

The Lac du Bonnet CPR Steam Train Water Tower

Memory plays tricks on us all... I am affected, at times, to a degree that would humble the staunchest Homo sapiens... but then we try.

In the early “steam-engines-train-years” huge water tanks accompanied and partnered with train tracks to quench and dispel a passing “*steam-engines-driven-train*” of its thirst as it makes its way across our country. And so it was that the CPR positioned their water facility... just a part of a kilometer past Lac du Bonnet on the way to Great Falls. My siblings and I walked to school, crossing that field just north of Smith Road. Many times, as we trudged, the magnificent figure of a steam powered train passed on the south side of the grave yard, on its way to Winnipeg. First to be seen and heard was the blackish smoke and steam that would twin with its substantial sound as it initiated a journey. Soon the fresh, white exhaust became evident as its speed gained; the great locomotive disappeared into the swamps of spruce, poplar and tamarack behind the rise in the field.



The massive structure, the CPR water tank that my father Joseph H. Pitre took a contract to paint, framed itself *towering* against the sky; its use was a necessary part of a steam engine employ.



The times were remnants of the years of the 20's, 30's, 40's and even in some cases the 50's when steam operated trains, here and there, were still in use. My memories say that the images included here were taken in the year's c.47/49 when my parents had moved from the farm to the village of Lac du Bonnet. Dad, and he wanted you to know, held the position of boss... the major component comprising the three-man-crew. He managed the required equipment and paints, though colour was not a problem, all building belonging to the CPR were mostly a deep, dark wine tone.



The only man known to me is my Dad, placed at... top-spot- centre-stage, despite being small in stature; the boss is always placed in a commanding position.

Alas, my memory bank is now depleted re: water tower/tank information. I'm sure some of you remember those particular times when steam powered trains were major event as they bisected our terrain... and our lives.

Marcel R Pitre