

May 12, 1872

The foundation stone of the Great Western Air Line Bridge to cross the Grand River at Cayuga, was laid with Masonic honours this afternoon (May 11). Jas. Seymour acted as the Grand Master.

May 11, 1872

Work on the Glencoe Loop Line Railroad is being pushed most vigorously, some two hundred men being employed in this neighbourhood by the contractors, Stratford, Nicholson & Chrisholm. Track-laying will commence east and west next month. On the bridge over the Thames there are forty men employed, and on the immense structure over the Big Otter Creek at Tillsonburg, seventy (men), both of which bridges will be completed July first. With the exception of some ditching and approaches to trestles, which are rapidly being made, the whole of the grading from Glencoe Junction to Simcoe is finished. The ties are delivered, and over fifty men are putting up the fences along the line, ninety miles of which is done. This railway work has been the most difficult ever undertaken by the contractors in this Province, consuming for bridges, culverts, fencing and ties over sixteen million feet of timber. The present contractors have been daily expended for the past eight months from two to three thousand dollars, employing from five hundred to one thousand hands. They are deserving of great credit for the vigour they have displayed, as also the satisfactory manner in which their business with the people along the line has been conducted. Toronto Mail

July 1 1872

The Canada Air Line laying the track commencing. The road from Glencoe east to Fort Erie has been pushed on. With the utmost vigor by the directors and we are now in a position now to announce that the laying of the track is to be commenced forthwith. Today two

-1872-

trains laden with rails will leave Hamilton for Glencoe and on Tuesday morning a force of seventy men will commence laying the track. The ties have already been distributed at various points along the line. The spikes and other materials have been distributed. The line has been fenced and the switch with the mainline connected at the Glencoe station. In a few weeks the track will be completed to St Thomas. London

September 3, 1872

The track layers on the Canada Air Line (Great Western) are now within five miles of St Thomas which they expect to reach by the (September) the 13th. The ballast train is also at work. The line is expected will be ready for traffic from Glencoe to St Thomas by December. The wire and material for the Montreal Telegraph Line over this route has arrived here. Globe

October 4, 1872

The Great Western took formal possession of the London and Port Stanley Railroad. Globe

October 15, 1872

Aylmer: The track laying gang of the Canada Air Line followed by the construction train passed through this place (Aylmer) today going eastward. The work is being pushed withal energy and the road will soon be completed and ready for traffic. The contract for the stations along the line has been let and the work of building already commenced. Globe

December 12, 1872

A third rail was laid along the Welland Railway. Globe

January 4, 1873

The Great Western Railway Company owing to the immense increase of business propose building a double track from Glencoe to Windsor, a distance of eighty miles and connecting with the Loup Line at the former place (Glencoe) thereby making it complete in itself without having to interfere with the traffic on the mainline. The estimate cost of construction is set down at \$1,250,000.00. It will in all probability be built next summer and the line from Glencoe to Welland will not be opened until the end of the month, as it is intended to run in connection with the Welland Railway to Thorold upon which a third rail is now being laid so as to make it of the same guage as the Great Western. The bridge over the Welland Canal and its feeder have been completed. The construction of the Loop Line from Welland to Fort Erie is to be completed early next summer. The International Bridge over the Niagara river will be finished for the passage of trains some time at the beginning of August. Globe

February 6, 1873

Railway trains are now being run over the Welland Railway from Thorold Junction to the Air Line (at Welland Junction). Globe

The London Advertiser is the authority for the statement that on Wednesday next, the Air Line will be opened for freight traffic and it is probably in the course of a few weeks a passenger train will be put on the road for the convenience of the residents in the municipalities through which the road runs. The delay we understand in getting the line in operation was caused by the scarcity of locomotives, much of the stock having been disabled by frost and accidents. Globe

-1873-

February 14, 1873

It is stated that the Air Line will be opened for traffic on Monday next. The temporary engine shed and waiting rooms at St Thomas are nearly completed and telegraphic communication along that portion of the Great Western will be secured in the course of a day or two. The batteries at St Thomas are ready for operation. The telegraph gang went to Glencoe yesterday for the purpose of completing the work there. It has finally decided, we understand the number of freight trains which will carry passenger cars for the convenience of travellers.

Times

February 17, 1873

This (Monday) morning the Loop Line of the Great Western will be opened for traffic from Glencoe to Welland Junction. The whole of the line is laid with steel rails and the track is represented as solid and smooth. Five trains each way will be run daily and a passenger coach will be attached to each for the convenience of the travelling public. A few days since Divisional Superintendent M. J. Dawson in company with Mr K. Showerman, Telegraphic Superintendent and others took a trip over the line.

London

February 17, 1873

On Saturday, the great Western Railway sent a number of cars down to Thorold to be placed on the Welland Railway to transfer freight over the Loop Line from Glencoe to Welland Junction, and this morning trains began to run over that portion of the road. The whole portion of the line is laid with steel rails and the track is solid and smooth. Five freights will be run over the road daily and one passenger car will be attached to each train for the convenience of the public.

Spectator

February 18, 1873

This morning a party of engineers left for Glencoe to make preparations for the double tracking of the Great Western to Windsor.

Hamilton Times

February 19, 1873

The Air Line. We learn that No. 16 freight, Conductor George Montgomery was the first full train to pass over the Air Line and that people along the entire line received the "iron horse" and its tail with considerable enthusiasm. On the road from Glencoe to St Thomas the men, women and children whose homes were in close proximity to the track manifested their joy with frequent Huzzas, the waving of handkerchiefs and the clapping of hands, all of which was doubtless heartily appreciated by those on board.

Times

February 27, 1873

The St Thomas Home Journal give the following as the prices of tickets from that town to the stations named:

Glencoe	.35 cents
Thames River	.80
Aylmer	.30
Jones Corners	.55
Tillsonburg	.75
Delhi	1.05
Simcoe	1.35
Jarvis	1.65
Nelles Corners	1.90
Canfield	2.23
Marshville	2.75
Welland Junction	3.05

Hamilton Times

July 31, 1873

There seems to be some likelihood of strife between Fort Erie or Buffalo and Clifton (Niagara Falls) as to which place shall be the eastern terminus of the Canada Air Line Railway. It is well known that the Great Western Railway Company some time ago purchased the necessary right of way for the line to Buffalo and the land has been fenced....to obviate the necessity of running the Air Line trains on the mainline from Merriton to Clifton as is now done that a line be built from Allanburg through the Townships of Thorold and Stamford to Clifton. A meeting has been held at Clifton to consider what inducement could be offered to the Great Western folks if they would adopt that route. The meeting agreed to offer a bonus of three thousand dollars.

Spectator

April 30, 1874

The Allanburg Branch of nine miles in length which was commenced on the 19th of August and opened on the third of November (1873) for traffic has proved of the greatest service enabling the freight traffic brought over the Loop Line to be worked via Suspension Bridge thus avoiding the tolls which would have been levied if the traffic had been carried over the International Bridge. The total amount expended in the construction of the Allanburg Branch has been to the end of the half year 37,753.00 Pounds. The General Manager reports that if all the traffic had been forwarded by the International Bridge the amount payable for tolls from November 3, 1873 to January 31, 1874 would have been 8,417 Pounds. The last section of the Loop Line was completed and opened for traffic on December 15th, 1872.

Spectator

August 19, 1873

Allanburg and Clifton Branch Railway. We learn that the contract for building the Allanburg and Clifton branch of the Great Western Railway has been awarded to Mr Henrie of this city who commenced the work this morning. This branch will connect the Air Line with the Niagara and Suspension Bridge line of railways. The contract stipulates that the branch must be constructed by the eighteenth of October. Mr Hendrie is just the man to do the work substantially and expeditiously.

Spectator

April 30, 1874

The easier gradients of the Loop Line have enabled the (Great Western Railway) Company to run trains of 27 loaded freight cars during the winter from Windsor to Suspension Bridge (Niagara Falls) with one locomotive via the Allanburg Branch. The largest number ever worked over the mainline having been 24 cars and then some with the assistance of a pilot engine at some points. On the whole, the number of trains which have ran over the Loo Line since the opening of the Allanburg Branch the three additional cars per train has been the equal to a saving of 152 trains or nearly two trains per day.

September 5, 1873

Sir Thomas Dakin, President of the Great Western Railway, accompanied by his two daughters, Hon. W. McMasters, of Toronto and Messrs. Price, Muir, Woodford, Robinson and other officials of the road, left Hamilton yesterday on a visit of inspection over the Air Line. When at St Thomas the train and party were photographed, and a splendid negative obtained. After this the visitors proceeded to Port Stanley, and were shown various points of interest in that neighbourhood.....The train which brought them had the Westinghouse Air Brake attached, for the purpose of experimenting on its capabilities, and those who witnessed its workings, speak of it in complimentary terms. The brake is worked by the engineer, who, in a few seconds, is enabled to bring a train to a stand-still with less difficulty than by any other mode yet brought to the notice of railway men.

February 17, 1873

The following are the stations on the Air Line beginning at the junction:

1. Glencoe
2. Thames river
3. Canada Southern Crossing west
4. St Thomas
5. Canada Southern Crossing east
6. Aylmer
7. Corinth
8. Tillsonburg
9. Courtland
10. Delhi
11. Nixville
12. Simcoe
13. Jarvis
14. Nelles Corners
15. Cayuga
16. Grand Trunk Crossing
17. Darling Road Siding
18. Michigan Road Siding
19. Marshville
20. Welland Canal
21. Welland Junction
22. Stevensville
23. Fort Erie
24. Black Rock. New York
25. Erie Street Depot, Buffalo, New York

Spectator

CAYUGA, ONTARIO

April 12, 1877

This morning as No. 24 eastbound was approaching the Cayuga bridge on the Loop Line the drawbar on one of the cars broke causing it to leave the rails. In this condition it was dragged on to the Grand River bridge where it smashed the side truss of the first span. The freight car fell off the bridge dragging five other freight cars with it. No one was injured. Times

SIMCOE, ONTARIO

August 13, 1878

In the early morning of August 13th, 1878 Great Western train No. 24 eastbound was approaching the long bridge about one mile to the west of the Simcoe station when an axle broke on one of the freight cars. The train, fortunately kept safely on the track until the bridge was passed. Immediately after passing the bridge eleven cars heavily laden with grain, flour, bacon and lard were thrown down the steep embankment into the ditch. Times

SIMCOE, ONTARIO

May 30, 1880

Great Western Railway's through freight No. 31 going west at about 2:45 in the early morning of May 30th, 1880 had just passed the Simcoe station, running at the rate of eight miles an hour but on reaching the first switch west of the station which had been left open ran off the track and plunged down the embankment fifteen to twenty feet. The engine fell on its side and about twelve following freight cars plowed down that embankment and fell both on top and all around the broken steam engine. The wooden cars immediately burst into flames, caused by the overturned locomotive's firebox. The locomotive engineer Frederick Chilcott had stayed at his post. He was buried in his engine's cab under a mound of splintered wooden debris. And that debris was on fire. Attempts were made to dig

through the fire to no success. The engineer was dead in the flames. The fireman, William Ashmore was buried under a pile of coal but he managed to extricate himself with only a few bruises. Brakeman Alexander Thompson who was riding on the tender was thrown from the train and suffered a broken knee.

An Inquest was held under Doctor Wilson. It was found that the switch light was in faulty mechanical condition and could and would not stay lit. There was not an operating switch light that hid an open switch.

AN ENGINE-DRIVER Falls Asleep and His Engine Runs Away With Him.

Engineer James Skuse, of the Air Line, G.W.R., took a sleep a few evenings ago, which came near being his last on earth. He had brought his train to St. Thomas from Windsor, and after shunting the cars on, a siding ran his engine up on the main line to the depot, and told his fireman Gordon to step in the telegraph office and see if there were any further orders. The fireman did so, but on coming out a second or two later he was surprised to see the locomotive proceeding in an easterly direction at a good rate of speed. The employees at the depot did not know what to make of the episode, but the yard engine was immediately dispatched in pursuit of the runaway, which was overhauled near the New Sarnia crossing. Skuse was found calmly sleeping in the cab, the ride having never awakened him. It is supposed he must have unaccountably fallen asleep immediately upon his mate leaving the engine, and remained in a state of oblivious unconsciousness until he was overtaken. The locomotive ran until her steam had been exhausted, when she came to a standstill. Fortunately for the engineer there were no western bound trains arriving, otherwise the results would have been appalling. Skuse has been suspended.

July 16 1880

ST THOMAS

AYLMER, ONTARIO

September 29, 1881

Late September 1881 is the time of the London Provincial Fall Fair. The Great Western Railway scheduled a number of special fall fair excursion trains. One such special or extra train, on the morning of September 29th, 1881, set out from Cayuga to run to St Thomas and then turn and run up the London and Port Stanley Railroad, that the GWR was leasing at the time, to London. In the cab of Great Western engine No.132 was engine driver Richard Walmsley, and his son William Walmsley who was today his fireman. The Conductor was John Maxwell. The train was composed of ten passenger coaches. Leaving Cayuga the train headed west through Jarvis and Simcoe and then it stopped at Nixon and the train received new train orders. The orders read meet; "Meet No. 4 at Delhi, and No.32 at Aylmer." Conductor Maxwell read them to the engine crew, then they were off. They arrived at Aylmer station at about 9:20. Conductor Maxwell went into the station where the operator Simpson was preoccupied with selling tickets and he just turned around and did not ask about freight train No. 32. Without thinking he said to the driver "All Right". Engine driver Walmsley pulled back the throttle and off they went at a good speed.

The eastbound freight train No.32 had passed the St Thomas station. Engineer Frank Cheeseborough knew he was to meet the extra excursion train at Aylmer. Then just three miles outside of Aylmer Cheeseborough and his fireman William Blackhall both saw another train coming directly toward them at full steam. Brakes on the freight were quickly applied, train slowed, then the crew jumped. The freight crossed the small bridge at Orwell then was slammed by the fast excursion train. Engine 132 was thrown in the ditch. The Walmsley's, father and son were killed, as were three passengers. An inquest fixed the blame on engineer and conductor. Five people died at the bridge at Mary Davis's farm.

London.Spectator

BOTHWELL, ONARIO

April 1, 1898

A serious collision occurred on the Grand Trunk at Bothwell on Wednesday, between a Wabash train and a Grand Trunk train.

NIAGARA FALLS, ONTARIO

December 14, 1898

A Grand Trunk freight train crashed into the rear of a Wabash freight train. About two o'clock this morning Conductor Finney Wabash train was pulling into the yard at Stamford when it was hit.

DELHI, ONTARIO

July 7, 1899

Westbound train No. 89, engine No. 67, was wrecked at 1:45 tis morning about two miles east of Delhi. Engine driver Frank Bowen was instantly killed. His body was found lying between the engine and the tender covered with ties. Fireman Perry and Brakeman Hickson were badly hurt. Conductor Griffin and the other brakeman who were in the back coach escaped uninjured. The engine cab was completely demolished and the remainder was hurled into the ditch upside down. The tender was completely turned over and four cars were piled up in front of the engine and four behind, all completely demolished.

Windsor, St Thomas, Spectator

-1897-

June 1, 1897

The Wabash Railroad it was announced had arranged with the Grand Trunk to run two passenger trains over the Grand Trunk's railway from Detroit-Windsor through London and Hamilton to Niagara Falls, Ontario and the great Suspension Bridge over the Niagara River and that it would use the Erie Railroads tracks from Niagara Falls, New York south to the Erie Railroad station in the heart of Buffalo. Commencing on Sunday June 13th, 1897 the Wabash would run two double daily fast trains from Detroit to Buffalo and Niagara Falls.

June 14, 1897

The first through Wabash passenger train ran from Chicago to Buffalo over the old Great Western-Grand Trunk route through London and Hamilton. Included in the first train were cars of the Rome, Watertown and Ogdensburg Railway and the New York, Ontario and Western Railways.

THE INAUGURATION OF THE WABASH FREIGHT LINE THROUGH CANADA

March 1, 1898

There was a great tooting of whistles and ringing of bells at midnight March first, 1898 when the Wabash Railway sent out its first eastbound freight train over the Grand Trunk Railway. The Hamilton Spectator reported from Detroit. There were 250 cars of Wabash freight and it took till noon the next day to send them all east to Buffalo. The two ferry boats were busy continuously. The GTR carries an average of 250 cars and now this number would be doubled. The Wabash would now send over all the freight that it had previously turned over to the Nickle Plate, the Lake Shore, the Baltimore and Ohio and Michigan Central railways.

-1898-

March 1, 1898

The new traffic arrangement between the Wabash and the Grand Trunk Railway's took affect with the Wabash running over the Grand Trunk's Air Line through St Thomas Ontario.

March 11, 1898

The Wabash Railway rented ten locomotives off the Grand Trunk Railway.

BOTHWELL, ONTARIO

APRIL 5, 1898

There was a serious accident on the Grand Trunk Railway at Bothwell near Chatham at 3:30 in the early morning of April 5th, 1898. An east-bound freight was pulling into the siding at Bothwell to allow the east-bound to Buffalo Express to pass, a west-bound Wabash freight dashed into the first freight train just as the engine was entering the switch. The engineers and firemen all jumped for their lives. Engineer Manning and fireman William Nagle were injured. The west-bound freight was running at about forty-five miles an hour when the crash came. The Wabash engine was completely wrecked and several cars as was the Grand Trunk locomotive.

STAMFORD, ONTARIO

December 22, 1898

At two o'clock on the morning of December 22nd, 1898 a Grand Trunk train dashed into the rear of a Wabash freight train on the out-skirts of Niagara Falls, Ontario.

-1899-

March 19, 1899

ST LOUIS-KANSAS CITY FAST MAIL

A new fast mail train running over the Wabash from Kansas City to Buffalo was started March 19th, 1899. Described as one of the most complete and handsome trains. The train was made up of mail cars, baggage cars, chair or parlour cars, coaches and sleeping cars. And will run direct from buffalo to Kansas City through St Louis.. The train was made up in Buffalo and would leave at 8:30 in the evening and would arrive at St Louis at two o'clock the following afternoon. The average rate of speed was forty-eight miles per hour over the Canadian Division, but there were some parts where the speed was reported to be over seventy miles per hour.

March 18, 1899

The Lake Erie and Detroit River Railway engine No. 8 was employed by the Wabash for some time was withdrawn from the Wabash to allow it to be repaired.

March 21, 1899

The Windsor Evening record on March 21st, 1899 reported that a train of twenty-four Wabash flatcars passed through Windsor loaded with U.S. cannons that were being shipped from Pennsylvania to Fort Stephen, in Oregon. One cannon made a load for each car. The guns were fifteen feet long with a fourteen inch mount.

CHATHAM, ONTARIO

January 10, 1900

A bad wreck was the result of a rear end collision a Chatham, on a winter Monday night, January 10th, 1900. A heavily laden east-bound Wabash freight train crashed into a number of cars of an east-bound Grand Trunk railway freight train which was shunting cars in front of the GTR freight house at Chatham. The way freight cars which were partly loaded and were thrown up into the air and falling in a tangled mass onto the mainline.

STONEY POINT, ONTARIO

January 19, 1900

A dense fog prevailed over western Ontario for several days in January 1900. Two Wabash freight trains were running close together on January 19th, when one freight train stopped for water at Stoney Point station west of Windsor. The second freight train crashed into the rear of the standing train, it was said that the dense fog made it impossible for the engineer of the second train to see the first train. Five cars were badly smashed, and the engine of the second train was said to be put out of business. Fireman Frank Addison was the only person injured. He received a dislocated shoulder. A run around track was quickly built around the train wreck so as not to delay any trains as the site was cleaned up.

PORT ROBINSON

May 24, 1900

Wabash passenger train No. 5 eastbound, engine 1313 collided with Grand Trunk engines No. 332 and No. 211 head-on at Port Robinson.

About 200 yards north of the Port Robinson station is a double switch. The railway at this point was double tracked. Standing on the north track was a double header of 60 coal laden cars, with two Grand Trunk engines No. 332 and No. 211. The first engine, the 332 was perhaps, thirty yards away from the switch, which had been left open, instead of being turned to switch the incoming Wabash train No. 5 to the west track. The engineer on the Wabash noticed the semaphore was against him, and tried to stop his train, but the air brakes did not work fully and although the Wabash slowed down, it was not enough and the engines smashed together.

Wabash engine No. 1313 crashing into G.T. R. Engine 332, forced its tender back onto engine 211, the result being that the tender of No. 332 was badly wrecked. The smoke boxes and headlights were smashed. The only injury was one passenger of the Wabash train.

The Welland Telegraph, May 25, 1900

1900

GLENCOE, ONTARIO

October 20, 1900

On Saturday night the westbound Wabash passenger express No. 5 which was due at the junction station of Glencoe at 8:17 ran into an open switch and was derailed on the Main Street crossing. The train had four coaches, a baggage car and was drawn by engine No. 1313 manned by a Grand Trunk crew. It was running at the rate of fifteen miles per hour. The engine was thrown on to its side into a deep ditch on the south side of the track. The baggage car slammed into a telegraph pole. Both the engineer and the fireman managed to jump. Fireman Ernest Crittenden was somewhat injured.

The Evening Record, Windsor, Ontario, October 22, 1900

The Hamilton Spectator, Hamilton, Ontario, October 22, 1900.

The Globe, Toronto, Ontario, October 23, 1900

1900

WINDSOR, ONTARIO

November 24, 1900

A Head On Collision in the Wabash Yards.

An accident on the Wabash in the Windsor yards took place about two o'clock in the afternoon. The Wabash express from the the east was coming into the yard just as the yard engine was pulling a train off the transfer. The air-brakes on the express failed to work properly and so the two engines came together with a crash.

-1900-

ST THOMAS, ONTARIO

December 23, 1900

A rear end collision occurred in the Wabash St Thomas yards at around 2:30 on the morning of December 23rd, 1900. A through east-bound freight train was standing on one of the main tracks at the west end of the yard. Conductor Hector Finnie and his two brakemen were asleep in their caboose when east-bound freight, with engine No. 1392, Engineer Thomas Yates came up and crashed into the rear of the standing freight train. The locomotive was wrecked and some seven of eight freight cars were smashed. The wrecks soon took fire.