

## ***Railroad Hog***

***by James Dickson***



My great uncle James Dickson started working for CN in Toronto in 1929 as secretary to the comptroller. In 1932 they moved the office to Montreal. He worked for CN for 44 years. My grandfather worked there for 27 years. Both my grandfather and great uncle grew up on the railway as my great grandfather started working for the railways in 1883, with the Northern and NorthWestern R.R. in Georgetown as Station Agent. Later with GTR and CN until 1935 where he retired in Omeme'e.

I relate this information because my great uncle (pictured at the upper left) was a great story teller and I have many of his stories of the railroad. The story below was submitted to and published in the Canadian [Railway Historical Association's](#) newsletter. It describes an amusing story of events at Omeme'e Station (see map at upper right). The middle picture above is of Omeme'e Station in 1927 taken by Bob Dickson's grandfather.

Bob Dickson, TRHA

---

***CRHA News Report #129 January, 1962***

### ***Railroad Hog***

"In 1920, ten years before the Welland canal was opened, heavy grain shipments moved from Midland to Lindsay, through Lorneville junction. The Blackwater-Coboconk branch crossed the Midland - Lindsay line at this point. The diamond was protected by semaphores a quarter mile from the station. Each semaphore was controlled by cable which was wound onto a drum to put the signal in "go" position. Changed to "stop" the cable was let out by kicking a release cog.

One fall day the agent at the Lorneville heard the telegraph key chatter a message that a freight

train was leaving Lindsey from Midland. To be sure, dead sure, that the signal was clear, he went to the station platform to check. The chain was wound tight on the drum, the signal arm was straight up, and the light was green.

.

A few minutes later the train whistled repeatedly. The agent heard it but, knowing the signal was clear, he thought of cattle on the track or some other reason for the whistling. A few minutes later the train crawled slowly up to the station. The conductor and engineer came into the office and expressed their views on being stopped for no apparent reason. The agent insisted that the signal was clear, and accompanied the crew outside to prove his point.

.

But the signal arm was straight out, the light was red. He glanced around for an explanation and saw the curly tailed end of a pig disappearing around the corner of the station house. He said to the conductor, "Maybe the pig did it." Snorting in disgust, the conductor high-balled his train, and spread the word along the line that the agent at Lorneville had lost some of his marbles.

.

A week later the agent called his son to the station window to bear witness with him. Over in the wye his potatoes have been harvested, but many little ones had been cast aside. The family pig was rooting them out and gorging himself. When he completed his meal he crossed the tracks and trotted along the platform, headed for home.

.

But for a moment he deviated. He moved inquisitively to the signal lever and drum, thrust his snout into the blob of axle grease on the release cog, then scuttled for his pen and safety behind the house as the drums spun, the cable ran out with a clatter, and the signal jolted from "go" to "stop".

.

The agent at Lorneville was William Roger Dickson, who retired from CN service at Omeme, Ontario in 1935 and died in 1937.

.

As told by James William Campbell Dickson"