

THE WEST END DIVISION OF THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD

The mountain subdivision is a historic piece of railroad between Viaduct Junction in Cumberland, Maryland and GN tower at East Grafton, West Virginia. I have continued this presentation to D Tower in Grafton Yard.

The B & O constructed this line as a single track in 1852, with double track added in some parts in 1875, with the whole line being doubled in 1888. During this time the West End Division of the B & O became an important link between Cumberland, Maryland and St. Louis, Missouri.

Between the years 1910-1913 the creation of the mallet steam locomotive occurred. The added power of this locomotive led to increase in train length, which in turn saw a major increase in the line's traffic. This prompted the railroad to add a third track over several areas of the division for the helper grades.

The main line has four (4) major grades:

17 mile grade from Piedmont to Altamont-The Summit of the Alleghenies, 2.28 %, climb this is going west
Cranberry Grade from Rowlesburg to Terra Alta- 2.4 % and at Salt Lick Curve a 2.8% climb, this is going east
Cheat River Grade from Rowlesburg to Blaser- 2.1% climb, this is going west
Newburg Grade from Newburg to Tunnelton- 2% climb, this is going east

The West End was one of the first lines on the system to have diesels. The arrival of several new EMD F-7's at M & K junction in 1949 marked the beginning of the end of steam locomotives

By 1973 the third track had been taken up on most portions of the West End. The Helper stations at M & K Junction, Keyser and Hardman also had been reduced. The Final Act on the West End was the main line being cut from Clarksburg, West Virginia to Cincinnati, Ohio in August 1985. One year later an additional blow occurred; all helper service at M & K Junction moved to Grafton. This ended over 70 years of helper service at the junction.

Towers began to close as well:

Viaduct Junction opened in 1902 and closed in 1997, tower is demolished
Q Tower at Hardman built in 1907 and closed in 1998, tower is demolished

Z Tower in Keyser opened in 1906 and closed in 2009, tower is demolished

MK Tower in Rowlesburg, the last remaining on the line, closed in 2010. The only manned tower left in operation on the line today is F Tower in Fostoria, Ohio.

Over the years inventions such as airbrakes and automatic couplers were developed and tested on the West End. Historically, the subdivision has been the proving ground for new technology with the understanding that mountain railroading is nowhere more extreme than here.

Some other important facts of The West End:

M & K Junction at one time had 42 helper crews stationed in Rowlesburg

Oakland Station was built in 1885 and Rowlesburg Station in 1873, both are still standing

West End Tower built in 1912, and closed in 1985, GN opened in 1911, closed in 1970 both still standing

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WEST END MILEAGE STATIONS AND CALL SIGNS		
MILEAGE	STATIONS	CALL SIGNS
0	CUMBERLAND	WC
0.1	BALTIMORE STREET	BS
0.6	VIADUCT JUNCTION	ND
9.2	MCKENZIE	CO
13.2	RAWLINGS	RW
23.3	KEYSER	KY
24.8	WEST KEYSER	Z
28.3	PIEDMONT	P
29.5	CENTRAL JUNCTION	
30.3	BLOOMINGTON	
32.8	BIG CURVE	BC
34.3	BOND	BD
39	STRECKER	HX
41.8	SWANTON	SN
44.2	WILSON	WI
45.1	ALTAMONT	AM
47.9	DEER PARK	DE
51.3	MTN LAKE PARK	PK
53.9	OAKLAND	OA
59.3	HUTTON	HN
59.9	CORINTH	CN
62.7	RINARD	RX
63.7	TERRA ALTA	CA
68.7	RODEMER	RO
71.4	AMBERSBURG	
74.2	MCMILLAN	MC
75.6	M & K TOWER	MK
76.1	ROWLESBURG	R
80.6	BLASER	KY
82	TUNNELTON	KN
83.7	WEST END TOWER	WS
88.9	NEWBURG	NE
90.1	INDEPENDENCE	
91.5	HARDMAN	Q
96.1	THORNTON	UN
99.2	GN-EAST GRAFTON	GN
100.9	GRAFTON YARD D TOWER	D