

Note:

At the time of publication of this summary, Pat Scrimgeour was on the editorial staff of the Upper Canada Railway Society (UCRS) newsletter. This document is a most useful summary of the many pioneer lines that criss-crossed south-western Ontario in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

32 - Historical Outlines of Railways in Southwestern Ontario

BY PAT SCRIMGEOUR

The following items are brief histories of the railway companies in the area between Toronto and London. Only the railways built in or connecting into the area are shown on the map below, and connecting lines in Toronto, Hamilton; and London are not included. The histories cover the years from 1850 to 1921, with some subsequent information provided for continuity. Within each of the corporate groups, the companies are listed chronologically. The sources of information are various; where the literature conflicts in dates, the more authoritative source is generally used this occasionally results in differences from popular railfan books.

The Grand Trunk lines

Buffalo, Brantford & Goderich Railway

The BB&G was the first railway to be built into south-western Ontario. In the 1850's, the boundary between the United States and Canada was no impediment to trade, and so the businessmen of Buffalo were able to support a new line to extend their trading area to the west. Residents of Brantford were unhappy that the planned Canadian main trunk railway was to bypass Brantford to the north. A partnership between the business communities in Brantford and Buffalo formed the Brantford and Buffalo Joint Stock Railroad Company in 1850. The company was formed without incorporation under the Plank Road Act, and the Town of Brantford and the City of Buffalo purchased stock in the firm.

The joint stock company was incorporated in 1852 under the name of the Buffalo, Brantford & Goderich Railway with authority to build from Fort Erie to Brantford.

The BB&G was opened from Buffalo to Caledonia on December 20, 1853, and to Brantford in January, 1854. A train left each end every morning (except Sundays) for the day trip to the other end. In November 1856, the line was opened to Paris, where a connection was made with the Great Western.

A new company, the Buffalo & Lake Huron Railway Company, was formed in 1856 to buy the assets of the BB&G, which had become financially troubled during its extension from Paris to Goderich. The B&LH completed the line under construction to Stratford in 1856, and became the first railway to serve the area, beating the GTR by only months. The line was completed to Goderich in 1858. The B&LH was then able to capture sizeable freight traffic from Lake Michigan and Chicago to the eastern United States, via Goderich.

The GTR in 1864 leased the B&LH for 21 years, and in 1869, the line was owned in perpetuity.

Toronto & Guelph Railway

The Toronto & Goderich Railway Company was established in 1848 to build from Toronto to Guelph, and on to Goderich, on Lake Huron. The Toronto & Guelph was incorporated in 1851 to succeed the Toronto & Goderich with powers to build a line only as far as Guelph.

The Toronto & Guelph was amalgamated with five other railway companies in 1854 to form the Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada. The GTR opened the T&G line in 1856.

Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada

The Grand Trunk was incorporated in 1852 with authority to build a line from Montreal to Toronto, assuming the rights of the Montreal & Kingston Railway Company and the Kingston & Toronto Railway Company, and with authority to unite small railway companies to build a main trunk line. To this end, the following companies were amalgamated with the GTR in 1853 and 1854: the Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada East (Montreal to Rivière-du-Loup), the Toronto & Guelph Railway Company, the St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad Company (Montreal to Island Pond, Vermont), the Quebec & Richmond Railway Company, and the Grand Junction Railroad Company (Belleville to Peterborough). In addition, the Atlantic & St. Lawrence Railroad Company (Portland, Maine to Island Pond, Vermont) was leased.

The Grand Trunk extended its line west from Guelph to Stratford in 1856, to St. Mary's Jct. in 1858, and to Point Edward, near Sarnia, in 1859. A connecting line under construction from St. Mary's Jct. to London, the London and Grand Trunk Junction, was amalgamated into the GTR in 1857.

The property of the Preston & Berlin Railway was acquired in 1865, giving the GTR a branch from Berlin to Doon. By agreement with the Town of Galt, this branch was extended to Galt in 1873.

A working agreement was established in 1866 with the Buffalo & Lake Huron, and the B&LH was acquired by the Grand Trunk in 1869.

In 1872, the gauge of the rails on the former B&LH line from Buffalo to Stratford, and on the GTR lines west of Stratford, was narrowed from 5'6" to 4'8½", to allow interchange with lines in the U.S. The line from Stratford to Montreal was changed in 1873, and all lines were subsequently changed to the standard gauge of 4'8½".

To replace the Grand Trunk's old locomotive repair shops in Toronto, and those of the B&LH in Brantford, a large new shop facility was opened in Stratford in 1871. In the same year, new car shops were built at Brantford.

In 1881, the Port Dover & Lake Huron, the Stratford & Huron, and the Georgian Bay & Wellington were amalgamated into one company, the Grand Trunk, Georgian Bay & Lake Erie, which was then leased by the GTR.

The Grand Trunk and its branches were in 1883 declared to be for the general advantage of Canada. This allowed subsidy to be provided by the federal government.

In 1884 the Great Western was amalgamated with the GTR under the Grand Trunk name. The new GTR took over the leases by the GWR of the Galt & Guelph; the Brantford, Norfolk & Port Burwell; the London, Hu-

ron & Bruce; and the Wellington, Grey & Bruce.

The Northern Railway of Canada and the Hamilton & North Western were absorbed by the Grand Trunk in 1888, so that the GTR then controlled all of the important railway lines in Ontario except for the Canada Atlantic (Parry Sound to Ottawa and Montreal) and those owned by the Canadian Pacific. The Grand Trunk had been prohibited by law from amalgamating or pooling profits with the Canadian Pacific in 1885.

The Grand Trunk was reorganized by the amalgamation of fifteen companies to form a new Grand Trunk company in 1893. In southwestern Ontario, the amalgamated lines were the GTR itself; the Brantford, Norfolk & Port Burwell; the Galt & Guelph; the Grand Trunk, Georgian Bay & Lake Erie; the London, Huron & Bruce; the Waterloo Junction Railway and the Wellington, Grey & Bruce.

Following an agreement with the City of Brantford in 1902, tracks in the vicinity were realigned so that the Grand Trunk's main east-west line followed the Great Western to Lynden, a new four-mile connecting track to Alford, the GWR Harrisburg – Brantford branch to Brantford, via a new connecting track to the B&LH at Brantford, then back to the GWR at Paris Jet. When the new route opened in 1905, the old GWR main line between Lynden and Paris Jct. was then downgraded to the status of a branch line.

The Grand Trunk encountered political and financial difficulties resulting from the construction of its line from Winnipeg to Prince Rupert, the Grand Trunk Pacific. Rather than bail out the company, the federal government assumed control of the GTR in 1920. After ownership was transferred in 1923, the GTR was amalgamated into the Canadian National Railways System.

Preston & Berlin Railway

The Preston & Berlin was incorporated in June, 1857, to take over the extension to Berlin (now Kitchener) under construction by the Galt & Guelph. The first section of the line, from Preston to Doon, was closed permanently in September 1857. The remainder of the line, unconnected to the Galt & Guelph, was opened from Doon to Berlin in November 1857.

In 1863, E.I. Fergusson acquired the Preston & Berlin by taking a mortgage on the line. Some stock in the railway was held by the Village of Berlin. Government approval was granted for the company to be sold to the Preston & Berlin Junction Railway Company but was apparently not acted upon.

The Grand Trunk acquired the property of the Preston & Berlin from E. I. Fergusson in 1865. An extension from Doon to Galt was opened in October 1873, under an agreement with the Town of Galt.

London & Grand Trunk Junction Railway

The London & Grand Trunk Junction was incorporated by the GTR in 1856 to build a line from London to the Grand Trunk main line at or near St. Mary's. As the line was built, title to the lands forming the right-of-way was taken in the name of the Grand Trunk. The London & Grand Trunk Junction was formally amalgamated with the GTR in 1857. The line opened from London to St. Mary's Jct. in 1858.

Port Dover & Lake Huron Railway

The PD&LH was incorporated in 1872 to build from Port Dover to Stratford. The company was allowed to acquire the roadbed and holdings of the Woodstock & Lake Erie Railway and Harbour Company. The line was opened between Port Dover and Woodstock in 1875, and between Woodstock and Stratford in 1876. The PD&LH purchased Port Dover harbour from the federal government in 1877.

The Port Dover & Lake Huron was amalgamated into the Grand Trunk, Georgian Bay & Lake Erie in 1881, which was subsequently amalgamated in 1893 into the Grand Trunk.

The seven-mile portion of the PD&LH from near Tavistock to Stratford ran parallel to the original Buffalo, Brantford & Goderich line. In 1893, this part of the PD&LH was closed in favour of a short connecting track at Tavistock Jct., in the western part of Tavistock. Part of the line, in the east end of Stratford, was retained as a connection between the BB&G, the GTR main line, and the Stratford & Huron to the north.

Stratford & Huron Railway

The Stratford & Huron was incorporated in 1855, and revived in 1873. Lines were built from Stratford to Harriston in 1877, Harriston to Chesley in 1882, and Chesley to Warton in 1882. These lines were leased to the Port Dover & Lake Huron for operation. The Stratford & Huron was amalgamated into the Grand Trunk, Georgian Bay, & Lake Erie in 1881, and into the Grand Trunk in 1893. Following the amalgamation, a portion of the S&H from Westonville (Listowel) to Harriston (15 miles) was abandoned.

Hamilton & North Western Railway

The Hamilton & North Western was incorporated in 1872 to build from Hamilton to the Township of Tay (near Barrie), and to build an extension to Lake Nipissing. The H&NW was amalgamated with the Hamilton & Lake Erie Railway Company in 1876. The line from Hamilton to Barrie was opened in 1877.

From 1879 to 1888, the H&NW and the Northern Railway of Canada were operated as a combined system, as the Northern & North Western Railway. The two companies were operated by a Joint Executive Committee, under an agreement authorized by the federal government. The short segment of the Hamilton & North Western from Allandale to Barrie was parallel to the Northern's line, and was abandoned in 1879.

The Hamilton & North Western was declared to be for the general advantage of Canada in 1883. Both the H&NW and the Northern were absorbed by the Grand Trunk in 1888.

Waterloo Junction Railway

The Waterloo Junction Railway was incorporated in 1889 to build from Waterloo to St. Jacobs and Elmira, and beyond, to Elora or Listowel. A section from Berlin to Waterloo opened in 1889, and the portion from Waterloo to Elmira opened in 1891. In 1891, the WJR was leased to the Grand Trunk for 39 years. and in 1893 the company was amalgamated with the GTR.

The Great Western lines

Great Western Railway

The Great Western's predecessor, the London & Gore Railroad Company was incorporated in 1834 to build a line between Burlington Bay, on Lake Ontario, the River Thames at London, and Lake Huron. No progress was made until 1845, when the company was revived and its name changed to the Great Western Rail Road Company. Construction began in 1852 at the Desjardins Canal on Burlington Bay. The Great Western was to be part of the main trunk railway sponsored by the Province of Canada.

The name was changed to the Great Western Railway Company in 1853. The line opened between Niagara Falls, Hamilton, and London in 1853, and to Windsor in 1854. Two affiliated companies built connecting lines: the Hamilton & Toronto opened in 1855, and the London & Port Samia, in 1858.

The GWR leased the Galt & Guelph in 1854. The line was extended to Brantford in 1871 with the completion of the Harrisburg & Brantford Railway.

Great Western leased the Wellington, Grey & Bruce in 1869, amalgamated with the London, Huron & Bruce in 1875, and leased the Brantford, Norfolk & Port Burwell in 1878.

The entire Great Western system was placed under federal jurisdiction in 1883 by an act declaring the GWR to be a work "for the general advantage of Canada." The Great Western was formally acquired by the Grand Trunk in 1884, and was subsequently consolidated with the GTR.

Galt & Guelph Railway

The Galt & Guelph was incorporated in 1852 to build a line between its two namesake cities. The Great Western leased the G&G in 1854, and took complete control by foreclosing on a mortgage in the 1860s. The line was completed and opened from Galt to Preston in 1855, and to Guelph in 1857. A branch of the railway to Berlin was separated from the company as the Preston & Berlin Railway Company, in 1857.

The Galt & Guelph was part of the Great Western system when the GWR was amalgamated with the Grand Trunk in 1884, and the Galt & Guelph was formally amalgamated into the GTR in 1893.

Wellington, Grey & Bruce Railway

The WG&B was incorporated in 1864 to build a line from Guelph to Southampton, with a branch to Owen Sound. The railway was leased to the Great Western in 1869. Operation between Guelph and Elora began in 1870, and to Southampton in 1872. A Pa1merston-Kincardine branch opened in 1874.

A traffic agreement was signed with the Great Western in 1873; and in 1876 and 1882 the GWR acquired the bonds of the company. The Wellington, Grey & Bruce was taken into the Grand Trunk system when the Great Western and the Grand Trunk amalgamated in 1882, and was amalgamated into the Grand Trunk in 1893.

Brantford, Norfolk & Port Burwell Railway

The Norfolk Railway Company was incorporated in 1869 to build a line from Simcoe, Port Dover; or Port Ryerse, to Caledonia, Brantford, or Paris. The construction of a line from Brantford to Port Burwell

was authorized in 1873, and in 1874 the name of the company was changed to the Brantford, Norfolk & Port Burwell.

The line opened from downtown Brantford to a junction with the Canada Air Line Railway at Tillsongburg in 1876. The Great Western leased the railway in perpetuity in 1878. The BN&PB became part of the Grand Trunk system in 1882, and was amalgamated into the GTR in 1893.

Harrisburg and Brantford Railway

The Great Western formed the Harrisburg & Brantford Railway in 1870 to build a branch between those two cities. Construction began and was completed in 1871. At Harrisburg, the switch points of the connection faced west, to allow through traffic between Galt and Brantford.

The Canadian Pacific lines

Credit Valley Railway

The Credit Valley was incorporated in 1871 to build from Toronto to Orangeville, with extensions to Galt, Berlin, or Waterloo. In 1873, powers were granted for an extension from Galt to Woodstock, and subsequently to St. Thomas. The railway was to be built to the standard gauge of 4'8½", as the broad gauge legislation had been repealed and the Grand Trunk and the Great Western had recently been converted from the wider gauge of 5'6".

Tracks were completed from Toronto to Milton in 1876, and opened the next year. The Orangeville branch was opened as far as Brampton in 1878. In 1879, lines were opened from Milton to Galt, and from Brampton to Orangeville. Finally, the section from Galt to St. Thomas was opened in 1881. At St. Thomas, the CVR connected with the Canada Southern Railway (CASO), and traffic continued west on the CASO.

The line was declared to be for the general advantage of Canada in 1883. Power was given that year for the CVR to amalgamate with, or be leased to, the Ontario & Quebec Railway (O&Q). In 1884, the Credit Valley was amalgamated with the O&Q, and the consolidated line was leased in perpetuity to the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Guelph Junction Railway

In the 1870s, the City of Guelph wanted to attract a third railway line to compete with the Grand Trunk (Toronto & Guelph) and the Great Western (Galt & Guelph, Wellington, Grey & Bruce). The city was trying to establish itself as a regional commercial centre, and needed connections to lake ports. The Wellington & Georgian Bay was incorporated by Guelph businessmen in 1878.

The name of the railway was changed to the Georgian Bay & Wellington in 1879. The GB&W was acquired by the Grand Trunk and merged into the Grand Trunk, Georgian Bay & Lake Erie; only one small portion of the line was built. When the Great Western was amalgamated into the Grand Trunk in 1884, Guelph was left with only one railway, and no competition.

The Guelph Junction Railway Company was then incorporated in 1884 to build a connection from Guelph to the Credit Valley Railway at a point between Milton and Galt, and to extend to Lake Ontario. The charter was amended in 1886 to allow for an extension to the north of Guelph, to Lake Huron.

In 1887, the City of Guelph took majority ownership in the GJR, and arranged for the line to be leased to the Canadian Pacific following its completion. In 1888, the line was opened from Guelph to a point west of Campbellville, called Guelph Jct. The railway was then leased to the CPR for 99 years. The City of Guelph purchased of the all shares of the GJR in 1901 and 1910, and still owns the railway.

West Ontario Pacific Railway

The connection between the Credit Valley and the Canada Southern Railway at St. Thomas was becoming inadequate for the needs of the Canadian Pacific system in the 1880s. The U.S.-owned Canada Southern ran between Niagara Falls and Amherstburg, on the Detroit River. To offer better service, the CPR needed a link to London and Windsor.

The absorption by the CPR of the Credit Valley in 1884 had included a lease of the proposed London Junction Railway. The West Ontario Pacific was incorporated in 1885 in place of the London Junction, to build a line from the St. Clair River to Lake Erie, with a branch to Ingersoll or Woodstock.

The word "Pacific" in the name of the company indicated not that the railway had ambitions of expansion, but that it was affiliated with the Canadian Pacific. In fact, all correspondence of the West Ontario Pacific was through the offices of the CPR.

The line was opened in 1887 between Woodstock and London, and the company was leased to the CPR-controlled Ontario & Quebec Railway in that year. The lease included the rights to complete the line to Windsor, as specified in an 1886 amendment to the charter. The extension from London to Windsor was opened in 1890 as part of the O&Q.

Tillsonburg, Lake Erie & Pacific Railway

The Tillsonburg, Lake Erie & Pacific was incorporated in 1890 to build a line from Port Burwell, through Tillsonburg, to a connection with the Canadian Pacific at Woodstock or Ingersoll. In 1891, arrangement was made with the Grand Trunk to construct and operate the railway. It was anticipated that the line would be an extension of the Brantford, Norfolk, & Port Burwell, but the GTR decided in 1892 not to build the TLE&P. The owners then applied to build an electric railway on public roads, but this was turned down by the federal government.

Construction of the railway began in 1896. The section from Port Burwell to a connection with the Grand Trunk and the Canada Air Line Railway south-east of Tillsonburg was opened in 1896. With additional subsidy, the line was completed through Tillsonburg to the Canada Southern station in 1898. A further extension was opened to Ingersoll in 1902.

In 1905, the line left local control as it was leased to the CPR. An isolated section of the TLE&P was opened in 1908 from Code Jct. (later Zorra) on the West Ontario Pacific to Embro, the terminal of the St. Mary's & Western Ontario. This line was extended south to Ingersoll North in 1910. Finally, in 1911, the two parts of the TLE&P were joined by a bridge across the Thames between Ingersoll North and Ingersoll.

Galt, Preston & Hespeler Street Railway

The Galt & Preston Street Railway Company was organized in 1890, and opened an electric railway between those towns in 1894. The name was

changed to the Galt, Preston & Hespeler in 1895, and an extension to Hespeler opened in 1896.

The Preston & Berlin Street Railway Company was leased by the GP&H in the year its line to Berlin was completed, 1903.

The GP&H and P&BSR then entered into agreements with the Berlin, Waterloo, Wellesley & Lake Huron Railway Company; a CPR-controlled firm with no railway lines. The operation continued to be carried out under the name of the GP&H, and the line was extended north to Waterloo in 1905. The BWW&LH was leased to the CPR in 1908. In 1914 the electric lines were named the Grand River Railway Company.

Preston & Berlin Street Railway

The Preston & Berlin Street Railway Company was incorporated in 1894, and opened its line in 1899. From 1900, when the company was reorganized, it was closely allied with the Galt, Preston & Hespeler. The Preston & Berlin connected with the GP&H in Preston, and with the Berlin & Waterloo Street Railway to reach downtown Berlin. The assets of the Preston & Berlin were transferred to the Hamilton Radial Electric Railway in 1900. Dominion Power and Traction, the owner of the HRER, was unsuccessful in an attempt to buy control of the Galt, Preston & Hespeler, and the P&BSR was then leased to the GP&H.

The Preston & Berlin opened its line to Berlin in 1903, and to Waterloo in 1904, replacing the previous on-street operation. The Galt, Preston & Hespeler operated the line from 1903, using its own cars. The two railways were amalgamated under the BWW&LH in 1908, and were named the Grand River Railway in 1914.

Guelph & Goderich Railway

The Guelph Junction Railway and the Canadian Pacific signed an agreement in 1904 allowing the CPR to build an extension to Goderich under the authority of the GJR. To that end, the Guelph & Goderich was incorporated that year; and leased its line to the CPR for 999 years.

The line was opened in stages from Guelph to Elmira, to Millbank, and then to Milverton, all in 1906. A branch to Listowel opened in 1908. Also in 1908, plans for a further extension to Stratford were shelved.

St. Mary's & Western Ontario Railway

The St. Mary's & Western Ontario was incorporated in 1905 to build a line from a connection with the Canadian Pacific, through St. Mary's, to Lake Huron or the St. Clair River. The StM&WO covered part of an earlier charter of the South Ontario Pacific. Construction began in 1907 from Embro, where a connection was made with the Tillsonburg, Lake Erie, & Pacific, to St. Mary's.

From 1908, the company was controlled by the Canadian Pacific. The CPR supplied equipment and materials used for the construction. The line was opened in 1908. The StM&WO was leased to the CPR in 1909.

South Ontario Pacific Railway

The South Ontario Pacific was originally incorporated in 1887 to build from Woodstock to the Niagara River; with branches to Cooksville and Toronto, and to Lake Huron. Plans for the construction of this line were dropped when the Canadian Pacific purchased part of the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo. Another company, the Hamilton & Guelph Jct. Railway was incorporated in 1906 to connect Guelph Jct. on the Canadian Pacific, with the TH&B at Hamilton.

The South Ontario Pacific in 1911 received permission to build the line between Guelph Jct. and Hamilton, via Waterdown. Also in 1911, the railway was leased to the CPR for 999 years. The line opened in 1912, giving Hamilton its first direct connection to Lake Huron, and Guelph its long-desired link to Lake Ontario.

Lake Erie & Northern Railway

The Lake Erie & Northern was incorporated by Brantford businessmen in 1911, to build from Port Dover to Galt, with a branch from Paris to Ayr. The Canadian Pacific purchased control of the company and leased the railway line in 1914. Because the CPR already served Ayr, plans for the branch were dropped, and the alignment for the LE&N was moved from the west to the east side of the Grand River.

The sections between Brantford and Galt and between Waterford and Simcoe were built in 1914. The next year the remaining sections from Brantford to Waterford, and from Simcoe to Port Dover were built. When the CPR purchased the section of the Grand Valley Railway between Paris and Galt, it agreed to electrify the LE&N. Passenger service with electric equipment began in 1916 over the whole line, and using Grand Trunk tracks to reach the GTR station in Port Dover.

Grand River Railway

The Grand River Railway was incorporated in 1914 to take over the Berlin, Waterloo, Wellesley & Lake Huron. From 1918, the GRR name was used, replacing that of the Galt, Preston & Hespeler. The operations of the Grand River Railway were closely linked with those of the other CPR-owned electric line on the Grand, the Lake Erie and Northern, after its electrification in 1916.

The independent lines

Brantford, Waterloo & Lake Erie Railway

The Brantford, Waterloo & Lake Erie was incorporated in 1885 to build a line from Berlin, via Brantford, and a connection with the Canada Southern, to Lake Erie. The section between Brantford and the CASO connection at Waterford opened in 1889. That year, there was a change of ownership, and construction of an extension to Galt was stopped. Under the new owners, work began on a line from Brantford towards Hamilton. In 1891, with construction advanced as far east as Summit, near Cope-town, the company went into receivership. An act passed that year allowed the BW&LE to be leased or purchased by the Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway Company. In 1892, the BW&LE was amalgamated with the TH&B.

Toronto, Hamilton & Buffalo Railway

The TH&B was incorporated in 1884 to build from Toronto to Hamilton, and on to the International Bridge at Fort Erie. The charter was revived in 1889, with authority received in 1890 to lease the line to either the Michigan Central Railroad or the Canada Southern (which was, in fact, owned by the Michigan Central). Authority was also given for a branch line from Hamilton to Brantford, and the eastern end of the line was changed to Welland.

A federal charter in 1891, declaring the company to be for the general advantage of Canada, enabled subsidies to be taken.

In 1892, the TH&B was amalgamated with the bankrupt Brantford, Waterloo & Lake Erie. Financial aid received from the City of Brantford in 1893 was conditional upon the Grand Trunk not controlling the line; further aid was received from Hamilton in 1895. In 1893, the TH&B was taken over by four companies: the New York Central & Hudson River Railroad, the Michigan Central, the Canada Southern (all three of these were commonly-owned), and the Canadian Pacific.

The portion of the TH&B between Hamilton and Brantford was completed in 1895, using the unfinished line of the BW&LE. Also opened in 1895 was the TH&B line from Hamilton to Welland. The TH&B acquired the Erie & Ontario Railway in 1916, giving it a branch from Smithville to Port Maitland.

Grand Valley Railway

In 1900, the Port Dover, Brantford, Berlin & Gode-rich Railway Company was incorporated, with authority to build an electric railway line. The name was changed to the Grand Valley Railway in 1902. The Von Echa Company built the line, which opened between Brantford and Paris in 1903, and to the city limits of Galt in 1904. Von Echa had plans to connect Galt and Brantford with London, and ultimately Toronto with Detroit. Von Echa also owned the Brantford Street Railway.

Through operation to a connection with the Galt, Preston & Hespeler in Galt began in 1905. During the next few years, the GVR bought the Brantford Street Railway and the Woodstock, Thames Valley & Ingersoll. The company entered receivership in 1911. All operations were closed in 1912, following a major snowstorm, and resumed only between Brantford and Paris the following spring.

In 1914, the City of Brantford bought the street railway and the section of the GVR to Paris, and organized them as the Brantford Municipal Railway. The new Lake Erie & Northern bought the section between Paris and Galt in 1915, and operated it until floods closed the line the next year. By that time, the LE&N was able to introduce electric passenger train service on its own parallel line. The Brantford Municipal Railway operated the Paris section until 1929, when it was replaced by buses.

Woodstock, Thames Valley & Ingersoll Electric Ry

The WTV&I was incorporated in 1900 to build an electric railway from Woodstock to Ingersoll. Service began between Woodstock and Beachville in 1900, and to Ingersoll in 1901. In 1902, an additional section was completed in Woodstock. Except for the part on the side streets of Woodstock, the whole line was built along the edge of the highway.

The Grand Valley Railway bought the WTV&I in

1907, but the line continued to be managed locally. When the GVR and the Brantford Street Railway were sold to the City of Brantford in 1914, the owners gave up control of the WTV&I to the bondholders. The line was operated until 1925, when the service was replaced by buses, and the railway abandoned.

Brantford & Hamilton Electric Railway

The Hamilton, Chedoke & Ancaster Electric Street Railway was incorporated in 1896 to build a line from Hamilton up the Niagara Escarpment to Ancaster. In 1899, the name was changed to the Hamilton, Ancaster & Brantford, and the planned route extended to Brantford. In 1904, a new company, the Brantford & Hamilton Electric Railway (B&H), was incorporated to build a line, conditional upon the older company not building its line. The HA&B withdrew in 1905, and urged that the B&H be allowed to begin construction.

The B&H was also owned by the Von Echa Company. Construction began in 1906. The B&H was sold to the Hamilton-based Dominion Power & Transmission Company (known as "The Cataract") in 1907. "The Cataract" also owned the Hamilton Street Railway, the Hamilton Radial Electric Railway (Hamilton to Oakville), the Hamilton, Grimsby & Beamsville Electric Railway, and the Hamilton Terminal Company (the central station for the other companies).

The B&H was opened from Hamilton to Ancaster in 1907, and to Brantford in 1908. In 1916, the line was extended to connect with the Lake Erie & Northern at a new union station in Brantford. "The Cataract" was taken over by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario in 1930, and the B&H was closed in 1931.

Toronto Suburban Railway

The Weston, High Park and Toronto Street Railway Company was incorporated in 1890, and changed its name to the City and Suburban Electric Railway Company the next year. The Davenport Street Railway Company was incorporated in 1891. In 1894, the Toronto Suburban Street Railway Company was incorporated and acquired these two companies, giving it 7.5 miles of lines in the northwestern suburbs of Toronto. By 1914, extensions had increased the length of the Toronto Suburban lines to approximately 10 miles.

Beginning in 1911, William Mackenzie, part owner of the original Toronto Railway Company and the quickly-expanding Canadian Northern Railway system, bought control of the Toronto Suburban. Under Mackenzie, ambitious extensions were undertaken north to Woodbridge and west to Guelph. By 1917, the Toronto Suburban was over 65 miles long.

Though it was part of the holdings of Mackenzie, Mann and Company, the TSR was not taken over as part of the Canadian Northern by the federal government in 1917. The government-owned Canadian Northern Railway Company instead purchased the TSR shares from Mackenzie in 1919. The urban lines were sold to the local municipalities, and the Guelph line was operated as the Canadian National Electric Railways, Toronto Suburban District, until 1931, when it was closed.

References

- Breithaupt, William H.: The Railways of Ontario: A Brief History: Ontario Historical Society "Papers and Records" vol XXV 1929 (reprint).
- Canadian National Railways. Synoptical History of Organization, Capital Stock, Funded Debt and Other General Information. Montreal, 1937 (unpublished).
- Canadian Pacific Railway Company; Annual Report, 1923. Montreal, 1924.
- Cook, John and Cook, Jo Anne: A Compendium of Southern Ontario Rail Lines 1850-1984 (map). Ottawa/Smiths Falls: Rideau Graphics, 1985.
- Currie, A.W.: The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957.
- Dorman, Robert (compiled): A Statutory History of the Steam and Electric Railways of Canada 1836-1937. Ottawa: Canada, Department of Transport 1938
- Dorman, Robert (compiled): The Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railway Systems. Origin and Growth with Statutory Authorities. Ottawa: Canada, Department of Transport, 1948.
- Due, John F.: The intercity Electric Railway Industry In Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966.
- Hopper, A.B. and Kearney, T. (compiled): Synoptical History of Organization, Capital Stock, Funded Debt and Other General Information as of December 31, 1960. Montreal: Canadian National Railways, 1962 (unpublished).
- McNab, William, Principal Assistant Engineer: History of Grand Trunk Railway; Rewritten, Toronto, 1930, Byrne (unpublished).
- Mills, John M.: Traction on the Grand: The Story of Electric Railways along Ontario's Grand River Valley. Montreal: Rallfare Enterprises Ltd. 1977.
- Mills, John M.: Cataract Traction: The Railways of Hamilton. Toronto: Upper Canada Railway Society / Ontario Electric Railway Historical Society, 1971.
- Thompson, Norman and Edgar, J.H.: Canadian Railway Development. Toronto: MacMillan, 1933.
- Walker, Frank N.: Buffalo, Brantford & Goderich Railway; Toronto: Upper Canada Railway Society. 1954 (Bulletin 39; reprinted 1975 in UCRS Newsletter).
- Wilson, Donald M.: The Ontario & Quebec Railway. Belleville, Ont. Mika Publishing Company 1984.

Southwestern Ontario Railway Lines 1921

Scale 1:650,000 (approximate)

Made by Pat Scrimgeour July 1987

Legend:

_____ Railway lines

_____ New railway lines

..... Railway lines closed

SEE BELOW FOR MAP



