

MAINE LINE

A Publication for the Friends of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad



TALKING IT OVER



Happy New Year! 2025 was a year that in some ways I will be glad to put behind me. The Maine Line was not one of those ways. I am very happy with the four issues put out in 2025 and I hope you were as well. 23 years after the B&A went into history, I am so amazed that I continue to find new and interesting ways to look into the B&A. We have contributions this issue from the Penobscot Marine Museum and from the B&A Archives, not to mention the late Ralph Curcio who you will be hearing about in this issue and for years to come.

One of the things I enjoy most about this magazine is when I can go deep into a topic that has not necessarily been brought to light before. This issue includes an indepth analysis on the business side of the B&A and I think may open a few eyes on the subject.

We dig into the Northern Maine Seaport Railroad's construction and never-before-published photographs from over 100 years ago. Yes, over 100 years later, these photos, to my knowledge, have never appeared in a publication about the Bangor and Aroostook.

I have much more planned for 2026, there is a literal pile of documentation and photographs from a variety of sources waiting for scanning, research and writing. Hold on folks - its going to be a ride!

As always, I thank my advertisers for their sponsoring of this publication. In reality though, it is those of you who read these pages that make it all worth while. I do not know how many hours I spend on each issue, but they are all worth it. The history of the Bangor and Aroostook is fascinating, deep and still opening new topics and avenues of research, as we enter the 9th year of this Maine Line.

All the best to you and yours in 2026!

-Joey

"Joey" Kelley, Editor

Maine Line Magazine

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IN THIS ISSUE

About the Cover

Rule of the Month

Memo of the Month

Conductors Tally Sheets of the Month

Maine Line Rewind

Locating The Past

Small World

Land Before Time

Just when I thought I knew Everything

The Archivist

Iron Road: Mission Impossible

120 Years Ago

Whats Wrong With This Picture

My Friend Ralph

From the Archives: Opening up the photo vault

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JANUARY 24-25, 2026



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53

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ABOUT THE COVER



Photographer Harriet Hichborn shot this photo on our cover back in 1904 or 1905. This particular view is rather significant to B&A history, but see more about that in our cover story in this issue! Photo from Penobscot Marine Museum Collection, LB2015.12.175

REAR Cover: From the January - February 1956 issue back cover, this was the first carload of paper to leave the Scott Paper mill in Winslow, Maine. The lady swinging the champagne bottle was not identified. This mill remained under Scott Paper until 1995, when it was sold to Kimberly-Clark, who then shut it down in 1997. The mill's history dated back to 1892 when it was built by the Hollingsworth and Whitney Company. The site is currently home to many smaller businesses as the mill has been repurposed. Presumably this photo was included in the 1956 issue because it was a State of Maine Products car. One has to wonder how the Maine Central (which served that mill) felt about someone else's car being used for this historic moment!



BANGOR AND AROOSTOOK RAILROAD

STORES DEPARTMENT

FEBRUARY 1995

Rule of the Month

5.1 Getting on or off or performing work on moving equipment is prohibited except when absolutely necessary for proper performance of duty and then only when moving at a safe speed and with secure hand hold.

S. C. Hamlin, Director
Purchases and Materials

J. W. Phinney
Safety Supervisor

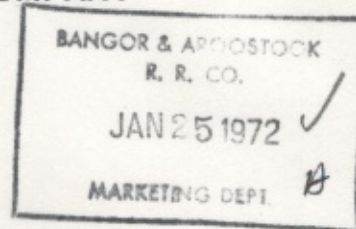
Nor.Me.Jct.Park
February 3, 1995

"THE RULE BREAKERS *are accident makers*"

Post on Bulletin Board

BANGOR AND AROOSTOOK RAILROAD COMPANY

SUBJECT: HARLEM RIVER TRAFFIC
TO - Memorandum for File
FROM - L. W. Littlefield



I telephoned Walt Callan, Manager of Freight Service, Penn Central, Monday, January 24, to verify the report that the freight schedule to Harlem River had been changed.

Callan confirmed that such a change had been made effective January 19 and advised that the present schedule is M-7 leave Worcester 2 P. M., arrive Cedar Hill 7 P. M.; BG-1 leave Cedar Hill 3 A. M., arrive Harlem River 6:30 A. M.

Callan reported that M-7 now connects with RW-1. This eliminates the 24-hour delay at Worcester and, in effect, is the schedule that existed prior to December 20.

cc: A. G. Dustin
H. L. Cousins ✓

No. Me. Jct.
Jan. 25, 1972
LWL-2/b

ST-15
5/55Bangor and Aroostook Railroad Company
CONDUCTOR'S TALLYTime _____ M. _____ Date 1-2-1985

		#12 CAR			Seals	Weight	Contents	Des- tination
INITIALS		NUMBERS						
1	BAR		5	0	9	3		Hold
2	V		3	5	4	4		Hold
3			5	7	1	5		Hold
4			5	6	7	9	ok	A
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
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The Safe way is the Only way!

Cond'r or Yardmaster _____ Train No. _____

ST-15
5/55Bangor and Aroostook Railroad Company
CONDUCTOR'S TALLYTime _____ M. _____ Date 1-2-1985

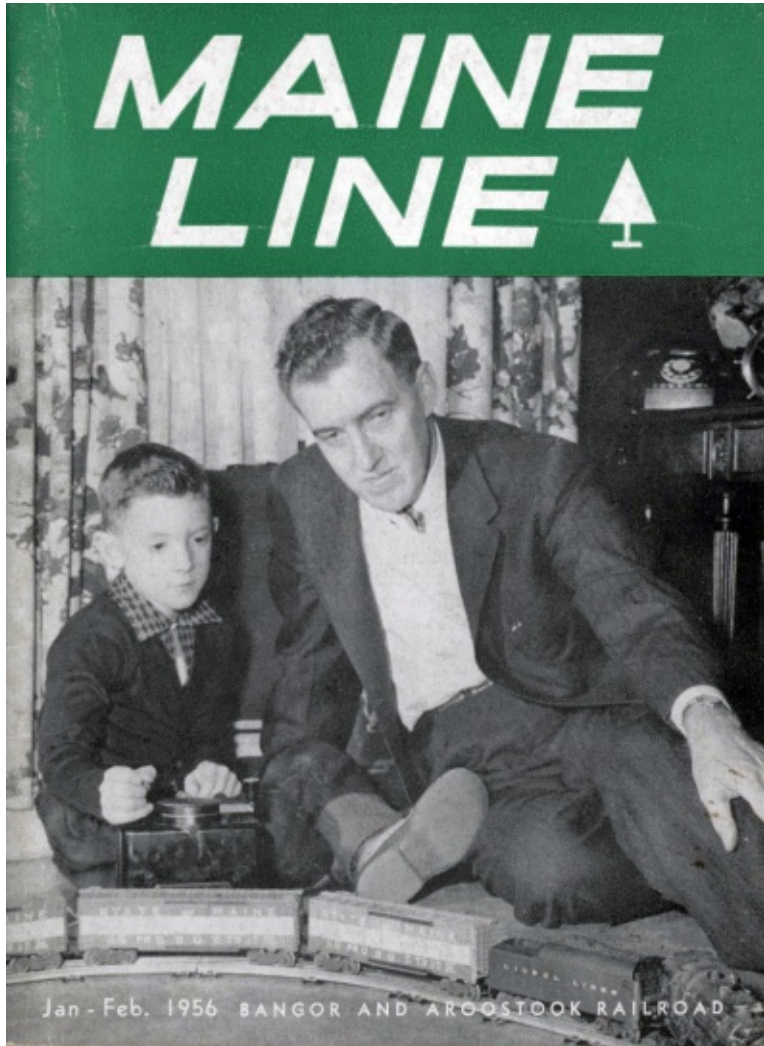
#10 CAR		Seals	Weight	Contents	Des- tination
INITIALS	NUMBERS				
1 BAR	5147				Hold
2	5410				
3	9238				
4	3534				
5	X 4228				
6	429				
7	9008				
8	5872				
9	9032	wh		set	12
10	5703			ok	A
11	5865			ok	A
12	3571			ok	chip
13	6966				Hold
14	9566			ok	A
15	9634	wh		set	12
16	425			ok	L.F.
17	6851			ok	A
18	9235	cu. sp.		set	12
19	9023			ok	A
20	3685	steps		set	12
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Boxes Cleared

The Safe way is the Only way!

Cond'r or Yardmaster _____ Train No. _____

MAINE LINE REWIND



70 years ago in the Maine Line:

January - February 1956 Issue

- W. Jerome Strout is Executive Vice President
- 50 years of Derby Shops
- Memories of Station Agent Frank W. Keniston
- Sales Department pushes for free Less Than Carload pickup and delivery service with the Maine State Public Utilities commission
- Maine Line Camera (Includes a picture of 27 new General Motors vehicles in front of the Bangor Auditorium!)
- Suggestion System pays off for James N. Furlong
- Siding in Smyrna Mills named in honor of Fritz Soule
- Meet Director Joseph H. Callan
- Safety up - Accidents down
- In The Family of the B&A
- A Christmas Story
- Facts and Figures

Governor Edmund S. Muskie and his son Stephen (aged 7 at the time) are on the cover shown playing with Lionel State of Maine Products cars!

The January - February 1956 issue was Volume 4 and Issue number 2. In 1956, the Maine Line was being produced every other month.

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



LOCATING THE PAST

Although generally I restrict myself to Bangor and Aroostook content in this magazine, these particular images are being included to bring up a point.

One comes from the Ralph Curcio collection you will read about in this issue. They were not only taken within the town I live in, but taken at the railroad crossing which is physically closest to my home. This is a spot which I pass multiple times per week. Yet, since 1980 when this was shot, the buildings have been torn down, the three track crossing reduced to one and the foliage in the background has grown up dramatically. The spot is nearly unrecognizable. Without the help of a track chart owned by a friend and the Maine Central Railroad Facebook Group (including a response from my Father) this spot would have gone unidentified.

This image is only a fraction more than 45 years old. If the amount of change in that time frame is enough to throw your editor off, imagine the lengths an older photo must take.

The photo below, is the same crossing, in 2022. Locomotive headed the same direction, but look at the differences!





Speaking of an older photo, this one comes from the B&A Archives collection that we will see some more details of later in this issue. It took about 20 minutes, referring to a very old track chart and referencing a locomotive roster to determine the what where and when of this photo. This is Houlton in approximately 1905. The locomotive tender off to the left is that of #45. 45 would be renumbered 60 in 1907. We can conclude that this was before 1907. The view has changed so much in this image that without going through pages of track charts, neither Matt Sawyer nor I would have identified the spot.

These are just some examples of the work and hours that goes into keeping the history of the B&A alive. The one below? We have no idea. If you do, reach out!





SMALL WORLD

This issue represents the first issue of the ninth year I have been producing Maine Line Magazine. I will not lie - there have been times when I have thrown up my hands and said 'why am I doing this?' But for each one of those occasions - there is a situation like this one, which makes the whole process worth every moment. I'm going to channel the late Paul Harvey here and tell you the 'Rest of the Story'.

In the Fall 2025 issue a piece showing a chase of one of the Turkey Trains was not only the cover story but the first piece submitted by Dan McFadden. Months earlier Dan had contacted me about a collection of Bangor and Aroostook slides that he had been given by the late Ralph Curcio. Ralph passed on in 2012 and Dan was going through the laborious process of viewing, cataloging and finding appropriate homes for Ralph's slides. Ralph was from New Jersey but traveled throughout New England on his own and on organized railfan trips, shooting slides of the railroads wherever he went. Dan sent many slides up to me with the stipulation that they be used and shown to honor Ralph's memory.

The first step was scanning all of them. More than 1300 of Ralph's slides were scanned. Over 400 of them were Bangor and Aroostook. Rest assured you will be seeing Ralph's photos in the future. The way the scanning went I wound up finishing with B&A slides instead of starting with them. Less than 10 slides from the finish, I found the one above. This is from May 26, 1991. The location is Presque Isle and this is the Memorial Day weekend debut of the recently restored 502. Railfans came from far and wide to see it. Ralph had come up all the way from New Jersey. This was the start of the third day of this weekend and I imagine he was probably just taking what I've come to think of as a 'shot of opportunity'. A scene popped up in front of him and with camera in hand, he aimed, clicked the shutter and the moment was preserved. I doubt he knew the people in the picture - he may not have even introduced himself. 35 years later, no one remembers. I however recognized the people immediately. Just to recap, this man from New Jersey travels to Aroostook County Maine, to photograph a train and winds up shooting this picture which was probably just a happy accident. It goes into his photo files where it remains until after his death. The collection passes to his friend who decides to distribute the slides to people who would use and display them. A portion of the collection is then sent to a railfan / photographer / magazine editor who is voluntarily producing a magazine for fans of a railroad that passed into history 23 years ago. It is scanned nearly 35 years after it is taken and sent digitally to the people in the photograph via the Internet on a platform called Facebook taking them back to a time when literally NONE of the technology that allowed them to see a picture of themselves existed. The technological progress since 1991 is staggering but the chain of events that lead to these three people seeing a picture of themselves is quite frankly astonishing. The people? Left to right, Gretchen, Justin and Timothy. A mother, son and father captured photographing trains in 1991. Their last name? Franz. Tim is a well known Maine based railroad photographer, former employee of the Belfast and Moosehead Lake Railroad who continues to railfan to this day. Gretchen is the power behind the family, keeping Tim and Justin on the straight and narrow. Justin? Well he outgrew that plastic toy camera and went on to get a print journalism degree. Today you'll find him listed as Associate Editor for Railfan and Railroad Magazine. He and his wife have a child of their own now and perhaps one day we might get a picture of three generations of Franz family members next to the tracks. Maybe it will even be shot by someone they don't know, from New Jersey. And now you know the rest of the story.





LAND BEFORE TIME

Neil MacDonald is a friend of mine. His photos have and will grace these pages for years to come, but if you go back to the Fall 1976 Maine Line Magazine, you will find a feature article on a Father / Son pair with an astonishing model railroad in the basement of their home. Nearly all of the MacDonald family appeared in one photo or another in that issue. Look for Volume 24 under Archive on the Maine Line website and the fall issue is the last one for that volume.

Neil is fond of using the phrase "Back in the Land Before Time" when referring to anything that he remembers that I do not. I'm not sure if this is a reference to the 1988 animated movie about dinosaurs called The Land Before Time or if he got it somewhere else. I've never asked. One of the things we have discussed often over the 20+ years I've known Neil is how much the hobby of model railroading has changed.

Today we are eagerly awaiting the announcement of prototypically accurate 3D printed plastic models of Troop Sleeper cabooses. Back in the 1970s, model railroaders had to get by with whatever was being made and either painting it, customizing it, kitbashing it or scratch building. Athearn used to make a F7

locomotive, but not an F3. Paint one up in B&A colors and don't look too hard. It was those sorts of compromises that have forced modelers for literally decades to accept that maybe what they had was not 100% accurate. It has lead to some interesting 'what-if' models and in some cases created some beautiful pieces, like this one.

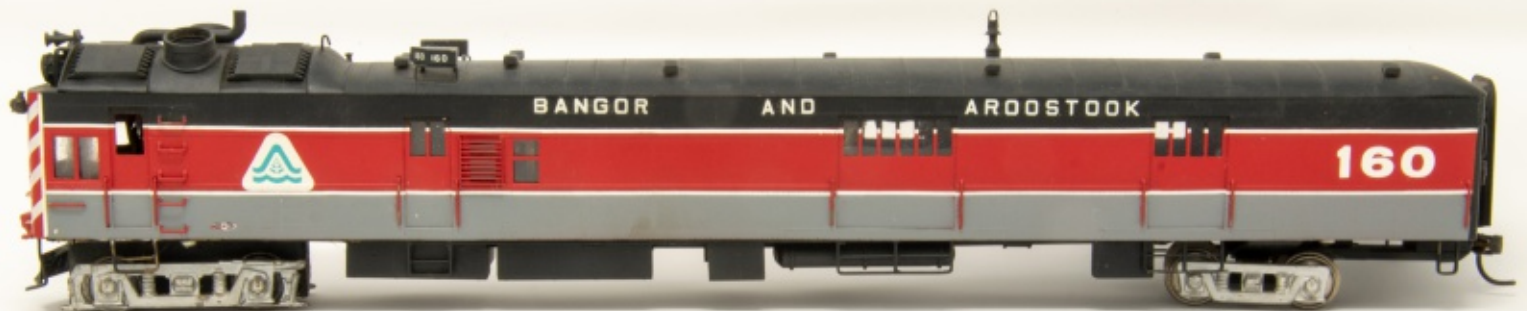


Above: M-160 in Fair Park on September 15, 2006 - photo by McKaby, used under a Creative Commons 4.0 license

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Santa_Fe_-M-160_Doodlebug_at_Fair_Park_09.2006.jpg

The prototype is Santa Fe M-160. This particular car was built for the Santa Fe and still exists. The model is a Hallmark Models brass HO scale model which is quite well detailed, particularly for something of this age.

You might well ask why I am going on about this brass model from some 50 years ago that was custom painted by Neil and is not something that is accurate to the B&A. Have a look at the next page.



Here it is folks! Still in its tri-color glory, decades after being painted. Neil has not been told (SURPRISE!) that I acquired this piece and probably does not remember me asking about it some months ago. Neil eventually disassembled that HO layout that was featured in the Maine Line back in 1976, sold off everything that could be sold off and went in a different direction in his model railroading hobby. Our mutual friend Jeff Waring bought this, but he does not remember if he got it from Neil or someone else. When I found it at Jeff's place, I had to have it. A deal was struck and this unique piece came home with me. Future plans include new running gear, DCC and sound and returning this to service. Thank you Jeff and thank you Neil!



A photograph of the front of a diesel locomotive, number 49, in red and blue livery. The locomotive is facing the camera, and its headlights are illuminated. The number '49' is visible on the front. The background is a cloudy sky.

JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I KNEW EVERYTHING

Every once in a while, someone will approach me with a question about the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad and they are surprised when I do not know the answer. It is true, I do not keep every piece of B&A knowledge in my head. There has to be room for all of the other important things, like Windows 95 registration codes and Beatles lyrics.

That said - one of the things I THOUGHT I knew was that the Gyra-Lite on the nose of 49 either did not work, or was never used. There are so few pictures of it with the light on that I had come to the conclusion that it did not work. I have even gone so far as to decide that I would not bother to put a LED behind the Gyra-Lite on my HO scale model of 49, since it did not work. So here I am, with that 'knowledge' in my head and I am scanning these slides shot by Ralph Curcio and I come across this series featuring 49, facing South, in Brownville Junction working the interchange with CP and the Gyra-Lite is on. Its on for every photo in that series.

The interesting thing about history is that although history does not change, our understanding of it, knowledge of it and viewpoints of what is important change as more discoveries are added to our collective understanding. This is one of those times when I really do like being proven wrong.

Now I will have to get a LED behind that Gyra-lite after all!

Ralph Curcio photo, June 20, 1980. JoeyKelleyPhoto.com Collection

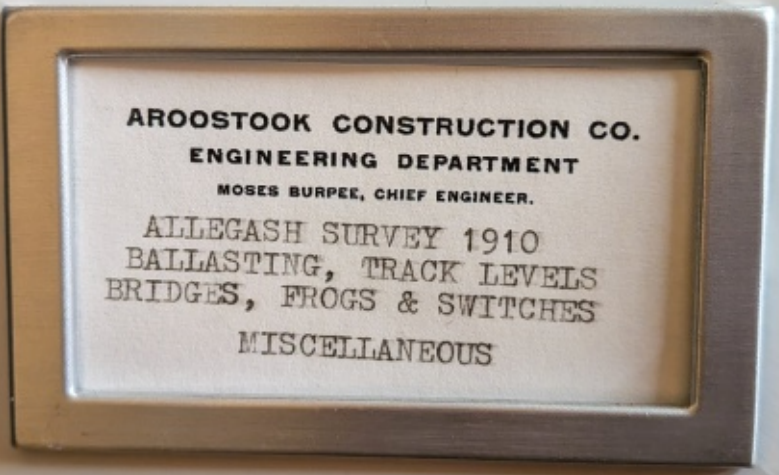


THE ARCHIVIST

Hidden away from the general public is an extraordinary collection of railroad history. Filing cabinets line the walls, containing documents, photos, publications, documentation and more that exist nowhere else. Contrasting the old documents are brand new pieces of computer hardware, bringing these documents firmly into the present. This tremendous resource for historians, modelers and fans of the B&A came about because one man recognized an opportunity to save railroad history and he grabbed it with both hands and has not let go.

The story begins in 2021 when the Central Maine and Quebec moved out of the Bangor and Aroostook headquarters building at Northern Maine Junction. This move meant a reduction in storage space and that historical documents not relevant to the current operations had to go: plans or technical drawings for everything from stations to track spikes. Add in the normal blueprints for buildings, site work, drainage, electrical wiring and of course track and siding diagrams the list of documents accumulated since 1891 was massive. Even after the need to retain some of these documents vanished the archive itself remained and as buildings and track were built, removed and altered the files continued to grow. When the new headquarters building was finished at Northern Maine Junction in 1974 this building became the primary holding facility for all of these plans. 47 years later, the CM&Q was moving out.





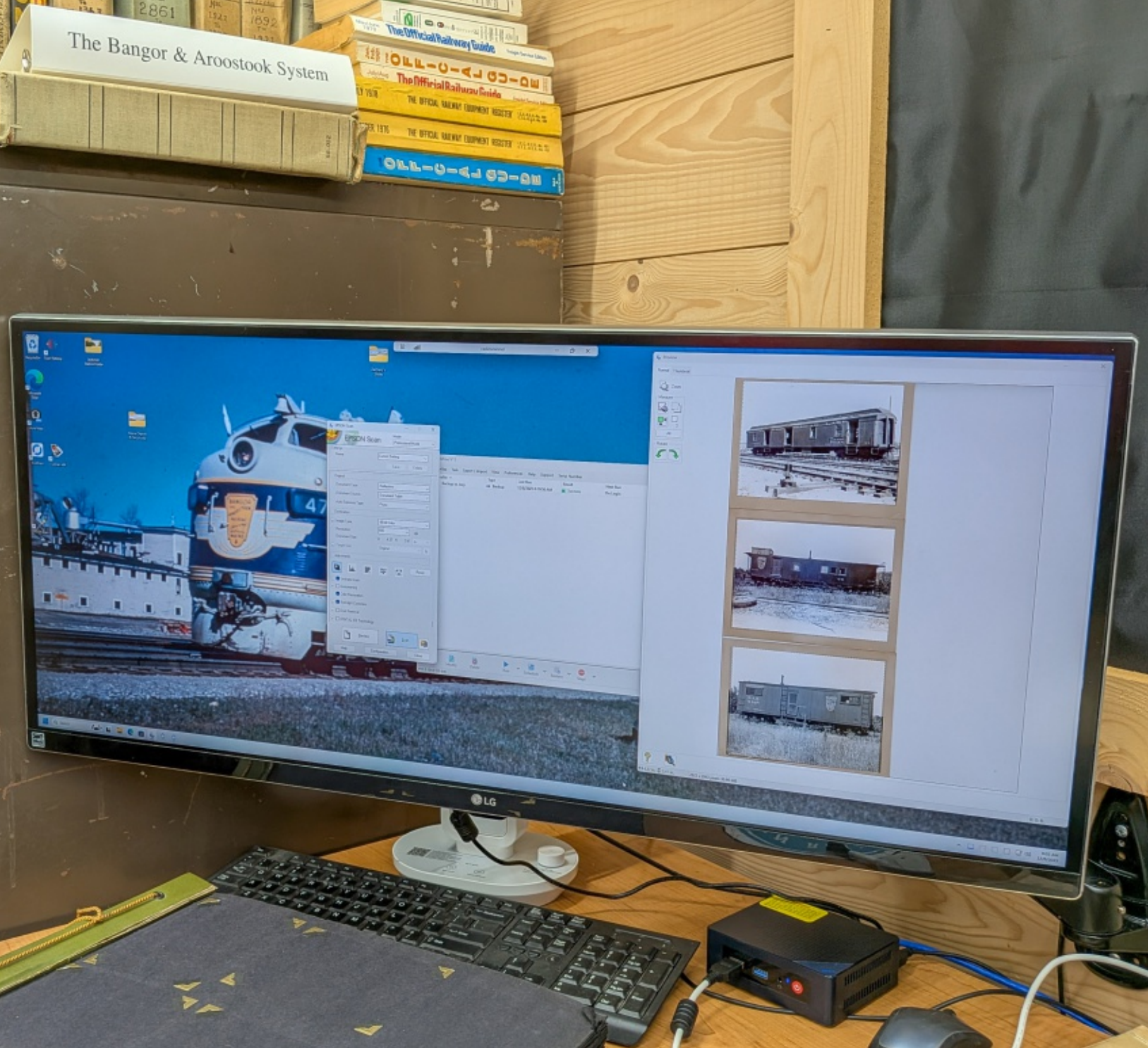
A member of CM&Q's management told Matt Sawyer to take what he wanted and the rest was to be thrown in a dumpster. Initially, he was not to take the original cabinets and cases that the documents were in and all of the documents had been removed from the cabinets and placed on the floor. Large boxes were sourced, the documents were packed up and placed in storage. Time was not on Matt's side. As a result, some decisions had to be made. Some items were deemed not to be of historical value and were disposed of. The decision to keep the document storage cabinets was reversed and Matt was able to go back and rescue the cabinets. Putting everything back where it belonged took weeks.

The process of moving everything, first to a storage unit, then to Matt's home took months. Initially, documents were stored in an unheated garage but this proved to be a very difficult environment not only to store the items, but to work with them. Heavy dust covers did not completely protect things. Normal garage activities made working with documents difficult. Documents had to be returned to their drawers in between working sessions, which slowed down progress and meant that each document had to be handled repeatedly.

Matt and his Father set out on the difficult project of rehabilitating an old building on the property as an archival storage building. New windows were installed and the walls were insulated. Doors were closed up, new paneling and wiring was installed. Network cables connecting the building to the house for access to computers were run under the ground, LED lighting, electric heating and remote temperature and humidity sensors were installed. A dehumidifier works 24/7 to keep conditions ideal for documents in storage.

The size of these documents, some are over 20 feet long, meant a traditional scanner was out of the question. Matt found and purchased a blueprint scanner, some four feet wide and capable of pulling a document through it. A computer network was installed to support the scanner and the computer required to run it. Currently one might find as many as three computers working in the archive simultaneously.

The process of actually scanning one of the documents, be it a plan, map or survey can take anywhere from a few minutes to upwards of a half hour depending on size and how cooperative the document wants to be when going into the scanner. Specs of dirt or dust that get stuck on the scanner rollers and not being quite straight into the scanner are the most common problems. The only fix for these is to clean the scanner and try again. It can be a frustrating process. After each document is scanned, it is verified to be complete and clear, tears and damage often have to be repaired manually with image editing software. Each file is then renamed and placed



in the appropriate digital file, mirroring the physical files in the room. The entire collection is backed up hourly to an offsite location to ensure this archive survives.

The sheer number of documents and artifacts is hard to wrap ones head around. It numbers in the thousands, not even Matt knows exactly how many. Undaunted by this, Matt continues to acquire slides, glass plate negatives and even the occasional box of documents found in closets and old store rooms. He has, effectively, his ear to the ground for anything Bangor and Aroostook, Montreal Maine and Atlantic and Central Maine and Quebec.

The Bangor and Aroostook Railroad Archives Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/bararchives> - carries the description "A privately owned, public resource for modelers, historians and fans of the Bangor and Aroostook" and that is exactly how Matt treats this collection. His goal is to gather, digitize and preserve.



Of course a collection like this does no good if it is not available to the public. A long term goal is to have everything scanned, cataloged and available. Readers of this magazine will recognize numerous times that items from this extraordinary collection have graced these pages and they continue to inspire new articles about what not only was, but might have been on the Bangor and Aroostook. Inquiries about the collection and specific items can be forwarded to info@bararchives.org

This collection is truly amazing and being curated by a truly dedicated individual. On behalf of all of us who are interested in the Bangor and Aroostook - thank you Matt!



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*Photo by
Larry Kemp*

IRON ROAD: MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

23 years ago this month the Bangor and Aroostook faded into history as an operating railroad. Three years ago, 20 years to the day, the January issue of the Maine Line was released. As part of that 20th anniversary tribute issue, multiple interviews were conducted with various B&A railroaders. An interesting and unexpected theme came out of those. The majority opinion was not that the B&A died on January 8, 2003 when the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic took over, but that it actually died on March 17, 1995 when Iron Road Railways bought the B&A.

Why unexpected? From the outside looking in, the latter half of the 1990s on the B&A was actually quite good, interesting and gave the appearance of a healthy railroad. Rebuilt locomotives arrived on the property, excursion trains were run, existing locomotives were taken off property and returned rebuilt and a general investment in the property appeared to be taking place. Behind the scenes however, the locomotives were leased, excursion trains are rarely money makers and the family atmosphere that existed on the B&A was replaced with a more corporate feel.

All of that, combined with the fact that a bit more than six years after taking over, the B&A was bankrupt, has lead to a perception that Iron Road killed the Bangor and Aroostook. But what are the facts behind that perception? First of all, the Bangor and Aroostook under Iron Road did not voluntarily go into bankruptcy. The bankruptcy was forced by creditors of the railroad. Although the effect is much the same, a voluntary entry into bankruptcy implies that the company realizes it is in trouble and wants to find a way out. An involuntary bankruptcy implies that the creditors have lost faith that they will get paid back for the credit they have extended and are no longer willing to wait. The latter is what happened here. Iron Road did not put the B&A into bankruptcy.

The argument here is of course that Iron Road did such a poor job of running the railroad that the bankruptcy was inevitable, no matter who actually initiated it. Allegations of corruption and poor business practices have circulated in the rumor mill surrounding the B&A for years. However, there has been little evidence to support these rumors. A lack of evidence does not make these rumors false, but, they cannot be proven either. One thing we can look at is the situation Iron Road found themselves in when they took over.

Back in summer of 2024, your editor stumbled on a document in the Oakfield Railroad Museum archives. It was a financial summary of the railroad for the five years between 1989 and 1994. It paints a very bleak picture of the financial situation the railroad was in.

Although there are various ways of calculating and presenting how any business is performing, the easiest is simply the net profit margin. One takes the net profit for the year, after all expenses and taxes are paid and divides it by the total revenue for the year. One ends up with a percentage, called the profit margin. If one made \$10 on a revenue of \$100, one would have a 10% profit margin.

The overall profit margin for an entire industry is difficult to calculate. A privately held railroad, one without stockholders, does not need to make any information public. However, in the third quarter of 2025, the net profit margin of railroads that had reported was 22.48%. In other words, for every \$100 in revenue, the company got to keep \$22.48 after all expenses were paid. (Source: https://csimarket.com/Industry/industry_Profitability_Ratios.php?ind=1104) Obviously as we go back in time and look at different economic conditions we cannot apply current standards. The nice thing about profit margins is that they are a percentage, which automatically takes into account things like inflation and changes in freight rates. For instance, in 1936, the Bangor and Aroostook had a gross revenue of \$6,028,540.60 with a net income of \$747,251.18. When you figure the profit margin, you wind up with a profit margin of 12.395%. The graphic below comes from the 1937 annual report but shows the figures from 1936 for comparison. If you add the top two highlighted figures you get the gross revenue and the net income is the third highlighted figure.

COMPARATIVE STATEMENT OF INCOME		
Year ended December 31,	1937	1936
Rail operations—Revenue.....	\$6,185,076.47	\$5,985,120.56
Less rail operations—Expenses.....	4,100,561.87	3,987,772.91
Net revenue from railway operations.....	\$2,085,115.10	\$1,997,347.65
Less—Railway tax accruals.....	547,704.97	559,237.32
Railway operating income.....	\$1,537,410.13	\$1,438,110.33
Equipment and joint facility rents—Credit.....	10,076.44	15,551.32
Other income.....	70,027.78	43,420.04
Gross Income.....	\$1,617,514.35	\$1,497,081.69
Equipment and joint facility rents—Debit.....	35,835.72	20,352.92
Other deductions from gross income.....	12,243.35	6,807.24
Available for fixed charges.....	\$1,569,435.28	\$1,469,921.53
Less—Fixed charges.....	724,211.22	722,670.35
Net Income, transferred to Profit and Loss.....	\$845,224.06	\$747,251.18
Fixed charges, times earned.....	2.16	2.03

Take that rail operations revenue figure from above, nearly \$6 million in 1936. The railroad had a net income of just under three quarters of a million dollars. Now have a look at the 1964 report on the next page. The revenue has more than doubled, freight revenue alone is at over \$12.5 million and the total revenue from the railway, highway division and other sources is over \$13 million. But the net income? Just a whisker over three quarters of a million dollars. In 28 years, the revenue has more than doubled, but the net income has remained essentially flat. That puts the profit margin in the 6% range. Inflation, higher prices, higher wages, higher freight rates are all accounted for when figuring the total profit margin. Obviously over nearly three decades, the railroad's finances are actually getting worse. Six years later, after the disastrous potato shipping winter of 1969-1970, the potato traffic would vanish.

TRANSPORTATION REVENUE:

	1964	1963
Freight	\$12,581,468	\$12,281,460
Highway passenger	269,406	258,006
Other	139,590	300,512
Total transportation revenue	<u>12,990,464</u>	<u>12,839,978</u>

INCIDENTAL AND JOINT FACILITY REVENUE

183,262

167,134

Total railway operating revenues13,173,72613,007,112**RAILWAY OPERATING EXPENSES:**

Maintenance of way and structures	2,772,501	2,895,593
Maintenance of equipment	3,731,944	3,589,061
Traffic	328,079	303,187
Transportation	4,020,968	4,091,756
General	918,916	854,280
Total railway operating expenses	<u>11,772,408</u>	<u>11,733,877</u>

NET REVENUE FROM RAILWAY OPERATIONS1,401,3181,273,235**TAXES OTHER THAN FEDERAL INCOME TAXES:**

Payroll	590,549	570,973
State, local and other	431,093	479,027
Total	<u>1,021,642</u>	<u>1,050,000</u>

OPERATING INCOME379,676223,235**RENT INCOME—NET:**

Equipment—Freight cars	1,978,244	1,390,332
Equipment—Other	51,867	66,660
Joint facilities,	3,279	3,165
Rent income—net	<u>2,033,390</u>	<u>1,460,157</u>

NET OPERATING INCOME

2,413,066

1,683,392

OTHER INCOME

257,382

589,668

TOTAL INCOME

2,670,448

2,273,060

MISCELLANEOUS DEDUCTIONS FROM INCOME

338,466

590,473

INCOME BEFORE FIXED CHARGES

2,331,982

1,682,587

FIXED CHARGES—Interest and amortization of discount on funded debt ..

846,564

731,301

INCOME BEFORE CONTINGENT INTEREST

1,485,418

951,286

OTHER DEDUCTIONS—Contingent interest

181,425

185,525

INCOME BEFORE FEDERAL INCOME TAXES

1,303,993

765,761

PROVISION FOR FEDERAL INCOME TAXES:

Current	132,100	20,604
Deferred	411,450	284,850
TOTAL	<u>543,550</u>	<u>305,454</u>

NET INCOME\$ 760,443\$ 460,307

Getting back to 1994, 30 years after the 1964 report we just discussed, the table to the right has been painstakingly retyped and the figures verified from the original found in the Oakfield Railroad Museum archives. Retyping it has allowed for some greater and easier analysis. Lets look at 1994 in detail. Compared to 1964, total revenue has nearly tripled - coming in at \$36.7 million. However the net income is about \$1.6 million. Yes, that is more than double what was made in 1964, but because revenue nearly tripled, the profit margin has actually gone down. 4.36% for 1994.

That is not the worst of the news however. How can a profit margin that has dropped to roughly 1/3rd of what it was 60 years earlier not be the worst news? Thats because 1994 was actually the high point of the five year period from 1989 to 1994.

Revenues	1994
Transportation Service	\$ 22,715,650.00
Other Operating	\$ 4,148,394.00
Equipment Rental	\$ 8,990,966.00
Non-Operating	\$ 887,014.00
Total Revenue	\$ 36,742,024.00
Expenses	
Payroll and Related	\$ 15,566,169.00
Material and Supplies	\$ 6,639,961.00
Car Hire and Equipment Leases	\$ 6,057,127.00
Outside Services	\$ 2,713,077.00
Rent, Heat and Utilities	\$ 420,685.00
Insurances	\$ 329,830.00
Depreciation	\$ 3,288,203.00
Other Services and Expenses	\$ 1,314,177.00
Taxes other than Income and Payroll	\$ 506,201.00
Intra Company Adjustments	\$ (2,907,090.00)
Interest Expense	\$ 200,032.00
Total Expenses	\$ 34,128,372.00
Income Before Taxes and Ext. Items	\$ 2,613,652.00
Federal Income Tax	\$ 767,300.00
State Income Tax	\$ 245,700.00
Total Income Tax	\$ 1,013,000.00
NET INCOME	\$ 1,600,652.00
Profit Margin	4.36%

You read that right - 1994 was the year that the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad made the most money, both by percentage and in absolute dollars for the five year period from 1989 to 1994. Revenue during this time ranged between about \$32.2 million and \$38.3 million, but profits were all over the place. The year 1990 is the one that sticks out. The railroad actually lost over \$1.1 million dollars. Revenue was off from the previous year, by \$4.2 million dollars and part of that profit and loss does include \$3.4 million of depreciation of the value of assets. It is unlikely that someone had to actually pull \$1.1 million out of a savings account, however, it never looks good at the end of the year to see a profit margin of -3.27%.

Further, everything that was made in 1989, nearly \$1.1 million was wiped out by the loss in 1990. Think that 1991 the year of the 100th birthday of the railroad was any better? Well it was a little, the railroad was back in the positive again. Revenue was off by about \$1.2 million from 1990, over \$5 million from 1989, but they managed to cut over \$3 million from the expenses compared to 1990 and wound up with a profit of \$95,585. The profit margin? 0.29%. The total net income, after all the expenses were paid for 1989-1991 was \$69,060.00. Profit margin? 0.07%.

	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989
Revenues						
Transportation Service	\$ 22,715,650.00	\$ 22,559,918.00	\$ 21,993,055.00	\$ 22,142,474.00	\$ 22,682,396.00	\$ 25,218,077.00
Other Operating	\$ 4,148,394.00	\$ 3,802,191.00	\$ 3,318,737.00	\$ 3,246,844.00	\$ 3,045,920.00	\$ 3,288,443.00
Equipment Rental	\$ 8,990,966.00	\$ 8,052,155.00	\$ 6,277,809.00	\$ 6,637,850.00	\$ 7,744,353.00	\$ 9,162,725.00
Non-Operating	\$ 887,014.00	\$ 1,417,625.00	\$ 692,475.00	\$ 836,064.00	\$ 603,490.00	\$ 611,566.00
Total Revenue	\$ 36,742,024.00	\$ 35,831,889.00	\$ 32,282,076.00	\$ 32,863,232.00	\$ 34,076,159.00	\$ 38,280,811.00
Expenses						
Payroll and Related	\$ 15,566,169.00	\$ 15,414,940.00	\$ 15,513,279.00	\$ 15,878,625.00	\$ 17,128,378.00	\$ 17,705,793.00
Material and Supplies	\$ 6,639,961.00	\$ 6,372,282.00	\$ 5,329,392.00	\$ 4,691,884.00	\$ 5,606,631.00	\$ 5,375,089.00
Car Hire and Equipment Leases	\$ 6,057,127.00	\$ 5,542,566.00	\$ 4,561,750.00	\$ 4,523,219.00	\$ 4,498,964.00	\$ 4,646,032.00
Outside Services	\$ 2,713,077.00	\$ 2,641,964.00	\$ 2,413,838.00	\$ 2,304,889.00	\$ 3,529,752.00	\$ 3,075,476.00
Rent, Heat and Utilities	\$ 420,685.00	\$ 487,079.00	\$ 502,279.00	\$ 727,371.00	\$ 756,079.00	\$ 698,898.00
Insurances	\$ 329,830.00	\$ 58,730.00	\$ 76,826.00	\$ 104,707.00	\$ 79,322.00	\$ 84,235.00
Depreciation	\$ 3,288,203.00	\$ 3,207,005.00	\$ 3,272,403.00	\$ 3,390,354.00	\$ 3,440,986.00	\$ 3,347,621.00
Other Services and Expenses	\$ 1,314,177.00	\$ 2,863,786.00	\$ 1,197,192.00	\$ 1,827,096.00	\$ 1,970,244.00	\$ 2,462,430.00
Taxes other than Income and Payroll	\$ 506,201.00	\$ 471,522.00	\$ 511,548.00	\$ 463,407.00	\$ 467,743.00	\$ 375,972.00
Intra Company Adjustments	\$ (2,907,090.00)	\$ (2,340,258.00)	\$ (2,553,960.00)	\$ (1,334,045.00)	\$ (1,940,015.00)	\$ (1,503,006.00)
Interest Expense	\$ 200,032.00	\$ 242,981.00	\$ 302,215.00	\$ 317,028.00	\$ 365,384.00	\$ 417,087.00
Total Expenses	\$ 34,128,372.00	\$ 34,962,597.00	\$ 31,126,762.00	\$ 32,894,535.00	\$ 35,903,468.00	\$ 36,685,627.00
Income Before Taxes and Ext. Items	\$ 2,613,652.00	\$ 869,292.00	\$ 1,155,314.00	\$ (31,303.00)	\$ (1,827,309.00)	\$ 1,595,184.00
Federal Income Tax	\$ 767,300.00	\$ 275,100.00	\$ 313,800.00	\$ (66,600.00)	\$ (714,000.00)	\$ 394,900.00
State Income Tax	\$ 245,700.00	\$ 85,300.00	\$ 98,600.00	\$ (60,288.00)	\$ -	\$ 113,500.00
Total Income Tax	\$ 1,013,000.00	\$ 360,400.00	\$ 412,400.00	\$ (126,888.00)	\$ (714,000.00)	\$ 508,400.00
NET INCOME	\$ 1,600,652.00	\$ 508,892.00	\$ 742,914.00	\$ 95,585.00	\$ (1,113,309.00)	\$ 1,086,784.00
Profit Margin	4.36%	1.42%	2.30%	0.29%	-3.27%	2.84%

Just to summarize, the total profit over this five year period was just over \$2.9 million. The total revenue for that same period was a little over \$210 million. The profit margin then over five years was \$1.39%. A one year loss essentially wiped out the profits for the year before and the year following. 1992's revenue was the low point, 1994 being the second highest during this period, but still down from 1989. The profit margin, compared to 1936 was pathetic, both for any one year and in total for the five. Even compared to 1964, the situation was not good.

Stepping away from the financial situation, the newest locomotives on the property were 25 years old, built in 1969 and they were acquired over 10 years earlier. All of the GP7s and GP9s had been on the roster for over 40 years. Sooner rather than later, something would have to be done to infuse the railroad with new or rebuilt motive power. But where would that money come from? The railroad itself certainly could not afford it.

Going back to the title of this article - Mission Impossible. Based upon the decades long slide of both profits and profit margin it is clear that the B&A was not a healthy business in 1994. When Iron Road took over in March of 1995 they faced an uphill battle. Iron Road took the chance of getting bigger, bringing in the Canadian American, Quebec Southern and Northern Vermont. The hope was to make a regional system that would be able to make money. In the end, it just did not work out and six years later, the creditors decided they had waited long enough.

We are left with some figures and a burning question. Did Iron Road actually kill off the Bangor and Aroostook through mismanagement or were they handed a bad situation and attempted to make it better, only to fail in the attempt? Was there a change in the culture of the railroad? Certainly. Different management, different management style, different culture. But should we consider Iron Road as being the evil force that killed the Bangor and Aroostook? Only you can decide, but you might want to give Iron Road the benefit of the doubt.



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120 YEARS AGO

Above: From the Harriet Hichborn Collection at Penobscot Marine Museum, the NORTHLAND and the MILLINOCKET are docked at Cape Jellison. This photo is believed to be at least 1907. PMM ID: LB2015.12.74

"There was a time in this fair land when the railroad did not run
When the wild majestic mountains stood alone against the sun"
-Gordon Lightfoot, *Canadian Railroad Trilogy*

It is fair to say that if you are reading this, you do not remember a time when the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad did not run to Searsport. The original routing of the B&A was that of the Bangor and Piscataquis which they bought out in 1891. The line started in Bangor, proceeded North to Old Town, essentially paralleling the Penobscot River. It then took a left turn, heading much more West than North until you come to South LaGrange. South LaGrange was not much railroad-wise until 1904, when the Northern Maine Seaport Railroad was chartered to build a line between South LaGrange and Belfast. In the Spring 2024 issue we discussed the six miles between Searsport and Belfast that was never built.

When the 54 miles of track from South LaGrange to Searsport was completed very late in 1905, South LaGrange became more important. It was the junction of the original main line and the new with a second main line between South LaGrange and Northern Maine Junction completed in 1907. When the Medford Cutoff was opened in 1908 South LaGrange became one of the very few spots in Maine where one could travel by train in four directions, on the same railroad. The line from South LaGrange to Old Town remained intact and fully in service until 1933 when permission to abandon was given in June and the line removed by the end of the year. [See Page 67 of Bangor and Aroostook The Maine Railroad by Angier and Cleaves]

Completed in 1905, the Northern Maine Seaport Railroad was leased by the Bangor and Aroostook for 999 years, then simply folded into the B&A in 1919. Given we are talking about 120 years ago, photographs of the construction of any of the B&A lines would be considered rare. Today, with cameras on every smart phone, the number of photos taken each day is truly staggering. In 1905 using glass plate negatives and toxic chemicals to make each image, the number was dramatically lower.

Maine Line contributor, Archivist and friend Matt Sawyer forwarded over a Facebook post from the Penobscot Marine Museum. It contained among other photos, the one on the cover of this issue. Given the amount of attention railroads in general gather from historians, it is rare and noteworthy when something previously undiscovered is found and made available. A review of both the 75th anniversary packet put out by the B&A and the Angier / Cleaves book published in 1986 show no sign of that particular photograph, nor any others of the N.M.S. being built.

The most exciting detail of that particular photo? The small dump cars being used are actually lettered N.M.S. for Northern Maine Seaport. Why would that particular fact cause both your editor's and Matt Sawyer's jaws to hit the floor? To the best knowledge of both, that was the first photo showing any equipment lettered for the N.M.S. to have ever been taken. Locomotives, cars and equipment owned by the contracted construction firm are not that unusual. Neither would, in this case, equipment owned by the B&A as they were the parent company. However, equipment actually lettered for and presumed to be owned by this shortlived company, chartered in December of 1904 and leased for 999 years by the B&A in 1905, would be extremely hard to find.



Left: Tightly cropped and with the N.M.S. circled are the dump cars.

Right: Tightly cropped and circled shows the B&A mark on the boom of the steam shovel.





Above: LB2015.12.175 - such an anonymous number for a unique photo, which may just be the only photo evidence of a steam shovel on the NMS. Penobscot Marine Museum collection

Nearly immediately, an e-mail was sent to Kevin Johnson, photo archivist at the Penobscot Marine Museum. The question was simple. Are there any more photos? The answer? Yes! This collection of 391 5"x7" glass plate negatives was donated to the Penobscot Marine Museum in 2015 from the Stockton Historical Society. Although several images from the collection show the construction of and the early days of operations along what we know today as the Searsport Branch the collection is far from exclusively railroad photographs. In a way that makes the inclusion of the railroad images all the more interesting.

In 1904 the great railroad building era in the United States was largely over. 1869 saw the famed Transcontinental Railroad completed, Southern Pacific's route was completed in 1883, the Great Northern was completed in 1893 and locally the Maine Central had become the longest railroad in New England by 1884. Waldo County's own Belfast and Moosehead Lake was completed in 1870. Railroad building in the US was by no means over and the Bangor and Aroostook would see considerable expansion in the early 1900s. That said, the Northern Maine Seaport Railroad was the second largest railroad construction project in Waldo County and was the only significant railroad construction after 1900.

With the Northern Maine Seaport Railroad creeping ever further South, the appeal to photographers is rather obvious. This was a miles long project, permanently altering the landscape and bringing the promise of not only travel, but commerce and jobs to an area previously unserved by rail. Today, in this era of automobiles and highways, its important to remember that in 1905, the Model T Ford would not even enter production for another three years, let alone become popular. Transportation was primarily via water, animal or foot. The railroad changed all that and the building of the line was not only big news but life altering to the people along the line.

During this time in history, photography was an expensive and difficult pursuit. Most photographers were men and very little was done without a commercial purpose. What makes this collection more interesting is that all 371 plates were captured by a woman - Harriet Hichborn.

Biography of Harriet Hichborn

Harriet Hichborn should be remembered as an irrepressible artist with a fearless nature and a loyal heart. She was born in Stockton Springs into a large and notable family in late August of 1869. Her father, the accomplished shipbuilder Hon. Nathan Griffin Hichborn, was descended from Robert Hichborn, one of the original Cape Jellison settlers and a cousin to Paul Revere. Her mother, Caroline (née Rendell), had high expectations for her children in their academic lives.

Harriet was known for being a bright and diligent student with a beautiful soprano voice, and as a pretty young woman with a theatrical bent. She excelled at needlepoint. Her mastery with the camera was complimented by her skill as a watercolorist, as she experimented successfully with hand coloring her photographs. She was also a Universalist and admired for the strength of her spiritual convictions.

Religion and photography must have been worlds of refuge to her. She lived for many years with a domineering older sister whose health was poor. Her darkroom was an accustomed sanctuary to her. It is typically thought that frequent exposure to photographic processing chemicals contributed to her persistent psychiatric trouble, which in turn led to her hospitalization in later years. She ultimately took her life in December of 1923, at the age of 54.

From PenobscotMarineMuseum.org





Above: Perhaps the earliest photo of railroad construction in this collection is this image from either 1904 or 1905. The location has been identified as being near Sandy Head Shore in Searsport, the homes in the distance are the Clyde Merriwether and Guy Lawrence houses. Your editors instinct is that this is probably Spring or Summer 1905. The NMSR was incorporated in December 1904, so logically construction would have started as soon as weather allowed. PMM LB2015.12.179



Above: In what appears to be a reverse angle of the photo on the previous page, Sears Island can be seen in the background. We would be looking in what the B&A would call South towards Searsport Station. There is no date documented but your editor's estimate is still Spring or Summer 1905. PMM LB2015.12.173



Above: Of the railroad photos, this may be the furthest North in the collection. We are looking at Mount Waldo from Frankfort and the camera is pointed nearly due South. The line is very freshly graded and one can see the level of cutting and the amount of earth that had to be moved to make the railroad grade. Without a documented date it is impossible to be certain but this looks to your editor like late 1905, possibly before the line was actually put into service. PMM LB2015.12.182



Above: One of the iconic photo locations on the Searsport Branch. Mosquito Mountain is visible on the left. If this scene looks a bit different today, there is a reason. The arch pictured is not where the current bridge is. The road was relocated to the right of the arch, a bridge built and the arch bridge was simply filled in. PMM LB2015.12.181

Below: In this Ralph Curcio shot from June 18, 1980, we see the modern view at this location, the original arch is just visible at the other end of this line:



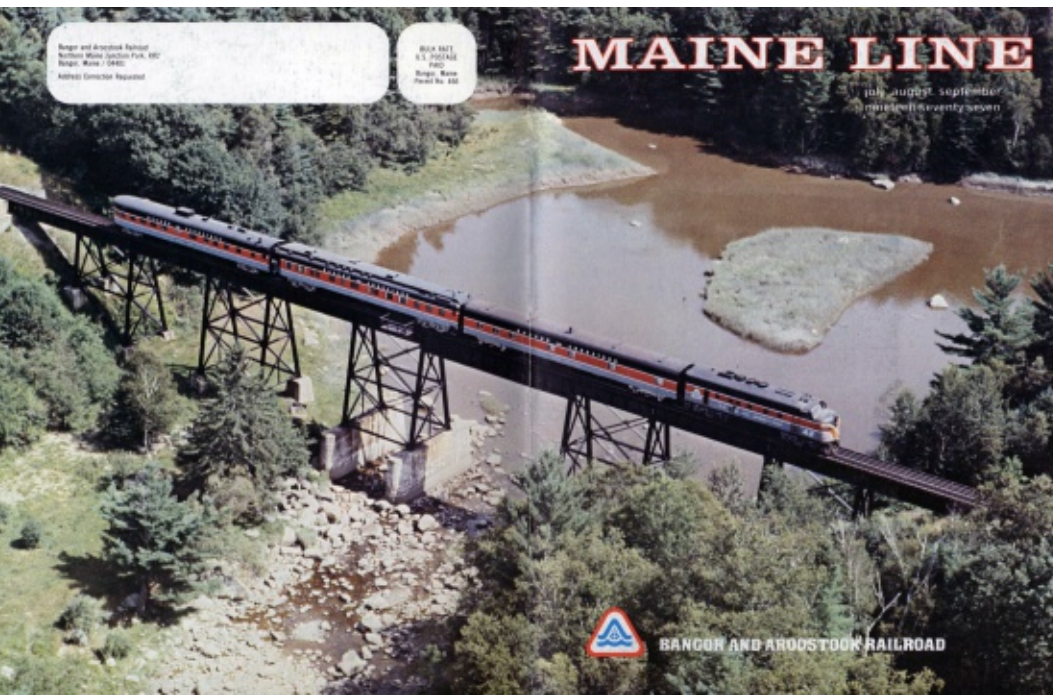


Above: Much larger than the previous photo, the original arch is much easier to see in this 1985 photo. Note how the flat, straight bit is on the top of the rest of the arch in all three photos. Photo by and courtesy of Larry Kemp

The through plate girder steel bridge was installed in 1951 according to a document entitled Bridge Book in the B&A Archives, information provided courtesy of Matt Sawyer.



Above: While we are discussing iconic locations on the Searsport Line, it does not get much more iconic than this. The Colson Brook Viaduct in Prospect is so iconic that the railroad hired a helicopter to shoot a Southbound passenger extra here on August 10, 1977. What is quite obvious in this photo, if only for the lack of trees, is that this is freshly built, putting the date around 1905. PMM LB2015.12.169



Left: The July-August-September 1977 Maine Line Magazine cover, note the changes in the foliage in 72 or so years. Today this location is nearly unshootable from the road due to the trees.



Above: Initially the docks at Cape Jellison were the primary traffic generator on the Northern Maine Seaport Railroad. Searsport also known as Mack Point was always important. In 1925 the modern pier at Searsport would be built. Here is the coal trestle very early in its construction or use, hard to tell which. This is also a shot from somewhere in the 1905-1907 range. PMM LB2015.12.192



Above: Speaking of Searsport, here is a very early image, so early it may be before the line even opened, if so, most likely the Summer or Fall of 1905. We are looking South towards where the larger pier would eventually be built. The station appears to be the same one that has now been relocated onto US Route 1, however the track orientation is somewhat different. PMM LB2015.12.170



Left: This shot by Richard B. "Dick" Gassett from July 24, 1969 was taken immediately next to the station at Searsport. Note how the tracks are curving away from the water. Very different from the shot above. JoeyKelleyPhoto.com Collection



Above: In what is believed to be the earliest photo in this series of Cape Jellison dock images we can see N.M.S. stenciled dump carts on the far track. Note the piles of fill sitting next to the furthest track over and the lack of any sort of ground cover in the foreground. These indicate that this is most likely 1905 or 1906. PMM LB2015.12.24



Above: Another early image of Cape Jellison, the scene is quite busy. Multiple cranes and large piles of materials are visible and it appears like two cranes are on barges. Two schooners are docked and that white dog is being walked. Quite the scene! This is most likely 1905 or 1906. Your editor is not impressed with the line and surface of the track closest to the camera. One hopes that before much heavy traffic was sent over it the track crew might come back and have another bash at it, lest tons of freight wind up in the water! Hopefully it looks worse than it was! PMM LB2015.12.72



Above: Progress on the piers! Without a date on the photo it is impossible to be sure but given the unfinished appearance and lack of buildings on the piers, this would appear to be another image of the Cape Jellison docks under construction. Given the tracks in the foreground that do not seem to have much in the way of ballast, this would presumably be 1905. PMM LB2015.12.19



Above: In what can only be described as a dramatic change from the previous shot, the Cape Jellison piers are now in use and a full train load of freight is evidently waiting to be transloaded onto ship. One of the B&A's small steam locomotives is working the dock. Multiple sailing ships are docked and it looks like a busy place. In the foreground a couple of boxcars converted to camp cars are sitting on an unballasted track. In several spots, if you look closely, you can see the original B&A script in use on the camp cars and the boxcar between two flats with lumber. The general lack of ballast puts this as either late 1905 or perhaps 1906. PMM LB2015.12.65

Right: The B&A script courtesy of Matt Sawyer's BAR Archives

The B&A.



Above: If that track in the foreground is the same one from three pages ago, the scene is dramatically different, with an entire pier added! According to the Penobscot Marine Museum this pier off to the right was Number 3 - the 'potato wharf'. The covered launch near the center of the photo has been identified as the ferry of Captain Melvin Colcord. It is difficult to date this particular shot but certainly more in the range of 1907 than 1905, given the third pier. PMM LB2015.12.71



Above: Note the electric lighting which must have been revolutionary for the time. A warehouse has been built for potato storage and in the distance we can see a locomotive working the docks. Although it is very far away, this appears to be the B&A's sole 0-4-0 steam locomotive, originally numbered 37, but renumbered 300. She was sold in 1917 and the renumbering took place in 1907. If one zooms in closely, there appears to be fresh paint on both the tender and the cab side, corresponding with where the numbers would be. Therefore, tentatively this is 1907. (Roster information from the Angier-Cleaves book) PMM LB2015.12.27



*Above: A water tower on the hillside and the tree growth now partially blocking the view of the three piers seems to indicate that this is one of the later shots in the collection, given the warehouse construction, probably closer to 1907 than 1905.
PMM LB2015.12.20*



Above: Looking at the paper house on one end of the pier, it is hard to say if the men in the foreground are transferring lumber into a ship for transportation elsewhere or if they are still laying the decking down for the piers. Give the paper house in the background, this image is most likely in the 1906-1908 range. PMM LB2015.12.13



Above: This image was used to produce many postcards and has been given a circa 1908 date by the folks at PMM. We have a motor launch, but still seeing sailing ships hauling freight. PMM LB2015.12.76

Harriet would have been 35 years old when the Northern Maine Seaport Railroad was chartered. Women in the United States would not have the vote for more than another 15 years when she was out capturing the construction of this new rail line that would so alter the fortunes of the Bangor and Aroostook and of Waldo County. As you have seen, the docks at Cape Jellison were a particular favorite subject. They were near to her home and a fusion of the sea and the new transportation medium of the railroad.

Speaking of the docks at Cape Jellison, the March-April 1954 (Volume 2, Number 3, Page 15) Maine Line reported the following: "Cape Jellison grew until November 8, 1924. It was a Saturday morning. The wind whipped across Penobscot Bay through the rigging of the schooner Ruth Martin moored alongside the pier. At 8:15 a. m. the fire broke out on Wharf No. 3. Five fire departments, including Bangor, rushed to the scene, but by evening, Station Agent H. H. Hatt reported that the wharves 1, 2 and 3 were practically demolished."

This remarkable woman seems to have single handedly taken most of the photos of the construction of the Northern Maine Seaport Railroad and most of the known photographs of the docks at Cape Jellison. It is perhaps fitting that she did not live to see that example of progress go up in smoke. One hopes that Harriet would be pleased to know that we appreciate her photographs, 120 years later.

The entire Harriet Hichborn collection is available for viewing on the Penobscot Marine Museum's website - <https://penobscotmarinemuseum.org/harriet-hichborn-collection/> or go to the menu on their website and look for photographic collections. Your editor would like to express his personal thanks to Kevin Johnson and the rest of the staff at PMM for their continued support!



Left: From the B&A marketing department photo collection in the JoeyKelleyPhoto.com Collection is this image, believed to be the docks at Cape Jellison after the fire of November 8, 1924.

WHATS WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE

Folks who watch the Maine Line Magazine Facebook Page - facebook.com/MaineLineMagazine - saw a post a few days before this issue was released, containing the photo below and a simple question - What is Wrong with this picture?



Given that we are looking at a HO scale layout, one can assume there are many details that are wrong and the sharp eyed may point out that this is a model of the former CP bridge in Brownville Junction and it would be extremely unusual to find any Bangor and Aroostook power on that bridge when they were still running five F3 lashups. Although true, that was not what was intended. Instead, look dead center. Then look to the left and right. Three tri-color F3s?!? Hold on - 48? There was never a 48! Taking advantage of that one unused number, your editor was able to insert one unit into the roster. But why? Well first of all for the fun of it. Lets not take model railroading too seriously folks, it is supposed to be fun. But the more important reason? 48 was the year your Editor's mother was born.

Shot on the Eastern Maine Model Railroad Club layout in Orland, Maine.
EasternMaineModelRailroadClub.org - Celebrating 50 years: 1976-2026



MY FRIEND RALPH

BY DAN MCFADDEN

Ralph Curcio grew up an only child in Queens, NY. He had a glimpse of LIRR steam while a young boy. His special interest in electric railroading began when he commuted to the renowned Stuyvesant High School riding the BMT "Standards" every day into Manhattan. His Dad worked for the Wall Street Journal and when they opened a plant in Monmouth Junction, the family relocated to New Jersey. This put him in close proximity to the Pennsy Main Line and that put iconic places like Princeton Junction within easy reach. There cannot be many people who took more shots of GG-1's and E-44's than Ralph Curcio. Ralph followed his Dad into the newspaper business and worked for the Trenton Times for more than thirty years.

Our common interest of course was railroads and we both had a special love of traction, trolley systems like those in Philadelphia and heavy-duty stuff like the Pennsy Main which we know today as the Northeast Corridor. In fact, when I met Ralph in 1976, traction was his only real railroad interest. On our next meet-up, Ralph took shots of a 136-car freight with pushers in Dover, maybe his first such shot. His interest in the broader world of railroading might have started that day. In the years that followed, we did a lot together, Southern Railroad steam trips and so on.

Ralph was dedicated to getting THE shot and put a lot of thought into his set-up all the time. On one occasion, we took a trip to Vermont for a Rutland Railroad Historical Society fan trip on the Green Mountain. On our return, we were surprised by a leased SD-90MAC working freight from Rutland to Bellow Falls. We chased it and got many great shots. But Ralph thought he had not gotten the pix he wanted and was back up the very next weekend. His enthusiasm and energy for the hobby were off the charts. He also took BAR fan trips. My efforts to put Ralph's BAR pix out there for all to enjoy led me to Joey Kelley and what you are reading right now.

For almost 15 years, Ralph fought a difficult fight with cancer. It was a lousy hand, but he remained positive and busy with his camera. On countless occasions, he would get me out on a trip either just before or right after a round of chemotherapy. Ralph passed away too young at 63 years of age in August 2012. He left behind wife Pam, stepsons Jay and Jeremy, and many friends. I miss him!

Editor's Note: Dan's work to get Ralph's photos in front of more people and to keep his memory alive are to be commended. It is both a wonderful and humbling experience to be entrusted with this collection of images and I can assure you that you will see Ralph's work in these pages for a long time to come. -JTK



FROM THE ARCHIVES

This magazine would not be possible without the gracious support of various photographers. Although you can be assured these are not the last time you will see some of Ralph Curcio's images here is a gallery of his work. Thanks to Tim Franz for help with locations and Dan McFadden for sending up this incredible bunch of photos in the first place. Thank you! -JTK



June 17, 1980 found Ralph Curcio at Northern Maine Junction where the dramatic setting sun light lead to this photo. 45 and 75 on the end of their respective tracks. For those of you on the Maine Line Facebook page, you may have seen the black and white conversion of this image. Ralph Curcio photo, JoeyKelleyPhoto.com Collection



One can almost hear the windows rattle in the old station in this shot of Oakfield. 36 and 32 are working the South end of the yard on June 19, 1980, Ralph Curcio photo, JoeyKelleyPhoto.com Collection



Southbound at Brownville. In an angle that I have never seen anywhere else, two F's sandwich a BL-2. June 20, 1980. Ralph Curcio photo, JoeyKelleyPhoto.com Collection



*Oakfield, June 20, 1980. A page out of the past, with the crew going on duty, past the turntable pit on their way to their train. This spot is nearly unrecognizable today.
Ralph Curcio photo, JoeyKelleyPhoto.com Collection*



A photo that you cannot take today, for many many reasons! Its truly amazing how little of this scene remains, including the Searsport station that has been moved. June 18, 1980, Ralph Curcio photo, JoeyKelleyPhoto.com Collection



Long time readers of the Maine Line will already know that I absolutely love the Tri-Color paint scheme. It was unique, good looking and my favorite color is red. What's not to love? Four 38s, all in the first version of the tri-color they were painted in, blasting their way southbound through Dyer Brook on June 19, 1980. Ralph Curcio photo, JoeyKelleyPhoto.com Collection



In 1980, Oakfield was still a busy place. 79 appears to be working a local on June 19, 1980. Ralph Curcio photo, JoeyKelleyPhoto.com Collection



Oh to have had a video camera or a tape recorder! 65, 45, 44 and 49 are Southbound between the semaphore signals on the South Side of Oakfield in this shot from June 19, 1980. Ralph Curcio photo, JoeyKelleyPhoto.com Collection



What a spectacular sight this must have been. Ground shaking, locomotives screaming, the same train we saw in the previous shot is now kicking up dust, southbound at Dyer Brook. June 19, 1980, Ralph Curcio photo, JoeyKelleyPhoto.com Collection

