

30 The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) – A Chronology

Mention railway history to a Canadian, chances are the CPR will be the first thought. History records that it was built to create Canada, to knit the country together from coast to coast, well, initially at the Pacific coast, at any rate. For the details of this enormous engineering feat, with all its monumental challenges, epic sacrifices, searing social history, hardboiled economics, larger-than-life players, machiavellian cross-border manoeuvres, riveting political intrigues and scandals, the reader is advised to delve into a short list of fascinating further reading:

The story of corporate CPR, its leadership and its mainline:

- Berton, Pierre: *The National Dream*, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, Ont. 1970
Berton, Pierre: *The Last Spike*, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, Ont. 1970
Chodos, Robert: *The CPR, A Century of Corporate Welfare*, James Lewis & Samuel, Toronto, Ont. 1973
Cruise, David & Griffiths, Alison: *Lords of the Line*, Viking Penguin Books, Markham, Ont. 1988
Green, Lorne: *Chief Engineer*, Dundurn Press, Toronto, Ont. 1993
Knowles, Valerie: *From Telegrapher to Titan, the Life of William C. Van Horne*, Dundurn Group, Toronto, Ont. 2004
Lamb, W. Kaye: *History of the Canadian Pacific Railway*, MacMillan, New York 1977
Lavallée, Omer S.A.: *Van Horne's Road*, Railfare Enterprises, Toronto, Ont. 1974, reprinted 1977, 1981, 1990.
Lavallée, Omer S.A., edited by Charles Cooper: *The International of Maine Division, the CPR to the East*, The Bytown Railway Society, Ottawa, Ont. 2007
Mika, Nick & Helma, with Wilson, Donald M.: *Illustrated History of Canadian Railways* Mika Publishing, Belleville, Ont., 1986

The story of the CPR in Ontario:

- Beaumont, Ralph: *Steam Trains To The Bruce*, Boston Mills Press, Cheltenham, Ont. 1977
Filby, James: *The Credit Valley Railway*, the Boston Mills Press, Cheltenham, Ont. 1974
McIlwraith, Thomas F.: *The Toronto, Grey & Bruce Railway 1863-1884*, UCRS, Toronto 1963, reprinted 1971
Wilson, Donald M.: *The Ontario & Quebec Railway*, Mika Publishing, Belleville, Ont. 1984

Some references:

- Andreae, Christopher: *Lines of Country: An atlas of railway and waterway history in Canada*, The Boston Mills Press, Erin, Ont. 1997 (Then an Affiliate of the Stoddart Publishing Co.)
Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online: <http://www.biographi.ca>
Dorman, Robert: *A Statutory History of the Steam and Electric Railways of Canada 1836-1937*, Canada Department of Transport, Ottawa, Ont. 1938
Trout, J.M. and Edw.: *The Railways of Canada*, Monetary Times, Toronto Ont., 1871 (reprinted by Cole's Publishing as part of its "Canadiana Collection" 1970, 1974)
White, James: *Altitudes in Canada: Commission of Conservation, Canada*. 2nd Edition, Ottawa, Ont., 1915

At the time J.M. and Edw. Trout (see above) published their handbook in 1871, the CPR was listed as "projected" with the introduction that "the people of the Dominion are pledged to the construction of this railway, by the terms of the arrangement made with British Columbia for the admission of that province into the Dominion".

A chronology of critical dates in the construction of the CPR and subsequent other dates of interest:

- 1871 (July 27) – British Columbia joins Canadian confederation.
- 1871 – Sandford Fleming is appointed chief engineer, and initial surveys are begun.
- 1872 – two companies formed – Canadian Pacific (Sir Hugh Allan) and the Inter-Oceanic Ry (GTR interests).
- 1873 – "Pacific Scandal" topples the John A. Macdonald government.
- 1873 – Liberal government under Alexander Mackenzie takes over.
- 1875 (June) – construction begins between Selkirk, Man. and what is now Thunder Bay.
- 1876 – the Canada Central Railway opens from Renfrew to Pembroke.
- 1878 (Dec) – Pembina branch (Winnipeg south to the U.S. border) opens.
- 1879 – Credit Valley Railway (CVR) opens from Toronto to Galt (now Cambridge).
- 1881 (Feb 15) – Canadian Pacific Railway Bill passes third reading.
- 1881 (Feb 18) – The Canadian Pacific Railway Company incorporated with George Stephen as first president.
- 1881 (March 21) – Ontario & Quebec Railway (O&Q) incorporates.
- 1881 (May 22) – PM Charles Tupper replaces Sandford Fleming with Collingwood Schreiber as chief engineer.
- 1881 (June) – the Canada Central Railway is incorporated into the CPR.
- 1882 – William C. van Horne appointed General Manager.
- 1882 – the CPR acquires the Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa & Occidental Railway (QMOO).
- 1882 – construction begins between Port Moody and Yale BC.
- 1882 – construction completed 600 miles west of Winnipeg.

1883 – the CVR is amalgamated with the O&Q.
 1883 – the Ontario & Quebec Railway leases the Toronto, Grey & Bruce Railway (Owen Sound).
 1883 (Aug 10) – first train arrives in Calgary.
 1883 (late) – railhead reaches Lake Louise, Alta.
 1884 – rails from the west reach Beavermouth on the Columbia River.
 1885 – the (second) Northwest Rebellion
 1885 (Nov 7) – rails from the east connected to rails from the west at (“stand fast”) Craigellachie B.C.
 1886 (Jun 28) – first transcontinental train leaves Montreal for Port Moody.
 1887 (May 29) – first transcontinental train reaches Vancouver, B.C.
 1887 – O&Q Railway is extended from Smiths Falls to Montreal.
 1888 – William Cornelius van Horne becomes the CPR’s second president.
 1888 (Dec 10) – last rail on Short Line laid at Packard Brook, Me, to complete the CPR coast-to-coast.
 1889 (Jun 2) – first through passenger train leaves Montreal for Saint John, N.B.
 1891 – Sir John A. Macdonald dies.
 1897 – Sandford Fleming knighted (KCMG).
 1899 – Mann & Mackenzie’s Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR) is born and expands rapidly.
 1899 – Thomas George Shaughnessy becomes the CPR’s third president.

1903 – the CPR acquires the Lindsay, Bobcaygeon & Pontypool Railway.
 1903 – Liberal government under Wilfred Laurier signs contract with the GTR for a third transcontinental railway – the government to build the National Transcontinental Railway (NTR) from Moncton to Quebec City and west via North Bay to Winnipeg, to be leased as a subsidiary to the GTR. The GTR will build the Grand Trunk Pacific (GTP) across the prairies.
 1905 – the CNoR reaches Edmonton.
 1905 – first sod turned on the NTR.
 1906 – the GTP begins construction.
 1906 – Toronto Terminals Railway formed by the CPR and the GTR.
 1908-1909 – “spiral” tunnels constructed to replace the 4.5% grade “Big Hill” (Kicking Horse Pass).
 1912 – Georgian Bay & Seaboard Ry established as a CPR subsidiary, to carry western grain direct to Montreal.
 1913 (April) – Ontario lakeshore route established between Glen Tay and Agincourt, Ont.
 1915 (July 15) – Sir Sandford Fleming dies.
 1916 – Connaught tunnel (originally double track) under Mount Macdonald, replaces the previous routing over Rogers Pass.
 1918 – Edward Wentworth Beatty becomes the fourth president of the CPR.
 1930 – Algoma Eastern Railway absorbed by the CPR.
 1937 – the Georgian Bay & Seaboard Railway is abandoned between Orillia and Lindsay, Ont.
 1942 – D’Alton Corry Coleman becomes the fifth president of the CPR.
 1947 – William M. Neal becomes the sixth president of the CPR.
 1948 – William A. Mather becomes the seventh president of the CPR.
 1948 – the CPR starts to phase out its steam locomotives over 12 years.
 1955 – Norris Roy (Buck) Crump becomes the CPR’s eighth president and accelerates the phasing out of steam.
 1964 – Robert A. (Bob) Emerson becomes the CPR’s ninth president.
 1965 – the CPR starts to phase out passenger service.
 1966 – Norris Roy Crump briefly becomes the CPR’s president again, to be succeeded by Ian David Sinclair (11th president)
 1971 – a new parent company – Canadian Pacific Limited – is formed and the CPR becomes one of its components
 1972 – Frederick (Fred) Burbidge becomes the CPR’s twelfth president
 1974 – the CPR purchases the Mattawamkeag to Vanceboro Me. section from the Maine Central Ry
 1976 – VIA Rail Canada Inc. is formed and takes over passenger service in Canada, largely completed by 1979.
 1977 – the CPR takes over the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway.
 1981 – William (Bill) Stinson becomes the CPR’s thirteenth president
 1982 (Nov 22) – the CPR demolishes the West Toronto Station, thus setting in motion station heritage conservancy
 1983 – the Crow (grain) Rate is abolished.
 1988 – Mount Macdonald Tunnel opened to complement the Connaught Tunnel (predominantly for westbound trains).
 1990 – Canadian Pacific Limited acquires the remaining shares of its longstanding subsidiary the Soo Line.
 1991 – Canadian Pacific Limited buys the Delaware & Hudson Railway.
 1994 – Canadian Pacific Limited offers to buy Canadian National Railways. The Federal Government blocked the deal.
 1995 – Company headquarters are moved to Calgary, Alberta
 1996 – David O’Brien becomes the CPR’s fourteenth president
 2001 – Canadian Pacific Limited is dissolved and the CPR is once again a stand-alone company.
 2001 – Robert J. (Rob) Ritchie becomes the CPR’s fifteenth president
 2006 – Frederick J. (Fred) Green becomes the CPR’s sixteenth president
 2012 – Hunter Harrison becomes the CPR’s seventeenth president.
 2017 – Keith Creel becomes the CPR’s eighteenth president