

# Local Railway Items from Ottawa Papers - Nosbonsing and Nipissing

08/08/1884 *Pembroke Observer* *Tramway*

*Nosbonsing and Nipissing*

August 1st 1884, ten new flat cars made their way up the line of the CPR through the Ottawa Valley, being hauled by a very powerful locomotive, super-inscribed "Nosbonsing & Nipissing, J. R. Booth." At Bonfield the locomotive and cars were ferried across Lake Nosbonsing to where the railway was built.

01/12/1896 *Canada Lumberman* *Tramway*

*Nosbonsing and Nipissing*

J.R. Booth's Logging Railway

To our readers the name of Mr. J.R. Booth, the great millionaire lumberman and railroad magnate, is quite familiar, but the system he uses in transporting logs from the timber limits to Ottawa will perhaps present some interesting and novel features.

There is no waterway between Lake Nipissing and the Ottawa river, or its tributaries, but back of Lake Nipissing is a small lake called Lake Nosbonsing, with an outlet by two small rivers and a lake into the Mattawa river, which empties into the Ottawa. The desired object, therefore, was to convey the logs from Lake Nipissing overland to lake Nosbonsing, at the greatest speed and lowest possible cost, and twelve years ago Mr. Booth built a railroad connecting the two lakes for this purpose. The terminus at Lake Nipissing is Wisawasa, where the creek of the same name empties into the lake, but the bank is very steep, being 65 feet above the level of the lake. This creek was harnessed to draw the logs up to the top and load them onto the cars. A building was built into which the logs were carried to be loaded. The building is 220 feet long by 45 feet wide. The rear end is on a level with the ground, and the front end, supported by heavy framework, is 65 feet above the level of the lake. A jack ladder, 150 feet long, conveys the logs to the building by an endless chain which is operated by a rope drive 500 feet long. A raised platform extends the full length of the building, and in the platform, or table, is an endless chain operated by another rope drive, 1,150 feet long. These rope drives derive their power from a water wheel 44 inches in diameter, under a heavy head of water passing down a flume 6 x 8 feet. The water wheel, by means of a frictionless clutch, drives a fire pump when required, by which the railroad engine is supplied with water. The shafting is 3 7/8 inches in diameter, and on this shaft are two grooved wheels around which the ropes rotate.

Alongside the platform are shunted four flat cars with two inch stakes on each, against which the logs run from the table. Each car is 18 feet long, and is built of red oak lumber on tamarack bunks. As the jack ladder chain dumps eight logs per minute on to the platform, the chain carries them along and they are dumped or slid onto the skids and then onto the cars. Seventeen men are required to do the loading.

When a car is loaded a fork chain attached at one side binds the load on, being tightened by a ratchet wheel and dog. In the handling of the logs a great deal of bark is knocked off which drops through the floor into a chute, and is carried down into the lake.

The road is five miles in length, with two miles of sidings and switches, one switch extending to the Grand Trunk railway. Twenty-two cars are taken each trip. Upon the return of the twenty-two empty cars, they are left on a siding. The engine then pulls out eleven cars already loaded to another siding, and eleven of the empty cars are run into the building, where they are quickly loaded. The engine then picks these up and with the other eleven the load is completed. At the terminus the track slightly declines towards the lake, the chains are let go and the logs glide off into the water. Two men are employed here to break up jams.

Here the screw tug "Nosbonsing" tows the logs down the Mattawa river, from whence they float down to Ottawa.

The rolling stock consists of 35 flat cars, which carry an average of 19 logs. Thirty-three of these cars are in constant use, two being kept in reserve. They are 18 feet long by 10 feet wide, and are mounted on standard wheels and axles. The locomotive engine has been in use twelve years, and was built by the Rhode Island Locomotive Works. A competent engineer and fireman are in charge, and four brakemen are employed on the train. The road is level and everything runs smoothly. Four section men keep the road in good repair. The round trip has been made in one hour. It requires but 2 1/2 minutes to dump the 22 car loads into Lake Nosbonsing. Ten trips a day are made, thus carrying over 4,000 logs.

The large steamer "Booth," of 100 tons, gathers up the logs around the shore, and a smaller tug does the booming, etc. There are two wharves at Wisawasa, and two men are constantly employed cutting up the flood wood which collects in the booms, for fuel for the boats. Six men feed the jack ladder chains.

Mr. Thomas Darling, the manager at Wisawasa, is a trustworthy man, and has been in Mr. Booth's employ for many years.