

OAPS  
Canadian  
Rail

CVR



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# CREDIT VALLEY MEMOIRS

by ALFRED PRICE\*

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\*These memoirs were written in 1926 by Mr. Price, following his retirement from the post of General Manager, Eastern Lines, of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, and are now published for the first time.



**G**EORGE LAIDLAW, after having taken the leading part in the construction of the Toronto, Grey & Bruce and the Toronto & Nipissing railways (the former now that portion of the Canadian Pacific Railway between Toronto and Owen Sound and west of Orangeville, and the latter the line of Canadian National Railways between Toronto and Coboconk) foresaw the advantages to the City of Toronto and to the people living west thereof, of a railway from Toronto to Woodstock, Ingersoll and St. Thomas, connecting with the Michigan Central, and also north from Streetsville Junction to Orangeville and Elora.

A great amount of preliminary work was necessary, and Mr. Laidlaw, with characteristic energy wrote pamphlets to the various municipal bodies and to representative farmers and others along the proposed routes, setting forth the advantages to them of a railway that would enable them to get their produce to the City of Toronto and their supplies from there. He also travelled extensively throughout the territory delivering speeches urging his hearers to render financial aid to the enterprise. As a result, bonuses were granted by the municipalities and townships amounting to \$750,000; the City of Toronto also subscribed \$350,000 and the Province of Ontario \$3,000 per mile, the latter sum amounting to approximately \$525,000.

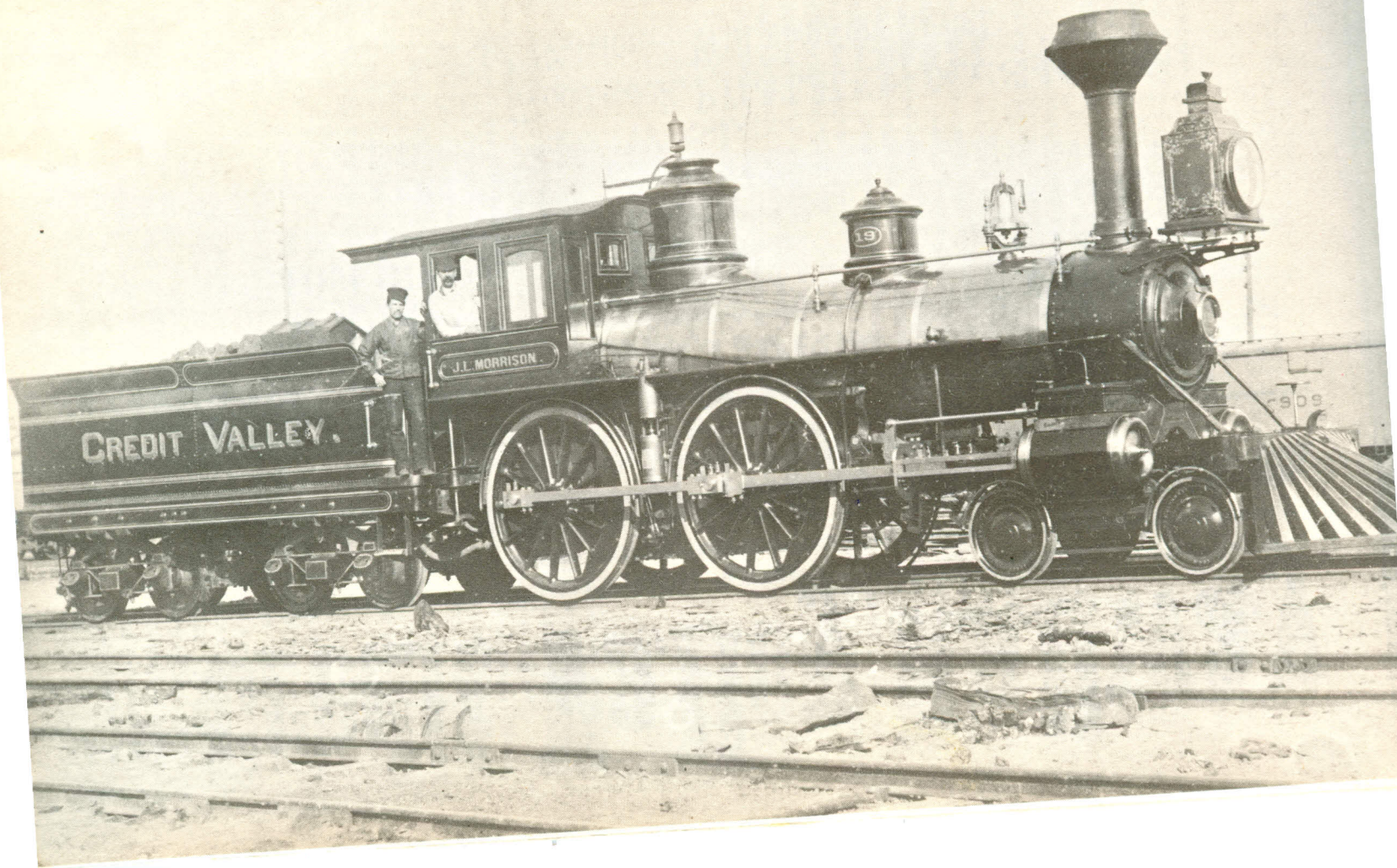
On February 15th, 1871, a charter was secured from the Provincial Government for the construction of the railway, and men were sent out to arrange for the necessary right-of-way on the most favourable terms possible. In the meantime Mr. Laidlaw was obliged to go to London to secure rails and fastenings, and notwithstanding the most strenuous opposition on the part of the Grand Trunk interests, he, with the aid of the Hon. Edward Blake, succeeded in getting on credit what were required for the undertaking.

Railway building in those days was a strenuous job, and the man who undertook it had no bed of roses. The building of the Credit Valley was no exception to this rule. Hampered for the want of funds, opposed by existing railways in its efforts to secure an entrance to the City of Toronto, a strike of all its employees around Toronto in 1880 and innumerable other obstacles made the task one of almost insurmountable difficulty.

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RIGHT: Typical of the motive power of the Credit Valley Railway was the handsome 4-4-0 "J.L. Morrison", named after one of the original directors of the road. It was built by Kingston (#234) in 1881. (OSAL)







# Credit Valley Railway

Running in Connection with Port Dover Railway.

**NO. 2**

**TIME TABLE**

**NO. 2.**

Taking effect Monday, 9th September, 1878.

Miles.	GOING EAST.		STATIONS.		GOING WEST.		Miles.	
	No.1.	No.3.			No.2.	No.4.		
	A.M.	P.M.			A.M.	P.M.		
0	7.40	4.00	Dep.	Ingersoll.	Arr.	9.15	5.25	10
2	7.45	4.05		× Centreville.		9.10	5.20	8
5	7.55	4.15		Beachville.		9.00	5.10	5
10	8.10	4.30		Woodstock.		8.45	4.55	0
—	8.15	4.35	Arr.	Woodstock, P.D.&L.H.R'y.	Dep.	8.40	4.50	—

× Flag Station—Will stop on signal.

**G. LAIDLAW,**

September, 1878.

Managing Director.

CREDIT VALLEY RAILWAY (cont'd)

In 1876, just fifty years ago, the Directors were:

George Laidlaw, President  
John Gardner  
James L. Morrison  
Angus Morrison  
Robert Hay,

C.G. Campbell, Vice President  
John Macnab  
R.W. Elliott  
William Arthurs

and there does not appear to have been many changes in the personnel of the Board during the time that the Credit Valley existed as a separate corporation.

The railway was then under construction, and three years later, on September 19th, 1879, it was formally opened by His Excellency the Marquis of Lorne, who was at that time the Governor General of Canada. The ceremony took place at Milton, the Chairman being Hon. George W. Allan, Chairman of the Trustees of the Municipal Trust Fund of the Credit Valley Railway. A large number of Directors and business men from Toronto and other parts of Ontario were present, the whole party having gone out from Toronto on a special train pulled by the C.V.R. engine "R.W. ELLIOTT", built at Kingston. Arches had been erected at Cooksville, Streetsville and Milton, all of which as well as the locomotive were bedecked with flowers and evergreens. Besides the parties named and designated, the following officers of the Company were present:

James Ross,	General Superintendent
J.C. Bailey,	Chief Engineer
J.H. Barber,	Assistant Engineer
H.S. Holt,	Assistant Engineer
H.E. Suckling,	Secretary-Treasurer.

The railway had several uncompleted gaps, but a little later in the year the bridge over the Grand River at Galt and the branches north of Streetsville Junction were ready for traffic so that regular services were established between Parkdale and Ingersoll and between Streetsville and Orangeville and Elora. However, before the formal opening regular trains were running between Milton and Parkdale, and a bus service between Parkdale and the Toronto Union Station carrying about six hundred passengers per day to and from the Toronto Exhibition. It was not very long after the formal opening until most all of the men employed in the vicinity of Toronto went on strike for wages which were four months in arrears; after being away but a few days, the Company raised sufficient funds with which to pay them and they returned to their work.

But there were other signs of poverty. Sometimes the railway was so hard up and its credit gone that the officers were at their wit's end to keep a supply of coal on hand for the use of their engines. Then Peter Stephen would be sent down to the Grand Trunk yard to see what he could do to induce the yardmen to place a car of coal on the interchange track. This plan succeeded for a time, but there was a stop to this mode of keeping up a supply of Credit Valley fuel. Perhaps the owners objected to being filched of their coal, or possibly the yardmen became unreasonable in their demands. In any case, the Company was hampered, even to the extent of delaying passenger trains until arrangements could be made with "Paddy" Burns to send some coal up to the Parkdale station in



CREDIT VALLEY RAILWAY (cont'd)

carts, and there to shovel it into the tender of an outgoing locomotive, which would be standing coupled to the cars with passengers aboard, and all ready to pull out.

There were many amusing experiences in the office of the Treasurer, Mr. Suckling. He had between his desk and the office door, a number of screens so arranged that a person having any business with him would have to talk around them, or thread his way through. One day, however, a great, husky, bullying navy from the grading gang came to town, and instead of observing the usual formalities, he simply plunged through the screens, knocking them down and smashing them. As he reached the surprised Treasurer, he demanded in thundering tones that he disgorge enough cash to satisfy his claim for wages. For a moment, Suckling thought that his hour had come but his assistant, Ross Mackenzie, a giant in stature and strength and, with Suckling, a member of the championship team of the Toronto Lacrosse Club, hove in sight, and grabbing the obstreperous individual by the scruff of the neck and the seat of the pants, ran him out of the office and hurled him down the stairs!

There was considerable talk in those days of a snow plough that had been invented at Orangeville by a man by the name of Jull. The Postmaster at Toronto, John Leslie, had acquired some interest in the plough and arrangements were made by him with the Credit Valley officers to demonstrate its practicability. The plough was not ready for the test until the last snow of the season had fallen; nevertheless, it was sent to Parkdale, and a gang of men went into fence corners and other shady places, and with their shovels brought forth enough snow for the demonstration. Up to that time, the Credit Valley had used only "bucking" ploughs, and it was claimed that the new plough represented quite a distinct advance in principle over the old one; that by placing a locomotive at the rear, coupling it up, connecting the steam with the plough and pushing it close against the snow, the front end with a series of knives would revolve, reduce the snow to powder and throw it through a funnel over the right-of-way fence: The test was pronounced a success, and from the modest little rotary plough that demonstrated its power over the elements on that day over forty-five years ago, the enormous steel rotary plough of today was evolved.

On March 25th, 1883, the railway secured a Dominion charter and on November 30th of the same year, the Ontario & Quebec Railway, which had been completed between Toronto Junction and Smiths Falls; the Toronto, Grey & Bruce Railway; and the Credit Valley Railway were consolidated under one management. Of course, the Canadian Pacific Railway was in control, but it was not until the following year, January 1884, that the amalgamated railways were absorbed by it.

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CREDIT VALLEY RAILWAY (concluded)

It was in 1883 that the track connections were made between the Credit Valley and the Ontario & Quebec railways at Toronto Junction, and a set of telegraph instruments were installed in a little shack placed for the purpose, approximately on the site of the present passenger station at West Toronto. At that time, there were no streets nor houses for miles around, except an occasional farm house. This is mentioned simply for the reason that since then a marvellous development has taken place in that section of the City of Toronto, and it is hard to realize that only a little over forty years ago, West Toronto was nothing but farms.

When the Credit Valley began running trains, they were operated with what was then regarded as modern equipment, but before long many new devices were introduced. The old "pin and link" coupling was superseded by the automatic draw bar; what was then known as the "Armstrong" brake, a system whereby the speed of trains was controlled by hand, gave place to the Westinghouse air brake and instead of passenger cars being heated by stoves, Baker heaters were installed. A couple of antiquated parlour cars were bought from the New York Central and placed on the run between Toronto and St. Thomas. The rear ends were rounded and when repainted and renamed "Victoria" and "Humber", they were quite popular. However, in time, the sills rotted and they were withdrawn and tied up in the Parkdale yard where they remained until they became the property of Canadian Pacific. One day, Mr. Van Horne was passing through the yard with Car Foreman Joe O'Brien, saw the cars and asked about them, and when told of the condition they were in said, "Burn the damned things!" and before he had left the premises, the order was carried out.

The President, George Laidlaw, who was instrumental in building of no less than four railways in Ontario, the Toronto, Grey & Bruce, the Toronto & Nipissing, the Credit Valley -- all converging on Toronto -- and the Victoria Railway from Lindsay to Haliburton, and to whose faith, energy, perseverance and force of character, Toronto owes more than to any other one man her present commercial supremacy in the Province of Ontario, retired to his farm on Balsam Lake near Cobocok after the Credit Valley had been taken over, and lived quietly there until 1889, when he passed away at the comparatively early age of sixty one. His name is almost forgotten now, but his monument is 675 miles of railway throughout some of the most productive parts of Ontario, and all doing tribute to the City of Toronto.