

## Just A. Ferronut's Railway Archaeology *December 1993* "Art Clowes"

How time flashes by! Here it is, already time to think of the end of another year. This month, I am going to be like the news announcers, broadcasting from "On Location". Being my lazy self, I didn't get the column finished before it was time to wander east for the holiday season.

### **Wandering East**

Having finally wrapped up things around the office, I headed east bright and early on December 15. The first train I spotted was at 1030 hours, a westbound CN Laser a few miles west of Montmagny, Québec, (about CN mile 92 Montmagny Subdivision) with 9618, 9614 and 9617 heading for Joffre. For my express runs through eastern Québec, I usually stick to Autoroute 20 from Montreal to Saint-Andre, (location of the junction between CN's Pelletier and Montmagny Subdivisions and near RiviPre du Loup). This Autoroute follows the CN's (nee GTR & ICR) line generally with the rail line visible for probably 40% of its approximately 400 kilometre length, also it's great since you can park the car in cruise and relax a bit. At 1120 hours near Saint-Philippe, I spotted a second westbound Laser led by a 6000 series unit with one other unit assisting. By 1200 hours I was on Highway 289 at Pelletier Station, QuJbec. This railway location, about 30 kilometres south of the Saint Lawrence River is the high point on the range of hills along the south shore of the river. Pelletier Station is the south end of CN's 20 mile Pelletier cut-off that was constructed in the mid 1970's to connect Pelletier Station on the National Transcontinental with Saint-Andre on the old ICR "North Shore" route. This cut-off permitted the abandonment of the NTR from Pelletier Station to a few miles east of Joffre, QuJbec. Coming into Pelletier as I arrived was a well-powered CN westbound container train with units 3543, 3513, 2323, 3573, and 3558.

While CN's Pelletier Subdivision has some great locations for railway photography, my desire to get to the Perth-Andover, New Brunswick library with the loss of an hour as one slides into the Atlantic time zone led me to forgo that pleasure this trip. For anyone thinking of a trip to the Maritime Provinces, Québec Highway # 289 and New Brunswick # 120 are worth including in your routing. Rail traffic is reasonable, presently averaging 16 trains a day, with the curves and grades over the hills and along the lakes between the St. John and St. Lawrence rivers, the line is quite paceable. The lines curvy nature also provides locations for reasonable photos almost any time of the day. The extra altitude can also lead to freaky weather conditions. Last Easter, Pat Scrimgeour and I was in the area and the ground was basically bare, I was back a couple of weeks latter and there was a 4 inch blanket of snow at Pelletier Station. This trip, while there was a little snow along the St. Lawrence, from Pelletier to Baker Lake, there had been rain and the bare trees were covered with ice and when back-lit on the hillsides it looked like heavy frost shining in the sun.

I arrived at Edmundston at 1315 hours (Montreal time), just as the crew was getting aboard CN 5280, this unit, followed by 2338 was heading an east bound container train along the Napadogan Subdivision towards Moncton with Halifax as its probable destination. I followed my usual route through Edmundston, noting that apparently CP Rail is still partially using their old station. I stopped for a fast coffee, and it was

Green River, before I caught up with our eastbound again, and paced him for a few miles – then it was off to Perth-Andover and their library. In passing McCain's plant in Grand Falls, while I didn't get my spy equipment out to check the details, there was a CP engine and a number of rail cars sitting at this plant. The other interesting item to note as one drives along the St. John River, is the status of CP's old rail lines. It appears that along most of their lines that were knocked out of service following the 1987 flooding that washed out a couple of their major bridges, many of the highway crossings have several inches of asphalt over the rails, but the crossing signs and flashing lights are still in place. However, on their trackage that was abandoned following the failure of appeals to the NTA, a year or so ago, all crossing signs have been removed, flashing lights removed or aimed skyward, but most of these locations still have their rails and crossing planks exposed.

### **Old Home Day**

Woodstock, New Brunswick is one of the fortune communities to have had early newspapers that were saved and micro-filmed. This, plus the fact that the earlier Woodstock newspaper people reported railway happening from far and wide makes this Library a high priority stop on my eastern trips. I arrived at the Library about 5 minutes after its morning opening, and there was Mark Honey, busy with his research on the community of Richmond, New Brunswick. Mark is an American whom I have met numerous times at the library and since Richmond was the original rail head of the New Brunswick and Canada Railway, we have had many exchanges concerning details of the railway. Between chatter, I was busy scouring newspapers. One of the first stories I found supplied me with a date I had been looking for relating to a bridge collapse on the Harvey branch of the Salisbury and Harvey Railway. I had been told of the bridge collapse which apparently ended the operation of this branch in south eastern New Brunswick. The second story, a somewhat timely one with the pending possible abandonment of CP's Short Line through Maine. The article reported a serious accident, near Moosehead Station, Maine. The accident on Sunday, July 1, 1894 occurred as the Saint John bound train was crossing a timber trestle some 240 feet long over the western outlet of Moosehead Lake. The engine and tender toppled off the trestle followed by the postal car, a baggage car and a second class passenger car. The incident in which four people were killed, was caused by "human fiends" piling three timber sleepers across the tracks at the end of the bridge.

Later in the day as we worked on, a couple of ladies doing some genealogy research joined us, as did another gentleman. Families and history of the area became the topic, and soon I realized the gentlemen who joined us was a cousin, several times removed, who I had wanted to meet to discuss railways. So Hubert Bryant, a local historian, who has spent many years living near the CPR's old New Brunswick Railway line, north of Woodstock was able to answer questions about the CPR lines between Woodstock and Hartland. One of my major puzzles was the location of a huge timber and stone bridge pier, it didn't fit either of the two routes that I was aware of. Dave Hanson had sent me a photograph of this pier from Hubert's collection several years ago. The answer, as Hubert pointed out

is simple, there were three different routes between the two towns, not two as I had previously thought – so back for some more research!

This was a lively day, with even some of the library staff joining some of our discussions, but as always with such get-togethers are too short.

### **Major Birthday**

I only heard it as a radio announcement, but the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the Chateau Frontenac in Québec City occurred on Saturday, December 18, 1993.

### **Who's Firing it Now?**

That would appear to be the proper heading relating to a short article in the New Brunswick Historical Society's annual publication several years ago about a steam locomotive that apparently had more changes in ownership than any other steam locomotive in Canada. This list compiled by the NBHS's Hugh Folster stated that the Western Extension Railway acquired their engine No. 1 in 1869. In 1872, it became the European & North American Railway's engine No. 1 and the Fredericton Railway's engine No. 2, in 1877. In 1887 it was acquired by the New Brunswick Railway as engine No. 30, only to become Canadian Pacific's No. 507 in 1890 for a few months. Later in 1890, the Willard Kitchen Company (a railway contractor) acquired it as their No. 1, then it became engine No. 1 on John Stewart's Tobique Valley Railway and by the end of 1890, it still carried No. 1, but of the Cornwallis Valley Railway in Nova Scotia. It remained in Nova Scotia until it was scrapped in 1912, during that time it was the Windsor & Annapolis Railway's No. 13 from 1892 to 1894 and then the Dominion Atlantic Railway's 1 for the engine's final 18 years.

### **St. Martins, New Brunswick Update**

I am still hoping to be able to obtain some interesting details on this railway, but in the meantime, our member David Osborne has sent along some extra information. However, I am going to be mean and keep some of Dave's information until I can confirm whether I can get this other material.

Anyway, Dave advises that the present structure on the beach at the foot of Beach Street is actually part of the freight shed. I had mentioned about the change in the roof design, well Dave advises that Hurricane Edna back about 1956 decided this structure should be a boat and split the building in two, washing one part out to sea.

I guess I must have been high on the thoughts of fried clams, for Dave closed his remarks by informing us city slickers that the lighthouse-come-tourist bureau is a fake, built simply as a tourist bureau.

### **North Bay**

On a recent trip to North Bay, I stayed at the Pinewood Park Inn at the Lakeshore exit from Highway 11 at the south end of city. The North Bay Model Railway club as a substantial display at this motel. They have a 25-30 foot long operating model display as well as a surrounding display. One cabinet has a number of railway lanterns, etc. In back of the display are shelves of model equipment, the full gambit of cars and engines. In the area, it is worth dropping in for a look.

### **Early Track Structure and Railroading**

Gord Webster's articles on railways in Nova Scotia in the October issue of *Rail and Transit* reminded me of an interview in the February 1915, *Canadian Government Railway Employees Magazine*. That interview was with a Mr. A. B. Gray, an early Roadmaster of the Intercolonial Railway at New

Glasgow, NS, and the following are his comments about his recollections of his early days as a Section man on the Nova Scotia Railway:

".... When I commenced railroading in 1866, the Nova Scotia Railway was in operation between Halifax and Truro and Windsor. The road bed was ballasted with clay, and rock, taken out of the cuttings between Halifax and Bedford. The ties were in nine foot lengths of round timber, split in two halves with saws. The rails were of the H pattern, that is, the tops and bottoms were alike, and could be used over again by turning them upside down. They were secured to the ties by cast iron chairs, the ties being spotted to allow chairs to set level on them. The rails were fastened in the chairs by wooden keys or blocks made of elm soaked in tar. These rails, when new, made a smooth running road. The rails were 16 and 18 foot lengths, and they, along with the chairs and keys, were brought out from England about the year 1855. In 1867, portions of the track between Windsor Junction and Halifax were re-laid with iron "T" rails, the same pattern as are now used. These "T" rails were secured at the joints by a thin steel scabbard. These scabbards had a decided tendency to work loose, and slip clear of the end of one rail, and trackmen had to keep busy keeping these scabbards in place. There were no hand-cars in those days, push cars only, but they were much lighter than those in use at the present time. The track men were paid 90 cents per day, and the foremen \$1.25, and many of us had to live, pay house rent, fuel, etc., and support quite large families, yet they seemed to get along, and have a little to spare. The first regular trains used to run with the passenger cars next the engine. Later on, the passenger cars were put on the rear of the trains. These trains made good time, and accidents were rare. It was quite a usual occurrence to see eight and ten flat cars on the regular morning train from Truro to Halifax, loaded with wagons of country produce. Special trains were frequently run out for loading and distributing ties. Many of these special trains had no van, and only a conductor and one man, and sometimes a conductor only. The engines in use at that time were all wood burners. In many cases, when out on special trains, loading and unloading ties, I have helped the Fireman to handle wood, both on the tender, and into the fire-box. The dumps or fills between Bedford and Halifax were seriously damaged by the heavy south-east and north-east storms. One, Doyle's dump was badly washed out in 1870. Rails and ties were carried by the sea into the pond on the right hand side going to Halifax, and I think the rails are in the pond to this day (1915). The sections between Halifax and Bedford were short, only three miles in length, and they had two men and a foreman to look after them, yet there was always plenty of work for them to do. They got no extra help in the summer, and in the winter they had plenty of snow and ice to handle. There were no car flangers of any sort.

Again, reading both of these articles, it is interesting to note the reference to early piggy-back service, the high rates of pay!, caboose-less trains and of course in both articles the reference to the wood-burning locomotives.

### **Early Rules**

While we are digging around some of the day to day parts of early railroading, I found the following from the 1864 Grand Trunk Railway's "*Book of Rules and Regulations*" interesting. The following is part of Rule # 15 for TRACK REPAIRERS as contained in the section for Maintenance of Way and Structures. This rule starts with all the technical niceties that

the ballast should not be more than two inches above the ties and how the track is to be kept clear of ballast, gravel and snow, etc., for the clear passage of trains. The part I found interesting part was: “.... All labourers dwelling in shanties along the line are strictly forbidden to keep cows or pigs within the fences. Occupants of crossing watch-houses must be particular in obscuring their windows at night, as the light might be taken for a signal. ...” This 1864 rule book was defined as general regulations applicable to all servants of the GTR and in addition to instructions concerning train operation had sections for each category of crewman as well as for station personnel and rail plant maintenance people. One section even gives instructions as to how to repair telegraph lines. Every foreman was expected to have a copy of these rules in his possession at all times or face a penalty of a fine of \$1.00 or worse, dismissal.

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**Future Months:**

CP LaSalle station still standing  
Newburgh CNOR Station exists in town as a house –  
Dan McConnachie.