

Railway Coastal Museum Crossword Challenge

ANSWER KEY

Across

1. *This area of Newfoundland had wind so strong it could blow the train right off the track.*

WRECKHOUSE: Weather, climate and geography are important factors in the way people live. It affected transportation and communication in the railway days by causing trains to be delayed or telegraph cables to collapse. It also provided people with employment – Lauchie McDougall was hired by the Newfoundland Railway to notify Port aux Basques station when he had determined, by “smelling the wind,” that it was unsafe for trains to pass through Wreckhouse where he lived.

4. *The Gulf ferry took passengers from North Sydney, Nova Scotia to this port in Newfoundland.*

PORT AUX BASQUES: This became the official departure port for the Gulf crossing after 1898 when the railway was completed across the island. Taking the train to the west side of the island to catch the ferry reduced travel time considerably between St. John’s and the mainland.

8. *The railway helped politicians communicate to the populace when they traveled to each _____ by train giving speeches.*

TOWN: Today politicians have television, radio, internet, newspapers, busses, planes, etc. to help them communicate their message to voters. In the past, they had to rely on trains and coastal boats to get them to the communities across the island where they could make their speeches in person.

10. *What is the well-known distress signal sent by a boat in trouble*

SOS: These three letters were sent as a Morse code signal that sounded as three short beeps, three long beeps, and then three short beeps. Some say the three letters stand for “Save Our Ship” or “Save Our Souls.” Actually the signal was chosen because it is easy to send and easy to recognize by the receiver.

12. *A message sent by electric current through telegraph cables using a special code based on dots and dashes.*

TELEGRAM: Before telephones and email, people had to invent other ways of communicating. Regular mail was the primary method used by most people, but for business and train scheduling, a faster method was used – telegrams. Using a code similar to the Morse code, telegraph operators could send messages from one train station to another, coordinating train movements, schedules, and sending important news. It was the most effective communication tool used by the railway and coastal boats.

13. *Most coastal boats were steam ships, which is why their names start with “S.S.”. To make the steam, the engines burned _____ to heat up the water.*

COAL: Steam engines used by coastal boats and trains were basically like big kettles where water was heated up to a boil, and the steam was used to turn the engine. Later, oil was used, and eventually the steam engine was replaced with diesel engines.

15. *Because of _____, Newfoundland joined Canada, and the railway became a part of the Canadian National Railway*

CONFEDERATION: When Newfoundland joined Canada, several Terms of Union were set forth regarding rail and marine services. One of the Terms was that CN would take over the operations of the Newfoundland Railway, and assume its operating debt. Another part of the Terms of Union was that the Canadian government would help pay for roads and highways in Newfoundland. This may have been the first hint that the railway was on the way out. When the Trans Canada Highway was finished in 1967, the train slowly lost popularity. Passenger service was shut down in 1969, and freight service in 1988 – thus ending train service in Newfoundland.

17. *The person who operated the locomotive and controlled the speed was called the _____.*

ENGINEER: The engineer, with a team of Firemen, made sure that the train kept moving at the appropriate speed. Interestingly, part of the requirements for the engineer's job was to report to work "as clean as possible."

19. *When travelling on a coastal boat, people were sometimes invited to _____ with the captain of the ship.*

DINE: Coastal boats of the early 20th century were known for their good food and comfortable facilities. Dining with the captain was always a special honour.

21. *On the Newfie Bullet, people ate their meals in the dining _____.*

CAR: On a train, the cars have no independent locomotive power – they can only get from one place to another by being pulled or pushed by an engine. After the engine, a typical train in Newfoundland would include a mail car, coach car, galley and dining cars, several sleepers, and a smoker. Each car served a different function, and met the needs of travelers who were on the road for more than a day at a time.

22. *The opening of the railway line increased logging by giving access to _____ that could not be reached before.*

FORESTS: The interior of Newfoundland had not been explored in any significant way prior to railway planning and development. After a preliminary survey in the 1860's, it was confirmed that vast forests were available for use if a means of access were available. The development of the railway spurred several large sawmills and pulp and paper operations, including the large operation at Grand Falls-Windsor.

23. *Coastal boats were used by fishermen heading to the rich fishing grounds of _____ for the summer.*

LABRADOR: The coastal boats were an important way for fishers to reach the rich fishing grounds of Labrador every summer. The coastal boats also brought back news to Newfoundland merchants and others interested in how the fishery was progressing.

24. *Robert _____ was the man in charge of completing the railway across the island.*

REID: The Reid family was instrumental in completing the railway across the island. The "Blackman Syndicate" had managed the first stage of construction, but unfortunately the company became bankrupt before construction was complete. The Reids stepped in at this point with considerable experience building the Canadian railways. They managed the construction of the railway to Port Aux Basques, several branch lines, and the coastal boat services from **1898 to 1924**.

Down

2. *Ships that took people, mail, and freight around the island were called "_____ boats."*

COASTAL: They served exactly the same function as the train, delivering mail, food and other commodities, and providing access to work, books, education, and medical services. Communities always had "their" coastal boat and paid close attention to its arrival.

3. *A nickname for the passenger trains on the Newfoundland Railway was the "Newfie _____."*

BULLET: American soldiers probably coined this nickname during the Second World War. Perhaps started to poke fun at the speed of the train, it quickly became a term of endearment for Newfoundlanders.

4. *In 1905, a side order of these small, round, green vegetables cost 10¢ on the dining car of the Newfoundland Railway.*

PEAS: Dining on the train was an elegant affair, but the food was reasonably priced. Steak with mushrooms was 65¢; cereal with milk, 10¢; pints of champagne, \$2.00. On busy trips the line of people waiting to eat in the dining car stretched through several cars of the train!

5. *The coastal boats and train locomotives burned coal to make water into _____.*

STEAM: see the explanation for 12 Across.

6. *The train _____ was the place where trains picked up and dropped off passengers.*

STATION: The original St. John's station was in the old Fort William at the east-end of St. John's. This only lasted a few years, however, and the new station was opened in 1903. When passenger service on the train was cancelled, CN continued to use the station as its bus terminal. Another notable train station was in Placentia. This station was built using a very unique design seen nowhere else in Newfoundland. A model of the Placentia station is on display at the Railway Coastal Museum.

7. *The staff in the Mail Car on the train was not employed by the Railway company, but instead by the _____ Mail.*

ROYAL: The mail car was a high security area. No one was allowed in that didn't have clearance. The Royal Mail staff would remain in the mail car for the train's entire run – about 24 hours! A long day's work, but it had to be done.

9. *The coastal boats were an important way for people to get access to a doctor or _____.*

NURSE: Coastal boats helped people access medical help in several ways: Wilfred Grenfell, the famous doctor, convinced the Newfoundland government to assign a medical attendant on the coastal that took fishermen to the Labrador fishery. Myra Bennett, a well known nurse, was responsible for communities along a 200 mile stretch of coast. Medical students from Canada, the United States, and Newfoundland gained important experience working as "WOPS" (With Out Pay) along Newfoundland's coasts.

10. *The eastern terminus of the railway was in _____.*

ST. JOHN'S: The headquarters of the Newfoundland Railway were originally located at the Harbour Grace Junction (now Whitbourne). The new train station was built at the west end of St. John's in 1903 included space for the headquarters which were subsequently moved.

12. *What is the name for the person in charge of the train?*

CONDUCTOR: The conductor was responsible for the overall safety and timeliness of the train. It was a job that included the management of the train, ensuring the comfort of the passengers, overseeing the supply of food for the dining car, among other responsibilities.

13. *The railway was an important link in getting access to new resources like wood and _____.*

MINERALS: several mines were opened along the railway route. Stone quarried from Gaff Topsail was used to construct many of the train bridges and other buildings including the St. John's train station.

15. *When a coastal boat is tied to a dock, it is "_____."*

BERTHED:

17. *The railway was built using _____-gauge rails, instead of standard gauge.*

NARROW: Many point to the decision to build a narrow-gauge railway as one of the main factors that led to its eventual demise. Standard-gauge rail (4'8") was commonly used on the mainland, and 3'6" rail was used in Newfoundland. This meant that a complicated process of changing the wheels on the cars from one width to the other was required when shipping off the island. At the time the decision was made, however, other countries with similar topography were choosing narrow-gauge. It was cheaper, easier to lay, and was suitable for a railway that was not intended to compete with the famous European railway system.

20. *Coastal boats use _____ code to send messages to the mainland.*

MORSE: Land-based telegraphy used a slightly different code system based on the Morse code. However, shipping-based communication continued to use the International Morse code. The most famous signal is SOS: ... --- ...