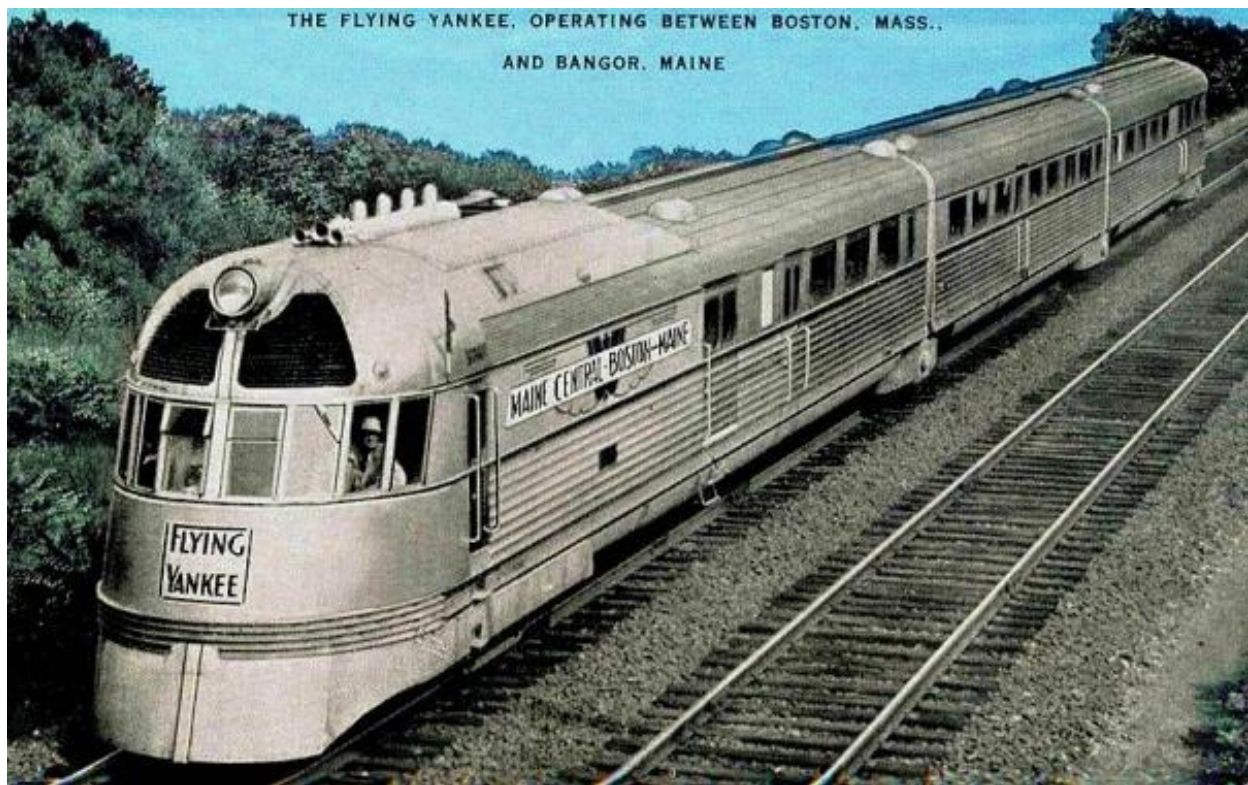


Bangor to Boston Passenger Trains --- Part 1: A Look Back at What Was Offered in '30s & '40s

Sources: Flying Yankee Assoc, Streamliner Schedules

In the 1930s, railroads in America relied on steam locomotives to move passengers and freight, but a new type of locomotive power was beginning to appear on the tracks: diesel power. Small diesel locomotives were showing up in railroad yards as switchers, shuffling and sorting freight cars at low speeds as they broke down trains that arrived and built up trains for departure. By the middle of the decade, a few railroads were trying out diesels to power high speed (for the time) passenger trains. These trains consisted of a diesel-powered lead car semi-permanently coupled to trailing passenger cars. These pioneering railroads included western lines like the Union Pacific and the Burlington, but also two partnering eastern railroads: the Boston & Maine and the Maine Central.

The diesel-powered train that Pullman-Standard built for the B&M and MEC consisted of three cars: a leading diesel-baggage-buffet-coach unit, a mid-train coach, and a trailing coach-lounge, providing a total of 132 seats. The cars were streamlined and constructed of stainless steel, as shown in the following photo.



The new passenger train, dubbed the Flying Yankee, began operation on the B&M between Boston and Portland and on the MEC between Portland and Bangor in 1935. The timetable below shows the 1936 schedule that the Flying Yankee maintained Monday through Saturday. The 1936 schedule shows that the Flying Yankee trainset, starting out of Portland, made a morning trip to Boston and then made a trip north to Portland and on to Bangor in the afternoon. The train returned to Portland and on to Boston in the evening. In the late evening, it returned from Boston to Portland, finishing its daily runs. The trip between Boston and Portland took about two hours. The trip between Boston and Bangor took about five hours. By comparison, the Downeaster makes the trip between Portland and Boston on a schedule around 2 hours and 30 minutes.

The Flying Yankee

Boston & Maine Railroad

Maine Central Railroad

April 26, 1936

15	265		Train Number				142	16
Ex Su	Ex Su		Miles	(Boston & Maine)	Services		Ex Su	Ex Su
11 00A	10 30P	Dp	0.0	Boston, MA (North Station) (ET)	C	Ar	9 25A	9 30P
	11 04P		27.8	Ipswich, MA	C			
	11 15P		37.3	Newburyport, MA	C			
	11 38P		56.9	Portsmouth, NH	C			
	12 20A		96.2	Biddeford, ME	C			
12 06P			67.1	Dover, NH	C		8 19A	8 24P
			99.1	Biddeford, ME			7 51A	
			103.7	Old Orchard Beach, ME (See Note)			7 46A	
			108.7	Scarboro Beach, ME (See Note)			7 40A	
12 50P	12 40A	Ar	114.7	Portland, ME (Union Station)	T C M	Dp	7 30A	7 40P
(Maine Central)								
12 55P		Dp	114.7	Portland, ME (Union Station)	T C M	Ar		7 30P
1 42P		Ar				Dp		6 43P
1 45P		Dp	150.2	Lewiston, ME	T C	Ar		6 41P
F 2 09P			169.8	Winthrop, ME	T C			F 6 17P
2 50P		Ar				Dp		5 41P
2 52P		Dp	198.4	Waterville, ME	T C	Ar		5 38P
F 3 25P			226.2	Newport Jct., ME	T C			
D 3 52P			248.0	Northern Maine Jct., ME	T C			
4 00P		Ar	253.7	Bangor, ME (ET)	T C	Dp		4 15P

How was the Flying Yankee able to cover so much ground in so little time? There seem to be two major reasons. One is that the mainline between Portland and Boston was all double track, so that the Flying Yankee could get around opposing and slower trains on the line more easily. Over half of the mainline between Bangor and Waterville was also double track. The other reason is that the Flying Yankee had few regular intermediate stops between Bangor and Boston. Although there were some seasonal and “flag” stops, the only regular intermediate stops were in Portland, Lewiston, and Waterville. The Portland to Boston leg operated as a virtual non-stop (express) service.

In the years following World War II, the B&M and MEC invested in new diesel passenger train sets for the Bangor to Boston runs as the original Flying Yankee equipment was transferred to other parts of the B&M system. Each of the new trainsets included a locomotive, a baggage-coach, several full coaches, and a diner-lounge. The trainsets would be used on three Bangor to Boston trains: the Flying Yankee, the Kennebec, and the Pine Tree. This photo shows the fully equipped Kennebec.



The three trains kept a schedule around 5 hours and 30 minutes for the full trip from Bangor to Boston, stopping in Waterville, Portland and a limited number of other scheduled stops. The 2-hour Portland to Boston express schedule was maintained for all three trains. The Flying Yankee continued to serve Lewiston via the MEC “Back Road”. The Kennebec and the Pine Tree served Augusta and Brunswick via the MEC “Lower Road”. For each of these trains, the added 30 minutes on the Bangor to Portland leg allowed some time for added stops and baggage handling. Below is the schedule, as presented in a 1947 ad in the Boston Globe. Under the 1947 schedule, the train departure times offered travelers a range of options to suit their needs. Boston departures were mid-morning, noon, and late afternoon. Bangor departures were early morning, early afternoon, and late afternoon.



3 NEW TRAINS

HERE ARE YOUR TRAIN SCHEDULES BETWEEN BOSTON and BANGOR...

<i>Read Down</i>			WEEKDAYS (Daylight Saving Time)	<i>Read Up</i>		
KENNEBEC	FLYING YANKEE	PINE TREE		PINE TREE	KENNEBEC	FLYING YANKEE
9:45 A.M.	12:00 noon	4:30 P.M. Lv.	BOSTON	Ar. 1:10 P.M.	7:20 P.M.	10:15 P.M.
11:45 A.M.	2:00 P.M.	6:30 P.M. Ar.	PORTLAND	Lv. 11:10 A.M.	5:20 P.M.	8:15 P.M.
12:00 noon	2:05 P.M.	6:40 P.M. Lv.	PORTLAND	Ar. 10:55 A.M.	5:05 P.M.	8:05 P.M.
1:07 P.M.	2:54 P.M.	6:05 P.M. Ar.	LEWISTON	Lv. 9:37 A.M.	4:36 P.M.	7:15 P.M.
----	3:29 P.M.	----- Ar.	WINTHROP	Lv. -----	-----	6:43 P.M.
12:36 P.M.	----	7:16 P.M. Ar.	BRUNSWICK	Lv. 10:16 A.M.	4:26 P.M.	6:25 P.M.
1:24 P.M.	----	8:06 P.M. Ar.	AUGUSTA	Lv. 9:28 A.M.	3:38 P.M.	6:10 P.M.
1:53 P.M.	4:04 P.M.	8:34 P.M. Ar.	WATERVILLE	Lv. 9:02 A.M.	3:11 P.M.	6:00 P.M.
2:28 P.M.	4:37 P.M.	9:09 P.M. Ar.	PITTSFIELD	Lv. 8:33 A.M.	2:36 P.M.	5:28 P.M.
3:25 P.M.	5:30 P.M.	10:00 P.M. Ar.	BANGOR	Lv. 7:45 A.M.	1:40 P.M.	4:40 P.M.

a---by connecting train. b---by connecting bus.

For Sunday schedules, consult your local ticket agent.

So, what conclusions can be drawn from the review of the Bangor to Boston passenger services offered in the 1930s and 1940s? One is that Boston, in those days, was as important a destination for Maine rail passengers as it is for today's Downeaster passengers. The Flying Yankee, Kennebec, and Pine Tree were developed to provide a speedy service connecting Maine cities from Bangor to Portland with New England's largest city. Boston was so important a destination for central Maine cities, that these trains had no regular passenger stops between Portland and Boston. Intermediate stops between these two cities were handled by a series of local B&M trains on slower schedules. Another conclusion is that the use of limited stops between Bangor and Portland and Boston and the technology of the day allowed these trains to maintain schedules on a par with those of today's passenger services. A final conclusion is that close cooperation between the B&M and the MEC on passenger equipment and scheduling made Bangor to Boston service possible and viable, much as the cooperation of today's railroad entities makes the Downeaster the success that it is.