

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1978

11/01/1978 Eganville Leader Renfrew

Ski Train To Make Trip

A winter weekend train, running from Ottawa through the valley to Barry's Bay, is scheduled for its maiden run February 4 and 5.

Bell Plotz, co-ordinator for the program at the Barry's Bay end, said he hopes the train will make the weekend trip throughout the month of February. The project is organized by the Nepean-Aylmer Transit Committee.

The train will leave the Ottawa train station at 7:30 a.m. each Saturday and Sunday, returning from Barry's Bay at 6 p.m. each day.

The Canadian National Railway is charging \$35,000 for a locomotive, baggage car and four coaches for four weekends. Each coach will seat 80 passengers, with a total of 300 people expected at the train station in Barry's Bay, said Mr. Plotz.

After leaving the train, passengers will be bussed to their accommodations, the ski hill and to other activities in the area.

17/01/1978 Ottawa Journal Kingston (CN) Cornwall

Three CNR cars, derailed in Cornwall

CORNWALL Three cars of a Canadian National Railways freight train derailed here late Monday but no one was reported injured in the incident. The derailment occurred just east of the city and involved in the mishap were a tanker car, a hopper and a caboos. There is no estimate of damage nor any indication of what caused the derailment. -

Soon to be Demolished Train Station Holds Memories

(BY Mrs Lawrence Shaw)

The wrecker's hammer is about to demolish an Apple Hill landmark which most of the younger generation today think of as just. "The old CPR. Station". It means a great deal more to me.

I was born in that station nearly 60 years ago and spent the first 25 years of my life there, until I married and moved to Cornwall. I still have nostalgic memories of those years which will remain with me until my dying day.

My father, the late Harold Mackie, more familiarly known as "Harry", spent over 42 years as agent and operator. He came to Apple Hill from Green Valley in 1913 and was there until his retirement in December 1953 at which time he moved to Martintown. Unfortunately he only lived two years after his retirement, until January 1956.

There have been many drastic changes over the intervening years. At one time that station was a bustling beehive of activity, serving not only Apple Hill and the surrounding area, but also, being the nearest depot for Martintown and surrounding area, people from a very broad area made use of its facilities.

As it was on the main Montreal-Toronto line, and in those days the modes of transportation not being what they are to-day, people from miles around used the trains for travelling as well as for shipping

milk, express and freight, and over the years I got to know many people very well, seeing and visiting with them while they were either waiting to board the train or sitting in the waiting room waiting for someone to come to pick them up to take them home, when they were arriving back from their trip.

EXPRESS

Back in the 20's and 30's there was a substantial amount of express and freight handled. There were carloads of bulk grain and bagged stock feeds arriving or being shipped almost every day except Sunday. Tons and tons of express were also loaded or unloaded every day. Two or three days a week, drovers would load stock cars with cattle or pigs. (I can still hear that mournful sound of the cattle bawling while waiting on the siding to be picked up by the freight train on a hot summer night).

In the early 20's hydro had not yet been installed, so the semaphores and platform lights were lit with coal oil and it was part of my father's duties to light them every evening and extinguish them in the morning. I can still see him climbing up the ladder to light the lamp in the semaphore.

In the waiting room, the office and the living quarters, we were a little more fortunate as we had gas lights which were cleaner and brighter. Sometime in the late 20's hydro went through and the station and platform lights were converted to electric. I remember vividly the thrill of coming home from school one afternoon and finding a new electric console radio in the living room, one of the first in Apple Hill It had been purchased at The Neighbourhood Store, operated by J. A. Dancause and Brothers.

MUCH EMPLOYMENT

During my time there and for some years later there were two track maintenance crews working out of Apple Hill. One from the station east to half way to Green Valley, and the other from the station west to half way to Monkland. Each crew would take turns looking after the lawns and flower beds around the station in the summer, and the clearing of the snow off the platforms in the winter. I can well remember my parents carrying pail after pail of water from the well to water the flower in the hot dry spells in the summer in order to keep them looking bright and fresh.

Sixty-three years ago this summer, a runaway freight rammed into a standing way freight train right in front of the station and a man in the supply car was burned to death as he was covered with coal oil

Several carloads of wheat were burned, but, thanks to the water from the tender on the steam locomotive, the station was saved. The engine would go up to the water tank at Monkland, load up with water, and then back all the way down to Apple Hill with the load of water in the tender and kept up this until the fire was under control.

CROSSING ACCIDENTS

There were also two terrible crossing accidents that happened during the time I was still living there. One of them was a fatal one in which two people and a team of horses were killed, the other one had no fatalities but the driver of the car was badly shaken up. Luckily I did not witness the accident but the aftermath was a gory sight, something that I will never forget.

Back in the years when passenger and freight trains were running more frequently, what a thrill it was to get a friendly wave and the toot of the whistle from the trainmen whom I had got to know quite well, as I used to go to Avonmore High School every morning and come home every evening on the train.

When Christmas and New Years rolled around it was almost like a country fair, what with people coming and going. Parcels and turkeys being loaded and unloaded from the express car. Even the mail was handled at that time and the mailmen had to be there to load and unload the mail bags

destined for either Martintown or Apple Hill post offices, six days a week on both morning and evening trains. It was not unusual for people to go to Montreal just before the Christmas holidays and come back loaded down with parcels, probably as gifts for their friends and relations.

BOX CAR PULLMANS

In the early 30's, more commonly known as "The hungry 30s", when the big depression was on, it was not uncommon to see literally hundreds of transients 'riding the rods' as we used to term it. They would be riding in empty box cars, coal cars, gondolas, and even on the roof of the box cars. If the train would have to stop to pick up or drop off some cars on the siding the transients would get off to scrounge for a bite to eat or some old clothes or maybe just even a pinch of tea. We were never afraid of them, there was not much violence in those days.

One thing, they were never allowed to sleep in the waiting room or even loiter around the station. Most of them were given a night's lodging at Lalonde's Hotel just across the road from the station and the

cost was usually borne by the village. I well remember helping my mother prepare food for them and they were ever so thankful for the handout.

Every summer brought in extra gangs who lived in boarding cars shunted into a little-used siding. Their job was to replace ties, rails, switches, and any mayor track repairs. There were welders, carpenters painters and other tradesmen to repair and refurbish the station and the living quarters as well. When they had finished in one place they would move on to the next to do much the same line of work.

The last major disaster to hit the area just before I left there was the big ice storm that hit between Christmas and New Years in 1942. That was a harrowing experience for my father, as well as the rest of us. All communications, both telegraph and telephone lines were down, hydro was off and all the trains had to be given clearance orders manually at nearly every station both day and night.

For more than two weeks, until the work crews got temporary lines installed, my father got very little sleep as the trains had to be kept a certain distance apart for fear of rear end collisions. The only good thing about it was that we had a good supply of coke, wood and coal in the freight shed to tie us over.

Yes like most of the other stations along the line between Montreal and Toronto, except the major terminals, the death knell has sounded. The time has come for the old C.P.R. station at Apple Hill to go, but to me, the years I lived in that station will be remembered as some of the best years of my life. When I reflect back on my girlhood days spent there. I cannot help but feel that part of me is being taken away when they take away the station.

O! Just to hear once more,

The click of the latch on the waiting room door,

It doesn't matter what the future will be,

It will always be 'HOME SWEET HOME' to me

CN Taking Steps To Cease Operation

The Canadian National Railway plans to make formal application to the Board of Transport Commissioners for approval cease rail operations on the Renfrew to Barry's Bay branch line.

However, the regional manager of operations for CN, Jacques Gauthier, said there is no urgency to halt rail traffic, adding "the tracks won't be pulled tomorrow." Officials from CN were in the area last week, speaking with municipal reeves and business firms that use the line. MR. Gauthier said that CN is making application to cease operation on those branch lines where revenues are lower than expenses.