

## **NEW ENGLAND RAILROAD TRACK CONSTRUCTION FROM 1826 TO 1850**

**Click on the name of the state to see  
details**

**STATE**

**1826-30**

## New England Railroads

Written by Paul Marston

Tuesday, 18 March 2008 09:59 - Last Updated Monday, 18 August 2008 21:29

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**1831-35**

**1835-40**

**1841-45**

**1845-50**

**TOTALS**

**CENSUS**

**CHANGES**

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## Connecticut

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**119.56**

**50.26**

**230.94**

**400.76**

**413.26**

**-12.50**

**Massachusetts**

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**2.79**

**72.20**

**215.32**

**212.40**

**528.81**

**1,031.52**

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**1,035.74**

**-4.22**

**Maine**

**2.00**

**11.00**

**60.35**

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**175.50**

**248.85**

**245.59**

**3.26**

**[New Hampshire](#)**



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**34.77**

**61.44**

**379.17**

**475.38**

**465.32**

**10.06**

## Rhode Island

**8.20**

**48.85**

**18.00**

**75.05**

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**68.00**

**7.05**

**Vermont**

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**290.07**

**290.07**

**279.57**

**10.50**

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## **TOTALS FOR INTERVALS**

**2.79**

**82.40**

**429.50**

**384.45**

**1,622.49**

**2,521.63**

**2,507.48**

**14.15**

**The Census data shown is for the year 1850 as reported in the 1860 Census.**

**See [www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1860e-06.pdf](http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1860e-06.pdf) (pages 230-231).**

**Why are there differences between the Census and our own figures?**

**Here is an explanation state by state:**

## **- Connecticut:**

**1. Hartford & New Haven Railroad - 5.87 miles of this railroad was in Massachusetts so of the 72.38 miles assigned to Connecticut by the 1860 census, we must reduce it by 5.87 miles and add it to the mileage in Massachusetts. The proof is that the 1880 Census gives this figure on page 508 for**



**the miles in Massachusetts. By 1880, this railroad was the New York, New Haven & Hartford.**

**2. New London, Willimantic & Palmer Railroad - 10 miles of this railroad were also in Massachusetts according to the 1880 Census. Page 508 shows the mileage in Connecticut as only 56 miles so the extra 10 miles has to be in Massachusetts. By 1880 this railroad was called the New London Northern.**

**3. Stonington & Providence Railroad - This was the name of the New York, Providence & Boston Railroad in Connecticut. The 1860 Census gave all 50 miles of it to Rhode Island but 3.37 miles were in Connecticut. Page 508 of the 1880 Census gives only 46.63 miles to Rhode Island so the balance has to be in Connecticut.**

**- Massachusetts:**

**1. Boston and Maine Railroad - While the 1860 Census assigned 83.05 miles to this railroad, it deducted 40.17 miles as being in New Hampshire. The remaining 42.88 miles were in Massachusetts but this railroad did not build all of that. The Andover and Wilmington built 7, the Andover and Haverill built**

**10 and the Boston and Portland built 3.18 miles before being merged into the Boston and Maine Railroad. The remaining 22.7 was divided between the Boston & Maine Railroad and its extension. The figures come out the same as given in the 1860 Census.**

## **2. Boston and Providence Railroad** -

**The 1860 Census gives 47.47 miles for this railroad but failed to mention 10.42 miles were in Rhode Island. The 1880 Census on page 507 confirms this figure.**

**3. Charlestown Branch Railroad - The 1860 Census omitted this railroad as a separate entity because this railroad was acquired by the**

**Fitchburg Railroad in 1845. This is one of those cases where part of a later railroad had been built by a predecessor railroad. We know from [P](#)  
[oor's book](#)  
on page 107 that the mileage built by this railroad was 7.80 miles.**

**4. Fitchburg Railroad -  
The missing 7.80 miles of  
the Charlestown Branch**

**Railroad was reported under this railroad so we have to reduce the mileage for this railroad by 7.80 miles to 57.98 miles from 65.78 miles.**

**5. Granite Railroad - As we mentioned earlier, the Census Bureau did not count this railroad in either 1860 or 1880 because it was constructed before 1830. Estimates of its**

**length range from 2 to 4 miles when it was first built. After reconstructing the railroad in Mapinfo® from the description at <http://thomascranelibrary.org/legacy/chap2.htm>, it reported a length of 2.79 miles which is very close to Professor Gamst's figure of 2.75 miles so we adopted that figure.**

## **6. Hartford and**



## **Springfield Railroad -**

**This was the name of the Hartford and New Haven of Connecticut in Massachusetts. As mentioned above, this 5.87 miles needs to be added to the mileage for Massachusetts.**

**7. Nashua and Lowell Railroad - As the name implies, part of this railroad is in**

**Massachusetts and part is  
in New Hampshire.**

**[Poor's book](#)**

**tells us on page 60 that the  
New hampshire portion is  
6.22 of the 14.58 miles  
leaving 8.36 for  
Massachusetts so we must  
show that as the figure for  
Massachusetts.**

**8. New London,  
Willimantic & Palmer  
Railroad (MA) - The**

**1880 Census on page 508 shows the mileage in Connecticut as only 56 miles so the extra 10 miles has to be in Massachusetts. By 1880 this railroad was called the New London Northern.**

## **9. Vermont and Massachusetts Railroad**

**- Once again the name suggests that part of this railroad is in Vermont, in**

**this case, 10.25 miles according to page 158 of [Poor's book](#)**

**. That leaves 58.75 miles of the 69 reported in Massachusetts.**

**10. Winchendon Railroad - This railroad merged with the Cheshire Railroad of New Hampshire and adopted that name in 1845. That caused the 1860 Census to**

**count all of the mileage for New Hampshire. The Winchendon portion of the railroad in Massachusetts had 10.81 miles according to page 507 of the 1880 Census that needs to be added to the mileage in Massachusetts.**

## **11. Worcester and Nashua Railroad -**

**This is another case where the name tells you that part**

**of this railroad was in New Hampshire. Page 164 of [Poor's book](#) gives the New Hampshire portion as 6.55 miles which leaves only 39.12 in Massachusetts out of the total of 45.67 miles.**

**- [Maine:](#)**

# **1. Bangor and Piscataquis Railroad and Canal Company**

-

**A name change to  
Bangor, Oldtown and  
Milford Railroad  
caused the Census  
Bureau to list the 11**

**miles under the new name.**

## **2. Bangor, Oldtown and Milford Railroad**

-

**A name change to this from Bangor, Piscataquis Railroad and Canal Company caused the Census Bureau to list the 11**



**miles under the new name.**

### **3. Boston and Maine Railroad (ME) -**

**Most of this railroad was in Massachusetts and New Hampshire but there was a short piece of 1.26 miles in Maine to connect to**

**the Portland, Saco and  
Portsmouth Railroad.  
This information was  
provided by  
[Poor's book](#)  
on page 100.**

**4. Calais Railroad -  
The 1860 Census  
assigns 6 miles to the  
Calais and Baring  
Railroad and all of it**

**built after 1850. By 1880 this railroad was called the St. Croix and Penobscot Railroad, but the 1880 Census shows that 2 miles of this railroad were built in 1835. Since the Calais and Baring was not chartered until 1837, that leaves only the predecessor Calais**

**Railroad, chartered in 1832, as the builder of these two miles and only 4 of the miles to built after 1850.**

**5. Machiasport  
Railroad - This railroad is listed in the 1860 Census as having 7.75 miles but the 1880 Census tells us that the**

**successor railroad, the Whitneyville and Machiasport Railroad, had 7.87 miles built in 1842. Since the Machiasport Railroad was not chartered until 1845, the preceeding railroad, the Palmer and Machiasport, actually built the railroad.**

**6. Palmer and  
Machiasport Railroad  
- The original railroad  
that built this 7.75  
miles before changing  
its name to the  
Machiasport Railroad  
in 1845.**

# - **New Hampshire:**

## **1. Boston and**

# Maine Railroad

(NH)

- The

difference is the

1.26 miles of this

railroad that are in

Maine as per

above.

## 2. Cheshire



# Railroad -

**The difference is the 10.81 miles that are in the Winchendon portion of this railroad that is in Massachusetts as explained above.**

# **3. Concord and Claremont Railway - This was one of the predecessor railroads to the Merrimac and**

**Connecticut  
Rivers Railroad  
that actually built  
this 17.78 miles  
but this mileage  
was counted  
under the new  
name.**

# **4. Concord and Portsmouth Railroad -**

**This 18.23 miles  
was the name of**

**the railroad that  
the Census  
Bureau used for  
this mileage, but  
the railroad was  
actually built by  
the Portsmouth  
and Concord  
Railroad. The**

**original railroad  
went into  
bankruptcy so the  
mortgage holders  
foreclosed on  
their note and  
changed the  
name.**

# **5. Contoocook River Railroad**

**- The predecessor  
railroad,  
Contoocook  
Valley Railroad  
defaulted on  
payments and was**

**sold to new  
owners who  
changed the name  
to this one. This  
caused the  
Census Bureau to  
report the mileage  
under this  
railroad.**



## **6. Contoocook Valley Railroad**

**- This is the  
railroad who  
actually built the  
14.64 miles before  
defaulting on**

**payments so we  
carry the mileage  
under the builder.**

## **7. Franklin and Bristol Railroad**

**- This was the  
original builder of**

**this 13.41 miles of road but was bought out by the Northern Railroad (NH). Hence this mileage was reported as part of the mileage for the new owner.**

# **8. Merrimac and** **Connecticut** **Rivers Railroad**

**- This railroad was formed by a merger of the Concord and**

**Claremont  
Railway and the  
New Hampshire  
Central Railway.  
Hence the mileage  
of both of the  
predecessor  
railroads who  
actually built the**

**two portions of  
the railroad were  
reported under the  
new name.**

**9. Nashua and  
Groton Railroad  
- This was the**

**name of the  
Worcester and  
Nashua Railroad  
in New  
Hampshire. This  
6.55 miles was  
reported as being  
in Massachusetts  
under the**

# Worcester and Nashua Railroad.

## 10. Nashua and Lowell Railroad

- This was

**the name of the  
Lowell and**



**Nashua Railroad  
in New  
Hampshire. This  
6.22 miles was  
reported as  
being in  
Massachusetts  
under the Lowell**

# and Nashua Railroad.

## 11. New Hampshire Central Railway -

**This was one  
of the  
predecessor  
railroads to  
the Merrimac  
and  
Connecticut**

**Rivers  
Railroad that  
actually built  
this 25.52  
miles but this  
mileage was  
counted**

**under the new  
name.**

**12. Norther  
n Railroad  
(NH) -**

**This railroad  
had 69.16  
miles that it  
built, but  
when it  
acquired the**

**Franklin and  
Bristol  
Railroad,  
that extra  
13.41 miles  
was reported**

**under this  
name.**

**13. Peterb**

**oro and**



**Shirley**

**Railroad**

**- The 1860**

**Census**

**says that**

**this railroad**

**was built  
after 1850,  
but  
Poor's  
Book  
on page 61**

**says that it  
was built in  
1849 and  
1850.**

# **14. Ports**

# **mouth and**

# **Concord**

# Railroad

**- This was  
the original  
builder of  
this 18.23**

**miles, but  
bankruptcy  
and a  
change of  
name**

**caused  
this  
mileage to  
be  
reported**

# **under the Concord and Portsmouth Railroad.**



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# 15. Rho de Island:

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**1. New**

**York,**

**Providen**

**ce and**



# **Boston**

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# **Railroad**

---

# **- This**

# **Railroad**

**is  
credited  
with 50  
miles in**

**Rhode**

**Island**

**but 3.37**

**miles of**

**it were in  
Connecti  
cut  
under**

# the Stonington on and Provident

**ce**

**Railroad**

**portion**

**of it.**

# 2. Pro

**vidence**

**and**

**Boston**

**Railroad**



# - The Massac husetts version

**of this  
railroad,  
the  
Boston**

**and**

**Provide**

**nce**

**Railroad**

**, is  
credited  
with all  
47.47**

**miles of  
this  
railroad  
but the**

**1880  
Census  
tells us  
that**

**10.42  
miles  
were in  
Rhode**

**Island  
under  
this  
name.**



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**1. Br**

**attlebor**

**o and**

**Fitchbu**

**rg**

**Railroa**

**d** . -

**This is**

**the**

**Vermont**

**portion**

**portion**

**of the**

**Fitchbu**

**rg**

**Railroa**

**d of**

**Massac**

**husetts**

**which**

**was**

**given**

**all**

**65.78**

**miles**

**when**

**10.42**

**were in**



**Vermont**

**nt**

**under**

**this**

**name.**

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**Where  
did the**



**extra**

**14.15**

**miles**

**in New  
Englan  
d come**

**from?**

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**1. C**

**alais**

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**Railroa**

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**d**

---

**- This  
railroad  
d**

**constr**

**ucted**

**2 miles**

**before  
1850  
and**

# the 1860 Census

s put

them

after

**1850**

**so**

**they**



**were**

**not**

**counte**

**d for**

**the**

**1850**

**figures**

**. This**

**was**

**correct  
ed in  
the**

**1880**

**Censu**

**s.**

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2. G

ranite

Railro

**ad**  
**\_\_\_\_\_**

**- This**

**2.79**

**mile**

**railroa**

**d was**

**not  
count  
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**becau**

**se it**

**was**

**built**

**before**

**1830**

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**- This**

**9.36**

**mile**

**railroa**

**d was**

**built**

**in**

**1849-1**

**850,**



**but  
the  
1860**

**Censu**

**s said**

**it was**

# built after 1850

**and**

**did**

**not**

**count**

**it for**

**1850.**

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