

Local Railway Items from Ottawa Papers 1931

Saturday 10/01/1931 Ottawa Citizen Canada Atlantic

The Engineer Also Acted as Fireman

A book with the story of the beginnings and early experiences of all well known locomotive engineers would make great reading. Every engineer, either in his firing days or in the first days of driving, has had some peculiar experience.

Take for example the early engineering experience of Harry (Hiram) Brown of Ottawa, now retired.

When Harry Brown started driving an engine he did so under quite humble circumstances. His engineering start was on a small tank engine which ran from Deseronto to the G.T.R. station (junction) about a mile and a half back of Deseronto.

At that time the Rathbun Lumber Co. owned pretty much everything at Deseronto. The company owned the little railway line.

The train crew on the Rathbun train consisted of an engineer and a conductor. The engineer ran the train and fired as well, and the conductor collected fares, and also braked the train. Hand brakes were use.

This "short-line" train made six trips per day between Deseronto and the G.T.R. station

Were Pooh-Bahs

In the eighties the Rathbun firm had great holdings. It also owned a three and a half mile railway line out from Gananoque to the Grand Trunk Railway junction, and a 20 miles line between Napanee and Tamworth.

After serving several years and gaining experience on these miniature railways, young Brown began to aspire for higher railway activities, In 1886 he came to Ottawa, attracted by the possibilities of the then almost new Canada Atlantic Railway.

To Ottawa

There was no engine opening when he came here, so he accepted a job as cleaner in the C.P.R. shops. Two days later they (presumaby the CAR) called the newcomer out of the cleaning job and put him on a freight engine as fireman.

The crews of the freight engines at that time (1886) were:

Engineers - James Casey, H. Kirk, Billy Sandow and Billy Eldridge.

Firemen - James O'Connor, Billy Gall, Alex Dewar and Harry Brown.

All engines at that time were wood burners. The freight engines carried a wood car behind the tender, to ensure a supply. The passenger engines did not carry a wood car. Instead, each tender had built up racks to increase the carrying capacity.

The passenger engines did not require as much wood as the freight engines, because the early passenger trains on the C.A.R. only carried two coaches. The load was therefore light.

Billy Gall referred to as one of the early firemen was the first man to fire a coal-burning freight engine out of Ottawa on the C.A.R. Mr.Gall is still alive. He is an uncle of Len Grosvenor, the hockey player.

When the C.A.R. started in 1882, the passenger service was supplied by the Grand Trunk Railway. In 1887 the C.A.R. began to handle its own passenger service, and put on fast trains to Montreal over the G.T.R.

The engineers of these fast trains were: F. Ferguson, Isaac Johnson, Robert Orr and Phil Roy. All are alive but superannuated.

The conductors on these fast trains were: John Roberts, Ned Martin, Dan Brown, and J. Whitman. The last three named are dead. John Roberts is superannuated.

<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?id=CLsvAAAAIBAJ&sjid=ANsFAAAAIBAJ&pg=6509.5570912&dq=railway+railroad+train&hl=en>

Saturday 17/01/1931 Ottawa Citizen Lachute

The Spare Fireman had Hard Initiation

Old time railway men sometimes used to have some trying experiences: long hours and hard runs. Take for example the experience of Engineer Phil Roy when he was a young fireman back in 1880. In the spring of 1880 Phil had joined the Q.M.O. & O. which then ran from Montreal to Hull (now C.P.R.North Shore).

When he entered the service of the Q.M.O. & O. he was only 16 and began as an oiler. Good luck or good conduct of something presented him a chance to go firing as a spare.

His first experience as a spare fireman was severe. His first trip kept him two days and two nights without sleep and made him think that railroading was not such a nice job,

At Hull the engine n which young Roy was firing hitched onto a long train of square timber bound for Quebec. On account of its length the train ran slowly.

As the Q.M.O. & O. was short of freight cars and much square timber had to be moved, a hurried unloading of the timber took place at the Quebec docks and the freight train with its already tired crew, was without being given a chance to rest, hurried back to Hull. before Hull was reached 48 hours had elapsed and neither the engineer nor the young spare fireman had had any sleep and not a great deal to eat. The exerience was one Phil Roy did not quickly forget.

Saturday 17/01/1931 Ottawa Citizen Canada Atlantic Coteau

Train boat on sand bar a week Car passengers had experience.

February 1889, near Clark's Island train boat was stuck on sand bar.

<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?id=DbsvAAAAIBAJ&sjid=ANsFAAAAIBAJ&pg=2165.6445673&dq=railway+railroad+train&hl=en>

Freight foreman was found dead in railway car.

Believed to have been rendered unconscious by a fall through a hatch at the top of a refrigerator car and while in this state to have succumbed to carbon monoxide fumes, Samuel W. Colbert, 500 Lisgar street, aged 42 years, C.P.R. freight shed foreman at Hull West, was found dead in the car in the Broad street yards. The tragic discovery was made shortly after four p.m. yesterday by William Tilson and John Burkhill, car inspectors, as they were checking over a freight train prior to its departure for Toronto.

Dr. I.G. Smith was called and pronounced the man dead. Coroner J.E. Craig M.D. was then notified and had the body removed to Burney and Sons parlour, where an inquest was called this morning and adjourned until Wednesday evening at the police station at 8 o'clock.

Colbert had not been seen around since early in the afternoon but no anxiety was felt as his duties took him nearly all over the Hull West yards. It was part of his duties to superintend the heating of refrigerator cars in winter to prevent goods in transit from freezing. The heaters, charcoal burners, are installed in the ice boxes of the cars.

The car in which Colbert lost his life came from Saint John N.B., and its destination was Toronto, but through a misunderstanding it came to Hull instead. It is believed that while inspecting one of the heaters Colbert lifted the cover off one of the hatches on top of the car, which is the usual entrance to the ice box, and in some manner unknown fell inside and was rendered unconscious by the fall. There was a bruise under his chin, apparently caused by the fall.

The circumstances which led to his discovery was the two car inspectors swinging the hatch at the top of the car open, On climbing to the top and looking inside they saw Colbert lying prostrate, partly over the heater in which a saw fire was burning and from which gas fumes were escaping. They immediately drew him out in the open and used every effort to revive him but without success.

Native of Gatineau

The late Mr. Colbert was born in the Gatineau district and lived the greater part of his life there. He came to Ottawa from Hull six years ago and had been a resident of the Capital ever since. In fraternal societies he took a prominent part, being a member of Eddy Lodge, A.F. and A.M. No. 41 and of the Brotherhood of Railway and Steamship Clerks Freight Handlers, Express and Station Employees No. 1161.

Surviving are his widow, formerly Annie Amelia Whates and one son, both of Ottawa.

The funeral service will be at his home, 500 Lisgar street on Monday January 19, at 2 p.m. Interment will be in Beechwood cemetery.

Saturday 31/01/1931 Ottawa Citizen Canada Atlantic

This is a story of one of the bad snow storms which the Canada Atlantic Railway had to fight in the year 1893.

On the afternoon of a stormy day in January, the C.A.R. passenger train for Rouse's Point left the old stone station (now Central Station) here. There were two engines on to help drive through possible snow drifts. The train started out gaily enough through the blizzard that was raging. But at the Laurier avenue bridge a mishap occurred. A casting on the front engine broke and she had to be taken off. This damaged engine was the best on the road. It was the "Schenectady," an engine which had been secured from the New York Central,

With one engine

Morley Donaldson, the superintendent, ordered the train to move out with only one engine. There would have been too much delay to have waited for a new engine.

On the remaining engine Phil Roy of Ottawa was at the throttle.

The train with its single engine made good progress for a time. But before Maxville was reached the storm had grown worse.

At Douglas Cut

At Douglas Cut, between Greenfield and Alexandria the train struck its first real difficulty. The cut was full of drift. The train plunged into the drift bravely.

The snow covered the engine and broke into the cab. But the train went through the drift victoriously.

However, half a mile farther on came Buffalo cut, a deeper cut. This was also full of drift.

Train off Track

Engineer Roy was about to plunge into the new drift, when Conductor Tom Lamplough pulled the bell cord and the train stopped. It developed that the whole train was off the track and had been running on the ties since the time it left the last cut. The rails had spread. When Engineer Roy got out of the cab he discovered that not only were the passenger coaches off the rail, but that the back truck wheel of the engine itself was off the track.

The baggageman was sent back toward Alexandria, 4 miles away and the brakeman was sent towards Greenfield to flag possible trains. The blizzard was then wild, but the brave trainmen plunged through the blinding storm, flags in hand.

Used the "Dogs"

Then the balance of the crew got busy with their iron "dogs" in an effort to get the passenger coaches and the engine back on the rails. It was cold hard work in the darkness of a January afternoon. It was next morning before the cars and engine were back on the rails.

Hunt for Food

When the baggageman and brakeman returned from their long cold walk, they were despatched to nearby farmhouses to hunt up food for the passengers.

And all this time the blizzard howled.

The next morning when the train was ready to proceed, it was discovered that the engine was short of water. The engine had run all the previous night in order to keep the passengers warm.

A Problem

How to get water, that was the question. An idea occurred to Engineer Roy. He uncoupled the engine and ran it into the drift of Buffalo Cut. The snow piled onto and covered the engine.

By this time the section men had come onto the scene. They carefully shovelled snow into the hot engine. The snow turned into water and the difficulty was solved. The water was not all made in a minute however.

In the meantime a powerful snowplow had left Ottawa backed by two freight engines.

The plow, however, also had trouble. The plow left Ottawa the same afternoon that the train did. But at Maxville it left the track. As a result it did not get up to the train until late the next morning.

After considerable difficulty both train and plow backed many miles till the nearest gravel pit siding was found. The plow went into the siding. The train backed farther up the track allowing the plow to go ahead.

<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?id=FLsvAAAIBAJ&sjid=ANsFAAAAIBAJ&pg=6514.8213822&dq=railway++railroad++train&hl=en>

Saturday 31/01/1931 Ottawa Citizen Canada Atlantic

The bear Said "Ba-Ba" Yet Phil Roy Ran.

In November 1880, when Phil Roy, now of Ottawa, was working in the Q.M.O. & O. shops at Montreal, and was then only 16 years of age, H.A.

Pangborn, master mechanic of the new Canada Atlantic Railway, then under construction visited the Q.M.O. & O. shops looking for somebody to look after construction at night.

Young Phil Roy was recommended to him. Thus did Phil Roy become connected with the C.A.R. - a connection which was to last for many years.

Young Phil soon found himself at the Moose Creek gravel pits. All that winter and into the spring of 1881, he kept steam up at night on an engine and had it in condition for the next days work.

Moose Creek was a mighty lonesome place in the winter of 1880-1881 and the youth found the nights not at all to his liking. There were plenty of bears around Moose Creek at that time, and the youth was always afraid a bear would climb into the cab for the warmth it might afford.

Talking about bears, it can be told that in the winter of 1880-1881 the bears were so bold that they ventured on to the construction rails, even in daytime.

Mr. Roy tells how a construction train crew on one occasion tried to run a bear down on the tracks, but the bear got off the rails just in time to save its hide.

In the summer of 1881 young Roy got promoted to fireman on a ballast train. The crews were working late at night to hurry up the ballasting of the road.

On one occasion Roy's crew made the last trip at 2 a.m. and young Roy started for his boarding house a mile from the pit. To reach his home he had to pass through a bush about half a mile thick. There was a forest path. On the night in question Roy did not have a lantern.

In a Dark Spot

Suddenly in a park part of the bush, he fell over something which jumped and moved into the bush. And not a gun! Young Roy started to run.

Bang! Over another he fell. He picked himself up in a big hurry and was just about to yell lustily for help when the thing bawled "baaaaa". It was a calf.

Tuesday 02/02/1931 Ottawa Citizen Montreal and Ottawa Interprovincial Bridge

Unidentified man killed by engine on railway track

Up to noon today the unknown man who was instantly killed early last evening when struck by a C.P.R. engineer the Ottawa end of the Alexandria bridge, has not been identified although several persons visited Gauthier's morgue where body was taken following the accident.

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According to an eye-witness the man was crossing over the street car and railway tracks from the south to the northbound roadway and did not see the light engine approaching across the bridge. the engine was in charge of Engineer James Johnston and Fireman Jack Finn.

Engineer Johnston in his report stated that while proceeding at about twelve miles an hour a man, who was walking alongside the track, stepped between the rails immediately in front of the locomotive.

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<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?id=Fjk0AAAAIABAJ&sjid=hfUIAAAAIABAJ&pg=7025.1402234&dq=railway++train++railroad&hl=en>

Monday 09/02/1931 Ottawa Citizen Montreal and Ottawa Hull Beemer

Three die when train hits auto at crossing.

Three well-known Ottawa men were killed and two others seriously injured then the car in which they were returning from the Fairmont Golf Club was struck by the C.P.R. Imperial Limited at the St. Hyacinthe street level crossing at Beemer Station in the northern part of Hull early Sunday morning.

The train was travelling slowly, but the impact was sufficient to deflect the speeding car from its course. It turned completely around and crashed into a post, hurling the five occupants to the ground.

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<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?id=Gjk0AAAAIABAJ&sjid=hfUIAAAAIABAJ&pg=6857.2132535&dq=railway++train++railroad&hl=en>

Saturday 16/05/1931 Ottawa Citizen Chalk River Carleton Place

Crossing accident at town line crossing Carleton Place - 1killed.

<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?id=CnAvAAAAIABAJ&sjid=A9sFAAAAAIABAJ&pg=4299.715488&dq=train++railway++railroad&hl=en>

Saturday 04/07/1931 Ottawa Citizen Pontiac & Pacific Junction

Push Pull and Jerk

After the Pontiac and Pacific Junction was built in 1887, the people along the road used to call it the "Push, Pull and Jerk" road on account of its roughness.

Somebody else called it the Poor People's Journey (P.P.J.). The idea was that as the road was short, it was about the right length of a journey for a poor person to take. It was probably an employe of the road who started this nick-name.

P. and P.J went far to allay fears of the farmers.

When the Pontiac and Pacific Junction Railway was suggested it met opposition from farmers who were afraid of being killed at the crossings of which there were many. To calm such objections, the company's agents promised that all sorts of precautions would be taken - even to stopping the trains when a horse was seen to be nervous - it is to laugh, is it not?

Anyway, the road went ahead and was built and began to be operated. To carry out its promise to the people, the company inserted at the bottom of its timetable the following remarkable notice:

"Owing to the proximity of stage road to railway between Coulonge River and Waltham, great care must be taken to avoid accident. Safeside, (?) must be taken in all cases, even to bringing trains to a dead stop, closing cylinder cocks, stopping whistle and bell when horses are seen to be frightened."

This notice was in small type. the notice was taken by the O.T.S. from an 1894 timetable in a scrap book owned by Mr. Wm. F. Pritchard of Wyman.

<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?nid=QBJtjoHfPwC&dat=19310704&printsec=frontpage>

Saturday 04/07/1931 Ottawa Citizen Pontiac and Renfrew Bristol
 Started in 1890 the railway was built from Billerica to Bristol, five miles, but it had greater plans. Iron went bad and the railway ceased to operate. Rails taken up and sold during the war.
 Today we have for the first time a reference to the Pontiac and Renfrew Railway, which, some 41 years ago, was built in connection with the Bristol Iron Mines Company's operations. This company was started and operated by Ottawa men including -
 Section missing.
 99 years' lease of the ore lands from James Ade and John Kilroy, the owners. They were to pay a rental of \$210 to each farmer.
 After some years the iron ore market went bad, and the mine was shut down.
 Back to nature
 After a time the fences on both sides of the right of way rotted and fell.
 When war broke out the iron rails began to be in great demand. The rails were taken up and sold to the highest bidders, and eventually found their way to Europe, where the Allies made good use of them.
 No Longer Exists.
 Today the right of way of the old Pontiac and Renfrew road no longer exists. It has virtually become part of the two farms concerned.
 It might be mentioned that some years prior to the war the mines were leased for a term of years to Ennis and Co. of Philadelphia, who operated them for a time, but did not produce much.
 Are hopeful
 The people of Wyman and district are now hoping that with electric power being produced in such quantities at the Chats (a few miles away) electric smelting will be available and that the Bristol iron mines may once more start up.
<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?nid=QBJtjoHfIPwC&dat=19310704&printsec=frontpage>

Thursday 23/07/1931 Ottawa Citizen Carleton Place
 Gas-electric car makes trial run
 Ottawa Car Mfg. Co. Produces first made-in-Canada vehicle of kind.
 One of the most up-to-date gas electric motor rail cars, the first of its type to be manufactured in Canada, was given a trial run yesterday from Ottawa to Carleton Place and return prior to delivery to the Canadian Pacific Railway. It is a product of the Ottawa Car Manufacturing Company and is the second of four to be manufactured by them. Built with ninety per cent British Empire products, the car is the last thing in rail transportation and is designed for short runs where stops are frequent and traffic is light.
 The car has a seating capacity of fifty persons. The main compartment holds thirty-six while the smoking room has seating accommodation for fourteen.
 The interior of the car is finished in mahogany and the baggage room is of corrugated steel. The seats in the main compartment are of green plush and in the smoking room black leather. The total length of the car is 74 feet and the width nine feet, nine inches. The engine room is at the front of the car and is separated from the baggage room by an insulated steel partition. The exhaust from the engine and the manifold is covered with asbestos while the flooring in the car is of rubber. The roof, floors and walls of the car are of special construction to keep out the cold.
 One of the main features is the comfort of the passengers who are well protected from the noise of the engine and in addition, the usual smoke and dust from the steam engine is eliminated through the use of the gas electric motor. There is absolutely no vibration whatever and the production of such cars is opening up a new road to transportation. The car has a speed of 65 miles an hour and carries a crew of three men. Another feature is the "dead man control," by which the car is stopped automatically.
 Hon. Thomas Ahearn, P.C., was expected on the trip but was in Montreal yesterday. Hon. Mr. Ahearn is very pleased with the car and has often said "The Ottawa Car Manufacturing Company can build anything."
 There follows a list of those who made the trip.
 The train crew was conductor M.P. O'Connell, trainman, J.P. Cole and pilot F.O. O'Doherty.
<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?id=vRUvAAAAIBAJ&sjid=NNsFAAAAIBAJ&pg=4982.1618737&dq=train+l+railway+l+railroad&hl=en>

Saturday 24/07/1931 Ottawa Citizen Pontiac & Pacific Junction Breckenridge
 Breckenridge was formerly known by name of Heyworth.
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 When the Pontiac railway came in the eighties, Mr. beemer called the station Breckenridge in honor of Andrew breckenridge, son of the pioneer, who had done much to make the railway possible. Then, in time, the postal authority changed the name from Heyworth to Breckenridge in order to maintain uniformity of names.
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<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?id=vhUvAAAAIBAJ&sjid=NNsFAAAAIBAJ&pg=2434.1846374&dq=train+l+railway+l+railroad&hl=en>

Thursday 05/08/1931 Ottawa Citizen Renfrew Fassett Lumber
 Brakeman meets death.
 Foss Mill. Gordon MacDonald, aged 41, son of the late Edmond MacDonald of Chisholm, was fatally injured this morning while braking on a train operated by the Fassett Lumber Corporation a few miles south of Foss Mill. Apparently no one was present when the accident occurred. He leaves twelve children, his wife and six brothers, one sister and mother to mourn his loss. He was a member of the United Church and a member of Chisholm L.O.L. 1323.

Tuesday 11/08/1931 Ottawa Citizen Montreal and Ottawa Vankleek Hill
 Pigeon crashed through locomotive headlight
 Injured bird found by engineer on C.P.R. train.
 It's quite an experience for any pigeon to be aboard a train, but when a pigeon is a passenger in the casing of the headlight of a locomotive travelling at seventy miles an hour, its an adventure.
 And that is exactly what happened Sunday night when a tiny pigeon broke the glass in the headlight of an Ottawa-bound C.P.R. engine in charge of C.F. Towsley, 5 Elm street. Mr. Towsley was proceeding from Vaudreuil to Vankleek Hill with his train when he noticed his headlamp flickering. He did not know the glass was broken, but decided to investigate on arrival at Vankleek Hill. He did so, and found the bird, still alive.
 Mr. Towsley brought the bird into the cabin, and when he pulled into the Union Station, he placed it on the platform, but the bird could not fly, as it had been injured. The only mark of identification is a celluloid ring on its left leg. Mr. Towsley is anxious to locate the owner of the bird.
<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?id=yhUvAAAAIBAJ&sjid=NNsFAAAAIBAJ&pg=2952.3588249&dq=train+l+railway+l+railroad&hl=en>

Friday 21/08/1931 Ottawa Citizen Montreal and Ottawa Hull Beemer

Excitement reigned supreme in Hull this morning - and it was not because of the provincial election campaign. Instead the Transpottine city was enveloped in smoke, three fires raging at the same time. Little actual damage, however, was reported, although thousands from Ottawa and Hull visited the various blazes on seeing the dense clouds of smoke hovering over the city.

Every available piece of apparatus at the command of the Hull fire department was put into play, while No. 2 Ottawa fire station pump was also summoned to assist in extinguishing one of the blazes.

The first call came at 11 o'clock when Hull stations No. 1 and 3 responded to an alarm from the Canadian Pacific Railway yards near the Beemer station where a large quantity of ties and logs, covered with tar had ignited. Several streams were used, but the smoke continued to ascend in large volume. The logs adjoined the Hull Electric Railway barns, but firemen prevented damage to the building by sprinkling water on it. There were also several freight cars on the tracks, neighboring the logs and ties but none took fire. The complete damage is estimated at \$500.

While the firemen were engaged in battling the blaze at the Canadian Pacific yards another call came from the Canada Cement plant, where a bush fire was in progress on its adjacent land. Chief Alphonse Tessier divided his forces, despatching a pump to the scene.

In the meantime a third summons was received to extinguish a bush fire on the Canadian Pacific Railway property near the Prince of Wales bridge, Aylmer road. No. 2 station Ottawa responded to the latest alarm, reporting no damage at all.

The voluminous clouds of smoke could be seen in practically every section, and hundreds called The Citizen to ascertain the whereabouts of the blazes.

<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?id=0BUvAAAIBAJ&sjid=NNsFAAAAIBAJ&pg=7048,4713632&dq=train++railway++railroad&hl=en>

Saturday 22/08/1931 Ottawa Citizen Ottawa and Prescott Gloucester

Much whistling of train as it came in.

The building of the Bytown and Prescott Railway between 1852 and 1854 is remembered by Mr. A.A. Blyth. When the road was started in 1852, Mr. Blyth was less than five years of age, but the fact that the road was being worked on less than a quarter mile from his home in Gloucester served to make his memory clear on the subject.

Mr. Blyth's father had a horse and cart on the job. The horse was driven by one Joe Lauzon, long since departed.

The day the first passenger train made its official entry into Ottawa, Mr. Blyth was about six years of age. He remembers the great amount of whistling the engine did as it neared Ottawa.

Not far from the Blyth home was a deep cutting called Smith's cut (William Smith).

Every winter, from the start of the road, the trains used to have trouble at Smith cut. At the start there were no snow plows and the cuts had to be shovelled out when they got blocked.

Sometimes when the road got badly blocked after a blizzard, the Imperial authorities used to send the regular soldiers out in force to shovel the road out.

<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?id=ORUvAAAIBAJ&sjid=NNsFAAAAIBAJ&pg=5247,4829803&dq=train++railway++railroad&hl=en>

Monday 23/11/1931 Ottawa Citizen L'Orignal Rockland

Rockland. Close call at crossing.

Three passengers of an automobile escaped death or serious injury by inches near here about 10 o'clock Saturday night when their car was grazed by the Ottawa-Montreal C.N.R. train. According to witnesses, the train just touched the rear mudguard of the car and caused it to go from one side of the road to the other before the driver could regain control. The names of the passengers in the car were not secured.

Former Aylmer man writes the O.T.S from California.

While on a visit to Ottawa, Ont., this summer I read quite a lot of Old Time Stuff in July 4th, Saturday's Citizen about the old Pontiac Railway and Billerica and also the old branch to the Iron Mines from Billerica which is Wyman's station on the P.P.J. Ry.

That prompted me to write an account of the old Gatineau Railway and make a sketch of an old engine that I fired and ran on the Gatineau Railway and also the building of the road from Gatineau Jct. to Mark's Crossing from 1st of April, 1891 to late in the fall of 1893. The little instances are just as I remember them and when I look back and think over those old times I recall that everyone worked hard and faithfully. We were all happy and I can say I missed their friendship after I got away from there. I worked under John Ryan, first superintendent of construction and J.R. Brennan who took Ryan's place. We were all like one big family, so it was not because I could not get along with the old Gatineau that I left. I had a good record there but I wanted to get away from those cold winters and snow plow trips, so I quit the G.V. R. in 1893 and the P.P.J Ry. in 1894 and left Canada for California to try the Southern Pacific Railway and so I have been with this company now since August 1895, also with a clear record.

Some time I will write an account of the old P.P.J. Ry and the Pontiac Renfrew Railway, that is the one to the Iron Mines at Bristol, Que.

I have visited dear old Canada several times since I left there.

My uncle is Mr. Herbert A. Pangborn, of Rockland, Ontario.

In reading the poem of the Stag Creek Wreck, I notice the name of Clemmon Hammond. There was no brakeman of that name on the G.V.R. all the time I worked there. Hugh McCann was Bill Blakeley's partner. McCann was braking ahead, but it was raining hard at the time and Blakeley asked McCann to trade places with him as he had no rubber coat and his clothes were wet so he wanted to ride the engine to try and dry his clothes in the cab while McCann had on a rubber coat. So they traded places and poor Blakeley of Aylmer, Que., met his fate and McCann was still alive on July 7th this summer. I correct that fireman's name, it should be Maher.

E.W.J. Pangborn

Memories of the G.V.R.

Mr. Pangborn's reminiscences follow.

Mr. Pangborn tells us that the Gatineau road at the outset had various names. One of the nicknames was "Old and Gloomy and Very Rough."

A road up the Gatineau was talked about from 1885, but it was 1889 before construction was started by H.J. Beemer who had built most of the Quebec and Lake St. John Railway.

The first engine with construction trains to appear on the scene was H.J.B. No.7. Mr. Richards was engineer, Dominic Lapointe, fireman, A. Robidoux, conductor and Albert Manville, brakeman. Work was started late in the fall but by Christmas the construction crew had over 15 miles of the road constructed. About Christmas time, Engineer Richards, owing to ill health, asked to be relieved of the job. He said that if he was not relieved, "they could send a coffin for him."

Mr. Beemer sent W. McFall from the P. and P.J. road and Mr. Richards was relieved.

Work was hard.

Work on the road was very hard. As the track was laid on top of hard earth the construction engine had a rough time of it.

On April 1st, 1891, Mr. Pangborn was sent to the G.V.R. from the P. and P.J. His engine was the "Pontiac". All engines in those days had names. She was a 36 ton engine with driving wheels 5 feet 3 inches in size. Mr. Pangborn's construction train was to look after track laying. His first job was to fix up the washouts and soft spots between Chelsea and Cascades.

While working on this section the train crew stopped at Smith's Hotel, between LaCharite and Farm Point.

A Tough Week

For one whole week in April it rained continuously and no work could be done.

The crew had to stick to the hotel all the time. As the hotel had no lights except candles they had to go to bed very early. During the whole week they never saw a newspaper and life was pretty monotonous.

Joke on Brakeman.

The brakeman of the train was a Cascades youth, Mr. Pangborn recalls that Conductor Manville, during that week, "broke him" (the Cascades lad) by telling him to fill all the train lanterns with "red lantern oil," and of course he "got the laugh" everywhere he went.

George Christopher was foreman of the track gang. The track gang reached Wakefield by the end of April.

Progress opposed

Above Wakefield the track layers had a bit of excitement. When they got up as far as Phil Earle's they had a right-of-way battle. The passage of the track was contested by farmers with pitchforks, etc., but the train crew, by force of numbers, took down the fences and finally the farmers decided not to resist any more, but to proceed to the law courts.

Bit of excitement.

By the time the road had got to the graveling stage the farmers had changed their attitude. One day a party of young people visited the construction train, climbed onto the engine, got into the cab and on top of the cab and had a good time generally. Some of the names of the party which Mr. Pangborn recalls were Duncan Giles, Charles Lamb, Dave Dick, Jack Laydon, the two Misses Earle, Miss Ash, Miss Laydon. The young men, except one, worked in McLafren's woollen mill, on the Peche River. Dave Dick clerked in George Patterson's general store.

Off the track.

On the trip the party of visitors had a bit of excitement. When about a mile from Wakefield on the way back (running backwards, there not being a turntable) the train derailed in the soft gravel. Fortunately nobody was hurt as the train was only moving at about five miles per hour.

The young ladies who were riding in the cab screamed and clung to the engineer and fireman for protection, and of course they did not object as the ladies were pretty. The engineer was Ned Pangborn; the fireman was Jack McGaskill.

To calm the ladies.

Conductor Manville, who was on the caboose, came to the engine and by way of calming the guests said gaily "What are you stopping here for Ed?"

Mr. Pangborn replied: "It's as good a place as any. Its near the village and near a church."

After a time the train was got back on the track but it was midnight before the party reached their homes.

More Serious.

Shortly after this incident this same engine backing with 15 cars of gravel from the pit, going north jumped the track right in front of McLaren's general store in Wakefield.

The thing happened about 10 a.m. The back end of the tank car struck the telegraph pole in front of Ardiss' harness shop. The hitting of the pole kept the train from going into the Peche river. A track had to be built under the derailed engine to get it back onto the track again.

Took the Fever.

In November 1891, Mr. Pangborn took typhoid fever and had to be taken to his home in Aylmer. Saul Wilson, a C.P.R. engineer, was hired to take his place. On November 16, 1892, Saul Wilson was killed in the Stag Creek wreck.

Up at Farrelton.

By that date the track had reached Farrelton and preparations were made to put on a passenger train. This train was manned by William McFall, engineer, Dave Rice (later an Ottawa Alderman) fireman, A.H. Van Camp, conductor. Mr. Pangborn thinks the brakemen were Johnny O'Donnell and Joe Rice.

By May 1, 1892, the gravel trains again started at full blast. All hands stayed at Mrs. McCaffrey's hotel for about four months. A gravel pit was opened at Farrelton and the G.V.R. opened a commissary store. Mr. McParc was the store keeper. Mr. Sam Allen was the first agent. Farrelton then consisted of a hotel and general store, the latter run by Farrel and Rice.

Skillen's Pit.

A little later a gravel pit was opened at Brennan's Hill. It was called Skillen's Pit. Gravel trains from that pit were run as far as Kazabazua.

In November 1892, Mr. Pangborn returned to the P. & P.J. Ry. owing to reduction of trains on the G.V.R. for the winter. Just before he left the headquarters of operations was at Venosta. He stayed at Mrs. Heffernan's hotel. At that time he had Erasmus Earle as fireman.

March-07-14

Colin J. Churcher

Too Much Pork

Mr. Pangborn tells that one time his father, G.W. Pangborn of Aylmer, who was master mechanic of the G.V.R. came up to Venosta to look over the rolling stock and have a visit with his son. While there he met Conductor Tim Brennan, an old friend.

"How are you getting on, Tim?" he asked.

"Fine", said Tim, "only I am getting so much salt port up here that I am ashamed to look a pig in the face".

The balance of Mr. Pangborn's interesting story is held over till next issue.

<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?id=1PcuAAAIBAJ&sjid=VNsFAAAAIBAJ&pg=6265.3296956&dq=pangborn+flight&hl=en>

Saturday 05/12/1931 Ottawa Citizen Maniwaki

The Stagg Creek Wreck and other Gatineau Valley Tales.

In continuing his reminiscences of the building of the Gatineau Valley Railway, Engineer Edw. Pangborn refers to the Stag Creek wreck which occurred Nov. 16 1892.

Three were killed in that wreck, viz. Saul Wilson, Billy Blakeley and Dick Maher.

The train was composed of two engines and fifteen flat cars of gravel. The P.& P.J. engine No. 4 (Hon R.L. Church) was pulling the train and the C.P.R. No. 4 was pushing. It had been raining and the soil had become loosened. When the train struck the soft spot it jumped the track and the front engine and twelve cars became piled up. The three men were buried underneath the wreck. As the C.P.R. engine did not go off the track the crew were saved. It took several days to clear away the debris.

Saul Wilson, who was killed, was the engineer of P.& P.J. No. 4, Dick Maher was his fireman and Billy Blakeley was brakeman.

Lost Her Bell

Mr. Pangborn mentions the fact that P.& P.J. No. 4 lost her bell in the wreck and it was never found. This bell had come off the old engine "Pontiac No. 1" and was a nice sounding bell - very much like a church bell.

Put up Fences.

Mr. Pangborn tells that in many places above Kirk's Ferry the railway crossed and ran very close to the highway. In fact it ran so very close that the company built high fences between the railway and the road in order that the teams of the farmers might not be frightened by the nearness of the trains. In some places the highway was above the railroad. In such places the fences had to be very high.

How about Brookdale?

Mr. Pangborn tells that when he was working around Low station he often thought Low should have been called Brookdale or Brookvale in honor of Caleb Brooks, who was the leading citizen and pioneer of that locality.

In Nov. 1892 Mr. Pangborn left the G.V.R. temporarily. The track was then about five miles north of Venosta. He returned in the spring of 1893 and continued in track laying work from Kazabazua on to Mark's Crossing. During the summer of 1893 the engine crews stayed at Ben Reid's hotel in Aylwin and at the railway's boarding house at Kazabazua.

The passenger trains then ran as far as Kazabazua. William McFall was engineer and Dave Rice fireman. The engine was No. 3, O. & G.V. Harry Heath was conductor, Jack McPherson was station agent.

Engineer McFall

It is told regretfully by Mr. Pangborn that Engineer McFall was killed by his train running into a washout between North Wakefield and Farrelton. The engine plunged into the Gatineau river,

For the benefit of present day railway men, Mr. Pangborn mentions the fact that the engineers at that time received only \$2.50 per day, and the firemen \$1.25 per day. Very little overtime was allowed. The engine crews had to keep up their own engine repairs.

Supt. of Construction.

At that period J.R. Brennan was superintendent of construction. Toby Brennan was foreman of track lifting. Malcolm Graham was foreman of bridge carpenters, Jim Donovan, Jack Campbell and J. Bailey were car inspectors.

Death of Harry Heath

The sad death of Conductor Harry Heath is recorded by Mr. Pangborn. Mr. Heath died suddenly one night about 1896 while on an up trip. Heart disease was the cause.

Mr. Heath was followed by Sam Kenney and later by "Dug" Hoolihan.

In the spring of 1895 Mr. Pangborn got the California fever, went south, and has been living there ever since. But he has not lost his interest in the Ottawa district as his letter shows.

<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?id=2fcuAAAIBAJ&sjid=VNsFAAAAIBAJ&pg=2288.4411277&dq=train++railway++railroad&hl=en>

Saturday 12/12/1931 Ottawa Citizen Alexandria Ottawa Union

Canadian National crashes into rear of Canadian Pacific in Laurier Ave. yards last night

Four of injured are in Civic Hospital.

Ten persons, nine of them residents of Ottawa, were injured about 9.15 o'clock last night in a rear end collision of the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Montreal to Vancouver crack trains in Laurier avenue yards.

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Three coaches of the Canadian Pacific train and two coaches and the engine of the Canadian National were damaged. The observation car of the Canadian Pacific was lifted off the tracks when the Canadian National engine struck it.

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<http://news.google.ca/newspapers?id=3fcuAAAIBAJ&sjid=VNsFAAAAIBAJ&pg=6432.5376297&dq=train++railway++railroad&hl=en>