

Vancouver's First Passenger Train

From: *The British Colonist, Victoria, 24 May 1887*

The First Train Reaches Vancouver City on time yesterday.

VANCOUVER, MAY 23—The Queen's weather ushered in the day long looked for by Vancouverites, the blending of the Occident with the Orient, the final accomplishment of the great transcontinental line of railway from the Atlantic to the Pacific. ...

The engine [Number 374] was a mass of verdure and mottoes and flags and was perhaps the prettiest sight ever seen on the coast. "From Ocean to Ocean" was conspicuous on the engine, and on the tender; "Our National Highway" on the buffer beam; "Montreal and Vancouver" was the name on a shield joined by an evergreen wreath; on the smokestack, "Montreal Greet the Terminal City", was displayed in white letters on the dark ground. In honor of the jubilee the headlight was ornamented with a painting of the Queen, surmounted with a crown. On the headlamp brackets were two flags, one on either side, labeled respectively "Atlantic" and "Pacific". The rail guard was prettily decorated with red and white streamers bound round. Inscribed on the number plate were the talismanic words "Arcadia" and "Eldorado". As the train reached Vancouver carrying the officers of the road, representative Vancouver citizens and your special correspondent, it was greeted with cheers at every point. Streamers floated to the breeze across the track at different points, while the ships and boats in the harbor were resplendent in their variegated colors. At the railway wharf, which was reached sharp on time, it seemed as if all Vancouver had congregated, and a mighty shout went up as the train thundered into the station between the handsome double arches of fir. As the engine rolled on it was greeted with the following mottoes:- "Occident Greet the Orient", and "Confederation Accomplished", while facing the city "Labor Omnia Vincet", and "Vancouver" surrounded the arch. The train comprised a baggage, colonist sleeper, first-class and sleeper, and drawing room car. There were many eastern passengers who proudly boasted they were the first to come through from Montreal, the centre of Canadian commerce, to this ambitious young city, destined for a large part in the future of British Columbia. The trip from Port Moody to Vancouver is delightful in the extreme, and a pleasant ending to the finest scenic route on the continent. ... At Moodyville and the Mission, as well as at



NUMBER 374. This fully restored locomotive was the first passenger train to arrive in Vancouver upon the completion of the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad. The engine is now permanently displayed in a portion of the roundhouse in Yaletown.

this city, flags were seen and amid all the grand in nature and resources the best civilization of the Atlantic shook hands with the Pacific. ...

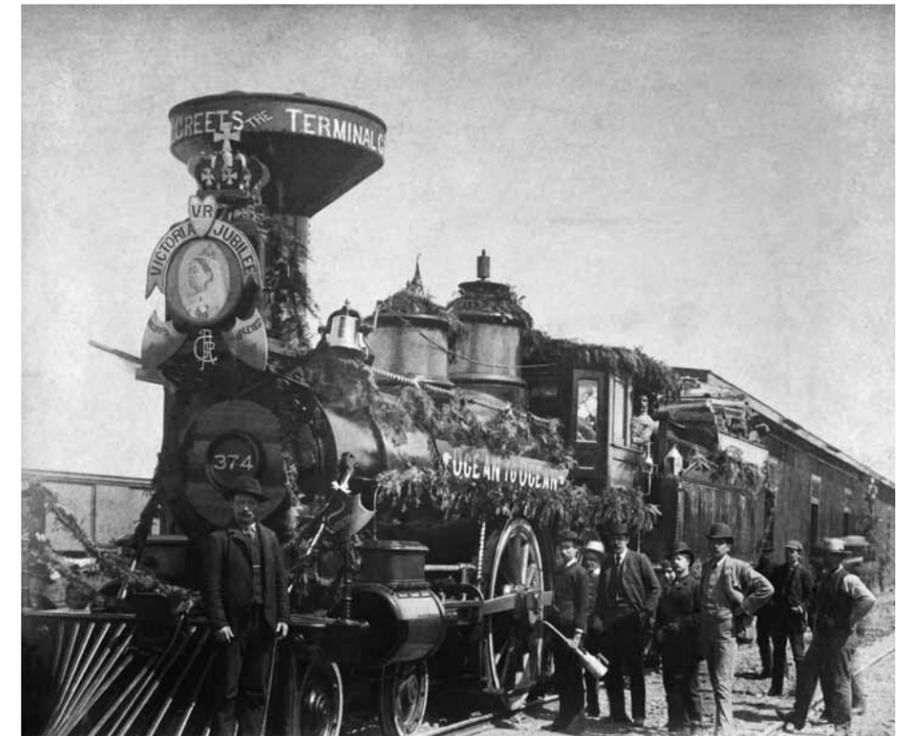
[The paper then gives the address read by Vancouver Mayor MacLean to Henry Abbott, General Superintendent of the Pacific Division of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Abbott, the "popular superintendent of the road" ...]

...was obliged to acknowledge the rousing cheers that greeted him. As he looked down upon the sea of upturned faces, he said he had the greatest pleasure in accepting the congratulations on securing the railway. Connection with this point had been bitterly opposed, but he didn't care to comment upon it. The

company acted upon what it believed to be right, and here we are and here we intend to remain (deafening cheers). As the mayor remarked, the progress made since the fire was unprecedented and one could not believe such a change possible. More passengers were coming now than ever before, and he only hoped they would remain in the country. It had mountains, but valleys too, and agricultural resources perhaps not sufficiently realized. As to the future of Vancouver the company believes in it and looks forward to grand possibilities. The steamer left Hong Kong for this port and every cabin was taken up before she left. The energy displayed was a sufficient guarantee that the people of Vancouver were up to the spirit of the times and ready to march forward in the van of progress. Personally he had to thank them for the kind remarks in the address. ...

Three hearty cheers for the Queen brought the interesting proceedings to a close. ...

Vancouver is naturally jubilant, and tonight is joyous. The city band and torchlight procession is serenading Mr. Abbott and other officials of the road. ... Vancouver greets the capital, realizing that the success of one is bound up in the other, and with a long pull and a strong pull, and a pull altogether, they naturally hope to raise the Pacific province to the proud heights she must in time attain.



Wood-burning engine number 374 brought the first train of passengers into Vancouver. This photograph was taken beside the freight sheds at the north foot of Richards Street by early Vancouver photographer John Allan Brock, who had formed a partnership with Harry T. Devine, another early photographer, the previous year. Dignitaries enjoyed the exhilarating experience of riding the cowcatcher at the very front of the locomotive, an activity pioneered by Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister. He built a platform upon which a chair was mounted so that his wife Agnes was able to take part in the spectacle of the first transcontinental voyage across Canada, the most spectacular part of which were the Canadian Rockies.

Following pages

At 12:45 p.m. 23 May 1887 the first CPR passenger train reaches the Vancouver Depot at the foot of Howe Street, hauled by Locomotive number 374.

