

# STEAM THROUGH PORT CREDIT

*Ian  
Wilson*



*Operations around the clock on the Oakville Subdivision*



# Steam Through Port Credit

*Operations around the clock on the Oakville Subdivision*



Robert Sandusky photo

*Ian Wilson*

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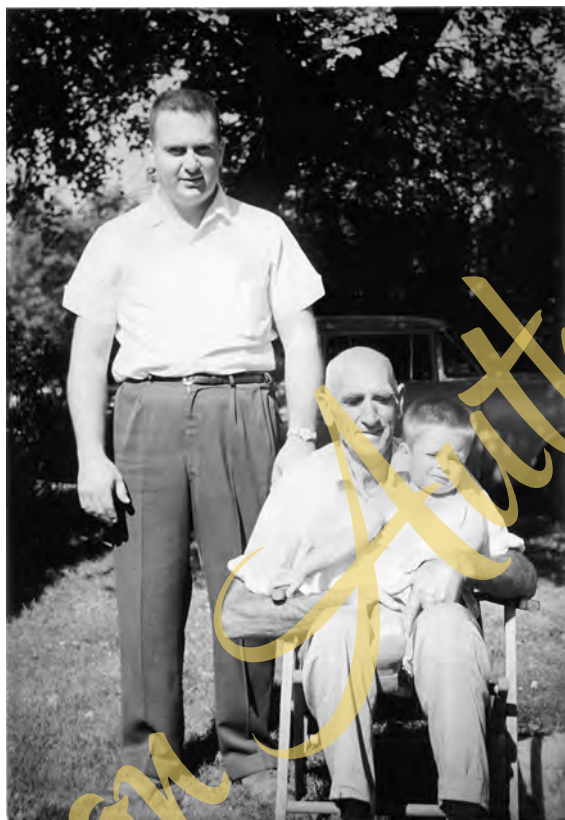
*Steam at Allandale*  
*To Stratford Under Steam*  
*Steam Over Palmerston*  
*Steam Through London*  
*Steam to the Niagara Frontier*  
*Steam in Northern Ontario*  
*Steam Scenes of Allandale*  
*Steam Echoes of Hamilton*  
*Steam Memories of Lindsay*  
*The Secret of the Old Swing Bridge*  
*Steam at Washago*  
*King's Highways & Steam Trains, vol. 1*

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*Speed Graphics and Steam 1957!*  
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*Speed Graphics and Steam 1959!*  
*Steam Encounters at Montreal vol. 2*



Number 76 at Port Credit in April 1959—W. MacLaren Wilson photo

*For you, Dad. And you too, Grandpa.*



Front yard of 38 Eaglewood Boulevard (formerly Second Street), Fort Credit, August 1962



Miles from Toronto Symbols		TORONTO AND LONG BRANCH (DARVILLE SUBDIVISION)		Trunk, Outer Divisions		Car Capacity		WESTWARD TRAINS—FIRST CLASS																																							
								87	77	101	721	17	741	188	88	75	761	79	81	5	801	89	821	15	763	187	9																				
STATIONS								Daily Ex. Sat. 87	Daily Ex. Sunday 77	Daily 101	Cen. Pac. Daily 721	Daily 17	Cen. Pac. Daily 741	Sunday only 188	Daily Ex. Sunday 88	Daily Ex. Sunday 75	Cen. Pac. Daily 761	Daily Ex. Sunday 79	Daily Ex. Sat. & Sun. 81	Daily 5	Cen. Pac. Daily 801	Daily 89	Cen. Pac. Daily 821	Daily 15	Cen. Pac. Daily 763	Sunday only 187	Daily 9																				
0.00	CE*	TORONTO	D N	U N	YARD	L	1.45	L	7.10	L	8.00	L	8.05	L	8.30	L	12.20	L	1.15	L	1.15	L	3.30	L	4.15	L	4.20	L	5.20	L	6.00	L	6.20	L	7.30	L	8.40	L	10.00	L	10.10	L	11.15	L	11.55		
1.00	CE*	BATHURST ST. (Jct. with Westward Subdivision)			YARD	L	1.49		7.14		8.04		8.08		8.34		12.23		1.19		1.19		3.33		4.18		4.24		5.24		6.03		6.23		7.34		8.43		10.04		10.13		11.19		11.59		
1.71	XY	CARLETON																																													
2.39		REHOBOTH																																													
3.51	X	SUNNYBROOK				F	1.54		7.21		8.11		8.15		8.41		12.30		1.24		1.25		3.40		4.25		4.29		5.29		6.11		6.30		7.41		8.50		10.11		10.20		11.26		12.06		
6.14	X	MIMICO EAST	D N	M Y																																											
6.76	CE*	MIMICO							7.27							1.30		1.32								4.35		5.35																			
8.00	CE*	MIMICO YARD	D N	M C	YARD																																										
8.44	X	CARLETON (Jct. with C.F. Ry.)				A	2.03	A	7.30	A	8.18	A	8.22	A	8.48	A	12.37	A	1.33		1.35	A	3.47	A	4.32		4.38		5.38	A	6.18	A	6.37	A	7.48	A	8.58	A	10.18	A	10.27	A	11.33	A	12.13		
8.84	Z	LONG BRANCH																	A	1.37							A	4.39		5.39																	
						Daily Ex. Sunday 87	Daily Ex. Sunday 77	Daily 101	Daily 721	Daily 17	Daily 741	Sunday only 188	Daily Ex. Sunday 88	Daily Ex. Sunday 75	Daily Ex. Sunday 761	Daily Ex. Sunday 79	Daily Ex. Sat. & Sun. 81	Daily 5	Daily 801	Daily 89	Daily 821	Daily 15	Daily 763	Sunday only 187	Daily 9																						

Miles from Toronto Symbols		LONG BRANCH AND TORONTO (DARVILLE SUBDIVISION)		Trunk, Outer Divisions		Car Capacity		EASTWARD TRAINS—FIRST CLASS																																								
								74	76	712	94	14	782	82	80	772	6	792	92	18	832	762	108	20	16																							
STATIONS								Daily Ex. Sat. 74	Daily Ex. Sunday 76	Cen. Pac. Daily 712	Daily 94	Daily 14	Cen. Pac. Daily 782	Daily Ex. Sunday 82	Daily Ex. Sunday 80	Cen. Pac. Daily 772	Daily 6	Cen. Pac. Daily 792	Daily 92	Daily 18	Cen. Pac. Daily 832	Cen. Pac. Daily 762	Daily 108	Daily 20	Daily 16																							
8.84	Z	LONG BRANCH				L	8.12	L	8.58																																							
8.44	X	CARLETON (Jct. with C.F. Ry.)					6.13		6.59	L	7.12	L	7.37	L	8.32	L	8.42	L	9.02	L	10.52	L	11.02	L	3.04	L	4.57	L	7.42	L	7.52	L	7.57	L	9.26	L	9.37	L	9.47	L	10.02							
8.00	CE*	MIMICO YARD	D N	M C	YARD																																											
6.76	CE*	MIMICO					6.18		7.08																																							
6.14	X	MIMICO EAST	D N	M Y						7.18		7.43		8.38		8.46		9.06		10.56		11.06		3.08		5.01		7.45		7.56		8.01		9.30		9.41		9.51		10.06								
3.51	X	SUNNYBROOK					6.24		7.17		7.24		7.49		8.44		8.49		9.10		10.59		11.09		3.14		5.04		7.49		7.59		8.04		9.34		9.44		9.54		10.09							
2.39		REHOBOTH																																														
1.71	XY	CARLETON																																														
1.00	CE*	BATHURST ST. (Jct. with Westward Subdivision)					6.31		7.25		7.31		7.56		8.51		8.56		9.16		11.06		11.16		3.20		5.11		7.56		8.06		8.11		9.41		9.51		10.01		10.16							
0.00	CE*	TORONTO	D N	U N	YARD	A	6.35	A	7.30	A	7.35	A	8.00	A	8.55	A	9.00	A	9.20	A	11.10	A	11.20	A	3.25	A	5.15	A	8.00	A	8.10	A	8.15	A	9.45	A	9.55	A	10.05	A	10.20							
						Daily Ex. Sat. 74	Daily Ex. Sunday 76	Daily 712	Daily 94	Daily 14	Daily 782	Daily Ex. Sunday 82	Daily Ex. Sunday 80	Daily 772	Daily 6	Daily 792	Daily 92	Daily 18	Daily 832	Daily 762	Daily 108	Daily 20	Daily 16																									

[illegible]

OAKVILLE SUBDIVISION		Train Order and Telephone Cables		Other Signals		Bridges		Car Capacity		EASTWARD TRAINS—FIRST CLASS																																		
										*74	*76	712	94	660	14	782	82	80	772	6	792	92	18	882	762	108	20	16																
STATIONS						Passenger Daily Ex. Sat. and Sun.		Passenger Daily Ex. Sat.		Can. Pac. Passenger Daily		Passenger Daily		Can. Pac. Passenger Daily Ex. Sunday		Passenger Daily Ex. Sunday		Can. Pac. Passenger Daily		Passenger Daily		Can. Pac. Passenger Daily		Can. Pac. Passenger Daily		Passenger Daily		Passenger Daily		Passenger Daily														
TORONTO 2:37		D N	U N	T A R D	A	6:35	A	7:30	A	7:35	A	8:00	A	8:55	A	9:00	A	9:20	A	11:10	A	11:30	A	5:25	A	5:15	A	8:00	A	8:10	A	8:15	A	9:45	A	9:55	A	10:05	A	10:20				
CANADA (Jct. with C.P. Ry.) 2:41		F	M J			6:13		6:59		7:13		7:37		8:32		8:43		9:02		10:52		11:02		3:04		4:57		7:42		7:52		7:57		9:26		9:37		9:47		10:02				
LONO. BRANCH 2:25						6:12		6:58																																				
LAKESIDE 2:31						6:07		6:52																																				
PORT CREDIT 2:35		D N	C R	W 15		6:03		6:49		7:07		* 7:31		8:27		8:37		8:58		10:45		10:57		2:59		4:52		7:35		7:45		7:52		9:21		9:31		9:42		9:58				
LOREN PARK 2:39						5:58		6:43																																				
CLAREMONT 2:43		D N	C A	41		5:55		6:40		7:03		7:25		8:22		8:33		8:55		10:35		10:53		2:56		4:46		7:23		7:37		7:46		9:15		9:25		9:38		9:53				
OAKVILLE 2:47		D N	O A	W 11	Var	5:47		6:32		6:59		7:21		To Milton Sub.		* 8:18		8:29		8:51		10:28		10:49		* 2:50		4:41		7:18		7:32		7:41		9:08		9:21		9:34		* 9:49		
BRONTE 2:51		F		30		5:38		6:22		6:54		7:16		8:13		8:24				10:16		10:44		2:43		4:34		7:06		7:25		7:34		8:59		9:14				9:45				
BURLINGTON (Jct. with Beach and Milton Subdivisions) 2:55		D N	S Q	W 10	7	5:29		6:14		6:49		7:11		A 7:30		8:07		8:19		8:43		10:10		10:39		2:37		4:29		7:03		7:19		7:29		8:54		9:09		9:26		9:40		
ALDENHOTE 2:59		D	A D	75		5:24		6:09				7:23																																
BATWIE (Jct. with Dundas Subdivision) 3:03		D N	S J	W 12		5:21		6:06		6:43		7:06		7:21		8:01		8:13		L 8:38		10:01		10:33		2:31		4:23		6:51		7:10		7:23		8:48		9:01		L 9:21		9:34		
HAMILTON JCT. (Jct. with C.P. Ry. and Dundas Subdivisions) 3:07		D N	S U			5:19		6:04		L 6:41		7:04		7:19		7:59		L 8:11				9:59		L 10:31		2:29		L 4:21		6:49		7:08		L 7:21		L 8:46		8:59				9:32		
HAMILTON 3:10		D N	S	Y A R D		L 5:15		L 6:00		From C.P. Ry.		L 7:00		L 7:15		L 7:55		From C.P. Ry.		From Dundas Sub.		L 9:55		From C.P. Ry.		L 2:25		From C.P. Ry.		L 6:45		L 7:04		From C.P. Ry.		From C.P. Ry.		L 8:55				from Dundas Sub.		L 9:28
						Daily Ex. Sat. and Sun.		Daily Ex. Sat.		Daily		Daily		Daily Ex. Sunday		Daily		Daily Ex. Sunday		Daily Ex. Sun.		Daily Ex. Sunday		Daily		Daily		Daily		Daily		Daily		Daily		Daily		Daily		Daily				
10.30 miles						74		76		712		94		660		14		782		82		80		772		6		792		92		18		882		762		108		20		16		

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W. McLaren Wilson photo



## *The Port Credit of 1947*

WHERE DO STORIES COME FROM? OR RATHER, WHERE DOES THE *compulsion* to tell stories, or document real life, come from? In your narrator's case, it begins with grainy black & white contact prints pasted randomly into an old photo album. Your narrator's father was born in 1931 and spent his entire childhood and young adulthood two streets over from the busiest railway mainline in The Dominion of Canada. It's the operations on that railway line, in that era, we'll explore in this narrative.

W. McLaren Wilson photo



W. McLaren Wilson photo





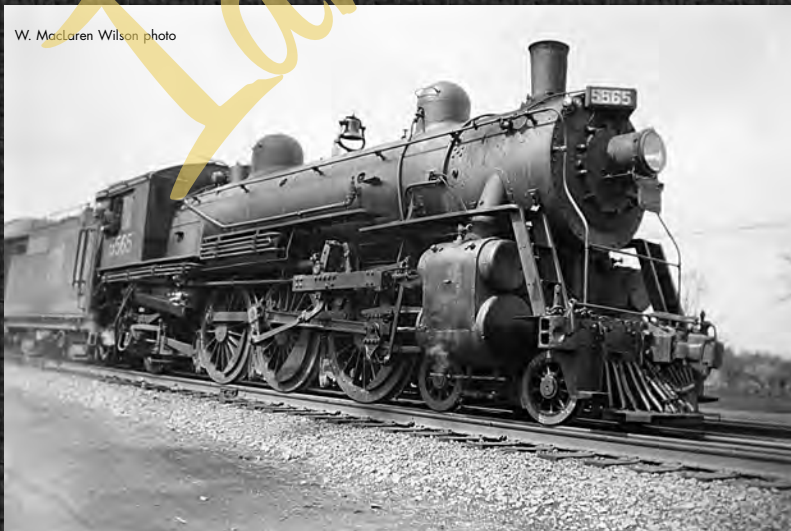
W. McLaren Wilson photo



But this story does not exist because your narrator's father, Mac Wilson of Second Street in Port Credit, happened to take pictures of trains with his first camera (as a 16-year-old member of *Railroad Magazine's* Railroad Camera Club). Or because this same Mac Wilson retained his copies of the pulp *Railroad Magazine*, purchased over the same interval as he took his grainy photographs, beginning in 1947 and continuing for a year or two until he finished high school.

So, where *does* your narrator's compulsion to tell a story about our subject, steam railway operations, come from? Not from his father (who only went so far as to take random pictures from time to time, rather by intent) or his grandfather (who walked every day to work at the St. Lawrence Starch Works in Port Credit, crossing that busiest mainline twice every day, and

W. McLaren Wilson photo



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often being held up by trains in either direction). The closest your narrator's grandfather ever got to being fascinated with trains was taking his son, young Mac, to Brampton to watch the Royal Train come through in 1939.

W. McLaren Wilson photo



W. McLaren Wilson photo





W. MacLaren Wilson photo



Your narrator's father had a best friend who was the son of the man who ran the local coal and lumber business. Both boys had the same exposure to the trains. One held a general familiarity with them for the rest of his life. The other felt compelled to go out and capture some images of steam locomotives as a 16-year-old. This latter boy, in his elementary and secondary school classrooms, was berated several times by his teachers because he was more interested in watching from the window the Canadian National and Canadian Pacific way freights going about their business at the station and on the Starch Works spur—he knew their routines and watched for them as old friends. His chum, the one who trundled sacks of coal on weekends, didn't care about the trains, nor did anyone else in the class, and the teacher certainly didn't understand the curiosity of your narrator's father. Those trains were noisy, dangerous, and a general nuisance to Port Credit villagers; they'd always been there and always would be; what about them could interest anyone?

William Wilson photo



W. MacLaren Wilson photo





W. McLaren Wilson photo



Anyway, your narrator, decades later, spent his boyhood paging through that photo album over and over again, looking at the grainy pictures of the Moguls with their oversized headlights, the elephant-eared Northerns, the Mountains with the funny pointed noses. Despite the scanty and blurry coverage, there was something compelling to your narrator about this Port Credit of yesteryear depicted in the contact prints. His own brother, exposed to the same stimuli, not to mention operating steam locomotives in the 1960s, held little of the fascination; he was about as interested as the son of the guy who ran the coal and lumber business.

To get back to our question as to where stories themselves actually come from: the *compulsion* to tell this story comes from somewhere nobody can explain. Indeed, your narrator's father over the years urged his son to stop being so obsessed with the steam locomotives of yesteryear. "They are a thing of the past," he exclaimed on more than one occasion. And he was right. But, we writers have a special power. We *can* obsess about the past and *bring the past to life*. We can put any moment into the spotlight and cause our readers to experience it. Let's do just that, at Port Credit and other locales on the busiest railway mainline in Canada, during the last decade or so of steam operation.

W. McLaren Wilson photo



W. McLaren Wilson photo





W. McLaren Wilson photo





(both) W. McLaren Wilson photo



## CHAPTER 1

# Port Credit 1947 to 1954

ONLY A COUPLE OF CONTACT PRINTS REMAIN, WITH THE NEGATIVES discarded long ago. These images are the lone record of an everyday aspect of railway activity at Port Credit, Ontario. Your narrator's late father, William MacLaren ("Mac") Wilson, captured the views while learning how to use his dad's camera in the 1940s.

For the bulk of our narrative, Mac Wilson (born April 17, 1931) resides on Second Street in Port Credit. That address is for practical purposes; he actually lives at the south end of Toronto Township. The Canadian National Railways' double-tracked Oakville Subdivision is the northern boundary of the Village of Port Credit (with Lake Ontario as the southern). Until sometime in 1958, the southernmost Toronto Township streets will remain numbered consecutively from the northern boundary of Port Credit. That puts Mac two village streets away from the busiest railway line in The Dominion of Canada (indeed, our photographer can clearly observe the CNR's Port Credit station from his attic bedroom window).

As for the man with the sign, he is a Mr. White, who (at the time of the pictures) lives beside the Wilsons on Second Street. A former CNR section man, he is now employed as a crossing watchman at Port Credit. His responsibility is the Centre Road (or Hurontario Street, or King's Highway No. 10) level crossing. While Mr. White holds down the eight-hour daytime shift, two other men cover the remainder of the 24-hour assignment.

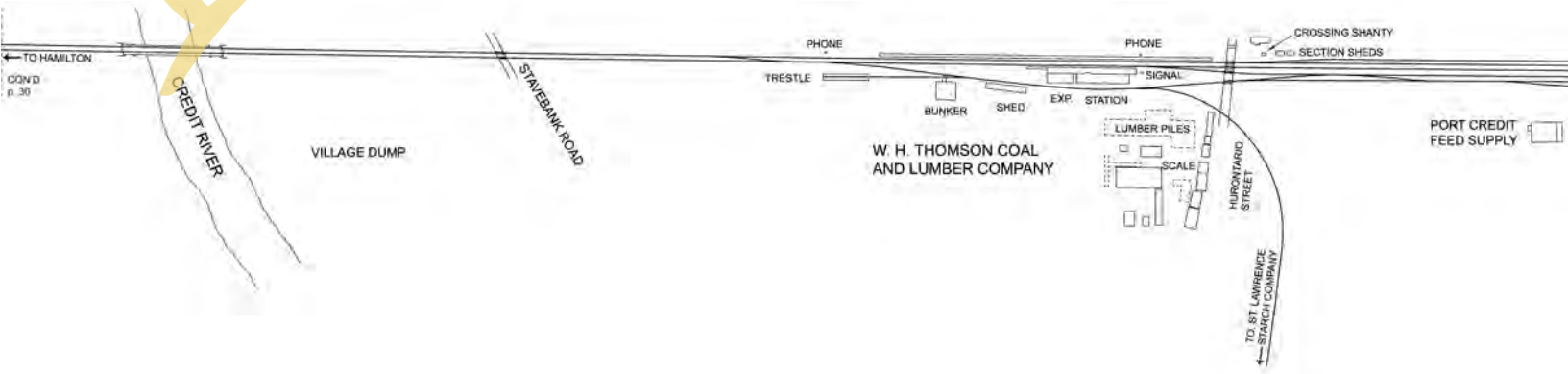
We're looking north in both of these views; the watchman's shanty is in the northeast quadrant of the crossing. In the picture of Mr. White holding his stop sign on Centre Road, our photographer's home street begins (and runs eastward) among the buildings visible on the right (east) side of the roadway.

In our Port Credit of the 1940s (and subsequently 1950s), the Centre Road crossing watchmen are the railway's most personal connection with the populace. It's reported that this is the busiest level crossing in the Province of Ontario, if not the Dominion. For a quarter century, the CNR will attempt to replace the manned wigwags and gates with automatic signals. That will be to no avail. Nothing short of a subway at Centre Road will suffice for a community intimately familiar with the dangers of a mainline level crossing.

Over the next few years, the CNR will replace the octagonal watchman's shanty with a rectangular one. Regardless, throughout our narrative at Port Credit, the Centre Road level crossing, with its watchmen, gates and wigwags, will be a principal point of contact between us and the railway.



W. McLaren Wilson photo



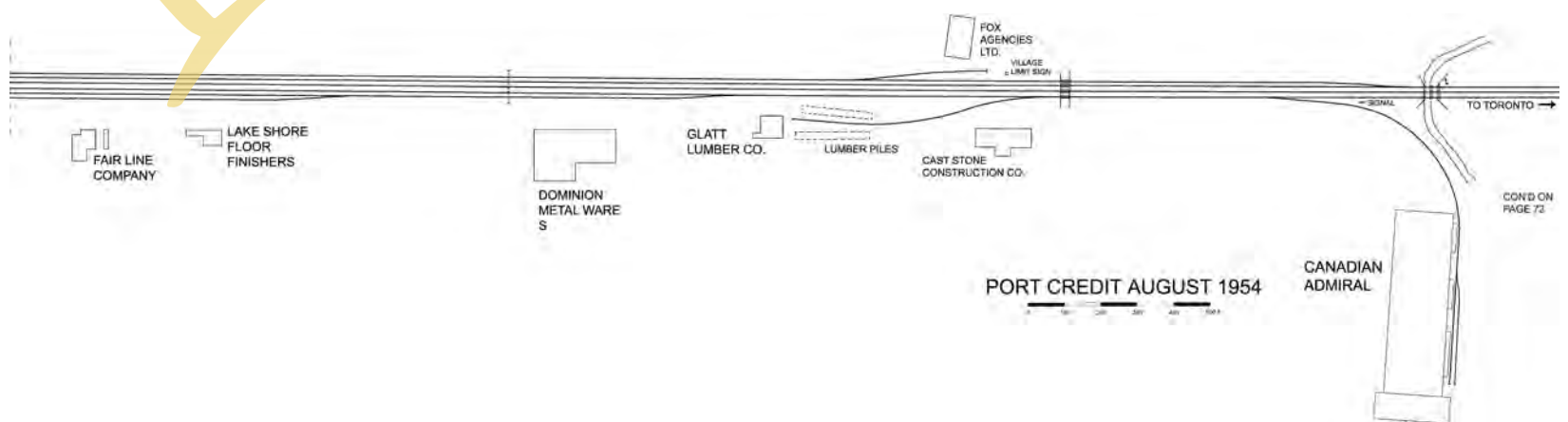


W. McLaren Wilson photo



Port Credit station's order board lies 12.80 miles west of Toronto's Union Station. This stretch of track, opened from Hamilton as the Toronto Branch of the Great Western Railway on December 3, 1855, has ever since been the busiest railway line in Canada. The GWR's successor Grand Trunk Railway double-tracked the line in 1892. From June 20, 1897, the Canadian Pacific has enjoyed running rights between Toronto and Hamilton, now honoured by the GTR's successor Canadian National. All local passenger traffic belongs to the home railway (CPR trains cannot stop at intermediate stations). Likewise for freight, but the CPR can handle local freight to/from destinations not served by the CNR.

A freight-only Mimico yard lead branches off the eastward main just east of the station. Behind the station loops a freight shed track. A spur off the shed track, laid in 1929, serves the W. H. Thomson coal bunker and coal trestle. Also coming off the shed track, east of the station, is the spur leading to the St. Lawrence Starch Company, which lies on the Lake Ontario shore. There are eastward and westward passing sidings. A team track lies beside the eastward passing siding, east of the Centre Road/Hurontario Street crossing. A mile to the west, beyond the Credit River bridge, a spur leads to the Good Rich Refinery on the waterfront.







CN Collection,  
Canada Science &  
Technology Museum

*Train Whistle Annoys People.* Such read a headline in the *Port Credit News* of July 12, 1933. The *terrible noise* had reached a point where it was *unbearable*. One locomotive sounded like a *moose in distress*. Villagers suggested one engineer must have had friends up Stavebank Road, because it sounded as if he *stepped on the throttle to let them know he was passing through*. Such complaints will resound continuously for years, until a no-whistling bylaw takes effect.

Some years later, in late autumn 1944, we're looking northward over the Centre Road crossing. A truck and trailer with covered load approaches, likely carrying a shipment of corn for the Starch Works. Manually-operated wigwags with bells and gates protect the roadway. The wigwags and bells—but not the gates—were installed by the CNR in accordance with a Board







of Transportation order of June 8, 1934. Early in the morning of February 22 of that year, a motorist had lost his life when he drove into the path of an eastbound freight train. Notwithstanding that he had ignored the watchman's signal to stop, it had become clear that a man with a sign was insufficient protection for the busiest railway crossing in the Dominion.

As that truck comes to a stop behind the gate at Centre Road, we can check in with the root of the inspiration for this narrative. If we gaze into the distance northward, beyond the rig, we're looking at the beginning of Toronto Township, which starts at the edge of the CNR right-of-way. About a block beyond the general store with the Buckingham Cigarettes sign is Second Street, where your narrator's father lives.

And here is our narrator's father, young Mac Wilson, with his dog Laddie on the front porch of his Second Street residence circa 1945. Mac parents' house was built in the early 1930s, just before he was born. He's an only child and in his early teens by now. His home is just a bit east of the station and two blocks north. That puts his attic bedroom window, which looks southward, some 900 feet from the tracks.

Mac's father William, your narrator's grandfather, is employed at the Starch Works, and walks to work every day. About the time of this photograph, Mac is been interested enough in trains to have begun to subscribe to, or purchase monthly, *Railroad Magazine*. He's also joined the publication's *Railroad Camera Club*, to which he submits information and photographs from time to time.