

Just A. Ferronut's August 1996

Railway Archaeology

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Well, I am now physically located in Toronto, but am still slightly less than organized! Hopefully this will change. I must issue an apology to those who have written me over the past few months, and to whom I have not replied. I am getting there! Don't tell anyone, but during my move I squeezed in a few weeks vacation, and spent most of it wandering around the east.

Trips in Québec and on the Québec North Shore Railway

Before I get into my ramblings, a story associated with part of Peter Gloor's trip to Canada this summer. Peter is from Switzerland, and spent nearly a month this summer railfanning in Canada, including a couple of trips in Quebec after a western sojourn.

Peter, last spring had placed a request on TRAINNET asking for information about Canada's railways, tips on railfanning, and good trains to ride. Pat responded, and after many E-mails, Peter had his Canadian trip planned.

Since Peter couldn't find as much written information about his eastern sojourns, he forwarded a couple of E-Mails with some of his observations, along with a number of questions. Finding these interesting, the following is the gist of them combined with some of our answers. I have not repeated a lot of Peter's questions, only the answers!

Peter used Québec City as the starting point for his eastern trips. He told us that, "With a tad of jet lag, I didn't rise in time to see "Le Tortillard du Saint-Laurent," leave Gare du Palais at 0730 hours. I would have liked to, for as you were saying that the refurbished "F" units and coaches painted in a green and gold scheme similar to that of the C.N.R. from the fifties must look sharp. Since my schedule didn't permit it, I couldn't spend an extra day and ride the "Le Tortillard du Saint-Laurent," In looking at a map, I can see why you commented that its route is very scenic as it winds along the St. Lawrence."

Answer: Le Tortillard du Saint-Laurent carries passengers to the Casino at Pointe-au-Pic and all indications are that it is doing quite well. It operates on the trackage of the Chemin de fer de Charlevoix, which in December 1994 purchased the 147-kilometre former CN's Murray Bay Subdivision. Part of this line had been electrified when owned by the Quebec Railway, Light & Power Company, that was before being amalgamated with Canadian National.

The freight operation has the paper and cement industries as their traffic base, and again their traffic has been growing since they acquired the line. The Chemin de fer de Charlevoix interchanges traffic with the C.N.R. at CN's Limoilou Yard, which is on the north side of the St-Charles river in the north-east part of Québec City.

Peter continued "Because of my schedule, I spent the day looking around historic Québec City and arranging for my trip to the Gaspé. While it was my first visit to Gare du Palais, I found it a beautiful structure, with some great detail. It is difficult to believe that they had closed this depot for a few years

for something in the suburbs. Its architectural style with its turrets and green tiled roof blends nicely with that the over-shadowing Chateau Frontenac, the fortress and the many other older building of the City."

"While doing some of the normal touristy things around Québec City, I had lunch on the water front patio of a restaurant in Old Town watching the shipping on the St. Lawrence and the ferry-boat shuttle back and forth to Lévis. However, it was soon time for me to take that ferry-boat and head to Lévis to catch VIA Rail's "*Chaleur*" for my trip to the Gaspé."

"After arriving at Lévis, I found out that I could have spent a little more time looking around Québec City, since the station agent advised that the "*Chaleur*" was 3 hour late. One thoughtful act was that the agent sent someone for coffee and donuts from Tim Horton's while we passengers were waiting for the tardy "*Chaleur*". This 3 hour delay made me eligible for a 50% refund on my ticket, but it would be given only as a credit on a later ticket purchase within 6 months. I doubt if I will go back to Canada within this time, but still a good gesture.

Answer: Often VIA doesn't give many details about train delays, and when they do, they seem to come from a stock list and sometimes they are the problem other times not. In your case it could have been any of a number of causes. The "*Chaleur*" could have been delayed waiting for other passenger trains from west of Montreal. Being the summer and good weather, heavy track maintenance could cause delays. In addition changes that started 20 or so years could be part of the problem. At that time Canadian National had basically two routes from Montréal to the Maritime Provinces on the south shore of the St. Lawrence. Since then track abandonments has resulted in the railway from St-Rosalie (about 70 miles east of Montréal) to St-Andre Junction near Rivière du Loup becoming a single track line. These abandonments were hardly finished when it was decided to construct a new tunnel under the St. Clair River at Sarnia, Ontario, that would permit CN to offer a competitive container service from Halifax, via St-Andre, a cut-off in back of Lévis on to Montréal and west to Chicago. This service has been successful and since the tunnel opened in the spring of 1995, freight traffic has increased. So a heavy volume freight traffic could have caused some delays. It probably was a combination.

"Once aboard the "*Chaleur*" I stowed my gear, and since it was late, I was soon in dreamland in my roomette."

"The sun and I rose near the same time, while we had made up considerable time, we were still skirting along the Matapedia River north of Matapedia. Shortly after leaving Matapedia following our separation from the "*Ocean*" the friendly crew served a complimentary breakfast. It was set up as a buffet in the "Park" car, another nice touch."

Answer: Your night travel was over two types of

terrain and also over trackage built by two railways. After you left Lévis, you were soon on the long tangents along the St. Lawrence, where the Appalachians mountains are far enough south to leave a wide band of rich, flat farmland along the river. As your train moved east, this band of flatland becomes narrower as the mountains come closer to the river. Then of course as your train left the St. Lawrence River and headed more southern toward Matapedia, you were going across the northern part of the mountain range. Railway construction wise, the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada East constructed the line from Chaudière on the Québec and Richmond Railway (just a few kilometres west of Lévis) to Rivière du Loup. This line was completed in 1860 and made many changes in travel along the 120 miles of the St. Lawrence River between Québec and Rivière du Loup. It improved mail service from Europe during the ice-free months, mail could be dropped at Rivière du Loup and taken by train to Québec and Montréal.

While there were plenty of schemes for many years to connect Rivière du Loup with the Maritime provinces by rail, construction didn't get started until after Canada's confederation in 1867. The line from Rivière du Loup via Mont-Joli (originally called Ste-Flavie) and to Matapedia and Campbellton was constructed by the Intercolonial Railway. It was near Routhièreville, Quebec (CN 33.92 Matapedia Subdivision) that the final link in the Intercolonial Railway between Halifax and Rivière du Loup was placed. This permitted trains starting on July 3, 1876 to travel between Upper Canada and the Maritime provinces by an all Canadian rail route. Back in the 1870s, Routhièreville was called Assametchugham.

Peter continued: "I then enjoyed the next five or so hours viewing the wonderful scenic seashore along the Gaspé line as I rode in the rearmost vestibule. As I have admitted, this was total foreign experience to me. But between breath taking scene after breath taking scene, I had to be utterly amazed at the array of station names we passed. Also, these stations were so clean and crisp looking, painted in their light pastel colours. I must admit, I was startled as we left Port Daniel. I was watching the station and cove disappear behind the village, then darkness – a tunnel. I wasn't expecting a tunnel in eastern Canada. However, I experienced another one north of Sept-Iles on the Québec, North Shore & Labrador a couple of days later."

Answer: Yes Peter, Canada is noted for its variety of station names, and as you mentioned, the Gaspé has its share. Here on the Gaspé, the names are a mix of aboriginal, French, English and descriptive. Many of them are fairly easy to classify, although many of the aboriginal names are still the subject of many discussions as to their true meaning. Others like Caplan, can trick you. It is named after an Indian Jean Caplan who lived on the banks of the stream at this location. If you ever want to see how weird we have gone with our place names, look over some of the ones on the Canadian Prairies.

"My final comment on this VIA Rail trip would be how excellent their service was, better than on previous trips, and the interior of the trains was spotless. Due to my time restraints, it was a dash from the Gaspé VIA station to the bus depot to catch my bus back to Campbellton in time for the day's (night's) westbound Ocean. While the friendly VIA attendant at Quebec had suggested to come back to Matapedia to catch the train, but there, the distance from the bus station to train station is way too great, whereas in Campbellton it is only a few hundred meters, so my choice was to Campbellton."

"In Montréal, it was off the "Ocean" and a trip to the airport for a flight to Wabush, near Labrador City. The purpose of this sojourn was of course to ride the Québec, North Shore & Labrador train from Labrador City down to Sept-Iles. Tuesday, August 20, was a sunny day, and our train consisted of two groups of two Budd cars each, separated by a deadheading PS-dome "City of St. Louis" (painted silver with Yellow-Orange stripes to match the ex-VIA Budds, orange ends). Only two of the Budd cars were active, since the deadheading dome car made it impossible to inter-connect to the two deadheading Budd cars in the rear. The ride was absolutely fabulous, smooth on the heavy-duty welded track, friendly personnel, small delay. I rode with the engineman. He kept complaining all the way about the lack of power on his train. On his two running Budds, he got only three quarters power. The railway is not downhill all the way. There are some grades out of Labrador southbound, and those were stiff enough to cost us about 15 minutes. The remaining 15 of our total delay came from waiting for a work train to clear the main."

"The trip down the canyon was great. All vestibules on the train were packed with local people who wanted to see the scenery. We met at least 6 northbound freights and saw three work trains."

"From Sept-Iles I went over to Port-Cartier, but saw no train. I would have needed another day to wait for one along the highway north of town. Since my vacation was rapidly coming to an end, it was a flight back to Montréal, above a solid blanket of nice white clouds. so I was not able to spot any of the rail lines along the St. Lawrence. This schedule gave me a day in Montréal for sight-seeing. I visited Terminus Windsor, Windsor Station and did a bit of train spotting south of Central Station. However, Montréal had too much highway traffic, too big buildings, much air pollution, etc., for me. I did climb Mount Royal to get some exercise. It was then to the airport for my hop over the pond to my wife, and life back here in Switzerland. Overall, I had a fabulous vacation, and my wife who was with me on the western part of this trip agrees that we must come back to visit Canada, its friendly people and interesting railways."

Answer: While it would need a book to give you the full picture on the Québec, North Shore & Labrador Railway, the following a few pieces of information that you might find interesting. The Québec, North Shore & Labrador Railway was constructed in the early 1950's to tap the rich iron ore deposits in western Labrador. The first contractor's timetable for the southern 181 miles was issued effective November 30, 1952. The track reached Schefferville, the northern terminus of this 356 mile main line on February 13, 1954. Steam power was used during construction, and several locomotives from other railways were purchased for the purpose. On the matter of grades, the design grade south-bound was 0.3%. North-bound the design ruling grade was 1.8%. The line was designed to be operated with full CTC signalling using remote controlled diesels.

West Coast Bridge

Several times back in the spring and summer of 1993 we mentioned the efforts to convert part of the former right-of-way of CN's Cowichan Subdivision (nee-Canadian Northern Pacific Railway) in the Victoria, British Columbia area into a hiking and bicycle trail. The problem part of the project was the old timber trestle and drawbridge over the Selkirk Water in Victoria. The conversion was further delayed by a fire in the

timber trestle on May 30, 1995. We reported that in the June, 1995 issue of *Rail & Transit*. Well finally, according to an article forwarded by Gray Scrimgeour, the structure over the waterway was opened on August 29, 1996. To help overcome the complaints from boaters, the trestle was raised at one point to provide more clearance for them. Operators of larger vessels requiring the opening of the drawbridge, which was retained, must provide a two hour notice to the operator of another Victoria drawbridge in order to have the Selkirk Water bridge opened. With the opening of the trail across the Selkirk Water, and the recent completion of an overpass of the Trans-Canada Highway means that the trail is now open from downtown Victoria to Swan Lake.

Stations

Pardon the pun, but some of the hottest station news comes out of Pictou, Nova Scotia, where the historic CN station was severely damaged by fire early on Friday, August 2, 1996. The Pictou station constructed about 1904 was a storey and a half red brick structure. One feature that made the Pictou station unique was that its basic hip roof was punctuated with 12 dormers that permitted more useful floor space. Many of these dormers were highlighted with semi-circular stone eyebrows over the windows and curved stone coping to cap the brickwork of the dormers. A local museum was located on the ground floor, while the upper floor contained the town's youth centre. Staff and local residents managed to remove the museum's artefacts.

I visited Pictou a week after the fire, and it was expected that the council meeting that day would decide the whether they would attempt to rebuild the station.

While the date of the official opening of rail line into Pictou is November 28, 1887, the area around the Pictou Harbour basin had seen railways back as early as 1829 when the General Mining Association's horse-drawn tramways were built for hauling coal from the mines to the wharves. In the same year this company constructed a smelter and used local iron ore to produce the first iron rails in Canada.

May 27, 1839, was an important day in the Pictou area with the arrival of the *Samson*, along with two other locomotives, the *Hercules* and the *John Buddle*. Built by Timothy Hackworth in England during the previous year, the *Samson* was one of the largest and most powerful locomotive in North America during its time. The restored *Samson* is presently on display at the Nova Scotia Museum of Industry, in Stellarton. I found the trip through the museum interesting. In addition to the *Samson*, a nearby model layout depicting the operation of the Intercolonial from around 1900 has been well executed by a local modelling group.

Back at Pictou, CN had obtained permission to abandon its rail operation into the town by federal authority dated February 11, 1985. Rail operations officially ceased on December 31, 1986 and CN advised on October 16, 1988 that the track has been removed.

As part of my visit to Pictou, I drove out to Wentworth Park to have a look at the former Canadian National Railways' Pictou Lodge. Originally known as the Wentworth Park Lodge, it was opened in the spring of 1926 and promoted as a beautiful bungalow hotel. Translation, a group of single storey rustic log buildings, including a main lodge and a series cabins. These cabins or bungalows feature stone fireplaces in their sitting room. The lodge is situated on the coast of Northumberland Strait and targeted the guests who liked the

fresh summer breezes off the water while playing a round of golf at the nearby Pictou Golf Club. A drive through the lodge grounds definitely take one back to the slower and relaxed days of bye-gone years.

From Pictou I followed the now abandoned Great American and European Short Line Railway that Sir Sandford Fleming promoted as part of his infamous All-Red-Route of the 1860s along the Northumberland Strait back to Oxford Junction, Nova Scotia. The original stations at Tatamagouche and Pugwash are still standing and have been recycled to new commercial uses. Tatamagouche was on the mainline of the Great American and European Short Line Railway and the station here is a storey and a half brick building. On one end is a flat-roofed single storey baggage and express area. This permits a patio to be added over this roof that can be accessed from the second floor. Three CN cabooses have been added adjacent to the station. The numbers on two of the cabooses are CN 71257 & CN 79815. The station and these cabooses have been converted into an inn and cafe.

The station at Pugwash, is near the end of the 4.6 mile long Pugwash spur, off the main line and is identical to the one in Tatamagouche. The second floors of these stations were used for living quarters for the station agent and his family. One recent visitor to Pugwash mentioned that he was the son of one of the station agents, and his family of ten lived in the cramped station quarters. The living quarters at Pugwash are now used by the local historical society. The main office area has been converted to the community's library. The baggage and express wing is presently occupied by the tourist bureau. We also wrote of this station and the Great American and European Short Line Railway back in February 1993, with some extra details concerning abandonments in our June 1993 columns.

Ted Deller sent along a recent news clipping that the Mayor John Murphy of St. John's, Newfoundland is attempting to have the city's old railway station turned into a transportation museum and indicated that the city is discussing the acquisition of this two storey stone building with CN Rail.

Murphy, who is optimistic this takeover will come about states that he would like to see the current museum in Pippy Park moved to the station site, along with the locomotives and rail cars there, and at Bowring Park. The mayor also remarked that there's excellent office space on the upper floor of the station that could be rented out to help offset the operating cost of the building. Some of the second floor offices have fireplaces that were exposed from behind false walls when the station was restored a few years ago.

This station, designated the Riverhead Station, was constructed by the Reid Newfoundland Company and was finished in fall of 1902 and Reid and the railway staff moved in January 7, 1903. It was constructed of granite that came from Reid's Quarry in the Gaff Topsail area. This station replaced the one in an old military building at Fort William (near the site of the latter Hotel Newfoundland). While the staff moved into the new station in January, trains continued to departed from the old Fort William until June 1, 1903.

One other station that has been mentioned this summer is the C.P.R. station at Foster, Québec, (near Lac Brome). This Eastern Township station, as mentioned in our June 1993 column was then at the junction of the then CP's Short Line to Saint John, NB, (last week the St. Lawrence & Hudson Railway! and next week the Canadian American

Railway!) and the abandoned Montreal and Atlantic Railway's north-south line route. Vernon Erle Ikeda of Montreal has now confirmed the earlier rumour that this station that was in sad shape and minus doors and windows in 1993 has been moved about 4 kilometres south, closer to Lac Brome on Route 243 (Chemin Lake). Vernon also advised that the station "has been lovingly restored and is now the tourist information bureau for the Lac Brome area."

Church Bell

I made my annual summer pilgrimage to Prince Edward Island to see our member Keith Pratt and his wife Jean. As usual Keith had arranged for us to meet several other Islanders and to visit some of the local sites. After a sumptuous dinner, we spent a joyous evening that resulted in several of the local ladies, that Keith had drop by, load me up with extra stories and railway information. Since I haven't got all of this sorted out, I am going to leave the details until another column. But earlier in the day, Keith took me a few miles from Bloomfield Station to the small community of Campbellton, P.E.I. Here we went to the small frame white United Church. We entered the small foyer and at one side hung the bell rope, a common fixture in many smaller churches. Keith then proceeded to give the rope a few tugs, and the bell was ringing loud over the village. What makes this bell special is that it formerly graced Engine No. 18, of the Sandy River and Rangeley Lakes Railroad. This railroad was one of the mystic 2 foot gauge railways that penetrated numerous valleys of south-western Maine. Back in 1937, Keith arranged to acquire this bell for the church. The bell was dedicated at a special evening service on Sunday, June 20, 1937. Our inspection of the church revealed a pump organ. This brought to life the newspaper account of that service in 1937. The wood burning stove in the corner with the long overhead stove pipe to the chimney, brought back other memories of sitting in the hard wooden pews of a similar church in the winter with the only heat coming from the stove and its long pipe.

Mike Leduc's Second Station Book

Its hard to realize, but it has been two years since Mike Leduc brought out his book on the CN family of stations that have existed on Montreal Island. Well for the station buffs, Mike has now published his second book on Montréal Island stations. This book follows the general format of his first, but covers the railway stations of CP and its constituent companies. This is a soft covered 100 page book with its twenty plus photographs and about an equal number of maps trace the development and locations of each of the stations of the Canadian Pacific Railway as well as the predecessor companies including: the North Shore Railway; the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa and Occidental Railway, the Atlantic and North West Railway; and the Ontario and Quebec Railway. A great reference book for understanding the evolution of the CP family of stations on Montréal Island. Copies of this book, titled *Montréal Island Railway Stations – CP & Constituent Companies* costs \$17.00 inclusive, and can be ordered from Michael Leduc, 57 Roosevelt Drive, Dollard des Ormeaux, QC H9G 1J1.

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