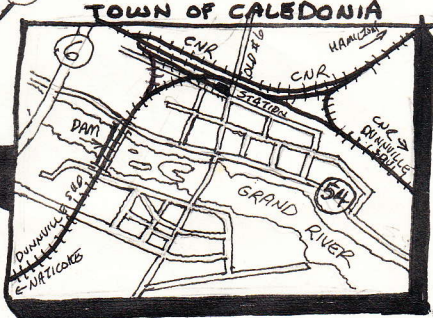
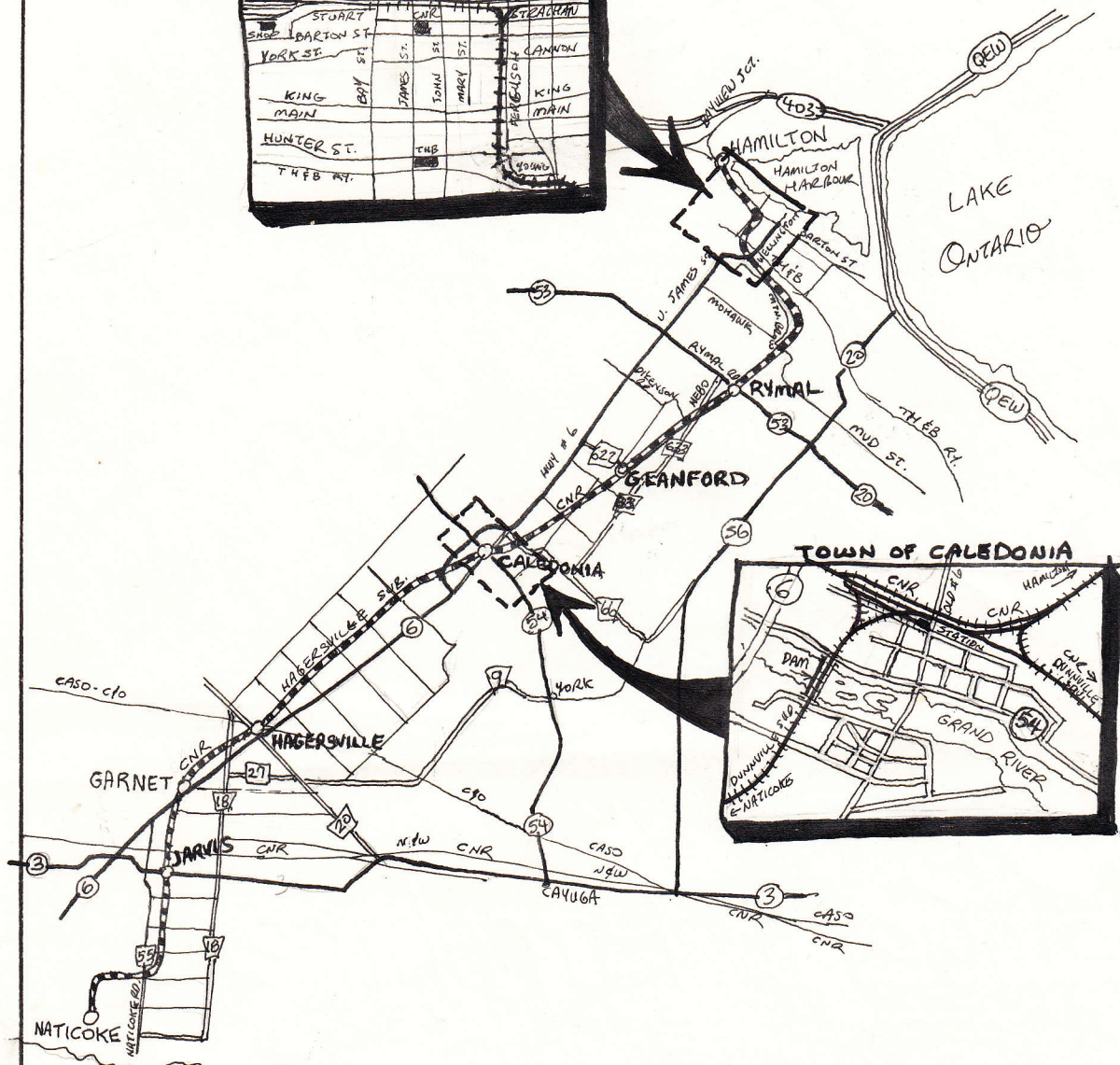
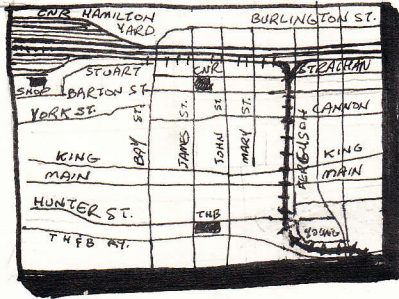


CITY OF HAMILTON



ANTHONY DeSANTIS ~ 1986

LAKE ERIE

CANRAIL VIDEOS



COVERED



WAGONS

Covered Wagons on the Nanticoke

Welcome aboard CANRAIL's first full feature video; "Covered Wagons on the Nanticoke, CN's 9100's". Before we begin our journey to Nanticoke on the shores of Lake Erie, here is a brief description of what the train in this video is about. When STELCO (The Steel Company of Canada) began to construct their first full scale steel mills away from Hamilton on Lake Ontario, at Nanticoke on Lake Erie, it was clear that shipping the amounts of unfinished steel coils and billets that this new plant was capable of producing would tax any available trucking system. The 40 some odd miles that STELCO had to move the steel to the finishing mills in Hamilton, would best be suited by the use of the railways. Since STELCO's railway yards in Hamilton are switched by both the Canadian National and the Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo (CP Rail), it was decided that both railroads would get the contract to move the steel out of Nanticoke. Operations switch back and forth every 6 weeks for the CN and 4 weeks for CP Rail (THSB).

When CN operates the Nanticoke train (no. 725), it travels to Lake Erie by the old Hamilton and Northwestern trackage (CN's south line) from Hamilton to Caledonia, to Garnet where a new line has replaced the old line through Jarvis to Lake Erie. The train travels back this same line to Caledonia, but here it travels west to Brantford on CN's Dunnville sub.. In Brantford, it connects in with CN's Dundas sub. for the return trip to Hamilton. The reason for this way of returning is because of the 365 foot Niagara escarpment which separates Lake Ontario from Lake Erie (and forms Niagara Falls). The H&NW line climbs the escarpment in about 8 miles and is the shortest route to Nanticoke, which is fine for an empty train in a populated area. The line from Brantford drops down the escarpment in about 20 miles through a region of scattered population which is better in case of a runaway train loaded with steel descending the line. The movement of Train 725, therefore, forms a wye pattern leaving and returning to Hamilton.

The CN "F" units arrived at the Great Lakes Region from Edmonton, Alberta in early 1986. Due to their old age and their great ability to handle bad weather, which Lake Erie and Nanticoke are noted for, these engines were selected for the Nanticoke run.

Now it is time to board the Nanticoke for our run. This video includes cab rides and line shots in some of Southern Ontario's finest scenery.

We open with CN switching the Nanticoke train in Hamilton's Staurt Street Yard. While the switcher is assembling our train, a rare CN RS18 brings the local way freight along side.

We now get a first look at our A-B-A motive power set consisting of 9169 - 9198 and 9172, as they arrive from the engine house ready for our trip. Because this video was filmed over a six week period, we shall see different units on the headend, but always a A-B-A "F" unit set! Boarding train 725's lead unit, we are treated to a trip out of CN yard, past the CN depot and up the south line of the old NS&NW and on our way. This is street trackage on Ferguson Avenue in Hamilton. On the Ferguson Avenue trackage we cross many main streets. We cross Barton Street, Cannon Street, Wilson Street, King William Street and finally King Street.

Trackside again, we watch as the train crosses King Street, leaves Ferguson Ave. and passes through an alley, and crosses Main Street Here it climbs a short but stiff grade that brings the CN trackage up to the level of the TH&B main line, so it can traverse over and start its ascent of the Niagara Escarpment. Just past the short grade, Train 725 passes under the Clairmont Access Road, passes over Victoria Ave. and diamonds across the TH&B, and starts up the 'Hamilton Mountain', crossing Wentworth Street part of the way up. This is all seen from the cab and trackside.

An early April shot of the Nanticoke train shows it cresting the Niagara Escarpment just before Mohawk Road on the mountain.

The Stonechurch Road Area is the backdrop as Train 725 is seen sweeping around the curve and past the co-op grain elevators at Rymal Station, before crossing Highway #53 (Rymal Road) through Hannon, Ontario.

Soon we arrive at the first of the two wyes, one on each side of the station, at Caledonia. We proceed slowly around this first wye, crossing Highway #6 and past the depot on the Dunnville sub.. After passing the depot, the train rounds the second wye towards the Grand River and our southerly route to Lake Erie.

From the cab we get our first look at Caledonia's long bridge across the Grand River. Spectacular is hardly appropriate, but an accurate description nonetheless, as we watch 725 cross this scenic location. The caboos behind the locomotives is to save movements at Nanticoke, which has no turning facilities. Upon leaving the bridge, our train is seen crossing Mill Street. This is a favorite spot of ~~ra~~ fans who chase the Nanticoke train.

In the long scene, Train725 is seen approaching the junction of the CN line and the old Canada Southern (Michigan Central) line in Hagersville, Ontario. Though the CN station and interlocking tower are gone, the New York Central (CS-MC) depot still stands. The Canada Southern now belongs to both CN and CP Rail. Leaving the junction, we see the Nanticoke train leaving Hagersville on it's way towards Jarvis.

We are now at Garnet, standing on the original roadbend of the NS&NW south line trackage into Jarvis as Train 725 approaches. With Ontario Hydro, Texaco Canada and STELCO moving the Nanticoke, it was thought that a new direct line should be installed. Again Train 725 crosses Highway #6 and up the new line towards STELCO.

The new trackage to STELCO cuts across the old Wabash-CN line just east of the yard in Jarvis. We watch as the Nanticoke comes around, past the interchange track, and comes across the single track diamond, still about 5 miles from the STELCO plant.

Moving out of a stand of trees and around a long sweeping curve, our train starts to slow down as we near our destination, the STELCO plant in Nanticoke. Here we see Train 725 entering STELCO's grounds while one of the big blast furnaces stands like a sentry watching as we enter. In the plant, our train will drop empty cars and pick up the already loaded train for our trip back to Hamilton.

Curving out of the STELCO property, we begin the journey back towards Hamilton. As the crew closes the plant gates, we get a good long look at the power that moves Train 725, and then we see our train leaving around the curve by which we arrived at Nanticoke, and then disappear back into the trees.

On an elevated site we can watch as the Nanticoke train moves past the yard of tank cars for both STELCO and Texaco. This high point gives an excellent view of our train and of the farmland it passes. Clearing the yard, we pick up speed on our way back to the old NS&NW line at Garnet.

Standing as before, on the abandoned right of way of the NS&NW line to Jarvis, we see the train approach, heading north towards Hagersville. While still on the new section, the leading unit, 9164, bottoms out crossing Highway #6, proving that even with modern tools and methods, railway men can't always stop age old railway problems.

Approaching Hagersville, we are in the cab again. As we cross the diamonds of the Canada Southern-Michigan Central, you will see the old NYC depot on the right side, with yellow siding, that we mentioned earlier.

Get ready! We are now standing at the Mill Street crossing in Caledonia, right beside the Grand River bridge. Once again enjoy the Nanticoke train moving past us, out onto the bridge, at one of the truly scenic areas of Southern Ontario. After leaving the bridge, Train 725 goes around the second wye of Caledonia and heads west on CN's Dunnville sub. towards Brantford.

The Dunnville sub. follows closely the shores of the Grand River from Caledonia to Brantford. Highway #54 (River Road) is between the tracks and the river. One of a few sideroads crosses the tracks, making a fine wooded scene.

In the final scenes, Train 725 has arrived in Brantford. The Dunnville sub. joins the CN mainline at the west end of the yard. The need for two cabooses shows up again here in Brantford as the train, when entering the yard, is heading west, while Hamilton is east of Brantford. The train simply backs into the yard, where the crew drops the train and runs the engines around, couples on to the rear of the train, without moving cabooses around. We watch this as Train 725 prepares to leave for Hamilton, moving past Brantford station.

We'll close with the Nanticoke Train 725 leaving on its 20 mile trip to Hamilton. Since this is a late afternoon train, our light is just about gone and the rest of the trip to Hamilton will be in the dark.

We hope you have enjoyed your trip to Lake Erie and back on the CN 9100s, Covered Wagons on the Nanticoke, and hope you can join us again on one of our video train journeys.

Happy Railroading

Rob McCormack