

MAINE LINE

A Publication for the Friends of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad



Talking It Over



Its truly remarkable for me to think that this is the last issue of the re-born Maine Line Magazine's 5th year. This is the 18th issue of this effort to keep the Bangor and Aroostook alive and each issue is unique. Its hard to believe the variety of topics – everything from models to preservation efforts. Photographs from as far West as British Columbia, Canada and as far East as the country of Finland.

I must acknowledge the amazing amount of support and positive comments that have come in from various people who have read these issues.

"...The B&A is only one of the railroads that I follow, but when your magazine comes out it often feels like the only one that matters." -Jim Sabourin

"I have to compliment you on the newsletter you produce. Each edition is top quality and this one certainly has some wonderfully unique stories. Well done!" - Lou McIntyre, Hot Box Newsletter editor, NMRA - Eastern Canada Division

"...A CRACKER JACK ISSUE!" -Jerry Angier

It is both humbling and a huge honor to to receive such comments about what is, essentially, an amateur historian hammering away aimlessly at a keyboard.

Contributors from as far away as Finland and Sint Maarten and from ages 9 to undisclosed, have made this effort possible. Thank you to every contributor and every reader. This magazine is all about our shared interest in the Bangor and Aroostook.

See you in the next issue and the start of the next five years!

- "Joey" Kelley, Editor

Maine Line Magazine:

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About the Rear Cover:

This ad appeared in the May 24,

1941 issue of Railway Age

Magazine, JoeyKelleyPhoto.com

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ABOUT THE COVER

The late Al Bush was a subscriber to the original Maine Line and your current editor has many copies of the Maine Line that were mailed directly to him. It is with great pleasure that we present one of Mr. Bush's images on the cover of this issue. Captured in July of 1979, we are in the roundhouse at Northern Maine Junction, looking out of one of the service bay doors, across the turntable at a pair of workers. Locomotives 40, 45 and one of the 80 series GP38s appear to be being readied for service in this moment in time. Al Bush photo, JoeyKelleyPhoto.com collection.



WHO OWNS THE OLD B&A NOW?

Although some of you may have heard about it, a rather large number of people I've spoken with had not heard about this particular transaction of former Bangor and Aroostook track.

Service Transportation Board docket FD 36641, [click here for the corrected filing, made October 31, 2022](#), requested formal permission for the Eastern Maine Railway Company to purchase 36.57 miles of main line and nine miles of branch line track all contained within the state of Maine. Although those who are interested may read the entire decision along with all the details, essentially this authorized the EMR to purchase the portion of the Millinocket Subdivision from the North Wye Switch, Brownville, to Milepost 109 – Grindstone, along with the East Millinocket Branch and the branch to the site of the former paper mill in Millinocket from Canadian Pacific, who bought it as part of the Central Maine and Quebec and they purchased it when buying the Montreal Maine and Atlantic out of bankruptcy. But why did the MM&A still own this section?

When the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic filed to abandon much of the track North of Millinocket, they opted to retain from MP 109 South and also the Van Buren Subdivision (and a small portion of the Madawaska Sub) from Madawaska to Van Buren. It would seem pretty obvious that this was intended to force any traffic coming out of Northern Maine to at least go over MM&A rails and also would permit the MM&A to service the Madawaska paper mill, even if they had to send locomotives all the way around the State on CN to do it. [In March of 2012 MM&A sold all the track they had left in Northern Maine. See STB Docket FD 35588.](#) Eastern Maine Railway owns the track but this section is run as part of the Maine Northern Railway, which leases the State of Maine owned portion of the old B&A.

This most recent purchase by the Eastern Maine Railway means that EMR now owns both the Northernmost portion of the B&A and owns the Southern tip of the Millinocket Sub, while leasing the portion in the middle and owning the former Canadian Pacific track from Brownville Junction to the East. Although this greatly simplifies operations and consolidates maintenance of what was essentially a EMR operation dispatched by and over tracks maintained by Canadian Pacific, it also means that one organization for the first time since 2011 controls all rail traffic in and out of Aroostook County. How long this will last and

who will be operating the rest of the Bangor and Aroostook are topics for future debate, but who knows, one day you might see Maine Northern locomotives switching Searsport Yard!



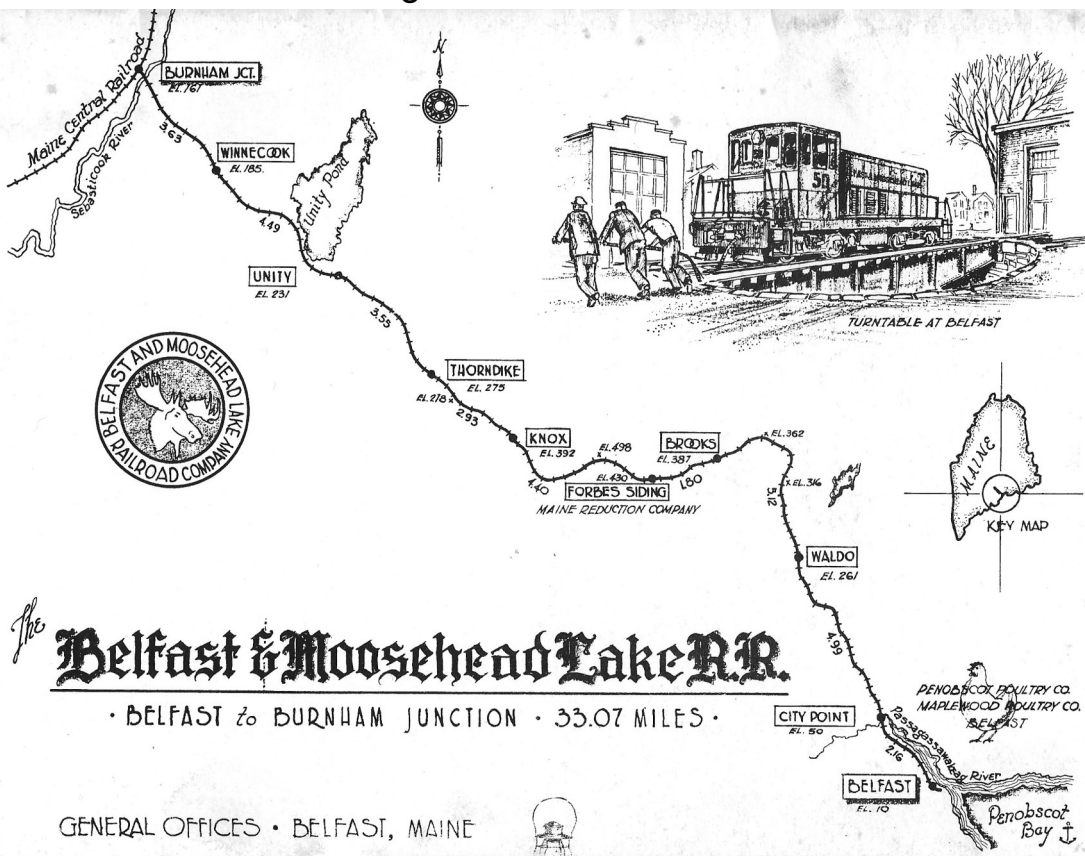
*Three Railroads – One sign.
Iron Road Era ‘Amtraks’ -
MM&A’s 8569 and
New Brunswick Southern
Six Axles all rolling past
West Sebois.
Dates vary, but all three shots
Were taken by Isaac A.
Greenlaw*

RAILROAD FUNDAMENTALS

DIRECTION

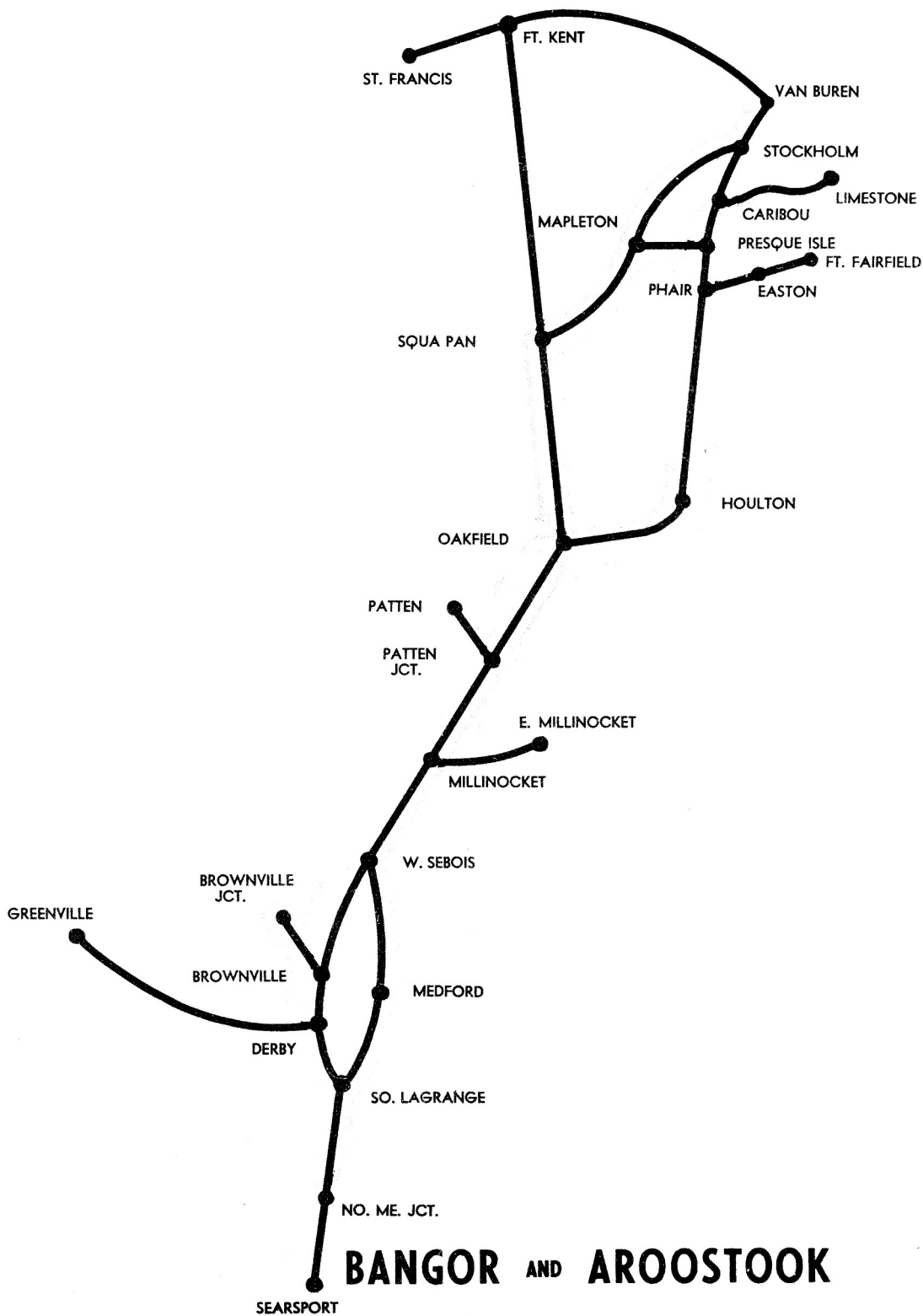
One thing that nearly every railroad ever constructed shares is that it will curve at some point. Inevitably there will be some obstacle that needs to be gone around instead of over or through, requiring a curve. It is hard then to say that at any particular point in time if a train is heading from one spot to another if it is headed, North, South, East or West. Perhaps Northeast? Southwest? How is one to know?

Simply put, every railroad establishes a direction of operation on a given piece of track. Generally, in North America, East and West are used, as quite often a railroad is longer in that direction than it is in a North South direction.



If we take a look at this map of the Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad, we note that North is straight up on this map, which means that although the line from Belfast to Burnham is, generally,

Northwest, it is more West / East than North South. The Belfast and Moosehead Lake railroad declared its direction of operations to be East and West, with Burnham Junction being the Western-most point and Belfast the Eastern-most. By contrast, if we look at a map of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad, we find that contrary to the conventional North American railroad, the Bangor and Aroostook is more North-South than it is East-West.



This map is also drawn with North at the top, and as you can clearly see, the overall direction is North-South. The problem comes in when you look at the line, say, from Millinocket to East Millinocket. By its very name we know that East Millinocket is East of Millinocket. How then, do we describe a direction of East on a railroad that ONLY has

North and South? Someone makes a decision and for railroad purposes, East Millinocket is North of Millinocket. Trains leaving Millinocket yard for East Millinocket were therefore referred to as Northbounds and trains returning, Southbounds. Generally a railroad divides its track into different divisions, called Subdivisions or Subs, which allows for different directions to be declared on a single railroad.

BROWNVILLE TRIANGLE

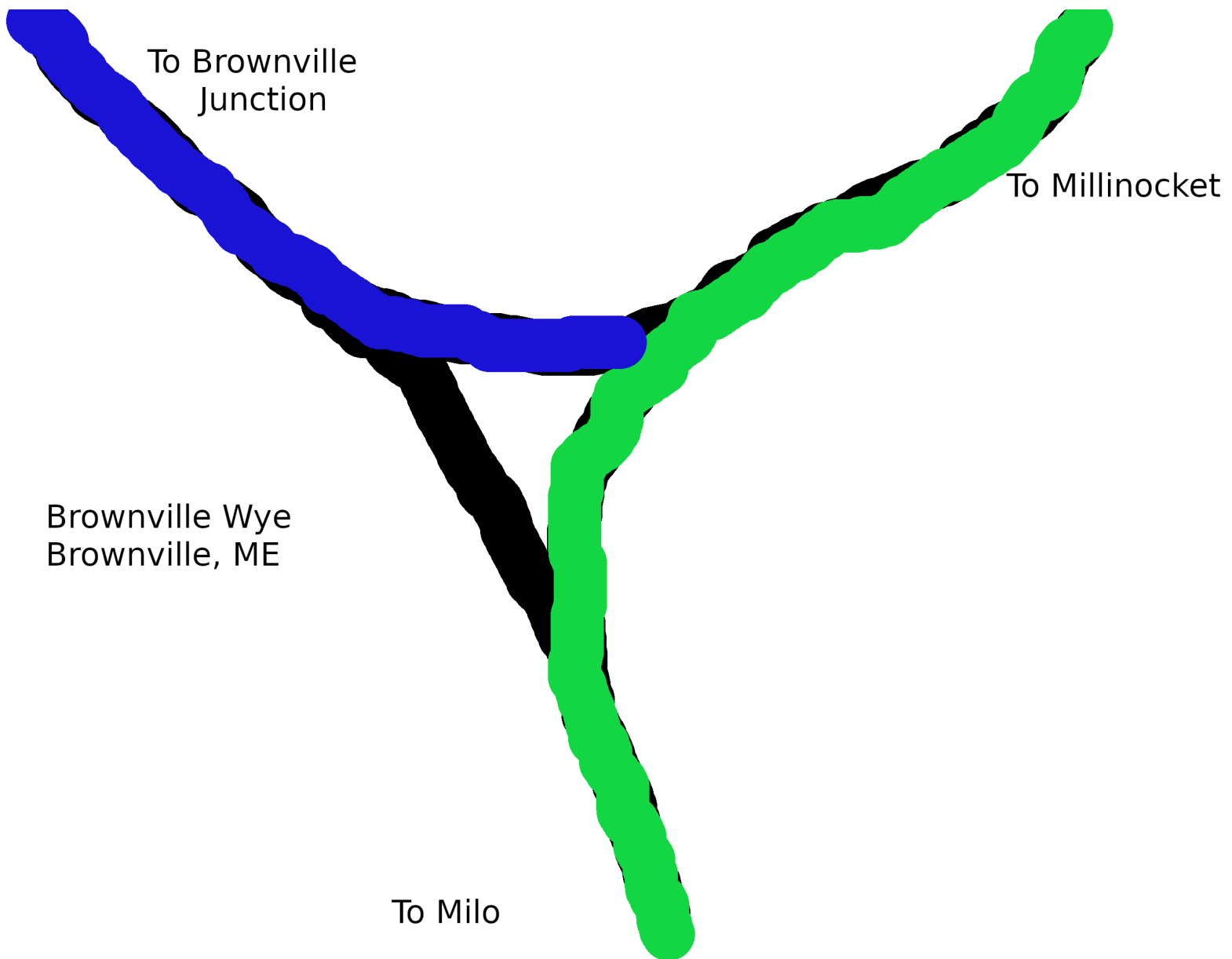
There is an urban legend about a mysterious region of ocean called the Bermuda Triangle. Supposedly, within this range of ocean both ships and aircraft mysteriously disappear – never to be heard from again. Although not proven statistically, the legend remains.

The Brownville Triangle is a different matter. It most certainly exists, trains enter and leave it without issue, but some magically change direction as they go through it.

Better and more accurately known as the Brownville Wye, this particular very short section of track on the rails of what was the Bangor and Aroostook can be terribly confusing for people new to railroading and unfamiliar with the history of the railroads in the area. A wye is built generally for one of two reasons, turning locomotives or entire trains at the end of a given stretch of track or to allow trains a choice of direction. The latter is the primary reason for the Brownville wye. Trains coming from Derby Shops can continue towards Millinocket or Brownville Junction. Trains coming from Brownville Junction can proceed towards Millinocket or Derby and trains from Millinocket can proceed to Brownville Junction or Derby. Operationally, this allows for a great deal of flexibility.

Even more interesting and confusing are the changes that have taken place since Iron Road took over the B&A as to how these locations and directions have been described.

How does one describe the various directions, which on the Bangor and Aroostook can only be either North or South and the switch locations, which, depending on one's perspective, might be both South AND North? Subdivisions allow us to designate different directions of operation on different stretches of track and in the small geographic area of the Brownville wye – there are actually three different subdivisions, although generally only two are named at any given time, the other being 'Not Main Track' or 'uncontrolled track.'



Above we find the Brownville Wye in what I suppose we could call the Iron Road Bangor and Aroostook configuration. The Millinocket Subdivision is highlighted in green – running from the South to Millinocket. The South Wye, Millinocket Sub Switch Brownville is on the Milo end, between the Millinocket sub and the non-highlighted track. Unofficially known as ‘no man’s land’ that portion of the wye did not have an official subdivision. The North Wye, Millinocket Sub Switch Brownville joins the two tracks highlighted in green and blue. The blue highlighted track is the KI Subdivision, going to Brownville Junction. The North wye, Millinocket Sub switch Brownville is also the SOUTH end of the KI Subdivision. Therefore, a train heading out of Millinocket, but going to Brownville

Junction, is dispatched as a Southbound, on the Millinocket Subdivision – then at the North Wye, Millinocket Sub Switch Brownville, is given a clearance up the KI subdivision to operate in a Northbound direction. Magically, and in this case with some adherence to the actual compass direction of travel, the train turns from a Southbound into a Northbound.

This arrangement of subdivisions goes back into the Iron Road era of Bangor and Aroostook ownership, although the track arrangement around the Brownville Wye dates back much further. This arrangement, the switch names and subdivision names would remain unchanged right through the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic ownership of the B&A, but would change under the Central Maine and Quebec. The initial change was very small, the switch between the KI sub and 'no man's land' became known as the West Wye Switch Brownville. Breaking the convention of North and South. However, a radical change was coming.

The Central Maine and Quebec ownership saw a radical change in traffic volume coming out of Millinocket. With the vast majority of traffic from the North running over the Maine Northern and bypassing the Brownville wye completely, the vast majority of CM&Q trains were running straight from Derby shops to Brownville. Under the setup above, this required multiple clearances and a large amount of communication with dispatchers. Someone decided to make a change. The Searsport, KI and a portion of the Millinocket Subdivision were combined into the Bangor Subdivision. The Brownville Wye Switches all retained their names – South, West and North, but the South and West now belonged to the new Bangor Subdivision and the North to the shortened Millinocket sub, which now started at the West Wye Switch, Brownville.

The graphic below reflects the new arrangement, with the Bangor Subdivision in red and the Millinocket Subdivision in green. Note that the former 'No man's land' is now Main Line Track – and the leg of the wye formally main line, Millinocket Sub track has become the new 'no man's land'.



We have seen two out of three potential combinations of where the Main Line is – will we ever see the third? Probably not in the short term, but who is to say what the future will hold if the old Bangor and Aroostook were to change hands again.

It is worth noting that if one examines very old B&A documentation, at one point in early 1900s, the Iron Works Branch (as it was known) actually started nearly a mile further South and prior to the wye being constructed, the switch between the Main line to Millinocket and the branch was called Aroostook Junction. [Thanks to the B&A Archives for providing this older documentation!](#)



Above: The Moose Caboose Arcade

'MOOSE CABOOSE'

Drive along a road in Maine long enough and your likely to stumble upon a former Bangor and Aroostook car sitting on the side of the road. More often than not it will be sitting on the ground without its trucks and is being used for some sort of storage. Although that might be the majority, it certainly is not the case for all. The 'Moose Caboose Arcade' might just be one of the more interesting uses for a former 57 foot mechanical refrigerated boxcar that your editor has ever seen! Located at the [Moosehead Trail Campground in Newport, Maine](#) a sharp eyed traveler will see the 57 foot reefer off to the right, if you're headed Northbound.

The story of how exactly this once-potato hauler came to be an arcade is not known and the campground could not be reached for comment. The details might be vague – but the fact remains that if you want to invest a few coins in a

former Bangor and Aroostook mechanical refrigerated boxcar – I know of only one place in the world to do it!



IRON ROAD ERA VIDEOS POSTED

For those that have not already viewed them, a substantial amount of video shot by the late Isaac A. Greenlaw have been posted on my YouTube Channel. <https://www.youtube.com/sandpvrr> contains the Isaac Rail Videos and much more. By the time you read this, 48 Isaac videos will have been posted. Although they are not all Bangor and Aroostook, a considerable number are, including cab ride videos you will not find anywhere else. More will be coming out – Wednesday nights at 7 PM Eastern until everything I have edited has been released.

These videos are a true time capsule into the Iron Road Era and it is my pleasure to bring them to you!

We still miss you Isaac!

Below: Shawn Duren and Isaac Greenlaw – (left to right) on the day I met Isaac – this is literally the first picture I ever took of him, at the Brownville Wye





MAIN STREET, ROCKLAND, MAINE

A 257

Looking Northward on Main Street in Rockland, this photo, featuring a marquee on the front of the Strand Theatre advertising the film All My Sons - which debuted in May of 1948,

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_My_Sons_\(film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_My_Sons_(film)) this photo dates from

Spring or Summer of 1948. Local business H.H. Crie and Co - First National Stores - Strand Theater - Senter Crane's Department Store and many others are shown in this Post World War II image. Courtesy of and in the collection of the Penobscot Marine Museum – Image LB2010.9.117674

SPUDS FOR DUDS

By Roger, age 11 of Player Development SXM

Business is the art of providing goods or services to a consumer. If done right the business makes money and hopefully turns a profit. Public Relations is the art of promoting a business or brand to increase public awareness. Every once in a while magic happens. A public relations campaign not only improves the image of the business but also directly results in profit. The bigger the profit the better. This is the story of Robert Crane and his department store and how he

was able to capitalize on an early Maine winter and double his money while looking like a good Samaritan.

Maine is known as the Pine Tree State, but Maine was once known more for potatoes than for trees. In fact, there was a time when a farmer could walk into a department store and buy his wife a full-length fur coat and pay for it in potatoes. Yes, real potatoes.

Winter rolled into Maine early in the fall of 1949. This caused a problem for the Maine farmers as potato harvest time is September to October. The farmers had to rush to get the potatoes out of the fields and into temperature controlled storage houses before they froze and were spoiled. Then began the rush to sell them. In a normal season, potatoes are harvested slowly, which means that the supply stays low. That allows the sale price to stay profitable. So the farmer gets money for his pocket, after paying all the bills. But in 1949, when winter arrived early, the market was flooded with potatoes and farmers risked having to sell below cost.

That is when Robert Crane, owner of Crane's Department Store, stepped in. He ran a full page ad in The Aroostook Republican. In the ad he announced that he was willing to accept potatoes in trade for fur coats. To make sure everyone heard the news he even had fliers dropped from planes all over the Aroostook County.

At age 33, Crane knew winters could be tough. His store was always ready for winter with both three-quarter and full length Muskrat fur coats in stock. The ad showed a variety of different coats and each was priced in barrels of potatoes! A full length fur was priced at 200 barrels.

Word of his generosity reached the Rockland Courier-Gazette. On Tuesday November 1 they ran a story on Crane and his furs deal. With snow on the way, Crane was reported to have said, "it is still too early for potatoes to start moving. I've got enough potatoes now to supply the county. If my kids weren't too interested in potatoes they're going to be this year." Crane also joked that his wife was busy looking up recipes for all the different ways you can prepare potatoes. Mr. Crane bought the potatoes at the going retail price. He put them in storage. He was not in a hurry to sell them, so he was able to wait until the price went up and so he almost doubled his investment. All because of an early winter, and a clever solution to a big problem.



This circa 1960 view of the Senter Crane's Department Store on Main Street in Rockland is much later than this story but as you can see, the store survived for decades after trading fur coats for potatoes! Photo from the collection of the Penobscot Marine Museum - LB2016.13.128

Editor's Note: [If you'd like to look at the original article from the Rockland Courier-Gazette – click here for the link and look for page three 'Swap for Spuds'](#)

FROM THE ARCHIVES



In the summer of 1969, an unknown photographer was in Millinocket on a fan trip. To be fair, this might have been Memorial Day weekend.



21 on the turntable at the Millinocket engine house.



56 and 10199 next to the engine house at Millinocket



87 and train – along with its passengers at Millinocket



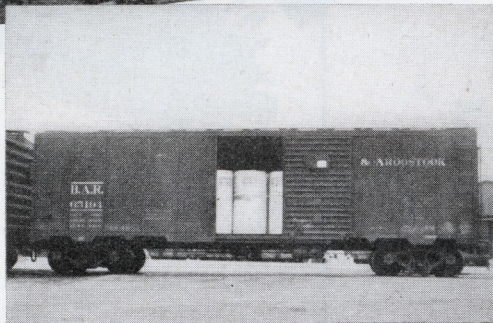
A long line of woodchip cars – in their original brown color – at Millinocket

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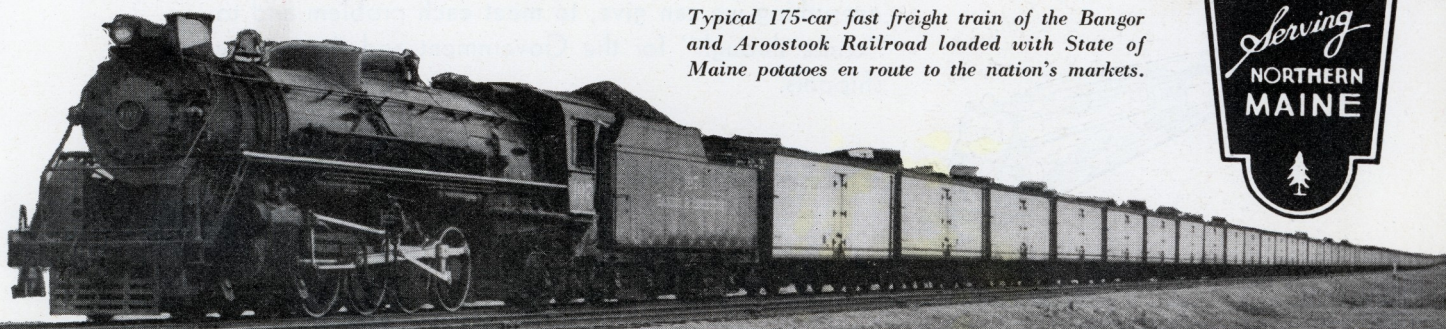
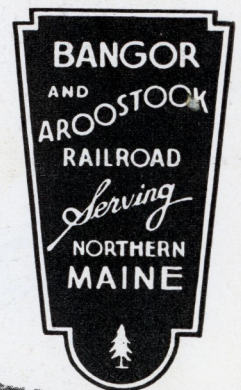


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