

THE WAY WE WERE

The TH&B Railway in West Hamilton

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The Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway, which operated from 1892 to 1987, had a large impact on West Hamilton by servicing industries and passengers.

The TH&B's Aberdeen freight yard lay at the south end of Longwood Road, with a passenger station on the south side. An industrial spur branched off south to serve the Canadian Porcelain Company, which closed following a strike in 1987. Canadian Westinghouse, later Hotpoint, then Camco, was serviced off the north side of Aberdeen Yard. McMaster Innovation Centre now occupies the property.

The track from the west end of Aberdeen Yard crosses Highway 403 on a bridge to Stroud Road. The old TH&B right of way is now the Rail Trail (for walking and cycling), which begins at Fortino's near Rifle Range Road; it will eventually include the Ainslie Wood East section. The Rail Trail to Jerseyville makes for an enjoyable ride—uphill all the way, but conveniently downhill coming back.

From Aberdeen Yard to Highway 2, the TH&B serviced the following:

1. The switch to the siding for Aitchison Lumber (formerly Bowman's Lumber) on Emerson Street lay east of Broadway Avenue. The siding crossed Broadway to reach Aitchison. As of this autumn, some switch ties are still visible, along with some of the siding track as it crosses Broadway.

2. A line to Dundas branched off the main line west of Emerson. The right of way from the switch is still apparent, with Hall Construction now occupying the land. The track curved north, crossing Leland, passing through what is now the Esso station (at Main Street West and Leland), and then crossing Main West to run beside Highway 102 (Cootes Drive) to service industries and passengers in Dundas.

3. The former property of Canadian Aniline and Extract (later Nopco Chemical, then Diamond Shamrock, and acquired by Henkel Canada in 1988) lay south and next to the main line between Leland and Rifle Range. It made acids for the steel industry, chemicals for the pulp and paper industry, and surfactants for the soap industry. McMaster now leases the property for a parking lot.

4. The former Donald Wire and Rope (later Greening Donald, an amalgamation of Donald Rope and Greening Wire

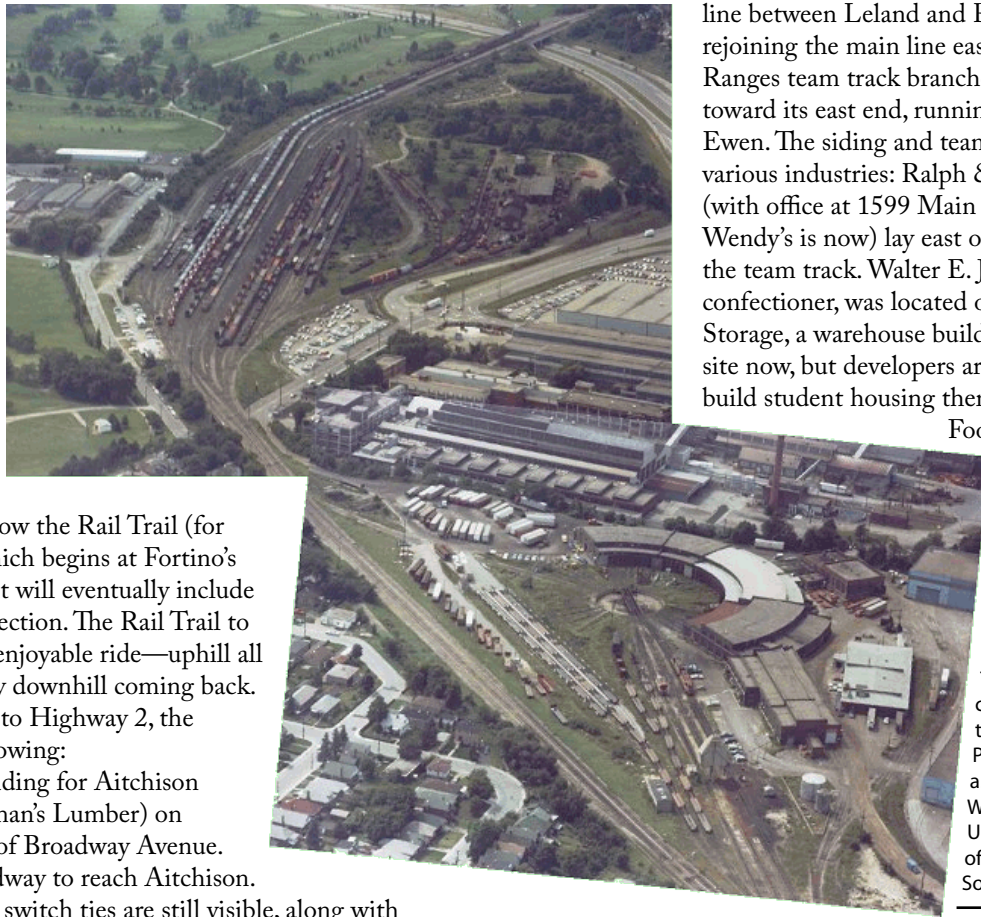
in 1970) is the current location of Fortino's Supermarket. The TH&B main line ran through the present parking lot, crossing Rifle Range to run just north of the present Cadbury Company.

5. The former John Deere Plant is currently occupied by Cadbury (between Rifle Range and Ewen) opposite Fortino's. The siding branched off the south side of the main line just east of Rifle Range, crossing the road to reach John Deere. You can still see a raised loading dock (once used to load tractors onto flatcars) on the north side of the Cadbury buildings alongside the old right of way (now a gravel-covered strip).

6. The Ranges passing siding branched off north of the main line between Leland and Rifle Range, rejoining the main line east of Ewen. The Ranges team track branched off the siding toward its east end, running west to end at Ewen. The siding and team track serviced various industries: Ralph & Sons Fuels (with office at 1599 Main West, where Wendy's is now) lay east of Rifle Range on the team track. Walter E. Jacques & Sons, confectioner, was located on Ewen; Xtra Storage, a warehouse building, is on the site now, but developers are proposing to build student housing there. Dundas Valley

Foods used the Ranges siding in the 1980s,

Chatham Street engine-servicing terminal (below) and Aberdeen freight yard (above). Top right, bridge crossing Highway 403; top left, Canadian Porcelain; centre above roundhouse, Westinghouse. Used with permission of the TH&B Historical Society.



transloading vegetable oil from tank cars to trucks.

The TH&B greatly helped in the development of West Hamilton, but all that is now left of the original right of way and industries described above are the Aberdeen Yard, the Rail Trail, and Aitchison Lumber.

Malcolm Horsnell is a TH&B Railway enthusiast and has been an AWWCA member since 1998.

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Mailing Label