



Unionville station was an important depot in bygone years.

## Trains played a big part in history

The histories of rail service through Markham township and the Toronto and Nipissing Railway, one of the earlier pioneering railways of Ontario are closely tied together.

It was not really that the railways themselves were paying concerns as a means of transportation, but their value to the communities they served was incalculable in terms of prosperity and making life more bearable.

This was certainly true of Unionville. Our area was an excellent example of a town already well established and prosperous before there was even any talk of a railway but whose most hopeful dreams were exceeded once the railway came through.

The T & N featured a narrow gauge line. At 3' 6" the line was slimmer than the usual 5' 6" line. Another famous railway using the same system at the same time was the

White Horse Pass and Yukon Railway. Both used it as a means of reducing construction costs.

A major lure of the T&N railway was its status as a common carrier. It would haul passengers and freight of any kind that the public wished to entrust to it.

The success of the railway was highlighted by the fact that when it finally went under it was not the result of bankruptcy, but of its own success. An enormous sum of money was required to keep the line up to its traffic potential and convert it to standard gauge to avoid the transfer of passengers and freight between vehicles at interchanges with standard gauge railways.

In Markham Township the T & N railway was sometimes criticized for inadequacies in its operation. In October 1872 a Markham Economist editorial said, "We regret that we are compelled to complain of

the manner in which shippers and consignees are treated by the officers of the T&N Railway. It is within the knowledge of the writer that shippers of cordwood have been treated in the most shameful manner."

The editorial went on to say that wood was being shipped from Goodwood and Uxbridge, but that Markham was being ignored. A subsequent editorial said the misunderstanding had been resolved to the satisfaction of everyone involved.

At about this time the Township openly welcomed the pioneering train line into the community with a handsome \$30,000 bonus and more than \$4,000 in shares.

This generosity was rewarded by a glowing description of the community in the railways travel brochure.

At that time a passage from the brochure summed up the marvels of rail transportation thusly, "Markham is so near to the city and the trains run so conveniently, that city

ladies can go out after breakfast and return in time for dinner."

The editorial also noted that it was now possible for businessmen who worked in the city to evenly divide their time at their rural homes with the benefits of working in the city. The cost for the 1 hour and 35 minute ride to Toronto was 75 cents.

The T&N railway was absorbed with other systems into a new body called the Midland Railway of Canada. This system slipped through several hands until it was absorbed by the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada.

The Grand Trunk together with the Northern Railway of Canada were unable to carry staggering debts through World War I. In 1922 and 23 they were consequently amalgamated into the Canadian National Railway system.

— Charles Cooper



Faces that tell a story — Colty Corners School, circa 1915. This treasured photo from the Tony Murphy collection, tells a

story of its own. The Unionville Historical Society has set out to record the story of such faces in the history of 'our town'.

### I like the clown...

I like the clowns because they are funny and very colourful and they sell pretty balloons. I like the haunted house too because it is scary.

Meghann Watson,  
Grade 1,  
Room 10,  
Unionville P.S.

### I like the clowns...

I like the parade because of the floats, clowns, horses, and the bands.

Amy Carr,  
Grade 1,  
Room 10,  
Unionville P.S.

### Child's Eye View

## Build bigger library

HOW WOULD YOU USE THE PROFITS. You all know and have been at least once to the festival. It's a fun place and a fast, enjoyable way for the Unionville Associa-

### The Unionville Festival plates

The plates have been sold at the festival since 1970. These plates commemorate the stores, houses and other special places of interest on Kennedy Road.

They can be bought at the festival every year and they are collector's items.

The 1970 plate was a picture of a tree and lady and a man on either side. This is the Unionville Festival Logo.

In 1971 the Queen's Hotel was printed on the plate. The Queen's Hotel was built in 1860.

The 1973 plate was the Blacksmith Shop, made in 1835. The one in 1974 plate had the Silver House, which was made in 1825.

1975, the Central United Church, made in 1879. In 1976 again they had the Unionville Festival Logo.

1978, they printed the Salem Eckardt House built in 1835.

In 1979 they celebrated their 10th anniversary which had a sketch of Main Street at the bend of the road.

1980, Toogood Pond was drawn on the plate, made in 1840, and the 1982 plate was Unionville Public School, made in 1892. I really think the plates are a great idea.

Julie Twaddle,  
Grade 6,  
John XXIII

tion to earn money. They have a lot of things. I'm sure, that they would like to have done.

If I were the person to decide what to use the money for, you could be sure I'd use it wisely. If we earned a lot of money, I would build a bigger and better library. Not start from scratch, but add on to the one we have right now, which is, Unionville Public Library.

Another thing I would do, would be to rebuild Unionville's old buildings that have burned down, like the Sawmill. I doubt if we have enough money though.

Something I would probably do is give the money to the people who live along Main Street, money to fix their houses if they want.

Or I would fix up Unionville's Historic Places. Anything I do would be for Unionville, though, and I'm glad we have a festival.

Carla Chung,  
Grade 6,  
John XXIII

### Special thanks

All historic photos presented in the 'Times' are from the Tony Murphy Collection. Photos from this collection will be displayed at the new Unionville Public Library, as well as various local institutions. We wish to sincerely thank Tony Murphy for sharing these valued memories of the past.