



Railroads of Cape Cod and the Islands

Andrew T. Eldredge

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In 1848, the railroad extended to Cape Cod to serve the Boston & Sandwich Glass Company. By 1887, fourteen of the fifteen towns on Cape Cod were connected by the railroad. For a short time, even the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard had railroad lines. As the highways expanded in the years following World War II, the automobile became the primary mode of transportation. By 1959, year-round Cape Cod passenger service had been discontinued. Today, many miles of track have been removed to accommodate recreational bike paths.

Using hundreds of historic images, Railroads of Cape Cod and the Islands illustrates the rich heritage of passenger and freight rail transportation on Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, and Nantucket. Mainland connections once involved transfer between ship and rail at wharves in Provincetown, Hyannis, and Woods Hole. Since 1935, trains have crossed the Cape Cod Canal on the world's second longest vertical-lift bridge.

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