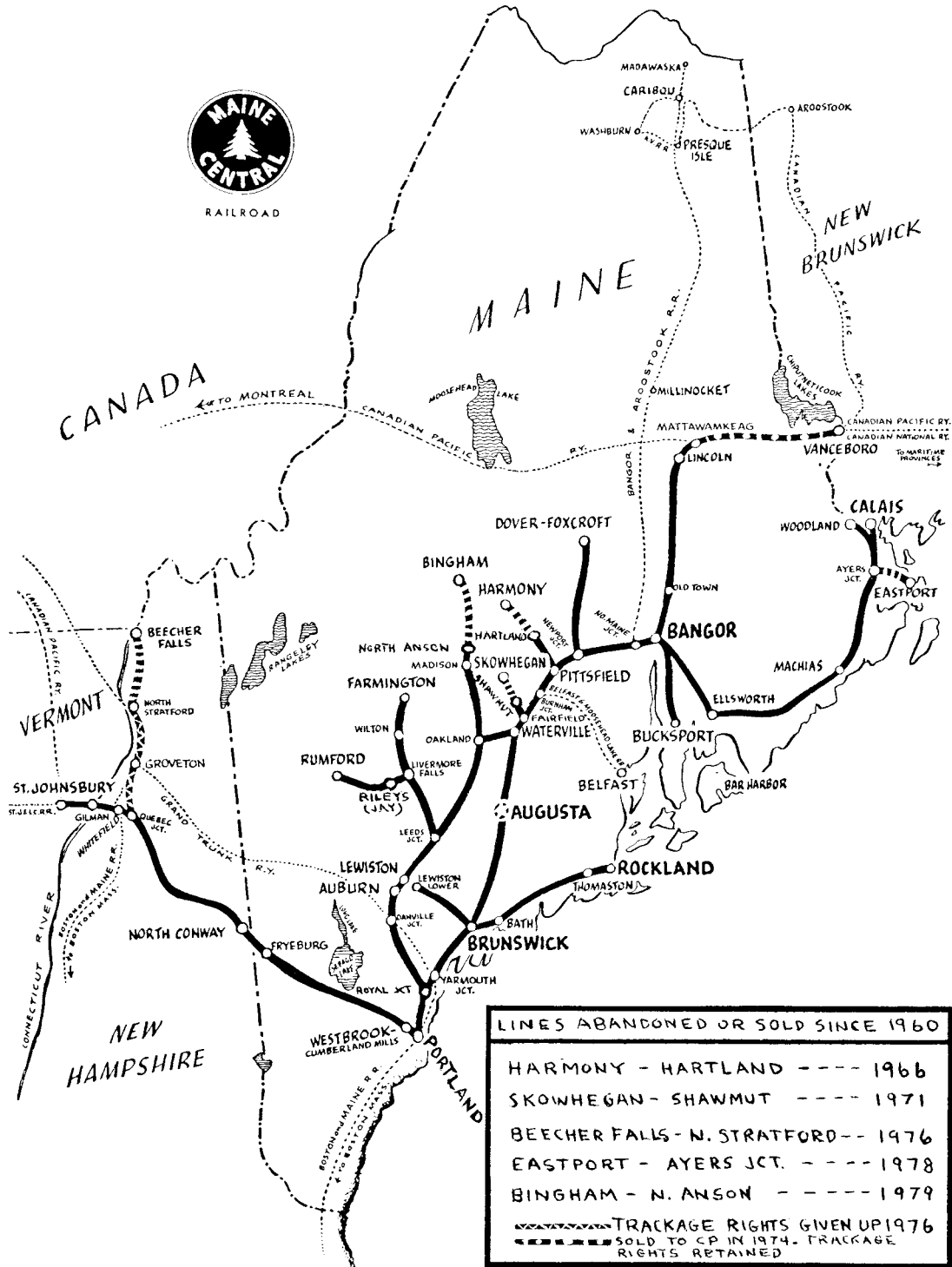


MAINE CENTRAL MAP



The Maine Central is the largest of the Northern New England railroads, operating 850 miles of rail lines. Of this 770 miles are in Maine, 58 are in New Hampshire and 22 are in Vermont.

On a typical day, up to 30 trains operate on the system. In addition, yard work is performed in Bangor, Waterville, Lewiston and Rumford. Yard work in Portland is handled by the Portland Terminal.

The railroad is split into 2 divisions, the Portland Division and the Eastern Division. The split was in Bangor, with all tracks west belonging to the Portland Division and all tracks east belonging to the Eastern Division.

Significant Portland Division daily trains include:

RY-2, operating from Portland to St. Johnsbury (Mtn Sub), returning as YR-1
RB-1, operating from Portland to Bangor, returning as BR-2
RD-1, operating from Portland to Rumford, returning as DR-2
RS-1, operating from Portland to Augusta, returning as SR-2
324, operating from Brunswick to Rockland, returning as 325



Significant Eastern Division trains include:

BV-1, operating from Bangor to Vanceboro, returning as VB-2 next day
BC-3, operating from Bangor to Vanceboro, returning as CB-4 next day

The famous Mountain Sub-Division is part of the Portland Division. For 131 miles, the Mountain Sub leaves Portland and travels through the heart of New Hampshire's White Mountains to get to St. Johnsbury, Vermont. The 15 mile grade from Bartlett to Crawford Notch exceeds 2%, and helpers are used to get the train over the hill. Usually these would leave Portland ahead of RY-2 and wait for the train at Bartlett. They would then cut off at Crawford station and run light back to Portland. Motive power would layover in St. Johnsbury and then head up the YR-1 back to Portland.

In Maine, two mainlines exist to Waterville. The "Back Road" travels from Portland through Lewiston to Waterville. The "Lower Road" travels more to the east through Augusta. The MEC operates these almost like a double-track main line, with trains generally traveling in one direction only each way. In Waterville, the 2 lines converge and a single route is taken into Bangor.

Branches to paper mills come off of the main routes. Local service switches the mills out of the main terminals. Paper mills in Rumford, Bucksport and Vanceboro see plenty of trains daily to keep the mills running.

The scenic Rockland branch leaves the Lower Road at Brunswick and serves small coastal towns. The Calais branch also travels along the coast, further north, and tracks go to Eastport, the most eastern point in the U.S. receiving rail service.

Many smaller branch lines use an Alco switcher in the summer and a 44 tonner in the winter. The reason for this was that the 44 tonners had heaters that could be plugged in to keep them warm in remote locations that did not have heated engine facilities.

Freight moved by the MEC is almost all related to the paper industry. 17 mills are in operation along the MEC in 1980. Paper, pulp, wood chips, pulpwood, chemicals and fuel make up 60% of the traffic. Other products include cement, poultry, sardines, feed and grain.

The Maine Central has always kept a well maintained locomotive fleet. While other railroads cast off their first generation units, the MEC continued to use them on important trains into the 1980s. EMD F3s, GP7s, SW7s along with Alco S1s, S2s, S3s, S4s, RS2s, RS3s and RS11s dieselized the MEC in the 1950s. GE 44 tonners were also used. E7s were used early on in passenger service, but were sold in the early 1960s. The F3s were traded in on second generation power, 12 GP38s, in 1966. In 1975, MEC went to GE for the first time and ordered 10 U18Bs, one of only a few railroads to operate these locomotives. In 1980, the MEC acquired ex-Rock Island U25Bs and rebuilt them for service.

The railroad owns over 4000 pieces of rolling stock, mainly boxcars for paper products. Also owned are pulp racks, wood chip hoppers, cement covered hoppers and various flats, tanks, gondolas and hoppers. Two mechanical reefers, numbers 1 and 2, are also on the roster.

The MEC interchanges with the BAR, GT, CP and B&M in Maine. In New Hampshire, interchange occurs with the Conway Scenic and the B&M. In Vermont, at St. Johnsbury, interchange is made with the CP and the Lamoille Valley.

Today

The MEC exists today as part of Guilford Transportation Industries. MEC was the first Guilford railroad, purchased in 1981. The B&M and D&H followed shortly thereafter, but the D&H was jettisoned in the late 1980s, leaving the MEC and B&M only.

The classic paint schemes are gone, covered by Guilford gray. Many of the older locomotives are now also gone, replaced by second hand GP35s and GP40s, plus some GP402Ws from the CN. Some of these are lettered for the MEC, others for B&M, GRS and Springfield Terminal.

The Mountain Sub shut down in 1983. Other branches, such as the Rockland and Calais branches, were also shut down in the 1980s. But pulp and paper are still the "green gold" for the railroad, and service to many of the mills continues on.

Selected Resources

The 470 Railroad Club
\$15.00 per year
Monthly newsletter
www.470rrclub.org



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New England's Colorful Railroads Vol. 1, Four Ways West, 2000
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Train RY-2, the Mountain Sub train from St. J to Portland, is in the heart of the White Mountains of New Hampshire, crossing the Sawyer River in 1981. Photo by Glenn Salvatore.

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MEC Low Side gondola, May 1989 Railroad Model Craftsman, p. 76
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Crawford Notch Depot, August 1983 Railroad Model Craftsman, p. 85
Guilford Preview, May 1983 Railfan & Railroad, p. 28-33
Protofile: MEC 50' Boxcar, March 1981 Railroad Model Craftsman, p. 89
Rock Island U-Boats on the MEC, Nov/Dec 1981 Rails Northeast, p. 4-10
MEC/B&M Ball Signal in Whitefield, October 1980 Railroad Model Craftsman, p. 83

Videos:

"Today's Maine Railroads", 105 min color, Pentrex, 1993
"Mountain Division", Herron Rail Services

Railfan Site: <http://www.angelfire.com/ct/MEC/>

Discussion site: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MEC_RR/

This document is available online as a PDF file at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mikefiles/files/>