



Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society

HISTORY

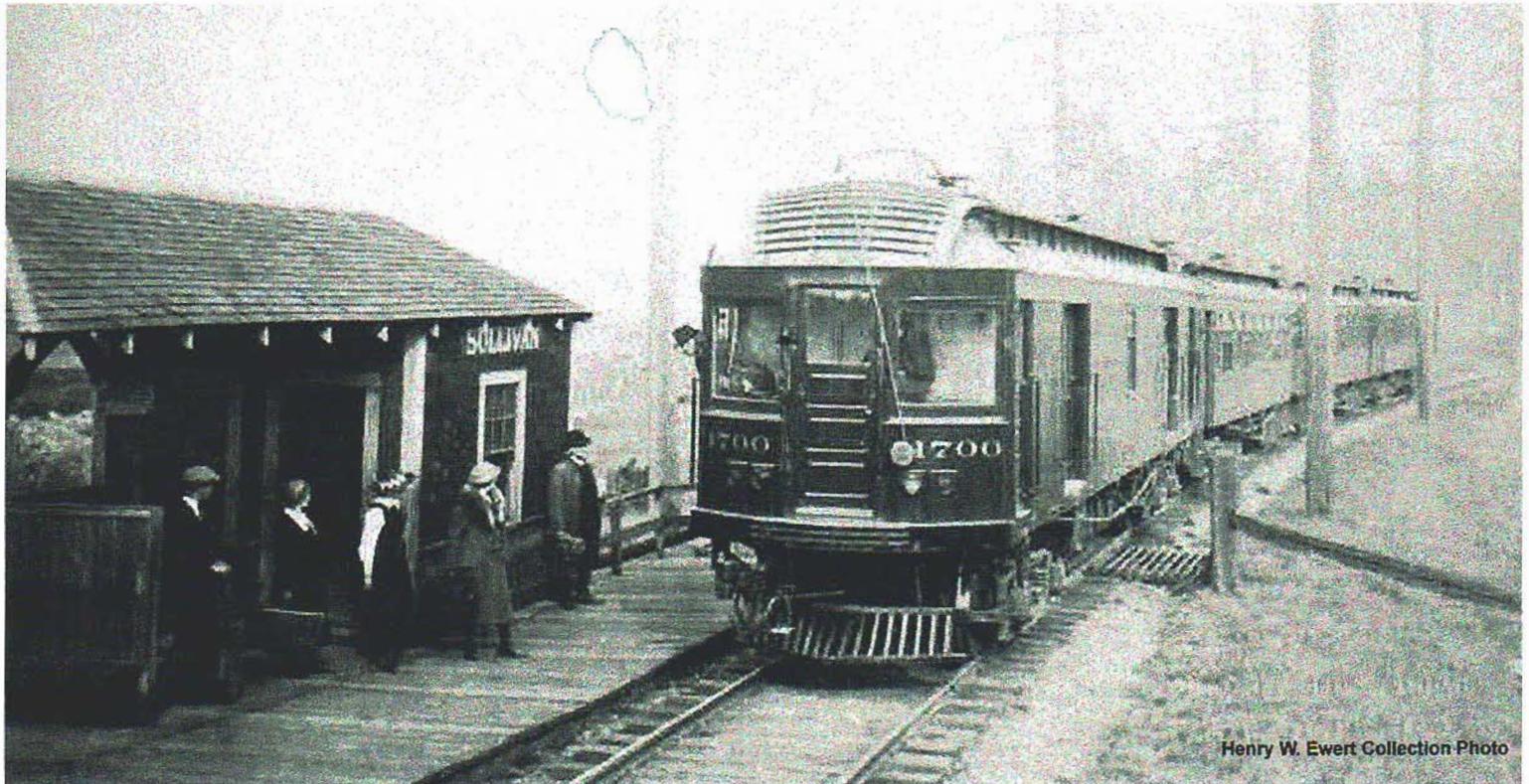
Number 1

Web Page: <http://www.fvhrs.org>

Spring 2004



CANADIAN COUNCIL
For
RAILWAY HERITAGE



Henry W. Ewert Collection Photo

An icon of the British Columbia Electric Railway's Fraser Valley Line, this May, 1923 photo of Sullivan Station shows the 1:20 p.m. New Westminster-bound run from Chilliwack arriving on a cloudy afternoon at 3:36 p.m. Baggage - Express Car 1700 pulls three 1300 cars in the deep jade green livery of the BCER's early days. The station, built in 1909, provided shelter for passengers for 41 years until the passenger system was terminated on September 30, 1950. The FVHRS plans to restore the original station and has built a replicated station to be used as a functional building once the Fraser Valley Line is operational with heritage interurbans.

The Saga of Sullivan Station

To many residents in the Panorama Ridge area of Surrey, "Sullivan Station" is an upscale subdivision on the east side of Johnston Road (152nd Street) between 56th Avenue (Highway 10) to 62nd A Avenue and Sullivan Park, wrapping around a now quaint 1950s-style school, Sullivan Elementary (formerly Johnston Road School).

The real Sullivan Station is a 95-year-old, 10 foot by 12 foot wooden "shed" that has lived the past 35 years of its life as a chicken coop and tool shed a half-mile from its original location. It was, for the first 40 years of its life, the second grandest BCER station along the 13-mile-long Surrey section of the interurban railway line that stretched 63.8 miles to Chilliwack from its starting point in downtown Vancouver.

Sullivan and its historic station had a simple beginning, as Henry Ewert eloquently points out in his *"The Story of the British Columbia Electric Railway Company"*:

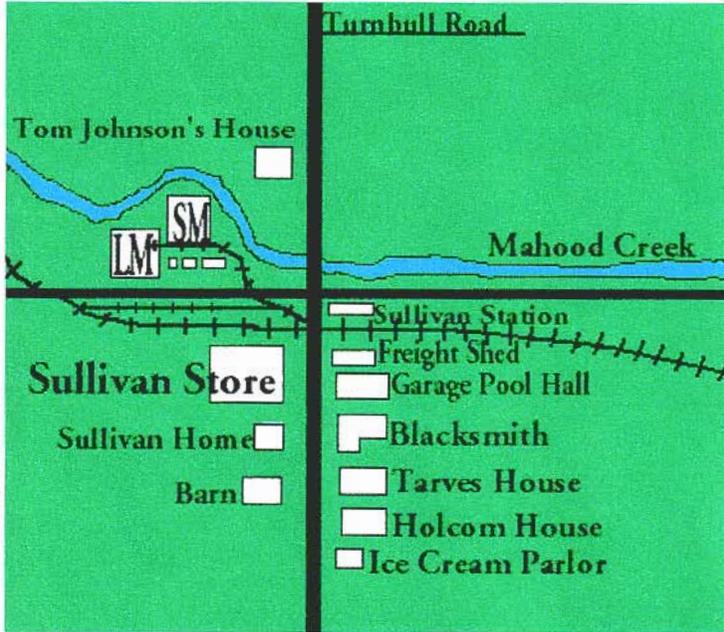
By the end of September (1909), track laying was complete from the Fraser River bridge to Cloverdale, and electrification of that section immediately began as well as track laying east from Cloverdale. On October 1, the first train, drawn by the company's 525, a Baldwin 2-6-0 steam locomotive purchased in May, operated from New Westminster with a load of lumber and construction materials. On October 30, electrification was sufficiently advanced on the Fraser River bridge to allow an electric locomotive over it and into Surrey Municipality to help with construction work.

Continued on page two

It would be on this run that timber would have been carried out for the line's major stations in Surrey - the 900-square-foot Cloverdale Station and the closed waiting room with open area seating Sullivan Station, which was used as a template for a number of stations on the Fraser Valley Line (1910-1950), the Burnaby Lake Line (1911-1953) and the Saanich Line (1913-1923) from Victoria to Deep Cove.

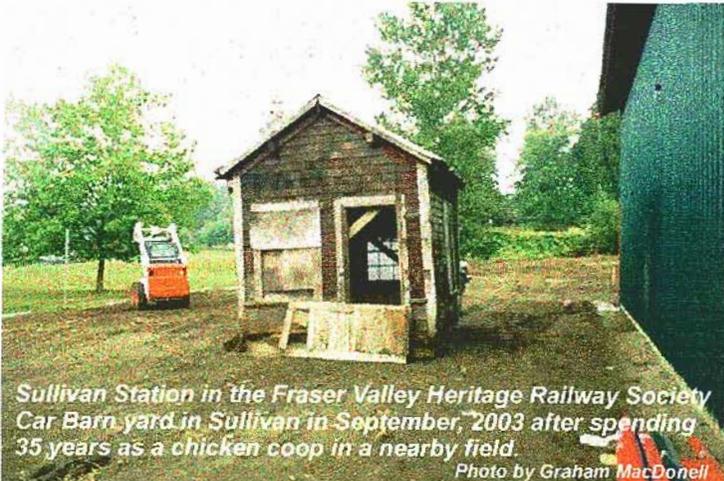
Henry adds:

Gravel was obtained at Sullivan, where the company had built a spur for deeper penetration into the gravel pit, one which the B.C. Electric would use for the life of its electric operation.



The little station got built in 1909, as Surrey Historian Jack Brown revealed in his thesis, *"The History of Surrey"* (1971):

In 1909, the Sullivan logging crews built the B.C. Electric right-of-way from Newton to Cloverdale. The junction with Johnston Road and Bose Road (or 64th Avenue as it is now called) became Sullivan Station and to the west, the next station was Hyland. After 1910, lumber and shingles were moved by the B.C. Electric Railway.



Sullivan Station in the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society Car Barn yard in Sullivan in September, 2003 after spending 35 years as a chicken coop in a nearby field.
Photo by Graham MacDonell



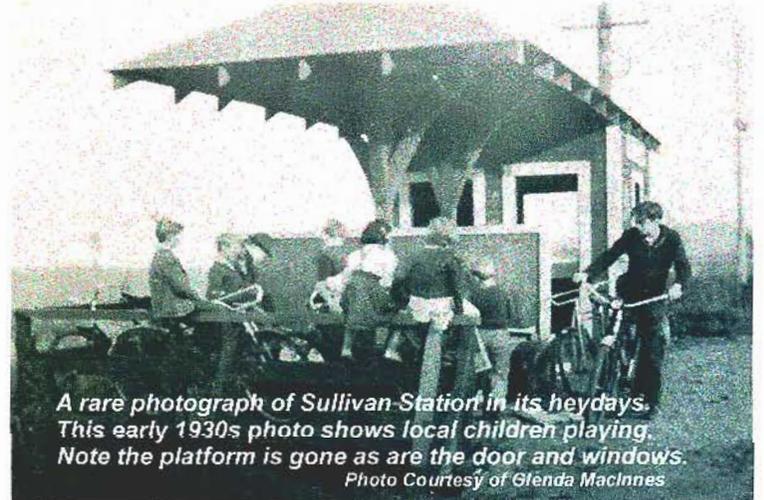
A coloured version of the 1923 photo by rail artist Peter Sawatsky commissioned by former CN Conductor and rail aficionado Bob Webster, whose wife is seen at left holding a white dog. Bob is the motorman leaning out the vestibule door window. BCER's livery was changed to red and cream in 1923 - 1924.

The opening of the station saw Sullivan develop as a regional focus, according to Jack's research:

Sullivan Station provided an important link for the district eastward to Cloverdale and into the markets of New Westminster and Vancouver. It was vital for the movement of products from the Sullivan mills.

But it was the BCER, that Jack Brown rightly points out, that helped make the community what it became:

The BC Electric Railway was the mainstay for Sullivan District from 1910 to the 1940s.



A rare photograph of Sullivan Station in its heydays. This early 1930s photo shows local children playing. Note the platform is gone as are the door and windows.
Photo Courtesy of Glenda MacInnes

Henry Ewert chronicles the demise of the Surrey segment of the BCER Fraser Valley line in his book and recalls that Hyland Station was demolished in 1945 to be replaced by two others, Burkhart to the west and Archibald to the east. Passenger service ceased on September 30, 1950, forty years after its beginning. Sullivan Station remained on its site until late 1968 when it was moved to the Clow farm on 156th Street, a quarter mile to the east. It was returned to Sullivan in September, 2003, to the yards of the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society's Sullivan Station Car Barn. The Society will be restoring the station in conjunction with the Sullivan Community Association.

Sullivan Station Reminiscences

Three boyhood friends recall Sullivan Station



Bert Chapman (1971)
(insert circa 1920)

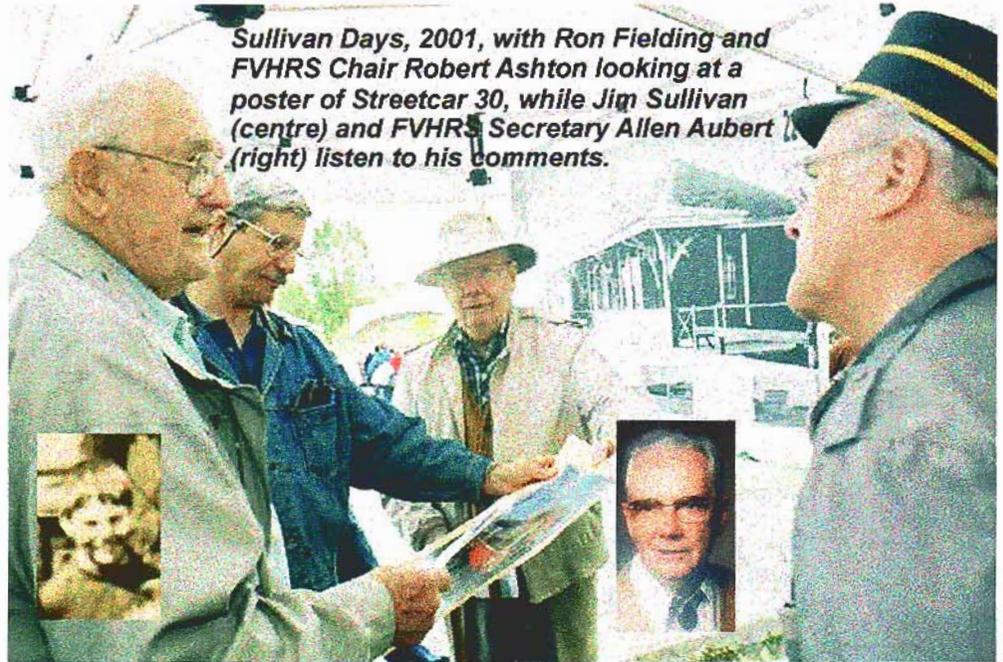
When Bert Chapman moved to Sullivan from England (via Vancouver) in 1914, he missed his first year of school. It wasn't because of his birthday being after Christmas. It was because there were no roads.

The BCER interurban went by only three-quarters of a mile away but Sullivan Station was further away from Johnston Road School than his house was, so riding the interurban daily wasn't the answer. But his mom used the railroad tracks as a route to walk the Chapman boys part of the way to school - not that Bert and his two older brothers didn't know the way but because of the bears.

The 8:30 a.m. BCER was used by his parents to go to the market in New Westminster every Friday and by Bert's wife, Helen, who went to secretarial school in the Royal City for three months in 1929. The two would do their shopping on Columbia Street after they were married in 1931.

Sullivan Station was further away than Hyland until Archibald Road Station replaced it in 1945. But by then, bus service was better as it stopped in front of the house on the way up from Bose Road (64th Ave.) on its way to Newton and New Westminster.

So, although Sullivan Station was the major station in the area, the Chapmans used Hyland more often.



Sullivan Days, 2001, with Ron Fielding and FVHRS Chair Robert Ashton looking at a poster of Streetcar 30, while Jim Sullivan (centre) and FVHRS Secretary Allen Aubert (right) listen to his comments.

Ron Fielding
(insert circa 1920)

Living the next street over to the Chapmans were the Fieldings...with twin sons Ed and Frank and older sibling Ron.

Although he was couple of years younger than Bert, Ron was in the same class - in the one-room Johnston Road Elementary School (built in 1912).

When he started his carpentry apprenticeship on April 18, 1926, Ron would take the interurban from Sullivan into Vancouver until he finished the program and got himself a car in 1929.

"My father used the interurban line a lot," Ron recalled. "He would deliver produce from the family's small farm on Rankin Road (now 148th Street) to the freight shed on the south side of the BC Electric line right beside Johnston Road (152nd Street)."

For three years, Ron would head home for the weekend on Saturday, returning on the 8:19 train Sunday evenings, sometimes rushing out of church service in the hall above the Sullivan store along with the preacher to make it to the train.

Sullivan Station was there but Ron never remembered much about it, but did remember it never seemed to have a door.

Jim Sullivan
(insert circa 1984)

The two or three-car BC Electric interurban would always stop with the lead car partly across Johnston Road, Jim Sullivan recalls.

The son of Jeremy Sullivan, one of the three operators of the Surrey Shingle and Manufacturing Company, started working for his father in 1926 at the Sullivan store, which was located just south of the BC Electric Railway line from 1903 until 1974, when it burned down.

"I'd go over platform and grab the mail," Jim said, "or I'd hold up the bag and the conductor would grab it right out of my hands as the motorman didn't want to stop unless there were passengers or freight as that would mean a loss of power."

He spent a bit of time taking the interurban from Sullivan Station when he took a meat-cutting course and "batched" with Ron Fielding for \$5 a week in a Vancouver rooming house.

But when he started working for his dad, he got to drive the "company" truck, delivering and picking up goods and produce. So he only took the interurban into New Westminster on Saturday nights, returning on the "Night Owl" to Sullivan Station.

Sullivan Station evokes memories



Surrey Mayor Doug MacCallum poses in front of the original Sullivan Station with Jim Sullivan and an unidentified friend during the Society's official Car Barn Opening on Saturday, September 13, 2003.

Photo by John Sprung

When the original Sullivan Station was revealed to the public at the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society's official opening of its 3,000 square foot car barn last September, Jim Sullivan showed a friend and Surrey Mayor Doug MacCallum a few initials carved on the walls of the 95-year-old station.

Who they are remains a mystery, so we've printed the initials with the hope that some readers might be able to identify the "owners".

On the front wall:

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Thomas Burton, 15/9/25 | 2. Win & Olive |
| 3. RM | 4. RTAM |
| 5. HW | |
| 6. JS (which we think stands for "Jim Sullivan"). | |

On the side wall (west):

- | | | |
|------------|-------------|---------------|
| 7. W | 8. KW | 9. WV & ___ki |
| 10. WW & ? | 11. JGS | 12. RE |
| 13. M&R | 14. W & DV. | |

If you can help us to identify these initial carvers, please contact the Fraser Valley Heritage Railway Society at: gemcom@telus.net

Sullivan Elementary celebrates its Sullivan Station heritage

For over a decade, Sullivan Elementary School teacher Werner Kashel has been encouraging his intermediate elementary students to learn more about the history of Sullivan, including the BCER and Sullivan Station.

Recently, his Grade Seven students visited the FVHRS Car Barn and toured the newly-completed, replicated Sullivan Station and viewed the original, BCER structure located on the grounds.

Kashel spearheaded a project that resulted in artist Shaun Bullied creating a large mural of Sullivan Station on the school's front wall two years ago.

Funding assistance was provided by the school's Parent Advisory Council and the Sullivan Community Association with help from Surrey Museum and Archives Board Chair Jim King, who is also the current president of the Surrey Chamber of Commerce.



Photo by Graham MacDonell



Photo by Evan Seal - Courtesy of the Surrey - North Delta Leader

Sullivan Station has been made a permanent 'feature' of Sullivan Elementary with the creation of a large mural attached to the school's front wall. (above) And it was less permanently created by Grade 7 students Nason Williams (left) and Jordan Haro for a visit by members of the Sullivan family in March. (left)