

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This is a copy of a 1999 printout from the Maine Department of Transportation Division of Rights of Way. It was excerpted from a listing of actions taken by the County Commissioners with regard to petitions for layouts and discontinuances of county roads. At the time this printout was made, there was a computer program which allowed the records to be sorted to select for just one feature; in this case, road discontinuances. While the listing of County Commissioners' actions does still exist, the program with which the list was compiled does not, so it is no longer possible to sort them to select one feature.

When this was printed in 1999, it contained all the *county* records of road discontinuances which the DOT had been able to find. This does NOT include *town* road discontinuances. Also bear in mind that as of 1976, all county ways in organized townships became town ways. After 1976, jurisdiction to discontinue these roads transferred from counties to towns, so they could have been discontinued by a town, and the record would not show up here.

Many of the roads in this list have not been identified. When you are searching for records of a road, it can be frustrating to know that a road in the town in question was discontinued, and not know whether or not it's the right road. Sometimes it's possible to identify a road by tracing its layout, or by pinpointing details from the request for discontinuance. (More on this later.)

This listing is alphabetized by town, with townships and plantations sprinkled in amongst the towns. The column labeled "C" is a code number for the county. The code numbers are as follows:

01 - Androscoggin	05 - Hancock	09 - Oxford	13 - Somerset
02 - Aroostook	06 - Kennebec	10 - Penobscot	14 - Waldo
03 - Cumberland	07 - Knox	11 - Piscataquis	15 - Washington
04 - Franklin	08 - Lincoln	12 - Sagadahoc	16 - York

Bear in mind that county lines changed several times over the years, so one town may show road actions being recorded in more than one county. The column labeled "vol" refers to the volume number of the records of County Commissioners' hearings for that county. The "page" column refers to the page number within that volume. You can go to the county record books, find the right volume, look up the page number, and find the record to which this listing refers. "D" stands for discontinued, and since this was a printout of only the discontinued roads, every road here has this designation. The "year" column indicates the year in which the discontinuance action was recorded. The "remarks" column contains any additional information that is known about the discontinuance action listed, and may or may not identify the road.

There were just a handful of roads that were recorded as "C" for closed, rather than discontinued, and those do not appear here. I have gone through the records by hand to locate these, (since there is no longer a computer program to do that,) and have listed them in an Addendum to these instructions.

If you are very lucky, the remarks column will actually name the road. If you are only partly lucky, it may give a road designation number such as "part of 0607447." In this number, the first two digits are the county designation. The second two are the volume number, and the last three are the page number, just as in the columns before. (Sometimes there is an extra zero on the end, and sometimes there is an extra digit that specifies which of a series of actions applies.) These numbers refer to the record of when the road was laid out by the county, or to

other actions taken regarding the same road.

The DOT Division of Rights of Way has maps that label roads with these layout numbers whenever possible. (Do not confuse these with the road designation number that appears on the Mapviewer function of the DOT's website. The Mapviewer numbers appear in a similar format, but do not necessarily refer to county layouts.) If the DOT has the road for which you are looking labeled on their map, you will be able to see if that number appears as a discontinued road. (Caution - often, only a portion of a road was discontinued, so you need to make sure which portion is indicated.) If the road in question does not have a number designation on the DOT map, that may mean that it was not a county road, or it may mean that they were unable to positively identify its layout. Bear in mind that town roads were roads which were entirely within one town, while county roads were roads leading from one town to another, and invariably crossed town lines. If the road in question crosses a town line, it was likely a county road. Sometimes what appears to be a short section of road was once part of a longer road. If it lines up with other sections of road all across town, it may once have been a county way.

If the remarks column indicates that one or more roads listed as discontinued were "not located," it's worth looking up the discontinuance order in the county records to see if there are any clues that might identify the road. Sometimes there is mention of a named geographical feature such as a hill or body of water. Sometimes there is reference to the home of some person. If there are such clues but you don't recognize them, a bit of detective work may be needed. One of the difficulties that can arise during road research is the matter of name changes. Roads and geographical features were often known by the name of the person who lived there, and when the property changed hands, so did the name of the road.

This also raised problems when only a portion of a road was discontinued. Often, the designation was, "to the house of" so it becomes necessary to know where that person lived in the year the road was discontinued. When it comes to really old records, locating where a person lived can be a real challenge. One useful tactic is to trace the chain of title from the current property owners backwards. Not only can this locate names that may appear in discontinuances - sometimes the description in one or another of the deeds along a road will describe the road as being discontinued. If this is a change in the description of a property, it can give you a clue to the approximate date on which the road may have been discontinued, making it easier to locate the record.

Sometimes a lifelong resident will remember what was done, or there may be a town history containing accounts of early residents. Look for any old maps. Many town historical societies have an old map or two that show where every person in town lived, and if you're lucky, the date may coincide with the date you need. You can also try [www.historicmaps.org](#) which has a whole library of historic maps to explore.

Another possibility is records of school houses. Early in the state's history, each little neighborhood had its own one-room schoolhouse, and records may show not only the location of each schoolhouse, but also list which families attended which school. That can help identify who lived in which part of town in the year in question. Even cemeteries can yield helpful information by giving the birth and death dates of residents, or by showing who was related to whom.

While the DOT printout unfortunately does not positively identify every county road that was discontinued, where it does identify it, that information is invaluable. Even in cases where the discontinuance is not identified, this record makes a great starting point for road research, saving hours of pouring through county records looking for discontinuance actions.