

Railway Construction – Heaslip & Beyond

Heaslip & Beyond

Heaslip had existed as a post office since the earliest pioneer days. It got a big boost when the Great Northern began operations in 1906 and the Heaslip community developed into the beginnings of a village, with a station and general store.

A Big Project

Just past Heaslip, the line angled north-westward to Bunclody. Along the way it had to cross two deep ravines that ran into the river from the west.

They built temporary trestles and dumped in earth to create a road-level earth dam, complete with huge pipes designed to let the runoff through. The pipes soon had to be replaced with concrete tunnels two metres square - still quite visible today. Local childhood adventures often included a dare to go through these tunnels.



Crossing a ravine between Heaslip and Bunclody



A concrete tunnel under the crossing.

The bridge over the Souris at Bunclody was the biggest undertaking.



The End of The Line

The line closed in 1936. It just wasn't needed. People travelled by cars and the mail and freight service could easily be handled by existing lines and by truck.

The line is credited with ending the rural isolation felt by many Westman settlers and offered them an important time-saving travel option. Daytime shopping trips to Brandon were a treat, and students at university could get home for weekends. But the car and the improved road conditions offered a new sense of freedom to rural residents, and the line, though remembered fondly by old-timers, was just not needed any longer.