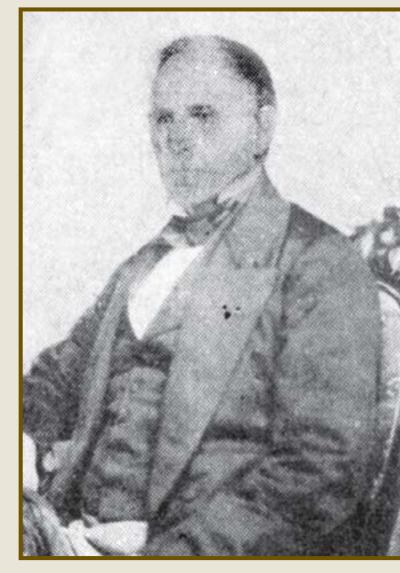
## THE COBOURG RAIL ROAD

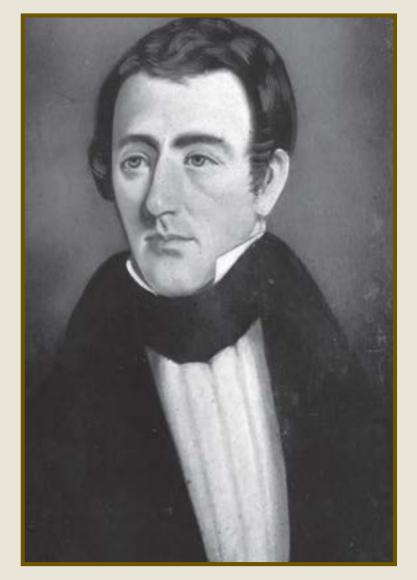
## THE GENESIS OF RAILWAY FEVER

Creating transportation linkages between the various small communities of Upper Canada was seen as a priority from the earliest days of settlement.

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Ebenezer Perry

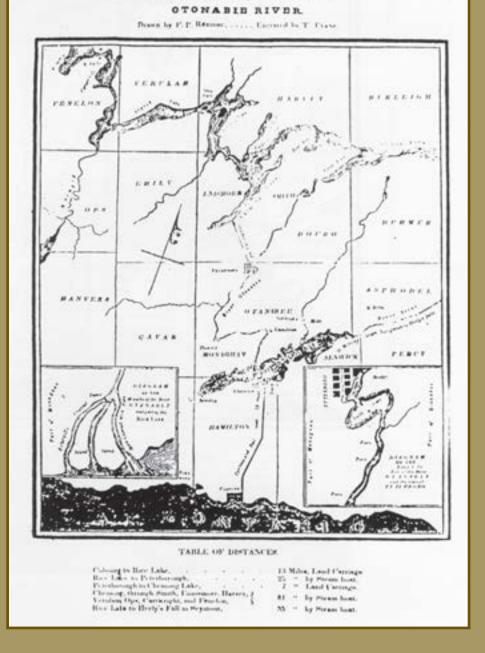


James Bethune

AN IDEA AHEADOF

Simple trails gave way to plank roads, river portages gave way to locks. The harnessing of steam power for a rail way provided a whole new way of approaching the problem of getting from Cobourg to the opportunities for settlement and development on the north side of Rice Lake.

In 1832, just three years after the first public operation of a railway in England, a real estate map of Ontario's Newcastle District (subsequently Northumberland) depicted a land carriage road from Cobourg northward in almost a straight line to the southern shore of Rice Lake.



On March 6, 1834, eighteen local entrepreneurs, including James Bethune and Ebenezer Perry, received a charter to construct the Cobourg Rail Road. This charter was amongst the first in the province and granted the right to construct a rail road to a point on Rice Lake without any financial aid.

Some of the charter's clauses were rather unusual:
the railway had to be completed in two years
the company could enter upon any private land for its construction

## **ITS TIME?**

A Board of Directors was elected and immediately instigated a survey of possible routes to Rice Lake. Three potential routes were surveyed, the proposed termination points being: Bewdley, Claverton (Gore's Landing), and Sully (Harwood). The twelve miles or so of railway were expected to cost about £25,000.

But for the moment that was the end of the story. What with the onset of the Upper Canada Rebellion in 1837, and difficulty in raising venture capital, the aspirations of the Cobourg Rail Road appeared to have died. It failed to commence any actual construction and by the mid 1840s the charter had lapsed. But a seed had been planted in the community which would flower a generation later.

## the company could regulate any and all fees any person who wilfully damaged railway property would pay twice the cost of repairs

fifty years after completion the government was entitled to purchase the rail road at a fair cost Ebenezer Perry Credit: Cobourg 1928-1948, Business & Professional Women's Club of Cobourg

Material prepared by Ted Rafuse. Design provided by Steve Smiley, RGD, Quench Design & Communications, Port Hope.