

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

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 (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

Railroad

- This

Railroad

**is
credited
with 50
miles in**

Rhode

Island

but 3.37

miles of

**it were in
Connecti
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the Stonington on and Provident

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Railroad

portion

of it.

2. Pro

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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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**Where
did the**

extra

14.15

miles

**in New
Englan
d come**

from?

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1. C

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**- This
railroad
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2. G

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mile

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1850

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1850.

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