

The Ferrophiliac Column Conducted by Just A. Ferronut

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Now that the first crisp clear days of fall are upon us, its time to fill up the old quill and pen a little more about some of the interesting oddities surrounding our hobby. First, George Horner, our Guelph oracle has pointed out that the *Caboose Café* in Pugwash, Nova Scotia, as mentioned in our July Column, started life as a flat car in 1915, being convert in 1933 to CNR flanger # 56375, not a caboose as the restaurant flyer had stated.

Along with this equipment note, George sent some data concerning the CPR freight shed in Guelph, Ontario that ties in with another interesting story from that community. This building that the CPR abandoned in 1988 as their freight shed was built in the late 1800s as the Speed Skating Rink. The CPR first gained access into Guelph from their Credit Valley line at Guelph Junction over the tracks of the Guelph Junction Railway. This company incorporated in 1884 was leased by the CPR under an agreement dated September 18, 1888. In 1904 the Guelph and Goderich Railway was incorporated to extend the GJR line from its terminus in Guelph to Goderich along with other branches. The Speed Skating Rink was taken over by the CPR to become their freight shed during the period between 1905-1908. Following the 1988 abandonment by the CPR, the City of Guelph acquired this historic structure with plans to turn it into an Arts Centre. However, fire had other plans, for on Saturday, May 18, 1991, the building was destroyed. Only the exterior limestone walls remained after the fire. A collapsing back wall pushed a box car off its track and completed the attack by badly bending in the side of the car. The City has now cleaned up the fire debris from the site and has started preparations to incorporate the remaining walls as part of a new Arts Centre.

Eighty-six years ago in September 1905, saw a very different view of events in Guelph. At that time the CPR had been dealing with the GTR for a year to get the passage over and along a piece GTR track to access the new Guelph and Goderich Railway. The immediate requirement was to get a G&G work train over the Grand Trunk track from the CPR track below Goldie's to the newly laid road of the Guelph and Goderich road above the London Road. This area in question is in the east central portion of the City along the Speed River. The G&G were anxious to get on with their track construction, since that had promised to have their line to Goderich opened by March 1906. You can set your own scene and mood for that late afternoon and night in the middle of September 1905. Mr. Leonard, President of the G&G Railway visited Guelph on the eventful afternoon, surveyed the scene and decided it was time to get his equipment across this GTR obstacle south of London Road in the area of Goldie's mill at once.

So, without delay, a few preliminaries were taken care of in late afternoon, then a G&G gang cut the GTR switches at the London Road and a little south of Goldie's mill, and united them with the CPR at the south end and the Guelph and Goderich road at the north end.

This work required some time, even with a gang working at each end. A connecting track had to be laid, and the track at the south end raised up. The CPR engine nearly got off the track at the CPR connection by the rails spreading, and a couple of hours was necessary to get it fixed up. The work train, an engine, four cars with tracklaying apparatus, was run on the GTR switch next to the mill; then backed down into the lumber yard, and then run onto the GTR track on Cardigan Street, then up to the London Road, where it went onto the G&G's track. The tracks were restored to their original places, and the gangs at

4:30 AM. retired to enjoy the repose that followed hard and rapid work.

We all have heard of this type of story from the mid-eighteen hundreds, but didn't we think that all the Railways had become civilised by the early 1900s, I guess not. The Grand Trunk Railway may not admit that they were consciously trying to keep the CPR south of their Toronto – Sarnia line, but the stories sure looked that way. Since earlier in 1905, the same two players were squabbling a few miles west in Waterloo.

By May 1905, the CPR (GRR) was in the process of establishing new freight yards in Waterloo, and making such other improvements as to enable them to handle a fair share of the town's freight trade. This new yard was being constructed on land on Erb Street near the GTR tracks. Five tracks were planned for the land nearest Erb Street, and would accommodate about thirty cars. The land at the rear of would be fenced off and used as a cattle yard. The old egg shop on the property was being fitted up and for use as a freight office and shed. This would replace their temporary freight office that had been located in a Waterloo Woollen Mill Company warehouse. The yard part was the easy portion of the project.

The problems arose when the CPR tried to build an access line into these freight yards that had to squeeze between the GTR track at the corner of Caroline and Erb Streets, and Mr. Seagram's warehouse. As there was not enough room to do this, the corner of the warehouse for its entire height had to be removed to allow sufficient space to pass. However, the rivalry between the GTR and CPR became evident in a lively manner when on Saturday afternoon, May 27, 1905, a gang of GTR men built about thirty feet of fence on top of the near rail of the new CPR track near the corner of Seagram's warehouse. This action on the part of the GTR prevented the CPR from running along its track to its yard.

On Monday the GTR started to tear up Erb Street apparently with the intent of relocating their track closer to the fence they had erected. The Town of Waterloo, told the GTR to stop and then got an injunction on Tuesday, May 30, against then, for tearing up Erb Street without permission of the town authorities. However, on Tuesday, before this injunction was served, the actions of the Grand Trunk caused considerable excitement in the town.

About 2:00 PM., Tuesday the Town authorities to enforce their instructions ordered seven members of their fire brigade to the scene at Erb Street. They remained on the scene all afternoon and evening to ensure that the orders to discontinue tearing up the street were carried out. They had the water ready to turn on at a moment's notice. It appeared the GTR men, who had orders to get on with the work, did not take kindly to the fire brigade, threats of shooting were made by one GTR employee, but no attention was paid to him, as the firefighters, with a good lot of hose at their back, felt quite secure to deal with them. During the afternoon quite a crowd were gathered about the scene of the dispute. The fire chief had two of his men stay on duty all night until 6:30 AM. the next morning.

The fence which the GTR built on the track of the CPR at the corner of Caroline and Erb streets, was removed sometime during Tuesday night. At the time the two firefighters who were on duty were having their lunch in the building nearby, and it was during their absence that the fence was removed. The next morning it laid at the side of the road. The CPR got their access, but truth must be stranger than fiction.

While the Town of Waterloo may now be a City and the GTR is now the CNR, however, the land area referred in a September 7, 1991 clipping, is still the same. George Horner sent along this clipping from the Kitchener-Waterloo Record, states that the City of Waterloo is expected to exercise its option under a 1987 agreement with the CNR to acquire about 1.16 acres of railway land including the former Waterloo station, south of Erb Street towards Regina Street. This article states that this station had been previously occupied by Ontario Seed. Again how times change.

While speaking of stations, one does think these days in the terms of their preservation and restoration. The Ontario Heritage Foundation, in their recent newsletter *Heritage Dimensions*, point out that work is well under way on the CPR station in Peterborough, Ontario, after several years of delays. This station, originally purchased by the City from CP Rail, has been sold to the Greater Peterborough Chambers of Commerce. Following restoration, the building is expected to house not only the Chamber of Commerce but also the provincial motor vehicle licence bureau, the tourism and convention bureau, and a community meeting room. A September 1991 report from Denis Taylor tells us that the work is well on its way to completion.

Research confirmed that this yellow brick and limestone station was constructed in 1884 and is now the oldest known CPR station in Ontario still in its original location. While considerable restoration work will be undertaken as part of the present project, a slate roof like the one originally capping this structure will not be replaced at this time.

A recent visit to Wallaceburg, gave me the opportunity to get my first look at the relocated C&O station in that community. This former station has been relocated by the Town's Works Department to Dufferin Street in the north west part of town. At least its exterior has been restored and looks as if it should survive for many years. This same trip took me through Petrolia, where the former Grand Trunk Station still stands as the Town's Public Library. One question about Petrolia, what has happened to the former MCRR freight shed? I understood this structure had been located for a number of years as an auto body shop on Tank Street, but my late twilight inspection failed to locate it.

Old railway records are always interesting to peruse. An interesting order issued by the Board of Transport Commissioners in August 1966 permitted the Canadian National Railways to temporarily close its station at Callander, Ontario for three weeks. According to the order, CN claimed it had a shortage of telegraphers and that there was no qualified employees to relieve the agent. The result was they asked for, and got, permission to temporarily close the station for three weeks during the late summer to permit the regular operator to go on vacation.

While writing the material on rails-to-trails for the August Newsletter, I couldn't help but think of our George Meek when thinking of abandoned right-of-ways that had been turned into hydro power line corridors. George, when the opportunity presents itself, likes to remind everyone of some of the oddities in the early days of the construction of hydro-electric transmission lines in Ontario. In the late 1800s and early part of this century, hydro companies had problems in acquiring property for the construction of their transmission lines. Apparently, these companies, unlike railways could not expropriate land for their corridors. The result was that a number of hydro companies either got into a partnership with railways or formed their own railway company in order that they could expropriate land for transmission lines.

Connected with this subject is an interesting historical antenote from Scott Haskill concerning Maintenance Access Hatches, or back in the days that these ones were installed, Manhole Covers. Scott writes, "Under the Ontario Hydro right-of-way, between the TTC's Hillcrest complex and the CP Rail North Toronto Subdivision lie two old, unremarked pieces of urban and technological history. Looking worn and chipped is a manhole cover marked "Toronto Transportation Commission". The "Transportation" in the name dates the cover to before 1954 when the TTC was reorganised upon the advent of Metropolitan government, and "Transit" replaced "Transportation".

There are probably many of the old TTC covers still about in Toronto. What lies nearby is undoubtedly older and more rare. A few feet away is a similarly-aged manhole cover, marked with the initials "T&NPCo". This is the Toronto and Niagara Power Company, an early privately-owned predecessor of Ontario Hydro. The electric transmission right-of-way were the cover lies was assembled by the T&NPC before the 1920s, and was one of the earliest entries into Toronto of hydro-electric power generated at Niagara." This company I believe is the hydro arm of the Toronto, Niagara and Western Railway Company. The T,N&W was incorporated in 1903 as the Toronto & Hamilton Railway Company, and became the T,N&W in 1906 and then part of the Canadian Northern Railway system in 1916. This line is no doubt George Meek's favourite example of the use of railway legislation to establish hydro corridors. This line is immediately north of the CPR North Toronto Subdivision and was touted to become the western access for the CNoR when they were dealing with the CPR over their proposed use of the CPR North Toronto Station. It was this intended agreement that resulted in some references to this station as the 'North Toronto Union Station'. The line of the T,N&W swung slightly northward near CN's Newmarket Subdivision and crossed that north south line near St. Clair Avenue. Reference to the T,N&W also showed up a few years ago as GO Transit was starting to acquire land for its ALRT line north of the CNR west of Oakville. They were looking at using part of the hydro corridor in that area and many of property plans were showing reference back to these early rail lines. While many noises were made over the years about the proposed T,N&W and no doubt some had the aspirations to build it, but this was never carried out. NOW, QUESTIONS FROM THE NORTHERN NOMADS...

Does anyone know about the history of the CP fuel facility spur in Britt, Ontario? The spur leads west off the Parry Sound Subdivision just west (railway south) of the Britt station, at Mile 65.0, towards the harbour at the mouth of the Still River. Just short of the present end of track is a tank farm, which seems to be owned by CP Rail. Diesel fuel is delivered by ship to Britt, and loaded into CP tank cars of the 400200- and 400300-series for the trip to Chapleau in northern Ontario. Because of Chapleau's isolation, the railway must move the diesel fuel itself, rather than dealing with a local supplier. The cars are moved usually by trains 934 and 935 (formerly numbered, and better known as, 954 and 955). CP has a very small fleet of tank cars, apparently used mostly for OCS work; the bulk of tank car business is carried in leased cars or private-owner cars (e.g., Procor and CGTX).

One thing that was not immediately clear on our brief visit was where the ships moor to offload the fuel. Not far west of the town was a small concrete wharf – actually, more like two dolphins connected by a platform than like a wharf. There was no indication of a pipeline, but there looked to be no other docks suitable for even a small tanker.

Beyond the present end of track runs an alignment

which crosses the river and ascends a low hill on the north bank. There, just above the present local government wharf, is a cleared site with a few storage tanks. Was this an older location for the same function as now?