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Margaret has also preserved the Great Western locomotive reports, but has preserved excellent railroad photograph collections .

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THE  
QUEBEC  
AND  
GOSFORD  
RAILWAY

C. H. RIFF

## QUEBEC AND GOSFORD RAILWAY

Chartered April 1869, the Quebec and Gosford was projected as a wooden railed railroad. It was to be constructed on a design by a New York State promoter Mr Jerome Hulbert. Work had started in September 1869. Twenty seven miles of this railway were completed by the end of November 1870. The Montreal Gazette of November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1870 carried the report of the first excursion of the press over the new railway. A snow storm had set in that Friday night, it was one of those wet slushy storms which are a premonition of a Quebec winter. The newspaper men slogged along a mud road to the outskirts of Quebec City to the station in St Sauveur Ward. Some of the carriages sank up to their axles in the mud. The guests boarded the little train and were surprised to find how quiet the train rode over the maple rails. On this trip a Mr Murphy, a mail conductor on the Grand Trunk was aboard. He had carried the first mail into Quebec over the Quebec over the Quebec and Richmond Railroad seventeen years earlier. He had a number of pamphlets and letters endeavoring to also be the first to carry mail over the Gosford.

On November 26<sup>th</sup>, 1870 His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec and several members of the Provincial Cabinet and the Provincial Legislature together with many prominent citizens made the official opening of the railway. At ten o'clock that morning the splendid little engine "Jacques Cartier" with a train of passenger and freight cars arrived at the St Sauveur station.

At about eleven o'clock a long line of sleighs were seen emerging from the classic region of St Sauveur full of citizens and politicians. In honour of the occasion a strong body of the new Provincial Police, under the command of Captain Voyer, were drawn up near the train. Their new distinctive headdress rather reminding people of the pictures of Napoleans 'Old Guard'. In the leading sleigh acting as a pilot over a little visited region sat the popular and energetic President of the Quebec and Gosford Railway H. G. Joly to

whom the success of this railway undertaking is due The party consisted of Lieutenant Governor Sir N. F. Belleau, the Premier of Quebec the Honourable P. J. O. Chauveau, the Honourable L. Archambeault of the Commission of Public Works and the Honourable Blanchet the Speaker of the House.

The whistle was sounded and with an 'All Aboard for Gosford' the engine and cars started out at sixteen miles an hour through swamp and bush and cultivated fields, up grades from four feet in one hundred feet and around curves of only five hundred feet radius going upwards until arriving at Lorette 9.5 miles from Quebec, where the engine stopped to take on water. Onward and at Sullivan's Falls on the Jacques Cartier River, sixteen miles from Quebec the train was now 570 feet above the St Lawrence River, Here the train relinquished its speed to traverse the bridge; which in two solidly constructed spans of 240 feet in all and 45 feet above the roaring torrent crosses the the Jacques Cartier River, Emerging from the forests the timid but enterprising traveller finds himself apparently suspended in mid-air. The train rounded the curved trestle.

The train had to stop once again at Hulbert's Mill to take on water. It was at this sawmill that all or the inhabitants of Gosford. the material for the Gosford was produced. Finally the train arrived arrived at Gosford, but the passengers had to look hard to find either the village or the inhabitants. The nearest village was one and a half miles to the west, Gosford consisted of one newly built Hotel and Lac a Isle, and one house. It was in the latter that the party was fed and the customary speeches were made.

It took the party two hours to return to Quebec. Upon leaving someone shouted "All aboard for Chicoutimi."

Contractor Hulbert had agreed in December to rent the railroad from the shareholders for five years, guaranteeing five per cent dividend on the Capital stock for the first two years and six per cent for the third year and seven per cent for the fourth year and eight per cent for the fifth year. The paid up capital of the road was

reported to be \$76,000.00 and Mr Hulbert's stock taken in part payment for the construction of the road was \$21,000.00. There was also a government grant of \$46,000.00 making a total of \$143,000.00. The Company wanted a dividend on the whole.

Shortly after the grand opening the railway was snowbound and the promise of cheap firewood was not fulfilled. During the winter attempts were made to negotiate a complete and direct entrance into the heart of Quebec City to the Palais Market. The talk was to use the tracks of the horse powered street railway.

The opinion seemed that the railway would soon be extended north to Lac St. Jean. Surveys were being made. Hulbert travelled to the United States to sell the company bonds and he came back with two new locomotives.

The first sign of discontent was reported April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1871, when a large meeting of the shareholders in the rooms of the Board of Trade. Mr Joly the President was called to the chair. There was required \$60,000.00 to pay off the liabilities and place the Railway in working order and it was announced that the Government had agreed not to claim priority for their debt.

During the summer the Gosford Road started running excursion trains to Gosford. The first recorded event occurred August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1871 when three hundred excursionists were carried in a train composed of nine flatcars with seats added. Whirled along at thirty miles per hour, the crowd detrained to a grove beside the Jacques Cartier River. It was noted that thousands of cords of firewood lined the track. Hulbert started his management of the railroad on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1871.

September surveys were conducted by Messrs. Roy and Nelson for the complete extension to Lac St. Jean. As the fall approached three trains were seen arriving at Quebec daily laden with firewood.

February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1872 the Annual meeting took place. Many of the shareholders complained about the original promise of cheap firewood, the railroad was supposed to have shipped into the city at cost. At

this time the railroad had not shipped any firewood into the city. The traditional source were the local farmers, but they believing the railway were furnishing lots of wood had not cut or hauled any firewood that winter and the result that the railway had caused a scarcity of firewood pushing up the price. Hulbert said he did not have money to cut wood. To the shareholders, Hulbert told them if they wanted wood for them to advance him money. The railroad was opened early in April 1872 in an effort to reduce the cost of firewood.

Once again in the summer of 1872 excursion trains were run to the Jacques Cartier River. The railway built a new ballroom 40 feet by 200 feet, complete with refreshment stalls in beautiful picturesque groves.

A lumber merchant by the name of Dubuc had built a sawmill on the river and had leases on three hundred square miles of timberland along the river. He was able to ship large quantities of balsam wood to Scotland over the Gosford Railroad.

The chief business of the railroad was the lumber generated by the three sawmills located along the railway, firewood chopped in adjacent woodlots, and excursions but all this was taking place in the summer months only. The wood rails by now were starting to fall apart, repairs had to be made frequently. on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1872 The Quebec Mercury announced the railroad had delivered installment of firewood but that the company intend at the close of this season to replace the wooden rails with iron rails. The cheap initial cost was far outweighed by the impracticality of the unreliable service. The failure of the Quebec and Gosford Railroad was readily imminent. The railway did not open or run its first train until July of 1873 Repairs were in the planning when the bottom fell out of the value of the stock of the railroad.

During July stock in the Gosford Railroad was being sold for between ten and twenty-four cents per ten dollar share. Hulbert who had contracts to build at least four other wooden railroads in Quebec defaulted on those contracts, both the Sherbrooke Eastern Townships

and Kennebec and the Levis and Kennebec Railroads forgot about using Hulbert's wooden rails. The Quebec and Gosford locomotives were run into the enginehouse the fires dropped and the doors were locked.

## SOURCES

1. Montreal Gazette November 28, 1871
2. Quebec Mercury February 17, 1871
3. Quebec Mercury March 2, 1871
4. Quebec Mercury April 12, 1871
5. Quebec Mercury August 18, 1871
6. Quebec Mercury August 17, 1871
7. Quebec Mercury September 17, 1871
8. Quebec Mercury September 25, 1871
9. Quebec Mercury February 7, 1872
10. Quebec Mercury July 9, 1872
11. Quebec Mercury August 19, 1873
12. Quebec Mercury July 24, 1873



## LOCOMOTIVES OF THE QUEBEC AND GOSFORD RAILWAY

No. 1	4-4-0	“Jacques Cartier”	built Rhode Island 6-1870
		43” drivers SN 172 to Q&LSJ No. 1, No. 28	
No. 2	4-4-0	“Quebec”	built Rhode Island 8-1871
		SN 274	
No. 3	4-4-0	“Gosford”	built Rhode Island 8-1871
		SN	
		To Q&LSJ “J.B Renaud”,	
		To Q&LSJ No. 30 in 1912	