

## 23af Lindsay, Ont. – A Brief Railway History

The first railway to arrive in Lindsay was the **Port Hope, Lindsay & Beaverton Railway (PHL&B)**, originally chartered in 1846 as the Peterborough & Port Hope Railway). The first train arrived at the St. Paul and King Streets station (Lindsay's first) on the east side of the Scugog River on October 16, 1857. In 1871 it continued on over the Scugog River across a swing-bridge, gained height on the west bank, and then headed west out to Beaverton. It was renamed the **Midland Railway of Canada** in 1869.

Lindsay's second railway began as the **Fenelon Falls Railway** in 1871, changing its name to the **Lindsay, Fenelon Falls & Ottawa River Valley Railway**, and then to the **Victoria Railway**. It reached and terminated at Haliburton in 1878. At its Lindsay end, it connected with the original Midland Railway route on William Street North at "Victoria Junction" in 1875, and its original Lindsay terminus was at the PHL&B/Midland station at St. Paul and King Streets. In 1877, it applied to the Town of Lindsay to extend its railway down Victoria Avenue to Glenelg Street to connect with the WPP&L (see below), where a brick station (Lindsay's second) was built on Victoria Ave between Glenelg and Melbourne Streets to serve the two railways as a union station.

Lindsay's third railway was the **Port Whitby & Port Perry Railway**, extended from Port Perry to Lindsay in 1876, reaching Albert Street, Lindsay on June 15, 1877 as the **Whitby, Port Perry & Lindsay Railway (WPP&L)**.

In 1881, the Midland Railway acquired the neighbouring smaller railways and built two links important to Lindsay. One was between Wick (Blackwater) Jct., and Cresswell (Manilla Jct.) in early 1883 for a direct route between Lindsay and Toronto (hitherto via Lorneville Jct.); and the other ("the Missing Link") between Peterborough and Omemee in late 1883, for a direct Lindsay – Peterborough connection (hitherto via Millbrook Jct.).

In Lindsay, a new entry from Omemee was then decided upon, and a bridge was built over the Scugog River at the east end of Durham St. The track now came along just south of Durham to Cambridge Street, where it curved north to connect with the former Victoria Railway on Victoria Avenue. A new station (Lindsay's third) was built at the south end of William Street in 1883, at which time the King at St. Paul Street station was abandoned. The new station burned in 1885, and the former union station was taken back into use until 1890 when a grand new two-storey station was built (Lindsay's fourth), that lasted until 1963. The union station was demolished around 1890. A freight shed was built on the site, which was destroyed by fire in 1954. (It was replaced by another freight shed, demolished in 2006.)

In 1887 the Midland Railway made Lindsay its operational headquarters. A large freight yard was built south of Durham between Lindsay and Hamilton Sts, and the Port Hope engine house was dismantled and rebuilt in Lindsay as a running shed, together with the attendant shops, on the east side of Albert St. south of Durham. In the meantime the old swing-bridge across the Scugog River at Lindsay and Colborne Sts. was dismantled in 1887, and the former Midland Railway route across Victoria Jct. and through what is now the Lindsay airport was abandoned when the new direct line from Lindsay out to Midland was built in 1907. The **Grand Trunk Railway (GTR)** took over the Midland in 1884, and Lindsay became a division point for the GTR's 8<sup>th</sup> (Belleville, Peterborough and Port Hope), 9<sup>th</sup> (Midland and Cobocok) and 10<sup>th</sup> (Scarboro Jct., Whitby and Haliburton) Districts. The GTR was merged into the **Canadian National Railways** in 1923. (The Maynooth Sub. was added to Lindsay's control in 1931, then at its peak as a railway centre.)

In the meantime Bobcaygeon interests had applied for, and in 1890 obtained, a charter for the **Lindsay, Bobcaygeon & Pontypool Railway (LB&P)** from Burketon Jct. (west of Pontypool) on the CPR's then main Montreal-Toronto line, north to Lindsay. Construction began in 1901, and the line opened in 1904. The LB&P ducked under the GTR at the Scugog River bridge, following the east bank of the river to a station at Caroline Street (Lindsay's fifth). The last train to Bobcaygeon was in 1957.

Meanwhile, the CPR sponsored the **Georgian Bay & Seaboard Railway (GB&S)** for competing grain traffic direct to Montreal. It opened in 1912, crossing the Scugog River further north from the former swing-bridge, and entering Lindsay at the CPR station to join the Bobcaygeon branch. (The abutments that carried this road over the former Haliburton line can still be seen on the Victoria Rail Trail a short distance north of the former Victoria Junction.) It then continued across King St. along the east bank, then across Logie St. to what became Lindsay Jct., where it branched off to Bethany Jct., or Dranoel (east of Pontypool) on the CPR's original Montreal-Toronto line. Passenger service on this line ceased in 1932.

The last CNR regular passenger train out of Lindsay was on January 31, 1962. The Lindsay Dispatching Office closed in 1960 and the Terminal in 1978, but freight services continued as required into the 1980s.

**Abandonments:** CPR Lindsay Jct. – Burketon Jct. **1932**. CPR (GB&S) Orillia – Lindsay **1937**. CPR Bobcaygeon branch **1961**. CNR Midland line **1966**. CNR Haliburton branch **1981**. CPR Lindsay – Dranoel spur **1987**. CNR Lindsay – Peterborough **1989**. CNR Lindsay – Uxbridge **1991**.

*Please turn over for some Highlights of Lindsay and Victoria County railway history ...*

# Highlights of Lindsay and Victoria County railway history

## Did You Know that

- In 1857, Lindsay's first railway train arrived from Port Hope, the same year that Lindsay incorporated as a Town?
- This railway was the Port Hope, Lindsay & Beaverton Railway, and that its terminus was at Lindsay's King and St. Paul Streets for the next 14 years?
- When in 1871, the Port Hope, Lindsay & Beaverton Railway was extended to Beaverton, it crossed the Scugog River by means of a swing-bridge at the north end of Lindsay Street, gained height on the west bank and then headed west along what is now Orchard Park Road and across what is now the Lindsay Airport?
- In 1875, Lindsay became the departure point of another pioneer railway – the Victoria Railway to Haliburton – via a place called Victoria Junction, approximately where William Street North intersects with Orchard Park Road today?
- In 1877, another pioneer railway, the Whitby, Port Perry & Lindsay Railway, arrived in Lindsay?
- Also in 1877, the Victoria Railway negotiated a right-of-way into downtown Lindsay right down the middle of Victoria Avenue North, to connect up with the newly-arrived Whitby, Port Perry & Lindsay Railway at a "union" depot at Melbourne Street and Victoria Avenue South, Lindsay's second railway station?
- In 1887, Lindsay became the operational hub of the various district pioneer railways that were consolidated into the Midland Railway of Canada, and subsequently became a major Grand Trunk Railway divisional point on a par with those of Stratford, Allandale and Hamilton, controlling traffic as far as Midland and Scarboro Junction to the west, and Belleville to the east?
- In the two decades at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Lindsay saw **on each day of the week** (save Sundays) some 20 passenger and mixed trains; and some 20 to 50 freight trains?
- Lindsay's distinctive engine house (running shed) was built in 1887 on the east side of Albert Street, using some of the bricks from the predecessor roundhouse at Port Hope?
- In 1890, Lindsay and Bobcaygeon business interests combined to make a deal with the Canadian Pacific Railway for a branchline from the CPR's then Toronto-Montreal main line through Lindsay to Bobcaygeon that came about in 1904?
- During the railway era, Lindsay had no less than five railway stations at four different locations (King & St. Paul Sts, Victoria Ave South, Durham St. (2), Caroline St.), none of which has survived?
- At the height of the railway era, Lindsay itself boasted a total of around 55 miles of track (including sidings)?
- The railways were the economic backbone of the Town of Lindsay for over a century, with a peak of 350 employees; and in 1914, a payroll of \$900,000 annually, the equivalent of about \$17,000,000 today?
- At the height of the railway era, no less than seven lines radiated out of Lindsay, clockwise from Victoria Junction: 1. to Beaverton-Orillia-Midland; 2. to Fenelon Falls-Kinmount-Haliburton, 3. to Orillia-Victoria Harbour-Port McNicholl; 4. to Bobcaygeon; 5. to Port Hope and to Peterborough-Belleville; 6. to Lindsay Junction, diverging there to Bethany Junction (Dranoel) and Burketon Junction; and 7. to Port Perry-Whitby and to Uxbridge-Scarboro Junction-Toronto?
- Of Victoria County's 60 or so stations and flagstop shelters, only 10 (Kinmount, Fenelon Falls, Lorneville, Eldon CPR, Balsam lake CPR, Coboconk, Grass Hill CPR, Omemee, Dunsford, Victoria Road) are known to have survived?
- All that remains today in the former Victoria County are those few railway stations, the bridges across the Fenelon, Scugog and Pigeon Rivers, the steel trestle at Doube's (Orange Corners), the rail trails, the grain elevator at Ponty-pool, some abandoned overgrown rights-of-way, and two large bridge abutments on the Legacy (Victoria Rail) Trail?