

– E. J. Phelps.

This is it, not only is this the last Ferrophiatic Column for 1989 but it is also the last one of the decade. So is everyone thinking of their new decade resolutions? Will we get out and do those things that we have promised ourselves for so long? It is great to sit and admire someone else's work, but are you going to add a few more winter photos to your collection or perhaps ride one of the soon to vanish VIA trains? Anyway, let's hope everyone has a joyous holiday season and all the best for both 1990 and the 1990s.

The mailbag this month brought a letter from Omer LaVallée adding more on the famous poem "The Lay of the Lost Traveller" by E. J. Phelps. As you may recall Arthur Meggett had sent the original of this poem which had been butchered and used in a story about McAdam, New Brunswick which was carried in October Newsletter. Instead of the one stanza as we published, there are three. While not wanting to bore anyone, I am going to repeat the first stanza here along with the other two that Omer LaVallée sent, so if anyone so wants they will have the complete poem in one place.

'Lay of the Lost Traveller' – Essex Junction, VT.

With saddened face and battered hat
And eye that told of blank despair,
On wooden bench the traveller sat,
Cursing the fate that brought him there.
"Nine hours," he cried, "We've lingered here
With thoughts intent on distant homes,
Waiting for that delusive train
That, always coming, never comes;
'Till, weary, worn,
Distressed, forlorn,
And paralysed in every function,
I hope in hell
His soul may dwell
Who first invented Essex Junction!"

Here Boston waits for Ogdensburg,
And Ogdensburg for Montreal,
And late New York tarrieth,
And Saratoga hindereth all.
From far Atlantic's wave-swept bays
To Mississippi's turbid tide,
All accidents, mishaps, delays
Are gathered here and multiplied.
O fellow man, avoid this spot
As you would plague or Peter Funk shun,
To hope in Hell his soul may dwell,
Who first invented Essex Junction!

And long and late conductors tell,
Of trains delayed or late or slow,
'Till e'en the very engine's bell
Takes up the cry 'No go! No go!'
"O let me from this hole depart
By any route, so't be a long one!"
He cried, with madness in his heart,
To jump aboard a train – the wrong one!
And as he vanished in the gloom,
He shouted with redoubled unction,
"I hope in Hell his soul may dwell
Who first invented Essex Junction!"

Omer also reports that a response to this poem entitled "Reply to the Lost Traveller", was penned by an Essex Junction Postmaster. The reply is considerably longer and appears on page 71 of Volume I (1830-1886) of Robert C. Jones' *The Central Vermont Railway*, published by Sundance in 1981.

Ray Corley added an interesting footnote to my October reference to Sir William MacKenzie and his house in Kirkfield. Sir William had a large 1½ storey summer cottage over at MacKenzie Point on Balsam Lake a few miles east of Kirkfield. Ray said it had been a number of years since he was last there. I have not been able to check out if it is still in existence and if so what is its condition, etc. Can anyone update us?

Last month, I was writing about Lindsay and the Victoria Railway. Well, Ross Gray sent along an article about the arrival of Montreal Locomotive Works built 0-6-0 steam locomotive in Lindsay on November 15, 1989. This locomotive built in September 1912 for the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway who operated it first as their # 42 and later as # 40. It ended its working career as Stelco # 40. It had been saved through the National Museum of Science and Technology in Ottawa. The Museum as part of their program to reorganise its displays, etc. has released several of its charges to different communities on the understanding that these locomotives with be preserved and displayed in enclosed spaces. The 77 year old steam engine had to wait in Ottawa while arrangements with Lindsay were finalized. So after almost a year of wondering if the deal would be finalized, Lindsay, Ontario now has a steam locomotive to help it record and recall its long history as an active railway centre.

While on the subject of Lindsay Railways, I have been given some information that Jay N. Parkes of Richmond Hill, is trying to compile a history on the Victoria Railway. Should anyone consider they have information, etc. that might be useful, let us know and I will pass you name, etc. along to Jay.

Gordon Shaw and Art Clowes were out looking over some of the territory down in the Brantford and Simcoe areas on November 25, 1989. They passed on several of their observations. In Otterville, they advise that the old Otterville Station (See May 1989, Newsletter) is gone and a new building of about the same size is under construction on the site. Does anyone know what happened? Just north of the Air Line (CN Cayuga Subdivision) in Simcoe, a contractor is busy removing the track and ties from the Lake Erie & Northern (CP Simcoe Subdivision) line working northward towards Waterford. Gordon reports that he had a pleasant chat with Sylvia Crossland the Curator of the Port Dover Harbour Museum, comparing notes about some of the interesting ships of the area and the Museum's plans for a new museum building. Ms. Crossland was showing Gordon the railway photos of the area that the museum has to date and how she is looking forward to the new ones Ross Gray will be sending to the Museum. I am certain that the Museum would like to get a few more railway photographs of the area, so if you have some suitable ones, why not offer them a copy or let me know and I will ensure any offer is passed on to them.

Last month, I mentioned Neil McCarten had given me some data concerning various stations east of Toronto on long abandoned rail lines. Well, I still consider I need more time to get a clearer picture in my grey matter before boring all our readers. However, in the meantime a couple of stand alone items.

Neil reports that he was poking around the old Canadian Northern Station in Port Hope (See page 3, September 1989 Newsletter) and the occupants of the house directly to the north of the former station said their house (150 Port Hope Street) was the station agent's residence. They had a newspaper clipping which showed the station and house at train time. A companion photo showed a roundhouse down in the valley north of the CPR Port Hope Viaduct. I have seen real estate plans showing the general trackage and outline of this roundhouse and can confirm Neil's assumption that it served the Port Hope, Lindsay and Beaverton Railway. This railway was opened to Lindsay from Port Hope on December 30, 1857 and 12 years latter became part of the Midland Railway of Canada.

In Cobourg, Neil raises a question. "Behind the town hall, there a rectangular building with overhanging eaves. Maybe I have an over active mind, but could this be the station for the Cobourg and Peterborough?" I can not find any tie in to the railway from my sources, so to all our knowledge friends can anyone cast the deciding vote on this question. Was this building a railway station or not?

As I leave you for the year and the decade, no applause, I will be back, I want to toss out a couple of questions. One of our members has suggested and even half offered to organize a late spring UCRS Family Picnic. He has a site in mind near Guelph Junction that over looks the CPR. What do you think about a Sunday afternoon out with family and friends, talking about our hobby and probably even seeing a few trains? The other item is that we now have twelve months to plan the celebrations for the Society's fiftieth anniversary, what are you thoughts and ideas?

So, until next month, good train watching.