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ONTARIO, SIMCOE & HURON RAILWAY - By Robert R. Brown

A century ago, my great-grandfather Jonathan Dunn was an alderman in the city of Toronto and as such he was one of the invited guests at the official opening, on May 16th 1853, of the Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Railway - the first line of any consequence to operate in what is now the province of Ontario. The train moved off slowly over the new and uneven track to the first stop at a wayside station, probably Davenport, where it was discovered that four or five teen-age boys were riding on the pilot of the engine and thoroughly enjoying their forbidden adventure. Old Jonathan was surprised and somewhat annoyed to find his own son among them and family tradition relates that the special train was delayed a few minutes while suitable chastisement was administered. And the boys had a long walk home too. Just beyond Davenport, at Hog's Back, there was another mishap; the train ran into a cow and one coach was thrown off the track. No one was hurt but one old gentleman lost his gold-rimmed spectacles.

The idea of building a railway northward from the city of Toronto to Lake Simcoe and then to some point on the shore of Lake Huron originated back in 1834 and some surveys were made at that time but it was not until 1849 that definite action was taken. Frederick Chase Capreol, a successful auctioneer and amateur detective - he once caught a gang of murderers - became interested in the project and was the railway's most enthusiastic supporter. The bill incorporating the Toronto, Simcoe and Lake Huron Union Rail Road was approved by the Legislature of Canada in 1849, but as it contained some rather unusual features, Lord Elgin, the Governor-General, referred it to London for study. This was likely to mean considerable delay, so Capreol made a quick trip to England and obtained the Royal Assent on July 20th 1850. The questionable items were that no northern terminus was specified in the Act because the railway had no idea where it was going and the directors were authorized to sell stock in the ordinary way or they could raise money by means of a lottery.

On January 1st 1851, Capreol announced "An Extensive Canadian Railroad Union Triage, founded on the principle of the Art Unions in England," an ingenious but very improper way of raising money for the construction of a railway. According to the prospectus, 100,000 raffle tickets would be sold at \$20.00 and in return for the \$2,000,000. cash received, shares to the value of \$2,000,000. would be divided as prizes among 15,954 winning ticket holders; the other 84,046 ticket holders would get nothing. The prizes were to be:

2 magnificent allotments of	\$100,000 in stock	\$ 200,000.
6 splendid allotments of	40,000 in stock	240,000.
10 extensive allotments of	20,000 in stock	200,000.
16 large allotments of	10,000 in stock	160,000.
20 allotments of	5,000 in stock	100,000.
50 allotments of	2,000 in stock	100,000.
100 allotments of	1,000 in stock	100,000.
250 allotments of	500 in stock	125,000.
500 allotments of	250 in stock	125,000.
2500 allotments of	100 in stock	250,000.
5000 allotments of	50 in stock	250,000.
<u>7500</u> allotments of	20 in stock	<u>150,000.</u>
15,954		\$2,000,000.

Huckstering had not yet become a fine art and they ran short of adjectives; otherwise there would have been at least one super-colossal first prize.

Despite the alluring possibility of big returns, the results were negligible and in 1850 the charter was amended; dropping the lottery scheme and changing the name of the road to Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Railway - or the Oats, Straw and Hay as some would have it. A coolness had arisen between Capreol and the other directors and he disappeared from the management of the railway he had done so much to promote. He was called "Mad Capreol" but, like many others, he was a clever man born a hundred years too soon and not properly appreciated by his contemporaries. Many years later, the directors of the Canadian Northern Railway remembered him and gave his name to an important station in northern Ontario.

A contract was awarded to M. C. Story & Company and construction started on October 15th 1851 when Lady Elgin turned the first sod. It was a typical celebration of that period, in the best British traditions; a monster parade, marshalled by Colonel G. T. Denison, a noted Canadian soldier, marched from the City Hall to the old Parliament Building. First came a band, then the volunteer fire companies, temperance societies, fraternal societies, the societies of the Saints - Andrew, George and Patrick - business organizations, mechanics, school children, lawyers, judges, legislators, Mayor Bowes and the City Council, the railway commissioners, engineers, contractors, directors - and, last but not least, two policemen! Toronto the Good was a law-abiding little town in those days.

On Front Street, a little west of the present Union Station a grandstand had been erected to accommodate the crowd and, opposite a handsome pavilion awaited Lord and Lady Elgin whose arrival was announce by booming cannon. They were welcomed by Honourable H. J. Boulton, chairman of the board of directors, and by the band of the 71st Highland Light Infantry. Mayor Bowes, gorgeously arrayed in cocked hat, sword, knee breeches, silk stockings and shoes with silver buckles, read the address of welcome and in reply Lord Elgin jocularly remarked, "It may seem a singular application of the principle of division of labour that the lady should dig and the gentleman speak but this is an age of progress in which we must be prepared for what is strange." Then with a beautiful silver spade, Lady Elgin dug the first sod, deposited it in an ornamental wheelbarrow which Mr. Boulton wheeled away and dumped. It was all very stuffy and mid-Victorian and the festivities ended with a sumptuous banquet in the evening.

Construction proceeded slowly; preliminary surveys were made by H. C. Seymour but he soon was succeeded by F. W. Cumberland who later became manager of the railway. Two young assistants were A. Brunel, who later was superintendent for many years, and Sandford Fleming, who in the future became Chief Engineer of the Intercolonial and Canadian Pacific Railways.

A small locomotive, the "Lady Elgin," was ordered from the Portland Company for construction work; it was brought across from Oswego by boat, set up on the track at the foot of Bathurst Street and on October 7th, 1852 it steamed up and down the track - the first locomotive to run in Ontario. Others were ordered for delivery the following year; two from James Good of Toronto and three from the New Jersey (Brandt) Locomotive Works. No. 2, the "Toronto," built by Good was the first locomotive built in Canada and No. 3, the "Josephine" was a beautiful high speed passenger engine built by Brandt. No one knew just how fast she could go because no one dared to try to find out. It was one of the most famous engines of its day; almost as famous as Cyrus Hockett its driver, a popular hero about whom a song was made:

DANDY CY OF THE JOSEPHINE

I dressed myself from top to toe,
 And out from Toronto I did go;
 My hair all combed so slick and fine
 I looked as prim as the Josephine.
 My superintendent told me, oh!
 I'se the best looking driver in the country, oh!

I looked in the glass and found it so,
Just as Brunel had told me, oh!

By February 1853, the line was completed from Toronto to Machell's Corner, now Aurora, and a limited train service was provided by the contractor.

The locomotive "Toronto" was built in the foundry and machine shop of James Good, on Queen Street, just east of Young Street. It was placed on temporary rails and conveyed along Queen and York Streets to the railway, a task requiring five days. It went for a trial spin on April 30th and was pronounced a great success.

The official opening of the railway was on May 16th, 1853 and regular service started between Toronto and Machell's Corner. A month later, on June 13th, service was extended to Bradford and on October 11th to Allandale. In the following year, on May 2nd, a short branch was opened from Lefroy to Belle Ewart, at the south end of Lake Simcoe where connection was made with steamboats operating on Lake Simcoe and Lake Couchiching.

The goal of the railway was a port on Lake Huron and finally Collingwood was selected and the railway completed to that point on January 2nd 1855.

The station in Toronto was on Brock Street (now Spadina Avenue), below Front Street and the freight sheds, round house, shops and yards occupied the block bounded by Brock, Front and Bathurst Streets and the lake. The railway owned several wharves with convenient spur tracks and also a grain elevator which however was burnt in 1870. The Office building was at the corner of Front and Brock Streets next to Loretta Abbey, a fashionable school for girls.

During the first few years of operation, the conductor on the passenger trains was John Harvie and railfans to-day owe him a debt of gratitude. Many years after he had left the service of the railway and become a prominent business man, he heard that the earliest locomotives were about to be broken up, so he arranged to have them photographed.

Although the railway was completed from Toronto to Georgian Bay, it was poorly built, overloaded with debt and ran through a still sparsely settled district, so the directors adopted a policy which they thought would create profitable through traffic but actually brought about the ruin of the company within four years. A steamboat was operated on Lake Simcoe and a line of five large boats ran between Collingwood and Chicago but the cost of operating them greatly exceeded the revenue and by 1859 the company was bankrupt. A re-organization followed in 1860, the name was changed to Northern Railway of Canada, and Frederick Cumberland was appointed manager. He immediately disposed of all the steamboats, discontinued all unprofitable through services and began to cultivate local traffic. He predicted a very large decrease in gross revenue but a proportionately greater decrease in expenses and the result would be a moderate profit instead of heavy losses each year as in the past. The country was beginning to open up. Cumberland's new accommodation trains were much more profitable than the former express trains and through freights, and a fair degree of prosperity followed.

For about twelve years the company was content to develop its 95 miles of main line and the short branch from Allandale to Barrie, built in 1859, but in 1872 it adopted a policy of expansion, through subsidiary companies, which in time raised the mileage to nearly 500. In 1872 the main line was extended from Collingwood to Meaford and a northern extension of the Barrie branch was started and reached Gravenhurst in 1875. In 1879 the Northern Railway amalgamated with the Hamilton and North Western Railway which, between 1875 and 1879 had built a line from Port Dover, on Lake Erie, through Hamilton to Collingwood and Barrie. A new name, the Northern and North Western Railway, followed the amalgamation and a connecting link from Toronto to Hamilton was projected but never built. In 1880 a branch was built from Colwell to Penetang and Hillsdale and in 1886 the Gravenhurst line was extended far to the north to a connection with the Canadian Pacific Railway at North Bay.

The line was built originally broad gauge, 5'6", and was converted to standard gauge in 1881. The Hamilton and North Western Railway was always standard gauge.

During the middle eighties, the Grand Trunk Railway and the Canadian Pacific Railway began buying up all the small independent roads and on January 24th, 1888 the Northern and North Western Railway was leased by the Grand Trunk Railway. It was bought in 1892 and as part of the Grand Trunk Railway it was acquired by the Canadian National railways in 1923.

NORTHERN AND NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY

ONTARIO, SIMCOE AND HURON RAILWAY

Toronto	Aurora	May 16, 1853	29.7
Aurora	Bradford	June 13, 1853	11.5
Bradford	Allandale	October 11, 1853	21.5
Lefroy	Belle Ewart	May 2, 1854	0.7
Allandale	Collingwood	January 2, 1855	31.4

NORTHERN RAILWAY OF CANADA

Allandale	Barrie	June 10, 1859	1.3
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NORTH GREY RAILWAY

Collingwood	Meaford	June, 1872	21.1
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TORONTO, SIMCOE AND MUSKOKA JUNCTION RAILWAY

Barrie	Atherley	1872	24.2
Atherley	Washago	1873	10.3
Washago	Gravenhurst	November, 1875	12.9
Gravenhurst	Gravenhurst Wharf	1876	1.0

HAMILTON AND LAKE ERIE RAILWAY

Hamilton	Port Dover	1875	42.7
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HAMILTON AND NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY

Hamilton	Barrie	1877	92.4
Beaton	Collingwood	1879	41.5

NORTH SIMCOE RAILWAY

Colwell	Penetang	1880	33.4
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FLOS TRAMWAY COMPANY

Elmvale	Hillsdale	1880	6.0
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NORTHERN AND PACIFIC JUNCTION RAILWAY

Gravenhurst	North Bay	January 27, 1886	<u>115.8</u>
			497.4

LOCOMOTIVES

1852 broad gauge 5'6"; 1881 changed to standard gauge; Grand Trunk Railway numbers in 600 series assigned in 1888.

1	Lady Elgin	4-4-0 14 x 20 60"	1852	Portland #33
		Scrapped 1881.		
2	Toronto	4-4-0 16 x 22 54"	1853	James Good #1
		Scrapped 1881.		
3	Josephine	4-4-0 17 x 20 72"	1853	New Jersey
		Scrapped 1881.		

4	Huron	4-4-0 17 x 20 60"	1853	New Jersey	Scrapped 1870.
4 641	St. Clair	0-4-0 13 x 20 54"	1853	Souther	1870 from Great Western Railway #91 1881 converted to standard gauge.
5	Ontario	4-4-0 17 x 20 60"	1853	New Jersey	Scrapped 1870.
5 642	Simcoe	0-4-0 13 x 20 54"	1853	Souther	1870 from Great Western Railway #93 1881 converted to standard gauge.
6	Simcoe	4-4-0 16 x 22 66"	1853	James Good #2	Scrapped about 1878.
6 643		0-4-2T 14 x 24 48"	1878	Baldwin	1881 converted to standard gauge.
7	Collingwood	4-4-0 17 x 20 60"	1854	New Jersey	Scrapped 1881.
8	Seymour	4-4-0 17 x 20 60"	1854	New Jersey	Scrapped 1881.
9	Hercules	0-6-0 18 x 20 54"	1854	James Good #3	1857 rebuilt 4-6-0; scrapped 1881.
10	Sampson	0-6-0 18 x 20 54"		James Good #5	1857 rebuilt 4-6-0; scrapped 1881.
11		4-4-0 16 x 20 60"	1855	James Good #10	Scrapped 1881.
12		4-4-0 17 x 20 66"	1855	James Good #11	Scrapped 1881.
13	George Beatty	0-6-0 18 x 20 54"	1855	James Good #12	1857 rebuilt 4-4-0 18 x 20 66" Scrapped 1881.
14		4-4-0 17 x 20 66"	1855	New Jersey	Scrapped 1881.
15		4-4-0 17 x 20 60"	1855	New Jersey	Scrapped 1881.
16	J. C. Morrison	4-4-0 17 x 20 66"	1855	James Good #13	Scrapped 1881.
17	Cumberland	0-6-0 18 x 20 54"	1855	James Good #14	1857 rebuilt 4-4-0 18 x 20 66" Scrapped 1881.
18		? ?			
19		4-4-0 16 x 24 60"	1867	Kingston #73	1871 changed to #24.
20 644		4-4-0 16 x 24 60"	1867	Kingston #74	1881 to standard gauge.
21 645		4-4-0 16 x 24 60"	1870	Northern Railway	Probably old engine rebuilt. 1881 to standard gauge.

22	646	4-4-0	16 x 24 60"	1870	Northern Railway
					Probably old engine rebuilt. 1881 to standard gauge.
23	647	4-4-0	16 x 24 60"	1870	Northern Railway
					Probably old engine rebuilt. 1881 to standard gauge.
24	648	4-4-0	16 x 24 60"	1867	Kingston #73
					Ex. No. 19; 1881 to standard gauge.
28	649	4-4-0	16 x 22 60"	1872	Dubs & Company
					1875 from Intercolonial Railway. 1881 to standard gauge.
29	650	4-4-0	16 x 22 60"	1878	Kingston #197
30	651 Reindeer	4-4-0	16 x 22 68"	1869	Great Western Railway
					1872 from Great Western Railway #44 1881 to standard gauge.
31	652 Elk	4-4-0	16 x 22 68"	1869	Great Western Railway
					1872 from Great Western Railway #45 1881 to standard gauge.
32	653 Gazelle	4-4-0	16 x 22 68"	1869	Great Western Railway
					1872 from Great Western Railway #46 1881 to standard gauge.
33	654 Stag	4-4-0	16 x 22 68"	1869	Great Western Railway
					1872 from Great Western Railway #47 1881 to standard gauge.
34	655 Antelope	4-4-0	16 x 22 68"	1869	Great Western Railway
					1872 from Great Western Railway #48 1881 to standard gauge.
35	656 Windsor	4-4-0	14 x 22 66"	1853	Schenectady #59
					1870 from Great Western Railway #5 Rebuilt 4-4-0 16 x 24 68" 1881 to standard gauge.
36	657 Greyhound	4-4-0	16 x 22 68"	1869	Great Western Railway
					1872 from Great Western Railway #49 1881 to standard gauge.
37		4-4-0	Taunton		
					Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #13 Origin unknown; scrapped 1881.
38	658 Port Dover	4-4-0	16 x 22 66"	1860	Rogers
					Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #12; origin unknown but originally bore name "Julia Collier."
39	Alliston	4-4-0	Pennsylvania Railroad, Altoona		
					Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #14 Scrapped about 1881.
40	Cookstown	4-4-0	Pennsylvania Railroad, Altoona		
					Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #15 Scrapped about 1881.

41 659 John Scott	2-6-0	17 x 24 54"	1874	Baldwin	Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #1.
42 660 J. M. Williams	2-6-0	17 x 24 54"	1874	Baldwin	Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #2.
43 661	2-6-0	17 x 24 54"	1874	Baldwin	Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #3.
44 662	2-6-0	17 x 24 54"	1874	Baldwin	Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #4.
45 663 Halton	4-4-0	16 x 24 60"	1878	Kingston #198	Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #5.
46 664 Peel	4-4-0	16 x 24 60"	1878	Kingston #200	Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #6.
47 665 Norfolk	4-4-0	16 x 24 60"	1878	Kingston #201	Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #7.
48 666 Simcoe	4-4-0	16 x 24 60"	1878	Kingston #202	Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #8.
49 667 Hamilton	4-4-0	16 x 24 60"	1878	Kingston #203	Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #9.
50 668 Barrie	4-4-0	16 x 24 60"	1878	Kingston #204	Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #10.
51 669 Collingwood	4-4-0	16 x 24 60"	1878	Kingston #205	Ex Hamilton & North Western Railway #11.
61-72 670-681	4-4-0	17 x 24 60"	1881	Brooks	Builder's #551-53, 555-58, 560-61, 563-65.
73-74 682-683	4-4-0	18 x 24 60"	1878	Kingston #333-34.	
81-88 684-691	4-4-0	18 x 24 60"	1886	Kingston #310-317.	

Nos. 85 and 86 survived until about 1925, becoming Canadian National Railways Nos. 130 and 131. Illustrations of the "Lady Elgin," "Toronto" and "Josephine" appeared in our Bulletin #25, published in 1931.