THE
LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD
A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY

by

Vincent F. Seyfried

Part Four

The Bay Ridge & Manhattan Beach Divisions

L.I.R.R. Operation on the Brighton and Culver Lines

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Preface

This fourth volume presents the history of the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway, the latest of the competing railroads independently constructed in the 1870's and later absorbed into the Long Island Rail Road system. Unlike previous volumes which carried their stories to 1880 only, the landmark year of reorganization on the road, this fourth volume presents the full history of the Bay Ridge and Manhattan Beach rail operations down to the end of passenger service in 1924. The isolation of the Bay Ridge Division from the rest of the Long Island Rail Road system, and the peculiarly local nature of the traffic in and around Coney Island, and always wholly within Brooklyn, seemed to dictate the presentation of this half-steam railroad, half-rapid transit hybrid as a unity without limitation of time. The Manhattan Beach Railway conducted joint operations for many years with the giant Brooklyn Rapid Transit system; these interesting inter-relations with the Brighton, Culver and West End lines plus a number of trolley lines, which, if proposed today, would be regarded as daring and imaginative innovations, are here described for the first time as they existed three quarters of a century ago.

Some effort has been made to present not only the transit picture but also the colorful story of one of America's great resorts. Manhattan Beach in its heyday was the playground of presidents and princes, the watering place for the old-line New York aristocracy, the favorite of the social and political haute-monde, and where Victor Herbert and John Phillip Sousa first gained prominence.

The author wishes to make grateful acknowledgement to Mr. Harold Fagerberg for most of the illustrations; to Mr. Harold Goldsmith for the engine rosters; to Mr. Edward Watson for details of trolley routings; to Mr. William Rugen for photos and timetables; to President Frank Aikman of the Long Island Rail Road for blueprints of track installations, and above all to the Long Island Historical Society, without whose unique newspaper files this work would have been all but impossible. Once again, as so often in the past, I take pleasure in expressing sincerest thanks to Mr. Felix Reifschneider of Fairton, New Jersey for his unfailing encouragement, and for moral, financial and editorial support of this series.

Volume V, The Golden Age of the Long Island Rail Road, *covering the years 1880–1900, is in preparation.*

Vincent F. Seyfried

CHAPTER 1

New York, Bay Ridge & Jamaica R.R.

THE Manhattan Beach Division of the Long Island R. R., though hardly more than 19 miles in length at its peak, is different from all other branches of the road in that it was pieced together, so to speak, from three different roads, with extensive trackage rights over a fourth. Each of these constituent companies had been founded for a different purpose and in a different area by very different groups of people, yet all came to be amalgamated into one railroad thanks to the ingenuity and planning of one man—Austin Corbin.

In point of time, the New York, Bay Ridge & Jamaica R.R. was the first of these. Incorporated in 1875, this road was created expressly to bring to completion the abruptly abandoned attempts of an earlier railroad, the New York & Hempstead, to establish a line from Bay Ridge through New Utrecht, Flatbush, Flatlands, New Lots, Woodhaven and Jamaica to Hempstead, about 21 miles. Though a route of this sort may seem strange to us today, it had much to recommend it in the eyes of investors in the post-Civil War era. No one had ever been entirely satisfied with the Long Island R.R. Some objected to its mid-Island alignment and the dead-ending of the Brooklyn track in East New York; others found fault with the management and its policies; still others felt that the freight rates were too high and were susceptible of reduction through shorter hauls and greater efficiency.

The New York & Hempstead R.R. had been founded in 1870 with the latter motivation in mind. The Long Island R.R. freight docks at Hunter's Point and along Newtown Creek opened out on the East River and Manhattan, and offered no direct connection with the trunk line railroad terminals on the Jersey side of the Hudson River. It was reasoned that if a railroad could establish a waterfront terminal approximately opposite the great terminals of Elizabeth, Bayonne, Greenville and Jersey City,

freight could be trans-shipped via barge across the Bay without breaking bulk, which would result in great savings of money and time. The closest point on Long Island to the Jersey shore was Bay Ridge, that portion of Brooklyn that bulges out farthest into the harbor. Since Bay Ridge faced Greenville, at that time the great coal depot of New York harbor, it was confidently hoped that loaded coal cars, direct from the mines in Pennsylvania, could be ferried across the bay and moved out on Long Island at savings of at least $1 per ton.

Soundings of public opinion having indicated a favorable attitude towards the construction of a trans-Brooklyn railroad, the backers of the New York & Hempstead decided to survey a possible route through the farmlands. At first it was proposed to select a route running south of the New Lots Road in East New York as this would be the shortest and most direct route from Hempstead to Bay Ridge but the railroad managers, attracted by offers of a free right-of-way from the Kings County line through Woodhaven by Florian Grosjean, owner of the great agateware works, induced them to shift the route northwards to run through the villages of East New York and Woodhaven. This alignment along the line of 101st Avenue would serve the Brooklyn Water Works at Chestnut Street, a steady and large-scale consumer of coal, and it would also offer shipping facilities for the great Lalance and Grosjean manufacturing plant at 88–93 Streets in Woodhaven. Engineers laid out a tentative route during February 1871, and a contract for grading this route was awarded to Mr. Louis Broad in March. Several farmers in New Lots and Woodhaven made the gracious gesture of donating additional rights-of-way through their lands. On Monday, April 24, Mr. Broad began work by putting a large number of men to work on the grading of the surveyed route. It would seem that the eastern end of the route was undertaken first from East New York to Woodhaven; by June the contractor had completed the grade as far east as 94th Street, Woodhaven. In the good spring and summer weather, grading of the comparatively level ground moved easily along; by the end of July a graded roadbed, with many breaks because of land acquisition problems, was reported to extend from Bay Ridge on the west to 104th Street, Woodhaven, on the east.

As the summer of 1871 drew to a close, an increasing number

of landowners began to make difficulties for the railroad company on the line of 101st Avenue (Broadway or Jerome Avenue) along which the road was supposed to be built, and at length the railroad directors, frustrated in their efforts to piece together a right-of-way, instructed their engineers to revert to the originally planned route south of New Lots Road which would avoid all the villages. Then most unexpectedly and in the midst of these difficulties, Mr. Broad, the contractor, died, and work had to be suspended. The directors cast about for a worthy successor to carry on the work and finally settled on the firm of Fairchild, Walker & Co. of New York, builders of the Croton Reservoir in Central Park.

The entire spring and summer of 1872 passed without visible physical progress. However, Samuel McElroy, the chief engineer, kept his surveyors at work mapping out the best route between East New York and Valley Stream. Most important of all, the directors of the New York & Hempstead completed in July after months of negotiations the purchase of the Bergen farm at Bay Ridge. This farm stretched for 1100 feet along the bay at 65th Street and extended back across First, Second, Third and Fourth Avenues; there were 110 acres in all and the total cost was $3000 an acre or $330,000. $60,000 was paid in cash and the balance was allowed to remain on bond and mortgage to Michael Bergen. This exceedingly valuable piece of waterfront property secured for the company an invaluable deep-water terminus and ferry site. It served for decades to come as a terminus for the Manhattan Beach R.R., and is today the great and extensive Bay Ridge terminal.

Work was resumed on the New York & Hempstead R.R. on August 15, but very little was accomplished with so much of the year gone. With the coming of good weather in April 1873 work at Bay Ridge was resumed vigorously. On a five-acre site at the waterside a depot yard was laid out with space ample for the largest business. From the depot began a deep cut through the high shoreline ridge as far east as Sixth Avenue. The soil through which the tunnel was being cut was a dry sandy one with here and there high boulders and beds of gravel. Most of this was carted out and used to fill up the adjacent hollows to build up the grades of 65th and 66th Streets. As of April, 90 men with 40 horses and carts were at work between the shore and Fifth Ave-

nue in the excavation through the ridge. The deepest cutting necessary at any one point was 43 feet (Fifth Avenue) and the average for a mile or two was 30 feet, the width being 32 feet, although the roadbed of the tunnel for a double track was fixed at only 25 feet. This cutting operation for about 2000 feet was made necessary by the terms of the contract under which the company obtained the right to construct the road at this point, and it was to run under the avenues, which were to be sustained by strongly built arches.

The line of the cut passed through what had been the orchard of the Michael Bergen farm; though the trees had bloomed and fruited in the 1872 season, this year the stripping off of the surface soil had drained the ground of moisture, and the trees bloomed thinly and failed to form fruit. The Bergen mansion that from its finely elevated position used to command a fine view across the bay had been reduced to the status of a bunkhouse for some of the workmen and already showed the marks of deterioration.

By the end of June ties had been laid from the shore toward Third Avenue on a portion of the cut already graded and only the iron remained to be spiked down. Work went on at the same time on the construction of the deep water dock, planned to be 1000 feet long, extending at one corner 500 feet into the water and at the other 800 feet with a depth of 16 feet at low water. By the end of May the dock crib had been anchored and a dredging machine was at work excavating just off shore for the required depth of water.

In the midst of all this progress, important events were taking place in the corporate structure of the New York & Hempstead R.R.; as of June 2, 1873 the railroad was leased to the South Side R.R. of L.I. This important road was opened in 1867 as a rival of the Long Island R.R. The South Side ran from Hunter's Point to Jamaica and then passed through all the south shore villages as far east as Patchogue. The New York & Hempstead directors, as a result of their affiliation with the South Side system, decided to change once more the ungraded and unconstructed route of their road east of Woodhaven. Instead of building through Jamaica and Springfield all the way to Hempstead as originally planned, it was decided that much money and time could be saved by shortening the road so as to link up with the

South Side at Springfield, using the South Side tracks the rest of the way to Hempstead. A branch line would traverse the villages of East New York and Woodhaven and join the South Side R.R. tracks at Richmond Hill (Berlin Station).

In January 1873, the South Side R.R. itself fell into the hands of the private banking firm of Shipherd & Co. of New York. During the spring and summer of 1873, Jacob R. Shipherd, senior partner of the firm, unwisely over-extended the road's resources and his own; suddenly and unexpectedly in September of that year a financial panic, triggered by the failure of Jay, Cooke & Co. of Philadelphia, swept through the banking and investment houses all over the country, and Shipherd & Co., along with many others, was driven into insolvency and ruin. The New York & Hempstead R.R., newly leased by the South Side R.R. only three months before, was dragged down into the general collapse.

Work on the New York & Hempstead had to be curtailed immediately; no more grading could be done on the right-of-way, but the contractors somehow managed to fill in the dock with rocks before their funds were exhausted. By February 1874 financial stringency forced a cessation of even this work; the laborers, hired for $6 a week and board, were kept waiting three weeks for their wages and then received only $3. The wretched barns that sheltered them from the winter's blasts were left almost bare of coal, and the work force, mistreated and cheated of its pay, drifted off in disgust. The dream of a tidewater-to-Hempstead railroad, which had seemed so certain up to three months before and on which so much progress had been made, faded away with no foreseeable prospect of revival. The business depression that set in after 1873 made it still less likely that a major railroad venture requiring large amounts of ready capital could be financed. The year 1874 passed with the right-of-way abandoned and weed-grown.

One man was not willing that the whole Bay Ridge project should die. Abram Wakeman, ex-postmaster and ex-collector of the Port of New York, a heavy investor in the defunct New York & Hempstead, and the prime negotiator in the acquisition of the great Bay Ridge terminal property, undertook in the spring of 1874 to rally support for a revival of the road amongst the farmers and landowners of Brooklyn. On June 21st a well-

attended meeting of property owners favorable to the speedy construction of the Bay Ridge R.R. was held in New Utrecht. Samuel McElroy, late engineer for the New York & Hempstead, attended the meeting and displayed a map of a proposed new road, the intention being to utilize the dock and the graded road already in existence, and to construct only to a junction with the Canarsie steam road. The proposed road would be only 9 miles in length, a much more modest project than its predecessor. In July, additional meetings were held in Flatbush, and everywhere the sentiment seemed to be for completing the road. As an inducement to investment in the road, the unfounded rumor was allowed to gain currency that the Lackawanna R.R. intended to purchase the franchise of the Bay Ridge R.R. so as to move loaded coal cars via barges to Long Island.

By November of 1874 a right-of-way had been agreed upon that corresponded very closely to the present-day route of the Bay Ridge Division: From midway between 65th and 66th Streets at the water inland to Fourth Avenue; then diagonally northward to Eighth Avenue and 60th Street; then midway between 60th and 61st Streets to New Utrecht Avenue; then diagonally northeast to McDonald Avenue at 47th Street; then midway between Avenues H and I to Albany Avenue and diagonally northeast to a junction with the Canarsie road at Linden Boulevard. It was decided that no step should be taken for construction until $100,000 should have been actually subscribed and the right-of-way secured, and that the incorporators should be, in the main, property owners of Brooklyn. The total cost was estimated at $400,000. Involving the local property owners in the project proved a shrewd move for many of them came forward with substantial donations of the right-of-way, while others at least gave their consent. By the end of March there were 50 stockholders holding from two to twenty shares of $100 each, most of them members of the old county families or local business men.

In the spring of 1875 Mr. Wakeman considered the time ripe to begin laying the legal groundwork of the organization in Brooklyn and in Albany. Individuals speakers and groups of citizens appeared before the regulatory bodies to make arguments in favor of the road, and to pray for the necessary grade crossing privileges. In 1871 the State Legislature had passed a

law providing that all steam railroads to be constructed in Brooklyn in the future must cross above or under grade the following streets: Flatbush Avenue, Ocean Avenue, Coney Island Avenue, Ocean Parkway, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Avenues. Thanks to Mr. Wakeman's influence in the Legislature, the Albany lawmakers were induced to amend the law so as to permit the New York, Bay Ridge and Jamaica R.R. to cross Flatbush Avenue, Ocean Avenue and Coney Island Avenue at grade. Mr. Wakeman offered no objection to tunneling Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Avenues, since a locomotive coming from the dock could not possibly climb up and over the high shore front bluffs. A dispute broke out, however, over the crossing of Ocean Parkway, a very wide, tree-lined promenade extending from Prospect Park to Coney Island. Only a very few short sections of this road had been laid out, and Wakeman balked at the expense of tunnelling a street that would carry no traffic for some years to come. After much discussion a compromise was reached. It was agreed to raise Ocean Parkway some three to four feet at the point of crossing and to depress the railroad some eight feet so as to pass under it. This solution pleased everyone and no further grade crossing problems arose.

In order to provide an entrance into Jamaica, negotiations were opened with the Brooklyn, Central & Jamaica R.R., owner of the railroad on Atlantic Avenue between South Ferry and Jamaica. It was hoped that the Brooklyn Central would consent to a lease of its road between East New York and Jamaica, or at least grant trackage rights. The problem was that the Brooklyn Central had leased its road to the Long Island R.R. in 1867 for a term of ten years with a privilege of renewal for seven years more. Would the Long Island R.R. give up its lease to a new road that would prove a powerful freight competitor? It hardly seemed likely, yet certain instances of alleged nonconformance on the part of the Long Island R.R. might furnish a pretext to the Brooklyn Central to cancel the lease and transfer it to the new road.

On July 6th, Mr. Wakeman and Engineer McElroy addressed a meeting of citizens in the Jamaica Town Hall to induce Jamaica investors to take some financial interest in the Bay Ridge railroad project, that was to terminate in their village. It was reported that $80,000 of the required $100,000 had already

been raised, and it was hoped that the Jamaica people would show the same interest and initiative as had the property owners in the county towns.

By the end of October the projectors of the new road were able to report that all the capital stock had been subscribed and that formal organization of the road could now proceed. On November 20, 1875 the new road was incorporated at Albany under the name of "The New York, Bay Ridge and Jamaica Railroad Company." It was to have a corporate life of 100 years and a capital stock of $300,000. In addition to the route from Bay Ridge to Jamaica, two branches were provided for: one to the village of Bath, and the other, significantly, to Coney Island. The officers of the road were listed as Abram Wakeman, president, and Samuel A. Wood, secretary and treasurer.

No time was lost in awarding a contract for immediate construction. In January 1876, an agreement was concluded with Messrs. Beard and Hanlon, both old and well-known Brooklyn contractors. The completion date was fixed for June 18, 1876. The contractors advertised for 700 men and were flooded with applicants willing to take as little as 85¢ a day, evidence of the prevailing hard times of the '70's. On January 19, the contractors began work at Bay Ridge.

The big task that lay ahead was to excavate a deep cut from shore level at the 65th Street dock through the high shoreline bluffs down to comparatively level ground beyond Fifth Avenue. Six hundred men set to work on this deep cutting project, an operation rather formidable by the standards of that day. A temporary tramway was laid from the dock up to the edge of the bluff and small dirt cars, drawn by horses, shuttled back and forth on the track. At Fourth Avenue a derrick was erected to hoist the dirt into the dump cars and on February 12th, a steam shovel, at that time a rare novelty, was set up to scoop out the sand and gravel. Unfortunately, it required almost a month to get the new machine operating. The work moved along very rapidly. By February 5th, Second and Third Avenues had been cut through despite occasional dangerous cave-ins.

Just when the work was progressing smoothly, half the work force, some 300 men, suddenly went on strike, not because they objected to the low pay, but because the contractor paid them only at two-week intervals. The contractors refused to go along

with the men's demands and discharged them. In a matter of days their agents had recruited a whole new labor force of immigrant Italians recruited in New York.

The great quantities of gravel excavated in the vicinity of Fourth Avenue made it easy to complete by the end of March the filling in of the dock where the ferry boats were due to land once the railroad began running. In the month of April even greater progress was made: a small locomotive was procured to take the place of the horses on the tramway, hauling the dirt cars to the dock. It now became possible to haul away ten carloads of earth at once. By this time the steam shovel had taken all the dirt out of the Second and Third Avenue cuts, and only the deep Fourth Avenue barrier remained. Beyond this point the route offered few if any construction problems, for the right-of-way passed through level farms with gentle grades. On March 13, work began on the Johnson farm on the line of 61–62 Streets between Fort Hamilton Avenue and New Utrecht Avenue. Surveyors moved ahead, marking the right-of-way through to Flatlands with monuments. By May 6th, the grading of the roadbed from Fourth Avenue to New Utrecht Lane was nearly completed and ready for the ties.

On Saturday, May 6th, President Wakeman graciously invited the press, the officers of the company and their wives and several invited guests on an official tour of inspection of the Bay Ridge excavations and to view the progress made. The party left New York by steamer, exactly as future passengers of the road would do soon, and arrived at the new 65th Street dock, where they boarded the gravel train and rode for a mile on the tramway to the base of the deep cut at Fourth Avenue. Later, all were escorted to the top of the bluff, where they viewed below the showpiece of the trip, the great steam shovel which scooped up nearly a carload of sand and gravel at once and emptied it in less than a minute. Ten waiting dump cars were loaded in moments, while 10 others were drawn to the dock and unloaded. The contractors had almost 200 men with 50 horses and carts at work here at Fourth Avenue, the deepest point of the cut. The party returned to New York in the evening, well-pleased with the progress everywhere evident.

In addition to the great expense of excavation, the company was obliged to erect large permanent bridges over its cut at

Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Avenues. On February 10th the company began the work of building a masonry arch of 80 foot width over Third Avenue. This avenue had to be bridged first, for it carried the Brooklyn City Railroad's horse car line to Fort Hamilton, the sole public transportation to that outlying area, and soon to be readied for steam dummy operation. By April 15th the abutments for this large arch were completed and work began on the span. In the case of the Second Avenue bridge, vandals demolished the wooden frames on May 16th and caused the company a loss of $500. The Fourth Avenue bridge as might be expected, took the longest time to complete, for it was not until the first week of June that the cut was cleared of dirt and rubble and made available to the bridge builders. By the second week of August this structure was at last finished. By June 15th, the work of grading the right-of-way had gone so smoothly that only 20 days of work remained to be done, while the work of track laying was scheduled to begin in a week.

With the prospect of completing the road so near at hand, it now became imperative to provide for the operation of the road. Instead of acquiring engines and cars in the conventional way, the directors concluded an agreement with the Brooklyn, Bath & Coney Island R.R., not only to furnish engines and cars for the remaining weeks of the summer, but to operate a passenger service between 65th Street and Coney Island. The contract called for the rental of only one train at a time; since the new railroad was being completed late in the season and had few physical facilities as yet for servicing rolling stock, it was thought best not to attempt too ambitious a schedule. The Bath or "dummy" railroad, as it was familiarly called at that time, was the pioneer road to Coney Island, and ran from Fifth Avenue and 25th Street down the New Utrecht Road and a private right-of-way along the Bath and Bensonhurst shore line to Coney Island. The New York, Bay Ridge and Jamaica intersected the Bath road at 62nd Street and New Utrecht Avenue, the limit of completion of the new road, and it was easy to construct a connecting curve.

On Monday, July 10th, 1876, the rails and ties, piled high on the Bay Ridge dock, were distributed along the 2¼ miles of right-of-way. The steam shovel, still at work between Fourth and Fifth Avenues, began to falter during June and July, and slowed

down dirt removal to only 1000 yds. a day. Just as the cut seemed ready for the ties and rails, a summer rainstorm on July 11th caused the banks on each side of Second and Fourth Avenues to slide down and cover the roadbed with three feet of gravel and water. However, on July 18th, the work of laying track was pushed past the caved-in section and pressed forward during the next two weeks, reaching completion about August 5th.

Last minute preparations of all kinds occupied the full attention of Mr. Wakeman and his fellow directors. The steamer "D. R. Martin" was engaged to run from Pier 8, foot of Rector Street, to the Bay Ridge dock. The fare for the boat ride was set at 6¢, and the train ride 19¢. It was calculated that the boat ride would occupy 18 minutes and the train ride 22 minutes, making only 40 minutes in all. During the week of August 5th the "D. R. Martin" visited the Bay Ridge dock and the adjacent waters to probe the channels and test the depth of water. Finally, on Wednesday August 16th, the Bath R.R. engine "Clifford" with one new car freshly turned out from the Fiegel Car Works in New Utrecht made a test run from the junction to the dock at Bay Ridge.

On Saturday, August 19, 1876, the maiden trip was made over the new road. The officers of the road and their invited guests left Pier 8, North River, shortly after 11 A.M. on the "D. R. Martin," and after a pleasant sail of about 25 minutes, reached the new pier at Bay Ridge. The excursion train consisted of three large open cars again drawn by the locomotive "Clifford". The distance between the dock and the Island, 6¼ miles, was covered in just under 18 minutes. A brief stay was made at the Island, and then a stop of several hours followed on the return trip at Locust Grove Pavilion for refreshments.

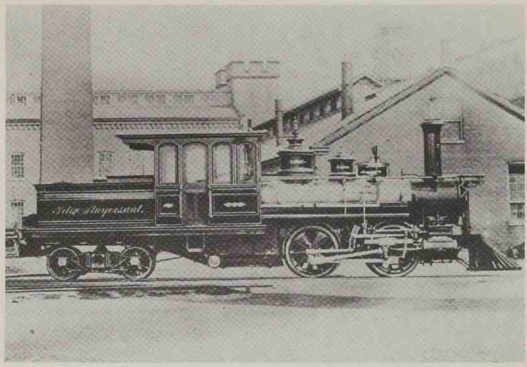
On September 1, 1876, regular service was opened, with trains running at two-hour intervals as follows:

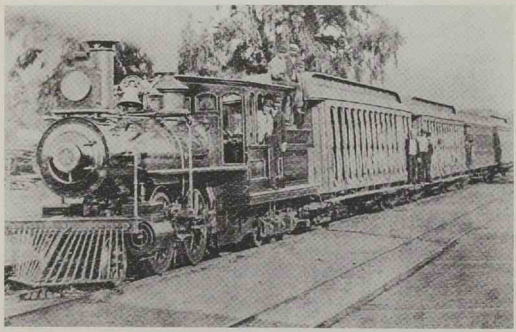
Leaving New York: 9:30, 11:30, 1:46, 3:45 and 5:15
Leaving Coney Island: 8:10, 12:10, 2:10, 4:10 and 5:20

Although the new route to Coney Island was a newcomer and started very late in the season, there was a fair amount of traffic both from New York and from Staten Island. On September 3rd, the engine "Maud" hauled 700 passengers to Coney Island and back. During these weeks the road erected fences along the inner

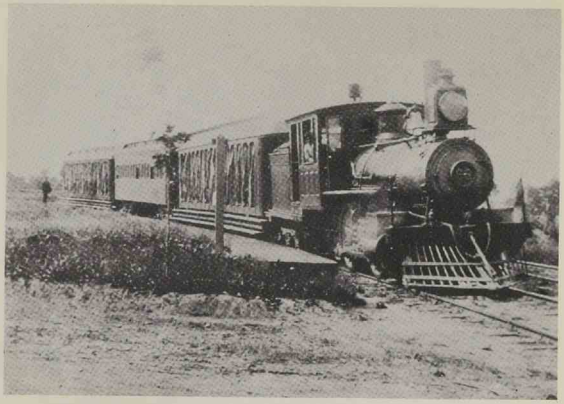
side of its docks, a plank walk for the comfort and safety of its passengers, and laid out a carriage road along 65th Street to Third Avenue for improved access. About October 8th the trains to Coney Island were discontinued after only five weeks of operation. The little road had nevertheless proved itself, and Mr. Wakeman and his directors fondly hoped that the 1877 season would see through operation to East New York and Coney Island over its own tracks.

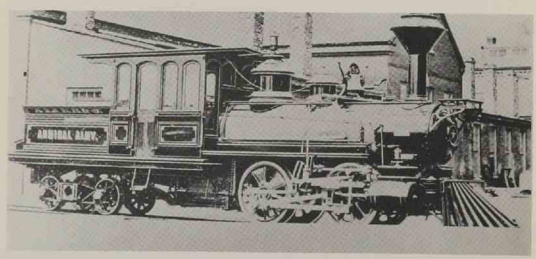
The New York, Bay Ridge and Jamaica R.R., as of 1876, was a standard-gauge road, 2¼ miles long, all single tracked, extending in almost a straight line from tidewater to Bath Junction. It was constructed of 56 lb. rail of American manufacture, laid on a comparatively narrow roadbed, bordered by high masonry banks for most of its length. Though very short, the cost of the road had been disproportionately high because of the extensive cutting necessary, the great expense of securing a waterside terminal, and the further heavy outlays for dredging and for driving piles for a dock. Operating the road was conducted at a loss, for substantial rents had to be paid for the steamboat "D. R. Martin," and for the use of the rolling stock. For the 1877 season either patronage would have to be exceptionally heavy, or some better method of financing the road would have to be devised to recoup the heavy initial investment.



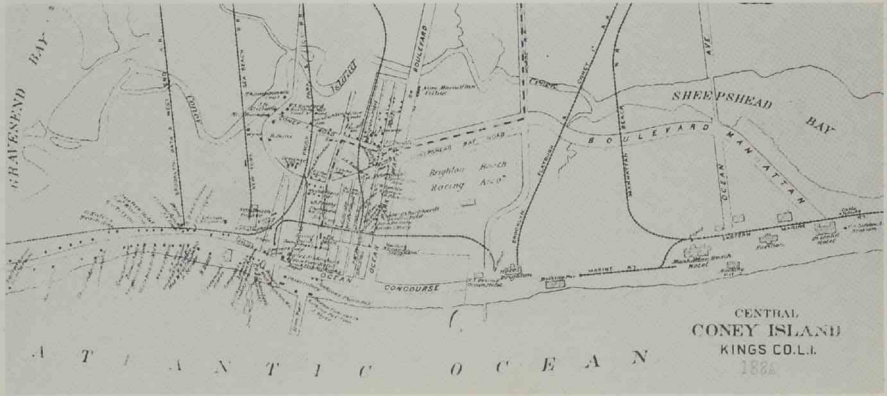


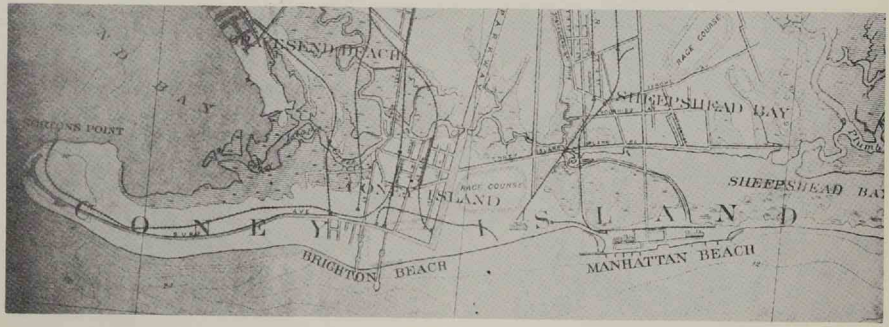
Locomotive "Peter Stuyvesant" (top) and with train (bottom) (Fagerberg)



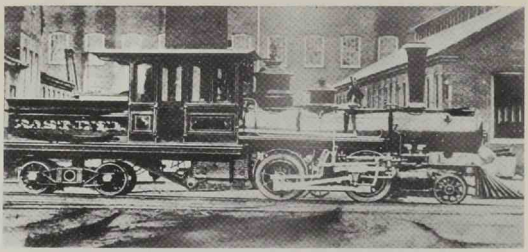


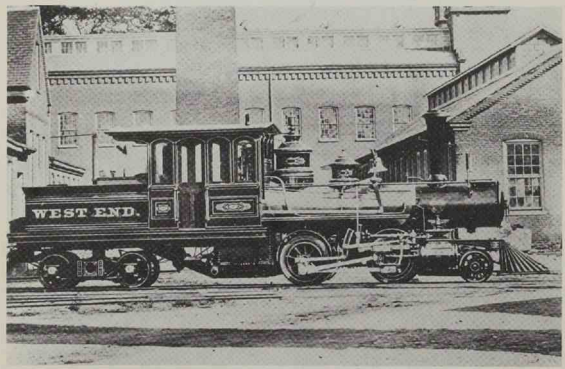
LIRR No. 63 with train (top) and locomotive "Admiral Almy" (bottom) (Fagerberg)


GRAVESEND BAY
SHEEPSHEAD BAY
BOULEVARD
OCEAN AVE
Brighton Beach Racing Ass'n
CONCOURSE
CENTRAL
CONEY ISLAND
KINGS CO. L.I.
ATLANTIC OCEAN
1886

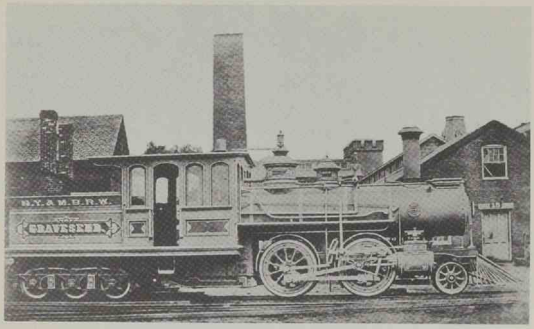


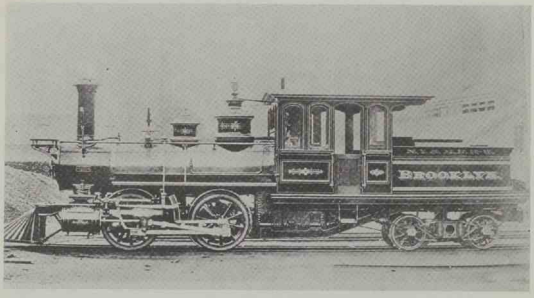
Map of 1891 shows severe erosion





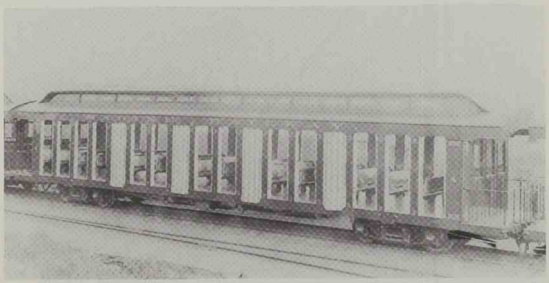
Locomotive "East End" (top) and "West End" (bottom)
(Fagerberg)



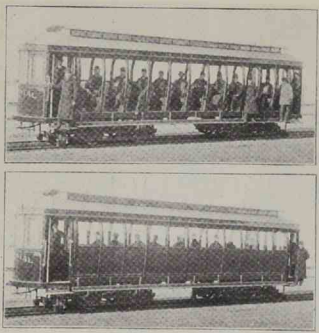


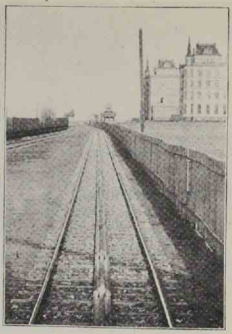
Locomotive "Gravesend" (top) and "Brooklyn" (bottom)
(Fagerberg)

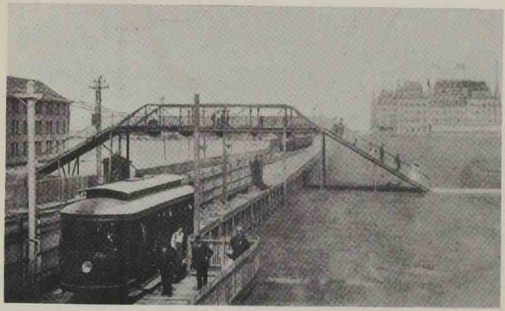
Rear Brighton Beach Hotel with Flatbush-Brightontrolleys (1901-05) in foreground, Marine Ry. terminal (top, left) and Manhattan Beach Hotel in distance at right (Watson)



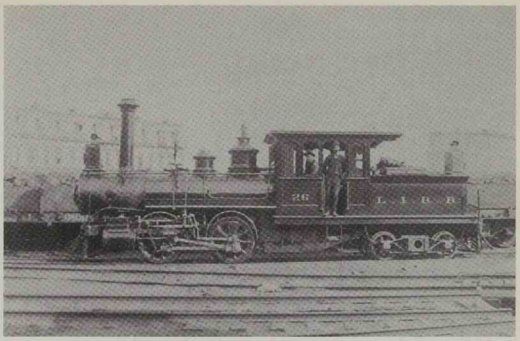
Marine Ry Car No. 4 in 1885 (Votava)

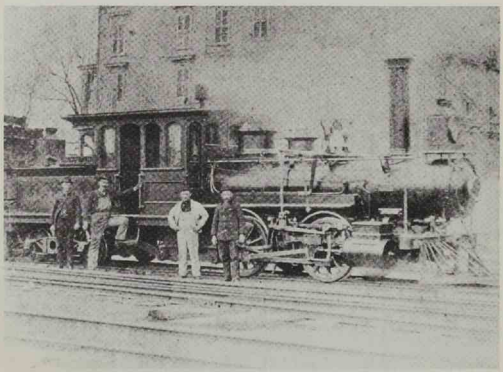




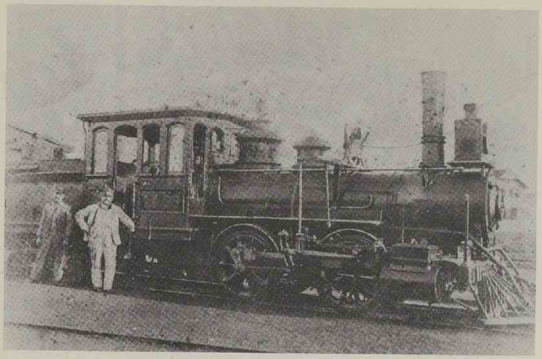


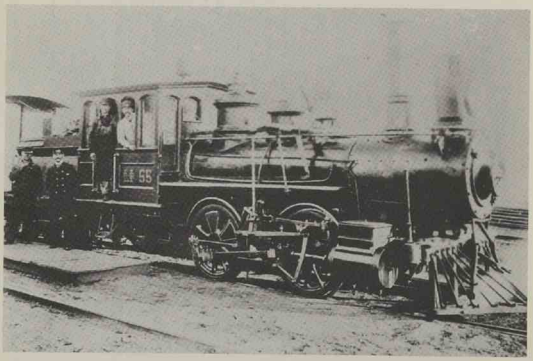
Marine Ry duplex car "Oriental" in 1899 (Watson) (top) and same car in 1905 (bottom)



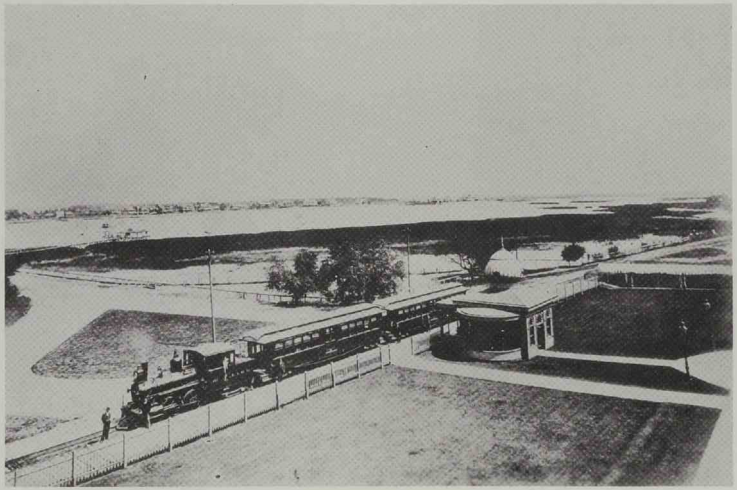


LIRR No. 26 at East New York (top) and Manhattan Beach No. 22 at East New York (bottom) (Fagerberg)

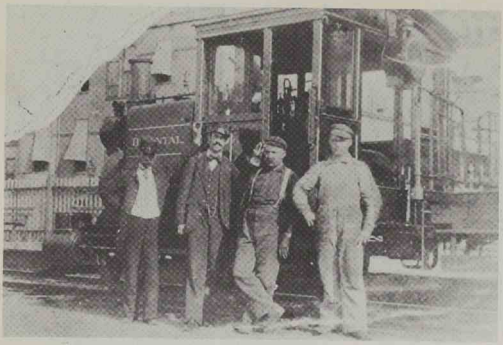




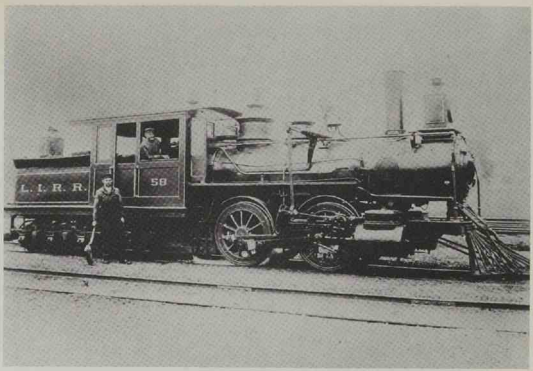
Manhattan Beach No. 33 (top) and No. 55 (bottom)
(Fagerberg)

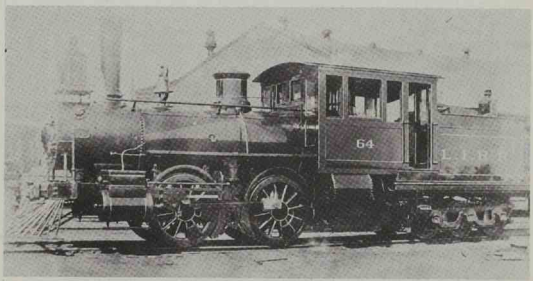


LIRR No. 211 and train at Oriental station (Fagerberg)

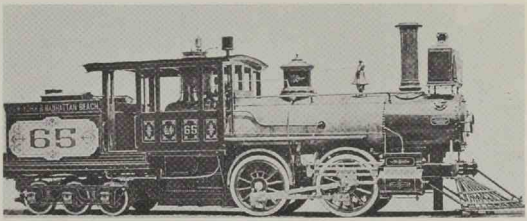


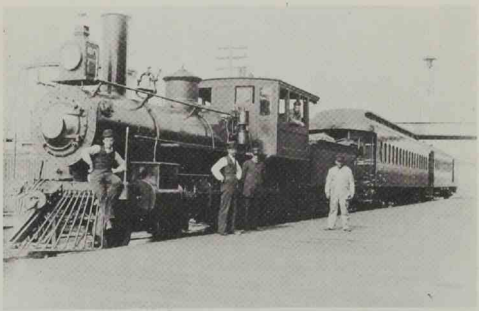
Locomotive "Oriental'(top) (Fagerberg) and Pt. Breeze Hotel and depot at east end (1880) (bottom)





Manhattan Beach No. 58 (top) and No. 64 (bottom) (Fagerberg)





Manhattan Beach No. 65 (top) (Fagerberg) and No. 80 at Manhattan Beach Station (bottom)

CHAPTER 2

Austin Corbin & Coney Island

CONEY Island, the most famous resort in the world, is geologically speaking, the continuation of the great barrier beach protecting the south shore of Long Island from the sea. Beginning in the shallow waters of Jamaica Bay on the east, Coney Island stretches in a straight line five miles to the west, jutting well beyond the Brooklyn "mainland" and tapering upward to a point in New York Bay. Coney Island, within the brief span of 90 years, has undergone changes more frequent and more drastic than those of any other part of the city. In pre-Civil War days the island was a wilderness of sand and cedar forests and salt grass; the era of popular amusements followed with almost explosive rapidity, reaching a climax in the years before World War I; in our own day, Coney Island has declined from its former pre-eminence as amusement capital of the world, and huge apartment complexes have displaced the bath houses and the giant entertainment palaces of earlier years.

Coney Island's history goes back to the year 1643 when Lady Deborah Moody, a cultivated Englishwoman and a refugee from religious persecution, was granted a patent for the southeastern section of Brooklyn, later to be known as Gravesend. She and her colonists perfected their title to the land by confirmatory patents from the Dutch rulers of New Amsterdam and treaties with the Canarsie Indians. The colonists laid out their village like a Roman camp, completely square, with the two main streets intersecting at right angles (later McDonald Avenue or Gravesend Avenue and Gravesend Neck Road). Radiating outward from this 16 acre square like spokes of a wheel stretched boundary lines that cut up all the surrounding land into thirty-nine equal pie-like slices. Thus each colonist received equal shares of good land and bad. Coney Island, separated from Brooklyn by the narrow shallow Coney Island Creek, was left undivided.

As the years passed, the patentees died and their shares of land came to be divided and sold many times over. The good farm lands surrounding Gravesend Village received the unremitting attention of the good burghers and produced a hundred fold in the Biblical tradition. No one paid similar attention to Coney Island. Then, about 1685, the sedge grass upon the middle section came to be of some value and the descendants of the original patentees got together and made a division of Coney Island called the "First Division of Sedge Bank Lots." Thirty-nine strips were laid out, running from Coney Island Creek to the Ocean, and from the point about where Coney Island Avenue is today, and these 39 strips were divided among the heirs of the patentees by lot, each man taking a fee simple title to his plot. The west end of Coney Island (Pine Island then) was left undivided. Some years later, the east end of the island was again divided by a "Second Division of Sedge Bank Lots", and again into 39 strips. The left-hand portion corresponded to the present Brighton Beach area, and the right-hand or extreme eastern part, corresponded to the present Manhattan Beach as far as the point.

Over the years the face of Coney Island changed. The sea took from one place and added to another. Winds built up dunes and blew them away again. Occasional violent storms, particularly the memorable one of 1839, tore deep inlets into the straight beach front, so that for years at a time, there were three or four islands in place of one. Then, in its slow mysterious way, the sea silted up the channels it had angrily carved out, and the beach front resumed its smooth unbroken appearance. By the early 19th century, the beach we know as Coney Island was divided into two islands separated by a narrow shallow channel slowly being obliterated by wind and tide. The west island was known as Pine Island, and the east as Guysbert's Island. Curiously, nobody at that time used the name Coney Island; in a lawsuit over partitions in 1879, many of the oldest inhabitants agreed that in their youth the term Coney Island was not in use; the name became current only when the first bridge was built (1824) to the island, or, according to another account, when the steamboat commenced running to Norton's Point (1844).

About the year 1800, the west end (Pine Island) began to be leased out for sedge grass like the eastern end. In 1817 a demand arose for the first time for leases of tracts on Pine Island for crude

shacks providing chowder and shelter for fishermen. The heirs of the patentees were so scattered by this late date that the Town of Gravesend took possession of the beach as Trustee and collected the rents. After 1847 the Town of Gravesend ceased to maintain even the pretense of acting as trustee for the patentees, and appointed Commissioners of Common Lands to administer the beach. The patentee heirs, scattered and many of them no longer residents, took no notice, and so western Coney Island slipped quietly into the public domain.

The first attempt to provide access to Coney Island occurred in 1823 when the Gravesend and Coney Island Bridge and Road Company was organized. This group built in 1824 a shell road which continued the old Gravesend Village road (McDonald Avenue) south across Coney Island Creek to West 8th Street; at the bridge was located the toll gate. The road company erected in 1829 the Coney Island House or Ocean House, the first hotel on Coney Island. In 1847, a second hotel, the Oceanic, was built nearby, but burned down in 1854, and the name passed to the older hotel. In 1844, a hotel called the Pavilion was erected at Norton's Point, now the tip of Sea Gate, which was later taken over by Senator Michael Norton, and renamed the Point Comfort House. Little side-wheel steamboats began running between New York and the Point as early as 1847.

As the reputation of Coney Island slowly grew, a second turnpike company called simply the Coney Island Plank Road appeared in 1850. This company laid out what is today Coney Island Avenue. In 1860 the planks were removed and soon the Coney Island & Brooklyn Railroad horse car line was constructed and opened for traffic on July 4, 1863. Just a year later, Charles Godfrey Gunther, mayor of New York for the years 1864–66, opened a steam dummy railroad from Fifth Avenue & 27th Street through Bensonhurst and Bath to Stillwell Avenue, Coney Island. This road opened in 1864 and provided the first regular, year-round rapid transit between Coney Island and the Brooklyn city area.

The earliest patrons of the few Coney Island summer resorts were by and large a well-to-do, cultivated class who came for an extended stay and who continued their genteel round of parties and balls exactly as if they were at home. The beach provided a promenade at best. With the close of the Civil War an immense

social change took place that was to affect the future of the island profoundly. The chief cause of this social upheaval was the phenomenal increase of population in both Manhattan and Brooklyn. Great numbers of immigrants were pouring annually into the two cities. These people were almost without exception the lower-class, working population and the poor of their native lands, and their meager resources and ignorance of the language compelled them to crowd into the poorest housing available in lower New York and the outer fringes of Brooklyn. In the twenty-year period 1860–1880, the population of Manhattan increased 50% while that of Brooklyn doubled:

	Manhattan	*Brooklyn*
1860	813,669	279,122
1870	942,292	419,921
1880	1,206,299	599,495

In Europe it had been the tradition for these people to work hard six days a week and to find relaxation in innocent amusements on the seventh. The older Anglo-Saxon tradition of a sober and meditative Sabbath gave way before the explosive pressure of the newcomers to recreation and release from an unending round of toil, driving work and low pay. In Europe the park and the countryside had been the traditional safety-valve. Here, in the New World, the parks were all too few and far from the tenements, while the countryside was distant and costly to reach, and the limited arteries of transportation totally unsuited to one-day excursions and holiday crowds. The masses suddenly and almost overnight discovered a new and enormously pleasurable outlet for themselves and their families—the beach.

The "discovery" of Coney Island can be dated rather precisely to one year—1875. One man with more vision than his contemporaries made it possible, Andrew R. Culver. Culver realized that if a steam road could be built from the Brooklyn city limits direct to Coney Island, with frequent trains and a cheap fare, thousands of poor people would flock to the beaches for a one-day outing, a novelty in that day when few people traveled any distance and then only for serious purposes. Culver's first move was to lay out the present McDonald Avenue (old Gravesend Avenue) and then incorporate the Prospect Park & Coney Island Railroad to operate a steam line over it. He also bought out

the Gravesend & Coney Island Bridge & Road Company to perfect his title to the avenue. On June 27, 1875, after a thousand legal difficulties with local officials and landowners, Culver opened his new railroad through to Coney Island. The new road was an instantaneous success and was patronized by thousands of Brooklynites eager for a day of pleasure and entertainment. Within two or three years' time one hotel after another sprang up on Coney Island's sands, along with countless bath houses, beer saloons and entertainment booths. The Coney Island of legend was on its way to fame; in a decade the name had become a by-word for glamor and gaudy amusement.

The Coney Island that Culver catapulted into fame was the center section of the beach around West 5th Street. The two extremities of the island, especially the east end, remained undeveloped and wild. But this could hardly continue for long; by sheer chance a second man of vision was about to appear on the Coney Island scene. Austin Corbin was born at Newport, New Hampshire, on July 11, 1827. He studied law at Harvard, and on graduation in 1849, returned to Newport to practice. This small town gave too little scope for his youthful energies and ambitions, and in the American tradition, he "went West" to seek his fortune. In 1852 he settled in Davenport, Iowa, where he organized the First National Bank, and remained there until 1866. With the capital which he had accumulated, he came to New York and opened the Corbin Banking Company, which he ran with such prudence and ability that his name soon became well-known locally and throughout the country in financial circles. He specialized in railroad financing and took over several western roads, putting them on their feet financially. In later years he was receiver of the Philadelphia & Reading R.R. and became its president, and he was president as well of the New York and New England R.R., and of the Elmira, Cortland & Northern, besides holding directorships in a host of other financial institutions.

In the summer of 1873, Corbin, faced with the problem of an ailing infant son, took his physician's advice, abandoned the hot, stifling streets of New York, and took rooms in the Oceanic Hotel at the foot of Gravesend Avenue. A restless, dynamic man and full of energy, he found it difficult to sit still on the porch and do nothing, and so, leaving his wife and child to enjoy the

ocean breezes, he removed his shoes and socks and set out for a walk eastward along the water's edge. An astute business man even in moments of relaxation, the thought struck Corbin forcibly that this wilderness of sand dunes, sedge grass and cedar brakes was a natural playground and fresh air retreat for New Yorkers. All that was needed to develop this wild spot was a big hotel and railroad access. Thousands of persons were crowded in cramped dwellings all over Manhattan and Brooklyn yet here, barely ten miles away, lay an unspoiled beach affording cool bracing ocean breezes and sea bathing. What better place could there be for investment and development?

Corbin left the eastern end of the beach that day determined to buy and improve it. This was the beginning of a long and complicated campaign. We have spoken earlier of the division of eastern Coney Island into 39 strips by the patentees in 1685. By 1873, a highly astute and adventurous man who had made a fortune for himself as a sutler in the Civil War, William A. Engeman, had secured the whole of the present Brighton Beach area for himself. This difficult feat had been accomplished with the help of an eighth-generation descendant of the patentees, William H. Stillwell, surveyor of the Town of Gravesend, and through family ties, familiar with all the old families who might have title to Coney Island. With Stillwell's help Engeman had secured several hundred acres of the choicest waterfront property for approximately $20,000. As a reward for his help, Engeman installed Stillwell as manager of the hotel which he soon built on his beachfront.

With the west end or Common Lands out on lease, and the middle section securely in the hands of Engeman, only the bare, sandy extreme eastern end of Coney Island, called the Sedge Bank, was left in private hands. When Corbin looked into the possibilities of tracking down the heirs of the 39 patentees for the Sedge Bank, the trail inevitably led to William H. Stillwell. Corbin asked Stillwell to act for him as his title searcher and purchasing agent, and generously offered him both a cash payment and a portion of the property to be acquired as a further inducement, but Stillwell, amazingly, replied that he had no interest in land he considered worthless, and agreed instead to work for 60 days at $6 a day. In his attitude he showed himself a true descendant of the old Gravesend landed gentry; for genera-

tions Coney Island had been a wasteland in their view, and they persisted in their blindness to change and the coming of a new way of life even when the evidence of a new day lay visible all around them.

The task of acquiring all the various parcels of the Sedge Bank took longer than either Stillwell or Corbin had imagined. All of 1874 and half of 1875 passed before Corbin could rank himself with Engeman as owner of two miles of beach front. The first lots came very cheaply, but when the owners discovered that every parcel was wanted, even sandbars and swampland, they scented a master plan and the price went up. Corbin was hardly in a position to complain in any case—he secured the whole Sedge Bank from East 12th Street, the limit of Engeman's property, eastward to Mackenzie Street for only $15,000. Many people shook their heads at the high price paid for land that for ages had been worthless. The tract was considered too far east of central Coney Island to be capable of any development; worse still, some of it was tidal swamp, and not one road or rail line gave access to it.

Austin Corbin made no secret of his grandiose plans for his Sedge Bank purchase. In an age accustomed to dynamic and colorful tycoons promoting spectacular and large-scale schemes, Corbin's dreams seemed quite in keeping with the times. In an interview with the press, Corbin revealed the full extent of his plans for his newly-acquired beachfront. Two mammoth resort hotels, one for transients and one for permanent guests were to be built fronting the beach, each surrounded by gardens and bowers making a veritable park. A railroad was to be built especially to connect the two hotels with New York and Brooklyn. Corbin was not pleased with the mental picture that the name "sedge bank" might conjure up in the minds of future patrons and he cast about for a more flattering name for his new development. Being an ardent Anglophile, Corbin proposed the name of the famous English watering place, Brighton. The Boston capitalists, who were engaged in the enterprise with him, vetoed the idea at once, saying that Brighton sounded too British for an American resort, and that to Bostonians, it strongly suggested a cattle mart. The name Manhattan was then chosen. (1875)

Building a hotel or two on property wholly owned and controlled posed no particular problem for Corbin; building a rail-

road to these beach palaces across the whole of Brooklyn and through the heart of populated areas was quite another matter. Corbin had watched the initial efforts and final success of the New York, Bay Ridge & Jamaica R.R., and decided to acquire this new road as the base for his own large railroad design. There seems to have been no difficulty in securing the property; a number of the stockholders, when they heard of Corbin's interest, repeatedly urged him to purchase their interest, and Corbin did so upon assurance that he and his board of directors should manage the reorganized corporation for the best interests of all.

The sale of the road by Abraham Wakeman and his board of directors to Austin Corbin was announced to the papers in November 1876. The Corbin Banking Company as such had nothing to do with the road, but Austin Corbin in his private capacity along with other capitalists, none of whom were stockholders in the Corbin Bank, subscribed to $152,500 of the unsubscribed stock, which constituted a controlling majority. The road was then reorganized as the New York and Manhattan Beach Railway Company, with the older road surviving as a subsidiary. The new officers of the corporation consisted of Austin Corbin, president; his nephew, Frederick W. Dunton, secretary-treasurer; and Isaac D. Barton, ex-superintendent of the Long Island R.R. and the Flushing, North Shore & Central R.R., as general manager. Abraham Wakeman consented to remain on the board of directors; other members of the board consisted of two or three Boston capitalists plus a number of prominent and moneyed New Yorkers.

The reorganization of the New York, Bay Ridge & Jamaica R.R. into the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway was more than a mere change of name; the whole purpose of the railroad was altered. Instead of the road running east to west as a commercial carrier with freight trans-shipment as the principal income, it was now to become largely a north-south road to serve purely as an adjunct to a beach resort hotel; passengers would form the overwhelming bulk of the travel and service would be seasonal only. Mr. Barton, the new general manager, when interviewed by the reporters, said that Corbin intended to continue the road as staked out by Mr. Wakeman through to East New York; in the vicinity of Parkville a branch would be constructed south to Manhattan Beach. Later, the road would

be continued north from East New York to Hunter's Point.

The new road immediately took over the prosecution of the work of construction. Although the railroad was fully completed to the Bath R.R. crossing, the right of way eastward had been staked out, and purchase arrangements made months before. As early as February, the crossing of Flatbush Avenue had been fixed at East 32nd Street. Similar arrangements had been made with the C. B. Kouwenhoven family for crossing their lands in the neighborhood of Foster, Farragut and Glenwood Road. Early in July the railroad got the courts to appoint a board of three commissioners, consisting of Teunis G. Bergen of New Utrecht, John A. Vanderveer of Flatbush, and William J. Cropsey of New Utrecht, all three members of the oldest families in the county, to appraise the value of lands condemned for railroad purposes. On July 29 these men walked the right of way on foot east of New Utrecht Avenue, traversing the farms on 16th, 17th, 18th and McDonald Avenues from 61st Street to 47th Street. A week later judgment was given for $1000 an acre, a figure that all agreed was pretty much in line with current property values. It is incredible to us, living 90 years later, to compare these prices with the land costs in the same neighborhood today!

The next barrier east was the Deerfoot Race Course, also known as the Half Mile Driving Park, on the southwest corner of Avenue H and Coney Island Avenue. The railroad had been laid out in May to cut directly through the track. The case was heard in court all through the summer and into the fall before judgment was given.

Ocean Parkway was a special problem. This was a newly planned road, staked out but as yet only a line on the map to its planned terminus at Coney Island. The road was under the jurisdiction of the Department of Parks and was intended to serve as a carriage drive for the equipages of the wealthy. Both the main road and the service roads were lined with trees and the whole was laid out to a width of 100 feet. By a special act of the Legislature of 1871, no steam road could cross Ocean Parkway at grade; even the New York, Bay Ridge & Jamaica with its potent political influence, had to be satisfied with a crossing below grade. The railroad track was designed to dip below grade east of Gravesend Avenue, pass under the parkway, and

to come up to surface level again at Coney Island Avenue. A very wide stone arch would support the parkway over the track. Work began on July 10, 1876, and dragged on for months.

The Corbin management, although it took over in November 1876 in the midst of winter, pressed the work forward with vigor. The press, the public, railroad circles and the whole financial community were amazed when the announcement was made in December that the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway would be built as a narrow gauge road, an unprecedented thing in the metropolitan area; besides this, the announcement added that all the engines and cars used at the great Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia had been purchased and would form the rolling stock of the Manhattan Beach Railway. On December 29 the company made a contract for 1500 tons of steel rails for main line track and 200 tons of iron rail for sidings.

Two considerations probably dictated the change to narrow gauge. One was certainly the opportunity to purchase cheaply the narrow gauge engines and cars from the Exhibition; these were all excellent Mason engines only a year old and in the best condition which had provided local service at the Fair Grounds. Corbin conceived of his New York & Manhattan Beach Railway in the same terms, it must be remembered. The new road was not to be a railroad in the conventional sense of the word, but simply a hotel facility, a sort of large-scale toy railroad designed solely to provide seasonal transportation to the hotel from Brooklyn ferry terminals. Corbin knew nothing of railroads apart from their securities, and the fact that his road was in no way comparable to the original Fair Grounds R.R. at Philadelphia was probably altogether lost on him. He had engaged Isaac Barton, one of the most experienced and able railroad men in the metropolitan area, and he left to him the practical details of building and running the road. As a matter of fact, there was much sentiment at this time in favor of narrow gauge roads. Barton himself had acted in the mid-70's as public relations man for one or more groups promoting narrow gauge railroads on Long Island, and he, as well as other reputable railroad men, subscribed to the myth then current that narrow guage roads were cheaper to build and operate. Barton was therefore the right man in the right place and he took over the prosecution of the road enthusiastically.

One of the first problems was to provide a place for the new rolling stock that had to be gotten out of Philadelphia as soon as possible. The dock at Bay Ridge had been battered by high tides on November 20–21, 1876 and part of the walk and fence washed away. In February 1877 carpenters began erecting the timbers for an engine house near the dock 40 x 24. At the same time track gangs went to work on the road, narrowing down the gauge to 3 feet from the standard 4'8½". In April, twelve feet was added to the Bay Ridge dock on the north side, and 175 feet more was built on the east end; a large coal depot 25 x 40 was also framed up, designed to hold 150 tons of coal. Water pipes were led down from Third Avenue and 60th Street to water the engines.

On March 6th there was a brief strike of the men who demanded $1.50 instead of $1.25 a day, but they were discharged. The unpleasantness of this incident was happily dissipated by the arrival of the first of five locomotives from Philadelphia, which received the name "Manhattan." On March 3rd the engine made its first trip over the completed section of the road to the Bath R.R. Junction. On Sunday, March 18th the new engine was pressed into service to lay track from New Utrecht Avenue to Gravesend Avenue (McDonald) where the Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. or "Culver Line" operated. Thirty thousand ties lay stacked up on the dock ready to be laid. The ground was nearly level and Superintendent Barton had his Italian track workers so placed that by early in the afternoon the track was laid to Gravesend Avenue, and the engine and dirt cars were run to the avenue, loaded with iron frogs all prepared for a safe crossing over the P.P. & C.I. rails.

President Culver of the Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. had not wished the Manhattan Beach road to cross his own at grade and had managed to introduce a bill to that effect into the Legislature, but it had not passed. In any case, some legal steps were necessary for the Manhattan Beach men before they tore up the Culver line tracks for the crossings, and as this had not been taken care of, Culver stood upon his rights. To prevent removal of his rails, he stationed an engine on the spot where the Manhattan Beach track was to cross. To prevent his own road from being blockaded while keeping an engine on guard day and night, Culver devised an ingenious scheme. He would start a passenger train from his Ninth Avenue depot with the engine on

the rear. When the train got to the crossing, the cars were uncoupled from the rear engine and coupled onto the guard engine, which then puffed away to Coney Island, while the rear engine backed onto the crossing and assumed the vigil. So it went on for all that night and into the morning. Superintendant Barton resolved not to be outmaneuvered. At 10 A.M. on Monday morning he ordered the Culver guard engine off the crossing, but was told to move it off himself. Not willing to put his head into a legal noose, he ordered his men to dig a hole alongside the track and undermine the engine. The 100 or so Italians went to work with a will, and after a time, the Culver engine and track began to settle slightly. At this juncture up rushed 25 sturdy Irishmen from Coney Island, who attacked the Italians with spades, shovels, picks and dirt. After some ten minutes of violent fighting the men who were at the bottom of the hole at a disadvantage gave up the fight at the orders of Superintendent Barton. A force of policemen had meanwhile been summoned by Culver. These piled onto a Culver engine and steamed down the road to the crossing where they spread out and stayed all night to keep the peace. The Culver men filled up the hole threatening their engine and things settled down to an uneasy peace, both armed bands glaring at each other under the watchful eye of the police.

On Tuesday morning, seeing that nothing could be done, Superintendent Barton moved his men to the far side of the Culver track and resumed work on the Ocean Parkway underpass. A track was laid also to the excavation. Barton, when queried by the press, explained that the reason for his haste in trying to cross the road was to permit the engine and dump cars to remove the large amount of dirt which had been excavated from the tunnel. On Monday Culver secured an injunction against the crossing of his road, but on Tuesday it was modified to permit Barton to proceed with the work on condition that they would in no way interfere with the running of the trains on the Culver line, and that they would apply at once for the appointment of commissioners to settle the manner of crossing. On Thurdsay morning, March 22nd, with the Culver men watching, the crossing was peacefully installed.

After the unexpected check that had cost him two days' delay, Superintendent Barton redoubled his efforts to complete the road. By March 31st his shovelers had begun work on his plan to

excavate one-half the boulevard at a time, and then roof it over, and then remove the other half and complete that arch. On April 2nd an engine was placed on the east side of the boulevard cutting to enable track laying to go on to Coney Island Avenue and beyond. Meanwhile a second track was laid on the completed railroad from the dock to Fort Hamilton. An injunction of some days' duration delayed matters on the A. Holmes Van Brunt property near Ocean Avenue, but this was soon compromised. By mid-April the grading gang had crossed Flatbush Avenue and finished work on the Baxter Farm to the east between Avenues H and I.

When the grading gang reached the farm of D. Vanderveer in the meadows on an arm of Bedford Creek, today roughly corresponding to 53–57th Streets, the farmer's son, angry because the men were going to work on his father's land before the family had received their award, drove a wagon load of manure on the line of the road just where the railroad teams were hauling fill across the brook. The contractor roughly ordered his men to get the wagon out of the way. The men picked it up and pitched it over into the brook while Vanderveer stood on it, jabbing right and left with his pitchfork. As it happened, nobody was seriously hurt though the contractor had the manure fork stuck in his hand. The next day the company had an injunction served on the Vanderveers, and the opposition died down. This was but one more of the many instances where the enthusiasm of the railroad builders outran the law's plodding progress in paying out awards agreed upon weeks and months before.

The trackmen followed not far behind the graders. On April 26th Superintendent Barton laid a temporary track across Ocean Parkway so as to get a locomotive, a freight car and a string of five dump cars at work to the eastward. Meanwhile, the graders finished up their work through Lott's Woods, the area around Ocean Avenue, and the point where the branch south to Manhattan Beach was planned to branch off. By May 1st the track had been laid through Lott's Woods and the track gangs pressed onwards to Flatbush Avenue, following the line of the stakes left by the graders. By the 12th of May the railhead had reached the meadows in the East 50's, the scene of the earlier Vanderveer fracas, while the engine "Admiral Almy" puffed back and forth dragging dirt for filling in the low marshland. In

places it was necessary to drive spiles in particularly swampy areas at the head of Fresh Creek in Canarsie. By June 1st the entire track had been laid and was in running order very nearly the whole distance to the New Lots Road. When the track layers reached New Lots Road, their hard work was largely over, for, from this point north to East New York Village, the Manhattan Beach Railway had made arrangements to use the outer edge of the Brooklyn & Rockaway Beach R.R.'s right-of-way north to Atlantic Avenue, East New York. Because of the difference in gauges, the Manhattan Beach road could not share the other road's track, so the Manhattan Beach Co. agreed to lay its narrow gauge track on the west side and parallel to the Canarsie track, continuing in this manner for a mile to Atlantic Avenue.

While all this work was moving forward on the main line, similar strenuous efforts were being made on the branch from Parkville south to Manhattan Beach. When the branch to the south was first surveyed in 1876, a line of route was laid out considerably to the east of the later constructed route; it followed more or less parallel to the old Ryder's Lane and down into Flatlands Neck, crossing Sheepshead Bay near its mouth. In January 1877 this route was abandoned in favor of a more westward alignment generally parallel to Ocean Avenue.

Early in the year 1877 contractors were taken down to the beach to inspect the site of the Manhattan Beach Hotel and to make estimates for bidding. The architect for the new mammoth watering place was J. P. Putnam of Boston; his original plans proved too grandiose for construction within the four months available, and a somewhat smaller structure was designed. Corbin was determined that his hotel should open its doors by July 1, 1877 and construction of both the railroad and the hotel would have to be paced to meet that deadline. The Manhattan Beach Hotel was to have a 475 foot frontage facing the ocean, with three stories in part and four stories at the corners. Within there was to be a dining room and a lunch room, each 70 x 100, two open-air lunch rooms 40 x 100, a kitchen 70 x 100. The second story was to contain 92 guest rooms, 12 x 21 feet each; the third story 48 rooms, and the fourth story, 13 rooms. The contract for this substantial structure was let about April 1st and work began at once at a feverish pace.

Most of the right-of-way for the Manhattan Beach Railway

was acquired easily except for the strip 3000 feet long through the lands of Henry Wyckoff, south of Kings Highway, and covering East 16th, 17th, and 18th Streets which dragged on in the courts from April to June. As early as May 1st the hotel was beginning to rear its immense bulk above the sands, with an army of workmen crawling like ants over its vast dimensions; persons with spyglasses gathered at Sheepshead Bay and marveled at this incredible apparition on the outer beach.

The level farm land south from Parkville offered no obstacles to the track layers and they made rapid progress. The branch left the main line at a point between East 15th and East 16th Streets and continued south in a straight line to Avenue M; at this point the line jogged one block to the east and again continued south in a straight line between East 16th and 17th Streets to Kings Highway, where it again jogged one block to the east, continuing straight south between East 17th and 18th Streets all the way to Avenue Z. By May 12th the completed track extended as far as Gravesend Neck Road and construction trains moved busily up and down the road hauling rails and ties so as to reach the hotel site as soon as possible. At the junction at Parkville and southward through Magaw's Woods to Avenue J the ballasting crews followed along with gravel. On May 28th the track of the railroad had penetrated to the headwaters of Sheepshead Bay and the first locomotive rolled into that drowsy shorefront cluster of cottages. For the first time it became possible to transport workmen back and forth between the hotel site and their homes in the city. Over 100 of these men were moved over the new road on May 29th. Surveyors were set to work locating the bridge across Coney Island Creek and construction trains began bringing timber and furnishing of all sorts for the completion of the mammoth hotel by June 15th if at all possible. In the rear of the hotel carpenters were set to work erecting a 300 foot platform for the reception of trains. Fresh water wells were also sunk to provide for cooking and the needs of the army of workmen.

By June 23rd the great hotel was so near completion that the majority of the workmen were due for discharge on the 30th. Night and day the noise of the locomotive was heard, as trainload after trainload of material was brought down. Several of the buildings that had formerly been used as exhibition pavilions at

the Centennial Exposition were reassembled and set up on the grounds as restaurants. On the 25th a train of several cars conveyed the stockholders of the Manhattan Beach R.R. over the road down to Sheepshead Bay where they viewed the hotel from afar and then toured its vast rooms.

By July 4th the whole road was so far completed that an announcement was issued to the press stating that the road would open for business on July 19th, offering service from both Bay Ridge and East New York to the Manhattan Beach Hotel. Trains would also stop at Gunther's road, Parkville and Flatlands (Flatbush Avenue) and pick up way passengers.

Feverish last minute preparations were made during the weeks previous to the grand opening. One problem was the huge 100 foot arched underpass carrying Ocean Parkway over the road. By June 1st the whole cut had been dug out, the arches of the tunnel brought together and the truss placed across. By June 9th the arches had almost been brought together from either side, and on the 13th the first train passed through the tunnel, closing the main gap in the track.

At Bay Ridge dock additional last-minute efforts were made at the depot area. The contractor, Mr. George Kingsland, was erecting a large depot in the shape of an L. It was 48 x 160 feet with a waiting room 26 x 40, two stories in height and capped by a bell tower. The upper floor was designed for ticket offices and "sleeping rooms," presumably for the crews. The building also contained a shed for wagons, and a platform 47 x 80. The covered train platforms extended 200 feet from the end of the waiting rooms, and were divided up into bays 10 x 20 each. The whole cost of construction came to about $5000. For security's sake the line was fenced in as far east as Gravesend Avenue, and cattle guards were placed at every road to forestall accidents—a commentary on the delightfully rural atmosphere of the Brooklyn of that day!

The final labors before opening day were expended on the completion of the East New York end. By June 23rd the track layers had completed their labors to the New Lots–Flatlands Town line (Stone Avenue). Arrangements were made with Mr. Robert Smith, proprietor of the Metropolitan Hotel on the southwest corner of Van Sinderen Avenue and Fulton Street in East New York, to use his hotel as the depot and terminal of the

Manhattan Beach Railway. This hostelry had formerly served as the terminus of the Brooklyn & Rockaway Beach R.R. from 1865 to July 1, 1870, so Mr. Smith was no stranger to railroad needs and practices. By June 30 the track had been completed along the Canarsie R.R. right of way, and across the tracks of the Long Island R.R. on Atlantic Avenue to Fulton Street. As soon as the Manhattan Beach hotel was sufficiently completed to open to the public, service over the new road would begin.

On the evening of June 29th Austin Corbin permitted the Athenaeum Society of Brooklyn to run a moonlight excursion over the just-completed road. A large party assembled at Fulton Street in front of the Metropolitan Hotel and filled eight cars. The unexpected event caused considerable excitement in the village and hundreds turned out to give the excursionists a rousing send-off. With the exception of a slight jolting here and there, the train moved smoothly over the new roadbed to Manhattan Beach ten miles away. The trip took thirty minutes. The presence of workmen was everywhere apparent around the hotel, four hundred of them being still on the job. Although everything was still in a half-finished condition, the west end of the building with a veranda and ballroom had been arranged for the reception of the visitors. Couples danced on the veranda and tables were spread in the ballroom. Half the guests took the special train homeward at midnight and the remainder followed at 1:30 A.M., well-satisfied with the beauty of Manhattan Beach and the generosity of Mr. Corbin.

On Wednesday, July 19th, 1877, the formal opening of the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway took place in bright sunlight and a festive mood. A large crowd of about 700 invited guests gathered at the Battery in New York at 10 A.M., including prominent business men, politicians, and railroad officials from all the metropolitan roads. At 11:10 A.M. the steamer "Mohawk" swung loose from the Battery to the music of Graffula's Seventh Regiment Band. In nineteen minutes she reached the Bay Ridge dock where the entire company piled into a special train of ten cars drawn by the engine "Manhattan," gaily decked out with flags and bunting and with a wreath of laurel entwined about the headlight. The train steamed off, stopped briefly at Gunther's Crossing and Parkville, drawing up twenty-five minutes later at the Metropolitan Hotel in East New York. An im-

mense crowd of enthusiastic onlookers cheered the incoming train; even cannon were shot off to mark the event. The train waited 50 minutes, and then having gathered up sufficient guests, the locomotive steamed off. Twelve minutes later Manhattan Beach Junction was reached, and in another twelve minutes the train pulled into the platform behind the great hotel. To the strains of the "Star-spangled Banner" the throng alighted and made their way across the wide stretch of platform and up the broad slope leading to the first balcony of the hotel. The vastness of the building soon absorbed even the large excursion crowd. Many wandered through the halls, marveling at the size and splendor of the rooms. After enjoying the view from the eighteen-foot wide piazza, many meandered down to the shore where they enjoyed a quiet swim in seclusion. Later, the guests were summoned to the dining room, where were six immense tables for the guests and a seventh at the head of the room for the officers of the company and the orators of the occasion. After dinner, Mr. Corbin arose and extended the best wishes of the company to all. Speeches were cut to a minimum because of the lateness of the hour, and the company then returned to the trains for either Brooklyn or Bay Ridge. The whole affair was a success, thanks to the careful but unobtrusive supervision of Mr. Isaac Barton, the superintendent.

On the following day the road opened for business with the following schedule:

Bay Ridge to Manhattan Beach: 13 trains a day, leaving from 7:25 A.M. to 7:35 P.M. East New York to Manhattan Beach: 13 trains a day each way, between 6:30 A.M. and 8:30 P.M.

Twenty-six trains a day each way gave the amplest accommodations for reaching Manhattan Beach; the road and the hotel were now well launched on their spectacular career.

CHAPTER 3

The Struggle to Reach Greenpoint (The Glendale & East River R.R.)

THE building of the remaining five miles of the New York & Manhattan Beach R.R. from East New York to Greenpoint took another year to manage, and the corporate history behind the short stretch of track is considerably more complex than the South Brooklyn section. Two other railroads enter the story, the Glendale & East River R.R., a dormant enterprise until Corbin breathed life into it, and the Brooklyn & Rockaway Beach R.R. (Canarsie R.R.) the unexercised franchises of which proved useful to Corbin in piecing out his right of way.

Readers familiar with the history of the South Side R.R. may recall that the South Side, almost as soon as it completed its Brooklyn terminus at South 8th Street in Williamsburgh, began to experience much local opposition. Residents and business men living in the densely populated area resented the movement of steam dummies and heavy railroad coaches through the crowded streets, and a campaign began to drive the South Side R.R. from the city. Since South 8th Street was the road's main freight outlet, the officials began to look around for a substitute terminal in the event that they were expelled from South 8th Street. The officers approached the owners of the New York & Flushing R.R. and after much negotiating, succeeded in buying outright the western half of that road from Winfield Junction (still existing) to Hunter's Point. The section from Winfield to Maspeth was abandoned, but the trackage along Newtown Creek from Maspeth into the dock at Hunter's Point provided an ideal substitute deep-water terminal. The purchase was concluded in October 1869; the problem now arose to build a connection from the South Side tracks at Fresh Pond Road to the newly-purchased track at Maspeth. For legal purposes the South Side incorporated, in January 1870, the "Hunter's Point & South

Side R.R. Co." which was authorized to build from Glendale to a point on the East River in Long Island City. Between January and May 1870 the physical connection between the two roads was completed. The Hunter's Point and South Side, having served its purpose, was leased to the parent road in 1871 and merged with it in 1872.

Agitation against the South Side continued even after the removal of the freight operations from South 8th Street depot. The community seemed determined to get rid of the passenger service as well and tear up the track. The South Side, after 1870, could have moved its passenger service to Hunter's Point, but the Long Island R.R. was already using that place for its terminal, and relations with that road were not cordial. Besides, the South Side wanted to stay in Brooklyn, where the Long Island R.R. could provide no competition. Since there was so much opposition to the South 8th Street terminal, the officials felt some of the objections could be met if the terminal were moved about twenty blocks north away from both Broadway and Grand Street, the two areas of greatest crowding and densest wagon traffic.

Several officials of the road began looking over the ground to the north of Williamsburgh in the area known today as Greenpoint. At this time the area was largely unsettled and very few streets had been laid out. The section between Bushwick Inlet and Newtown Creek was particularly undeveloped and recommended itself as a potential waterside terminal. There were no inhabitants to make objections, and changing the terminal to this point would actually shorten the line by ¾ mile; best of all, steam engines could run direct to the water's edge instead of having to uncouple at Bushwick station as the South Side was obliged to do presently, and then use horses to drag cars through the city streets.

A group of persons connected with the operation of the South Side R.R. along with a few wealthy and well-connected outsiders, gave the project a start by organizing a new company to be known as "The Glendale & East River R.R." Articles of incorporation were filed on March 26, 1874. The men behind the road included L. S. Canfield, superintendent of the South Side R.R. 1873–4; State Senator James M. Oakley; Vandewater Smith of Hempstead, contractor on the New York & Hempstead

R.R., Edmund D. Gale, receiver of the South Side in 1874, and Charles W. Douglas, ex-superintendent of the South Side 1869–72.

The South Side R.R. had gone into receivership in the fall of 1873; the road was therefore not in a position to undertake any new physical changes in its own right. The route of the new road was officially described as running from the foot of North 13th Street, along North 13th to Union Avenue, thence diagonally across existing streets to Metropolitan Avenue and Humboldt Street, then running just south of and parallel to Metropolitan Avenue and out to Glendale. This would enable the line to connect with the South Side track more or less at Fresh Pond Road in Glendale. Glendale itself offered no inducement whatever to a railroad speculator. There was no village of Glendale as such in 1874 and the name itself was a new one invented by real estate operators to boom the old farming locality of Fresh Pond; the total population in 1875 amounted to only 173 souls!

The new owners of the South Side R.R., the Poppenhusens, displayed some interest in the Glendale & East River project as a substitute steam outlet, but in January 1876, they bought out the Long Island R.R. and so no longer had any need of the Glendale & East River. The projectors of the company lacked sufficient capital to build the road themselves and so matters drifted through 1875 and the beginning of 1876. Then a new project arose in the form of a narrow gauge steam railroad that would more or less parallel the Long Island R.R. and tap its main sources of revenue. This idea started in the fall of 1874 and slowly gained momentum. By 1876 the road had taken shape sufficiently to settle on a definite route, and the Glendale & East River was to be an integral part as the westerly terminus. The narrow gauge, calling itself the North Shore Railroad of Long Island, was to use the Glendale & East River tracks, and then strike out from there along the north side of the line of hills through the island to Orient on the eastern tip.

In March 1876, the directors of the Glendale & East River R.R. elected Isaac D. Barton as their president. This able man, on his resignation from the post of superintendent on the Flushing, North Shore & Central as of March 1st, had served as superintendent of the Long Island R.R. previously, and knew Long Island well. Unlike so many railroad men, Barton was

articulate as well as knowledgeable in railroad affairs, and the directors sent him out on speaking engagements in various towns on Long Island to drum up interest and enthusiasm for the new narrow gauge road. As of April 1876, Barton was president of the North Shore R.R. of L.I. and the moving spirit in the enterprise. Although many persons were opposed to the Long Island R.R. because of past grievances, not enough support was forthcoming to launch so ambitious a project as the new road. To complicate matters further, the North Shore charter expired in 1876. That left the officers of the Glendale & East River R.R. alone with a now-useless franchise and very dim prospects of ever realizing anything on it.

It appears to have been Isaac Barton who saved the road at this critical juncture and turned it into a thing of value. Through his wide acquaintanceship and close knowledge of railroad affairs, Barton came to hear of Austin Corbin's hotel and railroad project and realized at once that Corbin's plans could be made to serve his own interests. Barton arranged a meeting with Corbin and made a favorable impression. Corbin knew nothing about railroads and was easily persuaded of the value of the Glendale & East River R.R. as an uptown terminus for the Manhattan Beach road, just as the Bay Ridge end would serve as the downtown terminus. In November 1876 Corbin appointed Barton as his general manager and right hand man, and publicity releases incorporating Barton's ideas were fed to the press.

Barton lost no time making all the legal transfers of the Glendale & East River road over to Corbin. By November 10th all the necessary arrangements with the Secretary of State had been completed, the maps filed, and the rights of way secured. Some of the directors on the New York & Manhattan Beach were inclined to favor Hunter's Point for a northern terminal but Barton was determined to build to Greenpoint. In an interview with the Long Island City "Star," he declared that he favored Greenpoint because of its superior ferry facilities, giving connection to East 10th Street and East 23rd Street, New York, with a prospective ferry to either Wall or Fulton Street; also that it afforded a number of splendid locations for a depot. In a burst of enthusiasm he was quoted as saying: "I have never been connected with a railroad enterprise upon which I have set my heart as much as this one; in fact, it is a pet scheme of mine as

well as with the directors. It is a splendid one that can be easily constructed at a comparatively small expense for which we have the funds, and it will be one of the best paying roads in the country."

The contract for the new road was awarded the same week to the firm of Smith & Ripley, who had done work on the Fourth Avenue road in Manhattan. Specifications were prepared for the depot site, tentatively fixed at Oak and West Streets, and for machine and repair shops, turntables, etc. A depot with suitable ticket office, passenger and baggage rooms was planned to cost between $15,000 and $18,000.

The original route of the Glendale & East River R.R. was modified somewhat. North 15th Street was substituted for North 13th Street; the track would then go to a point just south of Richardson Street, then parallel that street to Kingsland Avenue, and then cut diagonally southeast across what was then open country to the corner of Grand Street and Metropolitan Avenue, then across Newtown Creek and Flushing Avenue to a junction with the South Side R.R.

Between this point and East New York the Manhattan Beach R.R. owned no franchise, so arrangements had to be made with a second road which did have one for such a route. This was the Brooklyn & Rockaway Beach R.R. This steam railroad, popularly known as the Canarsie R.R., opened in August 1865 and provided the first public transportation route to the Rockaways. The route was from the Canarsie dock just west of and parallel to Rockaway Parkway, Brooklyn, then diagonally northeast to Linden and Van Sinderen Avenues, and then straight north to Fulton Street. After July 1870, the northern terminus was moved to the Howard House at Alabama & Atlantic Avenues. This short 3½ mile route with its ferry connection to Rockaway proved popular and gained patronage yearly. In April 1871 the Brooklyn & Rockaway Beach R.R. secured from the Legislature a franchise enabling them to build a road from the northerly terminus at Fulton Street to Hunter's Point by the most direct and feasible route, but not to extend its railroad or run its cars upon or in any manner interfere with, the tracks, depots or property of the Long Island R.R. Co. without their consent, nor to construct west of Cooper Avenue. This right to build to Hunter's Point had never been exercised but was exactly what

was needed to combine with the Glendale & East River franchise to piece together a connected route.

The New York & Manhattan Beach had already reached agreement with the Canarsie road relative to the joint use of their right of way between New Lots Avenue and Atlantic Avenue. On January 29, 1877 a second agreement was concluded authorizing the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway to acquire in the name of the company the right of way granted by the Legislature in 1871 lying "between the terminus of its present railroad in the Village of East New York and Metropolitan Avenue in the City of Brooklyn." The Canarsie road agreed upon its completion to lease this portion of the road to the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway. The Manhattan Beach Company agreed in turn not to construct any branches of its own to Rockaway, or connect with any other railroad owning such a branch. Since Metropolitan Avenue had been the southern limit of the Glendale & East River franchise, this avenue now became the legal boundary between the two roads.

With the approach of spring and good working weather reporters from the prestigious Brooklyn "Eagle" interviewed company officials as to their plans for Brooklyn and Coney Island. It was explained that the new company had already purchased the New York, Bay Ridge & Jamaica R.R. and were at work building to East New York and Coney Island; as soon as the Glendale & East River and Brooklyn & Rockaway Beach branches could be combined and constructed, the road would open. The unlimited capital behind the road was stressed and the valuable contribution to city life urged as an immediate reason for municipal cooperation. The main reason for the road's solicitude for striking a favorable pose before the public was the scheduled appearance of the road before the Railroad Committee of the Common Council of Brooklyn. The blueprint that the Manhattan Beach Railway put before the Council was as follows: a depot 688 x 100 feet and covering 28 city lots would be erected at the corner of Oak and West Streets and extend to the river a block distant; the track would run south down West to North 15th Street and then due east along North 15th to Richardson Street; then east along Richardson to Vandervoort Street; then south down Vandervoort across Metropolitan Avenue and Grand Street to Harrison Street; thence through Harrison Street and

Irving Avenue to the Evergreen Cemetery and East New York. If one follows the route on a map, it is evident that the line skirts the edge of the Brooklyn City limits; it actually skirted as well the outer fringes of the settled area of that day.

The exact location of the depot site and the right of way through Greenpoint was yet to be fixed by the committee and the consents of the abutting property owners would have to be secured.

A much more grave threat loomed in the bill introduced into the Legislature at Albany by Assemblyman Tighe prohibiting the running of steam trains through the streets of Brooklyn. The main opposition to the road and the real influence behind the Tighe bill came from the shipyard owners clustered along West Street. Between Greenpoint Avenue and Bushwick Creek at this time was the center of the Greenpoint shipbuilding industry and many a ferry boat and coastwise vessel was produced in the yards along the river. Between Greenpoint Avenue and Oak Street was the biggest yard of them all, that of John Englis; between Oak and Quay Streets was the large sprawling works of the Continental Iron Works of T. F. Rowland; between Quay and North 14th Streets was the iron foundry of John Alexander. It was perfectly understandable that these thriving commercial concerns should take strong exception to the invasion of their area by a railroad company which proposed to run its track down their main shipping lane, West Street, and worse still, locate a depot covering 28 city lots with yards, car houses, turntable, etc. in the very midst of their factories at the junction of West & Oak Streets. The heads of these corporations affected were moneyed men and in a position to exert potent political pressure. Such men were Mr. Palmer, ex-alderman of the 17th Ward and agent of the Cunningham Estate which extended for four blocks on West Street and covered 200 city lots; and George F. Williams, owner of the proposed depot site, a shipper and president of the Greenpoint Savings Bank, who was in favor of the road.

To help the Aldermanic Committee of the Common Council make up its mind, the members made a personal tour of the route on foot and by carriage on March 14. The party gathered at West & Oak Streets, the proposed depot site, and viewed the huge Englis ship yard and its satellite feeder companies loaded with ship building supplies, then to Quay Street where the dis-

mal swamp began toward North 15th Street. In spots the aldermen were able to use carriages, but owing to the nature of the ground, considerable rough walking had to be done. The utter desolation of the route impressed itself on the aldermen; for nearly a mile they passed only a few dwelling houses and these of the humblest description. Civilization began again at the junction of Grand & Metropolitan Avenue. The company had already bought out the Kalbfleisch Varnish Works; the owners of a coal yard and a lumber yard were less willing to sell out. At Newtown Creek the projected right of way impinged on the rear of William Marshall's Rope Walk, a large manufactory facing Waterbury Street and extending back 27 acres. Below this point the road passed along marshy ground and low flats, then crossed Johnson Avenue to the south of which was located two trout-breeding ponds owned by Mr. McGovern, both ponds being fed by springs flowing into Newtown Creek. Since the hour by this time was late and the March weather extremely disagreeable, the alderman concluded their trek and broke up.

To persuade the Aldermanic Committee to rule favorably, the railroad got one of the aldermen to present a petition in favor of the road which contained over 1000 names and which had been secured in two days. Slightly more than half the right of way had already been purchased, and three-fourths of all the needed rails had already been delivered. Austin Corbin himself appeared before the Committee and assured them that the road was not a mere speculation, but a road already partially built and the total sum of $900,000 needed to build the entire road fully subscribed.

On March 16, 1877 the Railroad Committee met again and continued the hearing. This time opportunity was given to the opponents of the road who made several general objections:

1. The road would run on narrow 30 foot streets with steam, a dangerous situation.
2. The railroad would depreciate nearby property.
3. It was a summer road catering only to pleasure seekers.
4. The road was not designed to carry freight.
5. The road cut across all leading avenues of the city.
6. Many of the signatures on the petition were of persons who were not property owners.

Mr. McGovern, the owner of the trout-hatching pond south of Johnson Avenue, also registered his protest. The tracks would cross his principal springs and the vibration of engines would ruin his hatch troughs with their five thousand young trout. It is certainly difficult for us today to imagine that the fetid stinking waters of Newtown Creek, irridescent with chemical wastes and exuding miasmic bubbles constantly from its putrid surface could ninety years ago have been pure enough for shell-fishing, bathing and fish culture! Mr. Marshall, the owner of the great rope walk on the west bank of the creek, also charged that the road was a money-making scheme by Boston capitalists at the expense of Brooklynites and that the road threatened his business. President Corbin, who was again present, tried to conciliate the board and dangled before them the prospect of a rapid transit road which would take people from Greenpoint to East New York in fifteen minutes. He stressed that the road had already settled with many of the property owners and had paid cash in every instance.

On March 17 more opposition developed in the hearings. A Mr. Henry Place, counsel for the objecting property owners, claimed that the permission granted to the Brooklyn & Rockaway Beach R.R. to extend to Hunter's Point was a fraud foisted on the public, for it had been presented in the guise of a street railroad, but that opposition had developed immediately when it was discovered that steam was authorized. Place opposed the transfer of this dormant franchise to the Manhattan Beach Railway and said that the Corporation Counsel and the Board of City Works both opposed Corbin's plans. The streets of the 17th and 18th Wards, he claimed, had never been laid out for steam railroads; he asserted that the railroad proposed to cut acute and obtuse angles through 56 streets along the proposed route in Williamsburgh and Greenpoint. His final point was that the foundries and shipyards in Greenpoint would be injured, and the lives of the inhabitants menaced by engines and roughs brought in by the trains.

On March 28th the hearing was transferred to the Assembly in Albany, the point at issue being the proposed Tighe Bill, prohibiting steam on the Manhattan Beach Railway in Brooklyn. The familiar arguments were again rehearsed and the company's counsel emphasized that the "streets" allegedly injured were

projected ones only, or streets as yet unopened, and that the principal portions of the disputed road crossed marshland and harmed no one (which was perfectly true). Other advocates stressed that it would bring life to a stagnant area of Brooklyn and serve to reclaim a section now a lifeless wasteland. Rapid transit and ferry facilities would immeasurably benefit the backward isolated hinterland of Greenpoint. Corbin testified that within the last month he had been able to purchase more of the right of way—he now owned three-fifths in all. Mr. Tighe, author of the anti-steam bill, said that he would be willing to modify his bill so that the road could use steam with the consent of the Common Council

This left the decision once again in the lap of the Common Council. On April 2nd the Railroad Committee recommended to that body that the railroad should first satisfy all the property owners and secure their consent before granting its permission to construct. On April 11, 1877 the Railroad Committee went over the proposed route a second time, to determine whether, by shifting the road a short distance one way or the other, they might meet the objections of the opponents. Again they crossed the swampy Bushwick meadows, emerging at Leonard Street, which was then several feet below the established grade and would therefore pass under the proposed railroad track unless the level was raised, an expense the city did not relish. At Richardson Street, along which the railroad was to run for three blocks, the householders between Manhattan Avenue and Humboldt Street, the sole point of thick settlement because of the Graham Avenue and Grand Street horse car lines, came forward with a map of their own, urging that the road be taken off their street and shifted one hundred feet south so as to run behind their houses. This property would have to be acquired. East of Humboldt Street the route crossed vacant lots, the few obstructions here having been already purchased. Then they looked at the Marshall Rope Walk where Mr. Marshall met them and again objected to the locomotive passing within 120 feet of his building. Superintendent Barton, accompanying the party, gave no sympathy. The tour then ended at Johnson Avenue and Vandervoort Street, the outlet of the Central Avenue sewer, one of the first such outfalls constructed by a short-sighted Brooklyn to destroy Newtown Creek. Here the party inspected the McGovern trout

pond and Alderman Acker's ice houses, both in the path of the proposed railway, and then broke up.

At their meeting on the following day the committee adopted two recommendations which the railroad accepted; move the railroad behind the houses on Richardson Street as proposed by the residents, and secondly, shift the railroad from Vandervoort Street eastward, construct a bridge over Newtown Creek and run the railroad through the meadows on the east bank. This eliminated at once the Marshall and the McGovern objections.

By May it was obvious that the railroad was winning its long hard fight to secure a right of way through north Brooklyn. Every accommodation had been made, thanks to the money and diplomacy of Austin Corbin; and the tact and affability of Superindent Barton. When it became obvious that the people were mollified and amenable to the coming of the railroad, the politicians became equally agreeable. On May 7, 1877 the Council appointed a committee of three commissioners to appraise lands in the 18th Ward (east of Bushwick Avenue) to be taken for the Glendale & East River R.R.

By July 1, 1877 the Common Council granted the long-sought authorization to construct. The company, as might have been expected, had not been sitting on its hands during the months of March, April and May while the Common Council deliberated at its leisure. On sections already owned the company had begun grading operations in the premature hope of opening the road during the 1877 season, but it was soon obvious that this could not be carried out. The proposed Greenpoint terminal at Oak & West Streets had also been purchased from George F. Williams, president of the Greenpoint Savings Bank, on February 21, and contractors had been called in for estimates. The contract for the construction of the trestle bridge spanning Bushwick Creek was awarded about March 1st to a New York firm, Messrs. Warren & McIntyre, and was due to be completed in 60 days from the signing of the contract. By the 1st of April work was well under way and short sections of track laid. About May 15th Yardmaster Frank Smith took delivery at Mr. Williams' dock at the foot of Oak Street of 200,000 feet of yellow pine caps and stringers for the trestle and the stone bed for the turntable. Some preparations were made as well on ferry facilities, for we read that a new steamboat line was beginning to run boats from Kent Street,

Greenpoint, to Peck Slip, New York. It was intended to connect with the new Greenpoint Railroad.

By September 1st, seven-eighths of the total grading on the road had been completed. The only serious opposition still came from the small homeowners on Richardson Street. The company looked forward to a large freight business along the Greenpoint Branch from the manufactories in Greenpoint. Somewhat to the surprise of the railroad, a delegation of Williamsburgh people called on Austin Corbin, urging him to consider running a branch to South 8th Street, the very terminal from which the South Side R.R. had been hounded just the previous year. The delegation claimed that the neighborhood had experienced a change of heart, but significantly, not one of them actually owned property on South 8th Street. Corbin listened and wisely forgot the incident.

On October 3rd the railroad applied to the Supreme Court for the appointment of commissioners to take the land occupied by the Continental Iron Works, located on both sides of West Street, between Oak & Quay Streets, and directly facing the proposed site of the Greenpoint depot. Mr. Rowland, the owner, strongly opposed the move, and reminded the court that he gave employment to as many as 1200 workers at one time, and even in the present slack time still employed over 500. The court reserved decision.

Meanwhile, during the cold winter weather, the work was pressed. In December sub-contractor Warner began the work of grading and filling in the meadow portions of the road between Franklin Street and Cooper's Hill near Kingsland Avenue. On January 18, 1878 the road received a setback when the Supreme Court denied the road's motion to appoint commissioners to take the Continental Iron Works on the grounds that the original Glendale & East River charter contained no provision to occupy West, Quay or Oak Streets. The court held that this constituted a change of route, and that the railroad had acquired neither consent of the Common Council nor that of the property owners for such change.

Having been beaten in the courts in their effort to secure the Oak Street terminal, the Manhattan Beach Railway directors set about making the best of the situation, and for depot purposes they leased instead the two spar yards at the foot of Quay

Street then occupied by David J. Taff and Cornelius Winant, from the James Cunningham Estate, which controlled over 200 lots along four blocks. The terms were $600 per year for a term of 8 years, plus the obligation to establish a ferry from that point to New York.

Inasmuch as Austin Corbin was as ignorant of the ferry boat business as he was of the railroad business, he made overtures to the operators of the East 10th Street Ferry, suggesting that they transfer their boats from Greenpoint Avenue to Quay Street. The ferry people expressed a willingness to acquiesce in this plan providing there was prospect of a fair return for the heavy outlay which would be required. The location at Quay Street was considered a poor one on account of the formation of the shore line in the vicinity. It adjoined the mouth of Bushwick Creek, where, in the winter season, large masses of floating ice collected which, it was thought, would prove a serious obstacle to the entrance and exit of boats at that point, and the building of bulkheads and ferry slips and the necessary dredging would entail a large expense which the ferry company did not care to incur without material aid from the railroad. In addition to these reasons, the ferry company pointed out that the business of the railroad was transient—four months at best—and there was the strong possibility that the ferry company might injure its regular business by removing itself so far from the central and convenient location at Greenpoint Avenue. Mr. Corbin estimated that the seasonal traffic over the road would be at least 500,000 persons for the season. This would net the ferry about $15,000, but the improvements at Quay Street were estimated at $18,000 for slips, etc.

All during the months of February and March, the Manhattan Beach Co. completed the laying of their track at different points between East New York and Greenpoint. Two miles of single track had been laid from the South Side R.R. crossing to Myrtle Avenue. Contractor Warren was also engaged in grading between Evergreen Avenue and Myrtle Avenue and began driving piles on January 28th in the vicinity of Cooper Hill and Grand Street; a construction train regularly moved over the completed track between Cooper Hill and Humboldt Street.

When the Manhattan Beach Railway sought access to its depot site on Quay Street, another obstacle arose. The block

just east of the depot formed by West, Quay, Franklin and North 15th Streets was occupied by the John Alexander Iron Foundry. He refused to let the company run its track across his land because of an earlier dispute. The company months before had contracted for a certain angle of land from him; he agreed and removed sheds and a small building which were in the way. Then when the Continental Iron Works foiled the company's plans to build their depot on Oak Street, Mr. Alexander's land under the altered conditions became useless to the company, and they refused to take it, or, it was alleged, declined to indemnify him for the expense he was put to. Mr. Alexander, therefore, to bring the railroad company to terms, retaliated by withdrawing his permission for the railroad to cross his land.

Superintendent Barton investigated Mr. Alexander's property title and discovered that since the time Alexander had bought his property from the original owners, the Banker Estate, Alexander had lengthened his property line 35 to 40 feet farther south by filling in the meadow land on the bank of Bushwick Creek. The Banker Estate, when informed of this by Barton, objected and laid claim to Mr. Alexander's filled-in land. Now it so happened that the Manhattan Beach tracks crossed on this filled-in land in dispute, and Barton took advantage of the contested ownership to seek and obtain from the Banker heirs permission to lay track across the property.

When Alexander heard of this, he was incensed and retaliated by building an iron fence all along the West Street side of his property, including the disputed filled land, thus cutting off the railroad right of way. Barton laid his track right up to the fence on the Quay Street side and close up on the Franklin Street side, leaving only a short gap of about 30 feet, Alexander called for police protection and two officers were stationed to prevent tampering with the fence. He himself watched to give the alarm in case Barton made a move.

On April 7th at 7 P.M., a train of cars, propelled by an engine in the rear, came dashing along toward Franklin Street. After crossing that thoroughfare, the engine was detached from the eight cars, which rolled along of their own momentum, the conductor jumping off when near the fence after a vain effort, he claimed, to apply the brakes. The cars crashed through the

fence to the dismay of the policemen who could only stand by and gape. The railroad officials were profuse in their apologies and kindly offered, with a big force of men nearby, to extricate the cars and build up the fence again. Of course, the cars would have to be jacked up with rails before they could be taken away. The policemen and Mr. Alexander saw the point immediately. If rails were laid beneath the wheels of the derailed cars, the Manhattan Beach track would be continuous. The officers therefore refused to let the men touch the cars. Six of the cars were dragged back to the line; the other two remained derailed. The company, fearing that Alexander, sometime during the night would dump the cars into Bushwick Creek, demanded protection for them until they could be removed. Two more policemen were detailed to keep an eye on both parties.

On April 8th, the next day, Superintendent Barton went to Greenpoint and telegraphed police headquarters for permission to remove his cars without police interference. The request was granted by the downtown officials who were unaware of the issues at stake. The two cars were jacked up, rails were placed under them, and before the police or Mr. Alexander realized what was coming, the rails were spiked and the cars pushed ahead to Quay Street depot. A moment or two later an engine and two passenger cars followed at speed and made a through run, thus legally opening the road. Mr. Alexander accepted the situation and proposed to turn to the courts for redress. The following morning, April 7th, the Manhattan Beach Railway ran their first train over the entire route from Manhattan Beach to Greenpoint. At 10 A.M. the train, containing President Corbin, Superintendent Barton, most of the directors and members of the company, besides a number of invited guests, started from Bay Ridge. A stop was made at the Manhattan Beach Hotel where the company were entertained for a few hours, after which the train passed over the new line to Greenpoint.

One month later, the company had completed the Greenpoint depot and had made arrangements with the Harlem Steamboat Company to have their vessels stop at the railroad pier on every trip, to convey the passengers to Peck Slip or Harlem. The 10th and 23rd Street ferries were also to connect with the road. An interline arrangement was concluded with the Brooklyn &

Rockaway Beach R.R. to sell tickets at Greenpoint to passengers desirous of going to Rockaway Beach, who would change trains at the Metropolitan Hotel, East New York.

On Wednesday, May 15, 1878, the whole Manhattan Beach Railway and the hotel were formally opened for the summer season. About fifty newspapermen and several prominent residents of New York and Brooklyn assembled at 11 A.M. at the foot of Pier 8, North River, in a drizzly rain. The steamer "Thomas Collyer" conveyed them to the new Greenpoint R.R. dock, where a special train, gaily decorated with bunting, was in waiting. Soon after starting, the clouds cleared away and the sun shone pleasantly. The Manhattan Beach Hotel was reached by about 1 P.M. where the guests left the cars and strolled about the grounds, greatly improved since last summer. At 2 P.M. a magnificent dinner was served befitting the occasion after which speeches were made and toasts proposed to the success of the new enterprise. Late in the afternoon the guests reentered the waiting cars and were taken down to the wharf at Bay Ridge where the "Thomas Collyer" was in waiting to convey them to New York. The guests set foot at Pier 8 at about 8 P.M., having made the complete circuit of Brooklyn City and the rural Towns of New Lots, Flatlands, Flatbush and Gravesend.

CHAPTER 4

The Kings County Central R.R.

WE have spoken of the part played by the New York, Bay Ridge & Jamaica, the Glendale & East River and the Brooklyn & Rockaway Beach railroads in the formation of the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway. There was yet another road in the Manhattan Beach organization, though a minor one to be sure, and that was the Kings County Central Railroad.

In the summer of 1876, Electus B. Litchfield, the railroad developer, projected a new steam railroad to run from the then City Line at Montgomery Street and Washington Avenue, down Washington to Empire Boulevard, then curving west to Ocean Avenue and south down Ocean to Parkside Avenue, along Parkside to Parade Place, south down Parade Place to Caton, where a depot would be built, then a block on Caton to 16th Street, and south down 16th Street to Coney Island. As it happened, just about the same route was currently being planned by the Coney Island & East River Railway, which later became the Brighton Line, and which actually built the route.

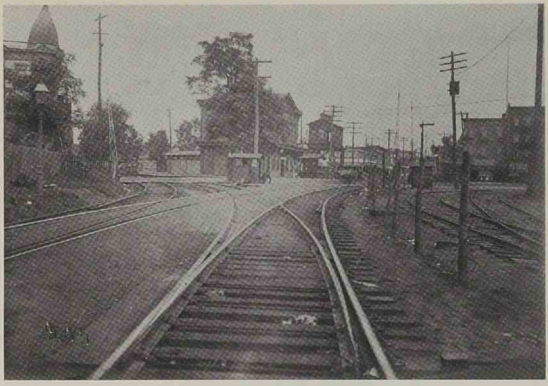
On September 14, 1876 Litchfield filed his maps with the Secretary of State. In the years 1874–77 Coney Island was suddenly "discovered" by the speculators, and dozens of paper railroads were duly mapped out and filed, the object of one and all of them being to connect the growing city of Brooklyn with Coney Island. Electus B. Litchfield and his brother Edwin ranked well above the average speculator in wealth and social prestige, for both had a long career in railroad investment and management not only in Brooklyn but in New York State, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. Electus, in particular, had operated the Flushing R.R. (1860) and was president of the Brooklyn, Central & Jamaica R.R (1860–67) and the New York & Hempstead R.R. (1871–72). When Litchfield, therefore, in company with Samuel McElroy, an engineer of the highest repute in Flatbush,

undertook to launch the Kings County Central R.R., everyone was prepared to see the project come to fruition.

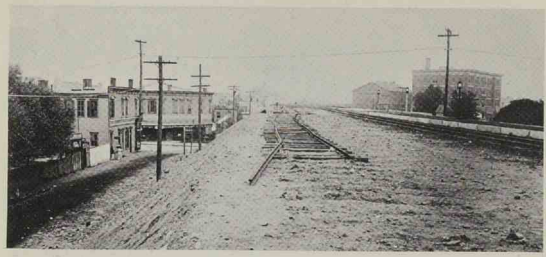
The moment that it became a matter of public record that the Kings County Central road planned to lay tracks in Washington Avenue, Mr. William Richardson, president of the Atlantic Avenue R.R., sent workmen to the corner of Washington & Lincoln Avenues on the morning of September 21st and proceeded to tear up the pavement. When the residents investigated into what was going on, they discovered that in 1873 the Atlantic Avenue R.R. Co. had secured a franchise to build on Washington Avenue from Atlantic Avenue south to Clarkson Street. The company had never bothered to exercise this franchise, but now that another company proposed to build, Washington Avenue suddenly seemed very important and worth occupying.

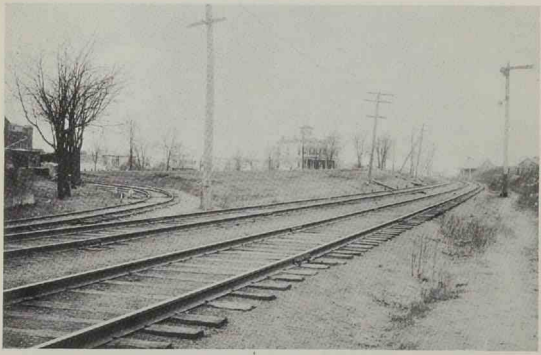
Mr. Litchfield had no intention of letting Mr. Richardson steal a march on him and presented to the Common Council a petition not only to operate steam on Washington Avenue but to extend the running of such cars north to Fulton Street. The Common Council referred this petition to its Railroad Committee where nothing was done. During the winter months the project remained quiescent but in February of the next year (1877), surveyors went to work along the Parade Grounds and Parkview Avenue.

In the spring of 1877 the whole Kings County project was transformed. Did Litchfield approach Corbin or did Isaac Barton or Austin Corbin approach Litchfield? We do not know, but it is known that Barton considered the City Line area at Prospect Park an important source of traffic because of the horse car lines that terminated there. Whatever the background, in July 1877 the Kings County filed an amended route which started at Flatbush Avenue & Empire Boulevard (Malbone Street), ran east through Empire Boulevard to the Clove Road, south down the Clove Road to Clarkson Avenue, and thence straight south to a junction with the Manhattan Beach road. An agreement was signed with the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway whereby the Kings County Central agreed to lay a three-foot gauge steel track with 40 lb. rail, to construct the necessary switches and sidings, turntables, depots and other necessary buildings, water tanks and engine houses. Upon completion, the Manhattan Beach Railway agreed to lease and operate the

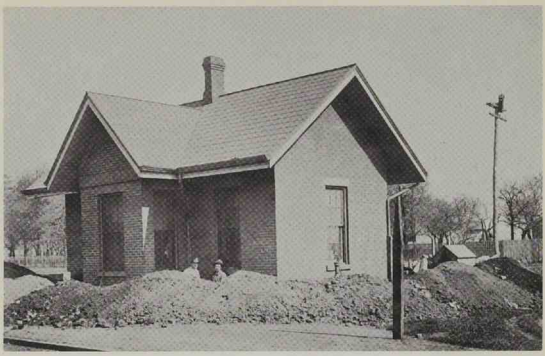


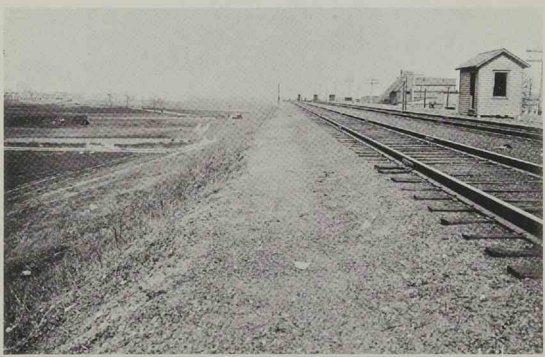
Atlantic Ave. Jct. at East New York in 1905 (top) and Manhattan Beach platform at East New York in 1905 (Rugen)



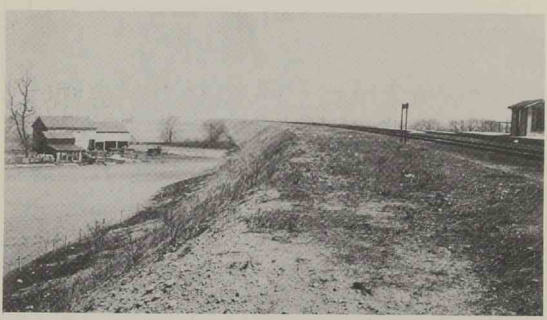


Cypress Ave. station in 1914 (top) and Evergreen Jct. in 1905 (bottom) (**Rugen**)

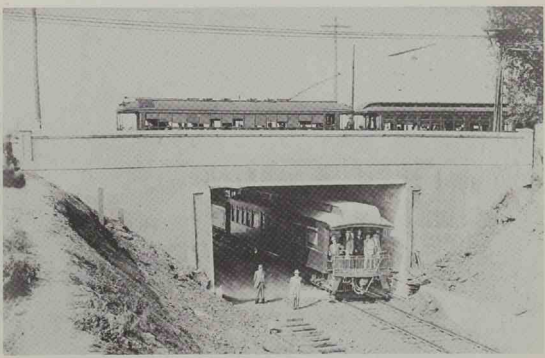




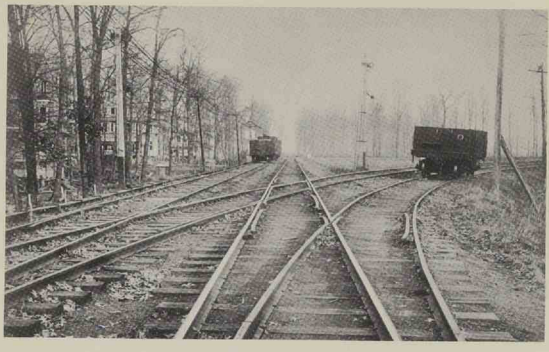
Vanderveer Park Station in 1906 (top) and Rugby station at East 92nd St. in 1915 (bottom) (Rugen)

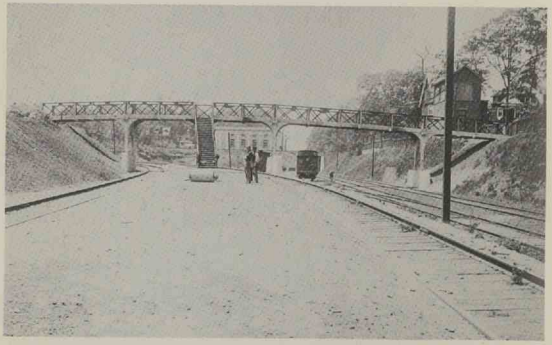


Kouwenhoven station at Kings Highway in 1905 (top)(**Rugen**)
same station in 1915 (bottom) (Watson)

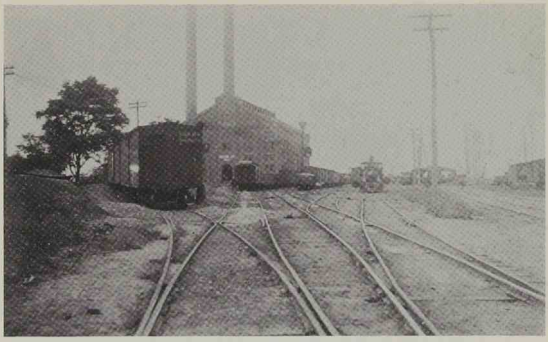


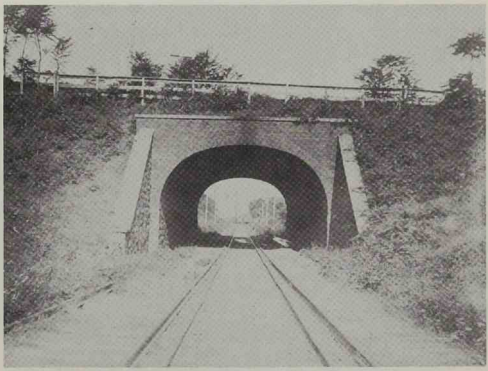
Parkville station in 1906 (built 1889) (top) and Parkville tunnel in 1906 with parlor car (bottom) (Rugen)



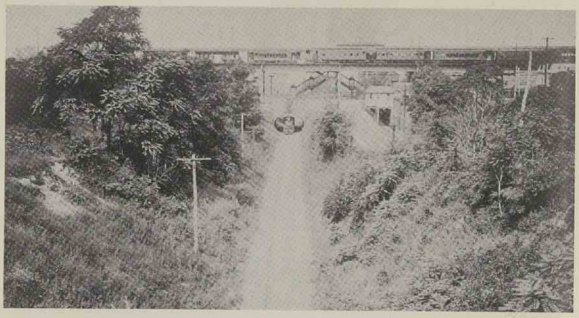


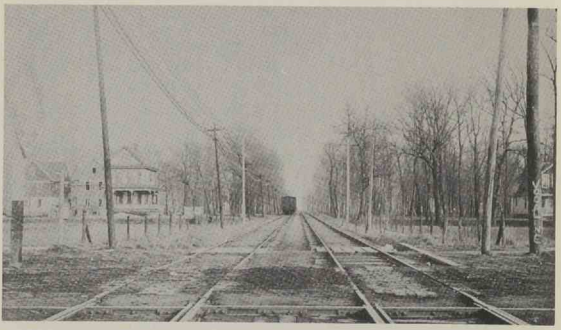
Wye at Manhattan Beach Jct. in 1905 (top) and platform at same station in 1910 (bottom) (Rugen)





65th St. dock and yards in 1905 (top) (Watson) and Tunnel under 2nd Ave. about 1905 (bottom) (Rugen)





Tunnel under 3rd Ave. with elevated in 1909 (top) and Coney Island Ave. crossing in 1905 (bottom) (Rugen)

Kings County Central for a term of 99 years, the Manhattan Beach road having the power to collect fares, and to deduct 50% in compensation for running and maintaining the road. The remaining 50% was to be divided pro rata, two-fifths to go to the Manhattan Beach Railway. For every passenger carried over the line of the Kings County Central, the road was to receive 2¢. All moneys collected for freight were to go to the Manhattan Beach Railway. The Manhattan Beach Railway agreed to furnish all the rolling stock, operate the road and defray all the expenses of repairs, and to furnish service as the public convenience might require. A few days later some additional details were published. The table of organization was made public and showed that a Mr. J. Condit Smith, a large operator in railroads and railroad supplies from Buffalo, was president of the new road, with Electus B. Litchfield as vice-president and general manager. Two other Litchfield relatives and Samuel McElroy, the engineer, appeared on the board of directors. Mr. Litchfield announced that the purchase of the greater part of the land had been arranged, and that the property owners along the line were in favor of the road. Two depot sites had already been provided for: the land for the terminus at Flatbush Avenue just north of Malbone Street (Empire Boulevard) had been rented from a local Flatbush citizen named Mr. Case. The property had a 100 foot front on Flatbush Avenue and ran through to Washington Avenue, giving sufficient room for platforms, turntables, switches, etc. The other depot site was purchased and covered the land on the south side of Clarkson Street between New York Avenue & East 34th Street, across the street from Kings County Hospital. This was to be the main freight depot. The work of building the road was awarded to Mr. N. A. Tompkins, a veteran contractor of Greenpoint.

During the first two weeks of August surveyors ran their lines along the Clove Road and down to Holy Cross Cemetery. Because of the relative shortness of the line, only 3½ miles, the work did not take long. On August 17th work was commenced on the road. Men with teams began grading from Nostrand Avenue and Empire Boulevard south along the right of way paralleling the west side of Clove Road as far south as Vernon Avenue (Tilden). By September 1st, the grading had been completed to the marshes at Paerdegat Creek below Foster Avenue.

It is probable that a small trestle had to be installed here over the creek headwaters, for even as late as 1910 the Flatbush Water Company still used the open streams here. Other gangs, meanwhile, distributed the ties over the line with the rails soon to follow.

In the first week of September track gangs began work at "Kings County Central Junction," the spot where New York Avenue intersects the Manhattan Beach Railway. A switch branching off to the northeast was laid, and both ties and rails were put down rapidly along the right of way midway between East 35th Street and East 34th Street. On Monday, September 3rd, the track gang at work on the upper end, when they reached Washington Avenue, tore out the T-rail of the Atlantic Avenue R.R. Co. and substituted their own track. Word reached Mr. Richardson of the challenge to his company's rights, and on the following morning, September 4th, an Atlantic Avenue track gang ripped up the Kings County Central track and replaced their own. Rather than foment a railroad war, the Kings County people agreed to put in an improved crossing at the intersection.

More surprising was the attempt of the Kings County Central men on Sunday night, September 2nd, to take possession of Malbone Street (Empire Boulevard) itself and to lay track along it, from Flatbush Avenue to Nostrand Avenue. Sunday was the favorite time in pre-World War I days to commit high-handed illegal acts that at any other time would be halted by court orders or injunctions, because of the simple fact that the courts were closed on Sunday. The tracklayers caught the Highway Commissioners of the Town of Flatbush completely by surprise. The railroad had no right to the use of the street itself, and since the legislative reform of 1875, no railroad could lay track in any street in the state without the consent of half of the property owners. Malbone Street had been graded and macadamized but a short time before at a heavy expense to the property owners, and already was burdened since 1872 with a horse car track of the New Williamsburgh & Flatbush Railroad Co. operating the Nostrand Avenue line.

Although the rails were already in place on Malbone Street, the Highway Commissioners effectively prevented their use by securing a court injunction, and the road was faced with the necessity of buying or renting the property on the north side of

Malbone Street. On October 15th a hearing was held in court on the injunction, and the justice so modified the injunction as to allow the Kings County Central to plead their case on its merits before five commissioners in five weeks' time. The matter was then laid over till the following year.

In the meantime progress on the rest of the road went on rapidly. By the end of September the track was laid as far north as Clarkson Street, and the locomotive ran back and forth carrying materials. By the last day of the year 1877 the locomotive and construction train ranged as far north as the County Buildings, and workmen were active in ballasting the new track.

Mr. Litchfield suffered another setback before the year ended. In October 1877, he had petitioned the Common Council of the City of Brooklyn to run steam dummies on Flatbush Avenue from the City Line on Flatbush Avenue along Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues to the South Ferry; also from Atlantic Avenue through Third Avenue, Ninth Street and Hamilton Avenue to Hamilton Avenue Ferry. This idea was not as far-fetched at that time as it seems to us today, for dummies were then running on Third and Fifth Avenue in South Brooklyn and on upper Broadway in Williamsburgh. In any case, the Aldermen in November decided to turn down Litchfield's request, unless the State Legislature could be persuaded to authorize it. The Brooklyn City R.R., already running horse car lines on the streets requested, opposed the Kings County Central petition and used its political influence to defeat it.

During the winter months of 1877–78 no physical work could be done on the railroad, but the company in January and February spent time in the courts in a continuing effort to secure the right-of-way through Malbone Street. The chief counsel for the company, Gen. Phillip S. Crooke, secured a re-argument for the case on January 28th. The company had another ace up its sleeve which very quietly came to light in the last week of January. A map in the name of the "Prospect Park and Clarkson Street R.R." was filed; the officers listed were the two sons of the Kings County Central's chief counsel, Frank Crooke and Charles Crooke. The route began at the Kings County Central depot at Malbone and Flatbush Avenue passed down Flatbush Avenue, to Lefferts Avenue, east on Lefferts to Rogers Avenue, and then diagonally southeast to a junction with the Kings County Central

track at Clarkson Street. The whole "railroad" was a transparent alternate route for the Clove Road-Malbone Street right-of-way of the Kings County Central.

Objections were forthcoming almost immediately from the Flatbush Plank Road Co. who at that period still collected toll from traffic on the avenue. After all, steam engines might well drive wagon traffic from the highway and the road's income would suffer in consequence. Their attorney suggested an alternate street, one on which Mr. Frank Crooke was a resident, and served him with notice of such change; Mr. Crooke then took the position that service of notice on him as a property owner was not the same as service as president of the railroad company, and insisted to the court that the petition of the Plank Road Co. was therefore defective.

On top of this legal hair-splitting, Frank Crooke, as president of the Prospect Park and Clarkson Avenue R.R., applied to the Commissioners of Highways of the Town of Flatbush for the use of the Clove Road south of Lefferts Avenue, and he appears to have been so sure of himself as to have ties strung along it. The Commissioners refused outright, smoothed the grade of the street and removed Crooke's ties from the roadway.

Just at this critical juncture when the Kings County Central needed someone to save it from the antagonisms that the Crookes were arousing in official Flatbush circles, Mr. Litchfield, in attempting to board a Wall Street ferry boat, slipped and broke his leg, making him an involuntary invalid for almost seven weeks. The result was no physical progress whatever on the road for the whole of March. In mid-April Mr. Litchfield, full of anxiety over the snail-like progress of the Kings County Central, painfully mounted his carriage and managed to be driven about by his coachman. Under his supervision and energetic personal direction the track laying on the uncompleted upper part of the road north of Clarkson Street was resumed. Since the Highway Commission had refused to the company the use of the roadbed of Clove Road, Litchfield bought or rented the land on the west side of the street as far north as Sullivan Street at the City Line.

As might have been expected, there was one holdout along the Clove Road who refused to yield his land for railroad purposes, and it became necessary to get court permission for the appointment of commissioners to appraise the land. The owner, one

Sullivan, asked $5000 for what amounted to a mudhole alongside the road; the commissioners, after viewing the plot, awarded the man $450, and to his tenant who would have to be displaced 6¢!

With the last break in the right-of-way mended, Mr. Litchfield could now construct the road straight into the depot. In his zeal to complete the track, he misjudged his ability to hobble about and fell once again, though this time no break resulted. He appeared on the job daily without fail and by mid-May had the satisfaction of seeing the rails laid up to Nostrand Avenue. Mr. Charles Litchfield, his son, and Mr. Edwin Litchfield, his brother, contributed their help to the project now so near its goal. Mr. Charles Crooke, son of the chief counsel, and a civil engineer and surveyor in his own right, did all the engineering work, checking the profiles and putting down stakes.

In the third week of May the switches behind the depot on Flatbush Avenue were installed and the turntable set in near the corner of Malbone Street. Only about four blocks of track remained to be laid. By the end of the first week of June even this gap had been closed, and on June 8th President Corbin, accompanied by the directors of the Manhattan Beach road, made the first experimental run over the completed roadbed. A heavy rainstorm did some superficial damage to the track, but not enough to disrupt traffic.

The first days before the grand opening were devoted to readying the Flatbush Avenue depot. Superintendent Barton of the Manhattan Beach Railway came up to supervise the installation of gates, ticket offices, etc. A huge sign was hung up facing Flatbush Avenue bearing the words: "Manhattan Beach Railroad." There was every expectation that the road would open on June 22nd, but at the last minute it was decided to postpone the opening one week.

On Saturday, June 29th, the great day came at last. Trains commenced running over the road at 9 A.M. and from that time until 8:30 P.M. possibly as many as five thousand persons traveled over it. Not only prominent residents but also hundreds of others were given free tickets over the road. The officials at the depot and on the trains were in neat uniform; new passenger cars were on hand drawn by the engines "Admiral Almy" and "Charles L. Flint," the latter having the honor of drawing the

first passenger train over the road. The initial trip was made from the depot to Kings County Central Junction in just eight minutes and to Manhattan Beach in ten more, or just 18 in all! There were no passing sidings on the Kings County Central track, so only one train could use the track at a time.

The preparations at Manhattan Beach for the occasion were extensive and had been in progress for a week. Trains came down from Prospect Park at intervals of every half hour. In the morning there were very few passengers and things were dull at the beach. The Manhattan Beach hotel managers had engaged a special battalion of waiters in expectation of the increased trade from the Branch. Yet, as the weather was warm and a large number of free passes had been given out, the attendance did pick up later. The afternoon trains were crowded and people began arriving in large numbers from East New York, Bay Ridge and Greenpoint as well as Prospect Park. By 5 P.M. the crowd was at its height with about 10,000 at the beach. It was estimated that about half this number had come from the new branch, the larger portion of them from the Eastern District who had reached Prospect Park by the horse cars.

An informal dinner was tendered to the representatives of the press and about 150 guests by Mr. Electus Litchfield, the president, and his sons Charles and Arthur B. at the Manhattan Beach Hotel. Dinner was served at 4:30 P.M. with a very elaborate bill of fare, after which Mr. Litchfield arose to give a brief history of the project.

The entire Kings County Central R.R. as completed was 3½ miles long. It offered excellent accommodations in many ways. At the time that it opened, the road provided the shortest route yet to Coney Island for people in the Prospect Park area and to the northward. The depot at Flatbush Avenue & Malbone Street on the Brooklyn City line was already a railroad terminus of some importance. The Flatbush Avenue horse car line to downtown Brooklyn passed by. The Nostrand Avenue line terminated at the new depot, as did also the Franklin Avenue line, these latter two lines giving access to Central Brooklyn and Williamsburgh. Locally, the new road was of the greatest benefit to the east side of Flatbush, where there was no public transportation at all. The many persons who visited on weekends at the County Buildings, which then included an Alms House, Hospital,

Nursery and Lunatic Asylum could now reach the site directly and for a 5¢ fare. Access was given for the first time also to the Holy Cross Cemetery at East 37th Street. Cemetery visiting was a big source of traffic at this period, and the road extended the 5¢ fare to this point also. For persons living in Flatbush or Flatlands the Kings County Central offered a quicker route to New York via the Bay Ridge Ferry or Greenpoint Ferry than the direct route via horse car to Fulton or Hamilton Avenue Ferry. This was certainly true if one wanted to reach the upper part of New York for the Greenpoint Ferry offered a choice of 23rd Street or 10th Street, Manhattan.

Trains out of Prospect Park depot ran through to Manhattan Beach for a 40¢ round trip fare; persons desiring to reach upper Brooklyn (Williamsburgh or Greenpoint), East New York or the Bay Ridge Ferry changed at Kings County Central Junction. The stations were as follows:

Prospect Park to:		
Nostrand Avenue (opened August 3)	.61 m.	5¢
County Buildings (Clarkson Avenue)	1.2 m.	5¢
Church Avenue	1.53 m.	5¢
Holy Cross Cemetery	1.76 m.	5¢
Kings Co. Central Junction	3.25 m.	

After leaving the depot area on Flatbush Avenue, the single track ran through private property along the north side of Empire Boulevard (Malbone Street), crossing Washington, Franklin, Bedford and Rogers Avenues at grade. Beyond Rogers Avenue the track swung northward toward Sullivan Street and then curved sharply southeast, passing under Nostrand Avenue in a tunnel. At this time Nostrand Avenue ended at the city line at Montgomery Street and had not yet been opened farther south. (Completed 1880) However, the Nostrand Avenue horse car did operate along a dirt track and through a narrow cut, turning west along Malbone Street to the park; the tunnel therefore served only to avoid a dangerous grade crossing in the woods with the Nostrand Avenue horse cars. The first station was located about at the present southeast corner of Nostrand Avenue and Malbone Street.

The track then approached close to Clove Road, an old lane no longer in existence, but which can best be described as run-

ning diagonally between the present Nostrand Avenue and East New York Avenue. The track passed through private property on the west side of and parallel to the Clove Road to the southeast corner of Clarkson and East New York Avenues where was located the County Buildings station. The track continued south, drifting slightly to the east so as to run midway between East 34th and East 35th Streets. There were stations at Church Avenue and Tilden Avenues and then a long run through unsettled empty country until the junction with the Manhattan Beach track at the present New York Avenue. There was probably a small bridge or trestle carrying the track over Paerdegat Creek just below Foster Avenue.

Early in August the Manhattan Beach road concluded interline ticket arrangements with the operators of the Nostrand Avenue and Franklin Avenue car lines. Coupons for the horse car fares and tickets for the steam car fares were sold for 50¢ the round trip from the South 7th Street (Broadway) ferry. Passenger traffic on the Kings Country Central R.R. suffered a heavy blow almost immediately after opening by the almost simultaneous opening of service on the Brighton line on July 1, 1878 (Brooklyn, Flatbush & Coney Island Railroad). The depot of the rival line was located across the street from the Kings County Central depot and was a much more pretentious affair. The Brighton road ran in a much more direct line to the beach and terminated at very nearly the same point. Although the fare on the new line was also 40¢ round trip, it attracted the bulk of the traffic. From July 2nd to July 7th the Brighton line carried 53,000 passengers, although two of these days were special days for "deadheads" when 1800 and 3200 rode free. Nevertheless, 48,000 paid fares is an impressive total; the riding statistics for the Kings County Central have not come down to us but the figure must have been much lower.

A hint of this came in the third week of August when the managers reduced the round trip fare to 30¢ and to 20¢ for the single trip. The "Brooklyn Eagle" commented that Manhattan Beach was patronized almost exclusively by New Yorkers, and that the Prospect Park Branch, constructed with the view of catering to Brooklyn travel, was not a success and that travel over it was light. Brooklyn people seemed to prefer Brighton Beach or the areas around Culver Terminal; possibly one reason for this

was the aristocratic tone of Manhattan Beach cultivated by Austin Corbin and the high prices charged there. New York had many more affluent persons than Brooklyn did, so that a Manhattan clientele would be in the majority. The middle class family trade of Brooklyn probably felt more at home along Coney Island proper with its many amusements, spectacles and low-priced restaurants and saloons.

Service continued through the remainder of the summer season of 1878 on the original timetable with trains at half-hourly intervals. Once on July 9th, a particularly hot and sultry day, a violent afternoon thunderstorm poured so much water down the slopes from the high ground around the Penitentiary building at Carroll Street that, over a quarter mile stretch of low ground near Nostrand Avenue, the track was washed out in eight places. Repairs were rushed rapidly and only two late trains were delayed. In September the road undertook to carry freight for the first time by making large deliveries of winter coal to the County Buildings at Clarkson Street. The coal was picked up at Bay Ridge dock at night after the passenger trains ceased running and was unloaded on a platform at Clarkson Street. It was hoped that this would be the beginning of a very lucrative coal-handling service all through the winter for the residents of Flatbush and Flatlands, who had been hitherto forced to rely on plodding horses and wagons.

On September 30, 1878 the Kings County Central R.R. closed down for the season, and as things turned out, never again reopened. In the first two weeks of operation a party of New York capitalists bought out Electus B. Litchfield's interest in the road along with the long-term lease the Manhattan Beach R.R. held. The new officers of the road were John L. Bergen, a large landowner in Flatbush and Flatlands, Charles R. Flint and three or four other Brooklyn men; Mr. Litchfield consented to stay on the board of directors in the new road. The new owners of the Kings County Central appear to have believed that their road was handicapped by being tied in with the Manhattan Beach Railway, for, in a press release, they announced their intention of continuing the road straight south from Kings County Central Junction to a point on the beach between the Manhattan and Brighton Beach Hotels; also, the proposed road would be standard-gauged.

The new owners continued the contract delivery of coal nightly to the County Buildings. Local residents were encouraged by this sight, for, over the course of the summer, the road had become quite popular. The low 5¢ fare and the road's policy of stopping at each station had attracted local riders in an area without any other public transportation and a very fair local traffic had grown up, especially to the county buildings and the cemetery. Sentiment was very strong for a continuation of service all during the winter months.

The new owners, as might be imagined, were little interested in the local needs of Flatbush and Flatlands and hoped to make the road the rival of the Brighton line during the coming summer season. Charles Crooke, the surveyor, laid out a new route during the first week of October from the junction to Sheepshead Bay. With the coming of winter the new owners prepared to take in the facilities for protection over the winter. At Prospect Park depot the outside ticket office, plank walk, etc. were moved indoors, and a caretaker appointed in the person of the local constable. High winds in mid-December blew down a part of the high fence around the depot area, but this was speedily repaired.

The last known occasion that trains ran over the Kings County Central was during late January 1879, when loads of manure were delivered to two local farmer friends of the president, John L. Bergen. Since the road had no rolling stock of its own, this must have been accomplished through an understanding with the Manhattan Beach Railway. The end of the railroad seems to have come in February when it went into voluntary bankruptcy. Apparently, there were construction debts that had not yet been met, and the creditors refused to be satisfied with a payment of 40¢ on the dollar.

With the road's ambitious plans to strike out on its own scuttled, the officers ate humble pie by proposing a new contract to the Manhattan Beach Railway for the season of 1879. Whether Austin Corbin refused outright or the terms were unsatisfactory or the through beach business not worth the lease, we do not know; at any rate, the lease was not renewed. The problem now became acute as to what to do with the road. The road did not go anywhere and its narrow gauge prevented it from linking up with any other railroad; had it been built twenty years later, it could have survived as a street car line, but this in 1879 was still

far in the future. The management apparently clung to the hope that something could be salvaged, for as late as the first week of April, track maintenance continued in the vicinity of Holy Cross Cemetery.

In mid-April the bondholders seized the road, after attacking Mr. Litchfield for bad management and for burdening the road with a large number of little debts. The bonds had become worthless in the market. Among the largest bondholders was Wm. R. Grace & Co. of New York, and this company formed a committee which introduced a bill into the Legislature requesting permission to standard-guage the road, extend it to Coney Island Avenue and follow that road to its Coney Island terminus. To finance the road permission was asked to issue preferred stock in the amount of $100,000 and to pay 4% dividends annually from any earnings. The bill failed of passage and the Kings County Central was left with no choice but to liquidate.

In April and May the annual rents for certain parts of the right of way not secured by purchase fell due, and there being no prospect of operating the road, the payments were defaulted. Mr. Case, the owner of the Prospect Park depot site, whose house had been transformed into a depot, was the first to seize his property on April 12th. In May he sold the tracks and switches to a New York railroad supply dealer, and cleared off the property for a new tenant.

By the end of April 1879 several other land owners along the right of way took legal steps to dispossess the railroad and recover their lands. Others summarily ejected the company's tracks without ceremony or recourse to law. During May, John L. Bergen, late president of the company and presently receiver, hastened to gather up as many of the rails and ties as he could in order to save something for the bondholders. Indeed, by the end of June, the right of way appears to have been stripped bare of all railroad materials. So passed the Kings County Central Railroad from history, the shortest-lived steam railroad in the whole Long Island Rail Road network.

CHAPTER 5

Narrow Gauge Days on the Manhattan Beach Road

THE completed Manhattan Beach R.R., as of 1878, was 14.25 miles long, extending from Greenpoint (Quay Street) to the Manhattan Beach Hotel; the Bay Ridge branch from 65th Street docks to Manhattan Beach Junction was just four miles long, and the short-lived Kings County Central branch 3.25 miles long, making a network of 21.5 miles. The whole road was three-foot gauge and single tracked with 40 lb. steel rail bolted with fish plates. The ties were of chestnut and oak, 6 ft. long and of 5 x 6" section, against 7–8 ft. long and 6 x 6 to 6 x 8" section on the broad gauge competitors. Half the road consisted of a great circle from Greenpoint to East New York to tidewater again at Bay Ridge; the remainder of the road was a near straight line from Prospect Park south to Manhattan Beach, intersecting the circle at Manhattan Beach Junction.

The Quay Street depot of the railroad occupied the south-western corner of Quay Street and West Street. The site had previously been devoted to a spar-making manufactory, the wooden cross-trees to which sails of sailing ships are attached. The railroad rented the yard for an eight-year period at $6000 a year beginning February 1878. A two-story depot went up on the site by May 15th. There was also a turntable and small engine house. When the Quay Street depot first opened in May 1878, there were no ferry slips constructed, but the company hurried to remedy this defect by building two slips the same month. A covered walk was also erected leading from the depot building down to the slips. As soon as all was in readiness, the steamer "Eliza Hancox" was put on the route to East 23rd Street, New York; passengers could also walk six blocks north to the foot of Greenpoint Avenue and get the steamer "Sylvan Grove" and others to East 10th Street or East 23rd Street. The two best boats, the "D. R. Martin" and the "Thomas Collyer" and later the "Twilight" continued to serve the Bay Ridge depot from

22nd Street, North River, Leroy Street and Pier 8, North River. To better accomodate the Greenpoint ferry traffic, the Manhattan Beach Railway in January 1879 purchased for the sum of $150,000 the waterfront property in Manhattan bounded by 7th Street, 8th Street and Lewis Street.

Immediately east of West Street the track entered onto an embankment along the north bank of Bushwick Creek because the tidal flats in this vicinity were several feet below grade. The only public street here was Franklin Street which crossed Bushwick Creek on a rickety bridge; the Greenpoint line of the Brooklyn City R.R. crossed the Manhattan Beach track at grade. From the Franklin Street embankment the track entered onto the Bushwick Creek meadows, crossing this dismal stretch on a pile trestle 1200 feet long and 7 feet above high water as far as Bedford Avenue (old 4th Street). From here up to Lorimer Street the track climbed eight feet, reaching fairly level land. Between Bedford and Driggs Avenues was the Fifth Street station; at Driggs the track again crossed at grade the Crosstown horse car tracks of the Brooklyn & Crosstown R.R. Between Lorimer and Richardson Streets was located the first passing siding.

Just south of Richardson Street the track turned east and ran parallel to Richardson Street, crossing two more horse car lines on Graham Avenue and Humboldt Street. Between these two streets was the Humboldt Street station. Beyond Kingsland Avenue the road made a broad arc to the southward through open vacant land. At Cooper Hill near the glue factory the track passed through a cut of 12 feet, the clay from which had been used to fill in between Maspeth Avenue and the head of Grand Street where the grade had to be raised 7 feet. At the important junction of Metropolitan Avenue and Grand Street was located the Grand Street station. The track then crossed a bend of Newtown Creek on a 425 ft. long trestle seven feet above high water. Just beyond the creek, the track crossed the South Side R.R. where another station was located. From this junction the track had to be raised for half a mile on an average of 10 feet. Between Flushing Avenue and Cooper Avenue a bank 25 ft. high had to be cut through. From Flushing Avenue the track then continued over sandy, vacant land up to the next station at DeKalb Avenue. On July 14, 1878 the Brooklyn City & Newtown R.R. extended its horse car line to meet the Manhattan Beach trains.

The next station was at Myrtle Avenue and Broadway and the next at Cooper Avenue, the only one in Queens County.

The track then curved sharply south, following the property line of the Evergreen Cemetery. At Broadway the tracks of the steam dummy line were crossed and at Fulton Street, the horse car line of the Brooklyn City R.R. On the southwest corner of Fulton Street and Van Sinderen Avenue was the important Metropolitan Hotel which served as the East New York depot. East New York was a considerable village at this time, "capital" of the Town of New Lots, and the terminus of the heavily traveled Broadway, Fulton and Jamaica lines. A block to the south the track crossed the Long Island R.R. at grade where passengers were exchanged from eastern Long Island.

Through East New York the track paralleled the Canarsie railroad. The first station was at New Lots Avenue where the two roads diverged. Just beyond here was the regular passing siding used during the first two seasons. At East 53rd Street and Kings Highway was Kowenhoven's station and the beginning of another passing siding. At about Albany Avenue the road began running in a straight line again midway between Avenues H and I. At New York Avenue was Kings County Central Junction, where passengers changed for Prospect Park or Bay Ridge. At Ocean Avenue the track passed through a thick woods at that time, familiarly known to the inhabitants as "Lott's Woods."

Between Ocean Avenue and East 19th Street was the platform for Manhattan Beach Junction, again a transfer point. South of here the track entered "Magaw's Woods" and then continued on a generally southward course running through farms to Neck Road, a flag stop, and to Sheepshead Bay station at Sheepshead Bay Road, the main street of that thriving village. The track then swept in a long reverse curve over the Coney Island Creek meadows, crossed the Creek on a short trestle and swept eastward to a long wooden platform station behind the Manhattan Beach Hotel.

The Bay Ridge branch, continuing west at Manhattan Beach Junction crossed the steam road of the Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. at grade on Gravesend Avenue (now McDonald) where both roads shared a Parkville station. West of this was the siding. The track then continued in a straight line, crossing diagonally over the present street pattern to 60th Street and New

Utrecht Avenue, where Bath station marked the crossing of the Brooklyn, Bath & Coney Island R.R. (today's West End line). The track continued to the next passing siding between 5th and 3rd Avenues. At Third Avenue was another station, permitting interchange of passengers with the Third Avenue line of the Brooklyn City R.R. and the steam line of the New York and Sea Beach R.R. The track fanned out at the docks into many branches leading into the car house, engine house and turntable.

The mileages and fares on the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway were as follows:

Greenpoint to:		
Fifth Street	.56 mi.	5¢
Humboldt Street	.99	5¢
Grand Street	1.75	5¢
S.S.R.R. Crossing		
DeKalb Avenue		10¢
Myrtle Avenue	3.26	10¢
Cooper Avenue	3.95	10¢
East New York	5.08	10¢
New Lots Road	6.33	15¢
Kowenhoven's	8.33	25¢*
Kings County Central Junction	9.46	
Manhattan Beach Junction	10.18	30¢
South Greenfield		30¢
Sheepshead Bay	13.55	35¢
Manhattan Beach	14.25	35¢

*(20¢ in '79)

On the Bay Ridge branch:		
Bay Ridge to:		
Third Avenue	.5	15¢
Bath Junction	2.2	20¢
Parkville	3.3	20¢
Manhattan Beach Junction	4.0	25¢

The heavy traffic which the Manhattan Beach Railway carried soon made improvements necessary. In August 1877 track shacks were built all along the line to accommodate the switchmen. During September an additional turnout was installed just west of Kowenhoven's Station (Kings Highway at East 53rd

Street) to relieve the Y at Manhattan Beach Junction. As soon as the road closed for the 1877 season, Corbin undertook the double tracking of the line south from Manhattan Beach Junction to Manhattan Beach Hotel. The work went on rather slowly, reaching Sheepshead Bay in January 1878. By May 1878, when the new season opened, the double tracking had been extended to Bay Ridge. At the end of the 1878 season, work was begun on the double tracking of the main line to Greenpoint. Considerable preparatory grading had to be done on the many narrow places through Ridgewood and Williamsburgh. In March, the actual track laying was begun, starting from Manhattan Beach Junction and working north. On May 24, 1879, when the railway re-opened for the season, the whole double-tracking project was finished.

The dispatching of trains by telegraph became possible for the first time in the 1878 season, when wires were strung in March of that year. The road erected occasional telegraph stations for the use of the general public as well; that at New Lots Village was opened in May 1878. Only once is the veil ever lifted for us on the signal system used on the Manhattan Beach Railway at this early date. A resident of Flatlands advised his fellow townsmen how to tell which trains were to be expected at the local flag stop at Flatbush Avenue: "If both signals show white, the train from East New York to the beach will be the first to pass. If the north one is white and the south one is red, the next train goes to East New York. If the north one is red and the south one white, the next train is due from City Line (Prospect Park branch). If both are red, the next train goes to City Line."

The physical installations for the operation of the railway were not extensive. At Greenpoint depot was an engine round house, a turntable and machine shop. At Bay Ridge was another engine house 40 x 24 and car houses 500 ft. in length. In November 1879 a large car house was built in Lott's Woods at Manhattan Beach Junction to accommodate most of the excursion cars. The Manhattan Beach terminus appears to have had no shop facilities at first other than a turntable and a sizeable car yard, perhaps to avoid lowering the tone of the hotel precincts.

When the Coney Island Jockey Club was built during the spring of 1880 and opened on June 19th, the Manhattan Beach Railway was not slow to extend its facilities to the new track. A

large wooded tract, 22¼ acres in all, bounded on the west by the railroad track, on the east by Ocean Avenue, on the north by Emmers Lane and on the south by Jerome Avenue (then Voorhies Lane) was purchased for a multi-tracked yard and depot in front of the grandstand located midway between Avenues X and Y. A branch track from the railroad was laid up to Ocean Avenue and the railroad carried its first large racing crowds on the June 19th opening day.

The most unusual railway operation on the whole Manhattan Beach system was unquestionably the Marine Railroad, separately incorporated and always separately operated. According to Corbin, one of the main objects in building this railroad was to accommodate fishing and gunning parties, who, by taking boats at the terminus at the mouth of Sheepshead Bay, could avoid the long winding sail from the boat anchorages at the head of the bay. Another motive behind the road was to give the patrons of the hotel a short, open-air promenade all along the length of the beach.

The road was first incorporated as the Marginal Railroad Co. on June 19, 1877 and contemplated a beach railroad from Ocean Parkway all along the beach to the eastern tip of Coney Island, then following the shore line of Sheepshead Bay back to the starting point. Austin Corbin and his brother Daniel were listed as directors, with the offices of president, secretary, and treasurer assigned to several of Corbin's business cronies. Since the road as projected would have passed behind the Brighton Hotel and Engeman's property, there would have had to be, of necessity, some measure of outside control and apportionment of the earnings. This ran counter to Corbin's usual policy of retaining exclusive control, so in February 1878 the charter was assigned as a lease to the Marine Railroad Co. with Austin Corbin himself as president and Isaac Barton superintendent. The route of the road was revised to run entirely within the limits of the Manhattan Beach domain.

In February and March 1878 the single-track, narrow gauge road was constructed from the upper end of the bathing house all along the beach front to the eastern tip of Coney Island, 1.6 miles. Since the track ran close to the water, it won immediate popularity with the hotel patrons. There was at first only one small car and one engine, the "Sea Breeze," and the fare was

only 10¢ round trip. In the mile and a half ride, the passenger passed only two buildings: the Life Saving Station, and the other a cottage used on and off by Corbin's nephew, Frederick Dunton. At the eastern terminus of the road was located the Point Breeze Pavilion, a house for the accommodation of passengers, who could dine there about as sumptuously as at the larger Pavilion next to the hotel. There was also a small boat house at the Inlet.

During this first summer of 1878, Corbin considered building cottages along the Marine R.R. at intervals but abandoned the idea. He also considered extending the Marine R.R. along the lines first proposed in 1877, but this was never done. To lay a track all along the Sheepshead Bay shoreline would have been an expensive business, for most of it was tidal flats and would have required extensive filling. The effort might almost have been worth the expense for a four-mile excursion ride with the wide sea and acres of unspoiled beach beneath a clear blue sky would have been an exhilarating and memorable experience. During the same summer of 1878 Corbin considered running through early morning fishing trains from New York over the Manhattan Beach Railway and out onto the Marine R.R. directly to the Inlet. Track connections existed to provide for such a service but it was never instituted.

By August of the first season the business of the little Marine R.R. had become so heavy that the managers were compelled to add a second coach to the train. On August 8th the road had its first accident. It had been the custom of the engineer, when approaching the bathing pavilion terminus on the west end, to uncouple the locomotive and car, and to run the engine down a switch leading to the main line of the Manhattan Beach Railway, leaving the passenger car to coast into the station. The switch was but a short distance from the station. On this day the locomotive "Sea Breeze" uncoupled as usual and put on steam to make the side track, when, unexpectedly it began to rock and then derailed, falling onto its side across the track. The passenger cars, close behind, were unable to brake to a stop in such a short distance, and the lead car crashed into the prostrate engine. About twenty passengers were shaken up or gashed, and the disgraced "Sea Breeze" was carted off by a wrecking crew and replaced by a regular Manhattan Beach Railway engine. The accident by no means discouraged other patrons from enjoying

the ride; full trains continued to run every half hour. By the end of the 1878 season, 59,274 passengers had patronized the line.

In January 1879 the company built a new branch from the west end of the Manhattan Beach Hotel westward along the shore to the line of Coney Island Avenue at the Brighton Beach Hotel baths. The Brighton Beach Hotel was the other colossal hotel on the beach at this time, newly opened (July 1, 1878) as the terminus of the Brooklyn, Flatbush & Coney Island R.R. (today's Brighton line). To connect the two segments of the Marine R.R., four-tenths of a mile of track of the Manhattan Beach Railway behind the hotel was used. The new half-mile segment to Brighton was opened on May 24, 1879, in time for the beginning of the 1879 season. Three handsome frame stations for the new road were built during the month of June by Supervisor John Y. McKane of Gravesend, who was a building contractor in private life. The fare on the Brighton-Manhattan run was set at 5¢ per ride, a very high rate for such a short ride, and the reason why the Marine R.R. throughout its long history was always a big money maker. The railroad put out of business a lucrative and flourishing hackney-coach operation that had carted passengers along the sands for lack of any other access roads. By July 4th the traffic on the new Marine R.R. branch had increased to phenomenal limits; this section had to be double-tracked in June, and the regular headway set at five minutes, and sometimes even three minutes to handle the crowds. In the 1879 season patronage on the Marine R.R. soared to 725,633; in 1880, 844,472; in 1881, 871,898, and in 1882, 879,327. Three engines and eight cars were now needed; in January 1879, Corbin acquired two rapid transit engines, the "Brooklyn" and the "Flatbush" from the Long Island R.R. They appeared on the Marine R.R. as the "Manhattan" and the "Oriental" respectively. Corbin very wisely provided no road access whatsoever to the whole Manhattan Beach operation; all the thousands who came to hear the music or watch the fireworks, or even to patronize the establishment to the extent of eating or bathing, had to come and go by rail—Corbin's railroads. Little wonder, therefore, that the Manhattan Beach investment was a bonanza.

The west branch of the Marine R.R. probably cost no more than $20,000 to build and equip according to estimates of that

day. The two depots probably cost another $4000. The engine and three cars first used came to another $8000 more or less, and the track the balance of the money. For three to four hours every summer evening it was almost impossible to accommodate all the business, although trains ran from each end of the half mile line every five minutes. Each train carried about 175 passengers which, at 12 trips an hour and 5¢ per passenger, netted $105 per hour, or at least $350 each evening. The day business was much lighter except for Sundays, but making liberal allowances, the railroad must have taken in hardly less than $3000 a week. The weekly running expenses probably did not exceed one day's receipts, so that in a summer season of 13 weeks, the company entirely paid for its road and had sufficient surplus to build another one.

The great asset of the Marine R.R., its magnificent location with unlimited view of the sea, was also its weakness. On February 3, 1880, a winter storm whipped up such high tides and angry seas that the bulkhead which had been constructed from the Manhattan Pavilion to the Life Saving Station for the protection of the Marine R.R. was breached. The enormous breakers smashed the timbers and the sea rushed through to the embankment of the railway and washed out a long stretch of track. The Pavilion near the Inlet and the station of the Marine R.R. beside it were lifted up bodily and carried out to sea. Water swept over all the Point at many different places. The grounds about the Manhattan Beach Hotel were flooded and portions of the track of the Manhattan Beach Railway were injured. A bulkhead, extending from Manhattan to Brighton Beach, was washed away and the west branch of the Marine Railway was badly damaged. An inlet was cut through from the shore to Sheepshead Bay between 50 and 100 feet in width that had to be laboriously filled in again. Such storms did not occur every year, of course, but some of the profits went towards costly repairs.

The rolling stock of the Manhattan Beach Railway during its narrow gauge period consisted of one engine bought from the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, and several new engines. These five were bought in November 1876, all Mason 0-4-4T:

Manhattan (I) (made maiden trip March 3)
C(harles) L. Flint
Admiral Almy
New York (I)
Bay Ridge

All five were on hand by March 17, 1877 and these five gave all the service during the first season of 1877. In the 1878 season eight more Mason engines were acquired, all but the first two 0-4-4T with the same dimensions:

East New York (I) 4-4-0
Sea Breeze
Peter Stuyvesant
Wouter Van Twiller
Washington Irving
Green Point
Brooklyn
Hendrick Hudson

Within a year or two, five of the older engines were sold off (Manhattan I, Admiral Almy, New York, East New York, Sea Breeze) and they were replaced in 1881-2 by six new larger ones, all 2-4-6T:

Manhattan (II)
Wm. Kieft
East New York (II)
Gravesend
New York (II)
Oriental

The Marine Railroad received two new Mason engines when it opened in 1879, both 2-4-4T:

East End
West End

In January 1879 the Long Island R.R. sent two of its ex-Atlantic

Avenue Rapid Transit engines to the Marine R.R., both Baldwin 0-4-0T:

Manhattan (ex-Brooklyn)
Oriental (ex-Flatbush)

The narrow gauge passenger equipment was as follows:

36 Jackson & Sharp 1876, open excursion cars from the Centennial Exposition. Twenty-five were burnt in the 1882 fire; "several" others were converted into freight cars in February 1881.

4 Jackson & Sharp, closed passenger cars, from Centennial Exposition.

31 Jackson & Sharp, open excursion cars, later widened to standard gauge.

8 Brill 1877, open excursion cars, later widened to standard gauge.

20 Harlan & Hollingsworth 1879, Woodruff Drawing-room cars reportedly built in Pittsburgh. Thirteen burnt in 1882 fire.

The whole Manhattan Beach Railway was something of an anomaly in the State; its passenger load was very high, yet it was always a seasonal road. Operation generally began a week or two before Decoration Day to bring down the army of workmen necessary to get the hotels in operation; trains continued running until about October 1st. The season was therefore a short one, only four months of the year. In the 1877 season when service was given only from Bay Ridge and East New York, there were 13 trains operated each way from 65th Street, and 13 from East New York. Beginning with 1878, the pattern that would prevail for the next few years was set. This consisted of a more or less hourly service in June during the daylight hours, and for the months of July and August, a half hourly service. A glance at the chart below shows that there was not too great a variation

from year to year: (The number of these running as expresses are indicated by symbols:)

		June	*July*	*Aug.*	*Sept.*
1878	Main	20*	22*	22*	13
	Bay Ridge	12	13	13	13
1879	Main	24†	24†	25‡	
	Bay Ridge	25	25	27	
1880	Main	12	30‡	30‡	0
	Bay Ridge	12	27	27	14
1881	Main	11	25	25	11
	Bay Ridge	12	27	27	12

* *Denotes 9 were express trains.*
† *Denotes 10 were express trains.*
‡ *Denotes 11 were express trains.*

Winter service after the closing of the Manhattan Hotel on October 1st was attempted only in the 1877 and 1878 seasons and not thereafter. In October 1877 one train a day ran each way, but with no connecting boats at Bay Ridge and even this limited service terminated by November 1st. Superintendent Barton pleaded the unfinished condition of the railroad, and the very light patronage the one train received. Several of the property owners who had donated land for the right of way were offended by the halt in service and threatened court action to take back their property. Hardest hit were the residents near the way stations in Brooklyn who had become used to the exceptional summer service, and were left suddenly stranded by the abrupt loss of trains during the long eight months of winter. In October of the 1878 season five trains each way ran between Greenpoint and East New York only, and only two of these ran through to the beach. On the Bay Ridge division two trains ran each way as far as Manhattan Beach Junction, connecting with the five main line trains. In December this local accommodation was pared to two trains on the main line and one on the Bay Ridge division. After 1878, the Manhattan Beach Railway reverted to a strictly summer operation annually between May 25th and October 1st.

Many of the trains run on weekends were expresses running through to Greenpoint or Bay Ridge and making few stops. This often proved a source of irritation to persons at the way stations who were passed up. The road tried to meet this problem by making the lesser stops flag stations. Apparently this was not always the answer, for there is one account of a large crowd waiting for a beach train at Humboldt Street station in Williamsburgh that almost rioted on August 11, 1878. Several express trains had passed, but no local stops were made. The would-be passengers became angry and threatened to tear down the waiting rooms, a threat which caused the agent to send to the station house for assistance. Several policemen were dispatched to the spot to keep the belligerents quiet until the arrival of the way train.

The Manhattan Beach Railway, in the six years of narrow-gauge operation, had an excellent safety record with very few accidents. The first occurred on July 29, 1877, a Sunday evening, at the intersection of the road with the Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. on McDonald Avenue. A train on the Manhattan Beach road composed of seven open cars almost empty and going down to the beach, laid over on the siding just west of McDonald Avenue to wait for a regular train from Manhattan Beach with eight cars heavily loaded with homeward-bound passengers. After the train had passed, the eastbound train moved onto the main line and began crossing McDonald Avenue, there being no train due on the other railroad. Suddenly, the engine "Parkville" with seven cars hove into view, thundering down McDonald Avenue. Before the Manhattan Beach train could clear the crossing, the Prospect Park engine crashed into the third open car, smashing it; two other cars were derailed and badly damaged. The "Parkville" turned somersault, landing about six feet from the track upside down. One woman was hurt on the Manhattan Beach train and over a dozen on the Culver train; the engine crew of the Culver engine jumped and saved themselves.

The fault lay clearly with the Culver road; the engineers of that company had always refused to stop at the crossing on the ground that their company had been there first and so had the right of way. President Culver gave orders that from that day forth, all Culver trains would come to a full stop at Parkville crossing. A flagman employed by the Manhattan Beach R.R. had been on duty at the crossing regularly, but it developed that

the timetable had been changed on July 28, and the man had not yet memorized it fully.

The only other accident of note occurred two years later on June 22, 1879. At 5:30 P.M. a Manhattan Beach train started up from the platform at the Metropolitan Hotel in East New York at the same moment that Rapid Transit engine #116 of the Long Island R.R. started from its platform. The engineers of both trains understood the flagman at the crossing to give the "all clear" signal, and each started at the same time. Rows of houses prevented them from seeing each other until at the crossing at Atlantic and Van Sinderen Avenues. Both engineers hastily braked their engines, but before they could stop, the trains came together. Fortunately, since each had barely got under way from a full stop, the resultant shock was light and no one was injured.

The Manhattan Beach Railway was always, essentially, a resort railroad and its traffic, accordingly, rarely fitted the normal railroading pattern. Weekdays might provide a normality of sorts, but the weekends regularly created peak periods of riding that all but overwhelmed the facilities of the road and forced every engine and coach into service. The attractions of the beach caused such notable crowding of the railroad that the newspapers were moved to comment and to marvel that it could be accomplished so efficiently; these comments are the sole records that have come down to us of individual day-to-day riding:

1877

July 22—8,000 people, 2500 of them from the East New York branch.

August 5—12,000.

1878

June 30–July 5—$18,500 in receipts.

July 7—Trains of 12–15 cars.

July 14—11,000 people, 2000 of them over the Kings County Central.

August 4—20,000.

August 5—(Monday) 8,000.

August 8—(Thursday) 15,000.

August 18—The 3:30 P.M. train alone had 19 cars and over 2000 persons, another train came with 15 cars.

August 12—16–20,000 persons.

September 8—"largest travel of the season; every train with two engines."

1879

June 25—4000 on the Marine R.R.
July 9—10,000 persons.

1880

July 11—30,000.
August 22—50,000.
September 5—20,000 of which 7300 were bathers.

The overall annual traffic statistics of the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway for these years are no less impressive:

1877	262,476
1878	1,056,871
1879	1,062,986
1880	1,227,579
1881	945,871

The Mecca for all these thousands was a 2½ mile stretch of beach totalling about 600 acres. Corbin's property line started about 700 feet east of Coney Island Avenue, the division between his land and Engeman's parcel. From this line the Manhattan Beach property stretched in an unbroken line all the way to the Point at Sheepshead Bay Inlet, from ¾ to a full mile east of where the bulkhead is today. The magnificent bulk of the Manhattan Beach Hotel dominated the beach. As originally built by architect Putnam, it had a frontage of 475 feet on the ocean and a depth of 225 feet. The house was reared upon a foundation of hard pine piles eight to twelve inches in diameter. The frame was heavy and solid and attached to the piles by strong bars of iron as protection against wind and sea. The central pavilion was three stories in height, capped by a handsome Mansard roof, while the wings were two stories in height, also with Mansard roofs. Two fire towers added to the pleasing effect. In the first two seasons the Manhattan boasted 92 rooms, 12 x 21 on the second floor, 48 rooms on the third floor, and 13 rooms on the fourth floor. Every room was furnished with electric bells and gas jets. At least 400 people could be accommodated.

In the spring of 1879 the hotel was enlarged again by adding third and fourth floors and wings. The extension to the main

building was built in the same Swiss chalet style as the main portion of the hotel, and even more tasteful in design. By June 5th two hundred additional rooms were at the disposal of Manhattan Beach patrons. The extension was nearly 300 feet in length and the addition to the promenade in front made the latter 660 feet long. The Hotel was now four stories in height, with a main dining room 80 x 40 and a dozen private dining rooms for the accommodation of select parties. Proportionate additions had to be made to the kitchen facilities.

To offset the huge bulk of the hotel and soften its outline, no effort was spared in the way of architectural embellishment and landscaping. Immense broad verandas 18 feet wide extended the full length of the building, giving an unobstructed view of the ocean. Ornamental woodwork and hanging baskets of flowers and trailing vines between the pillars gave a touch of lightness and grace to the scene. The main dining hall was 68 x 100 with an open-air dining room 100 x 50. The cuisine was of the finest, comparable to anything in New York; several prominent chefs supervised the menu, and an army of up to 200 waiters provided superb service. The kitchen servicing the dining halls was itself 70 x 100. The food was as expensive as it was excellent, meals costing from $1.50 to $6 depending upon the luxury of the liquors consumed. Comparable prices for ordinary hot meals at this period were 25¢ for an average day and 75¢ for a Thanksgiving repast; the average weekly earnings ranged from $8 to $10.

Most of the first floor was given over to large parlors, the reservations desk and private dining rooms. The furniture of the private rooms as well as of the public parlors was of rosewood in the Eastlake design so popular at the time, a 19th century evocation of the medieval Gothic style. Broad plank walks led down from the hotel piazzas to the edge of the beach and tubs of evergreens decorated the sides. On the paths along the water's edge were seats enough at first to accommodate probably 2000 people; in 1879 these were increased to seat 5000. The grounds about the hotel were in a raw state in 1877 and 1878, but by the 1879 season considerable landscaping had been done and the areas around the hotel were transformed into a miniature park with large flower beds and little artificial lakes stocked with water lilies and goldfish and bordered by walks. As a protection against

the sea a solid sea wall was built in front of the hotel extending for almost half a mile on either side of it (May 1878).

Corbin, naturally, sought out the very best hotel managers in the business to operate the enormous Manhattan Beach property. Messrs. Kiefer, Burnap and McKinnie were the managers during the 1877–1882 period. Kiefer was an easterner by birth but had acquired all his experience in the West. Corbin was determined at the outset that Manhattan Beach would attract a better type of clientele than any other establishment on the island. The emphasis was to be on respectability and decorum above all else. Manhattan Beach was to be a family resort where ladies and children could feel as secure as in their own homes. Nothing was to be permitted that would offend the sensibilities of even the most fastidious. Unlike the rest of Coney Island, there were to be no side-shows of any kind and no wandering performers; above all, the noisy, profane behavior that marked so much of Coney Island on crowded weekends would find no place at Manhattan Beach. To accomplish this, Corbin contracted with the Pinkerton Detective Agency to keep a sizeable squad of plainclothesmen and forty uniformed men constantly on duty. The squad kept itself informed of the identity and personal appearance of every known card sharper, pickpocket and professional thief and took up their stations at the depot of the Hotel and the Marine R.R. The moment any of these unwelcome intruders stepped off the cars, a detective quietly accosted him and put him onto the next outbound train.

The high tone of Manhattan Beach was maintained in more subtle ways as well. The rates at the hotel began at $2 a day and went upward depending on the location of the room and the view afforded. In these happy days before the Federal income tax had begun to siphon off the immense wealth of the large class of newly rich, there was a substantial number of New Yorkers who had either entered the glittering society of the metropolis, or were close enough to it to display their aspirations by an ostentatious display of fine clothes, jewelry, sumptuous meals and luxury accommodations. Manhattan Beach offered the setting where such display could be indulged. It was not only elegant and genteel, but had the advantage over Long Branch and Newport in that it was nearby. Leonard Jerome, the moving spirit behind the Coney Island Jockey Club, took up his headquarters in the

Manhattan Beach Hotel. His daughter, Jennie Jerome, married Lord Randolph Churchill and became the mother of Winston Churchill. The elite social clubs of the day, like Brooklyn's Union League Club, regularly maintained suites of rooms at the Manhattan Beach Hotel for the use of the members.

The high moral tone that supported the facade of respectability in Victorian society received full recognition at Manhattan Beach in the shape of the celebrated Sacred Concerts and divine services presented each Sunday. Grafula's Band, one of the best in its day, played hymns and sacred music and accompanied the best singers hired for the occasion. A choir of forty German waiters rendered hymns. In addition, the management arranged for divine services to be conducted by outstanding clerics on each Sunday of the summer. The most prominent ministers, including even the Episcopal Bishop of New York, gratefully accepted an invitation to preach at Manhattan Beach in return for a substantial honorarium and the free use of the hotel facilities.

One quarter of a mile to the east of the Manhattan Beach Hotel was the even more imposing pile of the Oriental Hotel, situated between the present Irwin and Langham Streets, and built in the record time of three months (March–May 1880). The building displayed fanciful Moorish touches in its architecture and struck the beholder from afar with its towers, pinnacles and minarets silhouetted against the sky. The main hall was in the center, with wings running east and west and ending in pavilions running north and south, the whole forming the letter E, the long stem being the hotel's front end facing the ocean. The building was four stories high, the upper story a Mansard with dormer windows. The central part and the end portions were carried up three additional stories with Moorish towers ending in spires. The overall dimensions were 200 feet deep and 600 feet front with a broad veranda on three sides. A piazza from 24 to 32 feet wide encircled the first floor and there were dozens of balconies on the sides of the building. Far up on the main tower was a promenade 17 feet wide from which a view all over Coney Island could be obtained. A corridor extended from north to south under the central tower and from it opened the offices, elevators, reading rooms, cafes and smoking rooms. A parlor 50x88 occupied the first floor of the west wing. The upper part of the building contained 413 sleeping rooms, each of which had every

advantage for light, air and ventilation. The rooms in the tower were considered the most desirable. On the first floor were twelve dining rooms, including private rooms and a public dining hall 62 x 112 and adjoining this, a second dining room 46 x 64, each stocked with fine china made expressly for the hotel. In the eastern wing were also the childrens' and nurses' dining rooms. The ladies' parlor was over the main hall.

The interior appointments were as lavish as those of the Manhattan Hotel. All the halls and corridors were wide with walls of hard finish; the wainscoting, staircases and banisters were of polished ash and oak. The bedroom and dining room furniture was again in the Eastlake style. The parlor walls downstairs were hung with velvet papers of gold and brown colors; the floors were carpeted with the richest Axminster. The mantel-pieces were of polished mahogany with andirons of polished brass. The gas fixtures were of polished brass and gold gilt in the Queen Anne style. The parlor furniture was said to be "rich and costly." All the carpets in the house had been selected by a committee of lady guests the previous season at the Manhattan. All the counters, partitions, desks and telegraph stalls were of polished mahogany.

The grounds and promenades outside the Oriental were extensive and elaborate, embracing several acres. Along the ocean stretched a wide planked boardwalk; between it and the hotel were flower beds and grass plots and wide walks paved with an asphalt composition. At intervals were trees, ornamental vases and statuary. Seven thousand dollars worth of sand and soil from East New York was carted in on the railroad to make the planting beds, plus six acres of sod and soil from the Neck woods. The total cost of the Oriental fell to just short of half a million dollars.

Some idea of the huge success of Manhattan Beach can be gained when we hear that the Oriental was three-fourths booked even before it opened in July 1880. The hotel was intended to cater to full-season family groups because of its removed position from the bustle of the Manhattan Hotel. The rates were set at $2 to $15 per day. The cream of society put in its appearance as soon as the doors were opened, led off by President Rutherford B. Hayes and family and numerous members of the foreign and diplomatic corps.

The operation of these great hotels required a very large number of special facilities. The water for the whole beach was ob-

tained from the company's own well at Sheepshead Bay and was forced from there to a supply reservoir on the beach through a 10 inch pipe yielding 400 gallons a minute. The hotels had their own fire protection based on the private water supply. There were several hydrants in the Oriental connected with a powerful force pump in the boiler room. A fire department composed of waiters was organized to act in case of emergency. Two more wells alongside the Manhattan furnished water for that institution, which was forced into the building by a pump. In each of the two towers of the Manhattan were large water tanks that fed two hydrants in front of the hotel and two more in the rear from which water could be forced by a steam pump to a height of 100 feet. Manhattan Beach had its own gas plant with a daily capacity of 50,000 feet of gas per day, for all the lighting in this pre-electric age depended on gas jets. To illuminate the large open areas in front of the hotel, gas was too weak and calcium lights were brought into use. There was a very limited use of the new electric light outdoors, but the customers complained of the unsteady and fluctuating voltage.

An entire army of employees was required to run all the attractions at the beach. The waiters alone, almost 200 in number in each hotel at the height of the season, required a "hotel" of their own, a large plain building at the southern end of the Ocean Avenue footbridge. Here were 78 large rooms accommodating 375 boarders, each room furnished with closets and wash rooms and single or double beds. The building was three stories high and required its own chambermaids to look after the halls and rooms.

In addition to the two hotels, there were many other attractions at Manhattan Beach. West of the hotel was a Japanese temple brought from the Centennial Exposition, but this was destroyed by the waves in the storm of January 31, 1878. In front of the Manhattan was another Oriental building, a Chinese pagoda, also from the Centennial. This was the music stand where the name bands played to a huge audience that sat on the sands and filled all the benches on the walks. Grafula's Band, the best on the island, was engaged for the seasons of 1877, 1878 and Gilman's sixty piece band for 1879–1894. Two concerts of fine classical and semi-classical music were given daily, from 5–6 P.M. in the afternoon and 8–10 in the evening. Sometimes the

band played on the west end of the hotel veranda in front of the windows of the main dining room. In 1878 the Chinese pagoda was illuminated with 200 gas jets encircled by small globes of red, blue, green, orange and white glass which added greatly to the exotic beauty of the pagoda. The most famous soloist of his day, Jules Levy the cornetist, was a star attraction in the 1879 and 1880 seasons. He commanded the unheard-of salary of $450 a week in 1879 and $500 in 1880! His performances on the cornet were done with such brilliance of style and executed with such flair and fire that they aroused audiences to wild applause and attracted huge crowds.

The first building just east of the Manhattan Hotel was the Amphitheatre, an immense frame building capable of seating some 3500 people, and intended for the accommodation of spectators; it was opened on June 30, 1878. An admission fee of 10¢ was charged. From here one could watch the antics of the bathers, and in the afternoon Grafula's Band came over to play. The amphitheatre was well patronized and was one of the institutions of the beach.

Just east of the Amphitheatre was the Pavilion, formerly one of the Brazilian buildings at the Centennial. It was a large building 300 x 60, erected in 1878 for the benefit of those who might desire to escape from the bustle of the Manhattan Hotel or to enjoy picnic parties. The Pavilion was covered by a lofty roof, but was open on all sides to give a full view of the ocean and to offer a cool and pleasant retreat. The western half was reserved for picnic parties and provided with tables, seats and attentive waiters. The eastern half of the building was devoted to transient guests who found here the same excellent cuisine and service as at the Manhattan but at lower prices. Some idea of the capacity of the kitchen can be gathered from the fact that on opening day in June 1878, Corbin entertained the entire press corps of New York and Brooklyn, 1000 strong, in this Pavilion.

Between the Manhattan Hotel and Amphitheatre, and directly fronting the beach were the bath houses. The bathing beach itself was reported to be the best on the island and superior to Brighton. It sloped gently down to the water and afforded a delightful place to rest and watch the surf and the bathers. No vehicles were permitted on a stretch of beach some 500 feet in length to give security to the bathers. The beach directly in front of the

bathing house was reserved for bathers exclusively and ropes kept away all in street clothes.

In 1878 immense bathing houses were erected with 1200 individual rooms, 800 for men and 400 for women, large, airy, and supplied with running water, gas, mirror, bowl, pitcher, comb and brush at a 25¢ charge. In 1879 the baths were enlarged to accommodate 2500. In the ladies' bathing section there was an elegantly fitted reception room, elaborately ornamented with flowers in hanging baskets and numerous canary birds in gilded cages. From the ladies' bath house a covered way permitted timid damsels to reach the water without facing the gaze of curious onlookers. The interior arrangements of the bath house were unusually full: steam washers, wringers and dryers constructed expressly for Manhattan Beach were employed in cleaning and drying the suits which were of the best quality and cut. Each department of the bath house had its corps of attendants, male and female. Two large fire and burglar-proof safes protected the bathers' valuables.

Night bathing was one of the special features of Manhattan Beach. By means of huge calcium lights the beach and the water for several hundred feet were brilliantly illuminated. A similar calcium light illuminated the front of the Manhattan Hotel. In the water were numerous life lines extending out several hundred feet and a lifeguard in a rowboat patrolled the deeper water. Attendance at the Manhattan Baths was very large, eight to ten thousand not being unusual on weekends.

The enormous patronage of the baths at Manhattan Beach made the cleanliness of the sand and surf a vital matter. One of the perennial problems at that date as it still is today was the dumping of New York refuse and garbage at sea. Scows laden with offal were under instructions to dump their loads over the Outer Banks well beyond the sea lanes into the harbor, but all too often the captains shortened their voyage and jettisoned their noisome loads close enough to the Narrows to allow the tides to wash up onto Coney Island and Manhattan Beach assorted cabbage stumps, decayed fruit, corn cobs and carcasses. Austin Corbin, on hearing of this, took prompt action. In August 1880 he brought suit for $30,000 damages against the City of New York for dumping. To avoid a repetition of the damage, he established a marine patrol offshore that picked up the garbage

scows as they came through the Narrows and kept them under surveillance through binoculars as far as the Outer Banks. Meanwhile, squads of men roamed the beaches at dawn and after dark raking up all offending flotsam and jetsam and burying it out of sight.

Though keenly alert to his own property rights and the public image of his own beach, Corbin, paradoxically, was one of the worst offenders himself in the sewage disposal of his own hotels. All the waste matter of the Manhattan Beach Hotel was dumped, wholly untreated, into the narrow landlocked confines of Sheepshead Bay. The residents of Sheepshead Bay village in the summer of 1879 complained bitterly that bathing had become impossible and the fish poisoned in the fetid waters. People refused to buy the shellfish that had been the support of many local baymen and the local hotel business was seriously impaired. In 1880 the nuisance reappeared in aggravated form and the Town of Gravesend appointed its first Board of Health to deal with it. Corbin made promises but the season passed with no remedial action.

East of the Oriental Hotel half a mile down the beach was a substantial building, the government Life Saving Station, finished in September 1878. This attractive wood frame building, 60 x 30 and costing about $3500, was built in Gothic cottage style. The lower floor accommodated the surf boat, life boat and mortar; in the rear was a kitchen and dining room. The upper story had the captain's room, the crew's quarters and a spare room for guests. Although a station of sorts had been located here for many years, this new one was built through the influence of Austin Corbin, and partly with funds donated by him for the purpose. The station nominally was for the relief of vessels in distress on the Rockaway Shoals nearby, but most of the time it served as a fishing and game bird preserve for Corbin and his obliging friend, Supervisor John Y. McKane of Gravesend Town.

At the extreme eastern tip of the beach was a small structure called the Point Breeze Hotel alongside the depot building of the Marine R.R. This was a small hotel built in 1879 and opened July 10, 1880 for the convenience of fishing parties. It may have had as many as 100 rooms. Boats for rowing and fishing were available for hire to the guests.

Corbin considered the filling-in of all the tidal flats along the

Sheepshead Bay shorefront; this involved a large area of about 500 acres. A bulkhead all along the bay would have been needed and the project was therefore postponed to a later time. However, in December 1879 and after, construction trains were constantly at work filling in those meadows in the immediate rear of the Manhattan Beach Hotel. Corbin also planned to build an avenue 200 feet wide and 2½ miles long on this filled-in land behind the hotels from one end of his property to the other, and to erect cottages fronting it for sale and lease. There were on hand many applications as early as 1878 for the lease of such plots, but Corbin decided to refuse them all out of fear of endangering the future of the beach by running the risk of having undesirable tenants.

No description of Manhattan Beach would be complete without some mention of the two other stellar attractions of the place: the fireworks and the balloon. The fireworks display was contracted annually to a company specializing in pyrotechnics with lavish, spectacular and brilliant effects. The display was generally staged during the one-hour intermission in the evening concert of Gilmore's Band. Both attractions drew additional thousands over the Marine R.R. from Brighton and the rest of Coney Island. For an hour the velvet darkness over the marshes was made brilliant with colored fire and exploding bombs. A typical display in 1880 featured an Oriental tree that burst into fiery blossoms of every hue; a weeping willow tree; the bicyclist Blondin riding a fiery bicycle, and a Chinese pagoda which turned into a fiery temple with spectacular explosions. Monster shells 12 inches in diameter were set off, together with countless aerial bombs, magnesium balloons, colored rockets, jeweled caves, fiery cobras, golden showers, pinwheel suns, whirling asteroids and shooting stars.

The balloon show was the operation of "Professor" Samuel A. King, an aeronaut, who began his work at the beach in June 1879. The professor had two immense balloons, each with a diameter of 65 feet and containing 150,000 feet of gas. The balloon was made of two thicknesses of the very best Irish linen, sewed with silk; the netting was soft and strong and the car into which the suspensory ropes were woven was made of wicker work. It took three days to inflate the balloon "Pioneer." The balloon was held on a cable 1½" in diameter which was attached

to a windlass. Four persons made two ascents with the professor to a height of 600 feet on July 2 amid the cheers of the crowd. The balloon was usually kept behind a fence together with the steam hoisting apparatus, engine, boiler, hydrogen gas works, etc. all of which cost $75,000. The balloon rose 300 feet a minute and could go up to a quarter mile. The balloon was not for public patronage; the idea behind it was scientific experimentation to test air currents, atmosphere density, humidity, etc.

Behind all the glamor and all the splendor that was Manhattan Beach was one ever-present menace—the sea. The first blow to affect the property was that of February 1878. The bulkhead in front of the Manhattan Hotel was swept away and the beach left level. The music pavilion was overthrown and the walks washed away. Two houses belonging to two of Corbin's winter beach guards were swept away together with the entire families of each man. In November 1880 a high tide dashed against the breakwater at the Oriental Hotel and broke away large pieces of the asphalt paving in front of the hotel, and water rolled under the hotel itself. Within a month a winter storm with high winds and driving snow whipped up the waves to furious heights. Manhattan Beach was so injured that $75,000 scarcely covered the loss. The whole beach was flattened out. The track of the eastern Marine R.R. was washed out for a distance of 600 feet. The Point Breeze depot was completely undermined by the surging waves and would have gone with the rest had it not been braced with stout posts driven deep into the sand. The bulkhead in front of the Manhattan Hotel together with the beautiful grass plots were washed away to within fifteen feet of the music stand. The bathing pavilion had a narrow escape. As it was, its whole front was damaged and underneath it the sea ebbed and flowed. From the Pavilion to the Life Saving Station the beach and all improvements from 35 to 50 feet inland were swallowed up by the sea. All along the distance to the easterly end of the Oriental Hotel the bulkhead filling was carried away, and there was nothing left but the skeleton piling.

A final word may be in order on the corporate structure of the Manhattan Beach enterprise. When Corbin began his undertakings in 1876, everything was done either under his own name or under the name of the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway. As the hotel project grew and spawned new and specialized

activities, it became convenient to decentralize operations through a number of subsidiary companies, each with its own officers and board of directors. The first to be created was the Manhattan Beach Bathing Company, incorporated in January 1879 with its purpose to "construct a bathing establishment, to construct and carry on hotels and restaurants, and give public entertainments and exhibitions." The capital stock was fixed at $250,000 in 2500 shares of $100 each. The nominal president was James K. O. Sherwood of Oyster Bay, L.I., the manager of the baths; Frederick W. Dunton, Corbin's nephew; and Alfred Sully, a Corbin business associate.

At almost the same time, the Manhattan Beach Improvement Company was incorporated as the central holding company with all others as underliers. The Improvement Company "purchased" the real estate holdings at Coney Island and Gravesend from the railway company, but the railway company was made to guarantee the bonds of the Improvement Company. In return, the railway company was allowed to reserve its depot and grounds at the beach, subject to the control of the Improvement Company. For the unimproved part of the railway company's property, the Improvement Company paid $200,000, $100,000 in bonds and $100,000 in paid stock. For the improved part $500,000 was turned over in full paid stock. The treasurer of the Improvement Company was authorized to sell bonds at 50% of their face value but not to a greater amount than double the sum of the stock subscribed for nor more than $300,000 unless authorized. The Improvement Company executed a mortgage to J. Pickering Putnam, trustee (and architect of the Manhattan Hotel) as security for the bonds. The president and treasurer were authorized to issue 1500 bonds of $1000 each, due March 1909.

Tied in with the Manhattan Beach Improvement Company was the Gravesend Land Company, founded in April 1879. The certificate of incorporation stated that the object of the company was to "purchase, hold and improve lands, marshes and sea beach for the purpose of public resort within the Town of Gravesend by erecting hotels, pavilions and other structures." The capital stock was only $50,000 and its directorate was partly identical with that of the Manhattan Beach Improvement Company. Several conveyances of land, including houses and a

picnic grove—108 acres altogether—in Sheepshead Bay appear to have been made to this company during August 1879. Six hundred dollars an acre was paid. It is likely, though not certain, that the acquisition of the land opposite the Coney Island Jockey Club for a depot and railroad yard was made through this company. There were rumors in real estate circles at the time that a new development, called Corbinville, with fully laid-out streets and cottages, was about to be started on the company's lands east of Ocean Avenue and south of Gravesend Neck Road, but nothing seems to have come of it.

By the following year—1880—the corporate reorganization of the Manhattan Beach enterprises appears to have been completed. In a note to the taxing authorities of the Town of Gravesend, Corbin stated that there were then five distinct corporations holding title at the beach:

The Manhattan Beach Improvement Company
The Manhattan Bathing Company
The Marine Railroad Company
The American Aeronautic Company
The New York and Manhattan Beach Railway Company

The inclusion of the Aeronautic Company comes as a surprise to us, but apparently Corbin saw some tax advantage in incorporating Professor King's balloon enterprise as a separate business activity.

The most profound change, and one that meant the eventual end of the narrow-gauge railway operation, came at the end of the 1880 season. All during the summer of that year, Corbin and Col. Thomas R. Sharp, receiver of the Long Island Rail Road, had met socially and conferred for long hours both at Manhattan Beach and at the Wall Street offices of the Corbin Banking Company. The outcome of these protracted negotiations resulted in the greatest coup of Corbin's carreer up to that time, the takeover of the entire Long Island Rail Road. The negotiations for sale and transfer, though pending for some time, had been one of the best kept secrets on the "street." Messrs. Drexel, Morgan & Co., the Philadelphia bankers, turned over to Corbin 35,000 shares of the capital stock of the Long Island R.R., a controlling interest. New articles of incorporation were filed at Albany on December 3, 1880 in the name of Austin Corbin, Alfred C.

Chapin, Edward Tuck, Henry W. Maxwell and B. S. Henning. The new company, unlike the Manhattan Beach enterprise, was not to be a one-man owned proposition; this time Corbin would be but one member of a syndicate, though, nonetheless, the guiding hand and leading voice.

The effects of the sale were far-reaching and portentous. Corbin's energies and interests for many years to come would be devoted to managing and improving a very large and complex railway system carrying increasing thousands of passengers every day of the year. The problem of integrating the little Manhattan Beach system with its seasonal operation and peculiar narrow gauge into the large Long Island network loomed as an immediate challenge to the ingenuity of the new corporation. The old days of the Manhattan Beach road as a private railway and hotel facility were at an end and a new era was at hand.

CHAPTER 6

The Golden Age of the Manhattan Beach Railway (1883-1903)

THE purchase of the Long Island R.R. by Austin Corbin foreshadowed immediate and profound changes in the Manhattan Beach Railway. Up to now, the Manhattan Beach road had been primarily an excursion railroad operated as an accommodation, and though important, nevertheless ranking as but one of the enterprises of a prominent resort entrepreneur. With Austin Corbin's purchase of the Long Island R.R. in December 1880, the railroad's position was completely altered; suddenly, Austin Corbin emerged as first and foremost a railroad magnate, the head of a large, complex and rapidly expanding rail system, with a passenger traffic and money valuation in the millions. The great hotels at Manhattan Beach with all their splendor and prestige and their attendant railway facilities could hardly rival the enormous investment represented in the Long Island R.R. The Manhattan Beach Railway, formerly occupying a conspicuous position as the sole railroading venture in Corbin's empire, fell at once to the position of a branch line and a minor one at that with but seasonal traffic, and worse still, an odd gauge that physically isolated it from all other parts of the Long Island system.

It was obvious to observers at the time that the inclusion of a narrow-gauge railway in the Long Island R.R. system was an anomaly. There were compelling reasons, not the least of which were ease of operation, economy of repair and shop facilities that dictated an early change over to standard gauge. The adoption of the narrow-gauge in the first place had been dictated largely by expediency—the easy availability and cheapness of the engines and cars at the Centennial Exposition of 1876. Yet what had begun as expediency had within a year or two become a philosophy on the part of management. Isaac Barton, the general superintendent, had in a press interview of October 1878

remarked: "The fact has been demonstrated that for short lines the narrow gauge is incomparably the best road. Here on the Manhattan Beach we carried over a million and have not killed one . . . the secret of the success of the road is that it costs so little to build and run it. The cars weigh only five tons, the broad gauge fifteen; the little engines weigh only twenty tons and carry eighteen cars. The wear and tear is less, the running expenses less, and hence freight and passengers can be carried cheaper." The suddenly changed conditions of 1880 forced Barton to reconsider his position, yet we can be sure that the day of the Manhattan Beach as a "short line" had passed, and that its future destiny lay with the Long Island R.R. which he knew so well.

The first move toward physically integrating the two roads was made in 1881 with the suggestion that a third rail be laid on the Long Island's Atlantic Branch from East New York, where the roads intersected, to Flatbush Avenue, and another on the Montauk Branch from Maspeth to Long Island City. The Flatbush Avenue connection would enable the Manhattan Beach road to compete effectively with the Brighton Beach Hotel and bathing facilities, which, since 1878, had enjoyed direct train facilities with the Flatbush Avenue station through a contract with the Long Island R.R. The Long Island City connection would give the Manhattan Beach traffic direct communication with the long-established ferries and add greatly to the business of the road. Both changes involved problems; there was serious question as to the legality of laying a third rail along Atlantic Avenue for another road, since the Atlantic Branch was leased and not owned outright by the Long Island R.R. The Long Island City connection involved building a new railroad to bridge the gap between Cooper Avenue, Glendale, and Maspeth, where the Long Island R.R. would be joined.

The Long Island management, or more specifically, Austin Corbin, spent the whole year of 1881 mulling over the advantages and the problems; then in December a decision was anounced: rather than third-track the Long Island R.R., the whole Manhattan Beach Railway would be standard-gauged, and, in addition, the two connections to Flatbush Avenue and Long Island City would be constructed.

The first legal step was to lease the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway to the Long Island Rail Road so that the roads

could be operated as one. By the terms of the lease, arranged in December 1881, the contract would run for 99 years and there would be a minimum annual rental of $92,500; the company was to receive 35% of the gross receipts from the Long Island R.R., who would also guarantee that the 35% would be equal every year to the fixed charges of the Manhattan Beach road. The contract took effect formally as of May 1, 1882.

The next step was to insure the construction of the new connection between the Manhattan Beach Railway and the Long Island's Montauk Branch by the incorporation of a new subsidiary, the Long Island City and Manhattan Beach Railroad Company, in February 1883. After some uncertainty it was decided to build the road from just east of Fresh Pond station on the Montauk Branch, south one and one-half miles to Cooper Avenue, where a junction would be effected. The corporate life was set at 1000 years, and the capital stock $50,000, which went to the Long Island R.R. in sufficient amount to reimburse it for the cost of construction.

Before embarking on the new road, the management used the year 1882 to complete the connection with the Atlantic Branch of the Long Island R.R. at East New York. A switch in the southwestern quadrant would enable Manhattan Beach trains to reach Flatbush Avenue station, but so much land between Van Sinderen and East New York Avenues was already occupied by tracks of the Long Island R.R. and the Canarsie road, that the Highway Commissioners, under pressure from the East New York electorate, were reluctant to give permission. When the commissioners failed to respond in what Corbin considered a reasonable time, he allowed the impression to gain currency that he would force a crossing and worry about legalities later. The commissioners were determined not to be worsted by so formidable an antagonist and kept police on the lookout night and day. They also secured an injunction from the Supreme Court restraining the railroad from laying tracks at Van Sinderen Avenue. Corbin, temporarily frustrated, bought land in August and September so that the connection would traverse private property only. He then reapplied to the commissioners for permission to cross certain streets. Again the Town fathers proved reluctant. Finally, on September 30, 1882, at a meeting with Superinten-

dent Barton and all the commissioners present, a meeting of minds was achieved. Barton dangled before the commissioners the attractive bait of a new central depot and a rapid transit service between East New York and Long Island City with its round-the-clock ferry service to upper Manhattan, plus the announcement that the road had applied for the appointment of a special commission to condemn the needed land for a connection. The New Lots Highway Commissioners were well aware that Corbin was wealthy and powerful enough to get what he wanted sooner or later, and that a special commission would very likely overrule them; they therefore decided that, as Mr. Corbin proposed to properly guard the track and to restore the streets to such a condition as would not impair their usefulness for business, they would grant the desired permission to put in the curve. The way was now clear to standard-gauge the whole Manhattan Beach Railway and to install the East New York and Long Island City connections.

The month of December 1882 was used to gather materials; construction trains began rolling in the week of February 4–10, 1883. During March momentum picked up considerably as the frost left the ground. Somewhat to the surprise of observers, the railroad people simply pried up and relaid the same 40 lb. rail then in use, making no attempt to substitute a heavier rail. By the end of March the track gangs appear to have worked their way down to the Bay Ridge docks, while a second gang approached Manhattan Beach itself, where the trestle had to be widened over Coney Island Creek and the meadows filled in.

On April 16, 1883 it became necessary for the railroad to apply to the Supreme Court for the appointment of commissioners to appraise the value of 13 plots of ground needed for the new right-of-way in the vicinity of Fresh Pond. On April 25, the three men appointed walked on foot over the farms of the Way Estate, the Wagner brothers, Mr. Edsall, Peter Debevoise and the heirs of John H. Ragen and the late Hannah Cooper to the tracks at Cooper Avenue. The remainder of the day was devoted to taking testimony from local farmers and the owners, who testified that the land had a current market value of $800–$1000 an acre. The Long Island R.R. appears to have settled with the owners at this figure and taken title without contest, for by May 24th, the

mile and a half of track was all laid, and construction and gravel trains were running. Progress was so swift that on June 2, 1883 the new line opened to passenger traffic.

The new connection, short though it was, effected important changes on the whole Manhattan Beach Railway. The outlet to Long Island City now became the main line, superseding the old route to Greenpoint. New stations were opened at Myrtle Avenue (Ridgewood), Cypress Avenue, and at the junction where the new extension branched off, another new station "Cooper Avenue," was built, where passengers changed to the still narrow-gauge Greenpoint Division, as it now became known.

It would be a mistake to imagine that the passenger traffic completely deserted the Greenpoint route in favor of Long Island City. The timetable for 1883 shows that as many trains originated at Greenpoint as at Long Island City—25 on weekdays. However, through service was no longer possible; all passengers from Greenpoint had to change to the standard-gauge trains at Cooper Avenue. At the Quay Street depot the expensive ferry service was abandoned and passengers had to walk five blocks to reach the East 10th Street and East 23rd Street Ferries. Since the bulk of the Manhattan Beach patronage came from New York rather than Brooklyn, it is very probable that the majority transferred over to the faster and more convenient Long Island City ferries; the 25 shuttle trains that met each of the 25 main line trains at Cooper Avenue Junction probably represented an excess of service over the real needs of the people of Williamsburgh. In the spring of 1884 the Long Island R.R. engaged a local Greenpoint railway contractor, Mr. Nathaniel A. Thompson, to standard-gauge the Greenpoint line. This made it possible for the road to give full freight facilities to the factories along the branch; passenger service, however, continued on a shuttle basis with a change at Cooper Avenue.

The new connection at East New York also made a profound change in the Manhattan Beach service. The "Flatbush Avenue Division" was created with 24 trains each way on weekdays and Sundays. Service opened on May 30, 1883. Trains stopped at Franklin, Nostrand, Kingston, Troy and Utica Avenues, thence switched onto the Manhattan Beach tracks at East New York and ran non-stop to Sheepshead Bay station and terminated behind the hotel. Actually, the Long Island R.R., in opening this

route, was competing with the Brighton line, for a Flatbush Avenue service was being operated via a connection at Bedford over the Brighton tracks to the Brighton Beach Hotel, always the competitor of the Manhattan.

The Manhattan Beach Railway, with the opening of these two new routes in 1883, had now reached its maximum extent in mileage. All subsequent service improvements would be in the nature of interline services. From this point forward it is possible for us to view the whole railway over a period of years.

The first contraction of the system—a small one, to be sure—came in April 1886 with the abandonment of the Quay Street station and facilities at Greenpoint. It will be recalled that the site had been leased in 1878 for a term of eight years and this now expired as of April 30th. With the new Long Island City and Flatbush Avenue terminals available, there was no inducement to continue paying a rental of $6000 a year to retain an unneeded facility. When the 1885 season ended, therefore, on September 28th, the Greenpoint passenger service was terminated permanently. The rest of the branch, aside from the depot area, was retained for freight. In 1891–92 the Long Island R.R. sold off the Humboldt Street and Grand Street depots and some of the old rails for $2600; in 1896–97 the right-of-way from Greenpoint to South Side Crossing was abandoned and sold, leaving the small remnant known today as the "Evergreen Branch."

During the '80's and '90's many improvements were made on the Manhattan Beach Railway. For simplicity's sake we shall list these chronologically:

1883: New turntable at Manhattan Beach
Interlocking tower at Manhattan Beach Junction
New depot and car sheds at Bay Ridge

1884: New depot at Sheepshead Bay
New union station at East New York
All station platforms replaced with yellow pine
All tracks planked in at Sheepshead Bay Race Course
New water tank at Manhattan Beach
All new 56 lb. steel rails laid from Cooper Avenue to Manhattan Beach

1885: New station and platforms at 3rd Avenue, Bay Ridge
New ferry sheds at Bay Ridge
Double track connection installed at Parkville with Culver line

1886: Curves at New Lots and Kouwenhovens smoothed to 3 degrees
Semaphore signal installed at Bushwick Junction
Connection with Greenpoint Division reduced to single track

1887: Manhattan Beach yard and the side tracks at Sheepshead Bay relaid with second-hand steel

1888: New sidings installed at Manhattan Beach
New interlocking plant at Parkville
Signal tower built at Parkville
Car house at Manhattan Beach Junction painted

1890: Tracks raised to street grade at Conway, Aberdeen, Hull, Vanderveer and Stewart Streets after dirt is shoveled over tracks and trains blockaded to force compliance

1892: Improvement of Bay Ridge docks

1894: Float bridge at Bay Ridge wharf
Parkville Bridge under Ocean Boulevard widened as a result of the Parkville disaster

1895: 15.472 acres of land under water bought at Bay Ridge to widen out dock and wharf area and enlarge yard

1898–99: Improvement of track and paving at Sheepshead Bay Race Track station

Beginning with the year 1885, the Manhattan Beach R.R. was linked for the first time to one of the rival roads in Brooklyn, the first of many such future connections. President Culver of the Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. was the operator of a steam road running along the present McDonald Avenue (then Gravesend) from Prospect Park to Coney Island. The road had been doing very well financially, but suffered from one handicap—a dead-end terminal at the city line at 9th Avenue and 20th Street, an hour's horse car ride from the teeming populations of downtown Brooklyn and Manhattan. In the summer of 1884 President Culver succeeded in arousing Corbin's interest in a joint operation of the Bay Ridge Branch with the prospect of increasing patronage for each railroad. Corbin had no Prospect

Park outlet since the untimely collapse of the Kings County Central R.R. in 1878; Culver would benefit enormously by an outlet to the New York ferries. In January 1885 the agreement was publicly announced.

Connection between the two railroads which crossed at right angles in the then suburb of Parkville was effected by double track switches in the southwest quadrant and a single track switch in the southeast quadrant. Track was laid and ballasted in April, May and June and the connection was opened to passenger traffic on Thursday, July 23, 1885. The arrangement between Culver and Corbin was that each would run trains on alternate hours between 8:30 A.M. and 10:10 P.M. from Bay Ridge and from 7:48 A.M. to 11:18 P.M. from the Culver depot at West Brighton. The Prospect Park & Coney Island named its new outlet the "Bay Ridge Division," while the Manhattan Beach Railway began to refer to its "West Brighton Division." Each of the roads contributed 15 trains to the service, so that a passenger at Bay Ridge could reach Coney Island by either route at 30 minute intervals. The new facility proved to be popular and greatly benefited the Culver line in particular. In gratitude, Culver named Corbin to the Executive Committee of the Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. in November 1886.

In August 1886 the opening of the Brooklyn Jockey Club on Gravesend Avenue between Avenues R and U gave the Long Island R.R. the opportunity to run special race trains from Long Island City over the Parkville connection and down Gravesend Avenue direct to the new track.

It is very possible that as a result of the close cooperation between Corbin and Culver, the idea of buying out the Culver property suggested itself to Corbin. Much of the motivation for the purchase, however, came from the inter-relations that Corbin had achieved with neighboring carriers over the period 1887–1892. All the steam lines running to Coney Island had been dependent on terminals at or near the city line with passengers supplied by horse car routes radiating out over the City of Brooklyn. These plodding horse cars, which had for years provided the sole transportation in both Manhattan and Brooklyn, were being rapidly outmoded by a new and increasingly popular form of genuine rapid transit, the elevated railway. New York provided the proving ground for this new experiment; within a decade

and a half four successful elevated railroads were in operation on 2nd, 3rd, 6th and 9th Avenues. The upper reaches of the city, hitherto too distant for wage earners dependent on horse cars to get to work, suddenly were brought within practical commuting distance. The lesson of all this was not lost on the politicians and capitalists of Brooklyn. Within a short time two rival companies contested for the most lucrative routes, the Brooklyn Elevated Railroad and the Kings County Elevated Railroad. By the end of 1885 the former company placed the elevated railroad in operation between Fulton Ferry and East New York via Lexington Avenue and Broadway. In 1888–89 a second road opened along Myrtle Avenue and Broadway. A third road along Hudson, Flatbush and 5th Avenues to Greenwood Cemetery opened piecemeal between 1888 and 1890. Although no one could have foreseen it at the time, it was this road that was destined to play a part in the Manhattan Beach story.

Andrew Culver, president of the Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. watched the progress of the "el" and conceived the idea of linking up with it. The directors of the Brooklyn, Bath and West End R.R. had a similar idea, and conversations began in 1888 leading to the establishment of a joint depot for both roads at the elevated terminus. The West End already operated on 5th Avenue from 27th Street to 38th Street and along that road to New Utrecht Avenue. The Culver line, unfortunately, was separated from the proposed elevated terminal by a mile. Culver decided to overcome this difficulty by building a connection from Gravesend Avenue through 38th Street to a junction with the West End track at New Utrecht Avenue, and so on over the West End tracks to the proposed elevated terminal at 5th Avenue and 36th Street. Land was acquired and the connection built in 1888–89, and both roads addressed themselves to the construction of a large brick, two-story Union Depot for their tracks

The elevated railroad opened to 36th Street on May 30, 1890 and the West End and Culver companies opened their Union depot on the same day. Both roads could now be assured of an all year around rapid transit feeder for their suburban steam lines. For the seasons of 1890 and 1891 things continued unchanged. Then in 1892 came the partial withdrawal of the West End road from the Union Depot. For four years (1888–1892) a

nearby road, the South Brooklyn Railroad & Terminal Company, had been attempting to rent or sell its seven-block long railroad which ran from the 39th Street ferry through a deep cut between 38th and 39th Streets to 9th Avenue and New Utrecht Avenues. The road, as its name implied, was not intended to be an independent operation; rather it was built to serve as a tidewater terminus for some neighboring road. In the beginning the South Brooklyn overestimated its own importance, and set itself at too high a figure to tempt the West End, Culver or Long Island R.R. This had been one reason why the West End and Culver had built the Union Depot. After four years of waiting, the South Brooklyn had become more realistic and succeeded in coming to an agreement with the West End line on February 27, 1892. As of July 14, 1892 the West End began running part of its trains into the 39th Street ferry terminal.

It was certainly the tie-in of the Prospect Park & Coney Island with the elevated road and the possibility of sharing the South Brooklyn Terminal facilities that made Culver's road attractive to Austin Corbin. In the summer of 1891 Corbin sounded out Culver about selling his road and he received an encouraging reply. The Culver line by this time was losing money and Culver himself was glad to get out. Austin Corbin allowed a whole year to pass before taking formal title on January 24, 1893. One of Corbin's main motives in buying the road was to secure for his own Manhattan Beach the cream of the Brooklyn excursion traffic; even if people still chose to go to West Brighton, Corbin stood to profit from their travel over his railroad. Equally important, possession of the Prospect Park & Coney Island gave Corbin's Long Island R.R. freight access to all South Brooklyn. To tie in with the new line, Corbin spent thousands of dollars in greatly enlarging and modernizing the 65th Street Bay Ridge docks and yards to relieve the congested facilities at Hunter's Point.

Within a year of Corbin's take-over of the Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R., trouble again threatened from a new and hitherto unknown source—trolley cars. The trolleys, beginning in 1893, were causing a revolution in transportation in Brooklyn. For years, both Manhattan and Brooklyn had chafed at the slowness and inadequacy of the horse car system. Various efforts had been made from time to time to supplant horses as a form of

motive power. Steam cars, compressed air cars, storage battery cars—all made their brief appearance and were found unsuitable in one way or another for the requirements of a truly efficient street car system. In the late 80's the solution appeared, very modestly at first, then with increasing authority. The electric motor, supplied with power through a pole or "trolley" on the roof with a revolving wheel pressed against an overhead wire, appeared locally on a suburban trolley line in Jamaica in 1887. The first important trolley installation in Brooklyn appeared in 1892 on Smith Street. Thereafter, electrification of the horse car lines moved so rapidly that in four years time the entire city and suburban system had been converted to electric trolley operation.

The traction companies soon discovered that the trolley car, thanks to its tireless electric motor, could move more people at a faster rate and over a greater distance than was possible with the old horse car. As the possibilities of the trolley car came to be realized, many new companies appeared, hotly competing for the more lucrative routes. The older companies, thrown on the defensive, joined the race to gridiron the suburbs with new routes and extensions. Coney Island, as might be expected, proved to be one of the greatest attractions for traction magnates. Although the older steam roads were already handling all the traffic that Coney Island seemed capable of generating, the trolley cars pushed south through the suburban villages toward the mecca at the seaside.

One of the aggressive trolley companies, the Atlantic Avenue Railroad Co. achieved the coup of buying out the West End line (Brooklyn, Bath and Coney Island R.R.) on April 23, 1893. Then, to the horror and consternation of Austin Corbin, the Atlantic Avenue R.R. began to make preparations to run its trolleys over the West End tracks to Coney Island. Corbin prodded the authorities of the Town of New Utrecht to forbid the stringing of wires over the West End tracks and to arrest the workers. When this failed, Corbin, as president of the Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R., charged the West End with breach of contract and secured an injunction against the stringing of trolley wires over the tracks in the Union Depot at 36th Street. Corbin realized only too well that as soon as the trolleys arrived, they would be able to charge very much lower rates to Coney Is-

land than the steam road. The trolleys would be very frequent and people would not wait for the steam trains of the Long Island R.R. Culver line which left for Coney Island only every half hour or every hour. Under this pressure by Corbin, the West End line surrendered its right to the Union Depot entirely on June 29, 1893, leaving the Long Island R.R. in sole possession.

In October, Corbin again tried to stop the Atlantic Avenue R.R. from connecting its Fifth Avenue trolley line with the West End tracks at 36th Street, and so making a through line from the Bridge to Coney Island by applying for an injunction. The attempt failed, and the Atlantic Avenue R.R. lost no time in opening its through trolley line to the beach on November 11, 1893. Although it was winter and the traffic light, the company was determined to use the cold months to work out operating conditions on what was then a novel operation and to make preparations for the summer rush.

When the summer season of 1894 opened, the Atlantic Avenue R.R. added insult to injury by not only running through frequent trolley car service but by undercutting the established fare. Corbin immediately took the company to court in the first week of July, charging them with violation of the agreement by carrying passengers on single-fare tickets to and from Coney Island for only 10¢ each way, whereas the agreement stipulated that each company must charge not less that 15¢ for a single trip or 25¢ excursion.

Equally troublesome to Austin Corbin was the attitude of the South Brooklyn Railroad and Terminal Company, the lease to which had passed to the Atlantic Avenue R.R. as an underlier of the West End line. Encouraged by the enemies of Corbin and the Long Island R.R., the South Brooklyn had embarked on plans to extend its road from 9th Avenue through Flatbush and New Lots to Jamaica so as to undercut the Long Island Rail Road's freight monopoly and to by-pass the expensive new port facilities just installed at Bay Ridge. All during 1893–96 the South Brooklyn road surveyed routes and obtained municipal grants to pass under various Brooklyn streets and highways.

Austin Corbin was not one to be easily intimidated by opposition and threatened encirclement and began a few intrigues of his own. His enemies were somewhat disconcerted by an article that appeared in the papers on January 4, 1894 announc-

ing his election to a directorship in the Brooklyn Elevated R.R. The reason behind this soon became apparent. Corbin had decided that if his rivals could introduce trolleys onto their lines, he could outdo them by introducing rapid transit elevated cars on his own line to Manhattan Beach. Within a year Corbin had brought the directors around to his scheme, and in June and July 1895, a connection was built at the southeast corner of Fifth Avenue & 36th Street between the tracks of the elevated road and the Prospect Park & Coney Island tracks.

On Monday, August 5, 1895, the Brooklyn Elevated opened a through service from the Brooklyn Bridge to Manhattan Beach without change. This remarkable service operated over an involved but interesting route. The train made all the elevated stops to 36th Street, then ran over the Culver tracks to Gravesend Avenue, thence to the Parkville interchange where it switched over to the Manhattan Beach tracks and so to the Manhattan Beach Hotel. No stops were made after 36th Street; the through run was made in 40 minutes and the fare was 35¢. The service continued through to October 30th. In the 1896 season the terminus was changed over to West Brighton (Culver Terminal) and so continued to the end of Long Island R.R. ownership and for years thereafter.

The new stimulus to traffic over Corbin's Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. to Manhattan Beach came none too soon, for the trolley competition in the 1895 season became fiercer and loomed up on all sides. A new and aggressive trolley company The Nassau Electric R.R. Company appeared on the scene, a formidable rival of the older Brooklyn City system. In July 1895 the Nassau Electric opened a trolley line from the 39th Street ferry over 39th Street and Church Avenue to Canarsie with a 5¢ fare. Then, in September and October, the company, by prodigies of track laying, extended a line down Rogers and Ocean Avenues all the way to Sheepshead Bay. On September 27, 1895 this new 5¢ trolley road opened, carrying crowds of riders. Some idea of the loss to the steam lines can be gained when it is realized that on one Summer Sunday, September 29, 1895, 10,000 people came down to the island on the Ocean Avenue line, some cars packed with 100 people.

In the season of 1896 the competition for Corbin's railroad lines to Coney Island became even more damaging. On March

4, 1896 the Nassau Electric R.R. swallowed up the already large Atlantic Avenue R.R. and connected its own trolley system to the extensive Atlantic system. It now became possible to travel from the Broadway, Fulton, Hamilton or 39th Street ferries to Manhattan Beach for 5¢. In the same year the Nassau Company completed a trolley line through 86th Street from Fifth Avenue, connecting with the West End tracks and so reaching the opposite end of Coney Island. The Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. was completely paralleled and even the Manhattan Beach road to some extent by the ubiquitous trolley, and the 5¢ fare made any sort of opposition ruinous for a steam line.

In the midst of this rapid obsolescence of his Manhattan Beach railroad empire as a result of the trolley explosion, Austin Corbin died suddenly as the result of a fall from his carriage on his New Hampshire estate (June 1896). Had he lived two months longer, Corbin would have lived to suffer another setback. For four years—1892–1896—he had fought a holding action to prevent the Brighton line from connecting at Franklin Avenue with the Kings County Elevated R.R. on Fulton Street. Through objections lodged with the Railroad Commission and encouragement of property owners' suits, Corbin had defeated the Brighton line's attempts to copy his own joint elevated-suburban operation. The rival line after a long struggle won out in the courts, and on August 14, 1896 through train operation began between Fulton Ferry (later Park Row) and the Brighton Beach Hotel.

The Manhattan Beach traffic, despite the competition, did not die away all at once, and Corbin's successor in the Long Island R.R. presidency, William H. Baldwin, continued to make new and resourceful traffic arrangements. On June 30, 1897, the Nassau Electric Company, acting for its subsidiary, the West End road, surrendered to the Long Island R.R. its lease of the South Brooklyn Railroad and Terminal Company, owners of the 39th Street ferry. In the next season—1898—the Long Island R.R. took advantage of its exclusive occupancy of the 39th Street terminal to open on June 16 a through passenger service between the ferry and Manhattan Beach Hotel, continuing this service to the end of 1902. The running time was 40 minutes and the fare to Manhattan Beach set at 40¢. Other trains ran through to the West Brighton terminal instead for a 20¢ fare.

Manhattan Beach gained its final important interline link in

the year 1899. The great Brooklyn Rapid Transit system, incorporated in January 1896 as a gigantic holding company for all the trolley, elevated and suburban steam companies in Brooklyn took some five years to merge all these many complex operations into one ownership. The Long Island R.R. had steadfastly opposed any union that might threaten the position of the Long Island R.R.-owned Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. or the passenger and freight traffic of the Manhattan Beach Railway. However, by 1899, there was very little left to protect. The trolleys with the 5¢ fare and five minute headways had just about taken away all the traffic as we have seen. The Long Island R.R., therefore, willingly sold the deficit-ridden Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. to the Brooklyn Rapid Transit in 1899 and, in addition, came to an agreement that ended the rivalry for the Coney Island traffic. On April 1, 1899, the "Agreement of Alliance" was signed. In general, each corporation agreed to stay out of the other's sphere of interest. B.R.T. territory was defined as west of, and including, College Point, Flushing and Jamaica. Long Island R.R. territory was everything east of that line, but the three aforementioned villages were in neither territory. This took care of the B.R.T. trolley threat to the Long Island R.R. in Queens County. More importantly, the Long Island R.R. agreed not to oppose the acquisition by the B.R.T. of the Brooklyn elevated network. In gratitude, the B.R.T. agreed to connect the tracks of the Brighton line with the Long Island R.R. at Sheepshead Bay just north of Emmons Avenue, where they were separated by only a few feet. This point of connection was designated as Sheepshead Bay Junction and the B.R.T. agreed to operate Brighton trains directly into the Manhattan Beach station. The necessary electrical construction was installed by the B.R.T. in June 1899 when the line was fully electrified.

It will be recalled that the Fulton Street elevated and Brighton line had been connected in August 1896. Now, on July 18, 1899 newly electrified Brighton Beach trains began running from Park Row through to the Manhattan Beach Hotel. The nature of this service fluctuated slightly from season to season; in 1899–1902 passengers changed at Sheepshead Bay station to a shuttle train; in 1903 all the Brighton Beach trains ran into Manhattan Beach station and passengers changed at Sheepshead Bay for a Brighton shuttle; in 1904 and thereafter, parlor cars attached to

the regular Brighton trains were detached at Sheepshead Bay and run into Manhattan Beach. This caused a good deal of grumbling, for the regular cars soon became crowded with passengers, while the 25¢ extra-fare chair car remained invitingly empty.

As soon as the Brighton elevated came into B.R.T. hands, trolley cars of the Brooklyn City R.R. were run through to the Brighton Beach Hotel via a ramp connection at Flatbush Avenue, Prospect Park. In 1899, the Flatbush and Nostrand Avenue lines came down to Brighton and in 1903 Gates Avenue was added. These three continued running every summer season until 1906.

In the following year—1900—the Nassau Electric Railroad inaugurated a summer only trolley route from the 39th Street ferry over 39th Street, 13th Avenue, 37th Street, Church Avenue, Gravesend Avenue, Neptune and Emmons Avenue into the Manhattan Beach station by means of a switch between the steam railroad and the trolley tracks at the Emmons Avenue grade crossing. This service lasted four seasons through 1903. The Coney Island & Gravesend R.R., operators of the Surf Avenue trolley line, began a service in 1900 from Sea Gate at West 36th Street over Surf Avenue, West 8th Street, Neptune Avenue, West 6th Street, Neptune Avenue, Emmons Avenue and over the same connecting switch into Manhattan Beach station. This summer-only service lasted seven seasons through 1909.

In the light of all these trolley inroads, it is easy to see why the Manhattan Beach train service gradually withered away to just a few trains on the main line to Long Island City. When resistance proved hopeless, the Long Island R.R. gave in to the inevitable, and actually arranged for its rivals to supply the service to Manhattan Beach that it could no longer supply itself. Within eight years the extensive Manhattan Beach network was all but wiped out:

1894 Bushwick service abandoned.

1897 Bay Ridge passenger service abandoned; one season revival 1904.

1899 Flatbush Avenue connection abandoned.

1899 Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. sold.

1902 39th Street ferry service abandoned.

It might perhaps be instructive at this point in our narrative to summarize in tabular form the bewildering variety of service available to the traveler at Manhattan Beach at different times. We shall see at once the evidence for one remarkable fact; no other Long Island R.R. station ever enjoyed any greater variety of services to so many different destinations and by so many different kinds of vehicles:

1. Manhattan Beach—65th Street Ferry (Bay Ridge)
   July 20, 1877–1897; 1904 (end of season).
2. Manhattan Beach—Greenpoint
   May 15, 1878–September 28, 1885.
3. Manhattan Beach—Flatbush Avenue station
   1883–1899 (end of season).
4. Manhattan Beach—Long Island City
   June 2, 1883–May 13, 1924.
5. Manhattan Beach—Bushwick Station
   1886–1894 (end of season).
6. Manhattan Beach—Prospect Park (Kings County Central R.R.)
   1878 season only.
7. Manhattan Beach—Brooklyn Bridge (via 5th Avenue L and Culver line)
   August 5, 1895–October 30, 1895.
8. Manhattan Beach—Park Row (via Fulton Street L and Brighton line)
   July 18, 1899–1907.
9. Manhattan Beach—39th Street ferry (via Culver line)
   June 18, 1898–1902.
10. Manhattan Beach—39th Street Ferry (via trolley)
    1900–1906.
11. Manhattan Beach—Sea Gate (via trolley)
    1900–1909.

In this lengthy presentation of the intricate interline operations to and from Manhattan Beach, we must not lose sight of another interesting operation at the beach itself—the Marine Railroad. The earlier history of this little road has been detailed in previous chapters down to the end of narrow-gauge days. It is appropriate

at this point to record the eventful fortunes of this road over the following twenty years, a steadily losing battle against the relentless sea.

As a result of the encroachments of the sea during the winter of 1880–81, what remained of the broad beach in front of the Manhattan Beach Hotel was eroded away, and bulkheads and dikes had to be installed to protect the foundations. A breakwater 400 feet long, composed of stones and cedar trunks, was begun in August. In addition, large stones were dropped an eighth of a mile offshore to break the force of the waves. The winter storms of January and February 1882 left no beach at all visible in front of the Manhattan Hotel except at low tide; one descended a flight of steps from the top of the bulkhead directly into shallow water. This benefited the western Marine R.R. for passage to Brighton could be achieved only by rail. The track was now so close to the water that in September, when the seasonal turbulence began, passengers to Brighton were sprayed by the wind-blown froth from the waves.

In the last week of September 1882 an equinoctial storm struck Coney Island, the like of which had not been experienced for decades. Once again the waves concentrated their fury on the stretch between the Brighton and Manhattan Hotels. The Brighton Bathing Pavilion was completely ruined, even the pile foundation being uprooted. The midsection of the Marine R.R. was entirely washed away by waves that crashed through the bulkhead, ate out the fill and swept across the island to Sheepshead Bay. A gap was left in the shoreline that the tidal flow soon deepened out into an inlet, preventing all passage between the Brighton and Manhattan Hotels. Bad as this was, the damage to the eastern Marine R.R. was far worse. The entire road from the Oriental Hotel to the Point Breeze Hotel was swept away so thoroughly that in place of the dunes and railroad track, there now appeared to the eye only a flat and level sand spit over which the waters rolled at every high tide.

No attempt was made to repair any of the damage until the spring of 1883, since the whole Manhattan Beach road was scheduled to be standard-gauged anyway. Then in February construction trains began carting in new ties and many carloads of fill to bridge the gap in the western Marine R.R. The exposed Manhattan Bathing Pavilion was also moved back. By June the

rowboat service across the gap was discontinued, thanks to a 1200 foot pile trestle which was built across the washout. On June 10th the newly repaired road was thrown open to passenger traffic over one track using an engine and two cars. By evening 13,000 people had patronized the road. The eastern Marine R.R. appears to have been repaired for what proved to be the last time between March and June, mainly to provide service to the Point Breeze Hotel at the inlet.

A storm of unusual violence struck the island on January 8, 1884 and did considerable damage but appears not to have affected the railroad. A year later on February 16, 1885 an easterly storm with high tides and driving winds struck hard along the beach, but especially at Brighton Beach and West Brighton. It would appear that it was this storm that put an end to the eastern Marine R.R. once and for all, for the reported mileage of the road shrinks this year to 0.326 miles, the figure for the western Marine R.R. alone. Significantly, too, the Point Breeze Hotel drops from sight and is never mentioned again.

In the winter of 1885–86 constant battering of the sea coast by a series of winter storms created such havoc at Brighton Beach once again that the managers of that unfortunate place began to seriously consider the possibility of moving the big hotel back a thousand feet or so from the threatening waves. Between the hotel and Manhattan Beach the sea clawed out a great bay, leaving the Marine R.R. perched high up on its pile work, drenched with salt spray and so far out in the water as to be completely inoperable. In the spring the management attempted to make the road usable by erecting large canvas screens all along the ocean side, but the railroad must by this time have lived up to its name of Marine railway with uncomfortable literalness, for a reporter in August reported that he had undergone a thorough ducking by reason of the waves washing over the canvas breastworks.

The seasons of 1887 and 1888 passed uneventfully for the little railroad; then, on November 25, 1888 a severe storm struck hard in the vicinity of West Brighton and swept away from 75 to 180 feet of beach. The point where the greatest damage was done was at the western terminus of the Marine R.R. The station building was washed out to sea. A quarter of the road and about 235 feet of the Brighton Beach Bathing Pavilion were smashed by the waves and totally destroyed.

The precarious position of the Marine R.R. after the 1885–86 storms plus the damage just inflicted made it inevitable that the road would have to be completely rebuilt. In April and May 1889 the railroad engineers moved the roadbed about half a mile farther north so as to make it safe from the encroachments of the sea for many years to come. When the road opened in June, the trestle work of the old road and the piling of the old Brighton Bathing Pavilion where the former road had terminated stood up gaunt and battered far out in the water, both unsightly reminders of a hard-fought but hopeless battle against an irresistible opponent. The whole shoreline of Manhattan Beach had by this time assumed the appearance of a beleagured fortress, the hotels thrusting their huge bulk several hundred feet forward of the new shore line, determinedly holding their ground behind bristling stone breakwaters.

In the fall of the same year 1889, high tides and easterly winds struck the coast again, carrying off large sections of Barren Island. Early in September, well before the close of the season, very high tides overflowed the beaches and flooded the lowlands. East of the Oriental Hotel a portion of the sea wall was torn away and the railing along the promenade stripped off its whole length. On the 9th the highest tide in several years flooded the foundations of the Brighton Beach Hotel and tore up the concrete pavement of the Concourse. At the new Marine R.R. depot, 450 feet from the usual high water mark and at least 30 feet above sea level, forty feet of the wooden platform was torn bodily from the piles and floated across the tracks which were already covered with a foot of sand. One hundred yards farther along the line lay one of the open cars, tipped half over at an angle, the untied curtains flapping mournfully in the wind. The hotels' bulkheads were wrecked and mud and seaweed covered the lush lawns. The costly concreted pavement was gouged out in spots and holes were breached under the hotel itself. The esplanade that overlooked the sea was torn up and the timbers piled up against the music stand. Lamp posts, benches and shrubs lay in heaps; the giant bathing pavilion and the bath houses were total wrecks. At the Oriental Hotel the lawns and plank walks were ruined, but nothing worse. On the following day the east end of the Pavilion succumbed to the waves and sand poured over the Marine R.R. tracks as fast as the workmen could dig it out. When the storm

finally moved out on the 12th, it was calculated that the tidal damage to Manhattan Beach was $75,000 at the lowest figure. In the 1893 season the Marine R.R. was again washed out in many places and the tracks warped. The worst damage of the 90's occurred on October 11–12, 1896, when the outer edges of a hurricane battered Coney Island with wind and rain, doing its maximum damage as usual in the Brighton area. The Brighton music stand was torn up, Sea Breeze Avenue ripped up and the race track strewn with wreckage. The Marine R.R. station, when rebuilt in 1889, had been set on a foundation of piling, placed close together and filled in with stones. This, in turn, as well as the tracks, had been protected by a double bulkhead ten feet thick and filled in with stones. With this protection the station had been considered indestructible, but on the flood tide of the 11th, the whole station was carried out to sea, and the tracks and ties were undermined and then washed away. At the Manhattan Hotel serious damage was averted by the massive breakwater, but pounding and crashing spray ruined the lawns.

After a decade of terrible buffeting at the hands of wind and wave, the coast line between Brighton and Manhattan Beach gradually stabilized after about 1895. The reason for this was not any lack of storms, for these continued to come regularly and to cause minor flooding. Rather, it was a change in the coast line itself that gave Manhattan Beach a deserved respite. The bar at Rockaway Point, under a long succession of northeast gales and tides, built up year after year to the westward. Since the bar was much farther out to sea than Coney Island, it tended to act as a barrier beach, deflecting the damaging breakers and high tides ever westward beyond Manhattan Beach. Today, after 80 years, the tip of the Rockaway peninsula extends even beyond Brighton Beach, fully three minutes of longitude west of its position in the 1880's.

With the risks of destruction by the sea a thing of the past, the Marine R.R. could turn its efforts to routine maintenance. One minor squabble in the 90's is worth recording in passing. For many years the Marine R.R. and the Brighton Beach company had an agreement to give to the latter a share of the railroad receipts, as the west end of the road was on Brighton Beach property. Another point in the agreement was that the Brighton Beach company was to be given two weeks' notice each year

before the cars ran, so that the company could have the walks in proper shape for passengers. In the 1895 season the Brighton company's share of the receipts was claimed to be 1½¢ on each 5¢ ticket. For the coming 1896 season it was claimed that the Marine R.R. had scaled this figure down to 1¢ per ticket and had given the Brighton company no notice as to how soon the cars would operate. The Marine R.R. began running on Saturday, May 23rd and again on Sunday, May 24th with no notice. When the superintendent of the Brighton company saw the cars running at least a week earlier than usual, he informed President Jourdan of the Brighton company. A meeting was called and it was unanimously voted to build a fence cutting off all communication between Manhattan and Brighton Beaches. Before daybreak of the 25th a gang of men was set to work and a high fence was built of old boards, well covered with barbed wire at the Manhattan Beach property line. Beyond the tracks a high barbed wire fence was erected all along the boundary from the water line to Neptune Avenue. Signs were put up and a watchman was stationed to warn off pedestrians.

The Marine R.R. reacted calmly to its ouster and made no attempt to crash the barriers. It was, at that time, the shortest railroad in the world, only 0.326 miles or about 1700 feet, and with its 5¢ fare, it cleared a fair profit during the short summer season. The disagreement between the two companies remained stubbornly unresolved for some weeks. The Brighton people were opposed in principle to obstructing passage between the two hotels at all and hoped to force a free passageway to pedestrians along the beach front. As a matter of fact, the 1896 dispute was only the latest of a minor series of skirmishes and truces at irregular intervals; the companies had a disagreement in 1894 but an accommodation was reached in two days. Over the winter season of 1896–97 lasting peace was patched up between the warring companies and the Marine R.R. opened as usual for the 1897 season.

The last change of significance on the Marine R.R. during the Golden Age was the introduction of electricity and trolley cars in the 1899 season. When the trolley system was first introduced in the 90's, many methods of conveying electricity to the motors were tested before the overhead trolley wire became standard practice. In March 1899, the Murphy Safety Third Rail Com-

pany of New York was permitted to make a test of its system on the Marine R.R. A third rail was laid between the running rails consisting of alternate electrified and dead sections encased in creosoted wood and insulation all along 1951 feet of the Marine R.R. right of way. A Duplex convertible trolley car, the "Oriental," made its maiden trip along the line beginning April 12, 1899 and thereafter for a month. The car was equipped with two shoes in its trucks, each fitted with magnetic switches that activated the third rail only while the car was actually passing over it; in this way the system was safe and posed no electrical hazards to pedestrians. A standard 500 volt current, taken from a special dynamo located in the lighting station of the Manhattan Beach Hotel, was used.

The system must have failed to convince the operators of the Marine R.R. of its worth, for the familiar engines and open cars were back in service by the end of the season and for many years thereafter.

We may conclude this survey of the Marine R.R. for the period 1883–1903 with the riding statistics for that time:

1882	879,327	1893	
1883	819,126	1894	339,513
1884	887,374*	1895	412,927
1885	667,302	1896	411,914
1886	623,691	1897	
1887	576,788	1898	203,435
1888	504,216	1899	107,919
1889	448,223	1900	132,720
1890	432,496	1091	147,414
1891	not given	1902	162,885
1892	408,264	1903	155,009

*Last season of eastern Marine Railroad

Let us turn our attention at this point to a survey of the service given by the Manhattan Beach Railway on all its various routes. The backbone of the service at all periods was always the Long Island City main line, operating both summer and winter. The

tables below give the typical weekday July and August daily train service rendered over the years:

1883	25	1893	20
1884	23	1894	19
1885	23	1895	26
1886	22	1896	15
1887	22	1897	24
1888	22	1898	19
1889	22	1899	22
1890	20	1900	23
1891	18	1901	23
1892	18	1902	23
		1903	22

Trains ran more or less at 30 minute intervals from about 6 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. There was never any all-night service on the Manhattan Beach road. The Greenpoint Division, the main line down to 1883, became a shuttle service during the 1883 season (narrow gauge) and 1884–85 seasons (standard gauge), running between Quay Street terminal and Cooper Avenue Junction:

1883	25	1884	14	1885	14

The Greenpoint Division always closed down at the end of September; there was no winter service.

In the 1886 season the Long Island R.R. began running trains out of Bushwick to make up for the Greenpoint abandonment in 1885, so that only three stations were closed down (Quay Street, Humboldt Street and Grand Street); the other three (South Side Crossing, DeKalb Avenue or Ridgewood, and Myrtle Avenue) continued to receive summer service down to as late as 1894.

1886	12	1891	4
1887	14	1892	3
1888	14	1893	4
1889	12	1894	4
1890	6		

These trains did not run through to Manhattan Beach even after the change of gauge; the service was a shuttle service only with a change of cars necessary at Cooper Avenue Junction.

The Flatbush Avenue Division began in the season of 1883, when a double track connection was made at East New York. All Manhattan Beach trains on this division stopped at Franklin, Nostrand, Kingston, Troy and Utica Avenues. Daily service was as follows:

1883	24	1892	21
1884	22	1893	21
1885	22	1894	22
1886	21	1895	23
1887	21	1896	14
1888	21	1897	21
1889	21	1898	25
1890	21	1899	25
1891	21		

In the fall of 1884 the Flatbush Avenue Division began running through the winter for the first time with five to six daily trains till the end of 1899. After the Fulton Street elevated-Brighton service began on July 18, 1899, the Flatbush Avenue service was no longer needed, because the rapid transit route closely paralleled the steam railroad route and had a much better city terminus at Park Row, New York.

The Bay Ridge (65th Street) Ferry summer service was even better than the Long Island City service for many years. This busy terminal after 1885 was also used by the Culver line to West Brighton, trains departing alternately for Manhattan and West Brighton. Just a short distance away the Sea Beach also ran its trains to Coney Island.

1883	15†	1891	23‡
1884	15†	1892	23‡
1885	15†	1893	23‡
1886	15†	1894	23‡
1887	26‡	1895	23‡
1888	26‡	1896	23‡
1889	25‡	1897	22‡
1890	23‡		

†Hourly

‡Change to half-hourly

There was no winter service on the Bay Ridge Division between 1883 and 1888; then, because of a complaint to the Railroad Commission, that Board ordered the Manhattan Beach Railway to give some kind of winter service on the Bay Ridge line, beginning in 1889. Accordingly, in the 1889–90 season, winter service began with four trains for Flatbush Avenue via East New York. In 1890-91 season this service was drastically cut back to one train each way to East New York only. In the winters of 1891–92 and 1892–93, the one train running was further cut back to Parkville, and in 1893–94, winter service ceased altogether and never resumed. Austin Corbin was eager to get rid of the Bay Ridge service because he had to pay a percentage of every fare to the Staten Island Rapid Transit which owned the franchise for the ferry service between Bay Ridge and Whitehall Street, New York, since July 1884. When Corbin bought the Culver line, it became more profitable to divert the Bay Ridge traffic to the 39th Street Ferry. It would appear that the Bay Ridge service was revived for the one season of 1904, for a Public Service Commission report mentions that four passenger round trips were run daily during that summer.

During all these years the Manhattan Beach Railway operated a parlor car service. In the December 1882 fire that burned up so much of the narrow gauge equipment, 13 Woodruff parlor cars worth $3000 each were consumed. After 1883 the regular Long Island R.R. parlor cars operated over the road, especially on weekend trains and race track specials.

Race track service was provided to the Sheepshead Bay Race Course on Ocean Avenue via the Long Island R.R.'s own tracks (1879–1910) and to the Brooklyn Jockey Club course off Gravesend Avenue via the Parkville interchange and the Culver line (1886–1908). From the special race track timetables we know that these Long Island R.R. specials laid over in Culver terminal at Coney Island until the races were over. At the Sheepshead Bay track the railroad had a five-track yard to lay over trains, with the tracks boarded over for foot passengers and a shelter area for patrons on Ocean Avenue.

The competition for the Coney Island traffic was the one factor that plagued Corbin and all the other railroad tycoons of the 1880's and 90's. Unfortunately, all the companies built their roads almost at the same time and terminated very close to each other at Coney Island. Although the summer traffic to the island

was very heavy, none of the roads could ever command a large enough slice of the traffic to achieve real financial security and one by one each of them succumbed to foreclosure and reorganization.

The West End was the first company on the scene and posed the least threat to the Manhattan Beach interests. It also operated for most of its years under the twin handicaps of a very roundabout route and, until July 1892, without a tidewater terminal. The Sea Beach road was a permanent thorn in Corbin's flesh because its Bay Ridge terminal directly adjoined that of the Manhattan Beach Railway; worse still, it was a renegade road in the matter of fares, always refusing to join in any agreement, and undercutting the rates of all the other roads. The Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R., better known as the Culver line, was alone among the roads in having a profitable winter traffic thanks to the villages of Gravesend and Parkville on its route. Its traffic volume was perhaps the best of any of the roads, and in 1890 it managed to link itself with the 5th Avenue elevated road. Its careful management and healthy traffic explained why Corbin made up his mind to purchase the road in 1891.

The fourth competitor, the Brighton line, was always Corbin's most damaging competitor for many reasons. It exactly paralleled the Manhattan Beach road from Manhattan Beach Junction to Sheepshead Bay and enjoyed good city connections, having trackage rights over the Atlantic Branch of the Long Island R.R. from Franklin Avenue to Flatbush Avenue. When Corbin took over the Long Island R.R., he did his best to ruin the Brighton line train schedules, and got rid of his unwelcome tenant at Flatbush Avenue by the end of 1883. At the island itself the Brighton Beach Hotel duplicated all too successfully the attractions of Corbin's hotels. The prices were always much more reasonable at Brighton, and the Brighton Beach Race Track in the hotel's very back yard was a special drawing card that Corbin could not match.

Austin Corbin did his best to advertise the attractions of Manhattan Beach and to stimulate traffic. At South Ferry, Manhattan, the terminal of the elevated railroads bore a huge sign on its roof "Manhattan Beach" during the 80's. At South Ferry itself and at 65th Street, Corbin, and indeed all the other roads, employed squads of men and boys to bawl out the current attractions of the beach in as loud a voice as possible and to im-

portune passengers into buying the rolls of tickets with which their hands were loaded. So hot was the competition that on at least one occasion—July 1882—Corbin furnished free tickets to the Brooklyn horse car drivers and conductors for a ride, a bath and admittance to the fireworks. At Manhattan Beach itself Corbin outdid himself in providing attractions. Aside from the bathing and the free Pavilion areas, there was Gilmore's Band, for almost 20 years a universal favorite, the impressive fireworks display at night, the balloon ascensions, and the many promenades and gardens.

We do not know, unfortunately, the traffic statistics of the Manhattan Beach road, for they were not reported separately to the State Railroad Commission, but we do have the passenger volume at Manhattan Beach station for four years:

1885	1,359,311	1886	1,576,298
1887	1,690,975	1888	1,570,799

The fares on the Manhattan Beach road remained fairly constant through 1881–1885:

Greenpoint to:		New York to:	
Humboldt St.	5¢	Bay Ridge	10¢
Grand St.	5¢	Bath Crossing	20¢
DeKalb Ave.	10¢	Parkville	20¢
Myrtle Ave.	10¢	Sheepshead Bay	35¢
East New York	10¢	Manhattan Beach	35¢
Kouwenhovens	20¢		
Flatlands	25¢		
Sheepshead Bay	35¢		
Manhattan Beach	35¢		

Excursion trips on either division sold for 50¢.

Long Island City to:		Flatbush Avenue to:	
Cypress Ave		East New York	10¢
Bushwick Ave		New Lots	10¢
East New York	10¢	Ford's Corners	15¢
Kouwenhovens	25¢	Kouwenhovens	15¢
Flatlands	25¢	Flatlands	15¢
Sheepshead Bay	35¢	South Greenfield	25¢
Manhattan Beach	35¢	Sheepshead Bay	35¢
Excursion trip	50¢	Manhattan Beach	35¢
		Excursion trip	25¢

In January 1886 Corbin succeeded in getting all the railroads to Coney Island except the Sea Beach to agree on a uniform fare schedule to avoid cut-throat competition:

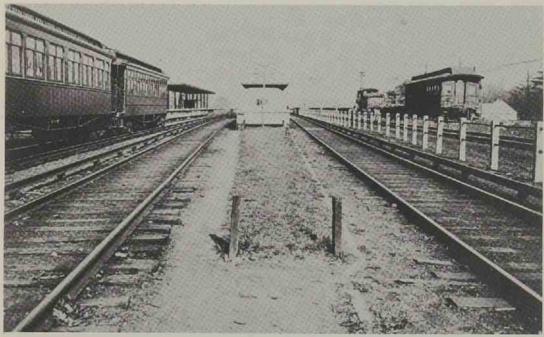
	Exc.	*Half Exc.*	*Single*
Manhattan Beach from Flatbush Ave.	40¢	25¢	30¢
Manhattan Beach from Bedford	35¢	20¢	25¢
Brighton line from Bedford	35¢	20¢	25¢
Brighton line from Prospect Park	30¢	15¢	20¢
Culver line from 9th Ave. & 20th St.	30¢	15¢	20¢
Manhattan Beach Railway & Culver:			
Bay Ridge to West Brighton	30¢	15¢	20¢
Coney Island & Brooklyn horse cars	20¢	10¢	15¢
Brooklyn, Bath and West End R.R.	30¢	15¢	20¢
Sea Beach from Bay Ridge	25¢	15¢	18¢
Sea Beach from 3rd Ave. & 65th Street	25¢	15¢	18¢

The Sea Beach R.R., alone, as can be seen, undercut the uniform rates to the island. This schedule was adhered to by all the companies for six years until May 1892, when the Brighton line broke the agreement. Thereafter the rates changed as follows:

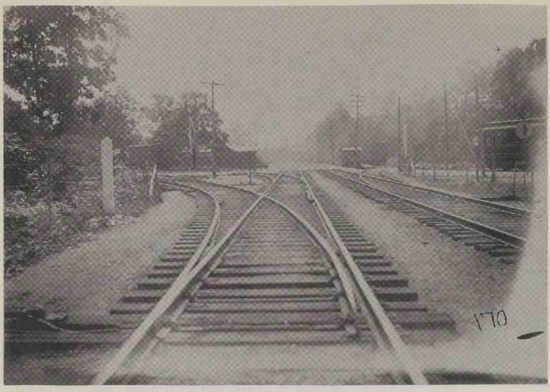
	Exc	*Half Exc*	*Single*
Flatbush Avenue to Manhattan Beach	30¢	20¢	20¢
Bedford or East New York to Manhattan Beach	25¢	15¢	20¢
West End line: 36th St. depot to Coney Island	25¢	20¢	15¢
Culver line: 36th St. depot to Coney Island	25¢	15¢	15¢
Sea Beach; Bay Ridge to Coney Island	20¢		

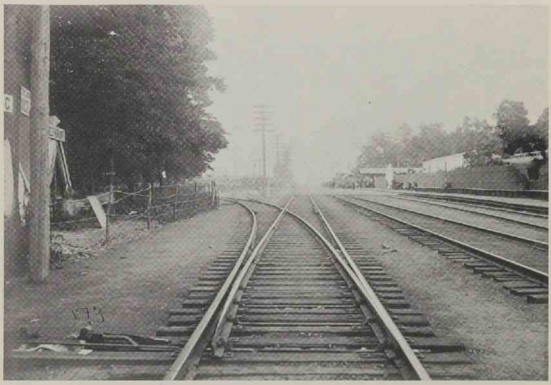
As can be seen from a comparison of the two tables, all the roads cut their rates by five cents. These new tariffs remained stable through the remaining years of the 90's until the elevated roads and trolley lines forced the old steam roads to Coney Island into a new rapid transit system.

The rolling stock on the Manhattan Beach Railway is largely a story of near total replacement in 1883 because of the change of gauge and then very slight additions. On December 14, 1882, a destructive fire at Bay Ridge terminal just about wiped out the entire narrow gauge rolling stock. The newspapers reported the following as destroyed or damaged:

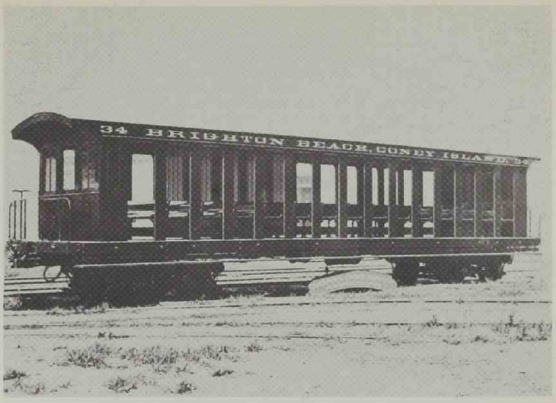


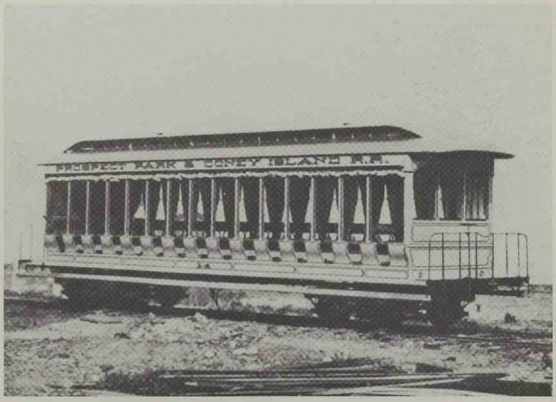
South Greenfield station at Chestnut Ave. in 1908 (top)(Rugen)
Kings Highway station in 1912 (bottom) (Watson)



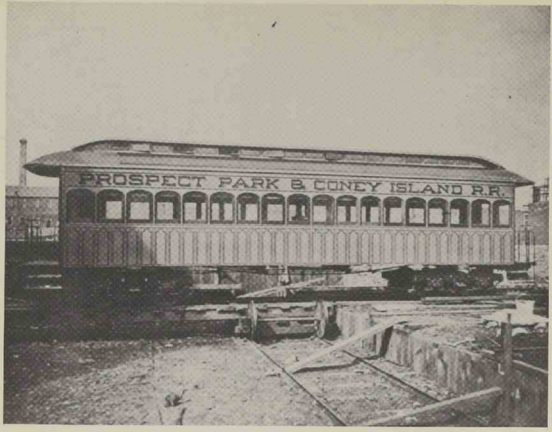


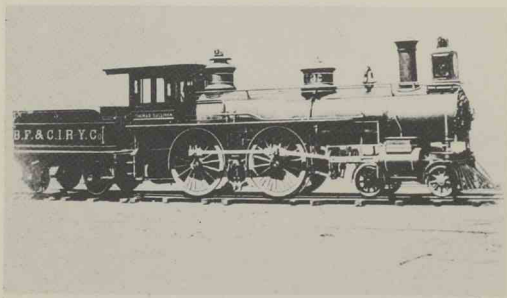
Sheepshead Bay Race Track looking south in 1903 (top) and same looking north (bottom) (**Rugen**)



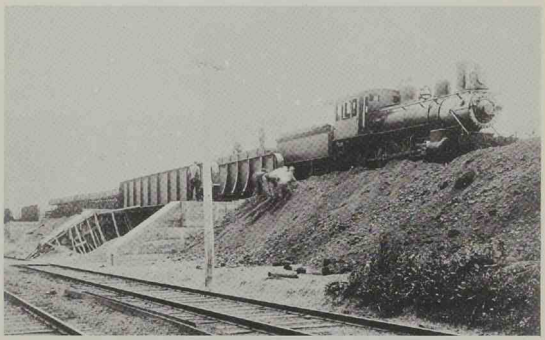


Brooklyn Flatbush & Coney Island No. 34 in 1878 (top) and Prospect Park & Coney Island No. 14 (Brill) (bottom)(Goldsmith)



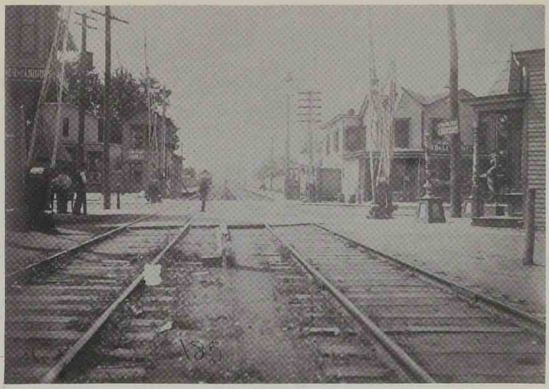


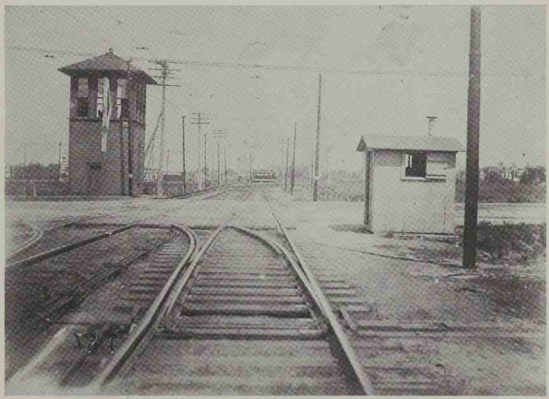
PP&CI Brill coach (top) and BF&CI No. 3 (bottom) (Goldsmith)



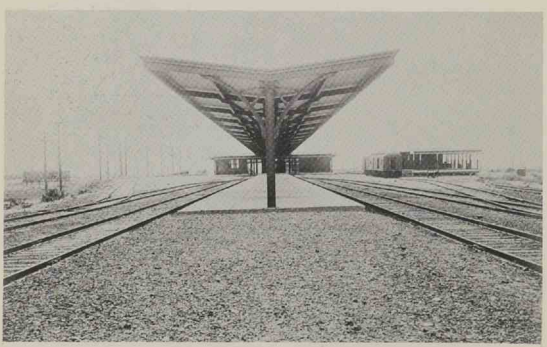
Construction train at Ave. N in 1909 (top) and another construction view about the same time (bottom) (Rugen)


LONG ISLAND RAILROAD
Manhattan Beach
to
SHEEPSHEAD BAY
LONG ISLAND RAILROAD
2
MANHATTAN BEACH to
BROOKLYN
NEW YORK & MANHATTAN BEACH RAILWAY
ATLANTIC
FORM 170
LONG ISLAND RAILROAD CO.
HALF FARE
NEW YORK & MANHATTAN BEACH RAILWAY CO.
№ 113
LONG ISLAND
STOP OVER CHECK
Saturday
JUNE 17
MANHATTAN BEACH





Sheepshead Bay station in 1903 (top) and Emmons Ave. Crossing and trolley connection in 1903 (bottom) (Rugen)



Manhattan Beach station under construction in 1909 (top) and as completed in 1910 (bottom) (Rugen)

First Brighton train turning corner from Flatbush Ave. into Atlantic Ave. in 1878 (top) and Woodruff parlor car no. 127 "Prospect Park" (Goldsmith) (bottom)

SIGNALS AT BEDFORD STATION.

MAIN LINE.

EASTBOUND TRACK.

When upper signal is White and lower signal Red, the track is clear for Eastbound Main Line trains, and blocked for Eastbound Brighton trains to L. I. R. R.

When upper signal is Red and lower signal White, the track is clear for Eastbound Brighton trains to L. I. R. R., and blocked for Eastbound Main Line trains.

When upper signal is White and lower signal Red, the track is clear for Eastbound Main Line trains, and blocked for Westbound Brighton trains to L. I. R. R.

When upper signal is Red, and lower signal White, the track is clear for Westbound Brighton trains to L. I. R. R., and blocked for Westbound Main Line trains.

When signal at Bergen Street is White, track is clear for L. I. eastbound trains; when this signal is Red, track is blocked for Northbound trains.

SWITCH SIGNALS.

The Semaphore is an upright position by day, or white light by night, indicates that switch is set for the Main Tracks.

The Semaphore is a horizontal position by day, or green light by night, indicates that switch is set for Side Line or the Cross-over on the main track.

If Northbound L. I. R. R. train gets white signal at Bergen Street, and the Cross-switches at Flatbush Ave. are set for the Cross-over, the east leg of the Y is clear and the train can proceed.

If Northbound B. F. & C. I. train gets white signal at Bergen Street, and the Cross-switches at Fleet Street are set for Main track, the west leg of the Y is clear, and the train can proceed.

J. L. MORROW,
Master of Transportation.

LONG ISLAND R.R.

THOS. R. SHARP, Receiver.

SPECIAL TIME TABLE

B. F. & C. I. Trains

Atlantic Division

15-G

1880.

For the Government of the Company's employes only, and not for public use or information, the Receiver reserving the right to vary therefrom when necessary, without notice.

TO TAKE EFFECT

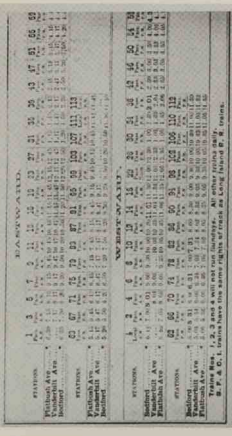
Sunday, June 20th, 1880,

At 12.15 A.M.

Superseding Special Time Table 15-A.

J. L. MORROW,
Master of Transportation.

East New York,
Long Island.



NOTES.

The standard time is that indicated by the chronometer in the telegraph office at Flatbush Ave. Depot, by which B. F. & C. I. trainmen must run while on the Atlantic Division.

Trains must not exceed schedule speed between Bedford and Flatbush Ave. Depot under any circumstances.

Engineers must use as little throttle as possible, and must not use the blower nor allow pop-valves to go off while on the Atlantic Division.

All brakemen must be at the brake-wheel and on the lookout while flying cars into the Flatbush Ave. Depot.

B. F. & C. I. trains will carry blue signals on the Engine between Bedford Station and Flatbush Ave. Depot, to distinguish them from Long Island trains.

Engineman must observe all switches at Flatbush Ave. and Bedford carefully, and be certain they are right before pulling out to them.

Trains must not exceed a speed of 5 miles per hour in going in or out of the Flatbush Ave. Depot.

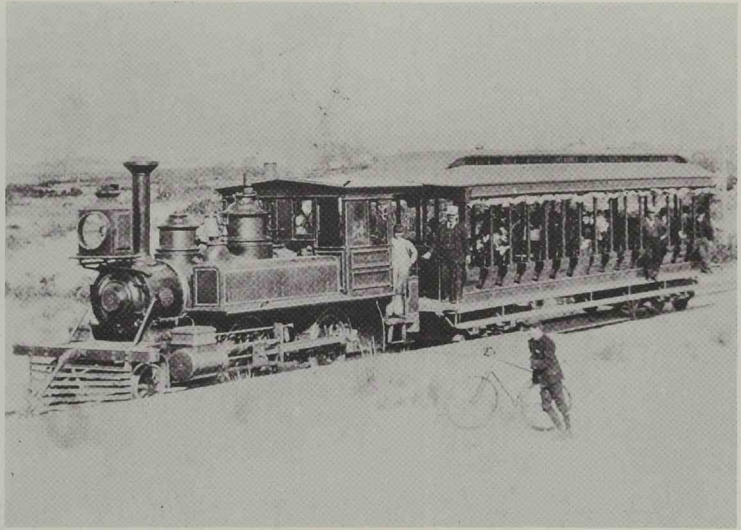
Conductors, Engineers, Firemen, and other trainmen, must not smoke while on duty on Atlantic Ave., nor about Flatbush Ave. Depot at any time.

The brakes must be tested before the train is started from Flatbush Ave., to see that it is in working order, and properly coupled.

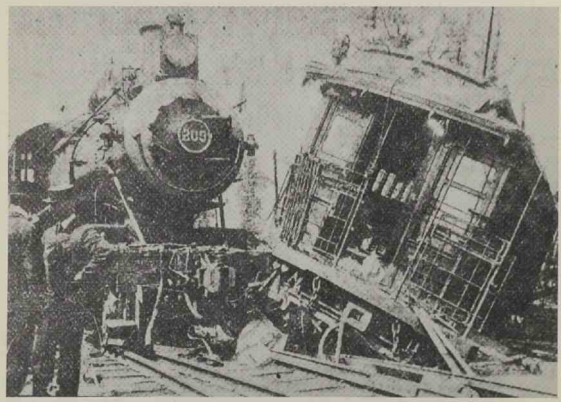
The last train at night on the Atlantic Division between Flatbush Avenue and Bedford or Van Wickles, will carry a Red and a White Lantern close together, and conspicuously displayed on the front of the Engine, under the headlight, as an indication to Flagmen and Gatemen that they can go off duty for the night.

B. F. & C. I. trains when running late at night will ask for orders at Bedford or Flatbush Ave., whether signals for Gatemen shall be carried or not.

Engineers must observe carefully the signals from flagmen and gatemen, and must not cross any avenue unless the gate is down or a proper signal is displayed.

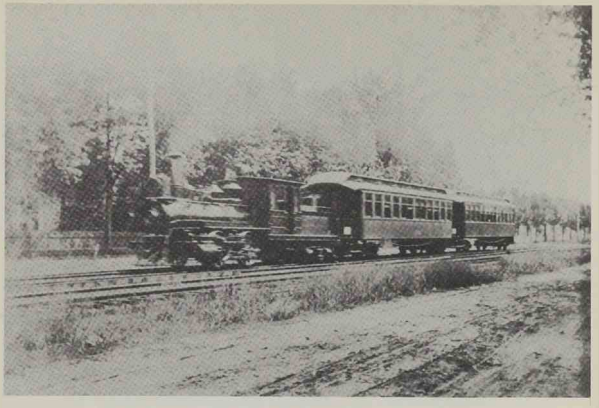


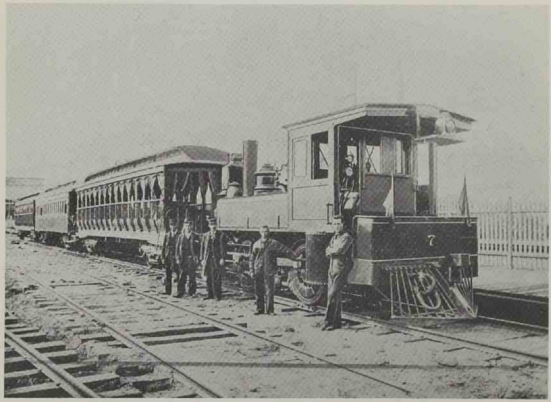
PP&CI train with locomotive no. 6 on Coney Island Point between Sea Gate and Culver terminal in 1893 (Fagerberg)



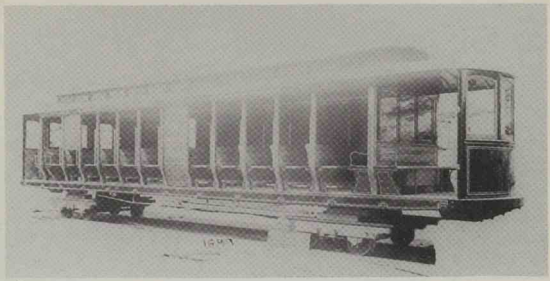
PP&CI No. 6 at Morris Park in 1899 (top) (Havrisko) and Crash between LIRR No. 209 and Brighton train at Emmons Lane and East 18th St. July 10, 1909 (bottom)

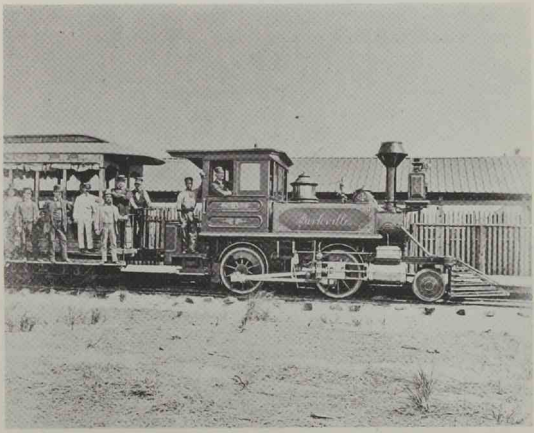
PP&CI no. 4 (top) and LIRR no. 73 at left, PP&CI no. 3 at right (bottom) (Fagerberg) (both at Culver terminal)



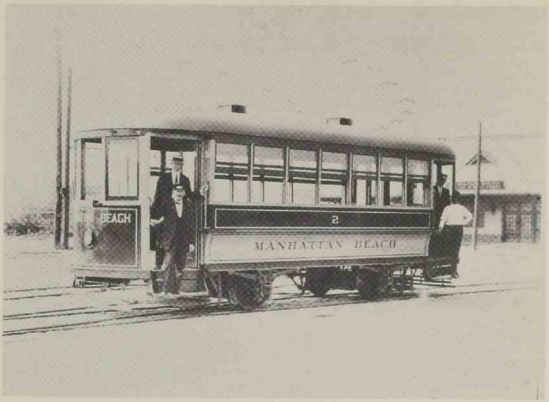


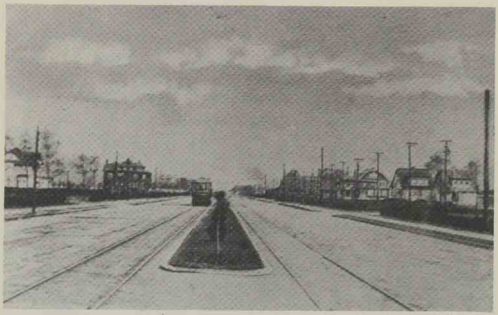
PP&CI train at Gravesend Ave. (LIRR No. 33) (top) and PP&CI no. 7 at Coney Island terminal (bottom) (Fagerberg)





Marine Ry. car by Jackson & Sharp in 1906 (top) (Votava) Locomotive "Parkville" at unknown location (Goldsmith) (bottom)





Battery car no 2 at Manhattan Beach Station (top) (Goldsmith) and same car on Oriental Blvd. (Silleck) (bottom)

13 Woodruff parlor cars worth $3000 each
23 ordinary passenger cars
25 Centennial cars
10 locomotives (6 minor damage, 4 needed rebuilding)

In the winter of 1882–83 the Long Island R.R. sent off to Mason for rebuilding and sale the four most badly damaged narrow gauge engines:

Manhattan (II)	East New York (II)
Wm. Kieft	Gravesend

The remaining ten narrow gauge engines were all run into the Bushwick shops of the Long Island R.R. on a special double gauge track, newly laid between South Side Crossing and Bushwick for the purpose:

C. L. Flint	Wouter Van Twiller	Brooklyn
Bay Ridge	Washington Irving	Hendrick Hudson
Peter Stuyvesant	Green Point	New York (II)
	Oriental	

The minor fire damage was repaired, the engines repainted and the wheels widened out to standard gauge. The same treatment was accorded the four Marine R.R. engines:

East End	Manhattan
West End	Oriental

This engine equipment was insufficient for the heavy demands and the Long Island R.R. accordingly ordered 10 new locomotives as follows:

#56–60 from Mason 2-4-6T
#61–65 from Rogers 0-4-6T

The passenger coach roster shows very little change over the years:

31 Jackson & Sharp 1877, open excursion cars. Twenty-three were damaged in the 1882 fire, but were repainted and the trucks widened to standard gauge in 1883.
8 Brill 1877, open excursion cars, also later widened to standard gauge.
50 New open excursion cars, bought 1883.

4 Jackson & Sharp 1885, open excursion cars for the Marine R.R.

51 Closed passenger cars bought in 1894 to replace the outlawed open cars after the Parkville disaster.

Despite the heavy passenger service over the Manhattan Beach Railway in the period 1883–1903, accidents were comparatively few, only two being well publicized:

1883 July 4—Greenpoint train strikes Calvary Cemetery open horse car #42 at the Humboldt Street crossing. Car smashed. One fatality.

1883 September 11—One mile out of Long Island City a race track special from Manhattan Beach collides with L.I.R.R. train at Blissville curve. Three dead because of hand-brake failure.

1886 April 7—Freight train strikes horse car at Graham Avenue crossing on Greenpoint line. Three injured.

1891 May 16—Seven cars of train derail just before entering Parkville Tunnel.

1892 June 9–Last Bay Ridge bound train derails at night in Parkville Tunnel.

1893 June 20—Train of 10 open cars from Sheepshead Bay races jumps switch frog in Long Island City yards; 4 cars derailed.

1893 June 20—Parkville Disaster. Train of 1 parlor, 2 closed and 3 open cars from Sheepshead Bay Race Track to Bay Ridge enters gauntlet track inside Parkville Tunnel; last 3 opens derail and strike granite tunnel wall; men standing on outside boards scraped off and mangled. Towerman threw switch while train was passing. Train consist: Parlor "Jessica," closed 5 and 45, open 45, 42, 47. Engine 68. Eight killed.

1893 August 26—Berlin Disaster. Train from Rockaway Beach smashes into rear of Manhattan Beach train of 6 cars, which stopped for a moment and then started. Last two cars demolished and 3 others badly damaged. Just east of Berlin Tower on double curve and in slight fog. Accident between Tower 6 at Bushwick Junction and Tower 5 at Berlin. Towerman admitted he should not have given white signal to Rockaway train until MB train had gotten farther toward Long Island City. Sixteen dead. This ended the use of

open cars on the L.I.R.R. A monument in Greenwood Cemetery to two of the victims depicts the wreck in stone.

1894 July 10—11:15 A.M. train for Manhattan Beach strikes switch engine a glancing blow on Jack's Creek drawbridge. Both engines derailed.

1895 August 9—Marine R.R. train crashes into standing car at Brighton Beach terminal, demolishing bumpers and station corner.

1895 August 29—Long Island City bound train smashes into a fire truck at Vesta Avenue.

1896 March 29—Engine #83 suffers air brake failure, skids on wet rails, and crashes into a pile of rails, toppling sidewise, at Bath R.R. Crossing.

1899 September 3—Rear-end collision at Flatlands. Twenty injured. Engine #311 plows into rear of stopped train drawn by engine #301 in heavy thunderstorm.

1899 September 28—Engine #120 on way to Bay Ridge strikes trolley #487 at Parkville crossing; 2 killed, 4 injured.

1903 June 27—Passenger train from Long Island City strikes freight train at Vesta Avenue and New Lots Road. Four injured, 1 coach overturned.

In the twenty year period of 1883–1903 during which the Manhattan Beach Hotels were at their peak of popularity, there were comparatively few changes. In the spring of 1881 the Oriental Hotel was enlarged by thirty rooms. The hotels were repainted every year to withstand the wind and spray; in 1883 both hotels sported a fresh coat of light green with dark trimming. Almost nothing is preserved of the rates charged or the number of guests. We do know that during a typical week in 1891 the guests at the Manhattan numbered 1120 with 300 additional guests over Sundays. The Oriental accommodated in the same season about 400 a day. We are fortunate in having, from an article of 1892, a detailed picture of at least a part of the huge inventory of household goods of the Manhattan Beach Hotel and the huge responsibility it must have been to make everything run smoothly. The table furnishings used at that time included 1793 tablespoons, 1193 tea spoons, 2835 forks, 2139 knives, 237 soup tureens, 259 ladles, 4000 pieces of glassware, 414 casters, 1500 dinner plates, 1500 cups, 1500 saucers and 500 platters. In the matter of linens the supply was 1048 table cloths, 5810 napkins,

3260 sheets, 2153 pillow cases, 7340 towels and 2000 aprons.

For one month of the 1892 season the supplies for the Manhattan Beach and Oriental Hotels cost as follows:

Beef, mutton, lamb, etc.	$30,000
Poultry	12,000
Fish	8,000
Vegetables	7,500
Butter	3,200
Flour	1,500
Ice (400 tons)	1,000
Wages of employees	30,000

All this does not include the cost of milk, sugar, tea, coffee, and other groceries of which proportionate quantities were used, nor of the inevitable waste and breakage, nor of the gas and electric lighting.

The waste from such huge hotels was a big problem in itself. By 1885 the sewage problem that had vexed the residents of Sheepshead Bay had been somewhat mitigated by the building of a mile-long pipe to discharge sewage into the bay at a point well to the east of the hotels and near the inlet to the bay. A real sewage system did not come to Coney Island until the mid-90's. The garbage from the hotel kitchens was loaded onto a special train every day and run out to a large pig farm between Yaphank and Manor where it was dumped as swill for 2000 pigs.

The hotels had their share of problems aside from the guests and the day-to-day planning. In 1880 a Mrs. Almira B. Coleman sued Corbin on the ground that she had inherited a one-fifth title to a strip of the extreme east end of Manhattan Beach, which, by tidal action in the 1840's, had become detached from Barren Island and was added to Coney Island. The land affected ran from east of the Oriental Hotel to the point. The suit was decided in the lady's favor in February 1882, but with the proviso that she pay Corbin for all the improvements he had made on the property in good faith. We have no record whether she paid over the thousands of dollars requisite to pay for the Point Breeze Hotel and the Marine Railroad tracks.

A further aggravation was the dumping of garbage at sea; when done too close to shore, carcasses and rotten fruit washed up on Manhattan Beach. Scows had to dump five miles at sea

and then only at flood tide and under Naval supervision, but ocean-going steamers dumped wherever they chose to avoid the expense of carting in port.

A second recurrent nuisance was the sickening stench from the fat rendering, bone boiling and fertilizer plants located on Barren Island. In addition, over 1000 hogs were kept on the island and fed on swill. Corbin sued the four operators for $25,000 damages on the ground that the odors were a menace to health and seriously jeopardized his multi-million dollar investment at Manhattan Beach. After much legal action the operators were forced to abate their nuisances. In the fall of 1889 winds and high tides attacked the island and ruined several of the installations to Corbin's great satisfaction.

The Manhattan Beach Improvement Company made every effort during the Golden Age of that resort to attract talent and produce lavish spectacles. James Pain's fireworks was, from its first 1879 season, one of the biggest drawing cards. Sometimes they were playful daylight affairs like his "Japanese Fireworks," which, on bursting overhead, let out paper favors of birds, beasts and reptiles which were collected as souvenirs on reaching earth. At night Pain loosed his grandest effects. All the material used was imported from England and at least 40 men were required to plan and stage the effects. The audience often ran to 10,000 and more, all of whom wildly applauded the ingenious and spectacular creations staged nightly. In the 90's Pain staged lavish historical spectacles entitled "The Last Days of Pompeii," "The Burning of Moscow," "Storming of the Bastille," etc.

The balloon building and the ascensions from it ceased after 1881 but other attractions speedily followed. We read of military reviews, sculling races in Sheepshead Bay with purses put up by the guests, roller skating rinks, a rowing track. In 1892 Corbin added a zoological garden stocked with three live buffalo and 26 elk from his private herd plus 11 sea lions and 12 seals. Hagenbeck's Circus appeared in 1894–95 and a Circus Carnival. When the bicycle craze hit New York in 1895, the Manhattan Hotel became a stopover for wheelmen and riders from Brooklyn and the island; a concrete one-mile path was built to attract patronage at a cost of $53,000. The grand stand beside it held 4000 people, the bleachers 2000 and the infield 5000, all of whom had a clear view of the races. In 1897, on the occasion of the 20th

anniversary of Manhattan Beach, Austin Corbin, Jr. took over the management of the enterprises and raised the tone of the spectacles. He introduced light opera companies and a Queen Victoria Jubilee Fireworks pageant, at which Pain outdid himself with fiery pinwheels, a flaming portrait and the crown jewels in scintillating colors.

In 1884, Corbin Sr. for the first time had permitted the construction of a road into Manhattan Beach though under tight restrictions, to be sure. The idea was first put forward in the 1882 season, envisioning a carriage drive lined with 50–75 Queen Anne style cottages between the Oriental and Point Breeze Hotels. The destruction of the east end in 1883–84 by storms ended the cottage idea, but in 1883 a gang of 195 men began laying out a carriage way from Coney Island Avenue along the south shore of Sheepshead Bay and ending in the rear of the Oriental Hotel. The filling in of the meadows had to be done with steam shovels. As completed, the road was over a mile long and 50 feet wide and lighted with electric lamps. A fence bordered the whole road. The road was thrown open to the use of hotel guests (not the public!) on July 4, 1884.

Another interesting event of the same year was the arrival in September of the Atlantic Cable (Bennett-Mackay) at Point Breeze. The cable, owned by the Commercial Cable Co., began at Nova Scotia and struck land again at Point Breeze. Then it passed through the center of Sheepshead Bay to the foot of Ocean Avenue and on into Brooklyn. Interestingly enough, twenty-five years later in August 1909, a new cable was laid to the same Point Breeze station.

Buildings at Manhattan Beach did not change much over the years. A theatre building on the front lawn of the Manhattan Beach Hotel was put up in May 1885 where the music stand had formerly stood. It seated 2600 people and was decorated with 800 colored lights. In 1895 this building was entirely renovated and reconstructed with greater seating capacity.

Musically, of course, Manhattan Beach was without peer at the island. Gilmore's Band of 65 men and 15 soloists reigned supreme for many seasons and enjoyed tumultuous acclaim and sellout performances. In 1895 John Phillip Sousa arrived on the scene and attracted a huge following with his Military Band. Some of his most famous marches were played here for the first

time such as "Stars and Stripes Forever" which opened the season of 1897.

Despite all these varied attractions and a heavy patronage by the most respectable and wealthy families of New York and Brooklyn, Manhattan Beach and its railroad failed to make money. The railroad deficit was covered annually by the Long Island R.R., but the hotel losses fell on the concessionaires, who bid annually for operating the properties of the Manhattan Beach Improvement Company. Some seasons suffered from too much cool weather as in 1886; other years lacked the ten or twelve-day heat wave that drove people to the seaside. There were simply too many hotels, amusement stands and attractions of all sorts at the island by this time, all competing for the summer visitor's dollar. The smaller ones with a small investment survived precariously, but the big establishments with a large and expensive plant failed to earn their expenses. At the end of the 1890 season Corbin and his fellow investors allowed the Improvement Company to undergo foreclosure proceedings, then bought back the assets at auction and reorganized the company as the Manhattan Beach Hotel and Land Company, which continued to operate the properties until May 1906.

CHAPTER 7

The Long Island R.R. and the Brighton Line

IF one glances at a Brooklyn street map showing the area around the upper end of Prospect Park, one notices that by an accident of street layout, several important avenues converge at a common point: Flatbush Avenue, Washington Avenue and Franklin Avenue. This coincidence was not lost on the gentlemen who owned the street railway franchises for those streets, Mr. Sullivan of the Brooklyn City Railroad, Mr. Theron Butler of the Franklin Avenue R.R. and Mr. Richardson of the Atlantic Avenue R.R. All three met at a Coney Island Hotel on August 30, 1876 and discussed together a new and attractive proposal that appealed strongly to each, namely, pooling their common capital and incorporating a new steam railroad to Coney Island from a terminal at Prospect Park to which their several lines would serve as feeders. This was the beginning of the Brighton line.

Within a month a company was organized as the Coney Island and East River Railway, and filed a map of a route running from Atlantic Avenue to Clarkson Street, and substantially following the present Brighton route, but paralleling the east side of Flatbush Avenue below Montgomery Street. The City Council on October 9 approved the new steam railroad with the proviso that the road should occupy an open cut and that all the important roads be bridged. All during November 1876 the promoters contacted property owners through whose lands the road was to run and came to financial agreements with them.

At almost the same time that the Coney Island and East River Railway was organized, a rival appeared on the scene under the name of the Flatbush and Coney Island Park and Concourse R.R. Co. This road planned to build from the junction of Flatbush and Ocean Avenues southward on private property between those two roads directly south to Coney Island. During October and November the local Flatbush officials, in order to avoid

having the village cut up into fragments by unnecessary railroads mediated between the rival promoters, and in January 1877 succeeded in inducing them to pool their efforts. The new road was to be called the Brooklyn, Flatbush and Coney Island Railroad and the route was a compromise. The Coney Island and East River route would continue to be used between Atlantic Avenue and Prospect Park, but south of Empire Boulevard (Malbone Street) the route parallel to Ocean Avenue would be employed. There was considerable opposition on the part of the property owners of Flatbush to the proposed route as it cut through valuable residential property; many preferred to see the railroad on the thinly settled east side of Flatbush Avenue.

The plans of the united company were released in July 1877. The estimated cost of the road was $300,000 and the capital was already fully subscribed. A double track road was to be built of steel rails; in the city and in the Town of Flatbush an open cut was to be used; in Gravesend, the road would run on the surface. The backers of the road were all solid men of Flatbush, largely lawyers and men with political connections. A large resort hotel was to be built at Coney Island. At Prospect Park the Willink Estate, comprising a homestead and land, 106 feet wide and 513 feet long and bounded by Ocean Avenue, Malbone Street and Flatbush Avenue, was purchased for $35,000. In August 1877 the consolidation of the two roads, agreed upon in January, was formally perfected. In the first week of October the road engineers occupied the Willink homestead and used it as their engineering headquarters. The road bought out the Vanderbilt property for $25,000 and at the rate of $30 a running foot north and south along Ocean and Flatbush Avenues, a rate interesting to compare with today's quotations! The railroad right of way was staked out to a width of 60 feet. The Coney Island terminal property near the Ocean House was bought from William A. Engeman for $160,000.

The directors, when they considered what name was to be given to the beach hotel, decided to use the name Brighton after the English watering place. Director Henry C. Murphy, however, strongly opposed the name, urging that it should be called Narrioch Beach after an old and original Indian name of Coney Island, but he was voted down.

In November 1877 active work commenced on the road. Barns

and trees were removed south of the Willink homestead and some excavation was begun near Lincoln Road. Farther south, clearing and grading was done at Neck Road. Dirt from the Flatbush excavations was hauled to the meadows below Sheepshead Bay Road and dumped. In December some of the residents complained that the deep cut made by the contractors cut Flatbush Town in half and left no cross streets, but they pointed out that permission had been secured from all the authorities and that their patience would soon be rewarded.

By the last day of 1877 the masonry walls of the arch at Church Avenue were well under way and the Willink homestead had been moved east 50 feet, lowered to street level from its high bluff and was undergoing remodeling for a hotel. In the first two weeks of January the masonry at Church Avenue and Franklin Avenue progressed toward completion and at the Sheepshead Bay end, Mr. Brown, the contractor, set up a narrow gauge railroad with engine and dump cars which hauled 25 loads of fill at a time onto the meadow and right of way. On January 16th bids were opened for the erection of the projected Brighton Beach Hotel.

The delivery of the first locomotive for the road was attended with considerable difficulty. The "John A. Lott" was landed at Hunter's Point on Saturday, January 5, 1878 and was moved to Jamaica, then over the Atlantic Branch to East New York. Since the only rail connection leading south was the narrow gauge Manhattan Beach Railway, it was arranged to hoist the engine onto a flat car and run it down to Sheepshead Bay where the two roads were only a few feet apart. The heavy engine was raised onto the car but its weight was too much for the timbers and the flat collapsed. The engine then seems to have been stored four months at East New York; then on May 5th, it was run on its own wheels down to Washington and Atlantic Avenues, then run onto a temporary switch onto the T-rails in Washington Avenue (laid the previous year by the Atlantic Avenue R.R. but never used) and from there into the new cut at Flatbush Avenue and Empire Boulevard. The engine was dragged by horses on this latter leg of the journey during midnight and dawn of May 6th and drew crowds of spectators.

By the end of January 1878 temporary bridges were built over Franklin and Church Avenues and several other roads were

closed to permit the building of abutments. The roadbed was all graded from Church Avenue to Coney Island and the narrow gauge construction track spanned the whole distance. An arrangement was made with Austin Corbin, whereby Corbin moved his Manhattan Beach Junction curve in the southwest quadrant farther to the east and raised his tracks five feet at the crossing point. In return, the grade of the Brighton track was lowered ten feet at the same point, both companies being equally anxious to avoid a grade crossing and collision risks.

During February 1878, the winter weather, which had been mild and cooperative up to now, began to interpose delays in construction. The grading was just about finished by this time and temporary bridges were stretched across Clarkson Street and Ocean Avenue. In answer to the bids for the Brighton Beach Hotel, four prominent architects, including J. Pickering Putnam, the winner for the Manhattan Beach Hotel, submitted designs; the plans of Mr. John G. Prague were selected as the winner. In the first week of March 1878 the contract was awarded to William H. Hazard of Brooklyn. The building was to be 450 feet wide, 100 feet deep and three stories high with a Mansard roof and with rooms for 500 people.

During March and April 1878 all the lumber and material for the Brighton Beach Hotel was transported over the Coney Island & Brooklyn horse car line all the way from the Gowanus Canal to Coney Island on 30 flat cars drawn by 68 horses. Amazingly, a million board feet of lumber and 500 loads of brick were so transported besides other materials.

During March track laying was begun at Sheepshead Bay and continued north. Meanwhile, the old Willink mansion was deposited on a new brick foundation and fitted with a new Mansard roof. At the same time 50 laborers were busy on the Lake farm, loading all the surface soil for use about the new hotel, the foundations for which were already in place in addition to some of the structural timbers.

The contract for building the new depot at Empire Boulevard was awarded to Samuel Booth, ex-Mayor of Brooklyn (1866–67). In the meantime seven miles of fence was going up along the whole right-of-way, and 2000 feet of fine picket fencing was stretched about the Willink depot grounds.

In the first week of April the contract to extend the Brighton

road from Prospect Park north to a junction with the Long Island R.R. between Classon and Franklin Avenues was awarded to Mr. J. N. Smith, the superintendent of the road, who sub-let his award to several sub-contractors in order to finish the work by the deadline of August 15th. In May the road took delivery of several flat cars, also over the Washington Avenue tracks used earlier by the "John A. Lott"; an engine and cars were then put into service as the first work train. An engine house was built on the west side of the cut near Lincoln Road to accommodate the "Lott" and the "Henry C. Murphy" which had just been landed at Long Island City. At this point in the progress of the road the board of directors appointed a general superintendent, Mr. William Dorwin, 38 years old, formerly Division Superintendent of the Montclair & Greenwood Lake Railroad of New Jersey and once Division Superintendent of the Toledo & Wabash Railroad of Illinois.

The advent of the new Brighton line depot greatly changed the Prospect Park neighborhood at the junction of Flatbush Avenue and Empire Boulevard, then known as "city line." The new depot itself was a brick octagonal building at the head of Ocean Avenue. The Willink homestead, remodeled into a hotel, occupied the Flatbush Avenue side of the cut and was equipped with porches around both of its floors. The president of the Franklin Avenue horse car line erected in his private capacity a three-story hotel, and his horse car railroad itself extended its tracks across Flatbush Avenue to a new terminus in front of the new Willink Hotel.

By the end of May the eastbound track to Coney Island was completed, the westward track almost so. It was soon discovered that several of the iron girder bridges over the track between Flatbush Avenue and Church Avenue were too low for the engines to pass under them and the track had to be lowered. The "Lott" had her whistle knocked off and 150 men were idled for two days till a replacement could be secured. In the first week of June the third locomotive, "Thomas Sullivan," arrived along with a large number of new flat cars. The first passenger car arrived on June 11, one of the open excursion type.

By mid-June the road was sufficiently completed to open immediately but the directors wisely concluded to wait until the Brighton Beach Hotel was finished and ready to receive guests.

The elderly and influential president of the road up to that time, the Hon. John A. Lott, chose to resign at this time, and the directors elected in his place the contractor who had built the road, Mr. James N. Smith. In the meantime, work was pushed on the large bridge carrying Flatbush Avenue and Empire Boulevard over the Brighton tracks, and on the south, smaller bridges over Carroll, President, Union, DeGrauw, St. John's and Butler Streets. The working forces of the road were also hired: engineers, firemen, conductors, ticket agents, clerks, etc. At the last minute truckloads of furniture for the hotel were loaded onto the cars on June 25th and sent down to the island.

On Monday, July 1st, a special train carried the directors, stockholders, members of the press and guests to the Hotel Brighton for a grand opening celebration. Flags and banners adorned the depot at Ocean Avenue. The guests descended the sloping, covered passageway to the wide platforms where the open cars, drawn by the "John A. Lott," conveyed them in thirteen minutes to the Brighton Hotel. The 600 who came on this train were soon joined by 700 on a second train. The guests wandered about, inspecting the hotel and the landscaped grounds and at 8:30 partook of the banquet laid out.

On Tuesday, July 2nd at 6:20 A.M. the new Brooklyn, Flatbush and Coney Island R.R. opened to the public. The Fourth of July came just two days later on Thursday of the same week, followed by the usual summer weekend, so that the opening week produced maximum strains on the superintendent and all the working crews. By Sunday evening, the 7th, 53,000 people had been carried over the line.

It remained now for the Brighton line to live up to the first word in its title, Brooklyn. The road, as completed, served the Towns of Flatbush and Gravesend but terminated at the Brooklyn border. To secure a good Brooklyn terminus depended now on the Long Island R.R. The Long Island R.R. in 1878 had been a year in receivership after the collapse of the Poppenhusen regime in 1877, and at its head was a very capable and energetic individual, Colonel Thomas R. Sharp. When the Brighton road had been formally organized in the fall of 1877, its promoters had approached Col. Sharp and succeeded in winning his approval for the Long Island R.R. to cooperate in the operation of the Brighton line, provided the permission of the Federal

Court could be obtained. Sharp was a forward-looking man, ever eager to improve the Long Island R.R. property and to stimulate riding. He himself mounted weekend excursions of all sorts and the prospect of access to Coney Island, one of the biggest and most popular resorts, was an unexpected opportunity too lucrative to ignore.

An operating agreement for the season of 1878 was accordingly drawn up in June. It provided that:

1. The Long Island R.R. will have the right to use the tracks of the Brooklyn, Flatbush and Coney Island R.R. for passenger and freight traffic in common.

2. The Long Island R.R. will build a connection between the two roads at Franklin and Atlantic Avenues so that Brooklyn, Flatbush and Coney Island trains might reach Flatbush Avenue terminal.

3. Freight will be delivered from all Long Island stations to all stations on the Brooklyn, Flatbush and Coney Island R.R. at low figures and vice versa.

4. The Brooklyn, Flatbush and Coney Island will sink its tracks in the open cut one foot and move them farther apart to allow the larger engines and cars of the Long Island R.R. to pass under the street crossings.

5. This agreement is renewable at the pleasure of both parties.

All during July the Brighton engineers pushed the work on the extension at Atlantic Avenue both night and day. By the 27th the rails were down from Eastern Parkway to Atlantic Avenue. On August 6th one track was ceremoniously opened despite a week of delaying rains, and a Long Island R.R. train ventured down for the first time. Col. Sharp himself, Superintendent Spencer and General Passenger Agent Chittenden came down to inspect the connection and confer with Superintendent Dorwin and President Smith of the Brighton line at the Brighton Beach Hotel. A banquet to mark the occasion was staged by Mr. W. M. Laffan, the New York passenger agent of the Long Island R.R. at which 500 to 600 guests participated. The guests that morning boarded the "Sylvan Dell" at the foot of Wall Street and then boarded a special train at Hunter's Point consisting entirely of Pullman parlor cars. In twenty minutes the train reached Jamaica, switched over to the Atlantic Division and then ran to

Bedford Station. Two additional locomotives were added here to the train and it slowly moved around the sharp curve onto the Brighton tracks amid the huzzahs of several hundred spectators. On the 1¼ mile run through the cut south to the park heavy rains had washed earth down onto the tracks in spots and workmen had to dig out the rails to allow the train to pass. The special then moved slowly southward to Prospect Park where normal speed was resumed. Two hours and seven minutes from the starting point the train reached Brighton Beach. At the hotel the guests inspected the rooms or sat and listened to Conterno's Band and the cornetist, Levy, all engaged for the occasion. In the great dining room eight huge tables accommodated 600 guests. Flowers and souvenirs of locomotives in sugar decorated the tables. After two hours of champagne and speeches celebrating the wedding of the two railroads, the guests left on the 10:15 train for Hunter's Point.

The Long Island R.R. made the fullest effort to develop the new Brighton traffic. Not only were double track curves to the east and west laid at Franklin Avenue junction but a second double track curve was laid at Berlin where the present Morris Park roundhouse is located now, to permit trains coming from Hunter's Point to switch onto the Atlantic Division. Rolling stock additions were also made. Pullman Palace cars were leased for the Brighton service for persons desiring privacy and comfort at a 25¢ surcharge. In addition two new engines were bought from Baldwin, the "Brighton" #70 and the "Seaside" #71. A contract was made with the Dodd Express Co. to run cabs and omnibuses from the Fifth Avenue Hotel, the Grand Central and other leading hotels uptown to the 34th Street ferry to connect with the trains.

A schedule of passenger service was arranged by Col. Sharp for the Brighton run beginning August 6th. The old Flushing & North Side depot in Long Island City was reopened and refurbished for the use of the Brighton passengers. Fourteen trains were to be run daily from Hunter's Point each with parlor cars attached, and the fare for the round trip was set at 50¢, single trip 25¢.

The Brighton trains delayed a week before running into Flatbush Avenue station, partly to permit the grading of the roadway in the open cut to be improved and partly out of fear of an in-

junction on the part of Atlantic Avenue property owners. On the advice of counsel the officials ran one train over Atlantic Avenue in order to secure the right of way which was equivalent in law to possession. Superintendent Dorwin himself acted as engineer and President Smith as conductor. On Monday, August 19th the Flatbush Avenue extension was thrown open to public travel at 6:30 A.M. No local stops along Atlantic Avenue could be made under the agreement. Passengers for Brighton ran through from Flatbush Avenue at 30 minutes intervals on a 45¢ fare (round trip) or they caught a Long Island Rapid Transit train and changed at Bedford Station where other through trains for the beach departed at 15–20 minute intervals on a 40¢ fare. For the accommodation of the public Long Island R.R. Rapid Transit conductors sold coupon tickets to Brighton and return.

Although the Brighton line opened late in the 1878 season, the patronage was very large, no doubt because the road enjoyed the best Brooklyn terminal facilities of any Coney Island road. Persons from central and upper Brooklyn could reach the road easily by various feeder horse car lines, while persons living in downtown Brooklyn and Flatbush could board the cars at Flatbush Avenue or at Prospect Park. On the last Sunday in August about 40,000 people came down to view the fireworks. The whole space in front of the Hotel Brighton was a dense throng and all available space on the piazza and roof was occupied. Long trains with hundreds of passengers continued to arrive until nearly 10 P.M. The resources of both railroad companies were taxed to the utmost. Superintendent Dorwin directed train movements and Col. Sharp in person saw to the making up of Long Island R.R. trains, some of which were nearly a quarter mile long. The Brighton line kept moving trains until long past midnight.

Thanks to ample publicity on Long Island, the railroad's service to Brighton Beach was very well patronized. The road ran excursion trains daily from Long Island City, leaving every hour from 10:10 A.M. to 10:10 P.M., and leaving the beach every hour until 1:10 A.M. Large numbers of people came over from New York to visit Brighton; the liberal patronage caused some papers to speculate that many people appeared to prefer the palace cars of the Long Island R.R. to the open cars of the Manhattan Beach road.

In addition to the Hunter's Point service there were weekly

excursions to Brighton from other points on the island. On Wednesdays of August and September 1878 an excursion train left Flushing at 9:45 A.M. and ran via Winfield and Berlin, returning at 5:10 P.M. The price was 75¢ and the running time just over one hour. On August 20th a seven car train ran on the Hempstead Branch, picking up so many passengers that another car was added at Jamaica. On August 22nd a train of 10 cars from Port Jefferson and the main line arrived at the beach filled; on the return trip stragglers increased the consist to 13 cars and 2 engines. On August 27th the Oyster Bay Branch excursion brought down 600 persons; even excursionists from New Haven arrived via the Hunter's Point connection at a round trip fare of $1.25. On November 11, an excursion ran from Greenport and, despite threatening weather, managed to fill nine cars.

On October 1, the Brighton Hotel closed down for the season, with the Brighton and Long Island R.R. officials well-pleased with the season's returns. The Brighton trains stopped running over the Long Island R.R. Atlantic Avenue tracks on October 20th and service was cut back to Prospect Park depot. Three trains a day sufficed for the winter service.

During the winter of 1878–79 the Brooklyn, Flatbush and Coney Island R.R. made many improvements. A large car house 400 x 70 was erected at Sheepshead Bay on the former Lake farm which had been cleaned and leveled earlier in the season for sod and fill. As soon as this was completed, the 37 passenger cars stored in the cut below city line were run under shelter. Two new locomotives were ordered for the 1879 season. The Brighton Hotel was enlarged by extending the east wing according to the original plans of the architect. This gave the building a ground frontage of 550 feet on the ocean. On the north end another wing was built which would increase the accommodations from 275 to 600. The grounds were resodded and replanted. An extensive musical program was also planned and the music stand rebuilt.

Before the 1879 season opened, the Brighton line and the Long Island R.R. made a formal written contract at the direction of the Supreme Court superseding the informal agreement of last year. In addition to the usual joint operation, the contract specified that the Brighton company had to pay 20% of their gross earnings from business done on the Atlantic Avenue Branch and 1¢ per passenger to the Atlantic Avenue R.R. Co. The Long

Island R.R. agreed to pay to the Brighton company 33⅓% for business done between Long Island City and Coney Island, and 35% of the gross earnings from business done between Bushwick and Coney Island, and a like amount for all business done by the Long Island R.R. between all points east of Jamaica, and Coney Island. The agreement was to run for five years from July 1, 1879 to July 1, 1884.

The 1879 season opened in the first week of June. The fame of the hotel already drew many visitors from the South and West and the dining room was busy enough, we hear, to require the services of a head chef and 36 cooks. The season as usual placed a heavy strain on the railroad facilities. To give the conductors more time to attend to their trains, the railroad adopted a new plan of collecting tickets at the gate on boarding the train. The Long Island R.R. operated the same excursions during the 1879 season as in 1878. The Pullman Palace cars out of Long Island City continued to receive good patronage; there was some grumbling that the railroad was booming Brighton Beach at the expense of Rockaway simply because the new resort was more "aristocratic." The Wednesday excursions from Flushing and Whitestone resumed running in 1879 at the same 75¢ bargain rate and drew many patrons.

The train movements at Bedford Junction were so heavy that the Long Island R.R. erected a tower at that point in May to improve on the manual operation of the switches by six to eight men as had been done in the 1878 season. Brighton trains were directed to carry blue signals on the engine to distinguish them from Long Island R.R. trains. Most surprising of all was the decision in March 1879 to eliminate the rather roundabout Long Island-City Brighton route by building a short cut that would save eight miles. In March a route was surveyed from Fresh Pond station south over flat ground and through the hills in the center of the island to Van Sicklen's Switch (Linwood Street) on the Atlantic Branch. Apparently, the road must have thought enough of the Brighton traffic to go so far as to let out to contract this 3½ mile extension to Mr. Ryan of Flushing, the work to begin April 21st and to be completed by July 1st. One of the additional advantages of the by-pass was that it would develop a good cemetery traffic enroute, passing close to the Lutheran, Cypress Hills, Evergreen and Jewish cemeteries. For some reason

the work was not started and we hear no further mention of it afterward. Whether the court intervened and refused Col. Sharp permission to spend the money and whether land acquisition and construction costs loomed too high, we can only speculate. Relations with the Brighton officials must still have been entirely amicable for in November 1879 Col. Sharp was negotiating to sell the Long Island R.R.'s Bedford depot to them. This depot site was 233 feet 10 inches on Atlantic Avenue and 75 feet on Pacific Street and was valued at $15,000 by arbitrators selected to assess the property, but Col. Sharp balked at this figure and petitioned the court that a truer market value would be $25,000. After some haggling a compromise figure of $20,000 was reached. The award was confirmed by the Supreme Court on June 2, 1880.

In the winter of 1879–80 the Brooklyn, Flatbush and Coney Island R.R. enlarged their Sheepshead Bay car houses to accommodate between 20 and 30 passenger cars. When the season of 1880 rolled around, the climate of good relations between the Long Island R.R. and the Brooklyn Flatbush and Coney Island seems to have disintegrated. It is possible that the dispute over the value of the Bedford station may have created some animosity; it is likely, too, that the Brighton service was no longer proving as profitable to the Long Island R.R. as before, for after two seasons, the new hotel was no longer a novelty.

A third compelling reason was the sudden emergence of a new rival to Brighton which the Long Island R.R. was making every effort to launch—the new resort of Long Beach. An improvement company in which Colonel Sharp was an officer had erected a large hotel and even built a connecting railroad from Valley Stream. There was no question here of traffic rights shared with any other company; all the traffic to Long Beach would be Long Island R.R. revenue.

When the 1880 season began in June, the Long Island R.R. declined to run its Long Island City daily excursions to Brighton; neither is there any record of the former odd weekday excursions from the North Side or main line. Worse still, the railroad quietly removed the huge "Brighton Beach Pier" sign over the slips where the Wall Street annex boats put into Long Island City and substituted a new sign "Long Beach Pier." The railroad was, of course, under no obligation to advertise Brighton Beach or even

to run excursions to that resort; we have no surviving financial data to determine whether the service furnished in 1878 and 1879 was profitable or marginal; however, it does seem improbable, judging from the service given, that the trains could have been run at a loss. It is more likely that the railroad deliberately cut off the service in its determination to boom Long Beach and to avoid payment of 33⅓% to 35% of its gross revenue to another company. The Brooklyn, Flatbush and Coney Island R.R. continued to run into Flatbush Avenue terminal as per contract and Long Island residents could still, if they chose, reach Brighton by changing cars at East New York and taking the Rapid Transit train to Bedford station.

The Long Island R.R. withdrawal from Brighton caused immediate trouble at that resort. The concessionaire, James H. Breslin, a very prominent and experienced hotel man, had in November 1879 just bought out the interest of his partner, Milton Sweet, for $45,000. The hotel had paid handsomely during the 1878–79 seasons and Breslin had every reason to believe that it would continue to do so. At the beginning of the 1879 season, Breslin and his ex-partner had bid $25,000 for the franchise to run the hotel. When the Long Island R.R. began operating trains, Breslin had been obliged to pay an additional $5000 in rental to the railroad. When the 1880 season opened, the railroad officials again demanded a $30,000 rental from Breslin even though the Long Island trains had ceased running. Breslin not only refused to pay the $5000 surcharge, but filed suit for damages for loss of trade.

The season, as it turned out, showed no sign of being affected by the withdrawal of Long Island trains; in fact, there was a 10% increase in patronage. In June the Brighton railroad lowered the price of excursion tickets between Prospect Park and Brighton to 35¢ round trip; then in August a heat wave sent a tidal wave of humanity to Coney Island. On August 22nd every room at the hotel was engaged and cots, sofas and even rockers were pressed into service for overnight guests. The Brighton road carried between sunrise and sunset 52,000 people. Interestingly enough, the new Bell telephone reached the hotel in June of this season. By December when the very last train operated over the Brighton

road, a new record had been set for passenger volume:

1878	602,692
1879	873,960
1880	1,004,502

The purchase of the Long Island Rail Road by Austin Corbin, owner of the Manhattan Beach enterprises, was an event of the most far-reaching significance for the Brighton Beach Hotel and railroad. By an ironical twist of fate, of all the possible purchasers of the Long Island system who might have taken over the road, it proved to be the Brighton's nearest neighbor—and most formidable rival! Austin Corbin had sunk a very large fortune into the two huge resort hotels at Manhattan Beach and into the Manhattan Beach R.R. Additional large sums had gone to provide the proper atmosphere and diversions—music, fireworks, bathing facilities, etc. Corbin, therefore, understandably resented the existence of the contract between the Brighton road and his own, which had three more seasons to run. Every passenger brought to Brighton from his own Flatbush Avenue depot represented the loss of a patron for Manhattan Beach, and the loss of the money that patron would spend there. Regrettably, Corbin was not in a position to establish a rival train service out of Flatbush depot because of the difference in gauge. He was forced, therefore, to tolerate this unwelcome partner until the expiration of the contract in June 1884.

To a man like Corbin, full of self-esteem and long habituated to success and mastery of every situation, this virtual subsidizing of a rival was an intolerable irritant. During the season of 1881 Corbin was too busy mastering the thousand and one operational, administrative, and financial details of his newly purchased Long Island R.R. to bother much with the Brighton lease. In December 1880, William Engeman, who owned all the property remaining between the Brighton Beach Hotel and the Manhattan Beach property line, put up for sale his bathing pavilion and the whole shore front and ocean pier. Rather than lose such choice property to a rival syndicate or to Corbin, the Brighton people bid on the parcel and won possession for $100,000 cash, a stupendous sum for that day. Since Corbin's Marine Railroad

had its western terminus on this property, the Brooklyn, Flatbush and Coney Island R.R. now became Corbin's landlord, though on a small scale to be sure, and the recipient of an annual rental, a curious turning of the tables.

In the winter season of 1880–81 the Brighton road enlarged its workshops at Sheepshead Bay and added a paint shop. Engeman's Bathing Pavilion was enlarged so that 1500 bathers could be accommodated. A fireworks program was arranged to compete with Corbin's and Conterno's Band was engaged to play in new showy uniforms in the style of the French Grenadiers. Levy, the famous cornetist, was lured away from the Manhattan Beach Hotel with the promise of more money ($500 a week and board). The hotel, as enlarged, could now accommodate 400 to 500 people with cots available for peak days. One of the biggest new attractions putting the Brighton Hotel in a competitive position with the Manhattan Beach Hotel, was the opening of a new Brighton Beach Race Track in the rear of the hotel as of May 30, 1881.

As of June 1st, Superintendent Dorwin resigned his post and was succeeded by Robert White, ex-superintendent of both the Long Island R.R. (1865–67) and the South Side Railroad (1867–69). On May 28, trains began operating from Flatbush Avenue as usual at 30 minute intervals. Sixteen thousand five hundred round-trip tickets were sold on Decoration Day. Over the Fourth, a new daily peak was reached of 3400 tickets at Prospect Park station and 1600 at Bedford and 1000 at Sheepshead Bay. Certain engineers of the road attempted a brief strike over their $100 a month salary but were replaced. On August 24th, a Wednesday, cornetist Levy gave a benefit performance and drew a crowd of 80,000 people, 42,000 of whom came down on the Brighton road. The corridors of the hotel swarmed with people and it took three hours to haul the crowd home that night. The Sheepshead Bay station showed surprisingly heavy use during August with 20,000 people taking the trains there. Although the hotel closed for the season on October 3rd, the Brighton road continued to run six trains a day from Bedford station to Atlantic Avenue even in December with Sheepshead Bay providing the main support.

With the Long Island R.R.-Brighton contract having only two more seasons to run, the Long Island in 1882 began a cam-

paign of subtle harassment and interference with the Brooklyn, Flatbush and Coney Island train schedules. The season opened as usual on May 27 with the familiar half-hourly schedule from Flatbush Avenue, and Corbin saw that once again, as in the 1881 season, Brooklyn people seemed to prefer Brighton to his own Manhattan Beach, even though he had just reduced his excursion fare from 45¢ to 30¢. There was also the annoying necessity of changing cars to the narrow-gauge Manhattan road at East New York. The fact was that Brighton Beach was a less pretentious resort, catering to a middle-class clientele where Brooklyn people felt more at home than they did at the fashionable and expensive Manhattan Beach with its superior class-conscious New York socialites and their social airs. Corbin seriously considered for a while the feasibility of laying a double-gauge track from East New York down to Flatbush Avenue terminal as early as February 1881 and again in 1882 with the express intention of undercutting the Brighton line but decided instead on a policy of discouraging patronage by delaying trains.

Secret instructions were probably issued to towermen and the train dispatchers concerned at Flatbush Avenue, for in the first week of June Superintendent Robert White of the Brighton line began to be concerned at the erratic movement of his trains over Atlantic Avenue and the delays at the Flatbush Avenue station. It was an easy matter to slow down trains at the Pacific Street and Bedford switches or at the Bergen Street semaphore to disrupt the Brighton schedule. In mid-June the Long Island R.R. officials held a Brighton train in the Flatbush Avenue depot for 14 hours just to see whether Superintendent White might be tempted to move it in exasperation and so violate the contract between the roads, but White was too shrewd for them and directed his crew not to move until they had written orders from Long Island officials.

The interference with the Brighton line apparently had little more than nuisance value in the 1882 season, for, to judge from accounts, both railroad and hotel did very well. On June 25th, the road transported 35,000 passengers to the island. The hotel was so packed with humanity that it was difficult to thread one's way across the promenade. On June 2nd, 20,000 people patronized the bathing facilities. On the Fourth, 20,000 riders came down despite clouds and rain to see a lantern display and fire-

works. On an August Friday evening 17,000 programs were distributed to listeners; we hear that many of the arriving trains were made up of nine and ten closely-packed cars. When the Brighton Beach races opened in September, extra trains had to be run, in addition to the regular trains of from five to ten cars. Even as late as October 1st, after the terrible storm of late September had ruined the bathing pavilion and left a channel separating Brighton from Manhattan Beach, business continued good; there is record of crowded racing specials even in November. The final tally for the 1882 season was 1,068,544 passengers, only 56,000 short of the record 1881 season and in the teeth of Corbin's best efforts to destroy the road.

With the 1883 season came the showdown. This was the last season that the Brighton line could use the Flatbush Avenue station. For Corbin the 1882 season had been a poor one, for we know that he had resorted to handing out free tickets to the horse car drivers and conductors in Brooklyn, entitling the holders to a free ride, bath and admission to the fireworks at Manhattan Beach.

The competition in this last year would now be on more equal terms, for in the spring the whole Manhattan Beach road had been widened out to standard-gauge and a connection installed at East New York so that trains could run into the Flatbush Avenue station. The Brighton road experienced several handicaps as it entered this season. There was, first of all, a total storm damage of about $100,000 from the terrible September 1882 storm, and another on March 10th. The bathing pavilion had been so badly battered about that a new one had to be erected farther inland on a safer spot at a $30,000 cost. In addition the 600 feet of platform before the pavilion had been smashed into kindling wood and strewn along the beach. The other handicap was a complete change in management of both the hotel and the railroad. President Henry C. Murphy of the railroad died in November 1882 to be succeeded by a new man, Gordon L. Ford. Even the secretary of the road from its beginning, Monroe B. Washburn, resigned. James Breslin declined to renew his lease of the Brighton Hotel and the place was rented to a family of restaurateurs under the leadership of Charles G. Leland.

Mr. Ford demonstrated poor judgment at the outset by making several serious mistakes. Austin Corbin, on beginning his Flat-

bush Avenue service, had dropped his price down to 25¢ round trip to undercut the Brighton road. Ford, instead of meeting the price immediately, kept his price at 45¢ and as a result, his trains ran nearly empty. Compounding this blunder, he antagonized the Brooklyn aldermen, other railroad officials and the press by canceling all their free passes over the road in the interests of a foolish economy. In the effort to recoup his mounting losses, he allowed scalpers to get hold of the road's tickets which these sharpers proceeded to peddle at his own depots for less than the price asked at the ticket offices. The more enterprising sharpers even had two prices, a wholesale and a retail rate! Finally, the Brighton trains ceased stopping at Church Avenue and South Greenfield, angering the local clientele along the road.

Belatedly, in the middle of August, Mr. Ford took alarm and reduced his rate to 25¢ to meet Corbin's, but it was too late. By the time the Brighton trains made their final run over the Long Island tracks to Flatbush Avenue on December 14, 1883, the damage had been done. The passenger total for 1883 came to only 1,037,281, the lowest in four seasons, and the hotel concessionaires suffered an equally serious loss, especially in view of the expensive repairs that had proved necessary. In January the expected happened; on the 22nd, a motion was made in Special Term of the Supreme Court on behalf of the railroad's creditors for a receiver in bankruptcy. The loss for the year came to $33,565.

General James Jourdan was appointed by the court receiver for the road. Under his capable and effective management, the Brighton road took a new lease on life. He improved the hotel, rebuilt Sheepshead Bay station, gave it a 5¢ fare to the island, built a ramp to the Sheepshead Bay race course, hitherto a private Corbin preserve, rebuilt the bath houses, and by keeping his rates low, grossed $180,263 or nearly 11% on the entire cost of the road and its debt. This was not quite enough to meet the expenses and interest, but at least came to within $6000 of it. For the 1884 season the road earned a profit over expenses.

General Jourdan gave Austin Corbin an unpleasant surprise in February 1886 by taking the offensive in a law suit against the Long Island R.R. for damages totalling $300,000. At the court trial the counsel for the Brighton line reviewed the history of the agreement signed by Colonel Sharp, detailing how his road had

faithfully paid to the Long Island R.R. all the sums due from the joint operation, how the road had widened its roadbed and lowered its tracks to accommodate the Long Island R.R. trains, and then found to its dismay that the Long Island R.R. ceased to perform its part of the agreement after only two seasons.

The damages were assessed on the following basis: on the strength of the Long Island R.R. passengers being landed at Brighton Beach, Mr. James Breslin, the lessee of the hotel, agreed to pay an increased rental of $4200 per annum. Over four years (1880–83) that made a loss of $16,800. During the first year the Long Island R.R. paid the Brighton road $12,371.34 for the use of its line; this, for the last four years of non-operation made a loss of $49,485. The Brighton road expended $3129 in altering its roadbed to suit the Long Island R.R. The remainder of the sum was claimed for damage for loss by the violation of the agreement.

The Long Island R.R. counsel in rebuttal made the point that the agreement between the roads had been made by a receiver in bankruptcy well before the purchase of the road by Corbin, and that the new owners were not bound by the earlier contract. He also claimed that the Long Island service to Coney Island was excessively long—23 miles—which put the Long Island R.R. at a competitive disadvantage, with lines only seven miles long. The decadence of Brighton Beach during the 1883 season was laid at the door of the road itself. Under Breslin's successor, Mr. Leland, it was alleged that Brighton was allowed to run down until it became a third-class resort like the Bowery. The attractions of former seasons were stopped, the fireworks stopped and questionable characters were allowed to resort there, making it no longer safe for wives and daughters to sit on the porches. He claimed that even nature had taken a hand in the resort's decadence by eroding the former beach and erasing the former facilities for bathing. None of all this decline could be blamed on the Long Island R.R., which was innocent of any wrong-doing.

After listening to these two contradictory presentations, the jury awarded the Brighton road $66,000 in damages. The verdict left both parties unsatisfied. The Long Island R.R. appealed the award to the Court of Appeals on March 10th as being too high; the Brighton officials felt that they had demonstrated grievous injury and that the award had been inadequate.

Meanwhile, reorganization proceedings were attempted for

the Brighton road. Bond interest was defaulted on September 1, 1885 and it was agreed by the first and second mortgage holders to let the road be sold under foreclosure. Under General Jourdan the road had incurred a further debt of $250,000 in receiver's certificates. In October 1887, the railroad, real estate and franchises were sold at auction and bought in by a committee of the bondholders, who reorganized the road as the Brooklyn and Brighton Beach Railroad Company.

After four long years of litigation the suit of the Brighton road against the Long Island R.R. for breach of contract, previously affirmed by the General Term of the Supreme Court, was, on October 8, 1889, affirmed by the Court of Appeals, and judgment was made for the original amount, plus the costs of four years of litigation. On Saturday, January 4, 1890, Austin Corbin sent to General James Jourdan, receiver of the Brighton road, a check for $83,597.44, the amount of the judgment plus interest and costs. Thus was the last act in this long and unpleasant drama played out; Austin Corbin seldom lost a battle, and the defeat dealt him here by the Brighton road was destined to influence his actions in the long and devious manipulations during his operation of the Culver line in the 90's.

CHAPTER 8

The Long Island R.R. Operation of the Culver Line (1893-1899)

FOR almost a hundred years the Culver line has been the familiar label for the six mile long rapid transit artery on McDonald (formerly Gravesend) Avenue, extending in almost a straight line from Greenwood Cemetery down to Coney Island. Of all the transit lines in New York City, the Culver line is the last one that still bears the name of its originator.

Andrew R. Culver was born in Northport, Long Island, on July 20, 1832. At an early age he went into business with a firm trading with the East Indies and studied law at night and in his spare time. At 19 he graduated from the Columbia Law School. He then married and for the next twenty years devoted himself to practicing law. He specialized in internal revenue cases, and it is said that the capital that went into his railroad enterprise was earned through his exploitation of an error in the Tariff Act of 1872. The fateful line read: "fruit, plants, tropical and semi-tropical for a purpose of prolongation and cultivation." The typist made an error, striking a comma instead of a hyphen after the word "fruit." The lawyers spotted the error and sued the U. S. Treasury, acting for a group of fruit importers. They collected over three million in tariff refunds, whence came the nest egg for the Coney Island railroad.

Culver suffered the loss of his only son in 1871 by a drowning accident, and, to distract his grief, plunged himself into railroad schemes. In 1873–75 he pioneered the Prospect Park and Coney Island R.R. In the 90's Culver sold it to Austin Corbin as an outlet for the Manhattan Beach R.R. He retired to New York in 1896 and died there July 10, 1906. He was buried in Greenwood Cemetery, close to the depot of the road he had pioneered.

Culver got into the railroad business in 1871 by buying out the Park Avenue R.R. Co., a horse car line on Vanderbilt Avenue, running from Park Avenue to 9th Avenue and 20th Street. The

line opened on May 18, 1870, but soon failed to earn operating expenses. Andrew Culver bought the property and decided to use it as the nucleus of his ambitious scheme to reach Coney Island. One of the reasons that the Park Avenue R.R. had failed to earn money was its lack of access to the East River ferries. Culver pieced together a route to Fulton Ferry over the violent objections of another road and opened it on May 1, 1871. On May 7th, the line was extended on the south side along Prospect Park West to 20th Street. With a through line for a base, Culver was now free to move on to Coney Island.

The route to Coney Island that Culver envisioned existed only in his own mind. The lower third of it lay over a shell road, a narrow track paved with oyster shells leading from Gravesend Neck Road south through the main street of the village of Gravesend and across Coney Island Creek to the shore line. Title to this antique turnpike lay in the Gravesend and Coney Island Road and Bridge Co., which had laid out the road in 1824. Fifty years later in 1874, title to the now obsolete track was vested in one John Lefferts, who was easily persuaded to sell out to Culver.

North of Gravesend village there was no road at all leading to Brooklyn city; however, the need of one had been felt. Gravesend Avenue was first surveyed and laid out through Chapter 670, Laws of 1869, passed by the Legislature May 1, 1869. This provided for a through road from about 9th Avenue and 20th Street south to the Gravesend Neck Road. Corbin resolved to use this new muddy track for his route to Coney Island and to occupy the middle of it.

To lay tracks along the new Gravesend Avenue involved a thousand difficulties for Culver. The permission of the Legislature had first to be obtained; then the many farmers who owned the properties had to be reckoned with. Worst of all, Washington Cemetery blocked the line of the road. Culver incorporated a new company for his Coney Island venture called the Greenwood and Coney Island Railroad Co. on August 16, 1872. When this company had served its purpose, Culver consolidated it with the Park Avenue Railroad Co. to form the new Prospect Park and Coney Island Railroad Co., incorporated October 9, 1874.

During 1873–74 Gravesend Avenue was opened and graded through to Coney Island. Culver immediately began track lay-

ing, but was stopped by Mr. Robert Turner, a banker of New York, who obtained an injunction in February 1875 preventing the laying of track on the ground that the legislative act was unconstitutional, and that no damages had been provided for the abutting property owners; finally, he challenged the right to use steam. The next blow was a suit instituted by the Washington Cemetery, whose land straddled both sides of Gravesend Avenue, to restrain the company from going through certain lands alleged to belong to the plaintiff. This action commenced in March 1875 and was argued concurrently with Turner's suit. Culver felt that sooner or later he would be vindicated and in March 1875 applied for the appointment of commissioners to condemn land at 9th Avenue and 20th Street for a large combination horse and steam depot. The initial decisions in the Turner and Washington Cemetery cases proved favorable to Culver, so he began the construction of his road despite the fact that his opponents immediately appealed their cases to higher courts.

On Saturday, June 19, 1875, the first train on the Prospect Park and Coney Island Railroad made its way from Gravesend Neck Road north to the city line at Greenwood in about 15 minutes. One week later, on Sunday, June 27, through trips were made for the first time to Coney Island. To popularize the trip, Culver hired Conterno's Band to give moonlight concerts at the Coney Island terminus every evening. Culver's line was easily the most direct and the fastest route to Coney Island and became almost immediately popular.

The initial rolling stock consisted of three small Baldwin engines, the "Coney Island," the "Gravesend" and the "Parkville." In 1876 the engine "Prospect Park" was added, and in 1877, the "Brooklyn." The ten cars were open excursion types, 45 feet long and with 16 reversible seats holding 30 passengers in all. In 1876, five new opens were added, each seating 96 passengers.

The completed Prospect Park and Coney Island Railroad was built of 45–56 pound rail, all single track, with passing sidings at Gravesend village and at Harris Station (later Woodlawn), now Avenue N. The alignment of the road was almost one long tangent with very slight curves. A very disadvantageous feature was the long and heavy grade immediately adjacent to the Greenwood terminus, consisting of a quarter mile of 4% grade and a

quarter mile of 2⅔% at the top immediately adjacent to the depot. There were seven stations in all: Greenwood (9th Avenue and 20th Street), Parkville, Harris Station, King's Highway, Gravesend, Van Sicklen Station (Neptune Avenue) and Coney Island. The Coney Island station was a frame structure facing the sea with a three-track terminal in its rear. The Greenwood station was a large brick building on the east side of 9th Avenue between 19th and 20th Streets. Behind this were paint and repair shops and two long platforms with five storage tracks and a turntable. At Coney Island Creek a siding led to a small dock for loading light materials.

Although the Greenwood terminus was at the edge of Brooklyn far away from the downtown areas, the Vanderbilt Avenue horse cars owned and operated by the company ran from Fulton Ferry all through the settled area of Brooklyn, tapping a large residential section, and so acting as a feeder line to the steam division. In addition, the Atlantic Avenue Railroad Company laid a track in 15th Street between their Fifth Avenue line and 9th Avenue, so that Atlantic Avenue horse cars could act as a feeder at Greenwood depot. This was opened on May 7, 1876.

The new Prospect Park and Coney Island steam line was an immediate success from the beginning and was the first to popularize the one-day excursion to Coney Island. The short straight run from Greenwood took only 21 minutes including all stops. The horse car trip from Fulton Ferry, even though it consumed 52 minutes, still made it possible to reach Coney Island in less than an hour and a half. The fare was high—25¢ from Greenwood to Coney Island, but this did not seem to affect riding.

By the 1876 season, 34 trains were running each way daily, giving half hourly service between 6:15 A.M. and 11 P.M. Only the want of a double track stood in the way of more frequent service. By the end of May the first seven-car train ran over the road, this becoming possible thanks to the lengthening of the siding at Woodlawn Station. In the 1877 season excursion trains of four cars each began running as early as April, and by June and July the timetable had to be abandoned. As many as 65 trains ran on a Sunday and most of these as expresses through to the island in 15 minutes.

After four profitable seasons the monopoly of the Coney Island traffic that Culver had hitherto enjoyed was broken. On July 4,

1878 the Brighton line opened as a formidable rival; its route was as straight as Culver's, but it boasted a double track the whole way and enjoyed a much better city terminus at Prospect Park. In August the Brighton road began running to the Flatbush Avenue depot of the Long Island R.R., still closer to downtown Brooklyn. Fifteen thousand persons who might have used the Culver line over the Fourth of July holiday elected to patronize the new Brighton road. To meet the competition, Culver cut his fares as follows:

	Culver Line	*Brighton Line*
Greenwood to Parkville	6¢	9¢
Kings Highway	11¢	12¢
Coney Island Exc.	25¢	40¢

Culver realized that his own single track road had been made obsolete by the Brighton road and in April 1878 double tracked his line from Coney Island Creek trestle to Parkville. May 4th was an early day in the season, yet 10,000 persons rode to Coney Island in 72 trains. On some Sundays in July and August, 15,000 people were carried, with trains every ten minutes. On such occasions the ticket agent at Coney Island would sell 4000 tickets in an hour's time when the homeward rush began.

One of Culver's strengths, lacking on the other roads, was a strong local riding public all the year around. Culver alone operated trains hourly all winter from 9 to 6 for the benefit of the residents of Parkville and Gravesend. This service did not pay in the beginning, but as the years passed, Culver managed at least to break even, and certainly compensated himself in summer. The winter service tended, too, to attract a wide patronage, secure a great deal of free publicity in the form of editorial approval, and to encourage an all-year around riding habit.

In the seasons of 1881–82 we again hear of 20,000 riders in one day and nine and ten car trains on a ten minute schedule. While it is true that these were peak riding days, the attractions at the beach on various weekday evenings helped to stimulate the substantial number of riders on average weekdays.

The road and its employees in those far-off days took a pride in the railroad that has vanished forever in our sadly utilitarian age. On the Fourth of July the locomotives and cars were gaily festooned with bunting. On the opening day of the season in 1878, the depot at Greenwood was decked out in flags of all

nations and flags of no nations, with streamers hung across 9th Avenue and bunting hung all over the facade. At Christmas time the locomotives were trimmed with pine boughs, and the front plate hung with a large wreath. At a time of national mourning, as for the death of President Garfield at the hands of an assassin, the Greenwood depot was completely draped in black crepe.

The earlier rolling stock of the Culver road was supplemented from time to time. In May 1879 three new engines were bought: #6, West Brighton; #7, Rosedale; #8, Idlewild

In the 80's three more were purchased: #9, West End, May 1883; #10, Bay Ridge, April 1887; #11 Jockey Club, May 1888.

Just before the road passed out of his hands, Culver bought the final two engines: #1, Coney Island, June 1890; #3, Parkville, June, 1890.

The passenger cars increased as follows:

1875	12	1881	43	1887	45†
1876	17	1882	43	1888	45†
1877	23	1883	43	1889	45†
1878	25	1884	43	1890	57†
1879	43	1885	44*	1891	57†
1880	43	1886	45*	1892	57 †

**Denotes 1 closed baggage car.*

†*Total includes 1 closed baggage car and 14 leased cars.*

We know that the five cars bought in 1876 were turned out by Brill; the one new coach that appears in 1886 was bought second-hand from the New York & Brighton Beach Company; finally, we know that twelve new open cars were bought from Brill in 1890 to compensate for an equal number burned up in a fire at Greenwood in November 1887.

The passenger statistics over the years are as follows: (The Vanderbilt Avenue horse car line is included in the returns for the years 1874–1885 inclusive).

1874	not reported	1881	3,645,181	1888	1,110,225
1875	2,236,600	1882	3,411,220	1889	1,200,068
1876	2,656,790	1883	3,493,354	1890	1,195,901
1877	2,855,412	1884	3,571,483	1891	1,258,580
1878	3,271,128	1885	3,171,064	1892	1,220,919
1879	3,741,505	1886	1,224,641		
1880	3,667,631	1887	830,454		

The ordinary passenger service on the Culver line was supplemented beginning in 1886 with the addition of Woodruff Parlor cars and by 1890 with Pullman Palace cars. These required a 25¢ surcharge in fare, and were used only during the spring and fall on the special race trains run to the Brooklyn Jockey Club.

Culver was constantly alert to the possibilities of stimulating riding on his road. In 1881 Culver and a group of very prominent politicians promoted the idea of an elevated road from Fulton Ferry via Water, High, Willoughby, DeKalb, Fulton, Flatbush and 5th Avenues to Greenwood depot. The scheme was incorporated on April 29, 1881 as the East River Bridge and Coney Island Steam Transit Company. The proposed road received a certificate of convenience and necessity in December, and approval by the mayor and Common Council of Brooklyn, but it came to grief in 1882 because of inability to obtain the consent of a majority of the owners of property along the line of the road.

Much more productive than the elevated idea was Culver's association, beginning in 1881, with the Iron Steamboat Company, headed by Cornell White. Mr. White operated seven handsome excursion boats from 22nd Street, North River, around the tip of Coney Island Point into the Atlantic Ocean and then up into Jamaica Bay and docking at various landings along Rockaway Beach. Early in 1881 Culver and White agreed to cooperate with each other to the mutual benefit of their businesses. White was to gain a new landing place at West Brighton for his boats and his patrons the chance to enjoy the fabled attractions of Coney Island and Rockaway on one excursion ticket. Culver was to collect rent from the new iron pier that was to be built on his property, and through White, the Culver line could advertise itself as a new route to Rockaway.

A new subsidiary was set up called the Brighton Beach Pier and Navigation Company, which leased the beach front in front of Culver's depot from Culver, who owned the fee to the land by virtue of his purchase from the Town of Gravesend. The Town opposed the construction of a pier, but lost out in the courts. Building began April 22, 1881; by May 21st, 450 feet had been completed. To further insure its title, the pier company applied for and received 1000 feet of land under water from the State Land Commission. On June 17, 1881 the steamer "Grand Republic" made the first landing at the new iron pier. Two days

later, on Sunday the 19th, four boats of White's line, the "Columbia," the "Grand Republic," the "Adelphi" and the "Americus" plied all day between New York and Rockaway, each calling at the iron pier going and returning. The boats severely shook the iron piles and stout pine planking, but the structure held. In the 1882 season we read that Iron Steamboat tickets and Culver line tickets were interchangeable, each company honoring the other's pasteboard.

Besides the profitable and attractive Iron Steamboat arrangement, Culver devised many other attractions to lure passengers to his road. Most famous of all was the Observatory, a 300 foot tower originally set up at the Centennial Exposition in Fairmount Park, Philadelphia, in 1876. Culver purchased the structure and set it up on the beach front before his depot where it opened to the public on July 4, 1878. Inside the tower were two steam elevators, each of which accommodated 25 persons and made trips skyward every 3½ minutes. From the top of the tower visitors on a clear summer's day could see for miles in every direction; many of the early photographic views of Coney Island were taken from this Observatory. Culver incorporated the tower as the "Coney Island Observatory and Signal Company" and charged an admission of 15¢ per visitor.

Culver's broad and spacious plaza in front of his Coney Island depot was threatened in 1880–81 by the laying out of Surf Avenue. Up to this time no road running along Coney Island peninsula gave access to all the scattered bath houses and hotels on the peninsula. Culver was first bitterly opposed to this invasion of his depot area, but was at last induced to acquiesce by appeals to his civic conscience. On February 4, 1878 the first monuments were put down by the surveyors. In June 1879 the original line of markers was moved back to avoid running the street through many existing buildings and so ruining investments. By October 1880 Surf Avenue across Culver Plaza was being finished off under Culver's watchful eye. Something occurred to offend him and he displayed his displeasure by running a blockading locomotive across the street, but was prevailed on to relent. Trouble broke out again in late 1883 and in February 1884 Culver won a permanent injunction to keep Surf Avenue out of his depot grounds. In the end he lost the fight and the avenue was finally cut through by 1890.

The Prospect Park and Coney Island R.R. did a fairly steady freight and express business in addition to the passenger traffic. The 80's were the great boom years at Coney Island and a great proportion of the lumber and building materials for the hotels and amusement places came down on the Culver road. We hear of one freight car loaded with wine alone! When Surf Avenue was laid out in 1880, enough dirt to cover the road 15 inches deep and 2000 feet long was hauled down in Culver dump cars.

Over the years various improvements were made in the road's physical plant. The terminal at Coney Island received a great deal of attention in 1876–78 in respect to lawns, waiting rooms, music stand, fountain, etc. In the spring of 1883 a new station was built on the line of the new Surf Avenue about 300 feet inland from the older station and platforms which had been on the line of the concourse. The station was a large frame 2½ story structure with Mansard roof and a central cupola. Two large car houses, 250 x 25, built in 1876, paralleled the platforms behind the old station. Here were stored the open passenger cars through the winter.

The Greenwood depot was the largest and contained the administrative offices of the company. It had a frontage of 200 feet on 9th Avenue and was 100 feet deep. Six tracks with a transfer table occupied the street floor rear, behind the offices. Behind all this was another 700 feet of frame buildings enclosing the paint shop, repair shops, turn tables, two train platforms, and four long loading tracks. The sidewalks on the 9th Avenue and the 20th Street sides were covered over for the shelter of passengers, and in 20th Street double tracks ran all the way between 9th and 10th Avenues to store trains during peak hours. When the road had first started in 1874 the brick depot alone had been available to the company, but in the spring of 1877, Culver purchased all the tenements in the rear of the building all the way back to 10th Avenue and this made it possible to add the two long loading platforms and four tracks.

On November 14, 1887 a fire broke out in the 9th Avenue side of the building, apparently on the third floor where hay and feed were stored for the horses of the Vanderbilt Avenue cars. The fire quickly raged out of control and left the brick depot and shed in ruins. Since it was winter, most of the rolling stock was in

storage at Coney Island; as it was, 12 coaches were destroyed; all the engines were saved. Promptly Culver set to work to repair the ravaged depot. He bought 17 lots on 19th Street across the street from the depot and in 1888 the old depot site was cleared and a new building erected.

Two further great improvements in the safe operation of trains were added. In June 1877 the telegraph was installed on the whole road and was available to the public as well as to the company. Several boxes were installed at each station to which the conductors had keys. The Atlantic & Pacific Telegraph Company furnished the operators and connected the wires from the Greenwood depot with their main office in Court Street, Brooklyn.

This was followed in 1879 by the installation of the telephone system at Greenwood. Five instruments were installed, two at Greenwood station, one at Coney Island, one at the office of the superintendent, and one each at Culver's house and the superintendent's house.

The double tracking improvement of 1878 was the most important physical betterment on the whole system. In April the second track was laid from Coney Island Creek to Parkville station, thus eliminating the Gravesend siding and making possible the safe operation of many trains at once instead of the former limit of four.

Far more adventuresome on Culver's part was the extension of the railroad to Norton's Point in 1879. Steamboats had for many years landed passengers at the Point but there was no way for these visitors to get to Coney Island proper except by walking over the sands on foot. The Point itself offered only one hotel and fishing facilities. Culver realized that a railroad to the Point would give him a monopoly of the steamboat passengers eager to sample the attractions of Coney Island. On January 13, 1879 Culver moved in court for the appointment of commissioners to take land. The right-of-way asked for was at that time about 700 feet back from high water mark and ran through the strips of some 30 property owners. The property owners favored the road but it was opposed by the Town of Gravesend and Austin Corbin of Manhattan Beach. The Town took the case to the courts but lost once again. On February 6th, Culver filed a map of his

road. During April the single track road was graded and on May 5th, laying of the ties and rails was begun. On June 9, 1879 the new road was opened to public travel.

As with all his enterprises, Culver incorporated the Point railroad as a separate entity. Legally, it was The New York and Coney Island Railroad Company. Since Culver owned all the stock, it was an easy matter to lease the new road to his own Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. on November 17, 1879.

The new road as completed was 2.41 miles long. It ran from the old steamboat dock at Norton's Point more or less parallel to the line of Surf Avenue, being anywhere from 30 to 400 feet north of it. The right-of-way was 40 feet wide. At the West End terminus an agreement had been reached with the owners, the Gunthers, to move their hotel-depot back, north of the new right-of-way. At what is now West 8th Street the track curved sharply north and joined the Prospect Park and Coney Island Railroad terminal yard tracks. The new road was given a terminal of its own facing Surf Avenue, 60 feet wide and located 202 feet east of the present West 8th Street. The new New York & Coney Island Railroad Company, unlike its parent, was a summer-only operation. There were stations at:

Sea Beach depot, West End depot, New York Childrens Aid Society (between 23rd and 24th Streets), Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum (between 27th and 28th Streets) and Sea Side House (Norton and Murray's Pavilion).

In the 1879 season the trains were timed to meet the boats, so that passengers could move on to West Brighton. In June 1880, the boats announced that they would no longer dock at Norton's Point, and as a result, no trains operated at all during this season. The announcement came just after Culver had gone to the expense of ballasting the new line with gravel and digging out the track which the high winds and gales of winter had covered with blown sand to a depth of eight feet in some places.

In the 1881 season a certain amount of the steamboat business was diverted to the new Iron Pier when Cornell White began to run his large excursion boats there; however, in compensation, another group of steamboats, the "Josephine," "Chrystenach" and "Riverdale" began sailing from West 22nd Street, West 10th Street and Franklin Street piers on the North River direct to

Coney Island Point. The Pavilion and the bath houses came to life again, and trains began running regularly between Culver depot and the Point.

Culver himself became so impressed with the development possibilities of Norton's Point that he organized a company and made a written proposal to lease the whole Point from the Town of Gravesend for two years for $125,000. In July 1881, after much bartering, the president of the Iron Pier Company (in which Culver was a director) won the lease of Coney Island Point for $100,000. They made grandiose plans to build a new hotel and to lay out the entire property in flower beds and grass plots, but this never materialized. In 1883 when the lease ran out, Culver secured for himself a part interest in the Point. In 1885 the leasehold passed to William Ziegler, millionaire owner of the Royal Baking Powder Company, and one of the largest real estate holders in Brooklyn; however, boats continued to land at the Point and Culver's trains continued to meet them.

Not all patrons of the beach railroad rode the cars for the steamboat connection; some came to enjoy peace and quiet from the noisy commercialism of Coney Island. An article of 1889 speaks thus: "Excursionists learn why there is so much anxiety to get to Norton's Point. Not more than 300 feet wide, it is washed on the north by the still water of Gravesend Bay and on the south by the wild surf of the Atlantic Ocean, while the view of Bath, Fort Hamilton and Wadsworth, South Beach and the Narrows is uninterrupted and pleasant."

Hardly less important to the operation of the Prospect Park & Coney Island Railroad were two changes effected in 1885–86. On January 1, 1886 Andrew Culver leased the Vanderbilt Avenue horse car division of his road to the Atlantic Avenue R.R. for an annual rental of $21,000. The Atlantic Avenue, or Richardson system as it was called after its owner, had touched Greenwood depot since 1876 and was the logical network to take over Culver's one horse car line. A year later, on May 27, 1887, Culver sold the line outright to Richardson for $420,000. In this way he rid himself of a street railroad operation that was not profitable as an isolated line, but which could be useful to some other operator with many other similar properties. The sale left the Prospect Park & Coney Island as a strictly steam railroad opera-

tion, despite the fact that its trains ran through the middle of a public highway for almost the whole length of the road exactly like street cars.

More important by far was the operating agreement concluded with the Long Island Rail Road in 1885. The Manhattan Beach Railway and the Prospect Park & Coney Island Railroad crossed each other at right angles at Parkville (Foster Avenue). Culver realized that he would benefit enormously if he could divert his Coney Island travel from the somewhat dead-end terminal at Greenwood to the Manhattan Beach tracks and so to the 65th Street ferry. A deepwater terminal with access to the New York traffic would supply a far greater number of passengers than could the horse car terminal at Greenwood on the edge of the then city limits. Austin Corbin and Andrew Culver liked each other personally and this probably goes far to explain the accord that both men reached. A switch was built in the southwest quadrant permitting the bulk of the Culver trains to run down to the ferry; in the southeast quadrant a single track switch was laid to enable Long Island R.R. race track specials to run to the new Brooklyn Jockey Club and to lay over at Culver Terminal. The agreement provided that each railroad would run trains alternately out of Bay Ridge, each road to furnish 15 trains, and so providing a half hourly service between 8:30 A.M. and 10:10 P.M.

Only two years after his tie-in with the Manhattan Beach line, Culver took the step that was destined to change the character of his road from a suburban steam line to a rapid transit railroad. The Brooklyn Union Elevated Railroad had opened its first elevated railroad on Lexington Avenue in 1885, and in 1888–89 a branch opened on Myrtle Avenue and Broadway. Its next extension was intended to tap the Greenwood Cemetery traffic; by June 1889 the el had reached 3rd Street and by August, 25th Street. Culver realized that the elevated with its matchless city connections could act as a year-around dependable feeder for his own suburban steam line.

Culver was not alone in his vision of what the elevated could do. The owners of another suburban steam road, the West End line to Coney Island, entertained the same idea. After some mutual sounding-out of opinion, Culver and the West End directors agreed to extend their routes to the elevated's future terminus

at 5th Avenue and 36th Street and to build for themselves a joint Union Depot there.

The tracks of the West End line ran from the Brooklyn terminus at 5th Avenue and 27th Street down 5th Avenue to 38th Street and through 38th Street to New Utrecht Avenue. For Culver to reach the Union depot, it would be necessary to lay track from his own rails on Gravesend Avenue westward to a junction with the West End tracks at about 9th and New Utrecht Avenues. For this very short connection, amounting to about eight long blocks or about a mile, Culver incorporated a new road, legally known as the Prospect Park and South Brooklyn Railroad, on June 12, 1888. During the year 1889–90 Culver bought the land for the new road, a strip 50 feet wide on the south side of 37th Street, and the square block between 36th and 37th Streets and 5th and 7th Avenues where the depot would be built.

Construction on the Union Depot began in the fall of 1889 by the two interested companies, the West End and Culver roads. An outdoor garden known as Pope's Park, situated behind the Union Depot site, was purchased for conversion into a ten-track car yard with sheds to protect the rolling stock. Progress was delayed in late April when the bricklayers on the project went out on strike because the contractor employed Jersey men to do the stone foundation work.

On May 30, 1890 (Decoration Day) the Brooklyn Union Elevated Railway opened to the public its 36th Street terminal; the Union Depot, although not yet completed, had to be opened at the same time to accommodate the crowds visiting Greenwood Cemetery alongside the depot. The Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. could not immediately begin service into the Union Depot although a trial trip had already been made on November 29, 1889 in order to legally establish the opening of the Prospect Park & South Brooklyn subsidiary and the right of Culver trains to use the tracks. On that occasion engine #6, the "West Brighton" and coach #1 made the trip. A tiny strip of land at 9th Avenue and 39th Street, owned by William Ziegler, a wealthy investor, and forming a part of Culver's right-of-way, had been sold to the South Brooklyn Terminal Company which opposed Culver's access to the newly opened el. Ziegler, however, was strongly in favor of the Culver extension and refused to honor the

deed of sale of his land to the Terminal Company unless that company withdrew its opposition to Culver. The matter went to court and the result was that the Terminal Company had to yield to Ziegler's wishes. The Culver people lost no time in laying their rails over the narrow strip of disputed ground and Culver trains began running into Union Depot on Saturday, June 7th; service was hourly at first.

A further rash of strikes by various unions delayed the completion of the Union Depot a full month. On the elevated road there was but one platform and this adjoined the walls of the new depot. The new building was two stories high, fronting 125 feet on 5th Avenue, with 1000 foot platforms. It was built with a high peaked roof, the cornices trimmed with reddish brown stone. The windows were very large and arched. The great windows at either end, extending up into the gables, were about 25 feet high and 8–10 feet wide. The lintels and bordering of the windows was of bright red Philadelphia brick. All the windows were filled with tinted glass. The brick main building of the depot was 60 x 122 feet and was all one room, except a small corner divided off for a ladies' parlor. The room was about 30 feet high, and running through the center of the ceiling was a large glass skylight for ventilation. Behind the main building was the "herding" room where the crowds gathered when the Culver and West End trains were about to load and unload. This smaller building was of wood and was 40 x 122. Behind it lay the five platforms, each about 1000 feet long to accommodate 16-car trains. These platforms were lighted with both gas and electricity.

The new Culver extension to the Union Depot branched off from the old main line just below Cortelyou Road at a point called "Kensington Junction." Here was erected a tower with interlocking switches and signals. The new extension became known as the "Fifth Avenue & 36th Street Division" and promptly became the main line of the road. North of Kensington Junction the old road was still single-tracked up to the Greenwood terminus. Three new stations were opened up on the Culver line in 1890: Keninsgton on the old line at Avenue C just above the junction; Fort Hamilton Avenue and City Line Junction (9th Avenue) on the new extension.

It was probably some time in the summer of 1891 that Corbin sounded out Culver as to the possibility of purchasing the Pros-

pect Park and Coney Island Railroad and operating it as a part of the Long Island Rail Road's Manhattan Beach Division. For Culver there were excellent reasons to sell out; he was now 60 years old and had been fighting for twenty years to make his road solvent. The times, however, were against him; as he himself insisted, there were just too many lines to Coney Island, and the new prospect of trolley competition threatened further traffic losses. Beginning in 1888 and in each year thereafter, the Culver line had run at an increasing deficit. Although the road continued to carry a large number of riders, this was offset by the mounting cost of wages and materials. Austin Corbin, as president of the large and financially prosperous Long Island R.R. system, could better afford the risk of a small unprofitable operation. He privately believed, of course, that once the Culver line became part of the Manhattan Beach system, it could be more economically operated and would pay its own way. There was always the possibility of linking it physically with the elevated line too.

A whole year passed before Austin Corbin took formal possession of the Prospect Park & Coney Island Railroad on January 24, 1893. The acquisition by this time had become such a formality that it was all staged in the Morris Park shops in just ten minutes' time. It was privately whispered that the purchase price came to about $350,000.

Two beneficial things had happened during the waiting period. Culver, along with all the other roads, reduced his rates on May 28, 1892. From either Greenwood or Union Depot to Coney Island, the tariff was 25¢ for excursion tickets, half fare 15¢, and single tickets, 15¢. From 65th Street ferry the rates were:

New York to Bay Ridge	10¢
3rd Ave & 65th Street	10¢
Bath Junction	12¢
Parkville	15¢
Washington Station	18¢
Woodlawn	18¢
Kings Highway	20¢
Gravesend	25¢
Van Sicklen	25¢
Coney Island	25¢

The other change of importance was the partial withdrawal of

the West End road from the Union Depot. For some four years the South Brooklyn Railroad and Terminal Company had been trying to rent out or sell a seven-block railroad it had built from the water front at 36th Street back to 9th Avenue. The road had no means of support itself; it could serve, however, as a valuable terminus for another road, for it offered completed ferry slips, a large well-built terminal building and yards. At first, the terms for the use of the South Brooklyn facilities were scaled too high (5¢ per passenger), and as a result, roads like the West End and the Culver line turned instead to the Fifth Avenue "L" for a terminal. By 1892 the South Brooklyn had become more reasonable, and, on February 27, 1892, its directors signed an agreement with the West End to link tracks. This gave the West End a direct ferry terminal for its passengers, and the Union Depot became thereafter of secondary importance. On July 14, 1892, the West End began running trains into the new 39th Street ferry terminal. Within two short years time, the West End gave up the use of the Union Depot altogether to the Prospect Park and Coney Island as of June 29, 1895.

Corbin, using the Prospect Park and Coney Island Railroad as a lever to exert the greatest possible pressure, made frequent efforts to secure a monopoly of the traffic to Coney Island, but the opposition forces had grown too strong by this time. In the early 90's, he schemed and intrigued both openly and covertly to buy out the Sea Beach R.R. which siphoned so much of his Bay Ridge traffic, but the owners fought off his moves. The other unpleasant feature of the 65th Street ferry was that the ferry franchise was held by the Staten Island Rapid Transit Company, who exacted a payment of 10¢ for every passenger carried on their boats. Corbin died in 1896 without solving this dilemma, but his successor, President William Baldwin, found an answer. When the Long Island Rail Road secured exclusive control of the South Brooklyn's 39th Street terminal in June 1897, the passenger service of the Prospect Park and Coney Island R.R. into 65th Street Bay Ridge was abandoned as of the end of September, and in May of 1898, the Culver trains began running into the 39th Street ferry terminal instead.

In the matter of dealing with the elevated roads, Corbin achieved more success. On January 1, 1894, to the alarm of the

other roads, Corbin's name quietly appeared on the roster of directors of the Brooklyn Union Elevated Railroad. With a foothold once secured in the elevated railroad councils, Corbin gradually succeeded in winning the directors over to the scheme of connecting physically the Fifth Avenue "L" with his own Manhattan Beach Railway. This was effected in June 1895 by means of a ramp on the southeast corner of 5th Avenue and 36th Street. Through trains began running August 5, 1895. For the summer season of 1895 only, the trains served Manhattan Beach directly, but in subsequent years, all the elevated trains ran into Culver Depot for a 20¢ fare.

This "L" connection made the Culver line the first through rapid transit route to Coney Island with no change of cars. None of Corbin's rivals could compete with such a service and for such a low rate of fare. The Brighton line had entertained the very same idea by means of a connection with the Kings County Elevated road at Franklin Avenue but Corbin used his not inconsiderable political influence with the Railroad Commissioners to frustrate the scheme. It is possible that Corbin covertly provided some of the financial support behind property owners' suits to prevent the construction of such a connection, because of necessary demolition of expensive houses along Franklin Avenue. For four years Corbin fought off the opposition (1892–1896) and then, to the surprise of his rivals, abruptly passed from the Brooklyn scene. In June 1896, he was thrown from a carriage and died of his injuries. Within two months' time the Brighton line won its case in the courts and built a rival elevated connection direct to Coney Island. (August 1896).

The last change to affect the Culver line under Long Island R.R. operation was the institution of passenger service from Manhattan Beach via the Parkville connection direct to the 39th Street ferry on June 18, 1898. The West End road, which had been running its trains into the ferry terminal since 1892, fell into the hands of a trolley syndicate in 1893 (Atlantic Avenue Railroad) and a still larger one in 1896 (Nassau Electric Railroad). The Nassau Electric syndicate, absorbed in furthering its own trolley system, had little interest in the 39th Street railroad terminal, and assigned its interest in the South Brooklyn Railroad and Terminal Company to the Long Island R.R. exclusively

on June 30, 1897. The following summer, therefore, the Long Island R.R. opened the new passenger service into the ferry and continued it to the end of 1902.

In the years that Corbin owned the Prospect Park and Coney Island Railroad, the nagging deficit that had plagued Culver toward the end continued to afflict the road:

	Passengers	*Deficit*
1894	1,128,599	$49,295
1895	1,073,065	24,660
1896		
1897		
1898	1,688,136	50,497

The passenger riding on the line showed a falling off from the 80's and the railroad operation brought no surplus; in fact, the largest source of income these days came from the rental paid to the road for the use of its very valuable land south of Surf Avenue. This land had never been needed for railroad purposes and was now covered with the Observatory, a hotel, bathing pavilions, carousels, etc.

The directors of the Long Island R.R., with no personal commitment to Manhattan Beach, and unwilling to subsidize a losing operation, resolved to sell the Prospect Park and Coney Island Railroad to the Brooklyn Rapid Transit, the gigantic syndicate that was rapidly absorbing every transit company in Brooklyn into one combined operation. Informal negotiations took place in the latter part of 1898. In April of 1899, the Culver line was re-equipped in preparation for its new owners, the Long Island R.R. suspending operation on the line to permit the necessary changes to be made. Trolley wire was strung from the Greenwood depot and from the Union Depot all the way down to Coney Island as the first step in a move to make the road a joint trolley and elevated all-electric operation. At the Greenwood depot switches were installed, connecting the trolley tracks in 9th Avenue with the steam tracks in Gravesend Avenue. After all the overhead had been installed, the Brooklyn Rapid Transit made a formal announcement on June 17th that it had leased the Prospect Park and Coney Island Railroad from the Long Island R.R. for a period of 999 years at an annual rental of $45,000, with the ex-

plicit exception of the steam rolling stock, all coal on hand, all machinery and supplies, and the valuable piece of land south of Surf Avenue which the Long Island R.R. reserved to itself. It is of interest to note here that the Long Island R.R. continued to collect interest on 1726½ shares of Prospect Park and Coney Island R.R. stock well into the 1920's. The annual rental paid by the B.R.T. served to insure the retirement of the loans that the Long Island R.R. had made to the Culver line in 1893. Within a month, by July 10, 1899, the electrification of the Culver line was complete and all steam operation ceased as of August 2nd. The B.R.T. began running trolley cars immediately from the Hamilton Ferry and from the Fulton Ferry via Fulton, Court, Hamilton, 15th Street, 9th Avenue and Culver tracks to Coney Island. These lines included the:

Coney Island–39th Street	1899–1901
Court Street	1903–1907
Fifteenth Street	1899–1920
Tompkins Avenue	1901–1920
Union Street	1899–1920
Vanderbilt Avenue	1900–1921
Vanderbilt–Culver (from Grand Street ferry)	1899–1900

Thus, beginning in June 1899 and for several years thereafter, on the portion of Gravesend Avenue south of Kensington Junction, trolley cars, elevated trains, and Long Island R.R. steam trains were all being operated over the same tracks! It would be hard to find a parallel to this amazing arrangement anywhere in the country.

The Long Island R.R. continued to operate the South Brooklyn Railroad and Terminal Company from June 30, 1897 to June 1, 1903. In December 1899, the South Brooklyn was sold in foreclosure, and was reorganized in 1900 as the South Brooklyn Railway Company by its purchasers, the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company. There is some evidence that the Long Island R.R. continued the freight service over the Culver line and South Brooklyn until March 30, 1905 on an informal basis, when the B.R.T. took over with discarded elevated locomotives. The B.R.T. greatly expanded the freight service from Long Island

R.R. days by constructing numerous new freight sidings. The B.R.T. rebuilt the large 39th Street terminal into a car shop in 1902.

The Long Island R.R., by special agreement dated May 7, 1900 and renewed September 11, 1907 provided for the continuation of the passenger train service on just those days of the year when races were run at the Brooklyn Jockey Club at Kings Highway. A dispute over insurance ended all Long Island R.R. service to this particular track in the spring of 1909, and at the same time, all Long Island R.R. operation over the former steam railroads in South Brooklyn.

CHAPTER 9

The Old Order Yields to the New (1903-1924)

THE most extensive and far reaching change ever to affect the Manhattan Beach Railroad came in the first decade of the 20th century and completed the transformation of the road from an excursion passenger line to a modern trunk freight road. The impetus for this change arose out of the changing face of Brooklyn at the turn of the century. When the road was built in the 70's, all Brooklyn south and east of Prospect Park was farmland, with the farmhouses of many of the old settlers still intact. The expanding population, overflowing from Brooklyn, soon burst the old boundaries and poured into the former rural townships of Flatbush, New Lots and Gravesend, and, in the spring of 1894, these were absorbed into the city of Brooklyn. A scant four years later witnessed the incorporation of Brooklyn itself and the remaining towns into Greater New York. It was easy to see that Brooklyn would soon develop into a borough of home sites and that the continued operation of steam and electric trains on the surface would prove impractical and even dangerous.

In anticipation of this need to give the railroad an unhampered right of way and the citizenry security of life and limb from accidents, the Legislature, on May 9, 1903, created the Brooklyn Grade Crossing Commission to abolish all grade crossings on the Brighton Beach line, and, because of its close parallel location, the Manhattan Beach road as well. The commission was to consist of a group of five men, three to be appointed by the city, one by the Long Island Rail Road, and one by the Brooklyn Heights Railroad, lessee of the Brighton line. These men took office as of June 29, 1903. It was decided that two separate working forces would be organized, the one managing what became known as the Brighton Beach Improvement and the other what became known as the Bay Ridge Improvement.

The law provided that the Bay Ridge work was to be done at the joint expense of the Long Island Rail Road and the City of New York, each to pay one-half the cost. The maximum amount of the city's contribution was limited to $2½ million, with the provision that any additional expense in excess of the joint expense of $5 million should be borne by the railroad company only. If, however, additional bridges were built at new as yet unopened streets, then the city would be liable for half the cost of said bridges.

The exact geographical coverage of the Act was defined as from the Brooklyn-Queens borough line west to Bay Ridge, 10.4 miles with 41 grade crossings, and from Manhattan Beach Junction to Manhattan Beach, 3.7 miles with 10 grade crossings.

As soon as the proposals for an elevated Brighton line were announced, residents of the Flatbush area registered their disapproval, fearing an injury to property values. A public hearing was held and it was explained that the elevation of the tracks did not imply a steel elevated structure as had been feared but rather an embankment with the sides sodded. Even with this plan there were mixed feelings. Some preferred a subway while others opposed an underground road, fearing flooding and the great expense involved. By September a monster petition against an embankment bearing the names of 97% of the residents had been submitted to the president of the Grade Crossing Commission. In November, after consultation with the property owners, the Brooklyn Rapid Transit was said to have agreed to a depressed road provided all the abutting residents donated a foot of ground for a retaining wall. It was thought that this could be easily secured. When it developed that the total cost of a depressed road would be very great and that, moveover, the Long Island R.R., who would share the right of way, refused to pay the high cost of a depressed road, the idea had to be abandoned and the embankment plan adopted after all.

The year 1904 passed in planning the exact alignment of the elimination and in formalizing the plans. As presented to the commission, the Improvement required a slight readjustment of the right-of-way at certain points, relocation of freight yards, sidings and spurs, the building of retaining walls and the purchase of land to provide for slopes to sustain an embankment. The plans finally adopted called for depression of the railroad from

Bay Ridge 5.6 miles to a point between Albany Avenue and Avenue G and for elevation of the road on an embankment from here to a point about 1800 feet north of New Lots Road (2.8 miles), thence following a gradually descending grade to a point about 425 feet south of Atlantic Avenue; thence a tunnel 3500 feet long coming to grade at the original surface point about 200 feet south of Central Avenue; then again elevated on an embankment to the borough line. The work would involve the shifting and relocation of a vast number of sewer pipes, water and gas lines and the shifting of street railway tracks.

The 41 grade crossings scheduled to be eliminated on the Bay Ridge Improvement were as follows:

First Avenue	Atlantic Avenue	Sutter Avenue
Ft. Hamilton Ave.	Herkimer Street	Pitkin Avenue
Kouwenhoven La.	Fulton Street	Glenmore Avenue
11th Avenue	Norman Place	Liberty Avenue
New Utrecht Ave.	Broadway	Vista Avenue
15th Avenue	Conway Street	East New York Ave.
60th Street	Ocean Avenue	Stewart Street
53rd Street	Amersfort Place*	Eastern Parkway
New Utrecht Road	Flatbush Avenue	La Salle Place
18th Avenue	Kings Highway	Bushwick Avenue
52nd Street	Wyckoff Avenue*	Aberdeen Street
Gravesend Ave.	Canarsie Road*	Furman Avenue
East 3rd Street	Rockaway Avenue	Central Avenue
Coney Island Ave.	New Lots Road	

**The three starred streets were to be eliminated from the city map and would not require bridging.*

However, additional bridges were planned for construction on the following 15 unopened streets:

16th Avenue	Brooklyn Avenue	Avenue D
59th Street	Avenue H	Ralph Avenue
17th Avenue	Albany Avenue	Remsen Avenue
East 14th Street	Avenue G	East 94th Street
Nostrand Avenue	Utica Avenue	Blake Avenue

The Manhattan Beach section from the junction to Coney Island was to be drastically relocated so as to run parallel to the Brighton Beach line and on the same embankment. If one glances at a

map of the old Manhattan Beach right-of-way, it is immediately evident that from the junction south to Coney Island, the tracks run anywhere from immediately parallel to the Brighton line to as much as three blocks east of it. Because of this close proximity and the undesirable condition which would be created by the construction of a separate embankment for each road, each on its own right-of-way, isolating the property lying in between and impairing its value, the Commission voted to abandon the irregular Manhattan Beach right of way and to relocate both roads on the straight Brighton Beach line.

On the line to Coney Island 8 street crossings were proposed to be eliminated:

Locust Avenue	Elm Avenue	Avenue U	Shore Road
Chestnut Ave.	Kings Highway	Neck Road	Neptune Ave.

Bridges were to be installed at eleven new streets which had not been opened: Avenues J, K, L, N, O, P, R, S, T, V, Y. Four old streets were to be abandoned altogether: McGows Lane, Johnsons Road, Johnsons Lane, Emmons Lane.

Bids were opened for the Bay Ridge Improvement on April 27, 1905 and ground breaking took place at Parkville at an imposing ceremony attended by all the municipal and railroad officials on the afternoon of May 17th.

The method of carrying on the work was first to construct all the bridge abutments and retaining walls and when the abutments were completed, to place in position the steel girders required to form the bridges, after which the excavation was to be made which would establish the depressed roadbed at the new grade line laid out on the plans, the material excavated being transported to that portion of the work to be elevated on an embankment. This method made unnecessary the entire closing of any street and kept surface traffic flowing freely.

In January 1906 an agreement was made between the Long Island Rail Road and the Brooklyn Rapid Transit to expedite the building of the embankment on the Brighton Beach right-of-way by diverting the operation of all Brighton Beach trains to the Manhattan Beach tracks. This would leave the entire Brighton right-of-way clear of trains from Avenue H south to Coney Island so that the contractors could work unhindered on the embankments and bridges. To speed the work as much as possible, the

contractor secured 40 flat cars, three Mogul engines, hoisting derricks and steam excavators. The east Brighton track below Avenue H station was now raised from its old depressed position and elevated 15 feet to the level of the Manhattan Beach track to Bay Ridge which it crossed and then swung over southeastward to connect with the southbound Manhattan Beach tracks. Trolley wire had to be installed over the whole Manhattan Beach line all the way down to Sheepshead Bay to enable the Brighton Beach trains to run with trolley poles as they customarily did south of Church Avenue on their own line. The first Brighton Beach trains began using the Long Island R.R. trackage at noon on March 5, 1906.

In May 1906, just as the project was moving along very smoothly, the chief of the Bureau of Franchises, in the familiarly obstructive manner of petty officialdom, created a complication that put a stop to all the work on the embankment. The plans for occupying the same embankment made it necessary that the Long Island R.R. move its tracks several hundred feet. This necessitated a new franchise for the Long Island. Everything had been planned for the new embankment and the authorities seemed satisfied with an embankment that would give 12 feet of clearance over streets crossed by the railroad tracks. The chief of the Bureau of Franchises now jarred the railroad officials by making a condition of the new franchise that the clearance be 16 feet instead of 12. The railroad companies naturally opposed this absurd and expensive demand and halted work. The Long Island R.R. threatened to build a 12 foot clearance embankment on its old right-of-way which would require no new franchise. The dispute went to the five commissioners for adjudication, and decision was rendered against the Bureau of Franchises chief.

During the remainder of 1906 intensive work continued all along the Brighton embankment; Brighton trains suffered numerous delays on the Long Island R.R. tracks owing to the operation of freight trains and switch engines.

While all this progress was going on along the Brighton right-of-way, similar good work was being accomplished along the Bay Ridge division. The depression of the roadbed there made such strides that the crossing with the Culver line was eliminated on September 19, 1906; the West End crossing was eliminated on July 16, 1907 and the Brighton crossing on January 17, 1908.

The year 1906 saw work begun on a third front, this time East New York. The Grade Crossing Act of 1903 had directed the elimination of all crossings through to the borough line but had failed to foresee that this was impossible in the East New York area without at the same time changing the grade on the Brooklyn and Rockaway Beach Railroad, popularly called the Canarsie Railroad, which paralleled the Manhattan Beach tracks from New Lots Avenue to Atlantic Avenue. At no place were the tracks more than 20 feet apart; to change one roadbed necessarily forced a change in the other. It became necessary, therefore, to petition the Legislature to amend the Act to the extent of allowing the Long Island Railroad and the Brooklyn Rapid Transit to purchase the Canarsie Railroad and to divide up the property between them. The Canarsie R.R. had always been a seasonal road, run for the benefit of summer excursionists bent on boating, fishing and clamming in Jamaica Bay and had rarely returned much profit to its owners. The Peoples Trust Company, which held most of the notes on the road, was only too willing to accept the overtures of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Co. A foreclosure of the road was arranged; in November 1905 the B.R.T. acquired the old road for roughly $74,000 cash and a new subsidiary was set up called the Canarsie Railroad Company. On April 5, 1906 the property was legally sold to the Peoples Trust Company, who in turn transferred it to the L.I.R.R.–B.R.T. on May 31, 1906. The Long Island R.R. leased for 999 years the old roadbed of the Canarsie Railroad between Pitkin and Atlantic Avenues and a 3½ foot strip on the west side of the Canarsie roadbed, providing enough width along with the original Manhattan Beach roadbed, for a new four track line for the Long Island R.R. The Brooklyn Rapid Transit undertook to elevate the old Canarsie line, electrify it and connect it with the Brooklyn Union Elevated R.R. on Broadway for operation as part of the rapid transit system. The Long Island R.R. paid to the new Canarsie R.R. $125,000 as consideration for the lease, but received in return the surrender of any remaining right and interest of the old Canarsie R.R. in the Manhattan Beach right-of-way north of Atlantic Avenue, plus payment for one half the cost of the construction of retaining walls for the Long Island's new depressed roadway.

Although the work in the East New York area proved formidable, progress was very rapid. Active work began in November

1905 and the three worst months of the winter were profitably used for legal preliminaries, drafting plans in the engineering offices of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit and letting contracts. Work on the ground began in February 1906. At New Lots Road the Manhattan Beach tracks began their descent and entered a depressed cut just west of Livonia Avenue and then continued along the old right-of-way below street level. Pitkin and Sutter Avenues are carried over the Manhattan Beach tracks on bridges.

The Canarsie el structure overhead was no less involved. The end of the old elevated structure at Pitkin and Snediker Avenues had to be first raised two feet above the old level to permit the building of the Sutter and Pitkin Avenue viaducts and to provide a smooth grade for the new elevated tracks. The new Canarsie elevated was left on the surface from Canarsie terminal to Linden Boulevard. There it was raised upon a concrete inclined viaduct to a point 300 feet south of New Lots Road. Here a bridge spanned the road. Beyond New Lots Road the viaduct was continued for some 550 feet to Newport Avenue and from there to the junction with the old el at Pitkin and Snediker Avenues on a steel structure. During May and June 1906 the builders set up six spans or 300 feet every 24 hours. Subsequent work by the riveters, track men and electricians proved so efficient that the new Canarsie elevated line was able to open on July 28, 1906.

The Manhattan Beach track gangs were now able to proceed even more rapidly with the Canarsie Railroad tracks out of the way. A very large new freight yard, comprising a strip of land 200 feet wide and a mile long, extending from New Lots Road to Liberty Avenue and from Van Sinderen Avenue to Junius Street, was constructed, a valuable new facility for the railroad's freight business.

Hardly had one drastic change been completed on the East New York section than another was initiated. The old right-of-way of the Manhattan Beach road north of Atlantic Avenue formed a reverse curve and to depress it would simply perpetuate this undesirable feature. After a great deal of investigation and study, it was found that a very large sum would be saved and the work carried on with much greater convenience and speed if the old right-of-way were abandoned altogether and the road rebuilt on a straight line between Liberty Avenue on the south and Granite Street on the north. Because of the drastic change in-

volved and the legal difficulties created by a change of route, it was resolved to petition the Legislature to amend the Act of 1903 to permit acquisition of new property to piece out a new line, and to authorize abandonment of the old surface route. The Legislature willingly complied and an enabling Act was passed on July 25, 1907 authorizing the change.

The old line passed under the Fulton and Broadway elevated roads and involved a steep climb to a high point at Bushwick Avenue with a corresponding steep descent on the north side; the new plan contemplated a four track tunnel from a point south of East New York Avenue to a point north of Granite Street, 3530 feet. The road would then pass to an embankment crossing Central Avenue and the Brooklyn-Queens borough line and thence one and one-fifth miles farther to Fresh Pond Road in Queens. The tunnel would eliminate 13 grade crossings.

Work on the tunnel began in June 1912. As completed, it was a monolithic reinforced concrete four tube structure, each tube oval in shape, 14 feet in width and with a maximum height of 17½ feet from top of rail to roof. Safety niches were provided for workmen and passages were provided between the tubes at 400 foot intervals. The tunnel floor was two feet thick, the roof 18 inches thick, partition walls two feet thick and side walls three and one-half feet thick. The first train to pass through the new tunnel was a special train on October 27, 1915. Eastbound railroad traffic was transferred to the new tunnel on November 6, 1915 and westbound traffic on November 24, 1915. At the south end of the tunnel between Atlantic Avenue and East New York Avenue an island platform was constructed for passenger use. This underground station superseded the old planked loading platform along Van Sinderen Avenue. The total cost of this great tunnel came to $1,203,760, the railroad paying 62½% and the city 37½% by special agreement. The Long Island R.R. in addition furnished the necessary new right of way, paying for all property and razing all buildings.

In the meantime considerable progress had been made on the Brighton embankment and along the Bay Ridge section. By June 1907 the embankment was sufficiently completed for the Brooklyn Rapid Transit to run its Brighton trains over it from Church Avenue to Sheepshead Bay. By November, all work including the stations was completed. In the spring and summer of

1909 one Long Island R.R. track was laid on the embankment and placed in operation though some Race Track specials continued using the old surface tracks as late as September. By March 1910 all the tracks were removed from the old surface line from Avenue N (South Greenfield) to Sheepshead Bay.

At the Bay Ridge yards the Long Island R.R. decided to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the extensive rebuilding and changing of grade to develop and increase its dock and yard facilities, the first such expansion since the improvements of 1892. The railroad entered into negotiations with New York City for the closing of 64th and 65th Streets between Second Avenue and the bay. Approval was received and in return the railroad agreed to assume all the costs of the First Avenue viaduct above the railroad tracks and enlarged yards. To get the viaduct to pass over the tracks at a sufficient height, it became necessary to depress the original track facilities 3.68 feet. A new Second Avenue bridge was completed in 1911–12. The bridges carrying Third, Fourth and Fifth Avenues all required rebuilding. The Fifth Avenue structure was completed in March 1915. The Seventh Avenue bridge was opened to use in 1910 and the Eighth Avenue structure in 1914. The new bridge carrying the Sea Beach line over the railroad was completed in 1911.

The bridging of the new yards and the extensive relocation and enlargement of the tracks was completed by May 1, 1917. The total cost to the Long Island R.R. came to almost eight million dollars but the road gained many advantages from the whole fifteen-year elimination effort. Among these was the laying out of new and enlarged local freight delivery yards providing increased freight handling facilities. Most of all, the Bay Ridge route could now qualify as a through freight line in connection with the New York Connecting R.R. between New England and the South and West. A trackage agreement was entered into between the Long Island R.R., the New York Connecting R.R. and the New Haven R.R. by which the line was to be used as part of the system for interchange freight between the New Haven and Pennsylvania Railroads via Hell Gate Bridge and the Bay Ridge float bridges. This service was inaugurated on January 17, 1918.

We must now go back again to the turn of the century and take note of the changing fortunes of Manhattan Beach itself in

the eventful years before World War I. The seasons appeared to follow each other with little outward change, the prominent guests arriving and departing, the dinners, the band concerts, the fireworks going on as always, but gradually an air of senescence tinged the atmosphere. The hotels were now a quarter of a century old and though still overwhelmingly respectable and unmistakably the resort of the "right people," there was less effort on the part of the management for striking and novel entertainments, less pursuit of expensive and top flight talent. Like comfortable dowagers the hotels continued on their genteel way but the bands were no longer those of Victor Herbert or John Phillip Sousa, and Pain no longer drew the thousands to his cataclysms of disaster overwhelming mimic cities. A new generation seeking more raucous and strident entertainment thronged the West End with its movie theatres, dance halls and variety shows and found no excitement in the sedate atmosphere of Manhattan Beach. The mainstay of the hotels now was its hard core of wealthy families who came year after year because it was the thing to do and the race track magnates whose large staffs of managers and operators filled blocks of rooms the year around because of the hotel's proximity to the tracks. Each of the race tracks reserved permanent suites for the use of members and guests. A big race day could still bring down 10,000 people who would fill the verandas and dining rooms either to celebrate their winnings or to dissipate regret for their losses. Rumors got about in the first years of the century that the Manhattan Beach enterprise was not doing as well as might be, and there were vague reports that it was for sale, but no price had ever been set on the great resort as a whole.

The spring of 1904 produced the first indication that all was not well when the company defaulted on the interest payment, but the difficulty was tided over by forming the Manhattan Beach Securities Company, to the stockholders of which was issued $225,000 of scrip. For a brief time in 1906 there seemed to be a way out of the difficulty when the New York City authorities showed an interest in purchasing the whole 425 acres for a public park. The city had toyed with the idea of securing Long Beach and had even prepared enabling legislation, but Manhattan Beach seemed a nearer and more attractive prospect. Austin Corbin, Jr., president of the Manhattan Beach Improvement Co.,

offered the estate to the city at $6800 an acre or a total of $3,000,000, a reasonable sum and not far from what it had cost his father to acquire and develop. The Board of Estimate visited the property in a body and inspected the hotels with a view to converting them to hospitals, but in the end no agreement could be reached and the idea was allowed to die.

It was now evident to Austin Corbin, Jr. and the other directors that the company would have to be completely reorganized as was done earlier in 1890. On May 1, 1906, the Manhattan Beach Hotel & Land Co. was allowed to default on the payment of its interest on $1,500,000 of the company's First Mortgage Bonds. The Manhattan Beach Securities Co., the holding organization formed in 1904 to secure the Hotel & Land Company's bonds, filed suit for foreclosure and a receiver was appointed. A plan of reorganization was released at the same time which contemplated a complete change in the face of Manhattan Beach. At least one and perhaps both of the old hotels was to be demolished and the whole estate was to be converted into a seaside cottage colony. The large swamp lands north and east of the hotels were to be filled in, graded and laid out in building lots; offers in excess of a million dollars had already been received for this tract.

The resort opened as usual for the 1906 season. The old bicycle track, an eyesore since the craze died out about 1899, was razed and replaced with a baseball field and professional teams were invited to play. Large sums went to beautify the lawns and grounds as usual and Pain was re-engaged for a larger and more spectacular display to recapture lost prestige.

On December 21, 1906 the property of the Manhattan Beach Hotel & Land Co. covering the hotels, fireworks pavilion, bath houses, railroad station and real estate was put up at auction and bought in by Austin Corbin, Jr. representing the Manhattan Beach Securities Co. for $1,100,000.

In the summer of 1907 work was begun on the conversion of the property which began to be publicized as the "Manhattan Beach Estates." An office was opened in Manhattan at 192 Broadway and an advertising campaign was mounted emphasizing the aristocratic, residential nature of the property and the conveniences available to a select clinetele. During the 1907 and 1908 seasons the company strained to install every conceivable

modern city improvement to attract lot buyers: macadamized streets, granolithic sidewalks, curbs, and a private sewer system with its own disposal plant, and gas, electric and telephone conduits buried out of sight to avoid disfiguring poles. The railroad station behind the Manhattan Beach Hotel, the fireworks enclosure farther back and the sedge grass where Corbin's buffalo used to graze in the 90's were all leveled flat. A birds-eye view of the property was published in an elegant brochure showing the new face of Manhattan Beach. Skirting the Sheepshead Bay shore line was a new Shore Road; midway between the bay and the ocean a broad straight thoroughfare was laid out called Hampton Avenue, and behind the hotels and running the length of the beach with a mall down the center was Oriental Boulevard. The blocks formed by these three horizontal streets were 800 feet in length and 208 feet in width, except where the curving Sheepshead Bay shore line cut into their depth. The seemingly odd width of 208 feet was proudly explained by the Estates Company. Behind every lot lay a four-foot strip expressly designed to carry the sewer connections and underground conduits for gas, water, electricity and telephones. In this way no unsightly connections need be visible in the open streets and no excavations need ever disturb their smooth surface. The first street on the west was West End Avenue; thereafter each of the streets to the eastward bore English-sounding names in alphabetical order from Amherst to Pembroke, an indication of the strongly Anglophile sympathies of the elder Corbin. The remaining three-fourths of a mile of beach that had existed in 1878 when the railroad had been laid out to Point Breeze had by 1908 long since disappeared and Pembroke Street remains today as "Land's end."

Sales of home sites in the new Estates went very slowly despite promotional effort—only 24 appear on the Belcher-Hyde map of 1908. In April 1909 the company turned the job over to a professional realtor, the well-known and experienced Joseph P. Day. Day opened offices at 31 Nassau Street and at the Estates itself and embarked on an energetic sales campaign. Sixty-five acres of Manhattan Beach comprising 800 lots were placed on sale. On West End Avenue facing the new railroad station lots were offered for stores; two entire blocks were reserved for bungalow sites. To maintain the aristocratic atmosphere of the Estates

section, street regulations were adopted for all new housing: no house costing less than $5000 might be erected; a minimum of two lots and preferably three must be used; corner houses had to use a minimum of five lots; the street frontage must be not less than 60 feet; all houses must be detached and the styles must avoid architectural discord.

In June 1909, Day concluded his first big sale—a block of 264 lots for about $25,000—to the Stuart Hirschman realty syndicate. Hirschman was a large investment broker of that day, specializing in subdividing acreage in Queens County. The lots he chose were all located between West End and Beaumont Avenues and between Oriental and Shore Boulevards, all close to the Long Island and Brighton stations. By the end of August Day had succeeded in selling another $200,000 of residential plots, the greater part of them located in the six westerly blocks. One of his customers, coincidentally, was Slaughter W. Huff, operator of the Third Avenue Railway System. Some of the houses erected were ornate and costly; though referred to as "cottages," some had as many as 18 rooms and ran to styles as disparate as Moorish and Old English.

Business at the old hotels continued on as usual in the 1909 season. The old railroad station behind the Manhattan Beach Hotel had been an early casualty in the laying out of the Manhattan Beach Estates, and by an agreement with the Long Island R.R., a new station and terminal was built at West End and Oriental Avenues, the point where the old line had curved to the east. When the season opened on June 19th, a three-track terminal with sidings and two long concrete platforms were ready for the trains. The storage tracks ran back about 2000 feet to Emmons Avenue, so that the new terminal had the use of nearly twice as much space as the old one. In the last week of September 1909 work was begun pouring the foundations for the new station building. To harmonize with the character of the other buildings in the development, the station was planned with a simple but pleasing exterior. The building faced south, opening onto a newly laid out broad plaza. On the west side of the station a substantial new freight building was started. The depot construction continued all through October and was completed in November.

The hotel season of 1909 was a busy one and, thanks to a complete absence of rainy weekends, financially successful. The 1910

season, despite all efforts, proved a depressing one for the management because of the ominous situation at the race tracks. Charles E. Hughes, governor of New York State, was a strong opponent of gambling, and before the expiration of his term on December 31, 1910, he succeeded in steering through the Legislature chapter 487 of the Laws of 1910, which provided that proprietors and officers of racing associations were to be held responsible for permitting betting within the enclosures of the race track over which they had jurisdiction.

In the vicinity of Manhattan Beach two large race tracks had for years provided heavy revenue for the Brighton Beach, Manhattan and Oriental hotels. The Brighton Beach Racing Association had already announced its dissolution at the end of the 1908 racing season, and began to lay out and grade streets through its grounds in the spring of 1909. Now there was only the huge 430 acre Coney Island Jockey Club left to carry on the tradition.

The Jockey Association managed the racing season of 1910 as contracted for and planned previously; as far as the hotels were concerned, everything now depended on the association's decision for 1911. It was a difficult decision to make. Betting had always been an inseparable part of track life; it was difficult to imagine racing without some form of wagering. Making the directors liable for every form of betting, both legal and illegal, seemed too much of a burden for any one owner or shareholder to bear; yet the Sheepshead Bay track represented a huge investment and provided the livelihood of a large number of trainers, handlers, etc. and originated profitable excursion crowds and freight handling for the railroads.

After much soul-searching the decision came—the track would discontinue racing and sell off the land. The decision was the death-knell of the old hotels; loss of the profitable racing patronage spelled the difference between financial solvency and ruin. Without the heavy weekend room occupancy and standing room patronage of the bar and dining rooms, the Manhattan Beach Hotel at least could not hope to reach the break-even point for the season in the light of heavy fixed expenses for wages, maintenance and entertainment.

Both hotels opened as usual on June 24, 1911 but for the first time rumors flew about that this might well prove to be the last season. The hotel manager denied the rumor and the presence of

President Taft himself at a banker's dinner in opening week seemed to confirm that all would go on as before. The decision to raze the famous old structure took place during the summer. The only notice given the guests was a simple announcement on the bulletin board: "This hotel will be closed after breakfast Tuesday morning." (September 12th) As this was the usual notice posted at the end of each season, no one read any special significance in it until a press release several days later disclosed the truth.

Contracts were let in a month to the Rockaway Point Company and the Gowanus Wrecking Company for tearing down the hotel, and in the meantime, engineers set to work laying streets, sewers, water and gas mains through the carefully manicured lawns, to ready the site for early cottage building. The wreckers began their work on October 30th. Within a week the top story and cupolas were dismantled; by the following March 15, 1912 only the foundations remained. The huge bulk of the hotel with its 103,000 square feet of floor space was taken apart with some care. Since nothing but the best long-leaf pine had gone into the structure, the wood was removed intact for resale. The Rockaway Point Company was then in the process of converting Rockaway Point into one of the largest camping and bungalow colonies in the country and many of the hotel timbers went into the erection of bungalows and a boardwalk at the Point. The remaining material was profitably disposed of as second-hand lumber.

The removal of the Manhattan Beach Hotel made room for three acres of building lots in the Estates layout. A builder, incorporated under the name of the Manhattan Beach Cottage Company, began erecting ten handsome villas for year-round occupancy beginning October 1909 and others followed thereafter. All had individual exteriors and interior appointments reflecting the taste and substantial income of the purchasers. To gain still further land for development and to make the most of the old hotel site, the Estates manager undertook the building of a massive sea wall 125 feet out from the existing shore line, extending from the western end of the Manhattan Beach property, passing in front of the former hotel site, and ending nearly at the bathing pavilion at the foot of Ocean Avenue. This large-scale filling operation added over 20 acres of new land for building sites, including a small piece of what had been part of the inlet

between Manhattan and Brighton Beaches. It was estimated that 300 building sites could be carved out of the new acreage; the area was zoned for bungalows exclusively, no house to be built on less than two lots and none more than 1½ stories high. The ocean front strip was dedicated for a new esplanade for residents. In June barge loads of large stones were dumped into the sea and piled up until they were visible above high tide; all the rock was taken from the foundations for the McAlpin Hotel in Herald Square in Manhattan and from current subway excavations. The dumping occupied all the seasons of 1911 and 1912. Once the riprap foundation was completed, the concrete sea wall was begun and continued until it attained its planned dimensions: 60 feet wide at the base, 12 feet on top and 8 feet above mean high water. The land which was made back of the sea wall was pumped from the ocean from a depth of about 60 feet; over this was laid a fill of dirt from excavations in other sections of Brooklyn, making a foundation suitable for growing grass and shrubbery.

Even before the land was ready, the realtor, Joseph P. Day, had no difficulty in selling off bungalow sites on the westerly side of Corbin Place. Here a number of plots were purchased by Westerners, several of whom were former guests of the hotel. The new houses were especially designed and built for seaside conditions, being covered with waterproofed Portland cement stucco and roofed with terra-cotta tile. All outside woodwork was heavy and substantial and treated with preservative creosote stain. To publicize the advantages of the new section and the Estates in general, Day invited a large group of newspaper men for a day at Manhattan Beach, including a swim, dinner and band concert.

Another improvement of the 1912 season was the reclamation of the marshes on the Sheepshead Bay side of Manhattan Beach. Permission was obtained from the War Department to recover those areas that had been washed out by successive storms over the previous twenty years. Great steam dredges were set to work which widened and deepened the boat channel in the bay and pumped the sand from the bottom onto the swampy shore line. Work on a second large sea wall all along the bay was begun, its base 50 feet wide, and resting on boulders weighing at least a ton each for stability. Atop the sea wall the new Shore Boulevard was laid out.

By the spring of 1913 Manhattan Beach had grown to a colony

of about 70 homes representing an investment of $600,000. The minimum cost of bungalows was $35,000 and the minimum for other houses $15,000. There were then 25 all-year-around residents at the Estates.

The year 1916 marked the final end of the old order at Manhattan Beach with the destruction of the Oriental Hotel, the last landmark dating back to the Corbin era. The great hotel had been accorded a short reprieve from the hands of the wreckers only five years before, but the increasing value of the land and the high cost of maintenance finally induced the Estates trustees to let the Oriental Hotel go the way of the vanished Manhattan Beach. Over April and May 1916 the great bulk of the old hotel with its familiar towers, pinnacles and minarets gradually succumbed to the wreckers and by June only the foundations remained.

The trustees at the same time turned over to Joseph P. Day the general management of the entire development including the Manhattan Beach Realty Company. Day was now operating from five offices at various points on the property. Sales of lots continued satisfactorily with 25 sold at the beginning of the 1916 season. The number of houses constructed at the beach had now risen to 114.

A further improvement designed to attract residents was the enlargement and improvement of the bathing area. On Saturdays and Sundays of 1915 the average attendance at the baths each day was still over 4000 persons, comparing favorably with the totals of twenty-five years before. There were still 2500 rooms for the accommodation of the bathers, though the once broad beach front had shrunk to 450 feet in length. Day renovated the whole pavilion and had the great sun-shade set back 50 feet to increase the bathing beach area.

The destruction of the hotels and the profound changes in the character of Manhattan Beach itself were bound to be reflected in the transportation facilities. The Long Island R.R. which had for years maintained a fairly steady level of service to the beach—22 to 24 daily trains in summer and 4 over the winter—continued the pattern down to the summer of 1907. The shrinkage thereafter, however, was abrupt: 15 trains only in the summer season of 1908, 8 in the 1909–10 seasons, 5 in the 1911–12 seasons, 4 from 1913 to May 1918; 3 from May 1918 to May 1921; 2 from May

1921–24. The reasons for the falling off are not far to seek: the closing of the Brighton Beach track at the end of the 1908 season, the further closing of the Sheepshead Bay track after the 1910 season, and the fact that just about all the traffic had gone over to the Brooklyn Rapid Transit elevated roads. The razing of the Manhattan Beach Hotel, which had always catered to a transient clientele in contrast to the Oriental, administrered the coup-de-grace to the already declining railroad patronage. The Long Island R.R. was now left with a line which served facilities that no longer existed and had outgrown its usefulness. There was no hope of better things in the new order at Manhattan Beach, for the whole place had at this time only about 100 homes and the number of year-round residents was hardly more than 25. The commutation figures for the newly built Manhattan Beach station show vividly how far the once-proud Corbin railroad had fallen:

1911	2	1915	2	1918	4
1912	2	1916	3		

The Manhattan Beach Estates management and its energetic promoter, Joseph P. Day, were understandably anxious to keep the railroad service at as high a level as possible and even filed a complaint in 1911 with the Public Service Commission to force the railroad to increase the service. Day, however, could not fill the trains he demanded nor even guarantee a break-even load. When the commission looked into the merits of the complaint, investigation disclosed that even the four daily trains still operated ran more than half empty. The Long Island R.R. was remarkably generous in providing Sunday service even when these runs were unprofitable. After the Public Service Commission had declared that no Sunday trains need be run, the Long Island R.R. voluntarily added the four Sunday trains requested to the regular four in August 1911. Again in 1912, 1914 and 1915 the four extra Sunday trains were provided. It is remarkable that the Long Island R.R. continued to operate trains at all for a further ten-year period considering that service was furnished at a loss. The regular consist in these last days had shrunk to one combination car and one coach operating over a single track south of Manhattan Beach Junction. For many years the railroad used the second track simply as a storage siding for coal cars.

Interestingly enough, the Public Service Commission, the Interborough subway and the Long Island R.R. conducted informal conversations during the spring and summer of 1913 on the possibility of selling off the unused Manhattan Beach branch to the Interborough subway. The idea was to electrify the steam road and to connect it with the Interborough's Eastern Parkway subway at the terminal of the Nostrand Avenue line in the Vanderveer Park section. This would produce a 15-block east-west extension of the I.R.T. along the Bay Ridge Division and a parallel I.R.T. service along the B.M.T.'s Brighton Beach line. The Long Island R.R. expressed willingness to sell the Manhattan Beach Branch but nothing came of the proposal.

Surprisingly enough, at the same time that the Long Island Rail Road's steam service was withering away to nothing, the Marine Railroad experienced an astonishing revival. In the first years of this century the same little cars drawn by the same old engines operated over the familiar route between Brighton Beach and the Manhattan Hotel. In 1899, an electric operation with one Duplex car "Oriental" briefly added variety by operating over the Long Island R.R. tracks between the hotels. This car ran for only a few days in April, then was withdrawn. It seems to have been turned over to the Brooklyn Rapid Transit for fitting with standard trolley poles, for, in the season of 1901, the car saw service briefly on the suburban Jamaica Avenue trolley line out of East New York. Although the traditional steam operation continued on the Marine Railroad between Brighton and Manhattan Beach for each summer season down to 1906, the Duplex trolley car must have returned to Manhattan Beach and continued its Manhattan Beach Hotel–Oriental Hotel runs, unacknowledged in the Annual Reports of the Long Island R.R. or the Marine R.R., for in the summer season of 1905, it was photographed behind the Manhattan Beach Hotel, supposedly still in shuttle service between the hotels and running with trolley poles. This unobtrusive operation was possible for trolley wires had been strung over the Manhattan Beach railroad tracks in the spring of 1899 and continued thereafter in use by B.R.T. elevated trains and trolleys.

In the summer of 1906 the Marine Railroad was finally electrified, a very belated improvement considering that the B.R.T. and the Duplex car had been using electricity for seven

seasons past. The stringing of trolley wire was started in the 1905 season and in any case would not take very long for the road was only 0.44 miles long, less than half a mile. Besides, so much overhead already existed at the Manhattan Beach end that only a few poles were needed at the Brighton Beach end. In the summer of 1905, the company withdrew one of its four old Jackson & Sharp open steam coaches and converted it for electrical operation at a cost of $2226. In the 1906 season the company bought new from Jackson & Sharp one large 15-bench open trolley car body with equipment for $1531. These two cars henceforth constituted the entire rolling stock of the road; two of the old steam coach bodies were sold off, one was demolished and one locomotive sold for salvage.

The Manhattan Beach Improvement Co., which held stock control of the Marine Railroad, furnished the power for the seasons of 1906, 1907 and 1908; thereafter power was supplied by the B.R.T. All the service was given by the one new trolley car, with the old electrified steam coach held in reserve. In the late months of 1909 the Long Island R.R. relocated and rebuilt the Manhattan Beach terminal. A broad open plaza was laid out in front of the station and trolley rails were put down preparatory to shifting the Marine Railroad roadbed. When the Manhattan Beach Hotel was torn down in the fall of 1911, the old Marine Railroad terminal was destroyed and the lone trolley had to end its run in the Long Island R.R. terminal plaza. It is probable that the Marine Railroad trolley track was extended into the Long Island R.R. yard at this time so as to provide shop facilities for the car. After the 1908 season when the Long Island R.R. track was torn up behind the hotels, the Duplex car "Oriental" could no longer make its inter-hotel shuttle runs and was transferred to the Marine Railroad roster.

At the end of the 1913 season another and final great change was made in the Marine Railroad. The track inside the Brighton Beach grounds was abandoned altogether along with all track west of the Long Island R.R. station. This meant, in effect, that the entire traditional right-of-way of the Marine Railroad went out of existence. A whole new trolley line, retaining the old name "Marine Railroad," was now built, starting from the Long Island R.R. station plaza and running east along Oriental Boulevard to the end of the graded road. The route was all double

tracked and a grass mall separated the tracks in Oriental Boulevard. The Manhattan Beach Estates was the prime mover behind the new road, the idea being to offer street railway facilities to the Estates residents and the baths visitors. A contract was drawn up between the Estates Company and the Marine Railroad whereby the Estates Company agreed to contribute $500 towards the operating expenses over and above income from fares. Since the Estates Company was inordinately proud of the appearance of the Manhattan Beach streets and had gone to great expense to bury all utility wires in conduits, the stringing of trolley wire and the erection of trolley poles for the new line was unthinkable. They therefore scrapped all the overhead electrification that remained over the old line along with the trolley cars themselves and arranged for the substitution of two rented storage battery cars. The new cars went into service on August 7, 1913 and all overhead operation was abandoned on September 7, one month later.

Storage battery cars were not quite the novelty in 1913 that we think them today. In Manhattan where many long street railway lines existed whose traffic density did not justify the great expense of electrification, storage battery cars had been substituted for horse cars. In late 1910 and more extensively in 1912 and 1913, this process accelerated; by late 1913, 117 storage battery cars gave all the service on six former horse car routes in Manhattan. Since the Marine Railroad was very short—only 1.36 miles and with light traffic—the storage battery car seemed the perfect answer.

Two cars gave service the first short season. The bodies were built by Beach and the electric installation came from the Federal Storage Battery Car Company who did the work at their shops in Silver Lake (Belleville) New Jersey. The cars came over the Erie Railroad to Jersey City, were floated over to Long Island City and then run on their own wheels to Manhattan Beach. The cars operated on 100 Edison cells and could make 20–22 m.p.h. on level track. The storage battery car company was understandably anxious to make a favorable impression in the hope of wider sales, and was careful to keep an accurate record of the two cars' performance at the beach. From August 7–September 5, 1913 the two cars ran 5804 miles and made 2134 round trips, carrying 21,485 passengers. Each car averaged 10 trips per day and on a

single battery charge got a maximum milease of 63.9.

The culminating improvement on the Marine Railroad was the extension of the storage battery car service from the station plaza over the tracks of the Long Island R.R. 0.848 miles to Sheepshead Bay station, where passengers changed to the Brighton Line trains. The Long Island R.R. received for the rental of its tracks and terminal $1200 a year. Operation began August 7, 1913. The new service was a great boon to the residents of Manhattan Beach, for residents could now ride directly to a connection with city-bound trains for a 5¢ fare at all hours of the day and during winter as well as summer. It was a strong bid on the part of the Estates Company for year-round residence at the beach. The company took large illustrated nine-inch-square ads in the Manhattan and local papers explaining and illustrating the new service.

Battery car service at Manhattan Beach lasted eleven years and riding gained over the years:

1913	70,841	1916	130,469	1919	190,307	1922	400,340
1914	116,253	1917	111,418	1920	256,757	1923	322,202
1915	132,168	1918	94,001	1921	358,205		

World War I depressed the riding for two years, but this was more than offset by a spectacular gain in patronage in the post-war period. In 1915 it became necessary to lease a third car to handle the traffic plus a sweeper to clear away the winter snows. The three cars were adequate until 1921 when two more were acquired, increasing the fleet to five cars and a sweeper.

On August 30, 1916 the Manhattan Beach Co. which had controlled the Marine Railroad through ownership of stock, transferred the control to the Manhattan Beach Estates, which retransferred it in May 1918 to the Manhattan Beach Park, Incorporated, of which Joseph P. Day was president.

On August 1, 1920 the Marine Railroad went before the Public Service Commission with a request to discontinue service over the Long Island R.R. tracks to Sheepshead Bay and to run instead to the B.R.T. station at Brighton Beach. The company explained that its cars were operated largely for the convenience of bathers using the Manhattan Beach Baths whose interests could be served equally well under the proposed plan. The route would also be a little shorter and two track operation would be an im-

provement over the single track assigned by the Long Island Rail Road. The company was also contemplating a change of motive power, either a return to overhead electric operation, or substitution of gasoline cars.

The Public Service Commission held public hearings in August 1920 and then concurred in the proposed changes. In the early spring of 1921 the Marine Railroad rebuilt a double track line over substantially the same right of way that it had given up in 1914, the new terminal being on the plaza in front of the new Brighton Beach Baths (0.478 mi.) Operation of cars over the Long Island R.R. tracks from Manhattan Beach station to Sheepshead Bay was discontinued and the Long Island R.R. lease canceled as of April 1, 1921.

The residents of Manhattan Beach were not all pleased by the change; many had come to prefer the shopping facilities of Sheepshead Bay. A delegation of residents carried their case all the way to City Hall and Mayor Hylan, requesting him to establish a municipal bus line from Manhattan Beach to Sheepshead Bay with a 5¢ fare. The mayor expressed doubt that the 5¢ fare could be maintained if buses were substituted.

Bus competition appeared at Manhattan Beach for the first time in 1921 when the Manhattan Beach-Plum Beach Auto Stage Company began operating buses to Sheepshead Bay for a 10¢ fare. The Marine Railroad took the bus company to court on the basis of the Cropsey decision, a ruling by a local New York magistrate forbidding bus operators, whether municipal or private, to operate over streets or routes, franchises for which were already held by street railway companies. When a faction of the Manhattan Beach people appealed to Hylan for municipal buses, he sarcastically advised them to prevail on Judge Cropsey to modify his decision in their case, and to contact Mr. Grover Whalen, the city's Commissioner of Plant and Structures. The determined residents took the mayor's advice and carried their plea to Whalen, who was then involved in the operation of a municipal bus line in Staten Island under Mayor Hylan's supervision. Whalen put a request for Manhattan Beach buses before the Board of Estimate on June 10, 1921 but was turned down, there being far too few buses available and the cost of service too high.

Although riding on the Marine Railroad reached a peak in

1922, the Manhattan Beach Park Company was becoming disenchanted with the realities of operating a transit company. The continued opposition on the part of a segment of the residents was unpleasant enough; still more disagreeable was the wrangling with the newly-developing bus competition. But, worst of all, the continued operation of the road required a considerable annual subsidy to make up any operating deficiency including repairs to equipment. According to the Park Company's figures the annual loss ran to something like $20,000 a year. When it came time to renew the annual contract with the Marine Railroad for the 1923 season, the Manhattan Beach Park Company decided to abandon the battery car operation entirely and to yield the franchise to the competing bus company. On June 10, 1923, operation of the battery cars was discontinued; so came to an end 45 years of beachfront railroading, which had run the gamut of steam trains, electric trolleys and battery cars, and had operated over a roadbed which had changed location at least four times over the years.

The Long Island Rail Road's own steam service from Long Island City to Manhattan Beach was not long in following. On May 24, 1921 the railroad had notified the Public Service Commission that it proposed to cancel the early morning and late afternoon trains and retain only one midday train. The handful of commuters left attended the public hearing called by the commission and pleaded with the road not to abandon them. The Commission agreed with the commuters that an elimination of the two useful commuter-hour trains constituted practical abandonment of the service and requested the Long Island to relent. Reluctantly, the railroad acceded, but reserved the right to put before the commission the riding statistics particularly on the portion of the route between East New York and Manhattan Beach. A check between these two points for the seven days between May 8 and 15, 1921 disclosed that the average daily travel on the morning train was 18 persons and the evening train 12.

For the seasons of 1922 and 1923 no changes were made, but the railroad finally called a halt to its unprofitable service in the spring of 1924. The spring timetable went into effect on Wednesday, May 14, 1924, and, in the space where the Manhattan Beach schedule had always been, appeared the single word

"discontinued." So ended very quietly and almost completely unnoticed 48 years of passenger service.

The Bay Ridge Branch during World War I and up into the twenties did a very heavy freight business, but the Manhattan Beach Branch south of Manhattan Beach Junction had nothing more than a few industrial sidings to provide revenue. For no discernible reason the Long Island R.R. in the year 1925 ended the corporate existence of the New York, Brooklyn and Manhattan Beach R.R. as of June 19, and merged the road into the Long Island system. The railroad abandoned the Manhattan Beach and Sheepshead Bay stations and the line south of Neck Road almost immediately in order to eliminate maintenance of the Emmons Avenue bridge and the box culvert containing Coney Island Creek. In 1932 the branch was again cut back from Neck Road to South Greenfield. In the words of the railroad, the freight revenue had "dried up" completely and freight service was discontinued altogether in July 1935. Abandonment of the whole Manhattan Beach Branch was approved by the Interstate Commerce Commission July 28, 1937. The track was taken up and the bridges dismantled in 1937. All the real estate was disposed of in 1939–41 as follows:

To Lurann Holding Corporation, March 4, 1939, the right-of-way from Avenue J to Emmons Avenue for $200,000.

To Trump-Brighton Corporation, January 2, 1941, the station property and some right-of-way from Neptune Avenue to Oriental Avenue for $175,000.

To Emanuel Lurio and Anna Grosfeld, April 3, 1941, 8.9 acres from Avenue J to Avenue I for $100,000.

The electrified Bay Ridge Division continued to be one of the Long Island Rail Road's heaviest freight lines and best revenue producers all during World War II and into the post-war years. The final event in our long story is the very recent sale of the entire Long Island Rail Road system to the State of New York on December 22, 1965. One of the many articles in the Contract of Sale provided that the Pennsylvania Railroad, as partial compensation for its investment in the Long Island Rail Road, should secure the whole Bay Ridge Division with all track and facilities. Thus, after 85 years of ownership by the Long Island Rail Road, the remaining trackage of the old New York &

Manhattan Beach Railway is presently alienated from the rest of the Long Island system. As we go to press in this summer of 1968, the continued existence of the Bay Ridge Division remains in doubt. The present mayor of New York City, John V. Lindsay, proposed in February 1967 a $1.3 million dollar "Linear City," to be built along a five mile stretch of the line through Brooklyn making use of air rights for the construction of schools, apartments, stores and community buildings. The latest proposal envisages tearing up the tracks altogether and building on the eight mile right-of-way between the water front and East New York a six-lane Cross-Brooklyn Expressway linking the Narrows Bridge with the Nassau Expressway at J. F. Kennedy Airport. It is argued that the recent merger of the Pennsylvania Railroad with the New York Central Railroad has provided the Pennsylvania with freight facilities unavailable before, and that the Bay Ridge outlet is now unneeded. Since the Cross-Brooklyn Expressway has recently been included in the interstate highway system, 90% of the cost will be underwritten by the federal government, and there is thus a strong likelihood that the construction target date of 1974 will be met. Only time will tell whether Austin Corbin's dream will succumb to the pressures of the highway-oriented age we live in today.

Roster of Locomotives, Engines and Cars

New York & Manhattan Beach Railway

NARROW GAUGE ENGINES

Charles L. Flint—Mason 1876. 0-4-4T. Construction #571. Cylinder 11″, stroke 16″, drivers 36″. Built for the Centennial Exposition, where it carried the number "1876." Came to the Manhattan Beach Railway in January 1877. Remained on the Long Island R.R., where it became #103; widened to standard gauge in 1883. Later became L.I.R.R. #55.

Admiral Almy—Mason 1877. 0-4-4T. Construction #581. Cylinder 12″, stroke 16″, drivers 42″. Believed sold in 1881 through Mason to the Cincinnati Northern, where it became #5, then to Toledo, Cincinnati & St. Louis as #55 in June 1883. Returned to Cincinnati Northern Railway in July 1884. Further disposition uncertain.

Manhattan (1)—Mason 1887. 0-4-4T. Construction #582. Cylinder 12″, stroke 16″, drivers 42″. Sold in the summer of 1879 to the Wheeling & Lake Erie R.R., but not numbered. Sent back to Mason 1881 for standard-gauging and rebuilding to 2-4-4T. Then returned to Wheeling & Lake Erie as #6. Retired 1890.

New York (1)—Mason 1877. 0-4-4T. Construction #585. Cylinder 12″, stroke 16″, drivers 42″. Sold in the summer of 1879 to the Wheeling & Lake Erie R.R. but not numbered. Sent back to Mason in 1881 for standard-gauging and rebuilding as 2-4-4T; then returned to Wheeling & Lake Erie as #7. Renumbered to #92 in 1892. Retired 1893.

Bay Ridge—Mason 1877. 0-4-4T. Construction #588. Cylinder 12″, stroke 16″, drivers 42″. Retained by the Long Island R.R., number unknown. Standard gauged in 1883.

East New York (1)—Baldwin, March 1878. 4-4-0. Construction #4293. Cylinder 12″, stroke 18″, drivers 42″. Built for the Chicago & Tomah R.R. but diverted at the factory to the Manhattan Beach Railway. Sold in 1881 to the Lawrenceville Branch R.R. in Georgia.

Sea Breeze—Baldwin, June 1877. 0-4-0T. Construction #4105 Cylinder 9″, stroke 16″, drivers 36″. Built for the Northern Pacific Coast R.R. as the "Moscow," but diverted at the factory to the Manhattan Beach Railway. Delivered April 13, 1878. Used on the Marine R.R. but derailed too often. Sold by 1880 to the South Florida R.R. where it became the "Kissimmee" #3.

Peter Stuyvesant—Mason, May 1878. 0-4-4T. Construction #590. Cylinder 12″, stroke 16″, drivers 42″. Delivered about June 1, 1878. Remained on the Long Island R.R. but number unknown. Widened to standard gauge in 1883.

Wouter Van Twiller—Mason, May 1878. Type 0-4-4T. Construction #592. Cylinders 12″, stroke 16″, drivers 42″. Remained on the Long Island R.R., but number uncertain. Widened to standard gauge in 1883.

Washington Irving—Mason, May 1878. 0-4-4T. Construction #593. Cylinders 12″, stroke 16″, drivers 42″. Remained on the Long Island R.R., but number uncertain. Widened to standard gauge in 1883.

Hendrick Hudson—Mason, July 1878. 0-4-4T. Construction #596. Cylinders 12″, stroke 16″, drivers 42″. Remained on the Long Island R.R., but number unknown. Widened to standard gauge in 1883.

Manhattan (II)—Mason, May 1881. 2-4-6T. Construction #648. Cylinders 14″, stroke 18″, drivers 48″. Damaged in the Bay Ridge car house fire of December 1882. Sold back to Mason in February 1883. Repaired and resold to the Toledo, Cincinnati & St. Louis R.R. as #83. Renumbered by the Toledo, St. Louis & Kansas City R.R. as #25 on June 12, 1886. For further data, see "Nickel Plate" by John Rehor.

William Kieft—Mason, May 1881. 2-4-6T. Construction #649. Cylinders 14″, stroke 18″, drivers 48″. Damaged in the Bay Ridge car house fire of December 1882. Sent back to Mason in February 1883 who repaired and resold it to the Toledo, Cincinnati & St. Louis R.R. as #84. Renumbered by Toledo, St. Louis & Kansas City R.R. to #26 on June 12, 1886. See Rehor book for later data.

East New York (II)—Mason, June 1881. 2-4-6T. Construction #650. Cylinders 14″, stroke 18″, drivers 48″. Damaged in the Bay Ridge car house fire of December 1882. Sold back to

Mason in February 1883, who repaired and resold it to the Toledo, Cincinnati & St. Louis R.R. as #85. Renumbered by Toledo, St. Louis & Kansas City R.R. to #27 on June 12, 1886. See Rehor for later data.

Gravesend—Mason, June 1881. 2-4-6T. Construction #651. Cylinders 14″, stroke 18″, drivers 48″. Damaged in the Bay Ridge engine house fire of December 1882. Sold back to Mason in February 1883, who repaired and resold it to the Toledo, Cincinnati & St. Louis R.R. as #86. Renumbered by Toledo, St. Louis & Kansas City R.R. to #28. See Rahor book for later data.

New York (II)—Mason, May 1882. 2-4-6T. Construction #682. Cylinders 14″, stroke 18″, drivers 48″. Remained on the Long Island R.R. where it became #66. Widened to standard gauge in 1883. Gone by October 1898.

Oriental—Mason, June 1882. 2-4-6T. Construction #685. Cylinders 14″, stroke 18″, drivers 48″. Remained on the Long Island R.R., where it became #67. Widened to standard gauge in 1883. Gone by October 1898.

STANDARD GAUGE ENGINES

(Bought by the Long Island R.R. for the

Manhattan Beach Division)

#56–60—Mason, May 1883. Type 2-4-6T. Construction numbers 699–703. Cylinders 14″, stroke 18″, drivers 50″. Later converted to 0-4-6T. Disappeared by October 1898.

#61–65—Rogers, June 1883. Type 0-4-6T. Construction numbers 3269, 3273, 3275, 3281, 3284. Cylinders 14″, stroke 18″, drivers 50″. In October 1898 these were renumbered to 227–231 and about 1905 to 327–333. Retired in 1906.

The Marine Railroad

East End—Mason, June 1879. Type 2-4-4T. Construction #603. Cylinders 10″, stroke 16″, drivers 37″. Converted to standard gauge in 1883. Passed to the Long Island R.R. in 1888, but number not known. Disposition unknown.

West End—Mason, June 1879. Type 2-4-4T. Construction #604.

Cylinders 10″, stroke 16″, drivers 37″. Converted to standard gauge in 1883. Passed to the Long Island R.R. in 1888, but number not known. Disposition unknown.

Manhattan—Baldwin, July 1877. Type 0-4-0ST. Order 4116. Cylinders 9″, stroke 12″, drivers 36″. Ex-Long Island R.R. rapid transit engine "Brooklyn" 0-4-0 dummy. Renumbered to 298 in October 1898. Retired by 1906.

Oriental—Baldwin, July 1877. Type 0-4-0ST. Order 4117. Cylinders 9″, stroke 12″, drivers 36″. Ex-Long Island R.R. 0-4-0 dummy "Flatbush." Renumbered to 299 in October 1898. Retired by 1906.

TROLLEY EQUIPMENT

Oriental—Duplex Car Co. 1899. 12-bench open, Peckham 14A trucks. Duplex convertible car. Operated 1901 on Jamaica Avenue trolley line. Returned to Manhattan Beach 1902–1911, operating as a shuttle between the Manhattan and Oriental Hotels over L.I.R.R. tracks. Assigned to Marine R.R. 1911–1913, sold 1914.

(*number unknown*)—Jackson & Sharp Co. 1906, 15-bench open, deck roof; bought to electrify the Marine R.R. in 1906; continued in service until 1913. Sold 1914.

1–5—Beach Car Co. 1913. Five storage battery cars. Length 27′6″ overall, height 8′. Weight 18,000 lbs. empty. Seating 26. Power: 100 Edison A6H cells, 95 cells for power and 5 for lighting. Two motors, 100 volt, 86 amp. 800 rpm motors. Wheels 30″. Hand Brakes.

First two cars delivered under their own power from the Federal Storage Battery Co. car shop at Silver Lake (Belleville) New Jersey via the Erie R.R. to Jersey City. Floated to Long Island City and then on own wheels to Manhattan Beach. Began service August 7, 1913. Car #3 bought in 1915, Cars #4 and 5 in 1921.

New York & Manhattan Beach Railway

PASSENGER CARS

NARROW GAUGE

36 open cars, Jackson & Sharp 1876. These open excursion cars were bought from the Centennial Exposition. Twenty-five were burnt up in the 1882 fire. In February 1881 "several" new freight cars were made from the old Centennial opens.

4 closed cars, Jackson & Sharp 1876. These closed cars also came from the Centennial Exposition.

31 open cars, Jackson & Sharp 1877. Twenty-three were damaged in the 1882 fire and were later widened to standard gauge.

8 open cars, Brill 1877. The Railroad Gazette as of April 20, 1877 reported that Brill was then building 8 opens for the Manhattan Beach R.R. These were all later widened to standard gauge.

20 Parlor cars, Harlan & Hollingsworth, April and May 1879. These were Woodruff Drawing Room cars, being built in Pittsburgh. Newspapers reported they had opal glass coupe fronts. Thirteen were burnt in the 1882 fire.

The Railroad Gazette for March 15 and June 1, 1878 reported that the Bradley Co. was then building 40 open cars for the Manhattan Beach R.R. They were 40 feet long and seated 80. There is no evidence that these cars were ever actually delivered.

STANDARD GAUGE

50 open cars, built 1883. All were taken out of service after the Parkville and Berlin disasters in 1893 discredited the value of open cars for large excursion movements.

4 open cars, Jackson & Sharp. Made for the Marine Railroad.

51 closed cars, built 1894; Replacements for the open cars taken out of service after the 1893 accidents.

Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R.

LOCOMOTIVE ROSTER

#1 Coney Island—Baldwin Locomotive Works, April 1875, Type 2-4-0T. Order #3714. Cylinders 11″, stroke 16″, drivers 40″. Twenty tons. Ruined in 1887 fire.

#2 Gravesend—Baldwin Locomotive Works, April 1875, Type 2-4-0T. Order #3716. Cylinders 11″, stroke 16″, drivers 40″. Rebuilt by company December 18, 1879. Twenty tons.

#3 Parkville—Baldwin Locomotive Works, April 1875. Type 2-4-0T. Order #3719. Cylinders 11″, stroke 16″, drivers 40″. Twenty tons. On July 29, 1877 damaged in collision with Manhattan Beach train. Sold in 1888 because of fire damage.

#4 Prospect Park—Baldwin Locomotive Works, May 1876, Type 2-4-0T. Order #3883. Cylinders 13″, stroke 20″, drivers 40½″.

Twenty-eight tons. Sold to John O'Brien. First delivered by boat to Coney Island and unloaded at company's dock on Coney Island Creek in mid-May 1876.

#5 Brooklyn—Baldwin Locomotive Works, June 1877, Type 2-4-0T. Order #4100. 12″, stroke 18″, drivers 41″. Twenty-five tons. Delivered by boat to Coney Island dock July 2, 1877. Cost $5500. Sold to Anchor Saw Mill Co.

#6 West Brighton—Baldwin Locomotive Works, May 1879, Type 2-4-0T. Order #4640. Cylinders 12″, stroke 18″, drivers 41″. Sold to O'Brien & Sheehan, then to Southern States Lumber Co.

#7 Rosedale—Baldwin Locomotive Works, May 1879, Type 2-4-0T, order #4644. Cylinders 12″, stroke 18″, drivers 41″. Ordered as #1 but delivered as #7. Sold to O'Brien & Sheehan, then to Southern States Lumber Co.

#8 Idlewild—Baldwin Locomotive Works, May 1879, Type 2-4-0T. Order #4648. Cylinders 12″, stroke 18″, drivers 41″. Ordered as #2 but delivered as *#8*. Sold to the McClure Lumber Co.

#9 West End—Baldwin Locomotive Works, May 1883, type 2-4-0T. Order #6754. Cylinders 13″, stroke 18″, drivers 41″. Sold to the Palmetto Phosphate Co. where it became #2.

#10 Bay Ridge—Baldwin Locomotive Works, April 1887, Type 2-4-0T. Order #8499. Cylinders 14″, stroke 20″, drivers 48″. Cost $6850. Sold to the Palmetto Phosphate Co.

#11 Jockey Club—Baldwin Locomotive Works, May 1888, Type 2-4-0T. Order #9267. Cylinders 14″, stroke 20″, drivers 48″. Cost $5934. Sold to the Union Tanning Co.

#1 Coney Island—Baldwin Locomotive Works, June 1890, Type 2-4-0T. Order #10,962. Cylinders 14″, stroke 20″, drivers 48″. Sold to the Penn Tanning Co. Bought originally for the Union Depot service which opened in the 1890 season.

#3 Parkville—Baldwin Locomotive Works, June 1890, Type 2-4-0T. Order #10,959. Cylinders 14″, stroke 20″, drivers 48″. Sold to the U. S. Leather Co. Bought originally for the Union Depot service which opened in the 1890 season.

CARS

10 open cars, 2 closed, J. G. Brill (?) 1875. The opens were 45 feet long with 16 reversible seats and seating 5 persons each or

80 in all. Weight 7 tons. The two closed cars had 18 windows.

5 cars, J. G. Brill 1876. Five cars, delivered May 1, 1876. Larger than the first set and seating 96 persons.

6 cars, J. G. Brill 1877. The Railroad Gazette of April 20, 1877 contained a report that Brill was then building 20 open excursion cars for the P.P .& C.I. The company's annual report lists only 6 new cars received in 1877.

2 cars, built 1878.

18 cars, built 1879

1 car, bought second-hand from the New York & Brighton Beach R.R. for $1814. This road was burnt out in 1881 and never resumed operation.

12 open cars, J. G. Brill 1890. Twelve bodies and 24 trucks ordered on February 3, order #2853. Bought as replacements for those destroyed in the November 1887 fire at Greenwood. Cost $16,640.

Twelve coaches were reported destroyed in the Greenwood depot fire of November 14, 1887.

Woodruff Parlor cars and sleeping coaches ran to the Brooklyn Jockey Club Race Track meets during the spring and fall of 1888 and 1889. Pullman cars are reported for 1890 and 1891; thereafter the Long Island Pullman Car Co. supplied the service from 1892 to 1909.

Brooklyn, Flatbush & Coney Island R.R.

(never a part of the L.I.R.R. system)

LOCOMOTIVE ROSTER

#1 John A. Lott—Danforth Locomotive & Machine Co., 1878. Type 4-4-0. Order #1048. Cylinder 16″, stroke 24″, drivers 60″. Delivered at Hunter's Point on January 5, 1878; because of an accident in transporting the engine, it did not arrive on Brighton rails until May 6, 1878. Cost $7000. Named after the first president of the road, a member of one of the first families of Flatbush and a local judge (1806–1878).

#2 Henry C. Murphy—Danforth Locomotive & Machine Co. 1878. Type 4-4-0. Order #1049. Cylinder 16″, stroke 24″, drivers 60″. Delivered week of May 13, 1878. Cost $7000. Named after the second president of the road, president of the

Brooklyn Bridge Co. and fifth mayor of Brooklyn (1842–3), and very prominent jurist (1810–1882). In 1882 this engine is described as being painted red, blue and gold for the season.

#3 Thomas Sullivan—Danforth Locomotive & Machine Co. 1878. Type 4-4-0. Order #1050. Cylinder 16″, stroke 24″, drivers 60″. Delivered week of June 3, 1878. Cost $7000. Named after the president of the Brooklyn City R.R., which company was a heavy investor in the Brighton road.

#4 William Marshall—Danforth Locomotive & Machine Co. 1878. Type 4-4-0. Order #1051. Cylinder 16″, stroke 24″, drivers 60″. Cost $7000.

#5 (name unknown)—Danforth Locomotive & Machine Co. 1878. Type 4-4-0. Order $1052. Cylinder 16″, stroke 24″, drivers 60″.

#6 Brighton—Danforth Locomotive & Machine Co. 1879. Type 4-4-0. Order #1075. Cylinders 17″, stroke 24″, drivers 63 ⅜″. Cost $6800. Contracted for in February 1879 and put in service July 4, 1879. Named for the terminal by resolution of the Executive Board on May 1, 1879.

#7 Flatbush—Danforth Locomotive & Machine Co. 1879. Type 4-4-0. Order #1076. Cylinders 17″, stroke 24″, drivers 63 ⅜″. Cost $6800. Contracted for in February 1879 and put in service July 4, 1879. Named for the station by resolution of the Executive Board on May 1, 1879.

#8 (name unknown)—Rogers Locomotive Works December 1884. Type 2-4-2ST. Order #3520. Cylinders 13″, stroke 22″, drivers 45″. There is a good possibility that this locomotive never bore a name. At the time of purchase it was scheduled to be used for "running in winter and doing the switching of trains in summer."

Brooklyn Rapid Transit records show that 7 locomotives were on hand as of December 1900 and were all scrapped during that month.

CARS

15 open cars, Wason Mfg. Co. 1878. Placed in service July 1, 1878. A bill from the Wason Co. for "open cars" for $7100 was presented to the Executive Committee and ordered paid as of June 18, 1878. It seems too little for 15 cars.

10 open cars (#7 and others), J. G. Brill Co. 1878. Placed in service July 1, 1878. Two bills, one for $4740 and another for

$3160 for "passenger cars" were presented to the Executive Committee of the road and ordered paid as of May 22 and June 1, 1878. These bills seem more reasonable.

2 closed cars, Wason Mfg. Co. 1878. Placed in service July 1, 1878. On July 10, 1878 a bill from Wason for "cars" amounting to $11,940 was presented to the Executive Committee of the road and ordered paid. A second followed on August 17th for $7777.85. Railroad Gazette for June 14, 1878 reported that Wason was building cars for the Brighton road.

2 combination cars, J. G. Brill Co. 1878. Placed in service July 1, 1878. A bill for "cars" amounting to $8275 was presented by the Brill Co. to the Executive Committee of the road as of July 10, 1878 and ordered paid. Another followed on August 17th for $4105.

3 open cars, 1 closed car, Brill or Wason 1878. Delivered July 9, 1878.

10 opens (#34 among others), Jackson & Sharp 1878. Delivered first week of August 1878.

1 closed car, converted in Brighton R.R. shops from a former open in September and October 1884.

4 opens, Jackson & Sharp 1885. Delivered in June 1885. Seated 126 passengers.

List of Stations

New York & Manhattan Beach Railway

BAY RIDGE BRANCH

Bay Ridge: The site of the terminal was the former Bergen farm, purchased in 1872 by the New York & Hempstead R.R. Co. The purchase covered an 1100 foot frontage on the bay and extended back to Fourth Avenue. In 1876, a fence was set up around the property and walks built; both installations were damaged in a storm of November 1876. A ferry house 30 x 20 was erected in late 1876. In February and March 1877 an engine house was built 40 x 24. In April 1877, a coal box was added 25 x 40 with a capacity of 150 tons of coal.

In June 1877, the contractor, Mr. George Kingsland, erected a depot in the form of an L; it was 48 x 160, with a waiting room 26 x 40, the latter two stories in height with a bell tower. The upper floor was used for ticket offices and sleeping rooms. Inside the building was also a shelter for trucks and a platform 47 x 80. Covered platforms extended 200 feet from the end of the waiting room and were divided into bays 10 x 20 each. The total cost of the depot was about $5000. There was also a car house for storing passenger cars 500 feet in length. The dock, as of July 1877, had a frontage of 230 feet and a depth of over 1000 feet.

On the morning of December 14, 1882, a disastrous fire, starting in the oil house, spread to all the buildings and razed the entire dock area—depot, engine house and car sheds, together with almost all the rolling stock. In 1883 the depot and car sheds were rebuilt and fenced in. In 1885 new covered walkways were erected leading to the dock, and in 1887 new covered platforms were reported built.

In 1892, the surrounding land under water was bought as part of the New York Bay Extension R.R. scheme; the idea was to divert all South Side trains into 65th Street rather than

into Long Island City, since Bay Ridge was much nearer to the Jersey freight terminals. In 1893, new tracks were laid in the expanded yards, new piers were built and a floating bridge added. In 1895, 15.472 acres of land in all were purchased to expand the yard to its present dimensions.

1904 was the last year of passenger service with four passenger round trips running that summer. Most service had been terminated with the close of the 1897 summer season.

Third Avenue: Station appears on the first timetable of July 1877. The railroad built a station here in June and July; a large waiting room was built on the bridge carrying Third Avenue over the track. The station remained closed for the 1879 season but was briefly reopened in August 1880, only to be closed again at the end of the season. Five years later, in 1885, the Long Island R.R. built a new station and platforms. Service in 1885, 1886, 1887 appears to have been given by the Culver trains only, for this station does not appear on the L.I.R.R. timetables. In 1888 both L.I.R.R. and Culver trains used the station. The Third Avenue station disappears from the timetables after the summer of 1897.

Brooklyn, Bath & Coney Island R.R. Crossing: Station appears on the first timetable of July 1877 and every year thereafter. In the early years the Bath R.R. tried to coordinate its schedules with the Manhattan Beach trains. The station disappears from the timetables after the summer of 1897.

Parkville: Appears on the first timetable of July 1877. The station was on the southeast corner of the M.B.R.R. and Gravesend Avenue. Parkville was at this time a village situated between Coney Island Avenue and Gravesend Avenue, and Avenues F and M. In 1877, the village had a population of about 700 and boasted a school and four churches. The village was named in 1866, when Daniel Cumiskey, James Sutherland, Francis Briggs and others had the name Greenfield changed to Parkville. The land originally had been the Ditmars Farm in colonial days. Half the land was conveyed in 1852 to the original settlers under the name of "United Freemen Land Association"; the other half was deeded in 1854.

In 1885, by agreement between Corbin and Culver, a connection was put in in the southwest quadrant and another in the southeast quadrant, the former for Culver trains to reach

Bay Ridge and the latter for L.I.R.R. trains to reach the Brooklyn Jockey Club Race Track. The Parkville station is last listed in the timetables for the summer of 1897.

Main Line

Long Island City: Manhattan Beach trains began running out of Long Island City terminal on June 2, 1883, when the new Long Island City & Manhattan Beach Railroad opened as a replacement for the Greenpoint service.

Penny Bridge: One of the original stations on the old South Side R.R. Manhattan Beach trains out of Long Island City stopped here from the beginning in 1883 to the end in 1924.

Haberman: First appears on the timetables for September 1910 and remains till the end in 1924.

Maspeth: First listed on the timetable of May 1895 and continues to the end in 1924. Station located at 58th Avenue and Creek Street.

Bushwick Junction (Fresh Pond): Originally the Fresh Pond station of the old South Side R.R. After the building of the Long Island City & Manhattan Reach R.R. in 1882–3, the station name was changed to Bushwick Junction. On the January 1918 timetable both names are used; thereafter, the station is always called Fresh Pond to the end in 1924.

Myrtle Avenue: First appears on the timetable of September 1893 and remains to the end in 1924.

Ridgewood (Cypress Avenue): Originally called "Dummy Crossing" from the steam line operating on Cypress Avenue; station opened June 2, 1883. Station name changed to Ridgewood on the 1884 timetables; name changed again to Cypress Avenue on the January 1891 table. This name remains thereafter to the end in 1924. This station on Cypress Avenue is not to be confused with the other Ridgewood station on Myrtle Avenue on the Greenpoint Division.

Central Avenue: Station opened June 2, 1883 and lasted just this one season after which it was moved south a few blocks to Bushwick Avenue.

Bushwick Avenue: First appears on the timetables of 1884 as a replacement for the Central Avenue station. Station abandoned in November 1915 after which all trains in the East New

York area were removed from the surface and transferred to the tunnel.

Fulton Avenue: First appears on the table of September 1893. See East New York.

East New York: The railroad used the Metropolitan Hotel on the southwest corner of Van Sinderen Avenue and Fulton Street as its depot. This hotel had been the original terminus of the Brooklyn & Rockaway Beach R.R. from 1865 to July 1, 1870. Its proprietor during the 60's and 70's was Robert Smith. In June 1877 the Manhattan Beach R.R. concluded arrangements with Mr. Smith to use his hotel as a depot. To make the building serviceable, the railroad, in July, built platforms in front of the hotel building and alongside it put up a waiting room and ticket office. New piazzas and platforms were erected fronting Fulton Street, and in the hotel, new dining rooms, an enlarged bar and additional accommodations for guests were added.

The increased business brought by the railroad forced an enlargement of the waiting room and the installation of a Western Union telegraph office in the 1878 season. A new wooden plank platform was also built along Van Sinderen Avenue between Fulton Street and Broadway (August 1878).

By 1883 even these accommodations proved inadequate and a new combination hotel and depot under Robert Smith's management was erected on the southwest corner of Atlantic and Van Sinderen Avenues. As of January 1, 1884, this new structure became the joint Main Line-Manhattan Beach R.R. station, and the L.I.R.R. discontinued stopping its Main Line trains at the old Howard House station.

In 1887, part of the long platform extending from Fulton Street to Atlantic Avenue was covered over to give shelter. A note on the 1899 table mentions that southbound Manhattan Beach trains stop at the Fulton Street end of the platform and northbound trains at the Atlantic Avenue end. The station had to be abandoned in November 1915 when the trains began running in the tunnel; a new island platform was built into the tunnel at the extreme south end and remained in use till the end in 1924. The platform can still be seen today at the south portal of the tunnel.

New Lots Road: Appears on the first timetable of July 1877. It would appear that after the 1878 season, service to this way station was given only off-season. Last appears on the timetable of May 1897.

Rugby (Ford's Corners): This station first appears on the timetable for the 1888 season. In March 1885, the Manhattan Beach R.R. was reported ready to erect a depot for the people of Canarsie, but nothing happened till 1888. The station was located on the west side of East 92nd Street and south of the tracks. In 1900, real estate promoters began a development which they called "Rugby," centering on the intersection of Church and Utica Avenues. By 1908 only about 125 houses existed in the neighborhood, but it boomed rapidly thereafter. In May 1902 the timetable first uses the name Rubgy along with Ford's Corners; after 1903, the name Rugby generally appears alone. The station lasted to the end in 1924.

Kouwenhoven: Station appears on the first timetable of July 1877. The name and spelling varies over the years: Cowenhoven's in 1877; Kowenhoven's Switch in 1878; Kowenhovens 1878–1890; both forms 1890–92; Kouwenhoven 1893–1924. At first this was a flag stop; in August 1877, a platform was laid out. The station building was on the east side of East 53rd Street between Foster and Farragut Roads and south of the tracks. The earlier location was on the west side of the dirt-paved, two-lane Kings Highway. The station lasted to the end in 1924.

Flatlands (Vanderveer Park): Appears on the first timetable of July 1877. In 1878, it was reported as a signal station with two large platforms recently laid out. About 1897–98, the area was developed as Vanderveer Park, and on the timetables of 1899, this new name supersedes the old one. The developers probably contributed to a substantial though small brick station located just east of Nostrand Avenue and south of the tracks. This was destroyed during the elevation of the road bed in the summer of 1906. Station lasted to the end in 1924.

Kings County Central Junction: functioned during the season of 1878 only; opened June 29 and closed down September 30th. Located at the present intersection of New York Avenue and the Manhattan Beach right-of-way. There was never any depot building.

Manhattan Beach Junction (Ocean Avenue): Appears on the first time-

table of July 1877. After 1878, the station disappears from the timetable for regular seasonal trains, but appears in the off-season tables and in those for race track specials. In 1898 the station is again regularly listed for all trains. Beginning in 1893, the station appears as "Ocean Avenue" but the old name re-appears in 1895 and remains thereafter. The station building was located on the west side of Ocean Avenue and south of the tracks. There were large car sheds near the station in "Lott's Woods" and these lasted at least into the 90's. Station listed till the end in 1924.

South Greenfield: Appears on the first timetable of July 1877. The station was located between Chestnut Avenue and Avenue M. After the 1878 season the station disappears from the timetables, but reappears in 1889. The original site was abandoned in the summer of 1909 and a new station was built on the embankment shared with the Brighton line. Lasted till 1924.

Kings Highway: First appears on the timetables of 1883. The original site was abandoned in the summer of 1909 and a new station was built on the embankment shared with the Brighton Line. Lasted till 1924.

Wyckoff's Switch: Appears once on the timetable of September 1877 and never thereafter. This was a siding below Kings Highway in single-track days.

Neck Road (Gravesend Neck Road): First appears on the timetables of 1893. The old site was abandoned in the summer of 1909 and the station transferred to the Brighton Line embankment. Lasted till the end in 1924.

Sheepshead Bay: Appears on the first timetable of July 1877. Original station located just south of Sheepshead Bay Road. In March 1885, there were 234 houses and an estimated population of 1170. In the season of 1884, extensive improvements were made on the station: in July, new yellow pine board platforms were laid down and a fence erected on either side of the tracks. In July and August, a new ticket office was erected. The old site was abandoned in the summer of 1909 and the station was transferred to the Brighton Line embankment. On August 7, 1913, this station became the terminus of the Marine Railway, continuing so till April 1, 1921. Station lasted till the end in 1924.

Manhattan Beach: In July 1877, the railroad depot area was laid

out behind the Manhattan Beach Hotel. Board platforms were laid down but no depot building was ever erected. In July–August 1878, a canopy was built over the boarded walks from the station to the hotel to provide shelter from the sun and rain. In February 1880, it was reported that the former Pavilion was to be converted into a railroad station, but this seems not to have been done. The old station was last used during the 1908 season.

The new Manhattan Beach station was located just west of West End Avenue and north of Oriental Boulevard. Work on the foundations of the new depot was begun in the last week of September 1909. The depot was a simple, rectangular one-story building with sloping roof; it was completed in November 1909. Two long concrete platforms extended along the tracks in the rear. On the west side of the depot was a freight house; on the east side was a track and turnout that served as the Marine Railway station. The depot lasted till the end in 1924; the building later did duty as a gas station for cars, surviving at least as late as 1938.

Oriental Hotel: First appears on the 1883 timetable with through trains scheduled from Long Island City, Bay Ridge and Flatbush Avenue. For years there was a shuttle service between the two hotels, steam at first, and trolley after 1899.

Greenpoint Division

Greenpoint: The first site selected for the Greenpoint depot on February 21, 1877 was the E. F. Williams shipyard on West Street. This extended 680 feet on Oak Street and 100 feet on West Street and was considered amply sufficient for the location of the necessary facilities. When it became impossible to secure this site, the company in January 1878 turned to Quay Street. In February 1878 the company leased the two spar yards of David J. Taff and Cornelius Winant from the Cunningham Estate for a term of 8 years at an annual rental of $6000. One term of the lease required the company to establish a ferry to New York.

In May 1878 work on the depot was begun. It was two stories in height, 60 x 100 feet and completed in July. In late

May a Mr. F. S. Bartlett received the contract for the round house at a cost of $4000. During the summer of 1878 the coal station, round house, turntable, machine shop and sidings were all built on the ground between the tracks and West Street. At the dock head on the creek side just below the depot two ferry slips were constructed. Between the slips and the depot a covered walk was erected.

In August 1880 a burning barge drifted against the steamboat piers and set them afire. The dock sheds kindled, but firemen prevented the blaze from spreading to the depot area.

The Greenpoint depot opened May 15, 1878 and closed September 28, 1885.

Fifth Street (today Driggs Avenue): In May and June 1878 a station was laid out between Bedford and Driggs Avenues within the limits of today's McCarren Park. There may have been a depot building.

The Fifth Street station was closed after the 1879 season.

Humboldt Street: The platform area extended between Humboldt and Graham Avenues. A Mr. Sherman was the ticket agent; his office, cafe and summer garden were at Graham Avenue and Skillman Street. After the station closed on September 28, 1885, it became in later years a carpenter's shop.

Grand Street: The station platform extended between Metropolitan Avenue and Grand Street. It is uncertain whether there was a depot building. Station opened May 15, 1878 and closed down September 28, 1885.

South Side R.R. Crossing: Opened May 15, 1878; last listed on the timetable of May 25, 1881. The station was reopened in June 1886 when service was instituted out of Bushwick station as a substitute for the Greenpoint abandonment. The station closed at the end of the 1890 season.

DeKalb Avenue (Ridgewood): On July 14, 1878 the Brooklyn City & Newtown R.R. extended their horse car line on DeKalb Avenue up to the Manhattan Beach R.R. crossing. The M.B. R.R. opened its station here on the same date. This connection enabled residents of Williamsburgh and Bushwick to obtain easy access to Manhattan Beach. On the June 1882 timetable the name of the station was changed to Ridgewood, after the

new settlement growing up around Myrtle Avenue and Palmetto Street. The station lasted until the shutting down of the Bushwick service in 1894.

Myrtle Avenue: Opened May 15, 1878; last listed on the timetable of May 1882.

Cooper Avenue: Opened June 2, 1883 at the junction of the Greenpoint Division and the new Main Line to Long Island City. The station was built as a transfer station so that passengers on the Greenpoint shuttle trains (1883–1885 seasons) could transfer to main line trains to Manhattan Beach. When the Bushwick service was instituted in 1886 to substitute for the Greenpoint abandonment, the station continued serving the same useful purpose until the Bushwick service was given up (1894).

In 1923 the much dilapidated remnant of a Manhattan Beach station was still standing just east of Halsey Street and north of the track. This was probably the former Cooper Avenue station that had been moved to serve as an office in a coal yard.

Kings County Central Railroad

Prospect Park: The depot was located on the east side of Flatbush Avenue between Empire Boulevard (Malbone Street) and Washington Place, with a 100 foot frontage on Flatbush Avenue. The property and a dwelling house on it were leased from a Mr. Case in July 1877. In August and September the house was remodeled into a railroad depot. In June 1878 a large sign was hung on the front of the house reading "Manhattan Beach R.R." In November 1878 after the summer season the outside ticket offices, plank walks, etc. were moved in for the winter, but never used again.

Nostrand Avenue: Station laid out between August 3 and 10, 1878; opened for service August 3, 1878. This station was well patronized by persons coming down from upper Brooklyn on the Nostrand Avenue horse cars. Station on the northeast corner of Nostrand Avenue and Empire Boulevard.

County Buildings: Station located on the south side of Clarkson Street between New York Avenue and East 34th Street, across the street from what was then the Alms House. This was the chief freight depot of the road, handling coal and lumber for

the County Buildings. Site purchased in July 1877. Service opened June 29, 1878. There was no depot building.

Church Avenue: Nothing is known of the station facilities here; probably a gravel platform alongside the track.

Holy Cross Cemetery: This was one of the two heaviest stations on the road but nothing is known of the station facilities. There was probably a gravel platform but no depot building.

Kings County Central Junction: A platform was provided here for changing trains for Bay Ridge or East New York or Greenpoint.

Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R.

STATION LIST

Greenwood: Northerly terminus of the road. In March 1875 Culver applied for the appointment of commissioners to condemn a plot on the east side of 9th Avenue and including the block between 19th and 20th Streets for a combination steam and horse depot. In May and June he erected a two-story building; the 9th Avenue front was 200 feet long with Mansard cupolas over each corner surmounted with ornamental ironwork. The sides extended 100 feet along 19th and 20th Streets. Behind the depot on the 20th Street side was a narrow frame building 180 feet long through which passengers passed to and from the train platforms.

Service began out of Greenwood depot on June 19, 1875. In May 1876 the waiting room was converted into a baggage room, and a ladies' room added in July. A long platform was added on the 20th Street side in 1876 to handle the crowds. Between March and June 1877 Culver bought all the houses behind the depot on the 20th Street side and installed two more long platforms with four tracks in all for inbound and outbound trains.

On the night of November 14, 1887 the whole depot burned but was rebuilt the following year. In 1899 the facilities were converted to trolley operation and remained in use for decades until rail operation was abandoned. In July 1961 the site was cleared and Bishop Ford Catholic High School was erected thereon.

Turner's Station: A station very briefly in use in 1875 and 1876; not listed thereafter. Probably located at or near Ft. Hamilton Parkway.

Kensington: Opened in 1890. A small two-story frame building was erected on the southwest corner of Gravesend Avenue and Avenue C. The stop was abandoned June 27, 1909. The old depot was still standing in 1929.

Parkville: One of the original stops. For years there was only a planked platform at Parkville, but in 1889 a depot was erected. It was built by Chas. E. Severs of Parkville at a cost of $2750. The railroad paid $2000 of the cost and the remaining $750 was raised by public subscription. There was a large covered carriage-way in front of the main entrance. The depot occupied the southeast corner of the crossing formed by the Culver and Manhattan Beach railroads.

Washington Station: A stop at Avenue K for visitors to Washington Cemetery.

Harris Station (Woodlawn): A stop at Avenue N. There was only a planked platform. The name was changed from Harris Station to Woodlawn in May 1878.

Kings Highway: One of the original stations; there was a planked platform only.

Jockey Club Race Course: There was a long siding on Gravesend Avenue, extending from Kings Highway to Avenue U. The station building was located between Avenues S and T.

Gravesend: Jim Hoagland's Hotel, located on the southeast corner of Gravesend Neck Road and Gravesend Avenue, was altered for the railroad, and a large waiting room was constructed for the use of passengers. In September 1879 the station was moved to the street north of Neck Road to oblige the Reformed Church which objected to the noise.

Van Sicklens: A stop located just north of Neptune Avenue. There was at first only a planked platform; a larger one was built in August 1876. In May and June 1884 a depot building was erected.

Coney Island: The Coney Island depot in 1875 fronted the open beach with a broad gallery. Trains stopped at the rear and side of the building, where a long planked walk had been laid over the sand. A picket fence enclosed the whole area of 9 acres which the Town of Gravesend had been forced by the courts

to sell to Culver. Facilities were enlarged with a new platform in 1876. This original station was alongside Doyle and Stubenbord's "Ocean View Hotel" on the line of the later washed-out concourse.

In 1879 agitation began to open an east–west road, and Surf Avenue was gradually laid out over the years 1879–1884. Since this road cut across the railroad yard, a new station (Culver Terminal) had to be built between February and June 1883 along the north line of the new Surf Avenue. The old building served until the spring of 1884 and was then razed. The new Culver Terminal was 2½ stories high with a high central cupola. In 1888 the depot area was extended and a building annex put up in 1890. After the Brooklyn Rapid Transit took over operation of the Culver Line in 1899, Culver Terminal became a combination trolley and elevated terminal.

36th Street Branch

Fort Hamilton Avenue: There was no depot building; a planked walk served the purpose. Station located on southeast corner of 37th Street and Ft. Hamilton Parkway. Station opened 1890.

City Line Junction: A planked walk alongside the tracks marked the station. Station located at southwest corner of 9th Avenue and 38th Street. Opened 1890.

Union Depot: Built jointly by the Brooklyn, Bath and West End R.R. and the Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. to tap the Fifth Avenue elevated traffic. The depot was a two-story building facing 5th Avenue. Behind the building was a long 1000 foot center platform and two other 1000 foot platforms on the north and south sides. There were 6 tracks, three on each side of the center platform. At the 7th Avenue end of the yard was a turntable. The Union Depot opened May 30, 1890, on which date the West End road abandoned its old terminal and began running trains out of here; the Prospect Park & Coney Island R.R. began running trains June 7, 1890.