

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - Union Forwarding Company

12/06/1847 Bytown Packet

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

The Union Rail Road is now in operation and is a work of vast consequence to the people on the banks of the Ottawa. When it is considered that the enterprise of three individuals, Messrs. Egan, Aumont and Wright caused this improvement to take place and that it has cost some thousands ought we not to wish that we had many like this and venture to hope that as it is a boon to trade it may be a source of ultimate profit to the proprietors. The land through which it passes is very uneven, and as the cost of levelling has been a principal item in the outlay. Every means have been employed to render comfort and convenience to the traveller upon this line and when we take into consideration the --- conduct of the company is indeed praiseworthy. On landing from the Emerald you enter the "reception room", mount a flight of stairs and take your place in the cars. The luggage &c. is drawn up by machinery and at a signal the cars start and in a few minutes you arrive at the terminus. The distance is three and a half miles and there are several beautiful curves along the route. The road is lined on both sides by wild, unbroken woods, if we except a beautiful little lake named after one of the proprietors Lake Aumont - round which you whirl until you strike the woods again. The lover of sport, the huntsman born or our neighbour the scribe might find amusement on every terms here for fish and fowl roam here at will. Crossing the only railway within a hundred miles.
Leaves Union Village.

25/06/1847 Bytown Packet

Union Forwarding

The Hon. James Ferrie and Mr. Davidson of the Bank of North America assembled on the Ottawa to inspect the Union Rail Road on Monday last.

27/11/1847 Bytown Packet

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

Advertisement. Emerald and Oregon with the Union Rail Road are now in operation. Cars connect with the boats.

27/11/1847 Bytown Packet

Union Forwarding

Ottawa

A rail road car intended for the "Union Rail Road" was drawn through the streets from the wharf to the premises of Joseph Aumont Esq. (one of the proprietors) on Monday last. The green "on's" were at a dead stand as to the exact character of the new arrival.

23/02/1850 Bytown Packet

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

Below Portage du Fort a very considerable expenditure has been invested in building two costly iron steam boats and making three miles of railway by the Union Forwarding Company. Talks about the lack of a road to Pembroke.

30/04/1850 Bytown Packet

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

The superior facilities now offered by the railway on the portage on the north side have drawn traffic to that side. Formerly the village was on this (Fitzroy) side.

07/06/1851 Ottawa Citizen

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

Advertisement. The public generally are hereby notified that this line will be in full operation on and after Thursday the 17th instant. There is a woodcut of a sailing ship and a steam engine hauling two coaches.

30/07/1853 Ottawa Argus

Union Forwarding

Long account of the visit of the Governor General

--
On Friday morning (5 August) His Excellency, accompanied by a party of some 70 gentlemen, and a few pretty faces to represent the fair sex, embarked on board the steamer "Emerald" which conveyed them to the "Chats,": here they took the cars, and after three miles pleasant driving over the railroad (a construction of timber in some places twenty to thirty feet high, which the County owes to the private enterprise of Mr. Egan and Joseph Aumont Esq.) were transferred to the "Oregon" on board of which steamer they continued on to Portage du Fort.

--
His Excellency returned to Aylmer about 10, p.m., and almost immediately proceeded to Bytown, which latter place he left for Montreal on Saturday morning.

16/08/1853 Ottawa Argus

Union Forwarding

At Les Chats

The traveller now ascends a flight of stairs some seventy feet, and there finds cars to carry him over three miles of railroad through a most wild and romantic olace. - Another steamboat is waiting to take him further up this magnificent river.

02/09/1854 Ottawa Citizen

Union Forwarding

Ann Sissons not shown in advertisement.

21/10/1856 The Tribune, Ottawa

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

--After a pleasant sail of 30 miles we reached the village of Pontiac-- This is the eastern terminus of the railway which extends thence to the navigable waters at Union Village, above the head of the Chats Rapids, a distance of over four miles. Pontiac is built on a rough uneven surface, elevated considerably above the river. It has sprung up mushroom-like, hastened, no doubt, by the construction of the Chats Canal at this place by the Government, and at which several hundred men are employed. Two years ago there was no dwelling place at this spot, now it contains over 500 inhabitants. The railway to Union Village passes right through the bush, over a rough, rocky tract of country. The excavations are not deep but they are chiefly through rock. The embankment is formed by what is termed by Engineers "cob work," built with heavy round timbers. Nearly one third of the line is formed of this description of work, and at some places it is raised to an elevation of 27 feet above the level of the ground. - It is truly a primitive line, having no side path or fence on any part of it, a circumstance which makes one feel a little shakey as the broad flat car, - which exceeds the line considerably in width, and thus overhangs the cob work - passes rapidly along the highest of the embankments. The cars are drawn by horses, which seem accustomed to move onwards as a brisk pace. One feature in connection with the road, worthy of notice, was the fact that captain Cumming, the energetic captain of the Emerald, took the reins in hand when the party had seated, and drove us at a rapid rate along this wooden road! And but for the skill he displayed in his locomotive power, I would have felt much more uneasy as we glided along the cobs.

After a run of 17 minutes we reached Union Village where we joined the Oregon, Captain Hilliard --

26/09/1860 The Union, Ottawa

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

We are sorry to learn that the Freight House, part of the Wharf and a few rods of the Railway, at Union village at the head of Chats Portage, were burned on Saturday the 21st inst. The fire is supposed to have originated from a spark from the funnel of the steamer Oregon as it was first discovered in the roof of the Freight house. The loss to the company will not exceed £250, as the Depot was empty; but we are sorry to say four or five horses belonging to poor people in the village, were destroyed.

02/12/1862 The Union, Ottawa Union Forwarding Chats Falls

Short reference to tramway from Pontiac to Union Village.

14/06/1865 Ottawa Citizen Union Forwarding Chats Falls

Account of a trip to the Upper Ottawa. Extracts.
Went via Aylmer and Ann Sisson.

It is here that the most extensive portage occurs on the whole river which is overcome by the Union Railroad, managed by the Steamboat Company. It is really worth coming a long distance to see. The sensations experienced in passing in the cars over the trestle works, in some places of a great height, is for the first time for the nerves rather trying; but the road is perfectly safe, and well looked after. Not an accident has happened during the 15 or 16 years it has been in operation. Arriving at what is known as "Wellington Bay", I found the steamer Oregon is waiting to convey us. More.

30/08/1865 Ottawa Citizen Union Forwarding Chats Falls

The press association excursion. Annual meeting and supper at Brockville on Wednesday 6th Sept. and the excursion to Ottawa the following day.

07/09/1865 Brockville Recorder Union Forwarding Chats Falls

Press Association Meeting

Attendance: Hamilton Spectator, Whitby Gazette, Belleville Intelligencer, Peterboro Examiner, Strathroy Dispatch, Newmarket Era, London Prototype, Sarnia British Canadian, Home Journal St. Thomas, Belleville Independent, Picton North American, Expositor Brantford, Times Hamilton, London Advertiser, Huron Signal, Barrie Examiner, Chronicle Ingersol, St. Mary's Argus, Statesman Bowmanville, Standard St. Mary's, Comet Owen Sound, Free Press London, Woodstock Sentinel, Brockville Recorder, True Banner Dundas, Review Peterboro, Canadian Post Lindsay, British Canadian Simcoe, Beacon Stratford, Picton Times, Perth Courier, Kingston Churchman, Berlin Telegraph, Coburg Star, Coburg Sun, Prescott Messenger, Morrisburg Courier, Montreal Echo, Belleville Chronical, Kincardine Commonwealth, Napanee Standard, Brampton Times, Prescott Telegraph, Gazette Quebec, Vindicator Oshawa, Home Journal St. Thomas, New York Herald, Woodstock Times, Welland Telegraph, Cornwall Freeholder, Hamilton Champion.

Brockville Recorder September 14 1865

The members were soon seated in the cars in waiting and richly enjoyed a most romantic ride over the horse railway connecting Chats lake and the Ottawa River.

The meeting of the Press Association this year at Brockville was unquestionably the most successful of any that has preceded it. In the evening the annual dinner was held. In point of numbers alone was it a success. The arrangement had been made for holding it at eight o'clock, sharp; but at a quarter past eight, the slow coaches to whom the destinies of the once well managed Wilson House are now confided, were only placing the tables in position to be laid. It was quarter before ten before dinner was announced, and you may be sure that, to a lot of worn out excursionists, most of whom had no sleep the night before or, comparatively, none, and who were required to be up at five in the morning for the trip back to Ottawa, this delay was anything but pleasant; and third, when we did get it, the spread was about the most wretched apology for a public house meal to which it has been my ill luck to sit down. Large unwieldy joints of beef, which resisted like a piece of India rubber the efforts of the knife to penetrate them; and scraggy fowls which looked like the refuse of an active market day, formed the substantials. And for desert, we had pastry half, or less, cooked, and fruit, which having been undesecrated by the cook's touch, was the only thing really eatable on the table. And for this wretched spread we had to wait an hour and three quarters after the regular train and pay five shillings, currency. Of a surety, I recommend to people to think twice before they look at the Wilson House, under the present management, for a public dinner.

However, we made the best of our emphatically bad job, and toasts and songs followed each other until midnight, when the President gave to our next meeting, and the party separated to find such relief as the poor accommodation of the Brockville hostels would afford to them and in anticipation of the pleasures of today. Never did anticipation more fully become realized in actual enjoyment. At 6 o'clock the party were at the station of the Brockville and Ottawa road and by half past six we had started dashing through the tunnel under the town, leaving us for some minutes in total darkness, and then emerging into the open country, and dashing onwards through hamlets and villages until we reached Smiths Falls, where we obtained an additional first-class car for the great number who were present rendering the car accommodation at starting barely sufficient. Then, after half an hour's detention we went onward on our journey, passing the flourishing village of Almonte, which is principally famous for its woolen factory, and thence onward through places of less interest until we reached Arnprior, which may be said, although the road is completed some seven miles further up to Sackport, to be the business terminus of the line. Arnprior is a cheerful looking place, with evident signs of business about it, and is likely to be a very important town. Here we saw a couple of buildings whose pillars were made of Arnprior marble, a very good sample of dark colored marble which prevails in great abundance. Leaving the railway we walked about a mile to the Chat's Lake, a beautiful sheet of water, upon which, in a commanding point, is situated the residence of A. McLachlan, Esq. Late M.P. for the County of Renfrew, and an unsuccessful candidate at the late election against Mr. Wm. Powell, in Carleton. Here we found the steam ferry boat, a large substantially built vessel called the "Oregon", gaily decorated with flags for our reception. A pleasant sail brought us across the lake and then a novel mode of conveyance awaited us. There is a short slip of land, some 3 miles wide at this point, separating Chat's Lake from the Ottawa River, and on this we went for the distance in carriages which are constructed very much in the style of large wagons, with eight or ten seats, and accommodating about thirty persons each. One, or at most, two horses draw the load with the greatest apparent ease. Indeed the regular freight load of these wagons, drawn by one horse, is six tons, in addition to the weight of the waggon; and with this weight, the distance of three miles is made in about twenty minutes. It struck me, while riding over this road, that it offered a cheap and expeditious method of overcoming the difficulty of transport, which has, thus far, tended to embarrass and retard the development of the mineral resources of the country. In these tram roads there is an easy and economical solution of this question, and a mode by which the public could be greatly facilitated in its efforts to promote the development of the resources of the province. In my own case, I rode in a carriage with about sixteen others, and a single horse took us over the road, three miles full, in about seventeen minutes. The variety of this method of traveling gave great zest to the excursion, and all agreed that it was not the least inviting feature of this admirable tour. The station at which we land at the Ottawa river is elevated about twenty feet from the wharf, and the descent thereto is made by stairs inside the building. But a most ingenious contrivance has been arranged for the lowering of freight or baggage. A platform elevator raised and lowered by a horse power places all parcels put upon it within a few feet of the steamer's gangway, so that although we had, being a number of ladies of our party, a large quantity of luggage, we were delayed but a very few minutes by getting safely on board the steamer.

The steamer was a large fine vessel, the Ann Sesson, owned by the Union Transportation Company, which has charge of this inland route of travel from Arnprior to Ottawa. In honor of the Association she, like the steamer we had left before, had her flags gaily floating on the breeze. She is under the command of Captain Brockens, a thorough sailor, and true hearted gentleman, who was for many years connected with the steamers in the Bay of Quinte route. Once fairly away of the wharf, dinner was announced, the ladies being seated first and the gentlemen taking their chances in coming after them. Thanks to the generous foresight of Captain Brockens, the ??? was a very good one ??? for though the table had to be laid four times, there was abundance for all, the dinner being, although plain, such as induced all unreluctantly to contrast it with the wretched crust of the Wilson House at Brockville. While the ladies were dining the members of the Association met on the fore deck, the President being elevated upon the fore-castle entrance, and proceeded to the important business of the previous day. The main thing being decided was the place of meeting next year, and the route of the excursion.

By this time we had reached Aylmer, a pretty little town, the county town of the County of Ottawa, where carriages were in waiting to convey the party to the capital. The people of Aylmer had put on their best holiday dress and displayed in great abundance their bunting in honour of the occasion and we thanked them by repeated rounds of hearty cheers as we passed through their enterprising little town. The drive to Ottawa over a good gravel road, of nine miles is an exceedingly pleasant one and we reached the city at about five o'clock in the evening, putting up at the Russell, the Albion and the Union Hotels. Tomorrow is to be devoted to the examination of the Parliament Buildings whose magnificent proportions form the chief source of attraction in the city. The fine falls of the Chaudiere over which we passed in our way into the city were greatly admired, and in themselves form one of the points of interest in this Ottawa country.

NB. The reporter managed to get many names wrong. Instead of Sackport he presumably meant Sand Point, while the names of the two vessels were Oregon and Ann Sissons. I have verified these from the Ottawa Citizen of the period. The captain of the Ann Sissons was named Bockus and that of the Oregon was Findlay (also verified from the Citizen).

On landing we found the tram railway train ready for our further transportation through a country remarkable only for its extremely barren nature, large rocks and scrubby thickets being the only gifts Nature has felt called to lavish here. The tram railway is a mode of conveyance the principal redeeming feature of which was its novelty. It is requisite, for the purpose of avoiding Chats Falls at the foot of the lake of the same name, which, of course, renders the river un-navigable. Thin bars of iron are laid down on a substantial bedding as rails. In some places where the country is extremely hilly and uneven, it is surprising to find how perfectly the grading has been effected by means of huge piles of timber built up in many cases as high as the tree tops on either side of the road. The cars are rather primitive in appearance covered over with roofs but open all around; no difficulty is experienced in obtaining a most excellent view of the sights by the way. The motive power by which they are impelled is horse flesh - two of these quadrupeds being driven in tandem on each car.

they were then changed to the rail cars drawn by horses across the Chats - three miles of a drive over the roughest part of the country we have seen. Here we may mention that the songs "The Low Back Car" and "Wait for the Waggon," were sung by the party with good effect, considering the novelty of the drive, and as each car arrived at its destination, cheer after cheer were given. After a few moments walk, the fast and commodious steamer "St. Anna Sission" was reached.

Press Association Annual Meeting at Brockville

The arrangement was that Thursday the party should proceed to Ottawa city by way of Arnprior. A few minutes after six o'clock in the morning, more than one hundred ladies and gentlemen of the press excursion started northward by the Brockville and Ottawa Railway. The train passed through the tunnel under the town by means of which the railway is brought to the river's edge. This tunnel is, I should think, one half mile in length, and passes under the Market Building, and thence underground until daylight is reached to the north of the town. After the train is fairly in the tunnel the darkness is total. There are no little holes as in the Victoria Bridge at Montreal to admit little streams of light, but black darkness renders it impossible for the passenger to see anything. For the sake of variety, a few minutes of this sort of railway riding was very well, but I think few of the excursionists would have cared for a much longer experience of the kind. The Brockville and Ottawa road is smooth and well ballasted and we had a very comfortable ride to its terminus at Arnprior, passing on the way a number of villages, the chief of which are Smiths Falls, Carleton Place and Almonte. The latter place owes some of its prosperity to manufactures. Flax mills are driven by water afforded by the Mississippi River (not the father of waters but a little river) -- Arnprior is distant from Brockville 69 miles, has for some little time been the terminus of the B&O Railway, but is about to lose that distinction, as the Company will, on Monday next open the road to Sandpoint, five miles or so much further up the Ottawa. When completed the road will terminate at Pembroke, a point some 50 miles further up the river. Arnprior is finely situated on the south bank of the Ottawa, or more accurately perhaps, of Chat's Lake. Mr. McLachlin, ex-MPP, an extensive lumber dealer, has a very nice residence there.

Down the Ottawa

At Arnprior there were not enough carriages for the excursion party. Those which were to be had carried the baggage from station to the wharf, which distance - about a mile - the excursionists had to make on foot. A steamer, the Oregon, carried us across Chat's Lake, a distance of about three miles or so. Then we travelled across a peninsular, three or four miles by "tram" railway. This railway has been in operation a good while, and differs considerably from an ordinary railway. The rails are strips of bar iron, such as is used apparently for the tiers of lumber waggons. The "ties" on the tram railway run lengthwise instead of crosswise. The country it traverses is not at all level, but there was little digging done to make the roadway level. This was done by filling up the "gulleys" with structures of timber on which the "ties" were laid. The cars are drawn by horses, and one of the "conductors" claimed as a merit of this road that there never was an accident upon it. Arrived at the end of the tram railway; the party embarked on the steamer Ann Sisson for Aylmer C.E. The distance is twenty or thirty miles and the trip lasted some hours. On board the steamer, the adjourned meeting of the Association was held.

At Aylmer there were flags up in honour of our arrival - at least we took it for granted that this was the meaning of the display. Carriages were in waiting for us and a pleasant drive down the north bank of the Ottawa, and the bridge across the Chaudiere brought us into Ottawa city between four and five o'clock.

14/09/1865 *Brockville Recorder*

Union Forwarding

The members were soon seated in the cars in waiting and richly enjoyed a most romantic ride over the horse railway connecting Chats lake and the Ottawa River.

15/09/1865 *Perth Courier*

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

-- After a four mile sail the company were landed at the depot of a tram railway which makes a portage of another four miles, to overcome one of the numerous rapids by which the navigation of the river is broken. In twenty minutes we were transferred to the large steamer, Ann Sisson, commanded by Captain Bochus--

15/09/1865 *Peterborough Review*

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

--Here we took the tram railway which crosses the Portage and from its novelty the ride on this road was keenly relished. The road is built on sleepers which bridge the gullies where they occur and upon which are laid flat iron bars. Between the sleepers is filled in with planks and upon this the horses travel. I learn that two horses can make the traverse of three miles in twenty minutes with a load of six tons weight. --

15/09/1865 *Newmarket Era*

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

Leaving Arnprior the Party took a small ferry steamer and proceeded across Chats Rapids - a distance of three miles; thence by a tram railway, four miles to the Ottawa River - through as rocky a piece of country as one could wish to see; but these very rocks, grey headed as they were added to the romance of the trip. Leaving the tramway we found the splendid river steamer of the Union Forwarding Co. waiting at the dock --

22/05/1866 *The Times, Ottawa*

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

Advertisement Grand Excursion on the Queen's Birthday!

-- Excursion from Aylmer to Pontiac calling at Quio village. Chats Rapids and Falls are well worth a visit.--

Passengers taking the morning boat can have the privilege of passing over the Union Railway free of charge--

04/07/1866 *Ottawa Citizen*

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

Extract from an account of a Parliamentary Excursion to the Upper Ottawa.

..Chats Canal. In the meantime the present link between the two steamers, the horse railroad, must be preserved. This railroad is a primitive affair, in fact the father of all railroads. Landing from the "Ann Sisson", a flight of stairs, of considerable height, has to be ascended, when the passenger finds himself vis a vis to one or more carriages with covered tops but open at the sides. Each of these carriages or cars are drawn by two horses, tandem fashion, in splendid condition. The roadway does not differ much from the ordinary way of our railroads, but in places, where it crosses ravines, is built up to the necessary level with cross timbers, and between the rails is a plank road for the horses. From the other extreme of the horse railroad we embarked upon the steamer "Oregon".

05/07/1866 *The Times, Ottawa*

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

Account of the Parliamentary Excursion.

--The portage between Lake du Chene and the Chats was crossed on a substantially constructed horse railway which, with its depots &c. cost the Company \$45,000.

25/09/1866 *Ottawa Citizen*

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

Account of an excursion by the Union Forwarding Company to Des Joachim.

"Ann Sisson" to the head of Lake du Chene, a distance of twenty eight miles, whence by comfortable horse cars, over a smooth tramway, three miles in length, which winds its way through hills and over valleys, amid scenery of the magnificence of which our pen can give but faint idea.

The excursionists also had the option, on the return, of riding on the Brockville and Ottawa between Sand Point and Arnprior.

The visit of the delegation from Newfoundland to Ottawa is now almost at its close, and with a most commendable spirit of hospitality, and a desire not to let our maritime friends depart without at least a cursory view of someportion of the Metropolitan counties, the managers of the Ottawa Union and forwarding Company determined upon entertaining them at a complimentary excursion on the Ottawa River above Aylmer. To the President of the Company, R.S. Cassels, Esq, R.W. Cruice, Esq, and Alonzo Wright, Esq, M.P. for Ottawa County, the idea of the trip must be accredited and, though only finally settled upon late on the evening before it took place, we are glad to say it was in every respect a most successful and pleasant one. Besides the especial guests of the day - Newfoundland Delegates - invitations were extended to several Members of both branches of the Legislature, several members of the Press, and gentlemen residing in Ottawa: and had the time for preparation been somewhat longer, a far larger party could have availed themselves of the Company's proffered hospitality. As it was however, a goodly number mustered at the Russell House yesterday morning, shortly after seven o'clock, and were soon stowed away in omnibuses and cabs provided for their convenience, and on their road to Aylmer,

Despite a most annoying amount of dust which soon reduced the clothes of all the party to a neutral grey, and which most successfully made its way into the eyes, noses, and mouths of all. This first part of the excursion was got over pretty pleasantly, the wild scenery of the Chaudiere, the grand milling establishments in its vicinity, and the many handsome villas along the Aylmer road providing all present with sufficient topics for lively conversation.

The Company's wharf at Aylmer was soon reached where the steamer "Anne Sissons" was in waiting to convey the party up the river. The work of embarkation did not occupy much time and by half past eight all were merrily steaming for their destination: the famous Des Chats rapids.

The 'wash room' was the first place sought by every one, from which after shaking the dust of the Aylmer road from off their feet, brushing it from their clothes, and wiping it from their travel stained visages, all hands issued forth like grants refreshed with sleep, and ready for an onslaught on the capital breakfast which had meanwhile been got ready.

The party consisted of -- --

The fare was such as would have invited the attention of a party far less invigorated for the work and after a due and satisfactory discussion of the viands an adjournment was made to the upper decks, to take a view of the passing scenery. To many, indeed to most of the party, the trip was a new one and seemed highly appreciated by all. On one side lay the well cultivated farms of the county of Carleton, and on the other side the Eardly hills rising grandly at no great distance from the shore in Ottawa County, while every now and then was passed a large raft of logs either floating with the current or being towed to the Ottawa market or perhaps moved for a time to the shore. For a time the timber trade was the staple topic of conversation, the visitors being apparently anxious to verify from statements they had heard of the value of this great staple of Ottawa industry. Fortunately there were gentlemen aboard well posted in the matter, and the information asked was willingly afforded, and such deductions drawn from the figures by the enquirers as showed the trip had not lowered the importance of the Ottawa Valley in their eyes. There was on board a considerable party of voyageurs for the Upper Ottawa, and at Mr. Cruice's suggestion they occasionally varied the proceedings with canoe songs. In this was March, Kelleys and Badhams were passed, when close to the last named place, the "Ann Sission" [sic] passed the fine Iron Steamer "Emerald" towing a raft to Aylmer. After the usual salute Mr. Cass proposed a return of the guests to the cabin as the sun was getting pretty warm on deck. The idea was followed out, and soon the whole party were enjoying the supplies of the steward, flavored with songs and stories from several members of the company. This amusement, pleasant as it was, was not destined to be of long duration, for soon after leaving Fitzroy Captain Findlay made his appearance and announced the "Chats" in sight. An immediate move was again made for the deck, and there in the distance could plainly be seen the milk white foam of the main rapid. We will not attempt to describe this wonderful formation which should not be unvisited by any resident of Ottawa, but we must say that its unique wildness excited the unbounded admiration from all who saw it for the first time. The passengers were transferred from the steamer to the cars of the tramway which connects the reach below the "Chats" [sic] with that above. This brought the party to Union Village where the steamer "Alliance" was in waiting for such passengers as might be going further up the river. After making an inspection of this vessel, not forgetting the Steward's Department, the cars were again taken to Pontiac, and a re-embarkation made on the "Ann Sisson" [sic]. On the downward trip, at Mr. Cassell's suggestion, the steamer was taken as close to the foot of the rapids as the current would permit to afford those on board the best possible view of them.

After leaving Quio a party sat down to a capital dinner Mr. Wright occupying the chair, and having on his right, the Hon. Mr. Carter and the Hon. Dr Tupper, C.B. and on his left, the Hon. Mr. Kent and the Hon. Mr. Anglin. Mr. Cassels occupied the Vic-Chair, and was supported on the right by the Hon. Mr. Tessier, and on the left by the Hon. Mr. Whiteway.

After disposing of the substantial part of the repast the usual standard toasts were proposed by the chairman and duly honored. After which the health of the visitors was toasted with great enthusiasm. The health of the manager of the Company, of the chairman, and several other parties connected with the day's proceedings were received with applause, and elicited suitable replies. At an early hour Aylmer was again reached, and after landing the regular passengers a trip down the stream was made as far as the head of the "Du Chene" rapids after which the party returned to Ottawa, where they arrived shortly after seven o'clock. All who had the good fortune to be of the party expressed themselves highly pleased with the exertions made to promote their enjoyment by Mr. Wright, Mr. Cassels, Mr. Cruice and Mr. Thistle, and with the kind attention of captain Findlay, and other officers of the steamer. The trip will long be pleasantly remembered by all.

14/10/1869 *The Times, Ottawa**Union Forwarding**Chats Falls*

Prince Arthur visits the Upper Ottawa--

Ann Sisson was given exclusively to the Prince's party -- took the cars of the Union Railway, and went on board the steamer Alliance.--

14/10/1869 *Ottawa Citizen**Union Forwarding**Chats Falls*

Prince Arthur travels from Aylmer to Pembroke.

Takes the Ann Sisson to Chats Falls.

As the boat neared the landing place at the foot of the extensive buildings of the Forwarding Company, the place was seen to be extensively decorated and a crowd of some hundreds awaiting to welcome the visitor, and cheer after cheer greeted his approach. If the village is small no one could mistake its loyalty; men women and children turned out in a body, and more than one old white headed pioneer of the North sent his hat high into the air shouting a hearty welcome to the Prince. Up the steep steps to where the horse cars were in waiting for them the Royal party went, followed by a swarming crowd, who all the while vociferously cheered them. The cars for the Royal party, which were in waiting, were tastefully decorated, and furnished with handsome chairs and lounges. The Prince and suite were soon seated and in a few moments were rapidly traversing the three miles of the road intervening between Pontiac and Union Village. Union Village was soon reached where a repetition of the scene already enacted took place.

Goes on to Pembroke.

Prince Arthur took a carriage to Aylmer and then travelled on the steamer Ann Sissons the Chats Falls via Quio and Pontiac.--

As navigation here is stopped by the falls, the Royal party were under the necessity of embarking. They then ascended a pretty steep stairway and came into a railway terminus. It is a horse railway. True, and it is only three miles in length, but it is a very fine railway notwithstanding, and so are the cars. The first one was neatly decorated with maple leaves and elegantly seated with easy chairs, and in this, having taken their seats, the Royal party proper then set off, at a handsome gallop drawn by two noble horses. There followed a second carriage containing the representatives of the press, and then a third with the Prince's baggage. The ride is at once very interesting and rather frightful, for the most part the carriages run over a railway raised to an elevation of more than 20 feet, and the first question suggested to one's mind is, what if a restive horse happened to be amongst the teams, for there is no ledge on the track, and to all appearances a very slight disarrangement would trip the whole thing, waggon, and horses, and passengers over into the marsh below. But though appearances are so threatening, it so happens by excellent construction and an excellent management not a single accident has occurred since the railway begun to run. Along the track there are a few arches quite peculiar in their way. They were live arches, and consisted of pine trees being bent gracefully over, fastened, and surmounted with a crown made of pine branches. These arches, perhaps, attracted more attention from the Prince than all the other arches put together that have been erected in Canada since his arrival. In the course of the drive, several lumberers came to the side of the wharf, lifted their hats in a quiet way, and after their simple expression of loyalty had been heartily acknowledged by the Prince, stepped back to their work. After twenty minutes drive, the cars arrived at Union village.

25/04/1870 *Ottawa Citizen*

Union Forwarding

On Friday morning the steamer "Ann Sisson" left Aylmer for the Quio and the steamer "Alliance" came down from Gould's Landing. The "Jason Gould" will be ready for her trip about Tuesday next.

25/04/1870 *Ottawa Citizen*

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

Advertisement. Steamers of the Union Forwarding Railway Co. will commence their daily trips to Portage du Fort on Tuesday morning the 26th April, leaving Aylmer at 8:30 a.m. It is expected the line will be open to Des Joachim in two or three days.

23/08/1870 *The Times, Ottawa*

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

On Saturday last something like a half a mile of the Union Forwarding and Railway Company's railroad, Pontiac, was destroyed by fire. Mr. B. ? Capt.. of the steamer Emerald was seriously burned on the occasion in the endeavors to check the fire. Mr. Cas?, President of the Company has gone to Pontiac, and under his superintendence - no doubt the railroad will soon be repaired. Traffic will not be interrupted by the accident.

20/04/1871 *Ottawa Citizen*

Union Forwarding

Aylmer

The launch of the steamer "Jessie Cassels" will take place today at Aylmer. --

29/05/1871 *Ottawa Citizen*

Union Forwarding

Advertisement shows steamers, Jennie Cassels, Emerald, Prince Arthur, Alliance, Oregon, Snow Bird Jason Gould, Sir John Young, Pembroke, Pontiac and Kippawa. No mention of Ann Sisson or the railway.

13/06/1871 *The Times, Ottawa*

Union Forwarding

Ann Sisson does not appear in advertisement listing the company's steamers. The photograph of this vessel at Chats Falls is therefore pre-1871.

05/07/1871 *Ottawa Citizen*

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

A fire occurred yesterday by which a portion of the tramway of the Union Forwarding Company above the Chats was destroyed. In consequence of this unfortunate occurrence a large portion of freight and a number of passengers had to come to town by Canada Central Railway. About half a mile of the tramway was destroyed and it will take some days to repair the damage.

06/07/1871 *The Times, Ottawa*

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

The Pontiac horse railway bridge over the Chats was burned down a few days ago. The origin of the fire is not known.

29/05/1872 *The Times, Ottawa*

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

Excerpt of description of trip up the Ottawa River from Aylmer to Pembroke.

The steamer Jessie Cassells plies between Aylmer and Pontiac which latter place was reached by our reporter about 1 o'clock on Friday. From Pontiac, a distance of about 12 miles [sic] is made by horse railway which is elevated a considerable height the whole length from the level. This railway conveys the passenger to the wharf of the Prince Arthur which navigates a very beautiful reach of the river.

24/06/1874 *Ottawa Citizen*

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

Yesterday afternoon while one of the horse cars was conveying passengers over the tramway between Pontiac and Union village on the Union Forwarding and Railway Co.'s line, the horse stumbled and fell over the tramway. He was suspended by the traces a distance of some fifty or sixty feet above the ground for a few minutes. Finally, when it was found impossible to pull him up, the traces were cut, and the poor animal was allowed to fall to the ground, where his brains were dashed out and he was instantly killed. It was fortunate the car was not thrown off the track and the passengers killed. The company, for the better security of passengers passing over that route should place a strong fence on both sides of their bridges outside of the track, as it has often been a matter of surprise that serious accidents have not occurred on them. When a foot passenger meets a car on the bridges he has to crawl out on a stringer and remain in a perilous position till the cars have passed.

25/06/1874 *Ottawa Free Press*

Union Forwarding

A few days ago a very fine horse belonging to the Union Forwarding Company met with accidental death on the horse railway at Quio. It appears that the animal broke through some planking and that in endeavouring to extract him, he fell to the ground, resulting in such injuries that he had to be killed.

27/04/1876 *Ottawa Citizen*

Union Forwarding

The annual meeting of the Union Forwarding and Railway Company was held in Montreal on Saturday last.

03/05/1877 *Ottawa Citizen*

Union Forwarding

The steamers of this line are now running to Deux Rivieres.

15/03/1878 *Renfrew Mercury*

Union Forwarding

The Ottawa Citizen says the Union Forwarding and Railway Company have come to the conclusion that there will be more money in towing sawlogs and square timber during the coming season than in carrying passengers, and consequently there will be no regular passenger boat between Aylmer and Pembroke. Since the opening of the Canada Central Railway the river traffic has been very light.

28/08/1880 *Ottawa Citizen*

Union Forwarding

The directors of the Union Forwarding and Railway Company are at present on a tour of inspection along the line. They go as far as Des Joachims.

Arnprior Watchman. Strange as it may seem, it is a fact notwithstanding, that the body of the first railway car ever constructed in Canada may be seen lying upon an old scow at the village of Quyon, P.Q. Mr. John G. Watson, our marble dealer, informed us that this is the genuine article, and that an old gentleman, Mr. Davis, a resident of the Quyon, rode it and is able to relate something of its history. Would it not be a good idea to place the relic on exhibition at the World's fair to be held in Chicago next year?

Also in the Renfrew Mercury of 27 May.

04/06/1892 *Ottawa Citizen*

Union Forwarding

Quyon

Strange as it may seem, it is a fact notwithstanding, that the body of the first railway car ever constructed in Canada may be seen any day lying upon an old scow at the village of Quyon, P.Q. Mr. John G. Watson, our marble dealer, informed us that this car is the genuine article, and that an old gentleman, a Mr. Davis, a resident of Quyon, rode in it, and is able to relate some of its history. - Arnprior Watchman.

20/11/1896 *Ottawa Free Press*

Union Forwarding

Quyon

When in Quyon a (few) days ago Mr. John G. Watson looked up the old railway car there, reputed to be the first ever run in Canada. From Capt. Davis he learned that what had been said of the car was correct. It was built in England and was first used in the Maritime provinces; then was purchased by the Union Forwarding Co. for their track on the other side of Chats Lake. It was nicely, even elegantly, built, but had been allowed to go to decay.

09/08/1902 *Ottawa Journal*

Union Forwarding

Chats Falls

Account of the 1860 visit by the future king. Travelled up the Ottawa river on the steamer Emerald to Chats Falls and thence to Arnprior by canoe. No specific mention that the horse railway was used.

08/02/1930 *Ottawa Citizen*

Union Forwarding

Drove Horses on the Pontiac Tramline;

Probably Last Surviving Driver of Line

Horse Walked Without protection on Board-Walk From 20 to 30 Feet Above the Ground - Thousands Carried in Three years But No One Hurt - Some facts About the Old Connecting Link Between Two Waterways.

When David McClelland was 18 years of age and living at Pontiac village (which does not know exist) he secured a job (1867) as driver of one of the horse-car trains of the Union Forwarding Co. which carried passengers and freight from Pontiac at the head of Lake Deschene, to a point at the foot of Chats Lake.

Mr. McClelland is probably the only driver of those tramway cars still alive. If there are others, both Mr. McClelland and the O.T.S (Old Time Stuff). will be glad to hear from them.

The old Tramway was three miles long and ran for long stretches on trestle work just as a steam railway does. This was because of the unevenness of the country. In some places that cars ran from 20 to 30 feet off the ground.

Two horses for used on all cars, but owing to the narrowness of the track, they travelled tandem fashion.

On a plank walk.

The space between the tracks was filled in with three-inch plank, and it was on this plank that the horses travelled.

The trestles work was not fenced in and the horses always stood in danger of falling off. As a matter of fact one or other of the horses did fall off now and again. Sometimes a bird would fly suddenly up from the trestle past a horse's head and frighten it, and it would "shie" off the trestle. But Mr. McClelland does not recall a case where a horse, so falling was killed. Usually the traces supported them and they will hauled back on to the track.

As to the cars.

The freight cars were about 24 ft long and could carry about 50 barrels of pork, or the equivalent of weight in other things.

Cars Carried 50 to 60.

The passenger cars were approximately the same length. The seats were placed crosswise as in a stage and there were curtains to pull down to keep out the wet and cold. The cars were crowded and could carry between 50 and 60 people.

On this tram-line the company-owned three passenger cars and five freight cars.

Mr. McClelland drove on this line till 1870, when at his request the company transferred him to the freight service at Ottawa.

No one hurt.

During the three years that David McClelland drove on the Pontiac line thousands of passengers were carried, but not one was ever hurt.

02/01/1937 *Ottawa Citizen*

Union Forwarding

Description of a Journey on an Extraordinary Railway.

Having given a fairly lengthy description of the life and works of the late John Egan and his effort to construct the Chats Canal back in the fifties, O.T.S. has been requested to publish a few facts about the old Pontiac Railroad, which was one of the most amazing examples of railway construction on the whole history of Canada, and which was built for the purpose of transporting boat passengers between Chats Lake and Lake Deschenes.

For this purpose we can do little better than present a description of this wonderful railway as written by a man who rode over it in 1855 and wrote a first hand story. The writer was W.S. Hunter Jr. After describing the Chats Falls and their wonderful beauty, he said:

"It's now time to describe the mode in which this formidable obstruction to navigation 'Chats Falls' is overcome. On landing from the steamer at the foot of Chats Lake, we find ourselves on a convenient wharf and are presently invited to take our places in an open carriage drawn by two horses, tandem fashion and soon find ourselves traveling at a pretty sharp rot along a railway track.

Was Extraordinary

"This extraordinary railway is built across the barrier of rock on piles of squared trees. These trees have been laid across each other horizontally and longitudinally in alternate layers until the required height was obtained. In order that the track may be level it has been necessary in many places to raise the pile of timber over twenty-five feet from the ground.

"There is no railing or fence of any description at the side, but during the several years that this amazing road has been in operation no accident has ever occurred on it, so well has it been managed.

"On arriving at the other end of the railway, which, by the way, is three miles long, we find that we have to descend a long flight of stairs to the wharf below. These stairs are built in a warehouse belonging to the steamboat company, and are necessary because there is about seventy feet of difference between the level of the railway and that of the river below. Descending these stairs we find ourselves on a large wharf alongside which lies the Steamer Emerald, etc., etc."

This remarkable tramway, we learn, stopped running in 1877, owing to the C.P.R. having been built into Pembroke. This was also the last year that the passenger boat "Jessie Cassels", ran to Pontiac from Aylmer. This narrow gauge railway was built away back in the middle forties - when steamboats began to ply regularly between Aylmer and the foot of the Chats. Congestion in the transfer of goods overland to the foot of the lake made it necessary.

Remembers Journey on Remarkable Railroad.

One who retains vivid memories of the old Pontiac horse railway which played an important part in the transportation affairs of the Chats Lake district many years ago, is Mr. Ernest Therien, 408 Rideau street. Writing to O.T.S., Mr. Therien says:

"I doubt if there are many living in the Ottawa Valley today who can say they had a trip on that remarkable old railway. I once had the pleasure and will never forget it, though I was very young at the time. Sometimes two horses were used, one travelling ahead of the other in the center of the track.

"The last time I saw that wonderful railway it was in ruins; the high trestles were rapidly decaying and falling apart. When I lived in Arnprior years ago, we used to cross Chats Lake to this forsaken spot to pick blueberries.

"When the railway was being built in the forties my grandfather, Charles Garrant, was chief cook in the construction camp. His youngest daughter is still alive and living in Almonte at the advanced age of 88 years."

Andrew King rediscovers a long-forgotten 19th-century steamship conduit between Ottawa and the Great Lakes that's in the wilderness and which has been slowly consumed by nature.

Trapped in time, forgotten in the woods 70 kilometres north of Ottawa, lies the dream of a steamship route along the Ottawa River.

For centuries, tribes of the First Nations used the Ottawa River as a major trade route, but with the advent of the steamship in the 1800s, a bold new plan was conceived to cut through the undeveloped wilderness of the Ottawa Valley. It would use a system of canals and portage railways to deal with the many waterfalls and rapids on the way to Lake Nipissing and Georgian Bay.

But as locomotives and roads opened the vast wilderness of the Upper Ottawa Valley, these grand plans of utilizing the Ottawa River as a steamship conduit between Ottawa and the Great Lakes would be discarded.

CHATS FALLS

Prior to the construction of the dam and power-generating station at Chats Falls in 1932, the northern end of Lac Deschênes offered a spectacular 40-foot waterfall. This presented a massive problem for the 19th-century shipping business that used the river to transport passengers and freight northward from Ottawa. Without rail service or roads, the river was the only means of moving goods and people from the St. Lawrence Valley to the western reaches of Ontario. The picturesque waterfalls and rapids were significant obstructions to steamship navigation and required ships to dock and unload their passengers and freight and portage around them to another ship waiting upriver.

The Union Forwarding Company decided to build an ambitious horse-drawn railway around the first of these portages in 1846, opening a five-kilometre long railway from its dock at the base of Chats Falls in 1847. Unloading from the newly constructed iron hulled steamship Emerald that departed from Aylmer, passengers boarded horse-drawn railcars. This was the first railway constructed in the Ottawa Valley, and one of the first in Canada. There was only 105 kilometres of railway track in existence in all of Canada in 1847.

This horse-powered train blazed a trail for passengers and freight around Chats Falls on a harrowing journey across swamps and mosquito-infested wilderness in open air cars to another ship waiting for them at Union Village. The Ottawa Citizen in 1869 reported that Prince Arthur travelled the Chats Passage on a trip up the Ottawa River, commenting, "The ride is at once very interesting and rather frightful."

The Union Forwarding Company soon realized a canal would allow their steamships to travel around Chats Falls on a faster and more profitable shipping route from Ottawa to Pembroke. In 1853, a survey was made to cut through the Canadian Shield at Pontiac Village.

With funding from the provincial government, construction on the canal began in 1862 at the base of Chats Falls.

Without the use of pneumatic drills, workers hand-drilled blasting holes into the solid igneous rock, going through 15 to 20 drill bits per inch of drill depth. Progress was slow and costly.

After two years and half a million dollars, the project was abandoned.

With a new steam-powered locomotive railway opening along the same river route, the Chats Falls passage became obsolete, and by 1879 the horse railway and canal were left to disappear into the woods.

THE LOST PASSAGE

After a century and a half, I assumed not much would be left of this once popular portage route through the wilderness north of Ottawa.

Researching mid-19th century maps and current aerial maps of the area, we located the general vicinity of the abandoned canal and railway. Arriving in presentday Pontiac Village, where both passages began, it's clear how much this once-bustling harbour town has changed. A few modern cottages dot the shoreline and the ruins of a 19th century log cabin can be found in the woods.

Hiking into the forest, we soon came across huge piles of blasted rock, obvious remnants of the original 1864 canal construction. Clambering over thousands of tons of blasted rock piles, we arrived at what was the Lost Canal ... a water-filled, mosquito-infested rock cut covered in a century and a half of overgrowth.

It lies preserved in almost the same state as it was left when work came to an abrupt halt 150 years ago. Within the piles of rubble, covered in lichen, the original hand-drilled holes the men worked so hard to make for the blasting dynamite can clearly be seen.

The rock cut they laboured to complete lies trapped in time, an ambitious project left as an unfinished reminder of an era when manpower and sweat did the job of machines we use today.

THE FIRST RAILWAY

With the canal documented, we moved our attention to finding what remained of the first railway in the Ottawa Valley. Abandoned in 1879, this horse-powered railway used wooden rails faced with iron straps or bars. Planking was placed between the rails to provide a firm footing for the horses. These tracks would be long gone, but maybe we could locate the bed the track lay on.

Superimposing an 1850s route map atop a current map, it appeared the railway route may have intersected a remote cottage road. Using swamps as reference points, we hiked into the forest to see if anything remained of this railway once travelled by royalty. Sure enough, it wasn't long before we came across evidence of the original railway: a rock cut with drilled blasting holes. This section of the original five-kilometre railway was about 4½ metres wide and was quite level as it continued into the forest.

Walking the route of the train you could picture how frightening it would have been for passengers to travel in their open-sided horse drawn rail cars through the bug infested woods under a canopy of thick trees, portaging between steamships on their journey up the Ottawa River.

Both the canal and railway lie forgotten in the wilderness, slowly consumed by nature, but both remain a powerful reminder of a time when work was hard, dreams were big and travel was meant to be a memorable adventure.