

# Local Railway Items from Ottawa Papers - Cornwall

**Thursday 11/07/1912 Chesterville Record Cornwall**

C.L. Harvey C.E. expects to have engineers at work in a few days locating the St. Polycarpe to Cornwall railway which is to pass about half a mile north of Williamstown. A charter has been obtained for this line which is to run from a point on the CPR at or near St. Polycarpe southerly and westerly through the County of Glengarry to Cornwall.

**Thursday 28/05/1914 Chesterville Record Cornwall Cornwall**

C.L. Hervey C.E. of Montreal and Lancaster and promoter of the Stormont and Glengarry Railway which is to be built from Cornwall to St. Polycarpe where it will connect with the CPR was in town today. The Smith Concrete company of Montreal, have been awarded the contract for the bridges over the Black River, M.M. McArthur, Montreal, will build thirteen miles of the road from St. Polycarpe west; A.F. Mulhern of Cornwall, four miles; H. Johnston, one mile; D.B. McIntyre of Maxville one and one-half miles; G and S Railway company four miles, and G.R. Phillips of Cornwall, four miles which will complete the twenty seven and a half mile distance between St. Polycarpe and Cornwall. It is expected that the rails will be laid before the first of December next.

**Thursday 25/03/1915 Chesterville Record Cornwall**

The first through passenger train to reach Cornwall from Montreal over the Glengarry and Stormont Railway arrived about 1.30 p.m. Saturday. On board were the following officials from the CPR: Messrs. George Hodge, general superintendent; Wm Stitt, general passenger agent; A.C. Mackenzie, engineer, maintenance of way; L.M. Mactavish, traveling freight agent; J.R. Gilliland, Smiths Falls, district superintendent; O. Kirkland, roadmaster; M. Malloy, bridge and building master; T.B. Ballantyne, resident engineer; C.L. Hervey, A.A. Mellor and D.A. O'Meara, of the Glengarry Construction Company, builders of the road.

The party was met at the depot by His Worship mayor Stiles, members of Cornwall Town Council and prominent citizens. The officials expressed themselves as highly pleased with the road and depots from St. Polycarpe to Cornwall and particularly with the Cornwall Depot which they described as one of the best ever erected on a new road. A stop was made at each station on the way west and considering this fact the train made good time having left Montreal at 10 a.m. Mr. Hodge the general superintendent stated that as soon as the frost was out of the ground the work of ballasting the road would be proceeded with and rushed to completion as well as other necessary works attended to, and he expected a through passenger service between Montreal and Cornwall would be inaugurated during the month of May.

The visitors were taken for a drive through Cornwall being accompanied by Mayor Stiles visiting several industrial establishments. They were greatly impressed with the outlook locally.

**Friday 09/07/1948 Ottawa Citizen Cornwall Cornwall**

Locomotive Wrecks Auto, Crashed Cornwall House

A runaway freight train that lumbered down street-car tracks on the main street, Pitt street, gave Cornwall residents a scare last night,

An unscheduled trip ended when the locomotive broke loose from its nine freight cars, toppled on a sharp curve and smashed into a verandah on which two people were waiting for one of the city's red street-cars.

Four injured

Engineer William Nicholson, 52, of Montreal and Fireman Gerald Suffle, 25, of Ottawa leaped from the cab just before the locomotive overturned. Nicholson suffered a head cut which required five stitches to close. Suffle sprained his ankle. Both men were released after treatment at hospital for their injuries.

Albert Lalonde who, with his wife, had been waiting for the street-car, suffered burns from steam after the engine landed almost on the verandah. Both Mr. and Mrs. Lalonde were taken to hospital, where Mrs. Lalonde was treated for shock.

Afer the accident, thousands of curious onlookers converged on the scene of the crash. cars and bicycles blocked many roads and at times police traffic constables were unable to clear Pitt street of the surging mob.

The locomotive, in addition to wrecking the verandah, flattened an automobile and damaged a light truck parked near the car.

"It was awful".

"It was awful, terrible," one witness, Mrs Arthur Parker of Cornwall stated. "Steam and water spurted all over the place, coal scattered all over the lawn and the cement curb was all torn up."

Timbers from the wrecked verandah lay strewn over the dug up lawn, some scattered several feet away.

Arnold Pitts of Cornwall was sitting in his automobile when he saw the train come around a corner of Pitt street, the main thoroughfare. He jumped from the car seconds before the toppling engine flattened it.

A panel truck near the Pitts car was damaged.

All the freight cars remained upright after the engine became uncoupled. They coasted to a stop.

Railway officials said the locomotive, a switching engine, had been standing on a siding which connected with the street-car track system when freight cars broke loose on another siding and struck it. The impact apparently jammed a gear and started the locomotive off in reverse, pushing the nine freight cars.

Extinguish Fire

City firemen extinguished the fire in the toppled locomotive firebox. CPR wrecking equipment was being sent from Montreal to remove the locomotive from its resting place on Pitt street three blocks north of the main business area. At midnight the wrecking crews had not yet arrived in Cornwall but were expected "any minute now."

The Cornwall Street Railway System operates a switching service for the many industries of the city. These firms have sidings at the three railway yards in Cornwall and their freight is hauled from the sidings to the factories by the street railway system.

But where the companies have no direct siding from a railway yard, the street railway hauls the freight and tank cars along their own recently-installed rails on back streets. Until a few years ago freight cars ran on Pitt street

The locomotive had been standing on a siding which runs into Pitt street opposite the foot of Sixth street. When the nine freight cars, shunted from a parallel siding, rammed into the rear of the standing locomotive, the engine began to move in reverse, pushing the freight cars towards Pitt street.

At the curve leading on to Pitt street, the freight cars became uncoupled but continued to roll south down the main street. they eventually coasted to a halt.

The locomotive, however, jumped the tracks after rounding the corner and crashed into the verandah of the Lalonde home, the sixth house from the junction of the street railway and the railway tracks.

Lucky to be alive in wake of train accident

From the Vault

By Claude McIntosh news@standard-freeholder.com

Mr. and Mrs. Albert Lalonde couldn't believe what they were seeing as they waited on the verandah of their home at 524 Pitt St. for a street car late in the afternoon on Thursday, July 8, 1948.

The fact that they lived to tell their story was nothing short of a miracle.

It was the same for Garnet Pitt who was sitting in the back seat of his son's car parked in front of the Lalonde home.

The elder Pitt was waiting for his son, Arnold, to return from an errand.

The Lalondes caught the first glimpse of the approaching danger as a 90-ton Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) engine came barreling onto Pitt Street from Sixth Street East.

In tow were several box cars and a tank car.

The ordeal started minutes earlier at the Sydney Street No. 2 siding just east of Sydney Street when, without warning, several freight cars that had been shunted on No. 1 siding rolled down the grade and rammed the cab of the engine.

The top of the cab was ripped off by the impact.

The engine was now being pushed by the momentum of the box cars and a tank car.

Engineer William Nicholson, of Montreal, fought desperately to control the lunging, runaway engine as it rolled east on Sixth Street and across Sydney, but debris had jammed the reverse gear and throttle.

With the runaway locomotive and cars picking up speed, Nicholson and his fireman Gerald Suffel of Ottawa jumped to safety.

Incredibly, the train negotiated the sharp curve onto Pitt Street at Sixth.

This was when the Lalondes froze in disbelief.

As they scrambled for the front door of their home the locomotive jumped the tracks, literally landing at their feet.

Mrs. Lalonde collapse on the porch in an hysterical heap.

They had come within inches of being crushed by the lumbering locomotive.

Garnet Pitt had a closer call.

When he spotted the runaway train, he jumped out of the car, but was buried to his waist in coal that spilled out of the rear of the locomotive.

The car was crushed, as was an unoccupied Edwards Electrical Co. panel truck.

Several pedestrians narrowly missed being crushed.

With the engine off the tracks and on its side, the unattached box cars and tank car continued on their merry way until they reached a slight grade on Pitt Street a couple of blocks away.

That's when they gently started to roll back, coming to a halt alongside the disabled engine after a man managed to engage the manual brake on the lead box car.

The engineer figured the locomotive was travelling at about 15 miles per hour when he and the fireman jumped.

However, Albert "Bert" Lalonde said it was going much faster when it made the turn from Sixth to Pitt "on two wheels."

"I'll stake my life that it was going at least 50 miles per hour," Lalonde told the Standard-Freeholder.

Mrs. Lalonde truly believed that they were about to meet their Maker.

The fact that there were no serious injuries in the episode was indeed miraculous.

The engineer suffered a gash on his head, his fireman had minor burns to his hands from the steam that poured into the engine from a broken steam pipe. Albert

Lalonde was shaken up and his wife was treated for shock. Garnet Pitt suffered an injured ankle. All were treated and released at the General Hospital.

Mayor Lloyd Gallinger was among the hundreds of citizens who swarmed to the scene.

He immediately called for a full investigation.

A CPR crew arrived from Montreal and after a three-hour tussle managed to upright the engine. It was shipped to the CPR shops for repairs.