

As Christmas approached the LIRR seemed to have a shortage of it's own baggage/express cars and our Huntington "set-off car" could be from the PRR, M.P., SAL, etc., quite often. One Monday it was an PRR "R50" express refrigerator, the very same kind that used to haul milk cans to Patchogue and Hampton Bays before WW II! Sometimes ex LIRR combines converted to baggage cars such as 621 or 623 we set off at Huntington. Tuscan red LIRR cars were now down to just three, nos. 720, 738 and 749. All remaining pre 1955 MU and diesel equipment was now Mr. Goodfellow's favorite color, gray. RPO 749 would be the absolute last red car in service by the end of next year and went to the scrappers in very faded tuscan red with her no. barely readable!

One Febuary morning going out on train 606, as we walked down the Jamaica sta. platform to see what the express messenger had for various stas., we noticed a "strange-looking car" on the head end. Apparently fresh out of the paint shop it bore no. 7750 and was lettered for the LIRR. It had six-wheel trucks and new electric markers. Careful, intensive observation revealed the "no. 186" and "Western Maryland" visible under the new grey paint. Seems the LIRR had bought the car in late December.

Former PRR "sleeper" Belfast was now rebuilt and in service as the club car "Oyster Bay", while ex "sleeper" J. Findlay Wilson would become the



**Club Car #2002 Oyster Bay**  
**Oyster Bay yard 1/03/1959**  
**(Votava-Keller)**



**Club Car #828 South Shore**  
**(Votava-Keller)**

"South Shore" club in March. Both now were equipped with undercar diesels for lights and AC. Three former club cars, nos. 811, 816 and 828, soon appeared, along with numerous MU trailers in a scrap line in Holban Yard.

It was beginning to look like 1958, while the steam engines were gone, would turn out to be an interesting year for "second-hand" equipment, much of it having six wheel trucks too! Another winter morning we were riding "the shove" down to train 606 in Richmond Hill yard when I noticed six NYC "heavyweight" six wheel truck cars on track twelve with "steam" oozing out of the steam traps and many other places besides., more interesting cars!

Originally parlor cars, the NYC had converted them to coaches during WW II. In about a week, after the LIRR had removed the diaphragms, painted out "New York Central", and their former nos., the six coaches were ready for service. Their new nos. were 7500-7505 inclusive. A week or two later in "Port", one morning while walking thru train 605 putting the lights on ~~the~~ I came upon one of these ex "Central cars", as they soon became known as.

Seems that 605 was to have three of these cars and P70 820 as it's regular "make-up" on the head end, followed by five 2900 series on the rear. The other three "Central cars" were on the "Cannonball" with P70s on either end.

"Boy!", did our early bird commuters love those comfortable reclining seats. Many of them, in order to get our train out of "Port" at five eight a.m. had to get up at "4 or before". As soon as we punched their ticket they would go to sleep, not waking until we yelled "Jamaica, all change", and sometimes we had to go thru and "shake them awake" or they would miss their trains to N.Y. or Bkln. Other contributing factors to make one drowsy were the almost silent ride on the heavy six wheel trucks, the rather dim lighting and of course the darkness outside all the way in. Until the arrival of the three ex PRR "sleepers" the previous year, the last LIRR cars to have "six wheel trucks" were a few RPOs and Baggage cars, all wood, retired in 1928.

The six "Central cars" were "modernized" in 1959 and 1960. One thing that never should have been done was to put "three and two seating" in them. The resulting aisle was much too narrow compared to the 2900s or any other "modernized" LIRR car. No. 7500 was rebuilt into the "Locust Valley" club car and all six cars got undercar power plants for lighting and AC.

One morning in April I noted a string of eight B&M RPOs in back of the roundhouse over in Morris Park. They were stored on what had been the DDI lay up track. There were two monitor roof six wheel truck jobs, three arch-roof four wheel truck ones, obviously built by the Osgood Bradley car co., and three monitor roof four wheel truck cars.

A friend of mine, a well known LIRR fan, was "checking out" the cars one Sunday and in the inside box under the mail slot in the car's side, found several letters that people had mailed, but apparently were missed by the RPO clerk in the car and were never postmarked by him. My friend dropped them off in a city mail box. No doubt when the letters were received by the people they were addressed to, they complained about the "slow" mail service!

During the Spring Morris Park shops "modernized" the eight cars. Only three remained as RPO cars. The other five had their RPO sections removed and became baggage/express cars. Renumbering was as follows: The two six wheel truck jobs became 7751 and 7752, while one arch roof car became 7753, The other two arch



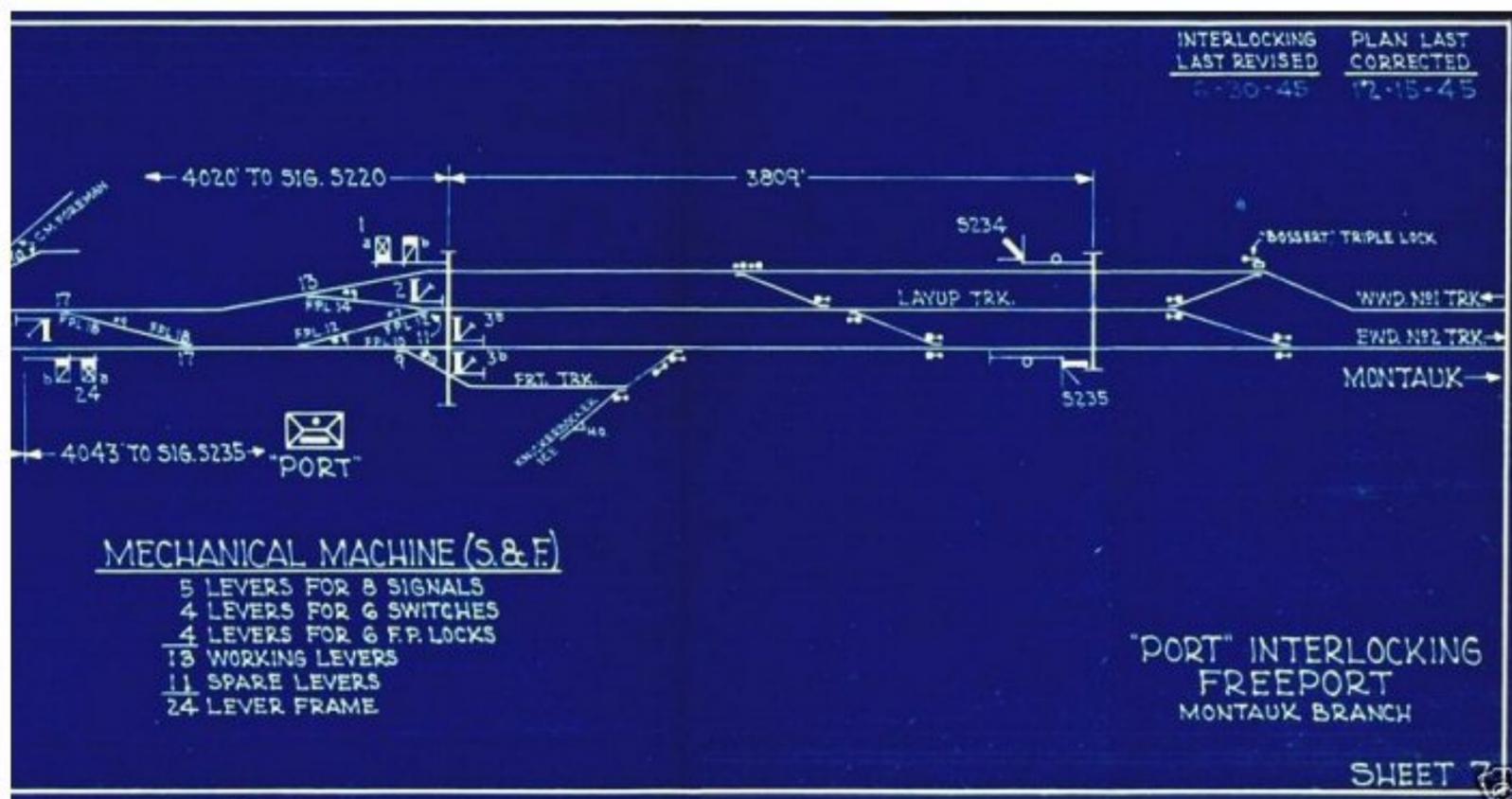
**RPO BM60C #7751**  
**Temporary station - Babylon**  
**9/28/1963 Archive: Dave Keller**

roofs to 7754 and 7755. The three four wheel truck monitor roof cars became 7756, 7 and 8. The 7751-53 were RPOs, the 7754-58 straight baggage. These would be the last "head end" cars the LIRR would ever purchase.

My intended "detailed LIRR track map project" got a tremendous boost one Sat. a.m. in the Richmond Hill cleaning yard. We were waiting for our engine to come over from "the shop" and sitting in our train on track fifteen. I noted an old LIRR wooden gondola in MW service on track sixteen opposite our car loaded to the "gills" with what looked like blue prints. I went to investigate promptly, and found the car was almost all blueprints! Apparently various departments in Jamaica Sta. had been "cleaning house" that week with these results.

I gathered up all I could carry to take home on the train, that was now waiting for me, instead of our engine to arrive! That gondola of cast-off blue prints would go out Monday on the Greenport freight, to be set off at the "landfill" project the RR sent all it's gondolas of rubbish to, about a mile east of Yaphank on the south side of the track. Almost every eastbound trip the freight had two or three of "these cars" in it.

Monday afternoon after work I drove over to the "landfill" and there was the car of blueprints all ready for "plucking". Mostly all were "private siding"



### PORT Tower Freeport partial blueprint 1945 Archive: Art Huneke

maps going back over the years when ownership passed from one concern to another, many from the 1920's and 1930's. There were also quite a few interlocking and signal dept. prints ~~also~~. Unfortunately there were no photographs. The very next summer, <sup>1959</sup> a general "clean-up" of the spacious Jamaica Sta. basement was ordered by the "higher ups". Truck loads of precious glass plate negatives from early in the 1900s and on up to perhaps the early "twentys" were carried to a landfill underway in the former lower interchange yard between "Pond" and "Fremont" towers.

By the time I found out about it, and Art, Huneke and I arrived at the site, loads of dirt had been "bull-dozed" over everything. If that wasn't enough, a pouring rain had ruined whatever was left, no doubt! Certainly at least, the RR's publicity dept. could have found a vacant building or dry cellar elsewhere on the RR to store these irreplaceable photographic things!

Only about a dozen or so of the glass plate negatives were saved. Electrical Dept. foreman Floyd Scenck happened to be at Jamaica sta. when they were carrying them up from the basement to load on a dump truck and asked the men if he could have a few for his "hothouse" tomato frame in his yard. He thought them being covered on one side would absorb more sunlight than ordinary clear glass. Only after he got home did he realize what a "prize" he now possessed!

The day after the trucking of the glass plates to Fresh Pond I went up to the Publicity Dept. to find out from Paul Blauvelt if any thing else was about to be "thrown out". He mentioned that the Law Dept. was "cleaning house" or it's outdated files and folders in the Forest Hills sta. basement on the westbound side at that very moment. At that time I had visions of dull legal-litigation piles of useless papers and put-off going to Forest Hills until the next day. That was a big mistake as I soon found out the next day when I walked into Forest Hills sta. basement!

A lawyer from the legal dept. was still throwing out "out-dated material", many with photographs of RR right of way scenes that had been used in the various court cases to prove a point. He said, "Why didn't you come yesterday? we had a whole "truckload" of old photos and blueprints go out of here!"

"Better late than never" that rainy day I got quite a few old photos of LIRR right of way scenes. If the last few paragraphs carry any important message to anyone, "it's don't put off doing until tomorrow what you could do today!" (Especially so, if there are old RR "plates" or photos to be had!)

One April Sunday I got the "old wanderlust" to do some more detailed map work of the LIRR, this time taking the "Argus C-3" along with me. I walked the Atlantic Br. from South St. in Jamaica to Springfield Blvd. in Laurelton. At



**MU train on temporary tracks over Springfield Blvd. crossing during the grade elimination project 8/16/1958. (Faxon, Jr.-Keller)**

this time it was still on "grade level" and very shortly undergo a grade crossing elimination similar to the part from Laurelton to Valley Stream, which had been done in 1950.

A "Director's Special" operated on the Oyster Bay Br. on June twelfth, consisting of the "Jamaica" with observation platform "east" and the PRR business car "Queen Mary", (7125), with observation platform "west". No doubt the "special" visited other Branches as well that day, but I have no proof.

Another part of the "Standard Era" on the RR was about to disappear with the arrival of two new GE-built "shop locos", the nos. 398 and 399. Good old



**LIRR #398 Morris Park  
Photo/Archive: Bob Bender**



**LIRR #399 Built: 8/1958  
Class: GS-1- View SE  
Morris Park shops transfer table**



**A-1 Shop Switcher #320  
Morris Park, ca. 1949  
(Osborne-Brooklyn Public Library)**



**A-1 Shop Switcher #322  
Morris Park Locomotive shop  
4/23/1955 (Faxon, Jr.-Keller)**

reliable, but "ugly", nos. 320 and 322 would go for scrap. With the two new "shop locos" the LIRR now had a total of 77 diesels of the "first generation" variety.

Starting in September and continuing up to August 1959, ex P&M "American Flyer" type coaches arrived at Morris Park a few at a time until there was a total of thirty. The B&M was getting out of its long haul passenger service so the LIRR picked up some badly needed diesel service cars for the "right price". In the summer of 1959 the LIRR had so many of these cars in Morris Park shop that some were being worked on in the roundhouse!

LIRR "modernization" of these thirty cars meant removing the very comfortable reclining seats and replacement with "two and three seating", as well as removing a set of washrooms on one end. New undercar power plants replaced the former "mechanical" AC type. Diaphragms were of course removed and electric markers installed. The thirty cars were numbered 7521-7550 by the LIRR. Later on in the 1960s some of this series became "full bar cars", or half-coach and bar. My memories of these cars were that the "AC" almost never worked enough to cool the car in hot weather, but you couldn't beat them for plenty of heat in the winter!

The LIRR's first parlor cars of its own since 1925 arrived in October. They were the "Julia Ward Howe" and "Virginia Dare", both "heavyweight" cars from the D.L.&W.. The cars were in beautiful shape, as of course any equipment off the Lackawanna would naturally be! They were 28 seat, 1 drawing room type parlors with "ice" AC. Almost immediately they were put into service to Montauk on the "Cannonball" on Friday afternoons. Before that happened however, the



**Virginia Dare (ex-DL&W) parlor  
in patched Lackawanna paint  
Archive: North East Rails**



**Julia Ward Howe (ex-DL&W) parlor  
in patched Lackawanna paint.  
Archive: Dave Keller**

"Lackawanna" name on the letter board over the windows was painted over with grey paint and the name "Long Island" painted on. The car's names and the rest of the D.L.&W.'s color scheme was left on. All during the 1959 parlor car season", (summer timetable), the two ex D.L.&W. cars made a nice looking train mixed in with leased Pennsy parlors. By having "parlors" of it's own the RR was saving money, as up to this time any parlor cars were rented per day from the PRR.

My November 1958 vacation was fairly good "weatherwise". so one cold morning I walked the Rushwick and Evergreen Branches to add to my growing collection of current LIRR track maps. Now that I had all the blueprints of former years to show "what had the area looked like previously", it was interesting to try and find out where the sidings had been. In the afternoon I started at "Fremont" tower and walked the Bay Ridge Br. to the east portal of the tunnel. There was nothing to be gained by walking the nearly mile-long E.N. York bore, so I walked the streets above to the west portal at East New York Ave.. So far



**Under the Evergreens Cemetery  
the Bay Ridge branch emerges  
5/13/1924 - (Osborne-Keller)**

there had not been any NH freights in either direction, but as I reached the west end of the long curve at New Lots yard an eastbound passed with three new EMD GP-9s chanting their "song" in full-throttle. They were making "a run" for the continuous upgrade from Livonia Ave bridge to "Fremont" tower. The current on the 11,000 volt Bay Ridge Br. had already been turned off and the NH electric "motors" of class E-F1 and EF-3 would never be used down here, ever again!

December saw some stations abolished, as far as trains stopping there at least. They were Brookhaven, East Moriches and Eastport. The buildings all survived this time as Brookhaven was moved to private property in East Moriches; East Moriches, (the small brick job), remained and Eastport was moved back of



**East Moriches Station  
View SE - 6/20/1955  
(Faxon-Keller)**

a garage in town as an annex to it, in mid-1959.

"Uncle Sam" abolished RPO cars originating at Suffolk County terminals in the a.m., such as Montauk, Greenport and "Port." The Oyster Bay and Far Rockaway RPOs had made their last runs in 1955. The Richmond Hill mail loading "dock" just off the advance yard had opened in June, eliminating any mail west of Jamaica, RPOs or otherwise. Trucks now handled all mail between the "mail dock" and the General Post Office in Manhattan and LaGuardia and Idlewild Airports.

Not long into 1959, "East End" station agents and clerks really got some bad news when "headquarters" in Jamaica announced that effective February sixth the following stations would be closed for good as far as being "manned". On the Main Line they were Holtsville, Medford, Yaphank, Calverton, Jamesport, Mattituck, Cutchogue and Southold. Montauk Br. "closings" included Bellport, Center Moriches, Eastport, Speonk, Quogue, Hampton Bays, Bridgehampton and Amagansett.