Fall 2026

Maine Line NEWS

A Publication for the Friends of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad



MaineLineMagazine.JoeyKelleyPhoto.com

TALKING IT OVER



As many of you know, I'm big on celebrating anniversaries. The original concept for much of this issue of the Maine Line actually started over a year ago when I reached out to the Bangor Public Library to request scans of photos from the Bangor Daily News archive of the destruction of Bangor Union Station. The request to not only have scans made but to republish them was granted and only after looking at the dates of the various photos, it dawned on me that if I only waited a year, it would be the 65th anniversary of the destruction of Union Station. Thus, the die was cast for this issue, some 15 months before it was actually released.

I and members of my family have lived in and around Bangor for multiple generations. I feel a connection to this area of the great state of Maine that is hard to describe. Its home. I pass by the site where Union Station was regularly and the sight of what is there now compared to what once was rarely fails to make me shake my head. Union Station was a beautiful building. Designed and built in an age where buildings were more than functional. It was a magical place where you could board a train and be transported to a far off destination. Born in an age before the automobile was popular and the airliner was decades off, it was a symbol of rail travel.

65 years ago when that wrecking ball struck that clock tower - the magic was gone and all that was left was rubble and dispair. To compound this dispair, a strip mall was built on the site - a squared off functional building that had none of the majesty of what it replaced.

In this issue the story of Bangor's Union Station will be told. Yes, I realize this is a Maine Central structure, but the Bangor and Aroostook did service it and many B&A passengers boarded and departed from B&A trains in Bangor.

Do not worry if you are looking for pure Bangor and Aroostook content, there are several pieces spread throughout this issue that you will find to your liking, but in this issue we honor the building that stood for 54 years in Bangor.

This is the last issue for 2026, so we will see you in the New Year and wish the best to you and yours over the holidays! Thank you always for reading the Maine Line, it makes it all worth it!

-Joey

"Joey" Kelley, Editor

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Joey Kelley Photography,
JoeyKelleyPhoto.com
Direct all correspondence to
joey@joeykelleyphoto.com
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Published Quarterly

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ABOUT THE COVER

Fall 2026

Maine Line NEWS

A Publication for the Friends of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad



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Back in 1961, the Maine Line was the Maine Line News, being produced in Newspaper form. Since 1961 was the year that Bangor's Union Station was demolished, a retro cover was in order. Interestingly, this is the last major Maine Line cover design to be used on the rebooted Maine Line. The image comes from the Penobscot Marine Museum collection - LB2007.1.72016 - and is dated October 5, 1925.

REAR Cover: New Union Station Poem by John J. Friend - Bangor Public Library Collection - https://bangorhistory.org/s/bpl/item/5458

Rule of the Month

STORES DEPARTMENT
November 1991

2.13 - Keep steps and platforms free of ice, snow, oil, or other hazards. Ice creepers are provided and should be worn when needed.

THE RULE BREAKERS *are accident makers*

CC: D. R. Sinclair
T. Corbett
File

Form 232

BANGOR AND AROOSTOOK RAILROAD COMPANY

BANGOR & AROOSTOOK R. R. CO.
OCT 11 1972
MARKETING DEPT.

SUBJECT: Effective Action to Correct Service Deficiencies

TO – H. L. Cousins - L. W. Littlefield

FROM – A. G. Dustin

Ok make copies of all for FBL, pls. A

While traveling over the railroad last week and talking to several of our agents, I find that delays and problems associated with delays, such as the Blier movement to New Jersey, happens quite frequently but our people don't seem to be able to reach the right person on the responsible railroad, not only for an answer but to correct a recurrence or a chronic problem area.

If we have situations like this, I think it's most important that we follow up with the proper officer of the offending railroad for an explanation of what went wrong and an assurance that some corrective action will be taken.

I am not in a position to suggest the best manner in the handling of a service deficiency of this nature as I am not aware of the full magnitude, but I do think we should establish a formal means of getting information on service failures from our agents with full particulars so that we can then follow up with the responsible officer of the proper railroad.

I discussed the possibility of doing something like this with Ron Lausier and the Labbes at Presque Isle and Caribou. Both of them were very much in favor of carrying out this type of a program and felt that the benefits would be well worth the effort.

My own personal experience in matters of this nature has been that unless you get to the right person in a high enough position of responsibility on an offending railroad, there will be little or nothing done to improve the situation due to the indifference of employees with whom we might be dealing.

I would like both of you to give this matter your consideration and let me know when you are ready to talk.

Nor.Me.Jct., Maine
October 11, 1972

BANGOR AND AROOSTOOK RAILROAD COMPANY
NORTHERN MAINE JUNCTION • R.F.D. 2 • BANGOR, MAINE 04401

October 11, 1972

R. D. Timpany, Trustee
Central Railroad Company of New Jersey
1100 Raymond Blvd.
Newark, N.J. 07102

Dear Bob:

I am writing directly to you to insure that the particular complaint I am reporting receives prompt and effective handling; also, because we are in jeopardy of losing this business if service failures of this type persist and I know that you don't want this to happen.

Car BAR 6916, containing cedar fencing from Van Buren, Maine, destined to Red Bank, N.J., routed via MeC-B&M-PC with interchange to the CNJ at National Junction, left Van Buren on August 6. I don't know when the car was delivered to the CNJ from the Penn Central but we did have information through tracing that this car left Jersey City, N.J., destined for Elizabeth, N.J., on August 18. Upon arrival at Elizabeth, N.J., the car was crippled but not placed for repairs in Elizabeth, N.J., until August 30, on which day the repairs were made and car was released. However, this car did not leave Elizabeth, N.J., until September 8, arriving at destination on September 12.

If our information is correct that the car was placed on the repair track and released on one day, the defect could not have been serious. The shipper and ourselves are very much concerned over the extensive delay in having the car placed for repairs and, also, in movement subsequent to release from the rip track.

We have a good and consistent movement of fencing from the shipper and would not like to lose his business.

I would appreciate it if you would have this matter investigated and let me know what happened and if we may expect that it will not recur in the future.

Thanking you in advance for your attention to this matter

Best wishes,

Alan G. Dustin
Executive Vice President

Bangor and Aroostook Railroad Company

ST-15
5/55

CONDUCTOR'S TALLY

Time _____ M. _____ Date 11-3-19 88

	INITIALS	✓ CAR NUMBERS	Seals	Weight	Contents	Destination
1	WWX	94291			ob	~~tank~~
2	BAR	36533			ob	chip
3		34110			ob	chip
4		35994			ob	chip
5		18 9			ob	Hbed
6		91 9			ob	Hopper
7		68422			ob	tap
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The Safe way is the Only way!

Cond'r or Yardmaster _____ Train No. _____

AD 171

BANGOR AND AROOSTOOK RAILROAD COMPANY

FOR OPERATING EXPENSE PROJECTS ONLY - WORK ORDER

ENGINEERING Dep't. No. 463 OCTOBER 28, 1966
(Date)

Authority is requested for performance of work as described below.

Station Name AS BELOW Mile _____ Division _____

Description of work: BRIDGE PAINTING

Necessity or benefits of proposed work: SIX BRIDGES SHOULD BE PAINTED AS FOLLOWS:

Budget Item No. 34

DETAILED DESCRIPTION-QUANTITIES, PRICES, ETC.	TOTAL COST
BRIDGE NO. A-12.25 A-18.98 A-30.58 100.93 113.14 139.56	$8,200

Recommended Donald J. Welch CHIEF ENGINEER

Approved W. J. Stroud
President

Date NOV - 9 1966

Work Order No. 602

FORM F. D. 1

(Uniform Domestic Straight Bill of Lading adopted by Carriers in Official Southern, Western and Illinois Classification territories, March 15, 1922, as amended August 1, 1930, and June 15, 1941.)

THIS SHIPPING ORDER must be legibly filled in, in Ink, in Indelible Pencil, or in Carbon, and retained by the Agent.

Shipper's No.

Agent's No. 3949

2

BANGOR AND AROOSTOOK RAILROAD COMPANY

RECEIVE, subject to the classifications and tariffs in effect on the date of the issue of this Shipping Order,

At Shirley 10/4 195-

From C C Brown (Young)

the property described below, in apparent good order, except as noted (contents and condition of contents of packages unknown), marked, consigned, and destined as indicated below, which said company (the word company being understood throughout this contract as meaning any person or corporation in possession of the property under the contract) agrees to carry to its usual place of delivery at said destination, if on its own road or its own water line, otherwise to deliver to another carrier on the route to said destination. It is mutually agreed, as to each carrier of all or any of said property over all or any portion of said route to destination, and as to each party at any time interested in all or any of said property, that every service to be performed hereunder shall be subject to all the conditions not prohibited by law, whether printed or written, herein contained, including the conditions on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to by the shipper and accepted for himself and his assigns.

(Mail or street address of consignee—For purposes of notification only.)

Consigned to GNP Co

Destination Ea Millinocket State of Me County of

Route

Delivering Carrier Car Initial BAR Car No. 9072

No. Packages	Description of Articles, Special Marks, and Exceptions	★ Weight (Subject to Correction)	Class or Rate	Check Column
1	C/L Peeled Poplar	PWD		

Subject to Section 7 of conditions, if this shipment is to be delivered to the consignee without recourse on the consignor, the consignor shall sign the following statement:

The carrier shall not make delivery of this shipment without payment of freight and all other lawful charges.

(Signature of Consignor.)

If charges are to be prepaid, write or stamp here, "To be Prepaid."

Received $ to apply in prepayment of the charges on the property described hereon.

Agent or Cashier

Per

(The signature here acknowledges only the amount prepaid.)

Charges Advanced:

$

★If the shipment moves between two ports by a carrier by water, the law requires that the bill of lading shall state whether it is "carrier's or shipper's weight."

NOTE.—Where the rate is dependent on value, shippers are required to state specifically in writing the agreed or declared value of the property.

The agreed or declared value of the property is hereby specifically stated by the shipper to be not exceeding per

C C Brown Shipper

Per

Permanent post-office address of shipper,

☞ Agent must detach and retain this Shipping Order and must sign the Original Bill of Lading

PRINTED IN U. S. A. BY A. T. HOWARD CO., RAILROAD PRINTERS, BOSTON, MASS.

MAINE LINE REWIND



48 years ago in the Maine Line:
Winter 1978-79 Issue

- Walter Travis is President
- 1978 was a rough summer- despite that, many projects were completed
- Chester Robinson: Repairer of Violins
- Saving lives with the Heimlich
- Moving Up
- In The Family of the B&A

The Winter 1978-1979 issue was Volume 26 and Issue number 3. In 1978-1979, the Maine Line was being produced roughly quarterly. The Great Northern Paper strike in the summer of 1978 resulted in the shortest issue ever produced, only four pages.

You can view the Archive of original Maine Line Magazines, including the issue above, on the Maine Line Magazine website
https://mainelinemagazine.joeykelleyphoto.com/
Look for the Archive page

MAINE LINE GOING TO THE BIG SHOW

If you were planning to come to the Amherst Railway Society Show on January 30 and 31, 2027, you now have one more reason to go!

Maine Line Magazine - for the first time in the show's 60-year history, will have a booth!

Merchandise - Collectibles - the Chip Switch switching layout and who knows what else will be there!

Come on by - talk Bangor and Aroostook - make sure you are signed up for e-mail notifications when we send out new issues - pick up some merchandise or that collectible you did not know you were missing!

The exact location has not been determined yet, but we will announce it as soon as possible. Keep an eye on these pages and our Facebook Page - https://www.facebook.com/MaineLineMagazine - for more details as we get them!

SEE YOU AT THE SHOW!





STOCKING STUFFER

For the first time, Hallmark has released a Bangor and Aroostook boxcar in ornament form. Hallmark can trace its origins back to 1907, adopting the Hallmark name in 1954. In 1992, Lionel engaged Hallmark in a deal to produce a Lionel Trains branded Hallmark ornament. Since 1996, a series of Collector's Series ornaments has been produced. Each year, a piece is chosen from Lionel's history and produced in ornament form. For Lionel's 100th anniversary in 2000, the 700J-1E Hudson was chosen. Given how model trains, Lionel in particular, are connected to the holidays in many people's minds, a Christmas tree ornament tie-in seems like a natural choice. In total, according to HallmarkOrnaments.com, there have been 188 pieces released since 1992. Your Editor's mother has made a yearly purchase of one from the collection, going back to 1996, making this a 30-year tradition in the Kelley household.

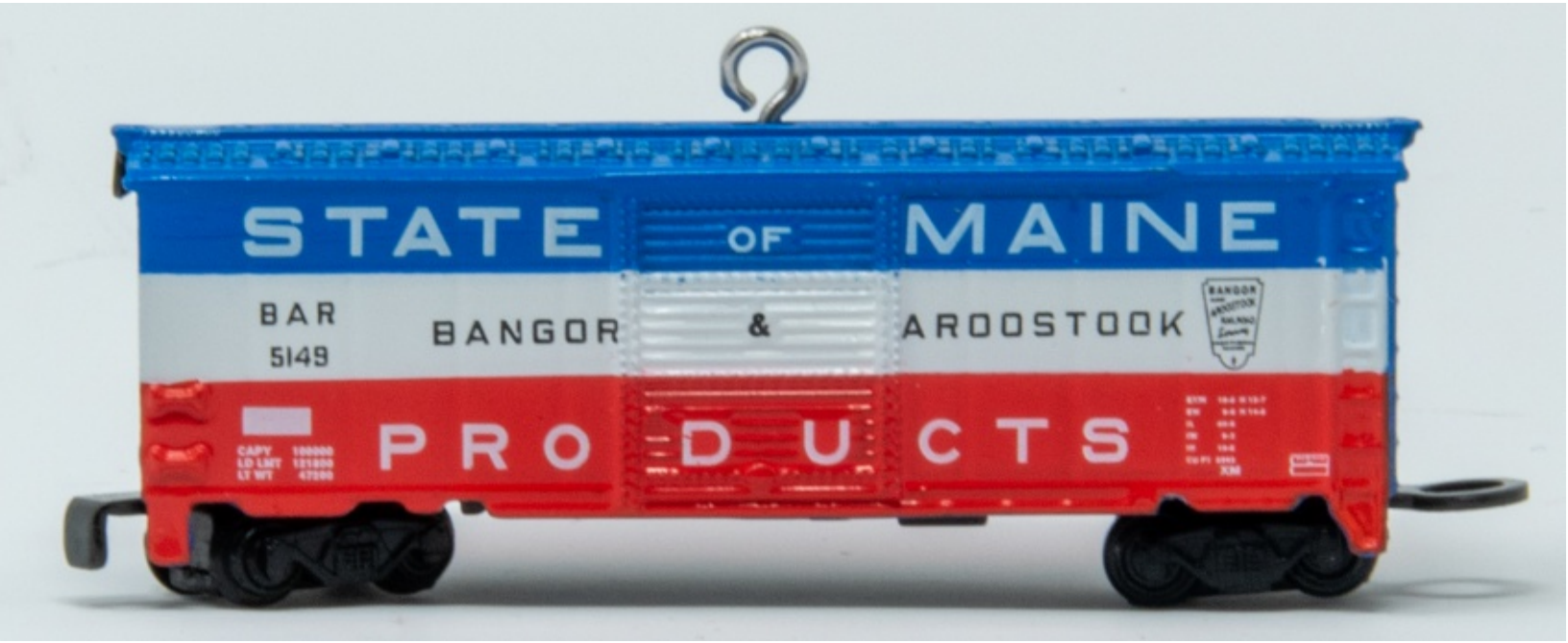
For the past several years, multiple ornaments have been produced each year, with this year being no exception. Two different GG-1s are being offered (one a limited edition with gold highlights) along with a red, white, and blue Norfolk and Western coal hopper. Of course, the one that we care about is the State of Maine boxcar, released in July of 2026.

Your Editor's passion (that being the nice word for obsession) with the B&A's State of Maine Products boxcars should be well known to our readers at this point, meaning that one of these ornaments simply had to join the collection. What your editor did not expect was his Hallmark ornament collecting friend Vanessa to give him one! {Thank you again! -JTK}



Hallmark has placed the year of production on the side of the box, making it easy to identify if one has a missing year in the collection of boxes in one's ornament collection. One has to understand that these are not ornaments made of prototype trains, but ornaments made to resemble a Lionel model. This explains details that might be missing or different from a real train, and being an ornament, we have to forgive the screw eye dead center on the top, which is of course required to hang it from a hook. This ornament is die-cast, and although no scale is mentioned, this particular model measures up reasonably well with a Z scale boxcar. That would make this ornament a roughly 25% scale model of an O Gauge boxcar. Although one might expect Lionel to go after a post-war 6464-275 being the oldest in their back catalog (introduced in 1955) the car in question is actually from 2016. Wearing road number 5149, this is an ornament of Lionel 6-83528, a PS-1 boxcar that contained a speaker and sound system to produce the sounds of rail clatter, wheel flange squeal, and coupler slack. This is a supposed to be a true O scale model with the sound built in. The graphics on the ornament are well done and this ornament would look at home on any B&A fan's Christmas tree, desk, or bookshelf.

Hallmark.com lists these for $29.99, but you never know what you might find at your local Hallmark Store!





40 YEARS OF OAKFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On July 17, 1986, the Oakfield Historical Society was established. 15 charter members attended that first meeting. The purpose? Create a non-profit to receive the Oakfield Station from the Bangor and Aroostook and restore it. On August 16, 2026, OHS held its 40th anniversary celebration at the Museum. The Dave Hersey Band was in attendance, rocking out classic hits that were usually older than the Historical Society! A group of volunteers was manning the grill outside the BARR, and a by-donation lunch was put on inside the BARR. On the other side of the property, appropriately near the tracks, was a hobo with his beans being cooked over a fire. The Caboose C-66 looked on from its spot near the main line, and Joe Kelley brought up one of his restored Fairmont motorcars to sit next to it.

Spirits were high during the event, and Secretary / Treasurer Marilyn Burton seemed quite happy with the event and the turnout. We here at the Maine Line congratulate Oakfield Historical Society on 40 years and wish them another 40 of preserving Bangor and Aroostook history!



Left: Cantankerous Clem, aka Carl Grant, prepares to spoon out a serving of beans at his trackside encampment

Below: The parking lot was filled beyond capacity!

Bottom: C-66 and Joe Kelley's restored motorcar look quite at home next to each other





Right: Joe Kelley (on the right) chats with a couple of the OHS volunteers

Below: The scale model of the Oakfield Station looks down right amazing, 35 years after it was constructed!





MAINE LINE MAGAZINE

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ONLINE STORE

mainelinemagazine.square.site











Always Something New!





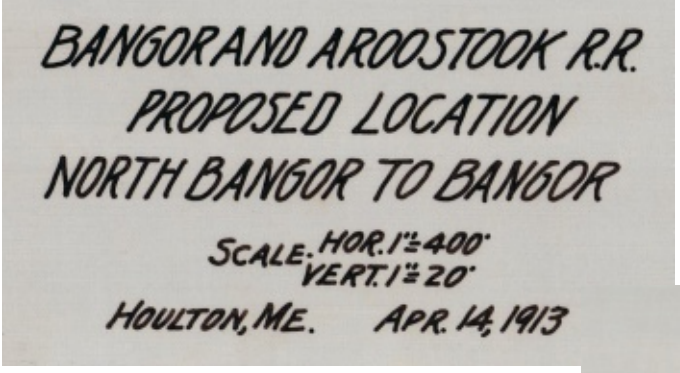
Left: A portion of an 1895 Timetable showing the original alignment of the B&A - apparently they considered the trackage rights from Old Town to Bangor as part of the line

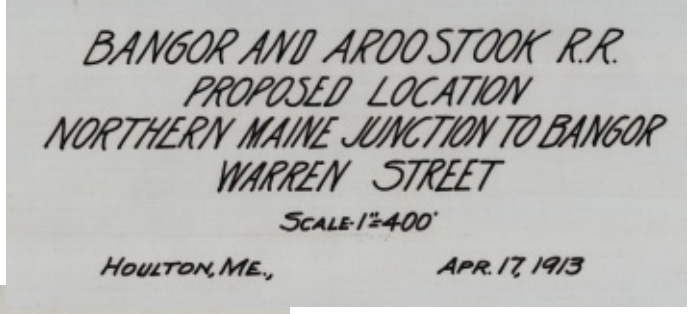
THE HERMON AND AROOSTOOK

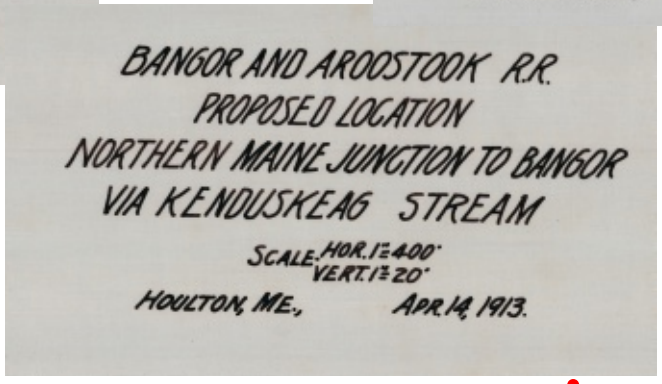
Railroad names are quite fascinating. Often descriptive of place or destination, they speak often of a goal, such as the Belfast and Moosehead Lake, which never got within 100 miles of Moosehead Lake.

If you think that this does not apply to the Bangor and Aroostook, think again. The Bangor and Piscataquis, which the B&A took over, never went to Bangor. In fact, a better description of the B&P would be the Old Town and Piscataquis. Eventually, they did get to Bangor via trackage rights over the Maine Central, but never via its own rails.

When the B&A took over the B&P, that was the situation they inherited. Based upon the timetables you can find on the Maine Line website, at different points in time you could board a Bangor and Aroostook train in Bangor, and at some points in time, you could not. When the Northern Maine Seaport Railroad was completed in 1905, one of the stations established was North Bangor. North Bangor would become much more important in 1928. Effective July 2, 1928, B&A passenger trains were no longer allowed to operate over the Maine Central to service Union Station in Bangor. The October timetable includes information about the trolley line schedule, from North Bangor to downtown Bangor. Service was restored in the December 1928 timetable. This interruption underscores the problem - the Bangor and Aroostook never really ran into Bangor. Yes, North Bangor is within the City of Bangor's limits; however, the station was around the length of a football field from the Glenburn town line. Not exactly centrally located to downtown Bangor. In addition, only about three miles of the main line actually runs through Bangor City Limits. The line from South LaGrange to Old Town would eventually be abandoned, and the only connection to the Maine Central would be at Northern Maine Junction, which is located in Hermon. After passenger operations on the Maine Central were shut down in 1960, no B&A trains would even go to Bangor. In a real sense, the name Bangor and Aroostook is a misnomer. Perhaps the Hermon and Aroostook will catch on?







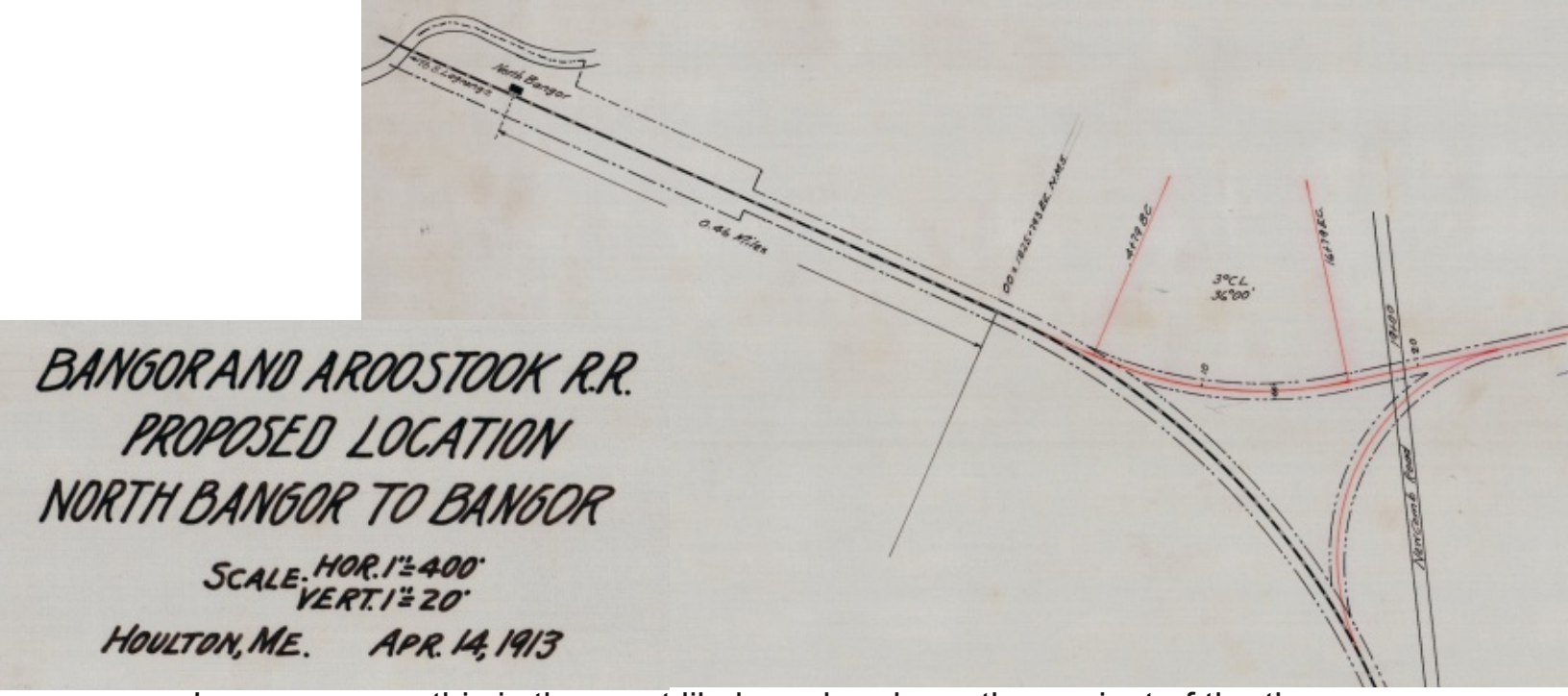
3 WAYS IN '13

Well over a hundred years ago, someone within the B&A wanted to make the Bangor and Aroostook name literal. What drove this particular desire has been lost to history, but we can make an educated guess. When you own the rails - no one can prevent you from using them. As mentioned in the previous piece, in 1928 and again in 1960, the Maine Central restricted the use of Union Station in Bangor, requiring switching of trains at Northern Maine Junction or, in 1960, a completely different method of transport to the bus station. Check the Timetables section of the Maine Line website for details.

Someone was obviously thinking ahead in 1913 when the B&A was looking at not one, but three different proposed extensions to service Bangor directly. None of them actually access the Maine Central's Union Station, most likely because that was unfeasible due to right-of-way issues. It may also have been a statement that the B&A was willing to go its own way, ignoring the Maine Central.

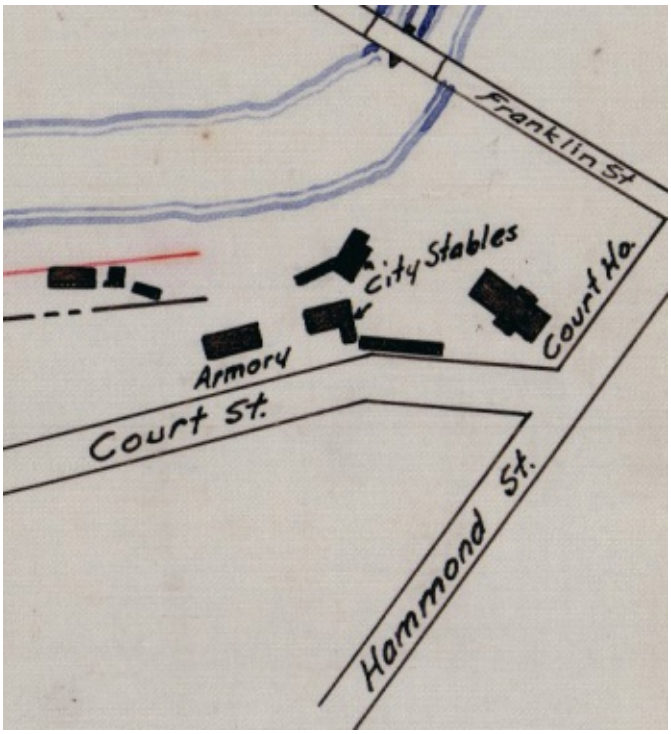
These sort of 'What-if' scenarios are quite fun for the historian as we get to play both in the realm of history and fiction at the same time. What might be unique about this particular set of proposals is that there are three of them and they all got as far as proposals, meaning that there was at least some sort of serious consideration made. Also, the drafting done for each of the proposals was completed within three days, based upon the dates on each of the documents. These were not casual ideas tossed off by someone who could not have made it happen - they were at least considered by management at a fairly high level.

As we know from the history of the B&A, none of these proposals was ever built, and the B&A took the cheaper, easier, and more convenient route for the travelling passenger of using the Maine Central's Bangor Union Station to base its passenger operations out of. These proposals would most likely have been lost to history if it were not for Matt Sawyer's BAR Archives. Thank you to Matt for making this material available. Due to the size of the proposals, each of which is measured in feet in both dimensions, it is not practical to put each one in these pages in full. We will be looking at the highlights of each. The detail is quite good, and perhaps most interesting is the inclusion of certain landmarks which no longer exist and some streets that had yet to be built when these were proposed.



In many ways, this is the most likely and perhaps the easiest of the three proposed routings. Starting from the existing North Bangor area, a wye would be built to facilitate going both North and South from this proposed trackage, which would run roughly southeast, first parallel to Ohio Street and then following the Kenduskeag Stream into Bangor. Assuming the streets are roughly where they were in 1913, the end of the line, presumably a station, would have been roughly where the parking lot for the old courthouse is today, between Court Street and the Kenduskeag Stream. This is a short distance from the present-day Bangor Post Office. This routing is one of two that utilized the Kenduskeag and terminated near Court Street. Both have the advantage of getting passengers into the very heart of the city of Bangor; one could argue even closer than the Maine Central's Union Station, although on the other side of the downtown.



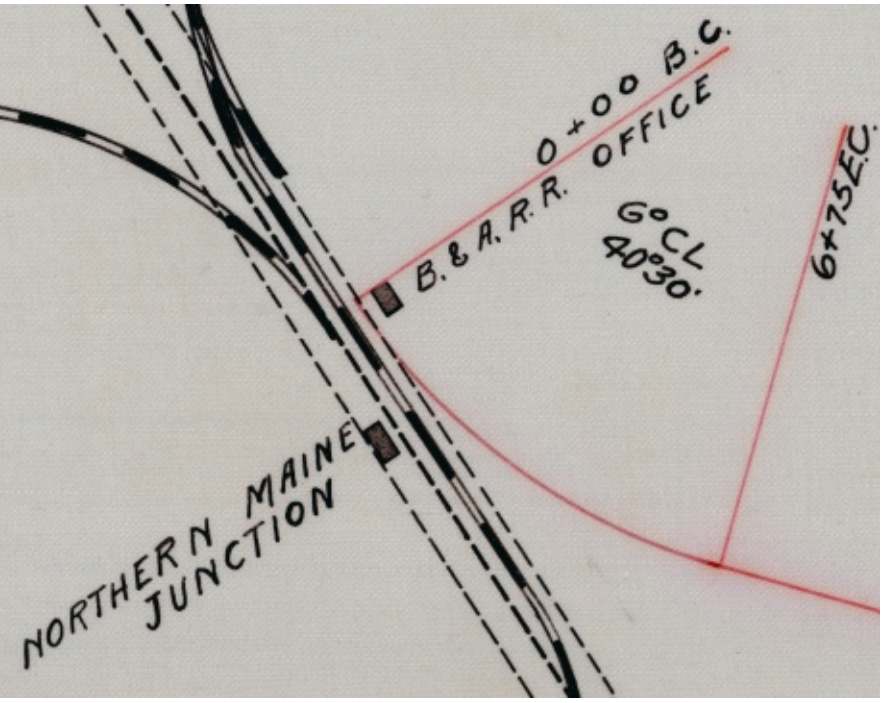


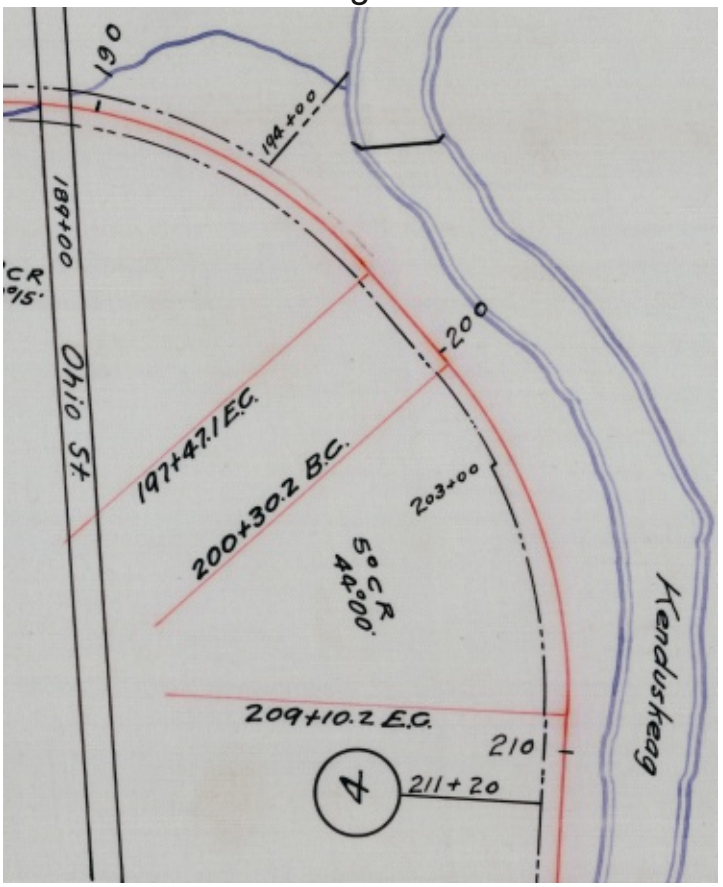
BANGOR AND AROOSTOOK R.R.
PROPOSED LOCATION
NORTHERN MAINE JUNCTION TO BANGOR
VIA KENDUSKEAG STREAM

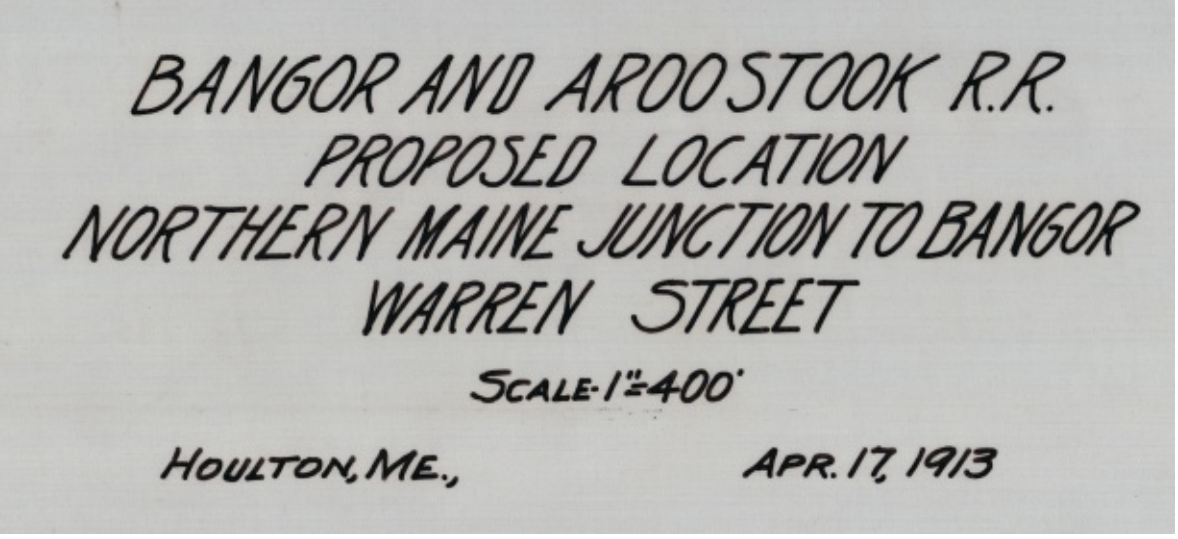
SCALE. HOR. 1" = 400'
VERT. 1" = 20'

HOULTON, ME., APR. 14, 1913.

With the same draft date as the previous routing, this one also ends near Court Street in Bangor; in fact, the routing seems to be identical from a certain point into Bangor. This routing is considerably longer and more complicated compared to the previous. Rather than taking a fairly direct route from North Bangor, this one proposes to build a new track from Northern Maine Junction, building northeast, crossing what is now Bangor International Airport, Union Street, and Ohio Street, before making a 90-degree turn to stay on the bank of the Kenduskeag Stream and head for Court Street.

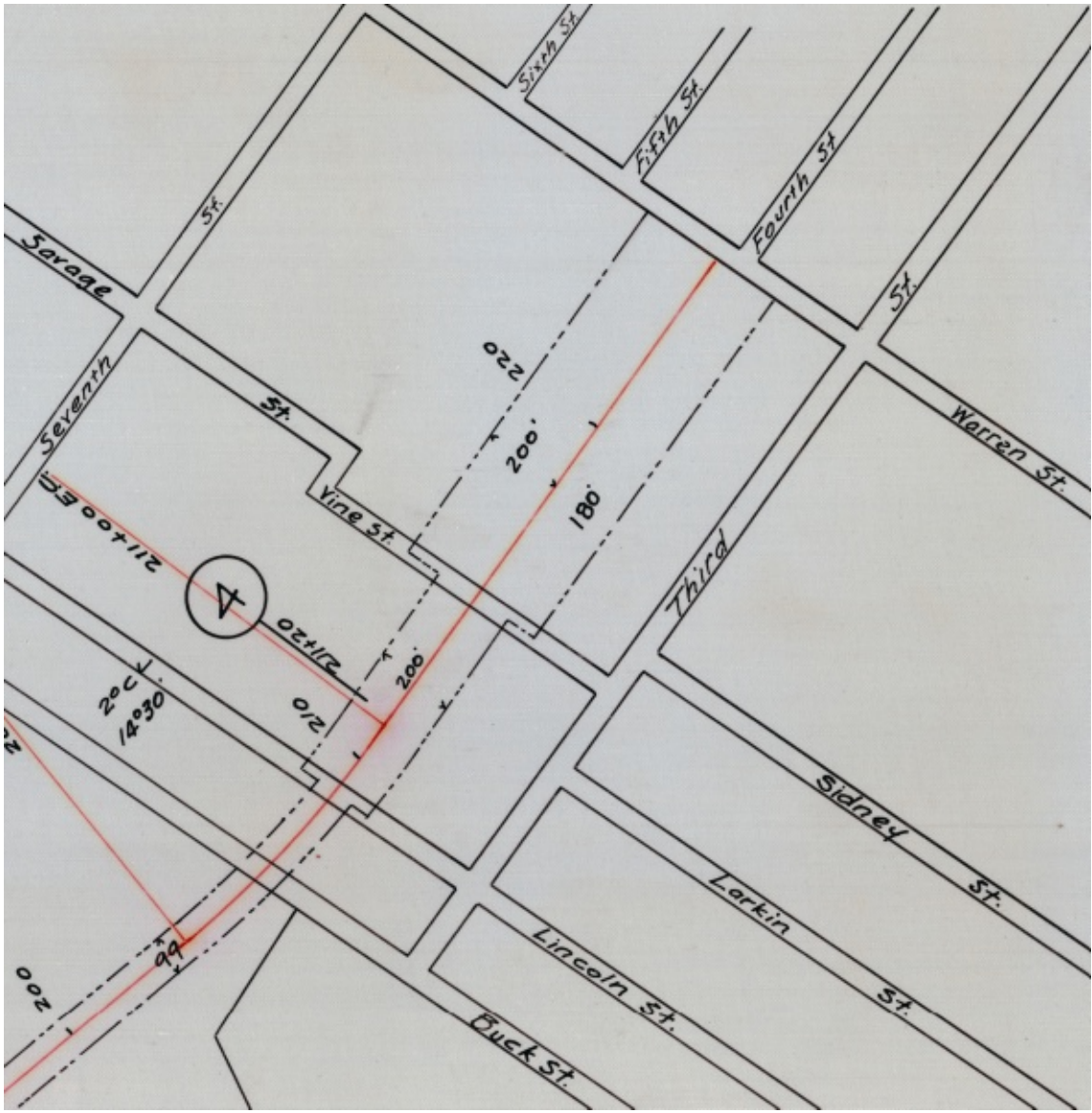






This routing is perhaps the most interesting of the three. It has the advantage of being the shortest, an important consideration when one has to buy land and rights-of-way from property owners. It also takes one right into the City of Bangor - but not where one might expect. This routing begins at Northern Maine Junction, running parallel to the Maine Central nearly all the way to the Odlin Road, where it breaks to the left, crossing right through where I-95 and I-395 are, going right through the Bangor Municipal Golf Course, (opened in 1964) skirting the edge of what would become Bass Park, crossing Buck and Lincoln Streets and esablishing a station near the corner of Third and Warren. Although this is not terribly close to Bangor's Downtown, it really is not that far. About 3/4 of a mile by road or about half a mile as the crow flies.

It also has the distinct advantage of putting a station right in the middle of what was and is a fairly affluent section of Bangor. How many passengers would take the B&A to Northern Maine Junction and then switch trains to the Maine Central will never be known. Although this is by far the shortest of the three routings, it does have the distinct disadvantage of going into an area of the City which was already established. Opposition and a greater expense for land seem likely.



Looking back over the decades to 1913, when these routes were proposed, it becomes quite clear how much has changed. Railroads are hardly the first choice when most people think of passenger transportation in 2026, at least in Maine. These three routes were designed not for freight but for passengers, as they provided no connection to another line nor brought the B&A's rails closer to any particular industry. But in 1913, when railroads were still the lifeblood of all land transportation across the world, it was conceivable that a line would be built into Bangor specifically for passengers.

What is most interesting about these three proposals is that they are not the dream of some misguided youth who wanted a train in his backyard but professionally surveyed routes with curvature, gradients, and distances in place. These were serious proposals that the railroad must have spent a fair amount of money to survey and have drafted.

Each of these has points in its favor and points that detract from it. The one from North Bangor along the Kenduskeag seems the most likely from a construction standpoint, but operationally it would have added considerable length to the trip to Northern Maine Junction, but simplified the journey for someone headed North. Much the same can be said for the option from Northern Maine Junction to Court Street via the Kenduskeag. It would seem to add length to one's journey, without much benefit. The third option - in fact, the very audacity to put a station in the middle of a Bangor residential neighborhood - gives one pause to think - what if? This routing was the shortest, paralleling an existing railroad for about half of its length. The investment was minimal, and the potential to siphon passengers away from the Maine Central by offering a direct train to the North or an easy connection to a train to the south was almost too much to resist.

Why, therefore, did none of these routings happen? Despite all the benefits to owning your own track, it was simply easier and cheaper to use the Maine Central's track and Union Station. The already established station was a known quantity; anything else would have been a gamble. People were already used to the station's location - why rock that boat?

We also do not know the intent of these routings, although presumably for passenger use, we do not know that for certain. Would these have been operated in tandem with the route from Bangor's Union Station or would the B&A have left that line to the Maine Central, working all trains through Northern Maine Junction? Although the latter seems likely, it is not a certainty.

In the end, over 100 years later, we are left with questions regarding these proposed routes. Why go to the trouble and expense of surveying these and proposing them? Why did they not get built? Compared to almost any of the other construction projects the B&A did take on, these lines would have been hardly noticeable.

Unfortunately, we will probably never know the answers to these questions. Much like the six miles that were surveyed between Searsport and Belfast that were never built (See the Spring 2024 Maine Line), we are left with a mystery that we may never solve.



WALES TO ATHENS VIA INTERVALE

Many people associate the EMD BL-2 diesel locomotive with the B&A. Given how late the B&A ran them, this is not surprising. A total of 59 of them were built (including a BL-1), and the B&A had a total of eight. Four of those eight made it into preservation, but only one resides within the state of Maine. It sits in the Cole's Land Transportation Museum in Bangor, with the building literally built around it. Stripped of major components it would not need in a museum, it is unlikely to ever run again. Which leaves the state of Maine, a state so tied to the BL-2, without a running example that you can ride behind. Or does it?

For the third year in a row, the Athens Historical Society in the town of Athens, Maine has put on "Old Home Days". The town of 952 people (in the 2020 census) takes the site of the Athens Exhibition Hall on South Main Street (Routes 150 and 43) and turns it into the sort of down-home small-town type of fair that most people have only seen on TV and movies. While you will not find the overpowering midway of a larger fairground, you will find homemade crafts, homemade baked goods, a local food truck, and lemonade squeezed right in front of you.

The two-day event (this year held on Friday-Saturday, September 18-19, but check back next year for the 2027 dates) featured a live sawmill demonstration, the construction of a blacksmith shop the old-fashioned way, with axes and a crosscut saw, a horseshoeing demonstration, an antique car display, numerous antique farm tractors, a presentation on how to read and interpret maps, and on Friday night, a contradance.

So what does Athens, a town that never actually had a railroad in it, and its Old Home Days have to do with the B&A and a BL-2?



Above: The Antique Tractor display

Below: Building a building the old-fashioned way





Above: Food and Drink were particularly yummy!

Below: Blacksmith demonstrations went on throughout the day



On one corner of the site resides a former ice rink that no longer holds water. Repurposed into a train ride for the young and the young at heart, this loop of track is the domain of Roland Perkins, historian, preservationist, railroad enthusiast, and owner of the so-called "Rollicking Railroad," which has given numerous children their first exposure to any kind of train. But how did this train come to be in Athens?

Below: Roland behind the controls of his BL-2



Our story starts in Wales, Maine. The details are a bit sketchy, and most of what we know comes from a pair of articles in the Lewiston Sun-Journal dated October 13, 1994, and August 12, 1996. If you search long enough, you can find both articles online in Google Books.

Roger and Cecile Caron moved to Wales around 1986, bought five acres and almost immediately began laying track across their property. It was intended to be a fun activity for Roger and his grandchildren. A back injury put most of the heavy lifting onto Cecile and their children. In 1994, they had about 1700 feet of track laid down, including a 45-foot-long aluminum bridge that spanned a brook. At the time, they were working on miniature buildings to complete the miniature world that the train would inhabit.

Two months shy of two years later, the Carons were announcing the sale of their hand-built labor of love to the Hartmann Model Railroad, Train, and Toy Museum of Intervale, New Hampshire. Roger was quoted as saying, "I can't keep up with this anymore." His back injury was hampering his efforts, and although the Grandchildren were still able to ride on the train, evidently insurance costs were another factor in the decision to sell the train. In 1994, the locomotive and 13 passenger cars were mentioned; by 1996, the working crane and a variety of railroad crossing signals were mentioned; it is not clear when those were built.

In the article from 1996, Mr. Caron is quoted as saying that they (the Hartmann Model Railroad, Train, and Toy Museum) plan to build "5,000 to 6,000 feet of track". Quite the step up from the 1700 feet (about 1/3rd of a mile) that he had. Although that would have been impressive, during a conversation with Scotty Mallett, a former employee of the Hartmann Model Railroad, Train, and Toy Museum said that he felt 1/4 of a mile was much closer to reality. That would track (pun intended) with the amount that the Carons had laid down on their property.

The tone of the 1996 article seems almost regretful - The time had come to take this great project and the years of effort that had made it into reality and move it on to someone else. The Carons would have been superhuman if they had not felt some sort of regret.



Your editor's long time friend Scotty Mallett was an engineer, track crew member and curator of the model train and toy museum for the Hartmann Model Railroad, Train, and Toy Museum in Intervale, New Hampshire. This Circa 2002 photo is from his collection



Inaugural Run. *Executive Councilor Ray Burton (above left) was on hand recently at the Hartmann Model Railroad for a demonstration run of their new miniature railroad. The train was brought to Intervale by Roger Hartmann (center), who intends to have the rideable train carrying passengers next summer. Serving as the engineer of the inaugural run was the train's creator, Roger Caron (right) of Wales, Maine.*

The next chapter of the story begins a bit later in 1996, in Intervale, New Hampshire. The photo at left appeared in The Mountain Ear on October 17, 1996 (Page 14) and shows the first run of the Hartmann Model Railroad, Train and Toy Museum's new railroad. The Museum closed in 2018 and the brochure for the museum from that year carried the photo at lower left, showing the BL-2 and Mr. Hartmann. Interestingly, when delivered the BL-2 appears to be in a Bangor and Aroostook paint scheme, but by 2018 had been repainted into that black red and yellow as shown. In 2018 Roland stepped up and bought the 12 inch gauge ride on railroad. 12 inch is a rather odd size for a ride-on train. 7.25 or 7.5 inch is much more common. As a result, just about everything is custom made, right down to the trucks. After bringing everything home, Roland stripped and repainted the BL-2, renumbering it 557 in honor of the locomotive that resides in the Cole's Museum.

Both of these photos came from the collection of the Bartlett Historical Society, Bartlett, NH. Our thanks to them for finding the material so quickly!



Next Page: Roland's 557 as it appears today


557
American Railfan
BANGOR AND AROOSTOOK
557
American Railfan
557
BANGOR
AROOSTOOK
NORTHERN
MAINE





Top: Side view of Roland's 557

Above: The rear door opens to allow the control handle to be inserted. The broom is a nice touch!



Above: Under the hood of the steam outline locomotive

Mechanically and operationally, all the locomotives are essentially the same: a small Honda gasoline engine powers a hydraulic pump; that hydraulic fluid is used to turn a hydrostatic drive similar to many modern lawn tractors and other equipment. The air tank is used to run the whistle on the "steam" locomotive. One lever controls both the direction and speed of the locomotive. The throttle position on the gas engine is more or less fixed. The output from the drive system is sent to the wheels via a combination of shafts and chains, so that all eight wheels are driven on all the locomotives.

For a town that never had a railroad, Roland's train is the first and sometimes only exposure local children have to a train they can actually ride on. As a result, seeing it at the Old Home Days has already become a tradition for many. Much like the passengers, the primary motive power is a locomotive that proudly wears a smile on its face.



Above: A full-capacity train just about to leave the station

This locomotive was designed by Roger Hartmann and built in New Hampshire. Scotty Mallett helped with its construction. The locomotive might be powered by a gas engine, but the smiles it provides are genuine and enthusiastic! The BL-2 is not the only homage to the Bangor and Aroostook - have a look at the first car behind the locomotive!

This is the largest model State of Maine Products car your editor has ever seen. Although its passenger-carrying duty means that the roof has been omitted. This particular car came straight from Hartmann's with very few changes and continues its duty, putting smiles on people's faces.



Above: The 557 holds on the siding while the State of Maine car takes passengers around

Below: Roland and his Granddaughter take a train around the loop past the BL-2





Left: Your Editor behind the controls of the 557 - Note the smile!

Roland's family and friends have done a great service to their community and Bangor and Aroostook fans everywhere by getting this unique train ride back into the public eye, even if it's only for two days a year. It is truly a multi-generational project, with Roland's children and grandchildren showing up throughout the day.

Combined with the community built around Roland's museum (that is a story for another time), this train ride is not just a way for people to get off their feet at the local town fair; it's a way to get railroads into the hearts and minds of the generation that will one day take over the preservation of our railroad history and heritage. Not a bad mission for one man and a BL-2, and just what one hopes for the future of the Bangor and Aroostook's story.

Editor's Note: This story would not have happened without Roland and his friends and family. The work that they have put into this train ride - all as volunteers - is quite impressive. Every single person I met in Athens during the day I spent there was friendly, welcoming, and only made me want to return to this town again. If you are looking for a unique small-town fair experience, I highly recommend Athens Old Home Days, and the chance of seeing the largest operating BL-2 in the state of Maine is just the icing on the cake!

I want to particularly thank Roland for allowing me to take over the controls of the 557 for a few laps. I can say that is the most fun I've had railroading for some time! -JTK



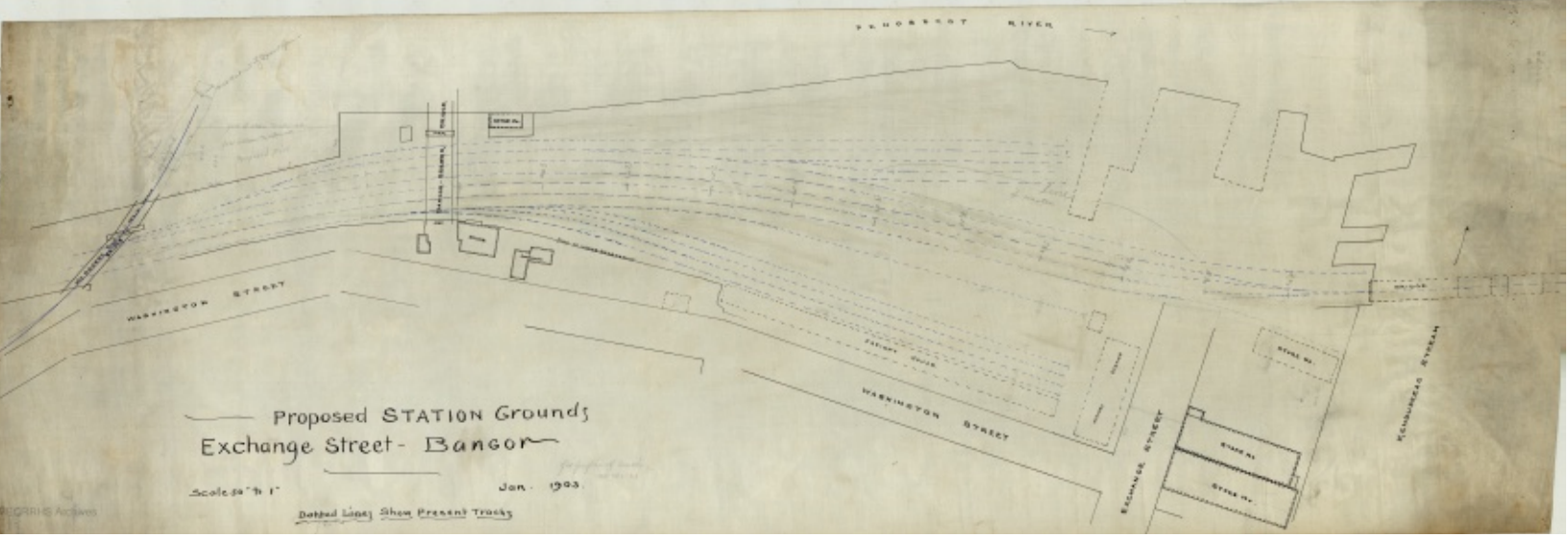


BANGOR'S THREE STATIONS

Above: The original European and North American Station in which the Bangor and Piscataquis rented space. Bangor, end of Exchange Street. Photographer unknown, date unknown. Courtesy of the BAR Archives

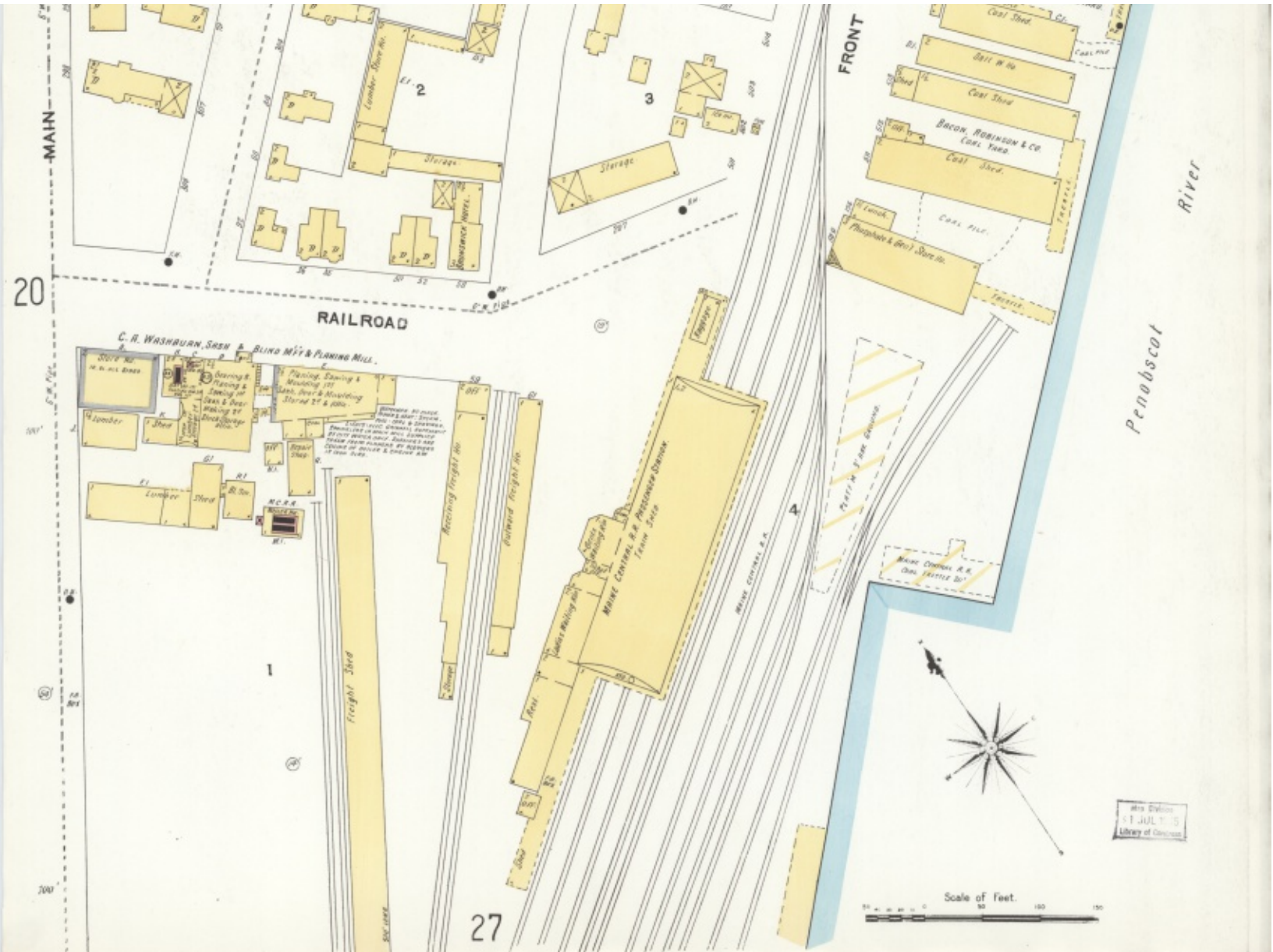
One of the hardest things to remember is that how things are is not necessarily how they have always been. Today we take it for granted that there is a railroad line to Searsport and that the former Bangor and Aroostook and former Maine Central interchange at Northern Maine Junction. Before 1905, the Bangor and Aroostook started in Old Town and never even touched Bangor. Once the line to Searsport from South LaGrange was established, in 1905, things changed. The interchange of both passengers and freight in Old Town became of a secondary nature - the primary freight interchange was actually performed in Bangor Yard. Entire train lengths of freight were shuttled between Northern Maine Junction and Bangor.

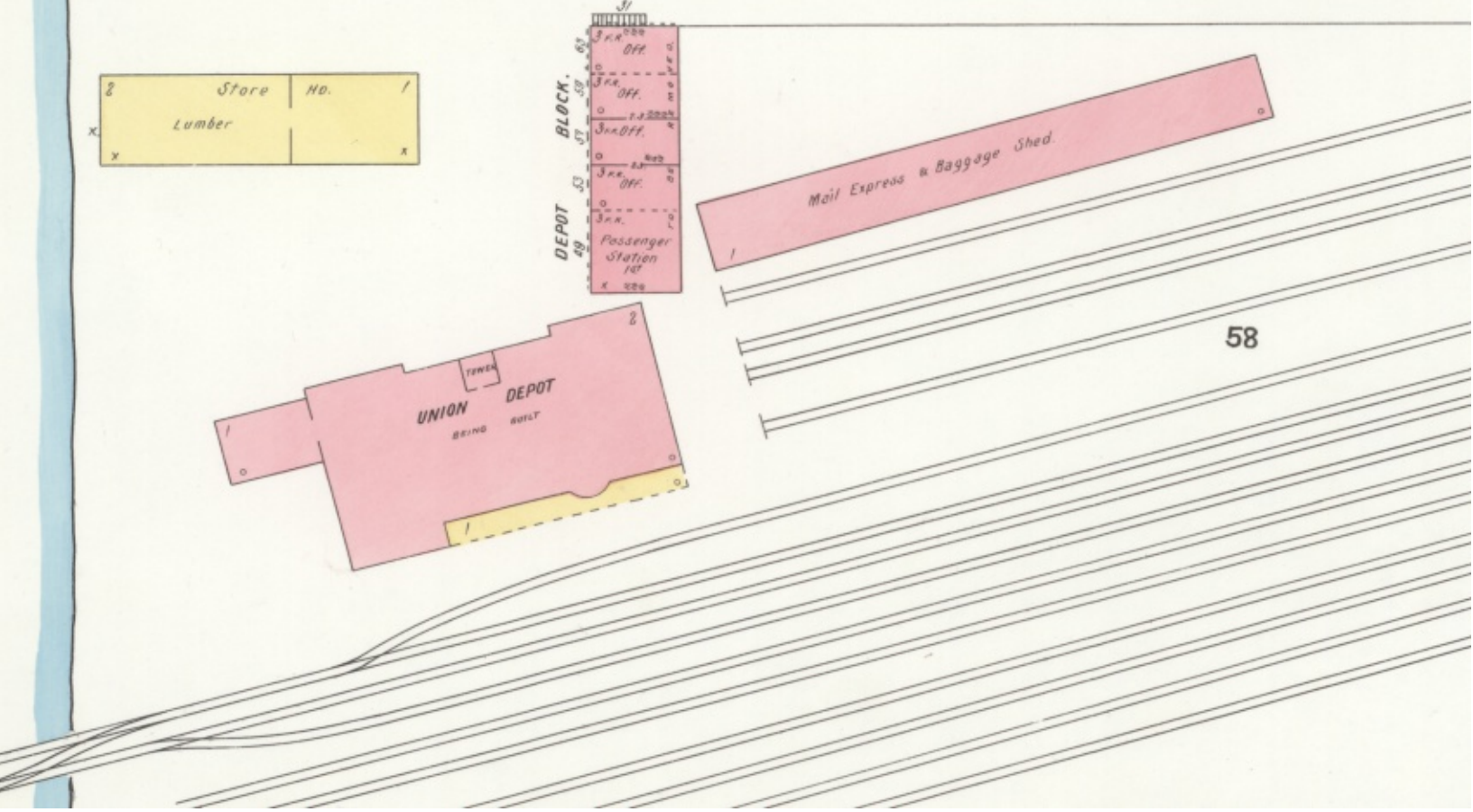
Passenger service was a bit more difficult. In 1905 the Maine Central had two stations in Bangor. One was the European and North American station located at the end of Exchange Street. The Bangor and Piscataquis had leased space from the E&NA in this station. The Maine Central leased the E&NA in 1882. Presumably trains headed East would be serviced from the E&NA station. Trains from the West (this is a railroad direction, one could argue that it is actually South) were presumably serviced out of a station the Maine Central built near the corner of Front and Railroad streets. Today this location is unrecognizable as only one track remains and the rest of the area between Bangor's Main Street and where this station was is the outdoor amphitheature where concerts are held. Unfortuanately, no photos of the station near the corner of Front and Railroad have surfaced.



Above: The Proposed Station Grounds from 1903. Courtesy of the Maine Central Railroad Historical Society

Below: A cropped version of the 1906 Sanborn Fire Map showing the Maine Central station at the corner of Railroad and Front streets. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Bangor, Penobscot County, Maine. Sanborn Map Company, De, 1906. Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn03427_005/

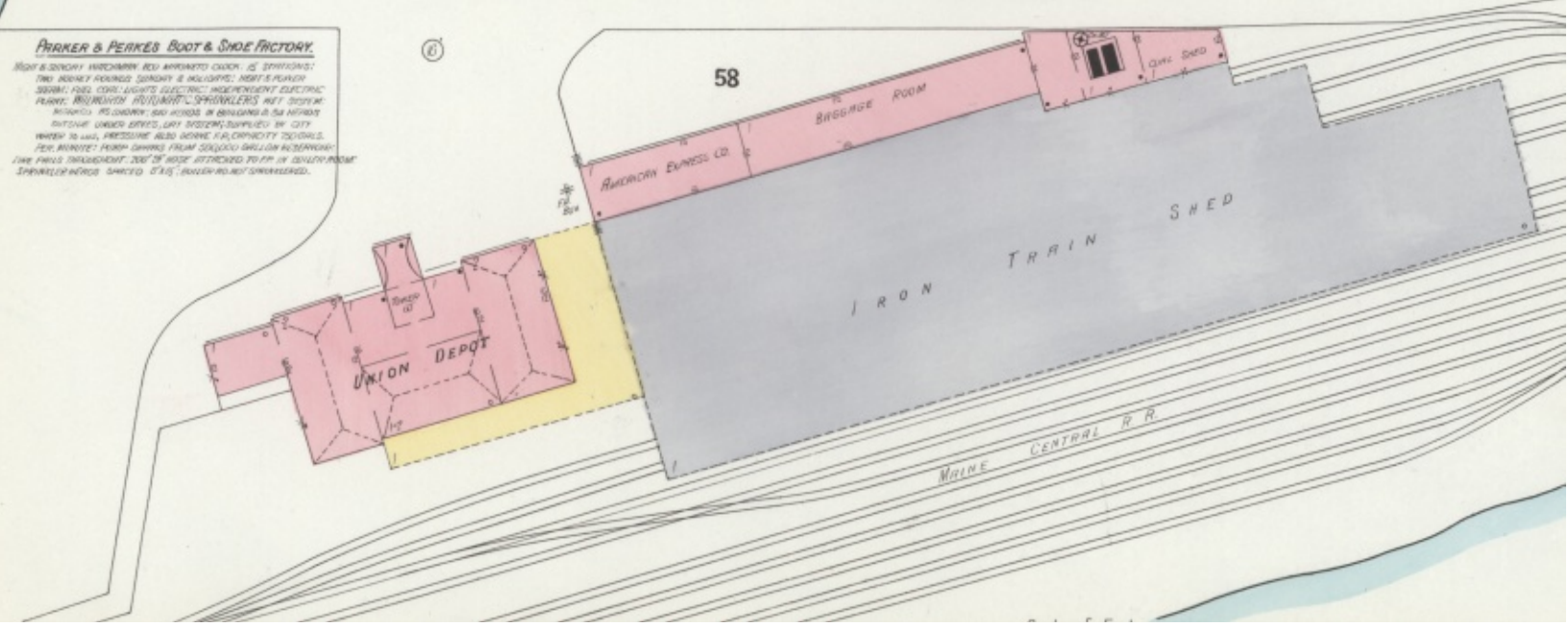




Above: Cropped 1906 Sanborn Insurance Map showing both the existing 'Depot Block' and Union Station under construction. Interestingly, the map does not quite line up with one of the photographs, in regards to the relative position of the two buildings.
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Bangor, Penobscot County, Maine. Sanborn Map Company, De, 1906. Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn03427_005/.

When the Bangor and Aroostook came to town, someone decided that enough was enough and that having one station to operate all the passenger trains made a lot more sense. Planning in this area had actually started in 1903, based upon the date of a document found in the Maine Central Railroad Historical Society Archives. A full two years before the B&A's new line was completed, someone was thinking ahead. Speaking of the MECRRHS archives, a nearly complete set of plans for Bangor's Union Station resides within them, however, they are not dated. We do know from the 1906 insurance maps that the station was listed as 'under construction' and we know that it opened in 1907. From when they broke ground on Union Station until the other two stations were demolished, Bangor had three passenger stations.

When exactly the Maine Central and E&NA stations came down is something of a mystery. One presumes it was after Union Station went into service, July 28, 1907. Unfortunately, there is no Sanborn Fire Insurance Map for Bangor for 1907, but the 1908 edition is shown on the next page. No trace of either of the other buildings is visible.



Above: Cropped portion of the 1908 Sanborn Fire Map - showing Union Station and the train shed that dwarfed the buiilding. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Bangor, Penobscot County, Maine. Sanborn Map Company, Nov, 1908. Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn03427_006/

Editor's Note: Your Editor would like to thank Peter Violette of the Maine Central Railroad Historical Society for his considerable help and knowledge that made this piece possible!

Below: Cropped Portion of the 1908 Sanborn Fire Map showing the area where the Maine Central station used to be, near the corner of Railroad and Front Streets. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Bangor, Penobscot County, Maine. Sanborn Map Company, Nov, 1908. Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn03427_006/

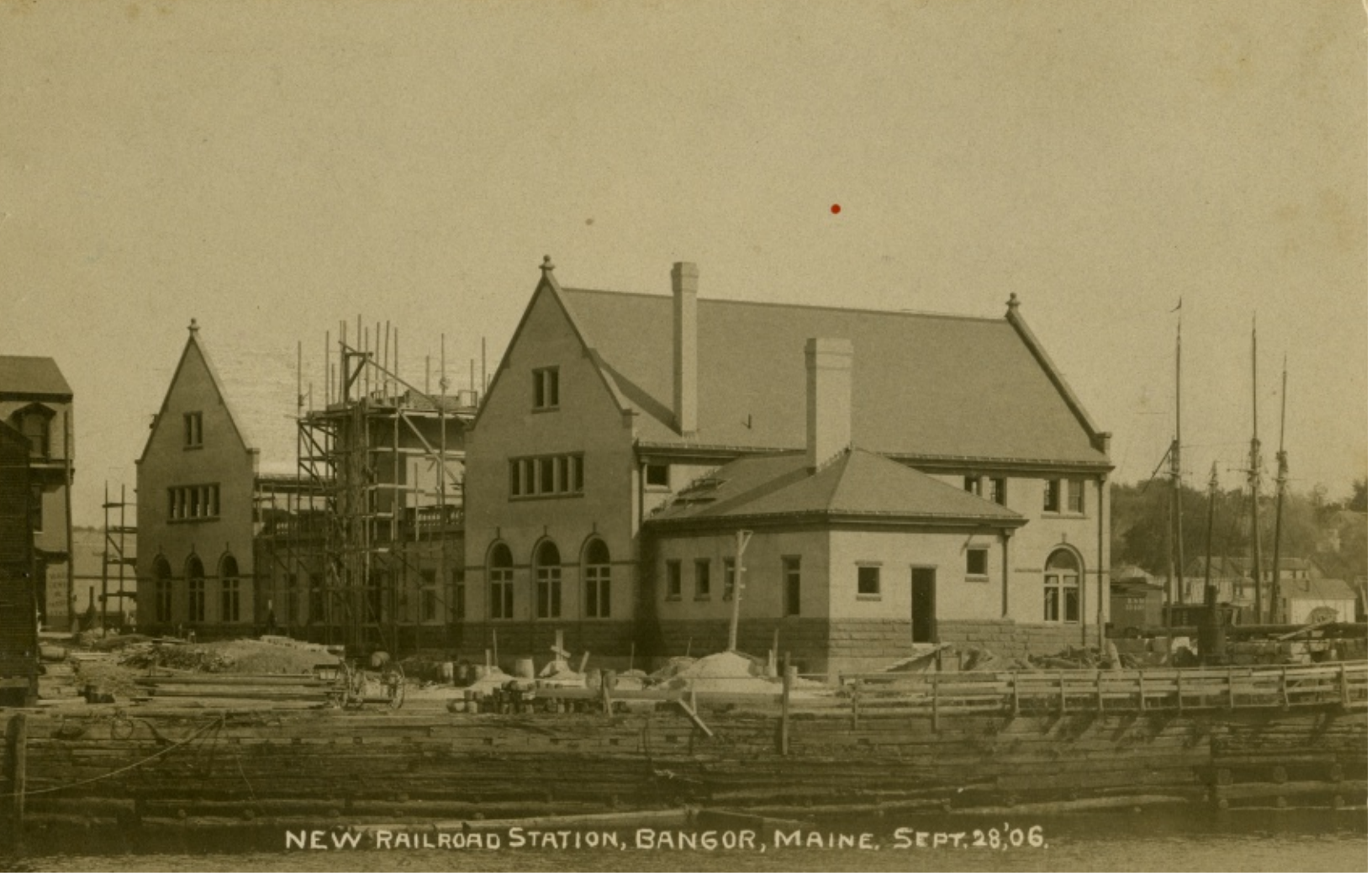




UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Above: The European and North American Station, now relettered Maine Central, at the end of Exchange Street in Bangor. Believed to be showing the initial construction for the foundation of the Union Station. This photo is therefore dated as 1906 and comes to us from the Penobscot Marine Museum Collection. LB2008.26.2

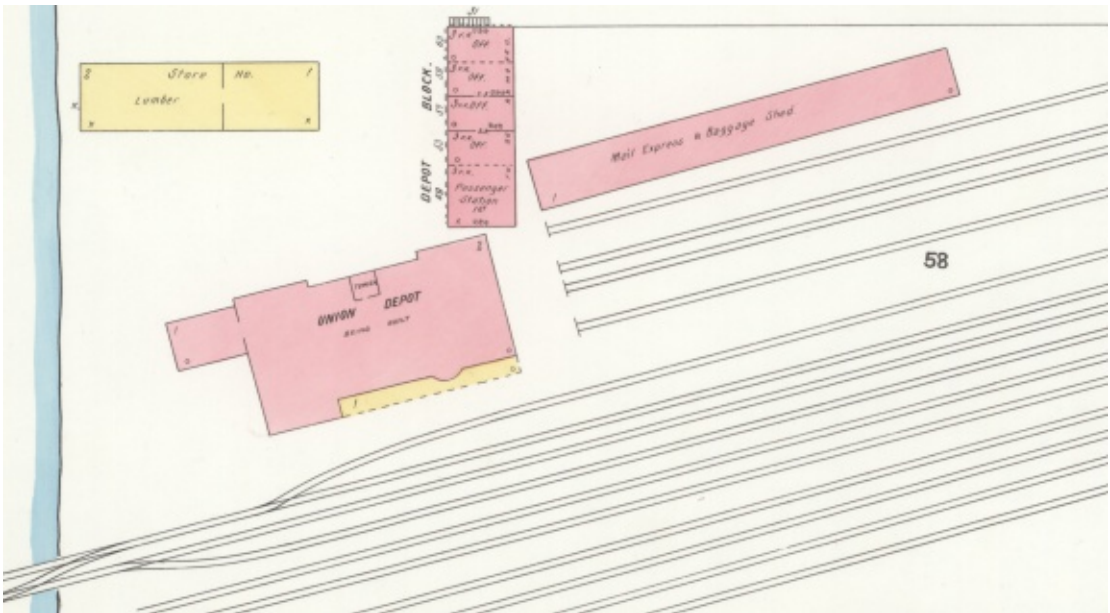
If one goes back to the maps referenced in the previous piece, (also included on the next page) the 1906 map makes it look like Union Station was built with one corner basically pointing at the end of the E&NA station it replaced. This photo is listed as being a construction photo of Union Station and would seem to indicate that Union Station was in fact closer to the Kenduskeag Stream than the map would imply. Interestingly the sign on the second floor still says Bangor and Piscataquis. Why the sign was never changed is another mystery we may never solve as the B&P would have been long gone by the time 1906 rolled around.



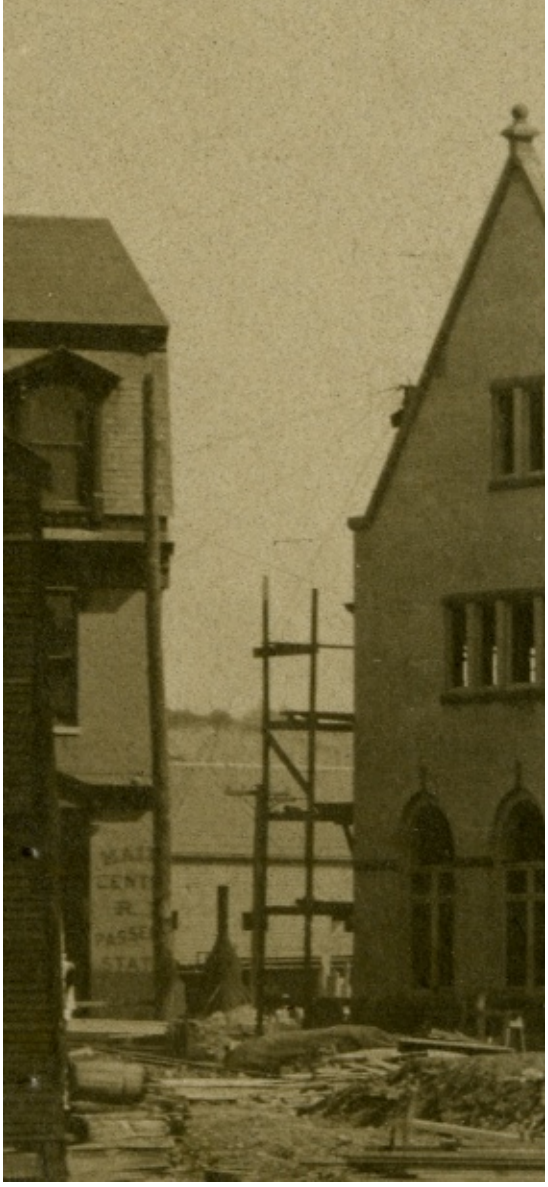
Above: This postcard comes from Matthew Cosgro's collection (NashuaCityStation.org) and in a somewhat rare move for postcards, is dated.

The postcard above is truly rare, it is dated! So on September 28, 1906, that was the situation at Bangor Union Station. Interestingly - it brings up one further detail. It clarifies the location of the old and new.

The 1906 Sanborn map referenced in the previous piece was troubling to your editor. The corner of the new Union Station seemed awfully close to the existing station, but the photo at the start of this article seemed to indicate that the foundation was actually next to the previous station, which simply did not seem to line up with this map.







Above on the left, we have a cropped version of the photo on the first page of this article. On the right we have a cropped version of the postcard above. On the left you can (if you look closely) see the words "Maine Central R.R. Passenger Station" with two windows to the right of the lettering. There are also two chimneys and the passenger waiting area canopy. If you look at the image to the right, first the canopy is gone, the building no longer has two chimneys at the end of it and although it is barely visible - The lettering is actually cut off. It now reads "Mai Cent R. Passe Stat". No windows to the right either. The conclusion is obvious, if a bit obscure. When they began construction of the foundation for the new Union Station they had to shorten the existing station and tear down the passenger canopy in order to have room. Demolishing the existing station entirely was not an option, passenger trains were still running during construction, so a work around was found.

This also meant that street access to the station would have been seriously constrained until the previous station was torn down.



Above: This postcard comes from Matthew Cosgro's collection (NashuaCityStation.org)

Although you could be forgiven for saying this is not a construction view, if you look very carefully, there is scaffolding between the station and the train shed. In addition, it looks like the scaffolding extends nearly the whole way to the peak of the train shed roof. The best guess of a date for this one is 1907. One cannot tell if the station is open in this picture and since the old station is probably shorter than the new station, we cannot tell if that one is still in existence on the other side.

Right: Cropped image from above
Note the scaffolding





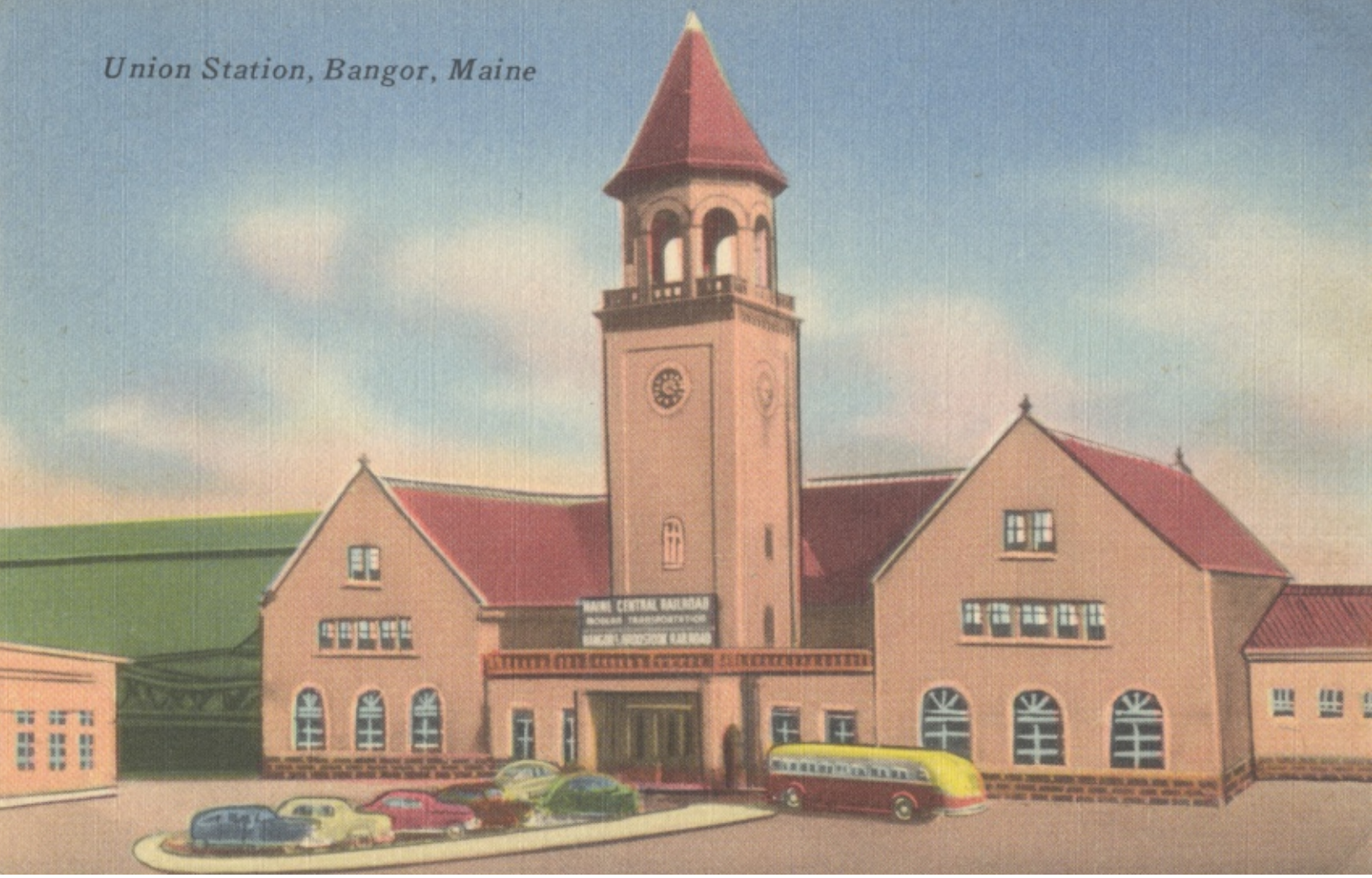
ONE MAN'S MEMORIES

Above: This one-of-a-kind painting of the inside of the train shed of Bangor's Union Station has hung for decades in the bar at Geaghan's Pub in Bangor. Thanks to the Geaghan Family and the Staff for allowing your editor to door-bust and turn off the lights to get it photographed! JoeyKelleyPhoto.com collection

Editor's Note: As we have discussed in this issue, it has been 65 years since Bangor's Union Station was demolished. Finding someone who has memories of this station is getting increasingly hard. The Maine Line went over to Neil MacDonald's home in January of 2026 to speak with him, not long before Neil's 86th birthday. Neil has been incredibly generous with his photographs, time, and memories through the Maine Line's rebirth, and this occasion was no exception. Thank you to Neil, Jeanne and Sue for once again inviting the Maine Line into their home! -JTK

Neil was born in 1940 and lived in what is known as East Hampden. Neil's Father, Eddie (Mac), was a railroad enthusiast and that interest was certainly handed down to his eldest son. Even as a young child, Eddie (Mac) would take Neil to see trains. Three of the favorite spots were just west of Bangor along the Old County Road in Hampden where you could really hear the locomotives work up the grade, the Bangor Roundhouse and Bangor Union Station. In those very early days, Neil remembers the steam locomotive pushers running light back down the grade towards Bangor. On one of the trips to the roundhouse with his Dad, Neil got a cab ride but was so young he couldn't make the steps work and both the hostler and his Father were pushing and pulling him up the steps to the cab!

When he was about 10 Neil began, with his parents knowledge, to ride his bicycle to Union Station. This was over 3.5 miles, a good distance for a 10 year old. Neil's across the street neighbor R.O. "Red" Frye worked the Mail Trains and at 6:30 PM the mail train would pull into Bangor. A couple of times Neil and his bicycle were loaded into Red's car and he would catch a lift back home. Once home, Neil would play with his Marx train set and think about what he had seen at Union Station.



Above: Circa 1940 Postcard of Bangor Union Station from the collection of Matthew Cosgro, NashuaCityStation.org

If one watches the movie Casablanca, the train shed is depicted as dark and smokey. Not so for Bangor, according to Neil. Given the proximity to the Penobscot River, a semi-constant breeze blew through the structure, and Neil remembers it as being clear and smoke-free. The REA and baggage building on one side of the train shed formed a wall on the side of the train shed that was closest to Washington Street. That kept the wind off the river at bay.

On the far side of the main line, toward the river, was the coach yard, where spare cars were kept. Neil did not wander over there because "there was nothing going on." Neil describes the trainshed as being full of pigeons that nested in the rafters. The whole area was huge from a 10-year-old's point of view. Concrete passenger platforms ran beside and between tracks, with wooden boardwalks provided to walk between platforms.

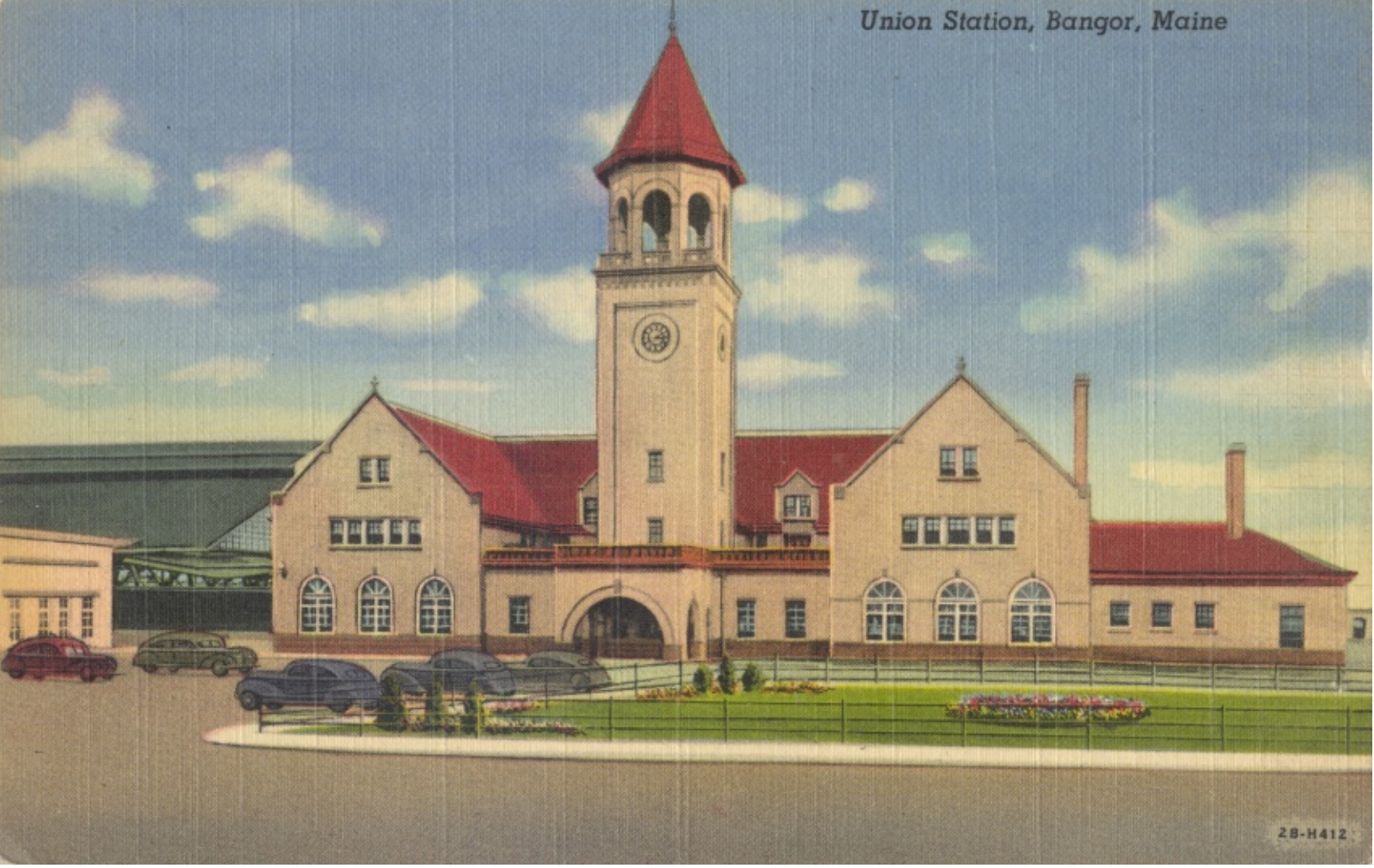
A full half of the property seemed to be devoted to the Railway Express Agency, mail and baggage. A Maine Central GE 44-tonner was constantly switching cars, baggage, mail, express all around and making up and breaking apart trains. Neil never remembers hearing a diesel engine and thought that it was electrically powered - like his model trains at home. Near the Railway Express Agency building, a near-constant stream of REA trucks - advertisements on their sides - seemed to come and go, dashing packages large and small to people around Bangor. UPS? FedEx? Decades away. When you needed to send it, Railway Express or the Post Office were your two choices.



Above: Circa 1950 Postcard of Bangor Union Station from the collection of Matthew Cosgro, NashuaCityStation.org

Not far away from the station proper, but on the south side of the Kenduskeag stream, was the crossing at the end of Bangor's Railroad Street. The spot is still there, but now it is a single track. Back then, it was a beehive of activity. Locomotives shuffling in and out of the roundhouse, being serviced. Freight cars being switched between cars in the freight yard, just to the south of Railroad Street. Passenger trains, express cars, mail all moving in and out of Union Station to the North of Railroad Street. It made for a constant stream of locomotives and cars. The Maine Central, unlike the B&A, had a mixed bag of diesel locomotive power. GE 44 tonners were a favorite for switching and light branch lines. More common were the Alcos. A variety of them called the MEC home. One day, the Maine Central was using a Bangor and Aroostook NW2! Now this was the first time young Neil had seen anything other than a 44 tonner or an Alco switching. It made a huge impression - it was clean - colorful (compared to the black the MEC favored) and it was quiet. The two stroke EMD just hummed quietly compared to the noisy four stroke Alco. Neil thought that maybe all the Maine Central's locomotives were broken!

Back in Union Station, when the Maine Central got its first passenger diesels, they brought one into Union Station and set up wooden steps for people to walk inside the cab, then through the hood and out the back. This was the height of passenger train luxury and a big upgrade from those old smokey steam locomotives. Someone decided to pull the horn. Inside that cavernous train shed, with the locomotive pointed towards a wall, it was deafening and everyone jumped.



Above: Circa 1930 Postcard of Bangor Union Station from the collection of Matthew Cosgro, NashuaCityStation.org

[Editor's Note: Although Neil was not sure, if these were in fact the first MEC passenger diesels, they would have been built in mid 1946. That would put Neil at about 6 years old. They would have been EMD E7s, a model that the B&A would also buy a pair of in 1949. -JTK]

Inside the station, Neil described it as 'Echoy' - a large empty space where sound seemed to travel. Over at the ticket counter, there would be two people selling tickets. Near the ticket counter was the timetable rack. Here you could pick up timetables and maps for railroads all across the country, bright, colorful and designed to catch the attention of a railroad minded young boy. Not far away was the Armstrong Company where for the lofty sum of 10 cents you could get a hotdog. For 5 cents you could get a Coke.

All the walls of the station had some sort of tile or polished pattern to them. It was a huge space to explore for a young boy, Coke and timetables in hand, wandering around this station where people came and went. The life of Bangor seemed to center around this building with packages, mail, people all coming from and headed to destinations far and wide.

Its hard to believe in 2026 but back then no one was telling him to 'keep out of here' or 'this is a no trespassing area.' There were no 'No Trespassing' signs back then. About the only thing Neil remembers is occasionally being told "Don't get hurt." He often rode his bicycle up and down the concrete passenger platforms inside the train



Above: Circa 1910 Postcard of Bangor Union Station from the collection of Matthew Cosgro, NashuaCityStation.org

shed and the only time it was a problem was when the baggage and people blocked his way!

Memories can be a funny thing and one of the details that stuck out to a young Neil was that the Bangor and Aroostook steam locomotives had air operated automatic bell ringers, as opposed to the manual ones on the Maine Central. In his young opinion that made the B&A steam locos far superior to the Maine Central's.

Outside the station was the Blue and Red Neon sign above the station entrance - with Boston and Maine Buses and Bangor and Aroostook buses taking passengers to and from their destinations. Neil would occasionally walk up the sidewalk from the station to watch the switching from the bridge across the river to Brewer. From this vantage point he could also watch the Bar Harbor Express passenger trains with their multi-colored coaches gathered from railroads all across the country ferrying their passengers towards Mount Desert Island. He distinctly remembers seeing trains back out of the station, then see them headed across the bridge into Brewer and towards Ellsworth down the Maine Central's Calais branch, maroon locomotive and multicolor cars in tow.



Above: Circa 1908 Postcard of Bangor Union Station from the collection of Matthew Cosgro, NashuaCityStation.org

Inevitably, life and things change. Neil got a part time job in 1953 or 1954 at Stanley's IGA in Hampden. This location today is the Angelo's Pizza at the corner of Main Road South and Kennebec Road. Working became the focus of most of his time, with Union Station carrying on without him. In 1961 when the station was demolished, Neil and Jeanne were married and living in Belfast. Today the station still lives in Neil's memory: "I can see it right now in front of me, clear as a photograph, but I can't seem to print it!"

Thank you again Neil for taking the time to tell us your memories of Union Station!

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THE LAST RUN

From 1891 to 1961 - over 70 years - the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad ran passenger trains. By 1961, the railroad traffic boom caused by the rationing during World War II was more than a decade in the past, and the automobile had clearly taken hold as the method of passenger travel of choice. When the Maine Central ended its rail service in September of 1960, the B&A would get you as far as Northern Maine Junction and then get you to the bus station via either taxi or bus. The days of passenger trains in Northern Maine were numbered.

According to the Maine Line News (the Maine Line was being printed as a newspaper at the time), "During August, 1961, the two passenger trains averaged eight revenue passengers a day." Clearly, passenger trains were no longer sustainable.

You can read the entire article from 1961 on the Maine Line website; look under Archive, Volume 9, September-October 1961 issue. Interestingly, there seems to be some argument as to when the B&A started offering passenger service. Established in 1891 and ending in 1961, simple math says 70 years. The Maine Line News Article says 68 in the headline, and the text of one article says 1895. Your Editor has always assumed that the B&A picked up whatever trains the Bangor and Piscataquis had established, and the 1893 Timetable posted on the Maine Line website indicates that trains were running at least that early.

Disputes about the start year aside, passengers were a significant part of the B&A's revenues until after World War II when the automobile really took hold. In reality, with the exception of the Great Depression and the rationing that occurred during WWII, one can see the adoption of the automobile coinciding with the drop in railroad passenger revenues. It was not a surprise.

In September of 1960, the Maine Central Railroad discontinued all passenger service, despite a Maine Public Utilities Commission Ruling requiring an additional full year of service. The Maine Central had a valid point. If they were losing money running a service, how could they be expected to continue it?

The Maine Central was the link between nearly all of the other railroads in the state of Maine, and once that link was broken, passenger service did not have a chance. It was easier and faster to simply get a bus from your starting point to your destination rather than changing your mode of travel. Did the Maine Central kill the B&A's passenger business? From one perspective, yes. But in reality, the writing was on the wall already.

The last passenger train left Caribou at 4:50 PM on September 4, 1961. It was covered in a couple of articles in the Maine Line News of the time. You are encouraged to read the full text of the articles on the Maine Line website, but quoted here are the last few sentences, presumably penned by Richard Sprague: "Some 71 friends came to pay their last respects to No. 2. When the train reached Northern Maine Junction, 11 passengers were left. They filed silently out of the coach, and passenger service ended on the Bangor and Aroostook. Almost everybody understood why. But most sensed that a colorful and exciting milestone in transportation had ended."



One of the very last tickets sold on the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad. Dated September 4, 1961, from Caribou to Presque Isle. One wonders how this passenger got back! Editor's Collection





GOING OLD-SPOOL

Back in 1902 the American Thread Company relocated equipment and employees to Milo, Maine. Setting up next to the tracks of an 11 year old Bangor and Aroostook railroad, the mill complex just west of the tracks was on both sides of West Main Street. The complex grew and at one point employed approximately 300 people. Despite being owned and run by the American Thread Company, not a single foot of thread was manufactured in Milo. What therefore was the purpose of this facility which spread out across multiple acres and employed hundreds of people?

One word: Spools. Thread to make or repair any sort of fabric is almost always sold on a spool. Since the middle to late 1970s, those spools have nearly all been made of plastic, a change brought on by changing economic conditions and the perfection of the injection molded plastic spool. Before that however, spools and bobbins of every size and dimension were made of wood. From the massive commercial spools that were several inches tall, to the residential ones that are more familiar to the general public, over the more than seven decades that the mill was in use, an estimated 3,600,000,000 spools and bobbins were made in Milo, Maine. Thats 3 Billion 600 Million spools. Do the math and that works out to somewhere around 51 million spools per year of operation. In the early years, all went over the rails of the B&A, but in later years trucks took spools particularly after ATCO relocated the thread mills to North Carolina from Connecticut.

Below: Undated photo of the Spool Mill - Penobscot Marine Museum Collection - LB2007.1.108083



Initially, logs were hauled to the sawmill by horses, then by Lombard Log Hauler. Eventually, as the distance between the mill and the white birch supply grew, the B&A hauled the approximately 10,000 cords of wood the mill used each year.

The Maine Line was able to speak with Russell Carey of Milo, who wrote a 299-page thesis for his Masters Degree in 1994 about the Spool Mill. Incidentally, he was granted his master's degree for the work. It remains one of the most comprehensive works on the Spool Mill since, in 1994, several people who worked at the mill for most of their lives were still living and were able to be interviewed. As an aside, Russell's father worked for the B&A!

Several interesting facts came out of this conversation, including that the largest surviving building is Three Rivers Hardware today. Two other buildings also survive, both converted to private homes.

The fortunes of the mill were always tied to the economy, as thread sales would go up when people could not afford new clothes. The era beginning with World War I and continuing through World War II was the high point for production. Speaking of production, the spools had to be perfect. No sharp edges were permitted, lest they cut the thread. As a result, approximately half of all the spools made were rejected. A lot of scrap wood was sold to Milo residents for use in their stoves.

One of the reasons the mill survived so long was its ability to almost instantly change products. If it was made out of wood, they could produce it. American Thread also made non-spool products, perhaps the most interesting of which was a wooden container resembling a lipstick container, which contained the blackout paint used by commandos during night raids during World War II. The flexibility to quickly switch to different products eventually could not compete with the reduced cost of plastic spools, and the mill closed in 1975. The property was sold in 1976. Thus ended over 70 years of spool production in Milo, Maine.

Right: An example of American Thread that probably dates from the early 1970s. This spool was found in your Editor's Mother's box of unused thread, as were the other eight photographed at the top of this article!

Editor's Note: Thanks Mom! -JTK





Above: Taken on May 14, 1966, this aerial image from the Maine Geological Society - ASH-1GG-100 - from DigitalMaine.com shows the land and mill complex



Above: A modern-day image from Google Earth showing approximately the same area. For reference, the tracks still cross the river in the same spot; the large building with the red/brown roof is now Three Rivers Hardware, but it used to be the mill, and Penquis Valley School is where 10,000 cords of white birch were stored!

Perhaps the most interesting, at least to railroad enthusiasts, fact about the Milo Spool mill is that it had its own intra-facility railroad. It was narrow gauge, 18 inch and was one of two narrow-gauge railroads to interchange with the Bangor and Aroostook. The other was the Monson Railroad. Details about exactly when the railroad was established are, unfortunately, sketchy. Woodrow Decker (former mill manager) is on record as saying the trains were used for "60 years," which would point to a purchase date in the 1920s. He also said that there were two engines, but only one is known to have survived. Mr. Decker also indicated that there were six miles of track. There was also a public crossing which crossed West Main Street, allowing the train to shuttle wood back and forth between the different parts of the Spool Mill property. Generally speaking, there were three-person crews, and although today we would probably perform the same function with a combination of forklifts, tractors, and trucks, the railroad was crucial to the mill's function, right up to the end.

Thank you to Russell Carey for his help and time on this article and to Allen Monroe and the Milo Historical Society for their assistance with background information. We must also thank long-time friend and contributor Rod Bushway for putting your Editor in touch with Mr. Carey!



WE ARE JUST CARETAKERS

Above: Possibly one of the most unusual photos featuring a train your Editor has ever seen - this one appears to have been taken purely to record the measurements listed in the photograph. Why was this done? That seems to have been lost to history. However, the back of the photo contains several measurements over and above those listed. Courtesy of the Milo Historical Society

At the end of the Spool Mill article previous to this one, the existence of a narrow-gauge industrial railroad was discussed, the job of which was to move wood around the Milo, Maine American Thread Company property from stockpile to drying sheds, to mill, and finally the finished product from mill to interchange with the Bangor and Aroostook. At 18-inch gauge, this is the narrowest narrow-gauge railroad your editor is aware of in the State of Maine and the smallest of the two narrow-gauge railroads the Bangor and Aroostook interchanged with. The Monson Railroad was a full six inches wider at an even two-foot gauge. Positively huge by comparison.

Also mentioned at the tail end of the previous article was the fact that the train survived the shut down of the Spool Mill it served. In fact - it still survives! Not only survives, but your Editor has gotten to see it! It is even for sale! Yes, dear reader, not only has this narrowest of narrow-gauge trains survived you have the chance to buy it!

In 1980, some five years after the Spool Mill closed, Ed Watson of Massachusetts relocated to Milo, Maine. A retired developer, Mr. Watson bought one of the drying sheds from American Thread and for his $12,500 investment, was able to build a three-story house and wound up with a variety of mill equipment, including 7,000 feet of track, a locomotive, and multiple of the four-wheeled cars the mill railroad used. He went on to set himself up with a retirement business, making cedar shingles for people out of his home and using the railroad to move wood around his property. Apparently Mr. Watson liked to keep busy and, even in his retirement, set up a spring water business, campground and sold Christmas trees.

In 2005, the Portland Press Herald ran an article on Mr. Watson, which also appeared on MaineToday.com, although you would be hard-pressed to find it today. At the time, Mr. Watson was 91 years young and looking to move the railroad on, purely because he was not doing much with his shingle-cutting business and figured someone else might want the railroad. Most of the information above comes from that Press-Herald article found in the archives of the Milo Historical Society. The railroad was listed for sale in Uncle Henry's Swap-and-Sell-It-Guide, where the current owner spotted it.

Rocky Miliano spent most of his life working in the Merchant Marine service, living in the Belfast, Maine, area. A regular reader of the Uncle Henry's (when it was printed, it is now available only online) he spotted this railroad setup listed for sale for the asking price of $75,000. Rocky made the trip up to look at it, but he knew that asking price was not something he was willing to pay. He made an offer, which was rejected by Mr. Watson. They parted ways, but the railroad never left Rocky's Mind.

Rocky had a plan to build his own retirement business, an RV park and Campground on some lakefront property he owned. The train was intended to be an attraction, giving rides to people around the property. As a result, every few months Rocky would contact Mr. Watson and check in, see if he had considered his offer, and the answer was always "No." This continued for some time until 2006, when Mr. Watson passed, and his son answered Rocky's call. This time, the offer was accepted and Rocky made the purchase. It is some 80 or so miles from Rocky's place to Milo and this was not a one-trip purchase. He began to disassemble the track, which of course was done entirely by hand.

"You find out who your friends are when you buy a railroad 80 miles from your house in the middle of the summer." Log truck load by log truck load the rails were pulled and and delivered to Rocky's property by a friend. The locomotive was moved by a ramp truck and Rocky's chicken barn became part engine house.

At the time of purchase, Rocky was in his 50's. Life of course gets in the way of the best plans and eventually it became clear that the campground plan simply was not going to happen. Now in his 70's, Rocky has decided that it is time to move this train on and said a wonderful line on the subject: "We don't own anything anyway, we're just caretakers of it for a while and then we pass it on to someone else who has the same or similar dream." Hard to argue with that!

Although the next caretaker of this will get the rail, one of the turntables from the spool mill, and all of the cars that Rocky currently has, the crown jewel is the one-of-a-kind locomotive that he has taken care of for the past two decades.



There it is folks! Right where it has been sitting for two decades, the last remaining locomotive from the Spool Mill Railroad! But what - exactly - is it?

Plymouth locomotives were built in Plymouth, Ohio, hence the name, which had absolutely nothing to do with the line of cars produced by the Chrysler corporation. Locomotive production started in 1910, but the company name was changed to the Fate-Root-Heath company in 1919. This locomotive therefore has to be 1919 or later. Further, it uses the patented friction drive system that had fallen out of favor by 1925. (Check out Wikipedia's article on "Plymouth Locomotive Works" for more) Thus, the locomotive itself comes from somewhere in that six year period, and that makes it over 100 years old. The early and smaller Plymouths were typically powered by gasoline engines and were offered in a variety of gauges from narrow to standard. They were also offered in a variety of weights but nearly all Plymouths were under 25 tons. Since nearly every locomotive, particularly the narrow gauge ones, was a special order, we do not have a lot of details about the specifications that the American Thread Company requested.

What we can confirm, just by looking, is that this locomotive has seen some modifications since it left the Plymouth factory - most notably the engine has been replaced.



Above: The side of the locomotive frame leaves no doubt as to who built it!

Right: That radiator guard is certainly not a factory piece, probably attached in Milo after the engine swap was made. Note the electric headlight (there is also one on the rear) which were probably not an option when this locomotive was built. The headlights themselves appear to be repurposed automotive or truck headlights, the front one quite obviously has a parking light on what is the bottom in this picture, indicating it probably is upside down from its automotive days.





The view of the locomotive from this angle clearly shows that the radiator guard sticks out rather far from the front of the locomotive and one can clearly see that the supports for it are a combination of bolted and welded. Further the entire roof of the locomotive seems to have been modified at some point. The original hood, as shown in the first picture in this article was much lower with a cab that the operator had to look out of, over the hood. This design allows for more visibility forward, as one can look past the drive and engine to see the ground, without the hood in the way. The locomotive does not have a strong score in the aesthetics department, but this was a working locomotive and no one was running a locomotive beauty contest in Milo, Maine.

The exposed drive chain and the un-guarded shafts and spinning gears would give a modern day safety inspector a shock to which they might never recover!



The operator's area (cannot really call it a cab as it is not enclosed) is, well, both rudimentary and a bit scary given all the exposed machinery. One suspects it would also be quite loud. The two vertical levers are the 'clutch' which physically moves the shaft with the chain on it forward and backward to engage and slip it against the drive wheel. The other is the brake lever. No 26-L air brake stand on this locomotive!



This is the heart of the drive mechanism. The wheel next to the fuel tank is connected directly to the crankshaft of the engine and spins continuously. The wheel in the center slides back and forth on the shaft, left and right, providing three different notches of speed in each direction. It slides forward and backwards as well to provide a clutch like effect. Both of the wheels have a wearable material on them that increases the friction. Having operated a similar locomotive, your Editor can confirm that slow moving coupling operations are some of the hardest maneuvers with a locomotive of this type.



About that engine. The original gas engine is long gone. According to the casting number found on the block, the current engine is a 23-inch Chrysler L-head (flathead) inline six engine produced during the 1950s and probably displacing 230 cubic inches. These were sold by Chrysler and used both in automobiles and in industrial and agricultural applications. According to the tag photographed above, this engine was remanufactured by the Darling's Machine Shop, Bangor, Maine on November 14, 1966. At that time this was number 173 (perhaps that means it was the 173rd engine rebuilt by Darlings?). The main bearings and connecting rods were replaced with units 10 thousandths of an inch over original spec and the cylinders were bored 60 thousandths over. That would increase the engine displacement by about 7 cubic inches. The choice to go wtih a Chrysler engine to repower this locomotive may not have been random. Early gasoline-powered Plymouth locomotives used engines from Chrysler Corporation.



Rocky is still trying to sell these historic pieces, although you might have to wait until Spring to get a chance to see them. You can contact Rocky via his Facebook Marketplace listing: https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/item/1344225141244960

For the lucky future caretaker of this historical narrow-gauge train, the deal will include the turntable above, the pile of rail to the right and the pile of cars below!





We would like to thank Rocky for taking the time to show us around this piece of history and for the interview he gave on the subject. A video of the interview will be appearing on the Maine Line Facebook page at some point in the future!



LAST RUN OF 470

Above: Safety valves lifting, smoke from the stack heading into the sky, 470 is just stretching the varnish west on her final trip.

For better or worse, when people think of Bangor Union Station, one event seems to stick out. The final run of 470. Out of the over 50 years the station was in existence, the final run of a steam-powered passenger train on the Maine Central looms large in the memory. Although the final passenger train run would be a bit over six years later, that event seems to have been almost forgotten in comparison. Perhaps this is a reflection of the changing public perception of rail travel - a steam locomotive was an event. The last run was important - a changing of the guard. What is interesting is that for so many people, they believe that the final run of 470 was the last passenger train. An inquiry decades ago on a railroad forum posted by your Editor not only failed to give the date of the last passenger run but resulted in several people posting about the 470 being the last passenger train. The flipbook these photos came in contains a handwritten note: Last train out of Bangor.

These pictures are part of a series that was found in the old family photo archive from your Editor's family. Contained for decades in an old King Cole Potato Chip container, we are not sure who actually shot these, likely your Editor's Grandmother or Grandfather, Marjorie or Leo Kelley.

Shot on June 13, 1954, here are some snapshots from what some would argue was the most photographed day at Bangor Union Station.



Left: 470 is being swarmed with well-wishers, including someone who wants to be on the front of the locomotive. Note the person on the right in what looks like a conductors hat.

Right: One gets a sense of the crowd gathered for this event and 470 seems to be soaking it all in. The entire series of these photos were provided to the New England Steam Corporation (NESCO) for their archives. Apparently someone was attempting to find out what the interior of the train shed looked like and these photos provided that information! We were happy to help!



LAST PASSENGER TRAIN OUT OF BANGOR



Previous Page: Conductor Harry C. Philbrick and Flagman Leon Gilbert waved from the rear platform of the last train out of Bangor Union Station. This photo appeared on the front page of the Bangor Daily News the next day. BDN 1960-2666-01

It was Labor Day, September 5, 1960: The day that the Maine Central hung up the passenger train and became freight-only. It was the day that Bangor Union Station closed its doors for the last time. Despite all the fanfare that had surrounded the last steam train out of Bangor - the last diesel-hauled train, a bit more than six years later, passed much as the last train on the Bangor and Aroostook would, a year later. The speed of the passenger aircraft had replaced the romance of rail travel. Very little notice was taken of the event, and the general public seemed not to care.

It would not affect your editor directly either, except for one fact. Your editor's Father, was on that train. Joe remembers being impressed by the size of the locomotive in Bangor - but remembers little of the rest of the experience. He was only 8 years old at the time.

Leo Kelley dropped his wife Marjorie and Son Joe off at Bangor Union Station. They caught the last Westbound, the old State of Maine Express, now train 8, while Leo and family friend Everett Mayo flew N6851B, the Piper PA-22 Tri-Pacer they co-owned, to Pittsfield. The train departed Bangor at 3:55 PM, the steady hand of 42-year veteran engineer David J. White on the throttle with fireman C. G. Kimball on the other side of the cab. The train was comprised of three coaches and two baggage cars. Conductor Harry C. Philbrick and Flagman Leon Gilbert waved from the departing train's rear platform and appeared in the Bangor Daily News, on the front page no less. The article commented, "There was no gaiety at the station." The BDN concluded its coverage of the event with the following: "An old shoe shine stand with its brass foot-rests stands forlornly in one corner of Union Station and the dusty benches are still there along with an old arrival and departure board. And that's all of an era of passenger service dating to 1832."

When the train arrived in Pittsfield, Marjorie and Joe were driven to the airfield and flew back to Bangor in N6851B. The Wright Brothers had flown for the first time less than four years before Union Station opened, but by 1960, when it closed, individuals owned their own private planes and flew them less for transportation and more for recreation. Those facts say far more about how passenger travel changed in the United States than anything else!

Santa knows where to find everything for the B&A Fan!



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Above: The street side view of the station as it appears today.

Right: The view from the back of the property, a bit more radically modified than the front would imply.

PART STATION
PART KITCHEN
PART APARTMENT

Many years ago, the Searsport station was sold, moved up the track, turned 180 degrees, and set up as an ice cream shop. Baxter Cook owned it at the time, and being a railroad enthusiast, the place was covered with railroad-themed signs and various bits and pieces. The largest was a former Maine Central 901, the railroad's only Oil-Electric car, long since turned into a Maintenance of Way kitchen car. It spent many years on the Belfast and Moosehead Lake before going to Searsport.



Left: ex MEC 901 as it appears today

Eventually, Mr. Cook sold the property, and Massimo's Restaurant took ownership, turning the ice cream shop into a "Restaurant Studio Market" according to their website. Your Editor actually ate there once, and the panini was quite good. For reasons that are unknown at this time, Massimo's closed - their website was last updated in 2022 - but the Facebook page indicates that they may have been open as late as the summer of 2025. In any case, the property is now for sale - listed for over three months with an asking price of $999,900. For nearly a million dollars, you get 1.5 acres of commercial property that has frontage on US Route 1 and borders on the Searsport Branch (or the Bangor Sub as CPKC calls it) on the back side. The interior looks nothing like what one would expect to see inside an old station, but it is difficult to tell how much of that is structural changes and how much is just cosmetic. It does now boast a full-size, one-story-tall walkout basement, and if you look closely at the back side picture, you'll note a 'bump' in the roofline where an apartment complete with bathroom and shower has been built into what would have been the attic of the station.

Is it an original building in pristine historical condition? No. Is it a turnkey business opportunity for someone who wants to run their own food-based business? Potentially. Is it worth nearly a million dollars? Well, that is for the buyer and seller to decide. Have a look at the property yourself - the MLS number is 1670573, and the address is 237 E Main Street, Searsport, ME 04974.

We would like to thank Judson Colby at Maine Country and Coast Real Estate for permission to use the photos in this article!



42 DAYS

Above: Looking out onto Exchange Street from inside where passengers once passed from station to trainshed. BDN 1961-3026-01

On October 26, 1961, the Bangor Daily News carried a short article announcing the razing of Bangor's Union Station. It was stated that this structure, which had taken months to build, would be demolished in 42 days. The steel framing of the train shed was to remain up, to become part of a new building on the site. Three men bought the building and property in the Spring of 1961, according to the BDN. Laurence K. Paine and Henry I. Bacon were still involved, but Millard C. Coffin had left the three-way partnership by the time this article was written. The work had been contracted to Duane Construction of Quincy, Massachusetts. With these few words of prose, the public was made aware of the destruction of this 54-year-old monument to public transportation.

On November 14, 1961, the BDN carried a photograph showing the work in progress. Much of the site had been reduced to rubble - but the clock tower was still

standing tall, for the moment.

On December 4, 1961, the BDN ran a six-paragraph piece entitled "Dramatic Ending For An Era". The 4th was a Monday, and the article references that Bangor Union Station's tower came down the previous week. It would seem that the 42-day deadline was met. The last paragraph is worth quoting in its entirety: "What the future holds for American railroads remains to be seen. But the toppling of the Union Station tower was a dramatic reminder that change inevitably comes with the passing of time; that a transportation era has ended - the old making way for the new."

With the cooperation and permission of the Bangor Daily News, here are multiple photos of the last chapter of Bangor's Union Station. We thank them and the Bangor Public Library, which holds the BDN's photo archive, for their help and work to get these images out to our readers. Thank you!

Below: Workers are stripping the roof off the Railway Express Agency end of the building that housed REA and the Baggage rooms. BDN 1961-3026-03





Previous Page: A view that must have required either a lack of fear of heights or considerable gritting of teeth on the part of the photographer, we see the debris of the roof and building scattered below. BDN 1961-3026-02

Below: Looking down Exchange Street in Bangor, the tower of Union Station still looms above the river and the street, but not for much longer. BDN 1961-3256-01



Next Page: The Railway Express Agency and Baggage building is completely down in this picture, exposing the side of the train shed and leaving only a pile of rubble behind. BDN 1961-3255-01






P&H
P&H




P&H


Bunny's
CAFE




ED BLACK
DOZER
BACKHOE

Previous Pages: The clock tower comes down in a dramatic series of photographs. In order: BDN 1961-3513-02, BDN 1961-3513-09, BDN 1961-3513-08, BDN 1961-3513-01, BDN 1961-3513-03, BDN 1961-3513-03-2, BDN 1961-3513-04

Below: Somehow the cheerful Christmas decoration on the power line makes the stark pile of rubble seen below it even more tragic in this view of the former Union Station site at the end of Exchange Street.



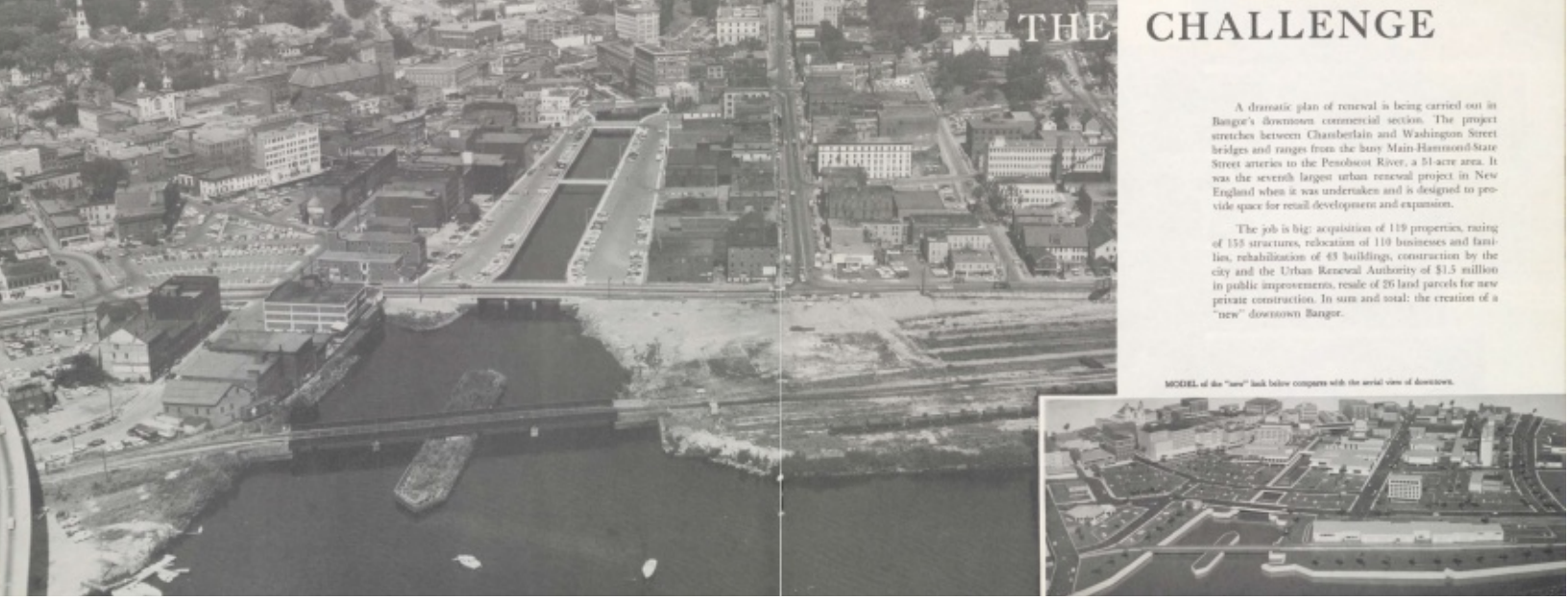


Above: Construction materials are piled up on one side of the property in this photo, BDN 1961-3514-02



Above: The empty train shed, devoid of tracks, looms above the site - the final reminder of all that Bangor Union Station was. BDN 1961-3514-03

For 54 years, a beautiful building was the point where dreams of far-away travel culminated for passengers. By the end of 1961, the dreams were gone - the magic and mystery of travel sacrificed to put up a retail space and have a place where people could easily park their cars to go shopping. The story does not end here, but the magic certainly does.



URBAN RENEWAL

Above: Pages 10 and 11 of Bangor and Urban Renewal - a report dated 1968 - found on the Bangor Public Library website - https://bangorhistory.org/s/bpl/media/6080 - This aerial photo shows the former Union Station site and a small artist's depiction of what the proposed Penobscot Plaza would look like

Those who read these pages are almost certainly people who care about history and preservation. Thus, it is easy to adopt an attitude of disgust and hatred towards a program like Urban Renewal. It feels very much like an out with the old and in with the new, leaving no room for appreciation of the old. However, like a lot of things, the truth is not quite so black and white, and the need for Urban Renewal was perhaps more critical than one might think.

Dow Air Force Base was announced for closure in November of 1964. One presumes that the personnel and materials, including planes, were shipped out in some sort of phased manner. Thus, the 4000 to 5000 servicemen and their families who created a huge section of the Bangor economy and tax base were soon elsewhere. On April 1, 1968, Dow Air Force Base closed, and the City of Bangor took ownership, opening Bangor International Airport in 1969.

On the face of it, that has very little to do with Bangor Union Station, but in reality the loss of that much of the economy and tax base had a great deal to do with the decision to take down so many historic buildings. The repairs and upkeep were simply more than the Bangor taxpayer could afford. Despite opposition, the plans went forward, and one of the projects was the Penobscot Plaza on the site of Bangor Union Station.

The last photo of the previous article shows the train shed still in existence. It was reported that the train shed was intended to be recycled in some fashion. The photo at the beginning of this article shows the area cleared. The reason for the change in plans is unknown. Scheduled for opening in February of 1969, the map on the next page from May 2, 1969 shows the building completed and appears to show businesses open.

Next Page: Aerial view from May 2, 1969, via the Maine Geological Survey





Top: Penobscot Plaza Today
Above: The sign on the East end of the building has a nod to the heritage of the site, showing Union Station - both photos Joey Kelley, JoeyKelleyPhoto.com

Today Penobscot Plaza still stands and has approximately the 10 business locations that was envisioned in 1969. Long time tenant Dunnett Appliance and Mattress has seen a lot of others come and go over the years. The area bustles with activity and you can get everything from a formal tux to a new home while walking through what once was Bangor's Union Station.

It occurred to your editor while working up this last piece on Penobscot Plaza that, ironically, Penobscot Plaza has now been on this site longer than Union Station was. As of this writing, the Plaza has Union Station beat by three years. You can no longer board a passenger train in Bangor, but keeping the economy moving is a goal in and of itself. Not all is lost, CSX still has tracks behind the Plaza and trains still go past the spot, but one has to wonder if they really appreciate all that has changed since 1961.

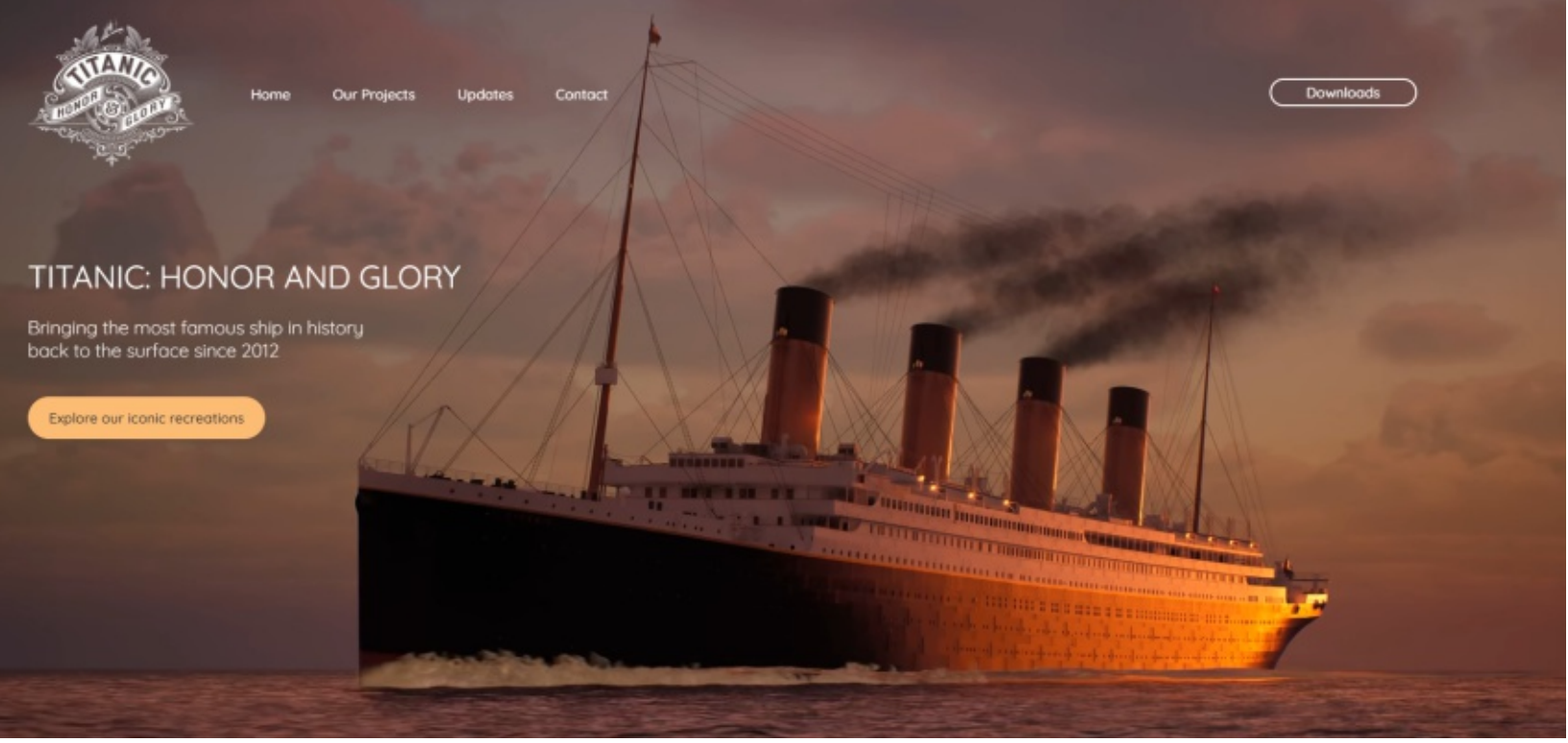


Above: Maine Central 671 leads an Extra freight westbound out of Waterville yard in what is believed to be the Summer of 1962. Waterville's passenger station is about 500 feet behind the photographer. Today, nothing in this scene remains, the track, buildings and road have all been either demolished or relocated. Alan Thomas photo, JoeyKelleyPhoto.com collection

VIRTUAL REBUILD

What could possibly link the passenger station in Waterville, Maine, the Titanic and Bangor Union Station? For 65 years many people have lamented the loss of Bangor's Union Station. With the Penobscot Plaza built on the site, those that want to get a feel for where it was or how it looked have a hard job ahead. But what if, someone were willing to take the time and effort to recreate the building, virtually. It would be an incredible amount of work, but with enough time and enough reference material, it would be possible to recreate this structure. But who would want to take on a project like this? One man: Peter Violette.

Peter is one of the members of the Maine Central Railroad Historical Society - mecrrhs.org - and has been responsible for a great deal of the scanning of their collection. A Maine native who now lives in New Hampshire, he is a University of Maine (Orono) graduate of their Civil Engineering program. A licensed Civil Engineer, Peter specializes in rail design. Growing up in the Waterville area and interested in trains from a young age, Waterville's station was a source of interest. The Waterville station disappeared into history two years after Bangor Union Station and it is fair to say even less remains to mark the spot where it once stood. The tracks today run over the foundation of the old station and the roads in that area have been relocated and rebuilt.



A rather unlikely source of inspiration for digitally re-creating railroad stations is a volunteer project known as Titanic: Honor and Glory. A team has been working since 2012 to create a fully accurate 3D digital model of the Titanic. Once the project is completed one will be able to walk around the entire Titanic in a virtual space, from the top deck all the way to the deepest bit of the engine room. Built using a video game engine, one can grab a controller and put on their Virtual Reality headset and slip back in time. The project has already generated some feature length animations of the Titanic's sinking and the quality and attention to detail is nothing short of amazing. Visit TitanicHG.com for all the links to videos and information about this truly amazing project.

Inspired by the Titanic: Honor and Glory project and armed with a MacBook and a piece of software called SketchUp, Peter began to chase this virtual dream. With few plans available, Waterville proved to be a challenge. Locating photographs then tracing them in SketchUp to create a 3D model sounds straight forward, but when adjusting for camera lens distortion and not always having the angle one needed, it becomes a lot more tedious. Peter was determined however and his first project Waterville station in 3D was eventually completed.



Once Peter had completed the Waterville station, he went looking for another project. A chance eBay find, a nearly complete set of construction plans for Bangor Union Station was the inspiration he needed. Full size blueprints, one of the original sets no less, these plans contained a truly incredible amount of detail - right down to the types of decrative brick used. Believed to be the set kept by the contracting firm that actually built the station, only one page is missing and it is not one that is critical to the digital reconstruction. Although one could easily say that a set of plans this complete and this important to history should be considered priceless, Peter won the eBay auction for $50. A truly small price to pay!

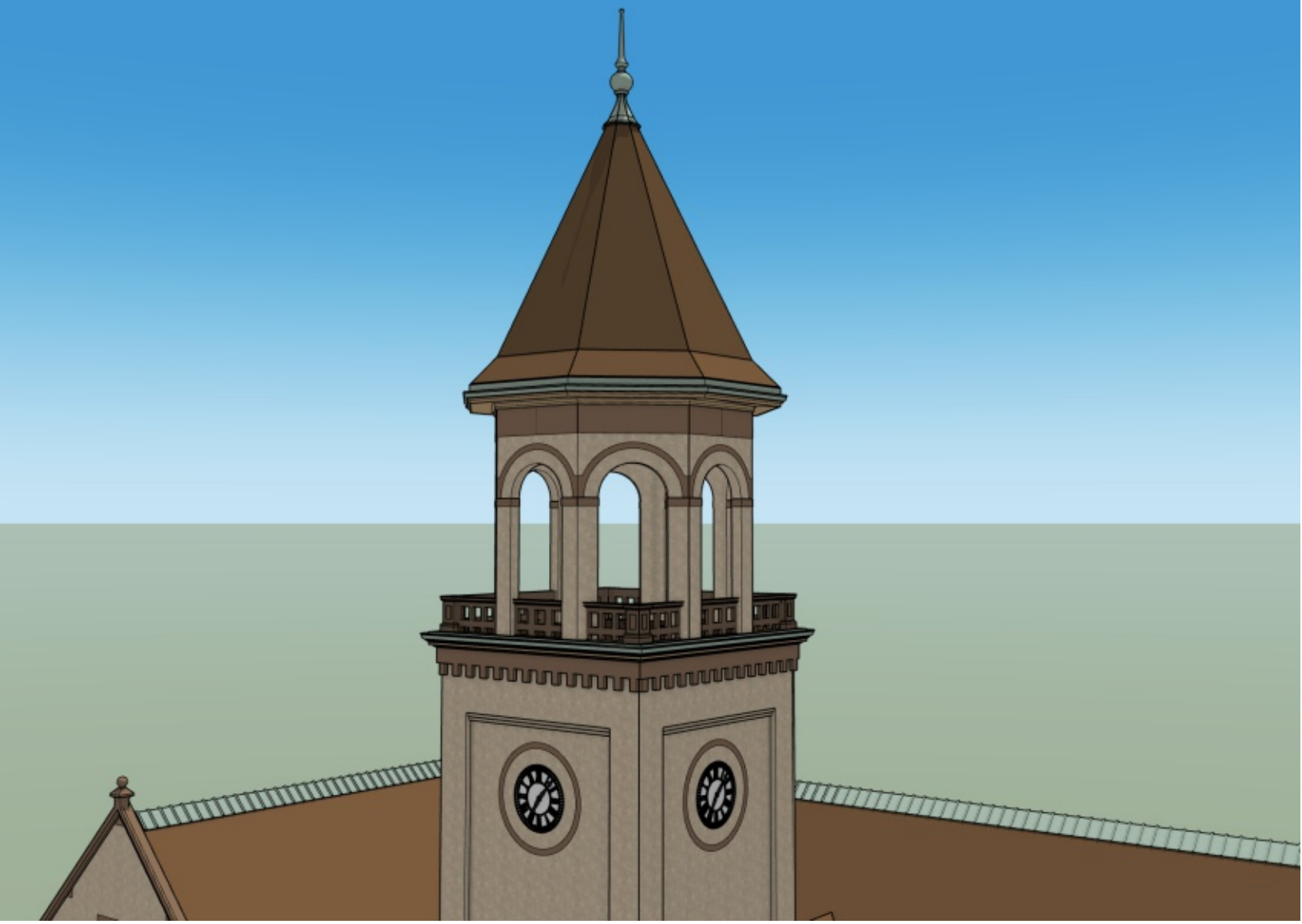


Armed with this nearly complete and extremely detailed set of plans, this project was much more straight forward. Rather than working from photographs that could never be verified dimensionally, Peter had the original dimensions in ridiculous detail. Now this does not mean that the project was easy, but it was substancially easier. Rather than just do the exterior, Peter went so far as to build in the trusses and beams, including those that made up the top of the clock tower.

Peter started on this project back in 2020 when the plans showed up on eBay and even six years later it is not entirely complete. He has the plans for the interior rooms as well and will continue working on this project, entirely because he wants to.



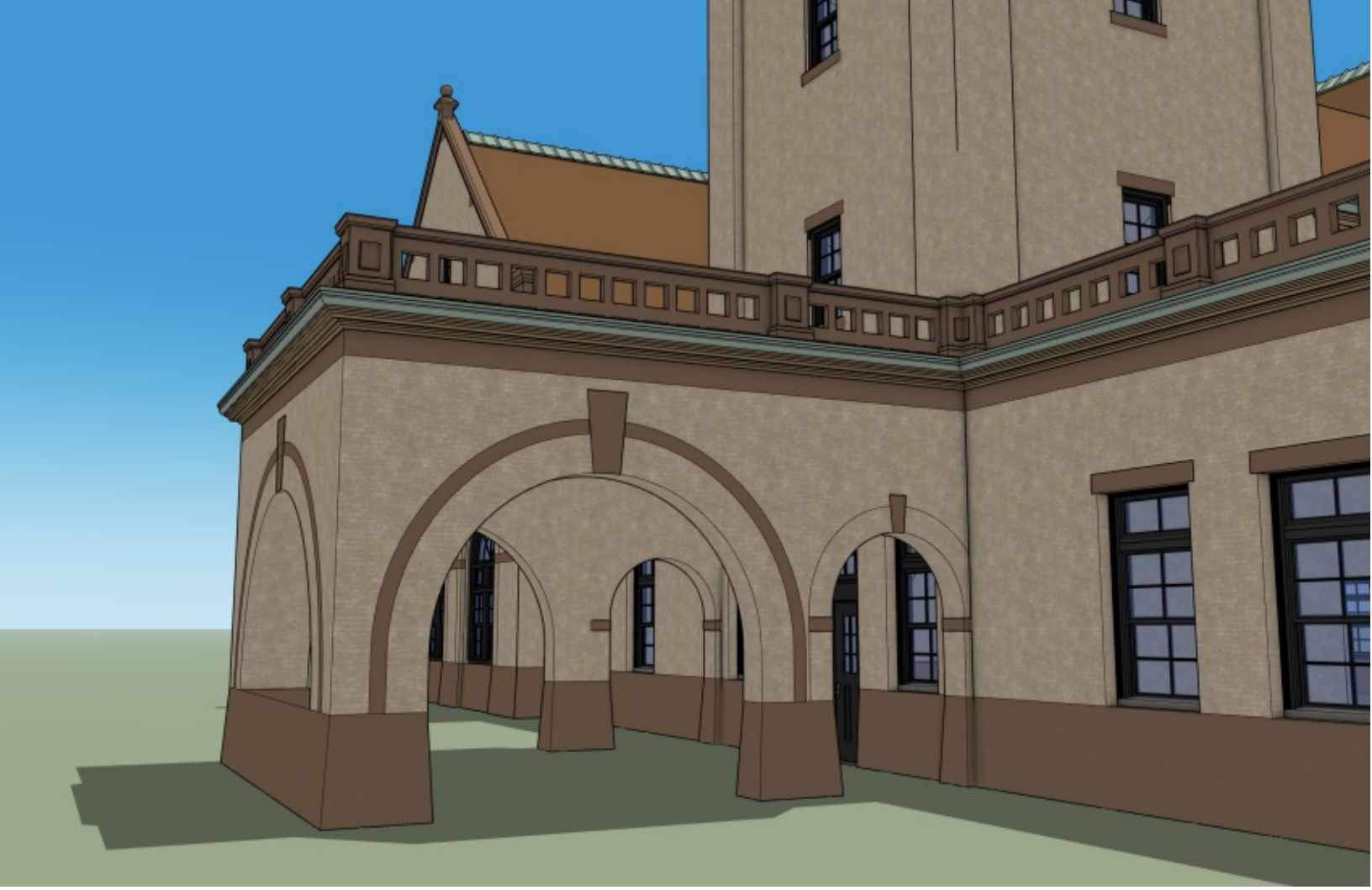
There it is folks, from the street side, as built and rendered by Peter. There are some things are are not quite complete and the interior is not yet done. But for those of us who never saw this station - this is just about as good as it is going to get!



The top of the clock tower with its 'witches hat' and spire - up close and personal! Peter hopes to be able to render this in a video game engine for realism and the ability to walk into and around the structure. Remember that Titantic project? Same idea.



Looking up from a height right around ground level, it would have been a majestic sight - that clock tower looming over you, projecting the time and telling you how long until your train departs!



Through these arches and doors lay the main part of the station where one could wait for their train to wherever they might be headed. This portion of the building was pointed nearly directly at Exchange Street. If one could see through the buildings, one would look at the Penobscot River from this angle.



To see the station from this angle, one would have to be standing on or near the bridge over the Kenduskeag Stream - as evidenced from this photo on the right. The photo to the right was in the Bangor and Aroostook's marketing department photo archive and is undated. You might recognize it from the April Fools Day joke issue of the Boston and Maine Employee's magazine that was released on the Maine Line page on April 1st, 2025. (You can find it under April Fools Day Pranks on the Maine Line website) Photo now in the JoeyKelleyPhoto.com collection





Up close and personal - the detail of the individually modeled windows is incredible. Missing is the awning over the right hand side but that is a future project as soon as enough reference material can be found to accurately model it.



Looking down river, this is an angle one would be unlikely to see in a photograph - simply put - one would be shooting into the sun at almost every time during the day here. Combined with the train shed, this particular angle might be impossible aside from a 3D rendering.

Peter is not resting - but pushing forward on his next project - producing the same sort of rendering of Portland, Maine's long lost station.

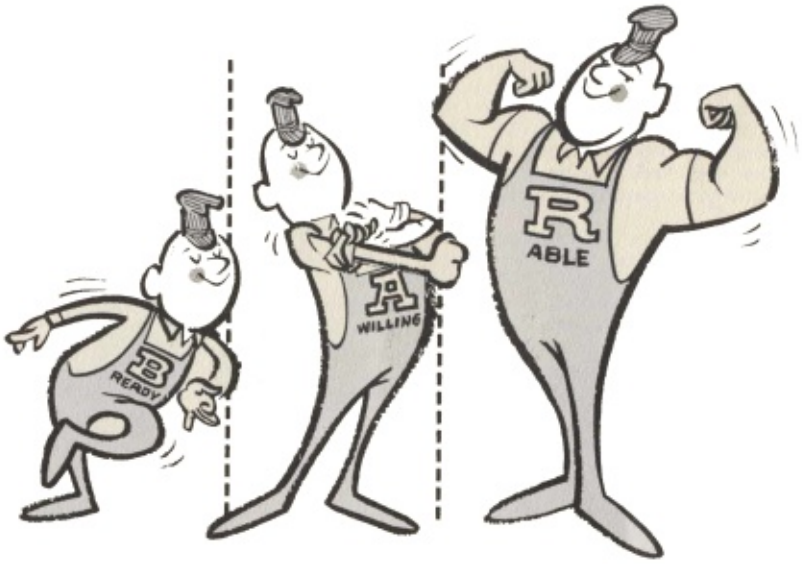
So far, Peter has three stations under his belt. One wonders how many more he will continue to rebuild in a virtual space!

One day it might become common place to bring your phone or tablet around to a historic location like this and have it render the building right before your eyes - bringing you back to a time of stone buildings, steam trains, clock towers and a slower pace of life.

All the screen shots in this article were provided by Peter and we thank him for not only his great work on these projects, but his willingness to share what has obviously become a labor of love!



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FORT KENT TRAINS FUND CHARITY

Above: Shawn Duren photographed the first train of the day returning to Fort Kent rolling over the Fish River.

On September 26, 2026 Maine Northern Railway hosted two excursion trains with the proceeds donated to the Aroostook House of Comfort. Both trains were sold out! Over 230 passengers for each ride took advantage of this opportunity to experience a train ride out of Fort Kent. Passengers, volunteers, and train crew were found across the yard from Fort Kent Station before each departure.

The first train of the day went South, with the lead locomotive stopping just North of the crossing across from the Boat Landing in Soldier Pond. With two engineers aboard, control of the three-car train was passed from NBSR 4302 to NBSR 4305 and the train returned to Fort Kent. With 30 minutes between trains, the second departure went from Fort Kent North, towards Frenchville. Taking passengers for a unique view across the river of Canada. Not quite getting to Frenchville proper, the train again stopped, control was handed to the other locomotive and went back to Fort Kent. Absolutely no one had a bad time - smiles all around from the train crew to the passengers.

At one point there were five vehicles and seven people chasing the train, proof that the old B&A still attracts the enthusiast community.

After the formal trains were done, the cars were transported all the way to Millinocket. Several, including your editor, gave chase. Light ran out just as the train rolled over Ashland Trestle. A perfect ending to a wonderful day.



Above: Nothing says Aroostook County or Bangor and Aroostook like a potato house! Some of the newest locomotives on the NBSR roster were picked for this duty. 4302 and 4305 are GP31ECO-M units, according to the Locomotive Wiki on Fandom, these are 3000 horsepower, 8 cylinder 710 cubic inch per cylinder Tier 1 emissions complaint units.



Above: This is as far South as the first train made it, stopping here at Soldier Pond. Taken from the boat landing, the crossing and Veteran's Memorial are just out of frame to the left.



Above: The foliage on September 26, 2026 in the Fort Kent area was absolutely breathtaking. If it was not at peak, it was very close. This is actually the first train returning to Fort Kent, with the trailing unit going past the glorious color on the hill in the background.

Below: Departing with the second train of the day, 4305 had the honor of passing by Fort Kent Station, now owned by the Fort Kent Historical Society.





Above: The second run has just reversed direction, heading back to Fort Kent with 4302 leading again. Technically, this is in Frenchville, although just barely.

Above: A short distance back towards Fort Kent, the foliage and green locomotives provide a nice frame for the passenger cars.

Below: The three passenger cars





Above: This private crossing provides an excellent view of the foliage covered hill, which is actually across the border, in Canada.

Below: 4302 leads the train back into Fort Kent past the old depot.



Right: This future engineer came appropriately clothed for the occasion, right down to his boots!

Next Page: The Maine Northern crew that made these two trains possible!




NB


NB
Ensure vent is clear
before fueling



Above: Now empty of passengers, 4302 retraced its steps to the South, shown passing the potato houses still in Fort Kent.

Below: A bit modified from its Potato House days, the structure at Sutton Siding once was served by rail. The empty passenger train rolls past it, Southbound.





Above: Rolling Southbound past the Veteran's Memorial in Soldier Pond

Right: Southbound next to Route 11 in Eagle Lake

Below: Passing the Old Mill Marina in Eagle Lake







Above: With a worn A4 sign on the cross buck, the Ashland Branch heritage of what is now the main line, is still present, at least in Winterville.

Below: Just south of Portage Wood Products at Milepost 202, the Southbound empty passenger train passed a line of woodchip hoppers with a spectacular burst of color behind.





Above: Light was fading by the time the Southbound empty train was on the Ashland Trestle, but there was just enough left to capture this.

Thanks to all at Maine Northern who made this possible - your work to continue to offer these charity trains is a credit to both your personal and corporate commitment to the communities that you serve!



Local Landmarks

Union Station, Bangor, Maine

LOCAL LANDMARKS

Sometimes the ideas or inspirations for stories for the Maine Line come from the most unlikely places. As discussed earlier, the preparations for this issue began some 15 months ago, but like most things, moved into high gear after the Summer issue was released. As a result your Editor was more and more aware of anything related to Bangor Union Station.

While in the Oakfield Historical Society covering their 40th anniversary celebration, your Editor happened to see a framed copy of the image above. Grabbing a quick picture, your editor decided on the spot to find out more about what this image was. It turned out to be a bit more of a story than originally thought.

The image is dated August 20, 1955. The artist is one Tom Kane, more on him later. This is number 23 of a series of Local Landmarks, a series of pen sketches commissioned and provided to the customers of Merchants National Bank of Bangor. Printed on Eastern Corporation paper (Later known as Eastern Fine Paper) exactly how many of these sketches were done is not known, but there were at least 26.

Mr. Kane chose to capture the view at the end of Exchange Street, a classic view of the station that many photographed over the years.

Union Station is perhaps most familiar of all our local landmarks. As a terminal for the Maine Central and Bangor and Aroostook Railroads it is not only a familiar landmark to residents, but to countless travelers as well.

Union Station, Bangor, Maine was officially opened for service on July 28, 1907. Previous to this date Bangor had been served by two depots, one on the site of the present station, the other on Railroad Street where the Maine Central freight shed now stands. Both former depots were razed at the time of the building of the new terminal. J. M. Ross of Milton, Mass. was contractor and construction was under the supervision of E. A. Johnson, then resident engineer of the Maine Central Railroad. A. A. White was first superintendent of the new Union Station.

Union Station is little changed in outward appearance since its beginning, but the services provided by the railroads that share its facilities include every advancement in modern railroad transportation.

August 20, 1955

This is a Photo Offset Reproduction of Original Printed on EASTERN CORPORATION'S 60# ATLANTIC OFFSET.

LOCAL LANDMARKS . . . *Number twenty-three in a series of original pen sketches by Tom Kane drawn exclusively for and presented with the compliments of MERCHANTS NATIONAL BANK OF BANGOR.*

Above: The back of the drawing on the previous page

Why exactly Merchants National Bank of Bangor chose to issue these and to whom they were sent has, unfortunately, been lost to time. One assumes they were offered as some sort of promotional gift. Merchants National Bank of Bangor became part of Maine National Bank on February 12, 1982. Maine National Bank existed until 1991, when Bank of America took over. As a result, with no one left to ask these questions of, we are once again left with a historical mystery.

Tracking down the origin of these drawings lead far and wide. It turns out a partial set exists at the University of Maine's Fogler Library, on the Orono Campus. Fortunately for us, one of the images was Union Station. Friends and contributors to the Maine Line, Rod and Judy Bushway were contacted and Judy made arrangements to scan what the Fogler Library had. Our thanks to Judy for the effort!

It is worth noting that since this was drawn in 1955, Union Station would have but five more years of service and six before it was torn down. Mr. Kane could not have known that he was in effect, drawing history.

Tom Kane has a direct connection to the Bangor and Aroostook. The owner of Tom Kane Advertising, in 1961 the Bangor and Aroostook was awarded a citation for excellence in the use of outstanding newspaper advertising by the Newspaper Advertising Executives Association, Inc. The advertising campaign in question ran in the Bangor Daily News and was a series of 12 cartoons that were drawn by Tom Kane. The story appeared in the May-June 1961 Maine Line along with a photo. Mr. Kane is on the right in the picture.

This advertising campaign explains a series of back covers of Maine Lines, beginning with the May-June 1960 issue and ending with the January-February 1961 issue. One presumes they are some of the same cartoons that ran in the BDN. The timing reflects that and the humor implied in each one makes them some of the most memorable advertising the railroad ever did.



Andrew J. Pease, center, advertising director for the Bangor DAILY NEWS, presents awards to K. S. Ludden, left, BAR, and Tom Kane, right, for cartoon advertising series. (Bangor DAILY NEWS photo).

BAR Receives NAEA Citation For Advertising Series

The Bangor and Aroostook Railroad has been cited for excellence in the use of outstanding newspaper advertising as judged in an exhibit conducted by Newspaper Advertising Executives Association, Inc. Out of an all time record of 2,451 individual panels showing advertising submitted by newspapers from all over the United States and Canada, the railroad's campaign was one of the 165 judged worthy of reproduction in the current issue of the semi-annual "Sales and Idea Book" published by the Association. A Certificate of Award was made to Tom Kane Advertising as the railroad's advertising agency and creators of the citation—winning newspaper advertising program published in the Bangor Daily News.

The entry was part of a series of twelve cartoon ads promoting the railroad's free pick-up and delivery for less carload freight and was submitted for the newspaper advertising exhibit conducted at the 1961 annual meeting of NAEA held in January at the Edgewater Beach Hotel, Chicago, Illinois.

A citation certificate was presented to Kenneth S. Ludden, assistant to vice president-marketing, Bangor and Aroostook by Andrew J. Pease, advertising director of the Bangor *Daily News* and a vice president of NAEA, in behalf of the Newspaper Advertising Executives Association. The agency award was made to Thomas P. Kane, President, Tom Kane Advertising by Pease.

Left: A selection from the May-June 1961 Maine Line, Page 6. Remember you can find all of the historic Maine Line Magazines on the Maine Line Website!

no matter how

HEAVY...



we pick up
and deliver

FREE pick-up and delivery service

FREE ORDER SERVICE, TOO!

Call Your Nearest B and A Station Agent

no matter how

ORNERY...



we pick up
and deliver

FREE pick-up and delivery service

FOR LESS-CARLOAD FREIGHT

FREE ORDER SERVICE, TOO!

CALL YOUR NEAREST B AND A STATION AGENT



no matter how

TROUBLESOME...

we pick up
and deliver

FREE pick-up and delivery service

FOR LESS-CARLOAD FREIGHT

FREE ORDER SERVICE, TOO!

CALL YOUR NEAREST B AND A STATION AGENT

BANGOR AND AROOSTOOK RAILROAD

no matter how

FRAGILE...



we pick up
and deliver

FREE pick-up and delivery service

FOR LESS-CARLOAD FREIGHT

FREE ORDER SERVICE, TOO!

CALL YOUR NEAREST B AND A STATION AGENT

BANGOR AND AROOSTOOK RAILROAD

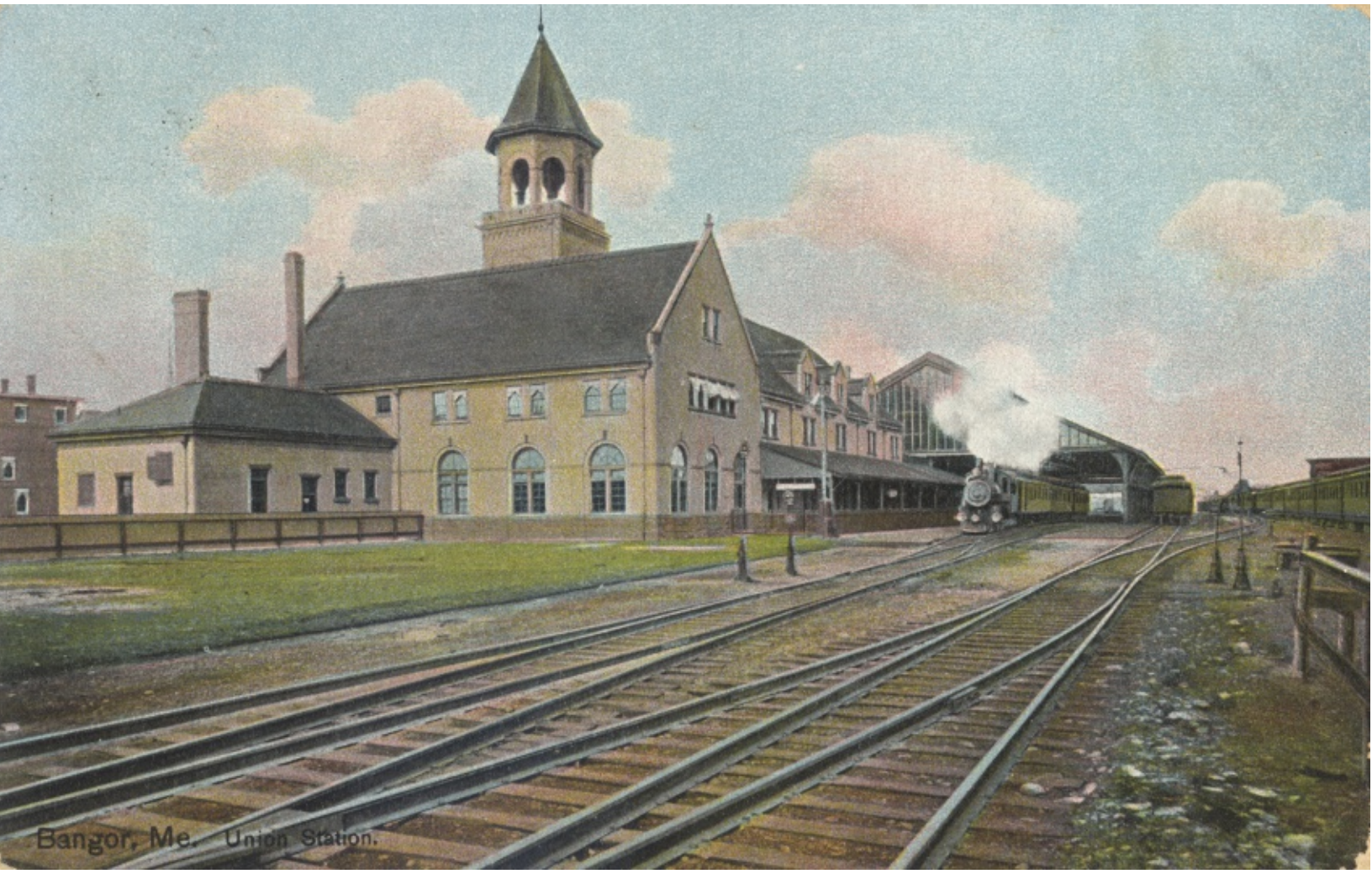


Previous Page and Above: Back covers of various 1960 and 1961 Maine Line Magazines

The message really sticks with you - No matter how heavy, ornery, troublesome, fragile, or out-of-the-way, the B&A will pick up and deliver! This was the sort of pro-active customer centric approach that the B&A took, trying to keep the railroad relevant in a freight-carrying market that was increasingly dominated by trucks.

Alas, the Maine Public Utilities Commission got involved, and on June 15, 1962, the MPUC ordered all carriers to discontinue free order service. The railroad would be able to charge for pickup and delivery, but using the free order service as a marketing tool to bring more less-than-carload freight to rails ended, as did the need for Tom Kane's cartoons promoting the service.

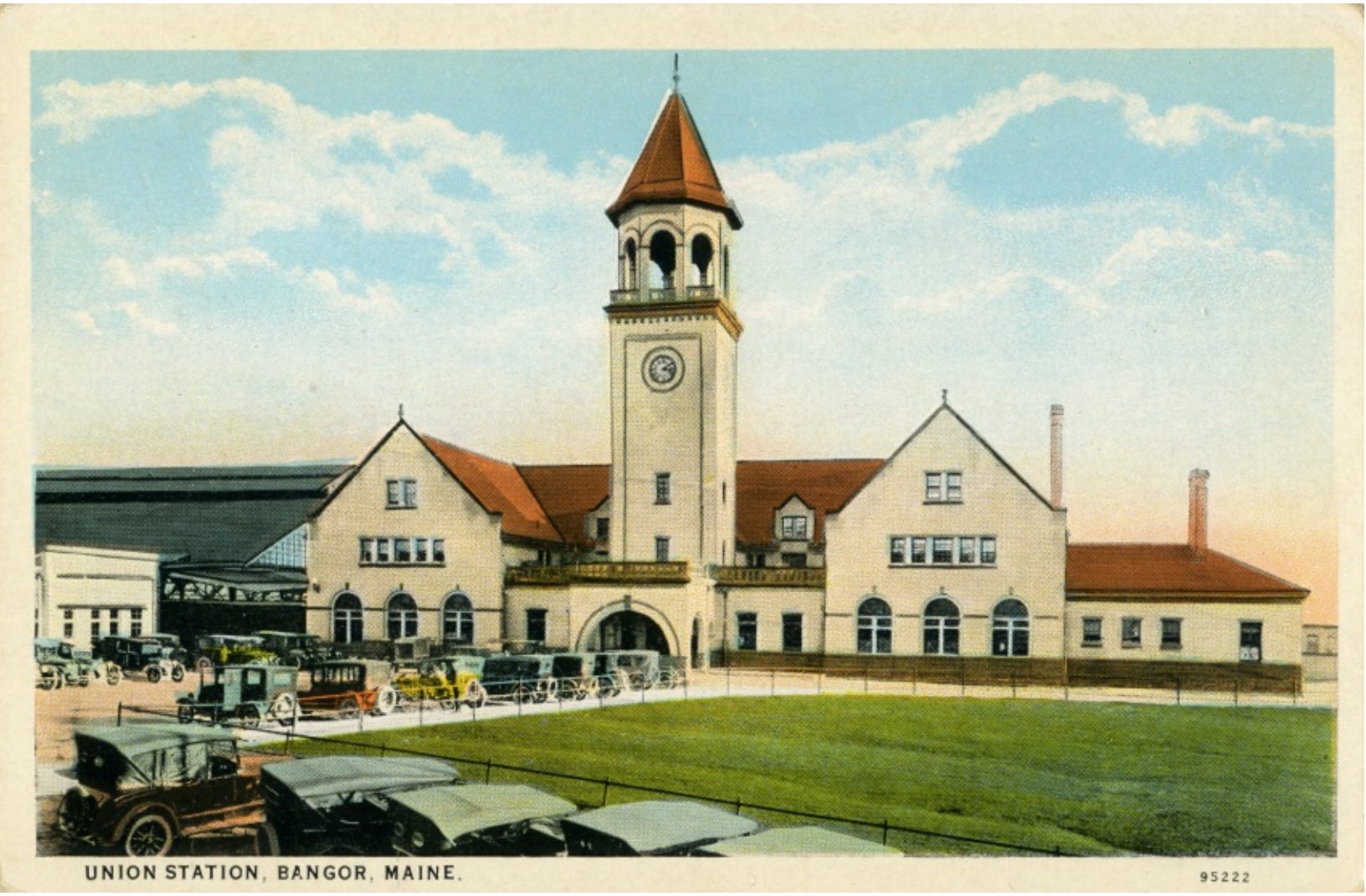
FROM THE ARCHIVES



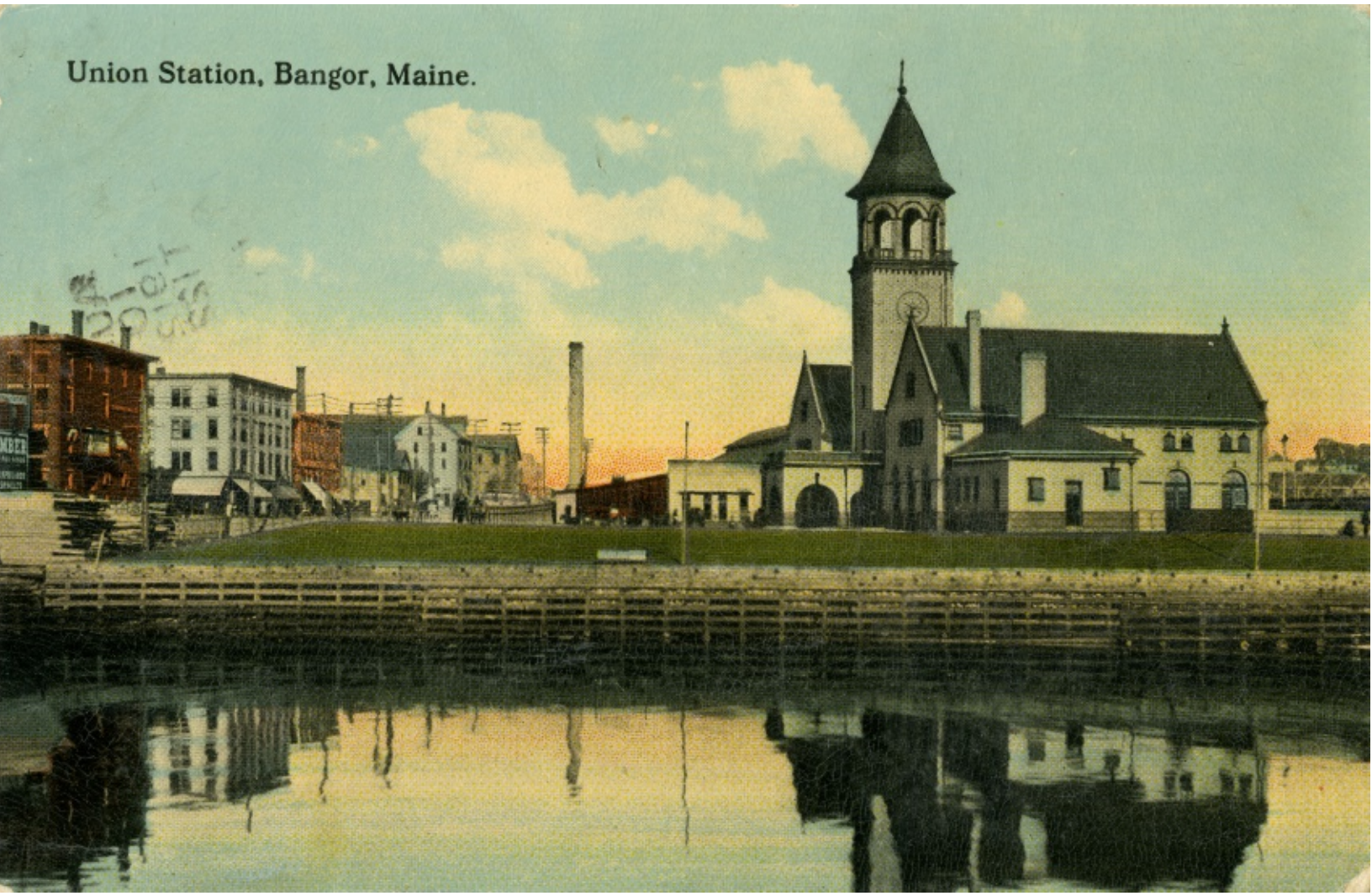
Matthew Cosgro's postcard collection which is available for viewing on NashuaCityStation.org is quite vast and the site is worth a look for multiple reasons. This postcard comes from his collection and shows an early scene at Union Station. The postmark is May 28, 1909 so we know that this is from the first two years of the station's existence.



Here is another early view from the street side of Union Station. Postmarked July 20, 1908. Possibly the earliest photo in this gallery. Matthew Cosgro Collection, NashuaCityStation.org



This style of postcard was in use from 1915 to 1930, given the visible automobiles, Circa 1920 seems reasonable. Matthew Cosgro Collection, NashuaCityStation.org



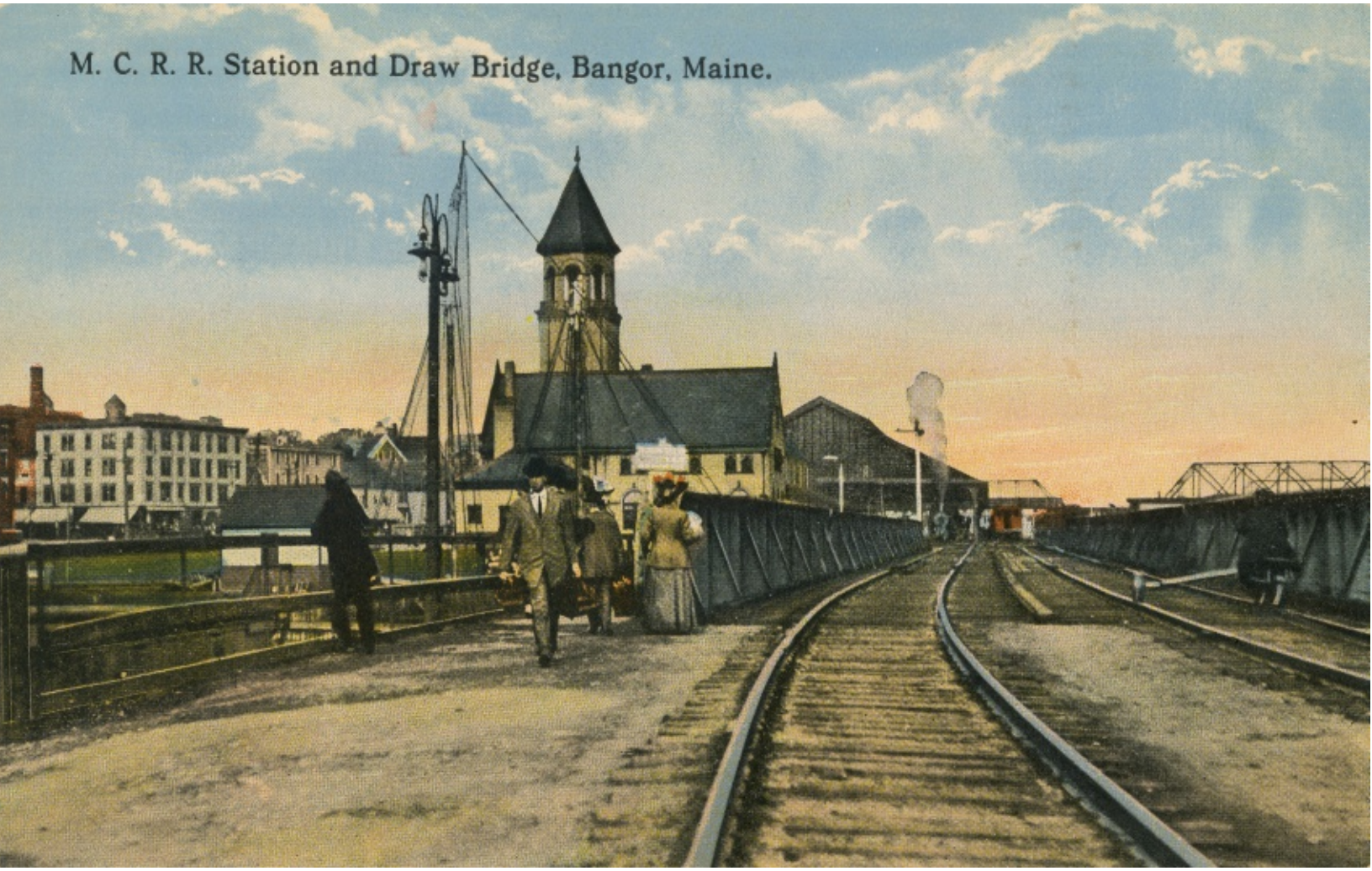
The postmark on this one is August 10, 1912 - almost everything in this view is gone today. Matthew Cosgro Collection, NashuaCityStation.org



This view comes to us from no later than 1915, and we know the station was completed in 1907. When exactly in between those, is anyones guess. Matthew Cosgro Collection, NashuaCityStation.org



Although we cannot be certain, the station looks like it may still be under construction in this view. Circa 1907. Matthew Cosgro Collection, NashuaCityStation.org



This postcard is undated, but is no later than 1915. Check out the track worker on the velocipede on the right hand side! Matthew Cosgro Collection, NashuaCityStation.org



Given the relative cleanliness of the building and grounds, this one is dated circa 1908. One hopes the pleasure boaters do not go too much closer to the Penobscot! Matthew Cosgro Collection, NashuaCityStation.org



This image was shot by Ray Higgins on April 11, 1949. What a collector would give for that lineup of cars today! Collection of JoeyKelleyPhoto.com



NEW UNION STATION

Respectfully Dedicated to the Directors and Railroad Men, whose brilliant efforts were the means of Building this Grand, New Station

By JOHN J. FRIEND, Bangor

In Fifty-five, long years ago,
Some men of worth and brain
Proposed to build a railroad,
Down through the wilds of Maine;
They started out from Waterville,
O'er mountain, hill and plain,
And landed down at Bangor,
The old Maine Central train.

Now Pickering swore he'd win or die,
James Dunning was not slow,
Lott Morrill swore he'd sell the bonds
Before they got too low,
So in a moment of despair,
A man whose name was Hill,
He bought the bonds, the road went on,
And that's what filled the bill.

Now Payson Tucker was the man
Who modernized the road,
And brought success to many towns,
As o'er the line he rode;
And to those friends of by-gone days
He often gave good cheer,
That "Auld Lang Syne" of long ago,
To memory ever dear.

There is a gentleman we know,
Lucius Tuttle is his name,
From a young man he rose, dear friends,
To wealth and railroad fame;
He's president of the Boston
And old Maine Central train;
And his many acts of kindness
Are known throughout old Maine.

The honored name of Boothby
I now present to you;
In years that's past he's shown his worth
In what was just and true;
And as our ticket agent,
He labored not in vain,
But made new friends and patrons
For the old Maine Central train.

We'll entwine a wreath of evergreen,
And in the center place a name,
It's our beloved George F. Evans,
Whose worth was known in Maine;
And though he's passed to that beyond,
To railroad men to memory dear;
And as you pass that lowly mound,
There drop the heartfelt, silent tear.

We'll now present McDonald,
Whose name is known to you,
With courage and true energy,
He won the prize it's true;
And as our new vice-president,
In life may he remain,
Success crown every effort,
On the old Maine Central train.

And now we'll pass along the line,
And look the station o'er;
It's built at dear old Bangor,
On old Penobscot shore.
And when the years are past and gone,
Sweet memories they'll recall
Of those grand men who reared that pile,
A monument to all.

Of the conductors now I'll speak,
They're gentlemen refined,
They'll show to you true courtesy
While passing o'er the line.
And to those bold, brave engineers,
True courage and clear brain,
They'll pull you through with safety,
O'er the Maine Central train.

To the directors of the road
Who worked so many days,
They have won out, it's a success,
I'll give them words of praise;
And to the friends now riding o'er
The old Maine Central line,
We'll thank our God that we still live
Beneath the grand, old pine.