



Railroad Heritage

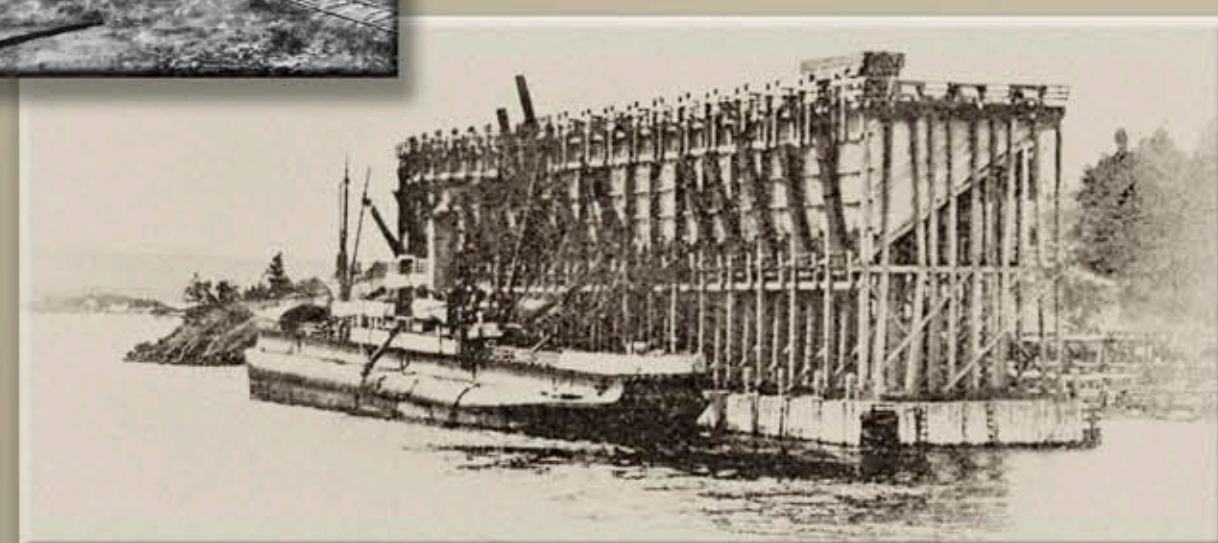
The official opening of The Inverness and Richmond Railway from Port Hastings to Broad Cove (Inverness) was June 15, 1901 and then from Port Hastings to the Inverness Junction just beyond Port Hawkesbury on December 19, 1901. The contract had been awarded to Donald Mann of the firm Mackenzie, Mann & Company. This railway was constructed primarily to transport coal from the newly developed mines in Inverness and Mabou to the Inverness Railway Coal Shipping Pier in Port Hastings. The contract called not only for the construction of the railway but for the development of the Inverness Colliery as well. On March 27, 1902, the name was changed to the Inverness Railway and Coal Company.

Inverness County had an abundance of mineral wealth beneath her soil. Coal deposits were found in Chimney Corner, St. Rose, Inverness, Mabou and Port Hood. Gypsum was located in both Cheticamp and Mabou. Barite ore was discovered in East Lake Ainslie. To access these minerals and to bring them to market, a railway would be required.



Inverness Coal Mine
Art by Neil Campbell

Inverness Railway and Coal Company
Shipping Pier at Port Hastings
built in 1901.



The IRRCL gave needed employment at home to our young people. In the first year of construction, 30 miles of excavation, bridge substructure and culverts were completed from Port Hastings to Port Hood. One thousand men were employed daily. Workers wages, nearly all of which went into immediate general circulation, benefitted the economy of Inverness County. The railway gave the best home market the county ever had, allowing for the exchange and sale of local products both within and beyond the county. The railway brought into existence our largest town, the flourishing mining community of Inverness, chartered in 1904. Thus it served to create an industry in our midst for which generations of our people had wished, waited and worked.

1910- left- Mrs Annie Grey MacBean, Doug MacMillan, telegraph operator and his sister Euphemia, Jennie Grey and William MacBean, station agent



Women formed close to 50% of the travelling public on the railway.



Railway employees on Sunday outings, circa 1910



Train wreck at Craigmore in 1916



Pre 1914- On sectionmen's trolley- on the left is A.B. MacMillan of Port Hastings who worked in the offices in Inverness for the Inverness and Richmond Railway.

Inverness Railway Time Table.
IN EFFECT JUNE 19th, 1910.

Westbound	Eastbound
10.40..... Point Tupper.....	3.40
10.35..... Inverness Junction.....	3.45
10.29..... Port Hawkesbury.....	3.50
10.12..... Port Hastings.....	4.07
9.57..... Troy.....	4.20
9.44..... Creignish.....	4.33
9.27..... Craignore.....	4.45
9.08..... Judique.....	5.00
8.55..... Maryville.....	5.13
8.40..... Port Hood.....	5.33
8.20..... Gencoe.....	5.48
7.50..... Mabou.....	6.11
7.40..... Gendyet.....	6.23
7.25..... Back River.....	6.43
7.12..... Strathorne.....	6.55
6.55..... Inverness.....	7.15

Trains make close connection at Inverness Junction with I. C. R. passenger trains.

1910 schedule in "Port Hood Greetings" newspaper

Second Port Hood Station under construction, 1928

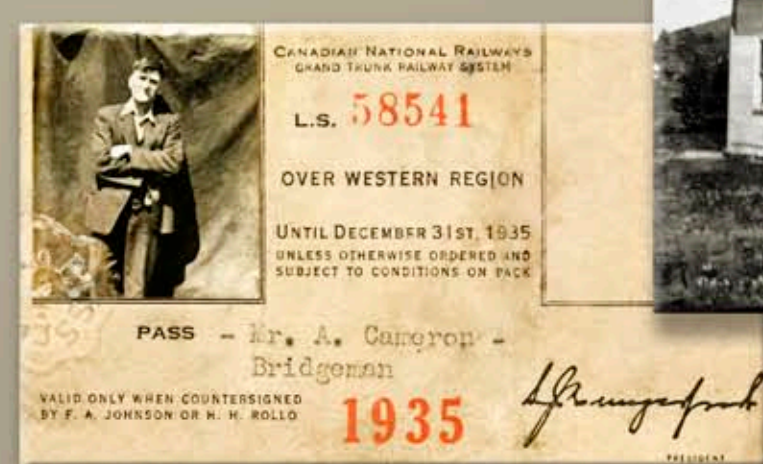


Second Port Hood Station

By 1908, the peak year, the railway was handling 322,000 tons of freight. The bulk was coal, followed by lumber products. During the first World War traffic was quite brisk as the mines were working full time.



The Mabou & Gulf Railway Co. ran until 1908, (mine flooded). Engines were stored until 1942 at the round house. Below is a Mabou & Gulf office and recreation building.



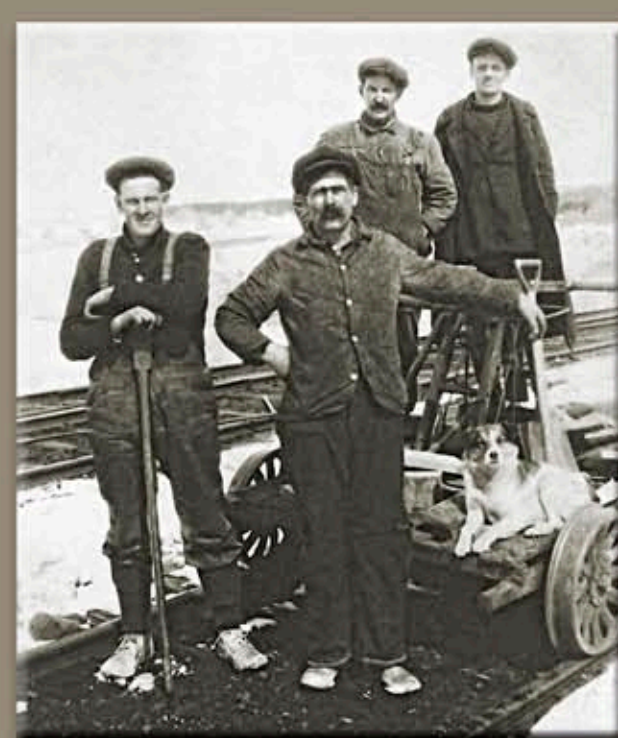
Railway Pass for A. Cameron, a bridgeman, responsible for maintenance of railway bridges and culverts.

The railway made for a more mobile Inverness County population. In its first five years of operation, the number of passengers carried by train averaged out as 26,530 per year. Some were travelling within the county for business and pleasure. Others were beginning journeys to the provincial capital, to central or western Canada, to the "Boston states" or places beyond. They left in coach cars which had open-end platforms and were heated by stoves and had oil lamps for illumination.

Prior to the construction of this railway, the only other train stations within Inverness County were Orangedale and Port Hawkesbury, both on the Intercolonial Railway Company line. This new line provided a connection with another Cape Breton line.



Employee and passenger before Engine 3327 at Port Hood Station



Train workers at Creignish
Bert Leadbetter of Port Hood with section crew and handcar.



Judique Station in 1936- Freight Train Crew

By 1915, the railway was beginning to experience financial difficulties. After World War 1 these difficulties increased. On February 1, 1924, the Canadian National Railways (CNR) leased the railway for five years prior to purchasing the Inverness Railway for \$375,000 in 1929.

In 1955, the construction of the Canso Causeway saw the original line from Inverness Junction in Port Hawkesbury to Port Hastings upgraded and realigned to become part of the Truro-Sydney mainline of the CNR. A new junction for the Inverness line was created east of the Canso Canal Bridge.

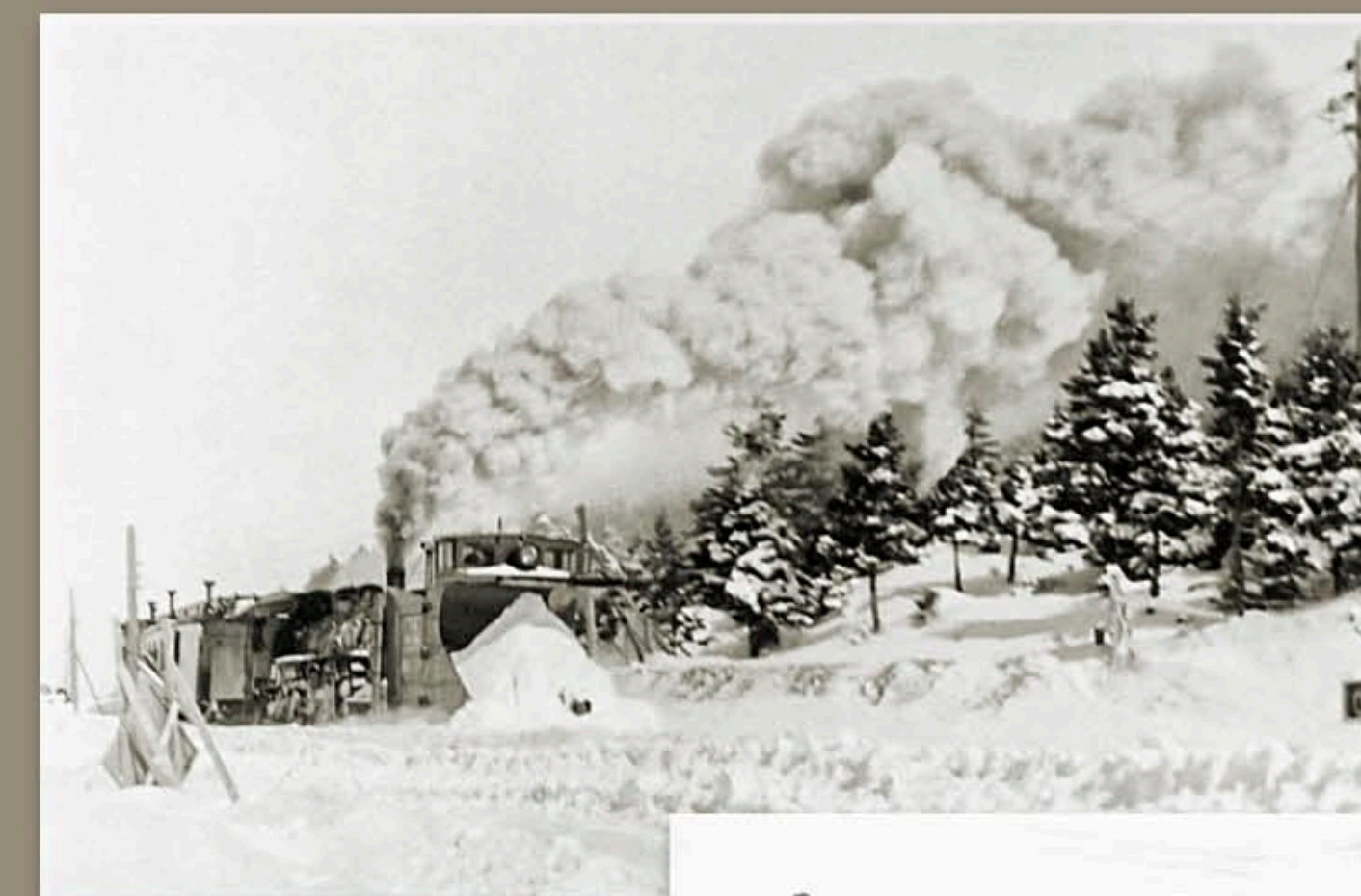


The S.S. Mulgrave, a towboat, was used to transport railcars by barge from Mulgrave to Point Tupper from 1893 to 1902 until the S.S. Scotia rail ferry service began.

The last passenger train on the line ran April 25, 1959. Freight service had also been reduced. Only two section crews still worked the line: one based in Creignish and the other in Mabou.

In 1975, the CNR first made an application to abandon the Inverness line from Port Hastings Junction to Inverness. Only one train a week was running as only one customer, Evan's Coal Mine in St. Rose, provided a volume of product that warranted the train. The Canadian Transport Commission denied the request. Deregulation of the railway industry in the 1980's saw CNR re-apply successfully in the late 1980's. The line was fully abandoned from the Canso Causeway to Inverness. The railway tracks and ties were removed soon thereafter.

Snowplow Port Hastings



First Diesel Locomotive on this line



Last train on line, 1987

The Inverness Railway and legendary Judique Flyer have become part of the fabric of the heritage and culture of Inverness County. It is fitting that the old railbed lives on as a new link in the Trans Canada Trail



The famous Judique Flyer, circa 1910



Text: John Gillies Photos: Gut of Canso Museum
Chestico Museum, An Drochaid Museum,
Inverness Miners' Museum & Orangedale Railway Museum.
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Property of Inverness County TransCanada Trail Project.

Text Source: "The Inverness And Richmond Railway" (A.W.D. MacBean)