RAILROAD CROSSINGS: THE TRANSNATIONAL WORLD OF NORTH AMERICA, 1850-1910

By

Christine Ann Berkowitz

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of History
University of Toronto

© Copyright by Christine Ann Berkowitz 2009.
RAILROAD CROSSINGS: THE TRANSNATIONAL WORLD OF NORTH AMERICA, 1850-1910

By Christine Ann Berkowitz

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Department of History, University of Toronto, 2009

ABSTRACT

The last quarter of the nineteenth century is often referred to as the “Golden Age” of railroad building. More track was laid in this period in North America than in any other period. The building of railroads was considered synonymous with nation building and economic progress. Railway workers were the single largest occupational group in the period and among the first workers to be employed by large-scale, corporately owned and bureaucratically managed organizations. While there is a rich historiography regarding the institutional and everyday lives of railway workers and the corporations that employed them, the unit of analysis has been primarily bounded by the nation. These national narratives leave out the north-south connections created by railroads that cut across geo-political boundaries and thus dramatically increasing the flows of people, goods and services between nations on the North American continent. Does the story change if viewed from a continental rather than national perspective?

*Railroad Crossings* tells the story of the people and places along the route of the Grand Trunk Railroad of Canada between Montreal, Quebec and Portland, Maine and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad (and later of the Southern Pacific) between Benson, Arizona and Guaymas, Sonora. The study first takes a comparative view of the cross-border railroad development followed by a consideration of emerging patterns and practices that suggest a broader continental continuity. The evidence demonstrates that this broader continental continuity flows from the application of a certain “railroad logic” or the impact of the essence of
railroad operations that for reasons of safety and efficiency required the broad standardization of operating procedures that in many ways rendered place irrelevant.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.........................................................................................................................II
TABLE OF FIGURES........................................................................................................... V
RAILROAD CROSSINGS: AN INTRODUCTION................................................................. 1
CHAPTER 1: CORRIDORS OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE ........................................ 11
CHAPTER 2: FROM ISOLATION TO INTEGRATION......................................................... 52
CHAPTER 3: LABOUR MOBILITY AND OCCUPATIONAL MIGRATION.......................... 94
CHAPTER 4: A CERTAIN RAILROAD LOGIC................................................................. 137
CHAPTER 5: RAILWAY WORKERS, UNIONS AND THE STATE................................. 179
CONCLUSION.................................................................................................................. 220
BIBLIOGRAPHY.............................................................................................................. 227
TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 1  Political Map of North America ca. 1840 ......................................................... 17
Figure 2  Political Map of North America ca. 1900 ............................................................. 17
Figure 3  Map of the Grand Trunk Montreal to Portland Line ca 1853. ............................... 26
Figure 4  Schematic of the Sonora System c1880. ................................................................. 43
Figure 5  Railways British North America, ca1850................................................................. 143
Figure 6  Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe R.R. Co. 1872. ..................................................... 144
Figure 7  The Santa Fe System ca. 1880. .............................................................................. 146
Figure 8  Connections across the southern border ca. 1882. ................................................. 146
Figure 9  The SP controls access to the port city of San Francisco, ca. 1898. ......................... 148
Figure 10 Map showing the Sonora System in the northwest and the lack of connections to other Mexican Railroads, ca. 1888................................................................. 171
Railroad Crossings:

An Introduction

Under the headline, “Strikers Fill Nogales Town,” the Los Angeles Times reported that on 18 January 1911 the locomotive engineers working for the Southern Pacific of Mexico (SPdeM), a subsidiary of the Southern Pacific (SP), in the States of Sonora and Sinaloa had gone out on strike seeking wage parity with their counterparts on the SP in the United States. 1 Although small in number, only 62 locomotive engineers in total described as native and American, their impact was initially far reaching. The strike affected the lines running south from Nogales to Guaymas, Mazatlan and Cananea, Mexico, a total of roughly 1000 miles. 2 Strikers used the border to their advantage, avoiding Mexican law by conducting all strike action north of the border in Nogales, Arizona. 3 They refused to operate the switch engine in the yards at Nogales, Arizona as it belonged to the line south of the border. The congestion in the yard backed up freight and passenger runs forcing officials to man the trains in order to maintain minimal operations. In short order all other connecting lines in Mexico placed an embargo on passenger and freight shipments over the affected lines because they were unable to guarantee delivery on time. According to one newspaper account there were 250 carloads of oranges billed through to Canada and 350 carloads of tomatoes, eggplant, green peppers and other similar produce. 4 The result was serious congestion throughout Mexico, ultimately with continental reverberations.

Earlier in June of 1910, a decision affecting brakemen and conductors on the eastern lines had been successfully negotiated for over 27,000 employees of the eastern lines, but not the 5,000 trainmen employed by the Grand Trunk of Canada and its subsidiary the Central

---

1 “Strikers Fill Nogales Town,” Los Angeles Times, 22 January 1911.
2 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
Vermont.\textsuperscript{5} Like the workers on the Southern Pacific of Mexico, the employees of the Grand Trunk walked off the job seeking wage parity with their counterparts in the eastern lines in the United States.\textsuperscript{6} The strike lasted fifteen days, affected service and connecting lines from Portland Maine through Quebec, Ontario and Michigan to Chicago. In this case there were reports of violence and corporate and government attempts at suppression on both sides of the border. Nevertheless the strike ended with an arbitrated settlement in favour of the employees of the Grand Trunk and its subsidiary the Central Vermont, a settlement very close to that awarded competitive eastern US lines. Both the Southern Pacific of Mexico and the Grand Trunk Railway operated lines that crossed international North American borders. By the early part of the twentieth century an extensive web of railways crisscrossed the continent not only east and west but also north and south. The growth of a continental space, one in which people, goods and ideas flow relatively freely across borders, and in so doing create conditions that contribute to the development of parallel social, economic, and political conditions, can be witnessed in the events of these two strike actions. What began as a national movement of organized railroad workers within the United States had a continental impact.

The preceding narrative is one in a series of vignettes in this study, chosen to illustrate the increasing connectedness of the North American continent in the late nineteenth century facilitated by the expansion of a continental railway network. The story of railroad development holds a significant place in the North American historiography of industrialization, imperialism and nation building. Railroad development on the continent began in the United States and

Canada in the 1830s and in Mexico in the 1840s. Expansion slowed dramatically in the United States during the American Civil War but then resumed with a vengeance reaching its peak across the continent in the 1890s. In Canada, development progressed more slowly and evenly with the first transcontinental railroad reaching completion in 1885. After the building of the first road with British support in the 1840s, railroad development in Mexico would be delayed for some thirty years and then grow dramatically from the 1870s through the 1890s. The impetus behind the construction of these early railroads was driven by local business interests and was intended to connect existing market towns within a regional economy or to link extraction industries with processing facilities. By mid-century much had changed politically on the North American continent—Canadian Confederation, the American Civil War, the re-establishment of the Republican government in Mexico after the invasion of the French—and national political ambitions merged with growing economic interests, turning the railroad into a vehicle for national political and economic expansion across the continent.

While the reader may be more familiar with these narratives of national economic development, in particular the building of the east/west transcontinental railroads in Canada and the United States, less attention has been given to the creation of the north/south transcontinental lines between Canada and the United States and the United States and Mexico. Most familiar are the popular accounts of the heroic achievements involved in building the transcontinental railways connecting east with west; the railroad as an imperial project, the engine of “progress” and “civilization;” and, railroad systems as the first large bureaucratically managed

---


corporations. However, by the early part of the twentieth century there were fifty-five gateways between Canada and the United States and about eight between the United States and Mexico. Regardless of the topic or approach employed in past studies of railroads and railroad labor, the scope has been primarily contained within the boundaries of the nation, whether it be Canada, the United States or Mexico, and to the exclusion of these transnational links unless it is to tell the story of economic imperialism at the hands of railroad developers. Even the railroad maps seem to end at the border.


what ways did the railroad affect the flow of immigrants/migrants as settlers and workers to these regions? How were the relationships between workers, corporations, and nation states affected by the cross-border movement?

The idea of considering a transnational rather than national unit of analysis has drawn considerable attention in recent years from social scientists and historians alike. The concept is often criticized for lacking definition and or appearing to suggest that the nation state as a unit of analysis is no longer relevant in this time of rapid globalization. For the purpose of this study the term transnational is employed in its simplest meaning—across nations as opposed to solely within the boundaries of a particular nation. What begins as a comparative approach to the study of two cross-border regions or corridors expands to consider the continental implications of the flows and linkages made possible by the expansion of the North American rail network.

To look beyond the nation is certainly not a new idea. Its roots are in the early twentieth century. Historian Herbert E. Bolton in his 1933 Presidential address challenged the members of the American Historical Association (AHA) to consider “American” history, meaning the history of the Western Hemisphere, in the same manner as European history which he argued could not “be learned from books dealing alone with England, or France, or Germany, or Italy, or Russia.” Today critics of a transnational approach to history suggest that in their zeal to transcend the nationalist narrative, historians and others are attempting to erase the nation or simply sell out to the logic of global capital rather than examine its motives more closely. I would argue that, just as the historical context of the 1960s thru 1980s – the cold war, worldwide social unrest, nationalist movements within nation-states and decolonization – drew

---

13 Herbert E. Bolton, "The Epic of Greater America," *The American Historical Review* 38, no. 3 (1933): 448
attention away from the nationalist narrative to consider broader influences and relationships beyond borders and to reveal the contradictions and flaws within them, the trend to the transnational or global history is driven by the events of our day – the dramatic expansion of global capital and the corresponding sense that our world is shrinking (i.e., the phenomenon of out-sourcing call centers relating to local customer support to places like India)—and the need to look beyond the nation to understand the flow of people, goods, services and ideas that corresponds to this contemporary movement or influence of global capital.

This dissertation captures not just one, but multiple histories or snapshots that compare over time local and regional realities and then considers the relationships between the workers, the corporations and the nation states. Each in its own way tells the story of the role of the railroad in transforming the cross-border corridors and the continent economically, politically and socially. This study builds on and engages with the relevant literatures—borderlands studies, immigration/migration history, labor history, business history—but suggests an alternative reading, a more complex transnational continental narrative. A comparative approach is employed first in examining the ways in which this regional cross-border development followed similar or different patterns, followed by a consideration of emerging patterns or practices that suggest a broader continental continuity. I argue that the continental continuity flows from the application of what I refer to as a certain “railroad logic”—the very nature of railroad operations, for reasons of safety and efficiency, required a broad standardization of operating procedures that in many ways rendered place irrelevant. Securing freight revenue was the primary motivating factor behind continental rail expansion and the creation of a continental space with its social, economic and political implications was an unintended consequence.
As with all things, this current phenomenon of globalization has a history and for the purpose of this study the period that appears to most greatly resemble the present is that of the last half of the nineteenth century in North America, a time of unprecedented movements in capital, goods, people, and ideas between the developing nations that occupied the continent. Historian Scott Nelson, in his work on railroad building in the 1870s, observed:

Every generation imagines that it lives in a time of rapid technological change, but in the late 1870s, within a decade, coal was replacing wood in steam engines, steel had gone from a precious metal to an everyday commodity, steam engines were replacing water races for power, and nitroglycerin was being used instead of gunpowder in blasting. In short, mechanical power came unmoored from its source. Power no longer meant horses, a waterfall, or human muscle. It was suddenly portable, cheap, and efficient.15

The railroad was the vehicle that not only transformed the physical landscape of the continent but the social, economic and political landscapes as well.

How did those who worked for the railroads and those who lived in the communities along the railroad lines experience this north-south cross-border connection? What was the nature of the relationship between capital, the state and labor? Did these experiences and relationships change over time and if so, what were the factors that contributed to that change?

In this study the transnational approach is not intended to erase the nation but rather to provide a way of seeing the role of the nation as one actor in larger patterns and processes; to grapple with the contingent nature of the idea of nation, national identities, national borders and their formation.

In this dissertation the railroad is being used to analyze social and economic cross-border relations, the intersection between those cross-border relations and the rise of governmental authority and the attitudes held by capital, communities, and workers with regards to the changing nature of national boundaries. The regions or corridors selected for this study—the

---

Montreal to Portland division of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada and the Sonora System of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway connecting Benson, Arizona with Guaymas, Mexico—are comparable in that in each there were significant pre-existing social, cultural and economic ties. There are deep historical connections based on trade, transportation and migration routes. These transportation and trade corridors encouraged settlement along a south to north or north to south axis. Travelers often found the most direct route east or west on the continent to be impassable for all or part of the year, blocked by mountain ranges or the ravages of climate. The fastest route required travel along these north/south corridors, through one national territory to reach another. In each case the advent of the railroad integrated regional cross-border economies into continental and international markets, and dramatically altered the speed and volume of the flow of people, goods and services. This crossing and re-crossing of these international borders brought with it a corresponding increase in state regulatory control that served to further define the borderlines.

The sources are phenomenally rich for a study of this type. In fact dealing with the sheer volume of corporate records was at times overwhelming. That being said, many of the corporate records relating to company employees have been systematically destroyed, therefore it has been necessary to piece together specifics about individuals from a variety of sources—executive correspondence, payroll ledgers, engineering records, census manuscripts and newspaper accounts. Government and corporate documents, trades and labor journals, and a limited number of first hand accounts and diaries were invaluable in developing an understanding of the ways in which people experienced life in these trans-border corridors.

The stories that follow will take us from a continental and national level down to that of the regional and local. The story of two cross-border corridors—Montreal, Quebec to Portland,
Maine; and Tucson, Arizona to Guaymas, Sonora—unfolded across time from roughly 1840 to 1911. Chapter 1 explores the deep historical social, cultural and economic connections in these corridors before the railroad. Chapters 2 and 3 consider the impact of the railroad on settlement and migration patterns, border development and the life and death of pre-existing communities from construction to operation. One cannot write a history of railroad development, even a social history of the railroad, without addressing the powerful influence of bureaucratic standardization or what is referred to in Chapter 4 as a particular “railroad logic”—the drive to conduct business as usual regardless of jurisdiction. What did it mean to be an ‘American’ company operating in Mexico or a ‘Canadian’ (in the earliest time period, ‘British’) company operating in the United States? Finally, Chapter 5 examines the connections between labor and the law, in contexts where the government jurisdiction was national and labor and capital appeared international.

The jubilant crowds were full of hope as they attended the last spike celebrations on the cross-border railroads connecting Canada with the United States in 1853 and the United States with Mexico in 1882. Participants spoke of assured economic prosperity and hailed the end of isolation and the joining of nations. As with all moments of change there were also the sceptics and those who chose to view the old ways nostalgically. In truth, neither booster nor sceptic knew in that moment how radically their lives would be altered by the coming of the railroad.

I sit upon my ox team, calm,
Beneath the lazy sky,
And crawl contented through the land,
And let the world go by.
The thoughtful ox has learned to wait
And nervous impulse smother,
And ponder long before he puts
One foot before another.

And men with spanking teams pass by
And dash upon their way,
As if it were their hope to find
The world’s end in a day;
And men dash by in palace cars,
On me dark frowns they cast,
As the lightning driven Present frowns
Upon the slow old Past.

What do they chase, these men of steam,
Their smoke-flags wide unfurled,
Pulled by the roaring fire-fiend
That shakes the reeling world?
What do ye seek ye men of steam,
So wild and mad ye press?
Is this, is this the railroad line
That leads to happiness?

And when you’ve swept across the day
And dashed across the night,
Is there some station through the hill
Where men can find delight?
Ah! Toward the depot of content
Where no red signals stream,
I go by ox team just as quick
As you can go by steam.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{16} S. W. Foss, “The Ox Team”, \textit{The Benson (Arizona) Oasis}, 20 July 1893, no. 11, vol. 1, col. 1, p. 3.
Chapter 1

Corridors of Continuity and Change:
“The lightning driven Present frowns upon the slow old Past.”

The poem “The Ox Cart” appeared in the Benson Arizona Oasis in 1893 and aptly represented local reactions in the southwest to the changes wrought by the coming of the railroad.¹ It described, in a somewhat romantic tone, the replacement of a slower paced, seemingly more human scale of life with the fast-paced, “roaring” and “reeling world” of the steam locomotive. Of even greater significance was the fact that it had first appeared in the Boston Yankee Blade making it even more interesting from a continental perspective. Samuel Walter Foss, author of the poem and known to some as New Hampshire’s poet laureate of the common man, wrote a poem a day for the newspapers beginning in 1891.² While it is not clear from the brief accounts available whether Foss ever traveled from New England to the southwest, his ideas clearly had resonance in both regions. The rapid technological changes that he described in his poem “The Ox Team” produced social, economic and political transformations that were felt, albeit in different decades, in very similar ways across the continent.

Describing a much earlier period, William Reed, a New England teacher, writer and abolitionist, wrote in narrative prose about his childhood growing up on the border between northern New York State and Lower Canada in the 1820s, a region the writer of his obituary

¹ S. W. Foss, “The Ox Team”, The Benson (Arizona) Oasis, 20 July 1893, no. 11, vol. 1, col. 1, p. 3.
referred to as, “the outposts of civilization.”

Like Foss, Reed too was intent on helping the reader to understand the dramatic impact the railroad had on the people and the landscape.

Recalling scenes from his last visit to the region in 1868, Reed wrote, “it seemed like a region entirely new or which I had never seen before.”

The catalyst for this dramatic change according to Reed was the completion of the railroad between Rouse’s Point, at the southern most tip of Lake Champlain, and Ogdensburg, in 1851, which brought the region “in contact with the whole civilized world and its great markets, and rapid ha[d] been the development.”

Historian Jean Pierre Kesteman described the arrival of the railroad in the Eastern townships of southern Quebec as “an irruption, sometimes brutal, of modern practices in a rural world with ancient rhythms.”

The border region of Reed’s childhood had been so transformed that he proclaimed “enchanted” the rare places where things remained as he remembered them.

S. W. Foss, William Reed, and the editor of the Benson Arizona Oasis were intent on capturing for their readers the dramatic changes taking place each in their respective regions and time periods. Reed, as we will soon see, was concerned that the story of changes on the border in northern New York State be seen in the larger historical context of the times. Kesteman, in his social history of the town of Sherbrooke, Quebec, suggested that the experience of early railroad travel, while transformative, “quickly became a standard phenomenon, almost banal, almost without history.”

And so it is today, changes happen so quickly that each new generation has little or no memory of the earlier forms of technology. All of this makes it extremely difficult

---

4 Ibid., 4.
5 Ibid., 3.
7 Reed, *Life on the Border*. 3.
8 Kesteman, *Histoire De Sherbrooke* vol. 1, p. 158. Translation from the original French by Christine Berkowitz: «Le voyage par chemin de fer devint rapidement un phénomène courant, presque banal, presque sans histoire.»
for us to imagine how a form of transportation that seems when measured by today’s standards of satellite communications and rapid air transportation to be not much of an improvement over the ox cart, was indeed transformative in its day. And it is for this reason—understanding the larger historical context and attempting to capture a sense of the people, the conditions in which they lived and the nature of the connections that bound these cross-border regions together in the era before the coming of the railroad—that the stories that follow are told.

As historian Edward Ayers suggests we must get past the “common sense” view, looking back from our vantage point in the present to find the path that justifies our understanding of how things came to be as we perceive them to be today—Canada (read as “English” Canada) and the United States as essentially the same socially and culturally sharing the longest undefended border in the world; and Mexico and the United States as essentially different with a shared border highly defended against illegal immigration and drug trafficking. To acknowledge the contingent nature of history is to struggle with the fact that the path to the present represented by our current ‘mental map’ of the continent and the countries that make up North America was not a straight line, but one with many twists and turns. The last half of the nineteenth century for all regions across the North American continent was a time of great promise, but also with the potential for great peril; tremendous opportunity but also uncertain outcomes. Finally, as Matthew Connelly put it, it was in some ways a period of both coming together and coming apart, for “processes of integration lead to new kinds of fragmentation,” whether considering the continental, national or local context.  

---


People of the late nineteenth century that met across international borders in Vermont and the Eastern Townships of Quebec, and in Arizona and Sonora, Mexico lived in a time not only of rapid technological change but also of political and economic uncertainty. As William Reed so eloquently described the larger historical context surrounding his first summer on the border in 1823: “the injuries inflicted by the British war of 1812” were still a fresh memory; the construction of the Erie Canal had just begun; the founding of the city of Lowell, Massachusetts (a future centre of the textile industry) “was ripening;” Boston had only just achieved city status; and settlement of the vast western wilderness, beginning with western New York State had just begun.11

Across the continent to varying degrees this period was marked by industrial development, massive movements of population through both foreign immigration and internal migration into new territories and urban centers. From the 1840s through the 1870s boundaries were set and reset in response to civil war, foreign invasion and peaceful treaty negotiation. During the 1840s and 1850s political boundary lines were shifting as westward expansion and national consolidation—by re-settlement, political negotiation and the forcible annexation of territory as spoils of war—drove the need to delineate state jurisdiction in disputed areas. When one speaks of westward expansion from a vantage point in the northeastern part of the continent, it is important to note that reference to the “west” is a relative term that until the late 1860s, when re-settlement began to catch up with boundary setting, meant west of the Allegheny Mountains but not west of the Mississippi in the United States and, into the Great Lakes basin in Canada, beyond the eastern portion of Upper Canada (what is now known as the southern Ontario peninsula). The ability to foresee future possibilities was contingent on the outcomes of

these social, economic and political changes and the railroad would play an important role in facilitating all of these developments.

As historian Schoonover has observed, with regards to the intentions of the United States, it was in this period that the transition took place between the “heyday of private and public efforts to annex all or part Mexico [and one should add, all or parts of Canada] and a period when most North Americans sought trade and investment rather than territorial annexation,”¹² This transition however would last for more than fifty years beginning with the Mexican-American War in the 1840s and ending with the Spanish-American War at the end of the nineteenth century with both territorial conquest and economic integration existing side by side. While the tendency is to focus attention on US expansionism, the United States was not alone in its quest for territorial expansion. In fact the decades of the 1840s, 50s and 60s were a time of intense focus on national destiny not solely for the United States, but for Mexico and Canada as well.

Although the popular image of the Canada-US border today is that of the longest undefended international boundary in the world, as historian Francis Carroll so aptly states, it had a decidedly “muddled and confrontational beginning” that dated back to the end of the Revolutionary Wars and the Treaty of Paris in 1783.¹³ By the 1830s only sections of the boundary between Canada and the United States in the northeast had been agreed upon and the possibility of tensions exploding into conflict was ever present.¹⁴ The 49th parallel as far west as the Rocky Mountains was established as the boundary between British North America and the United States in the Anglo-American Convention of 1818. In 1840 Britian united Upper and

---

¹⁴ Ibid., xiv.
Lower Canada (known today as Ontario and Quebec) to form the Province of Canada. British North America then consisted of the six colonies of Canada, Vancouver Island, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. In 1842, following major diplomatic negotiations, the border in the northeast between the Province of Canada and the United States was finalized in an agreement known as the Ashburton/Webster Treaty. The Oregon Treaty of 1846 established the 49th parallel as the border from the Rockies to Pacific and defined the border between Oregon Country and what would become British crown colony of British Columbia in 1858. The region north of the 49th parallel and extending west to the colony of British Columbia was known as Rupert’s Land and controlled by the Hudson’s Bay Company until 1868 when the rights were granted to the Dominion of Canada.

In the southwest, the Mexican American War ended in 1848 with US annexation of the Texas, New Mexico and California territories and the boundary set between Mexico and the United States at the Rio Grande, although a small portion of that boundary would remain in dispute until the 1960s. A visual representation is helpful. Figure 1 shows the geo-political boundaries as they were at the opening of the period, ca1840, and Figure 2 the boundaries as they were around 1900.

The 1860s were a politically defining decade on the North American continent. In the United States, secession and Civil War threatened to dissolve the union. In addressing the issues of civil war in the United States, John A. Macdonald (Joint Premier of the Province of Canada with George Etienne Cartier, and later, the first Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada) saw it as an opportunity for Canada when he remarked before the legislature, “that if [the United States] were severed in two, as severed in two he believed they would be, two great, two noble, two free nations would exist in place of one,” making it possible for Canada to rise to

---

15 Carroll, A Good and Wise Measure. xvi.
its rightful place. In response to William H. Seward, Foreign Secretary in the Lincoln administration, former Governor of New York State, and anti-Canadian sentiment in the New York press, Macdonald declared, “They knew that in consequence of the fratricidal war, Canada had every prospect of being the great nation of this continent.”

Seward was a long time advocate of territorial annexation. In an attempt to divert attention from the fractious secession debates, Seward proposed a plan to unite North and South by launching “a ‘war of conquest’ that would change a ‘threatened dismemberment of the Union into the triumphant annexation of Canada, Mexico, and the West Indies.’” If the European powers objected he proposed to declare war on them as well. President Lincoln however

---

17 Ibid., 92-3.
rejected the plan outright. Seward believed strongly that the destiny of the United States lay in the establishment of a continental empire, including Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean, with its capital in Mexico City. In 1860, he called the Canadian people "ingenious, enterprising, and ambitious" and in the process of “building excellent states to be hereafter admitted in to the American Union.” Overtime, however, his enthusiasm for continental empire would shift from thoughts of territorial annexation to those of economic integration.

In Canada, the defense of the provinces against this threat of US annexation in the Northwest and/or Canada as a whole is generally accepted by historians as a significant factor driving both the Canadian and British interests that favored confederation of the British North American provinces. Others in Canada did not share the same level of confidence expressed by Mr. Macdonald. Thomas Darcy McGee, newspaper editor and member of the Provincial Legislature, in a speech to the legislature said: “To me, Mr. Speaker, this American civil war is a true continental crisis; it is a Canadian crisis as well as a Republican crisis; and we can no more escape from its consequences than we can throw up a Chinese wall of exclusion instead of the existing boundary lines.” In a similar vein British Prime Minister, Viscount Palmerston, quoted in The London Morning Post, raised his understanding of the threat and the imperative driving confederation of British North American colonies: “There is but one enemy which the new confederation can have cause to fear, namely, the Northern section of the late American republic; and it is in the possibility of an American invasion of Canada as soon as all the hopes

19 Quoted in Ridley, *Maximilian and Juárez*, 113
21 Ibid.
of subjugating the Southern Confederacy are abandoned which has dictated the union which
would now seem to be determined on.” [emphasis mine]23

The Mexican Republic also had reason to view the American Civil War as a crisis with
continental implications. Napoleon III of France perceived American preoccupation with civil
war as an opportunity to realize his dream to reestablish a French colony on the North American
continent and thereby gain access to the Pacific trade. With the support initially of Britain and
Spain and under the pretense of protecting European interests, a French expeditionary force
overthrew the liberal government of Benito Juarez and installed Maximilian as Emperor of
Mexico in 1862. Both the Union and the Confederacy had designs on Mexican territory. The
Confederacy looked south initially for the possible expansion of slave territory and at the end of
the civil war as place of refuge. While the North did not intervene militarily in response to the
French invasion of Mexico, attempts were made by the Union government to support the Juarez
government by proposing to act as guarantor for the Mexican foreign debt—the object of
European protective interest—in exchange for a mortgage on northern Mexican mining territory
and railroad concessions in perpetuity across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The European powers
perceived this as a set-up for a future land grab. The Juarez government turned it down in light
of powerful anti-American public opinion in Mexico stemming from a long history of shrinking
national territory at the hands of the United States. It is clear that whether thought of as an
opportunity or a threat, all participants saw their national destinies as highly contingent on the
outcome of the American Civil war.24

23 Morton, The Critical Year. 169.
24 For a more complete discussion of the United States and Canadian interests in the Civil War see: Donald Grant
Creighton, The Road to Confederation: the Emergence of Canada, 1863-1867 (Toronto: Macmillan, 1964);
Lafeber, The New Empire; M. H Mahoney and Marjorie Locke Mahoney, Mexico and the Confederacy, 1860-1867
(San Francisco: Austin & Winfield, Publishers, 1998); Morton, The Critical Years; Schoonover, Dollars Over
Dominion.
As the decade of the 1870s opened, much of the political uncertainty as it related to territorial jurisdiction had been resolved. In Mexico the French were defeated and the republican government of Benito Juarez restored. An era of significant industrial development made possible by a corresponding growth in foreign direct investment, heralded by some and criticized by others, was ushered in at the end of the decade under the Presidency of Porfirio Diaz.

In 1867, the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, along with New Brunswick and Nova Scotia joined in confederation to form the Dominion of Canada. By 1870, Manitoba and British Columbia joined confederation completing the vision of a “Dominion from sea to sea.” The Hudson’s Bay Company transferred its interests in the North West Territory to Canada thereby resolving any question of American expansion into the region.

With Union victory over the Confederacy in the American Civil War, the United States was faced with the daunting task of political, social and economic reconstruction. Support for the completion of the first transcontinental railway in the United States and legislative measures to encourage the settlement of western territories formed part of the national unification efforts in both the United States and Canada. Efforts continued to encourage the settlement of the Canadian and American west on into the twentieth century. Although the Northwest Territories in Canada (now Alberta and Saskatchewan) remained thinly settled until the early part of the twentieth century, with the exception of indigenous populations, by 1893 historian Frederick Turner had declared the American western frontier closed and the attention of the United States would turn to territories outside of continental North America.25 The focus on national and international economic integration, rather than territorial acquisition was now of primary concern for Canada, the United States and Mexico and railroads would have a significant role to play.

As the words of S. W. Foss and William Reed cited above so eloquently illustrate, the narrative of the coming of the railroad is one of transformation, but is not a narrative that can be told within neat temporal bookends. The first railroads on the continent were built in the 1830s and 1840s connecting ports and towns along the eastern seaboard with markets further inland—1830 in the United States; 1836 in Canada; and 1842 in Mexico. The initial impetus was not transcontinental linkage but a desire to connect local producers with wider domestic markets. The acquisition of new territory and the resolution of boundary disputes created a settlement imperative to secure political title to these new lands and, with that, the need to establish more effective communication links across these expanding national territories in both Canada, the United States, and Mexico for the purposes of defense and commerce. By 1869 the first transcontinental railroad in the United States was complete and plans for similar lines in Canada and Mexico were in the development stages. Like the operation of the railroad itself, the story of railroad expansion across the continent is one of movement over time and space—from roughly the 1840s through the 1880s, reaching to and from all points on the compass in the early formation of a continental space.

The stories of development that emerged in regions from east to west are not distinctly different from each other but intertwined. People from the east were moving west and taking with them their knowledge, experiences and expectations based on their past experiences in the more urbanized and developed east. Internal migrants and new immigrants moving from the northeast in Canada or the United States in search of land and new opportunities brought with them their familiarity with things industrial and, to varying degrees, urban, as well as their knowledge and experience of railroad travel—the sound, the speed, and the size of the locomotive. In contrast those native to the rural southwest had never before seen a locomotive.
This spread of development facilitated by the expansion of the railroad network took place over many years, as shifts in social, economic, and political conditions affected the ebb and flow of people, goods, and services.

The narratives that follow take us from this continental and national perspective to the level of the regional and local with a focus on two selected cross-border corridors—in the northeast across the Canada/United States border between the Province of Quebec and the State of Vermont and in the southwest across the United States/Mexico border between Arizona and Sonora. This study, influenced by the study of borderlands that considers the affects of cultural mixing in regions on the periphery of nations, prefers to see borders as a vantage point from which to examine the performance of national jurisdiction over time; in other words, the ways in which the administration of the borders with respect to the flow of people, goods, and services was influenced by changing social and economic conditions. The approach is broader than simply a comparative study of cross-border corridors, designed as well to consider the ways in which this expanding transportation network served to facilitate movement of people as well as goods and services back and forth across the continent. To this end, it is necessary first to understand the deep historic social, economic, and cultural ties that bound these cross-border corridors together—settlement patterns and family connections, trade and agriculture, and the local lived experiences of the boundary line—a continuity in relationships that survived war and political separation and that was forever changed by the dramatic shortening of travel time and distance made possible by the expanding railroad network.

Beginning roughly at the same time as Reed’s childhood remembrances of the 1820s, but a little to the east in northern Vermont and southern Quebec, we will explore the period before the arrival in 1852 of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic/Atlantic and St. Lawrence railroads (later to
become the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada) that linked Montreal with Portland through the cross-border communities of Coaticook, Quebec and Brighton, Vermont. This particular route was selected firstly because it presents a counter narrative to the more common story of American economic, social and political influence on its neighbors. The Grand Trunk was a British financed and managed, and later a Canadian business enterprise operating in the United States. The period of early construction and operation in the 1840s and 50s allows us to examine a cross-border development prior to the American Civil War and Canadian Confederation, a highly unsettled political time.

This northeastern experience then will be compared with that of the southwestern border region in the 1870s prior to the arrival of the Sonora System of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad that ultimately linked Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico with Tuscon, Arizona through what would become Nogales, a single town divided in two by the United States/Mexico border. In this case we have the first American railroad to be constructed and operated in Mexico. Many more, including lines built by Canadian entrepreneurs, would follow. The period was one of rapid railroad expansion on the continent but particularly in the United States in the wake of the Civil War. Politically, this is a period marked by the defeat of the French in Mexico and the re-establishment of the Juarez Republican government. One could argue that it was also the closing days of the re-settlement period for northern Mexico and the southwestern United States as the expanding railroad network approached bringing with it settler migration into the plains.

**THE NORTHEAST**

The history of railroad building in the nineteenth century is full of heroic myths and legends and the story of the Montreal to Portland line is one such legend. Jonathan Poor, a
Maine-born Portland lawyer, was convinced that Maine’s economic future lay in helping its Canadian neighbor, Montreal, to secure a connection to a year-round Atlantic port. His is the story of the competition between the cities of Portland and Boston to become that Atlantic port destination and in so doing to capture at least some of the growing western trade bound for European destinations thus redirecting it away from New York City.

A skilled lecturer and propagandist, Poor traveled the countryside from Maine, through New Hampshire and Vermont to the Eastern Townships of Quebec pleading his case. In 1843, Poor’s Boston competitors had proposed a project to link Montreal to their fair city and the Canadian government had taken steps to subsidize the Cunard Line of steamships for service from Liverpool to Boston. Poor announced his plan to the people of Portland in 1844 and by the fall of that year had garnered support not only from the City of Portland but from parts of New Hampshire and Vermont. Along the way he gained support in the Eastern Townships of Quebec and in particular of Alexander Tilloch Galt, best known to Canadians as one of the fathers of Confederation, then commissioner of the British American Land Company and later to become president of the railroad line to be constructed on the Canadian side of the border. Poor brought the petition for a charter for the American section of the line before the Maine legislature in January of 1845. While awaiting passage of the legislation, he received word that the Bostonians were already in Montreal pleading their case before the Board of Trade. On 5 February 1845, “wrapped in furs and with his satchel of documents strapped to his back” ready to brave what was “the worst blizzard on record,” Poor departed Portland for Montreal in the hope that he could reach his destination before the final decision was made.26

The tale of Poor’s journey from Portland to Montreal is the stuff of which legends are made. For five days Poor and his party fought against the elements, laboring for hours and

gaining only short distances, the pace only a mile an hour in places. The most difficult part of
the trip, according to Poor, was the passage through Dixville Notch, New Hampshire, about
twenty miles from the Canada/United States border. The cliffs on either side of the gorge rise
eight hundred feet and the snow gathers at the bottom in drifts as high as twenty feet. “The first
thing that struck us on approaching the gorge was the fact—the road was lost! . . . not only were
all signs of a track gone, but we could see no way in which a man on foot could find room to
pass; the sides presented perpendicular walls of snow. . . The fearful thing to the uninitiated is
the danger of being smothered in the snow. Every few steps we had to turn round to catch our
breath. . . .” Those with shovels led the way while others followed finding foothold for the
horse. The sleigh and baggage were carried over by hand. 27 The party arrived in Montreal in
the nick of time and Poor entered the meeting of the Montreal Board of Trade just as the
Directors were about the make their decision with respect to the Boston proposal. Speaking on
another occasion, he would recall “the terrors of [that] Canada winter” but remarked that the risk
was worth taking “in view of the vast importance of the enterprise to the state.” 28

Embellished and highly dramatized no doubt for the benefit of stockholders and
investors, the tale does more than simply illustrate the lengths to which Poor would go in his
attempts to ensure future economic prosperity for the City of Portland. It paints a bleak picture
of the perils faced by early travelers, perils that would be overcome by the railroad, a mode of
transportation that by comparison was seen to be impervious to weather or grade, and able to
cover the same distances in a matter of hours rather than days.

27 John A Poor and Laura Elizabeth Poor, The First International Railway and the Colonization of New England Life
28 Ibid., 41.
To get a sense of how dramatically transformative this technology was to life and landscape we must look back to the conditions of the late eighteenth century and that period leading up to the completion of the railroad in the early 1850s. This was long before Canadian Confederation and the American Civil War, before the annexation of northern Mexico following the Mexican American War, before the War of 1812 and the hardening of the international boundary line between the United States and the Provinces of British North America. This was a time when the edge of re-settlement extended not much further west than the Allegheny Mountains and the Great Lakes basin.
Much like William Reed’s story of living on the border in northern New York, pioneers carved out a living from the wilderness in the sparsely populated border region in this corridor between Montreal and Portland. Despite the existence of a political divide between the British colonies and the United States set by treaty after the war of 1812, these pioneers were bound by deep historical ties grounded in a common heritage, the familiarity of daily lived experience, and the necessity to make a living. As demonstrated early in this chapter, this was a period where nation-states and political boundaries were still in flux and law and politics still weaker than economic and social relations. Legislative attempts to exert control over border trade for punitive or protectionist reasons (such as US President Thomas Jefferson’s embargo of 1808 aimed at curtailing trade with the British) threatened but never successfully interrupted the natural flow of people, goods, and services. The embargo was resisted by local people who depended on that cross border trade for economic survival turning formerly legal trade into illicit smuggling. As historian Little suggests, in contrast to the idea of the borderland as a region of contact or contested terrain separating two distinctly different cultures, in this northeastern border region a common culture was transected by an international boundary and then became differentiated over time.

Geography was one of a number of significant factors that bound these cross-border communities to one another by contributing to their shared sense of isolation. Until the building

of canals in 1822, primary transportation routes in the Eastern Townships of Quebec and the northern part of the State of Vermont conformed to the natural flow of rivers—south to north—a fact that, in this region, also confined the movement of goods to periods when waterways were free of ice. As one local historian, Albert Gravel, described it: «Les Cantons de l’Est sont considérés comme les marches du Canada. . . . De fait, des Etats-Unis on monte au Canada vers Montréal et Québec en passant par les Cantons de l’Est: la baie Missisquoi, le lac Memphrémagog,. . . les cantons situés aux têtes de la Connecticut formaient ces marches d’un escalier qui est naturellement dressé du sud au nord.»

In this border region of the north eastern part of the State of Vermont and the southern most counties of the Eastern Townships of Quebec, the rivers drain north through Lake Champlain and Lake Mephremagog to the St. Francis and Richelieu Rivers and out into the St. Lawrence. As Channell and Mackintosh observed in the 1890s: “the Eastern Townships is a country famous for its scenery, a country retaining its green hue until late in the autumn, a continuation northwards of that green-mountain country to which the State of Vermont owes its name.”

South of Lake Champlain all flows south to the Hudson, Batterskil and Wallomsa Rivers to Long Island Sound. The Green Mountains are to the west and to the east the Appalachian mountain range that runs along the eastern seaboard of the

---

31 Albert Gravel, *Vade-Mecum Du Sherbrookois* (Sherbrooke, Que.: unknown, 1961). 91. Translation by Christine Berkowitz: “The Eastern Townships are regarded as the steps of Canada. . . . In fact, from the United States one goes up to Canada towards Montreal and Quebec while passing by the Eastern Townships: Missisquoi Bay, Lake Memphrémagog. . . the townships located at the head of Connecticut would form these steps of a staircase which are naturally drawn up south to north.”


United States and up into the southern regions of Quebec.\textsuperscript{34} As early as the 1760s, loggers would come down from Quebec to cut the trees in the Champlain Valley and float them north.\textsuperscript{35}

In 1791 Vermont joined the Union as the fourteenth state and, at roughly the same time, Buckinghamshire, Lower Canada was subdivided into the Eastern Townships.\textsuperscript{36} Once the area was open for settlement the flow first was from southern New England to the north.\textsuperscript{37} But after 1850, the migration flow would shift to the south and west. Still motivated by the need to earn a living, migrants were drawn south by industrial wages in Vermont and other parts of New England. As improved modes of transportation and communication opened up access to the west, first to neighboring states and provinces and then on past the Mississippi, migrants followed in search of new opportunities and the promise of cheaper land.\textsuperscript{38}

The earliest settlers to the region were from southern New England moving north to what was then the border frontier driven by an ever increasing shortage of land in the south and encouraged to continue north across the border into the southern counties of the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada as part of the British North American colonial administration’s strategy to dilute the French influence in the region. The population of Vermont grew 85,539 in 1790 to 280,657 in 1830, a growth rate slightly higher than the national average for the same period.\textsuperscript{39} Growth then slowed dramatically to 12\% between the years of 1830 and 1850, the

\textsuperscript{34} Louise Brunelle-Lavoie, \textit{The Story of Sherbrooke} (Sherbrooke: Eastern Townships Historical Society, 1988). 5.
\textsuperscript{35} Klyza and Trombulak, \textit{The Story of Vermont}. 64.
\textsuperscript{36} Marcel Bellavance, \textit{A Village in Transition: Compton, Quebec, 1880-1920} (Hull, Quebec: National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Environment Canada, 1982). 8.
lowest growth rate in the nation.\textsuperscript{40} In Essex County, the northeastern corner of Vermont, the region the railroad eventually crossed, the population had grown to a mere 3,980 by 1830.\textsuperscript{41}

Of the population moving further north across the border into the southern part of Quebec known as the Eastern Townships in the 1790s, about 3,000 were Americans from Vermont, New York, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts.\textsuperscript{42} By 1829 the overall population of the Eastern Townships had grown to 42,206 residents, 62,332 by 1844 and by 1851 to 95,000, a more modest population than that of its neighbor to the south but growth continued at a significantly higher rate in the post-1830 period (52 \% compared with 12 \%).\textsuperscript{43} In contrast to the small population of Essex County in northeastern Vermont, the population of its neighboring county to the north, Stanstead, had reached 12,247 by 1830.\textsuperscript{44} In the decades of the 1840s and 1850s the percentage of the English-speaking population of American origin (either American born or Canadian born of American descent) remained at roughly 50 \%, with the concentration of that population found in the southern counties closest to the international border.\textsuperscript{45} One of those early pioneers of American origin was Richard Baldwin Sr., youngest son of Levi Baldwin originally of Connecticut. Baldwin was the first white man to set foot on what would later become the site for the village of Coaticook.

\textsuperscript{40} Census of Population and Housing, 1830 Census, Decennial Census.; United States Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1830 Census [website] (United States Census Bureau), accessed Apr 2008, Decennial Census.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 5.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 8; Gagnon, \textit{Petite Histoire Politique Des Cantons De L'Est}; Ross and Allen, \textit{A Century of Change in Selected Eastern Townships Villages}. 4-5.
Tom Baldwin, grandson of Richard Baldwin Sr., born in Coaticook in 1834, wrote about life in the early days and illustrates beautifully the social and economic ties between the Eastern Townships and New England. Tom’s grandfather came to the region in 1818 and, in partnership with Lester Cleaveland of the neighbouring township of Barnston, built a flour mill on the Coaticook River. Between 1818 and 1830 when Tom’s father, Richard Baldwin Jr., constructed the first house in Coaticook (which was then called Baldwin), local residents first eked out a living by hunting and fishing; domestic animals arrived in the 1820s followed by the development of simple vegetable gardens. As in William Reed’s story, Tom recounts how the first job of the early colonist was to clear the land or in this case fill the swamp. He describes the early colony not as a village really but a community of farmers. In order to build that first house in 1830, Tom recounts how his father, “at the age of 22, took a trip with a pair of horses through the forest Bangor (Maine) [a distance of approximately 206 miles] where he obtained work as a butcher. The following spring, he sold the horses and tackle for a sum of $400.00, and returned to his home on foot.” With that $400 and money earned in Bangor, Maine, Richard Baldwin Jr. would build the first house and later a lumber camp on the plain of the Coaticook River. Baldwin later would acquire the contract to build a section of the railroad and converted that 1830s house into a boarding house to serve the railroad workers.

Much concern was expressed both north and south of the borderline regarding the difficulties in attracting and retaining settlers in the region. Transportation was woefully inadequate isolating both northern Vermont and the southern Eastern Townships from the larger

---

48 Ibid., 50.
49 Ibid., 51.
markets to the north and south. Small local populations meant limited domestic or local markets for products. As previously mentioned, rivers in the region were only navigable during the summer months and roads were limited and poorly maintained. The first road in the Eastern Townships connecting the northern counties with the boundary line was built in 1810 for military purposes. Railroads had passed the region by to the north and south with no lines crossing through the region. As described above, the British Colonial administration was interested in promoting settlement in the region, at first to balance the French influence and then later with English settlers to balance the American influence. From the 1840s onward, however, the concern on the part of government was to stop the “bleeding” of French Canadians from Canada East into Vermont and other points in New England driven out as they were by the high land prices and drawn by the promise of wage labor in the textile mills and on railroad construction.

Growing concern on the part of residents in the Eastern Townships over economic stagnation would lead to the annexation crisis of 1849, a short-lived but emotionally and politically charged movement that demonstrated the power of economic relations over political allegiances within this cross-border region. Local business people in the Eastern Townships, many of whom originally came to southern Quebec from parts of New England, were greatly concerned about the apparent lack of political support for their economic plight. The dramatic negative impact on local trade resulting from the inability to access larger domestic markets to the north and south of the region combined with the British move to free trade which terminated

---

the privileged position of Canadian goods in British markets and the imposition of American protectionist tariffs drove the merchants and businessmen to consider proposing annexation to the United States.\textsuperscript{54}

With the union of Upper and Lower Canada in 1840 and the creation of a joint representative legislature with the power to govern the colony, the English-speaking population in the Eastern Townships began to feel their minority political position in an otherwise majority French-speaking province. While historically staunch supporters of the British, despite their American origins, and having most recently having fought in defense of the crown during the Rebellion of 1837/8\textsuperscript{55}, the introduction by the joint legislature of legislation to compensate all who had suffered property damage during the Rebellion including the Rebels themselves (providing they could prove they had not been convicted of sedition), became the last straw in a long line of economic complaints.\textsuperscript{56} A movement proposing voluntary annexation to the United States began among merchants in Montreal, but gained even greater credence in the townships closest to the border with the United States, those with the highest percentage populations of American origin.\textsuperscript{57}

The news of the developing unrest was carried in newspapers throughout the region, north and south of the border. The \textit{Portland Advertiser} was filled with articles relating to the

\textsuperscript{54} Little, \textit{Borderland Religion}. 48.
\textsuperscript{55} Dissatisfaction with a British Colonial administration that had the power to override decisions made by local elected representatives resulted in armed rebellion in both Upper and Lower Canada through 1837 and 1838. In Lower Canada the political battle was lead by the Parti Patriote under Louis Joseph Papineau, the majority party in the House Assembly for fifteen years. The Patriots took their demands for an Executive council made up of councilors who would be held accountable to the elected Legislative Assembly directly to the British Parliament along with a threat to pursue annexation to the United States should the British Government refuse. London refused and armed hostilities erupted in the summer of 1837 and would last off and on through the end of 1838. The Patriots who lost property during the rebellion and who had not been convicted of sedition that would become the controversial intended beneficiaries of the Rebellion Losses Bill, one of the provocations behind the annexation crisis of 1849.
\textsuperscript{56} Little, \textit{Borderland Religion}. 48.
\textsuperscript{57} Kesteman, \textit{Histoire De Sherbrooke}, vol. 1. p. 251.
“troubles” in Canada. This reprint from the *Montreal Courier* appeared in the 7 May 1849 issue of the *Advertiser*:

“TURN OUT! TURN OUT!—The members of the Corporation, and other inhabitants of the Town, who desire to mark their sense of indignation and abhorrence at the conduct of the Earl of Elgin, in prostituting the Queen’s name by Assenting to the *Rebel Indemnity Bill*, will assemble this evening, at half-past seven o’clock, on the Public Square of the town, in front of the Court House, in witness to Burning of His Lordship’s Effigy, and to adopt such other proceedings as may be deemed desirable.

The Warden of the District, the President of the Board of Police, and the High Constable, will see to the preservation of peace and order.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!”

Lord Elgin, the Queen’s appointed governor general of British North America and the one responsible for allowing the legislation to pass, was burned in effigy at a number of gatherings including one on May 12th in the town of Sherbrooke, located to the southeast of Montreal. Annexation was not the only solution advanced. Other proposals included the union of the Eastern Townships with Upper Canada (a population with whom they felt they shared more interests in common than with the French) or a complete regrouping of the British American colonies. With regards to the proposal of annexation, there were two possibilities: annexation to the United States as an autonomous state or as part of the state of Vermont. According to one account, on July 4th, the American national Independence Day holiday was celebrated in several places by hoisting the star-spangled banner midst salvos of rifle fire.

Dr. Moses French Colby of Stanstead was chairman of the local committee called to address the issue of annexation. A Harvard educated physician and local assemblyman, who had defeated a *Patriote* in the 1837 by-election; Colby came from Vermont to Stanstead in 1832

60 Ibid., 52.
62 Little, "The Short Life of a Local Protest Movement": 51.
to set up his medical practice. He was known for emphasizing the ‘Townships’ loyalty beginning with 1812 and the fact that it was the population of American origin that had responded to government call for support in 1837 and 38. In justifying local support for the British government during the Rebellion Colby said,“. . .because we saw no reason for revolt, and having been born freemen, we saw no freedom in the liberty offered us—the liberty of the serf; we saw in the continuance of the Seignorial system and the French law, an obstacle more damning to the future prosperity of Lower Canada, than the everlasting snows of the almost perpetual icy bridge of the St. Lawrence.”

With regards to enduring the Rebellion Losses bill as an “act of an ungrateful government” and the possibility of annexation as emancipation, Colby is said to have remarked:

We see in these acts the expiring blaze of hope in all that concerns the Anglo-Saxon race in this section of the Province. . .amid this dark gloom of coming events, we have yet a gleam of hope, [that] by petition we may receive emancipation by annexation, and share in the prosperity which [the United States] Government has shed upon Louisiana.

In October 1849 an annexation manifesto and petition was published signed by 1,500 Montreal businessmen and merchants. A further petition and request for opinion directed to their local Member of Provinical Parliament, Alexander Galt, was published in the Sherbrooke Gazette and Eastern Township’s Advertiser, in November, signed by 1,213 “Electors and Inhabitants of the County of Sherbrooke”—a significant number as the total population for the region was only 16,000. As the petition would declare: “a peaceable separation of the Province from Great Britain, and a union with the United States, would best promote the prosperity and develop the resources of Canada.”

---

63 Little, "The Short Life of a Local Protest Movement": 51.  
64 Ibid.  
66 Little, "The Short Life of a Local Protest Movement": 56
Despite the political turbulence, 1849 also signaled a new era of social and economic promise and the opening of the railway age in Canada with the signing of the Guarantee Act. The Act provided a provincial guarantee for investors of a return of “six percent interest per year on the bonds of any railway at least 120 kilometres long and half completed.”

68 Ibid., 63.

70 Little, "The Short Life of a Local Protest Movement": 65.
71 Ibid., 66.
72 Ibid.

Thus the promise of economic prosperity anticipated with the completion of a direct rail line between Montreal and either Boston or Portland brought an end to the call for annexation. The charter for such a line to be built on the Canadian side of the border had been acquired in 1845 and construction had progressed quickly from Montreal east to St. Hyacinthe by December 1848. Merchants based their optimism on increased exports already being realized via Vermont’s Passumpic Railway, with connections to Boston, even though it had been completed only as far north as St. Johnsbury, Vermont. According to a report in the Stanstead Journal in the winter of 1850, despite customs duties and a forty-seven mile haul to St. Johnsbury, local merchants were sending oats to Boston. “Bring about the connection of roads which we have been advocating, and every bushel of grain, every pound of beef, pork, butter, cheese, lard, etc., etc., which this country produces, could be sold for cash here.”

71 Reports from local Boston markets for 1850 documented that a significant percentage of their livestock sales came from Canadian cattle and horses. The virtual unanimous consent to the passing of the Act signaled more than the simple political recognition of the importance of rail transportation to the economic viability of the
Province. It also signalled that the generally held belief in railway technology as the engine of progress and prosperity was sufficiently powerful to transcend political and cultural divisions.\footnote{The measure was approved by a vote of sixty-two to four: den Otter, \textit{The Philosophy of Railways}. 32-33.}

Although short-lived and limited in its scope and impact, the annexation crisis of 1849 is an excellent example of the deep historic ties and interconnectedness of this region, the tenuousness of the connection between the primarily English-speaking Eastern Townships and French-speaking Lower Canada, and the need to make a living which drove many of the residents in the Eastern Townships to consider cross-border relations over national political affiliations. As Little suggests, the border meant little to those with personal or business ties in New England.\footnote{Little, \textit{Borderland Religion}. 284.}

Unlike the story of “civilizing” the west where “waves of immigration” followed the railroad, the revolution in transportation along the north eastern corridor between Montreal and Portland served to link existing market towns rather than generate totally new settlement. The decision regarding the route of the railroad would therefore have significant negative implications for those towns ultimately bypassed. There were in fact three proposed routes: 1) Montreal to Chambly and then to Portland; 2) Montreal, Belouil, St. Hyacinthe, Roxton, Compton, Stanstead and then to Portland, crossing the border at Stanstead, Quebec and Derby, Vermont; 3) Montreal, St. Hyacinthe, Richmond, Sherbrooke and then to Portland, crossing the border at a point between Coaticook, Quebec and Brighton, Vermont.\footnote{Gravel, "Avenement des chemins de fer dans les Townships". 11.} The competition was intense.

\footnote{...}
Concerned residents in counties north and south of the border mobilized in support of their communities.\(^7^6\) The residents of Stanstead County appear to have been the most vocal about their concerns with over 1,000 people turning out to meetings.\(^7^7\) In a joint meeting with residents of Orleans County, Vermont, they agreed to appoint and send delegates to press their case in Portland “and other places if advisable.” They argued that compared with the country to be traversed by the route through or to the east of Coaticook, their region was more densely populated, more favorable to agriculture, richer in resources on both sides of the border and offered connections to existing rail roads in Vermont. As such they believed that the Stanstead route would secure “ten-fold more way business” than the Coaticook route, which they argued would depend primarily on through business for its revenue.\(^7^8\) The opposition saw it otherwise. Kesteman argues that it was in the interests of the British North American Land Company and its representative Alexander T. Galt (resident of Sherbrooke, Member of Provincial Parliament and future director of the Grand Trunk) to have the road run through the less densely settled region thereby increasing settlement and land values.\(^7^9\) In the end the Board of Directors of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railway made the decision in favor of the route through Coaticook.

As the dust settled around the battle over the route and local attention was redirected to raising capital and construction, those who found themselves in towns located along the line were looking forward to the promise of prosperity that the railroad would bring. The editor of the *Stanstead Journal*, in a piece that appeared on 20 September 1849, in the midst of the annexation crisis, predicted that the “long and sober faces of the honest yeomanry” would relax

\(^7^7\) *Sherbrooke Gazette & Eastern Townships Advertiser*, col. 1, p. 3.  
\(^7^9\) Kesteman, *Histoire De Sherbrooke*, vol. 1, p. 154.
“into a cheerful smile in anticipation of the ‘good time coming’” and with “our Townships filled with an industrious, thriving and happy people” there would no longer be “occasion to look Southward with an envious or longing eye.”

As hoped, the railroad did integrate the local economy into broader regional, national and international markets. Land values along the line increased significantly. In anticipation of the railroad, the total value of farms in Vermont in 1850 increased by one third. Transportation costs were cut in half and stimulated industries and commercial farming that directly benefitted from the faster rates of travel and the ability to transport heavy goods—dairy, lumber and quarry industries. As a Richmond, Quebec shopkeeper declared in his 1851 advertisement in the Sherbrooke Gazette & Eastern Township Advertiser, a new era had come to the Eastern Townships, goods could be bought as cheaply in Richmond as in Montreal. But it would also bring with it increased competition with the growing trade in produce and products from the west that would have a distinctly negative effect on subsistence farms and those towns not on the railroad line.

THE SOUTHWEST

Thirty years would pass between the opening of the Grand Trunk Railroad in the northeast (1853) and the driving of the last spike on the Sonora System of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway in the southwest (1882). Cyrus K. Holliday, founder of the Atchison,
Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad would make bold statements about his transcontinental ambitions for the Santa Fe in 1869. "Fellow citizens," he said, "the coming tide of immigration will flow along these lines and, like an ocean wave, advance up the sides of the Rockies and dash their foamy crests down upon the Pacific. . .See there rolls the broad Pacific and on its breast are the ships of the Santa Fe riding in from the Orient." In resounding disbelief, for their journey that morning had been all of seven miles from beginning to end, a member of the picnicking crowd cried out: "Oh, kind Lord, give us rest!"85

When the day finally arrived for the last spike ceremony that would join Guaymas, Mexico with Benson, Arizona, all was in readiness. Excursion trains would bring visiting dignitaries from Arizona and Sonora to their shared border to witness what contemporary observers saw as, “an event of national importance” and the “dawn of a new epoch.”86 Agnes Morley, daughter of William Morley, Chief Engineer of the Sonora Railway, described the meeting of two locomotives meeting in “open country”—one “festooned from coalbin to mushroom smokestack with red, white and blue bunting,” the “also bunting-draped, but the colors are red, white, and green—the national colors of Old Mexico.” The last spike was driven by Mrs. Morley with “one lady-like blow” and as the cowcatchers of the two locomotives ceremoniously come together “a great shout goes up.”87 Despite the image of the ‘joining of two nations’, the border separating Sonora and Arizona was an invisible line that did little to divide what was to a great extent one culturally and economically integrated corridor extending from the port of Guaymas to Tucson.

Although mentioned in greater detail earlier in the chapter, it may be helpful to engage in a brief reminder of the major political changes that took place on the continent in the intervening years. The Union prevailed over the Confederacy in the American Civil War and with the cessation of hostilities came a burst in the expansion of the railroad network in the United States, one that produced what has been called a truly ‘national’ network but in fact, as the Grand Trunk has shown, was an emerging continental network. Following Canadian Confederation in 1867 the Hudson’s Bay Company ceded its lands to Canada thus closing the Canadian west to American expansion. The province of Manitoba was formed in 1870 and the promise of a transcontinental railway would prompt British Columbia to join Confederation in the same year.

In Mexico, also in 1867, the Republic had been restored and the liberal government of Benito Juarez re-established. By 1877, Mexico was under the administration of Porfirio Diaz heralding a period of unprecedented foreign investment and development. The period of resettlement on the continent was passing quickly as settlers, commerce and industry occupied points further and further west. By the end of the nineteenth century those that remained interested in expansion through territorial acquisition were forced to look outside the continent. This was for some the period that would bring “continental union through commercial means,” rather than conquest.

As historian Shelton Stromquist effectively demonstrated, settlement followed the rails in the western regions of the United States. The life and death of existing towns rested on the decisions relating to the final location of the lines. Where there were no pre-existing settlements land speculators, settlers, tradesmen and small business operators, hoping to cash in on the

---

prosperity associated with the railroad, contributed to the development of “magic cities” that popped up along the designated route to service the railroad operations.\textsuperscript{91} In the region crossed by the ATSF Sonora System, the evidence suggests in some respects the same is true, the anticipation of railroad construction brought land speculators and enterprising merchants and the fortunes of towns were won and lost as railroad officials determined the route the lines would take. However the “wave of immigrants” that Holliday spoke of in 1869 followed the rails into the northern portion of Arizona but not into Sonora.\textsuperscript{92} Settlement and development patterns in the southwest resemble more the pattern of the northeastern corridor where the railroad linked existing market towns and facilitated considerable internal and outward migration but in this case from south to north.

In the first decades following the Gadsden Purchase in 1853, the Sonoran population north of the border remained the predominant population in the region while Anglo settlers and miners slowly trickled in. Isolated as they were from their respective nations and with historic cultural ties, the two states were economically interdependent.\textsuperscript{93} As Thomas Sheridan, in his social history of Tucson, argues: “Between 1860 and the arrival in Arizona of the Southern

\begin{footnotes}
\end{footnotes}
Pacific Railroad in 1880, Tucson was neither Sonoran nor territorial but a combination of both."^{94}

Before the railroad, the focus was not on the border but on the port of Guaymas as the shortest and most economic route for the passage of goods to Tucson and points along the way. The port of Guaymas, 350 miles from Tucson, provided access to goods transported by sea from Pacific and Atlantic ports at greater speed and cheaper rates than the 500 mile overland routes from San Diego, the 240 miles west to navigable waterways at Yuma, or the 300 miles to Santa Fe in New Mexico.^{95} Under Mexican law, goods traveling through Guaymas to Arizona destinations passed duty free.^{96} Comparative shipping rates, reported in the *Weekly Arizonan* in

---

^{95} Henry Pickering Walker, "Freighting From Guaymas to Tucson," *Western Historical Quarterly* 1, no. 3 (70): 291.
^{96} Ibid., 294.
1871, effectively demonstrate the savings. Freight to Tucson from San Francisco via Guaymas was carried at five cents per pound compared with fourteen cents per pound via San Diego. Shipping ore from Tucson via Guaymas was at a rate of twenty-five dollars a ton while the same shipment through Yuma at two hundred dollars a ton. Remarking that “a hundred days” had passed since goods had arrived at the terminus of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe rail line in New Mexico but had not yet appeared in Tucson, the Tucson Arizona Daily Citizen, 10 March 1879, claimed there was an “old adage that the longest way round is the surest way to Tuscon.”

Goods traveled overland by oxen and mule train from Guaymas through to Arizona duty free and at one third to one quarter of the cost to ship overland from within the United States. Given that all goods, including the most basic food stuffs, had to be imported and came overland by oxen or mule, long-distance freighting was an excellent way to make a living. According to Thomas Sheridan, “anyone with a wagon and a string of animals could become a freighter, “and many did, including some whom became leading merchants and residents of Tucson.

These wagons were no small affair with beds sixteen feet by four feet, wooden sides six feet high rising up off of axles at the center of wheels measuring seven feet in diameter and designed to carry up to 12,500 pounds hauled by as many as thirty-six mules. An announcement in the Tucson Arizona Daily Citizen provides a powerful visual image: “Our streets presented quite a Broadway appearance yesterday. Meyers & Bowley and Capt. Jenks each brought in heavy loads of freight. Lord & Williams received a large invoice, and Congress Street, is blocked half way across with boxes, bales, etc. More goods came in later and several loads have been shipped

---

97 Quoted in: Henry Pickering Walker, "Freighting From Guaymas to Tucson," 299.
98 Henry Pickering Walker, "Freighting From Guaymas to Tucson," 299.
100 Walker, Henry Pickering, "Freighting From Guaymas to Tucson," 294, 299.
102 Ibid., 105.
out today.” The notice goes on to report that Meyers & Bowley brought in 69,000 pounds of freight and Jenks 14,000. As late as 1875, troops destined for Arizona still landed at Guaymas. The notice goes on to report that Meyers & Bowley brought in 69,000 pounds of freight and Jenks 14,000. As late as 1875, troops destined for Arizona still landed at Guaymas.

Guaymas was the “door to the world,” the “epicenter” of this commercial network. The City of Hermosillo, both the center for government for the State of Sonora and roughly at the geographic center of the state, provided warehousing and distribution to smaller regional outlets. Magdalena, to the north, was the last major distribution center just over 50 miles from the American territory and the home of the Mexican customs house or aduana. Located ten miles north of the US/Mexico border, the home of the US Customs house and the last settlement before the border on the American side, was the town of Calabasas. Founded in 1756, by 1870 Calabasas was home to sixty-two residents, the large majority of whom were male, farm laborers and born in Sonora, Mexico. The village of Tubac, situated between Calabasas and Tucson, had a population of 178 individuals, with a similar profile to Calabasas. The town of Tucson, in 1860, had a total population of 925 individuals of which the majority was Mexican. By 1880, while the population of Tucson had grown dramatically, from just under 1,000 to over 6,000, the Mexican population was still more twice the size of the Anglo population. Prior to the 1880s, there were no permanent settlements, Mexican or American, on the border.

103 Tucson Arizona Daily Citizen, col. 2 p. 3.
105 Miguel Tinker Salas, In the Shadow of TheEagles: Sonora and the Transformation of the Border During the Porfiriato (Berkely and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1997), 41, 44.
106 Ibid., 41, 44.
107 Ibid., 22, 41, 85.
109 Ibid.
Descriptions of settlement patterns within the region during this period are strikingly similar north and south of the border. Sonora is described as “a close-knit population in well established urban areas” but, much like northern Vermont and the Eastern Townships of Quebec, with the absence of reliable transportation and communications linkages these communities were isolated from each other and also from the rest of the nation.\textsuperscript{112} The Arizona Territory was described as “a handful of Anglo islands in a native American sea” dependent on Mexican merchants to the south for business and goods and isolated from the rest of the United States.\textsuperscript{113} Again, much like the northeast in its earlier settlement period, the isolation of the region and the harsh conditions significantly retarded the flood of immigrants and Anglo settlers into the region. Prior to the 1880s and the coming of the railroad, Arizona was the receiving society and Sonora the supplier of both goods and people.\textsuperscript{114}

In this environment then, Spanish was the lengua franca, the pesos or ‘dobe’ dollar was the accepted currency and adobe the most common building material. Mexican and American elites socialized and adapted cultural practices.\textsuperscript{115} Both Sonorans and Anglos participated in cultural and national celebrations held on both sides of the border.\textsuperscript{116} Inter-ethnic marriages were not uncommon events in either elite or the lower classes. In the case of the families of the middle and upper class such marriages cemented connections between prominent families and facilitated economic and political connections. For those of the working class, the most obvious

\textsuperscript{112} Carr, \textit{The Peculiarities of the Mexican North}. 2, 5; Ruiz, \textit{The People of Sonora and Yankee Capitalists}. 8, 184; Tinker Salas, \textit{In the Shadow of TheEagles}. 9, 17, 35.
\textsuperscript{113} Sheridan, \textit{Arizona}. 122.
\textsuperscript{114} Tinker Salas, \textit{In the Shadow of TheEagles}. 6, 82, 84; Sheridan, \textit{Los Tucsonenses}. 6, 30-3; Sheridan, \textit{Arizona}. 109-10.
\textsuperscript{115} Tinker Salas, \textit{In the Shadow of TheEagles}. 6; Sheridan, \textit{Arizona}. 109-10, 122.
explanation may be the correct one, a simple absence of available Anglo brides in an isolated predominantly male community.\(^\text{117}\)

Historian Thomas Sheridan argues that this interdependent relationship combined with the persistence of a Spanish-speaking majority did not produce the asymmetrical development experienced in other border regions in the southwest.\(^\text{118}\) This is not to suggest that racial, ethnic or class tensions did not exist in this region, but rather, not to the extent that they did in areas where the dramatic influx of foreign immigrant and Anglo settlers greatly outnumbered the Spanish-speaking population, a condition that would not develop in this region until after the completion of the railroad, from the early 1880s on.\(^\text{119}\) Sonorans were justifiably suspicious of American intentions as they began to settle the Arizona territory. The northern half of the state had been annexed to the United States in the Gadsden Purchase. They had experienced the filibustering expeditions of Boulbon and Crabb. Concern grew with the establishment of military outposts along the southern part of the territory. While the elite on both sides of the border stood to benefit from the interdependent relationship, dependence upon cheap and abundant labor required the subordination of Mexican and indigenous laborers on both sides of the border.\(^\text{120}\) Anti-American sentiment would grow with the increased American influence that was to come with the railroad and the bicultural society would become more and more compartmentalized along lines of race, ethnicity and class.\(^\text{121}\)

Animosity towards the railroad would come as it had in similar circumstances earlier in the north east, as Sonoran towns that found themselves at a distance from the designated route

---

\(^{118}\) Sheridan, *Los Tucsonenses*. 30-3.  
\(^{119}\) Ibid., 56.  
\(^{121}\) Ruiz, *The People of Sonora and Yankee Capitalists*. 6.
began to fear for their survival.\textsuperscript{122} Even members of the business community in Guaymas, who were at first delighted with the promise of prosperity that the railroad would bring, soon began to show concern when Empalme, a location outside of the crowded port city, was chosen by the railroad as the site for its shops and operations.\textsuperscript{123} Understandably they feared that Empalme with its own port facilities would draw important commercial opportunities away from Guaymas. An article that appeared in \textit{La Reconstrucción}, a Hermosillo newspaper, in 1877, just one year before Chief Engineer William Morely began the survey that would determine the route the railroad would take, provided testimony to the beginning of the shift in commercial focus from Guaymas to Tucson: “Tucson is where the residents of our border districts of Altar, Arizpe and Magdalena purchase the products that they need. The impact of this trade is felt in Hermosillo and in the port of Guaymas, because it has been a long time since the residents of the North have come here to shop. Even the campesinos of those districts save their earnings and go to the American border to buy what they need for their families without having to pay duties.”\textsuperscript{124} Local Sonoran businessmen had begun to move their operations from Guaymas to Hermosillo and from Hermosillo to Magdalena as the planning for the railroad route progressed.\textsuperscript{125}

Development north of the international boundary line began in Calabasas, with the building of the Santa Rita Hotel in anticipation of large numbers of travelers needing food and accommodation. José Camou, a businessman from Hermosillo, acquired Ranchos Los Nogales in 1871, a hacienda that had been part of an 1841 land grant and that now straddled the Arizona/Sonora border.\textsuperscript{126} In 1880 Jacob Isaacson operated a small general store and post office

\textsuperscript{122} Ruiz, \textit{The People of Sonora and Yankee Capitalists}. 20.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 19; F. Van Note, Brief Outline of the More Important Current Affairs of the Southern Pacific Railroad Company of Mexico, File No. 310-973, Part 8, From Jan. 1, 1932 to Dec. 31, 1932, Box 10, Sud Pacifico De Mexico Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino CA, [hereinafter cited as SPdeM, HL].
\textsuperscript{124} Reprinted in: Tinker Salas, \textit{In the Shadow of TheEagles}. 120.
\textsuperscript{125} Ruiz, \textit{The People of Sonora and Yankee Capitalists}. 17-20; Tinker Salas, \textit{In the Shadow of TheEagles}. 2.
\textsuperscript{126} Tinker Salas, \textit{In the Shadow of TheEagles}, 150.
on the Arizona side; José Juan Vásquez had a store and boarding house on the Sonora side; the Mexican government established the customs house under a tattered tent on the Sonora side; and, John Brickwood owned a saloon that straddled the border where customers would shift from side to side opportunistically avoiding various prohibitions. An article that appeared in the Tucson Arizona Daily Citizen in the days before the last spike ceremony was to take place tells us that: “The town [Nogales] numbers about one hundred and fifty people, sixty of whom are permanent residents. It has two stores, ten saloons and is regarded as one of the cities of the future.”

Historian Thomas Sheridan noted the symbolic end of an era when, in November 1880, a Southern Pacific locomotive ploughed into two of Tully, Ochoa & Company’s freight wagons just outside of Tucson, smashed the vehicles and killed their mules. The social, economic and political orientation of the region had shifted north towards the border from the Pacific coast at Guaymas, Mexico to Tucson, Arizona. The demographics of the region north of the border would change as the Spanish-speaking majority was slowly replaced by the influx of Euro-American migrants and other immigrant groups facilitated by the railroad. In the absence of available low cost land, the wave of settlers anticipated to follow the railroad into northern Mexico did not materialize. Towns not on the rail line were left to stagnate while boom towns created around railroad depots appeared over night. This uneven distribution of economic prosperity driven by foreign interests produced a growing anti-American sentiment south of the

---

127 Tinker Salas, In the Shadow of The Eagles, 151, 156.
130 I have borrowed the term “Euro-American” from historian Rodolfo F. Acuña to replace “American” as I feel it more accurately describes the non-Spanish-speaking migrants/immigrants arriving in the southwest corridor while acknowledging the presence of Spanish-speaking Americans in Arizona: Rodolfo Acuña, Corridors of Migration: the Odyssey of Mexican Laborers, 1600-1933 (Tucson : University of Arizona Press, 2007).
border. To paraphrase from our poet S.W. Foss, “the lightning driven present” had done more than simply frown it had indeed smashed “the slow old past.”

CONCLUSION

Despite a separation in time of three decades, these two narratives are strikingly similar in a number of ways, not the least of which is the absence of characteristics of a particularly national nature. Both cases demonstrate deep historic ties derived from early settlement and trading patterns that preserved cross-border familial and economic connections that proved in some instances to be stronger than the political ties of the period. Both corridors were isolated from their respective nations by harsh conditions and inadequate transportation which presented significant barriers to population growth and created greater economic interdependence. In each case, the impetus behind the development of the railroad came from outside the corridor but held considerable local support and involved a scheme to provide access to ocean trade that could not otherwise be accomplished, whether for reasons of competition or natural barriers, by direct routes through the country of origin. And finally, as we will see more clearly in the next chapter, the advent of the railroad would dramatically alter these interdependent regional relationships, connecting the once isolated local markets to larger domestic and international markets; reorienting the direction of trade; securing, with the determination of the route to be taken by the rail line, the imminent demise or future success of existing towns; and stimulating population growth. In fact, when considered from a continental rather than national perspective, these stories of early border re-settlement and development share many more commonalities than differences and the sense of interconnectedness begins to unfold.

The old turnpike is a pike no more,
Wide open stands the gate;
We have made us a road for our horse to stride,
   Which we ride at a flying rate;
We have filled the valleys and leveled the hills,
   And tunneled the mountain side;
And round the rough crag’s dizzy verge
   Fearlessly we ride!

   .........................

On—on—on—with a haughty front!
   A puff, a shriek, and a bound;
While the tardy echoes wake too late,
   To babble back the sound;
And the old pike road is left along,
   And the staggers seek the plough;
We have circled the earth with an iron rail,
   And the steam-king rules us now!  

---

Chapter 2:

From Isolation to Integration:
“Is This the Railroad Line that Leads to Happiness?”

As has already been established in the previous chapter, people, goods and services had been moving back and forth across these international boundary lines for some time. In the words of historian John Brebner, North America was “a continent where international boundaries [had] been disregarded by restless humans for almost two centuries.” Brebner was referring primarily to the movement of people across the border between Canada and the United States but acknowledged that the “mingling” of peoples was a continental phenomenon, equally prevalent along the border shared by the United States and Mexico. There were no natural boundaries—mountain ranges, rivers—separating Vermont from Quebec or Arizona from Sonora. Until the advent of the railroad, there were no permanent settlements at the point of border crossings. In fact, it was extremely difficult to determine the actual location of the political dividing line that appeared on maps but not on the ground. In the northeast the border region was heavily forested and in the southwest the border crossing was described as “open country.” So ‘open’ in fact that in the spring of 1890, Delos H. Smith, United States Consul at Nogales, Sonora, lamented that the border markers were so far apart that it was becoming extremely difficult if not impossible to manage the rapidly increasing cross border flow of settlers, grazing cattle and smugglers.

---

1 Taken from: S. W. Foss, “The Ox Team,” Benson (Arizona) Oasis, 23 July 1893, col. 1, p. 3.
4 Delos H. Smith to the Department of State, 25 April 1890, No. 34, re: placement of boundary markers, RG 59, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Nogales, 1889-1906, M283 Roll #1 July 5, 1889-Feb 28, 1893, Records of the Department of State, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC. [hereinafter cited as Records of the Department of States, NARA].
It was geography that played a determining role in the early social and economic integration of these isolated cross border corridors—natural waterways as transportation routes flowing north across the border from Vermont into Quebec and the St. Lawrence basin; mountain ranges and difficult terrain that impeded overland travel and made the shortest route for the transportation of goods and people by sea to the port at Guaymas and then north through Sonora Mexico to Arizona. Mechanical transportation in the form of the steam locomotive and the railroad made it possible to overcome these geographical barriers to transportation by, in the words of the poet, filling in the valleys, leveling the hills, tunneling through mountain sides and performing this great feat at dizzying speed, in effect “annihilat[ing] time and space.”\(^5\) How did the introduction of this mode of transportation change the social and economic relations in these two cross-border corridors? Were these the rail lines that would lead to happiness?

This chapter will examine the changing social and economic relations in the two corridors in the decades immediately following the completion of construction: in the northeast, the 1850s through the 1870s, and in the southwest, the 1880s through 1900. An examination of census manuscripts, government reports, newspaper accounts and corporate records reveals, that while being situated along the rail line ensured survival of towns and villages, whether in the northeast or the southwest, it did not guarantee growth and prosperity. For single industry railroad towns the dramatic initial growth generated to support the railroad operations—population growth associated with expansion of agriculture and services needed to support the railroad operations as well as railroad labor force—would quickly level off and ultimately stagnate for lack of other economic drivers. For existing market towns with a diversified economy based on small and emergent industry already making a successful transition to commercial agriculture, the

connection to new and larger markets produced the much hoped for growth and prosperity. The advent of the railroad would dramatically alter the interdependent regional relationships within these cross-border corridors, connecting the once isolated local markets to larger domestic and international markets and in so doing reorienting the direction of trade and securing the future success or imminent demise of cities, towns and villages along these cross-border corridors. The economic benefits associated with faster, more reliable transportation were not distributed equally from one end to the other across the corridors.

THE NORTHEASTERN CORRIDOR

The coming of the railroad significantly altered the social, political and economic orientation of the northeastern cross-border corridor, with terminus in the north at Montreal, Quebec and on the Atlantic coast at Portland, Maine. Advances in transportation and communication linked this once isolated region economically to wider domestic and international markets with both positive and negative effect. The increased speed of rail transportation reduced costs and stimulated the lumber and dairy industries almost immediately. Industrial and commercial agricultural development was encouraged, and land values and population centers along the line increased dramatically. Existing market towns fortunate to be located along the rail line would benefit from access to wider markets, while others reliant solely on agriculture would suffer or be forced to adapt to the increased competition from cheaper western products. The border itself

---

remained secondary to economic interests. Access to faster more efficient transportation also increased mobility facilitating out migration from the region to the south and west. For some the rail line did lead to happiness, but the promise of prosperity was not the reality for all within this cross-border corridor.

Competition came not only from the introduction of cheaper western produce outside the region but from producers within the corridor. For farmers in Vermont competition came from producers in the Eastern Townships to the north. Edwin Vaughan, US Consul stationed in Coaticook, Quebec, reporting in 1873 made reference to the ability of “local” [Coaticook] farmers to compete in “our” [United States] markets. Under pressure from western competition, sheep farming, or what one historian has referred to as “sheep mania,” in Vermont was replaced by dairy farming. The perishable products of dairy farming—butter, milk—were immune to western competition and bolstered the local economy. The region led the nation in butter production, with almost equal production in creameries and in homes. In this case, proximity to the rail line provided a regional market advantage for access to the growing population centers in Montreal, Boston and Portland. Demand for perishable dairy products remained high until the turn of the century when the improvement in refrigeration technology reintroduced competition from distant markets.

Development in the Eastern Townships shared many of the same negative factors facing the residents of Vermont but differed in terms of increased industrial development. The small scale industry driven by water power—saw mills, flour mills, woolen mills and weavers—and present

---

7 Edwin Vaughan to the Assistant Secretary of State, 24 October 1873, No. 87, re: Canadian exports to the United States. RG 59, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Coaticook, 1864-1906, Vol 1 12/21/64 to 9/30/82 T550 #1 Call No. 10-63, Records of the Department of State, NARA.
8 Klyza and Trombulak, The Story of Vermont. 72-3.
9 Ibid., 90.
10 Ibid.
in the local economy north of the border benefitted directly from the access to larger markets made possible by railroad development. US Consul Vaughan noted in 1878 a rapid growth in the population of this southern region of the Eastern Townships and a corresponding growth in the manufacture of wood, woolens, and iron in Coaticook and Sherbrooke, both communities on the GTR line between Montreal and Portland.\(^\text{11}\) The advent of the railroad and resulting integration into wider markets increased demand for local production which in turn created a demand for labor and an increased growth in agriculture to meet the needs of the growing population.

The railroad altered re-settlement patterns north and south of the border both directly and indirectly. Improved access to transportation drew laborers from rural regions to small urban centres along the rail line. Population increased dramatically for towns within about five miles either side of the route.\(^\text{12}\) Those outside this five mile limit attempted to connect with the line by shifting their town centers further downhill or relocating altogether.\(^\text{13}\) The construction of a rail line over the rugged, mountainous landscape of northeastern Vermont forced the railroad to favor valley over hill towns. In a struggle for survival, some even relocated their town centers further downhill or to other locations.\(^\text{14}\) Hill farms became untenable due to their distance from the new rail connections, harsh climate, poor soil and declining wool prices. Heavy losses of life during the Civil War and the reality that many that served settled elsewhere rather than return to Vermont, created a farm labor shortage that added to the pressure on small land holders.\(^\text{15}\) In some instances these properties were taken over by incoming French Canadian or Irish workers.

\(^{11}\) Edwin Vaughan to the Department of State, 27 December 1878, re: report on regional growth and local exports, RG 59, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Coaticook, 1864-1906, Vol 1 12/21/64 to 9/30/82 T550 #1 Call No. 10-63, Records of the Department of State, NARA.


\(^{13}\) Ibid., 85.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., 76, 85.

\(^{15}\) Ibid., 76-7.
who had participated in the building of the railroad and chose to remain.\textsuperscript{16} For those unable to survive the negative economic impact of the railroad, increased mobility and communication would facilitate migration west.\textsuperscript{17}

As in northern Vermont, the railroad altered town site development patterns within the Eastern Townships. With the opening of the GTR in 1853, industrial development and population growth in Coaticook was stimulated but its neighbor Barnston, just five miles to the east, suffered.\textsuperscript{18} The railroad benefited those seeking work in these developing industrial centers but did not provide transportation to rural jobs.\textsuperscript{19} As it did in northern Vermont, rail transportation also facilitated out migration from the border region of the Eastern Townships to urban centers and the west and in-migration from the north and east.

A picture of the influence of railroad development on the corridor in terms of population movements begins to unfold when the local specifics at county and town levels are compared with regional aggregate data. According to the US census, the demographics of the state of Vermont did not undergo dramatic shifts in composition in the decades after the opening of the railroad. The vast majority of residents of the State of Vermont were native born, born in the State or migrated from states in the northeast region (New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York).\textsuperscript{20} Only 11\% of the population in 1850 was foreign born and of that percentage the two most significant groups were those that had migrated from British America (48\% of the foreign

\begin{flushleft}
\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 247.
\textsuperscript{18} Ross, W. Gillies and J. E Allen, \textit{A Century of Change in Selected Eastern Townships Villages: Barnston, Hatley, Huntingville, Massawippi} (Lennoxville, Que.: Bishop's University, 1968), 20.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 19.
\end{flushleft}
born population) and the Irish (41%). The population of the state grew only slightly more than one half of one percent between 1850 and 1860 and the incidence of native and foreign born remained roughly the same. By 1860 the affects of out-migration could be measured—42% of those born in Vermont were living somewhere else in the United States, representing the highest percentage of any state. By 1870 the population of the state had grown by 5% and the incidence overall of foreign born residents had increased at the same rate. The percentage of immigrants from British North America, however, had increased 8% while that from Ireland had dropped 14%, the latter change possibly reflecting a slowing in railroad and canal construction. Keeping in mind that the relative percentage of foreign to native born was very low, by 1900 there were twice as many French Canadians as Irish immigrants in Vermont and the number of Irish immigrants was steadily declining.

Although the foreign born population in Vermont never accounted for more than 15% of the total, the influx of individuals that appeared to be resistant to assimilation—spoke a different language, established their own community institutions and maintained significant cross-border ties—was significant enough in some instances to provoke a nativist reaction. As one Vermonter commenting on the size of immigrant families remarked, “they’ll vote us out of the town as soon as those children grow up.” As evidence of the changing direction of the flow of

---

22 The Eighth Census of the United States 1860, Decennial Census.
23 Klyza and Trombulak, The Story of Vermont. 76.
25 The Ninth Census of the United States 1870, Decennial Census.
26 Fisher, Vermont Tradition. 309.
28 Fisher, Vermont Tradition. 293.
migration from Quebec to New England as opposed to the New England to Quebec in the decades before the railroad began operations, the 24 June 1874 St. Jean-Baptiste Day celebration in Montreal attracted 18,000 Canadians that had emigrated to Vermont including delegates from Montpelier, Middlebury, Rutland, St. Johnsbury, St. Albans, Burlington, and Winooski.29

While the numbers at the state level indicate the shift in migration flow from north to south, the picture is much more dramatic in the counties divided by the international boundary line—Stanstead County in Quebec and Essex County in Vermont. By the 1850s the flow of British and American immigration into this cross-border region had virtually halted. By 1863, one in five residents in Stanstead County was of American origin compared with the earlier one in two.30 Out-migration, primarily to the cities and western territories from the Eastern Townships was replaced by French Canadians from other points in Canada East and in Vermont by French Canadians, Irish immigrants arriving through Canada, and Irish and Italian immigrants arriving from New York who came to work on the railroads and in the factories.31 The wholesale replacement, in some instances, of the English-speaking populations in the Eastern Townships by French-speaking peoples was dramatic. By 1876 there were only two counties in the border region of the Eastern Townships of Quebec that could elect a political candidate without the support of the French Catholic vote.32

In 1850 the total population for Essex County, Vermont, linked with Stanstead, Quebec to the north across the international boundary by rail, was 4,650.33 While the population of the

30 Ross and Allen, A Century of Change in Selected Eastern Townships Villages. 4.
33 The Seventh Census of the United States 1850, Decennial Census.
state had experienced almost no growth over the ten year period between 1850 and 1860, the total population of Essex County had grown to 5,786 or approximately 24%.\textsuperscript{34} Despite the dramatic difference in growth rates the percentage of native and foreign born residents in the county was consistent with that of the state overall, roughly 90% and 10% respectively.\textsuperscript{35} By 1870, however, the population of Essex County had grown to 6,811 with a foreign born population of just under 1,400 individuals or just over 20% of the total population, 5% higher than the percentage of foreign born in the state overall.\textsuperscript{36} Unfortunately data is not available at this time to identify the source of this growth in the foreign born population, however, the Town of Brighton experienced a comparable growth pattern over the same period and in that instance the increase reflected an increase in the number of Canadian (formerly referred to as British North American) and Irish immigrants and by extension to employment on the railroad.\textsuperscript{37}

Railroad construction and maintenance along with an emerging industrial base in turn created a demand for labor. This expanded workforce was predominantly Irish and French Canadian coming to work as unskilled laborers, the largest percentage seeking work in the factories and mills and others as domestics or servants.\textsuperscript{38} In the 1840s through the 1870s Irish and French Canadian workers were recruited through Canada to work on the railroads.\textsuperscript{39} By the 1890s Irish workers were being recruited into the region from New York.\textsuperscript{40} When the work was completed many moved on with the contractor to new construction projects but many stayed with their families occupying the small farms being vacated by the English-speaking populations

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{34} The Eighth Census of the United States 1860, Decennial Census.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} The Ninth Census of the United States 1870, Decennial Census.
\textsuperscript{37} United States Census Bureau, 1850 United States Federal Population Census. (1850) M432 Roll #932, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, [hereinafter NARA].
\textsuperscript{38} Jean-Pierre Kesteman, Histoire De Sherbrooke. vo. 1, [ Collection Patrimoine (Sherbrooke, Québec)] (Sherbrooke, QC: GGC Éditions, 2000), 203.
\textsuperscript{39} Sessions, "Vermont's Nineteenth Century Railroad Workers," 239.
\end{flushright}
of the Eastern Townships and Vermon ters moving west or to the industrial centers further south.\textsuperscript{41}

At the level of the town one begins to see that beyond simply being located on the rail line, a pre-condition for assured survival was an economy based on a mix of emerging small industry—factories and mills—and subsistence agriculture. Of the towns connected across the international boundary line by the railroad, Coaticook, Quebec was an existing “market town” and Island Pond, Vermont was a “magic city” or railroad town. Market towns linked by the railroad would benefit from their connection to wider markets and most often flourished while railroad towns, in the absence of any diversification in their economic base, would grow quickly with the help of the railroad but that growth was short lived and stagnation would follow in the absence of the development of any other significant industry.\textsuperscript{42}

In the 1840s, prior to the opening of the railroad, Coaticook was barely a village, “a small built up area and a community of farmers.”\textsuperscript{43} By 1864, twelve years after the first train passed through, the town was incorporated with a population of 1,200. Despite the economic downturn of the 1870s and a devastating fire in 1869, the town flourished and the population would more than double by 1881(2,682).\textsuperscript{44} Local factories and manufacturing establishments included cotton mills and weavers, a tannery, a distillery, woolen and knitting mills, a grist mill, sawmills, a factory to make ash oars for the American Navy, the first factory in the country to manufacture sugar from sugar beets and a sash and door factory.\textsuperscript{45} The largest manufacturing operation in the village in 1871 was a sash and door factory owned and operated by A. H. Cummings that

\textsuperscript{41} Sessions, \textit{We Vermonters: Perspectives on the Past}. 294.  
\textsuperscript{42} The terminology of “market town” and “magic city” is borrowed from: Shelton Stromquist, \textit{A Generation of Boomers: The Pattern of Railroad Labor Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America} (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 143.  
\textsuperscript{43} Roch Dandenault, \textit{Histoire De Coaticook} (1818-1976), Dans Nos Cantons, 1 (Sherbrooke: Editions Sherbrooke, 1976), 50.  
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 431; Gravel, \textit{Histoire De Coaticook}. 72.  
\textsuperscript{45} Dandenault, \textit{Histoire De Coaticook}. 63, 117; Gravel, \textit{Histoire De Coaticook}. 72.
employed over one hundred workers. By 1874, the largest manufacturing facility employed three hundred workers. An article in the *Pionnier de Sherbrooke* of 1874 proclaimed Coaticook the faster growing region in the Province of Quebec, predicting the ‘Village’ would soon have sufficient population to be designated ‘Town’.

In terms of the ethnic breakdown of the population, according to the 1871 census for the Village of Coaticook, those born in the United States represented almost 12% of the population, slightly lower than the county average for the preceding decade. If one includes the number born in Quebec of American origin the number increases to just over 17%. The French-speaking population represents approximately 33% of the total population, higher than the average of the surrounding county (24%), more closely resembling that of the industrial center of Montreal in the earlier decade (48%). The higher incidents of French-speaking peoples in the Village may have reflected the growing need for industrial labor and the beginning of the shift brought about by the out-migration of the English-speaking population. The Irish were still a significant group in the Village at 15% of the total population. In addition, 13% of Coaticook residents born in Quebec were of Irish descent. The next largest immigrant group was the Scottish at 5% of the total Village population.

There are difficulties assessing the ethnic origin of railway workers in the 1871 Canadian census. There is no distinction between general farm labor and industrial labor, therefore it is not possible to determine whether those identified as “labourers” worked for the railroad in some capacity. However of those identified as “labourers” 56% were born in Quebec of French origin. There were two individuals identified as “Employed by GTR,” also born in Quebec of French origin.

---

48 1871 Canadian Census returns, Statistics Canada Fonds, LAC.
origin and one trackman born in Ireland. Those identified specifically by occupation as employees of the railroad or connected with border administrative functions included telegraph operators, baggage handlers, agents, and the customs collectors while born in Canada (Quebec or Ontario) were predominantly of English, Scottish or Irish descent. The Customs Agent for the Canadian government, interestingly enough, was born in the United States of French Canadian descent and the Deputy American Consul was born in Quebec of English descent. While there is not sufficient data to conduct a thorough analysis, this brief sample is consistent with the ethnic breakdown in the general population and with the findings of others confirming that French Canadians, Irish, and in other circumstances, Italian immigrants occupied the ranks of the unskilled while English-speaking Canadians and those of British or American origin the ranks of the skilled.

It is clear from the census that the railroad as an employer had minimal impact on the village of Coaticook. The railroad employees, not including the unspecified laborers, accounted for only 4% of the overall workforce, with 6% of the total households having at least one member involved with the railroad. (If the general labor is included the percentage increases to roughly 20% with 22% of households having at least one member associated with railroad work or general labor.) The town of Coaticook fits the profile of a market town with growth in local industry and population facilitated by rail links to larger domestic, national and international markets.

The Village of Island Pond, Vermont, sixteen miles to the south of the international boundary was in fact a ‘railroad town,’ constructed by the Grand Trunk Railway as a division town within

49 1871 Canadian Census returns, Statistics Canada Fonds, LAC.
51 1871 Canadian Census returns, Statistics Canada Fonds, LAC.
the existing township of Brighton, Vermont. The town site, located on the shores of Island Pond, was exactly half-way between Montreal and Portland. It was here that the GTR located its shops, roundhouse, passenger and freight depots and other facilities associated with the operation of the line. The local economy focused attention on supplying the needs of the booming railroad town. Business grew quickly around the Island Pond station, drawing attention away from the adjacent and original Town of Brighton. 52

The Town of Brighton was the first town on the railroad line south of the international boundary. In 1850, just prior to the opening of the railroad, the Town of Brighton had a total population of 193 residents of whom 3 were born in Canada (1.5%), one born in Nova Scotia and one in Scotland (.5% each). Of the native born population, 41 or 20% were born in New Hampshire and 137 or 72% in the state of Vermont. The remainder hailed from Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. In terms of the ratio of native to foreign born, the population of the Brighton in this period resembled that of both the state and the county. Farmers and general laborers were the largest occupational groups in the town (57% and 32% respectively of those listed as having an occupation). Based solely on the evidence of last names, there was possibly a family of four French Canadians living in Brighton; the head of household was a farmer. There is no distinction made in the manuscript census in terms of categories of laborers making it difficult to determine whether any of these in fact worked for the railroad on construction or in some other capacity. There are, however, two individuals recorded as ‘foreman’ which suggests, in the absence of evidence of other industry or factory activity that they may in fact have been associated with the railroad. In any event the data supports the

findings of other studies of the preference for hiring locally given that both foremen and the vast majority of the laborers were born in the state of Vermont.  

By 1860, just short of a decade after the opening of the railroad, and considering only the environs of Brighton designated as “Post Office Island Pond,” the demographic picture changed dramatically. The total population had grown almost 370% to 904 persons. The town experienced a significant increase in its foreign born population to just under 30% overall, surpassing the county at 20% and the state at 10% for the same period. Canadians and the Irish were well represented in the foreign born population at 57% and 40% respectively. Unfortunately the census enumerator drew no distinction between French and English-speaking Canadians. Based solely on the evidence of possible French last names, there appear to have been five males in the workforce of French Canadian origin, all of whom were laborers. The native born population continued to be drawn from neighboring states, particularly Maine and New Hampshire while those born in Vermont remained the largest native born group at 65% of the total native born population.

In contrast to the market town of Coaticook, the railroad workforce in Island Pond and those associated with border control functions, numbered 123 individuals or 60% of the total male workforce. Occupational categories included: engineers, firemen, telegraph operators and agents, a freight agent, a conductor, and laborers. Again the category of ‘laborer’ is not defined and so it is only speculation that some or all of the 103 individuals so categorized did indeed work for the railroad. In total, 99 or 18% of the households had at least one occupant that was involved with the railroad. Again the Canadians and Irish are significantly represented in the railroad workforce and the general workforce more specifically, as they were within the general

53 United States Census Bureau, United States Federal Population Census, 1850, NARA.
54 United States Census Bureau, 1860 United States Federal Population Census. (1860) M432 Roll #1320, NARA.
population. In this instance each represented about 23% of the total railroad workforce, a slightly higher percentage than in the overall workforce (19% and 15% respectively). The majority were laborers. Native born Vermonters were the only group larger than the Canadians or Irish, representing 27% of the total railroad workforce (34% of the total workforce), and again the majority were laborers. Skilled workers—engineers, fireman, conductors, freight agents, telegraph operators, customs officials—were native born from Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. These findings are consistent with the findings of other studies focusing on the northeast where Irish immigrants dominated as unskilled laborers and the native born or those of Northeastern European descent as skilled workers. Of interest is the high percentage of Canadians (of unknown heritage) categorized as ‘laborer,’ a classification which is most often associated with French-speaking Canadians.\(^55\)

Despite early dramatic growth, by the turn of the century the population of the Town of Island Pond was in decline, from 2,000 in 1880 to 1532 in 1910.\(^56\) However, presence of the railroad remained significant—12% of the total population was employed by the GTR and 44% of all households included at least one occupant who worked for the railroad.\(^57\) While literally brought to life by the railroad, the growth and prosperity of the village of Island Pond was constrained by its lack of industrial diversification beyond the railroad and its position as a pass through between the termini of Montreal and Portland.

The foregoing descriptions of the growth and development of the towns of Coaticook and Island Pond demonstrate the mixed effect that railroad development had on this cross-border corridor in this early period in the northeast. However, the story is not unique despite the fact

\(^{55}\) 1860 United States Federal Population Census, NARA.
\(^{57}\) Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910 Population, NARA.
that a border transects the region. As other studies have shown, railroad development produced similar conditions in other regions in the northeastern part of the continent. Market towns tended to benefit from the connection with wider markets, railroad towns experienced limited growth dependent as they were on the railroad as a single economic driver; and, towns not fortunate enough to find themselves located along the line stagnated or perished unable to compete. The presence of an international boundary transecting the corridor had little or no direct affect on this outcome.

THE SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR

Within two years of the completion of the Sonora Railway system (1884), the twin border towns known as Los Ambos Nogales had grown from 60 permanent residents to a combined population of roughly 1,000 and by 1910 to approximately 7,000 residents, about equally divided between the American and Mexican side. While some extolled the progress of Nogales as a “vanguard” for other border cities to follow, others raised concerns about growing foreign control and the threat of increasing immigration. The flood of foreign immigration feared by Sonorans did not materialize to the extent anticipated but growth from internal migration facilitated by the railroad was dramatic.

The growth in population in towns and cities along the rail line in the Mexican corridor continued to follow the shift in commercial and trading focus begun in anticipation of the railroad from the port city of Guaymas in the south to the northern border. In the initial years of

---

railroad operation, 1880 to 1886, Guaymas experienced a decline in population of roughly 20 % and Hermosillo a corresponding growth of 25 % as the trade and relocation of state government aligned more closely with the northern border.\(^{61}\) The members of the business community in Guaymas that had viewed the construction of the railroad with great anticipation were outraged when the decision was made not to locate the station in Guaymas but to the south fearing that trade would be drawn to the new location.\(^{62}\) Much like the decision of the Grand Trunk Railway to locate the division town in Island Pond, Vermont rather than in the existing town of Brighton, the location of Empalme served the interests of the railroad—more available land, fewer competitive interests with which to negotiate, and greater control over the site design and usage. The town of Guaymas sat in a bowl amidst hilly terrain of about a 2.5 % gradient.\(^{63}\) Punta Arena (later known as Empalme), 1 km to the east, and on flatter ground presented a less challenging site for construction and a private wharf facility for the offloading of construction materials. Local protests declared the town an insult to Mexicans and in contravention of the law governing the railway concession.\(^{64}\) Reaction was so strong that company officials fearing for their safety requested protection from local government. The station was moved to Punta Lastre, a location between Empalme and the town of Guaymas, but the company continued to build its storage facilities and employee housing in Empalme.\(^{65}\)

Called “Morley City” or “Junction City” by the Americans and later christened “Empalme” (Spanish for ‘junction’) or “Yankilandia” by Mexican workers that bore resentment


\(^{62}\) Tinker Salas, In the Shadow of TheEagles, 135.

\(^{63}\) John R. Signor and John A. Kirchner, The Southern Pacific of México and the West Coast Route (San Marino, California: Golden West Books, 1987), 14.


\(^{65}\) Tinker Salas, In the Shadow of TheEagles, 134-6.
against the company, the town was a thriving foreign enclave with all the trappings of “home.”  

Selena Ingram, wife of Robert Ingram, General Manager of the SPdeM, looked forward to having the company build her “a little home in Empalme” as it was “much cleaner and cooler than Guaymas.” She described her company built home as a “cottage,” “small & pretty” and “comfortable as can be!” Housing was constructed in the American style with white picket fences, fire places and front and back yards. More than 500 SPdeM employees called Empalme home. Company facilities included housing, schools, clubs, parks, a hospital, the railroad shops and roundhouse. According to company correspondence it was “founded so that a desirable class of workmen might be secured and retained.”

Guaymas remained an important trading center particularly for other European countries, for despite the rail link with the northern border and other points then in North America there was still no direct link to Mexico City, the Sierra Madre Occidental mountain range presenting a significant barrier to construction. Goods destined for points south of Guaymas were then transported overland by oxcart; by ship to Acapulco and inland from there; or by rail north through Nogales into Arizona, east to El Paso, Texas and then south via the Mexican Central to Mexico City. What seems a rather convoluted journey by rail in fact shortened the overland

---

66 Tinker Salas, In the Shadow of TheEagles, 136.
67 Diary entry for 15 Sept 1908: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1908. Box 9, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1900-1908, HM 31060 (1-9), Huntington Library, San Marino CA, [hereinafter cited as Ingram Diaries, HL].
68 Diary entries for Feb 12 and 23, 1909: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1909, Box 2, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, Ingram Diaries, HL.
69 Tinker Salas, In the Shadow of TheEagles. 137.
71 Lewis, 240; Signor and Kirchner, The Southern Pacific of México and the West Coast Route. 14.
72 Tinker Salas, In the Shadow of TheEagles. 134-5; F. Van Note, Brief Outline of the More Important Current Affairs of the Southern Pacific Railroad Company of Mexico., File No. 310-973, Part 8, From Jan. 1, 1932 to Dec. 31, 1932, Box 10 Sud Pacifico De Mexico Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino CA, [hereinafter cited as SPdeM Collection, HL]
73 Lewis, 138; Tinker Salas, In the Shadow of TheEagles. 140.
74 Lewis, 143.
trip from four weeks to only four days.\textsuperscript{75} That circuitous route would not be shortened until 1909 with the extension of the Southern Pacific of Mexico line (formerly the Sonora Railway owned and operated by the ATSF) south from Guaymas to Mazatlan, the further extension to Guadalajara would not be completed until 1927 at which time operating agreements with the Ferrocarriles Nacionales de Mexico (National Railway of Mexico) allowed travel directly into Mexico City.\textsuperscript{76} US Consul Willard reported in 1883, the first full year of railroad operation, that goods valuing $1.4 million had been imported through the port of Guaymas while only $157 thousand had come through Nogales.\textsuperscript{77}

The twin cities of Nogales, Sonora and Nogales, Arizona, now connected as they were to the rest of the world by telegraph and railroad, had experienced a direct encounter with “progress” and took full advantage of it. The result, according to El tráfico, was no less than the transformation of a “sad and poor” community into a “beautiful and elegant” city.\textsuperscript{78} Much to the surprise of one traveler, by the end of the nineteenth century, Nogales, Sonora had become a truly “modern city, with wide awake, keen business men of wide experience, handling large stocks of goods housed in fine stone and brick buildings,” not the “usual Mexican town with walls of adobe and roofs of mud.”\textsuperscript{79} By 1902, Nogales, Arizona was home to the first complete foundry operation and machine business west of the Mississippi, numerous financial institutions, hotels, commercial and retail operations; and a reservoir and pumping system to provide potable

\textsuperscript{75} Tinker Salas, \textit{In the Shadow of The Eagles}, 147.
\textsuperscript{76} Lewis, 20; William Sproule to A.D. McDonald, 26 Jan 1927, re: traffic agreement National Railways of Mexico, Box 9, File No. 510-973-NRM, Part 1, From Jan. 1, 1906 to February 28, 1927, SPdeM Collection, HL.
\textsuperscript{77} Tinker Salas, \textit{In the Shadow of The Eagles}, 140.
\textsuperscript{78} Montijo, "Nogales progresa," col. 3-4, p. 1.
water to the community. In September of that year, the twin cities were joined by a bridge across the arroyo, a span of 55 feet.

The railroad facilitated growth in the cross-border import and export trade. A growing list of consumer goods, clothing, beer and liquor, luxury items and heavy machinery were imported through Nogales into Sonora. Flowing across the border from Sonora were oranges destined for Arizona, California, New Mexico, Chicago and points in Canada; livestock; and copper, gold, silver, antimony and coal destined for processing plants in Arizona. The growing importance of Nogales, Sonora as a commercial population centre overshadowed that of Magdelena to such an extent that in 1899 State officials considered moving the District seat from Magdalena to Nogales.

Nogales was indeed a “magic city” and experienced the most dramatic growth—from a “virtual desert” to a population of 1,067 in just two short years, sufficient size for the settlement south of the border to incorporate as a municipality in the State of Sonora in 1884. In just ten years the combined population of Los Ambos Nogales grew to roughly three thousand people. For the communities closest to Nogales and south of the international boundary—Magdalena, Alamos, Altar—growth was most significant in the period between 1886 and 1895 with

---

81 Ibid.
82 Delos H. Smith to the Department of State, 03 Feb 1890, No. 17, re: Report on importation of beer. RG 59, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Nogales, 1889-1906, M283 Roll #1 July 5, 1889-Feb 28, 1893, Records of the Department of State, NARA.
83 Delos H. Smith to the Department of State, 21 Jan 1890, No. 10, re: Report on value of ore containing gold, silver, lead and copper passing through the Port of Nogales, RG 59, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Nogales, 1889-1906, M283 Roll #1 July 5, 1889-Feb 28, 1893, Records of the Department of State, NARA.; Delos H. Smith to the Department of State, 05 Feb 1890, No. 18, re: Report on export of livestock, RG 59, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Nogales, 1889-1906, M283 Roll #1 July 5, 1889-Feb 28, 1893, Records of the Department of State, NARA.; Delos H. Smith to the Department of State, 20 Feb 1890, No. 20, re: export of oranges. (20 Feb 1890) RG 59, Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Nogales, 1889-1906, M283 Roll #1 July 5, 1889-Feb 28, 1893, Records of the Department of State, NARA.; Tinker Salas, *In the Shadow of The Eagles*, 141.
populations more than doubling and representing more than twice the overall growth rate in the State (67%).

Magdalena, just 39 miles south of Nogales, continued to experience dramatic growth at a rate of about 50% for the period between 1895 and 1910. For the twin border towns, and for many other towns along the route, the Sonora Railway appeared to be the rail line to “happiness.”

But while some communities experienced dramatic growth, those bypassed by the railroad experienced decline in a similar fashion to the towns bypassed by the Grand Trunk Railway in the northeast corridor. Residents of the town of Calabasas located just ten miles north of the boundary line, had anticipated that the line would pass close by. The town was located on the banks of the Santa Cruz River and one prominent businessman had invested significantly in several new houses, a new brick hotel and advertising that depicted steamboats landing at the Calabasas docks on the Santa Cruz River. It was no doubt a considerable disappointment when the line was constructed five miles to the south and the decision was made to move the US customs house from Calabasas to Nogales. South of the border, the towns of Santa Ana, Carbo, Torres and Ortiz were created by the railroad at locations where the railroad company deemed it necessary to build depots. As with the hill towns of Vermont, survival for some towns close to the rail line in Sonora meant relocating their town site closer to the new depot or accept decline and be by-passed altogether.

87 Mexico, Sonora, Sinaloa y Nayarit, 61-2.
88 Ibid., 62, 66.
91 Ibid.
92 Corral, Memoria, 343-4.
Where railroad development in the northeast had primarily linked existing settlements, across much of the North American continent, immigrants and settlers followed westward rail expansion in the later decades of the 19th century. However immigrants and settlers did not follow the railroad into northern Mexico as they did into parts of Arizona, the western United States and Canada. The Mexican government encouraged settlement but as General Auditor, H. C. Whitehead of the ATSF articulated to an interested investor, “the reality north and south of the border was different.”

Whereas the governments of the United States and Canada had enacted legislation that provided significant land grants both to railroads and to individual homesteaders that in turn promoted settlement, the Mexican federal government encouraged settlement through colonization.

The Mexican federal government enacted legislation in 1875 that encouraged and promoted immigration and colonization through the granting of concessions. In the State of Sonora, large concessions, (100,000 acres in one instance; 185,000 in another) were granted for the colonization of uncultivated lands (terrenos baldios). In one concession the Mexican federal government granted to a Sr. Castro, 100,000 acres between and to the south of the Mayo and Yaqui Rivers, at the going rate for uncultivated lands and for the purpose of settling five hundred families within five years. Sr. Castro was granted the right to sell the land to the colonists for one pesos per hectare.

Sonorans, particularly those closest to the border with the United States, felt that the Federal government was insufficiently sensitive to the delicate situation faced by frontier states in terms of the growing foreign control over state resources, opportunities from

94 H. C. Whitehead to Col. O.M. Peabody, 14 Mar 1883, re: conditions in Sonora, RR791.1 Files of the Assistant Secretary, Subsidiary Companies, Sonora Railway: Sonora Railway Co. Ltd., Letterpress 1882-1887, ATSF Corporate Records, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas, [hereinafter cited as ATSF, KSHS.
95 John Mason Hart, Empire and Revolution: the Americans in Mexico Since the Civil War (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 113.
97 Ibid.
which they felt they had been excluded.\textsuperscript{98} Many Sonorans were equally concerned about the potential flood of immigrants being drawn to their region by growth in industry, the railroad and government policies that appeared to extend rights and privileges to foreigners not readily available to the residents of the region.\textsuperscript{99}

As the following statistics illustrate, the colonization policy had little or no effect on overall rates of immigration. By 1895 less than 1% of the total population of Sonora or 927 individuals were foreign born, 36\% (337 individuals) of those foreign born were reported as North American and 24\% (229 individuals) Chinese.\textsuperscript{100} By 1900 the foreign-born population had grown to just slightly over 1\%.\textsuperscript{101} Although still a very low percentage, as one would expect, the highest incidence of foreigners was reported in communities closest to the US/Mexican border.

According to one 1891 report, 2\% of the population of the town of Nogales or 35 individuals were foreign born compared with less than 1\% in the state of Sonora overall.\textsuperscript{102} Of the foreign nationals, the largest group in Nogales in 1891 was the French at 31\% (11 individuals), followed by the North Americans at 23\% (8 individuals).\textsuperscript{103} In Magdalena, according to the same report, only one and a half percent of the population or 38 individuals were foreign born with the largest group being the Chinese (55\% or 21 individuals), followed also by North Americans (26\% or 10 individuals).\textsuperscript{104} Certainly the numbers clearly demonstrate that the flow of immigrants into the region did not materialize, however, the very presence of the railroad facilitated an acceleration of the migration of workers internally within the corridor.

\textsuperscript{98} La Redaccion, "Editorial", col. 4, p. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{100} Macano Gonzales Perex, Geografia y estadistica de la Republica Mexicana por Alfonso Luís Velasco (Mexico: Tipografía T. Gonzales, 1895), 199-200.
\textsuperscript{101} Mexico, Sonora, Sinaloa y Nayarit, 64.
\textsuperscript{102} Corral, Memoria, 199, 491-2.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 491-2.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 490-1.
Much of the growth in towns along the line can be attributed to an influx of laborers from agricultural regions. The connection between railroad labor and farming runs deep across the continent. In studies of dealing with railway workers in the United States, findings support the fact that the majority of native-born railway workers came from farming families.\textsuperscript{105} In her study of railroad workers in Mexico, Teresa Van Hoy found a similar connection linking peasant production with railroad wage labor. In the Mexican case general labor and maintenance workers were recruited first locally from the ranchos and haciendas that the railroad passed through.\textsuperscript{106} Van Hoy confirms the connection between wage labor and subsistence agriculture and the instability of a seasonal labor supply.\textsuperscript{107} General labor on the railroads in Mexico, as in other locations across the continent, paid higher wages than agricultural labor and thus facilitated a migration of peasant laborers to towns along the lines.\textsuperscript{108}

The experiences of itinerant laborers Jesús Maria Huerta, William Peelle, and Fred Rutlege, provide a snapshot of the varied work life of laborers with some association to wage labor on the railroad across the continent in the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century. Jesús Maria Huerta’s journeyed from Ures, Sonora to Tucson, Arizona, in 1875, in search of wage work to support his family. He peddled ice cream and fruit to customers in local saloons and wood by hand cart around the neighborhoods. He worked underground at the Silverbell Mine in Arizona, north east of Tucson and for the railroad for many years until he lost his job because the union went on strike.\textsuperscript{109}


\textsuperscript{106} Van Hoy, \textit{A Social History of Mexico's Railroads}, 51, 59, 88.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid., 59, 67, 88.


The work life of William Peele provides a good example of the need to combine itinerant wage labor with subsistence farming. Peele came to Kansas from Indiana in 1879 and supported his farming with wages from work as an itinerant laborer and carpenter. He kept daily brief accounts of his local travels in search of wages: hauling fodder, gathering and husking corn, mowing and raking, herding cattle, hauling coal, working on the coal dump or mining coal. Peele plied his trade as a carpenter building a house, livestock pens, sheds and platforms. He sat idle for half or whole days at a time. Some days there was simply no work and on others inclement weather kept him from working in the fields. Building the house for D. Larue kept him occupied for the month of October. But the longest continuous employment was with the railroad. In December of 1881 he hopped a northbound train in the vicinity of Hiattville and traveled roughly 90 miles to Olathe, Kansas in search of work in the yards of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad where he worked steady for almost three months.\footnote{Will J. Peele, (1879) MS1018 Will J. Peele Diary, 1879-1902, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS, [hereinafter cited as Peele Diary, KSHS].}

In the northwest the difficult conditions facing homesteaders made wage labor a necessity. Fred Rutledge and his father were homesteaders who had migrated from an unknown eastern location to North Dakota in the 1890s in search of affordable farm land. Conditions were harsh and the process of clearing before any planting could be done meant a significant delay in realizing any revenue from farming. Starvation was the reality that made wage labor a necessity but opportunities for wage work were also limited. Fred worked in the lumber camps and for the railroad, any job that would provide enough income to keep body and soul together until the farm could produce enough income.\footnote{Fred Rutledge, Reminiscences, (ca1890) A\.R981F, Box 1, Reminiscences, Fred S. Rutledge & Family Papers, Minnesota State Historical Society, St. Paul, MN, 1-120, [hereinafter cited as Reminiscences, MSHS].}
Men like Samuel Fisher-Ingram, C. D. Flemming and Warren Stone provide a slightly different picture of the connection between railway work and farming, one of continuous long term employment with the railroad in addition to their lives as farmers. Fisher-Ingram was born in 1881 in Cavan, Ontario and worked for the Grand Trunk Railway (later known as the Canadian National) from 1903 till he retired in 1946. He worked as a trackman, sectionman and relief foreman. In 1903/4 and again from 1910 to 1913 he left the railroad service giving “to farm” as his reason for leaving. Flemming was a Locomotive Engineer and member of Division 598 of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. He proudly posed for the pages of the *Locomotive Engineers Journal*, with his team of farm horses and his daughters dressed in work clothes and reportedly giving Dad a hand. And finally, Mr. Warren Stone, Grand Chief Engineer of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, speaking in 1916 before a Congressional Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, claimed a farming heritage of five generations and twenty-five year career on the railroad during which time he owned and operated a farm.

While the details relating to Fisher-Ingram are few, for Flemming and Stone the connection to the land appears to have more value or status than even that of locomotive engineer, a way of life that pre-existed life on the rails and would continue after—the lifestyle of the yeoman farmer. The foregoing clearly suggests that the connection between wage labor and farming was of a symbiotic nature—one necessary to sustain the other, neither sufficient on its own.

---

112 Canadian National Railways Service Record: Fisher, Ingram Samuel. RG30 1999-00455-8 1, Canadian National Railway Company Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, [hereinafter cited as CNR, LAC].
The seasonal commitment of local laborers to railroad work was one of the reasons that railroad companies preferred imported laborers. They were more cost effective and reliable, dependent as they were on the labor contractor or the railroad for their livelihood and less likely to just up and leave. According to one estimate, by 1908 agents working on along the southwestern border between the United States and Mexico or directly in Mexico City placed approximately 2,000 Mexican track workers a month on American railroads.\textsuperscript{115} The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway imported Mexican track workers for its lines north of the border as early as 1874.\textsuperscript{116} Labor agents, often in the direct employ of the railroad, actively recruited workers, encouraging cross-border migration in both the northeast and the southwest.\textsuperscript{117} It was the railroad that forged the transportation link between labor markets: French Canadian workers were recruited for industrial work in New England; Italian laborers were recruited through New York and/or directly from Italy for work on the Canadian Pacific Railway.\textsuperscript{118} In the Mexican context, the very existence of the railroad provided new opportunities for employment and improved access for Mexican workers to mining operations in northern Sonora and across the border into Arizona thus accelerating the flow of Mexican migrants from more southern points in Sonora and other parts of Mexico north along the rail line.

The changing composition of the population and the dramatic growth rates north of the border are indicative of this northward flow of migrants and settlement following westward railroad expansion. In the decade prior to the arrival of the railroad (1870), the total population of the Arizona Territory was just under 10,000 people. Of that 10,000, about one third were

\textsuperscript{115} Jeffery Marcos Garcilazo, "Traqueros: Mexican Railroad Workers in the United States, 1870-1930" (Ann Arbor, MI: University of California Santa Barbara, 1995), 101.
\textsuperscript{116} Garcilazo, 74.
\textsuperscript{118} Ramirez and Otis, Crossing the 49th Parallel, 18-22.
native born and the remainder foreign born, a significantly higher proportion of foreign born residents than in the region immediately south of the border in Mexico, but also a much higher percentage than in the older established corridor in the north east reflecting the period of early westward expansion and re-settlement. Only 12% of the population were born in the territory and while the distribution of the remainder of the native born migrants is relatively unremarkable given the small size of the group, more had migrated from the west and the north east than from the south and mid-west, a possible explanation being the return of gold seekers from California and first time venturers from the northeast. Seventy-two percent of the foreign born population had migrated from Mexico, evidence possibly of the deep historic ties within the corridor. In dramatic contrast, the next most significant group of immigrants was the Irish at 8%. British North Americans represented 2.5% of the foreign born population.  

By 1880 and the beginning of railroad operations along the corridor through the border crossing at Nogales and entering the state from the west at Yuma, the population of Arizona had quadrupled, but the ratio of foreign born to native born remained much the same. Reflecting the change to a more settled region however the number born in the state grew from 12% to 20%. The percentage of Mexican born residents dropped to 58% of the total foreign born population, while the Irish still represented roughly 8% and British North Americans still less than 3%. Where there was a dramatic increase, significant because of the connection to railroad construction, was in the growth in the number of Chinese residents, from 20 individuals to over 1,600, or representing 10% of the total foreign born population.

There is considerable evidence of the growing significance of the border and the influence of railroad development. Forty-one percent of the population of Arizona in 1880 lived

---

119 The Ninth Census of the United States 1870, Decennial Census.  
120 The Tenth Census of the United States 1880, Decennial Census.
in Pima County, the most southern county bordering on the State of Sonora, Mexico and the location of Nogales. Unlike the overall population of the state, the county population was divided almost equally between foreign and native born peoples with 14% of the residents born in the state, slightly higher than the state average. In terms of the statistics relating to foreign born immigrants there was a higher percentage of Chinese born residents (13%), almost twice as many Germans (7%) and a slightly higher proportion of Mexican immigrants (59%) than in the state overall.121

Growth slowed considerably in Arizona by the final decade of the 19th century. The total population of Arizona had increased by 20,000 persons but the proportion of foreign born to native born had flipped with approximately one third of the population now foreign born and two thirds native born. The number born in the state as a percentage of the total population had increased by 5%. The Irish, Chinese, Germans and English state-wide were roughly equal in representation (approx. 6%) and the incidence of British North Americans had grown slightly reaching almost 4%. Worthy of note is the decrease in the Chinese population and the slight growth in the Mexican born population. The Chinese population declined from 10% to 6% state-wide and in Pima County from 13% to less than 5%, reflecting a decrease of almost 1,000 individuals. This reflects the shift from construction to maintenance on the railroad lines and a replacement of Chinese laborers with Mexican workers. The Mexican born population of Pima County remained at roughly 5,000 individuals, although as a percentage of the foreign born population in the county Mexicans represented 80%. By 1890, growth in the more northern portions of the state overtook the south, no doubt as a result of the railroad lines that crisscrossed the state from east to west, with only 20% of the total state population and 32% of the overall foreign born population now living in Pima County. The county population remained divided

121 The Tenth Census of the United States 1880, Decennial Census.
almost equally between foreign and native born peoples but the overall population of the county decreased by roughly 5,000 individuals.\textsuperscript{122}

The 1880 census for the state of Arizona provides a snapshot of the ethnicity of a railroad construction crew. The railroad company is not identified but given the time period and the location it was likely a construction crew on the New Mexico and Arizona line, a subsidiary of the ATSF and part of the Sonora System, extending from Benson to Nogales, Arizona. The crew was made up of just over 1,000 workers, predominantly laborers of whom 863 were Chinese. While there were many different nationalities represented in the category of ‘laborer,’ the most significant in number, after the Chinese, were the Irish (33), followed by those of Sonoran and Mexican origin (23). Four of the crew identified as Canadian: one was a Foreman, Canadian born of Irish descent; two were laborers, both Canadian-born, one of German descent and the other Irish; and the fourth was a teamster, second generation Canadian. There is no information provided to indicate which part of Canada these individuals came from. Three members of the crew identified as being born in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, one a carpenter, one a farmer and the last a foreman. Those identified as skilled workers or management (supervisory personnel, foremen and a Superintendent), were Irish, Canadian and German or American born, most often of American parentage, from the northeast and states such as Vermont, New York, Massachusetts, and Maine. The few identified with the running trades (locomotive engineer and fireman) were also American born of American parentage. The hiring of Chinese, Irish and Mexican workers as unskilled labor and European, Canadian and native-born individuals as

skilled workers is consistent with general railroad practices across the continent and certainly expected in regions with limited local talent.\textsuperscript{123}

While the data is not sufficient to indicate statistical significance, a comparison between the ethnic make up the population within Pima County with the make up of the single railroad crew is suggestive. Hiring locally was difficult in such a sparsely populated region. Recruiting was also a challenge in light of harsh climate conditions that discouraged many of the groups commonly found on railroad construction crews in the more northerly regions, such as the Irish and other European immigrants.\textsuperscript{124} Higher wages and other incentives had to be offered to entice workers to the region.\textsuperscript{125} There were many communications between company officials in Arizona and Mexico that discussed concerns over labor shortages and the potential for the importation of Chinese workers should the need arise.\textsuperscript{126}

The hiring of Chinese laborers initially supplanted local Mexican labor on construction. The Chinese were highly over-represented on the construction crew on the Benson to Nogales section of the Sonora system as compared with the county foreign born population—89\% of the workers on the crew versus 13\% of the foreign born population in the county.\textsuperscript{127} Mexican workers were significantly underrepresented on the railroad crew as compared with the population in general both within Pima County and the state overall—59\% of the foreign born population of the county compared with only 2\% of the employees on the railroad crew.\textsuperscript{128} Growing violence perpetrated by Anglo and Mexican workers against the Chinese workers convinced company officials that Chinese workers were no longer an effective source of cheap

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{123} US Census Bureau, 1880 United States Federal Population Census. (1880) Roll T9 #36, NARA.
\textsuperscript{124} Ducker, \textit{Men of the Steel Rails}. 27, 107, 109.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 27; Myrick, \textit{Railroads of Arizona}. 273.
\textsuperscript{126} J. A. Naugle to E.P. Ripley, President, D.B. Robinson, 1\textsuperscript{st} Vice President, J. J. Frey, General Manager, W.B. Biddle, Freight Traffic Manager, 17 Jun 1896, Box #117, File 650 Sonora Railway Co. Ltd., General Vol. 2, 1896-1898, ATSF, KSHS.
\textsuperscript{127} 1880 United States Federal Population Census, Decennial Census.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
labor and the shift was made to employ Mexican, indigenous and white workers as laborers in place of the Chinese. There are also fewer Germans, Irish and Canadians on the railroad work force than are represented in the general population of the county. In terms of native born populations, this railroad construction crew was made up of a significantly higher proportion of workers from California, Illinois, Maine, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania than were present in the general population of either the county or the state. Certainly these were states where railroad development had advanced much earlier suggesting the migration of experienced railroad laborers to new opportunities. In contrast to the previous statement, there were fewer crew members than in the general population from the neighboring states of New Mexico, Utah and only 2% of the railroad construction crew were hired locally from the state of Arizona, reflecting the embryonic state of railroad development in the region generally.

The first detailed demographic data for Nogales, Arizona dates from the 1900 US census (Nogales did not legally exist at the time of the 1880 census and the manuscript census for 1890 was destroyed by fire). The total population of the town had grown to just under two thousand residents of which there were almost an equal percentage of foreign and native born. Of that foreign born population 85% were from Mexico, the next most significant group were the Chinese at 2.3%, followed by English Canadians at 1.9%. By this time 50% of the population was born in Arizona. The next largest group of native-born residents came from California (12%) and from there the percentages become relatively insignificant—Texas, 4.5%; Missouri, 3.4%; Illinois, 3.5%; New York, 2.9%; and all others registering at 25 individuals or less. There were a total of 614 individuals in the workforce of which the largest group were identified as

---

130 1880 United States Federal Population Census, Decennial Census.
“merchants,” consistent with the import/export businesses located at the border crossing. Of the 614, seventy-three or 12% of the workforce were employed by the railroad. Again, as with the census data in the northeastern corridor, there is some difficulty accurately describing the railroad workforce as there are no general laborers specifically identified as employed by the railroad but there were 92 individuals identified as ‘day laborers’ with no employer or industry identified. The category of ‘farm laborer’ was not used. If one adds the ‘day laborers’ to the railroad workforce, the percentage increases to 27% of the overall workforce. In terms of the distribution within the community, 27% of the households (containing 35% of the total population) in Nogales included at least one railroad employee or individual associated with border control.131

The general hiring practices of the railway company in this region are consistent with the findings of other studies—the most coveted position of locomotive engineer was reserved for native born workers and while Mexican workers were found in all ranks except that of engineer they represented the largest number of unskilled workers.132 The single largest group of foreign born railway workers was of Mexican origin (33% or 24 individuals) and they held positions as customs clerks and inspectors, brakemen, firemen, telegraph operators, baggage master, engine cleaner, and wipers. If the day laborers are added, 84% of the day laborers were of Mexican origin, the percentage rises to 61% of the railroad workforce or an incidence of roughly 20% higher than in the workforce generally. Those of English origin accounted for 4% of the foreign born (3 individuals) and held positions as brakemen, customs inspector and section foreman. Those identified as locomotive engineers are native born from Missouri, Texas and Vermont.

131 US Census Bureau, 1900 United States Federal Population Census. (1900) Roll T623 #47, NARA.
Not all of the individuals enumerated provided a data for arrival in the State, but for those that did none arrived before 1870 and most after the opening of railroad operations suggesting that work was the motivating factor behind migration.\textsuperscript{133}

Unfortunately, limited occupational data is available for the state of Sonora and towns along the rail line south of the border. In terms of the railway workforce, in 1890, the most significant number of foreign born railroad workers appeared in the city of Guaymas, the furthest point from the international boundary line and of those the majority were identified as North American, meaning from the United States as Canadians were identified specifically; there were also seventeen Chinese day laborers identified that may or may not have been employed by the railroad.\textsuperscript{134} While a little over 16% of the foreign born population reported in the City of Guaymas worked in some capacity for the railroad, the total percentage of foreign born residents in the City was only about 3.5%.\textsuperscript{135} The 1891 report does not provide any data on the town of Empalme, but one can surmise from the fact that it was a company town with division maintenance operations and round house that the majority of railroad workers that were resident at the time in Mexico would have been housed there. Nogales, Arizona became the division point, or location of the shops and maintenance facilities at the northern end of the corridor and home to the majority of railroad employees, as was described in more detail above. Moving up from Guaymas, the closer to the boundary the fewer the number of foreign-born railroad workers. Three railroad employees identified as ‘North American,’ two who were locomotive engineers, were stationed in Hermosillo; one ‘North American’ locomotive engineer in San Marcial and one ‘Austrian’ locomotive engineer in Buena Vista.\textsuperscript{136} The company in fact moved

\textsuperscript{133} 1900 United States Federal Population Census, Decennial Census.
\textsuperscript{134} Corral, \textit{Memoria}, 492-6.
\textsuperscript{135} Gonzales Perex, \textit{Geografia y estadistica}, 159; Corral, \textit{Memoria}, 492-6.
\textsuperscript{136} Corral, \textit{Memoria}, 492, 496, 504-3.
its employee housing along with its offices from Benson, Arizona to Nogales, Arizona in 1895.\textsuperscript{137}

There were concerns expressed by William Morley the Chief Engineer regarding a possible labor shortage and the need then to import Chinese labor but the shortage apparently did not materialize.\textsuperscript{138} According to reports of the earlier construction phase along the line, the first crew consisted of about 300 Mexican and Yaquis laborers overseen by American foremen and superintendents.\textsuperscript{139} By 1883 and the opening of the line for full operation, Leopoldo Zamora, the Mexican government appointed Engineer, reported a total workforce of just under 1,949 including 810 Yaquis Indians, 664 Mexicans, and 475 Americans of which 200 were African American.\textsuperscript{140} North of the border the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe (Sonora Railway) initially hired Chinese laborers for construction work, while south of the border local indigenous and Mexican laborers were the preferred labor force.\textsuperscript{141} There is anecdotal information suggesting that the ATSF hired indigenous workers on both sides of the border and employed labor recruiters on Native American reservations in Arizona.\textsuperscript{142} It appears that labor shortages were more of a problem north of the border than south.

The dramatic growth precipitated by the opening of railroad operations dramatically altered the once interdependent and bicultural community within this corridor, particularly along the border, becoming more and more compartmentalized in the post-railroad era.\textsuperscript{143} While the

\textsuperscript{137} Myrick, *Railroads of Arizona*, 287.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{139} Ruiz, *The People of Sonora and Yankee Capitalists*, 21; Tinker Salas, *In the Shadow of The Eagles*, 133.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 143.
largest percentage of foreign-born residents in Arizona was still Mexican in origin, the foreign
born and native born populations in the state grew to be proportionately equal by the late
1890s. For Nogales the “two towns as one” became increasingly difficult to manage. As the population grew, the challenge of
controlling the flow of goods and people across the border became more difficult. The persistent
problem of smuggling and a desire to prevent an increasing number of conflicts between
individuals from spilling over the border prompted officials on both sides of the border to call for
more distinct demarcations of their jurisdictions. In 1895, the Arizona Territory passed a law
requiring that all newspapers and magazines be published in English only and passed other
legislation preventing non-citizens from receiving services from hospitals and other social
agencies. In 1898, in response to growing cross-border tension, the Mexican consul in Tucson
suggested the building of a fence along the international boundary line. The Mexican federal
government required that a one hundred and twenty foot no-mans land be established along the
border and a companion US Presidential order required a distance of sixty feet on the American
side. The railroad had transformed what was at one time an imaginary line across “open
country” into a definitive boundary.

This transformation from imagingary line to definitive boundary raises one of the most
interesting questions to emerge from the comparison of these two cross border corridors. Why it

---

144 Gonzales Perex, Geografía y estadística, 101; The Eleventh Census of the United States 1890, Decennial Census.
146 Ruiz, The People of Sonora and Yankee Capitalists, 183; Tinker Salas, In the Shadow of TheEagles, 106.
147 Tinker Salas, In the Shadow of TheEagles, 211.
148 James S. Griffith, A Shared Space: Folklife in the Arizona-Sonora Borderlands (Salt Lake City: Utah State
University Press, 1995), 2; Tinker Salas, In the Shadow of TheEagles, 169; Signor and Kirchner, The Southern
Pacific of Mexico and the West Coast Route, 14.
is that the border at Nogales/Nogales experienced this transition while the border between Coaticook and Island Pond remained invisible? The determination of the actual point of border crossing is linked to the location of railroad division towns. Calabasas, Arizona and Magdalena, Sonora were positioned across the border at a distance similar to that between Coaticook, Quebec and Island Pond, Vermont. They were also the sites designated by the state, as in the northeast, for the administration of customs and immigration regulations. But the management of the Sonora Railway chose Nogales as the location of its division operations. The route bypassed Calabasas altogether forcing causing the Mexican government to relocate border control functions from Calabasas to Nogales, Arizona.\textsuperscript{149} Despite a distance between them of roughly forty-five miles, Coaticook and Island Pond were considered border towns. Customs officials sealed freight cars traveling between the two points and immigration inspections were performed on board the moving train between the two depots.\textsuperscript{150} This created a dilemma for immigration inspectors, so-called “undesirables” often made it as far as Montreal before they could be returned to their point of origin.\textsuperscript{151} From the earliest days of construction, the railroad authorities, in establishing Island Pond as their division point halfway between Portland and Montreal had treated the line north as Canadian and south as American and thus set the border at Island Pond.

Furthermore, Marian Smith, Historian for the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service, argues effectively that the “magical difference” between the US administration of its northern and southern borders may be at least partially explained by a history of cooperative

\textsuperscript{149} Tinker Salas, In the Shadow of TheEagles, 151.
\textsuperscript{150} C. H. Powers to the Secretary of State, 05 Aug 1865, No. 18 re: the sealing of freight cars, p. 1-3, RG59 Despatches from US Consuls in Coaticook, 1864-1906, Vol 1 12/24/64 to 9/30/82, Roll #T550 #1, Call No. 10-63, Records of the Department of State, NARA.
\textsuperscript{151} T. B. Williams to W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, Ottawa, 21 Jul 1908, Bol 539 26B Reel C10628, Immigration Branch, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, [hereinafter cited as Immigration Branch, LAC]; T. B. Williams to W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, Ottawa, 21 Dec 1908, Bol 539 26B Reel C10628, Immigration Branch, LAC.
border control measures between the United States and Canada dating back to the 1890s, a relationship that was not considered necessary between the United States and Mexico at the time.\textsuperscript{152} Border control, at first only a concern at sea ports, became an increasing concern in the 1890s with the filing in of a continental rail network that produced nineteen points of entry along the land border between the United States and Canada by 1895.\textsuperscript{153} European immigrants were entering the United States through Canada creating a perceived threat to the administration of an American national immigration policy and prompting the extension of US immigration policy to Canadian ports through what was known as the “Canadian Agreement.”\textsuperscript{154}

Established in 1894, the agreement essentially allowed the extension of US immigration laws of 1891 and 1893 to Canadian ports.\textsuperscript{155} The laws prohibited steamship companies from landing immigrants that would be deemed ineligible under US law and made the same steamship company liable for the return of the excluded persons to their original point of embarkation. The signatories to the “Canadian Agreement” were the US government and Canadian transportation companies. The transportation companies, steamships and railroads, agreed not to land immigrants destined for the United States at Canadian ports unless they were known to be admissible under US law. In the event that immigrants were deemed inadmissible after they had been landed, the transportation company was liable for the return of those excluded to their point of original embarkation. US immigration inspectors were then stationed at all sea ports and along the land border.

The system was not, however, perfect. According to one account, 300 immigrants crossed each month into Canada via the Great Northern Railway through Gateway, Montana after the


\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 128-9.

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 128.
land port of entry had been established in 1903 further to the east at Winnipeg, Manitoba.\textsuperscript{156} Or in one instance the City Solicitor for Auburn, Maine held the Grand Trunk responsible for transporting some thirty to forty Italian immigrants without work or means back to their original port of entry.\textsuperscript{157} Immigrants had only to say that their destination was Canada and then bypass the established land ports of entry by traveling further west before attempting entry into the United States. By 1908, the Canadian Border Inspection Service was established at thirty-seven points on the Canada-US border, but only between Toronto and Sprague, Manitoba.\textsuperscript{158}

Although the continental rail network extended as far as the southern border between the United States and Mexico, only two or three gateways existed by the early 1890s. The United States government was more concerned with the flow of undesirable European immigrants using Canada as a backdoor into the United States, a condition that was not present at that time along the Mexican border. The extension of US immigration policy into Canadian territory along with a built in mechanism for dispute resolution between the two countries, Smith argues, pre-empted to a great extent the flow of “undesirable” immigrants into the US and paved the way for a dramatically different collaborative relationship with regards to border control between the two countries that could be perfected over time.\textsuperscript{159}

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

It becomes clear when the development and settlement in the two regions are compared that the benefits in the post-railroad period are mixed and while there are many similarities there are

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{156} Smith, "The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) at the U.S.-Canadian Border, 1893-1993": 130.
\bibitem{157} James A. Pulsifier to A. A. Strout, 10 Jan 1894, re: 30 to 40 Italians found at Hackett's without food for two days, RG30 13292 File 2 Mar 12/93 to Apr 94, CNR, LAC.
\bibitem{159} Smith, "The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) at the U.S.-Canadian Border," 129, 131.
\end{thebibliography}
also differences that help to explain this uneven progress. As market towns with existing industry or commercial interests, Coaticook and Magdalena both benefited from their connection to the broader market forces made possible by the railroad. For railroad towns the outcome was varied. Nogales was indeed a magic town that benefited both from the business created by the mere existence of the railroad shops and support services, but as a border town it also experienced the commercial and economic advantages of being the only gateway to markets on both sides of the border for trade coming north from the port Guaymas and beyond Tucson in this period and therefore the location of the necessary government and commercial services supporting this import/export trade. It would not be until 1927 that the link between Guaymas and Mexico City would be completed.

For Island Pond, Vermont, also a railroad town, the story was slightly different. The town grew only to the extent that the business of the railroad and necessary support services demand. Unlike Coaticook on the north side of the border, there was no local industry to benefit from the increased access to transportation; Island Pond was not a commercial destination or connection with other significant lines but simply a pass through point on the way to Portland, Maine. The border functions that became so evident in the life of Nogales/Nogales continued to be almost irrelevant in the northern narrative. In the southwest the boundary line was no longer imaginary, defined clearly the end of the nineteenth century by a well defined space or no-mans land. While in the northeast the boundary remained an imaginary with customs and immigration inspections performed on the train in motion between Island Pond and Coaticook. Given that the two corridors share US immigration and customs policy in common, this raises questions about the relative importance of the two border crossings and suggests that the difference may lie in the
history of Canadian and Mexican customs and immigration policy and enforcement. Further research is necessary to unravel this image of the border as a barrier in the southwest and invisible in the northeast.

To this point, the focus has been primarily on the influence of railroad development on local and regional social and economic relations. The building of the north/south transcontinental rail network began across the northeastern border in the mid-nineteenth century and across the southern border between the United States and Mexico in the 1880s. By 1879 the Grand Trunk Railway completed its westward line to Chicago; the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe would use those Grand Trunk lines to access Chicago’s Dearborn station just ten years later, thus illustrating the effective expansion of this continental network of railways.\(^\text{160}\) In the chapters that follow the focus will shift from the local and regional specifics of the cross-border corridors to considering the continental significance of the filling in of this transcontinental system of railways from the perspective of labor and occupational migration, the relationships between the corporations, states and organized labor.

\begin{verbatim}
\begin{center}
The old turnpike is a pike no more,
Wide open stands the gate;
We have made us a road for our horse to stride,
Which we ride at a flying rate;
We have filled the valleys and leveled the hills,
And tunnelsed the mountain side;
And round the rough crag’s dizzy verge
Fearlessly we ride!
\end{center}
\end{verbatim}

\begin{verbatim}
\begin{center}
On—on—on—with a haughty front!
A puff, a shriek, and a bound;
\end{center}
\end{verbatim}

While the tardy echoes wake too late,
    To babble back the sound;
And the old pike road is left along,
    And the stagers seek the plough;
We have circled the earth with an iron rail,
    And the steam-king rules us now!\textsuperscript{161}

Chapter 3:
Labor Mobility and Occupational Migration:
“We have circled the earth with an iron rail, and the steam king rules us now”

Shortly after the completion of the Montreal to Portland line of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada (Grand Trunk), discussions of transcontinental plans were in the air. An 1853 article in the *New York Daily Times* reported that the intention was to connect the Atlantic with the Great Lakes to become “one of the longest railways in the world.” Of the continental significance of this great enterprise, the *Times* observed that, “its influence on the course of trade from the great West to the ocean, and on the relations subsisting between integral portions of the people of this Continent will be great and lasting. . . . The political effects of these great undertakings will not be the less sensibly felt; they will tend in a far greater ratio than mere abstract principles of government, to consolidate the interests of the people in every part of this continent.”

Thirty years later and many miles to the southwest, similar sentiments were echoed by participants witnessing the completion of the Sonora link with the Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe network beyond Arizona. The editor of the *Arizona Weekly Citizen* remarked that this transnational railroad, “form[ed] the connecting link between the tropic South and the frozen north, and ma[de] possible the rapid interchange of the commodities of each.” A decade later, in the early 1890s, the then Governor of Arizona, L. C. Hughes, declared: "I believe the time is coming. . . when this Western hemisphere will be a sisterhood of republics, wil [sic] be bound together by international bands of steel reaching from Hudson Bay to the uttermost ends of

---

1 “Canadian Affairs,” *New York Daily Times*, 03 Sep 1853, p. 4.
Tierra de Fuego. Then will the destine [sic] of the Western Hemisphere be fulfilled.” Indeed in just a little more than twenty years, Canada, the United States and Mexico were bound by “international bands of steel” and the North American railroad network extending, not only from coast to coast, but from Hudson’s Bay in the north to Mexico City and points beyond to the south.

The expansion of the continental rail network linked formerly isolated regions with larger domestic and international markets; drew immigrants and internal migrants from land poor regions toward the promise of greater opportunities; and put into motion the largest workforce in a single industry in history. The railroad facilitated the movement of workers both directly and indirectly. As was made apparent in the previous chapter, the railroad indirectly facilitated the movement of immigrants and internal migrants in search of new opportunities presented across an ever expanding industrial landscape. As an employer the railroad directed the recruitment of labor for construction and expansion into areas lacking a local source of cheap labor. From time to time, companies relocated entire crews from one region to another along the same railroad line. In times of conflict between the corporation and organized labor, it was common practice for the railroad companies to recruit strikebreakers to increase the company’s position of advantage against striking workers. Workers in the running trades migrated from one line to another in search of promotion. At the same time, as part of an expanding informal management training and recruiting process, executive and management level employees were recruited, a form of occupational migration, if you will, across systems and between corporations and often

---

3 Miguel Tinker Salas, In the Shadow of TheEagles: Sonora and the Transformation of the Border During the Porfíriato, (Berkely and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1997), 160.
across international borders. Geographic mobility was the norm for industrial workers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as wage work was often seasonal and intermittent forcing many to travel considerable distances in pursuit of an adequate living. While many who worked for the railroads fit this pattern of itinerant labor, many others experienced this geographic mobility as a function of their employment within a single transportation industry.

LABOR SHORTAGES, CONTRACTORS AND LABOR GANGS

Before the turn of the twentieth century, immigration to and between the nations on the North American continent was virtually unfettered. This is not to say that the process of immigration was without any form of regulation, a Naturalization Act was passed in the United States as early as 1790 and the Canadian Immigration Service was established by the British Colonial Office in the 1820s, but the idea of restricting the general flow of people on the basis of race or ethnicity had not yet been placed into law, with the exception of the Chinese exclusion policies of the 1880s. The free global movement of labor was an essential component of capitalist economic development, drawing people from rural regions to growing industrial urban centers. The need for an industrial workforce was the basis for the encouragement and active recruitment of immigrants to the United States, Canada and Mexico as well as the goal to resettle sparsely populated areas with agricultural settlers.

---


Decisions regarding the processing of immigrants fell under provincial or state jurisdiction across the continent until the 1870s in Canada, 1880s in Mexico and 1890s in the United States. In the Canadian context power was granted to the Provinces under the British North America Act of 1867 to make laws in relation to agriculture and immigration so long as the Provincial law was not in contravention of an Act of the Parliament of Canada. In 1874 that process was determined to be inefficient and power withdrawn to the federal level under the Minister of Agriculture. Mexico responded to growing foreign immigration presence in northern regions in the 1880s by removing the right to grant citizenship from the states to the federal government in Mexico City. In the US context, although Congress had full authority over the regulation of immigration the policing was considered the perview of local state and police officials and a matter of commerce until the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1885 in which the US Supreme Court made it a matter of national security and thus granted absolute authority and control to Congress under its responsibility for foreign relations. By the 1880s both the United States and Canada had enacted statutes that created categories of immigrants ineligible for entry. These categories were based on criteria concerning general health and mental fitness, the exclusion of peoples without the necessary financial means, known criminals and those deemed ineligible for citizenship, including the Chinese prohibited from citizenship by legislation passed in the earlier part of the decade. Unlike the Canadian and US governments, the Mexican government did not implement restrictive legislation directed at Chinese immigration in the 1880s. Instead the Mexican government executed the Treaty of Amity and Commerce with China in 1883. As a

7 Knowles, Strangers at Our Gates. 48-9; Ngai, Impossible Subjects. 17-8; Smith, "The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) at the U.S.-Canadian Border": 129.
8 Tinker Salas, In the Shadow of TheEagles, 108.
10 Acuña, Corridors of Migration, 83.
result and despite the existence of a comparable exclusionary law in Canada, both Canada and Mexico became entry sites for Asian immigrants attempting transit into the United States.\textsuperscript{11} By the turn of the century public concern was growing in all three countries with respect to the influence of a growing number of immigrants deemed “unassimilable” and this public pressure, along with a decline in the need for cheap labor, drove the development of quotas, deportation systems and increased border control.\textsuperscript{12}

With respect to the regulation and restriction of workers in North American cross-border scenarios, first the United States (1885) and in direct response Canada (1887), passed legislation to prohibit companies from contracting with foreign workers and then importing them across the border.\textsuperscript{13} Policy makers were acting in response to pressure for organized labor.\textsuperscript{14} The American law was aimed directly at Canadian workers and the Canadian legislation was in direct response as evidenced by the stipulation that the law was to be used only against countries with a similar statute.\textsuperscript{15} The legislation was largely ineffective as the enforcement, in the Canadian case, was left up to the complainant—unions unable to afford the costs.\textsuperscript{16} Again there was no comparable legislation in Mexico until attempts began to Mexicanize the workforce, beginning with the railroads in 1906 and culminating with the Mexican Labor Law of 1931 that required the replacement of all foreign national workers with Mexican workers in all but positions deemed essential.\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{11} Smith, “The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) at the U.S.-Canadian Border, 1893-1993,” 142.
\bibitem{15} Knowles, \textit{Strangers at Our Gates}, 63.
\bibitem{16} Ibid.
\bibitem{17} H. B. Titcomb to Messers: Small, General Manager; Goldman, Auditor; Hellerstedt, Treasurer; Hoff, Traffic Manager; Green Purchasing Agent; Harris, Manager of Hospitals, 08 Oct 1931, Box 10, File #SPM 013-2, Section 2, SPdeM, HL.
\end{thebibliography}
While many workers were hired locally the preference during the construction phase was for workers with less experience in North America and therefore less likely to leave the job for work in the fields. In the northeast this meant Italian, Irish and French Canadian workers moving back and forth across the border as demand required.\(^{18}\) By 1907, the combined labor force of the Canadian Pacific Railroad, the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern in the construction of transcontinental lines in Canada was estimated a 50,000 to 70,000 laborers annually.\(^{19}\) The companies put pressure on the Canadian Immigration Branch to make exception to the Alien Labor Law and by July of 1910, “owing to the great scarcity of railroad laborers” it was decided to admit “with the exception of Asiatics, and irrespective of money qualification or direct journey, all railway construction laborers who [were] mentally, morally and physically fit, willing to work” and “guaranteed employment by railway contractors or railway companies” placing railway laborers on the same desirable footing as farm labor.\(^{20}\)

The Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (ATSF) imported Mexican track workers for its lines north of the border as early as 1874.\(^{21}\) Labor agents, often in the direct employ of the railroad, actively recruited workers, encouraging cross-border migration in both the northeast and the southwest.\(^{22}\) According to one estimate, by 1908 agents working along the southwestern border between the United States and Mexico and directly in Mexico City placed approximately 2,000 Mexican track workers a month on American railroads.\(^{23}\) It was the railroad that forged the transportation link between labor markets: French Canadian workers were recruited for industrial work in New England; Italian laborers were recruited through New York and/or

---


\(^{19}\) Avery, _Reluctant Host_, 30-1.

\(^{20}\) E. B. Robertson, Circular, Vol 539 26B Reel C10628, Immigration Branch, LAC.


\(^{22}\) Avery, _Reluctant Host_, 30; Heyman, _Life and Labor on the Border_, 24.

\(^{23}\) Garcilazo, 101.
directly from Italy for work on the Canadian Pacific Railway. In the southwest, the ATSF found it was unable to recruit more traditional immigrant labor groups such as the Irish or Italians to the region owing to the harsh conditions and isolation. European laborers were replaced by Chinese, Japanese or local Mexican/Chicano workers both north and south of the border. The Chicano workers would dominate the New Mexico and Arizona workforce for the remainder of the century.

In addition the ATSF contracted with local merchants, the Mexican government and directly on the reservation in parts of Arizona for the local indigenous workers, some of whom would be replaced by Japanese workers south of the border by the end of the century. When the Mexican government began its relocation of indigenous peoples from the northwest to the southeast, the railroad contracted directly with the government for the labor of “their” native workers. In times of extreme labor shortage in the south Italian workers were imported from other points on the ATSF line—Chicago, Kansas City—and transported where needed. Particularly in the southwest where local labor and work was in short supply, laborers on construction gangs often simply followed the contractor from one job to the next. But there were those that stayed on when construction was completed taking positions in the yards or on section crews performing general maintenance functions.

The employment record of Robert Sim Nicoll provides an excellent illustration of a construction laborer who followed the contractor and the work back and forth across the northern border. Nicoll was first recruited by a labor contractor and then the directly by a railroad

---

27 Ducker, Men of the Steel Rails, 27.
company as he journeyed west and back and forth across borders. He was born in Scotland and began his railroad career in 1876 working for a contractor as laborer and pile driver on the Hamilton and Northwestern Railway in Ontario, Canada. As many laborers did, Nicoll then followed the same contractor in 1878 to work on canal construction, also as a foreman and pile driver. Continuing west and south following seasonal labor opportunities, he joined the Canada & Grand Trunk Railway in Michigan as an extra gang foreman in 1880. By 1882 he had crossed back across the border to the north working as foreman for the CPR in Manitoba and the Manitoba and Northwestern Railway in the Northwest Territories. Nicoll continued to move up the ranks of the profession crossing the border again to the states of Montana and Washington as fireman on the Great Northern. The last we hear of Robert Sim Nicoll he had applied for a position in 1896 as fireman on the Great Northern out of Kalispell, Minnesota. 

**CREWS ACROSS THE LINE**

From time to time changes in operations or demands for particular skills required both the Grand Trunk Railway and the Sonora System of the ATSF (later the Southern Pacific of Mexico) to move individuals or whole crews from one point on the line to another with little or no consideration to the crossing of international boundaries. In September of 1896 the Grand Trunk was expanding the role of its operations at Island Pond, Vermont and transferred an entire crew across the border from Montreal. Transferring crews from one point to the other along the line was part of normal operations. In fact in the same month, changes had been made in the dispatching of train orders requiring a move of employees from Toronto to Belleville, Ontario, and from Portland, Maine to Island Pond and similar action had been taken earlier at Stratford,  

---

28 Great Northern Railway, General Personnel Record #306: Robert Sim Nicoll. (nd) Box #133,F.9.14.F, Great Northern Railway Collection, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN, [hereinafter cited as GNR, MHS].
Ontario. However, in this instance the move triggered a law suit brought by the State of Vermont against the GTR for contravention of the US Alien Labor Contract Law.

This case will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter but suffice it to say that the company argued it had no intention of violating the laws of the United States but that it was necessary to “have a corps of employees skilled in the various duties of the road,” in this case train dispatchers and other “necessary persons,” and this was simply a “transfer of part of the work force in the employ of the railroad from one point to another to do the business of the road.” Strout, Solicitor for the GTR, went on to say that “without this liberty [to transfer its own employees from one point to another along its own line] the business of the road would be crippled and the public put to inconvenience and damage.” The US Attorney for the District of Vermont agreed with the determination that under certain conditions the transfer of “train dispatchers” would not be in violation of the law but could not accept the addition of “clerks and other such employees” which appear to have been included. The disposition of the case is not clear from the corporate records, but in earlier communication company lawyers advised that in order to avoid further legal action the company should terminate the continuing contracts with the employees in Montreal, said employees should find their own way across the border and then be rehired in Island Pond.

In the southern cross-border corridor, it is well documented that the Sud Pacifico de Mexico (SPdeM) and its predecessor relied heavily on American workers to fill the skilled

30 A. A. Strout to the Hon. Herman Strump, Commission General of Immigration, 26 Feb 1897, RG30 Vol 13269 1896 v-1897, File 5, Indictments Under Alien Labor Law - Vermont, CNR, LAC.
31 Ibid.
32 John Senter to A. A. Strout, Solicitor for the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, 02 Mar 1897, RG30 Vol 13269 1896 v-1897, File 5, Indictments Under Alien Labor Law - Vermont, CNR, LAC.
positions in the running trades and the ranks of railway officials located in Mexico. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the company even built a company town (Empalme) to facilitate the recruitment and retention of “desirable” employees.\textsuperscript{34} Although outside the scope of this study, the implementation of the 1931 Mexican labor law illustrates effectively the company rationale for the importation and retention of this particular group of employees.

The 1931 law required that “the Railroad companies employ Mexican workers entirely.” The law further specified that “in positions of direction [the Railroad Companies] may employ the foreign personnel which they may need, and in the technical or administrative positions they may only employ foreign personnel when there is no Mexican personnel available.”\textsuperscript{35} Issues of citizenship and disputes regarding the definition of “Mexican,” while they had been topics of considerable discussion throughout the tenure of the ATSF and the SP, took on new meaning.

The SPdeM went to great lengths to justify the continued employment of as many employees as possible. They were able to potentially shorten the list by encouraging twenty-six workers that were eligible, to become naturalized citizens.\textsuperscript{36} The company sought approval for the classification of translators as technical positions arguing that translation required “the work of men highly skilled in English and Spanish Railroad work, as many reports must be put into the English language for transmittal to the Board of Directors, whose headquarters is in San Francisco,” emphasizing the need for English-language translation to groups outside Mexico rather than for Spanish-language translation internally.\textsuperscript{37} They even attempted to turn the

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{34} F. Van Note, Brief Outline of the More Important Current Affairs of the Southern Pacific Railroad Company of Mexico., Box 10, File No. 310-973, Part 8, From Jan. 1, 1932 to Dec. 31, 1932, SPdeM, HL.
\textsuperscript{35} H. B. Titcomb to Messers: Small, General Manager; Goldman, Auditor; Hellerstedt, Treasurer; Hoff, Traffic Manager; Green Purchasing Agent; Harris, Manager of Hospitals., 8 Oct 1931, Box 10, File #SPM 013-2, Section 2, SPdeM, HL.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.; Walter Douglas to Hale Holden, Chairman, Southern Pacific Company, New York, 09 Dec 1932, Box 10, File #SPM 013-2, Section 2, SPdeM, HL.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.; H. B. Titcomb to E. B. Sloan, Fiscal Representative, SPdeM, 10 Oct 1931, Box 10, File #SPM 013-2, Section 2, SPdeM, HL.
\end{flushleft}
definition of a ‘Mexican’ corporation stipulated by the 1899 Railroad Law to their advantage—a definition that they, and their predecessors the ATSF, had previously found to be objectionable for reasons of taxation.

Company officials petitioned the Mexican government arguing, albeit unsuccessfully, that the wording of the 1899 Law defined the Sonora Railway and all its employees as Mexican and not foreign and therefore the railroad should be exempt from the requirements of the new law. The 1899 Railway Law stipulated that: “The Company and all foreigners and their successors who shall take part in its affairs, whether as shareholders, employees, or in any other capacity, shall always be regarded as Mexicans in all matters relating to the Company.”

Despite efforts to expand the occupational categories exempt from termination or effectively manipulated the definition of “Mexican” specified in law, the SPdeM was forced to terminate 57 employees immediately, including office workers, telegraphers, dispatchers, foremen, locomotive engineers, brakemen and conductors.

The preceding examples illustrate well ways in which management of these two transnational railroad companies directed the movement of their employees across international boundary lines. In both cases the intended action and the justification offered in reaction to legal challenges—that these were company employees and necessary to the efficient operation of the line—supported the notion that these rail lines were simply extensions of domestic operations across international borders.

---

38 Republic of Mexico, Mexican Concession, 17 Jun 1875, Box RR316B, Files of the Assistant Secretary, ATSFRY, ATSF, KSHS.; Paul Shoup to General Abelardo Rodriguez, Secretary of Industry, Commerce and Labor, Mexico D.F., nd, Box 10, File #SPM 013-2, Section 2, From May 19, 1931 to December 28, 1933, SPdeM, HL.

39 Ibid.; Walter Douglas to Hale Holden, Chairman, Southern Pacific Company, New York, 9 Dec 1932, Box 10, File #SPM 013-2, Section 2, SPdeM, HL.; H. B. Titcomb to Messers: Small, General Manager; Goldman, Auditor; Hellerstedt, Treasurer; Hoff, Traffic Manager; Green Purchasing Agent; Harris, Manager of Hospitals, 8 Oct 1931, Box 10, File #SPM 013-2, Section 2, SPdeM, HL.
LABOR CONFLICT AND STRIKEBREAKERS

As was mentioned above, the Alien Labor Contract Laws in the United States and Canadian were implemented to appease organized labor in the fight against the importation of strikebreakers across international boundaries. For example, during the 1901 CPR Maintenance of Way workers strike hundreds of Italian strike breakers were imported from the United States and, although apparently in contravention of the Canadian Alien Labour Law, no action was taken against the CPR.\(^40\) In the 1910 trainmen’s strike on the Grand Trunk, strikebreakers were imported across the line between Port Huron and Sarnia, a suit was brought against the company and the result was a fifty dollar fine.\(^41\) In the southwest during the 1911 Locomotive Engineers strike on the Southern Pacific of Mexico, the company attempted to bring in other employees from the Southern Pacific lines further west and Chinese laborers also in the employ of the railroad.\(^42\) According to local media sources, the Chinese arrived but the other Southern Pacific workers refused to participate. South of the border the company exploited the animosity between Mexican and American workers by recruiting Mexican workers from other lines in Mexico to replace the striking workers. The ATSF manage to circumvent the US Alien Labor Contract Law in its importation of Mexican workers across the US/Mexico border by encouraging those already employed to recruit family and friends.\(^43\)

The importation of strikebreakers and the application of the alien labor contract legislation and its specific connection to the two railroad systems under consideration will be examined more closely in Chapters 4 and 5. Overall the use of strikebreakers by the corporations was a successful strategy in the crushing of labor conflict and the application of the

\(^{40}\) Avery, Donald, Reluctant Host, 30.
\(^{43}\) Garcilazo, 88.
Alien Labor Contract laws proved an ineffective remedy for organized labor with little or not consequence to the company even if found in violation of the law. For our purposes here however, the importation of strikebreakers illustrates again the role of the railroad in directing the movement of workers across international borders.

**MIGRATION IN SEARCH OF PROMOTION**

A review of selected personnel records of the Great Northern Railway, headquartered in St. Paul, Minnesota, provides a snapshot of the extent of general and geographic mobility of railroad workers in the late 19th century. The records offer evidence of movement upward within the ranks from laborer to fireman; machinist’s helper to conductor; fireman to engineer. While all the employees discussed here worked for the Great Northern at least once during the period documented, they all worked for at least three different railroad companies and almost all experienced some period of unemployment. The average career length was thirteen years, roughly eight different jobs each held for an average of a year and a half. The reasons for moving from one position to another varied: resignation, dismissal, promotion, work finished, train discontinued. Of particular interest to this study was the fact that the career travels of these railroad men involved movement back and forth across either the Canada/US or US/Mexico border.

Joseph Little was born in Ontario, Canada in 1855, his father was still living in St. Thomas, Ontario in 1895. He began his railroad career at the age of 23 as an engineer with the Michigan Central Railway, worked for six years as an engineer on the CPR out of Winnipeg, Manitoba and then moved further west to join the Northern Pacific in Missoula, Montana. Little

---

44 Eleven records were selected on the basis of some connection to the railroads or regions under study: Personnel Dept. Records, 1890s, GNR, MHS.

45 Great Northern Railway, General Personnel Record #376: Joseph Little. (nd) Box #133.F.9.14.F, GNR, MHS.
spent a few years employed by smaller lines in Montana and Washington, ending up as an engineer on the Canada and Great Falls, in Great Falls, Montana.

Schuyler Marshall Combs, of Alton, Illinois, entered railroad service in 1882 at the age of seventeen as an operator on the Wabash Railroad. His work on the railroad would take him through the states of Nebraska, Colorado, Oregon and Texas. By 1897 his travels had taken him across the border into Mexico working in Chihuahua for the Mexican Central as a lineman and then Ciudad Juarez as a brakeman. From there he moved to the Southern Pacific in Tucson, Arizona. The record ends on the Northern Pacific in Washington in 1899, where he was dismissed for falling back asleep after being called out for duty.

John Fruite was twenty-three years old when he went to work for the Sonora Railway as a fireman. Born in Grand Haven, Michigan of Dutch descent, Fruite was employed by the Sonora and its sister road in Arizona, the New Mexico and Arizona, and later the Colorado and Midland. He worked as a hostler, fireman and engineer. According to the record, he left the southwest for Minnesota and the Great Northern Railway because he “didn’t like the county.”

The railway labor journals provide further anecdotal accounts of the movement of workers as a result of transfer or promotion. One announcement in the *The Railway Conductor* 1887, tells the story of a Brother George Clark from Winnipeg, Manitoba who was now a Conductor in Panama. According to the writer, “He bears the mark of a Colombian ‘machette’ and says that conductors there do not think of attempting to ‘work’ their trains without a big revolver strapped to them.”

---

46 Great Northern Railway, General Personnel Record #349: Schuyler Marshal Combs. (nd) Box #133.F.9.14.F, GNR, MHS.
47 Great Northern Railway, General Personnel Record #401: John Fruite. (nd) Box #133.F.9.14.F, GNR, MHS.
Engineers journals document the continental movement of workers across the industry—from Mexico City to New Orleans, Louisiana, from Buffalo, New York to St. Thomas, Ontario, promotions to management from within the ranks and the formation of foreign locals of the international brotherhoods.49

The foregoing vignettes cover the gamut of railroad work from general labor to skilled locomotive engineer. While they represent immigrants and native born residents of Canada and the United States, there were no Mexican surnames present in the limited number of records reviewed. However, historian Jeffery Garcilazo in his work on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad in Kansas found that Mexican surnames appeared on the payrolls for track workers as early as 1874 and as far north as Chicago.50 The evidence illustrates effectively the continental range of this highly mobile occupational group and the extent to which working for the railroad facilitated movement for promotion as well as general mobility within a single industry.

In their studies of railroad labor in the United States, historians Peter Ducker and Walter Licht agree, and this study concurs, that there were a variety of causes that contributed to the high levels of mobility and migration within the railroad workforce including the seasonal and irregular nature of the demand for unskilled labor; desire for promotion; company directed relocation or official disciplinary action. Licht takes the position that general geographic mobility was the rule in the 19th century and that the data is not sufficient to evaluate whether the

49 In this instance a notice was posted requesting information on the whereabouts of J. H. Thomas, last seen in Silao, Mexico: “Mentions,” Railway Conductor Monthly, IV, no. 3 (March 1887): 163; This notice announces the movement of a Brother from Buffalo to St. Thoms using his union card to gain cross-border access to the local chapter of the union: “St. Thomas, Mar 25/87,” Railway Conductor Monthly, IV, no. 5 (May 1887): 243; The following notices document the directed movement of employees across the border from the United States into Mexico and promotion from Conductor to General Manager/Superintendent: “Appointments,” Railway Conductor Monthly, IV, no. 12 (December 1887): 624, “Personal,” The Railway Agent and Station Agent XII, no. 3 (November 1894): 27, and “City of Mexico Dec 20/86 Annual Election,” Railway Conductor Monthly, IV, no. 3 (March 1887): 145; “Divisions by State,” Locomotive Engineers Journal, XLIV, no. 5 (May 1910): np.
50 Garcilazo, 74.
nature of the mobility of railroad workers was unique.\textsuperscript{51} Ducker argues, and the foregoing illustrates, that this geographic mobility while employed by a single company is what sets railroad workers apart from industrial workers more generally.\textsuperscript{52} What makes the geographic mobility of a single occupational group more complex is the fact that it is not simply a study of sending and receiving societies or the circular migration of a specific population but both with the added factor of company or industry facilitated relocation.

There are many difficulties associated with attempts to reconstruct the individual histories of railroad employees. Prior to 1880 US census takers counted only the running trades as railway men. In addition, many corporations were in the habit of destroying employee records or the records have simply not survived. This problem is further complicated in this study by the absence of comparable data collection practices in the State of Sonora or Mexico more generally. Problems with categorization extend to the recording of place of birth or national origin. For example, the census enumerators for the State of Vermont record in some detail the differences between Canada East, Canada West and other British Colonies while the manuscripts for Arizona refer to only Canada. The enumerators for the Arizona census in districts closest to the border differentiated between Sonora, Chihuahua and Mexico; those further to the north reduced the country of origin to “Mexico.” As a result it has been necessary to draw from anecdotal accounts relating to the high degree of mobility within the trade found in the labor journals, diaries, personal accounts and company records other than those dealing strictly with personnel.


\textsuperscript{52} Ducker, \textit{Men of the Steel Rails}, 13-9.
While it is clear that this labor force is highly mobile and taking full advantage of the ever expanding continental network there is also a form of occupational migration occurring at the level of executive officers and management. Furthermore, if one follows this occupational migration, a connection can be made between the continental migration of managers and the comparable trends in labor relations that appear in the three nations across the continent in the early part of the 20th Century. This complex web of continental connections involved not only the “bands of steel” but also a close knit network of financiers, promoters, construction engineers and managers. Just as the need for large numbers of skilled and unskilled workers in the construction and operation of these lines required the recruitment of workers from beyond the immediate locale, the expertise needed to oversee construction and manage these operations would come from elsewhere, spawning a continental circuit of contractors, engineers and corporate managers. The significance of this occupational migration extends beyond the transfer of expertise and/or technology to the consideration of the ways in which culture informed this process of professional development and knowledge transfer.

If we believe that culture is socially and historically constructed and that our cultural beliefs and practices inform our decision making in daily life, then, in this instance, both corporate and community cultures, become significant factors influencing management decision-making including those decisions pertaining to labor relations. When we consider the career trajectories of the corporate executives in this particular case we must consider the transnational implication of this cultural transfer as well. Furthermore, whether one is examining the process of cultural formation—the meaning based on traditions and beliefs that underlies various actions—in either the case of migrating of workers or corporate executives, one must look

---

53 Tinker Salas, *In the Shadow of The Eagles*, 160.
beyond the workplace to consider these individuals in relation to their families and communities both pre- and post-migration.

The financing of North American railroads began and to a great extent remained a trans-Atlantic enterprise with the British, and to a lesser extent the French, Germans and Dutch, providing a substantial capital investment in building of Canadian, American and Mexican railroads. By way of illustration, the members of the same original syndicate that drove the building of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway from St. Paul, Minnesota north to Winnipeg, Manitoba (later known as the Great Northern) including notables such as its Canadian-born President James J. Hill, Donald Smith of the Hudson’s Bay Company, George Stephens of the Bank of Montreal, were also intimately involved in the later promotion and construction of the CPR. Bostonians were the driving force behind the Mexican lines built and operated by the ATSF. The Guarantee Company of North America with its head office in Montreal provided the bonding service for company employees along the Sonora Line when it was under ATSF management. It is also worth noting that the President of the Guarantee Company of North America was Alexander T. Galt of Montreal, a founding father of the Canadian nation and of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada.

---

57 H. C. Whitehead to Edward Rawlings, Guarantee Co. of North America re: bonding of agents, 28 Dec 1882, RR791.1 Files of the Assistant Secretary, Subsidiary Companies, Sonora Railway: Sonora, Railway Co. Ltd., Letterpress 1882-1887, ATSF, KSHS.
58 Edward Rawlings to W. B. Strong, President, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe, re: soliciting Strong for directorship with company, 29 Nov 1881, RR845.1 Files of the Treasurer/Secretary: General Auditor/Comptroller - Boston,
capital was responsible for most of the cross-border lines built between 1850 and 1914 but never completely replaced the trans-Atlantic capital flow.\textsuperscript{59}

Those who managed these rapidly expanding networks developed their knowledge and expertise on the job and facilitated the process of knowledge transfer by carrying it with them from one organization to the other.\textsuperscript{60} William Van Horne, known to most for his role in the building of the CPR, was an American who began his railroading career in 1857 at the age of 14 with the Illinois Central.\textsuperscript{61} He would go on is his career to become General Manager and then President of the Southern Minnesota Railway, then General Superintendent of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul and finally, in 1882, he was recruited for the job as General Manager of the CPR by a Board of Directors that included Hill and members of the so-called St. Paul syndicate.\textsuperscript{62} Looking south from Minnesota, Allen Manvel, General Manager and Vice-President of the St.PM&M, became President of the Santa Fe in 1889.\textsuperscript{63} Charles M. Hays, General Manager of the Grand Trunk, from 1896 to 1909 (at which time he became its President) was formerly General Manager of the Wabash System.\textsuperscript{64} Hays took a short sojourn from the GTR in 1900 to assume responsibilities as President of the Southern Pacific, just shortly after the

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{59} Gabaccia, 16-9.
\textsuperscript{62} Innis, \textit{A History of the Canadian Pacific Railway}. 113.
\textsuperscript{63} Comptroller to Board of Directors, 23 July 1903, re: request for names of Presidents of the Santa Fe, RR3, Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway Co. New York Executive Department File 1; Miscellaneous Correspondence, Vol. 11 Jan 1, 1903-Dec 31, 1903, ATSF, KSHS.
\textsuperscript{64} Regarding the career of Charles Hayes see, Keith L. Bryant, \textit{History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway}. Railroads of America: Railroads of America (New York) (New York: Macmillan, 1974) and Holt,\textit{The Grand Trunk in New England}.
\end{flushleft}
company took over the lease of operations of the Sonora System from the Santa Fe. Despite the national labels that designated these corporations as Canadian, American and Mexican, there was tremendous movement within the upper level management of these roads not only between organizations within a national context but as these stories demonstrate beyond national borders as well.

Robert Hord Ingram and his wife Selena, introduced earlier in Chapter 2, provide an excellent example. Ingram was a railroad executive born in the American south on the eve of Civil War. He and his family traversed the continent from the United States to Canada and then Mexico. While this case provides an excellent illustration of the potential for transnational cultural influence, that is not to say that it is in anyway representative of railroad managers in general.

When Charles M. Hays moved from the Grand Trunk in Montreal to the Southern Pacific in Los Angeles he brought along Robert Hord Ingram as his assistant. Like those involved in the complex career paths mentioned above, Ingram began his railroad career in 1876 at the age of seventeen in the employ of the Pullman Car Company in Louisville, Kentucky. He became the Assistant Comptroller of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Company (L&N) in 1882 and the Assistant to the President of the same in 1888. While in the employ of the L&N he married Selena Gray Galt, also of Louisville, Kentucky. By 1896, Ingram had accepted a position with the Grand Trunk and moved his family to Montreal. Ingram would later be appointed by the Southern Pacific Railroad as Vice-President of its subsidiary the Cananea and Yaquis River Railroad and General Manager of the Southern Pacific of Mexico. How might Ingram’s

---

65 Although the story begins with the ATSF, by 1898 operating rights had been granted in the form of a lease to the Southern Pacific Railroad (SP) in exchange for the ATSF gaining operating rights over the SP Mojave Division, the line between Mojave and Needles in San Bernadino Country California—the route necessary for the ATSF to achieve access to the California coast. This lease arrangement would be terminated in 1912 and ownership of the
experiences working with the Pullman Company and later the Louisville and Nashville Railroad along with his initial cross-border experience in Montreal have contributed to his later dealings on the Southern Pacific of Mexico? Or of possibly even greater significance, how did Robert Ingram’s world view, formed as a child and young adult growing up in a former slave state on the border between the Union and the Confederacy, inform his later life as a railroad executive working for railroad corporations that cross international boundaries? It is through the life of Robert Ingram and his family and their journey from the US south to the Canadian province of Quebec and then to the railroad town of Empalme in Mexico that we can begin to get a feel for the ways in which culture informed this process of professional development and knowledge transfer and influenced Robert’s decision making as a manager.

Robert Ingram was born in Henderson, Kentucky in 1860, the son of William and Sarah E. Ingram. According to family accounts, William and Sarah left Kentucky for Nebraska to try their hand at homesteading and failed, returning to Kentucky to take up residence in Louisville sometime in the late 1870s. Once in Louisville, William took a position as clerk in a local hotel but before long had successfully acquired the position of City Clerk and would be rewarded with the position of City Comptroller after exposing corruption within the city administration.

As already mentioned, Robert Ingram would follow somewhat in his father’s footsteps, line transferred to the Southern Pacific and the Southern Pacific of Mexico. Between 1909 and 1929, the SPdeM would extend the line south beyond Guaymas, making a connection with the National Railway of Mexico at Guadalajara and through a negotiated operating agreement achieving a direct line to Mexico City. Despite the Mexican government’s move to nationalize the railroads beginning in 1929, the SPdeM would be one of the last, sold to the Mexican government in 1951 for $12,000,000; Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary for 1908, (1908) HM31060, Box 9, Ingram Diaries, HL.

66 Details of the family found in notes left by Selena Pope, Dec 11, 1969: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), Box 5, Correspondence HM 31060 (1-9), Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diary, 1933-1938, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, p. 1. [hereinafter cited as Ingram Memoirs, HL].

67 Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), p. 64, Ingram Memoirs, HL.

68 Ibid., 65.
beginning what would become a successful business career in administration and management but in this case with the railroads.

Robert Ingram’s early experience with the Pullman Company and the Louisville and Nashville Railroad was a significant training ground in the race and labor relations of the 1880s and 90s. During the 19th century African Americans and immigrants from Europe, Asia and Mexico constituted the single largest group of railway workers and under conditions that Historian Eric Arnesen refers to as a “racial division of labor”—doing the hardest work under the most dangerous and arduous conditions and for the lowest pay.69 While recruiting from local itinerant labor force available along the rail line was the preferred most efficient and least costly option, labor shortages required a broader recruiting strategy.70 The ethnic composition of a workforce on a particular railroad ultimately reflected the regional variations in immigration and migration. Thus in the northeastern United States and eastern Canada in the early part of the 19th century, unskilled and semi-skilled railroad labor was composed primarily of recent immigrants from Ireland, later in the century immigrants from southeastern Europe would be added.71 On the plains and in northwestern states and Provinces the railroads in the US and Canada resolved their labor shortages by recruiting the Irish and other European immigrants from cities in the east along with Chinese and Japanese workers. In the south and southwest the workforce was made up of primarily African Americans, Native Americans and Mexican workers.

With specific reference to the case of the L&N and other southern railroads, African Americans workers were a source of cheap labor, earning 10-20% lower than their white

71 Ibid., 221-3.
counterparts. Like other groups of immigrant railroad laborers across the continent, African Americans were drawn to railroad work as an attractive alternative to gang labor or sharecropping paying higher daily cash wages than agricultural work, but providing the necessary cash to support the continuation of subsistence agriculture. Throughout the latter part of the 19th century and into the early 20th century, African Americans out-numbered white workers in the ranks of locomotive firemen and brakemen on many southern roads including the Louisville and Nashville (L&N). By 1914, the Pullman Company was the single largest employer of African Americans with roughly 6,000 workers.

African Americans were barred from membership in the railroad Brotherhoods and bars to promotion or color lines were erected that effectively prohibited the promotion of African Americans to the rank of locomotive engineer or conductor, a condition that would persist until the late 1960s. Members of the Brotherhoods argued that the willingness of African Americans to accept lower wages drove the wages of white workers down. According to one white brakemen on the L&N, on “every crew in the south you will find the ‘coon’ a man who is perfectly contented with one dollar a day.” The animosity between the races would erupt periodically in episodes of violence and terrorism. In 1891 on the Mobile and Montgomery division of the L&N African American trainmen were fired upon and a white brakemen flogged

---

72 Arnesen, Brotherhoods of Color, 24-5.
74 Arnesen, Brotherhoods of Color, 17, 24-5.
75 Ibid., 26.
76 Ibid., 33.
by his fellow workers for taking out a run with an African American trainmen. The result was an increasingly large pool of African American workers skilled and ready to fill the vacancies left by striking white workers serving management strategies to keep labor costs low, meet labor shortages and scuttle union efforts. It was in this racially divided workplace of the Louisville and Nashville Railway that Robert Ingram began his apprenticeship as a railroad executive in 1882.

By the time that Robert Ingram became the Assistant Comptroller with the L&N it had become the largest of the major southern lines with direct and indirect control over approximately 2,348 miles of track. The company had grown so quickly in the decades after the American Civil War that its physical assets were in serious disrepair, credit was dangerously overextended and the overall management plagued with corruption. A dramatic improvement was needed in efficiency in order to remain competitive. The man who would turn the organization around was Milton H. Smith, and Robert Ingram would work directly under Smith as his Assistant from 1888 to 1896.

Historian Maury Klein observes that Smith was devoted to efficiency above all and despised unions. Characterized as “gruff, cantankerous, hard-nosed and sardonic,” he was a hard man to work for with no tolerance for “shirkers and deadheads” and the expectation that administrative employees would not only master their own jobs but all others as well. Reporting to the L&N Board of Directors in 1893 on the subject of unions, Smith is quoted as having said, “most of our employees are organized into brotherhoods, or secret societies. . . .

---

78 Ibid., p. 34.
79 Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), p. 82, Ingram Memoirs, HL.
81 Ibid., 189.
82 Ibid., 228.
These organizations come at different periods and apply for increases in their compensation and for changes in the rules and regulations so as to give them less work and more pay." As the passage suggests, Smith was of the conviction that unions were a dangerous threat to the decision making prerogative and control of management and a refuge “for rabble rousers and men unwilling to work for an honest day’s pay.” Responding swiftly to the threat of a strike from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in 1893, Smith made arrangements with local authorities and a contingent of Pinkertons to protect company property while instructing his General Manager to open employment agencies in the major railway centers to the east of the Rocky Mountains to recruit replacement workers. The strike was preempted and Smith’s relationship with labor would remain tenuous and at times uncomfortable. According to a 1918 study, the strikebreaking success of the L&N was attributed to its financial strength, its anti-union attitude, and an ample supply of African American firemen. Smith’s swift response to strike threats, his anti-union attitudes, his proactive engagement of the forces of state repression and effective use of a divide and conquer strategy between African American and white workers are all tactics that Robert Ingram would employ between American and Mexican workers some years later in his position as General Manager of the Southern Pacific of Mexico.

The methods and attitudes towards race and labor relations that Robert Ingram first experienced under the supervision of Milton H. Smith on the L&N would be reinforced in his experience with Charles M. Hays on the Grand Trunk and the Southern Pacific. Charles Melville Hays was born in St. Joseph Missouri in 1856 and began his railroad career at the age of 17 [1873] with the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad (an operating subsidiary of the Santa Fe); at 22

---

84 Ibid.
85 Ibid., 261.
86 Ibid., 262.
he was secretary to the General Manager of the Missouri Pacific; and at 28 in a similar position with the Wabash, St. Louis and Pacific. He was appointed General Manager of the entire Wabash system in 1889 and from there moved with his family to Montreal, Quebec and the position of General Manager of the Grand Trunk. He was apparently brought in to the Grand Trunk to introduce more aggressive “American” methods as (opposed to British) with hopes of bringing the company back from the edge of bankruptcy, which he did successfully. In 1901 Hays took a short sojourn to Los Angeles California to assume responsibilities as President of the SP, just shortly after the company took over the lease of operations of the Sonora System from the Santa Fe. He brought along as his assistant Robert Hord Ingram. Ingram would later be appointed General Manager of the Southern Pacific of Mexico and Vice-President of its subsidiary the Cananea and Yaquis River Railroad. Hays, like Milton Smith, had a reputation for being intolerant of interference with his management of the road and for his contempt for organized labor. While there is no direct evidence to link Ingram with the railroad labor force and/or the policy making apparatus of these companies, it is difficult to imagine that in his role as paymaster and later as Assistant to the President that he would not have been influenced by the practices and prejudices of his superiors with respect to labor.

Outside of references in local newspaper accounts relating to strike actions and announcements of promotion, the records that speak directly to Robert Ingram’s corporate experience are slim. His name did not appear in the company records reviewed and he left no personal papers. What we do have though is a rich account of his work and family life left by his

---


89 Although the story begins with the ATSF, by 1898 operating rights had been granted in the form of a lease to the Southern Pacific Railroad (SP) in exchange for the ATSF gaining operating rights over the SP Mojave Division, the line between Mojave and Needles in San Bernardino Country California—the route necessary for the ATSF to achieve access to the California coast.; Diary entry 2 Sept 1908: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Date Book for 1908, Ingram Diaries, HL.
wife Selena in a manuscript detailing her earliest remembrances of childhood in the 1860s and her diaries that date from 1900 to 1938. A newspaper clipping pasted into the diary on 3 October 1908, tells us that “Bob” Ingram had high standards and was a man of character, style and ambition. Conductors on the Southern Pacific apparently agreed for Selena writes that they held her husband in high regard and “hated so to have him leave the SP” to take his position with the Southern Pacific of Mexico. Clearly the conductors—white American members of a Brotherhood—were able to meet Ingram’s high standards while many Mexican and African American workers did not. In conversations he had with his wife, Ingram shared his frustrations regarding the construction difficulties on a Mexican branch line that he attributed to a lack of “competent help.” Ingram solved one problem of incompetence with the “darkies” that he employed as porters that had “nearly run him crazy,” by recruiting a former loyal “darkey” by the name of Lee Wycliffe away from the L&N to become his personal porter on the SP of Mexico. Providing a further insight into Ingram’s labor management style, Selena relates an incident that took place on a trip down the SP of Mexico line from Nogales to Empalme: “The engineer persisted in running his train last night – faster than the speed limit; -& Rob called him down every time – sometimes by the signal to run slow, & twice by the air brake, stopping the train dead still. Then the engineer ran just as slow as he could -& in consequence we were very late reaching Empalme this morning.”

Selena Ingram’s diaries are like scrapbooks that share detailed personal accounts, photographs and newspaper clippings documenting the daily lived experience of this mother of seven children and wife of a railroad executive on their journey across the continent. In these

---

90 Diary entry 3 Oct 1908: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Date Book for 1908, Ingram Diaries 1900-1908, HL.
91 Diary entry 7 Dec 1908: Ibid.
92 Diary entry 9 Nov 1908: Ibid.
93 Diary entry 17 Jun 1909: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1909, Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, HL.
94 Diary entry 18 Jun 1909: Ibid.
writings Selena shows herself to be a complex personality. She has an adventurous spirit and a fascination with travel, but longs for the comforts and traditions of home. She is a strong, independent woman and at the same time suffers greatly from the extreme loneliness associated with being separated so much of the time from her husband. She is not a stranger to economic diversity or hard work but carries with her a strong sense of what constitutes appropriate behavior for a woman of her class. Despite the fact that she appears to revel in the comforts that some along with position on the railroad, she is awed by lavish wealth and embarrassed by demonstrations of deference from those that she perceives as equals or above her station in life. It is through Selena’s voice that we can gain an understanding of the social and historical context underlying the beliefs and values that informed the decisions and reactions of this young couple as they traveled across borders in the employ of transnational corporations.

Robert and Selena were introduced to the concept of borders, cultural and political, early in life born as they were on border between the north and south on the eve of the American Civil War. In Selena’s own words, “my very first recollections are of those troubled times.” While little is known about Robert’s early life, Selena writes in detail about her experiences growing up in Kentucky on the border between the Union and the Confederacy and in a family deeply divided in terms of their loyalties. Selena’s mother, Elizabeth Thruston Pope, and her family “southern as they were in birth, dearly as they loved the south and her people,” were against secession and therefore staunch supporters of the Union. Her father, William Henry Galt, “an intense lover of the south,” joined the Confederacy as the Chief Surgeon for the Kentucky

---

95 Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diary, 1933-1938, HL, p. 21.
96 Ibid., 20.
Department. This was not an experience unique to Selena’s family, the population of the state of Kentucky was deeply divided over the issue of secession along north/south lines.

This divided loyalty however didn’t appear to create any strong animosity between family members on the Pope side of the family. Betty, as Selena’s mother was referred to by friends and family, returned to her mother’s home for most of the war reliant on family for support in the absence of any income from her husband. There is one passing reference that Selena makes regarding “no help from family as had been promised” which under the circumstances must have referred to her husband’s family, the Galt’s, and may be the only indication that the divided loyalty also divided the family. In the eyes of the Union however, the wife of a Confederate soldier was a Confederate and in advance of General Bragg’s arrival in the city of Louisville an order was circulated making it necessary for the wives and families of southern soldiers to flee the city for their own safety. “So my mother had to pick us up and fly! We crossed the river to Jeffersonville, - and found it already so crowded with refuges that my mother could only obtain shelter in a third or fourth class hotel – a place of horror it was to her, - but it was all most entrancing to us. WE loved the excitement of it all.” William Galt, Selena’s father, was taken prisoner towards the end of the war and brought through Louisville on the way to the Union army’s Camp Chase. His mother visited him every day, delivering food and other supplies and sometimes taking the grand children along. One night through the use of bribes, William was able to convince the guards to let him leave camp to visit his family.

97 Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diary, 1933-1938, HL, p. 19.
98 Ibid., 20.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid., 26.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
103 Ibid., 27.
Selena clearly learned early in life the significance of borders and how they can divide more than just physical space.

Although the Pope family sided with the Union when it came to the issue of secession, they were not against the southern institution of slavery. Selena’s ancestors came to Kentucky from Ireland and Scotland via Maryland and Virginia at the end of the 18th century. They were prominent landholding professionals—doctors, lawyers, members of the state and federal legislatures. Selena’s great grandparents, James and Urith Brown, owned an estate outside the city of Louisville called the Old Homestead—“a large household and more than 100 slaves. . . well-ordered and luxurious.” It was there that according to Selena, her mother and her mother’s sisters “led an ideal life” and where Selena and her sisters would later visit often.

Despite the passage of time and changes in social and historical context in the post-Civil War years, Selena’s manuscript, written around 1920 at the age of sixty-one, is replete with stories and references that reflect her southern middle class roots, particularly with respect to concepts of race and respectability. According to Selena, as the Civil War progressed the “negroes” became “utterly demoralized.” She recalls how Easter, one of the family’s domestic slaves “grew lazier and lazier, and while she did not dare to be impudent – was more and more sullen and unmanageable.” This behaviour provoked mistrust and suspicion that resulted in all the jewellery being locked away and counts of the clothing and linens being conducted on a regular basis. Selena’s use of the word “demoralized” is telling in that it suggests that in the opinion of her mother and others the uncertainty of the times and the possibility of emancipation had a corrupting effect on Easter’s sense of duty and morale rather than seeing these acts as a

104 Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diary, 1933-1938, HL, pp. 1-16.
105 Ibid., 15.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid., 21.
form of resistance to an unreasonable condition of slavery. Hettie the cook and Henry her brother, on the other hand, continued to behave as they always had, demonstrating an appropriate degree of deference to the master and providing Selena with treats and special favors. Selena captures the tenuous and uncertain nature of the relationship between southern whites and blacks in her telling of her Aunt Urith’s trip home from Danville, Kentucky after the assassination of President Lincoln. According to her Aunt, “the whole country was terribly wrought up over it, and no one could tell what the outcome would be.” She spoke of how “all the buildings everywhere were draped in black” and there were “ominous looking mobs of darkies standing around everywhere, at all the stations they passed!”

Later in life but still in Kentucky, Selena employed an “old darkey nurse,” Mammy Susan, to look after her own children and Eva, Mammy Susan’s niece, to help nurse her back to health after the birth of her first son Alexander, in 1885. She tells of how, on the occasion of Robert’s relocation to Williamsburg she decided to bring along her cook, Lou, the sister of Eva, prized for her ability to make all the southern dishes “deliciously” but considered generally inefficient in all other tasks. Lou had a four year old daughter whom she was “allowed” to bring with her to Williamsburg “otherwise Lou would never have been contented.” “Old Wesley” was “the old darkey who attended to the horses and cows and brought all the coal for the house” in Louisville. Referring to Old Wesley as “quite a character,” Selena tells of an exchange she had with him just prior to leaving on a family trip to Pensacola, Florida: “The day we left home I said to Old Wesley—Now take good care of every thing for me, Wesley.’ to which he replied ‘Yes’m, jest de way you leaves every thing is jes de way youse gwine ter find every thing when

---

108 Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diary, 1933-1938, HL, p. 21.
109 Ibid., 34.
110 Ibid., 92.
111 Ibid., 97.
112 Ibid., 126.
you gits back’. . .The first thing he said to me after my return was ‘Well, Missis, did you find everything jes lak you lef’ it?’”113 The culture of affluence and the paternalistic relationship between white southerners and African American slaves and later freedmen was an integral part of Selena’s telling of the story of her life before 1900.

Domestic servants were not only a reflection of the Ingram family’s economic status but to some degree a necessity. Selena had not been a well child and her delicate condition would persist into adulthood, finally being labeled “nervous prostration” in the late 1880s.114 She suffered greatly with the delivery of each of her five children taking much longer than normal to recover and all of the children were born requiring close attention and nursing. She complained bitterly about the trials and tribulations of finding good help in much the same way that her husband did in relation to workers on the railroad.115 As the description of her childhood relationship with domestic servants demonstrates, Selena learned to value efficiency, a willingness to work hard, and a sense of duty and devotion to the family. On arrival in Montreal unable to find any help at all she found herself forced to rely on an inexperienced young boy recently arrived from London, England and sporting a cockney accent so thick that it was difficult to understand him.116 In St. Alban’s, Vermont she tells of how she suffered at the hands of two “no account Salvation Army girls” and in Los Angeles, California she hired “japs” and “chinamen” to clean and pack for the long journey to Empalme, Mexico.117 The maid that she spoke the most highly of was Carrie, who came to her in the early days of their stay in Montreal.

113 Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diary, 1933-1938, HL, pp. 126-7.
114 Ibid., 110.
115 Ibid., 103, 104, 111, 136.
116 Ibid., 132.
117 Ibid., 42; Diary entry for 8 Oct 1908: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1908, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaires 1900-1908, HL.; Diary entries for Jan 21 & 22, 1909: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1909, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaires 1909-1916, HL.
in 1896. Carrie was described as a “strong, tall, well-made blonde young Scotch woman.”\footnote{Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diary, 1933-1938, HL, 132.} For $18 a month, Carrie “did all the cleaning (except a little dusting and bed-making that I did every morning) all the cooking- and the washing and ironing” as well as helping with the youngest child and tending the furnace.”\footnote{Ibid.} For a short time between jobs with the L&N, Rob worked for the Kentucky Lumber Company in Williamsburg, Kentucky and the family occupied a company house.\footnote{Ibid., 95-6.} Williamsburg was clearly a step up the economic ladder for the Ingram family for Selena was proudly able to hire a cook at a rate of $3.00 a week, a rate which apparently “only wealthy people paid.”\footnote{Ibid., 97.} Despite the sense of comfortable living implied in the stories of inadequate domestic help, Selena’s life was not always as easy one. With her fragile health, five children and the loneliness associated with a husband that traveled more than he was at home, Selena worked hard to manage the household on her own and struggled to maintain a sense of middle class respectability.

The markers of respectability were learned early in life and conveyed clearly in Selena’s manuscript and diary. The stories of the lives and loves of the members of her extended family and ancestors are full of references to those who “married beneath” their family position; “runaway” marriages or marriages not approved of by the head of the family; and the shame associated with marrying a divorced person. \footnote{Ibid., 50, 63, 71.} Children should be independent “but never pert nor forward.”\footnote{Ibid., 100.} Of her own children, Selena recounted the story of a neighbor who was “overwhelmed” at the appearance of four small boys all dressed immaculately in white linen with Fauntleroy ruffles and curls.\footnote{Ibid., 127-8.} When the neighbor asked who was responsible for the
clothes, the curls and providing the piano lessons they spoke of, all four responded, “Mother.”

Maintaining this appearance of respectability, however was hard earned, Selena did all the sewing by hand, taught the children piano lessons and curled their hair daily while taking care of her fifth child, Selena Pope, who had been born quite sickly.

Rob and Selena clearly believed that it was the role of parents to ensure the future success of their children, particularly the sons. Selena registered and proved up a desert land claim in the Imperial Valley in southern California. Called “the ranch,” it was a successful turkey farm that she turned over to her oldest son to manage.

Son Stuart was interested in the mining industry and was found a position through company connections with the King of Arizona Mine. Demonstrating her belief in the value of hard work even for her own children, she wrote: “It was hard to have him go but we think he has a future full of promise before him. He will have to work very hard at first though – as an ordinary laborer.”

Selena understood her role and duty as wife of a railroad executive to set an example in the community. She writes a great deal about the social obligation of paying and receiving “calls.” The Grand Trunk in its take over of the Central Vermont made many enemies including the Governor of the State. Selena wrote of her surprise “that everyone came to call and quickly came to like them for themselves despite the company actions.” She was expected in her husband’s absence to call on Edward H. Harriman, President of the Southern Pacific, and his wife and traveling companions and arrange a luncheon in their honor at the club as they traveled

---

125 Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diary, 1933-1938, HL, 128.
126 Ibid.
127 Photos of the desert claim and newspaper announcement of regarding the successful transfer of deed appear in diary entries from January 20-26, 1908: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1908, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1900-1908, HL.
128 Diary entries from January 20-26, 1908: Ibid.
129 Diary entry 24 Sept 1908: Ibid.
130 Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diary, 1933-1938, HL, 144.
through Los Angeles. After moving to Empalme, Sonora, a company town built by the SP of Mexico for its employees and management staff, Selena was very excited and noted in her diary the occasion of her first callers:

I forgot to mention . . . I had my first callers! Mrs. McDonald & her sister-in-law, Mrs. MacPherson – called on me & also on Flora! They are perfectly plain, simple, good women, both from Nova Scotia! As they stayed a long time, I suppose they enjoyed it! A couple of months later, Rob would urge Selena and children to be the ones to reach out and make welcome the new residents arriving in Empalme.

With regards to her own economic status, Selena reveled in the benefits of traveling in private railroad cars and providing passes for family members that came with being married to a railroad executive. Railroad travel at the time, while an improvement over the stage coach or wagon, was still at its best less than comfortable—poor ventilation and extreme heat; ever present smoke and cinders entering through open windows creating a constant threat of fire; a lack of toilet facilities; dilapidated station facilities; limited if any food service; and unreliable schedules. Selena reported that in one instance, traveling though southern California to Yuma, Arizona, the temperature in the car reached a stifling 110 degrees fareignheit. In contrast Selena describes the luxury of traveling by private car or drawing room. The “Cananea” was a “luxurious old car. . .well ventilated, -ha[d] a lovely big porcelain tub & big brass beds.”

---

131 Diary entries for March 13-17, 1909: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1909, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, HL.
132 Diary entry for 17 Apr 1909: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1909, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, HL.
133 Diary entry for 20 Jun 1909: Ibid.
134 Diary entry for 5 Sept 1908: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1908, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1900-1908, HL.
135 Diary entry for 5 May 1909: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1909, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, HL.
a return trip from Mexico having left Rob behind, Selena writes: “I shall come home sadly – alone – like an ordinary passenger on a Pullman!”

But not all the trappings of affluence and attention associated with being the wife of a railroad executive sat well with Selena. One evening at their company cottage in Empalme, described by Selena as “small & as comfortable as can be,” the family was entertained by the 3rd Regiment Band from Guaymas. “They had come to play for us – as a great honor - & some of the prominent men with them came into the house – the Judge & the Commissioner & a Dr. (who looked emphatically an Aztec) They played several pieces - & we tried to seem appreciative – but it was a queer experience.” On a trip from Empalme to Mazatlan and points in between, the Ingram party is invited to stay in the Governor of Sinaloa’s Palace, an experience that Selena describes as “living a novel or fairy tale!” Upon their return to Culiacan the next day she wrote: “I feel as if I have been abroad – it has all been so strange & foreign & interesting.” She could be awed in the presence of lavish wealth and yet somewhat embarrassed at overt demonstrations of attention or deference coming from those she saw as equals or above her station in life.

Neither Rob nor Selena, however, were strangers to the insecurity of economic hard times. While no specific date is given to reference the time period, one can speculate that the hard times that hit as Selena finished school corresponded to the economic depression of 1873. Selena would have been about fourteen years old and forced to “decline all the parties and dances &c” that would have been customary for a young woman of her age and standing within

136 Diary entry 1 Oct 1908: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1908, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1900-1908, HL.
137 Diary entry 1 Mar 1909: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1909, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, HL.
138 Diary entry 7 Apr 1909: Ibid.
139 Diary entry 8 Apr 1909: Ibid.
140 Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diary, 1933-1938, HL, 71.
Selena and her sisters taught lessons and did sewing for neighborhood families, making enough to keep themselves clothed “by exercising the strictest economy and good judgment.”

Selena’s father’s medical practice had suffered greatly with most of his best clients having been forced to declare bankruptcy, he would have to give up the practice altogether due to long and difficult bout with typhoid which left the family with little or no income.

During her father’s long illness Selena wrote, “we hardly knew where we would get bread and meat from day to day.”

Her brother managed to collect a meager amount of the outstanding debt owed to her father and it was on that small amount that they survived the winter. Relief came in the spring when they were offered a house rent-free for several months.

The Yellow Fever epidemic in New Orleans and Florida in the late 1870s proved a strange blessing for the Galt family. William, Selena’s father had recovered from his illness and was called to manage the Louisville quarantine, “a God send at $10 a day.”

The “mortifications and deprivations and makeshifts” were hardest on Selena’s older sister, Alex, who, although nothing definite could be found ailing her, in Selena’s words “simply gave up and died.”

There are two more experiences in Selena’s life that serve to underline the somewhat precarious nature of middle-class life. The choice to move to Montreal was in fact less a choice and more an economic necessity. Rob had lost his job as Assistant to the President of the L&N on rather obscure grounds. Apparently Milton Smith, President, had Rob involved in some political dealings that Smith then felt had gone too far and compromised the L&N.

It appears that Rob may have been the scapegoat. In his year long attempt to find gainful employment he

---

141 Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diary, 1933-1938, HL.
142 Ibid., 75.
143 Ibid., 76.
144 Ibid., 75.
145 Ibid.
146 Ibid., 76.
147 Ibid., 77.
148 Ibid., 130.
went first to the Louisville newspaper the *Courier and Journal*, a long time supporter of the L&N and then became the Secretary to the Democratic Committee during the election of 1896.\(^{149}\) The Democrats lost and Rob was again left without a job and according to Selena was never paid for his time with the party.\(^{150}\) It was at this point that Charles M. Hays moved from the Wabash to the GTR and Rob approached him for employment.\(^{151}\) He was given a position with a small salary and required to move at once to Montreal. Selena was left on her own to pack up and move the family to Montreal as soon as possible, a condition that would become a pattern in her life in future moves.\(^{152}\) Selena remembers this particular experience as “horrible.” She was forced to sell crops and livestock for anything she could get and in one instance she was stiffed by the buyer for payment. Things had been so difficult financially that “some of the horses and cows went to pay the grocery bill, which had been running unpaid for so long.”\(^{153}\)

While things improved for Rob and Selena, Rob’s sister and brother-in-law were facing similar difficulties—bankruptcy, unemployment. Unfortunately for the sister, her husband was to die in an accident leaving her in a state of poverty and dependent on family for her support and that of her two small children.\(^{154}\) In 1897, sister Mamie died and Selena and Rob agree to take on the responsibility of her two surviving children.\(^{155}\) Despite the relative affluence of the Galt and Ingram families, these stories paint a picture of a tenuous hold on middle-class existence, one of alternating periods of prosperity and poverty that most certainly reinforced Selena’s sense of the importance of duty, devotion to family and hard work learned as a child. More significantly for the Ingram family, this period of financial insecurity and the career connection

\(^{149}\) Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diary, 1933-1938, HL, p. 130.
\(^{150}\) Ibid., 131.
\(^{151}\) Ibid.
\(^{152}\) Ibid.
\(^{153}\) Ibid.
\(^{154}\) Ibid., 137.
\(^{155}\) Ibid., 141.
with the railroad industry paved the way for their cross-border journey from the southern United States north into Canada.

    Selena had a fascination for travel from a very early age which must have contributed to the ease with which she accepted her “foreign” travels. She wrote that as a child she: “always wanted to go any where and every where that promised any change or excitement. I think I was often lonely and bored, for I was possessed of boundless energy, for which I was always seeking an outlet.”156 She prepared herself and her children with language lessons in French and Spanish and took a great deal of pride in her ability to make herself understood without having to rely on interpreters.

    As already described, she found the “strange & foreign” fascinating, but she also struggled with the challenges of different foods and customs. On one night spent in Nogales Selena and her daughter were forced, in the absence of any alternative, to find their dinner in “nothing more nor less than a saloon!” The experience left her feeling “very queer.” The saloon keeper apparently accommodated their needs as they “were shown into a little sort of room partitioned off the kitchen” that offered some privacy. Despite the discomfort and fears of strange foods, Selena declared that the food was good and they enjoyed it immensely.157 While Selena’s life experience prepared her for adversity her difficulty with entering a saloon belies her middle-class training and conditioning. Selena’s experience of Mexican society and culture continually challenged her middle-class notions of respectability.

    In the days leading up to the decision to take the job in Mexico, Robert and Selena made a number of exploratory trips. In the pages of her diary Selena describes her impressions of the country, her excitement and her reservations. On one trip she extracted from Mr. Finley, Master

---

156 Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Memoirs (1920), Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diary, 1933-1938, HL., p. 35.
157 Diary entry 2 Jan 1909: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1909, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, HL.
Car Builder on the SPdeM, that he thought “it would be hard to live there comfortably” but still felt that there was much that sounded interesting. Reports of a “scarcity of good food – eggs, milk, beef, bacon, etc. (& vegetables),” meaning food that was familiar to them, and the trouble with the Yaquis Indians frightened her but not enough to prevent them from making the move.

On their first visit to Guaymas she pronounced it “quaint & interesting.”

In the weeks and months that followed the decision to “pull up stakes” Selena, again was on her own as she is much of the time, responsible for handling all arrangements for this move from Los Angeles to Empalme, as she was for the move from Louisville to Montreal. During her time in Empalme Selena would enjoy traveling in the country that she found both quaint and exotic but pine for the well-known traditions of home—Thanksgiving, Easter and Christmas services in the Episcopalian Church.

Selena found the religious practices in these primarily Roman Catholic communities both fascinating and repulsive. During a trip in May of 1909, along the western coast of Mexico on the steamboat Luella, a man was scalded to death with steam from a broken pipe. Much to Selena’s horror, “He was carefully wrapped up & prepared – but was dropped into the ocean without a prayer or a word! How heathen & barbarous is this country! What a field for missionaries!” In Montreal in the fall of 1896 Selena witnessed the funeral procession of the Roman Catholic Archbishop that she described as “ghastly!” The body of the Archbishop was carried through the streets on an open bier with his face and head exposed. A procession of monks and friars followed behind the bier in the snow and slush, barefoot and bareheaded. The

158 Diary entry for 11 Sept 1908: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1908, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Dairies 1900-1908, HL.
159 Diary entry for 12 Sept 1908: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1908, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Dairies 1900-1908, HL.
160 Diary entry for 13 Sept 1908: Ibid.
161 Diary entry on 9 May 1909: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1909, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Dairies 1909-1916, HL.
procession ended with the congregation tearing the pall to shreds in their frantic haste to obtain a “relic” with which to work miracles.\textsuperscript{162} Despite the tremendous contrast between the traditions and practices of her own Episcopal Church and that of the Roman Catholics, Selena was clearly open to adventure and found her life in Mexico and French Canada to be an enjoyable one.\textsuperscript{163}

The children too faced the challenges of life in a foreign country. Selena described, in wonderful prose, what it was like for this transplanted family of American southerners to adjust to Canada—a “foreign country”—learning a new language, dealing with new customs. They were equipped with “heavy overcoats and warm underclothing” so as not to “suffer, even though the climate was so severe.”\textsuperscript{164} In school Stuart Ingram, Selena’s son, faced many a battle with Canadian children who insisted on calling him a “Yankee,” a defined insult to the grandson of a Confederate soldier. Selena went to great lengths to explain to Stuart that “he was a ‘Yankee’ in the eyes of those boys,” all Americans were ‘Yankees’ to those Canadian school boys.\textsuperscript{165}

French was not the only language challenge for the Ingram family. The children were quick to pick up Canadian English, becoming “more or less Canadian in their speech.”\textsuperscript{166} They learned to call boys “lads” and pen points “nibs”; to not say “nickels” and “dimes” when out shopping or risk be identified as American; to call crackers “biscuits” and rolls “buns”; to watch horse races on the ice and play hockey.\textsuperscript{167}

Through Selena’s manuscript and diaries we are able to fill in some of the gaps in our understanding of Robert Ingram’s work life and then reach beyond the workplace to examine family life in this transnational narrative. In her manuscript and her diaries, Selena painted a

\textsuperscript{162} Selena Gray Galt Ingran, Memoirs (1920), Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diary, 1933-1938, HL, p. 134.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 132.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 133.
\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 134.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., 134-5.
picture of the somewhat precarious existence of middle class life. We gain insights into her perceptions of social class and race in her relationships and challenges with domestic servants, her understanding of concepts of respectability and her discomfort with being treated in a manner that she felt to be above her station in life. While her middle class status places her at a distance from the women in the lives of the workingmen on the railroads, she shares with them a sense of isolation and loneliness, the result of being separated for long periods of time from her husband and having to manage her household and her family on her own. From their origins in the racially segregated American south to their sojourns across borders into Canada and Mexico, Selena’s story helps us to understand the social and historical context and the daily lived experience, the construction of culture if you will, that informed the choices and decisions made by this couple in both their work and family life across North American borders.

CONCLUSION

By the time the Grand Trunk lines connected with those of the Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe in Chicago in the 1880s, a truly continental space had been created on the North American continent. In this chapter we have seen how the expansion of the continental rail network put into motion the largest workforce in a single industry in history. Whether in the northeast or the southwest, as an employer the railroad directed the recruitment of labor for construction in areas lacking a local source of cheap labor and from time to time the relocation of entire crews from one region to another along the same railroad line. Despite legislation intended to prevent such action, in times of conflict between the corporation and organized labor, it was common practice for the railroad companies to recruit strikebreakers to increase the company’s advantage against striking workers. Workers in the running trades migrated from one
line to another in search of promotion; and, as part of an expanding informal management training and recruiting process, upper level executive and management level employees were recruited across systems, between corporations and often across international borders. Although geographic mobility was the norm for industrial workers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many who worked for the railroad on the North American continent found themselves moving back and forth across international boundaries as a function of their employment within a single transportation industry. Those with possibly the greatest influence in this continental movement were those at the management level with the power to extend particular cultural practices from one region to another and from one country to another. Exemplary of this continental movement were individuals like Robert and Selena Ingram that grew up in the racially segregated American south imbued with protestant and middle class values; gained initial railroad management experience in that same environment and then applied that knowledge and experience in locations in Canada and Mexico. The next chapter will move away from a specific comparative approach dealing with the two cross-border corridors to consider the continental implications of the relationship between the two railroad companies and the relevant nation states.
Chapter 4

A Certain Railroad Logic:
The search for traffic and the shortest route

"It has been found in the United States that the power of a Railroad to protect and increase its business depends much upon its length, and the extent of the territory it can touch."

William B. Strong, President, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway.

“In all but the very earliest years of railway planning and building in Canada, two aims have been dominant. One has been political, the desire to clamp together the settlements scattered across the continent, to fill the waste spaces and thus secure the physical basis for national unity and strength. The other has been commercial, the desire to capture the trade and traffic of an ever-expanding and ever-receding west. Local convenience and local interests have played their part, but in the larger strategy of railway building the dominant motives have been political and commercial.”

Excerpt from Oscar D. Skelton, The Railway Builders

There is a logic to the nature of the decision-making process in the railroad industry that stems from the necessity to standardize equipment and operations to ensure the safe and efficient movement of traffic and the management of vast workforces across great distances. Thus there are some aspects of the nationally-bounded historical narratives relating to the history of the railroads that are, in fact, transferable across North American international boundaries. The nature of work on the railroad and the standard operating procedures are very similar regardless of the location of the line. This made possible and desirable the kind of mobility and migration of railroad workers and managers discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter extends the examination of the role of the railroad in the creation of a North American continental space to

---

the perspective of the movement of capital. What were the motivating factors that led to this
cross-border development of railroad lines? How did these early international enterprises
perceive this extension of business into foreign territory and in what way, if any, did it effect
their general operations? What does it mean to be an ‘American’ company operating in Mexico
or a ‘Canadian’ (in the earliest time period, ‘British’) company operating in the United States?
How did the respective governments respond to this incursion of foreign business?

The intent here is to disentangle the factors that led these railroad corporations to extend
their operations across international boundaries from the larger political and economic motives
of politicians and to examine the struggle that ensued between the companies and local
authorities around the application of various laws and regulations. In taking this particular
approach the objective is not to evaluate the relative success or failure of these international
enterprises nor is it to assess the impact of this development on the receiving region. A great
deal of study has been conducted in that regard particularly in terms of the effect of American
foreign investment and operation of railroads in Mexico and Canada. Despite the fact that cross-
border development occurred on the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada (Grand Trunk) in its
infancy and on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (ATSF) after it had become a well
established system, both sought access to ocean trade, a condition that could not be met without
extending their operations across international boundary lines.\(^3\) The drive to secure freight
revenues in an increasingly competitive market place drove the decision to extend these domestic
operations across international boundaries. As such, both corporations expected to apply similar
methods and practices to the operation of these cross-border divisions similar to those that they
would apply to any other section of rail line under their control.

---
THE NARRATIVE OF DEVELOPMENT

Historians of all three countries have studied extensively the role of railroad development in the process of industrialization. The focus here though is not to simply re-examine that developmental narrative but to consider it in light of the fact that these particular roads broke the traditional mold by extending their operations across international borders, a fact not often addressed as part of the national developmental narratives and only in a very limited way in the corporate histories. It is this cross-border phenomenon and not the relative economic success or failure of these roads operating trans-nationally that is of interest. Consideration of the development of these two lines against the narrative of railroad development in the United States will help illuminate the similarities and differences between them.

There is a generally accepted pattern to the development in the United States that logically unfolds over time and space from the 1840s through the beginning of the twentieth century. The decades 1840s to the 1870s were devoted to local building followed by territorial expansion. The geographic extent of railroad building was initially along the Atlantic seaboard.

---


and then connecting east with west along the Mississippi River. The driving force behind this development was local traffic, linking existing market towns and transportation routes and a close identification of interests between the railroad company and the community they served. Railroads in this early period were often seen as complimentary to existing modes of travel—waterways, canals, stage routes—in the simplest form conceived as portage routes. “Territorial development” followed, defined by historical geographer Russell S. Kirby as the near monopoly of freight and passenger traffic within a particular district or region, with a corresponding shift in interest from local to through traffic. This condition of “near monopoly” was achieved through the construction of branch and feeder lines as well as the acquisition of smaller existing roads. East of the Mississippi three hundred and fifty companies controlled 31,000 miles of track by 1860.

The 1870s and 1880s can be characterized as a period of both cooperation and competition. Cooperation took the form of the standardization of equipment and operating procedures—standard gauge, standard time—which increased the efficiency of through traffic transfer between lines with cooperative operating agreements. But competition for these through routes increased and railroad companies responded defensively with interterritorial expansion achieved through a variety of strategies including: the direct construction of lines into the territory of another road; mergers or the consolidation of lines; preferential agreements; and rate wars. Competition through territorial and interterritorial expansion into the far west was

---

8 Chandler, The Visible Hand. 83.
11 Kirby, "Nineteenth-century patterns of railroad development on the Great Plains": 158.
12 Licht, Working for the Railroad. 10.
14 Kirby, "Nineteenth-century patterns of railroad development on the Great Plains": 159.
the driving force behind the dramatic growth in the rail network in the 1870s, from 31,000 to 53,000 miles.\textsuperscript{15} The need to ensure the continued flow of freight and passengers through the direct control of connections with major sources of traffic in the 1880s prompted the building of more track miles than in any previous period completing a national network of 93,000 miles.\textsuperscript{16} The result of this defensive response to competition was the creation of what historian Alfred Chandler referred to as “megacorporations” or systems building through the 1880s and into the 1890s.\textsuperscript{17}

Speaking of the emergence of the multi-national corporation in the United States, historian Mira Wilkins argues that before American companies could imagine themselves as international they first had to first achieve a sense of their operation as national in scope.\textsuperscript{18} This was made possible, Wilkins argues, in the period between the end of the American Civil War and the 1890s by the dramatic expansion of rail transportation and communication—the period of competition and defensive expansion that produced a national rail network and the megacorporations or rail systems mentioned above. Prior to the 1890s the only “genuinely multi-national” companies were those engaged in the building of railroads and the extraction of natural resources that had extended across international boundaries to nearby sites in Mexico and Canada.\textsuperscript{19}

Wilkins argues that this pre-1890s cross-border expansion was simply an extension of domestic operations or “spill-over” development.\textsuperscript{20} Citing examples of railroad and mining

\textsuperscript{15} Licht, \textit{Working for the Railroad}. 10.
\textsuperscript{17} Chandler, \textit{The Visible Hand}. 147.
\textsuperscript{18} Wilkins, \textit{The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise}. 35.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 35-6.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 114, 125, 147; Kuntz Ficker concurs with Wilkin’s assessment of systems building strategy and “spill-over” development in her study of the ATSF in its affiliation with the Mexican Central Railway. She argues that the Mexican Central and by extension not the Sonora Railway was the first large spill over investment. Kuntz Ficker, "Economic Backwardness and Firm Strategy": 270.
development, she argues that in the Mexican context the border was “meaningless.” Wilkins makes a distinction between companies with more broadly defined international interests and those conducting business nearby and or in less developed countries. The former often but not always made adaptations that reflected a truly genuine multi-national approach “sensitive to local traditions and respecting local jurisdictions and policies.” The later, although the actual negotiation of operations varied somewhat in each case based on the response of the Canadian and Mexican governments to the incursion of US capital, for the most part “operated simply ‘extra-nationally,’ using methods and procedures adopted at home and merely extending the domestic enterprise.”

This model of US railroad development, from local line to multi-national system, is a useful framework for comparing the development of the ATSF with that of the Grand Trunk, one that can bring into higher relief similarities and differences between these cross-border narratives along with the suggestion of possible causal explanations.

THE PATH TO CROSS-BORDER DEVELOPMENT

The transition from domestic to multi-national enterprise came at different stages in the development of the ATSF and the Grand Trunk but for similar reasons. Each company sought access to transoceanic trade through the extension of operations to an ocean port. Each was forced to consider extra-national options: the Grand Trunk in search of a year-round ice-free alternative to the port of Montreal, and the ATSF an alternative to the port at San Francisco completely controlled by the rival Southern Pacific Railway (SP). (see Figures 3 & 4) For the

---

21 Wilkins, *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise*. 126, 135.
22 Ibid., 200.
23 Ibid., 79.
24 Ibid., 200.
Grand Trunk that ice-free port was an early developmental imperative, one of the first lines to be opened and acquired by the railroad after its incorporation in 1852. The ATSF, by the time of cross-border expansion in 1882, was a mature system with lines stretching across Kansas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and into parts of California. While the developmental path differs dramatically, the evidence confirms Wilkin’s logic that the corporate vision of the Grand Trunk as both national and international was present at the earliest stage and emerged for the ATSF once the image of a transcontinental domestic line, based on the successful territorial and interterritorial expansion, was well established.

Figure 5 The Grand Trunk System, 1850s.  
The growth of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway follows the accepted trajectory for US railroad development from early local development, through territorial growth, interterritorial expansion, and finally to system building on a national and then international level. The initial building was locally controlled and linked Topeka west to the Kansas/Colorado State line. By the early 1870s the ATSF controlled the beginnings of a network across the southern part of Kansas and by the mid-1870s was the dominant line in the State and pursuing territorial expansion into the states of Colorado and New Mexico.

Expansion “in advance of actual business necessity” was financed through the effective management of the sale of land acquired through government grants—the ATSF was in effect a developmental agency in the State of Kansas. The Atchison controlled approximately three million acres of land between Atchison, Kansas and the State of Colorado concentrated in fertile

---

26 Johnson and Supple, *Boston Capitalists and Western Railroads*, 298; Kirby, R. S., "Nineteenth-century patterns of railroad development on the Great Plains": 163.
27 Johnson and Supple, *Boston Capitalists and Western Railroads*, 293-4.
river valleys. The ATSF managed an aggressive settlement and colonization campaign designed to ensure the growth of its freight revenue. Through the sale of this land along the Kansas main line the number of farms grew from 6,000 in 1870 to 21,500 by the end of the decade; the population in the State grew from 364,000 to almost one million between 1870 and 1880; and by 1880 the production of corn had increased seven times and wheat ten times the production in 1870. According to plan, the growth in agricultural produce resulted in a corresponding growth in freight revenue.

As the ATSF network grew financial control of the road shifted from local individuals to investors in Boston, Massachusetts. By 1873 fourteen of the members of the Board of Directors were Bostonians. Thomas Nickerson played a significant role in the shift in development strategy from territorial to transnational as the driving force behind expansion to the Pacific coast and development in Mexico. A retired Boston shipper and merchant businessman, Nickerson was president of the ATSF from 1874 to 1880, of the Sonora System in 1881 and of its associated line the Mexican Central from 1880 to 1884. The involvement of the Bostonians as investors came at the point when the ATSF held essentially a monopoly over its Kansas territory and was poised to undertake expansion that would produce the largest railroad system in the world by 1887. This shift from local control and territorial development to a

---

28 Johnson and Supple, *Boston Capitalists and Western Railroads*, 294.
29 Ibid., 293-4, 297.
30 Ibid., 292.
32 Johnson and Supple, *Boston Capitalists and Western Railroads*, 292; Bryant, *History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway*, 20; Officers - Sonora Railway, before and after becoming operational and integrated in the Santa Fe in Fall of 1882. (Fall 1882) RR790.2 Sonora Ry Co, Ltd.: Letters to the Treasurers 1882-1884 (vol. 18, part 1 of 3), ATSF, KSHS.
separation of financial and operational controls and the development of an interterritorial system is consistent with Kirby’s developmental model.\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure7.png}
\end{center}

\textbf{Figure 7} The Santa Fe System ca. 1880.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure8.png}
\end{center}

\textbf{Figure 8} Connections across the southern border ca. 1882.

\textsuperscript{33} Chandler, \textit{The Visible Hand}. 163; Kirby, "Nineteenth-century patterns of railroad development on the Great Plains". 167.
From its early inception as a small local line of seventeen miles in 1869, the ATSF grew, by the late 1870s, to a territorial network of about 700 miles mostly in the State of Kansas by the late 1870s.\textsuperscript{34} Spurred on by interterritorial competition, specifically the hold that the SP had on access to the Pacific Coast in California and with Jay Gould’s Denver & Rio Grande for the mountain passes, the ATSF began construction in 1878 of the Sonora System running from Benson, Arizona through Nogales to the Pacific coast port of Guaymas, Mexico. The line opened for business in 1882, the first major railroad line in Mexico. Construction on the Mexican Central was completed in 1885. By 1887 the ATSF was the largest transcontinental system in the United States covering 7,000 miles of track stretching from Chicago to the Missouri River and from the Missouri to the coast of the Gulf of Mexico in Texas and the Pacific Coast in Mexico and California.\textsuperscript{35}

William. B. Strong was the man responsible for overseeing this transformation from territorial railroad to transcontinental system.\textsuperscript{36} Part of a growing group of professional managers, Strong’s career trajectory read very much like that of Charles Hays and Robert Ingram in the previous chapter.\textsuperscript{37} Born in 1837 in Brownington, Vermont, Strong acquired a business education and entered railroad service in 1855 as an “expert” telegraph operator with the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad Company in Wisconsin.\textsuperscript{38} He worked his way up through the ranks to Vice-President and General Manager of the ATSF in 1877 and then

\textsuperscript{34} Johnson and Supple, \textit{Boston Capitalists and Western Railroads}, 298; Bryant, \textit{History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway}, 2.

\textsuperscript{35} Chandler, \textit{The Visible Hand}. 164; Johnson and Supple, \textit{Boston Capitalists and Western Railroads}, 299; Bryant, \textit{History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway}, 78.

\textsuperscript{36} Johnson and Supple, \textit{Boston Capitalists and Western Railroads}. 299.

\textsuperscript{37} Bryant, \textit{History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway}. 41; Chandler, \textit{The Visible Hand}. 164.

\textsuperscript{38} Bryant, \textit{History of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway}. 41.
President from 1881 to 1889.39 "The history of Western railroad construction for the past quarter century," according to Strong, "has demonstrated that successful results can only be attained by occupying territory promptly, and often in advance of actual business necessity."40 Strong’s expansion philosophy along with the need to ensure the continued flow of freight and passengers through the direct control of connections with major sources of traffic lead to the completion of the cross-border line from Arizona into Mexico.

Figure 9 The SP controls access to the port city of San Francisco, ca. 1898.

Management of the Grand Trunk also believed in the prompt occupation of territory to increase but also to protect sources of revenue. Charles Hays, President of the Grand Trunk from 1895 to 1912 not only supported that view but put it into action. Reporting in 1904 to the Board

---

of Directors regarding the proposal for westward expansion to the Pacific coast of Canada Hays argued that traffic was already coming to the eastern lines of the Grand Trunk from the western region and, in light of growing competition from the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian Northern, a large portion of that traffic would be permanently lost if not secured by the creation of the Grand Trunk Pacific. But Edward Watkins, President of the Grand Trunk in the 1860s forty years earlier and just ten years after the company’s incorporation made a similar argument in favor of westward expansion one, however, that suggested transcontinental system building should come before territorial and interterritorial expansion: “To work the Grand Trunk as a gradually improving property would . . . be easy; but to work it so as to produce _a great success_ in a few years can only . . . be done in one way. . . through the extension of railway communication to the Pacific.” The reality was that the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada initially was conceived as both a national and international enterprise.

The development trajectory of the Grand Trunk was not as neat as that of the ATSF but shared many of the same characteristics. The building of the Grand Trunk predated the existence of a truly national economy in fact it predated the nation itself. As O.D. Skelton so eloquently observed, the motivation for railroad building in Canada was always both political and commercial. From the very outset it was driven both by defensive national political concerns to create east/west transcontinental connections and in defense of competition with American roads for emerging western freight.

In Canada, railroad building began primarily in Lower Canada in the 1830s. As with early railroads in the US, these were portage roads linking one waterway or canal with another.

---

The first road of this type to be completed was the Champlain and St. Lawrence (1836) that connected the Montreal to New York City by ferry, rail and finally boat down the Richelieu River to the Hudson River. The rail portion of this connection was all of fifteen miles. More lines of this nature were undertaken in both Upper and Lower Canada. However, by 1850, the period of significant territorial development in the United States, there were still only sixty-six miles of track in operation in Canada compared with approximately 9,000 miles in the United States. By the opening of the first seventeen miles of the ATSF in 1869 track mileage in the US had grown to over fifty thousand miles compared with two thousand six hundred in Canada. But of the 2,600 miles, roughly 800 were owned and or operated by the Grand Trunk of Canada.

From its very inception the Grand Trunk was an international trunk line connecting the growing commerce from the west to an ice-free port on the Atlantic coast. While the traditional histories of the Grand Trunk always begin with the story of the building of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic/Atlantic and St. Lawrence in 1845, the Grand Trunk itself was not incorporated as a Canadian company until 1852, just months before the opening of the Montreal to Portland line. From the outset the creation of the Grand Trunk involved construction of new lines combined with the acquisition and amalgamation of smaller lines. The original act of incorporation provided for the completion of a route from the City of Toronto to Montreal, there to connect

---

46 Chandler, The Railroads the Nation's First Big Business, 13; Legget, Railroads of Canada, 230.
47 Legget, Railroads of Canada, 230.
with the St. Lawrence and Atlantic that was leased by the Grand Trunk for a term of 999 years.\textsuperscript{49} (See Figure 3) A second statute gave authority for the construction of a line from Quebec City to Trois Pistoles and then extended to the eastern boundary of the Province.\textsuperscript{50} The third statute provided authority for the amalgamation of any smaller lines with junction points or connections along the main line from the Great Lakes to the eastern boundary of Lower Canada (Quebec).\textsuperscript{51} By 1859 the line extended west as far as Detroit and by 1860 east from Montreal as far as Riviere du Loup, for a total of one thousand one hundred and twelve miles.\textsuperscript{52} (see Figure 5) Smaller lines along the desired route were bought out and construction was undertaken only to link one existing part of the line with another. As suggested by the expansion philosophy espoused by Watkins, priority was given to growth initially in terms of system building rather than local or territorial development.

Interterritorial competition came before territorial expansion and was first encountered by the Grand Trunk in south western Ontario in 1867 around an attempt to negotiate an operating agreement with the Great Western. The Great Western controlled the region of southern Ontario between Niagara Falls and Windsor.\textsuperscript{53} The negotiations failed and the Grand Trunk resolved the issue of competition by constructing a competing line through Sarnia with ferry connection across the St. Clair River and then running south to Detroit.\textsuperscript{54} The Grand Trunk would later acquire the Great Western lines (1882) during a period of defensive territorial expansion around its eastern divisions.\textsuperscript{55} By 1899 the Grand Trunk system, with the addition of the Central

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{50} Lovett, Canada and the Grand Trunk. 35.
\bibitem{51} Ibid., 35.
\bibitem{52} Skelton, The Railway Builders. 78.
\bibitem{53} Ibid., 86-7, 104-5.
\bibitem{54} Ibid., 179.
\bibitem{55} Ibid., 179.
\end{thebibliography}
Vermont Railroad as a subsidiary line, covered roughly five thousand miles stretching from the Atlantic port of Portland, Maine through Quebec, Ontario, crossing the Canada/US border again at Sarnia, Ontario and Port Huron, Michigan and then on to Chicago.\textsuperscript{56} The Grand Trunk had international and national aspirations long before the threat of competition produced defensive territorial expansion within its eastern region.

The financing and management of the Grand Trunk was never solely a local undertaking as it was initially with the ATSF. The road was financed through a variety of mechanisms—local bond subscriptions, Provincial government loans and loan guarantees from the British Parliament.\textsuperscript{57} The Board of Directors and management were based in London, England until the hiring of Charles M. Hays, as general manager in 1895.\textsuperscript{58} An American railroad man brought in to retrieve the company from the edge of certain bankruptcy, Hays was President of the corporation during the period of the transcontinental extension of the line to the Pacific coast and eastern regional development.\textsuperscript{59}

The Canadian government had first offered the Grand Trunk the opportunity to build the transcontinental line eventually constructed under the auspices of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) but the management and Board turned the offer down when it became clear that the required route was north of Lake Superior rather than connecting with their existing line at Chicago. The government had a vested interest in the completion of a transcontinental system having formed the Canadian Government Railway in 1867 to take over the existing lines in Nova Scotia (known as the Intercolonial Railway) and constructed a line to connect with the Grand Trunk eastern terminus at Rivière du Loup. Prior to the entering into an agreement to support the

\textsuperscript{56} Legget, \textit{Railroads of Canada}. 119.
\textsuperscript{57} Legget, \textit{Railroads of Canada}. 37, 45, 122.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 120; Skelton, \textit{The Railway Builders}. 200-1.
westward expansion of the Grand Trunk in 1903, the Laurier administration first proposed a merger between the Canadian Northern and Grand Trunk —the Canadian Northern Railway (CNR) to handle the western traffic transferring to the Grand Trunk for travel to points east. The Grand Trunk rejected the proposal but managed to retain government support for the building of its Pacific coast line in direct competition with both the CPR and CNR.60

The plan eventually approved under the National Transcontinental Railway Act involved the construction of a line from Moncton, New Brunswick to Quebec City and then in a more northerly route than the other two lines west to a point on the British Columbia coast.61 The line from Moncton to Winnipeg was to be built by the government and operated by the Grand Trunk and the remainder west constructed and operated by the Grand Trunk.62 Three lines were eventually built and competed for the Pacific coast and western traffic: the CPR, the CNR and the Grand Trunk Pacific (subsidiary of the Grand Trunk) which opened for operation in 1914.

Despite its longevity, the Grand Trunk suffered from continuous financial difficulties beginning as early as 1856 and always resolved with government assistance.63 In the opening years of the twentieth-century, over building would send the Grand Trunk into yet another bankruptcy cycle just as it had the ATSF in the 1890s. By 1915, when owing to the high cost of operations the Grand Trunk was unable to take up the lease as agreed, the government was forced first to assume operation of the National Transcontinental, along with the Intercolonial, under the auspices of the Canadian Government Railway.64 By 1918, Canadian Government

60 Legget, Railroads of Canada. 121-2; Skelton, The Railway Builders. 211.
61 Skelton, The Railway Builders. 207.
62 Ibid., 208.
63 den Otter, The Philosophy of Railways. 101-3.
Railways assumed control of the CNR and in 1920 the Grand Trunk Pacific. In 1922 the Canadian National Railway Company (CN) was incorporated and in 1923 the Grand Trunk was amalgamated with the Canadian Northern Railway by order in council.

Based on the foregoing, there appears to be no doubt that by the 1890s the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway and the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada were in fact “megacorporations.” The growth of the ATSF followed the model of railroad development articulated by Kirby developing its network and control in Kansas before extending its reach northward to Chicago and south crossing the border into Mexico. The growth of the Grand Trunk turned this model on its head. It began as an international line, the first on the continent, and spent the first years of its development building a system that crossed the Canada/US border at two points and connected the Great Lakes to a year-round Atlantic port at Portland, Maine. It was not until the furthest reach of the system was completed at the turn of the twentieth-century, that the Grand Trunk turned attentions to filling in its network in New England and southern Ontario with the acquisition of the Great Western and Central Vermont railways. Both corporations met the criteria of “genuinely multi-national” as defined by Wilkins having extended across international boundaries to nearby sites in Mexico and the United States. But was this cross-border expansion simply an extension of domestic operations or “spill-over” development, as Wilkins suggests?

RAILROAD LOGIC AND “SPILL-OVER” DEVELOPMENT

Kirby, "Nineteenth-century patterns of railroad development on the Great Plains": 167.
Wilkins, The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise, 35-6.
Ibid., 114, 125, 147.
There are really two conditions that in combination demonstrate that cross-border development in both cases was “spill-over” development or the extension of domestic operations into foreign territory. Following the discussion above it is not difficult to reach the conclusion that had access to transoceanic trade been available to these enterprises domestically cross-border operations would not have been a necessary consideration suggesting that this was an international venture in aid of a domestic enterprise. Secondly, once pursued as an alternative the very nature of the industry or what I choose to refer to as a kind of “railroad logic”—the necessity to ensure safe and efficient operations through the use of strict standardized operating procedures—was applied, “using methods and procedures adopted at home and merely extending the domestic enterprise.” The vast geography traversed by the railroads and the size of the bureaucracy needed to manage large organizations over great distances required a standardization of operations that could not and would not be altered by the crossing of national boundaries.

The evidence will show however, that the border was not altogether meaningless as Wilkins suggested, for the various states used it to define legal jurisdiction in the application of laws and statutes relating to the regulation of railroads, their freight and passengers both domestic and foreign. All three governments devised methods to regulate the operation of railroads within their national jurisdiction and then to clarify the application of such jurisdiction over the operation of foreign railroads within their borders. The corporations struggled with these differences as well. The evidence suggests that, although these were instances of corporations doing business nearby, the reality of railroad operations and the need for standardization produced both a corporate expectation to act “extra-nationally,” as Wilkins has suggested, but the necessity of ensuring ongoing business also required a degree of adaptation.

---

70 Wilkins, *The Emergence of Multinational Enterprise*, 200.
and compromise. National corporate identity—or defining what it meant to be an American corporation operating in Mexico or a Canadian corporation operating in the United States—formed a part of this struggle. Drawing on evidence found in corporate and government records, this section will examine ways that both the railroads and the regulatory arms of the state struggled with cross-border issues relating to the movement of workers, competition and rate setting and ownership. What follows are selected cases that illustrate this phenomenon of “spill-over” development for the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada and the Sonora System of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe.

In making the case for “spill-over” development on the Grand Trunk Railway the first illustration involves a dispute between the State of Vermont and the Grand Trunk over the simple act of moving a crew from one station to another to increase the efficiency in the dispatching of train orders, a fundamental operations decision undertaken by the company on a frequent basis but in this case it involved crossing a border. The second involved a dispute over cross-border competition brought before the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1889 by representatives of an American railway with through lines operating in direct competition with the Grand Trunk in southern Ontario, Canada (the Michigan Central). The charge involved the application of ICC rules to freight being transported from the United States into Canada, and the debate revolved around where ICC jurisdiction began and ended. Company testimony before the ICC, and correspondence between company representatives and various state and federal officials, document clearly the initial struggle to justify the company’s position with respect to basic operational necessities and decision making followed by adaptation and compliance with the laws of the host country.
The confusion regarding national jurisdiction and ownership of the Montreal to Portland division of the Grand Trunk has its origin in the 1840s and 1850s with the financing and construction of its predecessors the St. Lawrence and Atlantic/Atlantic and St. Lawrence. Under the original Vermont charter the Atlantic and St. Lawrence was responsible for the construction of the line from Portland, Maine up to some point on the international boundary. The exact route had not been determined at that point, in fact there were six possibilities under consideration. Money ran out before the section of the line was completed to the border and the American company turned to their Canadian counterparts—the St. Lawrence and Atlantic—for assistance. It was agreed that the Canadian company would assume responsibility for the financing and construction of that last fifteen miles in exchange for running the line along the west Nulhegan River to Island Pond. Once the line was operational, customs officials would inspect the cars and seal them at Coaticook or at Island Pond before crossing the last forty-four miles between the two points and immigration inspections would be conducted in transit between the two points. These facts combined with the Grand Trunk’s decision to establish the division point at Island Pond reinforced in practice an identification of the line from Island Pond north to

---

72 Ibid., 43-4; In this letter Rosevear responds to questions about the decision to locate the junction point at Island Pond when the original Act authorizing the construction of the line through the State of Vermont indicates that it should run to a point on the boundary line. While indicating that he was unable to determine the exact reason for locating the junction other than on the border he suggests that the Island Pond “offered accommodation for the construction of the requisite interchange facilities.” J. M. Rosevear to Wm. McNab, Chairman, Valuation Committee, 02 Jan 1919, p. 1-2, RG30 13243, File 16, Island Pond to Boundary Line, Federal Valuation 1919, CNR, LAC.
73 Albert Gravel, *Histoire De Coaticook* (Sherbrooke, Que.: "La Tribune", 1925), 22; Holt, *The Grand Trunk in New England*. 43; Franks W. Roberts to James D. Porter, Assistant Secretary of State, 06 May 1886, Vol 1 12/21/64 to 9/30/82, T55 #1 Call No. 10-63, Despatches From US Consuls in Coaticook, 1864-1906, Records of the State Department, NARA.; T.B. Williams to W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, Ottawa, 20 Jul 1908, Vol 539 26B, Reel C10628, Immigration Branch, LAC.
Montreal as Canadian, a practice that would put the Grand Trunk in conflict with the State of Vermont over labor practices in the 1890s.\textsuperscript{74}

In September of 1896 the Grand Trunk Railway was expanding the role of its operations at Island Pond, Vermont and transferred a crew across the border from Montreal. Transferring crews from one point to the other along the line was part of normal operations. In fact in the same month, changes were made in the dispatching of train orders requiring a move of employees from Toronto to Belleville, Ontario, and from Portland, Maine to Island Pond, with similar action taken earlier by the company at Stratford.\textsuperscript{75} In response to the cross-border transfer various US government officials with jurisdiction over the port of entry at Island Pond raised questions as to whether this action constituted a contravention of the 1885 Alien Labor Contract Law.

The US Alien Contract Labor Law was enacted in 1885 and subsequently revised and extended in 1891 and 1903. Under this law contract was extended to include those workers recruited by agents of capital on the basis of pre-payment of their travel or assisting in any way

\textsuperscript{74} Holt, \textit{The Grand Trunk in New England}. 43; Under the auspices of the US Interstate Commerce Commission a process to determine the value of real property owned and operated by railroad companies in the United States was undertaken in 1919 and it is in this context that the issue of ownership of these 16 miles of line between Island Pond and the Canadian boundary has arisen: William McNab to W. H. Biggar, VP and General Counsel, Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada, 06 Jan 1919, RG30 13243, File 16, Island Pond to Boundary Line, Federal Valuation 1919, CNR, LAC.; In response to enquiries from the ICC Valuation Committee, Rosevar provides his best report of the various Acts and agreements undertaken between the State of Vermont, the Atlantic and St. Lawrence Railway (the American section of the line) and the St. Lawrence and Atlantic (the Canadian section of the line). It would appear that the road and all rights were assigned first from the Atlantic and St. Lawrence to a trustee on behalf of the St. Lawrence and Atlantic and then directly to the St. Lawrence and Atlantic which ultimately became part of the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada. This would certainly be consistent other accounts of the American line being rescued from financial difficulty by the Canadian line: J. M. Rosevar to W. McNab, Chairman, Valuation Committee, 02 Jan 1919, p. 1-2, RG30 13243, File 16, Island Pond to Boundary Line, Federal Valuation 1919, CNR, LAC.; The details in this document confirm Rosevar’s assessment that in fact the line from Island Pond to the boundary is owned by the Canadian line. “In further consideration of the sum of 10 shillings current money of Canada Atlantic & St. Lawrence assigns all rights to those 16 miles of road, land, tracks, stations, engine houses, buildings, rents, revenues, etc. to St. Lawrence and Atlantic:” Mortgage of railroad between Island Pond and Canada, 11 Nov 1852, p. 2, 9, RG30 13243, File 16, Island Pond to Boundary Line, Federal Valuation 1919, CNR, LAC.

their migration or immigration into the United States, of particular concern to the labor movement, advocates of this legislation, were those imported as strikebreakers.\textsuperscript{76} The prescribed penalty was $1,000.00 for each offense, meaning each alien laborer imported.\textsuperscript{77} Exceptions were allowed in cases where the skilled labor needed could not be obtained from within the United States.\textsuperscript{78} It was this provision that the Grand Trunk would attempted to exploit in the indictment brought against the company by the State of Vermont in 1896.

Apparently, this was not the first time that the Grand Trunk had run into resistance in relation to the transport of workers across the border. An earlier account in 1888 suggested that sixty workers commuting across the border between Sarnia and Port Huron across the St. Clair River to work on the cross-border lines of the Grand Trunk were forced to cease the practice under the provisions of the Alien Labor Contract Law.\textsuperscript{79} In 1892 the company Solicitor, A. A. Strout, in correspondence with the General Manager indicated that he made various attempts over the past “two or three years” to get relief on this legislation directly from the Treasury Department in Washington, DC.\textsuperscript{80} Strout indicated that in response the Treasury Department reported that it had little if any influence given that complaints were made and indictments influenced by the representatives of labor organizations and “the Court was obliged to administer the law as it existed upon the statute books.”\textsuperscript{81} In this earlier instance, legal counsel suggested that quiet enquiries be made regarding the possibility of having the law amended to exempt such cases as these. But in the meantime, “I advise the termination of any contract relationship between such employees as would be likely to seek work in the States, and the railroad, and then

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Ibid., 51.}
\footnote{Orth, Samuel P., "The Alien Contract Labor Law": 51.}
\footnote{A. A. Strout to L. J. Seargeant, General Manager, Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, 1 Jan 1892, p. 1, RG30 Vol 13281 Eastern US Letterbook, August 3rd, 1891 - January, 1893, CNR, LAC.}
\footnote{Ibid.}
\end{footnotes}
hire the men when they get to the States as you would any strangers.”

Enquiries into the possible amendment of the statute had apparently proved unproductive as four years later the Grand Trunk faced an indictment brought by the State of Vermont.

In a series of communications between local government and railroad officials and the Treasury Department attempts were made to determine whether or not the company’s transfer of these workers constituted a contravention of the law. The employees in question included four Dispatchers, two clerks and two operators, one temporary and one permanent. The company’s intent was to rearrange the location from which train orders would originate, in the exact same manner as in the Toronto to Belleville case. Orders that originated from Montreal would now originate out of Island Pond for the section of line running north to Montreal—the Canadian section. According to a report made by the Deputy Collector of Customs at Island Pond to a Solicitor of the Treasury, only sixteen miles of the two hundred and forty four miles of track to be included in the responsibilities of these dispatchers would in fact be within the United States, suggesting the justification that they would still be doing the business of the Canadian portion of the line only.

Clearly the Grand Trunk expected to operate “extra-nationally,” applying the methods and practices in a uniform manner across the full extent of its international operations. The Solicitor for the Grand Trunk argued that the transfer of the dispatchers was necessary and “simply a transfer of part of the work force in the employ of the railroad from one point to

---

82 A. A. Strout to L. J. Seargeant, General Manager, Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, 1 Jan 1892, p. 2, RG30 Vol 13281 Eastern US Letterbook, August 3rd, 1891 - January, 1893, CNR, LAC.
84 F. A. Reeve to the Secretary of the Treasury, 29 Sep 1896, RG30 Vol 13269 1896 v-1897, File 5, Indictments Under Alien Labor Law - Vermont, CNR, LAC.
another to do the business of the road.” Solicitor Strout then attempted to use the exemption of skilled labor within the act to make his case when in a somewhat veiled threat he argued that this was a “corps of employees skilled in the various duties of the road” essential to carry on the business of transportation and that it was “necessary to transfer, from time to time, some of its employees from one part of the road to another, and without this liberty the business of the road would be crippled and the public put to inconvenience and damage.” Strout, on behalf of the company, repeatedly makes the argument that the extension of domestic operations from one part of the line to another including across international boundaries is necessary for the safe and effective operation of this transportation industry.

While the outcome of this indictment was not found in the corporate documents, it is clear that the management of the Grand Trunk expected to apply methods and practices used successfully in the country of origin (Canada) to its operations in a foreign country (United States). The earliest communications suggest that the company looked for ways to effectively have the law changed without success and also to consider options for circumventing the law by terminating and rehiring employees. There is no evidence that the company sought the intervention of the Canadian government on its behalf. As interpreted by the management of the Grand Trunk this was not an issue of whether the workers were foreign but whether there was in fact a contract for the purposes of importing labor which the Grand Trunk argued was not the case given that this particular crew had been in the continual employ with the Grand Trunk in Montreal. The nature of the railroad industry—large bureaucratically structured organizations

86 Ibid.
87 John Senter to A. A. Strout, Solicitor for the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, 2 Mar 1897, RG30 Vol 13269 1896 v-1897, File 5, Indictments Under Alien Labor Law – Vermont, CNR, LAC.
dependent on standardized operating procedures for efficient and safe operation—drove the expectation of Grand Trunk management to operate “extra-nationally” but as the next example illustrates the Grand Trunk also operated within the definition of a multi-national enterprise respecting local jurisdictions and policies governing its operations in the United States.

The struggle over the issue of interterritorial cross-border competition is nicely illustrated in the testimony given by representatives of the Grand Trunk and the New York Central before the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1889. Competition along the northern border was not only experienced within a particular national region but between nations as well. In the words of historian O.D. Skelton, “In 1914 Canadian Railways controlled four miles in the United States for every mile in Canada controlled by railways of the United States.” By the 1930s there were roughly 50 gateways crisscrossing the 4,000 mile border. Regulatory agencies struggled to define the extent of their jurisdiction over this foreign traffic.

The point has already been made that the end of the nineteenth century was a period of intense competition in the American railroad industry that resulted in public pressure for state regulation of railroad rates. With territorial and interterritorial expansion of the railroad network came a corresponding growth in the number of alternatives available to shippers which in turn drove the competition over freight rates resulting in rate wars. The railroads had made many attempts at self-regulation such as pooling and later rate associations that had failed due to the inability to enforce voluntary agreements. The Grand Trunk, with its lines extending into New England and the Great Lake States, participated in voluntary rate associations in both the eastern and western regions of the United States, although they like many others often simply chose not

89 Wilgus, The Railway Interrelations of the United States and Canada, 18, 71.
to abide by the agreements. 91 After the completion of the CPR in 1885 the voluntary rates associations in the United States gave due consideration to competition coming from both major Canadian lines—The Grand Trunk and the CPR. 92 The first legislative response to competition and rate wars in the United States was the Interstate Commerce Act and the establishment of the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1887; the Commission was not given the authority to fix rates and the grievance process was plagued with ambiguous definitions, such as requiring that rates be “reasonable and just.” 93

One source of considerable controversy within the Act was Section 4 which prohibited the practice of charging more for short hauls than for long hauls or through freight. 94 The Act provided for the selective application or suspension of Section 4 in cases where railroads faced competition from unregulated water transportation; foreign or intrastate lines; or in “rare and peculiar cases.” 95 In the absence of ICC authority to enforce rates, voluntary rate associations in both the eastern and western regions of the United States took it upon themselves to enforce the Act as well as their own rate agreements by notifying the Commission of violations. 96 In 1889, the ICC investigated two claims involving the Grand Trunk: one brought by the Michigan Central Railroad Company 97 against the Grand Trunk for violating the Interstate Commerce Act

---

91 Kolko, Railroads and Regulation, 17, 88; This article responds to put down rumors suggesting that members of the Joint Traffic Association are breaking ranks and cutting rates despite the voluntary agreement: "Joint Traffic Association," The Toronto Globe, 06 Feb 1897, col. 5-6, p. 33.
92 Ibid., 49.
93 Ibid., 51.
94 Ibid., 59, 61.
95 It is important in terms of the motivation of the Michigan Central to know that it controlled a line running through southern Ontario known as the Canadian Southern and both were part of the New York Central system. The Michigan Central operated only through traffic agreements, 24 hour transit requirements so as to be exempt from
by “granting rebates on traffic taken from points in the United States to points in Canada” and charging less than published rates; and the other regarding general concerns raised that “alleged increases” in traffic over the Grand Trunk between 1887 and 1888 were unlawfully acquired through the use of differential rates.98

In both cases the ICC was most concerned with the effect of foreign competition on American railroads, in particular the ability to attract long haul business originating in the US through unlawful discounted rates offset by short haul rates in Canadian territory. In at least one instance the language of the testimony was decidedly anti-Canadian in a similar vein to the anti-American criticism registered by Mexican nationals against American foreign corporations. For former Senator Conger of Michigan these were, “gigantic systems of foreign [Canadian] railroad corporations in competition with American railroads without any returning benefits to American citizens” able to “escape the operation and restrictions of American law” and “paralyze an immense amount of American labor.”99 The Commission’s line of questioning revolved primarily around control over rate setting or the long haul/short haul dispute; attempts to define what constitutes American and/or Canadian business for the purposes of establishing jurisdiction; and the role of Canadian government subsidy in providing an unfair advantage.

In response to the questions raised by the commission representatives of the Grand Trunk defended their right to set and control the rates on that portion of company business that did not constitute interstate traffic while demonstrating their willingness to abide by the regulations of the ICC on business that originated or terminated within the United States. Comparing the

---

98 "The Grand Trunk's Defense," New York Times, 05 April 1889, p. 5.; In 1889 there was a change in the Inter-State Commerce Act requiring that rates be published: Kolko, Railroads and Regulation. 55;
Grand Trunk to the New York Central Railroad (NYC), General Manager Hickson argued that the Grand Trunk business that originated and terminated at points in Canada was the same as the traffic of the NYC that originated and terminated within the State of New York and was therefore exempt from ICC regulation. Hickson attempted to assure the members of the Commission that, despite the fact that the Grand Trunk was a Canadian corporation with no legal status within the United States thereby implying that it was outside state jurisdiction, the company complied with the ICC regulation with regards to international business—rates were published as required and no rebates or allowances were granted. He offered as evidence of corporate compliance a copy of the memo that was circulated in anticipation of the new regulations embodied in the Act. The memo, dated 27 March 1887, detailed changes in legislation regarding the regulation of rates, the granting of passes and the extent of the lines under Grand Trunk control to be effected by the legislation. As Otto Kerchner, Counsel for the Grand Trunk argued, it was “not within the jurisdiction of Congress to regulate commerce into another country” only to the border, despite the statement by one member of the Commission that legislation was being considered to do just that.

The issue of sorting out that portion of the business conducted by the Grand Trunk that was international and not solely American or Canadian was not a simple task. Hickson demonstrated the complex cross-border traffic connections in his description of the various flows of traffic across the Grand Trunk system: the importation of goods from Europe on through shipment from the ports of Portland or Boston to points in Canada; traffic that originated in

---

100 Joseph Hickson, Testimony before the Interstate Commerce Commission, p. 19, RG30 Vol 13269 File 7, ICC Hearing Hickson testimony, CNR, LAC.
101 "Mr. Depew and Mr. Hickson,"p. 8.; Joseph Hickson, Testimony before the Interstate Commerce Commission, p. 18, RG30 Vol 13269 File 7, ICC Hearing Hickson Testimony, CNR, LAC.
Canada for transport through the US to other points in Canada; traffic that originated in the US for transport through Canada to other points in the US and finally direct trans-border shipments from Canada to destinations in the US or the US to destinations in Canada. The Commission struggled at length with the issue of what constituted American or Canadian or international business and the border again was a defining factor.

The foregoing examples are an effective illustration that the cross-border operations of the Grand Trunk were in fact indicative of both an extension of domestic operations into foreign territory and evidence of a willingness to respect foreign jurisdictions and policies. On the one hand the company believed it was fully within its rights to transfer company employees from one company controlled location to another. This belief in the right to control decision making was also reflected in the company’s choice of Island Pond as the division point as opposed to some point on the international boundary line and thus influence the regulatory business of border crossing being performed between Island Pond and Coaticook rather than at the actual border crossing. While statements of intent on the part of the company are certainly not sufficient to determine effect, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, involvement in voluntary rate setting agreements with the other American trunk lines and a willingness to comply in this instance with the laws of the foreign territory demonstrate a sensitivity to local practices and respect for policies on the part of the Grand Trunk operating in the United States. Thus one can conclude that unlike the US companies doing business nearby in Canada described by Wilkins, this British/Canadian corporation combined “spill-over development” of a domestic operation with a willingness to comply with certain local practices and policies. The determination of the border as meaningful or meaningless was contingent upon the specific circumstances and the degree to

---

which the management felt the issue impacted on the continued successful operation of the railroad.

While the issue of national identification and state jurisdiction presented a challenge to the Grand Trunk and the ICC in the northeast, these issues were far more prominent in the southwest and the cross-border operation of the Sonora System of the ATSF (later the Sud Pacifico de Mexico (SPdeM)). The last spike ceremony, staged symbolically by the corporation, provides an excellent illustration. Two locomotives dressed in national colors met nose-to-nose at the border to perform the fiction of linking Mexican and American railroads. The fiction of course was the fact that the Mexican line of the Sonora system was owned and operated by the ATSF.105 The performance reflected the difference in the language of the Mexican concession that in addition to defining the rights and obligations of the state and the corporation also stipulated that “The Company and all. . .who take part in its affairs,. . .shall always be regarded as Mexicans in all matters relating to the company.”106 The issues of state jurisdiction and the definitions of “foreign” and “Mexican” are pivotal to revealing the evidence of “spill-over” development and adaptation in the southwestern border context.

This stipulation of national jurisdiction was far more specific in the Mexican context than in either the United States or Canada. Concessions and charters across the continent granted authority for the construction of railroads through the stipulation in law of terms such as the proposed route; government commitments to pay subsidies, land grants; methods for the appropriation of land for the right of way; along with time frames defining construction obligations of the railroad corporation. Concessions or charters were legal documents that

105 The ATSF officially acquired the Sonora through an exchange of stock: Johnson and Supple, Boston Capitalists and Western Railroads, 300.
106 Republic of Mexico, Original Concession, Republic of Mexico to R. Symon [translation]. (Feb 1881) Box RR314; Files of the Assistant Secretary- New York, ATSF, KSHS.
defined the rights and obligations of the state and railroad corporation separate and apart from
the process of incorporation which defined the powers, structure and purposes of the corporation
itself. The lines that made up the Sonora System of the ATSF were incorporated in the State of
Massachusetts, under a statute that provided for the incorporation of American companies doing
business in foreign countries.\textsuperscript{107} The language of the Mexican concession that granted this
company incorporated in Massachusetts to construct a railroad in northern Mexico went much
further and defined limits on the function of this American corporation in Mexican territory.

The original concession approved by the Mexican Congress in 1880, stipulated that “The
Company shall be always Mexican” and subject to the laws of the land despite the fact that any
or all of its members were foreigners.\textsuperscript{108} The only exemption was for employees at all levels
with respect to mandatory military and civil service except in the case of a foreign war.\textsuperscript{109} The
concession prohibited the intervention of “foreign diplomatic agents” in the affairs of the
company in any fashion including the purchase of shares or transfer of any part of the enterprise;
the transport of belligerent forces; or the ability of company members to seek protection under
foreign law.\textsuperscript{110} The agreement required government appointed representation on the Board of
Directors and the appointment of a government engineer at the expense of the corporation.\textsuperscript{111}
The term of the agreement was ninety-nine years at which point “the railroad shall pass, in good
condition, and free from all mortgage, into the possession of the Nation,” physical assets—
stations, rolling stock, warehouses, goods and chattels—would be purchased by the Government

\textsuperscript{107} Sonora Railway Co. Ltd., Articles of Association. (1879) Box #117, File 650, Sonora Railway Co. Ltd., General
Vol. 2, 1896-1898, ATSF, KSHS.; Brandeis, Dunbar & Nutter to Victor Morawetz, General Counsel, Sonora
Railway, 12 June 1901, re: incorporation and taxation in Massachusetts. Box #117, File 650, Sonora Railway Co.
Ltd., General Vol. 2, 1896-1898, ATSF, KSHS.

\textsuperscript{108} Republic of Mexico, Original Concession, Republic of Mexico to R. Symon [translation]. (Feb 1881), p. 17, Box
RR314; Files of the Assistant Secretary- New York, ATSF, KSHS.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 22.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 9, 26.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 9.
at an agreed upon price.\textsuperscript{112} Previous permission was required for the transfer of the concession to another company or private individual.\textsuperscript{113} Materials required for construction would be exempt from taxation for a period of ten years and the operation exempt from taxation for twenty-five years.\textsuperscript{114}

Unlike in the American context where rates were set by voluntary agreement and monitored by the ICC, the maximum tariff for passengers and freight was established in the concession and a 60% discount was reserved for the Federal Government along with the right to take over the operation in the event of a national emergency.\textsuperscript{115} The Mexican government followed the development of interstate commerce regulation in the United States and with similar concerns further regulated the operation of railroads with the implementation of the 1899 Railway Act.\textsuperscript{116} The Act established provisions for the classification of railroads, concessions; forfeiture of concessions; nationality and legal status; construction; operation; rights reserved to the nation; jurisdiction over the line; and priorities for development and construction.\textsuperscript{117} This degree of government control suggests that the company was prohibited from operating “extra-nationally” but the evidence demonstrates that the company management still held expectations to the contrary.

In addition to the legal framework, the ATSF and its successor the SP, operated in a different development framework from that of the Grand Trunk in the northeast. As previously mentioned, by the 1930s there were fifty different crossing points with more Canadian track miles operating in the United States than American in Canada; in the southwest there were only

\textsuperscript{112} Republic of Mexico, Original Concession, Republic of Mexico to R. Symon [translation]. (Feb 1881), p. 10, Box RR314; Files of the Assistant Secretary- New York, ATSF, KSHS.

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 14.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 20.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 32.


\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 95.
The significance of this was the degree to which the rail networks of Canada and the United States were interconnected, creating a condition of interterritorial competition, to use Kirby’s model, across the international boundary line. There were far fewer major lines in Mexico and they were primarily extensions of American systems initially engaged in the movement of freight from and through Mexico into the United States and points beyond as opposed to within the country. It would not be until the late 1920s that the SPdeM completed its connecting line and operating agreements south from Guaymas to Guadalajara and through to Mexico City increasing access significantly to the internal domestic freight traffic and thus interterritorial competition within Mexico. In the absence of domestic competition the Sonora System had in essence a monopoly on rail transportation along the corridor from Guaymas to Benson, Arizona. Despite the adaptation required by the proscribed rates and prohibitions contained in the concession, it was this absence of competition that allowed the Sonora in many respects to operate extra-nationally.

All forms of adaptation were not however proscribed. The need for adaptation also arose from the obvious differences in the foreign environment negotiated by the ATSF—differences in language, customs, currency, political structure and the threats of disease and Indian attacks—differences that were far fewer in the Canada/United States context. Company documents were translated into from Spanish into English and from English into Spanish. Accounts were kept in pesos rather than converting to dollars. Personal loans were advanced to local officials including the Governor of the State of Sonora and justified as a cost of doing business.

Successful

---

118 Wilgus, *The Railway Interrelations of the United States and Canada*. 18, 71.
119 Kirby, "Nineteenth-century patterns of railroad development on the Great Plains": 167.
121 Lewis, 188.
122 Robinson to Reinhart, re: State of Sonora loan, 05 Jun 1894, Box #117, File 650-Sonora Railway Co. Ltd. General, Vol. 1, 1883 to Dec. 31, 1895, ATSF, KSHS.; J. P. Whitehead to Touzalin re: custom of Guaymas cashier Adams borrowing from and loaning to local merchants, 30 Aug 1883, RR791.1 Sonora Railway Co. Ltd., Letter
negotiation of some of these differences required a reliance on government intermediaries and translators. In this case the company’s representative in Mexico City was a lawyer by the name of Sebastian Camacho. Camacho acted at various times on behalf of the Sonora Railway, the Mexican Central and the SP. This adaptation to local customs and business practices, although difficult for some absentee Executives operating without direct knowledge of the region to understand, was accepted by local management as necessary to ensure the ongoing success of the operation.

Despite these clear adaptations to local business custom there remained an expectation on the part of company managers to extend methods and practices used at home across the border.

---

Press 1882-1887, ATSF, KSHS.; John P. Whitehead to J. W. Reinhart, President, ATSF, NY re: loan made by Sonora Railway to State of Sonora at request of Governor Torres, 12 Jul 1894, Box #117, File 650-Sonora Railway Co. Ltd. General, Vol. 1, 1883 to Dec. 31, 1895, ATSF, KSHS.
The Sonora System was part of the larger ATSF system and the same organizational and management structures, rolling stock, and procedures for day to day general operations were simply transferred across the border. Opportunities for greater efficiency or cost savings were exploited in the Mexican setting just as they were in the United States. There were no restrictions placed by the Mexican government or the State of Sonora initially on the movement of crews across the border. As previously discussed American workers occupied the majority of skilled senior positions in the running trades, station/depot operations and management. While Mexicans, Natives, African Americans and others described as simply “destitutes” were employed on construction and maintenance work. This policy of exploiting sources of cheap labor was practiced on both sides of the border.

The transfer of ownership from the ASTF to the SP effectively illustrates that management understood the Mexican divisions of the line to be extensions of their domestic operations and as such disposal of the property totally within their control. It was earlier stated that the extension of this line across the border into the Mexican State of Sonora was a defensive solution to domestic interterritorial competition. The SP controlled all access to the port at San Francisco forcing the ATSF to look south to the post at Guaymas, Mexico as an alternative. The Sonora line, intended primarily to capture ocean trade for through transit to the US never proved very profitable. Opportunities for regional traffic development were limited by inadequate

123 Kuntz Ficker makes this point about the relationship between the ATSF and its allied operation the Mexican Central in: Kuntz Ficker, "Economic Backwardness and Firm Strategy": 283.
infrastructure and a lack of affordable land with which to attract settlement. Mountainous terrain separated the northwestern Mexican states from Mexico City and surrounding markets. It would take another forty years before a connecting line through Mexican territory was established.\footnote{Lewis, 188.}

The SP had designs on territorial expansion into the Mexican market having extended its virtual monopoly of California eastward through Arizona. In 1897 a temporary agreement was struck between the two organizations to effect a trade—the ATSF would gain access through operating agreements to the port at San Francisco in exchange for leasing its Sonora operation to the SP.\footnote{Victor Morawetz to Aldace Walker, President, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, 28 Oct 1897, Box 118, RR118:1 File 650-3 Sonora Ry. Co. Ltd. Mojave Sonora Exchange - Vol 1., ATSF, KSHS.} As the sole owner of the Sonora line the ATSF anticipated no difficulties in transacting the deal, unfortunately a firestorm ensued.

On 1 July 1897 a company circular was sent out prematurely “to the officers, agents and employes [sic] N.M. & A. and Sonora railways south of Benson” advising the formal transfer of the lines to the SP.\footnote{E. D. Kenna to Aldace Walker, President, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, 21 Jul 1897, Box 118, RR118:1 File 650-3 Sonora Ry. Co. Ltd. Mojave Sonora Exchange - Vol 1., ATSF, KSHS.} On July 11th, Martiniano Silva, the government appointed engineer on the payroll of the Sonora Railway, reported the contents of the circular to the Deputy Minister of Public Works, believing that the transaction was not approved by the Mexican government as required under the concession and that the company is therefore out of compliance.\footnote{E. D. Kenna to Victor Morawetz, General Counsel, 12 Oct 1897, Box 118, RR118:1 File 650-3 Sonora Ry. Co. Ltd. Mojave Sonora Exchange - Vol 1., ATSF, KSHS.} The Mexican government responded by launching a judicial enquiry.\footnote{E. D. Kenna to Aldace Walker, President, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, 21 Jul 1897, pp. 7-8, Box 118, RR118:1 File 650-3 Sonora Ry. Co. Ltd. Mojave Sonora Exchange - Vol 1, ATSF, KSHS.} Company officials were of the opinion that “unfriendly influence” was responsible for spreading rumors to the effect that the ATSF and the SP were engaged in secret negotiations to avoid payment of taxes related to
the transfer and “the performance of other duties to the government.” E. D. Kenna aptly described the company’s dilemma: “so far as the public knows, we have violated a condition of our concession and the officials of the Mexican government tolerate no violations of law nor any stipulations made under it. It will not be an easy matter to satisfy the Government that we have acted properly, because the truth will require that we should admit having publicly stated the doing of that which was wrong.”

According to the Mexican government’s interpretation of the transaction the Sonora Railway had the “right to operate the railroad” but “no authority to freely dispose of that right” and by undertaking to do so it has violated the provisions of its concession. Further to the issue of the right to transfer control, the Mexican government was apparently considering investigating the relationship between the ATSF and the Sonora Railway. The Concession was an agreement between the Mexican Government and the Sonora Railway not the ATSF; the agreement to transfer was negotiated between the ATSF and the SP, suggesting that the “maintenance of [the Sonora Railway’s] corporate existence was a mere form.” Management of the ATSF and the Sonora were clearly frustrated by this development and understood the serious implications. They quickly moved to correct the error agreeing that progress would be made more “expeditiously by following strictly the directions of our representatives in Mexico than by attempting to change them in order to satisfy our own convenience.”

To satisfy the Government’s requirements the temporary agreement was made null and void. The President of

---

131 E. D. Kenna to Aldace Walker, President, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, 21 Jul 1897, pp. 4. 10, Box 118, RR118:1 File 650-3 Sonora Ry. Co. Ltd. Mojave Sonora Exchange - Vol 1, ATSF, KSHS.
132 Ibid., 11.
133 E. D. Kenna to Victor Morawetz, General Counsel, 12 Oct 1897, p. 1, Box 118, RR118:1 File 650-3 Sonora Ry. Co. Ltd. Mojave Sonora Exchange - Vol 1, ATSF, KSHS.
134 E. D. Kenna to Aldace Walker, President, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, 16 Oct 1897, p. 3, Box 118, RR118:1 File 650-3 Sonora Ry. Co. Ltd. Mojave Sonora Exchange - Vol 1, ATSF, KSHS.
135 E. D. Kenna to Victor Morawetz, General Counsel, 12 Oct 1897, p. 1, Box 118, RR118:1 File 650-3 Sonora Ry. Co. Ltd. Mojave Sonora Exchange - Vol 1, ATSF, KSHS.
the ATSF signed an affidavit swearing that the operations of the Sonora Railway were now and had always been under the control of the Board of Directors of the Sonora Railway. And in its final approved form the agreement to lease the operations was executed formally between the Sonora Railway and the Southern Pacific Company. 136 Despite the restrictions placed on the corporation through the concession designed to prohibit extra-national operation and define the operation as Mexican, the foregoing effectively demonstrates that the management and directors of the ATSF, like their counterparts on the Grand Trunk, viewed place as irrelevant and fully expected to be able to both operate and dispose of operations as they saw fit.

Moving crews from one point on the line to another across the border did not become an issue for the Sonora line until the passage of the 1931 Mexican Labor Law, some time after the ownership of the line was transferred from the ATSF to the SPdeM. In addition to many stipulations regarding such things as provision of housing and compensation for injury, the 1931 law required that “The Railroad companies employ Mexican workers entirely. In positions of direction [the Railroad Companies] may employ the foreign personnel which they may need, and in the technical or administrative positions they may only employ foreign personnel when there is no Mexican personnel available.” 137 Issues of citizenship and disputes regarding the definition of “Mexican,” while topics of considerable discussion throughout the tenure of the ATSF and the SP, now took on new meaning.

The SPdeM went to great lengths to justify the continued employment of as many employees as possible. They were able to potentially shorten the list by encouraging twenty-six

---

136 Noted in the annual report that the lease was in effect September 1, 1898: Sonora Railway Co. Ltd., Annual Report for the year ending December 31, 1898, 31 Dec 1898, RR118:4 File 650-4 Sonora Ry. Co. Ltd. Minutes of Meetings, ATSF, KSHS.
137 H. B. Titcomb to Messers: Small, General Manager; Goldman, Auditor; Hellerstedt, Treasurer; Hoff, Traffic Manager; Green Purchasing Agent; Harris, Manager of Hospitals., 8 Oct 1931, Box 10, File #SPM 013-2, Section 2, SPdeM, HL.
workers that were eligible, to become naturalized citizens.\textsuperscript{138} The company sought approval for the classification of translators as technical positions arguing that translation required “the work of men highly skilled in English and Spanish Railroad work, as many reports must be put into the English language for transmittal to the Board of Directors, whose headquarters is in San Francisco,” emphasizing the need for English-language translation to groups outside Mexico rather than for Spanish-language translation internally.\textsuperscript{139} They even attempted to turn the definition of a ‘Mexican’ corporation stipulated by the 1899 Railroad Law to their advantage—a definition that they, and their predecessors the ATSF, had previously found to be objectionable for reasons of taxation.

Company officials petitioned the Mexican government arguing, albeit unsuccessfully, that the wording of the 1899 Law that had constituted part of the original Sonora Railway concession granted in 1880 and had continued in force in all subsequent revised versions of the concession, defined the Sonora Railway and all its employees as Mexican not foreign and therefore exempt from the new law.\textsuperscript{140} Despite these efforts to expand the occupational categories exempt from termination, the SPdeM was forced to terminate 57 employees immediately, including office workers, telegraphers, dispatchers, foremen, locomotive engineers, brakemen and conductors.\textsuperscript{141}

\textsuperscript{138} H. B. Titcomb to Messers: Small, General Manager; Goldman, Auditor; Hellerstedt, Treasurer; Hoff, Traffic Manager; Green Purchasing Agent; Harris, Manager of Hospitals., 8 Oct 1931, Box 10, File #SPM 013-2, Section 2, SPdeM, HL.; Walter Douglas to Hale Holden, Chairman, Southern Pacific Company, New York, 9 Dec 1932, Box 10, File #SPM 013-2, Section 2, SPdeM, HL.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid.; H. B. Titcomb to E. B. Sloan, Fiscal Representative, 10 Oct 1931, Box 10, File #SPM 013-2, Section 2, SPdeM, HL.

\textsuperscript{140} Republic of Mexico, Mexican Concession, 17 June 1875, Box RR316B, Files of the Assistant Secretary, ATSF, KSHS.; Paul Shoup to General Abelardo Rodriguez, Secretary of Industry, Commerce and Labor, Mexico D.F., nd, Box 10, File #SPM 013-2, Section 2, From May 19, 1931 to December 28, 1933, SPdeM, HL.

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.; Walter Douglas to Hale Holden, Chairman, Southern Pacific Company, New York, 9 Dec 1932, Box 10, File #SPM 013-2, Section 2, SPdeM, HL.; H. B. Titcomb to Messers: Small, General Manager; Goldman, Auditor; Hellerstedt, Treasurer; Hoff, Traffic Manager; Green Purchasing Agent; Harris, Manager of Hospitals., 8 Oct 1931, Box 10, File #SPM 013-2, Section 2, SPdeM, HL.
It appears clear from the foregoing that had the ATSF not been prevented from accessing the port of San Francisco by the SP it would not have been necessary to extend operations across the border into Mexico. Necessity however dictated that the line be constructed and along with it came the expectation that as an extension of domestic operations many of the methods and practices employed at home would still apply. To a much greater extent than did the Grand Trunk crossing the border from Canada into the United States, the ATSF faced legal, social and political conditions to which it was forced to adapt.

CONCLUSION

Chasing the ever expanding market for domestic freight revenue drove these railroads to expand their operations across international the borders. Despite the fact that cross-border development occurred on the Grand Trunk in its infancy and on the ATSF well after it had become an established system, both initially were seeking access to ocean trade as an extension of their domestic operations. Had either of the companies been able to access ocean ports through other means it is unlikely that they would have been drawn across the international boundary.

Both railroad companies responded in similar ways to the different demands made by state authorities. Whatever the challenge, the railroads were primarily interested in the most efficient methods and effective practices to ensure the smooth movement of freight regardless of location. Rather than outright rejection of state authority, both companies simply and consistently attempted to maneuver in a ways that were most profitable.

The issues of motivation, ownership and corporate national identity were present in both the cases and may be the most interesting finding emerging from this analysis of the movement
of capital in a continental or regional space as opposed to national space. The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada was an overtly imperialistic project from its inception but imperial in the sense of the interest of its British founders to ensure access for British capital to Pacific markets through its own colonial territory (the Provinces of Canada). The primary motivation for cross-border expansion was access to trans-oceanic trade and securing the growing agricultural produce from the west, the possibility of revenue from local freight traffic on the cross-border division was a secondary consideration. One expects an anti-American narrative from a Canadian or Mexican interpretation of American foreign investment but what about the penetration of American territory by British-Canadian railroads? In fact, a decidedly anti-Canadian view is revealed. In the case of the Grand Trunk’s alleged contravention of the Interstate Commerce Act, the fears expressed by Americans about the invasion of Canadian capital were reminiscent of those expressed by Mexicans about the invasion of American capital. According to those testifying, the Canadian roads were “gigantic systems of foreign railroad corporations in competition with American railroads without any returning benefits to American citizens” that were destroying “a vast amount of the property of American citizens,” and paralyzing “an immense amount of American labor.” And while more focused research is warranted before any authoritative conclusions can be stated, disentangling the specifics of the expansion of these railroads from the nation-building narrative, looking at this particular development from the corporate perspective and at a regional or continental level, suggests an alternative reading where place appears irrelevant and that may have more to do with the inherent nature of capital to exploit and expand than with a political inference of economic imperialism.

142 "Bonded Freight in Transit. Secretary Windom Hears About Encroachments of Canadian Roads," p. 3.
In the end the companies conformed to the law and without redress to any other national authority—in other words the Grand Trunk did not apply to the Canadian government for support against the policies of the United States government or the State of Vermont and neither did the ATSF, or later the SPdeM, enlist the support of the United States government to intervene in its challenges. Following a kind of ‘railroad logic’ that was driven by the need for standardization both corporations expected to apply the same methods, practices and operating logic that they had at home in the foreign territory and when faced with challenges to that logic adapted, although not without resistance, to local traditions, legal jurisdictions and policies.

Chapter 5

Railway Workers, Unions and the State:
“Strikes for the whole continent”

There are symptoms of the approach of an economical crisis here. The extension of the Trusts seems likely to be met by a counter-extension of unions, so that we shall have strikes for the whole continent. I suppose we shall manage to rub along, but there may be a lively quarter of an hour.\(^1\)

- Goldwin Smith, Canadian journalist and passive proponent of Canada’s annexation to the United States. 1901

By the opening decades of the twentieth century the expansion of the North American rail network had become truly continental in scope. Fierce competition for international as well as domestic freight revenues forced some of the major trunk lines (in this case the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada (Grand Trunk) and the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe and its successor the Southern Pacific) to consider cross-border alternatives. With the completion of the Mexican Central Railway in 1885, one could travel from Mexico City to New York City in a week and

---

then on to Montreal in less than a day, a journey that before rails had taken months. The speed of travel and the distances covered had become common place and very aptly characterized as no less than the “annihilation of space and time.”

The expansion of the railroad network and corresponding economic expansion also engendered a political response in the form of regulation linking the various railroad corporations and states. The process of integrating the two corridors of concern to this study—between Montreal, Quebec and Portland, Maine and between Benson, Arizona and Guaymas, Mexico—into broader national and international markets that had begun in the 1840s through the 1880s had culminated, by the early part of the twentieth century, in a North American continental connection.

An integral component of this evolving continental network was the influence and spread of organized labor—the focus of this chapter. Railroad unions like their industry were pioneers in the forging of labor relations and the process of collective bargaining—first at the local, then through concerted action at the regional level, and finally with influence of a continental nature.

Growing labor unrest across the continent combined with a real economic and social dependence on the railroad for the “necessities of life” produced a corresponding state response to find

---


mechanisms to manage disputes between capital and labor and thus protect the public interest.\(^6\) The question of how these relationships and disputes between capital and labor were managed across international borders seems a logical one to ask given that by 1914 there were approximately fifty railroad gateways crossing the Canada/US border and eight across the US/Mexico border.\(^7\) It is not, however, one that has received much attention. As Goldwin Smith remarked, the extension of the trusts was indeed met by a counter-extension of unions and while “strikes for the whole continent” may not have materialized in the manner that Smith envisioned, the influence of the trans-border flow of workers and their unions had the ability to transform social movements from national to continental in scope.\(^8\)

Two strikes, one in July of 1910 and the other in January of 1911, serve to illustrate these early twentieth century continental connections. The first involved the trainmen and conductors on the Grand Trunk extending from Portland, Maine through the southern parts of the Canadian Provinces of Quebec and Ontario to Chicago, Illinois. The second involved the locomotive engineers on the Sonora System of the Southern Pacific of Mexico(SPdeM) a subsidiary of the Southern Pacific Railroad, running from Nogales, Arizona to Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico. While at first glance these two events do not appear to have been related given their distance apart both


in time and geographic space, they did however share several substantial similarities: the
striking workers were members of US-based international trade unions; they were employed by
railroad corporations operating across international borders; and the job actions took place across
those borders. Especially significant for our purposes here, they were connected by a movement
for the standardization of wages and work rules that began in the United States and, I will argue,
produced causal implications for these two strike actions. In these two instances organized labor,
the corporations, and the states were brought together in ways that transcended national geo-
political boundaries.

Through the lens of these two strikes this chapter will examine the evolving inter-
connectedness of North American labor relations in three primary respects: first, in relation to
the influence of the spread of US-based railroad Brotherhoods into Canada and Mexico and the
corresponding reactions, both positive and negative, to that influence; secondly, in relation to the
railroads as public utilities and the growing public pressure for legislation to protect the public
interest; and finally, to the shift in state involvement, from more coercive forms of restoring law
and order to the development of legal mechanisms for the management of relations between
labor and capital. I argue that by 1910 the condition of social, economic and political
interconnectedness on the North American continent was sufficient to transform a movement for
the standardization of wages and work rules on railroads in the United States from a national to a
continental movement as evidenced by the transnational strikes on the Grand Trunk and the
SPdeM.

This is not to suggest that this represents the first time that a railroad labor action had
cross-border implications. The locomotive engineers on the Grand Trunk were involved in a
successful strike action in 1876. While the strike did not involve the portion of the line in the
United States it did involve the international union and is credited for possibly giving strength to the actions that would follow in 1877, in what would become known as the most significant national strike action of the nineteenth century in the United States. What is significant in this cross-border labor action is the involvement of both the Canada/United States and United States/Mexico borders and the US-based international Railroad Brotherhoods. This is not intended to imply that the striking workers on the Grand Trunk and the SPdM were acting in concert; there is no evidence that they were. Nor can the outcomes be considered in any way the same given the diversity of worker viewpoints to be considered—Canadian, American and Mexican. The reality is that although the specific local, regional, and national circumstances and conditions varied greatly the corporations and labor organizations behaved in a consistent fashion across jurisdiction. For all the actors involved—the workers, the corporations and the state—the border functioned at times as a barrier and at times as a tactic to be employed. At still other times it appeared invisible.

THE STRIKES

On the morning of 18 July 1910, members of the Grand Trunk Railway strike committee met one last time to give negotiation instructions to their leadership. As the meeting disbanded each member left with a sealed envelope containing instructions in the event that negotiations failed and the strike was called. Unless a telegram was received stating otherwise, the strike was to commence at 9:30pm that evening. No telegram arrived and approximately 5,000 trainmen and conductors walked off the job on the Grand Trunk and its subsidiary the Central Vermont. The Grand Trunk Railway System, a Canadian corporation, covered a transnational territory

---

9 Reed C. Richardson, *The Locomotive Engineer, 1863-1963; a Century of Railway Labor Relations and Work Rules* (Ann Arbor: Bureau of Industrial Relations, Graduate School of Business Administration, University of Michigan, 1963), 180.
from Maine, through Quebec and Ontario, to Chicago, Illinois, over 4,400 miles of rail line. The cessation of freight traffic had serious negative economic consequences for communities on both sides of the border and for other roads with operating rights over portions of the Grand Trunk lines.

The dispute, along with a dispute between workers and the CPR, had been put before a Canadian Board of Conciliation, in May of the same year, under the provisions of the Canadian Industrial Disputes Investigations Act. The workers on the Grand Trunk were seeking parity with their counterparts on the Eastern Association in the United States or the equivalent of a 40% increase in wages. The result of the Board’s investigation of both disputes was a recommendation for a 25% increase, which was rejected in June by both the workers and the companies. The dispute on the CPR went to arbitration. Workers on the Grand Trunk had voted overwhelmingly in favor of a strike if their demands for parity were not met.

In the final meeting between company officials and union representatives on the afternoon of July 18, it became clear that neither side would budge. The company offered a settlement that they believed was comparable to the recommendation of the Board of Conciliation along with the suggestion that if their proposal was not acceptable they were prepared to submit the dispute to binding arbitration. The union representatives were quick to point out that the companies’ settlement “was very far from being anything like the board’s award, and that in the great majority of cases where rates had been specified these rates are very much below those suggested by the board.”

12 “Big Strike Begins on Grand Trunk: 4,500 Conductors and Trainmen Quit Work -- Have $1,000,000 in Their Treasury,” p. 1.
entirely” the board’s recommendation to standardize conditions and to put into effect the mileage basis of pay. 13 Given that the initial dispute investigation had resulted in a settlement representing only a little more than half of what had been requested and the company proposal even less at approximately an 18% wage increase, union representatives rejected the offer of arbitration as too little too late.

At the appointed time and in the absence of a telegram to the contrary, members of the Strike Committee opened their envelopes for instructions. Trains that had begun trips before 9:30pm were to be taken through to the terminal by the men in charge and left then for the company to look after. No other trains were to move. According to newspaper accounts, conductors and trainmen across the entire system obeyed the order to walk off the job.14 Through passenger service and local trips out of Montreal were still running with crews from other departments, but suburban service had been suspended.15 By day two there were reports of 1,800 men out in Michigan and no freight moving at Detroit or Montreal.16 “With [one] exception not a pound of freight has been moved here [Detroit] since the striking trainmen left their posts on Monday night.”17

The strike affected more than just the lines owned and operated by the Grand Trunk, broadening the continental implications. Three hundred and fifty workers on the Wabash Railway that ran on Grand Trunk lines along the Niagara frontier into Buffalo had also walked

13 Ibid.
17 "1,800 Men Out in Michigan: No Freight Moved at Detroit -- Road, Employing Strike-Breakers," p. 1.
off the job.\textsuperscript{18} The Wabash was bound to the Grand Trunk through operating agreements that among other things required they pay the same rates to their workers as did the Grand Trunk.\textsuperscript{19} The Intercolonial Railway and the Delaware and Hudson also had operating rights on Grand Trunk lines into Montreal. Union men in the United States agreed not to handle freight and passenger cars handed over to them from the Grand Trunk. President Stone of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, while not willing to sanction a sympathy strike, advised his members to remain neutral and specifically not to act as pilots for replacement conductors on the Grand Trunk system.\textsuperscript{20} The only trains to move immediately after the strike was called were manned by French-Canadians who were former employees of the company but not members of the Brotherhoods.\textsuperscript{21} The extent of the idle freight and suburban trains were held up by President Murdock of the Order of Railway Conductors as proof of success.

The company sought to pre-empt the strike with a swift response based on a clearly well-prepared contingency plan. In an announcement made at 6pm, three and a half hours before the strike was officially called, President Charles Hays provided detail on the company position and attempted to place the responsibility for the impending strike action on the workers while at the same time expressing his belief that the company would win even a protracted battle.\textsuperscript{22} In an interview with reporters he related his conversation with the representatives of the men: “Further, I said . . .: Suppose a strike is brought on, with all its disturbance of conditions and business,

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{21} "Big Strike Begins on Grand Trunk: 4,500 Conductors and Trainmen Quit Work -- Have $1,000,000 in Their Treasury," p. 1.
\textsuperscript{22} Might be worth a reminder note here that Charles Hays had left the employ of the Grand Trunk in 1901 for a brief stint on the Southern Pacific out of Los Angeles and that his assistant at the time Robert Ingram had stayed behind in Los Angeles and eventually been promoted to Vice President and General Manager of the Southern Pacific of Mexico and responsible for resolving the strike of locomotive engineers, the subject of the second strike action addressed in this chapter.
\end{flushleft}
what shall we do eventually but settle as I have proposed? You will have displaced a great many men, created great losses all over, and got no further ahead.’ But they [the workers] refused to listen to this.”

In an attempt to sway workers that might be unsure of their position, Hays announced that the increase of 18% offered by the company would be implemented immediately. To increase the potential pool of replacement workers and no doubt add to existing tension between workers across departments, all shops on the system were to be closed immediately placing another approximately 6,000 workers in Canada and Michigan out of work. Hays clearly stated his belief that these enticements would dissuade many, and if not the company saw no difficulty in filling the vacancies with replacement workers, indicating that they had already received many applications. No doubt Hays’ confidence stems from having had over six weeks to prepare for the possibility of a strike while the dispute was before the conciliation board.

While the company was not able to dissuade workers from walking off the job, confidence in its ability to recruit replacement workers seemed justified. The recruiting of strike breakers was initially successful and indicative of advance planning. Advertisements for replacement workers appeared in newspapers on day two, offering “permanent” employment to conductors, baggagemen, brakemen, yard foremen and helpers—an issue that would become

---

23 “Big Strike Begins on Grand Trunk: 4,500 Conductors and Trainmen Quit Work -- Have $1,000,000 in Their Treasury,” p.1.
25 “Big Strike Begins on Grand Trunk: 4,500 Conductors and Trainmen Quit Work -- Have $1,000,000 in Their Treasury,” p. 1.
26 Under the requirements of the Canadian Industrial Disputes Investigations Act all strike action and/or lockouts must cease until the decision of the Board of Conciliation has rendered its decision. At that point if either of the parties do not agree with the recommendation of the Board then the union is in a legal strike position. While the IDI Act is a form of non-binding compulsory conciliation which brings the parties to the table at the request of either of the parties in the dispute, much criticism has been leveled against the legislation for tying the hands of labor while the company prepares for the strike: Fudge and Tucker, Labour Before the Law, 54-6
significant after the strike was settled.\textsuperscript{27} In the meantime Superintendents and lesser officers were in charge of the through trains while other positions were being filled by superannuated or retired employees, the shopmen that had been forced out of work and new recruits where available.\textsuperscript{28} On the Wabash line, Conductor Alexander, in charge of Train #2, was described as “hale and hearty” and wearing “a long gray beard that he [kept] tucked into his waistcoat.” Alexander was 85 years old and had been out of active service for 20 years. Supervisor Wilkinson was in charge of Train #28.\textsuperscript{29} A report out of Boston suggested that strikebreakers were coming “by carloads and distributed throughout the territory to man the day trains.”\textsuperscript{30}

In that same report, however, the pressure of the workload and sympathy with the strikers was apparently taking its toll on the new recruits. Twenty-five strikebreakers on route to White River in Vermont refused to report for work and were waiting to return to New York.\textsuperscript{31} In one instance, the strike breakers themselves went out on strike protesting the 16-hour days which the striking Grand Trunk workers took as a vote of sympathy.\textsuperscript{32}

There were few reports of interference with the strikebreakers on the part of the striking workers. For the most part, significant acts of interference appear to have come from strike sympathizers: members of the local communities, family members and friends of the striking workers. In Island Pond, Vermont, for example, railroad employees, their families and relatives constituted the majority of the local population.\textsuperscript{33} The community came out in strong support of

\textsuperscript{27} “Grand Trunk Strike Stops All Freight: Passenger Express Trains Run, but Local Service is at a Standstill,” p. 1.
\textsuperscript{28} “Article 1 -- No Title,” p. 2.
\textsuperscript{29} “Wabash Was Helpless: Bound by Agreements to Use the Grand Trunk Tracks, Agent Says,” p. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} According to the 1910 US Census for the Village of Island Pond, approximately 12% of the total population held some position with the railroad and with roughly 50% of the households having at least one resident who worked for the railroad: United States Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910 Population, NARA.
the strikers and against the company, turning out on mass at the depot in such force that the company referred to the townspeople as an ‘angry mob.” There a crowd of strike sympathizers “threw lumps of coal and rotten eggs and other missiles at a trainload of strikebreakers, broke car windows, and did other damage.” 34 There were reports of apparent malicious damage to switches and rails; one arrest was made. 35 The Governor of Vermont, George H. Prouty, responded by traveling to Island Pond with “nearly half a hundred armed deputies.” 36 In the end he pronounced the conditions not as bad as anticipated and promised that, should the need arise, the militia would be called out. 37 Other trouble spots were mentioned—Niagara Falls, Ontario and Sherbrook, Quebec, Boston, Massachusetts—but in all cases the incidents were minor (shouting and jeering) and it was strike sympathizers not strikers that were involved. 38 While there were numerous headlines that suggested that the incidents of violence were perpetrated by strikers, the strikers themselves were conspicuously absent from the fray. 39 According to strike leaders, the men were “quietly awaiting an expected time when the rail road [would] find

34 References to members of the community outnumbering strikers and referring to them as a ‘mob’ and the action as a ‘riot’ as well as the throwing of eggs and stones etc. also mentioned in: Grand Trunk Railway Company of Canada - Investigation Portland Cases. Evidence re employees strike. Daily Journal of Travels, Appointments and Meetings. (24 Mar 1911) pp. 45, 53-5, RG30, Canadian National Railways, Series 1-A-10-c, Volumes 10705, CNR LAC.; Series of Letters between E.H. Fitzhugh, 1st VP Grand Trunk and Solicitor's office. (20 Oct 1910) RG30, Canadian National Railways, Volumes 13250, File 601, CNR, LAC.


36 "Attack on Grand Trunk Train: Governor of Vermont Out with Fifty Armed Deputies to Keep Order," p.2.

37 "Attack on Grand Trunk Train: Governor of Vermont Out with Fifty Armed Deputies to Keep Order," p.2.


resumption of its freight business impossible and [would] make such wage overtures to the
strikers as [would] induce them to return.”

While the company continued to release reports of an imminent resumption of full freight
and passenger service, the economic impact of the strike was quickly felt in the broader business
community on both sides of the border. In Vermont and Massachusetts woolen mills had closed
for lack of supplies. In Stratford, Ontario packing and milling companies had closed and a
shortage of coal had caused the electric company to turn out the street lights. The fruit business
and other perishable freight shipments were suffering and ice companies were unable to get ice.
There was significant freight congestion building in the Montreal harbour. Within four days
the tie up of freight at Canada/US border points served by the Grand Trunk System was
significant enough for United States Customs to consider becoming involved to effect the
forwarding of bonded freight intended for Canada from the United States.

On the first full day of the strike the Canadian Minister of Labour, made an offer of peace
through arbitration which was “coldly received.” William Lyon MacKenzie King, Minister of
Labour for Canada attempted a second offer of binding arbitration with company support, on the
second day of the strike. While the Canadian Industrial Disputes Investigations Act(IDIA)
provided for a process of non-binding compulsory conciliation, an avenue that had already been
tried and rejected, there was no further mechanism in legislation for government involvement in

40 “Strike Peace Plan Offered by Canada: Grand Trunk's Reply Not Divulged -- Strikers Want to Name Arbitrators,”
41 "Attack on Grand Trunk Train: Governor of Vermont Out with Fifty Armed Deputies to Keep Order," p. 2.
42 "Strike Peace Plan Offered by Canada: Grand Trunk's Reply Not Divulged -- Strikers Want to Name Arbitrators," p. 2.
43 Ibid.
44 "Article 1 -- No Title," p. 2.
46 "Grand Trunk Strike Stops All Freight: Passenger Express Trains Run, but Local Service is at a Standstill," p. 1.
47 "Article 1 -- No Title," p. 2.
Vice President Murdock of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen responded on behalf of the strikers that arbitration was out of the question: “The company did not talk arbitration until they had nagged the men to a finish. Now they want it. We will have none of it.”

According to Murdock, the men had offered to enter into arbitration but their selection of Edgar E. Clark, Chairman of the United States Inter-state Commerce Commission (formerly President of the Order of Railway Conductors) and P. H. Morrissey, President of the Railroad Employees and Investor’s Association (formerly President of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen) had not met the companies standard of ‘expert railroad men.’

Clark and Morrissey had successfully arbitrated an award for the Eastern roads in the United States, the content of which the workers on the Grand Trunk hoped would be contained in their settlement. By day four of the strike, the possibility of arbitration was still in abeyance with both parties intransigent with regards to their selection of arbitrators.

On the evening of the fifth day of the strike, 23 July, Murdock had had a change of heart and wired MacKenzie King expressing a willingness “to refer existing differences to arbitration, provided a board of arbitrators mutually acceptable can be secured.” Several factors may have influenced the decision of the union to accept the governments’ offer of arbitration. The Wabash workers had returned to work. The company’s claims that they had “the men and all the machinery necessary for the operation of our railway” and would “restore normal conditions on the Grand Trunk whenever the proper authorities restore peace,” coupled with the slow

---

49 "Article 1 -- No Title,” p. 2.
51 Ibid.
resumption of some freight traffic may have caused some concern.\textsuperscript{55} Possibly of greater significance was Murdock’s involvement in the successful negotiation on 21 July, just two days earlier, of an agreement that constituted 90\% of the demands of the trainmen, yardmen and conductors on the Canadian Pacific Railroad—demands that mirrored those of the workers on the Grand Trunk, including wage parity with competing American trunk lines in the eastern region.\textsuperscript{56} As previously mentioned, the dispute on the CPR together with the case of the Grand Trunk, had been considered by a Board of Conciliation under the provisions of the IDIA, beginning in May and subsequently rejected in June of 1910.\textsuperscript{57} The positive resolution through arbitration of a comparable dispute may in fact have been the moment for which, Murdock suggested, the men had been “quietly awaiting.”

The arbitration process lasted for ten days with the announcement of a successful settlement being made on 3 August 1910. The terms of the settlement were as follows: 1) that the company will “put back, as soon as possible” those who went on strike with the exception of those who may have been found guilty of acts of violence or disorderly conduct; 2) that the new rates agreed upon (18\% increase over existing schedule) to be retroactive to 1 May 1910; and, 3) that effective 1 January 1912, the company will implement rates in train and yard service consistent with those on the Canadian Pacific Railway east of Fort William.\textsuperscript{58} The same terms were applied to the Central Vermont Railroad Company with the rates of the Rutland Railroad to be substituted for the Canadian Pacific. The effect was a settlement that fell between that awarded to the workers of the Eastern Association railroads in the United States and that of the

\textsuperscript{58} "G.T.R. Strike is Over; An Agreement is Reached," \textit{The Toronto Globe and Mail}, 03 Aug 1910, col. 2, p. 1.
Canadian Pacific. The union leadership hailed the settlement as a victory and extended their appreciation to the members of the Canadian government, the Honorable Mackenzie King, Minister of Labour in particular, adding a wish that the Canadian members of the union “in future, make that appreciation thoroughly apparent.”

Almost immediately, however, the victory began to pale. Strikers had raised concerns regarding the status of their company pension benefits. The union leadership had responded that given that the pension scheme “ha[d] not even been mentioned . . . we take it for granted that the men going back will automatically resume their status quo under the pension arrangements.”

The company however took a different view. The agreement only required that they take the strikers back “as soon as possible” which they were prepared to do, but as “new hands” so far as pension and seniority were concerned. According to one writer, it appeared that the company saw pensions as a benefit not a right, designed to engender a feeling of loyalty and solidarity towards the employer a sentiment clearly not displayed by disloyal striking workers and thus the benefit was forfeited. The phrase “as soon as possible” also became problematic for former strikers. As mentioned earlier the company offered replacement workers permanent employment, thus strikers would only be taken back as vacancies became available. By the end of August not one striking passenger conductor had been reinstated on the Central Vermont.

Protests regarding the lack of a timely reinstatement of former strikers prompted the Canadian government to propose a series of investigative hearings. Charles Hays, President of the Grand Trunk refused unless the company convened and controlled the proceedings. There

60 “G.T.R. Strike is Over; An Agreement is Reached,” col, 2, p. 1.
61 Ibid.
being no legal mechanism for the government to undertake such an investigation it was left to the company. Judge Barron presided at the request and was on the payroll of the Grand Trunk.⁶⁴ No legal representation was allowed for either the workers or the company and no union representation. Each case was brought by the worker desiring reinstatement, handled individually, and investigated in relation to “any charge that [wa]s made [by the company] against any man, no matter what it [wa]s.⁶⁵[emphasis mine] The worker seeking reinstatement was thus put at risk of having charges brought against him that had no bearing on his involvement in the strike action but raised questions about his general conduct and with the potential to justify the company’s decision not to reinstate. The Judge had no power to reinstate only to report his findings to the company President and no mandate even to consider the terms of the agreement of August 1910, in fact in the Judge’s own words, “I know nothing about it, except what I have seen in the papers.”⁶⁶

In one instance documented in the hearing transcripts, striker Clare Anderson, who had managed after the strike to secure work as a steam fitter in the shop in Portland, was told by the company representative Mr. Whittenberger that to hear his case would require that he be “immediately discharged” from his current job, in Whittenberger’s words “you won’t go back to work to-morrow.”⁶⁷ Rather than risk unemployment Anderson agreed to withdraw his case and remain in a job that paid considerably less than his former position. Hearings were held in communities across the line from Windsor, Ontario, through Montreal to Portland, Maine. 

---

⁶⁵ Ibid., 3-4.
⁶⁷ Ibid., 37
appears to be little indication that the Judge reported favorably to the company President on behalf of any of the former strikers or that any were reinstated as a result of the proceedings.

The real winners in this conflict appear to have been the leaders of the US-based international Brotherhoods who proclaimed the process a victory for their membership on both sides of the border and the replacement workers who would now benefit from the successfully negotiated increase of 18%. The losers in this process included local businesses that had suffered serious losses, some ending in bankruptcy, and certainly those strikers who ultimately were not reinstated or who suffered the loss of seniority and pension benefits. The significance of the settlement was not in the percentage increase, which was in fact what the company had originally offered, but in the effective date—up to a year and a half earlier than the company’s original proposal.68 The process had taken almost a year from the beginning of the investigation by the Board of Conciliation in May 1910 to the end of the investigation in relating to reinstatement in April 1911. For facilitating the importation of 13 foreign strike breakers through the tunnel at Sarnia in contravention of the Canadian Alien Contract Labour Law, thirteen charges were brought against the company and a fine levied of $50 and costs in each of the thirteen cases.69 Essentially the company was free to do as it pleased once the final process of arbitration was completed and the strike settled. As already pointed out, there was no mechanism in law to scrutinize company behaviour with respect to the enforcement of the arbitration award. Even the Minister of Labour, Mackenzie King, in a conversation with the Prime Minister admitted that the Industrial Disputes Investigations Act had been “a tremendous handicap to the men and a no less equal advantage to the company.” 70

While the strike had been underway on the Grand Trunk system a wave of successful wage and rule arbitrations continued to gain momentum across the United States, beginning as they did with the major lines in what was known as the Eastern Association and continuing to the south and west. Six months after the strike action on the Grand Trunk System a successful arbitration award was negotiated between the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE) and the major lines of the Western Association that included the Southern Pacific but not the lines that extended into Mexico. Like their counterparts on the Grand Trunk, the locomotive engineers, fireman, conductors and brakemen working in the States of Sonora and Sinaloa, Mexico for the Southern Pacific de Mexico went out on strike seeking parity with their counterparts in the United States—a 30% increase in wages with which the company could not or would not comply.  

Although much smaller in number than the strikers on the Grand Trunk System, only 62 locomotive engineers in total described by the local newspaper as native and American, their impact was initially far reaching. “At least two score of train crews [were] affected, many of them quitting in sympathy with the strikers.” The strike affected the lines running south to Guaymas and on to Guadalajara and north to Cananea, a total of roughly 1000 miles. In short order all connecting lines in Mexico placed an embargo on passenger and freight shipments over

---

71 In this account it was suggested that the workers were also asking for parity with workers on the National Railway of Mexico, "Iran empleados Mexicanos: se projeta la Mexicanización un importante ferrocarril," El Heraldo Mexicano, 26 Jan 1911, p. 6.; "Strikers Fill Nogales Town," Los Angeles Times, 22 January 1911.; Diary entry on January 17, 1911: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1911, Ingram, Selena Gray (Galt) Diaries 1909-1916, Ingram Diaries, HL.; In this account the demand is reported as 50% and an indication given that the company would be in contravention of Mexican law if such an increase was granted: "Two Strikes Hamper Business on the West Coast," Mexican Herald, 20 Jan 1911, col. 1, p. 6..  
72 "Mexican Lines of Southern Pacific Tied," Tucson Arizona Daily Star, 18 January 1911, col. 6, p. 3.;"Strikers Fill Nogales Town,".  
73 "Iran Empleados Mexicanos: Se Proyecta la Mexicanización Un Importante Ferrocarril".; "Strikers Fill Nogales Town,".
the affected lines. Like the traffic interruption on the Grand Trunk system, this strike action produced serious freight traffic congestion with far-reaching continental trade implications.

The strikers used the border to their advantage, avoiding the threat of Mexican government repression by conducting all strike action north of the border in Nogales, Arizona. The striking workers refused to operate the switch engine in the yards at Nogales AZ as it belonged to the Sonora line. The congestion in the yard backed up freight and passenger runs forcing officials to man the trains in order to maintain minimal operations. In short order all other connecting lines in Mexico placed an embargo on passenger and freight shipments over the affected lines because they were unable to guarantee delivery on time. Those to be affected included local growers of fresh produce that had only recently developed a brisk business shipping to Chicago and points on the Pacific coast. According to one newspaper account there were 250 carloads of oranges billed through to Canada and 350 carloads of tomatoes, eggplant, green peppers and other similar produce. The result was serious rail congestion throughout Mexico, ultimately with implications for consumers and businesses across the continent.

While the outbreak of hostilities relating to the 1910 Mexican revolution had had little impact at this point on railroad operations, the ever present rumors of insurgent attack and increasing labor unrest prompted the Mexican government to respond to the strike action by moving a company of infantry from Cananea to the border, stationing soldiers as guards on passenger trains moving south from Nogales, Sonora and issuing an order prohibiting public gatherings. According to Selena Ingram, wife of the General Manager of the Southern Pacific of Mexico, Robert Ingram, the company and the Mexican government had little concern about

---

75 "Mexican Lines of Southern Pacific Tied," col. 6, p. 3.
76 Diary entry of January 18, 1911: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1911, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, Ingram Diaries, HL. ;"Strikers Fill Nogales Town,".
“keeping the peace” with respect to the striking workers or to controlling the Mexican firemen and brakemen recruited as replacement workers. But there was concern expressed for the safety of company representatives and their families in Empalme. Selena expressed her own concern that, “all these men suddenly turned loose with all their wages in their pockets may give trouble temporarily.” The company of Mexican soldiers that had just left Empalme were to be sent back.

Newspaper reports on the company response paint a picture of little concern and business as usual. On the second day of the strike one newspaper reported that: “Colonel E.P Randolph [President of the SPdeM] has not deemed the strike of sufficient importance to interrupt his trip to San Antonio and has not returned to this city [Tucson].” According to Selena Ingram, however, the strike was considered a very serious thing for the road. In her diary entry for 17 January 1911 Selena records that her husband was called to a meeting in Tucson the day before workers walked off the job. Selena goes further in the diary entry to suggest that the strike in fact was anticipated and as a result preparation already in place, which may provide the justification for this apparent lack of concern.

None of the American newspapers reviewed reported incidents of violence or any requests on the part of the company for government intervention on the American side of the dispute. Nor do they provide any information regarding the role of organized labor. Selena Ingram, however, tells a different story. According to her diary entries, three days into the strike

77 Diary entry on January 17, 1911: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1911, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, Ingram Diaries, HL.
78 Ibid.
80 Diary entry on January 17, 1911: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1911, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, Ingram Diaries, HL.
there was “great excitement in Nogales.”\textsuperscript{81} She specifically refers to striking members of the Brotherhoods that were reported throwing stones at the new engineers as they brought trains across the border from the Mexican to the American side. She also recounts reports of union members bribing the Mexican firemen acting as engineers.\textsuperscript{82} According to Selena’s diary, nine days after the strike began Rob Ingram and his superior, Epes Randolph, President of the Southern Pacific of Mexico, commissioned “gun men” and “professional murderers” from the Arizona government to protect replacement engineers on the American side of the border.\textsuperscript{83} In Selena’s own words, these were men who had “quelled trouble many times in the old lawless days in Arizona.” Given that no accounting of these union activities appear in the company records reviewed or local newspaper accounts of the period, the company was apparently very good at keeping their fears and their responses quietly under raps.

In earlier strikes involving Mexican workers on the SPdeM the company had received assistance from the state. Workers, rather than be forced backed to work in the same conditions, simply walked away from their jobs. In a 1906 strike in the Empalme, Sonora yards of the SPdeM, Mexican workers walked off the job protesting a wage reduction from 1.75 to 1.50 pesos per day.\textsuperscript{84} The local Mexican police intervened, stopped the strike and one hundred workers quit rather than work for less. In reaction to another pay cut in 1909 there was yet another unsuccessful strike of Mexican workers on the SPdeM line. In that instance, and with the support of the state, the company fired 250 workers.\textsuperscript{85} In contrast, when an American locomotive engineer who worked for the SPdeM was jailed by local Mexican authorities and his

\textsuperscript{81} Diary entry on January 21, 1911: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1911, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, Ingram Diaries, HL.
\textsuperscript{82} Diary entry on January 20, 1911: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1911, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, Ingram Diaries, HL.
\textsuperscript{83} Diary entry on January 27, 1911: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1911, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, Ingram Diaries, HL.
\textsuperscript{84} Ruiz, Ramón Eduardo, \textit{The People of Sonora and Yankee Capitalists}, 22.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 23.
companions went on strike to acquire his release, instead of punishing the strikers the company manager secured the release of the engineer.\textsuperscript{86} When miners walked off the job in protest of preferential treatment begin given to American workers in the Cananea miners’ strike in 1906, the governor of Sonora requested assistance from the governor of Arizona who responded by sending an armed contingent of Arizona Rangers and miners across the border into Mexico to put down the strike.\textsuperscript{87} The violent repression by government, including the use of the Arizona militia, heightened the anti-American and anti-Diaz sentiments of Mexican workers and no doubt stood as a warning to American workers as well.\textsuperscript{88} Selena’s reports of the company’s confidence in government support to ‘keep the peace’ through the use of force is certainly consistent with both the Arizonan and Sonoran governments’ response to past labor unrest.

In 1911 the Southern Pacific of Mexico responded to the striking locomotive engineers with a ‘divide and conquer’ strategy. A report from Nogales, Arizona spoke of “thirty strike breakers and thirty Chinese” arriving on a southbound train—the Chinese disembarked but the American strike breakers from Los Angeles did not appear.\textsuperscript{89} A company spokesman responding to allegations claimed that it was not totally true that they had replaced all American Engineers with Mexicans but were using Mexican engineers where available.\textsuperscript{90} According to a report in the \textit{Bisbee Arizona Daily Review}, company officials were attempting to recruit American engineers as strike breakers in Bisbee but to no avail.\textsuperscript{91} There was also evidence that the managers on other

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{88} Gonzales, "United States Copper Companies, the State, and Labour Conflict in Mexico," 652, 667, 674; Andrews, \textit{Shoulder to Shoulder?}, 18-9.
\textsuperscript{89} "LOCOMOTIVE TALK TWO DAYS HAPPENINGS," \textit{Tucson Arizona Daily Star}, 25 January 1911, col. 5, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{91} "Officers at the Throttle of Engines," \textit{Bisbee Arizona Daily News}, 19 Jan 1911, col. 1, p. 8.
American controlled Mexican roads and on the National System were recruiting Mexican engineers and sending them on to the SPdeM as replacements.\textsuperscript{92} Although not mentioned in the American newspaper accounts, Selena wrote that Mexican fireman and brakeman went out on strike initially but then returned to work almost immediately with the promise of training and promotion to engineer.\textsuperscript{93} Employing a strategy reminiscent to that of the Grand Trunk, the SPdeM initially maintained what service it could through the use of officials and some replacement and trainee engineers.\textsuperscript{94}

Following the reports of the strike in Mexican newspapers, Selena was shocked by the anti-American abuse being directed towards the company and its management.\textsuperscript{95} The discrimination practiced by the SPdeM against Mexican workers has already been mentioned in relation to the unsuccessful strikes of 1906 and 1909. The US-based Brotherhods dominated organized labor in the Mexican railroad industry. Initially the Brotherhods did not establish international affiliated branches of their craft unions but rather locals that excluded Mexican membership. By 1910 there were fourteen divisions in Mexico including one in Guaymas and one in Guadalajara.\textsuperscript{96} That exclusionary policy changed to a degree when it became apparent that the companies, like the Southern Pacific of Mexico, would exploit the non-union Mexican workers as strikebreakers.\textsuperscript{97} Opening membership to Mexican workers prevented the company


\textsuperscript{93} Diary entry January 18, 1911: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1911, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, Ingram Diaries, HL.; the offer of training and promotion is corroborated in this article: "Two Strikes Hamper Business on the West Coast," \textit{Mexican Herald}, 20 January 1911, col. 1, p. 6.

\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Tucson Arizona Daily Star}, 20 Jan 1911, col. 4, p. 2.

\textsuperscript{95} Diary entry January 24, 1911: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1911, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, Ingram Diaries, HL.

\textsuperscript{96} "Divisions by States," \textit{Locomotive Engineers Journal}, XLIV, no. 6 (June 1910), I.

\textsuperscript{97} Lorena M. Parlee, "The Impact of United States Railroad Unions on Organized Labor and Government Policy in Mexico (1880-1911)," \textit{The Hispanic American Historical Review} 64, no. 3 (1984): 452.
from using those workers as strike breakers but did very little to advance the cause of Mexican workers.

The racial and ethnic discrimination practiced by the Brotherhoods against their Mexican co-workers was an extension of similar practices against African Americans and other foreign-born workers domestically. These practices migrated across the border not only with organized labor but also with management. The man responsible for labor relations and strike negotiations on behalf of the company was Robert Hord Ingram, who as we saw in Chapter 3, received his early labor relations training in the racially antagonistic environment of the Louisville and Nashville Railway. This discrimination supported by management took the form of limiting advancement and preserving a system of unequal compensation that not only allowed for lower pay rates for Mexican workers, but also supported their payment in company scrip as opposed to payment in coin. In addition, Mexican workers who joined with the Brotherhoods were threatened with blacklisting, firing, and imprisonment by US companies and the Mexican government. The American railroad workers in Mexico believed they were fighting to maintain their position while Mexican workers struggled to achieve parity with their American counterparts and the company. As we shall see, these two groups played one off against the other.

98 In 1883, a year after the official opening of the line across the border, the company had 1,949 employees in Sonora with the following breakdown: 664 Mexicans, 810 Yaqui Indians, 475 Americans, including 200 African Americans. Americans held primarily skilled and professional positions; a handful of Mexican workers could be classed as skilled—carpenters, station attendants (who were employed more for their skills as cultural brokers/translators)—the majority were construction laborers. The Yaqui Indians were employed first as construction laborers and later as permanent section crews performing track repair. This same pattern existed north of the border in Arizona, with the addition of Chinese coolie labor in track laying: Tinker Salas, *In the Shadow of TheEagles*. 134; Andrews, *Shoulder to Shoulder?*, 19; Parlee, "The Impact of United States Railroad Unions on Organized Labor and Government Policy in Mexico (1880-1911)": 447, 453; Roberto R. Calderón, *Mexican Coal Mining Labor in Texas and Coahuila, 1880-1930* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 27; Stromquist, *A Generation of Boomers*, 188-9.

This inequity has been well documented by scholars such as Andrews, Parlee, Ruiz and Tinker Salas and will not be dealt with in detail here, but what is of significance to this study is that by the turn of the twentieth century Mexican workers had rejected the unequal partnership offered by the US Brotherhoods and begun to organize in earnest. A number of organizations emerged and gained momentum as their interests and those of the state to ‘Mexicanize’ the railroad system converged around 1906 thus creating the opportunity for a dramatic increase in the availability of skilled Mexican railroad workers and weakening the hold of the Brotherhoods. Despite Selena’s dismay regarding the negative accounts in the Mexican press, the company was effectively using this deep seated animosity and the combined interests of Mexican railroad workers and the state to their advantage against the US-based Brotherhoods.

From the point of view of the striking engineers, the apparent chaos resulting from the company’s decision to substitute with inexperienced officials or Mexican workers only bolstered their perception of themselves as indispensable skilled workers. Passengers reported having no idea “how far they would be able to travel between stops” and have had to wait long periods of time between meals. They reported traveling on trains in “bad shape,” in one instance “a hose was played on a boiler to cool it off and avoid an explosion.”

There were no specific details found in the newspaper accounts or corporate records of the outcome of the strike action, and existing accounts seem to be conflicting. In one newspaper

---


report the strike was “patched up” by 27 January. 103 According to Selena’s account, after dickering for a few days over the details of the concession, the strike was off Rob’s hands by 16 February. 104 Certainly the potential for loss of freight revenue would have been a motivating factor for the SPdeM given the withdrawal of freight from connecting lines; however there was apparently little disruption on connecting lines through Tucson. 105 A brief note that appeared in the Locomotive Engineers journal for October of 1911, eight months after the company declared the strike settled, warned members of the Brotherhood to “keep away from Nogales, Arizona.”

106 According to the Journal the strike had not been settled and members offering their services to the company would be in violation of their obligations and subject to having their membership revoked. In an article that appeared in the March 1911 edition of the El Paso Mining Journal, the writer reported that little information was available about the actual settlement and no one seemed to know exactly what Robert Ingram had done to achieve it. 107

How does one unravel the mysterious ending of this strike action? It is fair to say that the 1911 strike took place during a turning point in the evolution of organized labor in Mexico. While the US Brotherhoods had for some time effectively kept Mexican workers out of positions of higher skill and authority in the interest of protecting their own, as already mentioned nationalization of the railroad system was slowly shifting the balance of power to some extent in favour of the Mexican worker. It is significant to note that the SPdeM was the last major rail line in the country to be nationalized in 1951. 108 Growing numbers of skilled Mexican railroad

104 Diary entry February 16, 1911: Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1911, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, Ingram Diaries, HL.
105 "Strikers Fill Nogales Town, ".
107 Diary entry March 19, 1911 Selena Gray Galt Ingram, Diary, 1911, Selena Gray (Galt) Ingram Diaries 1909-1916, Ingram Diaries, HL.
workers on the national lines combined with the growing animosity towards American workers and companies contributed a ready and available strike breaking workforce for the SPdeM.

While the policy of Mexicanization was moving ahead and control of the Mexican railroad system in terms of majority shareholding was slowly being transferred to the Mexican government, management expertise continued to be in the hands of foreign nationals who, it seems reasonable to speculate, would have been sympathetic to the cause of the SPdeM. As previously noted, newspaper accounts confirm the willingness of the American manager Sparks of the Mexican Central to rally qualified Mexican workers as strike breakers for the SPdeM dispute.

The Southern Pacific of Mexico was as interested in maintaining good relations with the state, both local and federal, as it was with generating sufficient profits for shareholders. Both meant keeping the trains running. This preoccupation with government relations dates back to the terms of the original concessions and the ongoing debate over the non-payment of government subsidies; the power of the state to set freight and passenger rates, always considered too low; and the power of the state to nationalize the operation in times of war or civil unrest, a current and pressing threat.\textsuperscript{109} As the winds of change shifted and the numbers of skilled Mexican workers grew, the SPdeM took advantage of an opportunity to keep wages lower, appease the state and Mexican workers and, in the same manner as the Grand Trunk Railway before them, recruit and hire permanent replacement Mexican brakemen and firemen to fill the vacancies created by striking locomotive engineers.

\textsuperscript{109} Leal and Villaseñor, \textit{La clase obrera en la historia de México: en la Revolución (1910-1917)}, 70; J. A. Naugle to Aldace F. Walker. (09 Mar 1895) Box #117, File #650 - Sonora Railway Company Ltd. General, Vol 1 1883 to December 31, 1895, ATSF, KSHS.; J. A. Naugle to Aldace F. Walker. (05 Aug 1895) Box #117, File #650 - Sonora Railway Company Ltd. General, Vol 1 1883 to December 31, 1895, ATSF, KSHS.
So while there are no specific reports outlining the way in which the strike was resolved or why the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers would warn its members in October, eight months after Robert Ingram apparently had the strike off his hands, to stay away from Nogales, it is not unreasonable to draw the conclusion that the company did in fact permanently fill all vacancies created by striking American and Native workers with Mexican workers. In so doing they successfully returned the line to full operation making the strike action irrelevant and without having to negotiate an official settlement. As in the case of former strikers on the Grand Trunk, the vacancies created by the striking locomotive engineers were permanently filled and the striking workers no longer needed.

Compared with the fanfare at the end of the successful negotiation of the award on the Grand Trunk, strikers on the SPdeM just seem to fade away. In this instance the company effectively used the border and Mexican political and popular will to divest any responsibility it might have had for providing parity with company employees on the American side and to return operating conditions to normal.

FROM COMPARISON TO CONTINENTAL CONNECTION

From a simply comparative perspective there are many interesting similarities and differences that can be drawn from these two strike accounts. The differences appear quite obvious, relating to the size of the striking workforce, the nature of the state intervention and the acceptance or rejection of the spread of the US-based Brotherhoods. The strike on the SPdeM involved 62 locomotive engineers compared with 5,000 trainmen on the Grand Trunk. The State in the southwest responded with the very credible threat of violent repression versus a legislative framework for compulsory conciliation in the case of the Grand Trunk. Finally, as was
mentioned earlier the negative combined influence of the discriminatory practices of the US-based Brotherhoods and foreign corporations drove the development of an organized labor movement in Mexico with a strong national identification in contrast to the situation in Canada.

The Canadian response to the spread of US-based Brotherhoods varied greatly from the Mexican response. The migration of workers across the Canada/US border combined with increased cross-Atlantic immigration put Canadian workers in contact with developments in both the United States and Britain. According to historian Desmond Morton, “In North America even skilled craftsmen frequently rolled up their belongings, wrapped their tools in an oily rag, and set out 'on tramp.' To itinerant workers, the border between Canada and the United States was no obstacle.”

Many English Canadian workers welcomed the internationals for their leverage in terms of numbers. That acceptance was not however unanimous. There was a movement for a truly nationally-based organized labor movement more generally. For example, railroad workers formed the Canadian Brotherhood of Railroad Employees, in 1908. French Canadian workers felt excluded from membership in the internationals much in the same way that Mexican workers were excluded from membership in the US south and from branches in Mexico. English was the language of business, and French Canadian workers, like many other non-English speaking workers, were over represented in the category of unskilled labor. For example, in Montreal during the 1920s, the CPR was the single largest employer and while the majority of the

---


111 Morton, Working People, 132.

population (63%) were French Canadian, the majority of managerial, supervisory and skilled jobs were held by those of British origin.  

Historian Robert Babcock discusses the resistant of French Canadians to ‘foreign unions’ in the early 1900s. In particular he cites the Anglo-Saxon bias of many labor leaders using the American Federation of Labor (AFL) as an example. Samuel Gompers, President of the AFL, had on occasion "boasted of his linguistic ability” but “bluntly told his French-Canadian correspondents to write to him in English.” In answer to the recommendation that the Federation endorse an international language, Gompers responded, “I find my time too fully crowded to say one half I want to say in the English language.”

French Canadian workers had aligned strongly with the Knights of Labor (KOL) and their more broadly inclusionary practices. In 1902 the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada (TLC) agreed with the AFL to disallow membership to organizations that promoted dual unionism, an action directed specifically at the Knights of Labor and other forms of industrial unionism. The result was a further alienation of French Canadian workers from the Canadian labor movement in general. In many industries French Canadians formed their own unions, in some cases under the auspices of the Catholic Church. However, unlike Mexican workers able to take advantage of growing state support against the abuse of American corporations and so-called international unions, French Canadian workers existed as a minority within the dominant English Canadian national context.

113 Ibid.
There were many similarities between the two strikes. The strikers in both instances were employed by transnational corporations. However, it seems that in operation the Grand Trunk was truly more so than the SPdeM which in its own legal fiction functioned quite separately from the Southern Pacific proper. As a result while the strike actions did take place across international boundaries, the border appeared invisible in the Canada/US instance but in the US/Mexico border it was clearly a barrier deployed to advantage by the company, the strikers and the local states involved. The strikers themselves were all members of the US-based Brotherhoods but as already pointed out that fact worked in favor of the Canadian membership and against the American membership working in Mexico. The most striking similarity is that in both cases the striking workers appear to have been the losers despite a declared victory in the case of the Grand Trunk and the unintended win for Mexican workers on the SPdeM. The continental significance can be found in the events that precipitated these two strikes—the spread and influence of the international Brotherhoods and the movement for the standardization of wages and work in the United States. The origins of the US-based movement for the standardization of wages and work can be found in the struggle between labor, capital and the state with respect to the regulation of freight rates.

The point has already been made that the end of the nineteenth and opening of the twentieth centuries was a period of intense competition in the railroad industry across the continent resulting in public pressure for state regulation of railroad rates.\textsuperscript{118} With expansion of the network came a corresponding growth in the number of alternatives available to shippers which in turn drove the competition over freight rates. As we saw in Chapter 4, the railroads, including the Grand Trunk and the CPR, had made many attempts at self-regulation such as

\textsuperscript{118} For Canada see: Armstrong and Nelles, \textit{Monopoly’s Moment}, 116-141; For the United States see: Kolko, \textit{Railroads and Regulation}; and for Mexico see: Kuntz Ficker and Connolly, \textit{Ferrocarriles y obras publicas}. 
pooling and later rate associations that had failed due to the inability to enforce voluntary agreements.\textsuperscript{119} Any company large or small, the Grand Trunk being a regular offender within the eastern trunk line association, could simply choose not to abide by the rate agreements and thus make the process irrelevant.\textsuperscript{120} While the first legislative response in the United States was the establishment of the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1887, the Commission had not been given the authority to fix rates and the grievance process was plagued with ambiguous definitions, such as requiring that rates be “reasonable and just.”\textsuperscript{121} The process was also incredibly costly in terms of time and money thus favored the railroads and large shippers over small farmers and workers.\textsuperscript{122} The Hepburn Bill in 1906 and the Mann-Elkins Act in 1910 strengthened the powers of the ICC.\textsuperscript{123} While much of the ambiguity remained, the ICC gained the power upon complaint of a shipper or railroad to “determine and prescribe what will be the just and reasonable rate or rates” and for that determination to take effect within thirty days and to be in force for a maximum of two years.\textsuperscript{124}

While it is the ICC that we are most concerned with here because of its role in connection with the arbitration of the two strike actions, it is also notable that similar legislative activities to increase oversight over private industry engaged in public works, and in particular railroads, were taking place in Canada and Mexico as well.\textsuperscript{125} The Canadian Parliament passed the Conciliation Act in 1900, the Railway Act and Railroad Labour Disputes Act in 1903. The Conciliation Act established the Department of Labour and charged it with the collection of labor

\textsuperscript{119} Kolko, \textit{Railroads and Regulation}. 58-9, 83, 88.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 17, 88.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 53.
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 53-6.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 128-52; Stover, \textit{American Railroads}, 269.
\textsuperscript{124} Kolko, \textit{Railroads and Regulation}, 145.
\textsuperscript{125} Armstrong and Nelles, \textit{Monopoly’s Moment}, 240-1; Shabot, \textit{Los orígenes del sindicalismo ferrocarrilero}, 19.
statistics and a process for voluntary conciliation.\textsuperscript{126} The Railway Act of 1903 established the Board of Railway Commissioners charged with the oversight of operations and rates on all railways under federal jurisdiction, the first Canadian regulatory agency.\textsuperscript{127} The Railroad Labour Disputes Act of 1903 imposed a procedure for compulsory binding arbitration.\textsuperscript{128} The Mexican government established the Secretary of Communication and Public Works in 1891 and the Railway Law, regulating among many things the freight and passenger rates, was revised in 1899.\textsuperscript{129} The consolidation of the Mexican railway system under government control began between the years of 1903 and 1910.\textsuperscript{130} Process for conciliation and arbitration in labor relations followed in Mexico, but not until the the 1917 Constitution had established the right of workers to organize and to strike.\textsuperscript{131}

Railroad freight revenues in the United States had reached their height in 1907 and then fell off in 1908 and even more sharply in 1909.\textsuperscript{132} The railroads were anxious to offset this drop in revenue with an increase in rates in 1908. They did however withdraw their demands temporarily following the suggestion from the Commission and President Roosevelt that the timing was inopportune given the approach of an election and a controversial split in Congress over the justification of such an increase.\textsuperscript{133} But in May of 1910, and in the midst of a controversial debate in Congress regarding the provisions of what would become the Mann-Elkin

\textsuperscript{126} Armstrong and Nelles, \textit{Monopoly's Moment}, 168, 189.
\textsuperscript{128} Hibbits, "A Change of Mind": 60; Woods et al., \textit{Labour Policy and Labour Economics in Canada}, 56-64.
\textsuperscript{129} Coatsworth, \textit{Growth Against Development}, 44-5; Leal and Villaseñor, \textit{La clase obrera en la historia de México}, 76.
\textsuperscript{130} Coatsworth, \textit{Growth Against Development}, 46; Leal and Villaseñor, \textit{La clase obrera en la historia de México}, 82-3.
\textsuperscript{131} Norman Caulfield, \textit{Mexican Workers and the State: From the Porfiriato to NAFTA} (Fort Worth, Tex: Texas Christian University Press, 1998), 3.
\textsuperscript{132} Kolko, \textit{Railroads and Regulation}, 173.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 174-6.
Bill, the Western railroads ignored the previous suggestion and collectively raised their rates between 8 and 20%.\textsuperscript{134} Faced with growing public pressure the government was forced to issue an injunction against 24 railroad companies, a compromise was negotiated and the companies agreed to withdraw the advance until the Bill had passed.\textsuperscript{135} The atmosphere was one of uncertainty between the passing of the legislation in June of 1910 and February 1911 when the ICC finally ruled against the rate increase.\textsuperscript{136} The Commission was divided and while dropping revenues had justified an increase in 1908, the dramatic increase in revenues 1909 to 1910 severely undermined the case.\textsuperscript{137} It was in this environment that the railroad Brotherhoods began to press their demands for the standardization of wages and work rules.

The Brotherhoods were organized in the same fashion as the rate association regions defined by the ICC: Eastern, east of Chicago and north of the Ohio River; Western, west, northwest and south from Chicago; and Southern or south eastern, south of Ohio and east of the Mississippi.\textsuperscript{138} The Eastern Association included the workers on the Grand Trunk and its subsidiary the Central Vermont and the workers on the Southern Pacific were part of the Western Association. They had been supportive and active in the movement to increase rates believing that they shared interests in common with the company and knowing that if rates could not be increased then wages would be cut in order to maintain sufficient profit margins for shareholders.\textsuperscript{139} Up until the turn of the twentieth century bargaining had been negotiated separately between each railroad and the relevant labor organization, but the lack of uniformity in pay rates and in rules governing methods of payment and general conditions of employment

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 191.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 192.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 195-7.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 192, 195.
\textsuperscript{138} Richardson, \textit{The Locomotive Engineer}, 286.
\textsuperscript{139} "A Good Record & Merry Christmas," \textit{The Railroad Trainman}, 27, no. 12 (1910), 1035.
resulted in a series of regional movements and for the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen (BRT) and the Order of Railway Conductors (ORC) an unprecedented shift to concerted action on a regional basis.\textsuperscript{140}

The only way to accomplish standardization was to take a collective approach to the bargaining process—a committee of company managers to meet and negotiate with a committee of union representatives acting on behalf of the employees of the companies involved. Each of the big four Brotherhoods was involved in pressing their demands at different times across all three regional associations. The first to make a move was the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers in the west in 1907 pressing for wage increases. To avoid a strike the Western railroads agreed to arbitration under the provisions of the Erdman Act of 1898, a legal mechanism for voluntary arbitration.\textsuperscript{141} The award favored the locomotive engineers to the tune of a 10 to 12\% increase in wages.\textsuperscript{142} The ORC and the BRT in the Eastern Association were prepared to move forward in the very first concerted action but withdrew their demands in reaction to the severe economic downturn, remaining, however, poised to renew the action with the return of better economic conditions.\textsuperscript{143}

That opportunity would come in May of 1910 for the Eastern Association of the ORC and BRT.\textsuperscript{144} The demands were presented to all the major trunk lines in the eastern region, some evidence suggests to the Grand Trunk as well, but the process is not clear. The railroad companies refused to negotiate as a group and so the process began of pressing demands individually to each line beginning with the Baltimore and Ohio. The B&O initially rejected the

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{140} Richardson, \textit{The Locomotive Engineer}, 285-6.
\textsuperscript{141} Chandler, \textit{The Railroads the Nation's First Big Business}, 132; Eggert, \textit{Railroad Labor Disputes}, 224-5; Stromquist, \textit{A Generation of Boomers}, 262.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid.; "Award of Arbitrators for NYC," \textit{The Railroad Trainman}, 27, no. 7 (July 1910), 606.
\textsuperscript{144} "The Eastern Wage Movement," \textit{The Railroad Trainman}, 27, no. 6 (June 1910), 522-4.
\end{flushleft}
demands, a strike vote was taken and in the interest of avoiding a strike the company opted for voluntary arbitration under the Erdman Act of 1906. The unions prevailed and the B & O award became the benchmark for subsequent negotiations throughout the eastern region ending finally in June of 1910 with the award on the lines of the New York Central. Similar movements were undertaken by the other Brotherhoods in the Western and Southern Associations with similar degrees of success. The final arbitration award of note was to the BLE in the Western Association in December of 1910 to the tune of an average 10 1/3% increase in wages.145

The overall impact of this wave of successful arbitrations was to establish the foundation for the effective standardization of wages and work rules across the system in the United States but not initially to the transnational members of the unions working for the Southern Pacific of Mexico or the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada (and its subsidiary the Central Vermont). The timing of these arbitration awards was the trigger for the strikes—the Eastern award was finalized in June of 1910 and the Grand Trunk trainmen went out in July; the Western award was completed in December of 1910 with the SPdeM locomotive engineers strike beginning in January 1911. It is clear that the successful arbitrations in the United States were considered important precedents on which to base grounds for parity in both Canada and Mexico. There is evidence that the strikes were anticipated by the companies and certainly in the case of the Grand Trunk the dispute was put before a Board of Conciliation under the Industrial Disputes Investigations Act at the same time as the first demands were being put to the B&O in May. To achieve true standardization required the extension of similar awards to those companies that operated across international boundaries. Through the strike actions on the Grand Trunk and the

---

SPdeM, the national movement for the standardization of wages and work in the United States became a continental movement.

CONCLUSION

As Goldwin Smith so eloquently observed, the extension of the railroad Trusts was met by a counter-extension of trade unions across the North American continent. While the his prediction of strike actions continental in scope did not materialize, the continental implications of more regional but also transnational labor actions did produce a rather lively beginning to North American railroad labor relations in the twentieth century. A movement intended to standardize wages and work rules primarily in the United States developed into a movement with multiple and complex cross-border interactions resulting in strike actions involving railroad systems in Canada and Mexico.

Overall the movement for railroad workers in the United States appears to have been a success. Notable at this time was the shift in the nature of the involvement of the state from the use of injunction or repression by force for the restoration of law and order to the more complex management of the relations between capital and labor. This shift was connected to the growing sense of state responsibility for the protection of the public interest with respect to public utilities. Strike actions, although threatened in some instances, were avoided through the process of voluntary arbitration, under the Erdman Act, with resultant awards that favored employees over employers. In addition to granting increases in wages, the settlements simplified a very complex system of rules for pay and work that varied from company to company to a regional system of standardized pay schedules, hours of work and other terms of general employment.

In Canada, workers seem to have won the battle but in some ways lost the war. While the Grand Trunk rejected the offer to negotiate as part of the Eastern association of trunk lines, the
dispute was placed first unsuccessfully before a Board of Conciliation under the Industrial Disputes Investigations Act and then, following a strike action of short duration, successfully arbitrated. The result as in the American case was an increase in wages, effectively to the standard of the Eastern Association and the CPR, and similar agreements regarding general terms of employment. In this case though, the process of compulsory conciliation was criticized for giving the advantage to the company by requiring the cessation of strike action for the duration of the conciliation process. While tying the hands of labor it did nothing to restrain the company from making preparations to thwart the possible strike action if and when the recommendation of the Board of Conciliation was rejected, as it was by both sides. Even with the final resolution in the form of a successfully negotiated arbitration award there was no mechanism under law for enforcement, thus the company was free to penalize former strikers as it saw fit—delaying reinstatement and terminating pension benefits.

The Mexican case is a mixed bag with an apparent loss for the American railroad workers and an unintended victory for Mexican workers. In this instance, in the absence of a legal mechanism recognizing unions and the right to strike, the response of the company and the state was the threat of violent repression. Recognition of the right of workers to organize and to strike would not come until 1917. This was a pivotal moment. The outbreak of hostilities in the 1910 revolution fed by the growing anti-American sentiment on the part of Mexican workers experiencing discrimination at the hands of American workers and American corporations and combined with the federal government’s move to nationalize the railroads and ‘Mexicanize’ the workforce seriously weakened the position of foreign railroad workers in Mexico. The evidence suggests that Mexican workers were ready willing and able to fill vacancies left by strikers and that that company with the blessing of the state was taking full advantage. Under those
conditions, and given the small number of engineers involved in the action and the traditional reluctance of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers to use strikes as a vehicle to solve disputes, the absence of any real union presence was not surprising. Unlike the strike on the Grand Trunk, in the southwest there was little evidence of support from the BLE. We must resist the temptation to read this as a failure simply because it was a failure for the American workers; it was nevertheless a movement with significant transnational implications for the standardization of wages and work rules for the Mexican railroad workers.

One very interesting aspect of this transnational movement was the issues of legal jurisdiction raised in terms of the application of legislation in cross-border disputes. Clearly the application of US law related to voluntary arbitration was a non-issue—no attempt was made to include the transnational railroads in voluntary arbitration efforts under the Erdman Act. In the Mexican case the border appeared to clearly define jurisdiction, effectively dividing the parent company, the Southern Pacific, from its subsidiary, the Southern Pacific of Mexico and demarcating the limits of state jurisdiction with regards to policing. The Canadian case appears somewhat different. There the border appears to have been somewhat invisible—the conciliation and arbitration awards, the strike action and the reinstatement hearings took place across the entire system, including workers and lines operating in the United States. While legal jurisdiction quite clearly begins and ends at the border in the US and Mexican cases, the Canadian case is not clear at all with respect to labor disputes on transnational rail lines involving so-called international unions.

In the July 1910 issue of the *Railroad Trainmen’s Journal* there appeared a partial reprint of an analysis of the Industrial Disputes Investigations Act from the *Labour Gazette*, the official publication of the Canadian Ministry of Labour. The writer was attempting to understand what
would happen if an international union were to call for a strike of its membership on the portion of a Canadian railroad operating solely outside of Canada:

Suppose the Grand Trunk switchmen were ordered by the international to strike in order to enforce a demand on connecting railways in Chicago, for instance, to prevent the handling of freight from such roads. If the strike were called without first applying for a board and having an investigation, it would be illegal, though the first offenders might be without the reach of Canadian law. But if a board were appointed and made an investigation, it would find no grievance existing on the railway for which it was appointed and could not justify the intending strikers. Such an order, under the present constitution of most railway unions, would be impossible, but it might occur in case of other international organizations. . .A law has been seriously proposed in Canada making any society, the constitution of which contains provisions contrary to the laws of the country, an illegal society within the Dominion. The main purpose of such an act would be to meet such situations as the one here suggested.¹⁴⁶

According to this analysis, despite the appearance of invisibility, Canadian legal jurisdiction ended at the border, raising unanswered questions about how and why the arbitration award granted under Canadian law to workers on the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada could be made applicable to American workers on lines operating in the United States.

While the labor action being discussed here had its beginnings in the United States, it became much more than just an American story. The two strikes examined here and their causal link to the US-based wages and work movement, have helped to illuminate the evolving interconnectedness of North American labor relations. It is quite clear that by 1910 the social, economic and political interconnectedness facilitated by the expansion of the railroad network made it possible for a movement for the standardization of wages and work rules on railroads in the United States to become the catalyst for the transnational strikes on the Grand Trunk and the SPdeM thus transforming the scope of that social movement from national to continental.

The events described in this final chapter were chosen specifically for their ability to illustrate the well developed continental connections in existence at the turn of the twentieth century.

century, a by-product of railroad network expansion on the North American continent. Further study may help to illuminate some still unanswered questions, but there is no doubt that the stories contained in the preceding chapters and taken together effectively demonstrate a growing continental connectivity and the ever changing nature of these particular international borders—at times functioning as barriers, at times as a tactics to be employed and at times appearing invisible.
Conclusion

Historical sociologist, Barrington Moore Jr. eloquently observed that “generalizations that are sound resemble a large-scale map of an extended terrain, such as an airplane pilot might use in crossing a continent.” He went on to make the point that such maps are essential for some purposes while greater detail is better suited for others. He cautions his reader that “no one seeking a preliminary orientation to a terrain wants to know the location of every house and footpath” except of course for the person who’s house constitutes a detail too small to make it onto this preliminary map.¹ This project was conceived and fashioned as just such a preliminary orientation—the application of a continental unit of analysis in the study of North American railroad development. In an attempt to ensure a connection between the footpath and the large scale map, there has been attention to local and regional realities while attempt to draw out the continental significance. But given the breadth of a project of this nature strategic selections have been made. As such, the foregoing chapters constitute selected topics and events, each of which would benefit from greater in-depth attention, in the development of two cross-border corridors that when taken in comparative or transnational context suggest alternative readings to the more traditional nationally bounded narrative of railroad development.

This project opened with a discussion of the deep historic social, economic and political interrelations that existed across both cross-border corridors in the period prior to the development of the railroad. Isolated by geography from larger domestic and international market opportunities the local regional economies developed in an interdependent fashion. As one scholar suggested, residents of the regions were more interested in making a living than they

were in issues of national identity or jurisdiction. Even before construction was complete the anticipation of what the railroad connections to the wider world would bring in terms of economic prosperity triggered dramatic change in the interdependent orientation of these cross-border regions.

Despite the span of thirty years that separated the development of rail lines across these two corridors, the pattern of development both in anticipation and after completion was remarkably similar. Market towns along the railroad lines with diverse economies before the completion of the railroad benefited most from the opportunity to ply their wares in larger domestic and international markets. “Magic cities” or those towns created by and for the purposes of the railroad, although they experienced overnight growth initially, had limited on going growth in the absence of economic drivers outside of the railroad industries. Towns outside the reach of this faster and more efficient form of transportation were forced to move or decline. Although the case study of the southwest in terms of chronology suggests a process of development consistent with the narrative of westward expansion, the deep legacy of Spanish settlements as far north as Tucson produced a narrative similar to that of the more established corridor in the northeast.

The presence of settlements that pre-dated railroad development in both corridors may explain why the development pre- and post- railroad construction also looks quite similar. Market towns, such as Coaticook and Magdalena, with economies that were diversified beyond that of industry and commerce in support of the railroad benefited from access to wider domestic and international markets. In both corridors the railroad maintained considerable control over the development of its own facilities and thus dictated the creation of “magic” towns in locations

---

convenient for the purposes of railroad operations—Island Pond and Nogales serve as examples. Towns that were not fortunate to find themselves located along the determined route if not too distant from the line were forced to relocate or simply went into decline.

The movement of people within and out of the corridors also has similarities, again creating a contrast with the narrative of westward expansion common to American and Canadian railroad historiography. In the period under study the population in this particular southwestern corridor was, like that in the northeast, remarkably homogenous in language and heritage. The persistence of a majority Mexican Spanish-speaking population in the region well into the late 19th century is comparable to the homogenous British North American composition of the northeastern corridor for the same period. As such, the residents of each cross-border corridor had much in common and long standing cross-border ties both socially and economically.

The advantage of comparison at this point in time highlights the differences emerging in the administration of customs and eventually immigration regulations across these two international boundaries, difference that on some level can be attributed to decisions made by railroad management. It was the prerogative of management to determine where the maintenance shops and division operations would be located. In both instances the locations were consistent with operational needs of the lines, a distance between two points that made for the most efficient and cost effective use of labor and equipment. It also meant locations that allowed for a straightforward acquisition and control of the land on which to build the necessary facilities. This explains the selection of Nogales as opposed to Calabasas just five miles away; Empalme rather than Guaymas less than two miles away; and Island Pond over the existing Town of Brighton. In so doing the operational decisions of railroad management also influenced the administration of border functions. The location of division operations in Nogales, Arizona
and the building of a single depot etc. contributed significantly to the initial operation of *Ambos Nogales* as one town, a condition that the realities of border administration over time made untenable. In the case of Coaticook, Quebec and Island Pond, Vermont, linked by the rail line across the United States/Canadian border across forty-five miles of densely wooded territory, the process of administering customs and immigration regulations was performed in motion on the train. The opportunity to connect these local realities with a larger continental significance is present here given that the two scenarios share the administration of US customs and immigration policy in common. The connection of the history of the development and administration of Canadian and Mexican customs and immigration policy emerges along with the difference in the images of the two borders—a clear barrier in the southwest and invisible in the northeast.

Moving from the local and regional specificities to broader continental connections, by 1879 the Grand Trunk completed its westward expansion as far as Chicago and a decade later the ATSF would use those same lines for the final approach to Chicago’s Dearborn Station and the completion of the northern section of its system. The technological and organizational exigencies of railroad development or what I have chosen to refer to as the logic of railroad development are evident in the mobility and migration patterns of railroad labor. Directly and indirectly the railroad influenced the motion of this massive workforce not only along lines within a particular national context but across borders as well. In addition to the transfer of capital, equipment, and labor, the informal process of training and recruiting management across international boundaries on the continent contributed to a diffusion of ideas and practices relating to race and labor relations. Although geographic mobility was the norm for industrial workers in the nineteenth century, for many who worked on the railroad on the North American continent,
moving back and forth across international boundaries was a function of their employment within a single transportation industry.

The motivation behind cross-border development can also be attributed to this idea of a logic driving railroad development. Chasing the ever expanding market for domestic freight revenue drove these railroads to expand their operations across international the borders. In both cases the motivation was access to transoceanic trade to secure freight traffic, the freight traffic obtained from the region being traversed was secondary in this instance to the through traffic. These cross-border lines were merely extensions of domestic operations or examples of “spill-over” development. Again place becomes irrelevant in the face of the operational technological imperatives driving the railroad industry. The Grand Trunk and the ATSF (later SPdeM) operated extra-nationally, fully expecting to apply the same methods and practices used at home to their operations in foreign territory. Where sensitivity to local traditions and customs was necessary to ensure the security of ongoing revenues, the companies adapted their practices, however not without protest.

In this context of “spill-over” development or the extension of domestic operations across international boundaries, the questions of motivation, ownership and corporate national identity were ever present in the development of both railroads. While the response of the states varied in terms of provisions for dealing with foreign railroad development, the companies responded in similar ways to the different demands. Whatever the challenge, the railroads were primarily interested in the most efficient methods and effective practices to ensure the smooth movement of freight regardless of location. Rather than outright rejection of state authority, both companies simply and consistently attempted to maneuver in ways that were most profitable. An interesting
pattern that emerges as a result of the comparison suggests an alternative reading of local reactions to the invasion of foreign capital.

One expects to find anti-American sentiments emerging in Canadian or Mexican business communities facing competition with American capital. While this was certainly the case in the southwestern corridor, in the northeast the language of unfair competition, destruction of local property and exclusionary employment practices was expressed by Americans towards the invasion of Canadian capital in the form of the Grand Trunk Railway. Again place appears less relevant than the inherent nature of capital to exploit and expand.

By the turn of the twentieth century the complex interconnectedness of this North American railway network was such that both capital and labor were acting in combination across borders. The interest of the railroad corporations in combination with government to standardize rates influenced international labor to consider working in concert to standardize wages and work rules. And while this did not produce a continent-wide concerted effort on the part of labor, it is clear from the evidence that the existence of these continental connections was sufficient to produce parallel efforts in the Canadian and Mexican sections operated by the two transnational railroad corporations—the Grand Trunk and the SPdeM. It is here that one begins to see the continental significance of a convergence of factors all in some manner influenced and facilitated by this cross-border railroad development—the spread of organized labor, the trends towards increased regulation in public policy, the continuity in the evolution of labor relations.

As opposed to stages in a progressive chronology, the preceding chapters constitute several different approaches through which one might examine the influence of the creation of a North American railroad system on the development of a continental space—the influence of railroad construction and operation on regional social and economic relations; upon regional
migration/immigration patterns; and on labor migration patterns. In addition there was the drive to standardize and its influence on public policy; and finally the continental presence of organized labor and its affect on labor relations both corporately and at the level of the nation-state. The outcome has the appearance of inevitability although not intended as a statement of progress towards some identified end goal. The process was more organic in nature than intentional; the passage of time and intensification of development could not do other than accelerate continental linkages. In the spirit of historian Bruno Ramirez’ observation, a variety of approaches have been used to address the local and regional realities of these two cross-border corridors while at the same time attempting to reveal the larger continental social, economic and political significance of North American railroad development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.3

How has changing the unit of analysis from national to regional and then continental changed our understanding of railroad development in that late 19th century and early 20th century in North America? Over a span of roughly sixty years, the steadily increasing complexity of this continental network of rail lines facilitated an increased flow of people, goods and services across international borders that in turn produced a synergistic response at a national, regional and local level. The very nature of railroad operation—standardization or railroad logic—was the constant in each scenario and as a result produced a continental convergence of thought and action in the areas examined.

---

Bibliography

**Manuscript Collections**

Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, HL

Ingram, Selena Gray (Galt) Diary and Manuscript

Sud Pacifico de Mexico Collection

Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, KS, KSHS

Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway Company Collection

Peele, Will J. Diary, 1879-1902

Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, LAC

Canadian National Railway Records

Immigration Branch

Statistics Canada Fonds

Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, MN, MHS

Fred S. Rutledge & Family Papers

Great Northern Railway Collection

National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, NARA

Bureau of the Census

Records of the Department of State

**Newspapers**

*Benson (Arizona) Oasis*

*Bisbee (Arizona) Daily News.*

*El Heraldo Mexicano.*

*El tráfico.*

*Kansas City Journal.*
La voz de Alamos.
Los Angeles Times.
Mexican Herald.
Montreal Gazette.
New York Daily Times.
The Nogales Oasis.
Portland Advertiser.
Sherbrooke Gazette and Eastern Townships Advertiser.
Tucson Arizona Daily Citizen.
Tucson Arizona Daily Star.
Tucson Arizona Weekly Citizen.
The Toronto Globe
The Toronto Globe and Mail.

**Labor Journals**

Locomotive Engineers' Monthly Journal
Locomotive Engineers Journal
The Railroad Trainman
The Railroad Trainmen's Journal
Railway Conductor Monthly
The Railway Agent and Station Agent

**Government Documents**

Corral, Ramon. *Memoria de la administracion publica del Estado de Sonora presentada a la legislatura del mismo por el Gobernador Ramon Corral*. Tomo I, [Report of the Public Administration of the State of Sonora Presented to the Legislature of the Same for the Governor Ramon Corral.]. Guaymas: Imprenta De E. Gaxiola y Cia, 1891.


**Secondary Sources**


Deutsch, Sarah. *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier


______. *Histoire De Coaticook.* Sherbrooke, Que.: "La Tribune", 1925.


1981.


Richardson, Reed C. *The Locomotive Engineer, 1863-1963; a Century of Railway Labor Relations and Work Rules*. Ann Arbor: Bureau of Industrial Relations, Graduate School of Business Administration, University of Michigan, 1963.


Robinson, J. Dennis. *Sam Walter Foss was NH Poet Laureate for the Common Man*, [online article] (SeacoastNH.com, 2007), accessed Apr 2008 http://seacoastnh.com/Famous_People/Link_Free_or_Die/Sam_Walter_Foss_was_NH_Poet Laureate_for_the_Common_Man/.


Wilgus, William J. *The Railway Interrelations of the United States and Canada.* The Relations of


