

# Canadian Rail



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# THE ROUSES POINT GATEWAY

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Travel westward from Montreal by railway, was not a reality before 1857, when the Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada opened its broad gauge-line from Montreal to Toronto. Rather, it was possible, but by a somewhat round-about route and a further journey by steamer was required to reach the growing towns along the St. Lawrence River west of Montreal. For a period of about 6 years, from 1851 to 1857, the favourite route of the summer traveller, (and presumably the winter one, if there was one), was via the Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad to St. Johns, Quebec, the Montreal & Province Line Junction Railway, (which had been chartered in 1848 and whose rights had been purchased in 1850 by the Champlain & St. Lawrence) to Rouses Point, in the State of New York. Here, the traveller took the cars on the Northern Railroad of New York (later the Ogdensburgh & Lake Champlain Railroad (westward to the banks of the St. Lawrence at Ogdensburgh, where frequent steamboat service to the upper St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario was available.

By 1865, the Grand Trunk had the traffic from the riverside towns in its pocket but the southeastern traveller from Ontario still found the Ogdensburgh route attractive if his journey trended towards New England. The HUNTINGDON JOURNAL of 1 September 1865 carried the following travel information:

## OGDENSBURGH RAILROAD

### Summer Arrangement.

Running time twelve minutes faster than local time.

THREE TRAINS DAILY (Sundays excepted).

First Train, Boston and New York Express:

Leave Ogdensburgh at 5.30 A.M. (breakfast at Malone) arriving at Boston 10.00 P.M. and New York next morning. No change of cars by this train between Ogdensburgh and Boston.

Second Train, Through Mail:

Leave Ogdensburgh at 11.30 A.M. (dine at Malone) arriving at Boston at 8 o'clock the following morning and New York, 2 P.M. the next day.

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Splendid sleeping cars run with this train between Rouses Point and Boston. This train connects with M & C R.R. at Rouses Point, arriving in Montreal at 9.00 P.M.

Accommodation Train leaves Ogdensburgh at 6.45 P.M. arriving at Rouses Point at 4.45 A.M., connecting with V.C. R.R. for Boston and New York also with cars for Montreal.

#### RETURNING

Trains leave Rouses Point at 7.05 A.M., 7.05 P.M., and 9.00 P.M. connecting with all trains on the Grand Trunk and Ottawa and Prescott Railroads, and with Lake Ontario steamers.

Trains pass Malone and Chateaugay as follows:

Pass Malone going East at 8.00 A.M., 2.45 P.M., and 12 Night.  
Going West at 10.A.M. 9.30 P.M. and 1.40 Night.  
Pass Chateaugay going East at 8.46 A.M., 6.30, P.M. and 1 at Night. Going West 9.15 A.M., 8.50 P.M. and 1 Night.

The following steamship lines were listed in the same edition of the HUNTINGDON JOURNAL.

Richelieu Company - Daily Royal Mail Line.

Steamer MONTREAL - Montreal to Quebec, Mon.,  
Wed. Fri. - 6 P.M.  
For Sorel, Three Rivers, and  
Batiscan.

Steamer EUROPA - Montreal to Quebec, Tues.  
Thurs. Sat. - 6 P.M.  
For Sorel, Three-Rivers and  
Batiscan.

Steamer COLUMBIA - Montreal to Three Rivers -  
Tues. Fri. - 2 P.M.  
For Sorel, Maskinonge, Riviere du Loup, Yamachiche and Port St. Francois.

Steamer NAPOLEON - Montreal to Sorel-Tues. Fri.  
Montreal to Sorel - Tues.  
Fri. - 3 P.M.  
For St. Sulpice, Lanoraie, Berthier, Petit Nord, Grand Nord.





### photo above

Before it was demolished, Canadian National Railways station at St-Henri, Montreal, marked the point where the Grand Trunk broad-gauge track met the standard-gauge Montreal & Lachine. The Grand Trunk's connection to Bonaventure Station was at the rear of the building.

Photo C.R.H.A. (E.A. Toohey Collection)

Steamer CHAMBLY - Montreal to Chambly, Tuesday,  
Fri. - 3 P.M.  
For Vercheres, Contrecoeur,  
Sorel, St. Ours, St. Denis,  
St. Antoine, St. Charles, St.  
Marc, Beloeil, St. Hilaire &  
St. Mathias.

Steamer TERREBONNE Montreal to L'Assomption-Mon.  
Tues. Fri. Sat. - 3 P.M.  
For Boucherville, Varennes &  
St. Paul l'Ermite.

Steamer L'ETOILE - Montreal to Terrebonne-Monday  
Tues. Fri. Sat. - 3 P.M.  
For Bout de l'Ile & Lachenaie

Day Line - Between Montreal, Chateauguy & Beauharnois.

Steamer LOTBINIERE Montreal, Lachine & Beauharnois. The Steamer Lotbiniere  
Capt. S. Filgate will leave  
Canal Basin, Montreal, every





PHOTO ABOVE: Mooers , New York - about two miles south of the international boundary, at the former junction of the line from Plattsburg to Montreal, via Hemmingford and Caughnawaga. On April 1, 1951, Rutland # 8 with engine No. 78 stood under the order-board, waiting for a meet with a westbound freight.

PHOTO BELOW: The same train, Rutland No 8, with the same engine photographed on April 29, 1951.

PHOTO PAGE 121: This photo shows the same train as pictured below leaving Mooers N.Y. on its eastward run to Rouses Point, Alburgh, Burlington, and Rutland Vt. Note the classic combine on the rear.

All photos from the E.A.Toohy collection.





day at one o'clock P.M. (Sundays excepted) and Lachine on arrival of five o'clock, P.M. Train from Montreal, calling as above.

Returning - leave Beauharnois every Monday morning at six o'clock, (Sundays excepted), calling at Chateauguy and arriving at Lachine for the 8 o'clock train.

The M & C R.R. referred to in the Ogdensburgh Railroad schedule for the "Second Train Through Mail" is the Montreal and Champlain Railroad, the successor to the Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad. The first rival of Canada's first railway was the Montreal and Lachine Railroad, which, had amalgamated with the Lake St. Louis and Province Line Railroad, (Caughnawaga to the International Boundary near Moers, New York), on 1 January, 1852. Fierce competition and a bad business climate, forced the amalgamation of the two rivals under the name "Montreal and Champlain Railroad Company" in 1862. The Parliamentary Act Authorizing the amalgamation received Royal Assent on 9 June, 1862, but unfortunately no customers were found for the preferred stock. At this point, and with the newborn Montreal & Champlain on the verge of bankruptcy, the directors of the Grand Trunk, decided that this was an opportune time for action and on 25 September, 1863, leased the whole operation for 21 years.

Several results of this lease became immediately apparent:

- a. A connecting curve was laid from the G.T.R. main line at St. Henri Junction, Montreal, to the Montreal & Champlain's approach tracks to Bonaventure Station. An additional rail was laid to accommodate the broad-gauge equipment of the G.T.R. on the tracks of the standard-gauge Montreal & Lachine.
- b. Since the opportunity existed for a connection between the Grand Trunk and the Montreal and Champlain at St. Lambert, the G.T.R. soon abolished the underpass of the M. & C. and by means of a large balloon, reverse curve, connected the M. & C. to the GTR main line. The installation of a third or "narrow gauge" rail permitted M. & C. trains to pass over the Victoria Bridge to St. Henri Junction, and thence to Bonaventure Station.
- c. There was no immediate change in the name of the Montreal and Champlain Railroad, although it was firmly leased to the Grand Trunk. Moreover, the primary reason for leasing the M. & C. was to obtain access (over the Old Montreal and Lachine) to Bonaventure Station, their own station at Pointe St. Charles now being quite inadequate and remote for their Montreal operation. In view of this fact, it is not surprising that the GTR made no dramatic effort to work

the M. & C. profitably for the shareholders. This reluctance persisted to 1873-1874, when the GTR standard gauged its lines. To add insult to injury, in 1873, when gauge-standardization was imminent, all service on the Caughnawaga Division of the M. & C. was arbitrarily discontinued, and the line from Caughnawaga to Mooers Junction was used for the storage of new standard gauge GTR locomotives and cars.

In his history of the Champlain and St. Lawrence Railroad, the late Robert R. Brown reported that "the people of the district, naturally annoyed by the total suspension of train service on what had once been a very busy line retaliated by removing and hiding all the brake wheels and coupling pins of the rolling stock stored there."

The Caughnawaga Division of the M. & C. and its natural extension, the Plattsburg and Montreal had been variously wooed by the Vermont Central and the Rutland and Burlington. After the Richelieu River had been bridged, the Vermont Central could afford to be casual with the Plattsburg & Montreal and the M. & C. For a time, some freight made its way from the Rutland and Burlington to the Plattsburg & Montreal and the Ogdensburg line via Mooer's Junction. Inevitably, this trickle of traffic stopped when the Vermont Central leased the Rutland & Burlington. For a time it seemed as though the all-powerful Smiths of St. Albans, Vermont, had triumphed!

PHOTO BELOW: Rouses Point Junction - grade crossing between the D & H, and the Rutland in 1947. In the 1870's this was the junction where trains from Plattsburg connected with the Montreal and Champlain for St. John's and Montreal. Photo from E.A. Toohy col.







Within four years after the Vermont Central had leased the Rutland and Burlington, on 30 December, 1870 the lessor was unable to pay the rent, \$281,660.63, being due. In 1874, both the Rutland and the Ogdensburgh lines proposed the termination of their leases to the V. C. RR. and the consolidation of the two roads into one. However, the Rutland succumbed to the charms of a modified lease in February, 1875, and this was ratified and actually lasted until 1896, when the Rutland took back its property. The Ogdensburgh line, meanwhile, had returned to its President, on 1 April, 1877. The all-powerful Vermont Central went resoundingly bankrupt in 1873, and was rapidly reorganized as the Central Vermont Railroad in the same year. Unable to form a connection with any alternate north-south or east-west system the poor Ogdensburgh helplessly accepted another C. V. RR. lease in 1886, which arrangement lasted ten years until the second resounding bankruptcy of the Central Vermont.

Humpty-Dumpty's pieces were stuck back together with another Central Vermont reorganization, whereupon the Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada emerged as the majority stockholder. For the GTR, this was the final step in the elimination of competition for freight traffic from Portland and Boston to the Great Lakes. The Delaware & Hudson Canal & Railroad Company managed, by some magical means, to make a through line from Albany, New York, to Rouses Point, late in 1875. Even so the CV-GTR stranglehold on traffic through the Rouses Point - St. Johns gateway endured until 9 April, 1907, when the D. & H. bought the Napierville Junction Railway from Rouses Point to St. Constant (on the CPR) for \$615,680.56. From then on the D. & H. was a "shoo-in" to Montreal, via the C.P.R. By that time however, the Grand Trunk was busy expanding elsewhere, and the C.V. had been exiled to the role of a New England bridge-line, whose sole mission was to feed business to the insatiable appetite of its master!