

Just A. Ferronut's Railway Archaeology May 1994

"Art Clowes"

This is Canada, last month, it was winter, this month it is almost summer. The spring showers, warm sun and the greening of the fields encourages one to get out to explore the country-side and that I did!

Sherbrooke Expo Trains 94

Saturday April 16, dawned warm and overcast, but the weather people said Sunday would be stormy, so this would be my day to go to the Eastern Townships to do a little exploring and visit the Sherbrooke model show. Sherbrooke is 151 km (90 miles) east of Montreal. I took the quickest route, Autoroute # 10 (Autoroute des Cantons de l'est), since I wanted to go east of Sherbrooke after visiting the show.

The Club des Modélistes Ferroviaires de L'estrie who coordinated the Sherbrooke model show had a very interesting mix. The show, in a sizable exhibition building at the fair grounds focused on railway modelling, but an added touch was a section on radio-controlled model airplanes and boats. This like most model shows I have visited in Québec, had some photos, paper goods and memorabilia, but as their name states, they are primarily for modellers.

This show proved interesting, for as I was standing talking to Roger Boisvert, a UCRS member from Trois Rivières and looking through his collection of photos of steam power, a Mrs. Carr of Danville came along and was asking if anyone had a photograph of the Britannia Mills Station. Interesting question, since several months ago, I was asked what I knew about this station by a CN librarian. Being me, I approached Mrs. Carr and related my story, since apparently there is a group in the area who are interested in constructing a replica of the station for a community centre. Mrs. Carr's interest in a photograph related to the fact that her husband's mother had been the first telegraph operator at the last Britannia Mills station.

Britannia Mills was a small station on the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad about 7 miles east of St. Hyacinthe. This company, along with its American counterpart, the Atlantic and St. Lawrence became Canadian National's line from Montreal to Portland, Maine. The Canadian company was amalgamated with five other companies to become the Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada, effective July 1, 1853. The American company was leased on the same date for 999 years by the Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada. The full route opened on July 18, 1853, although some segments had been opened as early as 1848. The portion from St. Hyacinthe to Richmond, Quebec through Britannia Mills was opened on September 11, 1852.

The GTR Inventory of 1907 indicates that a 1st class frame station at Britannia Mills been opened in 1893. The single storey station setting on wooden posts and sills was 27 ft. x 73 ft. with an iron roof. The open platform was 2200 sq. feet and this stop had a wood frame baggage house 12 ft. x 20 ft. as well as a frame freight shed 16 ft. x 20 ft. with a loading platform on one side.

The Eastern Township's in Spring

The warm weather was chasing the winter's snow rapidly towards the streams and rivers, periods of heavy showers added more water to this race towards the lakes and ocean. The result, the waterways in many locations had to let water flood

over their banks. Such was the case even in Sherbrooke as I came out of the model show. Sherbrooke is located along the banks of the Rivière St-François where the Rivière Magog. CN's Sherbrooke Subdivision (nee St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railroad) follows north – south, along the banks of the Rivière St-François from Richmond down through Sherbrooke to Lennoxville.

CN's large brick station is located about a block back from the west bank of the river. The problem on this visit was that the waters of Rivière St-François was occupying the open area on the river side of the station.

This station, built in 1890 is 33 ft. x 156 ft. consisting of a 2 storey centre portion with rambling single storey sections on each end all with steep hip roofs and wide overhangs. VIA has it painted in pastels. This station, along with CP Rail's in Sherbrooke have both been declared heritage structures under the federal Heritage Stations Protection Act.

The CP's Sherbrooke Subdivision, part of CP's Montreal – Saint John short line was constructed by Atlantic and North West Railway and enters Sherbrooke from the west, along the Rivière Magog and then loops south along the Rivière St-François to Lennoxville where both the river and the rail line swings eastward. The CP station built in 1901 and substantially added to was described in the June 1993 issue of *Rail & Transit*. CP 1819 was sitting at the station waiting for Monday and work. Sherbrooke is also the junction with the Quebec Central Railway's line that originally wound its way northeastward via Tring and Valley Junctions to Harlaka (Lévis, across from Québec City).

My next target was Scotstown, Québec, 43 miles east of Sherbrooke on CP's Saint John short line. The station, recently declared heritage was the subject of a write-up in Montreal's *The Gazette*, a couple of months ago.

This small Eastern Township community on the Rivière au Saumon first commenced their efforts to save the station in 1978, when it was first rumoured that the CPR planned to close the building by 1982. This portion of CP's short line east of Sherbrooke was started by the Interational Railway Company (Canada) and later acquired by the Atlantic and North West Railway.

The simple frame one storey station was constructed in 1888 between the main line and the Rivière au Saumon.

It really takes a trip to this site to put things into true perspective. East of the station about 300 metres (1000 feet) upstream is a dam retaining a sizeable mill pond. The river, west of the dam on my visit was charging in a vicious wardance downstream and splashing angrily at the pier of CP's bridge as it no doubt has done each spring for the last 106 years. The mills that caused the construction of the dam are now gone, except for one large chimney. This chimney some 8 or 10 feet square at the base rises some 60 feet or so skyward. The community has converted this piece of industrial archaeology into a useful monument. They have constructed a verandah all around it. This verandah is quite wide with a railing around its outer edge to provide a viewing platform for people to watch wildlife on the mill pond or to just stop and enjoy a summer evening breeze. It has a roof that protects both the people and also the chimney's

base.

The station is a boxy structure about 20 x 30 feet, with a gable roof, operators bay window on the trackside and a medium overhang on that same side. The station has a concrete foundation that appears to have been added after original construction and extends eastward beyond the depot. This foundation along with differences in the clapboard styles on the station indicates that at some point there had been a connected freight shed on the east end next to the road.

The July 1908 issue of the *International Railway Guide* shows six passenger trains (three in each direction) per day stopping at Scotstown.

The Gazette in its article on this station carried parts of a telephone interview with a Tom Riglar, now a Vancouver businessman who grew up in Scotstown. Riglar, recalled that back in the 1950s, the station bustled with activity whenever he boarded a train to visit an aunt in Montreal.

"You'd hear the clickety-clack of the Morse code as you approached the building," said Riglar.

In those days, old-fashioned steam engines paused outside the station while their tanks were replenished from a giant water tower that has since vanished.

"Sometimes the engineer would invite us aboard for a peek at all his gauges and gadgets."

The community would like to turn it into a museum and an art gallery for local artists.

Heading back towards Montréal, I stopped by East Angus on the above mentioned Quebec Central's line, 17 miles east of Sherbrooke. This portion of the QCR was incorporated as the Sherbrooke, Eastern Township and Kennebec Railway Company in 1869 to construct from Sherbrooke northeast to connect with the Lévis and Kennebec Railway (at Valley Junction/Vallée Jonction). The S,ET&K became the Quebec Central Railway in 1875 and the QCR purchased the L&K in 1881. The S,ET&K opened the first 14 miles of its line east of Sherbrooke in 1874, but the connection with the L&K was not completed until 1881.

East Angus is a pulpwood milltown on the Rivière St-François. Quebec Central's single storey concrete block station that was built in 1912 is still used by CPR maintenance forces. The station, about the size of a small bungalow has a hip roof with one gable dormer projecting over the operator's bay window. Again, the July 1908 issue of the *International Railway Guide* list eight trains a day using this station. There were two Express, one Passenger and one Accommodation trains northbound and two Passenger and one Express and one Accommodation southbound.

The adjacent freight shed, like the station is of concrete block construction. This structure, with two loading doors has a gable roof. The gables are finished in asbestos shingles and it is interesting to note the painted sign on one gable – FREIGHT SHED in large capital letters.

Not wanting to treat the railways unfairly, I decided to follow the CN (Grand Trunk) lines for the remainder of my journey back to Montréal. I skirted northward around Sherbrooke with the plan to follow down (northward) along the Rivière St-François to Richmond (the junction with GTR's original line [CN Danville Subdivision] to Lévis). High water was over the road along the east side of the Rivière St-François between Sherbrooke and Windsor, so I had to detour. The east side road for the 10 miles from Windsor to Richmond was open. This road

parallels the CN Sherbrooke Subdivision (nee St. Lawrence and Atlantic) and the high water made the rail line a causeway surrounded by water. Knowing the power of nature, this setting made it easy to visualize trains all the way from a wood-burning 4-4-0 puffing huge clouds of smoke creeping with a couple of swaying wooden coaches along the river to a massive F40PH growling loudly pulling the stainless steel cars of VIA's Atlantic along the same water level route.

On arrival in the south end Richmond, I found that due to the dangers of flooding a dike was being constructed across CN's line at mile 71.25. I am told that this location about 3 mile south of the station has a long history of flooding. This flooding had delayed CN's Train 394 and CN 7070, 7020 & 7073 were setting in the Richmond yard.

As I reached the eastern outskirts of St. Hyacinthe about 1800 hours, the sun was shining brightly, a real change from the heavy showers of earlier. Also, CN added a bit of action as SD40-2W 5309, and GD40-2W 9669, led two other units and a lengthy container train on a west bound march towards Montreal as I approached the Drummondville Subdivision.

Not in the Eastern Townships but a quick update on

Gaz Metropolitan engine house
September 93 & April 93

Books

Last October, *Rail & Transit* carried a review of **THE BARNEY AND SMITH CAR COMPANY CAR BUILDERS** as submitted by William R. Reddy. Now John D. Knowles has forwarded extra details and comments on this 1993 book by Scott D. Trostel.

THE BARNEY & SMITH CAR COMPANY - CAR BUILDERS - By Scott D. Trostel - Reviewed By J. D. Knowles, April 1994 - Published 1993 by Cam-Tech Publishing, Box 341, Fletcher, Ohio, 45326. Hardbound, ISBN 0-925436-06-2, coated paper, 82" x 11", coloured dust jacket, 232 pages, selected bibliography, index, over 100 illustrations, 12 car side elevations plus some cross sections and end elevations, 45 car plans, many showing seat locations, 8 maps, 14 diagrams, separate passenger car and freight car construction lists reconstructed from public records and reported orders.

This book is a history of the Barney & Smith railcar building plant in Dayton, Ohio, which was once among the three top builders of luxury passenger cars, as well as producing large quantities of freight cars. Canadian Pacific and Canadian Northern were among the purchasers. At one point the builder employed 2000, working in plants occupying 28 acres. Important customers included both of the sleeping car giants, Pullman and Wagner.

Later Pullman made its own car building plant at Chicago, and became a competitor. Barney & Smith did not take part in the mergers which produced strong combines in the car building industry, and thus declined to minor standing. After many years as a family-owned company, managed for the benefit of employees and the community, it was sold to investors with little knowledge of the business, who were slow converting to steel car fabrication. The builder had a lingering death, and closed in 1921. Prior to closing, the plant suffered great damage in 1913 by flooding. This also caused the loss of company

records and photographs, forcing the author to resort to secondary sources for information. The story is nonetheless well told, and will appeal to those interested in old passenger rolling stock.

J.D. Knowles

Book - Chief Engineer by Lorne Green

Hamilton Station –

Train missed Guildwood April 27, 1994

Doug excursions

Montreal, The Morning Courier, July 23, 1836 - Opening on Thursday, July 21, 1836.

“... Before starting the locomotive, engine made two short trial trips with its tender and, as the accident which occurred lately to it had not been thoroughly repaired, it was deemed advisable to attach it to only two of the covered passenger cars. ... While the other cars with the rest of the company, were drawn each by two horses. The locomotive with its complement soon shot far ahead of the other cars.

“The locomotive in returning took four cars with it, and the other twelve were dragged back, as before, to LaPrairie by horses.”

The return trip of the locomotive on Thursday was completed in 59 minutes, but we learn that yesterday, (Friday, July 22, 1836), with four passenger cars and two loaded freight cars, it effected the journey in 45 minutes and returned in 30, over a line 142 miles in length. A few repairs have been made to the engine and her regular trips commence on Monday next. (July 25, 1836).

Montreal, The Gazette, July 30, 1836 - Locomotive withdrawn from service for repairs.

Montreal, The Gazette, August 9, 1836 - We are glad to learn that the locomotive engine is again in operation on the St. Johns Railroad. The new engineer has given it an examination and made a trial of its speed yesterday. With four cars attached to it, it went to St. Johns in 48 minutes and returned with five cars in 41. From Montreal to St. Johns, a person may now be conveyed in an hour and a quarter; a slight change from the old system of travelling, when some four to six hours of most uncomfortable jolting were by no means unusual.

An accident recently occurred on the St. Johns Railroad, in consequence of an attempt made by a Canadian; who had been employed on the work from its commencement, to jump upon one of the cars while it was impelled with great velocity by the locomotive. Missing his grasp, he was caught by the wheels, by which his leg was broken. The wound proved so serious that he died the next morning.

Montreal, The Gazette, August 18, 1836 - Excursion to St. Johns by Moringhar and Macrimmon (possibly nicknames), members of the Gilchristiana.

Arrived at LaPrairie and had to wait some time the return of the locomotive and cars from St. Johns. At last they were seen approaching and a desire to view the whole in rapid motion, led us forward a short distance on the road to meet them.

Whirr, Whirr, puff, puff C by they rushed with almost stunning impetuosity and, lightning speed. The cars are of rather elegant construction and tastefully painted; on each, the

emblazonry and armorial bearings of Great Britain and the United States, emblematical, we presume, of the connection of British and American interest and enterprise combined together in the completion of a work so much required and so important as this is.

When we were on the point of starting for St. Johns, part of the machinery of the locomotive gave way ... we were ... left in a delightful dilemma, with the alternative before us of either walking to St. Johns (or) being dragged in cars thither by horses.

The engineer, however, after some trouble, was enabled to put the engine into such a state as to put it in our power to proceed and accordingly we started, between four and five o'clock.

We had not got more than a mile over the road, when the deplorable concern gave way again. Another half hour suffices to get us into condition a second time to go forward, and rattling along in very good style indeed.

The engineer (Giba Pangborn) is about as cool a fellow as we have seen for a long time. He did not appear in the least degree disconcerted nor seem to lose any of his stock of self possession, notwithstanding the accidents and delays we met with and he gave evidence of understanding his profession thoroughly.

Montreal, The Gazette, August 23, 1836 - Excursion to St. Johns by Charles Kadwell.

“ we arrived at LaPrairie, when we found the locomotive and its tail, almost as long as Daniel O'Connell's, waiting our nobility. Scrambled ashore and secured a seat in the car immediately behind the engine, which saluted me with a puff or two of a vaporous substance, yclept steam, in acknowledgement of which I put up the window.

By a certain instinctive feeling which is natural to all men, I found we were moving and soon increased our speed as Paddy would say, “to the devil of a rate” for the trees went as fast one way as we did another and to make the matter short we were soon at St. Johns and about 23 miles from Montreal.

Montreal, The Gazette, April 22, 1837 - Train service resumed after winter shut down.

Future Months:

CP LaSalle station still standing
Newburgh CNOR Station exists in town as a house – Dan McConnachie.
Millville Station
Dick Browlee and church game
Dog at Boston Bar

Which railway hotels are still open and doing business? Here 's the ones I can think of off the top of my head:

Hotel Newfoundland

Hotel Nova Scotian (is that the name? who runs it now?)

The Prince Edward

Château Frontenac

Château Champlain

Le Reine Elizabeth/The Queen Elizabeth

Château Laurier

Royal York

*Crowne Plaza Toronto Centre – was L'Hotel **
*SkyDome Hotel **
The Fort Garry – still open?
Hotel Bessborough
Radisson Plaza Hotel Saskatchewan
*Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Edmonton – was Château Lacombe **
Hotel Macdonald
*Château Airport **
The Palliser
Hotel Vancouver
*Château Whistler **
The Empress

*I came across a reference – perhaps in the February 1966
Newsletter – to the CP hotel in Winnipeg, which was at that time
being sold off by CP. I wonder what became of it?*

Date: 20-Mar-94 10:48 EST

What do you think about a special issue or a bulletin with “Just
A. Ferronut’s Railway Archaeology Guide to Toronto,” in which
there would be as complete a list as possible, with a
paragraph-or-two description, of every interesting railway or
transit structure or site in the city. Then, after that, we could do
the same for the area west of Toronto, east of Toronto, and
Montreal. It could be a sort of printed database of everything we
know about. Just a thought, now. Ideas?

Pat