

The Ferrophiliac Column

Conducted by Just A. Ferronut

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Well here we are at the start of a new year, a new decade and also the Society's fiftieth anniversary of its founding. First, I thank all the contributors whom have submitted information over the holiday season. Since I have been relaxing on vacation for a while, this month is going to be a lot of odds and sods.

We have been writing about details of the Atherley Narrows area, near Orillia for the last couple of months. Well, George Horner has sent us a few more notes from the GTR Timetable # 8, effective June 22, 1896.

#19 BRIDGES

Two or more engines coupled or detached, must never be upon the "Narrows", Swing Bridge at Atherley Junction at the same time.

#20 DRAWBRIDGES

All engines, with or without trains, must be brought to a full stop before crossing Drawbridge at "Narrows", near Orillia, whether Bridge be opened or closed, and must not proceed until Signal to do so is given by Signalman.

#21 RULES FOR WORKING THE JOINT MAIN LINE BETWEEN ATHERLEY AND ORILLIA

The Dispatcher at Orillia Junction will have control of, and issue Train Orders in the General Superintendent's name over the Joint Line.

All trains from the North (N&NW Section) and from the East (Midland Section) must come to a stop, register, and procure Orders at Atherley Junction.

All trains from the South (N&NW Section) and from the West (Midland Section) must come to a stop, register, and procure Orders at Orillia Junction.

On arrival at either Atherley Junction or Orillia Junction, Conductors and Enginemen must surrender to the Operator on duty the orders received to run between these two points.

Passenger trains to have precedence over all other trains.

Mixed Trains to have precedence over Freight Trains.

Midland Section Freight Trains to have precedence over N&NW Section Freight Trains.

Enginemen on Midland Trains approaching either "Orillia" Junction or "Atherley" Junction will give the usual whistle signals for switch, as the switches will stand set for the N&NW Line.

Trains must be under control and stop short of the Junction switches so as not to foul the other Track.

George also informs us that the Morse Telegraph call for Atherley Junction is 'NF', which makes one look for another older name. George says he can't find one but considers that perhaps 'N' comes from Narrows, but what does the 'F' come from?

A little more history from George as it relates to the December article by the Rusty Railfans, and their mention of Colwell Junction. This station had the telegraph call 'HG'. The name originally was 'HARRISON' and suspect the call letters are from Harrison Gravel Pit as the topographical maps shows a gravel pit spur leading northwest from the Meaford Subdivision at a point about 1000 feet east of the Penetang Subdivision switch and terminates at Highway # 90. There were other gravel pit spurs off the Penetang Subdivision at various locations. When the Penetang Subdivision was built, the first lot was owned by W. W. Colwell, hence the change of names.

While we are on the subject of telegraph call letters,

Bruce Chapman has passed along some of his recollections about the subject. Bruce writes, "I was an operator for the CPR at their Ottawa Terminals and Smiths Falls Division from 1965 to 1969. From then to 1974 I was a Train Dispatcher in Smiths Falls. During these days we used morse, until it was removed one day, while I was working at Renfrew, I think that was 1969. There are many interesting call letters that I recall. The call letters for Jasper, Ontario on morse were 'IC' recognising the station's original name of Irish Creek. 'MF' is still Smiths Falls; 'BS' is Brockville (we had other titles for 'BS'); 'KO' was Bedell; 'RO' is Vaudreuil, Quebec; 'WJ' is Windsor Station, Montreal; 'AJ' is St.-Luc Yard; 'RS' was Renfrew; 'FN' was Pembroke on CP, while 'KO' was the CNR call for Pembroke; 'AN' was Arnprior; 'JN' was Carleton Place. In the Ottawa Terminals, 'CD' was and still is Ottawa Union; 'UY' was Ottawa West; 'HU' was Hull West; 'HJ' was Hull; 'BO' is Walkley Yard (also for those who don't use deodorant. In CP's Montreal office, 'VD' is still the call for Winnipeg, the same initials we whispered about in our young days.

During the summers of 1962-64 while still in High School and University, I worked the 'WA' office in Ottawa, the CP Telegraph Office was in the Blackburn Building on Sparks Street at Metcalf, and my job was to put the incoming telegrams on the right printer, or take them over to the morse operator who was stuck in a corner. During the day, there were two operators, the afternoon shift had one and the night shift none, but on the night shift, the chief operator had to be a morse man, should there be an emergency telegram come in. These guys could send and receive morse, in fact there is still a morse code club with its headquarters in Ottawa, they have a yearly meeting and Bell Telephone still hooks up circuits for them. They also have their own newspaper printed in the USA, but often with lots of Canadian News. I belong to it, but I was a poor excuse for a morse operator, but I expect some of our members like George Horner probably belong as well.

My first job as an operator on the CPR was at Almonte, Ontario and there was a federal radio communications centre not far from Almonte, and on my first day, a Saturday, this poor guy in 'RA' office in Montreal had to send me a couple of pages of code for this federal outfit, and I'm sure I broke into that guy's sending at least 2 dozen times to make sure I didn't screw it up."

Who said the old timers were dull? A Friday, August 20, 1869 newspaper carried the following: "The Saint John, (NB) Street Railway of which we have seen and heard so much recently, has so far approached completion that a trial trip was made between the extreme points, Market Square and Indiantown, on Tuesday last, the passengers, some thirteen in number including W. K. Reynolds, Esq. the contractor, doing the distance in about 12 minutes, - 4 horse power. The opening ceremonies must have been imposing, if we are to judge by the solitary speech made on the occasion, and which is reported as follows: - Come to Watt's and have a drink." I am going to let you draw your own conclusions.

Bruce Chapman also wrote about Dale Wilson's queries about the railways in downtown Kingston including the old K&P. Bruce points out that the book "In Search of the K&P" by Carol Bennett and D. W. McCuaig may be of interest to students of railway history around Kingston, especially its

bibliography that lists many people newspapers, etc. that were sources of information for the book. While the book was published in 1981, it may be worth writing the publishers Renfrew Advance Limited, R.R. # 2, Renfrew, Ontario, K7V 3Z5 to see if they still have any copies, or keep your eyes open for its red and white cover at the flea markets.