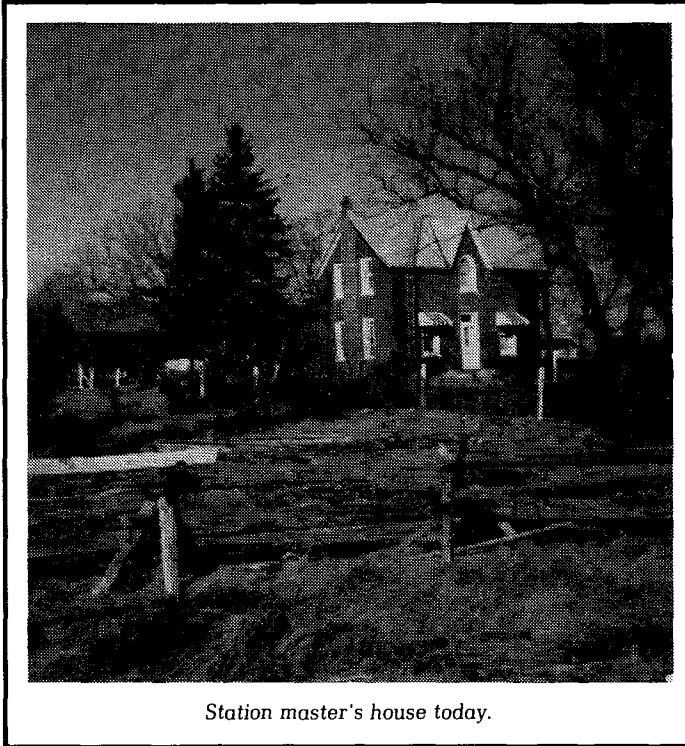




CPR section foreman, John Forsythe with his wife Catherine (McMaster).

CHAPTER 1

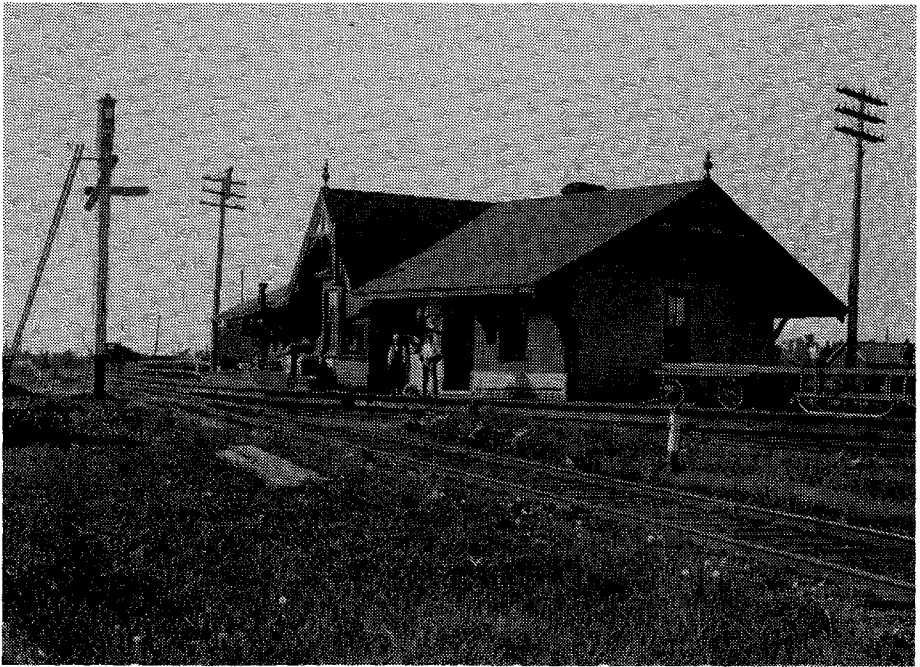


The Death of Bellview

I often thought and compared Bellview to a beautiful young woman with the promise of a full and rewarding lifetime ahead; then when things looked their best like the dawning of a new day; then bright with sunshine and promise; then the clouds; then the lengthening shadows; the darkness; the stillness of death and no tomorrow. So it was for the young woman when the dreaded disease appeared. She was destined to die by degrees and when the years had taken their toll, there was nothing left, but someone else's memories. Bellview died in a similar manner, not from the dreaded disease of humanity, but one almost as destructive and senseless; called tear down or wreck. The

time from symptoms to death were about the same for Bellview as for the young woman, but in this case it was wantonly destroyed. Premeditated murder! I believe the underlying cause was greed and jealousy. This death could have been avoided and had it been, Bellview would have stood today as a monument to the dreams, the hopes and the visions of many.

CHAPTER 2



The station in 1910 when named Central Ontario Junction.

Progress or Retrogression

Born about a mile from Bellview, my first recollection of the place was in the summer following my third birthday, when I was asked what my name was and then was treated to a plug of licorice in the old country store. From that day on, through the adolescent and youthful years, I thought Bellview was the greatest place on earth.

Much has been written about Bellview in the past and I believe that there were many before my time who had the same sentimental feelings for the place as this writer has had for seven decades. Bellview was not only situated in a beautiful rural environment, it was in the heart of a county with untold wealth

on the surface and underground. As I was growing up, so was Bellview. With each passing year, I kept wondering what it was going to be like in the next.

It was hard for one of my age to understand what it meant when Dan Bell said, "We, in this county, are sitting on millions of dollars' worth of gold, iron, lead, and talc."

I, for one, am sorry he didn't live long enough to see how right he was. Dan Bell had always had an interest in mining and minerals; he had done considerable prospecting and managed to put his only son through university where he graduated and became a qualified mining engineer.

Shortly after the birth of this town, it was named and ordained as Big Springs, a very fitting name, because this spring was known not only for its clear, cold water that fed Trout Creek, it was considered by the railroad surveyors as a very important factor in their choice of water supply for the locomotives, as well as the site for the station and the water tank. The next name was Bellview, but it was often referred to as Central Ontario Junction; later the Diamond.

There was a name change after that to Bonarlaw, but to me, until its dying days, it was always Bellview.

My mother was the first one to tell me about the place. Her sentimental feelings left an indelible impression in my mind. I recall the happy times when my mother and I walked along the dusty road. Sometimes I rode my tricycle as we went to Bellview, to do some shopping and to visit some very special friends; the Bells.

Those were very happy days for us both and the beginning of the times which I now write about - Bellview - as I saw it - not as someone told me or as I read about it. The sentimental feelings of home to a ten-year-old boy get lost in the shuffles of adulthood, but they appear to me now, similar to the feelings the child might have for his mother or a pet animal he has had; one that played a very important part in the boyhood years.

This was the feeling I had for Bellview then and for many decades thereafter.

There are very few of us left who were around Bellview during the boom years and I refer to the period during World War I and through the early twenties.

What time I had to spend around Bellview was usually spent between the store and the railroad station. A favourite pastime was counting the horse-drawn vehicles coming and going to and from the station.

Early in the twenties, one holiday, it was livestock shipping day, usually

the busiest day of the week; a school chum, Tom Neal and I took turns counting the traffic. From early morning until the livestock was loaded and ready for the last freight train of the day, we counted:

- 53 teams and wagons
- 20 single horse-drawn buggies
- 4 horse democrats
- 12 Model T Ford touring cars
- 3 unknown make of cars
- 5 chauffeur-driven company cars
- 3 cars picking up and delivering passengers to trains
- 2 mailmen in cars picking up and delivering mail to the station
- 2 Model T Ford trucks picking up freight from the C.P.R. trains for delivery to Marmora. (The first so-called trucks this writer had seen.)

On livestock shipping days, the sounds around the station were many and varied. The whistle of the shunting locomotives; the squealing hogs, the bawling cows, the bellowing bulls; the young calves' first separation from their mother, responsible for a heart-rending sound that could be heard above all others; the chanting of the stock men herding the animals into the various yards for later loading into the railroad cars. The pungent smell of sweating animals and portions of barnyard clinging to their feet created an atmosphere that made livestock shipping day at Bellview one to be long remembered and never again duplicated.

On shipping days, the station was a busy place. After the farmers had unloaded their livestock, many lined up in front of the feed warehouse, waiting their turn to pick up a supply of feed to take home. There were horses and buggies, teams and wagons, either tied up to the fence or just patiently waiting for their drivers who also waited; for them it was the scaleman's report to collect their money. Then there were the curious, attracted by the noise, as well as the travelling salesman waiting for the next train out.

Further attractions some days created even larger gatherings. Some eminent person from Ottawa, expected to be on the eastbound train, would step off the train for a few minutes while the express was being unloaded and shake hands with some of his ardent supporters. Four railroad coaches located on a siding just west of the station and consisting of sleeping cars, a cookery and dining car, accommodated 40 men who were called the extra gang. Along with the regular section gang, they spent most of the fair weather months upgrading and improving the tracks and buildings.

Because there were two railroad companies passing one station, there

were occasions when both crews were present at the same time, adding additional activity. Sixteen trains crossed the Diamond during daylight hours one day with 3 station men working the day shift; 2 on the four to twelve and 1 on the midnight. Daytime activity started with the local or otherwise referred to milk train, coming from the east. This train made many stops on its way to Toronto picking up not only passengers, but farmers' produce for the big city market; eggs, cream and maple syrup, just to name a few.

It was from this station that I had my first train ride with my mother and Aunt Effie - destination Toronto - a two-day excursion to the Exhibition; a most memorable time. Twenty-five cents took me from this station on the old C.N.R. mixed train, as we called it, to Marmora station. Then it was on foot for the return trip home. What an outing that was!

One rather unusual, but most welcome event took place here for at least three seasons that provided not only a service to the farmers and teamsters in the area, but some extra cash that always seemed to be needed as well. A ramp was built along the siding on the east side of the station to accommodate teams and wagons for the loading of field stone. Herb Keller had a contract to supply all the field stone that could be found in the area for fill along the waterfront in downtown Toronto. The price was \$1.00 per yard for various sized stones ranging as large as two men could lift and unload into the stone cars.

These stones were quite abundant along the fences where farmers had cleared the land. When that supply was nearly exhausted, some ambitious teamsters went into the yet uncleared pastures and by digging the hard treasures out of the ground, did the farmers a favour. This project not only added to the economy of Bellview, it increased the traffic along Station Road almost to congestion; teams and wagons coming and going; teams unloading and those waiting to unload.

There are not many of us left now who remember this or that recall that one part of the city of Toronto is sitting on what was once part of Bellview!

Meanwhile, back at the old country store on livestock shipping day, it is a busy day for the storekeepers and their helpers. The horses and wagons are tied up wherever their owners can find a place to do so. The farmers are getting their cheques cashed; doing some shopping; paying their bills; some have stopped at the Blacksmith Shop; some are just passing the time of day and catching up on the news.

On one of these busy days, a hot humid day in July, the store owner was working alone and seemed to be getting farther behind all the time. The years had taken their toll on him. A customer well known for his humorous stories

was a bit upset by having to wait so long to get served.

"Mr. Bell, I have tied my horse up out there to an icicle. If it melts, he might run away and hurt somebody!"

Another annual event, sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, took place at the Bellview station usually during the early spring season when the farmers were not yet involved with their planting. Three railroad cars were shunted on to the siding on the east side of the station where they were easily accessible to the public. Two railroad cars had been converted to display the various breeds of hogs with a walkway down the side for viewing the pens on the opposite side. The third car was for the convenience of the travelling crew, caretakers, veterinarians, as well as those with a degree in swine husbandry qualified to extol the finer qualities of certain breeds.

Some lecturing was done on how to get the most pounds of pork with the least pounds of feed. All the current popular breeds were displayed, including sows with babies in various stages of growth . . . weaners and shoats as well. The boars or "daddy" hogs that were most likely to produce were among the viewed. There was the long lean offspring and the shorter with more fat (which some of the old timers seemed to prefer) and some young breeding stock were available or could be ordered later.

The excitement with the extra traffic; the many strangers and their obvious interest in the event only accomplished to dramatize my admiration for Bellview.

Carloads of grain seed and feed displayed on the railroad siding were offered to the public at cost and sponsored by various organizations of farmers. Eliminating the middle man made it very attractive to the farmers of several townships and attracted strangers to an already busy Bellview.

I would be remiss if I did not attempt to describe the sidewalk traffic, which at times was congested as well as Station Road. First, there was just a path between the fence and the roadway. During the rainy season, it was not very pleasant walking on the path, on the grass, in the ditch or on the road. A four-foot-wide concrete walk was finally built from the store to the station and was a most welcome addition to the many services Bellview provided, especially to the walking public.

I doubt very much if any sidewalk designed for foot travel was ever exposed to the volume and nature of the to and fro traffic that this one was. Had movie cameras been available then, there would have been times when they could have recorded scenes and sounds that would have been the envy of any movie maker.

The wheel traffic included bicycles, tricycles, baby carriages, wheel barrows and children's wagons. The on-foot traffic was mostly local folks who knew the train schedules and were going or coming from meeting friends at the station; to see them off or to welcome them home. Sometimes they would walk to the station just to say hello to a friend they knew was passing through on a certain day. During the busiest time of the day, obvious confusion and frustration resulted from the same amount of traffic going and coming with many in a rush.

The travelling salesman with his two or three suitcases sometimes welcomed the boys with their wagons and a treat or a few pennies made the service competitive. A most amusing pastime was watching not only the local people, but the strangers who weren't familiar with passenger train schedules. Not realizing the number of trains that were crossing the Diamond in any given hour, a traveller carrying two suitcases, just leaving the store for the station, would hear the toot! toot! of the locomotive. This being the signal that the engineer had been given clearance to cross the Diamond and perhaps move on, the salesman in a panic, with the two suitcases, would start running in a matter of seconds. Several more were doing likewise. By the time they got to the station, the train was crossing the Diamond. The one they thought it was, came along twenty minutes later, on the other track.

There was one service that never failed to increase the traffic on the sidewalk. Morbid curiosity, they called it, when everyone who had the time, old and young alike, would follow the horse-drawn hearse to the station to see if it was bringing a body to be shipped out or was coming to pick one up from an incoming train. So it was, that there were those who got their last train ride to or from Bellview.

There were many pleasant occasions around the railroad during the boom years. Couples taking their first train ride as Mr. and Mrs. headed for the honeymoon to possibly Ottawa, Toronto, or Niagara Falls. The wedding guests were usually present to see them off, as well as the reverend. His presence seemed to make the occasion more dignified and with the help of the station agent, a highly respected man in the community, it was a memorable going-away party. There were hugs and kisses, flowers, and confetti, but when the conductor who had joined the party for a few minutes shouted, "All Aboard!" there were farewells, more handshakes and tears, not from sadness, but tears of joy. As the train moved out, the conductor had graciously made it possible for the happy couple to stand on the platform of the last coach where the hand-waving continued 'till the train was out of sight. This was one time when I

thought seriously about the tears and wondered then and since: did the tears wash away the smiles or did the smiles dry up the tears?

Most honeymooners arrived back on the night trains and when some friend had been asked to meet the train, it frequently meant a welcome home party. Many of those who had wished them bon voyage were there for the chivaree and with the first sounds of the old cow bells, the strangers were quick to join the revelry. Memories of those who were serenaded in this fashion would be for the rest of their lives. Unexpected pleasant surprises are among life's most cherished gifts; they ring the bell that unlocks one's book of memories, bringing back the delightful days and hours of yesteryears, to make them live bright and clear once again, retouching their brilliance with new colour and meaning.

The station waiting room was well maintained by the section men and provided a homey atmosphere with the coal stove and the coal oil light. Many of the box car passengers warmed their bones, made their tea and slept their cares away, until the next freight came through. A few unusual things took place here.

A small barrel marked "molasses" attracted a lot of attention in the express office, as did a certain well dressed law man, who spent several days in the waiting room watching to see who claimed the barrel.

Those who were aware of the situation were so concerned that they failed to pay attention to a man who made several visits to the express office, claiming to be looking for a missing steamer trunk. On each visit, he was actually counting the joints in the planking of the floor and pin-pointing the exact location of the barrel relative to the walls. Later that third night, with the law man still in the waiting room and the night operator busy with the night trains, (one each way), this gentleman armed with a brace and bit, several jugs and cans and having easy access as the floor was three feet above ground level, proceeded to bore a hole through the floor into the barrel, insert the spigot and fill his containers with the best whiskey made in the next province.

Several stories were told about the reaction of the station men and the law men, when they learned how they had been tricked. I had the pleasure of talking to the old gentleman who performed the surgery on the barrel. His one comment was, "The best whiskey I ever drank!"

A rather unusual story told by the station agent again involved a law man who had followed a suspect from Ottawa to this station. Appearance indicated a mute woman writing a request for a ticket on the next northbound train. Later the law man and suspect were sitting in the waiting room. The law man

was eating an apple; from the bag he took another and tossed it toward the lap of the suspect, who according to the station agent, pulled his knees together and confirmed the law man's suspicion that it was indeed a man. He was arrested on the spot.

The agent's explanation at the time was that had it been a woman, reflexes would have been to spread the knees outward to catch the apple in the lap.

The first signs of change in Bellview, I accepted with some reluctance believing, "It shouldn't happen here."

Death came slowly and the symptoms appeared slight . . . at first. The partitions in the hotel horse stables were torn out to make room for the few cars that belonged to the station's night operators who lived in the hotel apartments. Some stalls in that stable complete with the horses' names on their very own doors, were assigned in advance; an added benefit to their owners, the salesmen.

Travelling stallions, travelling for purposes of breeding, also took advantage of the overnight resting spot. The salesman and the stallioner had a reservation in the hotel as well, even though the services they offered were vastly different.

Symptom 2 - remaining partitions were taken down and no more horses were kept overnight.

Shortly thereafter for no apparent reason, the third symptom struck hard and cruelly; the shed for the horses of visiting patrons of the store and hotel was torn down.

With not enough horse business, the disease spread - the Blacksmith shop disappeared.

Next to go was the icehouse and the sawdust pile. The icehouse had been a very important part of living in those times. From the ice cutting days in Mud Lake to the north, there were those who looked forward to the cold weather and hauling and delivering the clear blue twenty-inch square blocks to the various icehouses in the area, including the big one at Bellview.

When the icecream was delivered to Bellview store with the coming of warm weather, preserving it was essential and first priority. If the store clerks were busy and one or two of us boys just happened to be standing around, we were asked if we should like to "Take the canvas bags. Go to the icehouse and dig down where the stake is. If there is a half block there, okay; if not, cut one in two and bury the other half. Cover it well up and replace the stake."

The remaining half we cut in two pieces again. Put one in each canvas bag,

took it to the well and washed it good. After this we proceeded to break it up in small pieces, then took it to the store where the owner gave us each a cone of icecream. We were pleased and so was he.

As far back as I can remember, there always seemed to be a lack of accommodations for those who, because of their work, had to live in or near Bellview.

Long before I knew anything about engineering, construction work, or subdivisions, I thought of and talked about someday building a row of houses on both sides of Station Road from the store to the station. I often talked about this with my friend, the station agent, who concurred with my thinking and dreaming.

It was when, for no apparent reason that I knew of, I saw the wreckers tearing down the last apartment behind the hotel where school chums, night operators and friends of mine had spent many happy years, that I realized whatever was destroying Bellview was now an epidemic and it was going to take a miracle to save it. A short time later, when I saw the wreckers at work on the main barn, a building that couldn't be replaced at the time for five thousand dollars, I had a sickening feeling that the death of Bellview was inevitable.

A year or two later, just before leaving for greener pastures and life in the fast lane as it was sometimes called, I took a farewell look at the old place, where once the fine old buildings had welcomed the horses and drivers. There was nothing now, but a jungle of weeds and bushes. The store, the hotel, the station and the four houses all looked familiar, but as I turned and walked away, I had a foreboding feeling of impending doom.

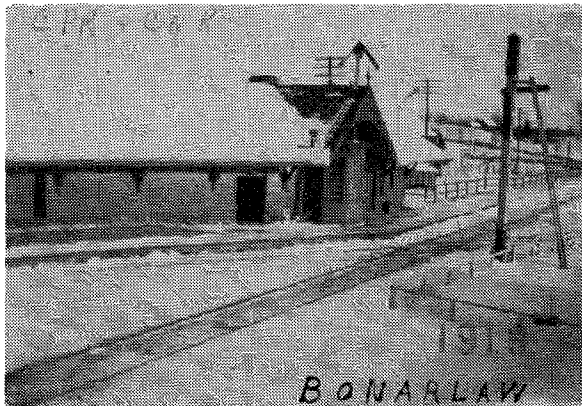
Once again, memories took me back to the wonderful times I had ever since that first plug of licorice in the old country store. For a few moments, I saw again the two rows of houses along Station Road, my dream that at one time had seemed like an infinity. I consoled myself, "It *will* be and I *will* be back."

Little did I know then, that a decade would pass so quickly and that I'd be back to witness first hand, the death of Bellview. The water tank at the station disappeared, a victim of the times, as the steam locomotives with the coming of the diesel. Knowing the features and the structural design of the tank, I thought of several uses that it might have served. There were others who expressed the same sentiments at the time. The water tank was yet another victim of progress with no chance of a reprieve or a stay of execution.

. . . and Bellview . . . in the name of Progress . . . died.



Honeymooners, Burton and Irene Bateman with Edward and Annie Bateman, married the same day, waiting for the train.



Bellview station in 1919. On the CPR track the semaphore is up to stop. For the CNR the semaphore on top of the station is down meaning go. This device controlled by the station agent who had adequate visibility to both tracks from the station window and received signals through morse code from the station above.

CHAPTER 3



A woodcutting bee at the old Barlow homestead in Bellview.

Neighbourly Love

“**L**ove thy neighbour”, seemed to be an inherent quality that was quite apparent in Bellview. The wood sawing; threshing and barn-raising bees; rebuilding a neighbour's house after a fire; the collections; the donations; including the childrens' pennies for the unfortunate.

My grandfather drove fifteen miles with a team on a democrat, taking several neighbours with him, to help a farmer they didn't even know. Even though it was two walking miles through the bush and over rough terrain to John Spry's farm, the same grandfather said, “I never had a better neighbour than John Spry.”

The farmers of the times referred to here were a very important part of the community. Assets were judged by the number of horses and cows that a farmer owned; both of which were considered essential for survival. As in any settlement, Bellview being no exception, there seemed to be those who stood a little taller in a crowd than some of their neighbours. In Bellview the names were Spry, Barlow, Mumby, McComb and Morrison. Whether it was an inheritance, good management, hard work or luck that put them in such a position, there were those who envied them. A lazy man's assessment of a hard working man's prosperity was assessed in one word - "luck".

It was around the station that I first heard the words, tourist and taxi. These people were referred to as sportsmen, fishermen or millionaires. They were easily identified by the equipment they were carrying when they stepped off the train. Transportation was always available to take them to their favourite fishing spots, Allan's Mills, Healey Falls, Callagan's Rapids, Crowe River and Crowe Lake. It was on a baggage wagon at this station, that I first saw a case of whiskey. It attracted considerable attention as it was handled with care from the baggage wagon to a waiting car.

One gentleman in the party was known to consume one quart during the day and the last thing he did before retiring at night was to put a full bottle and a glass under his cot, within easy reach. He lived to be ninety-two. Whether or not he was pickled, was never known.

One other brand of sportsmen, that were easily identified around the station, were the hunters. They came by both east and west trains, usually wearing their red hats and hunting jackets. Their suitcases, guns and dogs were unloaded from the express car and loaded on the baggage wagon.

Their intentions were to catch the mixed train north to their hunting camps. This was not always feasible as the mixed train had no fixed schedule, resulting in their having to stay overnight. Some stayed in the Bellview Hotel. Others spent the night in the station waiting room where they could party all night, as well as having been assigned to looking after the hounds. Those getting on or off the night trains, seeing this show for the first time, would be either amused or confused.

For the hunters, who were lucky enough to find accommodations in the Bellview House, it added something unusual to the day's activities to see men with their red hunting colours, quite visible, walking in pairs, some carrying their guns in cases looking quite formidable.

Two men attracted considerable attention; Tom Long and Joe Shortt - and that they were. Tom was a big man, about 6' 4". Joe was a small man less than

5', with some of the characteristics of a midget or a dwarf. They had been buddies for years and were quite sociable to many of us who sort of looked forward to their coming and going at the hunting time.

There was always a repeat of their return to the station a few days after hunting season ended. They were a more somber and sober bunch now, the glamour of the hunt had worn off. Even the dogs with their sore feet and pounds lighter had a rather dejected look.

There was the usual stopover and once again, they made their presence felt in the old country store. Some antlered heads were dispatched to the nearest taxidermist and some ice was added to the burlap bags. With the revisions, a few stories were told about the buck that got away and the bear that scared the something or other out of one of the party, who went to sleep on his watch.

Then there were the handshakes, the "so long's" and the "we'll see you next year's".

We were glad to see them come; sorry to see them leave; hopefully expecting to see them again; especially Tom Long and Joe Shortt, who were in a sense, the Long and Shortt of the story, the part that made Bellview seem important.

It always seemed to me that Bellview had something to offer that no other place had and the station was the centre of it all. There was always a light in the window and a fire in the stove when it was cold outside. The station agents, the night operators and the trackmen were all a sociable bunch and never were any of us younger ones reprimanded or chased away when playing around, inside or out. The engineer or fireman always seemed to have the time to wave a hand as did the brakeman or the conductor in the tail end. All dedicated professionals at their chosen vocation, enjoying their work, they were always mindful of the safety and comfort of the public.

When the feed storehouse along the siding was torn down, I could not understand why it could not have been used for some other purpose. It was a part of the epidemic.

When the rumour reached me that the station was next, I spent many sleepless nights wondering what Bellview would look like without it. Several times I returned and as I became entranced with the station, I relived the happy times, so many had known in and around that building for so many years. Inspirations to pray tugged at my boyhood beliefs, but they were shrugged aside, with the belief the station would still stand. The day came. The wreckers went on the job.

As a boy, a youth, a man, this place was home to me wherever I lived. I never went near, while the wreckers were on the job. It would have been like going to witness the execution of an old and dear friend. In lieu of flowers, I bought some planking that was part of the platform, where many of the travelling dignitaries had stood, shaking hands and making speeches. It was on this platform, that the Honourable J. R. Cooke had often stood and talked to his many supporters, while waiting to take the train to Toronto. It was not unusual for a delegation to meet him here when he was returning home for the weekend.

Considering my family relationship with this gentleman, I had written him a letter shortly after finishing high school, asking him what he thought would be a good trade to get involved with. I had his letter around for a long time, which said, "William, I can't think of anything right now that has as much potential for the future as Ontario Hydro."

I often wished I had taken his advice and it was on this station platform that I thanked him for his answer, then shook his hand for the last time.

I had the carpenter build a set of basement steps for my home with the planking, leaving it with the sort of weather-beaten look. Nine inches wide, three inches thick and three feet long. The nine steps remind me quite frequently that part of the station is in our house. Occasionally, I pause, closing my eyes. I am walking up the old steps to the station platform again. Looking down the steps from the top, I am reminded of the rather unusual game we practiced, usually on Sundays, one I never recall seeing since school days.

Riding our bicycles down the centre of those five steps took a lot of practice, bumps and bruises, skinned shin bones and elbows. With perseverance, it was done, and the only one who viewed it as a simple feat, was the observer.

Being one of the graduates, I had the opportunity during the first year in high school to demonstrate my skill; the result of bragging. No teachers were present when we took the bicycle upstairs. The takeoff was perfect, as was the descent, despite the cheers and the jeers of the audience. That loud accompaniment must have been responsible for the appearance of the principal at the precise second of the landing, when concentration was crucial. Instead of riding out the doorway as planned, I picked myself and the bicycle up off the floor. More jeers. Then cheers. Now I had lost the bet and was ordered to appear in the principal's office at once!

"What do you think the trustees would have thought of the discipline

around here, if you had broken a leg?" Expecting a reprimand in a militant tone of voice, I was more than happy to face a smiling teacher.

"Where did you ever learn to do that?" she questioned again, smiling with curious humour.

"At the railroad station." I answered simply.

"Good heaven! In a railroad station! I must be dreaming," she exclaimed.

The high walkway ride offered a challenge that no doubt could have been hazardous. Thirty empty railway box cars parked on the siding made an ideal setup for Sunday afternoon activities. With all bush on the west side, one house vacant on the east side, no one could see us. We often climbed up and ran along the walkway, as we had seen the brakeman doing frequently, even when the train was in motion. There was about a foot of open space between the walkways when the box cars were coupled together. We had had a bicycle up there a few times and had taken turns at the short ride when someone suggested some short wide boards nailed temporarily into position over the gap. We could at least amaze anyone who may be watching from a distance.

The Sunday before we were to make the maiden run, while discussing plans atop the box car, we were oblivious of the approach of the track patrolman on his velocipede. When we finally noticed the intruder, we quickly ducked down, but were sure he had seen us. As soon as he disappeared we were not long getting down and heading for home.

The following week we learned the patrolman had reported some unusual activity around the box cars on Sunday. Being in reasonably good health and never administering to any broken bones, I was somewhat relieved when the high walkway ride was temporarily terminated. A year later when one of the promoters moved away, this daring act was almost forgotten, with one exception. The promoter can say that he did in fact ride a bicycle on the walkway of a railroad box car. However, for several years after, this promoter had more than one nightmare of jumping the bicycle over the open space between the next box car, something I thought could be done then or even many years later as well.

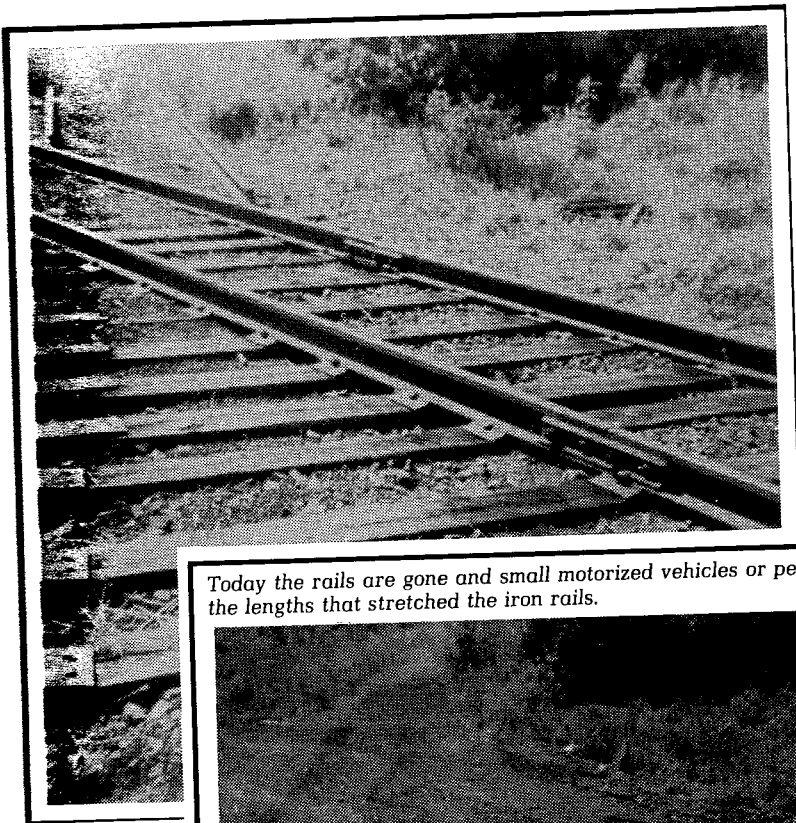
The station is gone. The lineups of box cars are no more and the Diamond has disappeared. The picture now shows naught but devastation with the few discarded iron rails like the bones that supported the locomotives with their might and varied cargoes. One look now brings the feelings and tears as readily as visiting the ravaged grave of your dearest friend or relative. As I gaze upon this restless graveyard, sentiments build, but

all I can breathe is, "The full century you were around should never have ended this way. But thanks for the memories."

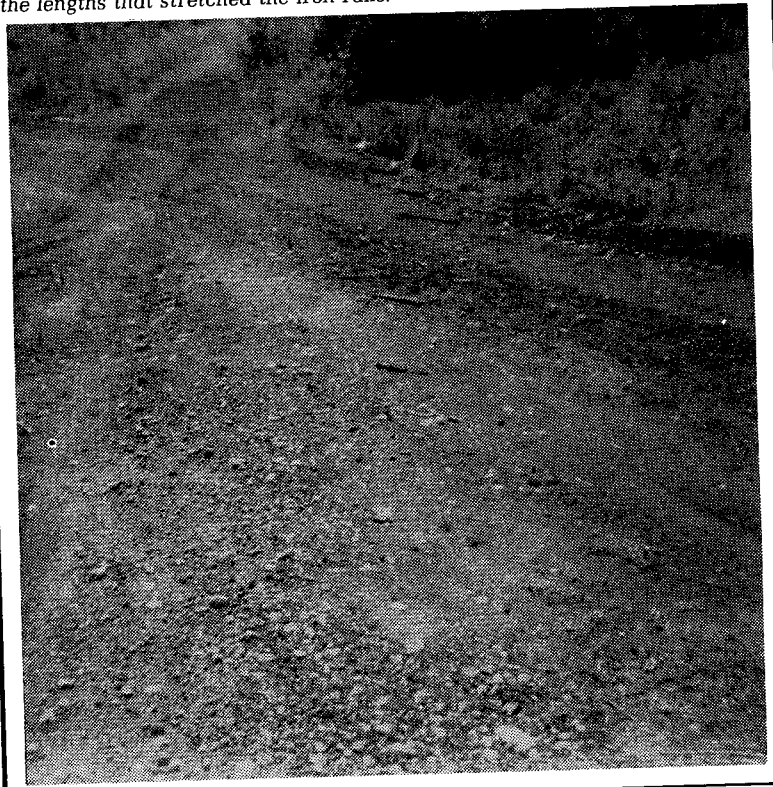
If there is a place where old railroaders go after their last train ride or the end of the line on the journey through life, I hope it is eternal. When the history of railroading for the 19th century is compiled, I am hopeful, honourable mention will be made of the dedicated railway employees that helped make Bellview the busiest and most interesting stop from Smith Falls to Toronto.

The epidemic has struck again and now death; the extinction of life aptly describes the place. With the Diamond now gone and the few rusting old rails looking like the rolling bones of some prehistoric monster, mute testimony of what once was here.

My idea of a suitable monument here would be a cross made from a steel rail set in concrete, twenty feet above ground, and eight feet across with the word "Bellview" welded across the front. Hopefully, it would last for a hundred years. Only desolation and devastation now mark the spot.

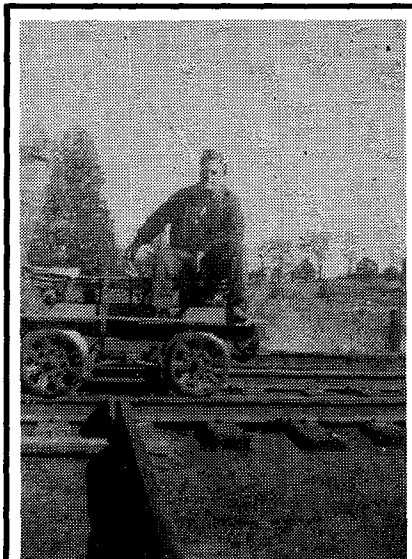


Today the rails are gone and small motorized vehicles or people on foot travel the lengths that stretched the iron rails.





Jim Rathwell (last section man) with section crew on the hand car.



Jim Rathwell on the hand car. Four men usually operated this vehicle, patrolling and working on the track. The gas car eventually took over the need for the handcar.

CHAPTER 4

William Luery — Pioneer 1861 - 1956

William Luery was a pioneer in the true sense of the word. He lived in and loved Big Springs and later Bellview. It was here he cleared the land for his farm and his family and was justifiably proud of both. As a young man, his farm and home was situated between two railroads; one passing on the east side; the other on the west.

He worked clearing the right of ways on both lines and later worked on the actual construction of the railroads. Though he was well respected as a man in the community, he was a bit eccentric in some of his opinions and habits. Having always worn a beard seemed to make him older and different

to the younger generation.

As a historian and a story teller, there was none better. With the passing of time and as an old man, his memory served him well, as he recalled dates and events of yesteryears.

During the early railroad period, a labourer was accidentally killed on the right of way near his home. Being a transient and having no known relatives or friends, permission was given to bury the victim in a nearby secluded area.

Two days later, William and his friend were walking along the road from town, when they were accosted by a well dressed young man driving a horse and buggy. They were asked a few questions as to where they lived and would they like to make a dollar each after dark. Arrangements were made for a meeting place close by at 10 o'clock. From there, they were driven a short distance to a familiar place. The horse was tied out of sight in some bushes.

The well dressed young man took two shovels, a coal oil lantern and a black bag out of the buggy. After lighting the lantern and handing the adolescents each a shovel, he led his accomplices a short distance. It was not until William saw the stones on the fresh dirt, that he realized where they were and why.

Following instructions, they dug only a few minutes until the body was exposed. Identifying himself as a medical student, the young man opened his black bag. William and his buddy became nervous as they watched the demonstration of the various tools of the trade. A gadget resembling a farmer's hog hook was produced by the doctor. As he reached down, he hooked it into the chin of the victim and hauled the corpse out of the grave. William relieved himself of his stomach contents, while his helper fainted.

They were further instructed to back-fill the hole, throwing in some extra stones to fill the void, as well as placing the original stones in the pre-existing positions. The sight was to appear as it had previously.

With their composure restored, the next gruesome task was at hand. With the help of the doctor, the rigid body was put into a bag designed for the purpose. While one carried the equipment, the other positioned the recipient of the hog hook on the seat of the buggy beside the driver. Wearing the doctor's hat and under the cover of darkness, the cadaver appeared as any passenger, though he couldn't have been much of a conversationalist for the doctor's long ride. Rather than the original \$1.00 promised, they were paid \$2.00 each, with the doctor's compliment. "A job well done."

Horses had always played a very important role in William's farming operation. He was a good caretaker and very proud of his four-legged friends. When one of his favourites came up missing one morning, he was surprised and concerned. After searching for two hours and checking the fences, without any signs of the animal, he was certain it had been stolen.

A band of travelling gypsies had been camped on the Gordanier Road for several days and were always seeking to buy, sell or trade horses, usually managing to get the best of the deal. The more he thought about it, the angrier he got. He went to the house, entered the back door, picked up his rifle and some shells, with the idea in mind of paying a not-too-friendly visit to the gypsies. Leaving by the front door and now getting hotter under the collar, he sought a cool refreshing drink of water. Looking in the direction of the well, he noticed the wooden cover minus several sections. As he peered down into its depths, he was greeted by a familiar whinny.

Fortunately, the mare had fallen rear end first and was sitting upright with only her head out of the water. The rescue procedure required considerable engineering strategy, but with the help of the neighbours and the curious, the mare was finally pulled out of the well. Although she was minus considerable hide and hair, there were no broken bones; truly a miracle.

A few days later, Mr. Luery paid a friendly visit to the gypsy camp, where he enjoyed himself, considering what he had previously planned.

Having a small farm with good soil and plenty of horse power, William was able to produce grain crops considerably higher per acre than his neighbours. He credited this to his system of seeding and for many years never divulged his method to anyone.

He claimed that when sowing grain with the conventional seed drill with the rows of seed about four inches apart, he was losing some of the ground area's resources. He believed he could almost double the production by sowing first north and south, then going east and west over the same ground. Whether or not this procedure was practical is questionable, but the extra bushels in the granary at threshing time convinced William he was right.

During the ninety-five years Mr. Luery lived, he never travelled very far from the place of his birth, although he was very knowledgeable in history and world affairs. His world affairs never included the places 'heaven' or 'hell' as these were the two he did not believe in. In mentioning the word 'hell', he said it came from the word 'helio' meaning 'hole in the

ground' and that would be where we would all go sometime. He once said he never would travel farther from Bellview than he couldn't walk home the next day.

William Luery was laid to rest in the place of his choice beside his faithful wife. Whether it is hell or not, it is as he said; a hole in the ground.