

In Maine, the CP operates a 201 mile rail line known as the International of Maine Division (and later the Saint John Division). This line serves as a critical link between the Canadian Maritimes and Montreal. The CP traverses Maine right across the middle, from Vanceboro on the New Brunswick border, past the huge Moosehead Lake and exiting into Quebec in the remote road-less territory in western Maine.

The CP interchanges with the BAR in Brownville Junction and with the Maine Central in Vanceboro and Mattawamkeag.

The line is split into 2 subdivisions centered at Brownville Junction. The Mattawamkeag Subdivision travels east into New Brunswick and Saint John, while the Moosehead Subdivision travels west of Brownville Junction to Megantic, Quebec. Even into the 1980s, trains swapped not only their crews but also their cabooses, a throw back to the old days when crews had their own caboose.

The Maine Central uses 56 miles of trackage rights to operate between Mattawamkeag and Vanceboro. This was originally MEC track, purchased by the CP in 1974.

At least 2 trains operate daily over the line from the port of St. John to Montreal. Traffic picks up in the winter with upwards of 12 trains daily when the St. Lawrence Seaway freezes. There is very little on line industry on this section of the railroad, primarily serving as a bridge line.

Passenger service is provided 7 days a week by the famous Atlantic Limited between Montreal and St. John, with coach, dining and sleeping cars as well as a dome car. (When CP discontinued passenger service, VIA Rail picked up the operations).

Further to the north, the CP also operates 33 miles of track from New Brunswick into Maine. These lines serve local industries in Houlton and Presque Isle, and interchange with the Aroostook Valley.

Today

The CP sold its eastern network of rail lines to a new group called Iron Roads in 1995. A series of newly created railroads were born to operate these lines in addition to the Bangor & Aroostook. The Canadian American operates trains from Megantic, Quebec to Brownville Jct. From there, the Eastern Maine Railway operates to Vanceboro, where the New Brunswick Southern takes over to Saint John, NB. Other lines in Quebec and Northern Vermont were added later. Collectively the whole operation is known as the Bangor & Aroostook System and totals over 1100 miles of track.

Selected Resources

Railroads of the Pine Tree State Vol. 1, Four Ways West, 1999

Railroads of the Pine Tree State Vol. 2, Four Ways West, 2000

Northern New England Guide to Freight & Passenger Equipment, Morning Sun Books, 1994

New England Rails 1948-1968, Morning Sun Books, 1989

New England's Colorful Railroads Vol. 1, Four Ways West, 2000

Iron Road Through the North Woods, October 1999 Trains, p. 60-65

Video: "Today's Maine Railroads" - 105 min. color, 1993, Pentrex

The Aroostook Valley operates 22 miles of track in northern Maine between Presque Isle and Caribou with an extension to Washburn. At Washburn Junction, a connection with the Canadian Pacific is made, while an interchange with BAR is at Washburn. Freight includes potatoes, fuel, farm supplies, paper and wood.

The railroad was constructed in 1910 and the Canadian Pacific assumed a majority interest in the line in 1932. It operated as an electric line until 1946, when the overhead came down and passenger service ended. But freight was always the number one revenue for the railroad, handling as much as 10,000 carloads of potatoes a year.

Three GE 70 Tonners purchased in the 1940s, numbered 10, 11 and 12, provide motive power. A caboose, flatcar and a unique double-ended snow plow converted from a steeplecab round out the railroads equipment.

In the 1970s, much of the potato traffic was diverted to the recently completed nearby I-95 Interstate. The Penn-Central's inability to deliver potato trains to New York City had many shippers using trucks on the new roadway instead of the unreliable rail service. This hurt the short line and CP decided to sell it to local businessmen in 1980.

The 1980s were still difficult, although the railroad did profit from a fleet of 50' IPD boxcars that traveled the country. A steady decline in traffic and storm damage to the right of way led to a 1996 cease of operations.

Selected Resources

New England Shortlines 1970-1980, Tom Nelligan (available from amazon.com)
Railroads of ThePine Tree State Vol. 1, Four Ways West, 1999

Aroostook Valley 50' Boxcar Photo, October 2001 Railmodel Journal, p. 8
Aroostook Valley RR, July 1966 Model Railroader, p. 28

Web site: <http://kenanderson.net/aroostook/avr.html>



Aroostook Valley's blue and yellow GE 44 Tonner #12 sits near the end of the railroad's existence. Photo from the Ken Anderson web site.

The BAR is the second largest railroad in Maine. It operates 504 miles of track entirely in Maine and is divided into a Northern and Southern Division, with a division point in Oakfield. The BAR runs from the very northern reaches of Maine to Searsport along the coast. Major traffic includes pulpwood, woodchips, chemicals and paper for the large mills, along with a steady supply of fuel oil and potatoes.



Interchanges are made in the north with Canadian National and the Aroostook Valley. To the south, interchanges occur with Canadian Pacific and Maine Central.

Motive power consists of older well-maintained units, such as SW9s, F3s, GP7s, GP9s and BL2s, along with more modern GP38s. A large fleet of over 4000 boxcars, chip cars, pulpwood racks and mechanical reefers serve online industries. Included in this are the famous Red, White and Blue State Of Maine boxcars and reefers.

Various paint schemes were employed by the BAR, including blue and gray, all blue and a red, gray and black scheme on locomotives. Freight cars ranged from boxcar red to aqua green, light and dark blue, yellow and orange.

In 1976, the BAR instituted a "Turkey Train", which traveled throughout the system delivering turkeys to employees for the holidays. A Reefer would hold the turkeys, followed by a couple passenger cars for railroad officials.

Today

The BAR has almost always had financial difficulties, but Yankee frugality has always kept the line alive. Difficult operating environment and a reliance on a few key industries have at times severely hampered the line. In 1995, a group of Eastern Canadian and Maine railroads came under the umbrella of the new "Canadian American", created by the Iron Roads group. The Bangor & Aroostook was purchased by this group, along with the Canadian Pacific lines in Maine and New Brunswick. This ended over 100 years of independent ownership.



In 2001, the BAR filed for bankruptcy and its final fate is still being determined by the court and a few groups that are looking to purchase the railroad.

Selected Resources

Railroads of The Pine Tree State Vol. 1, Four Ways West, 1999

Railroads of The Pine Tree State Vol. 2, Four Ways West, 2000

Northern New England Guide to Freight & Passenger Equipment, Morning Sun Books, 1994

New England Rails 1948-1968, Morning Sun Books, 1989

New Englands Colorful Railroads Vol. 1, Four Ways West, 2000

Railfan site: <http://www.nh.ultranet.com/~petlick/bar.htm>

Photo site: <http://silcon.com/~lgoss/Homepage.htm>

BAR 50' Gunderson Boxcar Photo, August 2001 Railmodel Journal, p. 52

BAR 50' Berwick Boxcar Photo, January 2001 Railmodel Journal, p. 44

BAR 50' FMC Boxcar Photo, June 2000 Railmodel Journal, p. 8

BAR 50' P-S Boxcar Photo, May 2000 Railmodel Journal, p. 28

BAR State Of Maine Boxcar, May 2000 Mainline Modeler, p. 40

BAR BL2 Diesel Detail Close-Up, Feb/Mar 2000 Model Railroading, p. 56

Iron Road through the North Woods, October 1999 Trains, p. 60-65

Northeastern Pulpwood Cars, August 1997 Railmodel Journal, p. 26-33

Model a BAR BL2, September 1994 Model Railroader, p. 68

BAR's Potato Haulers, June 1992 Model Railroader, p. 90

BAR at 100, February 1992 Trains, p. 48

BAR GP38's, March/April 1991 Diesel Era, p. 9

BAR Mechanical Reefers, February 1991 Model Railroading, p. 16

BAR 50' Smooth Side Boxcars, December 1989 Model Railroading, p. 41

Paint Shop: State Of Maine Reefers, December 1989 Model Railroader, p. 146

Profile: BAR GP7, March 1988 Railroad Model Craftsman, p. 97

BAR Newsprint Boxcar, November 1987 Model Railroader, p. 114

BAR Turkey Train, Nov/Dec 1982 Prototype Modeler, p. 30

BAR 50' Double Door Boxcars, May 1981 Railroad Model Craftsman, p. 63

Taters to Tidewater, January 1977 Railroad Model Craftsman, p. 47



Both BAR
photos
from the
Larry Goss
web site

The Portland Terminal is a switching and terminal railroad jointly owned by the Maine Central and Boston & Maine. It operates 21 miles of track in and around Maine's largest city, Portland. It performs all Rigby Yard switching operations in Portland. It also provides service to the Portland waterfront terminals and handles the MEC/B&M interchange with the Grand Trunk in Portland. A paper mill in nearby Westbrook is the largest on line customer.

The PT operates a fleet of Alco switchers and will make use of any MEC and B&M power when needed. The roundhouse and locomotive facilities at Rigby Yard handle all service needed for the PT, B&M and MEC.

Selected Resources

Maine Central In Color Vol. 1, Morning Sun Books, 1998

Maine Central In Color Vol. 2, Morning Sun Books, 1999

Boston & Maine In Color Vol. 1, Morning Sun Books, 1997

Northern New England Guide to Freight & Passenger Equipment, Morning Sun Books, 1994

New England Rails 1948-1968, Morning Sun Books, 1989

Alcos of Rigby, August 1981 Trains, page 30-33

RIGHT: PT1057, an Alco S2, is in the later paint scheme. Some Maine Central Alcos also received this scheme. **BELOW:** PT 1008 is an S1 built in 1949. It is wearing its as-delivered scheme, the same as the MEC and B&M Alco switchers. Both photos from the NERAIL online photo archive.

