

The Arrival of the First Passenger Train in London

Dan Brock and Gerry Nichols¹

Background

Thursday, December 15, 2023, marks the 170th anniversary of the formal celebration of the arrival of the “first” passenger train from Hamilton to London along the Great Western Railway tracks. The Niagara Falls section, between the Suspension Bridge at Niagara Falls and Hamilton, was opened for regular traffic on November 10, 1853 and the Windsor section, between London and Windsor, would open on January 23, 1854.²

This railway had its origins in the incorporation of the London and Gore Railroad Company on March 6, 1834 to build a railway from the town of London to the head of Lake Ontario. The name heading the list of incorporators was Edward Allen Talbot of London.³ Indeed, it was he who, in 1830, was the first person in Upper Canada to advocate for a railway in the province and that to run from the London hinterland to Burlington Bay.

In March 1845, the Company was reincorporated as the Great Western Rail Road Company. The original survey of the Great Western line was done with a view to economy and was to be run through the town of London generally along what is presently the route of the Canadian Pacific (CP). The breaking of the ground took place to the southwest of the present Richmond Street and the CP tracks on October 23, 1847. When London was permitted to take stock in the Rail Road Company, in July 1850, the Town Council took £25,000 (about \$37.8 million in 2023), but with the proviso that the line be south of Dundas Street and that the station be located on Richmond Street. “The directors found that they could not do without London’s contribution to the stock, and consented to the wishes of the municipality, though by so doing they materially increased the cost of construction as well as of maintenance.”⁴

In April 1853, the Company was renamed the Great Western Railway Company (GWR). By this time, the chief promoters were lawyer-politician Allan Napier MacNab of “Dundurn Castle” on Burlington Heights and Hamilton merchants Isaac and Peter Buchanan, Robert W. Harris, and John Young. Aided by government guarantees and attracting sufficient American and British capital it was able to open the entire line from Niagara Falls to Windsor, via Hamilton and London, in mid-January 1854.

This article outlines the “trial run” of the first passenger train to enter London on December 13, 1853, the “official trip” two days later, and ends with accounts of the locomotive, engineer, and fireman of the locomotive on both trips. But first a little about the town of London at this time.

London, in December 1853, was bounded by the two branches of the Thames River on the south and west and Huron and Adelaide streets on the north and east. Its population was about 8,000. While the town could boast of having three weekly newspapers at the time—*The Times*, *The Canadian Free Press*, and *The Middlesex Prototype*—only one issue of the latter, covering the arrival of the first passenger train into London, appears to have survived.⁵

The Trial Run

The Wednesday, December 14, 1853 issue of the *Hamilton Spectator* noted that “the first train on the central division [Hamilton to London] passed safely from this city [Hamilton] to London, with several of the Directors on Board” and that the formal opening of this section would take place the next day.⁶ Thus, it would indicate that this passenger train probably arrived in London on Tuesday, December 13th, two days before the “official” run.

This was indeed the case, as it was reported in the *Spectator* for Saturday, December 17th that “On Wednesday morning [December 14th] the Directors returned from a trial trip, the whole distance, in 3 hours and 20 minutes, including stoppages—a speed which has hardly been attained before on a new road, a small portion only of which is gravelled, and yet there is actually less motion than on some of the roads in the State of New York in use for years.”⁷

One of the passengers on this trial run was William Bowman (1820-1909), the mechanical superintendent of the GWR then living in Hamilton. Fifty years later, while living in London, Ontario, he recounted the event for a reporter of the *London Advertiser*.⁸

Bowman stated that this train “consisted of a locomotive and, a couple of cars,” and besides himself, included Charles John Brydges,⁹ the general manager and John T. Clarke, the chief engineer. This makes perfect sense, as the hurriedly-constructed road would have to be tested before the official run of December 15th, and Brydges, Clarke, and Bowman would have been the three main officials capable of seeing that all was in order.

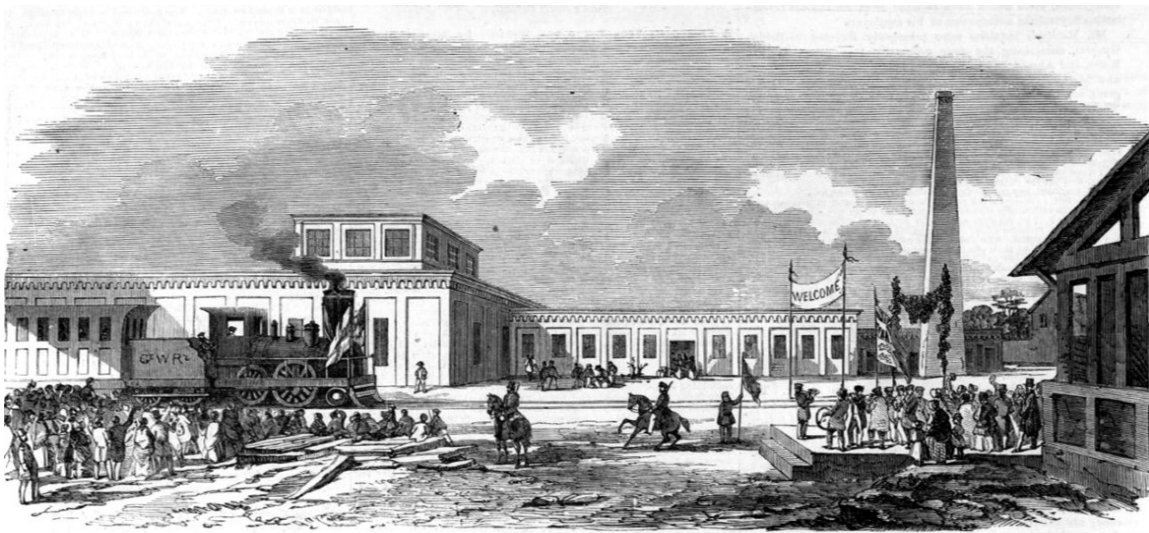
It may be of interest at this time to note that the then province of Canada (now southern Quebec and Ontario) declared on July 31, 1851, that 5 feet 6 inches (1.68 m) would be the National Railway Gauge of Canada. It has been surmised that this was a military and political decision to frustrate any attempted invasion from the United States although its adoption in the British colonies might be of advantage to British manufacturers. This was much to the annoyance of the Directors of the Great Western Railway, who had made all their plans for a railway on the 4 feet 8½ inch (1.44 m) gauge as used by the railways in the Eastern United States, and would prevent the use of its cars in that country. Eventually, a third rail was laid to enable rail travel between Niagara Falls, New York and Detroit, Michigan. This was completed and opened for traffic on January 1, 1867. By January 31, 1872, the whole of the Company’s system had been converted to the narrower gauge.¹⁰

Meanwhile, Bowman recalled that on December 13, 1853 “the weather was cold and raw, and the mud along the line was simply appalling.” The train “left Hamilton...early in the afternoon and it was near dusk when we arrived at London.”

It was further noted that the travel time had been “slow, slow even for those days, owing to the condition of the roadbed; and it was my opinion at the time that it was a foolhardy notion to attempt the trip on such a roadbed. The rocking of the coaches was frightful, and I thought at times we would go into the mud in the ditch.”¹¹ Bowman continued: “We stopped at all the stations along the line, but it was difficult to leave the coaches, as there was [*sic.*] no platforms as yet erected, and the mud was too deep to wade into.”

The fact that the train had stopped “at all the stations along the line” would explain why the actual travelling time was “considerable less than three hours” while the train took “3 hours and 20 minutes, including stoppages” in its trial run from Hamilton to London.

The London station at the time, according to Bowman, “was a little frame building”, another indication of how rushed everything was done under Brydges’ direction.¹² As for the sketch on page 56, of *The Illustrated London News*, of London, England, January 21, 1854, this station, was described as representing “the Train passing the Company’s Engine-house and Workshops, and approaching the Passenger Station. The Engine-house, next the square building partly lighted from the top, in the left of the Sketch, is well arranged, and capable of containing seventeen locomotives,” is quite clearly not the temporary London station of 1853 or the permanent one constructed in 1854, for that matter.¹³ Rather, it would be of the scene at the station in Hamilton, presumably on the train’s return trip from London on Friday, December 16, 1853.¹⁴ Thus, the myth of the sketch in the January 1854 issue of the *Illustrated London News* actually being the London station is put to rest.



OPENING OF THE CANADA GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.—LONDON STATION.



The London Station, opened in 1854, with a train arriving from Windsor and the Tecumseh House in the background

There was “a great cheer from those present” on the arrival of the train on which Bowman arrived in London on December 13th “without incident...and [we] were met by a large crowd of people, who had awaited our coming.” The party was greeted by Edward Adams, London’s mayor and one of the directors of the GWR, “and a number of councillors and prominent citizens” who were then escorted to Adams’ residence which was possibly in the same building as his wholesale and retail grocery store on the south side of Dundas Street, between Ridout and Talbot.

As already noted, the party returned by the same train to Hamilton the next day. Presumably, all were also on the official trip of Thursday, December 15th.

The Official Trip

The weather that Thursday, December 15, 1853, was described as “more like April than the middle of December” and the air was “rather chilly, but there was not a particle of frost in the ground, nor of snow on the surface.” This “official” run left Hamilton at about 9:30 a.m. (sun time) and arrived in London “at 3 p.m. [3:25 EST].” The *Toronto Globe* stated that the train consisted of four passenger cars, “which were not filled” and one baggage car when it left Hamilton, while the *Hamilton Spectator* article only mentioned “three cars.”¹⁵

Among the passengers known to have boarded the train at the Hamilton station were Robert W. Harris, president and director of the GWR; George S. Tiffany of Hamilton, another director; Samuel Zimmerman of Niagara Falls, whose firm built much of the railway; Joseph Curran Morrison, Solicitor General of the Province of Canada; “Major Graham of the Pensioners”; David Christie, MP for Wentworth County; Mayor William G. Kerr of Hamilton; William Paterson McLaren, a wholesale grocer in Hamilton; Messrs. Hatt, Osborne, McKinstry, and Pring, also of Hamilton; William Notman, lawyer and politician of Dundas; and the aforementioned C.J. Brydges,

J.T. Clarke, and Wm. Bowman. Along the way, they were joined by George Samuel Wilkes, the mayor of Brantford, Oxford County's warden, Daniel Mathison, of West Zorra Township, and Oxford County judge, David Shank McQueen of Woodstock.

After rounding Burlington Bay and the low lands through which the Desjardins Canal had been cut, the train laboriously climbed the steep ascent which "Hamiltonians fondly call the mountain." Trestles constructed of logs, while men and horses worked below—another example of Brydges' rush to open the line—were crossed. Stopping at Dundas, a few passengers were picked up.

Coming to a stop at the Flamboro' Station, 3¼ miles (5.6 km) further, the passengers were greeted by a large group of people. Triumphal arches had been set up, banners displayed, a cannon procured and two bands were in attendance. Refreshments and champagne "were dispensed liberally to all who chose to partake," and a toast was given and reciprocated.

It is not known whether passengers boarded the train at Fairchild's Creek (near Copetown), Princeton, and Ingersoll, but they certainly did at Brantford, Paris, and Woodstock. Lunch and champagne were also provided at Paris, Woodstock, and Ingersoll. Large crowds turned out at all the towns and villages where the train stopped. Twenty-eight-year-old Rowland W. Sawtell of East Zorra Township wrote in his diary that day that "A large procession formed at the courthouse at Woodstock and with band and banners, marched to the depot. The band with a number of citizens, went on to London. We can hear the whistle quite plainly at our place, five miles distant."¹⁶

An "immense crowd of people," estimated to have been 16,000 in a town of about 8,000, "were seen awaiting the expected guests," in London, some of whom "had driven twenty and thirty miles, over bad roads to be present." Among those in the immediate vicinity of the station were the firemen and dignitaries.

As the procession, headed by marshals, firemen, and the band, moved west on York, north on Richmond and again west on Dundas streets, triumphal arches, enormous banners, and festoons were to be seen from one side of Dundas Street to the other. Among the amusing mottos displayed was that on a furrier's store, believed to have been that of Raymond & Rowland on the north side between Talbot and Ridout, of "a large black bear, holding in his paw the words 'You are no friend of mine'." From a distance could be heard the peal of the bells of St. Paul's Episcopal (Anglican) Church on the northeast corner of Mark Lane (Richmond Street) and North Street (Queens Avenue).

James Egan, the daguerreotypist, had taken "some excellent views of Dundas Street, while decorated, and of the locomotive and car, as they arrived." It was believed that it was "the intention of the committee to send copies to the publishers of the London 'Illustrated News'."¹⁷

On "a little platform" in the Court House Square, on the west side of Ridout Street, between Dundas and King, "A congratulatory address was presented by the Council of London to the

Directors, which was appropriately acknowledged....” Brief speeches were then made by the aforementioned R.W. Harris, Edward Adams, W.G. Kerr, G.S. Tiffany and C.J. Brydges.

Huge bonfires were lit, at different places, in the middle of the main streets in the evening and the new and extensive wholesale dry goods store of Kerr, McKenzie & Co., on the southeast corner of Ridout and North (Carling) streets “was brilliantly illuminated.”

At “about 7 o’clock, about 350 gentlemen¹⁸ sat down to a dinner given by the corporation and the town’s people, in [John Smyth’s] Royal Exchange Hall [on the northwest corner of Ridout and Dundas streets], a large and handsome room, built by a company to be used on occasions like the present. Four long tables filled the room, and a little gallery at the end afforded room for the bands, which played during the evening. The dinner was excellent; every care had been taken to provide such delicacies as could be procured. Lobsters were brought alive from the east, game was abundant, and the cuisinerie in general, excellent,” according to the *Globe* of December 19, 1853.

The Hamilton *Spectator* observed that: “Every substantial and delicacy of the season was spread in profusion, and wines, of which champagne formed the staple, were to be had without the trouble of asking.” The only criticism noted was that the service “was not quite so good as it might have been, but this trifling fault lay with the caterer—not the hosts.”

Mayor Edward Adams presided “at the central table” and was supported by Crowell Willson, M.P.P. for Middlesex, Thomas C. Dixon, M.P.P. for London, London merchant Adam Hope, London lawyer James Daniell, and others.

Following the clearing of the table, toasts were proposed to the Queen, Prince Albert, and the Royal Family, the Administrator of the Government, the President of the United States and the Executive Council of the Province of Canada (now southern Ontario and Quebec), the President of the GWR, its Managing Director, the Directors of the Company, the Municipalities holding stock in the Railway, John T. Clarke and the Associate Engineers, the Resident Engineers, the Mayor and Corporation of London, and, as an afterthought, the health of Sir Allan MacNab (who was severely ill and unable to attend).

Several Americans were present and it was a General Clark or Clarke, “one of the contractors,” who responded to the toast to the President of the United States.

Among the other toasts which followed were those to “The health of Mr. [Roswell Gardinier] Benedict, late chief engineer; and of The Ladies of London,” the latter, of course being excluded from the gathering. To the surprise of many, the press also had been totally ignored, despite its promotion of the railway.

The next morning, Friday, December 16th, London’s firemen “took an excursion to Ingersoll on the cars, while the guests strolled through the town or called upon their friends.” Following the

return of the excursion party, it “turned out in the same order as the previous day, and escorted the guests to the Cars. Here, a few minutes before twelve [about 12:20 EST] friendly cheers and farewell greetings were exchanged and the train moved eastward.”

Among those on this return trip was the “Special Correspondent” of the Toronto *Globe*.¹⁹ He noted that “the excursion train” was to leave the London station at 11:00 a.m. “but some delay took place in consequence of the crowd of people about the cars, anxious to see the start, and also from the number who wanted to take a ride down the line.”

Again, the train “stopped at all the stations to land passengers, and it was pleasant to see the delight of those who had travelled and those who came to meet them, at the idea being in possession of this first railway.”

“It reached Hamilton in four hours, after making several stoppages on the way.” The reporter noted that “Between London and Woodstock the time was fully thirty miles an hour, and there can be no doubt that when fully gravelled and settled, the road will come up to the expectations of its friends, as the very best Railway on the Continent.

The Locomotive

Like the myth of London’s passenger station in December 1853, *The Illustrated London News*, on pages 10 and 11 of its September 1, 1860 issue, is the originator, albeit unwittingly, of another myth, namely the identity of “The First Locomotive” to have entered the town of London.



A reproduction of this image from a photograph is to be found in Archie Bremner's work of 1897 and in the 1909 LMHS publication. The year given for the arrival of the first train into London is stated to be 1854 in the former and 1853 in the latter.²⁰

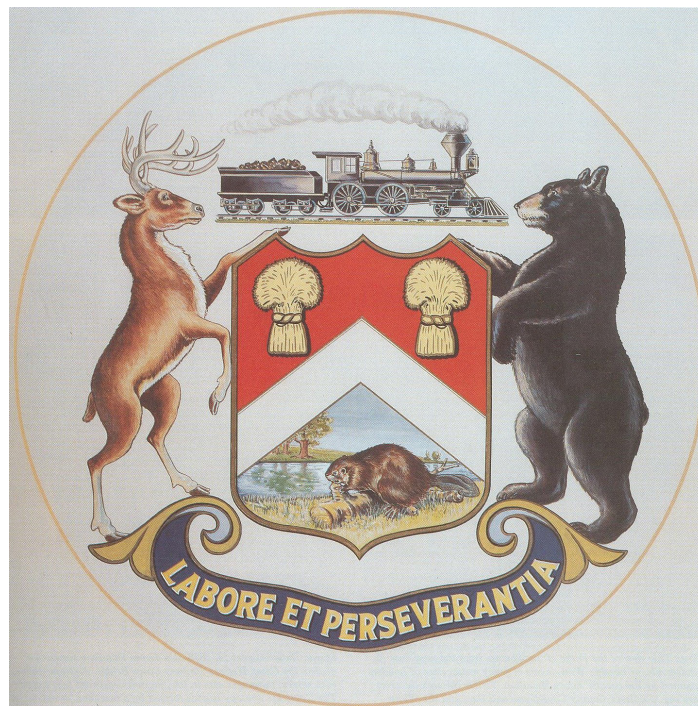


Now, the American system used to describe steam locomotives, known as The Whyte System, lists the leading wheels first, then the driving wheels which are coupled together, and lastly, the trailing wheels at the rear. The above illustrations, therefore, are of a 0-6-0 engine, no leading wheels, six driving wheels and no trailing wheels. Moreover, the images depict locomotive number 67, *G. STEPHENSON*, which was a freight, not a passenger, engine. It was only completed in June 1860, at the Hamilton shops of the GWR, along Burlington Bay and just a short distance east of Sir Allan MacNab's residence, "Dundurn Castle."²¹ Quite clearly, Archie Bremner and the LMHS got it wrong when they thought locomotive number 67 was the first engine to arrive in London!

The City of London's coat of arms, as shown in the City's first business directory, should provide a clue as to the appearance of the first passenger engine to arrive in the then town of London in mid-December 1853.²²



Note that the engine depicted on the London coat of arms would be described as a 4-4-0, there being no trailing wheels. Below is an image of an obviously different locomotive and other changes on the City's more recent coat of arms.



According to William Manser Spriggs,²³ the GWR had at least 25 passenger locomotives by December 1853! Ten had been built by the Lowell Machine Shops of Lowell, Massachusetts, nine by the Schenectady Locomotive Works of Schenectady, New York, and six by Richard Norris & Son of Philadelphia. All were of the 4-4-0 variety and, like ships, were given names. In this case, they were named after the counties, towns, and cities which were to be connected by the railway, such as *Middlesex* and *London*, or Roman gods such as *Jupiter*.

It is our belief that the locomotive used on both the trial and official runs had to be *London*, owing to its name and destination on the days in question. The *London* was one of the first four passenger engines built by the Lowell Machine Shops in 1853 for the GWR. Spriggs thought its original assigned number was 5. Interestingly, these engines were not delivered directly but sold to the Schenectady Locomotive Co.²⁴ *London* and *Hamilton* were delivered on May 1st and *Canada* and *Niagara* sometime earlier. These and others would have been taken by rail to Cape Vincent, New York, across from Wolfe Island, and then transported to the “Burlington Beach canal by boat and were unloaded and taken to Stoney Creek on temporary rails and put on the main line which was graded and rails laid to that point, and from there they were taken to the G.W.R. shop at Hamilton and put in running order.” Although built as passenger engines, they were originally used “in the construction of the line & subsequently in hauling the heavy freight trains.”²⁵ Using a “carriage horse” as a “draft horse” meant that *Canada*, *Niagara*, and *London* required “a thorough repair” by the early summer of 1854.²⁶ On the afternoon of Thursday, March 8, 1855, the 23-ton (20.86-tonne) *London* had the distinction of being the first locomotive to cross the Suspension Bridge in a test run at Niagara Falls to the American side and return.²⁷ By 1862, however, both *Niagara* and *London* had apparently been scrapped.²⁸

The one GWR passenger locomotive of this time for which a photo exists is *Essex*, completed by the Lowell Company of Massachusetts in March 1853 but not delivered to the GWR until January 1854. Its original number was 15. Later that year, it had the distinction of pulling the GWR’s first mail car.²⁹ This engine was identical to *London*, and its sister locomotives *Canada*, *Niagara*, and *Hamilton*, except that *Essex* had 14” x 22” (36 cm by 56 cm) inside connected cylinders and 66” (1.68 m) drive wheels, whereas the other four had 16” x 22” (41 cm by 56 cm) inside cylinders and 72” (1.83) drivers.³⁰ All five originally had a “Croton cut-off.”³¹



**Essex, the GWR's first mail-carrying train, as seen in 1854
at the Niagara Falls station.**

<https://picryl.com/media/93-william-england-the-canadian-gwr-locomotive-essex-5b3d0c>

The Engineer and Fireman of the First Passenger Train

The engineer and fireman who arrived in London on the trial run of December 13, 1853 and the official run two days later were John Hall and Thomas Brock respectively.³²

John Hall, the eldest son of Matthew and Ann Hall of Longbenton, Northumberland, England, was baptized there on April 22, 1821. On September 17, 1848, at St. John's Church, Preston, in Lancashire, he married Eleanor Robinson, the daughter of Thomas and Fanny (Layfoot) Robinson. John was living in Carlisle, Cumberland and is believed to have been working for the Northern Division of the London & North Western Railway (LNWR) at the time. He and Eleanor were living in Carlisle when the 1851 census was conducted and John is listed as a stoker (fireman) for a railway, presumably the LNWR. He is believed to have left the LNWR on February 25, 1853, at which time he was earning 5 shillings per week, was probably a senior fireman, and could have become an engineer if he had remained.³³

It is believed that he had been recruited by the GWR with the assurance that he would be promoted to engineer, as indeed he was by December 1853. Like the aforementioned William Bowman (who also arrived in Canada from England in 1853), John and his wife, Eleanor, were probably living in Hamilton by this time.

Again, like Bowman, the Halls had moved to London by 1856. At this time, John is believed to have been still an engineer and boarding at Robert Wilson's Golden Quoit Saloon on York Street, near Burwell.³⁴ Later, he became a conductor for the GWR, probably owing to injuries suffered in a train wreck or because it was a safer occupation. It was on the afternoon of Thursday, June 5, 1862, however, while in charge of the east bound cattle train and while assisting in coupling cars at the Bothwell station, that "he received a blow in the region of the heart," while "Incautiously stepping between the buffers, just as the cars were coming together" and died shortly afterwards.³⁵

The Halls appear to have been childless.³⁶

As for Thomas Brock, the fireman on this auspicious occasion, he was born out of wedlock, on either September 1st or December 1st, 1823, in Muiravonside, Stirlingshire, Scotland, to Ann Malcolm (1801-1868), the daughter of Alexander and Elisabeth (Calder) Malcolm. The father was William Brock (1799-1861) who lived in the Parish of Denny to the northwest of Muiravonside. William and Ann were married in Muiravonside on February 6, 1824. Their son, Thomas, was baptised into the Church of Scotland three days later.³⁷

At the time of Britain's 1851 census, Thomas was working as a stoker for the Southern Division of the LNWR and lodged on Church Street, in Rugby, Warwickshire, England. The LNWR records confirm that he moved from Rugby to Wolverton, in Northamptonshire, in December 1851 and left the railway in May 1852.³⁸

The next month, he boarded the *Houghton* in Liverpool and disembarked in New York on June 29, 1852. The ship's passenger list described him as 28 years of age, male, an engineer, and a native of Scotland.³⁹ Indeed, his obituary also denoted him as having also been an engineer for the LNWR.⁴⁰ He spent a few months in Montreal before presumably making his way to Hamilton where he was employed as a fireman by the GWR.

Sometime after arriving in London on the first train, he was promoted to engineer and settled in that city. This is believed to have been after 1856 as he is not to be found in *Railton's Directory*.

The 1861 Census for Canada West lists Thomas as an engineer and living in London with his wife Susan, their children William and Mary Ann, Susan's son, Alfred Tory, by her first marriage to Ireland John Tory (1822-1857) and Tory's eldest son, John Michael or Mitchell Tory, by his first marriage.⁴¹

Ireland John Tory was born to Roman Catholic parents and baptised as "John Tore" on May 25, 1822, in Buttevant, County Cork, Ireland. At some point, John had moved to England and had assumed "Ireland" as his first name by the time he had married Elizabeth Rose (1825-1851), in Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, in the second quarter of 1845. Their first child, Mary Ann, was born in the second quarter of 1846, in Newport Pagnell, and died in the fourth quarter of that year in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. Their second child, the aforementioned John M. Tory, was born in Newport Pagnell in the third quarter of 1847.⁴²

Ireland Tory was most likely working for the London & North Western Railway (LNWR) at this time. In February 1851, its records confirm he was an engine driver for this railway. Between October 1851 and June 1852, he was in Rugby, Warwickshire. On December 20, 1852, Tory married his second wife, Susan Southam, in St. Pancras Church, London, and gave his occupation as engine driver.⁴³

The Torys may have had a son, William, born in the St. Pancras District of London in the fourth quarter of 1853, who probably died before the family sailed for Canada.

Tory, his wife, Susan, and his son, John M., by his first marriage ultimately moved to London, Canada West where Susan gave birth to their son, Alfred Tory, on August 12, 1856. As Ireland Tory's name is not found in the 1856-57 directory, it would seem that the Torys only arrived in the city sometime later in 1856.

Tory, an engineer back in England, was almost certainly an engineer for the GWR by the time he arrived in London, CW. On the morning of January 8, 1857, he was the engineer of the west bound freight train out of Hamilton which collided with the east bound mail train "on the embankment crossing the old entrance to the Desjardins Canal just beyond Burlington Heights". As both trains were going around the curve in slow motion, none of the cars were thrown off the track but R.M.

Kesler of Windsor, the inspector of the water service on the railway, Charles Betts, the fireman in the locomotive Tory was driving, and Hiram Everson of Detroit, the express messenger, all died that same day from their injuries.⁴⁴

This tragedy, which occurred some distance west of the Desjardins Canal, is not to be confused with the internationally-known Desjardins Canal Disaster which took place scarcely two months later, on March 12, 1857, when the leading axle of the *Oxford* broke and the engine and several of the cars of the west bound passenger train out of Toronto fell over the bridge, causing the deaths of 59 persons.

As for Ireland Tory, who was denoted as “Dory” in the January 9th issue of the *Hamilton Spectator*, he was described as “very much injured, burned, and scalded.” Although “removed from the Depot to a hotel” and stated to be “progressing favourably”, he succumbed to his injuries on January 21st.

Betts was probably living in London as well at this time as both appear to have been interred originally in St. Paul’s Cemetery on the present site of Queen’s Park in East London and later their remains were transferred to Woodland Cemetery. The grand monument seen on the next page was erected to both men by “their friends and fellow workmen.”

No doubt Thomas Brock was one of Tory’s and Bett’s “friends and fellow workmen” who contributed to this fine piece of workmanship. Brock was most probably well acquainted with Tory’s family in London and may have stayed with them on layovers. In fact, Brock and Tory probably knew one another back in England as they were both employed by the LNWR.



Below the names of Tory and Betts, is written the following:

Our engine now is cold and still,
No water does our boiler fill.
Our wood affords its flames no more,
Our days of usefulness are o'er.
Our wheels deny their wanted speed,
No more our guiding hands may heed.
Our whistle, too, has lost its lore;

Its shrill and thrilling sounds are gone.
Our valves are now thrown open wide,
Our flanges all refuse to guide.
Our backs also that were so strong,
Refuse to aid the busy throng.
No more we feel each weeping breath;
Our steam is now transcended in death.
Life's railway's [sic] o'er such stations past,
In death we've stopped our course at last.

Erected by their friends and fellow workmen.

Like John Hall, it is believed that both Brock and Ireland Tory had been hired by the GWR before they ever left England.

Brock would appear to have been residing in Hamilton as an engineer for the GWR, prior to Tory's death, after which, he was based in London.

Thomas Brock and his wife, the former Susan (Southam) Tory, had married within about a year of Ireland Tory's death as their first child, William A. Brock, was born in London on October 19, 1858.

The London directories continue to list Thomas as an engineer for the GWR between 1863 and 1872. In 1868, he became a chartered member of the London division, No. 68, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.⁴⁵

At some point, Thomas gained possession of the painting of the *Saxon*, seen on the next page, by the artist John Milburn of New York City. This locomotive, built by the GWR in January 1862 at its Hamilton car shops, was the fifth freight locomotive, the aforementioned *G. Stephenson* No. 67 being the first.⁴⁶

Sometime between 1872 and 1874, Thomas became disabled and resigned his position with the GWR. He then became a fish dealer at the Covent Garden Market. He was also active in three local Masonic and one of the Odd Fellows lodges.

He suffered from a severe illness the last two years of his life and died at his home on Hill Street, on January 6, 1892. His internment took place in Woodland Cemetery. Susan (1828-1914), his widow, carried on the fish business after Thomas' death and was no doubt assisted by her maiden daughters who lived with her.



Epilogue

This article has its origins in an April 2022 query to this society from Catherine Elliot Shaw, Acting Director of the McIntosh Gallery. Her query related to the artist and donor of the above painting of the *Saxon*, something of the locomotive itself, and the location depicted in painting's background.

In the course of research by both of us—Brock and Nichols—two articles resulted, which were published in the Society's newsletter. The first, "An Attempt to Solve the Mystery of a Painting in the McIntosh Gallery Collection at Western University" appeared under Brock's name, in the Summer 2022 issue and the second "Shrouded in Myth: The Arrival of the First Train in London," was published under both Brock's and Nichols' names, in the Winter 2022 issue. Much of what is contained in this present article is based on those two articles.

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the debt of gratitude we owe to the staff of the London Room at the London Public Library, to Chip Martin, journalist and author of several books, and to John O'Brien who produced for us, for the front cover, a colorized version of the 1854 photograph of the locomotive *Essex*. Without their help this work would be the poorer.

Endnotes

1. Gerry Nichols is the librarian of The Stephenson Locomotive Society (www.stephensonloco.org.uk) and the co-author of “Shrouded in Myth: The Arrival of the ‘First’ Train in London,” which appeared in the Winter 2022 issue of this society’s newsletter.
2. Archives and Special Collections, University of Western Ontario (UWO), Papers and Correspondence of William Manser Spriggs Regarding Ontario Railways, 1851-1946, B4552, “Meeting held at Hamilton Ont. on Monday 5 June 1854” and “Dates of openings on the Great Western Railway of Canada and on associated railways.” See also W.M. Spriggs, “Great Western Railway of Canada: Some Particulars of the History of the Road and its Locomotives From its Commencement to its Amalgamation with the Grand Trunk Railway in 1882,” *Bulletin* no. 51, The Railway and Locomotive Historical Society (RLHS), (1940), 37-39.
3. Statutes of Upper Canada, 4 Wm. IV., Chap. 29. See also “Notes by Cl. T. Campbell, Ex-Pres. London and Middlesex Historical Society,” *Historic Sketches of London and Middlesex*, Part II, The London and Middlesex Historical Society (LMHS) (1909), 39-40.
4. Notes by Cl. T. Campbell, 42. “The Great Western Railway,” LMHS, Part II, 31-35.
5. *Middlesex Prototype, Railway Advocate, and General Advertiser*, 17 Dec. 1853.
6. *Hamilton Spectator*, 14 Dec. 1853, 3.
7. “Great Western Railway,” *Hamilton Spectator*, 17 Dec. 1853, 3. The account, entitled “Grand Railway Celebration. A Trip on the Great Western to London,” which appeared on page 2 of the December 19, 1853 issue of *The Globe*, Toronto, stated that “a train had travelled from Hamilton to London ‘in considerable...less than three hours’ on the previous Tuesday,” i.e. December 13, 1853. This article was cited by J.J. Talman, of the University of Western Ontario, in *The London Free Press (LFP)*: “High Hopes, Lunches, Speeches and Champagne With Many Official Delays Featured the Trip In Opening Great Western, Hamilton to London”, 6 July 1940, 17 and “Residents of London Celebrated Great Occasion Of Formal Entry Of First Official Railway Train”, 20 July 1940, 17.
8. “Entry of the First Train Into London: An Event of Fifty Years Ago Recalled,” *London Advertiser*, 19 Dec. 1903, 1. See also “Notes by Cl. T. Campbell,” 43-44. Born in Liverpool, England, Bowman received his education in mechanical engineering in Liverpool and in London. Following graduation, he worked in the engineering department of the London & North Western Railway. In 1853 he immigrated to Upper Canada to become mechanical superintendent of the GWR, based in Hamilton, Canada West. (Christopher Andreae, “William Bowman, mechanical engineer, businessman, and politician,” *Dictionary of Canadian*

Biography (DCB), vol. XIII (1901-1910), 102.) Bowman kept a diary during this time, but the typescript copy at UWO's Archives, ends at July 17th for 1853 and picks up again on January 1, 1856. "Diary of William Bowman, Engineer in England and London, ONT., 1853, 1856," AFC 20-5. See also "Directors Were Much Pleased, *LFP*, 18 Dec. 1940, 11.

9. Brydges Street in London and the village of Mount Brydges in Middlesex County are named after him.
10. J.M. & Edw. Trout, *The Railways of Canada for 1870-1...* (1871), 62-65; Spriggs, "Great Western Railway of Canada," 8-10, 21.
11. *Advertiser*, 19 Dec. 1903, 1. Bowman's experience is borne out in Alan Wilson and R.A. Hotchkiss' biography of Charles John Brydges in volume XI (1881-1890), 122, of the *DCB* where they note that: "Against the advice of his chief engineer John T. Clarke, he [Brydges] rushed the poorly built line to technical completion as a running line within the year." They further state that even later "Brydges was still dangerously unfamiliar with road-bed...." Initially, the track rested on the bare ground. Stone ballast was not completely added until the following year.
12. Bowman's diary for May 6, 7, and 8, 1853 makes reference to the drawings and plans for the "London Station." This appears to refer to the more substantial one built in 1854, which stood immediately east of Richmond Street, between the tracks and York Street, until demolished in August 1935. "Old C.N.R. Station Shuts Up and Ends 80 Years," *LFP*, 15 Aug. 1935, 8.
13. Examples of the perpetuation of the myth that the sketch in the *Illustrated London News* was of the London station in December 1853 can be seen in W.H. Wood, "First Train in Ontario Ran to London," *Canadian National Magazine*, December 1938 and Stewart Anderson, "City Hailed First Train 100 Years Ago, *LFP*, 15 Dec. 1953, 19.
14. Of the Hamilton station, the *Globe* of 19 Dec. 1853, 2, noted that it was "situated at the west end of the bay, about three quarters of a mile from the city proper. About 35 acres have been reclaimed from the waters and the whole ground owned by the [Great Western] Company measures 70 acres. Upon this have already been erected a very large engine house and a machine shop of the most substantial and handsome kind—all of stone. The freight-house is also partly up, and will be even more stylish-looking than the other buildings in the mode of finishing. The passenger house is frame, very neat and commodious."
15. *Globe*, 19 Dec. 1853, 2; *Spectator*, 19 Dec. 1852, 3. The issue of the *Middlesex Prototype* for 17 Dec. 1853, page 2, agreed with the arrival time of 3:00 p.m. but made no mention of the number of cars the engine was pulling.
16. M. McIntyre Hood, "Railway Celebration at London in 1853 Was Big Event for the District," *LFP*, 25 Jan. 1930, 3.

17. *Prototype*, 17 Dec. 1853, 2. To the best of our knowledge no copies of these views are known to exist.
18. The *Prototype* stated “upwards of three hundred persons.”
19. *Globe*, 21 Dec. 1853, 2.
20. Archie Bremner, *City of London Ontario, Canada. – The Pioneer Period and The London of To-day*. (1897), 24 and (1900), 40; *Historic Sketches of London and Middlesex*, Part II (1909), 39.
21. Gerry Nichols to Dan Brock and Catherine A. Elliot Shaw, email, 5 May 2022; *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the County of Wentworth Ont.* (1875), 54-55.
22. Geo. Railton, *Railton’s Directory for the City of London, C.W....1856 – 1857* (1856), title page.
23. Spriggs, “Great Western Railway of Canada,” *Bulletin* no. 51, 37-39.
24. On a typed note to himself, Spriggs stated: “I think that there can be little doubt that there was some connection between the Schenectady Locomotive Works and the Lowell Machine Shops.” Archives, Papers and Correspondence of William Manser Spriggs, B4552, 27 Feb. 1934, A1, B2.
25. The fact that it was *London* which was used in the construction of the railway in the London area during the autumn of 1853, apparently the first locomotive brought into London in October 1853 by William Bowman, is another reason for us believing it was the engine used on the passenger train’s arrival into London on December 13th and 15th. (See Andreae, “William Bowman,” DCB, 102.)
26. Archives, Papers and Correspondence of William Manser Spriggs, B4552, W. Bowman, “Report of the Mechanical Superintendent, Mechanical Department, Hamilton, 20th. September, 1954,” (typescript copy) and “Great Western Railway of Canada, List of Locomotives A1 27 Feb. 1934.”
27. Several sources specifically mentioned *London* as the locomotive which made the return crossing on this momentous occasion. By March 17th, the track over the Suspension Bridge, and apparently to a turntable on both the American and Canadian sides, consisted of three different gauges, 4 ft. 8½ ins., 6 ft., and 5 ft. 6 ins., to accommodate the New York Central, the Elmira, Canandaigua and Niagara Falls, and the Great Western railways respectively. On Sunday, March 18th the Bridge was officially opened with a special passenger train, consisting of the locomotive, tender, eight cars filled with passengers, two baggage cars, and weighing “about 130 tons” which had started out that morning from Hamilton. (“Opening of the Niagara Railway Suspension Bridge,” *The Globe*, Toronto, 9 March 1855, 2; “The First Locomotive,” *The Buffalo Commercial*, Buffalo, New York, 9 March 1855, 2; “Opening of the Railroad Suspension Bridge at Niagara”, *New York Times*, 9 March 855, 8; “The First Crossing of the Suspension Bridge,” *Buffalo Commercial*, 13 March 1855, 1; “Opening of the Great Railway Suspension Bridge at Niagara Falls – Union of the United States and the Canadas,” *Globe*, 19

March 1855, 3, cited from the *Buffalo Express*; <https://casostation.ca/hall-of-fame/niagara-suspension-bridge/>, accessed 28 June 2023).

28. Spriggs, B4552, "The 'Canada', 'Niagara', 'London' & 'Hamilton'. B 27 Feb. 1934.
29. "First Train Into London Well Stocked With Wood For Burning; Passengers Were Joyful From Champagne in Celebration," *LFP*, 15 Dec. 1948, 15. This article, which carried a photo of the Essex, noted that "A **Wood-Burner** like this drew London's first train into the city...."
30. *Edwin R. Clark, "Early Locomotive Building in Lowell, Mass," Bulletin no. 7, RLHS, (1924), 50.*
31. The "Croton cut-off" was a locomotive valve gear designed by Walter McQueen (1818-1893) of the Lowell Machine Shops and Schenectady Locomotive Co. and first used on the Croton locomotive built for the Hudson River Railroad by the Lowell Machine Shops in 1851. It involved two separate valves to control admission of steam to the cylinders, one to start and the second at higher speeds to "cut-off" the steam to reduce consumption.
32. "The Death of Mr. Thomas Brock," *Toronto Daily Mail*, 7 Jan. 1892; "Entry of the First Train Into London," "Notes by Cl. T. Campbell," *Historic Sketches of London and Middlesex*, Part II, 43.
33. Archdeaconry of Richmond, Church of England, Marriage Bonds, John Hall and Eleanor Robinson, 16 Sept. 1848; 1851 England Census, Cumberland, Carlisle, Botchergate, page 49; Dan Brock to Gerry Nichols, email, 2 May 2023; Nichols to Brock, email, 2 May 2023.
34. *Railton's Directory*, 85, 108, 159.
35. "Melancholy Acci [sic.]," *LFP*, 7 June 1862, 3.
36. See 1851 England Census, Cumberland, Carlisle, Botchergate, page 49; 1861 Census of Canada, Canada West, Middlesex, London, Ward 5, District 8, page 165; "Melancholy Acci," *LFP*, 7 June 1862, 3; Nichols to Brock, email, 2 May 2023.
37. Gerry Nichols to Dan Brock, email, 2 June 2022; www.ancestry.co.uk/family-tree/person/tree/65780940/person/282022066119/facts
38. Gerry Nichols to Dan Brock and Catherine A Elliot Shaw, email, 27 May 2022.
39. New York, U.S., Arriving Passenger and Crew List, Houghton, 29 June 1852, no. 34, Thos. Brock.
40. "The Death of Mr. Thomas Brock," *Toronto Daily Mail*, 7 Jan. 1892.
41. 1861 Census of Canada, Canada West, Middlesex, London 156.
42. Nichols to Brock and Elliot Shaw, email, 27 May 2022; Brock to Nichols and Elliot Shaw, email, 27 May 2022.

43. London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1936, Camden, St. Pancras Chapel 1852-1853, Ireland Tory and Susan Southam, 20 Dec. 1852.
44. Brock to Nichols and Elliot Shaw, email, 5 May 2022.
45. "Death of Mr. Thomas Brock"; Goodspeed, *History of the County of Middlesex, Canada*, (1889, reprint 1972), 359.
46. Spriggs, "Great Western Railway of Canada." This painting was donated to the Lawson Library at The University of Western Ontario (UWO) on February 28, 1947, by Esther Jane Brock (1865-1960), the fourth known child of Thomas and Susan (Southam) Brock and the last surviving sibling. The painting is now in the possession of UWO's McIntosh Gallery.