

Railways in Nova Scotia

On June 13th, 1854, the first railway was built in Richmond, Nova Scotia. Four years later, on June 3rd, 1858, Nova Scotia's first ever passenger train took its maiden voyage from Halifax to Windsor.

Nova Scotia was home to one of the earliest railways in Canada that used steam locomotives. This took place in 1839 at Albion Mines located in Pictou County. Rail routes in the Sydney and Louisburg areas were at one time some of the busiest for shipping coal in North America.

"The Ocean Limited" was introduced by the Intercolonial Railway in Nova Scotia in 1904. This train was to provide first class passenger service from Halifax to Montreal.

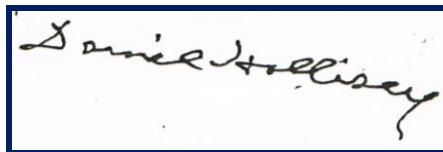
Railway stations once located in Wolfville, Bridgetown and Middleton have been utilized in new ways. These buildings are used for a variety of purposes, such as a library, museum, and restaurant.



To the left of Beaver Bank Station was the Hallisey Hotel building. Above is a picture of this building from 1936.

The Railroad Beaver Bank Station

One of the passengers aboard the maiden trip of the first passenger train in Nova Scotia was a man named Daniel Hallisey. Later on, he became the station agent for Beaver Bank Station. His daughter, Mary Hopkins, succeeded him. The station was run by three generations of the Hallisey family.



The signature of Daniel Hallisey, the station agent for Beaver Bank Station is shown above.

In 1886, the station accommodation that was put in 1858 was replaced with a comfortable waiting room. Other renovations to the station included a bay window that was installed in the office, a freight shed built at the west end of the station and on both east and west sides of the station, the words "Beaver Bank" were painted on.

Beaver Bank Station was officially closed on March 31st, 1956. By 1959, the Dominion Atlantic Railway had introduced diesel engines to all their stations causing the Beaver Bank Station to no longer be needed. Since the station was no longer being used as a railway station, it was put up for sale to be removed from the property. Mark Murphy bought the station house and moved it to the Beaver Bank Crossroads. He then renovated the house but it was sadly lost to fire in November of 1967.

Heading Down The Rails: A Look At Railway Heritage



Above is a picture of the Beaver Bank Station and the Hallisey Hotel building.



The above picture is of Daniel Hallisey (seen on the left) and his family. Mr. Hallisey was the station agent for the Beaver Bank Station for some time.

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Railway Terminology: Did You Know ...

The term railway was first used in the 1770s. The idea of moving goods by wagons running on a set of rails goes back to the sixteenth century. The early routes operated on wooden or stone rails. They were called **wagonways** or **tramways**. The shift in emphasis to the word **rail** came partly in the late eighteenth century when iron rails were introduced.

The word **train** has a long history. It derives from French words that mean **to drag or to pull**. It came into English use in the fourteenth century. The use and meaning of the word eventually applied to something that was dragged along. It originally would have referred to an extended part of a robe or skirt trailing on the ground. The term eventually applied to the artillery and wagons that followed an army, which led to phrases like **train of artillery**, and much later, **wagon train**. Out of this came the idea of a person or things travelling behind another. When the railways were constructed, the phrases **train of wagons** and **train of carriages** were utilized and have since been modernized to the term used today.

Before the use of the word **car** was used to describe railway vehicles, they were referred to as carriages. The design of early railway carriages looked exactly like stagecoaches on rail.



The picture to the left is of an old passenger train located in White Sulphur Springs, Montana. The old passenger trains resembled a stagecoach.



The term railway station has been used since the early days of passenger transportation on rails. The first citation of the term appeared eight years after the world's first passenger station was opened in Manchester, England on September 15, 1830. Pictured above is the **Beaver Bank Station**.

Full Steam Ahead: A Challenging Road

Constructing a railway was a long, backbreaking process. To begin, logs, known as "ties", were laid on the ground and then heavy iron placed on top of them. After that, the iron and wood was pounded into the ground with large spikes to hold the rails in place. It was common to have to build tracks through mountains and to do so, the mountain would first be blasted with dynamite to carve a hole in the side and then the railway was built in the tunnel left over by the blast. Many railway constructors risked their lives when blasting through the mountain because they were compromising the structure of the mountain.

The Economic and Industrial Impact of the Railway

During the 19th century, considerable economic power in Canada was bestowed upon the banks and railway companies of Canada. From the years of 1863 to 1935, the Bank of Montreal acted as the government's sole bank until the creation of the Bank of Canada in 1935. For the most part, the Bank of Montreal invested itself in the creation of railways.

People were not the only ones to profit from the creation of railways. Railways also helped the Canadian economy with growing business opportunities to the United States, the Orient, and Europe. As new markets were created, the opportunity for employment expanded.

Cities such as Halifax, St. John, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver were able to help develop their surrounding towns. As these major cities expanded, the urban landscape around them had the chance to evolve. Many other industries and businesses were attracted to these up and coming towns which helped them become more economically stable and home to many new families. In some situations smaller communities were forced change.

The railway allowed commerce to thrive much more quickly, as goods were no longer carted by wagon. Locomotives moved much faster and ran through the darkest and dreariest of storms.