

NO MATTER WHERE IT'S GOING

*Travelling by train in Canada
and elsewhere in North America*

1950's



[AL PATERSON]

by Peter Dawes

No Matter Where It's Going: Travelling by train in Canada and elsewhere in North America 1950's

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FRONT COVER PHOTO

1950's-1: CN No. 47 at Hawthorne, approaching Ottawa from Montréal, behind Mountain locomotive 6047 (1957/02/28) [AL PATERSON].

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DEDICATION

to John Stilgoe.

FOREWORD

This project documents my train travels over the years in most parts of Canada served by rail, and to a much lesser extent in the United States, Mexico and Costa Rica.

The current volume covers the 1950's, and involves trips in Ontario and Québec only.

This is **VERSION 21** (for changes from the previous version, please see page 77).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

PETER DAWES worked as a transportation policy researcher, analyst, project manager and advisor for the Canadian Transport Commission and Government of Alberta until taking early retirement. He has had a lifelong personal and professional interest in railways and passenger trains, and resides with his wife Sandra in Edmonton.

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PHOTO CREDITS

Boulton, Ken (Collection) *[1950's-4];*

Buckman, Cliff (Library & Archives Canada) *[1950's-6];*

Canada Science & Technology Museum/Canadian National Collection *[1950's-11,16];*

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Chapman, Bruce (Collection) *[1950's-3];*

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Merrilees Collection (Library & Archives Canada) [1950's-15];

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Paterson, Al [1950's-1,10];

Paterson, Al (Collection) [1950's-5];

Paterson, Al (Chapman Collection) [1950's-14];

Sandusky, Robert [1950's-9];

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IMPORTANT!

Please see **GENERAL NOTES AND CAVEATS** below for important information regarding copyright, ownership, use and acquisition of photos appearing in this document (specifically under **Photographs** and **Photo credits**, page 12).

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to my North American rail-travel project. The title, *No Matter Where It's Going*, is taken from an Edna St. Vincent Millay poem [*"Travel"*, *Kennedy*, xxiv], and truly captures my love of train travel.

While some people like to model, paint or photograph trains in their settings, I mostly just like to ride them, from the fastest high-speed "Train à grande vitesse" (TGV) to the slowest tourist steam excursion. I've found over the years that, in the right circumstances, trains can offer both efficient transportation for business, visiting and tourism purposes *and* an escape from the hurly-burly of modern-day life. Best of all, I've made a number of lifelong friends through this highly social activity.

Over the years, my North American trains have ranged from Canadian Pacific's Waltham QC local and Canadian National's *Continental* of the 1950's; to CP's *Dominion* and CN's Ottawa-Toronto overnight *Capital* of the 1960's; to CN's *Super Continental* and Amtrak's *Coast Starlight* of the 1970's; to VIA Rail Canada's *Ocean* and Terra Transport's Carbonear mixed of the 1980's; to VIA's LRC-equipped, Ontario-Québec Corridor services and Great Canadian Railtour Co.'s *Rocky Mountaineer* of the 1990's; to VIA's modernized *Canadian* and Alberta Prairie Railway Excursions' Big Valley tourist train of the 2000's; and

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finally to *Le Train du Massif de Charlevoix* tourist operation train and Amtrak's *Empire Builder* of the 2010's.

I figure that, in North America, I've taken 948 train trips and travelled 406,341 kilometres (*253,597 miles*) through **2025** – almost 10 times around the world and an average of 13 trips and 5,723 km (*3,572 mls*) per year in which travel occurred (based on 71 years). Canadian-based service providers have accounted for 87% of the trips and 82% of the distance; American, Mexican and Cost Rican providers, the rest. This is not meant as a boast, but rather an indication of how privileged I've been in having this experience.

The 1950's so far have accounted for only 3% of the trips. Other decades (in descending order, through **2025**): 1970's, 33%; 1980's, 21%; 2000's, 12%; 2010's, 12%; 1960's, 7%; 1990's, 6%; and 1950's, 3%. (The 2020's so far: 6%.) However! Each decade has had its interesting trips.

Please note that I've also travelled widely by train in Europe and, to a much lesser extent, Australia, Fiji, India and Sri Lanka, Japan and Hong Kong – the subject of a separate project called *La Grande Allure: Travelling by train in Europe and elsewhere Overseas*.

My home bases for North American, train-riding purposes have been as follows: Aylmer QC (1953); Alexandria ON (1953-1962); Metcalfe ON (1962-1971); Ottawa ON (1971-1982); and Edmonton AB (1982 to date). Over the years, I've made many trips for business purposes, especially for the Canadian Transport Commission from 1969 to 1982, then two Government of Alberta departments from 1982 to my early retirement in 2002. From December 1984 to June 1985, I was seconded to work on a federal Rail Passenger Action Force in Ottawa, leading to more train travel. The rest of the trips were to visit family or for personal pleasure, especially with Sandra from 1982 onward.

This volume provides detailed accounts of all train trips taken during the 1950's. Further volumes cover the 1960's, 1st 1970's (1970-75), 2nd 1970's (1976-79), 1st 1980's (1980-82), 2nd 1980's (1983-89), 1990's, 2000's, 2010's and 2020's. The final volume is a comprehensive "Reprise" providing: a review of rail-passenger developments by decade; an overall summary of my travels; personal ratings of trains; interesting cars and locomotives encountered (for the equipment fanatics); and several tables of detailed trip information. (I've also prepared three "Companion Documents": No. 1, Trip Details; No. 2, Train Details; and No. 3, Equipment Details – which again may appeal to the real enthusiast.)

It is important to note at the outset that I only started taking train consists at the beginning of 1974.

Prior to this, most trips are reconstructed from memory and are therefore speculative, with timings and car types taken from public timetables and equipment lists (in most cases, names and numbers are based on other reference documents and indicated in *Italics* – the exceptions being a small number of consists supplied by others).

Turning to the current volume, I begin by providing **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** of those persons without whose assistance this project never could have happened. To assist readers as they go through the year-by-year accounts, I also offer **GENERAL NOTES & CAVEATS**, **ABBREVIATIONS**, a **SAMPLE ENTRY**, and a **QUICK INDEX OF TRAINS TAKEN**.

Then comes the meat of the document. For the **decade** involved, I provide the overall context, summary of trips taken, places visited, and particularly noteworthy trips. For each **year** within that decade, I begin with a **SYNOPSIS** covering: the context; trips taken and distance travelled; types and numbers of cars and locomotives making up the trains; places visited; noteworthy train trips; fastest and slowest average speeds; and any memorable associated trips by other modes of transport.

Then, under the heading **TRIPS AND CONSISTS** and for each train trip, I provide the date and (in a headline) service provider, train number, embarkation point, disembarkation point, origin and final destination (if different), and train name (where applicable). I go on to show the detailed train consist in a darkly shaded box, followed by departure time, arrival time, purpose of the trip, and in some cases major enroute stops. (If more than one leg was involved, I mention the ultimate destination, trip purpose and connecting points at the start of the first leg.) I then describe any interesting aspects about the train and route taken, and things that happened along the way. I also provide a brief account of any relevant events that occurred before the train departed or after it arrived at my destination.

At the end of the entry (lightly shaded so that it can be more easily noticed by those interested in these matters, or avoided by those not so inclined), I often provide the distance in both kilometres and miles, elapsed time and average speed, as well as further details on the train itself, including configuration and history of selected cars and locomotives. Unless circumstances dictate otherwise, I do this only for the first trip, during that year and over that route, of a certain train or type of train.

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Now for an important explanation. I fully reference every point-to-point, inter-community ***rail*** trip taken, including excursions on both regular lines and preserved railways – also commuter rail trips, provided they went beyond the city or region concerned. I note, but do not fully reference, associated marine, road and air trips, as well as intra-community trips by main-line railways.

At the end of the volume, I provide a **GENERAL INDEX** by subject, **BIBLIOGRAPHY**, **LIST OF PHOTOS**, **LIST OF SCANNED IMAGES**, and note describing **CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS VERSION**.

Three final points. First, please bear in mind that this is a ***personal*** account of rail and associated travel. It will appeal mainly to people who already enjoy train travel or might want to try it out; to railway modellers, photographers, historians or researchers; and perhaps to those who are just interested in the evolution of rail travel in Canada and (to a much lesser degree) the United States during this era. While trip purpose, references to travelling companions, and anecdotes are included, I present this information in such a manner as to be easily avoided by those looking strictly for train consists.

Second, more knowledgeable readers will find many comments and explanations to be old hat and obvious. If you fit this bill, please understand that you will be a lot more familiar with this subject area than others.

Third, I strongly encourage feedback – everything from factual clarifications to minor typographical corrections; to representative train consists if you have them; to additional car and locomotive information; and to photographs that might fill in gaps (or, where my efforts are concerned, improve on what I've included). Please contact me using the information shown on page 2 above.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the following:

- Transit planner, manager and consultant Tom Matoff for enhancing my awareness of the finer things about riding trains, and for ordering me to begin taking train consists;

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- Transit planner (later Florida State University professor) Greg Thompson for being an excellent travelling companion and, through his subsequent research and writings, helping me to better understand the evolution of rail-passenger transportation in North America;
- Professor John Stilgoe of Harvard University for giving me, through his books and correspondence, a better appreciation of how railways transformed society during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries – thereby helping me to make sense of my own keen interest in trains;
- Former Carleton University professor, public servant and consultant Ken Mozersky for guiding me through a Master's research paper on the reaction of western Canada to the 1966 discontinuance of CP's transcontinental train, the *Dominion*, and for being good company on many a train trip;
- The late public transport policy expert, consultant and futurist, Brian Sullivan, for introducing me to the world of hinterlands and service centres, and their link to public transportation;
- My late colleague and close friend Mark Bunting, who demonstrated throughout his career that it was possible to maintain one's integrity while making a difference in the field of transportation policy;
- Ken Boulton, Tom Clark, Gerry Gaugl, Greg Gormick, Ken Holmes, the late Fred Matthews, Doug Smith and Nicholas Vincent for being kindred spirits;
- Ken Boulton, the late Jennifer Bunting, Cindy Chow, Colin Churcher, Charlie Dawes, the late Patrick Dorin, Don McQueen, Jean Patenaude, the late Earl Roberts, Doug Smith, Dan Walter and Dale Wilson for providing valuable advice concerning this project;
- Shaun Fawcett for essential help in publishing these volumes online; and
- my wife Sandra for much-appreciated companionship on many trips, for design suggestions, and for developing the route schematics, website and web version of these documents.

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Specifically where this 1950's volume is concerned:

- Ken Boulton, Debbie Brentnell (Library & Archives Canada), George Carpenter, the late Bruce Chapman, Colin Churcher, Gerry Gaugl, Scott Hartley, Antony Pacey (Canada Science & Technology Museum), the late Al Paterson, the late Earl Roberts, the later Bob Sandusky and Doug Smith variously for supplying or helping me to obtain photographs, or for assisting with captions; and
- Earl Roberts for providing the final date of Montréal streetcar operation (also, along with Doug Smith, information on steam operations at Montréal Central Station); and Ross Gray for information on RPO's.

Despite the assistance provided, the author remains entirely responsible for errors or omissions.

Finally, this initial volume is dedicated to Professor Stilgoe, for the reasons mentioned above.

Peter Dawes
Edmonton, Alberta
January, 2026.

GENERAL NOTES AND CAVEATS

Timings: are shown in standard or daylight savings time, whichever was in effect;

Travel by non-rail means: is highlighted by a bullet, either on its own if it occurred at the start of a journey on a non-rail travel day, otherwise within the normal text;

Car occupied: is indicated in **Bold**;

Locomotive origins and destinations: are sometimes assumed, especially beyond the segment travelled (furthermore, the term "Diesel" is used instead of the more technically correct "Diesel-Electric");

Snack facilities: are not usually indicated but were often available, during the 1950's, from a News Agent;

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Equipment units: are shown in several categories, examples being “Coaches & Daynitters” and “Sleeping & Business Cars” (please note that not all car types mentioned under these category titles were necessarily encountered in every decade or period);

Equipment deadheading: is indicated by *[dd]*;

Cars used for other than designed purposes: are noted as such (e.g., a Sleeper being used as a Coach carries the notation, *[as Coach]*);

Major stops: refers to full revenue stops and omits Flag or Conditional stops except where these are of special interest;

Distances and average speeds: are rounded to the nearest full kilometre or mile (distances may vary from timetables especially where conversion back and forth between the two measures was necessary and where the service provider used a different ratio; also, average speeds reflect the scarcity of dedicated, high-speed passenger trackage in North America, as well as the often considerable time required for operational, servicing, passenger access, express handling and crewing purposes);

Equipment details: are provided for selected cars and locomotives to give the flavour, in each year, of equipment encountered (special thanks here to the Bytown Railway Society for its excellent, annual *Canadian Trackside Guide*, Earl Roberts and Dave Stremes, editors);

Photographs: have been chosen to support the text, ***remain the property of the individual photographer and/or collection, are protected by copyright, and must not be used in any fashion without permission*** (please bear in mind that most included in this volume are four or five decades old, and that colour photos are particularly vulnerable to deterioration; also, that those involving early morning, late afternoon, or night trains often were taken in adverse lighting conditions);

Photo credits: are given to the photographer and/or collection as applicable (please note that the original version of some photos might have been sold on or given to collectors without this author's knowledge; that some collectors who provided photos did not always know who the original photographer was; that the author has tried unsuccessfully to contact some copyright holders; that he has attempted, also without success, to track down missing photographers; and that he would appreciate receiving any

information that would enable him to obtain formal permission and provide full credit in future updates or versions).

ABBREVIATIONS

SERVICE PROVIDERS

CN Canadian National Railways

CP Canadian Pacific Railway

ADDITIONAL TRACK AND EQUIPMENT OWNERS

ARM	Alberta Railway Museum (Edmonton)
C&M	Coopersville & Marne (MI) Railway
CNoR	Canadian Northern Railway
CRM	Canadian Railway Museum (St-Constant/Delson QC)
FERM	Fort Erie (ON) Railroad Museum
FPD	Fargo (ND) Park District
GCRT	Great Canadian Railtour Co. (Vancouver)
GTR	Grand Trunk Railway
GTRS	Grand Trunk Railway System (CN)
GVA	Government of Alberta
ISLS	Industries Soulonges (Les-Cedrés QC)
JBB	John B. Baldwin
MST	Michigan State Trust Railroad (East Lansing)
NRHBC	National Railroad Historical Society, BC Chapter (New Westminster)
NYC	New York Central Railroad
ONR	Ontario Northland Railway
QNS&L	Québec, North Shore & Labrador Railway
RMRS	Rocky Mountain Rail Society (Warden AB)
SPW	Springwood Productions (Orillia ON)
VIA	VIA Rail Canada

RAIL EQUIPMENT

BLS	Buffet Lounge Sleeper
BP	Buffet Parlor
C	Coach
Col	Colonist
CX	Coach Baggage
D	Diner
dd	Equipment deadheading
DN	Dayniter
DnY	Dinette Dormitory
E	Engine (Diesel unless otherwise indicated)
e	Electric locomotive
ex-	Former
Ir-	Later
LRC	Light-Rapid-Comfortable train
PG	Parlor Grill
RPO	Railway Post Office
S	Sleeper
s	Steam locomotive
T	Tourist Sleeper
Wrk	Work service
X	Baggage
XML	Baggage Mail (Railway Post Office)
XY	Baggage Dormitory

SLEEPING ACCOMMODATIONS

db	Double Bedroom
dr	Drawing Room
rm	Roomette
sc	Section

EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS

CCF	Canadian Car & Foundry
CLC	Canadian Locomotive Co.
EE	English Electric
GMD	General Motors Diesel Division
MLW	Montréal Locomotive Works
NSC	National Steel Car
PS	Pullman Standard

SAMPLE ENTRY

12? AUG:

CN 3 MONTRÉAL-ALEXANDRIA [VANCOUVER] *Continental*

E	[3]	6517,6605,6538	MONTRÉAL-WINNIPEG
XML		7836	"
X	[2]	9058,9269	
XY		9205	
C	[2]	5581,5485	
T		2249	
Dn		431	
BLS		<i>Fort Brabant</i>	
S		<i>Westlock</i>	MONTRÉAL-WINNIPEG
S		<i>South Magnetawan</i>	MONTRÉAL-NORTH BAY [SWASTIKA]
C		5643	MONTRÉAL-OTTAWA

Return to **ALEXANDRIA** on the *Continental*, headed for Ottawa and points as far west as Vancouver; * Depart 2130, arrive 2249, stopping only at Lachine and Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue (the latter to take passengers for Ottawa and beyond), perhaps behind two FP9A's, spliced by an F9B – also several head-end cars filled with storage mail, express and baggage, as well as a Railway Post Office; * Train No. 3 featured mostly older equipment built in the 1920's and 1930's, such as the Tourist Sleeper and Buffet Lounge Sleeper, although a

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recently built Dinette Dormitory provided meal service (FORT BRABANT now resides at the Alberta Railway Museum in Edmonton); * Both WESTLOCK and SOUTH MAGNETAWAN were former New York Central Roomette cars; * Swastika was the junction point on the Ontario Northland Railway for mining communities such as Kirkland Lake and Rouyn/Noranda QC, its name unchanged despite the Nazi connotations; * 101 km in 1 hr 19 mins, or 77 km/h (63 mls/48 mph); * Nos. 6517, 6538, 6605 (*Ir-VIA*) (*all GMD, 1954-8*); * No. 2249 (*NSC, 1925, 14sc/Ir-Pointe au Pic*); * FORT BRABANT (*CCF, 1924, 4db/Ir-Wrk D 59714, ARM*); * WESTLOCK (*17rm1sc; ex-City of Buffalo*), SOUTH MAGNETAWAN (*18rm; ex-City of Worcester*) (*both PS, 1938-9; ex-NYC*); * No. 431 (*CCF, 1957/Ir-VIA*); * No. 7836 (*CCF, 1939*); * No. 9205 (*NSC, 1954; ex-X*).

Explanations:

12? AUG:

CN 3

MONTRÉAL-ALEXANDRIA

[VANCOUVER]

Continental

E [3] 6517,6605,6538

XML 7836

X [2] 9058,9269

XY 9205

C [2] 5581,5485

T 2249

DnY 431

BLS *Fort Brabant*

S *Westlock*

S *South Magnetawan*

C 5643

- departure date (the “?” indicating assumed);
- service provider was CN; train number 3;
- segment travelled, with train originating in Montréal;
- destination of train;
- name of train;
- three Locomotives travelling from Montréal to Winnipeg (*Italics* here and below indicating that these units are assumed, not recorded);
- Railway Post Office likewise as far as Winnipeg;
- two Baggage cars, travelling all the way from Montréal to Vancouver;
- this Baggage Dormitory likewise;
- these two Coaches likewise;
- this Tourist Sleeper likewise;
- this Dinette Dormitory likewise;
- this Buffet Lounge Sleeper likewise;
- this Sleeper as far as Winnipeg;
- this Sleeper off at North Bay for Swastika;
- this local Coach attached as far as Ottawa (the **Bold** indicating I occupied it).

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- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>* 101 km in 1 hr 19 mins, or 77 km/h (63 mls/48 mph)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> distance travelled, elapsed time and average speed in kilometres (<i>and miles</i>); |
| <p>* Nos. 6517, 6538, 6605 (<i>lr-VIA</i>) (<i>all GMD</i>, (1954-8)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all built by General Motors Diesel Division between 1954 and 1958 (No. 6605 later to VIA); |
| <p>* No. 2249 (<i>NSC</i>, 1925, 14sc/<i>lr-Pointe au Pic</i>)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> built by National Steel Car in 1925 with 14 Sections; later named Pointe au Pic; |
| <p>* FORT BRABANT (<i>CCF</i>, 1924, 4 db/<i>lr-Wrk D 59714</i>, <i>ARM</i>)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> built by Canadian Car & Foundry in 1924 with 4 double Bedrooms; later work service Diner No. 59714, then to Alberta Railway Museum; |
| <p>* WESTLOCK (<i>17rm1sc</i>; <i>ex-City of Buffalo</i>), SOUTH MAGNETAWAN (<i>18rm</i>; <i>ex-City of Worcester</i>) (<i>both PS</i>, 1938-9; <i>ex-NYC</i>)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WESTLOCK having 17 Roomettes, 1 Section, formerly named City of Buffalo; SOUTH MAGNETAWAN having 18 Roomettes, formerly named City of Worcester, both built by Pullman Standard during 1938-9 for New York Central; |
| <p>* No. 431 (<i>CCF</i>, 1957/<i>lr-VIA</i>)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> built by CCF in 1957; later to VIA; |
| <p>* No. 7836 (<i>CCF</i>, 1939)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> built by CCF in 1939; |
| <p>* No. 9205 (<i>NSC</i>, 1954; <i>ex-X</i>)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> built by NSC in 1954, formerly straight Baggage. |

QUICK INDEX OF TRAINS TAKEN

<i>number</i>	<i>name or route</i>	<i>page(s)</i>
CANADIAN NATIONAL		
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48	Ottawa-Montréal	32,49,56,61
50	Ottawa-Montréal	28,32,34,39,44,45,51,56,58,62
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CANADIAN PACIFIC		
35	Green Valley-Chesterville	44
545	Ottawa-Waltham	27

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THE 1950's

ONTARIO/QUÉBEC



1950's-2: Alexandria ON station from the cab of FPA-4 No. 6781, heading VIA's Montréal-to-Ottawa No. 33 on a rainy day – this station looking much as it did during the 1950's if one ignores the CN "noodle" (1979/05/25) [SCOTT A. HARTLEY].

OVERALL CONTEXT

I wonder if a small boy today gets the same thrill watching a jet take off in the distance that I used to experience standing on the platform at Ste. Annes when, only a dozen feet away, the Imperial Limited roared by on its journey to the other side of the continent.

C.H. Dawes
(*Answering the Call*, 88).

Our family lived in Aylmer QC until August of 1953; then Alexandria ON through the rest of the decade. Dad's words above refer to his youthful days in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue QC, but they apply equally to my experience watching CN's *Super Continental* rush through Alexandria station at the start of its long journey west to the Pacific coast. The trains would soon become this small-town boy's link to the world beyond.

Aylmer was a bedroom community located roughly 15 kilometres (9 miles) from downtown Ottawa at the point where the Ottawa River widened into Lac Deschênes. The town boasted a mostly Anglo population of around 5,000 at the time. CP operated a passenger train over its branch line from Waltham (located "up the line" on the Québec side), down through Aylmer, on to Hull, and across the river into Ottawa.

Dad was the United Church of Canada minister for the Aylmer, Mountain View, Centre Eardley and Upper Eardley congregations – the latter three being small churches built before rural depopulation and high-speed roads made them redundant. (The United Church was a 1920's amalgamation of Methodist, Congregationalist and many, but not all, Presbyterian churches.) Competing with CP's Waltham local was a Colonial Coach Lines bus operating on a similar morning-in, late afternoon-back schedule, and there were frequent transit buses linking Aylmer, Hull and Ottawa. Until 1947, the Hull Electric Railway provided interurban service between the latter three points, turning around its cars under Confederation Square, right next to Union Station and the Château Laurier hotel. If my parents took me on the interurban, I was too young for it to make any impression. What I do recall is taking the CP local from Aylmer the short distance to Eardley – probably my very first train trip.

Sometimes, Dad would drive us the short distance into the city to shop on the Byward market or at Caplan's department store, then take me over to Union Station to watch the trains arrive and leave. The pungent smell

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common to large railway stations everywhere in those days – based primarily on stale cigar smoke – greeted us as we walked down the impressive staircase and into the high-roofed waiting area. Then it was through a passageway, flanked by CP's ticket windows on one side and CN's on the other, to the concourse and gates of this 8-track station. I particularly recall CP local No. 562 hurrying in on Track 1 behind a steam locomotive, this train having first accepted connecting passengers from the morning Toronto-to-Montréal Pool at Brockville; then paused at stations such as Smiths Falls, Carleton Place and Ottawa West; then crossed the Ottawa River over to Hull on the Prince of Wales bridge; and finally re-crossed the same river on the Alexandra (known locally as Interprovincial) bridge before entering the station – as all passenger trains using the Carleton Place Subdivision did in those days.

Where Alexandria was concerned, our stay lasted until 1962. The town was located midway on CN's Montréal-Ottawa line in Glengarry County just west of the Ontario-Québec border, and had a population of 2,500 composed of roughly half English- and half French-speakers. Together, we lived peacefully right on the “fault line” of the grand Canadian experiment, and I consider myself lucky to have spent my formative years there. I attended Alexandria Public School until 1959, then Glengarry District High School for the final months of the decade and into the next.

Most of my train trips during the 1950's were either west to see our long-time family dentist in Ottawa, or east to visit my older brother in Montréal where he was attending McGill University. These trips were highlights of my existence and spurred a lifelong interest – both personal and professional – in trains and transportation in general.

The Alexandria station became a focal point for me, particularly during summer afternoons. It had all the typical amenities for such a town, including a ticket and operating office, waiting room, and freight shed. Large paintings of Cunard Line ships graced the walls of the waiting room, as that great company battled Canadian Pacific and others for Canada-Europe traffic. The friendly staff kept an eye on the platform to ensure that young rail fans didn't come to harm, in fact one of the younger CN guys dated my older sister for a while. Hoboes regularly jumped off freights in search of a handout or meal from the townspeople, and our house must have been well known because such visits occurred perhaps once a month, falling off towards the end of the decade.

The 1950's saw the transition from steam to diesel power – a momentous change for the rail industry. CN and CP both placed large numbers of new passenger cars and locomotives into service (particularly

NO MATTER WHERE IT'S GOING: 1950's

during 1954 and 1955), introduced new transcontinentals, and began to improve intercity trains. Alas, the overall number of people using trains continued to decline, and while larger communities such as Alexandria still rode and shipped on them, smaller places saw their trains reduced or eliminated. While the competition from other public modes was fierce (due in large measure to better road and air facilities), the biggest culprit was the private automobile.

TRIP DETAILS

I took possibly 32 trips and travelled 2,572 kilometres (*1,605 miles*) by train during the 1950's, all in Canada. Perhaps 30 of the trips were on CN and 2 on CP, and all were in Coaches assigned to locomotive-hauled trains. Twenty-one might have been behind steam, covering 1,575 km (*983 mls*).

By year, the greatest distance travelled was 562 km (*351 mls*) in 1958; the least, 180 km (*112 mls*) in 1955. The most trips were 8 in 1954; the fewest, 2 in 1955.

There were perhaps 203 units in the trains I took: 41 Locomotives & Related Units and 162 cars. The latter by category: Coaches & Dayneters, 73; Parlor & Club Cars, 22; Sleeping & Business Cars, 5; Dining & Other Meal Cars, 1; Lounge Cars, 1; Baggage & Miscellaneous Cars, 60.

On these trips, the fastest average speed was CN No. 47 from Ottawa to Alexandria in 1959: 92 km/h (*57 mph*). The slowest was CN Nos. 624 and 625 between Coteau and Valleyfield QC in 1954: 36 km/h (*22 mph*).

PLACES VISITED

ON – Chesterville and Ottawa; **QC** – Eardley, Montréal and Valleyfield.

PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY TRIPS

1953: CP 545, Aylmer to Eardley (a classic branch-line passenger train featuring a 4-6-0 steam engine hauling wooden cars); **CN 47**, Alexandria to Ottawa (a Montréal-to-Ottawa train running over the old Grand Trunk/Canada Atlantic route, behind a steam locomotive possibly of the Mountain type);

1954: CN 624, Coteau to Valleyfield (a steam-hauled, branch-line local perhaps featuring an ancient Sleeper in Coach service);

1956: CP 35, Green Valley to Chesterville (an all-stops, Montréal-Peterborough-Toronto local, marking my first trip behind a diesel locomotive);

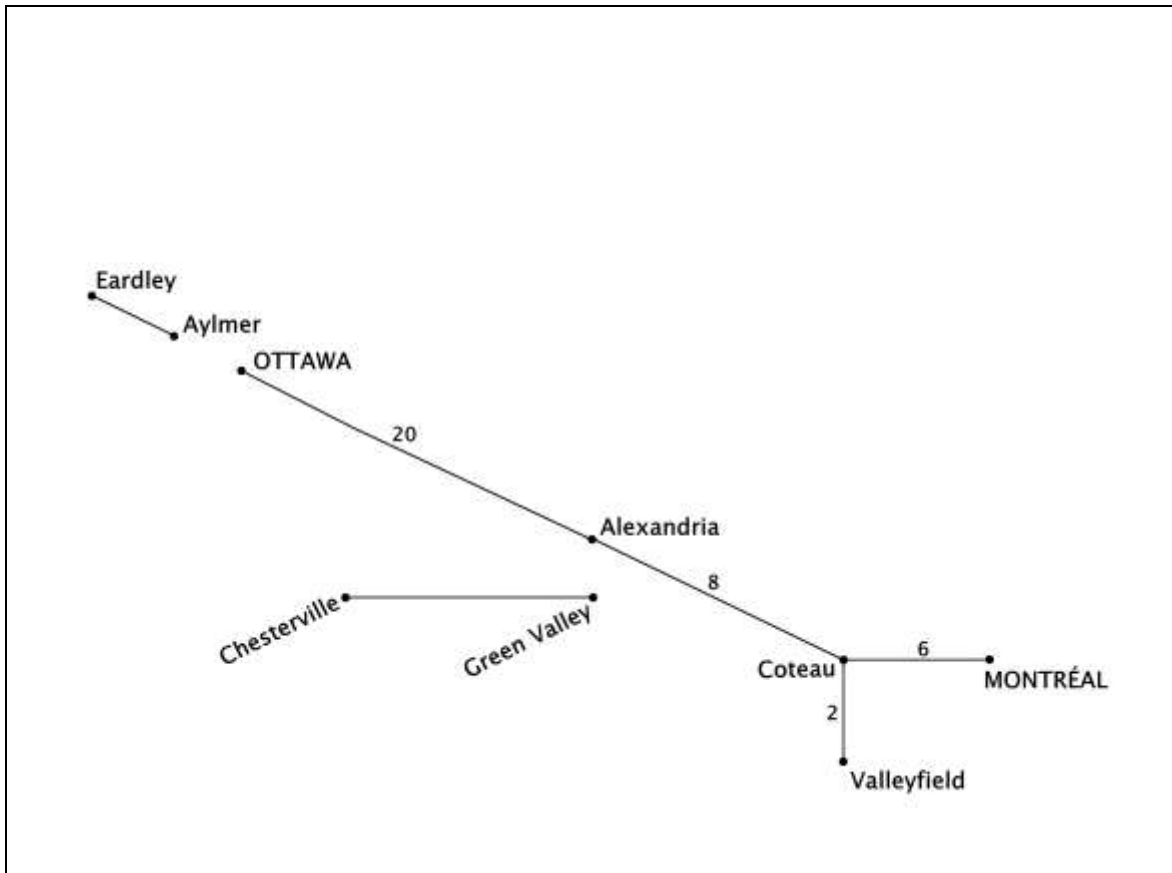
1959: CN Continental, Montréal to Alexandria (CN's secondary transcontinental since the *Super Continental's* introduction in 1955 but still a formidable train, especially during the summer); **CN 50**, Ottawa to Alexandria (on a 59-minute schedule compared to 87 minutes in previous years, due to a reduction of stops and use of diesels).

REMINDER!

Trips and dates for this decade are reconstructed from memory and are therefore speculative. Timings and car types are taken from public timetables and equipment lists, while names and numbers are based on other reference documents and indicated in *Italics*.

ROUTE SCHEMATIC

*[Showing one-way rail trips by route segment
(one such trip unless shown otherwise)]*



NO MATTER WHERE IT'S GOING: 1953

1953

ONTARIO/QUÉBEC



[CNR-GTRS System Time Tables, 1957/04/28, 27]

SYNOPSIS

My first train trips involved travelling to a church function during our last year in Aylmer, then visiting the family's long-time dentist from our new hometown of Alexandria. The above CN sketch is characteristic of the railway's promotional efforts during the mid-1950's.

Trips taken: Three would have been involved, covering 201 kilometres (*125 miles*), two on CN and one on CP, all in Coaches behind steam.

Equipment units: possibly 16, made up of 3 Locomotives & Related Units and 13 cars (Coaches & Dayneters, 6; Parlor & Club Cars, 2; Baggage & Miscellaneous Cars, 5).

Places visited: **ON** – Ottawa; **QC** – Eardley.

Noteworthy train trips: **CP 545**, Aylmer to Eardley; **CN 47**, Alexandria to Ottawa.

Fastest average speed: **CN 47**, Alexandria to Ottawa, 65 km/h (*40 mph*). ***Slowest:*** **CP 545**, Aylmer to Eardley, 47 km/h (*29 mph*).

HIGHLIGHT!

Taking CP's milk run from Aylmer "up the line" as far as Eardley, often within sight of the Ottawa River – wooden cars still being the norm on such trains during their final years.



[CP Time Table, 1956/09/30, 11]

TRIPS AND CONSISTS

21? MAR:

CP 545 [OTTAWA] AYLMER-EARDLEY [WALTHAM]

Es	425
X	3890
CX	3270
C	1554

To **EARDLEY** with other family members to attend a church function, Dad following later by car after tending to other business; * Depart Aylmer 1404, arrive Eardley 1431 over what was originally the Pontiac & Pacific Junction Railway, behind a 4-6-0 steam engine such as No. 425, built in 1912 in CP's Montréal shops; * This was the Saturday afternoon schedule, featuring a flag stop at Breckenridge, and we possibly occupied seats in the rear Coach; * Eardley was a village located part way towards Shawville in this English-speaking area of Québec; * We lived at the eastern end of Aylmer on the Hull highway, meaning that I couldn't regularly witness the little Waltham train pass through town; but I do remember occasionally noticing its whistle and puffs of smoke down by the lake, and seeing it as Dad drove along old Highway 8 on church business; * This service became a mixed freight-passenger train in 1954 and was discontinued in 1959; * Return to Aylmer by car; * 21 km in 27 mins, or 47 km/h (13 mls/29 mph); * No. 425 (CP, 1912, 4-6-0); * No. 1554 (CP, 1908/Ir-CRM); * Nos. 3270, 3890 (details unavailable).



[CP System Time Table,
1959/09/26, 28]



1950's-3: CP No. 543 (or 545) at Aylmer QC, on its way from Ottawa to Waltham, 4-6-0 No. 424 hauling a wooden consist typical of such trains (late 40's/early 50's) [BRUCE CHAPMAN COLLECTION].

19? OCT:

CN 47/50 [MONTRÉAL] ALEXANDRIA-OTTAWA & RETURN

Es	6060	CENTRAL STATION-OTTAWA/OTTAWA-TURCOT
X	[2] 9060,9105	
C	[2] 5181,5288	
BP	Miette Lake	

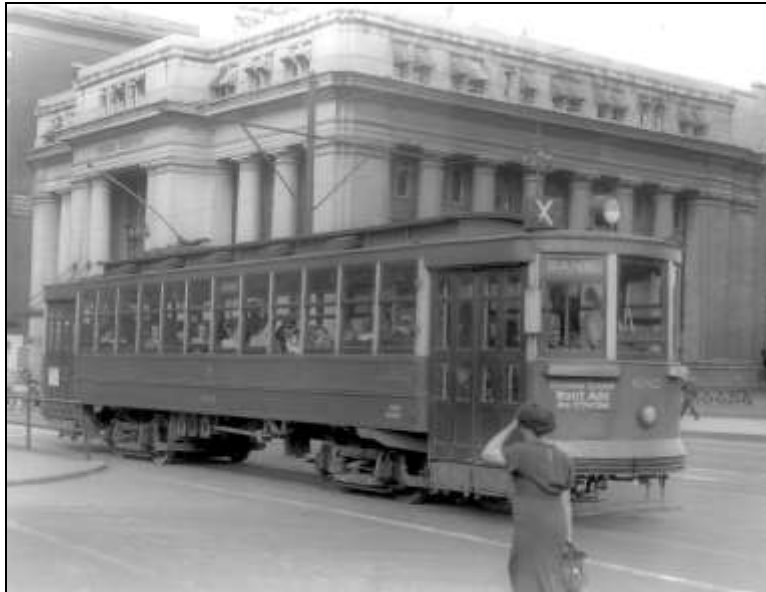
To **OTTAWA** on a day excursion with other family members west over the former Canada Atlantic, later Grand Trunk line; * No. 47 during these years typically departed Alexandria at 1047 and arrived in Ottawa at 1210, with major stops at the English-speaking communities of Greenfield, Maxville and Moose Creek, then French-speaking Casselman, Limoges and Vars; * We occupied the local Coach, operating along with a modernized heavyweight Buffet Parlor such as MIETTE LAKE, built in 1919 for the Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR) as a Colonist car to handle a thriving emigrant traffic – CN having recently replaced full Dining and Parlor cars on these trains; * The morning and afternoon Montréal-Ottawa trains were very

NO MATTER WHERE IT'S GOING: 1953

much locals, displaying the CN green of the era and being hauled by steam locomotives, in this case perhaps a Mountain type such as No. 6060, built in 1944 by Montréal Locomotive Works (an affiliate of the American Locomotive Co. – ALCO) and later to find a home in Alberta with the Rocky Mountain Rail Society; * Steam locomotives were replaced by electrics for the short distance from Montréal's Turcot Yard into Central Station's underground platforms (not a problem outbound, as the locomotive could stand outside at the head of the train); * The *Continental Limited* supplemented these intercity services but made only a few intermediate stops (including Alexandria daily on westbound evenings; but eastbound only on Sunday mornings); * Returning, depart 1630, arrive 1754; * 90 km in 1 hr 23 mins, or 65 km/h (56 mls/40 mph), on No. 47; * No. 6060 (MLW, 1944, 4-8-2/lr-GVA, RMRS); * No. 5181 (CCF, 1937/lr-VIA); * MIETTE LAKE (CCF, 1919; ex-CNoR, CN Col 2828); * No. 9060 (NSC, 1951).

A REAL TREAT

While our dentist was located within comfortable walking distance of the station, business sometimes took us farther afield. This meant catching a red, Ottawa Transportation Commission streetcar along Confederation Square – a nice way of capping off another visit to the nation's capital.



1950's-4: Ottawa Union Station from Confederation Square, with Ottawa Transportation Commission Bank streetcar heading west (1951) [KEN BOULTON COLLECTION].

1954

ONTARIO/QUÉBEC



*[CNR-GTRS System Time Tables,
1954/04/25, inside back cover]*

SYNOPSIS

My train trips this year probably involved visits to our dentist and relatives. The above "Package Tours" advertisement proudly features CN's primary symbol of the day, the maple leaf.

Trips taken: There might have been eight trips this year, covering 452 kilometres (*282 miles*), all on CN, in Coaches and behind steam.

Equipment units: possibly 42, made up of 8 Locomotives & Related Units and 34 cars (Coaches & Dayneters, 14; Parlor & Club Cars, 6; Sleeping & Business Cars, 2; Baggage & Miscellaneous Cars, 12).

Places visited: **ON** – Ottawa; **QC** – Valleyfield.

Noteworthy train trips: **CN 48**, Alexandria to Coteau; **CN 624**, Coteau to Valleyfield.

Fastest average speed: **CN 47**, Alexandria to Ottawa, 65 km/h (*40 mph*). ***Slowest:*** **CN 624/625**, Coteau-Valleyfield, 36 km/h (*22 mph*).

HIGHLIGHT!

Taking the steam-powered local from Coteau across the Soulonges Canal and over the long bridge spanning the St. Lawrence River into Valleyfield, in what seemed to be very old car featuring plush seats – looking back on it, possibly a Section Sleeper in Coach service.



[canadiannor
thern.ca]

TRIPS AND CONSISTS

21? APR:**CN 47/50 [MONTRÉAL] ALEXANDRIA-OTTAWA & RETURN**

Es	6218	CENTRAL STATION-OTTAWA/OTTAWA-TURCOT
X	[2] 9070,9199	
C	[2] 5283,5416	
BP	Lachine	

Day excursion to **OTTAWA** to visit our dentist; * Depart 1047, arrive 1210, with major stops at Greenfield, Maxville, Moose Creek, Casselman, Limoges and Vars, perhaps behind a Northern steam locomotive such as No. 6218 (later to become famous in excursion service) and occupying seats in the local Coach; * Returning, depart 1630, arrive 1754; * 90 km in 1 hr 23 mins, or 65 km/h (56 mls/40 mph), on No. 47; * No. 6218 (MLW, 1942, 4-8-4/lr-FER); * No. 5283 (CCF, 1942/lr-VIA); * LACHINE (CCF, 1919; ex-CNoR, CN Col 2863); * No. 9070 (NSC, 1951).

18? MAY:**CN 48 [OTTAWA] ALEXANDRIA-COTEAU [MONTRÉAL]**

Es	6069	OTTAWA-TURCOT YARD
X	9072	
C	[2] 5384,5224	
BP	Lac Mistassini	

To **VALLEYFIELD** with family members to visit relatives, starting with the morning Ottawa-Montréal train; * Depart 0953, arrive Coteau at 1035, with major stops at Glen Robertson, Ste-Justine QC, De Beaujeu and St-Polycarpe – Coteau being the junction where CN's Ottawa line joined its Toronto-Montréal main line; * 37 km in 42 mins, or 53 km/h (23 mls/33 mph).



1950's-5: CN 2-8-0 No. 2620 at Valleyfield QC, heading the shuttle connecting with main-line trains at Coteau (1952/08/30) [AL PATERSON COLLECTION].

CN 624 COTEAU-VALLEYFIELD

Es	2601
X	9096
S	Kingston [as Coach]

Depart 1125, arrive 1140 over a stretch of the old Canada Atlantic Railway that used to run all the way from Depot Harbour on Georgian Bay through Ottawa, Alexandria, Coteau and Valleyfield to U.S. connections near Cantic QC, making one stop at Soulanges – behind a steam locomotive and occupying a 12-1 Sleeper (respectively, these might have been a 2-8-0 such as former Grand Trunk No. 2601, built in 1907, and a Sleeper like KINGSTON, relegated to this mundane duty four decades after being constructed); * Valleyfield was a small industrial city southwest of Montréal, predominately French speaking but with a fair number of white-collar Anglos employed in woollen mills and chemical plants – typical, in other words, of Québec during this era; * 9 km in 15 mins, or 36 km/h (6 m/s/22 mph); * No. 2601 (MLW, 1907, 2-8-0; ex-

GTR 746/lr-CRM); * KINGSTON (CCF, 1914, 12sc1dr; ex-CNoR 9648/lr-C 4320).

20? MAY:

CN 625 VALLEYFIELD-COTEAU

Es	1115
X	9096
S	Kingston [as Coach]

Return to **ALEXANDRIA** via Coteau, starting with No. 625 which departed at 1705 and reached the junction at 1720.

CN 51 [MONTRÉAL] COTEAU-ALEXANDRIA [OTTAWA]

Es	6015
X	9072
C	[3] 5384,5224,5190
BP	Lachine

Depart 1744, arrive 1824 on the Montréal-Ottawa evening train, possibly behind Mountain No. 6015, built in 1923 in Kingston ON by the Canadian Locomotive Co. – an engine which ended up being preserved on the grounds of CN's Jasper station; * No. 6015 (CLC, 1923, 4-8-2/lr-CRM).

11? OCT:

CN 47/50 [MONTRÉAL] ALEXANDRIA-OTTAWA & RETURN

Es	6213	CENTRAL STATION-OTTAWA/OTTAWA-TURCOT
X	[2] 9086,9115	
C	[2/3] 5438,5445,5425[No. 50 only]	
BP	Miette Lake	

Another day excursion to **OTTAWA** to visit our dentist; * Depart 1037, arrive 1200, let's say in No. 5438, one of CN's recent order of 218 Coaches from Canadian Car & Foundry; * Returning, depart 1700, arrive 1824; * No. 5438 (CCF, 1954/lr-CN 3224, 5438, CN, VIA DN 5712, ONR 850).



1950's-6: Ottawa Union Station's waiting area, with the passageway to ticket windows and concourse to the left (1966) *[based on CLIFF BUCKMAN (LIBRARY & ARCHIVES CANADA/PA-155324)].*



[railwaybob.com]

1955

ONTARIO



*[CNR-GTRS System Time Tables,
1956/04/29, back cover]*

SYNOPSIS

I probably made one round trip this year for the purpose of visiting our dentist. Mom organized and led these jaunts, which were always eagerly anticipated by me if not other family members, given that I got to ride the train and rarely needed dental work. The local station continued to be an important hub in Alexandria's daily life. In addition to handling a lot of parcel express, CN's staff provided information, sold tickets, processed telegrams, issued money orders, checked baggage, and looked after freight customers – all the while helping the trains move in the days before Centralized Traffic Control and train radio.

Trips taken: Both trips would have been on CN, covering 180 kilometres (*112 miles*), in Coaches hauled by a steam locomotive.

Equipment units: possibly 14, made up of 2 Locomotives & Related Units and 12 cars (Coaches & Dayneters, 6; Parlor & Club Cars, 2; Baggage & Miscellaneous Cars, 4).

Places visited: *ON* – Ottawa.

Noteworthy train trips: none.

Fastest average speed: *CN 47*, Alexandria to Ottawa, 65 km/h (*40 mph*). **Slowest:** *CN 50*, Ottawa to Alexandria, 64 km/h (*39 mph*).

MILESTONE!

Both railways introduced new transcontinental trains at the end of April, CN the *Super Continental* and CP *The Canadian*, relegating the *Continental Limited* and *Dominion*, respectively, to secondary status. Furthermore, CN applied an attractive new colour scheme of green, black and gold, with circular maple leaf monograms.

For Every Reason . . . Go Thrift Season!

EMPRESS OF SCOTLAND
EMPRESS OF FRANCE
EMPRESS OF AUSTRALIA

*Sailings from Montreal and Quebec in summer
and from Saint John in winter.*



WHITE EMPRESS *to Europe*

Gala nights and plenty of entertainment . . . movies, dancing and other ship activities . . . all this combines with wonderful meals and service to make your trip a real holiday, when you go Canadian Pacific. \$212 up First Class; \$152 Tourist, according to ship and season.




Special trains to ship's side at Saint John save you hotel and transfer charges.

Assistance with passports and full information from any Canadian Pacific office or your own travel agent.

Canadian Pacific

ENJOY YOUR TRIP . . . GO BY SHIP

[CP System Time Table, 1954/09/26, inside back cover (in smaller print: "Sailings from Montreal and Quebec in summer and from Saint John in winter"; "Special trains to ship's side at Saint John save you hotel and transfer charges"; "Assistance with passports and full information from any Canadian Pacific office or your own travel agent")]



'SCENIC DOME'
COACH COFFEE SHOP
ON TRANSCONTINENTAL ROUTE

[CP System Time Table, 1956/09/30, 58]

TRIPS AND CONSISTS

18? OCT:

CN 47/50 [MONTRÉAL] ALEXANDRIA-OTTAWA & RETURN

Es	6071/6062	CENTRAL STATION-OTTAWA/OTTAWA-TURCOT
X	[2] 9111,9060	
C	[3] 5385,5619,5607	
PG	Beaverhill Lake	

To **OTTAWA** with other family members, departing 1047, arriving 1210, with major stops at Greenfield, Maxville, Moose Creek, Casselman, Limoges and Vars, possibly behind a Mountain steam locomotive and occupying seats in the local Coach; * CN was now assigning new Parlor Grill cars to Nos. 47/50, although I recall seeing modernized heavyweights on some of these trains for a few years yet; * CN later rebuilt both Coach 5385 and Parlor Grill BEAVERHILL LAKE into Diners; * Returning, depart 1700, arrive 1827, let's say behind a different Mountain this time; * 90 km in 1 hr 23 mins, or 65 km/h (56 mls/40 mph), on No. 47; * No. 6071 (MLW, 1944, 4-8-2); * No. 5385 (CCF, 1947/lr-CN, VIA D 1370, ISLS); * BEAVERHILL LAKE (PS, 1954/lr-CN, VIA D 1362); * No. 9111 (NSC, 1952/lr-Wrk 70792).

ACTION STATION!

The most trains I ever saw in Alexandria at the same time was four. It all started one day with the steam-hauled way freight completing its switching and pulling into the fourth track away from the station, with perhaps a dozen cars. Then, a smallish freight of around 30 cars, also behind steam, arrived from Ottawa direction on the third track, followed closely by a diesel-powered job of around 80 cars in from Montréal on the second track. After half-an-hour or so, the *coup de grâce* with No. 2, the *Super Continental*, blasting through on the main track on the final lap of its journey from Vancouver. Quite the performance!



1950's-7: Meeting of CN trains just east of Ottawa at Carlsbad Springs ON, possibly No. 1 *Super Continental* from Montréal behind FP9A 6503, with No. 50 in the siding heading the other way (1955/05/04)
[GEORGE CARPENTER COLLECTION/AL CHIONE].

SECOND FIDDLE

CP continued to dominate the Montréal-Ottawa route during these years, for example its afternoon eastbound train offering three Parlors and a Buffet Parlor, plus another Parlor on Fridays – compared to CN's solitary Parlor Grill.

NO MATTER WHERE IT'S GOING: 1955



1950's-8: Montréal-bound trains at Ottawa Union Station, probably CN's No. 50 behind Mountain 6073 and CP's No. 504 headed by E8A 1800 (1950) [ADDISON SCHWALM (CHAPMAN COLLECTION)].

1956

ONTARIO



[From actual, steamed-off label, 2004!]

SYNOPSIS

I possibly made two excursions this year, to visit our dentist and to attend a church function in a nearby town. The steam era at Alexandria station was fast drawing to a close, and with it the mournful sound of the whistle in the distance, the cinders in your eye as you stood on the platform, and the smell of smoke long after the engine had disappeared. The beer label? "Pils" is the "national beer" of Saskatchewan, and just happens to feature a very interesting rendition of a CPR train – albeit in a mountain setting.

Trips taken: Five would have been involved covering 413 kilometres (258 miles), 4 on CN and 1 on CP, all in Coaches. The CN trips were likely behind steam, while CP's was my first hauled by a diesel.

Equipment units: possibly 32, made up of 5 Locomotives & Related Units and 27 cars (Coaches & Dayneters, 13; Parlor & Club Cars, 4; Baggage & Miscellaneous Cars, 10).

Places visited: **ON** – Chesterville and Ottawa.

Noteworthy train trips: **CP 35**, Green Valley to Chesterville.

Fastest average speed: **CN 47**, Alexandria to Ottawa, 65 km/h (40 mph). ***Slowest:*** **CP 35**, Green Valley to Chesterville, 56 km/h (35 mph).

Memorable non-rail trips: Alexandria to Montréal by automobile to meet a Cunard liner.

HIGHLIGHT!

Taking CP's all-day, most-stops, Montréal to Smiths Falls, Peterborough and Toronto local – even if we were only travelling the short distance from Green Valley to Chesterville.

TRIPS AND CONSISTS

17? APR:**CN 47/50 [MONTRÉAL] ALEXANDRIA-OTTAWA & RETURN**

Es	6063	CENTRAL STATION-OTTAWA/OTTAWA-TURCOT
X	[2]	9072,9093
C	[3/2]	5500,5615,5404[dd][No. 47 only]
BP		Lac Mistassini

Day excursion to **OTTAWA** with other family members to visit our dentist, leaving 1047, arriving 1210, with major stops at Greenfield, Maxville, Moose Creek, Casselman, Limoges and Vars, possibly behind a Mountain locomotive; * We occupied seats in the local Coach, while the "Parlor Grill" this day might have been an older heavyweight Buffet Parlor; * Returning, depart 1700, arrive 1827; * 90 km in 1 hr 23 mins, or 65 km/h (56 mls/40 mph), on No. 47; * No. 6063 (MLW, 1944, 4-8-2); * No. 5500 (CCF, 1954/lr-3252, CN,VIA 5500, SPW); * LAC MISTASSINI (CCF, 1919; ex-CNoR,CN Col 2849); * No. 9072 (NSC, 1951/lr-8036:2, Wrk 59132, NRHBC).

15? AUG:**CP 35 [MONTRÉAL] GREEN VALLEY-CHESTERVILLE [TORONTO]**

E	8472
XML	3621
X	4704
C	[2] 2110,2262

To **CHESTERVILLE** ON, a town located some 50 kilometres southeast of Ottawa, to attend a church rally, starting with Dad driving us the seven kilometres (*four miles*) south to catch the train at Green Valley; * Depart from there at 1149, arrive Chesterville 1246 over a line completed for CP under an Ontario & Québec Railway charter, with major stops at Apple Hill, Monklands, Avonmore and Finch; * This was my first train both hauled by a diesel (let's say a Montréal Locomotive Works RS10) and featuring a Railway Post Office, although No. 35's Buffet Parlor had been discontinued recently; * Return by automobile, courtesy Dad, the timing of eastbound No. 36 being much too early in the afternoon to be of use to us; * 53 km in 57 mins, or 56 km/h (33 mls/35 mph); * No. 8472 (MLW, 1954-5); * No. 2110 (NSC/CP, 1937/lr-QNS&L 472); * No. 3621

NO MATTER WHERE IT'S GOING: 1956

(CCF, 1947); * No. 4704 (CCF, 1952/lr-Wrk 411742W).



1950's-9: CP's Toronto-Peterborough-Montréal No. 36, in the background at Sharbot Lake ON, as northbound and southbound, Kingston-Renfrew trains stand back-to-back in the foreground (1956) [ROBERT SANDUSKY].

SUNDAY LOCAL

While the Montréal-Toronto local ran Daily except Sunday, CP did operate a Sunday evening train from Smiths Falls into Montréal. I recall being an interested observer one time as Dad transferred my brother David to Green Valley so he could catch this train and get back to his studies at McGill earlier than by using CN from Alexandria.

3? OCT:

CN 47/50 [MONTRÉAL] ALEXANDRIA-OTTAWA & RETURN

Es	6201	CENTRAL STATION-OTTAWA/OTTAWA-TURCOT YD
X	[2]	9071,9085
C	[3]	5430,5543,5507
BP	Montréal	

Another day excursion to **OTTAWA** to visit our dentist.



1950's-10: CN's Alexandria station, looking west (*undated*) [AL PATERSON].

STEAMSHIPS, TOO

Another thrill was tagging along when Dad drove my grandmother to the Port of Montréal early on a July morning to board Cunard's new liner CARINTHIA to Liverpool; then meeting her off the same company's veteran ASCANIA in early November. (For steamship buffs, 21,947 and 14,013 Gross Registered Tons, respectively.)



[Liner ASCANIA, from Cunard post card]

1957

ONTARIO/QUÉBEC



[CNR-GTRS System
Time Tables, 1956/
09/30, 45]

SYNOPSIS

I possibly made journeys this year to visit my big brother and attend a baseball game; also (inevitably) to see our family dentist. The above ad encourages people to check their bags during an era when almost every train – including those operating on short intercity routes – offered this service. At train time in Alexandria, it was always interesting to watch the staff load or unload the head-end traffic – not only baggage but also parcels, milk cans, boxes of cut flowers, baby chicks, even the occasional casket (the local undertaker assisting).

Trips taken: Four trips would have been involved covering 382 kilometres (238 miles), all on CN and all in Coaches. I haven't been able to confirm this, but 1957 was possibly the final year for steam on CN's Montréal-Ottawa trains.

Equipment units: perhaps 24, made up of 5 Locomotives & Related Units and 19 cars (Coaches & Dayneters, 10; Parlor & Club Cars, 2; Baggage & Miscellaneous Cars, 7).

Places visited: **ON** – Ottawa; **QC** – Montréal.

Noteworthy train trips: **CN 48**, Alexandria to Montréal; **CN 50**, Ottawa to Alexandria.

Fastest average speed: **CN 47**, Alexandria to Ottawa, 65 km/h (40 mph). ***Slowest:*** **CN 51**, Montréal to Alexandria, 52 km/h (32 mph).

HIGHLIGHT!

Ascending from track level to the concourse of Montréal's Central Station for the first of many times over the years, this facility being much larger than Ottawa's and more modern (not to mention, bland) in design. Outside, the occasional sound of police and fire sirens was mildly troublesome at first to a small-town kid, especially at night.

TRIPS AND CONSISTS

6? AUG:

CN 48 [OTTAWA] ALEXANDRIA-MONTRÉAL

Es	6201	OTTAWA-TURCOT
Ee	6716	TURCOT-CENTRAL STATION
X	[2] 9088,9155	
C	[2] 5602,5561	

To **MONTRÉAL** to visit brother David, still attending McGill University (two nights there); * Depart 1003, arrive 1155 on my first train trip alone and first into Montréal, with major stops at Glen Robertson, Ste-Justine QC, De Beaujeu, St-Polycarpe and Coteau, and finally the English-speaking West Island suburbs of Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Pointe Claire and Lachine – occupying a seat in the local Coach; * It's possible that a Northern steam locomotive headed our train, replaced in Turcot yard by a boxcab electric built in England for the short distance into Central Station; * First-class service was no longer being offered on No. 48 and its westbound morning counterpart No. 51, but there was still a Parlor Grill on Nos. 47/50 in the evening; * 101 km in 1 hr 52 mins, or 54 km/h (63 mls/34 mph); * No. 6201 (MLW, 1944, 4-8-4); * No. 6716 (EE, 1924-6); * No. 5602 (CCF, 1954/lr-VIA 5602, VIA, GCRT 3203); * No. 9088 (NSC, 1952/lr-Wrk 52300).

LE BASEBALL

We took a Montréal Transit Commission bus to Delorimier stadium to see the Montréal Royals and Miami Marlins play an International League baseball game – the driver calling out the street names in both French and English. Streetcars remained on some routes but would be gone by Aug. 30, 1959. (For trivia buffs, the Royals had been the last stop for Jackie Robinson in 1946 before he broke the major league colour barrier, and pitching for the team this night was the future Dodgers manager, Tommy Lasorda.)



[logoserver.com]

NO MATTER WHERE IT'S GOING: 1957



1950's-11: Train time in Montréal's Central Station, CN's *Ocean Limited* boarding at Track 14 (undated but probably mid/late 1950's) [CANADA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM, CSTM/CN COLLECTION NO. 55449-2].

8? AUG:

CN 51 MONTRÉAL-ALEXANDRIA [OTTAWA]

Es	6218
X	9072
C	[3] 5421,5493,5302

Return to **ALEXANDRIA**, departing 1730, arriving 1927.

SUMMER MEET

Nos. 50 and 51 were scheduled to meet at Alexandria this summer at 1927 hours – with me sometimes watching. If on time, No. 51 from Montréal would appear at the east end of the station and take the siding. Then No. 50 would arrive from Ottawa on the main track, do its business in front of the station while taking water, and depart. Finally, No. 51 would back out onto the main line, then move up to the station and follow the same routine before steaming off towards the nation's capital – a precious memory during the twilight of steam.

?? OCT:

CN 47/50 [MONTRÉAL] ALEXANDRIA-OTTAWA & RETURN

Es	6210	CENTRAL STATION-OTTAWA/OTTAWA-TURCOT
X	[2]	9155,9091
C	[2/3]	5430 ,5479,5520[No. 50 only]
PG		<i>Radiant Lake</i>

Day excursion to **OTTAWA** with other family members to visit our dentist; * Depart 1047, arrive 1210, with major stops at Greenfield, Maxville, Moose Creek, Casselman, Limoges and Vars; * Returning, depart 1800, arrive 1927; * 90 km in 1 hr 23 mins, or 65 km/h (*56 m/s/40 mph*), on No. 47; * **RADIANT LAKE** (*PS, 1954/Ir-CN, VIA D 1365, JBB*).

THE NEWSIE

Travelling in Coaches on Montréal-Ottawa trains was pretty basic during these years, there being only a "Newsie" (News Agent) peddling everything from sandwiches to pop to magazines. As far as I know, Cafe Lounge facilities – either as a separate car or section of a Coach – didn't materialize on these trains until the 1960's.

NO MATTER WHERE IT'S GOING: 1957



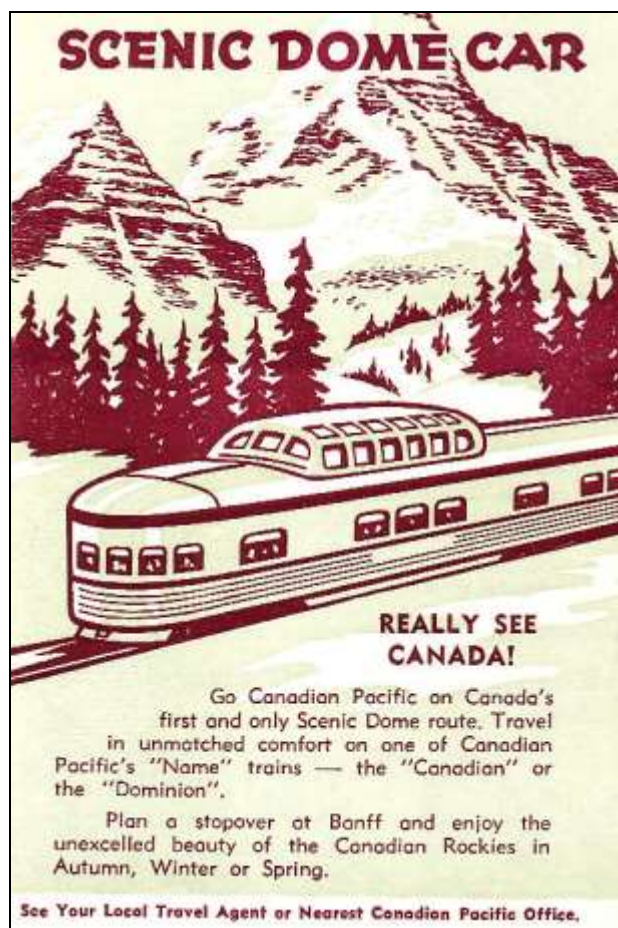
1950's-12: CN Northern No. 6218 in the ready line at Turcot yard, Montréal (1946/04/13) [GEORGE CARPENTER COLLECTION].



[CP System Time Table, 1956/09/30, 58]

1958

ONTARIO/QUÉBEC



[CP brochure, undated, circa later 1950's]

SYNOPSIS

As in 1957, I possibly made journeys to visit our dentist and my older brother. The above excerpt from a brochure shows how CP played up its advantage in operating the only dome cars in Canada at the time.

Trips taken: Six trips would have been involved covering 562 kilometres (*351 miles*), all on CN, in Coaches and behind diesel power.

Equipment units: perhaps 39, made up of 10 Locomotives & Related Units and 29 cars (Coaches & Dayneters, 13; Parlor & Club Cars, 4; Baggage & Miscellaneous Cars, 12).

Places visited: **ON** – Ottawa; **QC** – Montréal.

Noteworthy train trips: **CN 47**, Alexandria to Ottawa.

Fastest average speed: **CN 50**, Ottawa to Alexandria, 92 km/h (*57 mph*). ***Slowest:*** **CN 51**, Montréal to Alexandria, 52 km/h (*32 mph*).

MILESTONE!

Diesels probably were being assigned to all passenger trains on the Ottawa-Montréal route by now, and for many it was truly the passing of a romantic era, the triumph of a mere machine over something that seemed to live and breathe – although, to be realistic, the diesels had a clear-cut advantage in performance, economics, and crew comfort over the old steam locomotives.



**WIRE . . . and
let them know
you're coming**

CANADIAN PACIFIC TELEGRAPH OFFICE
on platform at all principal stops

[CP System Time Table, 1954/09/26, 12]



**ONLY
35¢ FOR
THE NIGHT**

Soft pillows with freshly
laundered white covers are
available on most over-
night trains . . . add to your
comfort and pleasure in
coaches.

**RENT A
PILLOW**
and Relax!

Ask your News Agent.

*[CNR-GTRS System Time
Tables, 1959/04/26, 44]*

TRIPS AND CONSISTS

15? APR:

CN 47/50 [MONTRÉAL] ALEXANDRIA-OTTAWA & RETURN

E	[2]	6500,6605
X	[2]	9219,9230
C	[2]	5450,5507
BP		<i>Lac Mistassini</i>

Day excursion to **OTTAWA** with other family members to visit our dentist; * Depart 1047, arrive 1210, with major stops at Greenfield, Maxville, Moose Creek, Casselman, Limoges and Vars, possibly behind a General Motors Diesel Division FP9A/B combination; * We occupied seats in the local Coach, with a modernized heavyweight Buffet Parlor possibly operating in place of the regularly assigned Parlor Grill; * Returning, depart 1800, arrive 1927; * 90 km in 1 hr 23 mins, or 65 km/h (56 mls/40 mph), on No. 47; * Nos. 6500, 6605 (both GMD, 1954/lr-VIA); * No. 5450 (CCF, 1954/lr-CN, VIA DN 5708, ONR 854); * LAC MISTASSINI (CCF, 1919; ex-CNoR, CN Col 2849); * No. 9219 (NSC, 1954).

WOULD YOU HAVE A SYSTEM TIMETABLE?

I always made sure to pick up CP and CN timetables from the station ticket agents during these visits to Ottawa. Both railways also maintained full customer service offices just west of Confederation Square on Sparks Street.

12? AUG:

CN 48 [OTTAWA] ALEXANDRIA-MONTRÉAL

E		6532
X	[2]	9218,9250
C	[2]	5577,5493

To **MONTRÉAL** to visit brother David, still attending McGill (two nights there); * Depart 1008, arrive 1200, with major stops at Glen Robertson, Ste-Justine QC, De Beaujeu, St-Polycarpe, Coteau, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Pointe Claire and Lachine; * 101 km in 1 hr 52 mins, or 54 km/h (63 mls/34 mph).



1950's-13: CN 4-6-0 No. 1244 on the Montréal-Ottawa way freight, Moose Creek ON (1940's?) [MAX MILLER (GEORGE CARPENTER COLLECTION)].

SHIPS AND PLANES

On my Montréal visits, I got in the habit of asking for steamship and airline timetables (such as Cunard, Holland America, Air France and KLM) at various ticket offices, to go along with my budding rail collection – demonstrating that I've always been a *transportation* guy, not just someone interested in railways.

14? AUG:

CN 51 MONTRÉAL-ALEXANDRIA [OTTAWA]

E		6538
X	[2]	9234,9223
C	[2]	5416,5577

Return to **ALEXANDRIA**, departing 1730, arriving 1928.

15? OCT:

CN 47/50 [MONTRÉAL] ALEXANDRIA-OTTAWA & RETURN

E	[2]	6530,6623
X	[2]	9253,9239
C	[2/3]	5542,5577,5639 [No. 50 only]
PG		Severn Lake

Again to **OTTAWA** to visit our dentist, departing 1035, arriving 1135, this train now stopping only at Maxville and Casselman; * Returning, depart 1745, arrive 1844, with the same two stops, on a schedule reduced from 87 to 59 minutes due to fewer stops and use of diesel power – indicating a recent shift from all-purpose to (relatively) fast intercity trains; * 90 km in 59 mins, or 92 km/h (*56 mls/57 mph*), on No. 50; * SEVERN LAKE (PS, 1954/lr- CN,VIA D 1364, FPD).

END OF ANOTHER ERA


The streetcars continued to circulate around Confederation Square in 1958, but would soon be replaced by Canadian Car & Foundry transit buses.



1950's-14: CP Ottawa-Waltham train, Breckenridge QC, behind 4-6-0 No. 425 (1957/05/29) [AL PATERSON (BRUCE CHAPMAN COLLECTION)].

1959

ONTARIO/QUÉBEC



Snack...or Sumptuous Meal
... there's something to suit every budget
on CNR's modern, air-conditioned

Dining Cars • Coffee Shops • Dinettes
(See equipment tables in this folder for facilities
available on the train you're taking)

[CNR-GTRS System Time Tables, 1957/10/27, 9]

SYNOPSIS

Following the recent pattern, I probably made journeys in 1959 to visit our family dentist and my older brother. The above ad promotes CN's range of meal service cars, from Diners to Coffee Shops to Dinettes.

Trips taken: Four trips would have been involved covering 382 kilometres (238 miles), all on CN and all in Coaches.

Equipment units: perhaps 36, made up of 8 Locomotives & Related Units and 28 cars (Coaches & Dayneters, 11; Parlor & Club Cars, 2; Sleeping & Business Cars, 3; Lounge Cars, 1; Dining & Other Meal Cars, 1; Baggage & Miscellaneous Cars, 10).

Places visited: **ON** – Ottawa; **QC** – Montréal.

Noteworthy train trips: **CN Continental**, Montréal to Alexandria; **CN 50**, Ottawa to Alexandria.

Fastest average speed: **CN 50**, Ottawa to Alexandria, 92 km/h (57 mph). **Slowest:** **CN 48**, Alexandria to Montréal, 54 km/h (34 mph).

HIGHLIGHT!

Returning from Montréal to Alexandria on the *Continental*, CN's by now, secondary Montréal/Toronto-Vancouver train but still featuring a Dinette, Standard Sleepers, Tourist Sleeper, and Buffet Lounge Sleeper – not to mention a Railway Post Office car.



[CN System Time Table, 1959/10/25, back cover]

TRIPS AND CONSISTS

10? AUG:**CN 48 [OTTAWA] ALEXANDRIA-MONTRÉAL**

E		6754
X	[2]	9226,9263
C	[2]	5180,5599

To **MONTRÉAL** to visit brother David, still attending McGill (two nights there); * Depart 1008, arrive 1200, with major stops at Glen Robertson, Ste-Justine QC, De Beaujeu, St-Polycarpe, Coteau, Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue, Pointe Claire and Lachine, possibly behind a Montréal Locomotive Works FPA-2; * I occupied a seat in the local Coach, perhaps an older, pre-war car such as No. 5180; * 101 km in 1 hr 52 mins, or 54 km/h (63 m/s/34 mph); * No. 6754 (MLW, 1955; ex-6710); * No. 5180 (CCF, 1937/Ir-VIA, MST, C&M); * No. 9226 (NSC, 1954).

12? AUG:**CN 3 MONTRÉAL-ALEXANDRIA [VANCOUVER] Continental**

E	[3]	6517,6605,6538	MONTRÉAL-WINNIPEG
XML		7836	"
X	[2]	9058,9269	
XY		9205	
C	[2]	5581,5485	
T		2249	
DnY		431	
BLS		Fort Brabant	
S		Westlock	MONTRÉAL-WINNIPEG
S		South Magnetawan	MONTRÉAL-NORTH BAY [SWASTIKA]
C		5643	MONTRÉAL-OTTAWA

Return to **ALEXANDRIA** on the *Continental*, headed for Ottawa and points as far west as Vancouver; * Depart 2130, arrive 2249, stopping only at Lachine and Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue (the latter to take passengers for Ottawa and beyond), perhaps behind two FP9A's, spliced by an F9B – also several head-end cars filled

NO MATTER WHERE IT'S GOING: 1959

with storage mail, express and baggage, as well as a Railway Post Office; * Train No. 3 featured mostly older equipment built in the 1920's and 1930's, such as the Tourist Sleeper and Buffet Lounge Sleeper, although a recently built Dinette Dormitory provided meal service (FORT BRABANT now resides at the Alberta Railway Museum in Edmonton); * Both WESTLOCK and SOUTH MAGNETAWAN were former New York Central Roomette cars; * Swastika was the junction point on the Ontario Northland Railway for mining communities such as Kirkland Lake and Rouyn/Noranda QC, its name unchanged despite the Nazi connotations; * 101 km in 1 hr 19 mins, or 77 km/h (63 mls/48 mph); * Nos. 6517, 6538, 6605 (*Ir-VIA*) (*all GMD, 1954-8*); * No. 2249 (*NSC, 1925, 14sc/Ir-Pointe au Pic*); * FORT BRABANT (*CCF, 1924, 4db/Ir-Wrk D 59714, ARM*); * WESTLOCK (*17rm1sc; ex-City of Buffalo*), SOUTH MAGNETAWAN (*18rm; ex-City of Worcester*) (*both PS, 1938-9; ex-NYC*); * No. 431 (*CCF, 1957/Ir-VIA*); * No. 7836 (*CCF, 1939*); * No. 9205 (*NSC, 1954; ex-X*).

NEW CANADIANS

Part of the *Continental's* fascination was that, even at this late date, it still carried European immigrants heading west after disembarking from their ship at Québec, Halifax and other ports, then completing immigration formalities.

21? OCT:

CAN 47/50 [MONTRÉAL] ALEXANDRIA-OTTAWA & RETURN

E	[2]	6532,6634
X	[2]	9221,9301
C	[3]	5636 ,5526,5596
PG		<i>Luster Lake</i>

Day excursion to **OTTAWA** with other family members to visit our dentist; * Depart 1035, arrive 1135 on the faster schedule introduced the year before, with stops at Maxville and Casselman; * Returning, depart 1800, arrive 1859, making the same two stops; * 90 km in 59 mins, or 92 km/h (56 mls/57 mph), on No. 50.

NO MATTER WHERE IT'S GOING: 1959



1950's-15: CN No. 1 *Super Continental* in a siding at St-Polycarpe QC, waiting to meet an eastbound train (1957) [based on MERRILEES COLLECTION (LIBRARY & ARCHIVES CANADA/PA-167624)].



[encyclopedia.
laborlawtalk.
com]



1950's-16: CN conductor taking tickets, perhaps impressed by the fashionable "swirl" on the younger lady's hat (1948) [CANADA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM, CSTM/CN COLLECTION, NO. 002053].

BRING ON THE SIXTIES!

This brings an end to my **1950's** volume. While we no doubt made more trips by rail, for more purposes, than most families, the passenger train faced an uncertain (but interesting) future at the close of the decade – as will be seen in the next, **1960's** volume of this series.

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CHANGES FROM PREVIOUS VERSION

Minor stylistic changes and routine updates, including percentage splits by decade (p. 7).