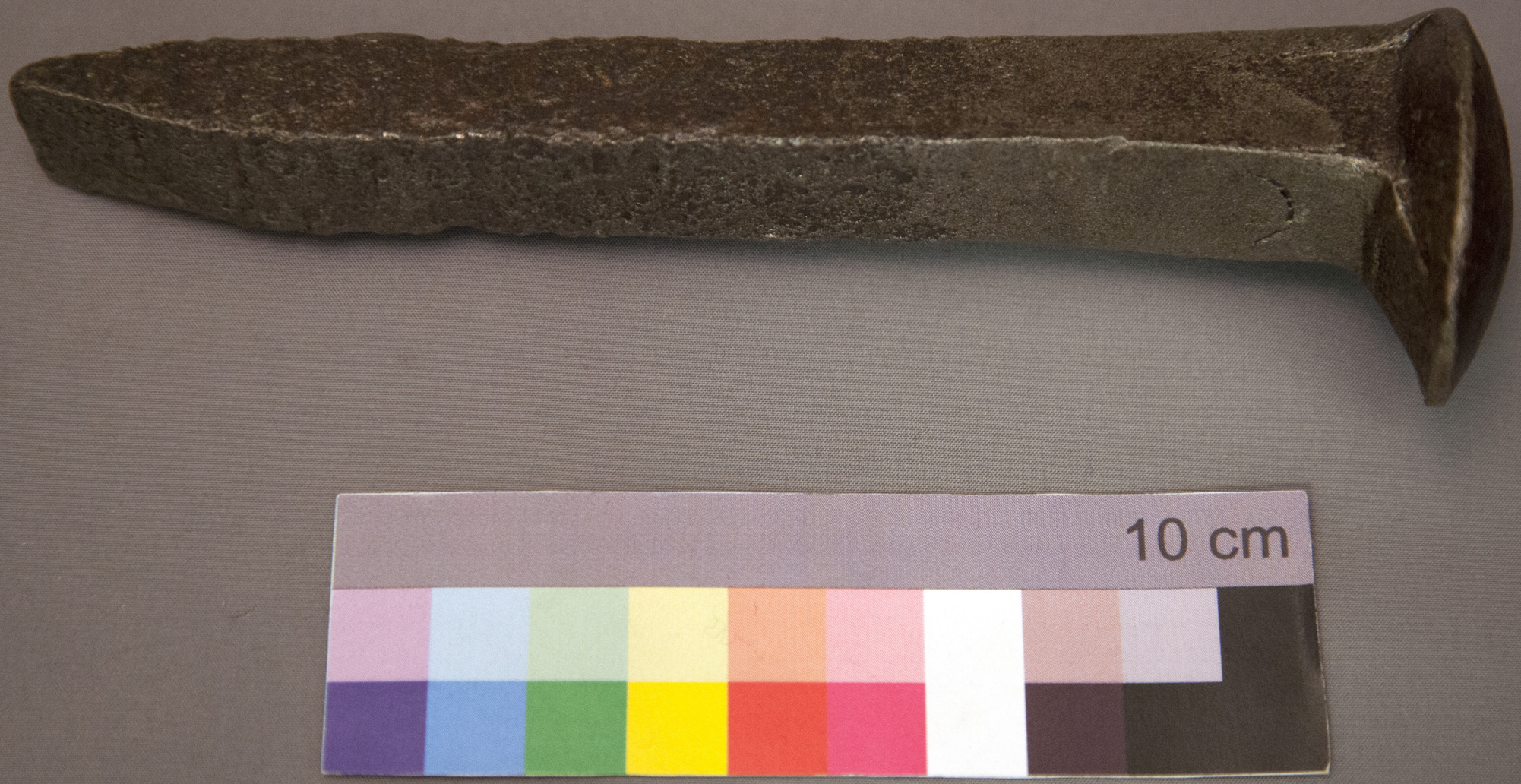

10 cm

100

CP Rail

1885 ~ 1985

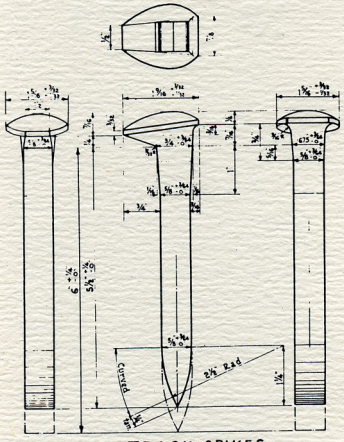
10 cm

№ 2709

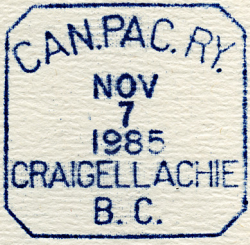
Certificate of Authenticity

This certifies that the attached CP Rail steel spike was used on the transcontinental main line during 1985, the centennial year of the driving of the Last Spike, which occurred at Craigellachie, B.C., on Nov. 7, 1885, at 9:22 a.m. (Pacific Time). This spike was one of countless millions hammered home during the past century. It was removed from the main line during normalized maintenance after 30 years' service.

Omer Lavallée
Corporate Historian &
Archivist
Canadian Pacific Limited



In railroading, there's nothing quite as basic as the standard track spike. Yet, the simple spike is as important to the railway as steel rail and locomotives. It is also an important symbol. Canadian Pacific's "Last Spike" was driven by the Honorable Donald Smith at Craigellachie, B.C., on Nov. 7, 1885. Since then, the Last Spike and countless millions just like it, have been replaced over and over again. The 5½-inch iron spike used 100 years ago at Craigellachie was replaced with a six-inch low carbon steel spike – now CP Rail's standard spike size. The life expectancy of today's standard spike varies. On sections of track carrying heavy tonnages or where there are long curves, spikes are normally replaced every five years. In areas where there is less traffic, such as on branch lines, spikes can last 20 years or more. Each year, CP Rail orders nearly 4,000 tons of six-inch spikes – more than 9.7 million individual spikes. Despite the fact railway operations have changed dramatically over the years, the spike design has remained virtually unchanged for at least a century. Today's railway engineers have described the common track spike as a marvel of engineering design. Track spikes must hold in place steel rail and tie plates and are subjected to forces exerted by trains weighing up to 14,000 gross tons. In heavy traffic corridors spikes are subjected to these types of forces as often as 30 times a day.



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