1904 by Fitz-Hugh Luther Company. When Anticosti acquired it in 1917, it was in poor condition. After some repairs it was put in service until the end of 1918. In 1926 after about 8 years of storage, the shops at Port Menier built a new cylinder for No. 5 and she went back into service until the end of 1930. This 2-6-0 weighed 150,000 lbs, and carried a boiler pressure of 150 pounds. Her cylinders were 18 x 24" and drivers 57". This locomotive joined the other five steam locomotives in the 1939 scrapping.

In addition to the locomotives, 5 steam and 1 gas, the Anticosti Railway had a steam shovel and steam crane.

The steam shovel was build in 1911 by Alco (Serial No. 48414), arrived new and helped with some of the final construction of the railway. The Anticosti Railway month-balled this steam crane in 1920, and remained on the island to join in the 1939 scrapping.

In 1927, a new 16 ton Industrial steam crane arrived from Bay City Michigan to join the island railway. This crane remained in service until the summer of 1946, when she tipped over on her side in the canal at Port Menier. She was scrapped and shipped out by boat in 1949.

The original 20 dump cars and 1 passenger car reported in 1912 had become a rolling stock roster reported in 1937 to include: about 10 steel cars, 2 or 3 box cars fitted up for boarding cars, about 20 dump cars and 25 wooden cars, about 30 by 92 feet, that were scrapped with the locomotives in 1939. Mr. Samson in his 1980 write up, has a slightly higher total.

So with the counting of cars, we close our look at the Anticosti Railway. As mentioned this is a rework of the research of several parties, to whom I am grateful. Since, as mentioned there are a number of gaps in the records and I believe we would all appreciate and additional information any of our readers could add.

The Book Scene

There are a couple of recent books of interest to railway and transit enthusiasts, and a couple of others that are nearing the end of the production pipeline.

First, a book on an intriguing subject that played hand in glove with railways, their development and operations. No, not another book on locomotives, but one on railway telegraphy. To mark the 150th anniversary of Canada's first telegraph company, Robert G. Burnet has just released his new 240 page soft-covered book *Canadian Railway Telegraph History*. October 26, 1996 will mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of The Toronto, Hamilton, Niagara & St. Catharines Electro-magnetic Telegraph Company, so a timely release. At this point, I have only read a few snippets of *Canadian Railway Telegraph History*, and while the telegraphy gang can lose me by simply discussing telegram categories, the tie-in with railway history has answered a couple of questions, and of course the many photographs bring back many

fond memories. It is also straightening out my perennial telegraph confusion – the relationships between, and the hierarchy of the different telegraph companies in Canada. I have noted a couple cases of the standard complaint with many of the smaller printers, misplaced captions. I only noted this because the captions were very descriptive, therefore, this helped get them straightened out. Over all it looks like a worthwhile book for both the telegraphy and rail enthusiast.

Should you be interested in obtaining more details about *Canadian Railway Telegraph History*, contact Telegraph Key & Sounder, either at PO Box 40526, 5230 Dundas Street West, Etobicoke, Ontario M9B 6K8; or E-Mail rrrobbie@idirect.com.

Another recent release is *THE TTC STORY - The First Seventy-five Years*, by Mike Filey with photos selected by Ted Wickson. This is a 170 page, soft-covered book in a landscape format. While the book is intended for the publicity of the Toronto Transit's 75 years of existence, and is concentrated on that Commission, it does provide a good look at many of the changes around Toronto, including a few related to rail, interurban and harbour ferry boats. Two things strikes one when first looking at this book, it is laid out in a chronological order. This means one can home in on the TTC for a given year or period. The second difference is not only the use of lesser known photographs, but those providing more of a look at the scene or action, rather than just roster type shots.

Presently this book is available from W. H. Smith book shops in Toronto, as well as from the TTC, and Ted Wickson.

There are two other books that I understand should be released in the not too distant future.

Mike Leduc, here in Montréal, the 1994 author of *Montreal Island Railway Stations – CN & Constituent Companies*, has just delivered to the printers, his second book covering the stations of Canadian Pacific Railway family on Montreal Island, so for the station fans, this should be a good addition in the next month or so.

The other book project that has come to my attention is that Norman Helm is working towards reissuing his book *IN THE SHADOW OF GIANTS: The Story of The Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo Railway* with numerous revisions and updates that have taken place since his 1977 version. Norm advises that an entire chapter will be devoted to the resurrection of the T.H.& B. Hamilton station in its new role as the new GO Transit Centre.

So, save your pennies, and we will keep you posted as more details on these books become available.