

23ac Tully's, Doube's and the "Missing Link"

BACKGROUND

Following the absorption by the Midland Railway of Canada of the "central Ontario" pioneer railway lines in 1881 (see leaflet '23a the Midland Railway of Canada Group of Companies'), the Midland sought to rationalize its network, with the particular object of establishing a direct rail link between Peterborough and Toronto. As of November 1881, the "direct" route was via Millbrook, Omemee, Lindsay, Lorneville and Blackwater. The diversion around Lorneville was quickly addressed by means of a short connection between Manilla and Wick (Blackwater), leaving the other detour through Millbrook to be resolved.

"THE MISSING LINK"

Construction began in 1882, with a branch off the Lakefield line at Brock Street in Peterborough, out through Jackson Park, to meet the former Port Hope, Lindsay & Beaverton's "Old Road" at Omemee (West), around Sibley Ave. North. The "Old Road" was the section of that railway's former line between Millbrook and Omemee that was subsequently abandoned in 1927. Traces of it can still be seen near the former junction at Omemee (West). Notable engineering feats were the trestles to bridge the valleys at Tully's (5.5 miles out of Peterborough and originally 700 ft long, 45 ft high), and at Doube's (9 miles out of Peterborough and originally 1,500 ft long, 74 ft high).

In addition there was a swamp about five miles out of Peterborough – a "sink hole" with a prodigious appetite that devoured trees, logs, stones, gravel, and even a construction train, presenting a major challenge to "dry it out".

The structures at Tully's and Doube's were originally wooden trestles. The "missing link" was completed in time for the 1883 winter timetable and the first trains operated on the newly-completed line in November, 1883.

INTO THE 20TH CENTURY

Trestles were cheap and fast to construct, but were vulnerable to instability and decay. Also subsequent to the popular use of wooden trestles in the 19th century, the weight of locomotives and train loads increased rapidly after the turn of the century. As a result, many trestles were filled in, strengthened and/or replaced entirely.

By 1907, Tully's had been replaced by an embankment (filled in with earth), with a stone arch to accommodate the water course.

Also by then, Doube's had been shortened to a length of about 700 ft by the similar means of filling in the end portions of the original trestle with earth. In 1923 the remaining trestle portion was renewed and changed to a deck girder steel frame trestle. The last regular passenger train passed over the line on January 31, 1962, but the route continued to be used for freight trains. The line was eventually abandoned in 1989 and became a rail trail.

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