**COMMENTS ON DIGITAL LISTING OF THE CORPORATE HISTORY OF THE BOSTON AND MAINE RAILROAD ISSUED BY THE ICC, 1916**

This digital listing in an Excel file of the corporate history of the Boston & Maine Railroad was taken from the 1916 ICC document Corporate History of the Boston & Maine Railroad. The digital listing was prepared over a period of nearly a year from spring 2019 to late winter 2020 by David D. Ashenden, member of B&MRRHS Archival Committee.

**Purpose:**

As a student of railroad history I undertook to enter the data from the 1916 ICC Corporate History of the B&M so that I would have the information available in digital format and organized such that it could be sorted, searched or filtered using the tools Excel offers. This effort was primarily for my personal use and edification in attempting to sort out the complexities of the development of the Boston and Maine Railroad and its predecessor lines. The format was set up for my needs and not necessarily as others might desire. I am, however, submitting the data to the B&MRRHS to be released at its discretion. A few words of explanation are in order.

**Set Up:**

There are nine fields or columns each listed and described below.

**1. REC** - for record. These are unique numbers assigned to each record 1 to 4335. These are useful to separate records which otherwise may be confusing. Also the file can be reset if need be to its original condition by sorting by REC.

**2. NUM** - for number. This is a means to designate the location of a record in the original ICC document by page and position on the page. The page number is separated from the position number by a decimal. For example the entry 5.060 refers to page 5 and the sixth item on that page. A user must be warned that these position item numbers may be controversial. Some items that seemed irrelevant may not have been entered or counted. Likewise in running down a page not all individuals might count in the same way. But the position number should give a broad hint where to look on the page if there is need to check against the original data. Also there are many redundancies because more one railroad may be involved in a specific item such as when road A is leased by road B the item is repeated for both roads with separate symbols. All items are designated with three decimals places so that should an additional item needing inclusion be decided upon after many have already been designated there is the means to insert it without upsetting all the records previously entered. The third decimal place was rarely used. Using this system permits sorting by this field.

**3. YEAR** - for year. This is straight forward and is for convenience in contrast to the specific date discussed next.

**4. DATE** - for date. This is expressed as an eight digit number year, month, day such as 18750613 which is for June 13, 1875. Excel date format cannot handle dates in the 1800's. This method permits sorting by date. Most dates given are specific to the day but there are some in which the day is omitted. These voids are entered as zeros. A date given only as June 1875 is rendered as 18750600. For those dates given only by year such as 1875 would be entered as 18750000. The date is useful because it can be used to sort a set of selected records chronologically which may render a thumbnail history. If there are records with dates containing zeros they are of course placed out of order but within the correct year and a user must exercise discretion.

**5. RR** - for railroad. The railroads or other corporations are all identified by symbol for purposes of searching, sorting and filtering; example BO&ME is used to designate Boston and Maine. The symbols used are listed on sheet 2 of the digital file identifying the 177 corporations included in the corporate data. In that listing **NO**. for number is the number assigned to the corporation in the corporate data; **PAGE** is a reference to the initial page in the original document for any given corporation.

**6. ITEM** - is a summary of the information provided in the corporate history for each and every entry. This item may be repeated as was the case for symbol if more than one railroad is involved such that the information provided for each road will be returned in any search or filtering by specific roads.

**7. REFERENCE** - a citation for the document and page number. This is for the convenience of the user should he wish to post a reference for any item that might be cited in any writings or notes; that reference is right there with the item.

**8. CAT** - for category. This is an effort to designate the nature of the record. Admittedly some of the designations may be arbitrary and subject to revision but most are not ambiguous The categories used are as follows:

**ABD** - abandoned - a reference to abandonment of a section of line

**ACD** - acquired - a reference to trackage acquired by means other than being built

**BNK** - bankrupt - self explanatory

**CNL** - control - mostly if not entirely control by stock control

**CON** - consolidation - two or more corporations merged into one corporation or a new corporation; there may be uncertainty between the use of the terms consolidation versus merger

**FCL** - foreclosure - self explanatory

**INC** - incorporated - usually the date of incorporation

**LSD** - leased - a road leased to or by another

**MRG** - merged - one line merged into another; understanding the line merged into another loses its corporate identity whereas the absorbing line continues its corporate existence; see note with consolidation - the distinction between merger and consolidation may not always be clear

**OPN** - opened - usually the date of the opening of a section of trackage with points from and to and mileage

**OPR** - operated - a note concerning the operator of a railroad which may not necessarily be the owner of the trackage such as operation under lease, under contract or other arrangement

**ORG** - organized - dates of acceptance of articles of incorporation, election of officers, election of directors, etc.

**RCV** - receivers - instances in which receivers are appointed

**ROR** - reorganized - refers to a corporate reorganization with details provided in each instance

**SLD** - sold - a given road sold to another road

**TRK** - trackage rights - notes those instances where trackage rights were in force

**TRS** - trustees - notes the appointment of trustees

**9. TO B&M** - this entry is appended to those records which record the joining of a given line to the Boston & Maine and by the means of the join using the designations listed in field 8.

**Suggestions in using the listing:**

Using the filter tool for the RR field all records for a given railroad can be selected and saved as a separate file. Sorting those records by date will yield a chronological time line for that railroad.

I used the filter tool in the field CAT for the designation OPN and then sorted by date to yield a chronological listing of the opening dates of all the segments of the various railroads that ultimately went into the Boston & Maine Railroad.

These are but two examples. The imagination of the user considering the information for which he may be looking may provide numerous approaches as to what can be done.

Once the basic Excel file has been downloaded the user is free to reformat it, rearrange data to suit his needs, change the various fields, substitute other designations, add additional data, remove needless data or in short use the data in any way that may fit his use.

**Errors and Corrections:**

I regret to state that as I have been using this data I have been finding various errors. Mostly these are minor typos which are promptly corrected whenever encountered. There are, however, more serious errors such as inconsistent dates between the Date field and the Item field, inconsistent symbols in the Railroad field and Item field just to cite some instances. These cases likewise have been corrected as encountered by going back to the original document if needed. But the data is vast and to date much has not been sampled meaning that there are probably multiple as of yet undetected errors. To date I have made extensive use of the data for the New Hampshire lines and this is where most of the corrections have been made. As of this time I am anticipating periodically resubmitting updated versions to the B&MRRHS.

**Limitations and a caution to users:**

I do not guarantee the accuracy of this data.

The user must be aware that the data reflect the state of the B&M as of no later than June 30, 1916 but probably somewhat earlier possibly as far back as June 30, 1914. The cut off date for organizing the data is not clear to me. Only a few years later in the reorganization of 1919 many of the leased lines were merged into the B&M corporate structure and none of that is reported here.

For a long period I had assumed that this document was put together by the ICC but fairly recently I was led to believe that the ICC ordered the B&M to prepare the document. If that is the case the chore fell to B&M personnel to assemble the information and prepare the typed version.

In going through the entries I regret to state that I have found some that are suspect for various reasons including inconsistencies. I am not in a position to substantiate these suspicions but I have marked them with comments in italics. All the italics are my comments and conversely all comments I have added to the data are in italics.

In addition there are as yet the undetected errors I made in putting all this together. I would welcome corrections that any user may note.

David D. Ashenden

August, 2020