

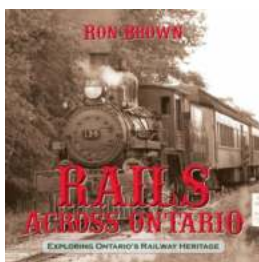
# Unveiling Ontario's Rich Railway Heritage: Rails Across Ontario

Ontario, a province with a vast and diverse landscape, holds a treasure trove of railway heritage. From the era of steam-powered locomotives to the modern electric trains, Ontario's railways have played a significant role in shaping the province's history and development. In this article, we will take you on an exciting journey through the railways of Ontario, exploring the fascinating stories behind the tracks, stations, and locomotives that once crisscrossed this beautiful province.

## The Birth of Railways in Ontario

The first railway in Ontario, the Ontario, Simcoe and Huron Union Railroad, was built in the mid-19th century to connect Lake Ontario with Georgian Bay. Its completion marked the beginning of a new era for transportation in the province. The railway network expanded rapidly over the next few decades, linking major cities like Toronto, Hamilton, London, and Ottawa.

As the railways expanded, new stations were constructed, each with its unique architecture and charm. These stations played a crucial role in connecting communities, serving as hubs of social and economic activity. Today, many of these stations have been preserved and repurposed as museums, galleries, and community spaces, providing a glimpse into the past.



## Rails Across Ontario: Exploring Ontario's Railway Heritage by Ron Brown (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 5009 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 216 pages



## Exploring Ontario's Railway Museums

One way to dive deep into Ontario's railway heritage is to visit the numerous railway museums scattered across the province. These museums offer a hands-on experience, allowing visitors to see and even ride vintage trains that were once the lifelines of Ontario. Let's take a look at some of the most popular railway museums in Ontario:

### 1. Toronto Railway Museum

Located in the heart of downtown Toronto, the Toronto Railway Museum showcases the city's fascinating railway history. The museum features numerous outdoor exhibits, including restored locomotives and passenger cars. Visitors can also enjoy train rides around the museum grounds, providing a nostalgic experience.

### 2. Halton County Radial Railway

Step back in time at the Halton County Radial Railway, located near Milton. This unique museum operates Canada's first and largest collection of vintage streetcars. Visitors can hop on and off these beautifully restored streetcars, experiencing a piece of history while enjoying the scenic countryside.

### 3. Elgin County Railway Museum

Nestled in St. Thomas, the Elgin County Railway Museum offers a comprehensive look at the railway history of Southwestern Ontario. The museum houses an extensive collection of artifacts, including vintage locomotives, cabooses, and rolling stock. Guided tours showcase the rich history of railways in the region.

#### **4. Northern Ontario Railroad Museum & Heritage Centre**

Located in Capreol, near Sudbury, the Northern Ontario Railroad Museum & Heritage Centre provides insights into the development of railways in Northern Ontario. Visitors can explore an array of exhibits, including historic railway buildings, cars, and an operational turntable. The museum also offers train rides, allowing visitors to experience the thrill of riding a vintage railway vehicle.

### **Ontario's Forgotten Railways**

While many railway lines in Ontario are still operational, some have been abandoned and left forgotten. Exploring these forgotten railways provides a unique opportunity to witness the remnants of a bygone era. Here are a few fascinating abandoned railway lines in Ontario:

#### **1. Hamilton & Northwestern Railway**

Once a major rail line connecting Hamilton to Guelph, the Hamilton & Northwestern Railway has now become a popular hiking trail. The 32-kilometer long trail offers picturesque views of the surrounding countryside, allowing visitors to witness the railway's historical remnants and nature's beauty simultaneously.

#### **2. Credit Valley Railway**

The Credit Valley Railway, which operated between Streetsville and Orangeville, is now part of the Trans Canada Trail. This trail offers an immersive experience

for hikers, with occasional railway artifacts and abandoned stations still visible along the route.

### 3. Grand Trunk Railway

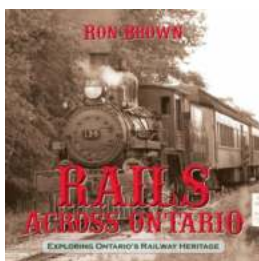
Once a vital transportation link between Lake Erie and Georgian Bay, the Grand Trunk Railway has been transformed into a scenic rail trail stretching between St. Marys and Cambridge. The trail passes through picturesque farmland and charming small towns, providing an idyllic setting for outdoor enthusiasts.

### Preserving Ontario's Railway Heritage

Organizations and passionate individuals across Ontario have been working diligently to preserve the province's rich railway heritage. Through restoration efforts, museum exhibits, and educational programs, they ensure that the stories of Ontario's railways continue to be shared with future generations.

The Ontario Heritage Trust plays a pivotal role in supporting the preservation and promotion of Ontario's railway heritage. The Trust works closely with museums, heritage organizations, and communities to safeguard the province's railway artifacts, buildings, and stories.

So, whether you choose to visit a railway museum, explore an abandoned rail line, or get involved in the preservation efforts, Ontario promises a captivating journey through its railway heritage. Embark on this adventure and discover the stories that lay hidden along the Rails Across Ontario.



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Explore Ontario's rich railway heritage — from stations and hotels to train rides, bridges, water towers, and roundhouses.

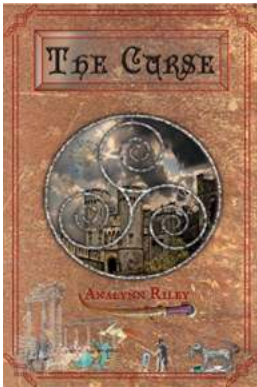
Rails Across Ontario will take the reader back to a time when the railway ruled the economy and the landscape.

Read about historic stations, railway museums, heritage train rides, and historic bridges. Follow old rail lines along Ontario's most popular rail trails. Find out where steam engines still puff across farm fields and where historic train coaches lead deep into the wilds of Ontario's scenic north country. Discover long forgotten but once vital railway structures, such as roundhouses, coal docks, and water towers. Learn about regular VIA Rail routes that follow some of the province's oldest rail lines and pass some of its most historic stations, including one that has operated continuously since 1857.



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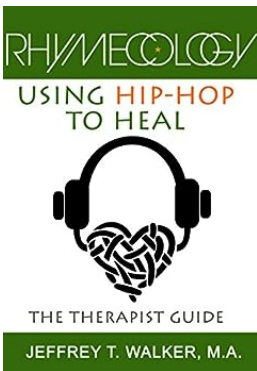
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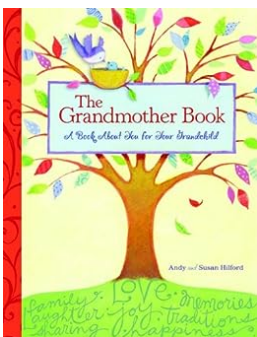
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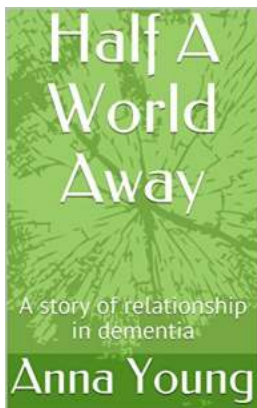
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