

Railway cars

Students tackle artifacts

By Linda Kirby
Marian Anderson of Guelph never had any great interest in railway cars, but in the past two years she has accumulated enough knowledge to practically strip down and rebuild railway cars dating back to the early 1900's.

The second year Guelph University student is one of seven individuals hired to work at the Halton County Streetcar and Electric Railway Museum for the summer.

Along with the other students, she is responsible for cataloguing, painting and refurbishing the railway relics that are the pride and joy of the Museum.

Located north of Campbellville on Guelph Line in a quiet forest setting, the Museum offers visitors an opportunity to step back in time as they trundle down the tracks in perhaps a 1910 Toronto Railway Convertible car.

Restoring the railway pieces takes considerable time, effort and money. In 1978 under the provincial government program Summer Experience '78, several students were hired to assist Museum club members with the restoration work.



SUMMER STUDENTS at the Halton County Railway and Electric Museum north of Campbellville have been kept busy for the summer months restoring and cleaning railway cars. The university and

college students are Martin McCombie, (left), Riaz Kaba, Nancy Hood, Doug McOuat, David Johns and Marian Anderson.

many hours of hard scrubbing are needed to return them to their original lustre. Members of the Railway Museum club that operate the site, work alongside the students, offering information on the various car pieces for cataloguing purposes.

The students work from original railway car pictures from the Toronto Archives. Old blueprints and photographs are blown up several sizes to provide students with some idea of detail and construction.

But more often, the group must work with the material they have. An original paint chip is sometimes the only clue to the car's original color.

Students on the job have learned a variety of trades involved in the restoration of the antiques.

The group is in the final stages of finishing a 1915 railway car for display at the annual CNE in Toronto. Brass fittings are getting a final scrub and the inside of the car carries the scent of fresh cherry wood stain, specially concocted by the Museum membership.

At the cataloguing table, several students pore over cartons of pieces belonging to cars and overhead railway lines.

Two box cars are filled with parts in addition to two storage sheds on the Museum's property.

"I am surprised there are so many pieces that go into the construction of a car," said Martin McCombie, a Guelph University student.

Approximately 100 parts go into the making of a sliding car door for some of the older models he said.

"It is educational work. I would never have known anything about the railway cars if I hadn't taken the job," said Miss Anderson.

"Now I can operate them," she said proudly.

The summer experience has meant more for the students than just a job. They are proud of their work and their part in helping to restore the cars.

"You can always look back at it and know you helped build something up," noted Linda Ramsey.



BRASS fittings inside a 1915 railway car get a final rub from Marian Anderson, one of seven students hired to work at the Halton County Streetcar and Railway Museum for the summer.

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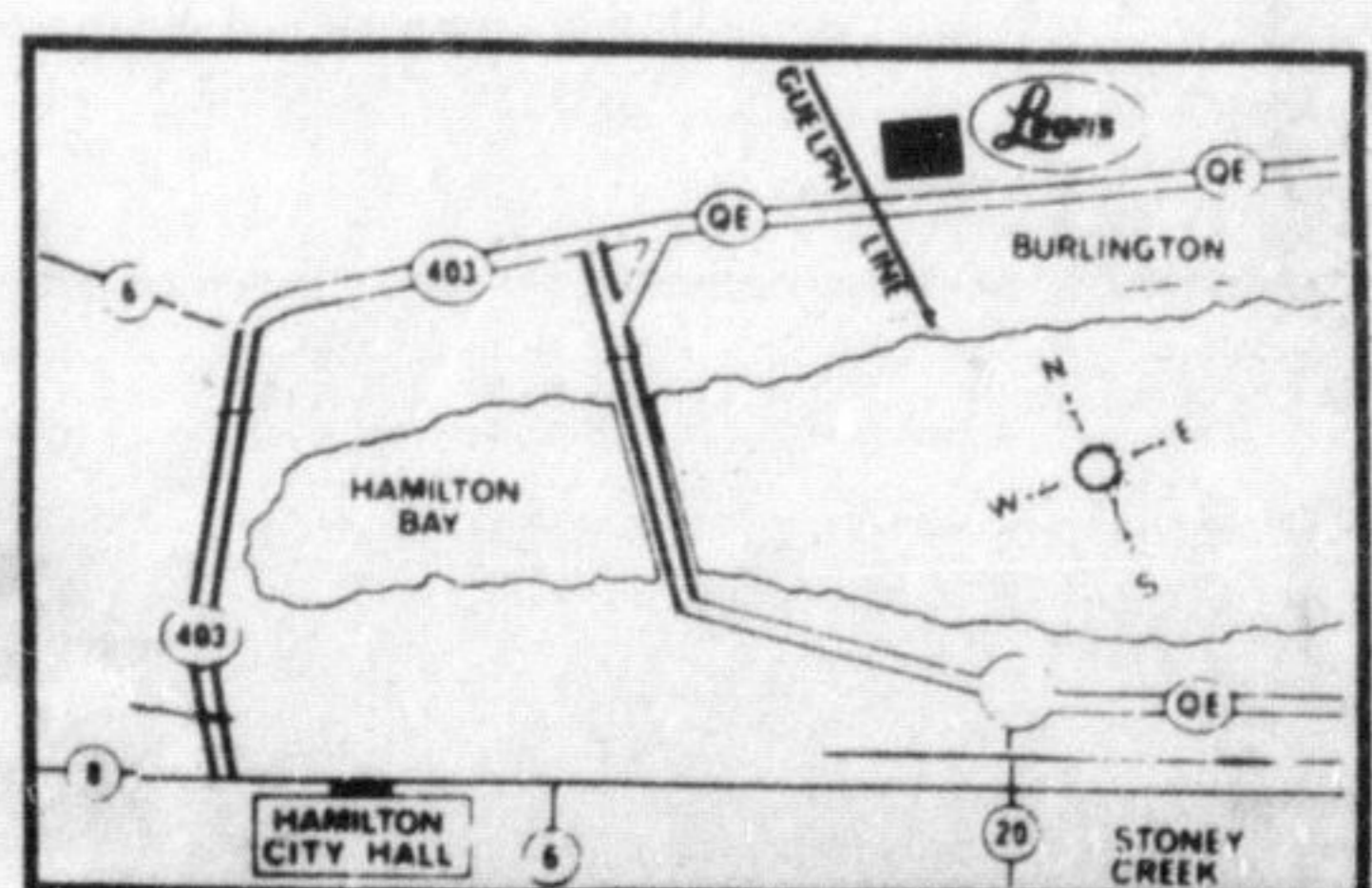


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