The Story of the Canadian Pacific Railway

Hop aboard the Canadian Pacific Railway and travel through its history from the steam era to modern times.
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The Transcontinental Railway

On July 1, 1867 four provinces joined together to form the new country of Canada. The four provinces – Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario – were joined three years later by Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. Then in 1871 British Columbia decided to join Canada, but only if the Canadian government promised to build a transcontinental railway. British Columbia set a 10 year deadline for the completion of this link to the rest of the country.

British Columbia – The Promise

The people of British Columbia agreed to join Canada after Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald promised that a railway would be built within ten years to join this westernmost province to the other provinces. The result was the birth of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Today, CPR remains one of Macdonald’s greatest legacies and has been the subject of numerous books and songs. These include Pierre Berton’s books, *The National Dream* (1970) and *The Last Spike* (1972), and Gordon Lightfoot’s well-known song, *Canadian Railroad Trilogy.*
Keeping a Promise

Although many thought it was impossible to build such a railway, Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada’s first prime minister, was determined to keep his promise to the people of British Columbia. However, Macdonald’s Conservative government soon ran into trouble when private financiers hired to build the railway bribed government officials. This caused a scandal, known as the Pacific Scandal, which was the reason Macdonald’s government lost the election of 1873 and the Liberals came to power. The Liberal government, under Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie, was not very interested in building the railway. It wasn’t until 1878, when Macdonald was re-elected prime minister that construction of the railway started in earnest. British Columbia’s 10-year deadline was fast approaching and Macdonald knew he had to do something to show the province the railway was on its way.

Canada’s First Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald

John Alexander Macdonald, who was born in Glasgow, Scotland on January 10, 1815, came with his parents to Kingston, Upper Canada in 1820 when he was only five years old. After receiving his education and becoming a lawyer, Macdonald was elected to Upper Canada’s Legislative Assembly at the age of 29 and by 1857 was Premier of Upper Canada. In Macdonald’s early years as a politician, Canada, as we know it today, did not exist. Instead there were several British North American colonies – Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Lower Canada (today called Quebec), Upper Canada (today called Ontario), and British Columbia. In addition to the colonies there was the vast expanse of land in the West known as Rupert’s Land.

During his years as a politician in Upper Canada, Macdonald supported joining the colonies together to form Canada. After meetings in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island in 1864 and Quebec City, Quebec in 1865, Macdonald and the other Fathers of Confederation worked out a deal that would form the basis of the British North America (BNA) Act. On July 1, 1867, the British Parliament passed the BNA Act, creating the Dominion of Canada. For the key role he played in bringing about Confederation, Queen Victoria knighted Macdonald, giving him the title of Sir. Macdonald, elected as Canada’s first Prime Minister, held that office from 1867 to 1873 and again from 1878 until his death on June 6, 1891.
Building a Nation

The best way to show that the railway was coming to British Columbia was to start building tracks. So, the Canadian government hired an American contractor, Andrew Onderdonk, to start construction. Over the next seven years 15,000 men, including many Chinese labourers, built 545 km of track in British Columbia from Port Moody to Eagle Pass. The work was dangerous and cut through some of the most treacherous geography in the Fraser Canyon. Many workers lost their lives building this section of the transcontinental railway, but the tracks built by these men showed British Columbians the railway was on its way. Canada had kept its promise and British Columbia decided to remain part of the country.

CPR Honours Chinese Workers

On May 27, 2005, Canadian Pacific Railway named the railway interchange in Kamloops, British Columbia after Chinese labourer Cheng Ging Butt. The Cheng Interchange honors the many labourers who toiled, some sacrificing their lives, to build the western section of the CPR from Port Moody to Craigellachie, BC.

For many years, the contribution of the Chinese railway workers went largely uncelebrated. Fifteen years ago CPR, working with the Chinese community, erected a monument in Toronto honouring Chinese railway labourers. More recently, the Royal Canadian Mint launched a two-coin commemorative set marking the 120th anniversary of the completion of the CPR and the important part played by the Chinese workers in building the railway. In 2005, CPR, once again building track to expand in the West, took the opportunity to celebrate the Chinese workers from the 1880s with the dedication of the Cheng Interchange.
William Cornelius Van Horne is most famous for overseeing the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. This was a great achievement, but just one of the ways Van Horne left his mark on the railway and Canada. Van Horne became one of CPR’s first vice presidents in 1884. Four years later, he became the president of CPR, a job he held until his retirement in 1899. Van Horne was appointed Chairman of CPR’s Board of Directors that same year, a position he held until his resignation in 1910.

In addition to being a smart business man Van Horne was known for his great intellectual curiosity. He had many interests, including geology, gardening, sketching, and art collecting. He was one of the first people in Canada to acquire artworks by French impressionist painters. After his retirement, Van Horne indulged in his passion for sketching. On a trip to Europe in 1909, Van Horne sent hand drawn postcards to his grandson in Montreal. He loved to draw elephants, including elephants on trains with their “trunks all aboard.” Author Barbara Nichol was so inspired by Van Horne’s elephant sketches she wrote a book of verse using his illustrations. This children’s book was published in 2001 and is appropriately called, *Trunks All Aboard*.

The story of the CPR would probably be quite a different one if Van Horne had not been at the railway’s helm in its early days. Today, Van Horne is remembered as “the aristocratic railway builder of the Canadian Pacific” in the Canadian Railway Hall of Fame.
In 1882, with Van Horne in charge of construction, crews laid 673 kilometers of track. The dream of a transcontinental railway was getting closer to being a reality. But, first there was one big problem to overcome – how to get through the mountains? In the late 1880s CPR did not have the modern equipment it does today, so laying tracks through the mountains was a difficult task. Major A.B. Rogers, a surveyor, started looking for a possible route in 1881.

It took him two seasons to find a pass that the railway could use to cross the Selkirk Mountains. The pass was called Rogers Pass in honour of the Major. In addition to having the pass named after him, Rogers was rewarded with $5,000 and a gold watch for his work. Today, CPR uses tunnels under the mountains, while the Trans-Canada Highway follows the original CPR route over Rogers Pass.

Conquering the Mountains

The Rogers Pass was so steep trains needed pusher locomotives to help them get over the top. In the winter avalanches often blocked the tracks and many people lost their lives, either caught in an avalanche or digging out from one. It soon became clear that a tunnel through the mountain would be safer than going over Rogers Pass. On December 9, 1916, Canada’s Governor-General, His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught, officially opened the tunnel that bears his name. The Connaught Tunnel served the railway as a double track tunnel until November 11, 1958. It was then converted to single track operation so that the higher and wider loads on rail cars would fit.
By 1970s, CPR needed additional tracks to move its trains more efficiently, so the company began the third and most expensive of all the Rogers Pass projects. In 1982 CPR started construction on a project to make it possible for longer and heavier trains to travel through Rogers Pass with ease. The project, which consisted of a 1,229-metre long viaduct, a shorter 1.9-kilometre tunnel, and a longer 14.7-kilometre tunnel, was completed in the late 1980s. The new Mount Macdonald Tunnel, with its gentle slope, meant that pusher locomotives were no longer needed to help trains through Rogers Pass. This modern-day engineering feat is the longest tunnel in the western hemisphere and on October 15, 2003 the tunnel was named to the Canadian Railway Hall of Fame.

Surveyors had to push their way through dense bush and scramble over rugged terrain, and were also in danger of forest fires, drowning, grizzly bears, and other wild animals, as well as hordes of pesky mosquitoes.

By 1887, CPR had built 31 showsheds to protect trains from heavy snow and avalanches in the Selkirk Mountains of BC.

CPR workers dig out from one of the worst winter storms to ever hit the prairies and hope for better weather soon.
The CPR soon found out it was very expensive to build railway tracks through the mountains. By 1885 the company had run out of money and needed more to finish building the tracks. At the same time CPR was having financial difficulties, Canada was dealing with the Second Northwest Rebellion on the Prairies. The government needed to get soldiers from eastern Canada to the West to control the unrest with the Métis and some of the First Nations peoples of the region. The nearly completed railway was used to move troops to the area in less than 10 days. This proved to the government how useful a railway was to the country and the government decided to help CPR with its financial difficulties so the railway could be completed. Just a few months later, on November 7, 1885, Donald A. Smith drove the last spike into the railway tracks at Craigellachie, BC, to commemorate the track from the East meeting up with Onderdonk’s track from the West. Sir John A. Macdonald’s dream of a transcontinental railway was now real. Eight months later the first transcontinental train left Toronto and Montreal, on June 28, 1886, for the Pacific Coast.

The Boy in the Photo

If you look closely at the photo of the last spike, you will notice the face of a boy in the centre of the picture. This is Edward Mallandaine, who was born in Victoria, BC, on July 1, 1867, the very day of Canada’s Confederation. Edward left school when he was 14 years old and began providing a pony express delivery service to the railroad construction workers in BC. He made good money for several months, until the two ends of the rail-track drew close to each other and most workers left the area. Before ending his adventure, Edward decided to attend the historic last spike event. So, he hopped aboard an open flat-car, enduring a bumpy ride through a bitterly cold night to reach Craigellachie on Nov. 7, 1885.

At the ceremony, Edward, who was short for his age, wormed his way forward between the burly track-workers crowding around the CPR dignitaries, until he was in the front row. A few moments later Edward poked his head around Donald Smith’s shoulder just as photographer Alexander Ross took his famous picture. Soon after Edward had his picture taken he returned home and studied to become an architect and surveyor. He became a successful land developer and was co-founder of the town of Creston, BC. Edward passed away in 1949 at the age of 82, forever remembered as the boy in the picture of the Last Spike.
Famous People

Canadian Pacific Railway has been providing famous people with special trains almost since its beginnings. Just one week after Canada’s first transcontinental train arrived in Port Moody, BC, July 4, 1886, CPR’s first special travellers – Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald and his wife, Lady Agnes Macdonald – took a transcontinental train trip. They travelled in Sir John A’s private car, Jamaica, across Canada. Lady Agnes rode on the front of the train through the mountains and started a trend. A few years later, Canada’s governor general, Lord Stanley of Preston, whose lasting legacy is hockey’s Stanley Cup, travelled across Canada in 1889. He and Lady Stanley also rode on the front of the train through the mountains.

Driving the Last Spike

November 7, 2005 marked the 120th anniversary of the driving of the last spike. It was on this date in 1885 at 9:25 a.m. that Canadian Pacific Railway finished laying the track for Canada’s first transcontinental railway. Company director Sir Donald Smith had the honour of using a spike maul, or sledgehammer, to drive the last spike joining the track from the east to the track built from the west. The ceremony, which took place in Craigellachie, BC, was attended by several CPR officials and the rail workers who had just joined the two sets of tracks earlier that morning. Although there were no reporters or politicians at the ceremony, the event was marked by a very famous photo on page 8.

What is a Cowcatcher?

The cowcatcher is not really for catching cows, but the name is much more fun than the official term for a series of metal bars on the front of a locomotive – a pilot. The device deflects objects from the track that might otherwise derail the train. Perhaps the pilot became known as a cowcatcher after a cow decided to catch a ride on a passing locomotive.
Settling the West

Over the next several years the railway continued to grow. By 1889, the railway extended from coast to coast reaching Saint John, NB, and the CPR was expanding into other businesses. In order for the railway to be profitable, it needed passengers and cargo, but not many people lived in the West when the railway was first built. So, as early as 1881, the railway got involved in land settlement and land sales. CPR actively recruited immigrants and settlers to come West by selling them farm land from the railway’s original 25 million acre land grant at bargain prices. To help sell its land, CPR set up 10 experimental Prairie farms along the railway tracks in 1884. An exhibit car full of crops grown on these farms toured around Eastern Canada to show potential settlers from Ontario and Quebec the bounty of the Prairies.

CPR didn’t just advertise for settlers in Eastern Canada, it also ran advertisements in European newspapers to tell people about the fertile farmland of the Canadian Prairies. In 1909 CPR spent more money promoting immigration than the Canadian government.

Ready Made Farms

In order to encourage immigrants to settle on the Prairies, CPR decided to sell some of the land it had received from the Canadian government to build the railway. However, there was one problem; settlers did not know how to farm in the Prairie environment. In 1909, CPR solved this problem by selling ready-made farms. Each farm came equipped with a house, barn, well and pump. The 65- to 130-hectare farms were fenced, with one third of the land plowed and ready to seed. They were located near schools, churches and, of course, the railway. The cost was ten equal annual payments of $1,300 for smaller farms and $2,500 for larger farms.

The first ready-made farm colonies sprouted up in southern Alberta. Later ready-made farm colonies were built along the CPR line from Wetaskiwin, Alberta to Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Between 1909 and 1919, CPR developed 762 ready-made farms in 24 colonies of five to 122 farms.
The railway also became involved in many other enterprises. In 1882, CPR bought the parcel carrier Dominion Express and started an express parcel service door to door. That same year the railway transmitted its first commercial telegram over telegraph lines erected alongside its track. After the last spike was driven in 1885, CPR realized that passengers on the railway needed a place to stop and rest. In 1886 CPR president William Van Horne decided to build three hotels. The hotels, Mount Stephen in Field, BC, Glacier House in Rogers Pass, BC and Fraser Canyon House in North Bend, BC were very modest, but they paved the way for the construction of other hotels along CPR’s rail line. It wasn’t long before grand resort hotels like the Banff Springs and Chateau Lake Louise were built. Van Horne also saw the potential of the tourist trade and so proposed setting up a national parks system to draw tourists to the Rocky Mountains. In 1883 three CPR construction workers had discovered a natural hot springs at the base of Sulphur Mountain in Alberta; Van Horne decided this would be a perfect spot for a park. The Canadian government created a 26-kilometre reservation around the springs in November 1885, declaring that the springs would belong to all Canadians – as part of Canada’s first national park. Rocky Mountains Park (later renamed Banff National Park) received royal assent in 1887. There are now 41 national parks across Canada.

Touring Canada

Entertainment and refreshments in the pool at the Banff Springs Hotel in the years between World Wars I and II. Life was tough sometimes.

ahhh... music to swim by

tobogganing in a top hat?
After Canadian Pacific Railway built hotels in Alberta and British Columbia, lots of tourists began to vacation in the luxurious accommodations and enjoy the fabulous views in Canada’s first national park. Amateur mountain climbers were also coming west to conquer the unscaled mountain peaks. The tourist trade was booming, but then, in 1896, an amateur mountain climber fell to his death while climbing Mount Lefroy. This tragic accident could have halted the tourist trade to the mountains, but CPR saved the day by hiring Swiss guides to safely guide tourists to the tops of mountains.

In June 1899 the first two Swiss guides, Christian Häsl er and Edouard Feuz arrived. They settled in and prepared to offer their guiding skills to CPR hotel guests at Glacier, Field and Lake Louise. Swiss guides made it safe for just about anyone to climb a mountain. In fact in the 55 years between 1899 and 1954 that CPR’s Swiss guides led guests up and down mountain peaks, passes and glaciers, not a single person died.

Dear Tommy stop you are in big trouble stop there are 42 more nights stop this is your last warning stop Santa stop

The Telegraph Boy

Christmas was a special time of year for telegrams, as relatives wanted to let loved ones far away know they weren’t forgotten during the holiday season. People felt very important when instead of the postman trudging through the snow with a Christmas card, a CPR telegraph boy came to the door. A telegraph boy was always outfitted in a gray uniform, complete with a cap, boots and even leggings; in his hand would be a brightly coloured holiday telegram designed by CPR’s art department. The telegrams were decorated with pictures of holly, poinsettias, doves and Christmas scenes. Along with season’s greetings, they also contained a special message from the person who sent the telegram. CPR went a step further in the 1930s when Santagrams were introduced. These special telegrams were from Santa Claus himself and were a real hit with children anxiously waiting to hear whether they were on his good or naughty list!
In 1899, Canada became involved in its first overseas conflict – the Boer War (1899-1902), sending volunteers and troops to South Africa in support of Great Britain. Canadian Pacific Railway director Donald Alexander Smith, Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal, felt that the Canadian government’s commitment was lacking, so using his own money, he equipped and funded a mounted cavalry. Five hundred thirty seven officers and men, as well as 599 horses, arrived in Cape Town, South Africa on April 10, 1900. The men and horses, called Strathcona’s Horse, fought with distinction and returned home at the end of the war highly decorated.

Today, the Lord Strathcona’s Horse (Royal Canadians) is based in Edmonton, Alberta. Each year, the Strathcona Mounted Troop performs mounted rides and demonstrations across Western Canada.

The CPR continued to help build Canada and its economy through its many businesses. The railway was also a great help to Canada’s efforts during the First World War from 1914 to 1918. CPR devoted its rail repair shops to wartime shell production and CPR ships transported 810,000 troops and millions of tons of supplies and ammunition. When the war ended in 1918, Canada had lost almost 62,000 men out of a population of just 8 million and CPR had lost 1,116 employees.

Women helped out the wartime effort by manufacturing munitions in CPR’s Angus Shops in Montreal. CPR passenger cars converted to hospital cars were used by the Red Cross to transport wounded soldiers to their homes across Canada.

Canadian Pacific Railway Goes to War

Strathcona’s Horse

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School Days

After the war Canada continued to prosper and the need for services grew. But travel in the 1900s was not nearly as easy as it is today and many children in remote areas did not have the opportunity to attend school without travelling great distances from home. CPR found a solution in 1926 with its school cars that brought education by rail to children living in Northern Ontario. The railway also introduced a specially equipped dental car to bring free dental care to Northern Ontario children.

On the Prairies, CPR used its travelling tree-planting cars to educate children and adults how to plant trees on the bald, parched prairie farmland.

School Cars

If there were no schools near your house where would you go to learn? To solve this problem for children living in northern Ontario, the provincial government decided to bring the school to the children. In 1926, the Ontario Department of Education hired the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Canadian National Railway and Ontario Northland Railway to use some of their railcars as travelling classrooms. Each school car was divided into two parts. One half was a classroom, complete with a chalkboard, charts, a map, desks, and a library and the other half was comfortable living quarters for the teacher.

The school cars travelled from place to place with each stop lasting five days at a time. Students often travelled by foot in the summer or snowshoes in the winter to attend classes. Once Friday arrived, the school car would move on to its next destination over the weekend, leaving the students with enough homework to last them until the school car visited again.

Today you can still see one of CPR’s original school cars on display at the Canadian Railway Museum in Delson/Saint-Constant, Quebec.
The 1930s were not easy for CPR. Canada was in the midst of an economic depression and the newly formed Canadian National Railways was competing with CPR for business. Then in 1939 World War II broke out and the company once more devoted its resources to Canada’s war effort.

During the next six years, CPR moved 307 million tons of freight and 86 million passengers, including many soldiers and sailors. Twenty-two CPR ships went to war and 12 of them were sunk. In the air, CPR pioneered the “Atlantic Bridge” – the transatlantic ferrying of bombers to Britain. CPR set up pilot training schools and opened Canada’s far north to modern-day travel, creating Canadian Pacific Air Lines in 1942. CPR also transformed major portions of its rail repair shops in Montreal and Calgary to build munitions, naval guns and tanks. At CPR’s Chateau Frontenac hotel in Quebec City CPR helped Canada host two very important meetings in 1943 and 1944 called the Quebec Conferences. It was at the first Quebec Conference where Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, United States President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill planned the D-Day invasion into France, which ultimately won the war in Europe. CPR’s huge war effort came with a cost, 21,787 CPR employees enlisted in World War II, 658 sacrificed their lives.

Women Railroaders

During both World War I and World War II, Canadian Pacific Railway turned its railway shops into munitions factories. Because so many men were overseas fighting, there was a real shortage of workers and women stepped in to fill the void. Women not only worked at manufacturing munitions, they also served as engine wipers, car cleaners and nurses. Today women work in all aspects of the rail industry from locomotive engineers to executive positions.

From 1941 to 1943, CPR’s Angus Shops in Montreal produced 1,420 Valentine army tanks to support the Allies in World War II.

With many male employees off fighting in he war, it was up to women to keep the railway running. These women are wiping down a locomotive between runs.

Freight from a Canadian Pacific Airlines’ Douglas DC-3 will complete its journey by horse-drawn sleigh.

Air Lines in 1942. CPR also transformed major portions of its rail repair shops in Montreal and Calgary to build munitions, naval guns and tanks. At CPR’s Chateau Frontenac hotel in Quebec City CPR helped Canada host two very important meetings in 1943 and 1944 called the Quebec Conferences. It was at the first Quebec Conference where Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, United States President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill planned the D-Day invasion into France, which ultimately won the war in Europe. CPR’s huge war effort came with a cost, 21,787 CPR employees enlisted in World War II, 658 sacrificed their lives.

Scottish terrier Fala was a well-travelled and well-loved dog, accompanying US President Franklin Roosevelt and his wife Eleanor on many of their foreign trips. In this photo Fala shows off for Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King at the 1943 Quebec City Conference.
For over 100 years, senators, prime ministers, presidents, dukes and duchesses, princes and princesses, kings, queens and emperors have travelled in style on Canadian Pacific Railway’s trains. These visitors travelled on special passenger cars known as business cars. The business cars were originally built for CPR executives, so they could travel the railway in comfort. The cars are elegant, with wood paneling and carvings of the finest mahogany and other exotic woods. They also have bedrooms with beds rather than berths, as well as private bathrooms.

Executives and visitors not only slept in comfort, they also dined in high style with fine linens, china and silverware. When passengers weren’t sleeping or eating they could relax in the comfortable chairs in the lounge area at the back of each car and view Canada’s spectacular scenery. Today the elegance of these bygone days of train travel has been recreated by CPR’s Royal Canadian Pacific Train.
Getting Back to Business

After the war effort, it was time to get back to the business of being a railway. Before the war all but one of CPR’s locomotives were powered by steam. Then in the 1950s, CPR began using diesel locomotives eventually retiring the last of its steam locomotives in the 1960s. CPR, known for its ingenuity, was often the first to introduce new technology. In 1952, CPR was the first railway to offer the new generation of piggyback service where truck trailers are carried on railway flatcars. A few years later, in 1967, CPR introduced Canada’s first remote-controlled mid-train diesel locomotives in freight service, using a “robot” radio-command system.

This allowed the railway to increase the length of its trains and the amount of freight carried on each train. Several years later, in 1984, CPR was the first railway in North America to pioneer the use of AC-traction locomotives. AC locomotives have a much greater hauling capacity than standard direct current (DC) locomotives.

For example, three of today’s 4,400 horsepower AC4400 CW AC-traction locomotives do the work of five 1960s-to-1980s 3,000-h.p. SD40-2 DC-traction locomotives. While AC locomotives are more expensive, they are more fuel efficient, have better reliability and require less maintenance than DC locomotives.

CPR’s Roving Ambassador

General Electric produced diesel-electric locomotives as early as 1918, but it took several years before Canadian Pacific Railway was convinced that diesel power was here to stay. At the end of 1942, CPR operated 1,686 steam locomotives and only one diesel locomotive. But it soon it became apparent that diesel locomotives are easier to maintain and operate more efficiently than steam locomotives. Today, all of CPR’s locomotives are diesel, except for one very special steam locomotive.

In 2001, the CPR Empress 2816 re-entered active service as a roving ambassador for CPR. This class H1b Hudson-type locomotive was built by Montreal Locomotive Works in December 1930 and logged more than two million miles in active service before being retired on May 26, 1960. After a complete three-year rebuild, 2816 has been restored to its original splendor. Each year the CPR Empress visits communities along the CPR’s mainline, once again thrilling spectators, young and old, with the sights and the sounds of the steam era.
Much More Than a Railway

As the company continued to grow and expand its business beyond the railway, it changed its name in 1971 from Canadian Pacific Railway to Canadian Pacific Limited. Although the company had many interests, its main businesses were: the railway; ships; hotels; mines, minerals and manufacturing; oil and gas exploration; airlines; telecommunications; trucking; and real estate. By the 1980s, CPL had become Canada’s second largest company with some 100,000 employees.

Moving across North America

From the late 1970s, when Via Rail was formed to take over passenger services in Canada, CPR concentrated on its freight service. The railway continued to expand in the early 1990s with its two US railways – the Soo Line Railroad and the Delaware and Hudson Railway.

In 1996, Canadian Pacific Railway moved its head office to Calgary, Alberta from Montreal, Quebec. The railway decided it made more sense to be located in Alberta close to Prairie grain and BC coal, two products that make up a large percentage of goods moved by the railway. Three years after moving to Calgary, CPR launched its first Holiday Train, which has become an annual Holiday Tradition. As the train travels across Canada and the US, it gives CPR employees the chance to say thank you to the communities along its tracks. The train also helps raise awareness about hunger by collecting donations of food and money for community food banks in each town and city the train visits.

CPR Holiday Trains meet at the Canada/US border on their annual trek to raise food and money to help in the fight against hunger.
The Delaware and Hudson Railway

The Delaware and Hudson Railway has been called “America’s oldest continually operated transportation company”. D&H started out as a canal company in 1823, and later built one of the first railroads in the United States. In the late 1890s, the company sold its canal and changed its name to the Delaware and Hudson Company. Over the next several years the company expanded its rail business and in 1928 changed its name to the Delaware and Hudson Railroad. Canadian Pacific Railway acquired the D&H in 1990. Today the D&H operates as part of the CPR and gives the railway access to New York City and other parts of the northeastern United States.

North America’s First Steam Engine

The Delaware and Hudson Canal Company not only built one of the first railroads in the United States, it was also the first company to own a steam engine. The company was started to transport coal from Pennsylvania to New York City. The coal first went by boat down the Hudson River and then through canals along the Delaware River to incline railways through the Moosic Mountains. The mountains had a few flat spots and instead of using horses to pull the rail cars, the D&H decided to use steam locomotives. The company ordered four of the new inventions from England and on August 8, 1829 became the first company in North America to operate a steam engine. The “Stourbridge Lion” – the first locomotive ever run upon a railroad in America.

The Soo Line Railroad

Two of Canadian Pacific Railway’s founders, Donald Smith and George Stephen, began investing in the Minneapolis, Sault Ste. Marie and Atlantic Railway in the late 1800s. CPR owned the controlling interest in the railroad, commonly called the Soo Line, for many years. In 1992 CPR increased its ownership of the railroad, acquiring all of the railroad’s shares. Today the Soo Line is the United States arm of the CPR, serving Chicago, Illinois and the areas to the east and west.

Pronounce That Name

The Soo Line Railroad had a much longer name when the company was first started. It wasn’t long before people started to shorten Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie Railway. But, instead of Sault, the phonetic spelling of Soo was used. In 1950, Soo Line became the railroad’s trade name. A decade later, Soo Line Railroad became the railroad’s official name.
A New Beginning

On October 3, 2001, a momentous event occurred in the railway’s history. Canadian Pacific Limited was dissolved and the company’s main businesses became five separate companies. One of the five, of course, was Canadian Pacific Railway. Since becoming a separate company, CPR has continued to use technology and ingenuity to move more and more products on its trains. CPR has the most AC locomotives of all the large North American railways and many of its trains exceed 3,000 meters. As CPR trains become more frequent and longer, being safe around trains remains one of the company’s most important messages for both employees and the public, especially children. That is why the CPR Police and Operation Lifesaver offer public education sessions at schools and other public events to educate people about train safety. Remember, being safe is being smart.

Operation Lifesaver

LOOK! LISTEN! LIVE!
Every year Operation Lifesaver and the railways bring the safety message Stay Off, Stay Away, Stay Alive! to thousands of school children in Canada and the United States. Safety videos, written materials and extensive web sites are also provided by Operation Lifesaver. For more information on Operation Lifesaver Canada go to www.operationlifesaver.ca and in the United States www.oli.org.

Did you know?
Did you know that in 2004 there were 237 collisions between trains and motor vehicles at highway or railway crossings in Canada, resulting in 25 deaths and 50 people badly hurt? In addition to highway or railway crossing collisions, there were 99 trespassing incidents, 67 pedestrian deaths and 34 serious pedestrian injuries. In the United States, a person or vehicle is hit by a train approximately every two hours and many of these accidents involve death or serious injuries. Trains cannot stop quickly. An average freight train travelling at 100 kilometres an hour requires about 1.1 kilometres to stop. A passenger train travelling at 120 kilometres an hour requires about 1.6 kilometres to stop.

Trains appear at any time and simply can’t stop on a dime.

Be sharp, think smart and clear the track.

Obey the law and watch your back!
The Prairies-to-Vancouver track, which crosses the rugged Rocky Mountains, is Canadian Pacific Railway’s busiest rail line. Canadian resources, such as coal and wheat, shipped to Asia continue to grow and imports of consumer goods made in Asia and destined for Canadian store shelves have also increased. In order to meet this demand, CPR undertook a project in 2005 to expand freight capacity on this busy stretch of track. The work involved building and extending sidings, laying sections of double track, improving signal systems and installing staging tracks and track-to-track crossovers. During the construction, CPR installed more than 530,000 feet of rail, 137,000 crossties, and 300,000 tons of rock ballast.

Since the dream of a transcontinental railway was first realized Canadian Pacific Railway has become one of the most recognized of all companies in Canada and beyond. After celebrating 125 years of success, CPR has begun another exciting chapter in its long history. A major expansion project was completed in 2005, when CPR built additional tracks in British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan. North Americans are buying more products from places like China and Japan and the railway plays a very important part in delivering these products – everything from cars to toys – to stores throughout North America. By building more track, CPR can move about 400 more railcars each day. This means goods from the Port of Vancouver are transported across the continent faster and more efficiently. Canadian Pacific Railway has had many momentous events throughout its long and illustrious history, but none more exciting than the future that stretches before it.

Western Expansion

CPR transports windmills from the United States to a wind farm in Saskatchewan.

A Promising Future

CPR transports windmills from the United States to a wind farm in Saskatchewan.