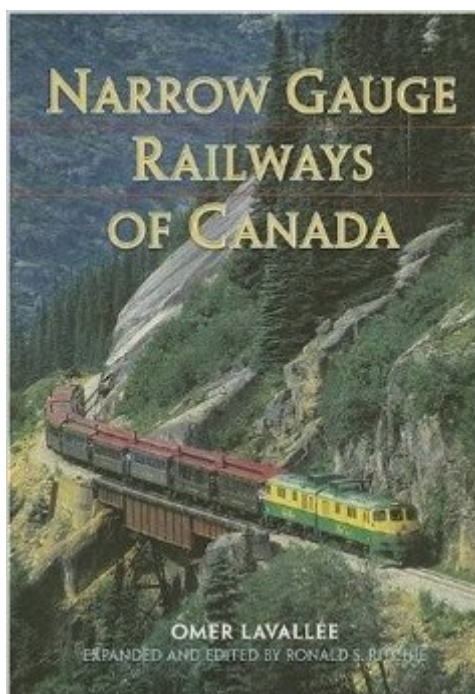


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# Narrow Gauge Railways Of Canada



## Synopsis

Narrow Gauge Railways of Canada is a "survey course" about one of the most interesting chapters in Canadian railway history. The late Omer Lavallee's original work was published by Railfare Books in 1972, and soon sold out. Long-sought by collectors, historians and railway enthusiasts, his excellent material has now been expanded (over 40%) by the author's long-time friend and collaborator, editor Ronald Ritchie. Omer Lavallee's survey indicates the Province of Ontario, Canada, was the birth place - in July 1871 - of the first narrow gauge steam-operated public railway in North America . . . and the Lingan Colliery Tramway in Cape Breton may have been - in 1866 - the first narrow gauge steam-operated railway in the Western Hemisphere. Two dozen different railway systems are covered within the book's twenty-five chapters. There are 192 rare photographs - including a section of 66 full-colour photos - interesting sketches, and informative maps of each line to show route details. These are keyed to an overall map, pinpointing the railway's exact location within Canada. Narrow Gauge Railways of Canada contains listings of railway mileage, chronological and geographical facts about each system, and locomotive information. Several other useful features include: time-mileage charts, 50 diagrams, charts and tables, equipment rosters for virtually all the railways, and gradient profiles of three steeply-graded mountain routes. The book includes a specially-commissioned painting by famed railway artist Wentworth Folkins, illustrating Newfoundland Railway's "Overland" approaching Port-aux-Basque on the last lap of its 547-mile journey from Newfoundland's capital city, St. John's.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 160 pages

Publisher: Fitzhenry & Whiteside; 1 edition (August 1, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1550418300

ISBN-13: 978-1550418309

Product Dimensions: 8.8 x 0.7 x 12.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (4 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Railroad gauges in Canada have varied quite a bit. In 1851, the legislature passed a law that all rails laid in Canada would be 5'6". This was to keep Yankee domination of the railroads from happening. The fact that you then couldn't send a car from Toronto to New York wasn't important. This lasted until the 1870's. Canada's narrow gauges came from two sources. One was the 'British Metric,' not really metric, but 3'6". The other, more common in the west was copied from the very successful D&RG of Colorado which used a 3' gauge. There were some 17 narrow gauge railways in Canada. Generally speaking they were in areas where the narrow gauge meant significant savings in construction costs. The tighter turning radius meant that a lot less earth had to be moved in mountains. This book is a loving collection of the pictures and stories of these railways. And lest you think of narrow gauge as something of the last century, there is a great picture on page 115 of a diesel engined train leaving a tunnel and crossing a bridge. What makes it so great is that everything in the picture, the tunnel, the bridge, the engines, the cars is of later than 1968 vintage. Lovingly Done, Great Pictures, Good Book.

**Narrow Gauge Railways of Canada** This is a well-written and nicely-illustrated book by one of Canada's foremost railroad historians. The 2005 edition has 32 pages of color photographs that were not in the original 1973 edition. The book is divided into 23 chapters, ranging from one or two pages for the smallest lines to 38 pages for the White Pass & Youkon and 44 pages for the Newfoundland Railway. Each chapter provides a summary of the railway covered, as opposed to an in-depth history, so it is informative yet easy to read; and the text is nicely-supplemented with maps and locomotive rosters. People with a general interest in railways, or a specific interest in Canadian railways or narrow gauge lines should find this book enjoyable and a worthwhile addition to their library.

Twenty-three short histories of Canadian railways and tramways are presented in text and in numerous black & white photos. Timetables, engine erection drawings, and time-mileage charts are included for some of the lines. The strength of the book is the presentation of these railways which may otherwise not be known. Those who love Canadian railway history or obscure narrow gauge railroads will find this book a delight.

Great book, covers them all!

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