

North Bay Old Home Week, 1925 and 1935

by Dr. Francoise Noel, Nipissing University

"History, Art and Character Contributed to the Parade by the Three Railway Floats." *The Nugget*, August 7, 1925.

HISTORY, ART AND CHARACTER CONTRIBUTED TO THE PARADE BY THE THREE RAILWAY FLOATS

Some Inside Facts About Those Floats

The contributions which the three railways connected with North Bay made to the Grand Pageant and parade which was staged on Monday and was repeated on Wednesday morning were worthy reflections of the high place which the railroads have occupied in the development of North Bay. Visitors here during Old Home Week who have seen exhibits of a similar nature in various large centres of Canada and United States are responsible for the statement that nowhere yet have a string of floats been contrived with so much attention to historical, artistic and characteristic detail as those which represented the Canadian Pacific, Canadian National and Temiskaming and Northern Railways in the Old Home Week pageant.

Naturally the Canadian Pacific Railway's contribution formed the most historical part of the long parade. It took the form of an exact replica of "Lucy Dalton," the old wood burner that was named after the sister of Lady Lisgar, wife of the then Governor General of Canada, and which for several years in the early days of the C.P.R. development steamed regularly between Ottawa and Prescott. Afterwards, as No. 9, the Lucy Dalton was one of the first

locomotives to ply between North Bay and Mattawa in early construction days. The original Lucy Dalton was built in 1872 in Tonton, Mass. and has long since been discarded as scrap. The Lucy Dalton which tooted and puffed its way down North Bay streets in the middle of the parade with wood tender and caboose attached, is an exact replica copied off an old photograph and designed and manufactured especially for Old Home Week's pageant in the back shop of the C.P.R. locomotive works in North Bay.

Old Timers in Crew

Besides Lucy Dalton herself, particular interest attached to the crew who named (sic) [manned] the old-timer on Monday and Wednesday. On Monday in charge of the train was conductor Harry Huges, superintendent at Ottawa and a former trainman of many years experience at North Bay; William Dreany alderman and veteran yardmaster of North Bay, as brakeman, while the engine crew consisted of no less than Alex Gillies of Chapleau, one of the oldest enginemen on the road, and Lottie Britten, who actually fired the Lucy Dalton herself in the days when the fuel for a trip between North Bay and Mattawa consisted sometimes of two cords and sometimes not quite two cords of wood.

The interesting contrast between the Lucy Dalton, representing the first locomotive to steam out of North Bay and the present monsters of the road was given to history on Thursday morning when the replica which appeared in the parade was

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drawn up beside No. 5323 th, the latest type of freight engine plying overland on the C.P.R. and a photograph is being sent to Mr. H. J. Humphrey, general superintendent of the North Bay-Algoma Division, who is confined to the General Hospital, Toronto, through illness.

A Floral Beauty

Artistically, the contribution of the Canadian National Railways to the parade was a magnificent creation. Led on Monday by the C.N.R. Stratford shop band of 25 pieces which was sent to North Bay for the day free of charge, the display consisted of a luxurious flower-bedecked float drawn by four magnificent greys, the identical teams that were awarded first prize at last year's Canadian National Exhibition. The float itself consisted of a truck and framework, manufactured specially in the C.N.R. shops of Toronto and covered with veritable masses of flowers over a background of cedar and fern. Side panels proclaimed in lettering of Japanese rope on a background of cedar, "C.N.R.—Coast to Coast."

The float was designed in Toronto by Mr. William Hoath, florist in collaboration with Mr. S.G. Skinner, landscape gardener for the Canadian National Railways. With the horses it was shipped to North Bay on Sunday night and a fresh shipment of flowers was received for its redecoration for Wednesday's parade. There were approximately 10,000 flowers used in the preparation of both floats, including over 600 Easter lilies, some 5,000 gladioli, 2,500 asters, 800 larspur, 400 delphinium all mingling with over 4,000 spreys of cedar. Baby's Breath was used in large quantities to emphasize the coloring and added

effectively the delicate appearance of the display. The total weight of flowers in both floats is said to have been approximately 1,300 pounds. No pains were spared in making the float as attractive as floral and artistic temperament could affect and the result proved to be one of the finest spectacles ever seen on North Bay streets.

Characteristic of North.

Realism was the keynote of the truly northern float of the T. & N.O. Railway which appeared in Monday and Wednesday's parades. It portrayed the growth of the North through its three main industries. The T. & N. O., accompanied by the officers of law and order, opened Northern Ontario first as a farming district for the T. & N. O. was originally a colonization railway. Then when mining wealth was found the railway provided means of bringing into the mining district working material and men and carrying out to the market the silver and gold. Now the district along the railway is being sought as a sportsmen's paradise of beautiful scenery and fine fishing and hunting.

The first section of the float depicted farming life and the violin which was played by Harry Quirt of Nipissing Junction is claimed to be the first violin to bring music to North Bay. Mr. Quirt came to North Bay in 1881 and pitched his camp under three balsam trees on the present site of the C.P.R. roundhouse.

The second section of the float depicted mining with the canvas of the float painted to represent the interior of a mining shat with its veining of precious metal. The drill used on the float was imported from a Cobalt mine for the occasion.

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The third section of the float pictured a sportmen's camp with great realism. The Indian guide was not other than Frank Commando, chief of the Nipissing tribe, while the fish were brought fresh from the water of Lake Temagami.

The float originated in the mind of A. B. Odium, of the T. & N. O. staff, while Russel Huntington took charge of the designing. The float was built and painted in the shops of the T. & N. O. and was carried from the idea to the finished product in two weeks' time.
