

# Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 1982

*09/01/1982 Ottawa Citizen Beachburg Bristol*

Cause of derailment investigated

Canadian National officials are still trying to determine the cause of a nine-car freight-train derailment in West Quebec, 60 kilometres west of Ottawa, Thursday. The freight cars, on the front part of an 83-car train heading for Montreal, jumped off the track at the Pontiac Station in Bristol, Que., at 4:30 p.m. Carrying general merchandise containers, the freight train derailed over a 200-metre stretch along the line which runs from Ottawa to Brent, Que. Louise Filion, a CN spokesman, said the Montreal CN emergency crew had swiftly cleaned up the cargo Friday and the track was again open for use.

*23/01/1982 Ottawa Citizen Chalk River Pembroke*

Freight train plows into truck

A Petawawa couple are recovering in Ottawa's Civic Hospital today after a CPR freight train slammed into their truck at a level crossing on IHwy. 17 near Pembroke, Friday.

Ontario Provincial Police said the collision took place at 8:40 a.m. as the couple's eastbound truck was crossing tracks near Westmeath Township. Gerald Gust, 58, is listed in satisfactory condition. His 49-year-old wife, Gloria, is in fair condition in the hospital's intensive care unit. Their truck was destroyed.

*26/01/1982 Ottawa Citizen Kingston (CN) Iroquois*

Iroquois fireman freed after five weeks

The Iroquois volunteer firefighter who drove the van hit by a train last March killing five colleagues has been paroled after serving five weeks of a five-month prison sentence for dangerous driving.

Philip Thompson, 28, was released Jan. 13, eight days after the parole board received his letter asking for special consideration.

Thompson must report once a month to a probation officer until May 7. In addition to the prison term, his driver's licence was suspended for three years.

"It was an exceptional case in many, many ways," said Joe Whitehead, vice-chairman of the Eastern Ontario parole board. "Everyone in the community was supportive, including the police.

"The man's got to live with what happened for the rest of his life. That's punishment enough."

The van with its six occupants was crushed by a freight train March 19, moments after Thompson drove around a lowered crossing barrier at a level crossing on the edge of Iroquois, 90 kilometres south of Ottawa. He had stopped to let an eastbound train pass and then skirted the barrier to save time. The van was hit by a westbound train.

Still a volunteer with the fire department, Thompson, a self-employed dry waller, had no comment Monday on his parole except to say, "everything's fine."

Volunteer fire chief Willard Duncan said he's glad Thompson has been freed.

*27/01/1982 Eganville Leader Renfrew*

CN Abandons Winter Service On Local Line

Rail service on the local Canadian National Railway line has been abandoned for the remainder of the winter months and unless there is an upswing in the economy of the area, the line between Renfrew and Barry's Bay will remain closed in the winter months in coming years.

Thursday afternoon, the red and black CN locomotive, pulling a lone boxcar and caboose, pushed eastwards back to Ottawa signalling an end to the use of the line until the spring season arrives.

*17/02/1982 Brockville Recorder Brockville Brockville*

Brockville history buff Mildred Livingstone believes she has proof that the CPR tunnel and adjacent waterfront property in that community belong to the city and not to Canadian Pacific. Her proof is based on a 3 page 1959 document describing a contract between the Town of Brockville, James Foster a representative of the Brockville and Ottawa Railway Company at Smiths Falls, and a construction firm called Messrs. (Nathaniel) Taggart of Ogdensburg. The contract, for the sum of \$1,859.11, is for the delivery of iron, sand, wood and stone to the front of the tunnel, and is signed by the three parties and stamped with Brockville's official seal. Livingstone feels that Brockville's seal on the papers proves that the town was responsible for maintenance and ownership of both the tunnel and waterfront property adjacent to it.

City solicitors are attempting to validate the authenticity of the paper. A 1979 deal which would have seen the city acquire the tunnel and land in front of it from Marathon Realty fell through in 1980 as the city felt that the Canadian Pacific real estate arm did not have clear title to all the property. (Branchline).

Ownership of 'hole in hill' in dispute

BROCKVILLE Another chapter in the checkered story of this city's 123-year-old "Hole in the Hill" is now unfolding.

The latest confusion is over who owns the abandoned railway tunnel.

Marathon Realities, the land management branch of Canadian Pacific Railways, has long claimed ownership of the half-mile tunnel and several acres of waterfront land immediately south of its entrance.

Brockville has always dealt with the tunnel and its adjacent lands as CPR property, once going so far as to threaten to expropriate the waterfront portion if it was needed for expansion of downtown.

But a document unearthed recently by historian Mildred Livingston indicates the city of Brockville may be the rightful owner.

The tunnel runs north from the St. Lawrence River, through the hill that forms the "hump" of Brockville.

It lies directly under Brockville's 110-year-old city hall and in the old days, council chambers shook with the passage of freight trains.

Opened in 1859 as part of the Brockville and Ottawa Railway, the tunnel has been inactive for some 20 years and its rails have been removed. Dwindling business from the waterfront areas forced the CPR to suspend operations.

The southern doors are well known to Brockvillians and tourists, but the northern terminus is seldom seen.

There, the rails run under CNR tracks and merge with the Brockville-Ottawa CPR line. The northern end is now a ravine, overgrown with small trees, brush and weeds.

Livingston, who resides in the Blue Church area 12 kilometres east of here, has a document she says is a 123-year-old contract for materials accepted by the Town of Brockville, calling for delivery to the tunnel.

She will meet civic officials this week to discuss the document and city solicitor John Corbett will be given a chance to study it.

The contract calls for delivery of iron, sand, wood and stone to the south end of the railway tunnel. It is signed by three parties involved and bears the official seal of the Town of Brockville.

More than 100 years ago, builders installed heavy oak doors on the tunnel. These doors were shut at night, to prevent curious cattle from straying into the tunnel, becoming instant hamburger when the first freight came through in the morning.

Livingston, a vivacious historian who attacks any historical problem with an almost religious zeal, has declined to reveal where she located the document. She allows it came from "a very reliable source."

"I'm surprised there isn't a plaque gracing the tunnel entrance," she says. "After all, we own it."

Livingston plans to do some research in New York State to find records of the Taggart firm, contractors from Ogdensburg, N.Y., who entered into the material supply contract in question with Brockville.

Over the years, Brockville has negotiated with Marathon Realities for the tunnel and its adjacent lands.

In 1979, Mayor Robert Sheridan named an ad hoc committee to study possible future uses of the tunnel, including turning it into a tourist attraction.

Marathon has said it will sell the waterfront property if the city buys the tunnel. The city has visualized use of the acreage for downtown re-vitalization purposes, but in negotiations with Marathon, has emphasized the cost of assuming liability for the tunnel would be too high.

In January 1980, the city agreed to purchase the waterfront property valued at \$296,000 and assume liability for the tunnel for \$1.

Six months later, city council withdrew the offer on grounds it did not believe Marathon could prove clear title to the land.

Former Brockville alderman Don Fowler, a railroad buff whose great-grandfather John Fowler was doors. one of Canada's pioneer railway builders, says his research shows Brockville became interested in a railway tunnel as early as 1851.

By April 1854, 64 miles of the Brockville and Ottawa Railway were completed and work started on the tunnel, the first in Canada. The tunnel was completed in January 1859.

The Brockville railway tunnel is reputed to be the only tunnel in North America equipped with doors.

Crash could have been avoided: MayorThe Thursday night train-car accident that claimed the life of a Templeton woman and seriously injured her husband could have been avoided, municipal officials say.

Gatineau Mayor John Luck says the Canadian Transport Commission recommended in 1976 that an automatic protection system be installed at the level railway crossing.

But a six-year squabble between Gatineau city officials, CP Rail and the transport commission over the project failed to produce results.

The Chemin du Cheval Blanc crossing had no warning lights or signals when the compact car was crushed by a passing Canadian Pacific freight train killing Pierrette Vaudrin, 36, who lived on Des Fauvettes Street, a block from the accident scene in the east sector of Gatineau.

Her husband Andre, the driver of the car, underwent surgery late Friday afternoon and is in critical condition.

"It's possible they never saw the train at all," Luck said. "There should have been a signal of some sort there. The accident could definitely have been avoided."

In September, 1975, Gatineau city council requested that flashing lights be installed at the crossing, Luck said Friday.

Seven months later, the federal transport commission wrote the city that "based on the traffic "circulation, it seems justified to install an automatic protection system."

Such a system should be installed "within a reasonable time" after the roadway leading to the crossing was widened and paved, the commission said.

But financial problems over who would pay for the repairs forced the city in 1977 to abandon the project of road improvement. With it, went any hopes for a signal at the crossing.

When the Vaudrins approached the tracks before Thursday night's accident, the road was still only dirt and gravel.

Last July, protests from area residents forced city council to once again request signals. In February, the transport commission agreed the high number of school buses using the crossing warranted the installation of signals.

"It was in the process of being done. There's no question we would have got it eventually," Luck said.

Gatineau Coun. Claude Berard said, "We've been asking and asking and asking. It always takes so damn long. Maybe this accident will teach them."

The Templeton couple, who had been married 14 years, were on their way to their weekly Thursday night volleyball game with friends at a nearby racquet club, when tragedy struck.

"It was just coincidental that they went that way," said Andre's brother Gilles. "It was the first time they went that way to go to volleyball. They usually take Maloney Boulevard."

Pierrette, who owned a small beauty salon in Hull and was the former president of the local hairdressing association, was also an avid swimmer and was taking ballet jazz lessons.

"She was into physical fitness," Gilles said. "She did everything to keep in shape."

Ironically, Pierrette had updated her will just last week, Gilles said. She purchased a second home from her mother a month ago, requiring changes in her estate, he said.

"She joked with us that if she ever died, life would still continue," said Lisette Cayer, a hairdresser at Salon Twiggy, which Pierrette had owned for 18 years.

"She told us that if she ever died, we should continue the business."

So business went on as usual Friday.

"If one of our customers lost a relative, she always used to tell them to be strong because life continues. She was always positive," Cayer said.

Andre, 40, was a salesman for a Plaisance meat wholesaler.

The couple has a nine-year-old son, Benoit.

Gatineau police and transport officials are still investigating the accident.

15/04/1982

*Brockville Recorder*

*Brockville*

*Brockville*

Leeds County MLA Bob Runciman has proposed that a "first class railroad museum" be developed at Brockville. Citing the community's long association with the railway industry, Runciman has called for a project centred around a 3 mile tourist operation running from Brockville's waterfront, through the city's historic rail tunnel and north on CP's Brockville Subdivision to the provincial-municipal conservation area (known locally as the "Back Pond") at the edge of the city. Apparently Runciman has gone so far as to consult with CP officials as to the feasibility of such a project. According to the freshman MLA, Canadian Pacific has been "extremely co-operative", especially in terms of their offers to re-install track and supplying vintage railway equipment. (Branchline).

05/05/1982

*Ottawa Citizen*

*Other*

Discovery train to be sold

A train that the federal government turned into a rolling museum with millions of taxpayers dollars is going to be sold.

Purchased from the Americans in the late 1970s and dubbed the Discovery Train, it was supposed to entertain and educate Canadians over five years with exhibits touching on various aspects of the country's history.

Under instructions from the short-lived Tory government, however, the 18-car train was put on a siding at Ottawa's Alta Vista station and ordered sold in 1980 after only three years of operation.

Though it's been collecting dust ever since, with taxpayers again picking up the costs of guarding and maintaining it, an official with the National Museums of Canada said today that Secretary of State Francis Fox has finally approved the train's sale.

This will probably be done through the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation. Though some money will likely be recouped through its sale, the train has already cost more than \$14 million.

Despite a Tory order to sell the Discovery Train in 1980, an official of the National Museums of Canada said the corporation never acted on the instructions because the succeeding Liberal government issued no explicit directives on how it should be disposed of.

That was settled last week, he said, when Secretary of State Francis Fox sent a letter to Sean Murphy, chairman of the board of trustees, saying he should go ahead with the sale through regular procedures.

On top of the \$575,000 purchase price that's in American dollars it cost \$5 million for renovations and \$9.1 million for operations from 1978 to the end of October, 1980.

Maintenance and protection costs for the year ending April 1, 1982, were \$125,000.

04/06/1982

*Ottawa Citizen*

*Beachburg*

*Vance Side Road*

Train cuts car in half, but driver lives

A West Carleton man miraculously escaped serious injury Thursday when his car was sliced in two by a freight train at a level crossing in the township.

Shortly after 5 p.m. Thursday, Gregory Zarzycki's 1974 Dodge Dart was severed at the dashboard when the 23-year-old failed to brake in time to avoid the 91 - car, westbound freight at Vance's Side Road.

Zarzycki, who lives near the crossing and uses it at least twice a day, was thrown into a water-filled ditch. .

"I just remember looking and seeing the train about 15 feet in front of me," a groggy and sore Zarzycki said this morning from his Queensway-Carleton Hospital bed.

"The last thing I remember is slamming on the brakes. Then I woke up here. I don't even remember going through the windshield, but I must have because they put 30 stitches in my head and picked out a lot of glass."

Zarzycki is in satisfactory condition with a broken collarbone and severe bruises to his face.

He was on his way to help a friend set up a new restaurant when the accident happened.

"Right now it's too painful to say I'm grateful to be alive. I used to see that train track and wonder how anyone could get hit by a train. I guess I did it this time so it must be possible.

"I think I'll be more surprised when I see the car."

His father, George, spotted the torn car as he was returning from work.

"I said to myself, 'My son's dead.' I still don't believe how he survived."

Zarzycki apparently managed to unlatch his seatbelt as the car was being hit, allowing himself to be thrown clear.

"He's lucky to be breathing," said neighbor Brian MacLaren, who found Zarzycki in the ditch.

Police say there was enough water in the ditch to drown the dazed man.

Nearby residents say visibility is poor near the crossing.

Dense bush about 75 metres south from the crossing makes it impossible to see westbound trains, said Brian MacLaren, who found Zarzycki after the accident.

There are no railway signals at the crossing.

Vance's Side Road runs off old Hwy. 17, and is about 25 km northwest of Ottawa.

West Carleton Mayor Frank Marchington, who also lives in the area, said the trains' whistles aren't always sounded until the final approach.

"I've nearly been hit myself," he said.

Said George Zarzycki: "Today every train is whistling like mad. Before they never used to whistle."

But the mayor said municipal engineers have studied which level crossings in West Carleton require signals. Because Vance's Side Road isn't heavily travelled, they concluded it wasn't worth applying to the Canadian Transport Commission to have signals installed.

But the accident victim's father and MacLaren say the municipality should at least get Canadian National to clear some of the dense bush.

Police suspect Zarzycki was travelling at a high speed when caught sight of the westbound train. Zarzycki tried to brake in time, but "he was already at the point of no return," said OPP Const. David Delmer.

Seeing Zarzycki's car, the train engineer applied his brakes, but the freight, travelling at about 80 kilometres an hour, didn't stop until it was already about a half-kilometre from the point of the collision.

The northbound car was cut at the dashboard and debris was thrown for metres.

Police, who have never seen a motorist survive a similar train-car crash, say the last accident at the crossing was on Dec. 24, 1980. A transport truck was sheared in half in that accident, but no one was injured.

22/06/1982

*Ottawa Citizen*

*Kingston (CN)*

*Johnstown*

VIA train loses car

JOHNSTOWN -Mechanical failure is believed the cause of a derailment here Monday involving one car from a Toronto-bound VIA passenger train.

Ontario Provincial Police from nearby Prescott said 69-year-old Laura Leviolette of Hamilton suffered minor injuries in the 12:45 p.m. derailment.

Leviolette was able to continue the Montreal to Toronto trip after another VIA passenger train picked up the passengers.

Woman hurt in train derailment

JOHNSTOWN Mechanical failure is believed the cause of a derailment here Monday involving one car from a Toronto-bound VIA passenger train.

Ontario Provincial Police from nearby Prescott said 69-year-old Laura Leviolette, of Hamilton, suffered minor injuries in the 12:45 p.m. derailment, but refused medical attention.

Leviolette was able to continue the Montreal to Toronto trip after another VIA passenger train arrived at the scene.

Prescott OPP said the derailed car went off the track, but didn't flip over.

The historic Grand Trunk Railway stations at Prescott and Belleville have both been selected as official historic sites by Parks Canada. Monuments Board of Canada plaques (were) . . . unveiled at both locations on (Dominion) Day . . . to commemorate the historic Grand Trunk Railway (and its station architecture). Senator Royce Frith of Perth (represented) . . . Federal minister John Roberts at the 2 p.m. ceremony in Prescott. The mayor of Prescott, Sandra Lawn, and Carleton-Grenville MPP Norm Sterling, provincial secretary of justice, (were) among the guests . . . at the unveiling. At 7 p.m., Frith (unveiled) the second plaque at Belleville Station. The ceremony (was) followed by a reception in Allhambra Hall. The Grand Trunk Railway was incorporated in 1853. Between its incorporation and 1857 several existing rail lines were combined with new construction to form Canada's first inter-provincial railway. Sarnia was linked via Toronto and Montreal to Portland, Maine. Although much of the track and roadbed have not endured, Belleville and Prescott stations both remain as monuments to the entrepreneurial efforts of the Grand Trunk Railway. Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada selected Belleville and Prescott as the first two sites to commemorate along the railway this year. The board is responsible for commemorations of people, places, and events "of historic significance in Canada."  
(Branchline)

12/07/1982 *Ottawa Citizen**Winchester**Mountain*

CP Train derailment near Mountain cuts Toronto-Montreal line for a day. (with picture)  
MOUNTAIN, Ont. All freight traffic on the Toronto-Montreal rail corridor was paralysed for 30 hours on the weekend by a train derailment in this quiet Eastern Ontario town.  
A Canadian Pacific railcar carrying wax plunged off the track and burst into flames while travelling 80 km/h about 7 a.m. Saturday. The 24-car pile-up burned until early Sunday morning on the outskirts of Mountain, 50 kilometres southwest of Ottawa. There were no injuries and damage to local property was minimal. CP spokesman said no cause has been determined. The derailment is under investigation. Had the cars derailed seconds earlier, the crash could have destroyed the home of Arnold and Marion Johnston, who were sleeping at the time. The train overturned only 20 metres from the Johnston home, leaving the yard and garden littered with boulders and pieces of metal. A steel railway shack was thrown 30 metres, coming to rest 10 metres from the farmhouse. Windows were cracked and dirt was thrown into the house. There was also minor damage to the farm on the other side of the tracks. "Another couple of hundred feet and it would have taken off the north side of the house," said Marion Johnston. The derailment cancelled the Johnstons' plans for Saturday. They were expecting a large turn-out of friends and relatives to help with a hay harvest. The Johnston's son Steve, who was in the barn milking cows at the time of the accident, said: "You'd swear you were in a war." He said the boxcars just continued to pile up in the midst of flame and flying debris. The 81-car train was carrying grain, general merchandise and automotive parts, along with the flammable wax substance, from Toronto to Montreal. There was no toxic material on the train, which was travelling at two-thirds of its freight capacity. The derailed cars on the west-bound line were removed and 150 metres of track were replaced, restoring west-bound service Sunday morning. East-bound freight traffic remains at a standstill until further repairs and clearing are done. Six firetrucks from the Mountain County, Kemptville, and the Winchester fire departments tried to control the fierce blaze throughout the day and most of the night

14/07/1982 *Ottawa Citizen**Winchester**Mountain*

Rail car that jumped tracks blamed for CP derailment  
An empty freight car jumped the tracks, causing Saturday's derailment of a CP Rail train outside Mountain, Ont., a Canada Transport Commission spokesman said Tuesday.  
Peter Schnobb of the commission's railway transport committee said preliminary investigations indicated one of the car's axles jumped the track while the train was taking a flat curve.  
"The derailment had nothing to do with mechanical failure as far as we're concerned. The preliminary investigation boils down to the fact that it (the car) simply jumped."  
However, Ottawa CP Rail spokesman Herb Brooks said the company is continuing its own investigation and could not confirm the committee's finding. He said it could be several days before the investigation is finished.  
Schnobb said the gondola car, used to carry such materials as rolled steel and shingles, jumped because of a "combination of ingredients," including the normal flex of the track that causes cars to rise and fall, the curve and the fact that the car was empty.  
"This kind of situation doesn't happen very often. The cars rise and fall and, needless to say, when you don't have the weight this rising and falling is much more pronounced."  
He said the train's speed of 80 kmh was about 20 kmh under the established limits and was not a factor in the derailment. The gondola car was the 25th in the 81-car train that started in Windsor and was en route to Montreal via Toronto. Brooks said 51 of the cars were loaded and 30 were empty. He also said the company normally places loaded cars at the front of the train and empty ones at the middle or rear. He said the empty gondola car was in the middle because additional cars were put on in Toronto. When the car derailed it triggered a chain reaction that sent 24 cars plunging off the track, including 18 that were loaded. One car, carrying a wax compound used in furniture polish, burst into flames and ignited other cars. There were no toxic materials on the train. Brooks said a damage estimate won't be available for about two weeks when the clean-up and repair work is completed.

29/07/1982 *Ottawa Citizen**Maniwaki*

Boiler trouble halts tourist train  
More than 250 people missed a steam train ride to Wakefield, Que., Wednesday after mechanics making a routine engine inspection discovered five cracked bolts in the engine's main boiler.  
The National Museum of Science and Technology, which operates the train, found the problem Tuesday and tried to notify ticket holders. But many tourists got only refunds and apologies.  
It's the first time the train has been out of commission in eight years and the museum hopes to resume the twice-weekly excursions on Aug. 8. Tours scheduled for Sunday and next Thursday are cancelled while the mechanics wait for replacement parts to arrive.

The Mercury contends that rumours are plentiful, but facts scarce. One sure thing was that the CPR chief returned and was driven by Mr. Barnet up the valley of the Bonnechere as far as Douglas, going up one side of the river and back the other. The next week W. A. Ramsay, chief engineer, and his staff of surveyors returned to Renfrew and commenced a survey of the route on the north side of the Bonnechere River.

It was speculated that the Grand Trunk and New York Central Railway were at the back of Mr. Booth. Hence, Mr. Booth's apparent retirement from the fight "only another move on the railway chess board.

(The fight between the CPR and OA & PS created widespread interest articles appeared in various large dailies.)

The Toronto Empire pointed out that the CPR seemed to have taken control of the Parry Sound colonization road. If this were true, would Booth continue to build beyond Renfrew, as he did not propose to enter into a fight with a large corporation like the CPR. Booth added that if the CPR did go to Parry Sound, he would swing his line in the direction of Lake Nipissing and the French River, where he has large timber interests, which alone would create sufficient traffic to sustain a railroad for many years.

A Montreal paper interviewed Mr. Van Horne, President of the CPR, on the subject: He stated that work was already in progress and they expected to complete forty miles this season, but that the final direction had not been determined. Van Horne said, 'OA & PS was paralleling their railroad for fifty miles, and we feel justified in meeting such a movement in the most effective way possible.'

Van Horne was quoted in the Empire that he intended 'to build a branch to Eganville and some thirty miles beyond, and we will certainly keep ahead of anyone coming into our territory.' He looked upon the granting of a subsidy to the OA & PS as a great injustice to the CPR. The Montreal Gazette credited Van Horne with saying: Construction will commence at once.

The Toronto Telegram held the belief that locomotives would be done away with on the new line, to be replaced by electric trolleys. Also, traffic on the Grand Trunk between Toronto and Hamilton would be entirely electric. Trains would then run every hour, the public would have better service and the company would pocket the large difference between the cost of electricity and steam.

(The writer did not say where this electricity would originate.)

The Eganville Enterprise reported that: The CPR brass had again visited, called a town meeting and asked that the right of way be given to them. It was resolved that the line along John Street would be taken and that this right-of-way be free. This would be expensive, since some buildings would have to be removed and damages paid for properties cut off from access to the street. Eganville is desperate for a railroad and it is reasonable that aid be given to the first one which will accommodate it, but it would have been better to have given a reasonable bonus and allowed the company to purchase the right-of-way themselves. Eganville has been disappointed before in the matter of rail access; it is hard to believe that we will now have cars running into the village before winter sets in. There is a good deal of speculation as to whether the O. A. P. S. will now build their line.

The Ottawa Journal of August 2, 1892, carried a response from Booth: 'that his line did not parallel the CPR in some cases they diverge as much as twelve miles. And even if the two roads are apparently parallel, there is not, and never was, any intention of competition. We had to get to Parry Sound, and the route selected was the most convenient to ourselves.' 'The CPR' he continued, 'need not worry itself over the Parry Sound, a railroad that may not be completed for fifty years yet.'

In the Free Press, the contractor at Carp reported that: "the work of building was advancing most favourably; five or six miles had been graded already. The economic advantage to the village of Carp was huge. Every house was filled from top to bottom with workers, and boarding houses had been built"

13/08/1982

*Ottawa Citizen**Kingston (CN)**Prescott*

Prescott rail depot now historic site

PRESCOTT Saved from the wrecking ball by the concerted action of the good burghers of this historic seaway town, Prescott's venerable railway depot has become an historic site.

Erected by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, a plaque commemorating the 127-year history of this fine stone station was unveiled recently. Owned by Canadian National, this station is enjoying a much happier fate than similar stone stations built by Canadian Pacific in other Eastern Ontario communities.

Most of those buildings have been unceremoniously razed despite pleas from history-minded residents.

This station was built by the Grand Trunk Railway in 1855 during laying of the Montreal-Toronto line, The Grand Trunk, which later became CN, laid out a system running from Sarnia to Toronto on to Montreal and down through New England to Portland, Maine.

Existing lines were taken over where possible; new construction filled in the gaps.

In 1980, CN announced plans to scrap the old station as part of streamlining its system. Prescott council and irate citizens immediately opposed the idea and after a long battle, the federal railway transport committee bowed to public pressure.

The venerable station was saved and today is an historic site.

The depot was built of square-cut sandstone blocks quarried locally. For 127 years, the heavy mortar used in the building has held the stones together and the station is just as sturdy today as it was in 1855. The interior has undergone several renovations over the years and two west side doors have been blocked off. Otherwise apart from such modern conveniences as a telephone booth and inside washrooms the station remains much the same as when it opened.

Long ago, Prescott station had a rival at nearby Prescott Junction where the Bytown and Prescott Railway crossed the Grand Trunk line. In the last century, a flourishing village stood at the junction.

The village vanished some 70 years ago

In 1871, Prescott Junction consisted of a restaurant with accommodation for overnight guests; a Canadian Pacific Railway express office operated by author Bruce Hutchison's grandfather, Ernie Leslie; Montreal Telegraph Co. office; the Ottawa Hotel; Grand Trunk Railway offices and station; several homes.

Prescott Junction faded when business began moving west to Prescott in the early 1900s and by 1912, the village was abandoned. The buildings were subsequently torn down, some falling prey to fires.

Prescott Station is still in daily use, although it's only open when trains are arriving and departing.

On Wednesday of this week, Via Rail's morning train from Montreal arrived at 10:50 a.m., 29 minutes late. It discharged three passengers, took on five and after a 45-second stop, was on its way westward to Brockville and Toronto.

27/08/1982

*Ottawa Citizen**Beachburg**Riverside Drive*

Riverside train underpass to be open in September

Construction of a train underpass on Riverside Drive near Uplands Drive is nearing completion and should be open to traffic in about three weeks.

A spokesman for the region said although the \$6-million project will be officially opened sometime after Oct. 15, the four-lane divided roadway under the tracks should be open a month before that date.

Railway buffs organize to keep station whole.

Railway buffs from Perth, Merrickville and Brockville have joined ranks with local enthusiasts in their battle to save the CN Station here.

They've formed the Smiths Falls Railway Museum Association.

President of the newly formed group is Bill LeSurf, chamber of commerce manager, who has spearheaded the Save Our Station Appeal to save the building from demolition.

Smiths Falls lawyer Hugh McLain was named secretary-treasurer. Committee members include Dr. Robert V. Nicholls, president of the Canadian Railway Historical Association and director of the Canadian Historical Society, Clare Garrod of the chamber of commerce; Smiths Falls; Smiths Falls collegiate principal Robin Fraser; artist Craig Campbell; Perth restaurateur Fred Bannon; and Brockville Tunnell Bay Railroaders Club executives S.H. Galloway and Steve Hunter. First priority will be to persuade Smiths Falls council to assume ownership of the doomed building. Dr. Nicholls warned the meeting that as soon as the structure is declassified as a non-operating station by the Canadian Transport Commission, the wrecking crew could move in within 24 hours.

LeSurf planned to contact CN officials to attempt to get a stop order on the demolition of the building.

The first fund-raising project will be a draw for a painting of the station by Craig Campbell.

The Tunnel Bay Railroaders said they have given up hope of having a railway museum on Brockville because of lack of space, so they're joining the Smiths Falls group.

Bannon, owner of Noonan's restaurant in Perth, has offered the committee the original blueprints of the station plus an architect's proposal for turning it into a restaurant. Bannon has been unsuccessfully trying to negotiate a deal with CN for the past four years to buy the station for a restaurant.

14/09/1982 *Ottawa Citizen**Winchester**Mountain*

Teen escapes brush with train

A farm worker escaped injury Monday when a CP Rail freight train smashed into a corn wagon at a farm level crossing near Mountain just hours after the railway had been asked to clear dense bush from around the crossing.

Neil Bartholomew saw the approaching 53-car freight too late to avoid the collision, said Carol Bryan, whose husband Dave owns the farm where the level crossing is situated.

Although the 17-year-old managed to get the tractor across the tracks, the wagon he was pulling was rammed broadside by the westbound train. The \$7,500 wagon, carrying a full load, was destroyed.

Damage to the CP Rail diesel was more than \$6,000, a company spokesman said.

Ontario Provincial Police from Winchester are investigating the 5:30 p.m. accident. Bryan said she and her husband have tried unsuccessfully for the last few years to get CP Rail to clear dense bush which blocks lines of vision at the level crossing.

The Bryans phoned CP Rail Monday afternoon to ask that the bush be cut down. A farm crossing is used only by a farmer to get across the tracks from one side of his property to the other.

Mountain is about 50 kilometres south of Ottawa.

15/09/1982 *Ottawa Citizen**Winchester**Mountain*

CP to probe farm crossing

CP Rail has pledged to investigate within the next two days whether brush and trees near a farm crossing at Mountain, Ont. dangerously obscures sighting of oncoming trains. The crossing was the site of a train-corn wagon collision Monday.

Carol and Dave Bryan, owners of the property adjoining the crossing, say they telephoned CP Rail only hours before Monday's collision complaining that the brush and trees blocked the vision of drivers using the crossing.

Neil Bartholomew, the 17-year-old driver of a tractor hauling the wagon, was unhurt in the incident.

Railway spokesman Herb Brooks confirmed the company's Smiths Falls division received the call, but added, "We get a number of these (calls) during the year. A lot of them (com-plaints) are unfounded."

Brooks said CP Rail checks its lines on a regular basis.

20/09/1982 *Ottawa Citizen**Chalk River**Chalk River*

Chalk River rail station to go

CHALK RIVER The death knell has been sounded for another historic Valley train station.

CP Rail has asked council for a certified resolution that there's no objection to removing the 72-year-old station. Council could see no reason to object.

CP, as it has done in other communities, wants to replace the station with a modern passenger shelter.

There's a possibility a CP-owned home at the entrance to the village will also be demolished and the property will be included in a package council is hoping to purchase through Marathon Realities.

The property is required as a site for a new water tank, part of a general upgrading of the municipal water system planned for next spring.

30/09/1982 *Brockville Recorder**Brockville*

CP Rail's Brockville subdivision, also nick-named the "bump and grind" line, has been targeted for upgrading work by VIA Rail Canada as part of an overall 10 million dollar project to cut Ottawa - Toronto running times by as much as 50 minutes. This work will involve laying newer and heavier rail in addition to straightening curves, upgrading the roadbed (parts of which are still cinders or pit-run gravel) and extending the track circuits at level crossings protected by bells and flashers. Similar, but less drastic, work is planned for CN's track between federal and Smiths Falls East. (Branchline).

20/10/1982 *Ottawa Citizen**Alexandria*

Man dies under train

A man in his mid-20s was killed by a westbound passenger train near St. Laurent Boulevard Tuesday night.

Police said today they believe the death was a suicide.

The man was hit about 7:35 p.m. on a stretch of track west of St. Laurent Boulevard just south of the Queensway.

The train, coming from Montreal, was halted for about 45 minutes and the track closed to rail traffic for several hours after the incident.

30/11/1982 *Ottawa Citizen**Alexandria*

Santa riding Y's train

Santa Claus and four clowns will ride the rails with area children on Saturday when a YM-YWCA train tour leaves Ottawa Station for Montreal.

YMCA spokesman Evan Frank said children and their parents are invited to join Santa and the clowns for the shopping tour to Montreal. Space will be available on two cars which will leave Ottawa at 7:30 a.m. and return from Montreal at 5:30 p.m.

Via Rail's mascot, Tchou Tchou will greet the children when they arrive in Montreal.

Tickets cost \$19 for adults, \$9 for children five to 11 and \$1 for children under five. Frank said the Via tickets are available at the YMCA on Argyle Avenue or at Algonquin Travel on 90 Sparks St.