

23ai Victoria Junction (Lindsay) 1875 - 1907

LOCATION

Victoria Junction was located in the area of William Street North and Orchard Park Road at the north end of Lindsay. It has been commemorated by an information kiosk and replica track on what is now the Legacy (Rail) Trail where it crosses William St. North.

The area was originally traversed by the first railway to reach Lindsay in **1857**, the Port Hope, Lindsay & Beaverton Railway (PHL&B), when it (by then the Midland Railway) was extended to Beaverton in **1871**. It did so by continuing north from its original station beside the Scugog River at King and St. Paul Streets, crossing the river by means of a swing-bridge, then gaining height on the west bank of the Scugog (through what is now the Rivermill condominium complex), curving west across what is now William Street North at Orchard Park Road, and then continuing along through what is now Joan Park and the Lindsay Airport.

THE JUNCTION 1875 to 1883

A railway junction was created when the originator of what subsequently became the Victoria Railway (VR), the Fenelon Falls Railway, was chartered in **1871** to build north from Lindsay, with plans to extract timber and minerals in the Haliburton Highlands and in what is now Algonquin Park. This railway, renamed in 1873 as the Victoria Railway (to improve its financing prospects), did not however originate from downtown Lindsay, but started out from the top of William Street in **1875** with a triangular wye formation connected with the Midland Railway line, to create Victoria (or Midland) Junction. This permitted direct traffic between Haliburton and Port Hope (through Lindsay along the Scugog); and between Haliburton and Beaverton (and on to Waubaushene in 1875, and through to Midland in 1879). It also enabled the Victoria Railway to use the Midland station at King and St. Paul Streets in Lindsay as its initial terminus.

Victoria Junction grew in importance when the Victoria Railway (looking for a more convenient Lindsay terminus) obtained permission from the Town of Lindsay in **1877** to lay a track straight down Victoria Avenue to Melbourne Street to connect with the Whitby, Port Perry & Lindsay Railway (WPP&L), thus bisecting the existing triangular wye formation at William Street North with its southward extension that curved into Victoria Avenue just north of Pottinger Street. The WPP&L was the first railway to reach downtown Lindsay in **1877**, and with the Victoria Railway, established a "union" station and terminal facilities at Victoria Avenue and Melbourne Street.

THE JUNCTION 1883 to 1907

By **1883**, the Midland Railway had acquired the Whitby, Port Perry & Lindsay Railway and the Victoria Railway (among others), and reorganized its newly-expanded system. This involved the realignment of its original route from Port Hope to enter Lindsay along Durham Street (also with the prospect of a downtown station), where it now connected with the joint WPP&L and VR station facilities on Victoria Avenue. As the Midland traffic now went along Victoria Avenue, a westbound curve was put in between Pottinger and Eglington Streets, south of the Victoria Junction diamond crossing, to connect the new route up with the Midland's original track along what is now Orchard Park Road, Joan Park and on through what is now the Lindsay airport, out to Beaverton and beyond. The original diamond crossing was removed, and the former main line along the banks of the Scugog, severed by the removal of the original swing-bridge and now only connected by means of the eastern portion of the original triangular wye, became a spur to serve residual local industries until the mid-1950s.

Until **1907**, Victoria Junction remained pivotal to local railway operations. By 1907 however, the volume of grain traffic from Midland was such that the Victoria Avenue route was no longer acceptable as a main artery, and the successor Grand Trunk Railway (which had acquired outright ownership of the Midland in 1893) built a new line west out of Durham Street to cross Kent and Colborne Streets West to join the original PHL&B (Midland) line just west of Monarch Road. Victoria Avenue continued to be used for the Haliburton traffic, but Victoria Junction now existed in name only, except for the spur referred to above to the west bank of the Scugog River.