

5. Victoria Junction 1875 - 1907

BACKGROUND

Before the Railway Age, travel and the movement of goods in Upper Canada were dependent on waterways and on such trails and crude strips of planks, dust or quagmire that passed for roads.

In 1849 the Province of Canada passed the Railway Guarantee Act, which triggered Canada's railway building boom.

Victoria Junction was located in the area of William Street North and Orchard Park Road at the north end of Lindsay.

Until 1907, it was pivotal to local railway operations.

From 1875 to 1883 it permitted traffic between Lindsay's first station at King and St. Paul Streets and either Haliburton or Waubaushene (1875) and then Midland (1879); from 1877 to 1981 also between downtown Lindsay (Victoria & Durham) and Haliburton; and from 1883 to 1907 between downtown Lindsay (Victoria & Durham) and Midland.

From 1875 to 1907 it also permitted direct traffic between Haliburton and west from Lindsay to Waubaushene (1875) and then to Midland (1879).

THE JUNCTION

The first railway to reach Lindsay was the Port Hope, Lindsay & Beaverton Railway (PHL&B) in **1857**.

In **1871**, this railway (by then the Midland Railway) was extended to Beaverton, and by 1879 to Midland.

It continued from its original station beside the Scugog River at King and St. Paul Streets to cross the river by means of a swing-bridge, gained height on the west bank of the Scugog, and then curved west across what is now William Street North at Orchard Park Road. It continued westward roughly parallel to today's Orchard Park Road and through what is now the Lindsay Airport.

Also in **1871**, the originator of what subsequently became Victoria Junction was conceived as the Fenelon Falls Railway. It transformed itself into the Victoria Railway (VR) in 1873, with plans to extract timber and minerals in the Haliburton Highlands and in what is now Algonquin Park.

At its Lindsay end, the Victoria Railway did not originate from downtown, but started out from the top of William Street in **1875** with a triangular wye formation connected with the Midland Railway line to create Victoria Junction. This permitted direct traffic from the north both with Port Hope (through Lindsay along the Scugog) and with Beaverton. It also enabled the Victoria Railway to use the Midland station at King and St. Paul Streets in Lindsay as its initial terminus.

The first railway to reach downtown Lindsay was the Whitby, Port Perry & Lindsay Railway (WPP&L) in **1877**, establishing a station and terminal facilities at Victoria Avenue and Melbourne Street.

In the same year, the Victoria Railway obtained permission from the Town to lay a track straight down Victoria Avenue to Glenelg Street to connect with the WPP&L, bisecting the existing triangular wye formation at William Street North with its southward extension that curved into Victoria Avenue just north of Pottinger Street.

By **1883**, the Midland Railway had acquired the WPP&L and the VR (among others) and was reorganizing its newly-expanded system. This involved the realignment of its route from Port Hope to enter Lindsay along Durham Street, where it now curved north to connect with the former VR track on Victoria Avenue. As traffic for Midland now went up Victoria Avenue, a westbound switch was put in south of the Victoria Junction diamond crossing between Pottinger and Eglinton Streets to connect the new route up with the Midland's track out to Beaverton and beyond. The crossing was removed and the former main line along the banks of the Scugog (severed by the abandonment of the original swing-bridge), now became a spur to serve residual local industries.

By **1907**, the volume of grain traffic from Midland was such that the Victoria Avenue route was no longer acceptable as a main artery, and the successor Grand Trunk Railway (1893) built a new line west out of Durham St. to cross Kent and Colborne Streets West to join the original PHL&B (Midland) line just west of Monarch Rd.

Victoria Avenue continued to be used for the Haliburton traffic, but Victoria Junction now existed in name only.

The successor Canadian National Railways (1923) abandoned its Haliburton branch in **1981**. At that point the former Victoria Junction faded into history altogether.

(For more information, please consult our "1 Victoria County – A Capsule Railway History" and "4 The Victoria Railway" leaflets.)

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