

= Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad =

The Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad (reporting mark MPA) , familiarly known as the " Ma and Pa " , was an American short @-@ line railroad between York and Hanover , Pennsylvania , formerly operating passenger and freight trains on its original line between York and Baltimore , Maryland , from 1901 until the 1950s . The Ma and Pa was popular with railfans in the 1930s and 1940s for its antique equipment and curving , picturesque right @-@ of @-@ way through the hills of rural Maryland and Pennsylvania . Reflecting its origin as the unintended product of the merger of two 19th @-@ century narrow gauge railways , the meandering Ma and Pa line took 77 @.@ 2 miles (124 km) to connect Baltimore and York , although the two cities are only 45 miles (72 km) apart in a straight line .

Passenger service was discontinued on August 31 , 1954 , and the section from Baltimore to Whiteford , Maryland (just south of the Mason @-@ Dixon line demarcating the Pennsylvania @-@ Maryland border) was abandoned in June 1958 . Most of the remaining original railroad line was abandoned by 1984 . The Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad acquired a former 19 @-@ mile (31 km) Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) branch line between York and Hanover in the 1980s , now operated by a successor corporation , York Railway .

= = History = =

= = = 19th @-@ century predecessors = = =

The Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad was formed from two earlier 19th @-@ century 3 ft (914 mm) narrow gauge railways : the Baltimore & Delta Railway , later the Baltimore & Lehigh Railway , and the York and Peach Bottom Railway , later the York Southern Railroad . Construction of the Baltimore & Delta Railway started in 1881 , and passenger trains between Baltimore and Towson , Maryland began on April 17 , 1882 . Later that year the company was merged into the Maryland Central Railroad . The line was extended northward to Bel Air , Maryland on June 21 , 1883 , and the following January , the line was completed to Delta , Pennsylvania .

In Pennsylvania , the Peach Bottom Railway was incorporated in 1871 . The railway 's Middle Division laid narrow gauge track between York and Red Lion by August 1874 and completed its line southward to Delta in 1876 . It went bankrupt in 1881 and was reorganized as the York and Peach Bottom Railway (Y & PB) in 1882 . The Y & PB merged with the Maryland Central Railway (successor to the Maryland Central RR) in 1891 , becoming the Baltimore and Lehigh , and the new company operated trains on the combined track between York and Baltimore .

Both railroads struggled with light freight traffic and financial difficulties in the 1890s . Because of their narrow gauge construction , the Baltimore & Lehigh Railway and York Southern Railroad could not interchange freight cars with other lines . The two companies finally converted to standard gauge between 1898 ? 1900 and subsequently merged to form the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad on February 12 , 1901 . The result was the circuitous , 77 @.@ 2 @-@ mile (124 km) " Ma and Pa " route between Baltimore and York , compared to the competing Pennsylvania Railroad 's more direct 56 @-@ mile (90 km) distance between the two cities on its Northern Central Railway division . The completed line had grades up to 2 @.@ 3 percent and 55 sharp curves of 16 ? 20 degrees (most mainline railroads seldom exceed six degrees , and even the former Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad 's mainline through the Rocky Mountains does not exceed 12 degrees) .

= = = 20th century = = =

Following the merger , the Ma and Pa operated through passenger and freight trains between York and Baltimore , as well as local trains at each end of the line , hauling mail and express , slate , marble , anthracite coal , lumber , furniture , and agricultural products to market . Particularly on the

Pennsylvania Division (Delta ? York) , slate from Delta and manufactured goods from Red Lion and York were mainstays of the railroad 's outbound freight traffic in the early years . On the Maryland Division , inbound anthracite coal deliveries accounted for a significant volume of carloadings , along with milk from the many dairy farms in the area . One early morning train from Fallston boarded more than 1 @,@ 100 gallons of milk daily and was dubbed the " Milky Way " . The line was profitable and traffic volume was such that additional locomotives were necessary .

The Ma and Pa acquired two 0 @-@ 6 @-@ 0 Baldwin switchers in 1913 , # 29 and # 30 (pictured) , called " jewels of engines , in some respects the most attractive the road had " , by writer George Hilton in The Ma & Pa ? A History of the Maryland & Pennsylvania Railroad . The next year , three 2 @-@ 8 @-@ 0 " Consolidations " by Baldwin were added to the roster , providing more powerful locomotives for the Baltimore ? York through freights . At its peak , the railroad had 16 locomotives and 160 pieces of rolling stock , with 573 employees .

With increasing competition from trucks and automobiles in the 1920s , passenger volume began to decline along with less @-@ than @-@ carload freight , such as milk from the many dairy farms along the Ma and Pa 's pastoral route . The Ma and Pa substituted more economical , self @-@ propelled gas @-@ electric passenger cars for steam @-@ powered passenger trains in 1927 ? 1928 . Carload freight volume increased in the 1920s , however , as more industries located along the line , and earnings were strong enough for the company to declare dividends in 1930 and 1931 . The Ma and Pa 's relative prosperity ended with the economic downturn during the Great Depression , which cut the railroad 's gross revenues by half from 1932 to 1935 .

In the mid @-@ 1930s , the Ma and Pa became an early favorite of railfans , attracted by its hilly , curving line through rural Maryland and Pennsylvania . The railroad offered several popular fan excursions pulled by its elderly steam locomotives .

Following the end of World War II , the Ma and Pa acquired four diesel locomotives for more economical operations , but traffic declined significantly . When the Ma and Pa 's mail contract was cancelled by the U.S. postal service , the railroad discontinued all passenger service on August 31 , 1954 . One person on the last passenger train recalled that many riders came from as far away as Boston , Massachusetts , and Washington , D.C. , to participate in the historic event , along with members of the National Railway Historical Society . The picturesque line 's last steam engine dropped its fire for the final time on November 29 , 1956 .

The lack of traffic on the railroad 's 44 @-@ mile (71 km) Baltimore ? Whiteford Maryland Division in the 1950s was particularly acute . One of the last major shipments to occur was Indiana limestone for the construction of Baltimore 's Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in 1956 . The Baltimore ? Whiteford segment in Maryland was finally abandoned altogether on June 11 , 1958 , leaving only the stone abutments where the tracks crossed York Road in Towson on a steel girder bridge . A local group of history buffs placed a bronze plaque on the west abutment in 1999 , commemorating the departed railroad 's place in Towson history .

In the 1960s , the Ma and Pa Railroad continued to solicit business along its line for its remaining 34 @. @ 8 @-@ mile (56 @. @ 0 km) Whiteford ? York segment , almost entirely in Pennsylvania . In 1964 , it added a siding 905 feet (276 m) long near Red Lion to serve a new cigar box factory . In 1971 , the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad was acquired by Emons Industries . Primarily hauling slate from a quarry at Delta , and furniture from a factory in Red Lion , the Ma and Pa 's Pennsylvania Division continued in operation until June 14 , 1978 , when the line was further

reduced to the 9 @-@ mile (14 km) York ? Red Lion section . The Red Lion freight station was closed on November 1 , 1980 ; when the Pennsylvania town 's furniture manufacturer shuttered its doors in 1984 , the Red Lion section of the railroad was also abandoned .

= = Currently = =

The Emons @-@ controlled Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad acquired 19 miles (31 km) of a former PRR branch line between York and Hanover , Pennsylvania in the 1980s . In December 1999 , Emons merged its M & P subsidiary with another area short @-@ line , Yorkrail , forming the York Railway . In 2002 , Genesee and Wyoming gained control of the 42 @-@ mile (68 km) York

Railway , including the former M & P Railroad trackage between York ? Hanover . The York Railway currently serves 40 online rail customers and connects with the Norfolk Southern and CSX railroads .

A small , 3 @-@ mile (5 km) fragment of the original railroad line still exists between Laurel and Muddy Creek Forks in York County , Pennsylvania , maintained by the Maryland and Pennsylvania Railroad Preservation Society . Founded by enthusiasts and former employees in 1986 , the group has restored the Muddy Creek Forks station and also has a small collection of rolling stock there . The preserved Red Lion station is now a museum operated by the Red Lion Area Historical Society . Another section of the Ma and Pa 's old right @-@ of @-@ way was converted in 1998 to a rail trail in Harford County , Maryland . Now 6 miles (10 km) long , the MA & PA Heritage Trail through Bel Air is used for hiking and biking .

In Baltimore , near Pennsylvania Station , Ma and Pa track remnants and the old roundhouse , freight shed , and yard shed are still extant . The Baltimore Streetcar Museum now operates in this area .

In York County , the Muddy Creek Bridge , Delta Trestle Bridge , and Scott Creek Bridge @-@ North were added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995 .