

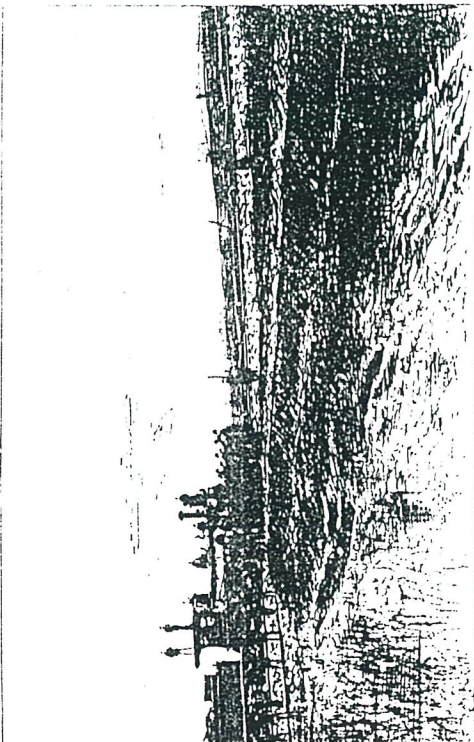
THE  
GREAT  
NORTHERN  
RAILWAY  
IN  
CANADA  
DIARY

C. H. RIFF

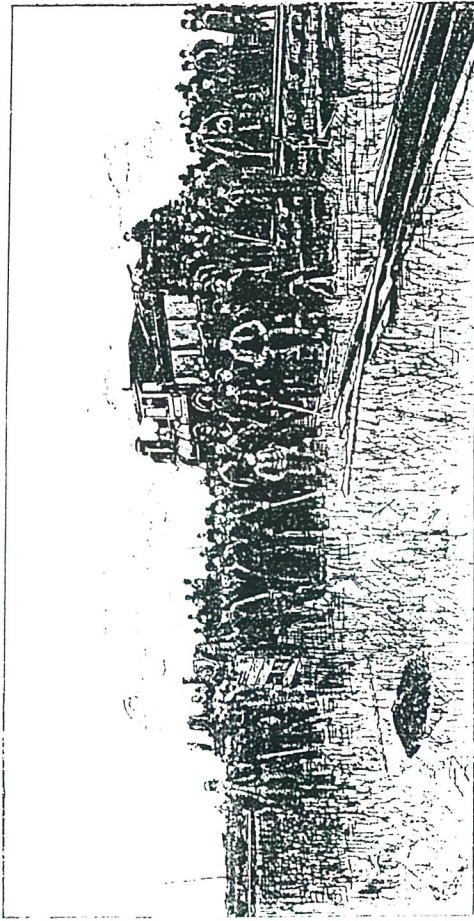
3

1888

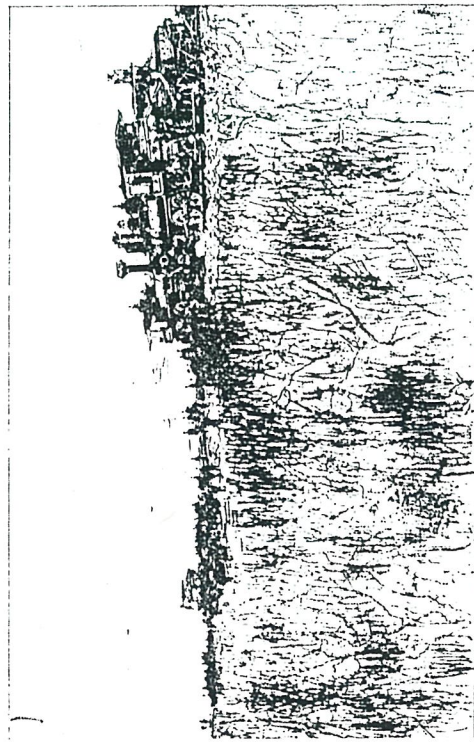
THE RAILWAY WAR IN MANITOBA.



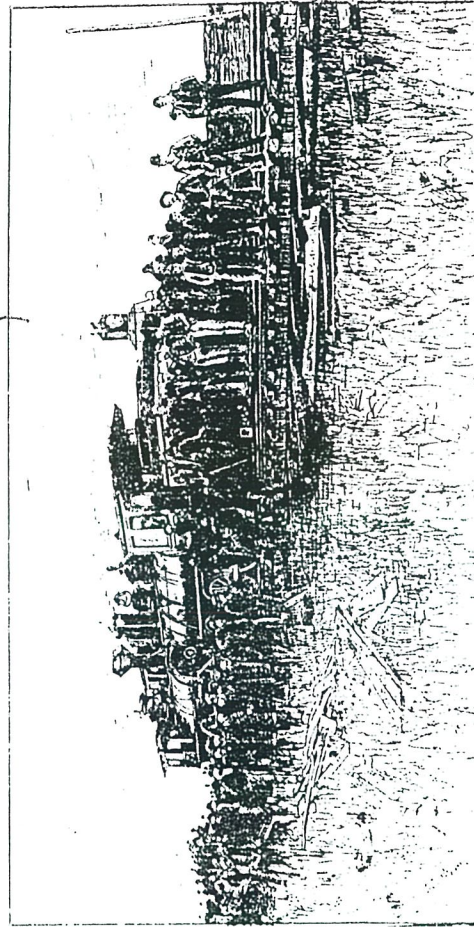
N. 1. Showing the N. P. N.Y. engine just dumped alongside the first, of which the cabin and smoke stack can be seen on the further side.



N. 2. C. P. N.Y. special police: the force: and the hand car on the N. P. & M.



N. 3. Showing the second C. P. N.Y. engine just dumped alongside the first, of which the cabin and smoke stack can be seen on the further side.



N. 4. Showing the second C. P. N.Y. engine just dumped alongside the first, of which the cabin and smoke stack can be seen on the further side.

Printed and Published by J. H. H. H.

November 10 1888

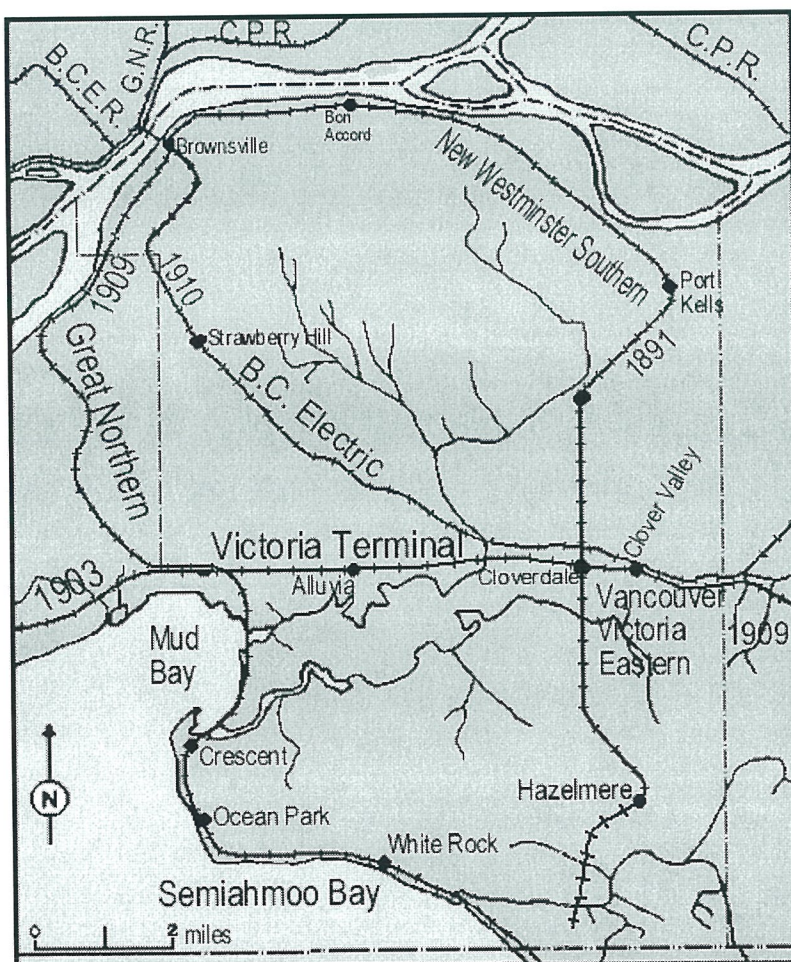


# Surrey History

## The Railway Era 1887–1910

**The coming of the railways to Surrey resulted in the decline of water transportation.** The completed network of railways provided that which the system of trunk roads could not – accessible year-round links whereby products of the forest and farm could easily be moved to market. The peak year of the railway era, 1910, was also the year that navigation effectively ended on the Serpentine and Nicomekl Rivers due to the construction of flood control dams.

Interest in railways in Surrey stemmed from the construction of the **Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR)** in British Columbia. At its regular meeting on November 29, 1880, Surrey Council passed a resolution to co-operate with the New Westminster City Council in applying to have a line surveyed on the south bank of the Fraser River for the CPR. When Port Moody was chosen as the western terminus, Surrey felt it would be deprived of any railway connections as the Federal Government's contract with the CPR forbade the construction of any competing line to the south or southwest during the next twenty-five years.



Rail lines operating through Surrey in 1910



The first rail line in Surrey was a logging spur built in 1887 for **Royal City Mills**. In that year the locomotive *Curley* was brought up the Nicomekl River on a scow and was landed about one-quarter mile west of Coast Meridian Road. It was hauled to the section of rail which ran west from the old Royal City logging ditch. The section east of the logging ditch to Hazelmere was built in 1890.



The Royal City Planing Mill's locomotive "Curley". Bob Harvie, engineer 1894

By 1889 the **New Westminster and Southern Railway(NWSR)**, a subsidiary of the **Great Northern Railway(GNR)** was under construction. In 1887 a charter was granted by the provincial government to build a railway from a connection (to the as yet to be built Fairhaven and Southern) at Blaine to Liverpool on the Fraser River. After considerable opposition from Ottawa, the clearing of the right of way in Surrey was under way in April 1890. By December 1890 the track was completed from Liverpool (Port Mann) to the Nicomekl River south of Cloverdale. On February 14th, 1891 two special trains met at the border to celebrate the driving of the last spikes. An excursion train ran the 23.51 miles from Liverpool on the Fraser to the border. The northern terminus of the NWSR was on the south bank of the Fraser at Liverpool. Later the terminus was extended to Brownsville where a the ferry connection to New Westminster existed. Both passengers and freight shared the ferry across to New Westminster with the Fraser Valley road traffic. To the south the NWSR connected at Blaine with the GNR line. Initially the Canadian subsidiary lacked locomotive stock, until the Great Northern link from Seattle to Fairhaven was completed late in 1891. In order to maintain service during this period, the Royal City Mill's locomotive *Curley* was leased for the run between Brownsville and Blaine. The railway resulted in the establishment of stations and post offices in Hazelmere, Clover Valley - Cloverdale - at the junction of the railway and the McLellan Road. Henry Kells also moved his town site from the Fraser River to the railway but he kept the former name Port Kells. Regular service with Seattle did not begin until Dec. 2, 1891.

In 1903 the **Victoria Terminal Railway and Ferry Company(VTRF)**, a subsidiary of the GNR, opened its 17.49 miles of road from Port Guichon, just west of Ladner, to Cloverdale where it connected with the New Westminster and Southern. In association with a fast ferry and its rail line on Vancouver Island, the VTRF offered regular freight service between Victoria and Vancouver. This service was virtually abandoned, however, as the City of Victoria cancelled its \$15,000 subsidy. This combined with the CPR's direct steamship service between Victoria and Vancouver made the service unprofitable. The VTRF Co. continued to operate its trains on the mainland but on a very infrequent basis thus earning the company its nickname Molasses Limited. By 1906, passenger trains from Port Guichon to New Westminster ran only on Mondays. In Surrey, Alluvia Station (at the foot of Woodward's Hill at the intersection with the Semiahmoo Road), became an important stop on the line, and from this new station much farm produce and lumber was shipped.

The VTRF line, from Port Guichon to Cloverdale, was purchased by the **Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern Railway and Navigation Company(VVER)** in 1907. This GNR subsidiary extended the line from Cloverdale to Huntingdon in 1909. This line was intended to be part of a through route from Vancouver to the Kootenays. However, the completion of the BC Electric Railway in 1910 and the growing competition from road transport brought a rapid decline in service.

The bottleneck of road and rail transportation south of the Fraser River was the ferry link from Brownsville to New Westminster. This was eliminated with the expiration of the CPR's monopoly clause and the completion of the **New Westminster Bridge**, which was formally opened on July 23rd, 1904. The bridge, a low-level swing span to permit continued river traffic, was double-tiered, the lower level carrying the railway and the upper level two eight foot lanes for foot and vehicular traffic. Tolls were exacted on all traffic to help defray construction costs.

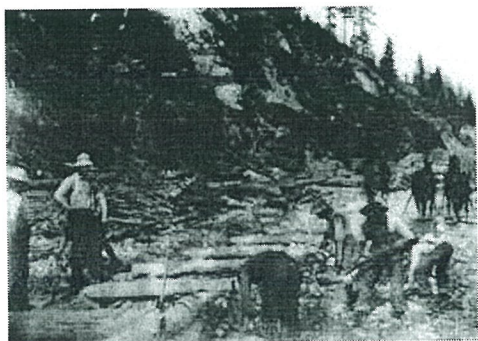




The New Westminster Bridge opened in 1904. This double-tier span had the railway bridge on the lower level while the upper level had two eight foot lanes for foot and vehicular traffic.

The **New Westminster Bridge** was a vital link permitting direct rail access into the growing Municipal area. It focused all traffic on New Westminster, and made the markets of the growing metropolitan centers more readily accessible to Surrey's producers of agricultural and forest products. It also encouraged city residents to travel south through Surrey to the beaches of White Rock and Crescent Beach. It was the essential stimulus to further settlement in Surrey.

In 1907 the **Great Northern Railway (GNR)** began re-routing its main line from Blaine to the New Westminster bridge to follow the coast line of Semiahmoo and Boundary Bays. The original line, operated under the subsidiary the New Westminster and Southern Railway (NWSR), traversed boggy land from Clayton to Port Kells and re-routing was deemed necessary. This combined with the potential for development of White Rock and Crescent Beach were the deciding factors. The new line began operation in March 1909 and the rails were taken up just north of the border at Douglas Station (end of track in 1909 was the Melrose Shingle mill siding). The end of track was moved north in 1911 to the Campbell River Lumber Spur, just north of the Campbell River. The remainder of the line to the Nicomekl River was abandoned by 1919, and the section from Port Kells to Brownsville was sold to the Canadian Northern Railway in 1916. The section from Clayton to the McNair's Mill spur north of the Nicomekl River remained in use until the end of 1929 and the tracks were lifted in 1930.



The Great Northern sea line route provided lower grades and firmer ground but maintenance costs were higher. The water-level line offered easy access to the beaches of White Rock and Crescent and those communities began to develop.

The New water-level line offered easy access to the beaches of White Rock and Crescent. Residents of New Westminster and Vancouver could now spend the day on South Surrey beaches, arriving on the morning train and returning in the evening. Weekend excursions to the beach resorts became a regular seasonal feature. White Rock and Crescent mark their real beginnings from the opening of the sea shore route.



The Great Northern station at White Rock in about 1913. Sunday evening commuters are waiting for the evening train.

On November 6th, 1910 the **BC Electric Railway (BCER)** from New Westminster to Chilliwack was formally opened by Premier Richard McBride. This extension of the Vancouver–New Westminster interurban was designed to serve the agricultural communities and the forest industries of the Fraser Valley. The **Market, Milk, Mail, and Owl trains** provided important freight and passenger links between the Upper Valley, Surrey and the Metropolitan areas.

1910 marked the peak of railway development activities in Surrey. The growth of railways was complemented by the rapid increase in settlement. The opening of new market areas in and outside of British Columbia did much to stimulate the expansion of Surrey's agriculture and forest industries. The emergence of Cloverdale as a railway hub, and the early development of the White Rock and Crescent resort areas reflect the prosperity and growth associated with the railway era.

#### Surrey Railways: Their Affiliations and Dates of Operation

##### Great Northern Railway (GNR) and subsidiaries

**New Westminster Southern (NWSR)** Brownsville to Blaine via Port Kells and Cloverdale. Opened 1891. Service reduced after 1909 and closed in stages. The remnant is officially abandoned 1929 and tracks lifted in 1930.

**Victoria Terminal Railway and Ferry Company (VTRF)** Port Guichon to Colebrook. Opened 1903 and operated until Aug. 10, 1935. Officially abandoned and the tracks lifted in 1938.

**Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern (VVER)** Cloverdale to Huntingdon. Opened 1909. Officially abandoned 1929.

**Great Northern Railway (GNR)** New Westminster Bridge to Oliver's Slough to Blaine. Opened 1909. Currently operated by the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway.

**British Columbia Electric Railway (BCER)**, formerly BC Hydro Railway, currently BC Southern Railway. Opened 1910.

**Roberts Bank Railway** Roberts Bank to Cloverdale. Opened 1970.

**Canadian Northern Pacific Railway (CNPR)**, now Canadian National. New Westminster Bridge to Hope. Opened 1914.



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WINDSOR,  
ESSEX  
AND  
LAKE SHORE  
RAPID RAILWAY  
RAILWAY

1907-1924

C. H. RIFF