

Just A. Ferronut's Railway Archaeology

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Well, hopefully we are getting our recent *Rail & Transit* glitch under control! From my end, I wish to thank everyone for their patience, letters of concern and support, etc. However, we are still very shy of people to assist with *Rail & Transit*. Hopefully, the pleas in our last issue will bring forward some assistance. To me, the Upper Canada Railway Society has been Canada's general practitioner of guided ground transport for nearly 60 years. In this era of specialties and super-specialists, I look upon *Rail & Transit* as a very important speciality publication, the one that provides the titbits on all aspects of our hobby! The future of our Society is up to you, our members and supporters! While we get plenty of requests for information, we need a few people willing to provide your Society with some help to keep the UCRS in the forefront as a well respected and useful Society.

The recent publication delays has again created a back-log of items to be cleaned up.

HISTORIC CANADIAN STATIONS IN THE NEWS

There have been several substantial changes on the station scene over the last few months.

Starting in the west, an article in the Toronto Globe and Mail reported that the former Northern Alberta Railways' Waterway station at Fort McMurray, burned on Wednesday, May 20, 1998. This frame structure was apparently used recently as a museum and by some youth groups.

Waterways (Fort McMurray), some 300 rail miles north east of Edmonton, Alberta is the northern terminus of a rail line originally built by the Alberta & Great Waterways Railway.

A scheme to build a railway from Edmonton to Fort McMurray was first incorporated by James Kennedy Cornwall in 1905. The next four years saw plenty of wheeling and dealing, but no construction. In February 1909, a new provincial charter was acquired under the name of the Alberta & Great Waterways Railway. During this period several railways were incorporated to penetrate the hostile portion of Alberta north of Edmonton. While the 1909 incorporators only started construction with a sod turning on November 15, 1909, they had great expectations, by December 1909, they indicated that their plan was to have 150 miles of the line completed by the middle of the summer of 1910 with completion to Waterways by the fall of 1911. Like the first attempt, the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway quickly ran into problems, mainly relating from their playing a shell game mainly with government monies pledged to the project. While physical construction stalled, their shenanigans added money to the promoter's pockets and accusations between them and the Government flew. These escalated as several Provincial Government ministers resigned, and culminated in May, 1910, when the Premier of the Province resigned.

This of course, led to a commission investigating the whole affair. This was followed by about two years of court battles. Finally, in the fall of 1913, by mutual consent, control of the property was acquired by J. D. McArthur of Winnipeg, a

railway contractor, and lumber baron, who had been working on the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway Company, another of these northern Alberta lines. While J. D. McArthur, had been approached back in 1909 to construct the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway, but smelling a scam, quickly backed away.

A second informal sod turning took place late in December 1913. In 1914, the McArthur's, with a company named D. F. McArthur Company, J. D.'s brother, started to construct the first 150 miles of the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway. They started near Carbondale, about 14 miles north of Edmonton, on the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway Company.

While the late winter of 1915 saw track laid into Lac La Biche, 113 miles from Carbondale, it wasn't until July 14, 1916, that regular rail service, by McArthur to the community was commenced. Lack of steel, caused by the demands of World War I, slowed progress on the northern half of the line.

Construction over the unstable ground and flood-prone rivers in the area, also caused many problems both during construction and later operation of the line. If these events (accidents, etc.) weren't so life threatening, the accounts of head-on collisions between motor cars, and a local warning a train of a washed out bridge with a candle, sound more like plots for a Three Stooges or a Laurel and Hardy movie, than railway operations!

By the end of 1918, the Alberta and Great Waterways Railway had crawled to Lynton, a point about 10 miles south of Fort McMurray. Deep muskeg and bad weather basically stalled the line at Lynton.

The next couple of years saw the McArthur lose control of some of the northern Alberta railways. As it seemed that nature was reclaiming the northern portion of the Alberta and Great Waterways Company faster than man could put it in place, the Alberta government stepped in and with an agreement dated July 23, 1920 took over the control of the railway.

Under government control, the Alberta and Great Waterways Company saw the Northern Construction Company hired to undertake its rehabilitation, and to complete the line northward. The Northern Construction Company had been formed in Winnipeg in 1904 by a brother of Sir Donald Mann and a relative of Sir William Mackenzie. Their new efforts resulted in the railway reaching its terminal at Waterways in 1922, much to the objection of the residents of Fort McMurray. In 1922 Waterways was still about four miles from Fort McMurray. By November 1925, the rail line had been extended 3.7 miles down into the river valley near the junction of the Clearwater and Athabasca rivers. The former terminal was renamed Draper, and the name Waterways was moved to the new end of steel.

Between 1926 and January 29th, 1929 the Government of Alberta assumed the responsibility of managing this Company. Effective with the January 1929 date, an agreement

between CPR and CNR was reached for these two national companies to purchase the Alberta and Great Waterways Company. The agreement also included the purchase of the lines of the Edmonton, Dunvegan and British Columbia Railway; the Central Canada Railway; the Pembina Valley Railway; and the Central Canada Express Company Limited. This agreement was ratified by the Alberta Government on March 20th, 1929. The name chosen for the amalgamated railways was the Northern Alberta Railways Company (NAR).

This joint ownership existed until CN Rail purchased CP Rail's interest effective January 1st, 1981, thereby giving CN Rail complete ownership of the NAR.

Under CN control, mixed train service to Waterways was discontinued on October 31, 1989. This date also saw the last revenue train to operate on the northern portion of the line into Waterways.

The northern 10 miles of CN's Waterways Subdivision into Fort McMurray was abandoned effective October 14, 1993, as authorized by a federal regulatory abandonment order.

So this fire erases another part of the interesting 70-odd year history of the struggle of one of the many interesting western railways.

From southern Ontario, Dave Jakubiec reported in April that he visited Glencoe, and found that the older depot had been moved about 100 feet and placed on a new concrete foundation. The first major step in restoring this station.

Moving farther east to Hudson, Quebec (Canada West). Their Montreal & Ottawa Railway Company (more recently Canadian Pacific Railway) 1890 station has been in the news recently. It is the last remaining structure built by the M. & O. Concerns are being raised over a decision by the Directors of Heritage Hudson Incorporated to allow the Village Theatre group to gut the interior of the Hudson stations for their temporary use. This has raised concerns among some of the citizens of this community on this rail line that originally joined the two larger communities in its title. These concerns mainly relate to what will happen once the Village Theatre group are finished with the building? While apparently, this group has agreed to undertake restoration of the interior of the station, the concern seems to be that it will be a mere reproduction of the original interior, not the real thing.

This railway from Rigaud to near Ottawa was abandoned and removed a number of years ago. However, the portion from Rigaud through Hudson and Dorion to MontJal is still used as part of their west island rail commuter service.

Now that I am back in New Brunswick, I will have to favour it this month, since I have three historic stations making news or worthy of note this month. The first is to report another fire, this one destroyed the CP Rail station in Woodstock, NB on the night of March 7, 1998.

This structure consisted of a one-storey central block (for the operator's and ticket agent's office and waiting rooms), this central pavilion was flanked by two symmetrical wings, a one-storey north wing, and two open shelters, one at each end of the building. It measured nearly 166 feet in length, including the two end shelters, and had a concrete base supporting the red brick superstructure. The bricks were laid to form a banding effect, which creates a pseudo-rusticated, monumental finish usually found in stone masonry rather than brickwork. When it

was seen from a distance, the finish gave the building a robust quality that, upon closer examination, contrasts sharply with the pattern of small-scale brickwork. (Note: This description is based on the heritage report for the depot.)

This brick station was constructed in 1911, and became the focal point of a beautifully landscaped and attractive railway premises in the town. Between the station and the street, was the two-storey frame divisional headquarters. This office building had its hip roof capped with an ornate widow's walk, a small square cupola with windows on all sides, and access to a walkway that rested on the roof of a gable protruding from the roof. Nearby, facing Main Street stands an earlier single storey frame station that had spent about 30-odd years serving railway passengers from its up-town location near the river bank end of Queen Street. This site was near hotels and wharves along the St. John river that had been serving the river-boats that connected the communities from Grand Falls to Saint John since the days before the railways. After the construction of the 1911 station, the Queen Street station was relocated to its present location. While presently a privately owned residence, during its years of railway ownership, after relocation, it served as the residence for railway officials, including the Division Superintendent. (Note: Rumour has it that an area rail enthusiast plans to build a full-sized replica of this station.)

The community as a division point, was the site of a roundhouse (six or eight stalls??) with a turntable in front of it. A couple of hundred feet to the south was the coaling shed. It was an interesting timber structure, half up and half down. The shed was partially raised that permitted carloads of coal to be pushed up and dumped by gravity into bins along one side. The coaling track was depressed, so that engines could be run under the bins, and be coaled from these bins, again by gravity. The terminal had an ice-house, a frame structure where the tons of ice would lie buried in mounds of wet sawdust waiting for placement in the top of an insulated rail car to keep their perishable contents cold.

The long low frame freight shed was the source of numerous delivery vehicles, both horse and motor driven over the years, that hurriedly carried shipments to and from the town's businesses. This building also held the express department.

Woodstock was originally the northern terminus of the 10½ mile Woodstock Railway, that extended from a junction at Debec (DeBeck's mill) to Woodstock. The line through Debec to Richmond was originally part of the St. Andrews and Quebec Railway. The Woodstock Railway originally terminated in the southern end of Woodstock, thus avoiding the need to cross the Meduxnekeag River. In 1870, the New Brunswick Railway acquire the Woodstock Railway, along with the other lines that formed the New Brunswick & Canada Railway network in south-western New Brunswick, that included the former St. Andrews and Quebec Railway. These lines were all to the west of the St. John River.

Since the New Brunswick Railway operated on the east side of the St. John River, at least in the area south of Perth, this take-over meant the construction of bridges over both the St. John and the Meduxnekeag Rivers at Woodstock to permit the connection of the lines of two companies. This resulted in the eventual building of the Queen Street station, to replace the earlier one south of the Meduxnekeag.

Since the recent station fire, it has been decided that

since it appeared that the damage to this station was severe, to demolish it. Which I understand has been done.

Still in New Brunswick, information on a couple of other long abandoned stations is surfacing. In several columns starting in January 1993, I have mentioned the short lived Albert Southern Railway. This railway operated for about the last ten years of the 1800's, in the southern portion of Albert County, and then was abandoned. Confirmation has been showing up that both the stations at West River (possibly called Turner mills in the Albert Southern days) and at Alma, the southern terminal still exist as private residences. The West River station is now located to the east side of Highway No. 114 at about house number 7309. While now difficult to identify as a station, its gambrel (barn or double sloped roof) is a feature to help identify this station to a passer-by.

The Alma station, like the one at West River has lost all railway identification, but still sits in its original location, across from the location of the long vanished engine house in this small village, that was once the centre of much coastal shipping and lumbering.

A trip to Cape Breton a couple of months ago, took us through Pictou, NS. Back in our August 1996 column, we mentioned that on Friday, August 2, 1996, the Pictou station had suffered major fire damage. Well, our trip this spring revealed that this station was in the final stages of restoration. This restoration definitely adds to the historic flavour of Pictou with its numerous other historic structures.

ODDS AND SODS

My above mention of horse drawn vehicles, reminded me of the following June, 1953 article from Melfort, Saskatchewan. This article announced that eighteen-year-old Sandy, last horse in the service of the Canadian National Express anywhere in Canada had been retired. It pointed out that the CNR Express Depot, in Melfort was the last outpost of the hay-burning delivery system. The change-over was greeted with mixed emotions among the express men, who stated they would miss the chestnut gelding that had served every working day, rain, snow or shine, for the last eleven years.

Sandy, had arrived in Melfort from Saskatoon in 1941, one of seven express horses. He is said to have worn out three wagons, one sleigh and three sets of harness. He was also hard on shoes, having had 264 pair nailed to his feet. It was also estimated that the chestnut gelding had travelled 42,000 miles hauling 20,000,000 pounds of express traffic in Melfort.

During its 11 years in Melfort, Sandy ran away only twice. The first time was when lightning struck near him, he galloped off to the barn with his driver, fighting him all the way.

Strange as it might seem, Sandy never got used to locomotives blowing off steam. One day the "iron horse" stampeded the chestnut on another race for the barn. Unlike the first time, the barn door wasn't open far enough. Sandy got into the barn but left the harness and wagon a shambles at the door.

MUSEUMS AND DISPLAYS

A CBC report on January 13, 1998 passed on the news that the Newfoundland Transportation Museum in St. John's, Newfoundland had been forced to declared bankruptcy!

The Newfoundland Transport Historical Society had developed a small museum and railway exhibit in Pippy Park. Last year the Society decided to undertake some renovations at its museum. This included the restoration of several of its five

rail cars, including a dining car that was to be converted into a restaurant with washrooms to be installed.

The society had budgeted more than \$200,000 to undertake the work, but due to a number of factors the restoration project ended up about \$90,000 in debt. The volunteer group had little success during an approach of various organizations for financial help.

With no sign of payment some creditors began legal action, this has led the society to file for bankruptcy. The creditors were to meet to decide what their next steps would be. Unless, some arrangement can be worked out between them, their assets including the five cars, and other artefacts from the province's transportation history will probably be sold.

Perhaps some one can give us an update on the results of the meeting with the creditors?

The museum news from Capreol, Ontario is more upbeat! The Northern Ontario Railroad Museum is planning its official grand opening for July 1, 1998. The intention of the Museum is to feature the Canadian Northern – Canadian National in Capreol from 1911 through the present. The museum will be located in the home of the original railway superintendent in Capreol, which the town of Capreol purchased a few months ago, and donated to the Museum. It is located beside Prescott Park, where CN 6077, a 4-8-2, as well as a wood CN boxcar and "Rules" car are located. One of the first main tasks will be to restore the super's house, a task which will be done by volunteers.

For their opening display, the museum has a large collection of steam locomotives photographs taken in and around Capreol from the 1920's through to the 1950's. The museum also has a good collection of steam locomotive drawings and manuals dating back to the early 1900's, as well as railroad artefacts which will be on display. In addition the museum is also about to acquire a collection of photographs of steam era structures, steam era accidents and local mining operations.

We wish the group all the best wishes!

From Brighton, Ontario comes an update to the on-going saga relating to the moving of CNR Consolidation No. 2534 from Zwicker Park in Belleville, to its new home adjacent to the Grand Trunk station at Brighton. In last report we mentioned that various preparatory work had been undertaken, and the group was waiting for the ground (old land fill) to become frozen harder to better support the weights resulting from the moving equipment and locomotive as it is moved.

Mac Wilson, of Barrie, kept the project followers informed via e-mail, as the final count-down and the actual move took place. However, the final stages of preparatory work took longer than planned, as the cold weather and the largeness of some of the fitting slowed progress, in fact the moving date got delayed past the time of frozen ground.

However, finally on a rainy Monday, May 4, the move was undertaken. The locomotive and tender had been taken apart into several pieces. The tender body was the first item to be loaded onto a flat bed blocked and chained for the move. The tender trucks were hoisted onto a dump truck, blocked, secured and immediately moved to Brighton.

After some double checking of sizes, etc., as well as a little more torch work on a few bolts, the boiler was lifted and placed on a second flat-bed, blocked and secured ready for its move. A second truck was needed to help get the flat-bed with

the boiler on it out of the park and on the road.

A third float backed into position, ready for the chassis/drivers lift. Once loaded, it like the boiler trailer, required help to get over the wet grass onto the road. After considerable jockeying, all the tractors with their flat-beds got onto the highway. Soon the mobile cranes joined the trucks to form a convoy for the trip to Brighton.

This conglomerate of vehicles with their odd cargo, police escort and ambulance was routed via Highway 401 for the major portion of the trip. Some of the pacers were slightly freaked out to note the convoy moving at the highway speed limit.

Work at Brighton started on Tuesday, May 5, 1998 at eight o'clock. The unloading went quite quickly. The frame/drivers were hoisted and unloaded without incident; the rear drivers placed on the rails first; followed by the front portion. The boiler/cab was placed on concrete pad, remains from a former coal dealer. The tender trucks were placed on rails; properly spaced and then the tender body lifted, swung, and placed on lead truck first. Rear truck had to be pushed forward a little; then the body dropped and, with a little prodding here and there, rear of tender placed on its truck.

The unloading operation was completed at lunch time on Tuesday. So CN 2534 has arrived at its new home, in Brighton, Ontario, and of course, while much of the heavy bull-work is done, there remains the real job ahead with the major tasks of cleaning and restoring this long neglected Consolidation.

TRACK REMOVALS

Dave Savage passed along a few notes about some track removals in Port Hope and Oshawa, Ontario.

At Port Hope, Dave advised that about the middle of May, a CN track gang removed one track on the south side of the station, leaving one track to serve Cameco. All the former yard trackage, on the north side of the station, including the former CP interchange tracks and the remains of the connecting track that led to the former CN Millbrook Subdivision, originally of the Port Hope, Lindsay and Beaverton Railway.

Back on December 4, 1997 CN shut down the remains of north branch of the former Oshawa Railway. The last shipper on the line was Peregrine Industries which had purchased General Motors' north plant. They dropped all rail traffic in the summer of 1997 in favour of trucks. The St.L. & H removed their diamond over the former Oshawa Railway track and closed their North Yard. CN quickly removed the connecting track from their Kingston Subdivision. CN has started removing the trackage from both Hillcroft and Bruce Streets Yards. The east – west alignment along Bruce Street dates back to the Toronto Eastern, and was merged in with the other trackage of the Oshawa Railway Company.

Dave goes on to point out that most of the trackage in the former GM north plant remains, and for some reason Peregrine Industries maintains a track mobile on the Ritson Road side of the plant.