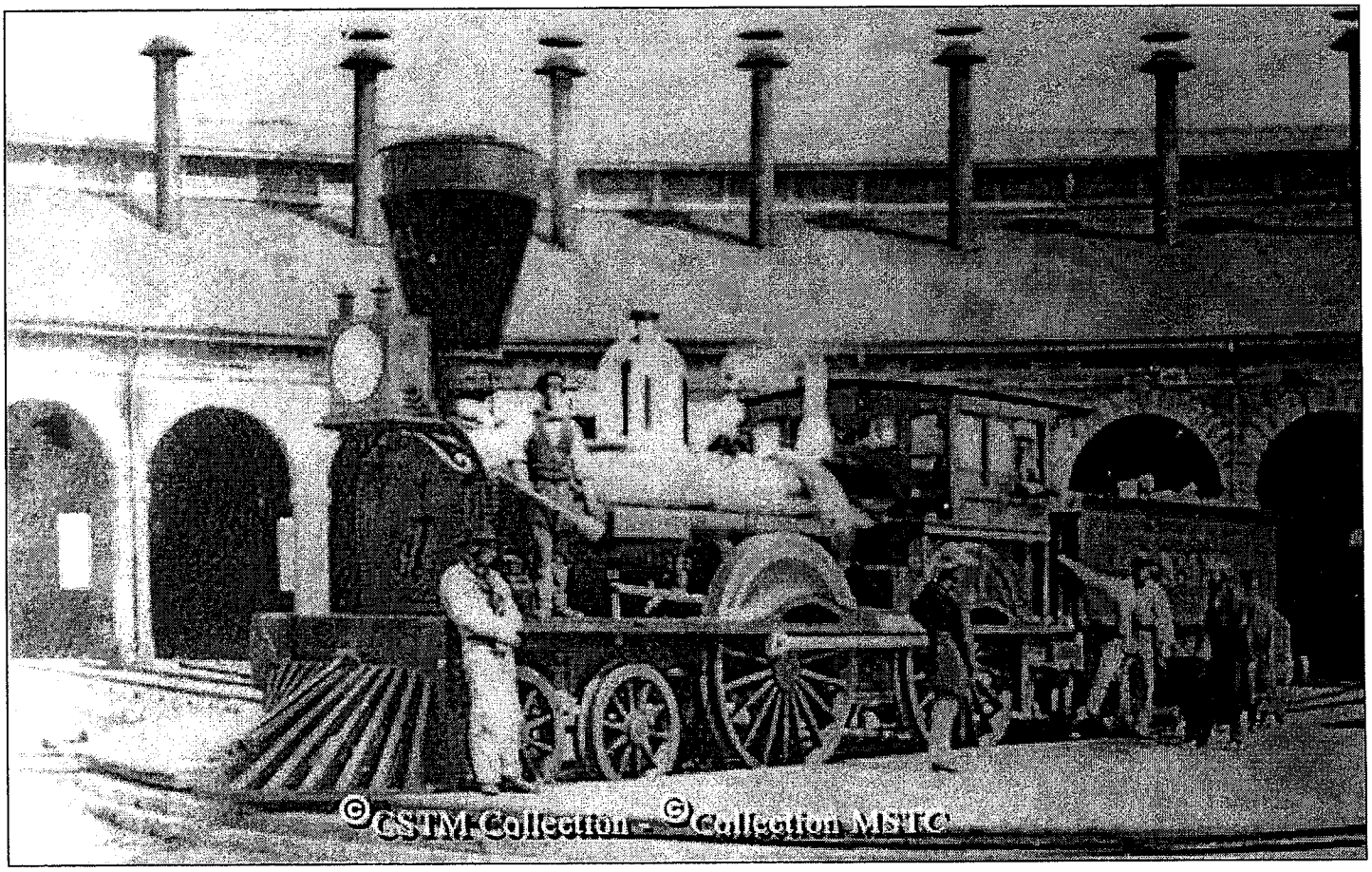
BAYVIEW

THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY STORY

C. H. RIFF



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THE GREAT WESTERN RAILROAD

A railroad line was incorporated on May 6th, 1834 to build a line from the Lake Ontario harbour city of Hamilton west one hundred miles to London, Canada and hence to the navigable waters of the Thames River at Chatham. Its name was the London and Gore Rail Road Company. The principals were Sir Allan Napier McNab and about seventy leading men of Hamilton, Canada. McNab was the political boss of Upper Canada. Nothing was done for a decade. There were no more than twenty miles of railway in all British North America until 1850. In 1845 the company changed its name to the Great Western Rail Road and McNab had the charter changed as well so that the company had the right to build from some point on the Niagara River through Hamilton and than west to London, Chatham and to the Detroit River at Windsor on the opposite shore from Detroit, Michigan. Its charter was not just for a local line but for a through line connecting New York State with the State of Michigan. It would be international in its scope and this would appeal to investors in the United States and England. The subscription books would reveal that 55,000 shares were carried in Britain with only 5,000 in Canada. American investors soon became involved for they could see the route to be a fast link between New York City and Chicago.

The Guarantee Act was pivotal, for the Canadian Government guaranteed the interest on half the cost of a railway over seventy-five miles long, but it would have to built to the Broad Guage of 5 feet 6 inches. In 1853 the name was altered to the Great Western Railroad. The Americans invested about one million dollars in the new project.

The main contractor for the construction of the railway was Philadelphian Samuel Zimmerman, who had come to Canada to build part of the Welland Canal.

The close of 1852 saw only very small and detached portions of the line had been graded although the whole of the road had been put under contract. This was despite the fact that the contractors had been told to start as early as February 1852. There were not any parts ready to receive rails. The section from Hamilton to the Twenty Mile Creek had only been lightly graded and was to have been ready for rails but the procrasurnation of the contractors meant that the banks would have settled and would allow the laying of iron in the early spring, instead it would be May of 1853 that rails could be laid. The grading on one hundred miles from the Detroit River east had even started. The original plan of building pile trestles, for over fourteen miles, over the wet prairies west of Chatham were slow and were considered insecure, were cancelled and a new plan. The route would be graded in a permanent manner by taking fill from adjacent to the line or by hauling beach sand from the lake. The grading and masonry on the Eastern Division both east and west of St Catharines were problematic. The solution was to adopting a temporary grade and wooden trestle work at the Ten and Twelve Mile Creeks. Problems west of Hamilton were found in the gorge of the old Desjardins Canal, the grade up from Dundas and in a deep quicksand deposit near Copetown. The costs were driven up by the large amounts of material that were required to be moved or excavated, by the large and continued slides of earth in the deep cuts and the pilings that were necessary to protect the foot of slopes. At one point on Section 11, the sinking of the embankment into a deep morass or subterranean lake the tactic adopted was to construct an extensive platform of evergreen trees and bushes. so interwoven with earth so as to prevent the loss of ballast by its own displacement. There were only a couple of cuts in the London area to contend with, and west of London work was conducted around the clock. Extensive stone locomotive and car shops were completed at Hamilton. Some of the buildings were leased for a period of one year to Fisher, Brianard, Williams and Company for their place to manufacture rolling stock for the railroad. Their contract with the GWR was to provide both passenger and freight rolling stock.

Fisher, Brainard, Williams and Company

Built Hamilton 1853-1854 for the Great Western Railway

25	Eight wheel passenger cars
4	Eight wheel express and mail cars
8	Eight wheel baggage cars
20	Eight wheel emigrant Cars
100	Eight wheel flat cars
150	Eight wheel boxcars
100	Four wheel gravel cars
25	Four wheel repair cars
15	Hand cars

ONTARIO BRANCH JULY 20, 1853

The Hamilton spectator July 20th, 1853 reported the iron rails were being laid on the Ontario Branch. This branch line of the Great Western was reported to be less than a mile long from a wharf on Lake Ontario to the Great Western. A wharf was built in eleven feet of water. It was built for the convienence of the contractors for the purpose of landing iron rails and locomotives, cars and other materials. This point was later GWR station Ontario until 1867 when it was renamed Winona.

It was Copetown where construction was really started. It was at Copetown where it was described the construction crews encountered during the such quicksands as have nearly done to the contractors what the Red Sea did for the Pharoh. They swallowed up everything within their reach. So serious was the difficulty, that after a road had been excavated through this section during the day, to the depth of five or six feet, the weight of the adjoining banks would raise the whole bed to the same height, and and the work of Sisyphus had to be renewed at the dawn. This recurred as often as the excavation was made and the bed of quicksand was so deep that a rod of twenty feet did not reach a solid foundation. This was the first delay in construction and while crews worked at a solid foundation, rails were started to be laid west from the edge of the quicksand.

On Saturday May 14th, 1853 with about two and a half miles of rails laid from Copetown westward, and the locomotive Niagara on the spot, the contractors fired her up. A quick impromptu excursion was decided. The directors of the company and their ladies travelled up Govenors Road by carriage to participate in the first excursion. At 3:00 o'clock, with the engine under steam, ladies and gentlemen climbed aboard the tender of the Niagara and off they went. It was numbered that nine ladies climbed onto the tender, some sat on wooden seats-that is, on sticks of wood-some were so fortunate as to find a board or cushions, while the gentlemen either "lay about loose" or occupied standees. They had no labeled conductors to bother the excursionists for tickets- not troubled by open or closed windows but were rattling along through the woods and over hills and along the valleys where the whistle of the engine imparted a novel element to the echoes, and frightened all animated nature with the saddenness and strangeness of its scream. She started off in fine style and steamed the company over the road several times, running occasionally at the rate of 30 miles per hour. Irish children, who had lived on the line of the works ever since digging was commenced, rushed in consternation

up the banks, as the engine dashed along the track their fathers had been building, and it speculated that they went home with a new reverence to those pioneers. The excursion over it was time for a collation, toast and speeches, by the contractor the directors and Hamilton Mayor Kerr and other politicians. Rails would be laid to Fairchilds Creek, later Harrisburg a full seven miles by the end of the week.

July 1853 saw the work proceeding with full vigour, some portions knew no cessation of work, night gangs and steam excavators continuing the labour of the day by lamp lights, and Sunday alone bringing any rest. Track had now been laid out of Hamilton, along the water of the Bay for a mile, intersecting the new Desjardins Canal.

It had been the intention to bridge the Canal on its old route, but after working a long time and expending large sums of money, it was found impossible to give the bridge permanence. The Canal was described as a bottomless pit. the railroad company conceived the grand project of cutting a new channel, for the canak through the heights and filling the old one for a solid bed. A beautiful road suspension was built across this new gorge for the horse carriages.

The route wound around and started its assent up the side of the Niagara Escarpment towards Dundas. At Dundas a gorge of about 600 to 700 feet in length and about 100 feet deep had to be crossed. A culvert of superior masonry costing $70,000.00 was built to cross this stream. large embankments were filled and then a bridge across the Flamboro Road. July saw rails laid thirteen miles to the edge of the Grand River, waiting for the massive bridge, when another excursion was run to Harrisburg and a dinner at the Sawmill Hotel.

Port Ontario was created as depot to serve the construction of the Great Western on the eastern end. Ontario was the place now known as Winona, as the result of the Confederation of Canada, with a new province of Ontario created out of the old Upper Canada, the village of Ontario was renamed Winona. The point directly north on Lake Ontario, a sandbar with a draft of ten feet of water allowed for a temporary harbour. A small pier but with enough water for a lake craft of the time was built. July 25th saw the arrival of the lake steamer Traveller at 10:30 in the morning and a locomotive and tender named the Middlesex was unloaded. The track was laid on to the wharf and the engine was pulled up the gradient and curve in half a day using rope and tackle, in half a day. A mile of rail had been laid from Port Ontario to the point where the GWR would start. The Middlesex was manufactured at the Schenectady Locomotive Works in New York state and had been carried over the Lake from Ossewego. The steamer Ontario landed rail irons. The locomotive was soon at work distributing iron and ties along the main line.

The Great Western had three engines sitting on the dock at Cape Vincent, New York, at the south east end of Lake Ontario, late December 1853. Winter had arrived, and the boats had left the lake for the season. The engines were needed for the winter construction season so the company quickly contracted that the lake steamer Magnet quickly cross the lake and pickup the three locomotives. The engines were strapped onto the deck of the ship.

WOODSTOCK 1853

As the Great Western built west after crossing the Grand River at Paris the railway came to the small developing town of Woodstock. Twenty years earlier the town did not exist. Between Paris and Woodstock the railway encountered few problems with construction on this straight stretch. By September 1853, a bridge was built across Cedar Creek and the road leading to East Oxford (Mill Street). The bridge was built on five timber bents built on top of massive stone abutments reaching up beyond the highest water mark. The contactors was originally planned to be built of stone, but with its great height and there was a lack of stone in the area before the coming of the railroad. The plans for the future was a fully stone bridge upon the completion of the railway. The bridge across the Thames River was completed of wood had one long span of 160 feet. The station grounds were in the process of erection and the rails had arrived.

Tuesday, November the first, 1853 was a day for celebration. The Great Western opened the section from Hamilton to Niagara Falls. All the local dignitaries were invited. A train of five cars waited for the company at Hamilton station. It ran east over the newly built rails, the section from Hamilton to Ontario (Winona) was laid with a new compound rail that had been developed locally. A stop was made at St Catharines, and then over the Welland Canal and up the escarpment. Four miles from the destination, in the deep cut, the locomotive spun off the track, hit the embankment submerged in gravel and clay. The center driver pin broke. Some of the dignitaries just got out and started walking the four miles. When they arrived at the station another train was sent quickly to the scene to bring in the fellow travellers. All marched down to the Clifton House to partake in the speeches, collations and food. The Clifton House put on a fine spread for the guests, but then why not, for the Hotel was owned by Mr Zimmerman, the GWR contractor as well. labourers were workinghard on the track, and by the time of the return trip, a new track had been laid right around the wrecked locomotive.

In January 1854 the Great Western chartered the lake steamer the Princess Royal to transport locomotives from Rochester to Wellington Square or more precisely the Burlington Beach at the Canal. A total of four locomotives were delievered to the GWR on the beach. The last in late March.

The Railway Jubilee is what the Hamilton Spectator called January 18th, 1854. A great day of celebration, not only for Hamilton, but for people living in the Great Lakes Region on both sides of the border. The Great Western was a direct link between the new New York Central railway at Niagara, and the Michigan Central at Detroit. New York and Chicago were linked by rail. The Erie Railroad ended at Dunkirk New York. Why a route through British Canada? The answer is that at this time when the individual states had more impact then the Union, all the States along Lake Erie fought the establishment of a through route for it would take trade from their own Atlantic ports or rail lines.

The Celebration Train arrived from Rochester with four hundred passengers at Niagara Falls at two in the morning. At Hamilton it was greeted by a large crowd, enough to fill another train. So two trains set out. west bound, through the small Canadian settlements. Stops were made at Dundas, Paris, Woodstock and London. The trains arrived at Windsor at five o'clock that night. The celebrants crossed the river to land in Detroit. A massive dinner was held inside the Michigan Central freight house.

May 12th, 1854 the ground breaking for the Galt and Guelph Railway was considered a holiday celebration for the town of Preston; all the stores were closed and throngs of people were in the street. About two o'clock a procession was formed at Klotz's Hotel and marched to the site of the Railroad grounds. Mr Sheriff Grange addressed the crowd about the importance of the railway and then a quantity of earth was dug and thrown into a wheelbarrow. A cannon fired a thunderclap, the band played, more speeches and all returned to the Hotel.

Early June, the 16th, 1854 the Friday morning express train was headed east when the Engineer discovered there was something wrong with the tender of the locomotive and tried to stop the engine. Applying the brakes caused the tender to jerk off the tracks and it took the baggage car, one second and two first class passenger cars with it off into the ditch. The rolling stock was smashed to pieces. It was described as miraculous how the passengers and crew escaped. The passengers were brought to Chatham. Later that evening another derailment occurred when one of the cars were derailed by a wandering cow. Just over a month later a train was once again derailed by a cow a farmer allowed to graze on the railway embankment.

Thursday July 30th, 1854 the railway station at St George was destroyed in a morning fire. The new engine "Jupiter", one of the most powerful and efficient on the Great Western, along with a number of cars were destroyed by the conflaguration. The engine had been expected in Galt with a load of rails to complete the laying of track.

With the mainline completed and the Niagara Suspension Bridge the Great Western was ready to conduct through train service with on blockade, the Detroit River separated Windsor from Detroit, a half mile wide. A bridge or tunnel was technelogically impossible at this time. The Great Western purchased two side-paddled transfer ferries, the Niagara and the Transit in 1854.

Pressure to open the Great Western to traffic fast was a large mistake. There were no fences or cattle-guards to prevent livestock from wandering onto the track. The employees, most of whom had never seen an engine or a locomotive had little training and gave no importance to the Rules; and or the dangers of railway operation. There were not enough engines or rolling stock to handle the flood of new traffic. The rails and rolling stock were built with brittle cast iron, not steel. Prone to cracks and breaks. The rush to public operation not only caused the Baptiste Creek wreck, but threw the light on the accidents in the first year of operation between the first day of operation November 10th, 1853 to November 1st 1854, when seventy-eight persons were killed on the Great Western. The GWR was subject to a special Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into a series of Accidents and Detentions of the Great Western, Canada West. The list examined was as follows.

1. December 12, 1853	Hamilton	One killed
2. December 26, 1853	Capetown	One killed
3. March 13, 1854	Chatham	One killed
4. March 23, 1854	Stoney Creek	One killed
5. April 22,1854	Woodstock	One killed
6. April 26, 1854	Niagara Falls	No one hurt
7. June 1, 1854	Chatham	One killed
8. June 2, 1854	Lobo	Six killed
9. June 10, 1854	Chatham	One hurt
10. June 12, 1854	Woodstock	One killed
11. June 27, 1854	Princeton	Two Killed
12. July 6, 1854	Thorold	Seven killed

13. August 22, 1854	Capetown	One killed
14. September 30, 1854	Woodstock	One killed
15. October 11, 1854	Beachville	One killed
16 October 27, 1854	Baptiste Creek	Fifty-four killed
17. October 29, 1854	London	One killed

The Board of Inquiry found that cases 3, 4, 5, 10, 13 and 17 were caused by the rash exposure of the victims in some cases while under the influence of liquor. Cases 2 and 9 were caused by iron cracking and breaking on rolling stock. Cases 7, 14, and 15 was careless operation by employees.

Princeton, Case No. 11 was caused by a track layer removing rails without putting out signals causing the derailment of a train.

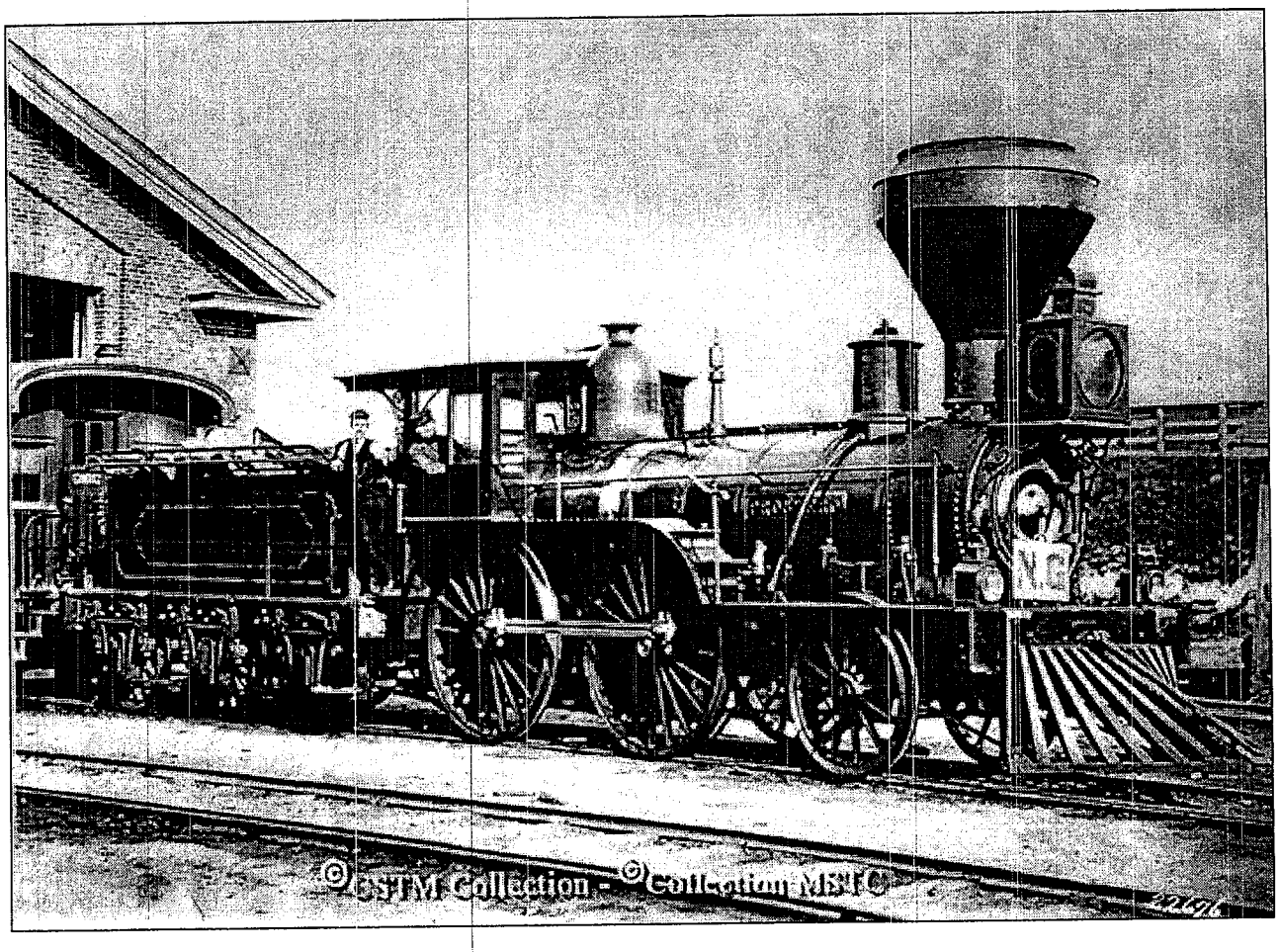
Case No. 1, Hamilton occurred when three cows wandered on to the track near what is now Wellington Street. The engine, baggage car and three coaches were thrown off the track.

An east-bound Express train hit a cow on an high embankment when it seems that the driver deliberately ran down the cow. Six persons were killed, and it seems the company was sentured for five of those killed were Norwegian Emigrants being carried in freight cars.

Thorold , Case 12, the Express from Niagara Falls hit three horses standing by the only the partially fenced track, one mile east of the Welland Canal. A passenger coach was thrown from the track killing seven Norwegian Emigrants.

The major accident at Batiste Creek was an appalling calamity, caused by a number of faults by the Railway.

This would not be the end of accidents.



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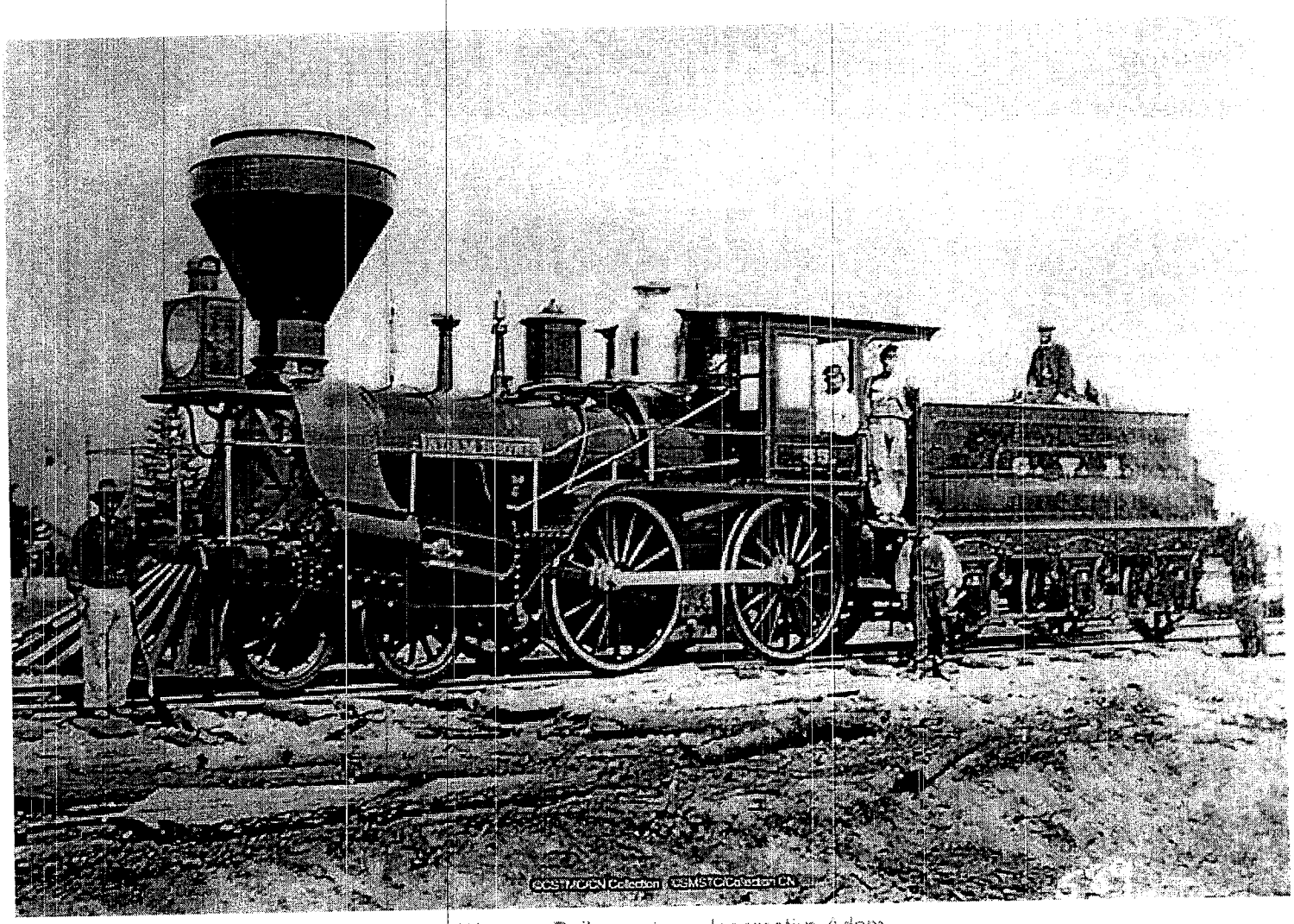
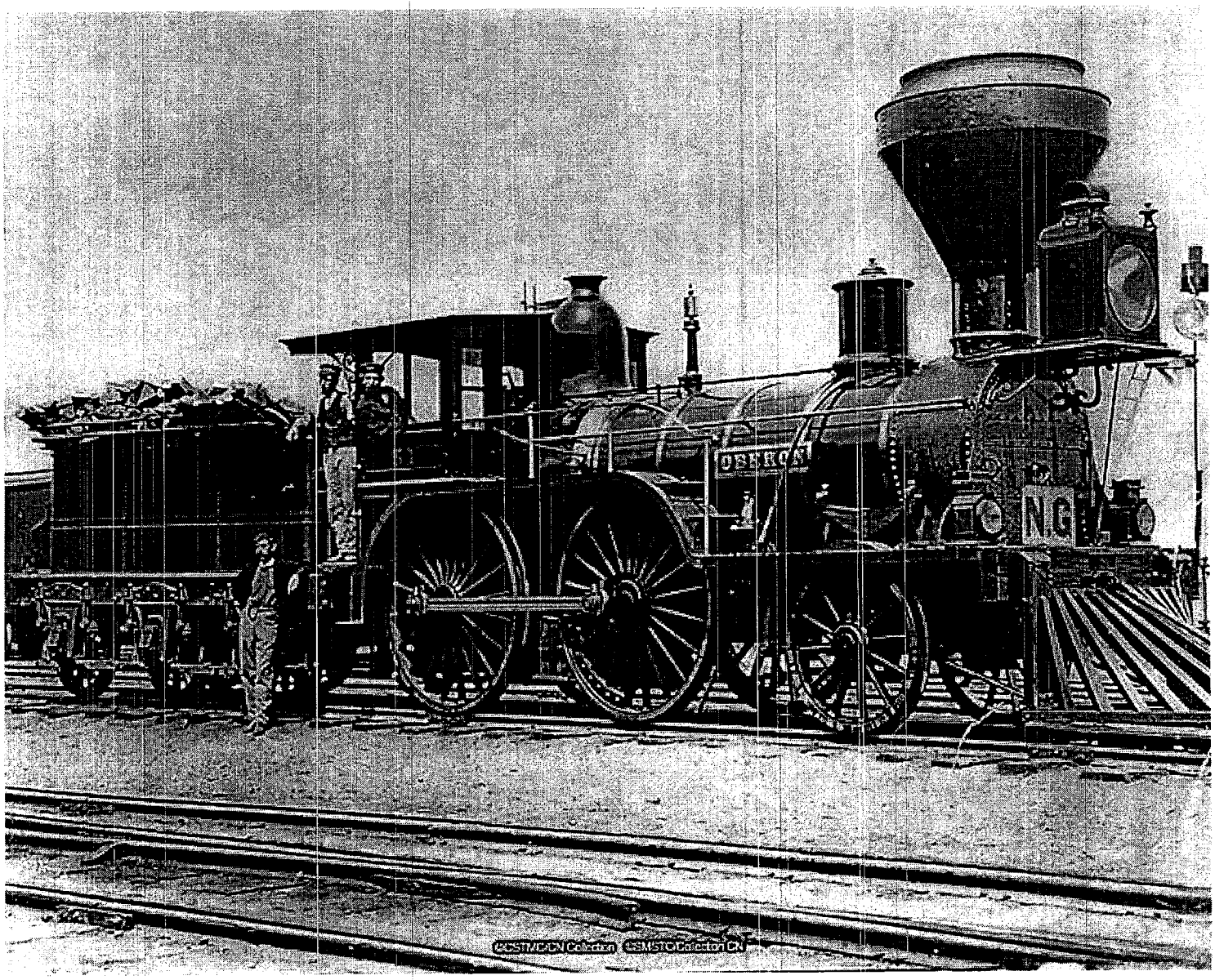
Subject: Steam locomotive
Equipment Number: Prospero
Collection: Mattingly



Great Western Railway steam locomotive Adam Brown no. 55 and railway employees
ca. 1870
Image No.: CN002134



Great Western Railways steam locomotive Oberon with an NG sign as it was hauling cars of mixed gauge
ca. 1870
Image No.: CN002135

CLOSE WINDOW

JUNCTION CUT FEBRUARY 5, 1854

Saturday evening, February 5th, 1854, a collision occurred between a freight train from Detroit and a gravel train going up the Dundas grade. The accident happened half way between Hamilton and Dundas. The down freight was propelled by the engine Kent and had ten boxcars containing 90 barrels of flour in each car.

The driver of the freight engine Kent when he arrived at Paris at 4:45 PM received an order to proceed. The freight left Paris and proceeded down grade past the Dundas station. A short while later the freight ran into the locomotive Ontario pulling a gravel train on its way to Dundas. The Ontario was running without lights, the crew saw the approaching engine but this was not the case on the engine Kent. It was luck that out of this affair there were only slight injuries.

It would appear that the Superintendant at Hamilton thought that the freight would be late and sent the gravel train up the hill thinking it would make Dundas before the arrival of the eastbound freight.

BAPTISTE CREEK OCTOBER 27, 1854

Baptiste Creek in western Ontario fifteen miles west of Chatham on October 27th, 1854, was a very quiet place. The Great Westernad a station consisting of a wood shed, water tank and sleeping quarters for the switch tender. The railway tracks passes for a long distance through a inhospitable swamp. On this date their was but one person living here for a square mile. The contractors building the railway had a gravel pit located on the shore of Lake St Clair a few miles distant being developed for the ballast of the railway.

The Great Western by all accounts had been opened prematurely, amoung other problems, the railway had not been adequetely gravel ballasted. Without ballast there was nothing to hold the ties, and therefore the rails in place or to provide drainage from the track. In the hurry to open the railway and operate trains it was decided to operate gravel ballast trains interspersed with the regular passenger and freight traffic. Therefore double the trains and double the meets.

The day before, a mail express train had left the Suspension Bridge at Niagara Falls at two o'clock in the afternoon. It ran through the Niagara Pennisula without occasion to arrive at Hamilton on schedule. It left rounging the Bay and climbed the escarpment through Dundas and Copetown. At St George station it came upon a gravel train that had derailed, a delay ensued until the route was clear. The Express reached London late but it set off again west. The express had only travelled two and a half miles when the cylinder head burst without warning. It would seem that a small screw had broken loose and had fallen in side the cylinder binding the cylinder and piston. The engine was now unable to move. A messenger was sent on foot back to London, where another engine was requested. Another engine was sent out and the whole train was pulled back to London. Nearly four hours had been lost, just at London, before the train could again start west. It was now early morning, and a dense fog lay across the land. The Express had arrived and left Chatham near Five o'clock in the morning when it should have left by the Timetable at near Ten o'clock the night before. It was seven hours late.

At Bapiste Creek, at five in the morning; men began loading ballast on the special gravel trains.

G. F. Harris was the gravel contractor hired by the Great Western to ballast the working, but still unfinished railway. From his gravel pit on the edge of Lake St Clair he had men loading gravel on to flatcars at 5:00 AM. A steam engine pulled the loaded cars out to destinations on the GWR. The Engineer of the gravel train was John Kettlewell and the Conductor was a man T. D. Twitchell. He was the Boss of the gravel train. He ran the ballast trains out on the mainline when he felt like it. He was the sole arbiter, all subordinates were bound to obey him. He would order out the private gravel train not only in violation of the rules and regulations of the Great Western Railway, but in "defiance every dictate of common prudence and sound judgement." Prior to this date Twitchell had been admonished about running his gravel train out on the GWR mainline close to the time of the Express trains. Engineer Kettlewell had complained to the local GWR officials, only to be rebuked, and told to follow Twitchwell's orders. The GWR did not have a fulltime agent at Baptiste Creek. Instead, the contractor's handy man Patrick Pine, was the engine wiper, the switch-tender and a makeshift operator. All the rules had been given up for the profit of the contractor.

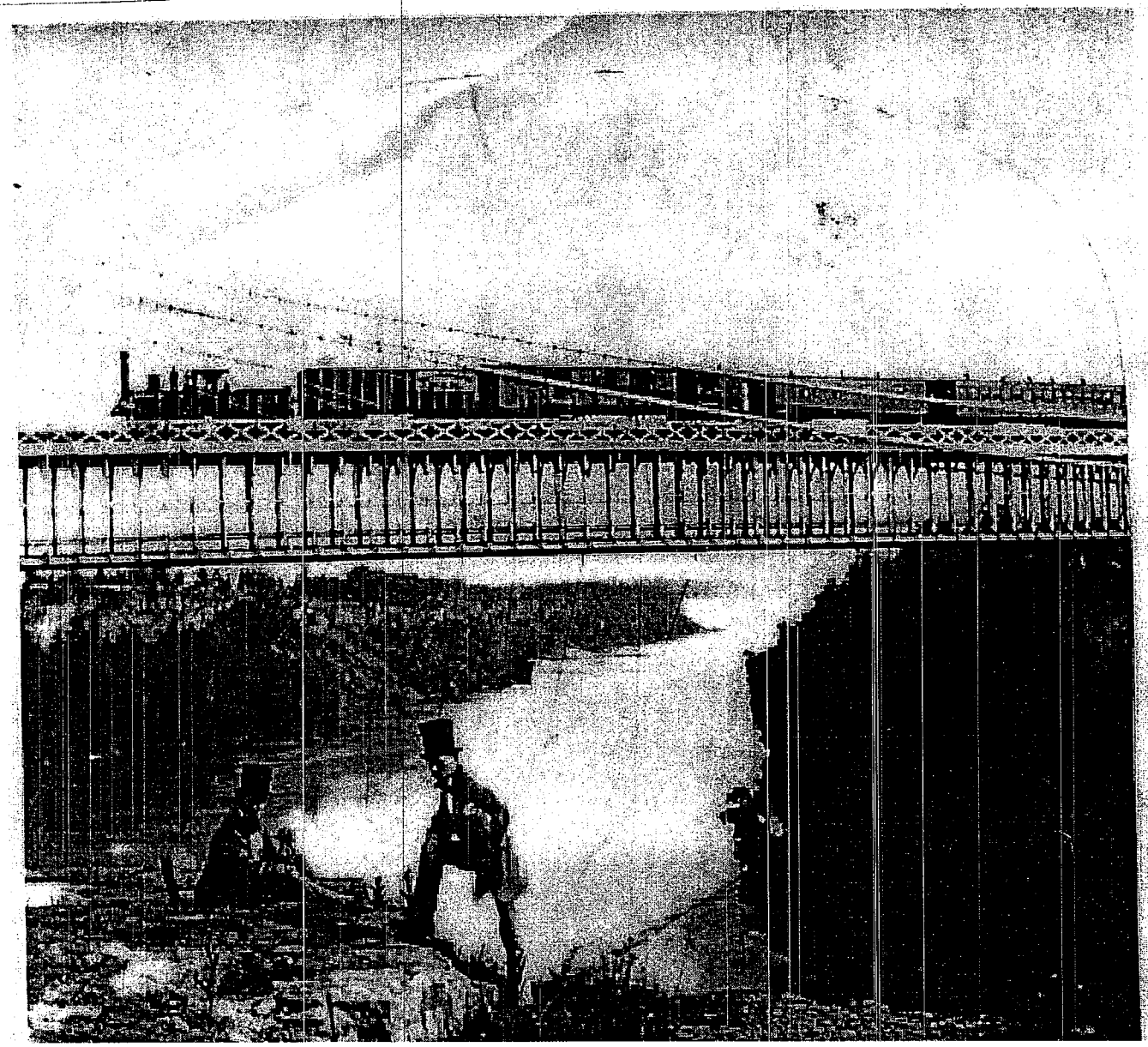
On this early 4:00 in the morning all were awake to start a days work. It was very dark and there was a very thick fog. Kettlewell searched out Patrick Pine to ask him had the express gone through. Pine replied that it had, but he would later say that the Eastbound Express had been seen, but he did not think to include the westbound. Kettlewell thought the track was clear. At 4:30; steam had been raised, gravel trains were in operation. Twitchell ordered Pine to unlock the switch, and ordered Kettlewell to get the fifteen car gravel train out on the railway. The fog was thick and cold.

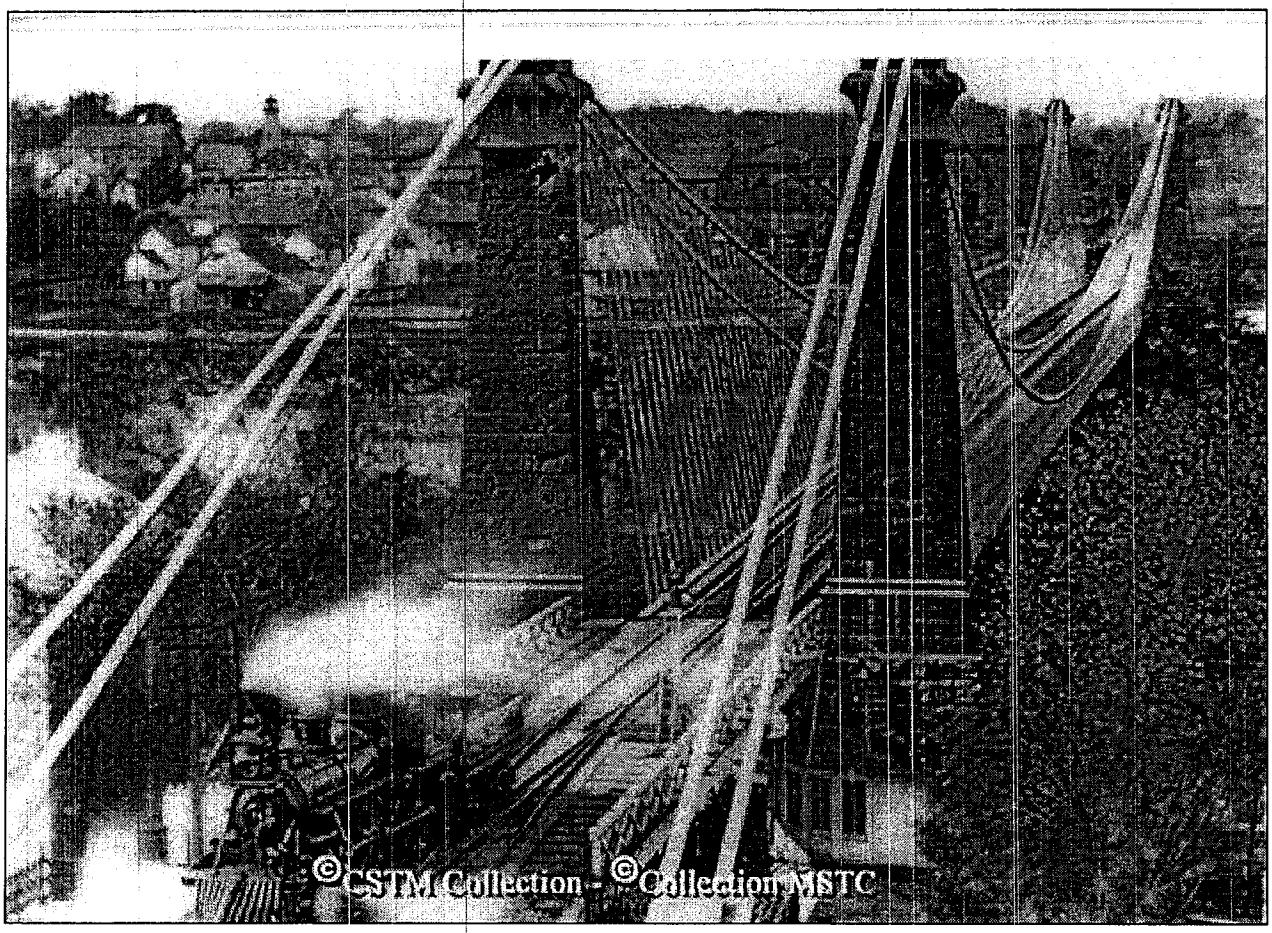
The Express Passenger Train came out of the white fog and in a moment the locomotive smashed and crashed into the flatcars of the gravel train. Immediate carnage. The engine and the express car were thrown over to the side of the tracks, passenger cars were thrown about, two coaches were crushed and a third wrecked. It took five hours to pull people out of the debris. The Baptiste Creek wreck would claim 48 killed and 50 injured.

SUSENSION BRIDGE

Sunday March 24th, 1855 a special test train of engine, tender and twenty-two loaded freight cars, over four hundred tons, passed safely over the new Suspension Bridge. The next day, Monday, March 25th, 1855 ; at three o'clock in the afternoon the first passenger train, the Morning Express from Rochester, New York steamed out on to the bridge. The honour fell to the engine David Upton pulling a baggage car and three passenger coaches. At the throttle was New York Central Railroad Master Mechanic David Upton. The train was just covered with passengers hanging from every window and platform.

The train when it arrived on the Canadian side the guests were treated to a great collation and speaches. The train then backed up and crossed the bridge to the American side where there was another great collation and some more speaches.





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Subject: Steam locomotiveBridge
Collection: Mattingly

Photo Number: MAT001296
Photographer: CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS
Location: Niagara Falls, ON
Railway Name: GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY OF CANADA
Subject: Bridge
Collection: Mattingly

In June 1855 the Great Western Railway had two steamships built named the America and the Canada. The Great Western planned to use these steamships to sail across Lake Ontario to the New York port of Oswego. The length of their hulls were 298 feet. The breadth of their beam was 38 feet. They were built of Canadian white oak and fir. The engines were a lever beam condensing engine, the cylinders were of 70 inch diameter, the piston stroke was 12 feet, wheels 36 feet in diameter manufactured at the West Point Foundry. The main deck forward is devoted to freight. The officer's rooms, a smoking salon, kitchen and offices occupying the guards, or that part of the ship extending beyond the sides. Abaft the engine on this deck was the Ladies Cabin which had ten state rooms. On the promenade deck was an upper cabin 250 feet long. That cabin contained fifty-six state rooms. It was felt that grain and flour both from the Great Western territory and that from the western United States could be unloaded at Oswego into the American railway network for a quick trip to New York City.

The daily service was started June 25th 1855 with two other chartered steamers the Europa and the Western World. The service had been ordered by the Canadian directors and it was extremely disasterous. London shareholders were not pleased. The next year the route was changed to a daily sailing from Hamilton to Brockville, Prescott, Canada and Cape Vincent, and Ogdensburg in New York. This still lost money and the steamships were sold the next year 1857.

The rails of the Galt and Guelph Railway were being laid with vigor it was reported by August 31st, 1855. The track had been laid half way between Galt and Preston, with the exception of ballasting. The Great Western Railway Company's locomotive, St Catharines was used to convey the iron along the rails every evening, under the gaze of the admiring local inhabitants. The railway between Galt and Preston was opened for public traffic Monday the 26th of November 1855.

The Great Western Railway filled Ostrandes Trestle between Twelve Mile Creek and St Davids that same November.

GREAT WESTERN HAMILTON SHOPS

Hamilton was the center of the world created by the Great Western Railway. It was conceived in this city. The principals were Hamiltonians. It was the headquarters of the railway. The harbour is the best on Lake Ontario. The railways principle engine and car shops were built in Hamilton. The railway shops and yards were constructed along the shore of the bay at its western end. The railway lands were obtained by filling the bay with material excavated from the railway construction. The land was pushed seven hundred feet into the bay creating forty new acres of land. The locomotive department buildings; the locomotive shops and the roundhouse were constructed of solid stone.

The number of engines belonging to the Great Western in 1857 was eighty-six. About half were constructed in the United States by Lowell, Schenectady, Souther, Norris and Amoskeag. The other half were heavier engines imported from English works, Fairburn, Stothert & Slaughter, Stephenson, and Birkenhead. A steam locomotive requires a lot of repair and maintenance. The early cast iron could often crack in extreme cold. The locomotive shop to maintain the iron horse was important.

The Great Western locomotive shop was a mammoth stone building three stories tall. Twelve tracks came off the turntable and ran a hundred and fifty yards into the twelve work-bays. Each work-bay could hold two locomotives. Here the engines could be disassembled completely, repairs and alterations made, and were so well equipted that locomotives could be completely manufactured in the shop. On this ground floor were ponderous lathes for turning crankpins and driving wheels, a large planning machine, large drill press and a cylinder boring machine. The second floor contained rows of lathes and woodworking machines to repair the wood portions of an engine like its cowcatcher, cabs and buffer beams. A stationary 60 horsepower engine provided the power for the countless pulleys and belts that drove all the machines for both the locomotive and car departments. At the back was the blacksmith shop with twenty-six smithy fires. and a huge steam forging hammer.

Behind to the west of the locomotive shop was the car shops used for the construction and repair of the railways freight and passenger cars. This was a wood frame building fifty feet wide by three hundred feet long.

NIAGARA FALLS DECEMBER 18, 1855

A most fearful collision took place on Tuesday afternoon December 18th, 1855 between the east-bound mixed accommodation train on the Great Western due at the Bridge- Niagara Falls at 1:00 PM. and the down train on the Erie and Ontario which leaves Niagara at 1:05. The GWR train had lost speed and a telegraph message from Grimsby reported that it was running nearly an hour late. The Superintendent at the Bridge gave orders for the Erie and Ontario train to proceed, for at this point the GWR and the E&O share the same track for several miles before the E&O splits off to run south to Niagara on the Lake. It seems that the engine Middlesex on the accommodation was running at an extraordinary speed past Grimsby and recovered the lost time so that as it came around the curve not far from the station the engine Middlesex smashed into the E&O engine Niagara. Despite a severe crash only slight injuries occurred. Mr Zimmerman immediately ordered the construction of a second track from Niagara Falls station to the junction, later named Clifton Junction, at the top of the mountain.

INGERSOLL SEPTEMBER 3, 1855

A special train left Niagara Falls at midnight September 3rd, 1855, bringing excurionists from Chatham and Detroit back to their homes. The Engineer Thomas Finlay, stopped at Woodstock and took on water and pushed onwards, not intending to stop at Ingersoll. As his train, which consisted of the engine Hamilton and three passenger and one baggage cars approached Ingersoll, he gave the usual signal for "switch off" but as he neared the point, he found that his signal had not been attended to, and that the lights at the switch were dimly burning. The brakes were at once put on, but it was too late to be of any service, and the train dashed off the track with frightful velocity. The Engineer was thrown several feet in the air and fell upon the track. The engine Hamilton and tender were capsized and smashed to pieces, and the baggage car plunged against the tank to be useless. None of the passenger cars were derailed. Fireman John Lowry had to be pulled out of the wreckage. The injury was small.

HAMILTON AND TORONTO RAILWAY

While work started on a railway between Hamilton and Toronto in 1854, due to sickness most of the work was advanced in the year 1855. By June 1855 the grading had been completed from Hamilton to Port Credit, twenty-six miles, and this included the widening of the Great Western Railway embankment to a double track around the Hamilton Bay. Obstacles were a cuttings; on the west side of the Credit River, the east side of the Etobicoke River, and at the Mimico River. While each of these required the removal of 4000 yards of material, it was the removal of 28,000 yards of earth through the Garrison common at Toronto. Bridges were built at the old Desjardins Canal or gorge, Applegarths Creek, Twelve Mile Creek, Sixteen Mile Creek, Credit, Humber, and Etobicoke Rivers. Stations, combined passenger and freight buildings, were built at Wellington Square (Burlington), Bronte, Oakville and Port Credit. Water tanks and woodsheds built at Bronte and Port Credit. At Toronto a permanent engine house and turntable and a temporary passenger house were located at Queens Wharf on eleven acres of Ordinance land adjoining the Old Fort. By June rails reached from Hamilton to Port Credit twenty-six miles. City politics in the city of Toronto delayed a proper entrance along the Esplanade and a Union Station with the Northern Railroad and the Grand Trunk.

OPENING THE GREAT WESTERN HAMILTON TO TORONTO
DECEMBER 3RD, 1855

The first day the a train ran between Toronto and Hamilton was an extremely simple affair. The first GWR station at the foot of the bridge leading to Queen's Wharf was a 6x10 foot ticket box, adjacent to a small engine shed. The GWR wanted to go east along the Esplanade to use the Northern station, as a sort of union station, but this move was held up by the Toronto City Council. The first train was a small three car train west. The importance of this event was not lost on civic leaders in both cities and it was decided that a week later, December , 1855 would become a grand celebration.

The celebration train left Toronto. Full to capacity at 8:10 AM and all were pleased with the westward trip until the engine slowed down at Port Credit The engine and engineer encountered a surprise fence built right across the track A farmer by the name of Carthew, had a dispute with the Railway and the Railway Act and he was just going to show everyone he still owned the land. The fence was taken down and the train proceeded to Hamilton where a large crowd had assembled at the station to greet their new visitors from Toronto. one mile west of Port Credit. A farmer by the name of Cathew, had a dispute it would seem; with both, the Railway and the Railway Act. The price paid by the GWR wasn't to his agreement. The engine was given more steam and dashed through Carthew's barricade and was off to Hamilton, where a large crowd was waiting for their new Toronto visitors.

Speeches were made, and then the Hamiltonians boarded the enlarged eastbound special train, now ten cars long. The Conductor, with forthsight, after the incident at Port Credit asked that a Constable accompany the special train. Off they went at 10:45, passing Wellington Square (Burlington) where a small crowd stood, as a cannon was fired in salute. The Port Credit farmer Cathew, had been busy again; for now there was not only a rebuilt fence; but heavy stakes had been driven into the middle of the track.. The train stopped, and the Constable marched forward and the gentleman arrested and the fence and stakes removed. The special train arrived Toronto at noon.

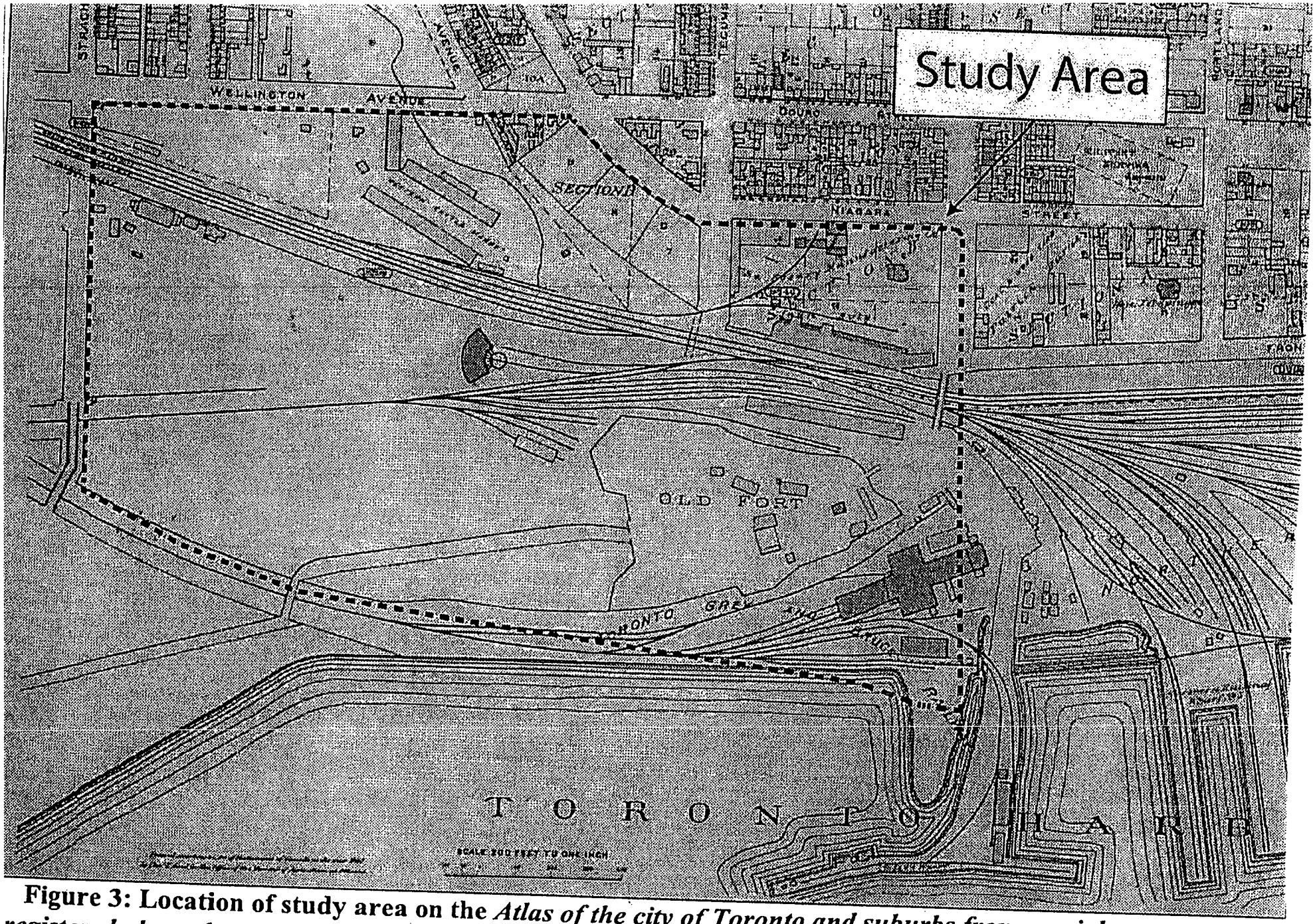


Figure 3: Location of study area on the *Atlas of the city of Toronto and suburbs from special survey and registered plans showing all buildings and lot numbers*. Charles E. Goad, 1884, Plate 19, Assigned Page 23, (Toronto Public Library [TRL])

The Great Western engine the Hecla had been built in November of 1855 by Fairburn and Company in England and shipped to Canada. It was built according to records as a 2-4-0, but these same records indicate it was converted to a 4-4-0 a few years later.

On the night of October 22nd, 1856 the Hecla was less than one year old, when it was assigned at Niagara Falls Suspension Bridge yard to The Lightening Express. The Express this night was eight cars long. Robert Hinchie the engine driver, and fireman James Hall climbed into the cab. Hinchie probably started grumbling to Hall immediately about the Hecla, for the last time he had her, he had reported in the Official Engine Register, at London, about the dangerous state of the smoke stack of Hecla. When the steam was shut off smoke and steam poured into the cab of the engine as to render it impossible for the driver to see ahead. Never the less, The Lightening Express left Niagara Falls at midnight and traveled west. As the train progressed, Hinchie knew he was right, for in the cab of Hecla the same problem existed, for as he slowed to approach two stations he shut off the steam and could not see. It was so bad that he would later state that he had completely passed by the stations at Ontario (Winona) and Vansickles without even being aware where he was, the smoke in the cab was that blinding. Through Hamilton, up the Dundas grade, St George, Paris Junction, slowing down at Woodstock expecting to meet an eastbound cattle train, he shut off the steam. The cattle train wasn't there, so on he went now besides the steam in the cab there was a very thick fog. The Lightening Express was now running as slow as a snail with the driver devoid of vision.

At Ingersoll that night, the cattle train heading east had arrived just a few minutes before the Express was due. It had started to do some shunting of the cars. The engine derailed at this time, and the consequence was that part of the cattle train was still on the mainline.

At 3:23 AM, the crew banged on the window of the Station Master; John Barr , and they told him of there problems, the engine couldn't be rerailed, the main track was fouled by the standing cattle train, could he please telegraph London to send another engine quickly.

Edward Nugent the brakeman on the freight started walking to the east , to the semaphore, at the east end of the yard. He carried with him two fog signals and his red lantern. The fog was so dense. The semaphore was set to red and as he traveled just a little more east out of the fog came The Express. He swung his red signal to no avail he thought, when he heard in the fog, the long signal "Down Brakes." Fireman James Hall later said they saw the red lantern, shut of f steam, whistled for brakes and ran over the fog signals. It was too late, the wet rails only made the train slide into the standing cattle cars. The Hecla, tender, baggage car and coach were wrecked. Cattle cars were wrecked, hurling hogs and cattle all about. No human lives were lost.

Railroading in the fog.

BEACHVILLE SEPTEMBER 8, 1857

September 1857, it had rained for two hours causing violent streams of water to whirl around the landscape. Heavy torrents of water had washed down a large quantity of sand around Beachville. The Afternoon Express plunged head first into a barricade of sand that had washed down upon the track, the engine buried in the sand, a baggage car drove to the right and was shattered. Fireman McCormick was scalded.

JUNCTION CUT JANUARY 8, 1857

It was a freezing cold morning January 8th, 1857, the Great Western eastbound Mail Express was late, really late arriving at the Dundas Station. It should have arrived at three in the morning and now as eight o'clock came, it still hadn't arrived. In the Hamilton station sat an eight car freight bound west. Hamilton was impatient, the Hamilton dispatcher telegraphed the Dundas operator had the Mail arrived; and if it had not to but out the signal to stop the mail at Dundas, for the freight was going to leave now. Station operator Andrew Nisbet agreed , without consulting the station master George Olds. Nisbet then told Thomas Greer to put out the signal to stop the Mail Train for the freight was now leaving Hamilton. Greer went out side for the purpose of setting the switches to put the Mail in the siding. Station master Olds had arrived in the front office was his dwelling at the rear of the station, Nesbit and Olds were in conversation about the morning events when they looked out and saw the Mail leaving Dundas. They ran out and questioned switch-tender Greer why he let the Mail pass; and by all accounts, it would appear that he was totally befuddled. Greer stood on the station platform waving a red flag to the back of the train. The Mail train was now on the down-grade.The telegraph operator ran into the station and wired Hamilton to hold the upbound freight. The return reply was that the freight had left. It was 8:00 AM.

The Mail Train this day consisted of the engine, a baggage car, a mail and express car, one second class coach and three first class coaches. In the locomotive cab were engineer John Tory, fireman Charles Betts. M. T. Bridgewater was the Conductor.

The collision occurred on the embankment over the site of the old Desjardins Canal, at a point today known as West Hamilton Junction.

The engines smashed together, the baggage car was thrown on top of the Mail car and at the same time the second class car ran through the Mail car. The dead and dying were pulled out of the wreckage. GWR employee S. M. Keeler was found dead, Hiram Everson the express messenger and fireman Charles Betts would die later in the day. Engineer Tory was scalded.

DESJARDINS CANAL MARCH 12, 1857

Engineer Alexander Burnfield swung into the cab of the 4-4-0 Oxford at the Great Western little temporary station adjacent to Bathurst Street in the late afternoon of March 12th, 1857, he hung his clock on the back of the boiler-head. His fireman George Knight was tending the fire and checking the steam pressure. The Oxford was one of a group of engines purchased a few years earlier, from the Schnectady Locomotive Works. He looked at his clock , it was 4:10, the conductor gave the signal and the little train of a baggage car and two coaches left Toronto. The two hour trip to Hamilton would not be fast. Stops were made at Port Credit, Oakville, Bronte and Wellington Square.

Up the line, just west of Hamilton, the Great Western crossed the new Desjardins Canal and fourty yards past was Desjardins Junction. This was the point where the Great Western Railway split. The mainline from Niagara Falls to Windsor and the switch from Hamilton to Toronto. A switch tender was stationed here. At 5:20 the switch tender aligned the switch, so that Engineer Edward Hartman, could run his train, pulled by the heavy English engine the Panther over the Canal swing-bridge and through the switch west to London. Everything was fine.

Now Engineer Burnfield saw the Bay to his left as he slowed up to the switch at Desjardins Junction and one of the retiring switch tenders ran and leaped up onto the platform of the last coach. It was 6:15 PM, little steam was given as there was a restricted slow speed limit crossing the Canal Bridge. Suddenly, something was amiss, Engineer Burnfield grabbed the whistle and threw the engine in reverse. The engine had derailed between the switch and the approach to the bridge. The cast iron axle on the front pilot wheel cracked and split throwing the engine off the track on to the ties. The Whistle screamed. The locomotive and tender were now on the swing bridge when the engine and tender twisted and threw the engine violently to one side onto the wooden bridge structure and the horror the engine cut into the bridge timbers and the bottom of the bridge caved in.

The engine and tender just fell through. The engine crew were last seen trying to jump clear. Quickly the passenger train was pulled out onto the bridge and then down fifty feet. The engine Oxford crashed through the thick ice. The tender followed, but the baggage car hit the hind of the tender and was thrown aside and slid over the ice. The first passenger car, pulled into the chasm turned as it fell, landing on its roof smashing it to pieces and then it sank into the ice and water. There were estimated to be one hundred people on board the train. Fifty-nine people died and eighteen injured. The engine crew perished. Many notable people died that night, Samuel Zimmerman, the contractor of the Great Western, is the most prominent.

Rescue started immediately but there were few to rescue, most were submerged. A heroic diver repeatedly went into the cold to recover the bodies. He would perish on his last dive. It took two attempts to pull the Oxford out of the Canal. Found on the back-head of the locomotive was Burnfield's clock stopped at 6:15.

Many were buried in the Hamilton Cemetary where a memorial was erected complete with a bronze model on the top of the engine Oxford.

Burnfield's clock was exhibited at a jewelly store as the Desjardins Clock around 1910. It has disappeared and then in the Depression years the bronze model was stolen from the memorial.

Desjardins Junction is the point where the CPR joins the mainline today, just south of Hamilton Junction.

THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY SLEEPING CARS

On Saturday, November 27th, 1858 the new sleeping cars just completed for the Great Western had been turned out for a trial trip. They were described as the most perfect thing of its kind ever constructed. The credit was given to Mr Sharpe, the Car Superintendant, under his instructions, and after whose designs they had been built. The hamilton Spectator said they were much superior to the ones then in use on both the New York Central and the Michigan Central Railways. These cars had all their interior fittings, instead of being made of the traditional mahogany were made with Canadian black Walnut, at one third the cost of the former.

The cars were beautifully arranged. The berths or beds were three tiers high, and when necessary the car could be divided by curtains so that a party of either three or six could be entirely shut off from the other passengers in the car. Basins for washing is fixed at each end of the car. Attendants looked after the comfort of the passengers. Less motion was felt on these sleeping cars than on the common passenger cars because of the greater weight held in the center of the car.

TORONTO UNION STATION 1858

When the Great Western opened its Hamilton and Toronto branch line in 1855, it built a permanent brick roundhouse just west of Bathurst Street. and while it crossed the Northern Railway and continued along Front Street and there the company in 1855 built a temporary station between Brock and Front Streets. The GWR had arrived in Toronto before the Grand Trunk. The GTR was built in two sections,, Montreal to Toronto and Toronto to Sarnia. The two sections were opened in the summer of 1856. The eastern section had a station at the Don River while the western section crossed the GWR to a station shed and terminal at Queens Wharf. The two portions at first had no connection. The following year the GTR made an arrangement with the Northern Railway to use its station at Bay and Front Streets. In 1857 the Grand Trunk built a connecting line along the Esplanade. There were now four stations in Toronto. The Grand Trunk started construction on its own station in the spring of 1858. The original GTR Toronto station was situated fifty feet west of Bay Street along Front Street. A small frame building, housing two waiting rooms, a lunch room, a barber shop, a ticket office, a baggage room and telegraph office. Designated the Toronto Union Station the Great Western Railway and the Northern Railway joined the Grand Trunk in using this station. The station was opened June 21st, 1858 to the GWR, Northern and the Grand Trunk.

In 1858 the company purchased a large passenger transfer ferry the Union capable of breaking through the ice on the winter Windsor to Detroit passage.

The first station at Chatham burned down the night of Monday the 15th of November 1858. The adjoining buildings managed to be protected, although the nearby saloon of David Walker was considerably damaged.

The Great Western built December 1858, the largest grain elevator in the region opposite the Hamilton depot along its wharf where the water is 14 feet deep. A railway track is laid into the building and there were three elevating machines. Three cars could be unloaded at the same time. Ships could be loaded alongside the new grain elevator.

SARNIA BRANCH OPENS

January 18th, 1859 the Great Western finally opened its branch line to Sarnia. The celebration consisted of a special excursion train that left Sarnia at 7:30 in the morning carrying about 250 people. The train travelled through a rustic and very rural area that had been ignored by settlement. The train ran over the new line, on a miserable cold and rainy day, to a reception at the "Forest City", London. It arrived at 11:30. While the excursionists were enjoying themselves in London, the Great Western directors left in an official train from London travelling to Sarnia. At two o'clock the excursionists left London. Arriving at five o'clock, Mayor Henry Glass, accompanied by a number of the Town Council waited upon the GWR Directors at McAvoy's Hotel. The customary speeches and toasts flowed freely. Sarnia and its adjoining sister city of Port Huron, Michigan sit at the point where Lake Huron flows into the St Clair River. The St Clair River while it has a depth of twenty feet, at its end, where it empties into Lake St Clair the natural depth of the river is only four feet. An early impediment to Upper Lakes navigation. The Chicago and the mid-American trade it was hoped could be drawn off at ports like Sarnia and Goderich.

ST CATHARINES TUBULAR BRIDGE

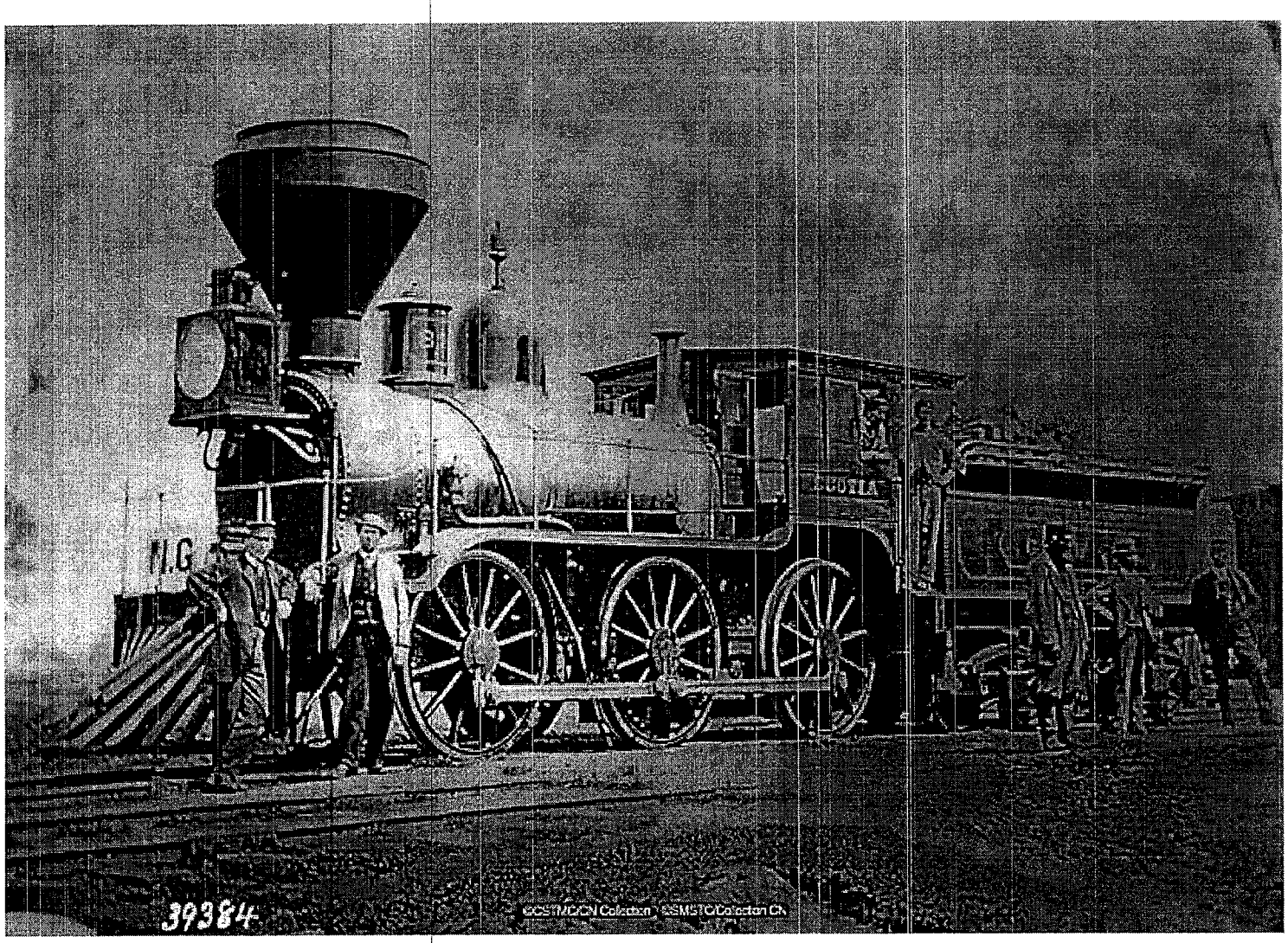
The Great Western at the time of its construction had built a large wooden trestle across Twelve Mile Creek north of the town of St Cathaines. With its approach tracks it resembled a large S in the middle of a very

straight line of track. This obstacle was removed in March 1859. A new tubular bridge was constructed on a new crossing a little down the stream than the old trestle-work, a distance sufficient to make the track a straight line for a considerable distance east and west of the bridge. This obviated all the inconvienence, danger and wear and tear to the light rails on the wood trestle crossing. Heavy masonry abutments were spanned by cast iron tubular beams. This tubular portion is made of the heaviest iron, well wrought, and riveted together. The span from one abutment to the other abutment was about 184 feet. Trains passed over the bridge for the first time March 18th, 1859.

Competition between the Great Western and the Grand Trunk each for their own territory had started to alarm the foreign English shareholders. The Great Western had built to the GTR town of Sarnia. The Grand Trunk had built a railway from near Stratford down through St Marys to the GWR town of London. The Grand Trunk carried its Sarnia traffic across the St Clair River and had made arrangements with Michigan railways to carry its traffic down river to the GWR fortess at Windsor-Detroit. Given that the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway's connection at Stratford gave the GTR a reach to Buffalo on the Niagara River and that GWR and GTR both had terminals at Toronto. English capitalists started to fear cut throat competition as revenues started to fall. And there was still a lot of talk about a more southern route through Southern Ontario from the Niagara to Detroit.

The Great Windsor Fire

Citizens of Windsor were startled in the early morning hours of April 25th, 1859 by the alarm of fire. A terrible conflagration was raging in the repair shop and buildings belonging to the Great Western Railway along the river shore. Firemen from Detroit ran to the aid, grabbing the ferry steamer "Windsor". Quickly the fire consumed the repair shop with four engines and very valuable tools inside. the shop was a large frame building about a quarter mile east of the station. The blacksmith shop and a large five hundred foot long woodpile were soon consumed. The firemen were able to contain the fire and protect the larger roundhouse farther eastward. Some believed that the fire was a result of arsonists. The locomotives burned were the Medusa, Erebus and Medea; all English engines, all considerably worn, and an American, a Norris engine.



Great Western Railway 0-6-0 locomotive 82 Scotia
and railroad employees
1861

Image No.: CN002123

CLOSE WINDOW

PRINCE OF WALES

In the summer of 1860 the first visit to Canada by English Royalty occurred when Albert, the Price of Wales , eldest son of Queen Victoria and heir to the English Throne paid a long excursion through Canada and the United States. He travelled along the Grand Trunk from Montreal to Toronto, then paid a brief visit to Collingwood riding the Northern Railroad. September 13th, 1860. once again on the Grand Trunk he ran from Toronto west through Guelph, Stratford, St Marys to London.

At London the Great Western took over the operation of the Prince's travels. The GWR had built their own ornate private car for the Prince. It was described as having two compartments. The furniture was maple, the interior was also maple with white enameling and gilt beading. The ceiling forms part of a segment of a curve.

The Great Western drew the train west over it's new line to Sarnia. The area was so new that the press of the day described a line through forests very few people and rustic homesteads with log cabins, not the well established farming communities seen east of London. At Sarnia five thousand people were waiting at this port on the shores of the St Clair. Two hundred native people from Manitoulin Island had journeyed to be part of the celebrations. A quick return was made back to London, arriving at three o'clock in the afternoon.

The next day, September , the special Great Western train left London heading east. The Royal Train was driven by Richard Eaton, the Superintendent of the Locomotive Works of Great Western. The conductor was Mr Patchin, the oldest conductor in service on the railway.

At Ingersoll an arch was placed over the track as the train passed slowly. Firemen lined the platform at the station. The next stop was Woodstock. A small civic reception was held in the town. The Train then ran to Paris Junction, where the Prince crossed the platform to board a

Buffalo and Lake Huron Royal Train. The B&LH carried the Prince to a reception at Brantford, then east through Caledonia, Dunnville, Port Colborne to Fort Erie. A river steamer and horse carriages delivered the Royal to Niagara Falls. There he stayed at the house of the late Samuel Zimmerman, the contractor of the GWR, and a victim of the Desjardins accident.

The Great Western made up a special train at Hamilton at nine on the morning of September 15th, that took the Hamilton Field Battery, men, horses and guns to Niagara Falls to participate in a celebration and a Royal Gun Salute at Clifton House. The Prince of Wales sent several days in the Niagara area visiting the Falls, and dedicating the Queenston monument to Sir Issac Brock. Then to Niagara on the Lake where he took a steamer for a quick trip to Port Dalhousie. There he boarded a Welland train for St Catharines. After a civic reception the Prince of Wales once again came under the care of the Great Western Railway. Boarding the private car at the GWR station at St Catharines the special train left running west, stopping at Grimsby and arrived at Hamilton at five o'clock on Wednesday, September 19th. The Prince stayed more than a day at Hamilton.

Friday afternoon, at 2:00 o'clock, September 21st, Prince Albert left from the Great Western Hamilton station bound, the Royal Train hauled by an English engine three coaches and the Royal state car went west once again, but this time it would be a fast through train, bound for the United States. It ran fast through Dundas, Ingersoll, London, slowing and stopping at Chatham station. There it was extremely notable that a crowd of two thousand waited on the platform, of which one thousand were the areas black population. The former slaves who rode the Underground Railroad north. It is ironic that when the train left Chatham that the next stop would be Windsor were the British Prince crossed by ferry steamer to Detroit, United States. The American Civil War was only six months into the future.

The London Free Press of September 15th, 1860 states that the Royal Train on the Great Western Railway was pulled from London to Sarnia was drawn by the engine Hecla and was driven by G. Williams with Mr Patchem as the Conductor. A Mr Wylie drove the pilot engine to Sarnia and Mr Brodie was the Conductor.

NEW SLEEPING CAR

The Canadian Illustrated News in December 1862 reported that the Great Western Railway had just turned out a new sleeping car. The car which the GWR converted into a sleeping car was the Royal saloon which had been placed at the disposal of the Prince of Wales during his 1860 tour. It outside appearance was not altered; but its ceiling was described as the loftiest of any railway car in America. The ventilation was provided by GWR Sharpes excellent ventilators-for the admission of air-at both ends; and exhaust ports over each berth, securing an abundance of fresh air, without the slightest draft. The car had accommodation for forty-four passengers and could be used as either a day or night car. Partitions of solid walnut, beautifully polished, divided the berths into eleven compartments, four berths in each. The beds were spring-stuffed, and covered with moquette. They were enclosed by damask curtains, which secured complete privacy for the travellers. There were two wash-rooms, one for ladies and the other for gentlemen at the diagonal corners of the car. The trucks were built uponthe compensating double lateral motion principle, first designed by Mr Sharp for this car when it served the Prince of Wales. These trucks helped to reduce the oscillatory motion.

GREAT WESTERN STATION TORONTO

On Saturday March 3rd, 1866, more than a decade after the arrival of the GWR in Toronto at the small temporary station the Great western opened it's own Toronto station at the base of Yonge Street, on land reclaimed from the Lake. The Toronto Globe called it the most conviently situated station in the city at that time. The extension to Yonge Street served two purposes; the first that it gave the Great Western access to the different wharves of the city over an independent route. The second the railway secured station accommodation entirely under its own control.

The station was built on fifteen foot wood piles slammed into the rock base. The base was built on large tiles, for only a few years earlier the land was under the edges of the harbour. The land area of the station was 150 feet by 211 feet. On the north side was the passenger station, including waiting rooms, the telegraph office, and refreshment rooms. The south side was the freight portion. Between the passenger and the freight offices, in the center was an enclosed arch or trainshed that protected the railway cars and passengers. This center portion was 64 feet wide, the side walls 34 feet high, with the top of the arch being 54 feet high. The passenger platform was 35 by 195 feet long. The structure was built of wood painted a stone colour.

The opening of the station was celebrated by the Great Western by offering an excursion from the new station to the Toronto Board of Trade to Niagara Falls. The train consisted of five of the new eliptical roofed passenger cars, with the official car at the rear. The train was drawn by the engine Dakin. It left at 9:30 in the morning. The train stopped at Hamilton to pick up the Hamilton Board of Trade and GWR officials. The special ran east to Erie Junction where the train ran over the Erie and Ontario Railway to stop in front of the Clifton House. The guests roamed around the Falls area, some even crossing the ice bridge over the Niagara River to the American side. They returned to the Clifton House for a banquet and speeches. They left Niagara at 6:00 o'clock and arrived Toronto at ten in the evening.

December 19th, 1870 it was reported that the Great Western had made additional alterations to this station by adding an addition to the south east corner of the Yonge Street building. One office was moved westward.

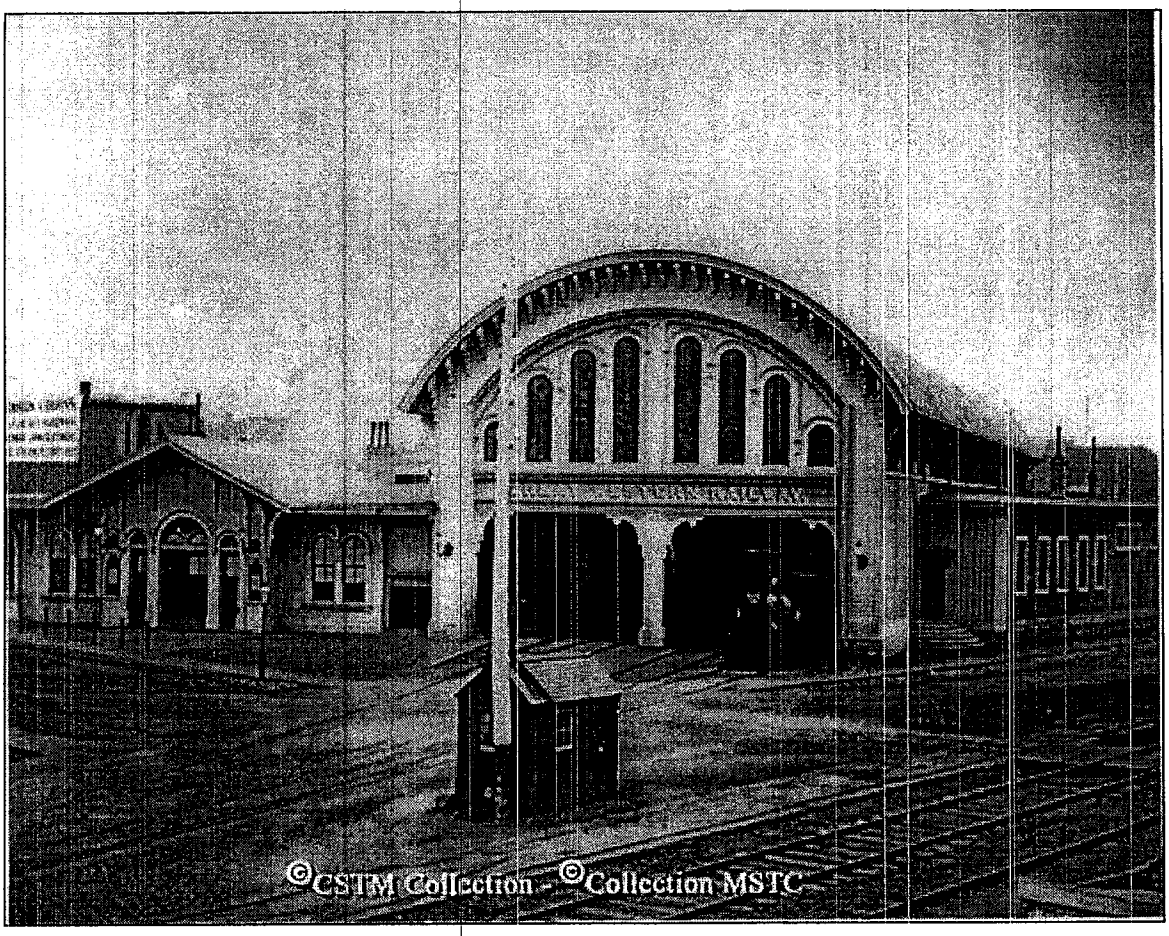


Photo Number: MAT001295
Photographer: unknown
Location: Toronto, ON
Railway Name: GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY OF CANADA
Date: 1860-00-00
Caption: GWR station at the corner of Yonge & Esplanade streets in Toronto.
Subject: Station
Collection: Mattingly

Photo Number: MAT001294
Photographer: unknown
Location: Hamilton, ON
Railway Name: GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY OF CANADA
Date: 1850-00-00
Caption: First railway station in Hamilton and one of the early trains in the 1850's.
Subject: StationSteam locomotive
Equipment Number: 82 Wm. Weir
Collection: Mattingly

THE FENIAN WAR

The Fenian Brotherhood was started in 1857 by Irish-Americans with the view of attempting to secure the Independence of Ireland Shortly after its establishment; the American Civil War erupted. Many newly arrived Irishmen joined the Union Army. The Civil War ended in 1865, and now there were many battle tested Irishmen returning to the northern cities. The American Fenians in 1865 was extremely strong with 10,000 war veterans and nearly $500,000.00 in cash. The idea became that with this power the Fenians would invade and seize Canada, and hold it as a temporary hostage believing that they could force the British Crown to establish an independent Ireland. In May 1866 the call went out to thousands of Irish Patriots, and they took the call and started travelling to assembly points on the border, one south of Montreal, one near Prescott, Ontario but thousands started to arrive at Buffalo. Many came by train from Cleveland, posing, when questioned, as railway workers. The leader was Brigadier General John O'Neill, a former Union cavalry officer. The hope was that the United States would give recognition to the Brotherhood and its aims. With 2000 Fenians in Buffalo May 31st, the American military commander at Fort Lennox at the mouth of the Niagara River gave a warning that they would not allow a crossing of the Niagara to Fort Erie. Directly opposite the Fort was the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway terminal and its car ferry International. The British Consulate in Buffalo telegraphed Mr Swinyard, the Genreal Manager of the Great Western Railway requesting him to stop all trains between Hamilton and the Suspension Bridge, stating he feared that the Fenians would cross the border, seize and take possession of the Great Western and make a quick advance to Hamilton. The Buffalo and Lake Huron-Grand Trunk removed all their engines and rolling stock from Fort Erie.

In the early morning hours of June 1st, 1866, the Fenians moved north of Buffalo to Black Rock, New York, secured a few barges and 800 Fenians crossed the Niagara River and commenced their invasion of Canada. Later that morning another 400 Fenians and this continued until the US

Navy gunboat, the USS Michigan started intercepting the rogue barges. Two columns of the Fenians were formed with the intent of sweeping around and behind Fort Erie to capture the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway and march west along the B&LH through Ridgeway to Port Colborne, there upon seize and block the Welland Canal then march north and seize the Welland Railway to cut the Great Western at Merritton. This first day this full march was hampered as O'Neill tried to commander supplies and deal with large desertions from his large force. Some B&LH rails were torn up, a small bridge burned and the telegraph line into Fort Erie was cut.

With the first landings in the night the railway telegraph line sent the message of the invasion. Hamilton, Toronto and all along the GWR the message was received, with alarm, a cannon was fired from the Belfry of the Drill Shed on King William Street in Hamilton to call the 13th Volunteer Battalion of Hamilton to quick assembly at four o'clock that morning. In Toronto the Queen's Own Rifles were also aroused. The 13th Battalion of the 7th Military District were turned out and assembled at the Drill Shed by 6:30 AM. and marched down to the Great Western station on Stuart Street. The Great Western had assembled two troop trains. The first train of empty coaches left at 6 AM. heading due east to gather volunteers at Grimsby, Beamsville and St Catharines to arrive at the border at Suspension Bridge-Niagara Falls. The second GWR train, full of the 13th Volunteers left Hamilton at 10:00 AM., for the front, but not eastward this time, but west, up the Dundas grade to Paris Junction. The Troop train then turned on to the Buffalo and Lake Huron Railway ran through Brantford to Caledonia and York where local companies boarded the train. The train then steamed on to Dunnville, then on to Port Colborne then to the outskirts of the little village of Ridgeway. Meanwhile The Queen's Own Rifles of Toronto had assembled, boarded the steamship City of Toronto, sailed across Lake Ontario landing the troupe at Port Dalhousie. They took the cars of the Welland Railway south through St Catharines, Merritton, Thorold and Welland to arrive at Port Colborne. The train then turned onto the B&LH to arrive at Ridgeway to join the 13th Battalion.

Meanwhile, business on the Great Western Railway was suspended to allow military trains the right of way. At London, a train was assembled to transport 550 troops and held there. Armed pickets stood guard at all the GWR bridges. Engines were fired up at all points along the mainline ready for any emergency.

In Hamilton, the 16th Foot had been assembled, and they marched to the GWR station to go to Suspension Bridge, but the train just waited for hours. Then loud shouts were heard in the distance, to the west, by the railway workshops, then came a long military extra train from Toronto drawn by two powerful broad guage GWR engines. It was the British Royal Artillery. G Battery of the Royal Artillery of Toronto, complete with six Armstrong field pieces, their ammunition wagons, the required horses and two hundred men and officers. And as that wasn't enough; this long train also a wing of the 47th from Toronto. At 2:30 PM. the Royal Artillery train left Hamilton eastward, followed east by the other train with Hamilton's 16th Foot leaving at 2:40 PM.

By nightfall of June first 1866 the Canadian railroads had delivered the Canadian Militia units to the front at Ridgeway, where they faced the Fenian invaders. The United States Navy gunboat has sealed the Niagara River. The 4th Battalion from London was steaming east through the night, to arrive Hamilton at 5:30 AM.

During the night the Fenians had marched to a defensive position at Limestone Ridge near Ridgeway. In the morning of June 2nd, 1866, 800 entrenched Fenians were met by an almost equal number of Canadian militia. It would appear that the Canadians prevailed in the first hour, but for some unexplained reason some Canadian units withdrew in the chaos of battle. The withdrawl was seen as a retreat and the Fenian commander O'Neill ordered a bayonet charge upon the Canadian line. The Canadian line broke. The Fenians had won the field but they feared that regular British Army reinforcements were soon to arrive, they only held the Fort Erie bridgehead. The United States controlled the Niagara River, and he had seen many desert the cause. The Fenians withdrew from Canada, the last invasion of Canada July, 1866.

Early steam locomotives ran on wood fuel. By 1866, wood was becoming scarce, so in December 1866 trhe Great Western started an experiment of burning peat in their locomotives on the Toronto branch. Peat was obtained in Montreal. The Grand Trunk also tried the same experiment at this time.

PETROLEA BRANCH

One of the first areas of industrial oil production in the world occurred in Pennsylvania and South-western Ontario. Centred in an area just north between London and Sarnia, the area boomed in the early 1860's. The wagon roads that were constructed over a clayey soil and were described even more excrable and dangerous by the ill contrived efforts to improve them. No one would travel over these roads unless it was a true necessity. The oil was refined in London mainly to produce kerosene, for interior lighting. The Great Western started construction of a 5.5 mile branch railway, from Wyoming station, ten miles from Sarnia, in August of 1866. The weather delayed construction. Mr Reid was the engineer and Alexander McDonald was the contractor. The Petrolea Branch was opened amidst a local celebration December 17th, 1866. This extension has been described as the most profitable of all the GWR trackage. It was built at a cost of L10,501 without rolling stock but in its first four years after opening totaled about L50,000.

The beginning of a signal system was installed at the junction going into the major junction at Toronto Union Station December 18th, 1866. The new signal tower using interlocking rods controlled all the signals and switches.

With the completion of the third rail, The Great Western could now haul American standard guage freight cars from Niagara to the edge of the Detroit River. The railway in 1866 had an iron hull car ferry built named the Great Western. Dual-guaged it could carry sixteen loaded freight cars or eight passenger cars on two enclosed tracks. It was placed in service January 1st, 1867. The railway now had the ability to carry freight from Chicago to New York and Boston without transferring the freight once. With the New York Central to the east and the Michigan Central to the west it was the most direct line over the longer route south of Lake Erie. The route through Canada had less snow than America with at times massive snow squalls coming off the lake.

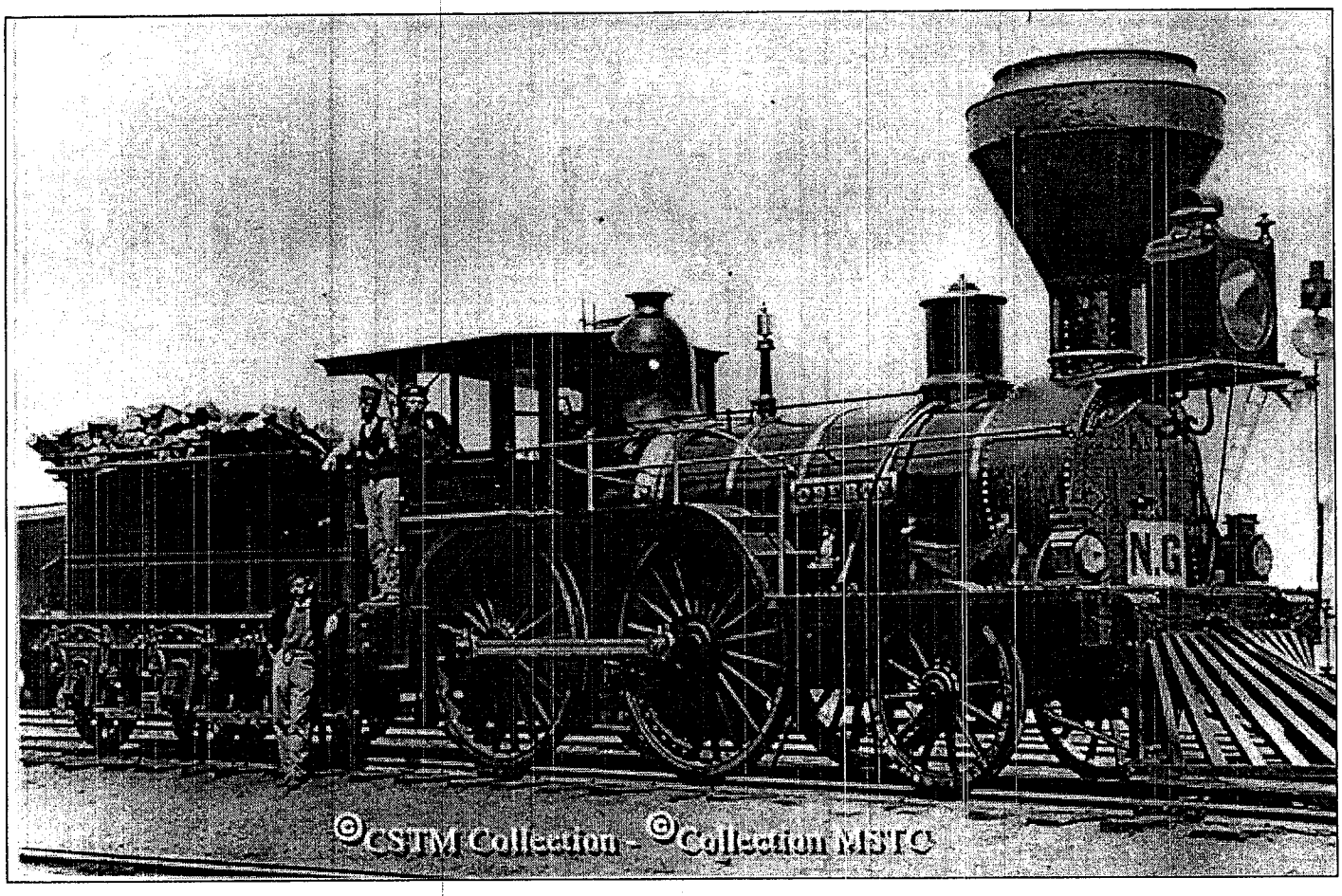


Photo Number: MAT001301
Photographer: CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS
Railway Name: GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY OF CANADA
Subject: Steam locomotive
Equipment Number: 51 Oberon
Collection: Mattingly

THE BLUE LINE

January 9th, 1867 was a day of celebration in the City of Hamilton for a large contingement of American Financier and Railway Magnates were riding in luxurious Michigan central sleeping cars from Chicago east, to Hamilton and then Rochester, New York. The passenger cars crossed the Detroit River on carferries then continued to arrive at 3:00 PM. The celebration was the completion of the Third Rail, the length of the Great Western from the Niagara to the Detroit rivers. The third rail laid inside the GWR's Broad Guage was to the American Standard Guage. Thomas Swinyard the GWR General Manager met the party at the station. The reason for celebration was repeated in speech after speech. That there would no long be trans-shippment at the borders, from cars of one guage to another. Freight could be loaded in Boston and travel through Canada to go on to Chicago and even futher west to the very base of the Rocky Mountains in one car without delay.

BRANTFORD BRANCH

January 1871 saw the turning of the first sod in a eight mile branch of the Great Western. The route left the GWR at Harrisburg and ran south to the manufacturing City of Brantford on the Grand River. The City in the 1850's had backed the Buffalo, Brantford and Goderich Railway over the GWR. Now its good citizens had to travel west to Paris to catch a GWR train for Toronto. The BB&G had come under the control of the Grand Trunk, so freight had to go west to Stratford before going east. The branch was opened November 23rd, 1871. With the Great Western-Grand Trunk amalgamation in August 1882 the two lines were joined at Brantford. This would become important in 1906.

OAKVILLE MAY 29, 1873

May 29th, 1873 the Great Western big bridge at Oakville caught fire and burnt down May 29th, 1873. This wooden bridge was from 550 to 600 feet long and sixty feet high. The GWR Hamilton to Toronto line was cut in two. The GWR maintained train service by building stairways up and down the embankments with adjoining chutes for the transfer of baggage. Omibuses were provided for first class passengers. Freight was sent from hamilton to Toronto by steamships. It would take a month to build a replacement bridge.

THE ERIE RAILWAY WAR

April 1872, that old thorn, the Erie and Ontario Railway Company would annoy the company once again. Running from one of the only ice free ports on Lake Ontario, Niagara on the Lake to Chippewa and Fort Erie it had some use to the Great Western, but it had more use for the Canada Southern. In the early morning at three o'clock April 20th, 1872 the Erie and Ontario Railway Company with the aid of Canada Southern employees made an attempt to recover possession of their railway from the Great Western. A party took a GWR train and ran it north from Fort Erie, stopping at the stations and locking them up. Reaching Clifton, the junction with the GWR at Niagara Falls their train stopped and they started to pull up the connection between the E&O and the GWR. They were interrupted by a posse of Great western employees who chased them of , replaced the connection and took their train back up the line unlocking the stations all the way back to Fort Erie.

Two days later a second attempt was made by the Canada Southern to take possession, again relocking the stations and this time they opened and locked the Chippewa swing bridge open. They over turned a GWR freight car at the junction and seized the Niagara station. The GWR again sent a train from Fort Erie recovering the stations but at Niagara the gang would not surrender the station to the GWR boys. The Canada Southern was left in possession. A legal battle followed in the courts.

The Great Western Railway during the eighteen-sixties saw very little expansion, less than ten miles. But the eighteen-seventies the second Canadian railway boom would take place and things would change. The old southern route proposed in 1855, to be known as the Canada Southern would soon span southern Ontario from the Niagara River to the Detroit River. The Great Western's traffic between these same points had become large, so large that extended sidings and steel rails could not handle the increased through traffic. By January 31st, 1872 the entire freight car stock had been converted to Stanard Guage. The old charter idea, that the mainline should be double-tracked to increase the efficiancy and tonnage, was again rethought, but with what seemed a better idea, that was to build a southern line from Glencoe east to the Niagara River. The cost of this while distant, but second track, was not much more in cost than double-tracking the main line and would both open up a new area of traffic but also avoided the severe grades at St David's in the east and the Dundas grade in the west on the 1854 mainline. It would attempt to block the new Canada Southern. This new route was chartered as the Canada Air Line. The original plan was to connect with the Buffalo and Lake Huron-Grand Trunk at Canfield and use the latter's route to the border, but as construction proceeded the Grand Trunk rejected the suitor and the GWR had to continue building their own tracks to Welland and Fort Erie.

The London and Port Stanley Railway was leased in April, 1872, running from London south to St Thomas, where connection could be made with the Air Line, then still south to the Lake Erie port of Port Stanley. Rails for construction could be unloaded at the port, so that construction could be carried out at three points. The lease would be for twenty-one years for the 27 miles of railway. Coal was becoming a major source of both fuel and freight traffic. Steamships making the crossing of Lake Erie could bring Pennsylvania coal to Port Stanley

September of 1872 saw the Great Western enter into an agreement to lease the broad guage Welland Railway that ran from Port Dalhousie, on Lake Ontario crossed the GWR at Merritton ran due south to Welland,

crossing the new Air Line to the Lake Erie port of Port Colborne. The Welland parrarelled the second Welland Canal its entire length. The purpose of this lease would allow trains to exit the mainline at Merritton and run to Fort Erie and Buffalo. Freight trains from Detroit left the mainline at Glencoe ran across the Air Line to Welland then head north from Welland to Niagara Falls and the border crossing.

The Great Western took formal possession of the London and Port Stanley October 1872 and quickly altered the guage of the track to the Standard. This speeded the laying of track on the Air Line so that rails had been laid east from St Thomas to Alymer two weeks later.

In September 1872 the Great Western added another wooden car ferry to the Detroit crossing. The Transit II had two enclosed tracks capable of carrying ten cars. The next year, in May, a small ferry Saginaw was acquired capable of carrying four cars between Sarnia and Port Huron. That same year the Great Western launched its largest car ferry, the Michigan with a capacity of eighteen cars. Whole passenger trains could cross the river on one ferry at one time.

The original plan for the Great Western was for the mainline to be a double track railway as early as 1853. In June of 1873 contracts were let to construct a second track from Glencoe to Windsor. Messrs. Carpenter, Seymour & Bowles took the eastern section from Glencoe to Chatham and Mr W. Shanly the western section from Chatham to Windsor. The work was completed that autumn.

A surprise trial was made at the GWR Hamilton shops on June the 18th, 1873. The Great Western had built a branch line into Petrolea in 1866 to capture one of North America's first oil fields. At this time it was only Western Ontario and Pennsylvania that were in the running, and the oil was refined to produce Kerosene for home lighting. That was the demand, and the Canadian oil was heavier and more difficult to refine. The supply was greater than the demand. Oil entrepreneur Charles Ribighini had over twenty wells in Ontario producing 5000 to 6000 barrels of oil per month. The newspapers claimed he was one of the wealthiest oil men in the country. To create a larger demand ,he had made a number of experiments to use crude petroleum to fuel steam engines. Locomotive fuel had been wood and was only now turning to coal. Oil, it was found to work with stationary steam engines; but now he turned to power railway locomotives with crude petroleum. The Great Western had taken the old broad guage engine "St Catharines" lying in the yards, and allowed Mr Ribighini to experiment with his new oil-burning apparatus.

A Oil small Tank was placed in the tender ,from which a hose pipe runs to within about a foot of the stoke hole in the boiler, there the pipe divides in the shape of a T into two one-half inch pipes which at a distance of two feet apart, and a few inches above the platform of the cab, enter the boiler. At the point of entrance two holes, about two and a half inches in diameter, are cut through the front of the fire hole. These are larger than the smaller pipe in order to allow a draught of cold air from without to the heat within, so that the apparatus there may be kept cool. From the drum on the boiler a pipe conducts steam to the locomotive cab, where branching into two smaller ones the hot vapor descends to the floor and into a short pipe which surrounds (with a space between) the smaller pipe through which the oil is projected in to the firebox; so that it enters that place by the pressure or suction of the steam, which being directed through it in jets, so as to cut it, separates the gases in the combustible. A fire started in the firebox and was kept going until some steam is generated in the boiler, when the oil is turned on, and by reason of the steam playing around and upon the flaming petroleum, the entire heat is directed into the flues, so that all the heat is utilized. The trial on the "St Catharines" seemed a success but the Great Western never did have an oil burning steam engine.

In August of 1873 the Great Western Railway built a steam powered self propelled passenger car. It was built to run on the small Wyoming to Petrolia branch line. In one end of the passenger car a powerful upright steam engine and boiler having a direct connection with the axles of the wheel truck below it. The car could accommodate thirty to thirty-five passengers at a cost much less than the use of a locomotive and train.

TORONTO UNION STATION

The Grand Trunk had built the first wood Union Station in 1858 and the Great Western had been a tenant, even after the GWR built its Yonge Street station in 1866, GWR trains would first make a stop at The Union Station then travel to the GWR station at Yonge. In 1871 the Grand Trunk to build a large and impressive stone and brick station. October 25th, 1871 the old Union station was vacated and the GTR moved into a temporary buildings near the freight sheds. The Great Western in connection with this station built a temporary baggage room and ticket office on the opposite side of the track from the GTR. This GWR stop would be in use two years. When this second Toronto Union station was completed in 1873 it was considered an architectural triumph with a large trainshed, and three towers facing Lake Ontario. It was located west of York Street and north of Front Street. It was the terminal for not only its owner the Grand Trunk but also for the Northern Railway, the Credit Valley and the narrow guage Toronto, Grey and Bruce Railways, the latter would become part of the Canadian Pacific. The Great Western continued to use their own 1866 station at Yonge Street, until the 1882 amalgamation. Thereafter, trains from the former Great Western began terminated their trains at the Toronto Union Station. The GWR Yonge Street station was used as a freight house and survived as a fruit warehouse until the nineteen-fifties.

LONDON CAR SHOPS

The Hamilton Spectator reported July 11th 1872 that the Great Western were planning to move the car shops to London as part of a deal in the lease of the City of London owned London and Port Stanley Railway. This occurred in November 1874 when one hundred and fifty men were moved to a new car shops. The increase in business in the last two years the railway needed many more cars and while the locomotive shops and roundhouse were massive stone buildings the car shops in Hamilton had made due with a number of wood buildings. Plans to enlarge the car shops in Hamilton over the years were never acted upon.

October first, 1874, there was a fire at the car shop at Clifton-Niagara Falls that destroyed the 360 foot long structure. A GWR baggage car and passenger car and a Erie Railroad sleeping car were consumed in the structure.

1878 saw the Desjardins Canal bridge was loaded on cars and shipped to Merritton for use on the old Welland Canal in March. On May 24th the Great Western opened a new station at London East.

KOMOKA FEBRUARY 28, 1874

London,, February 28th, 1874. The Great Western Sarnia Express stood at the station platform. It was called the Sarnia Express when in fact it was an accommodation to Sarnia and all points in between. A mixed consist, three oil tank cars, one baggage, one second class coach and another coach on the rear. It left London at 6:20 PM heading west. Three miles from Sifton's Cut, a pasenger got up to visit the water closet but was surprised that the small oil light had fallen in the bathroom and shattered. The oil had just ignited, the fire at this moment was small. The passenger closed the door, not panicing, looked for something to smother the fire. He grapped at cushions but they were tied down. When he managed to get one free, he returned and found that the fire was now a blaze. The cushion now wouldn't work. With the door open and the train travelling at thirty miles per hour the flames were fanned and smoke filled the car. Panic now started. Passengerslooked for a bell rope but there just wasn't one on this train. The car was filled with smoke and the entire car was on fire. Passengers while they broke the windows toescape it only made the situation worse. Conductor Mitchell who had been sitting with his daughter in the last coach came forward. The train had to be stopped! Conductor Mitchell at great peril boosted himself up the roof and managed to cross the coach and baggage car and then pull himself over and around the petroleum tank cars. Finally the engine cab was reached, the brakes applied and the engine reversed. This allowed many to escape, but their were eight people caught by the smoke and their bodies were now being cremated within the car. The Sarnia Express was stopped at Palham's farm, two miles east of Komoka. When the train did reach Komoka there were eight burnt cinders that would be laid out on planks on the Komoka station platform. At the later inquest it was stated that it was impossible to run a bell rope over oil tank cars.

HAMILTON STATION DECEMBER 15. 1875

A new Great Western Railway Station was completed December 1875. A massive structure thirty-six feet wide by three hundred and fifty feet long. The one hundred foot center portion was two stories high, the whole building is built of red pressed Aldershot brick, with an ornamental roof of blue, red and green slate shingles.

THE GLOBE TRAIN

The Toronto Globe newspaper in August 1876 contracted with the Great Western Railway to run a special early morning train from Toronto to London via Hamilton for the exclusive transmission of the Globe newspaper. The Globe set the rules, no passengers or mail between Toronto and Hamilton. The Globe train would leave Toronto at 5:00 AM to arrive London at 10:00 AM. This gave the Globe a much larger distribution over western Ontario and beat the local newspapers in every town and City about the important news. The Globe Train was the best known of any Great Western flyer. It would on occasion carry passengers west of Hamilton. The Globe had a clear track, whether GWR or Grand Trunk. Toronto first step to media dominence that lasts today as The Globe and Mail.

JUNCTION CUT

Starting in 1876, and for the next year The Great Western started filling with earth the mouth of the old Desjardins Canal. There was great difficulty in finding the solid bottom as was the case in 1853. Then when an attempt was made to build a bridge on piles it was given the name "bottomless pit" for it was found that as fast as piles were driven down during the day they disappeared during the night in the quicksand at the bottom of the canal. In consequence the old canal was filled up and a new was cut through the Burlington Heights to the west. On the Toronto branch at the outlet of Desjardins Canal into the Hamilton Bay the Great Western still had a wood trestle built in 1855. This was not to have been a permanent structure and the GWR determined to fill old canal and dispense with a bridge and to secure a permanent track. Immense quantities of material were thrown into the gulch and by the end of summer 1877 the embankment had risen two-thirds of the height from the water to the rail, about eighty feet. The amount of fill and caused some curvature to the wood trestle as more and more material was added.

Wednesday, September 19, 1877, at 3:00 PM ,while a large number of men and teams were at work under the trestle a large subsidence of the earth on which they were working and from the center or the bridge several hundred feet to the western edge near Hamilton. In the short span of one hour the embankment sank twenty-two feet. A large mound was raised several feet from the bed of the adjacent marsh on the side of the embankment next to the bay. The Railway trestle was left twisted with a large bow into the Bay. At one point the trestle sank two feet. Work started immediately on filling and repairing the wooden structure, so as to allow trains to creep across the bridge.

On Saturday night, December 22nd, 1877 shortly after 10 o'clock the watchman at the trestle bridge over the old Desjardins Canal discovered that another slide had taken place. The last one in September had occurred on the Hamilton side, now the slide had occurred at the eastern end. The Great Western authorities were immediately summoned. The night was pitch dark and it was impossible to discover the amount of damage that had happened in the dark. It was decided advisable not to allow the night train to pass and so cabs were dispatched from Hamilton to transport the passengers in the early morning. The next day examination discovered that a large slide had happened but the actual damage was not disturbing. Slowly a heavy freight train with twenty heavily laden cars and two engines passed over the remaining wood trestle. Some 6,000 to 7,000 yards had given way, but it was explained that nearly 200,000 tons of clay and gravel had been deposited in the fill, so that the amount lost was not so great. With this amount of fill, the bottom of the swamp or old canal had finally been reached and made stable. The cut between the west mainline at the west junction; Hamilton West Junction and the Toronto line at Junction Cut or later named Bayview Junction had been completed. The work would be completed in three weeks.

The 1858 iron swing bridge over the Desgardins Canal was removed in February 1878 and placed over the Welland Canal near St Catharines and in its place an iron stationary bridge

CREDIT VALLEY RAILWAY WAR

Saturday July 20th, 1878, tension started to grow around Woodstock, for the Credit Valley Railway had built west from Toronto, but north of GWR territory, but as it slide southward towards St Thomas it planned to cross the Great Western one mile west of Woodstock. The GWR objected to the route planned by the CVR as they stated it would at a point on an up grade and it would be difficult for GWR trains to start after coming to the required stop at the diamond. They wanted it else where, and the Credit Valley was seeking its subsidies and bonuses for complete construction and would not be deterred.

This Saturday the Credit Valley would attempt to lay track over the Great Western mainline. The GWR expected the move and the engineer o the No. 36 freight was told to hold the fort until reinforcements would arrive. A special train shortly arrived with Mr Domville the Mechanical Superintendent and Mr McGuiness the Road Master with a number of men. The GWR put engines from passing freights on the crossing. A fight developed but the GWR prevailed for the time until the matter could be settled in Chancellory Court.

April 2nd, 1879 a fire started in the early morning hours at the GWR Clifton-Niagara Falls station, while it started in one wing the station burnt to the ground. Both the local fire brigade and the Great Western fire brigade were called on to fight the large fire. While station was not saved, the efforts of the firemen saved the many buildings fronting on Bridge Street

The Great Western in the summer of 1879 was looking at a through traffic arrangement with the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg Railway. The RW&O stretched from Suspension Bridge along the southern shoreline of Lake Ontario upward to and along the St Lawrence River almost to the gates of Montreal all in New York State. A connection with the NYO&W ran right to New York City. The GWR and the RW&O looked at a bridge at Lewiston. Alas the RW&O was swallowed by the Vanderbuilt's New York Central.

The Great Western completed an elegant official car number 43 on August 25th, 1879 at the London car shops. It was brought to Hamilton that same day for inspection by GWR General Manager Frederick Broughton. The car was divided into five compartments, a parlour saloon, two bedrooms, dining room and a kitchen. A large wood table was in the center of the parlour, surrounded by elegant leather chairs. The bedrooms consisted of a total of twelve bunk-beds. The dining room seated twelve. The interior had a base of oak with walnut panels above. It was simply named "Official Car."

Friday, September 27th, 1879 the Town of Chatham and the Great Western Railway celebrated the grand opening of the brand new Chatham station. GWR General Manager Broughton was in attendance with civic officials.

ROYAL TRAIN 1879

Princess Louise, sixth child of Queen Victoria and her husband The Governor General of Canada John, the Marquess of Lorne after arriving in Canada in November 1878 undertook in a Royal Train; a tour of Canada. After arriving at Toronto, they left for Hamilton on Monday morning, September 16th, 1879 at 10:45 in the care of the Great Western Railway. The train consisted of a composite baggage-coach, the Royal coach, the Intercolonial Railway official car. The Great Western's official cars numbers 27 and 43 made a train of four cars. The train was proceeded by pilot engine 167 with engineer C. Domville. The GWR Royal Train was pulled by engine 207. The engineer was Harry Donnelly and the Conductor was Richard Furness. After a civic reception at Hamilton the train travelled westward, making stops at Brantford, Woodstock, Ingersoll and finally London. The Royals then went by Grand Trunk; back towards Stratford, Berlin and Toronto.

NIAGARA FALLS STATION

The Great Western Railway opened a new and very large station at Clifton; later to be Niagara Falls, January 10th, 1880. It replaced the previous station that burnt down in a fire April of 1879. Built of brick and stone in a semi-Gothic style, the station was three hundred feet long, comprising of a center two storey portion sixty feet long and two one hundred and twenty foot one story wings.
The building was constructed thirty-five feet wide.

The center block was the waiting rooms and ticket office. The east wing had a large dining room, lunch-counter, wine room and the United States Customs office. The west wing had a telegraph battery room, an agents office, a baggage room and the Canada Customs office.

October 1881 saw the Great Western take delivery of brand new coaches that were built in the company shops at London. In November it was announced that the GWR wanted to enlarge the station at the foot of Simcoe Street in Toronto for the benifit of both the Great Western and the Northern Railroads.

April 20th, 1882 the Great Western announced plans had been filed in Buffalo for their own American terminus. Tired of paying fees to both the Erie and the New York Central, the new railway was named the Buffalo and Great Western. It would start at Parish Street near the International Bridge at Dearborn Street and would run north crossing Parish, Thompson, Gorton, and Tonawanda streets to Hertzel. It would amount to only one mile of track. The company wanted to run a through passenger express train over the Air Line.

THE MICHIGAN SEIZURE

The negotiations were proceeding between the English shareholders of the Great Western and the Grand Trunk Railways in London, England. The Great Western might have only hours left of life. A Michigan Court's judgement gave these last hours drama. The Erie and Chicago Car Company had gone before a Wayne Circuit Court in a dispute with the Great Western Railway. Judgement was awarded for $600,000.00 to the car company, over an old dispute dating back to 1871 over a joint car lease agreement, for the through freight car line between New York and Chicago. With judgement in hand the plaintiff went quickly to the authorities to enforce their execution against all the property of the Great Western found within the jurisdiction of the court in Michigan. The Sheriff at noon; August 10th, 1882, went out and seized everything in the way of rolling stock, standing or floating, of the Great Western. Writs of garishment were filed with every railway treasurer in Michigan. The most important seizure was made when the transfer steamer "Michigan", was just about to leave the dock at the Brush Street depot. The Great Western was paralyzed entirely on American soil. It was described that the Erie and Chicago Car Company had set up a blockade at the border as effectual as if it were supported by a fleet of gunboats. In a short period of time over a million dollars of GWR assets were in the hands of the Sheriff. The Sheriff even went to Port Huron to see if there could be further seizures made there. The Great Western Railway was stopped at the border. The car company blamed the shareholders in London, claiming that their ignorance of American railroad business was the chief cause of the problem. The car company relented to allow the railroad to operate, it did not seize the smaller ferry steamer the "Transit" and allowed it to operate. Pullman and Wagner sleeping cars crossed on the ferry, but GWR coaches did not cross. The history of the dispute was a 1871 contract entered into between the Erie and Chicago Car Company and the Michigan Central, the Erie, the Great Western, and the Detroit and Milwaukee Railroad Companies. A dispute developed with all the contracts. The Erie went bankcrupt in 1876. The Great Western purchased the Detroit and Milwaukee so the former inherited the latter's contract debt. Not the best of times to negotiate.