

that "MUs" normally used had various restrictions about them that made them undesirable for long trains of double-deckers.



**Double-deckers at Floral Park
9/15/1948 - (Votava-Boland)**

Train 214 with its hour long layover afternoons on track fifteen occupied a much needed track and platform that the new double-deckers could use. The "hour long" stay was so that the RPO clerk could get a good start sorting his mail. Other trains with RPO cars such as no. 650 which occupied track fourteen for an hour, and no. 26 on track 16 for forty five minutes were tying up valuable track space sorely needed in the late afternoon rush hour. In the time DD1 hauled trains took to back trains thru the East River tunnels, load mail, six or seven more "MUs" could use each of those above tracks.

In January 1948 the U.S. Post Office Department got "in the act" by desiring an earlier delivery of its mails to Montauk Br. points from Bay Shore out than old reliable train no. 4 was giving. To comply with this the RR established train 32, leaving Jamaica at the early hour of three thirty a.m.. From the usual K4 on the "point", the consist was thus: Express car for Bay Shore; express car for Patchogue; express car to be left at Speonk, where an REA tractor-trailer would unload the car and make deliveries to all points east to Montauk, and RPO car and two coaches.



**MU RPO/REA car #1209
Hempstead 6/25/1946.
(Arnoux-Keller)**

At Speonk, trucks to both Montauk Br. stations and North Shore towns from Riverhead east carried train 32's locked first class pouches and parcel post for the desired earlier arrival of Uncle Sam's mails. Speonk as a starting point for crews was abolished at the same time, with all trains to that terminal having Jamaica-based crews. Train 8 to Montauk was moved up to an earlier leaving time from Jamaica in the a.m. and also got an RPO car.



DD1 #340 passing Hillside 11/1949

The old faithful DD1 engines were becoming "surplus" little by little as other trains between Jamaica and Penn. Sta. came off, such as 36, 38, 47 and 66 about this time. The DD1s themselves were partly to blame for all these changes. They were breaking down quite often on the road, necessitating running them double-headed on longer trains like nos. 31, 615, 617, 621, 652, etc., to insure against failures, especially breaking down or catching fire in the East River tunnels!

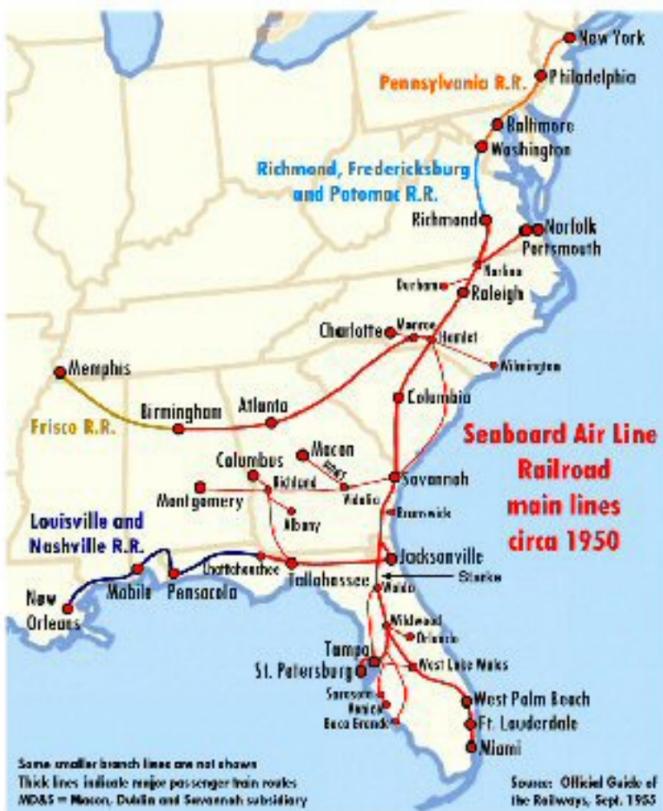
Quite a few, probably a dozen Pennsy K4s were now operating on the LIRR, as Dieselization on the PRR was making them also "surplus" on that RR. It was rumored that the PRR leased each K4 to the LIRR for one hundred dollars a day!

A "steam Spectacular" happened every weekday winter morning and all I do to witness it was step out of the trainman's building in the Jamaica storage yard"! About seven fifteen, Greenport to L.I. City train 263 would



Richmond Hill Trainmen's Building
Archive: Dave Keller

storm past the building with her K4 and ten or so heavy mixed LI and PRR P70 coaches. Coming up the "westbound Montauk Br.," from Van Wyck Blvd. to the engine underjump under the Montauk Br. was all upgrade and engineer Johnny Miller really had that K4 working with all the smoke and sound effects you could ask for! Just about the time he passed where I was, he'd shut off and start braking for the "employee stop" at Ridgewood, (89th), ave. overpass. This stop was for the Morris Park Shops men and usually about two hundred or so got off. More "sound effects" followed as 263 accelerated again for the quarter mile run to Richmond Hill sta. Many days K4 no. 7938 was on that train, sporting a "face-lift" of course.



Seaboard Air Line - Sept. 1955
Official Guide of the Railways

In mid February I took two weeks off so my dad and I could go to Florida. We left N.Y. on SAL's "Camellia" which took us to Jacksonville. We changed there to ACL's "West Coast Champion" for the rest of the way to St. Petersburg. Coming from New York with it's 21 degrees, the weather in "St. Pete." was like "going to heaven," as it was in the low eighties! A few memories from the trip going down: Riding in a SAL "American Flyer" coach; Snow on the ground all the way to Savannah, Ga.; A ride behind RF&P steam, which was a 4-8-4, and the delicious fried chicken peddled by a colored lady on the SAL Richmond, Va. Main St. sta. platform.

Dad fell in love with Florida right away and talked of moving there as soon as he could get his LIRR pension, as he was still working as a operator-clerk in Port Jefferson. This was not to be as he passed away three days later. We came back to N.Y. on the "West Coast Champion" all the way, with dad riding in the baggage car, sadly.

During March of 1948 Jonn L. Lewis pulled another coal strike in the "soft" coal fields causing the RR to temporarily take off a few steam-hauled trains to conserve coal. Train 512 was among those cancelled, which meant we would have it's two express cars added to our head end on train 514. By having our RPO car added on next to the engine at Jamaica sta., this created an unusual arrangement of cars. Any time otherwise when Express cars and an RPO were on the same train, the express cars followed the loco., and then came the RPO and coaches.

Now that we were setting off the Glen St. express car as well as picking it up on train 538, we no longer were faced with the possibility of the car "running away" as I described a few pages ago.

By the time we pulled in ,the express agent and drivers were on duty, so they could break the car seal enabling me to get inside if a "monitor" roof car and wind the handbrake on tight to hold it when the air leaked off during the day.

Parcel Post was still increasing monthly so that "foreign" baggage cars on the LIRR were becoming fairly common.The Sunnyside yard crews would use any empty for loading at PXT,(Pennsylvania Express Terminal). The LIRR's 682-691 and 1217-1219 "monitor roof" baggage cars were showing their age and some were no longer usable,also contributing to the shortage of cars for use to the Island. One morning at Glen St. I set off a Railway Express Agency express reefer of wooden construction,although it had a steel underframe.It was an arch-roof,fifty foot car,no doubt having been on many a head end of various "Limiteds"!

One cold morning when we arrived in Jamaica at our usual seven one arrival time the platform usher informed us we would make the stops of Greenport train 263 over the Montauk Br, to L.I.City. No.263 had broken down east of "PW" somewhere and would be very late coming in. The usher took his "stick" and pulled down the sign reading," Richmond Hill,Glen-dale,Fresh Pond,Haberman,Penny Bridge and Long Island City"for our train which would be a "passenger extra " beyond Jamaica. Additionally we made stops for RR employees at Morris Park Shop and Dutch Kills Draw-bridge.



**Dutch Kills bridge - c.1965
DB Cabin - Lower Montauk
Photo/Archive: Henry Wagner**



**Newtown Creek view W - 2000
Photo/Archive: Bernard Ente**

Probably it was much too cold for the "clam diggers" along Newtown Creek east of Penny Bridge sta.,as none were seen! "Joke",as not even week-old garbage could live in that sludge from all the sewers and factories that lined it's banks! About nine a.m.,after train 519 arrived off the Montauk Br.,we took our five "pings" to the storage yard, entering it via the crossovers opposite the shops where "R " tower had once been. We had missed our middle round trip to the "Bay" by going to L.I.City,so we were "Free" until two oclock.

Five brand new Baldwin diesels arrived during the year,the L.I.City passenger yard,the "float jobs" and "Yard A " getting most of them.The C-51 class 0-8-0s would soon be unemployed for good. The very last K4s left on the LIRR without the "face lift" were nos. 3731 and 3754, and before the "snows" came again they too would go back on the PRR. Since early 1946 the H10s had been going one by one to the Altoona Shops to get "stokers" and rebuilt tenders.The Fireman's union about this time got thru an agreement with management that if certain runs did not have a stoker-equipped engine on it ,two fireman were required!

There were enough PRR K4s on the RR to pull all the Montauk and Greenport trains except nos. 205 and 212; all the Speonk trains and the three heaviest Port Jeff. trains both ways. On weekends, almost all Port Jeff. trains saw "K4 power". Class E6s ruled Patchogue-Babylon "Scoots" as well as shorter Oyster Bay trains. Even the "Montauk Fisherman's Special",



**LIRR #1611 E-6s 4-4-2
"Fish Train" westbound
Shinnecock Canal 1940**

revived in 1946, always had an E6. Among those here at that time were nos. 51,198,230,645,1238 and 1694.

A few Pennsy H9s were borrowed while the LIRR H10s went to Altoona for stokers. Down at Blissville engine terminal in mid-September I observed a class B8 PRR 0-6-0 switcher, (no. 2784), used on the sharp curves on the Degnon Terminal job. By year's end she would be gone back "home" and Blissville engine terminal would close, a "victim" of the new diesels.

During 1947-48 the RR added more trains to L.I. City via the Main Line. This was to encourage more commuters to use the Hunterspoint Avenue sta., and take away the increasing crowding at Penn. Sta. Nassau County was being saturated with new homes and a great number of the "breadwinners" in them were using the LIRR to get to the city.

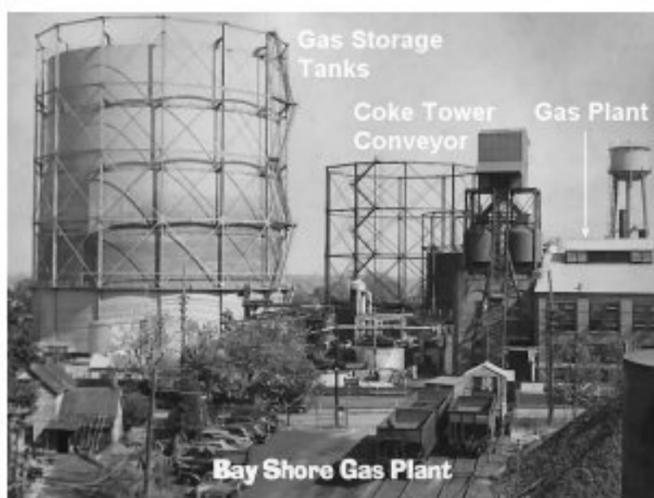
Just after the June "timetable change", one Saturday I was "marked-up" on a N.Y. to Montauk round trip. It was trains no. 10 and 7. My second trip to Montauk in five years on the RR, and it would be my last behind "steam"! I thought the post war PRR "gold stripes" running the car lengths of both P70 coaches, combines and recently acquired ex "Pullman" parlor cars very neat-looking. Today was no exception as I walked down the stairs to track 16. Back of the DDL there was a parlor and four P70s, all PRR of course, and freshly washed, with the interiors refreshingly cool.

Charlie Langton, the "boss", would collect the parlor, while George Weego the flagman and I handled the coaches. Out of Penn. Sta. we had a very light load as it was still rather early in the summer. At Jamaica E6 no. 230 became our power, and we were off for Center Moriches, our first stop. We went via Freeport and engineer John Robelin made sure they knew we were coming on that nice-sounding whistle!

Out at Montauk the parlor had to be placed on train 5's equipment, while the coaches we layed up on track four for our train in the evening. Two photographers, (obviously railfans), took about what seemed a hundred shots of us switching and me taking 230 around the wye. To this day I still do not know who they were, but I would love to see those pictures, as it was a sparkling day out there!

There was a "hack" and a LIRR H10 laying up on the ashpit track. It was the Speonk-Montauk freight all done for the week. The one time Holban Yard-

Montauk freight known as "Big Bertha" was no more. Holban-Speonk freights brought cars destined for Westhampton and east to Speonk for the job we saw here that day. It went west Mon, Wed. and Fri. and east Tues, Thurs. and Sat. There was also a "Patchogue Switcher" based there that worked Bay Shore - Eastport as needed Mon. to Sat.. That way the Speonk Freights didn't have to spend so much time switching LILCO at Bay Shore or the Eastport feed mills.



Bay Shore LILCO Gas Plant
View east Clinton Ave c.1948
Archive: Brian Cholerton



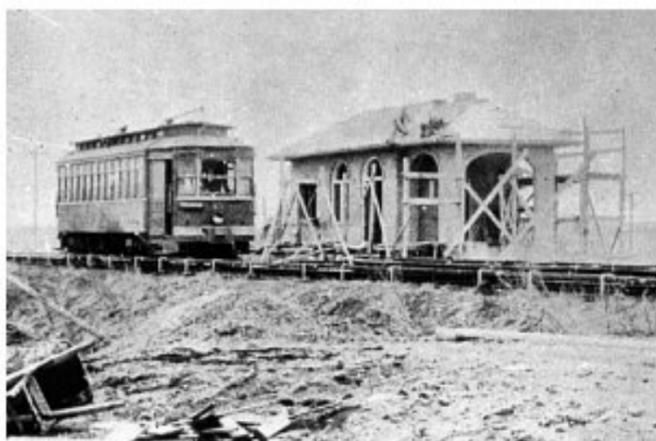
Beacon Milling Co.
Eastport - View SE
Photo: Edward Hand

Since I had five hours at Montauk I decided to hitch-hike to the famous lighthouse at the "Point", as I had never seen it. Just a little way past Montauk Village on route twenty seven along came a "ride". It turned out to be George Christopher and his wife, also going to the lighthouse. He was a brakeman out of Port Jefferson, small world!

I seemed to have gotten a little ahead of my story, so let's "back up a couple of car lengths" for a bit. With the rest of weekday afternoons off after putting train 538 to "bed", once a week or so I'd ride to Mineola for supper on train 543, since I had sold my 41' Chevvié in January. My uncle George and aunt Jenny lived in Hempstead, so after eating I'd hop a Hempstead Coach Corp. "Mack" bus to their place, which was on Morrell St. at the entrance to the underpass pedestrian "subway" to the sta. platforms.

Uncle George had been station agent at Garden City since before World War 1 and would be for a few more years. He had known all the PRR officials sent to the LIRR by the parent company so they could get more "experience" in operating a commuter line. Usually after a few years of this they went back to the PRR and on to more important positions. One of the best-liked PRR men to ever head the LIRR was E.L. Hoffman who was superintendent for some years around 1940-46. Apparently the PRR or LIRR owned a few handsome homes in Garden City, as nearly all important officials always seemed to live there.

My mother had several times related to me as a child, how she had ridden a "trolley" car from Garden City sta. to Clinton Road sta. For many years this didn't make sense to me as I always thought the "MP41" cars furnished all service from Country Life Press to Clinton Road. Uncle George explained that my mom had indeed done that! Up to at least 1927, Ocean Electric deck-roof trolleys with third rail shoes, on loan from their Far Rockaway runs between there and Hammels had ran from Garden City sta. to Salisbury Plains sta. over the Central Extension.



Ex-Ocean Electric Car 15 eastbound
Salisbury Plains station construction
View NW 1923 - Archive: Dave Keller

Even when I came here to work in 1943 I noticed old rotten ties along what appeared to be an abandoned right of way from Garden City sta. along no. two track nearly to Franklin Ave. crossing. This was of course the ex trolley spur abandoned about 1927 or so when "MP 41 cars" replaced the trolleys. At that time a spur was built from the Central Extension over to Country Life Press sta. platform where passengers transferred to or from Hemp-

stead Br. trains. When my dad and I rode the "MP 41" car in August 1942 it ran from C.L.Press to Salisbury Plains and had a "Conductor-Motorman". He was probably G.R.Herbert who seemed to be the only one on the RR that ever ran that car. After early 1943 another "MP 41" was added to make a two car "shuttle, and service to Salisbury Plains was dropped at the same time. The Sunday we rode it we were the only passengers in either direction! My dad never could figure out why his entire system LIRR pass was no good on that run. Everybody had to drop a nickle in the fare box. Mr. Herbert only



**Salisbury Plains
Private residence 1947
Archive: Art Huneke**

needed a "change-maker" on his belt, no "duplexes," (cash fare receipts), were issued or accepted on the "shuttle". If the LIRR owned the line and equipment on it, why were passes not valid on it ?

Late in April my thoughts turned to travel, somewhere off of Long Island. My 1948 week's vacation was coming up on the last week of the month, and I had just purchased a 1938 Ford in suprisingly good condition, except it lacked a "jack"! Bert Comstock, another trainman working in the "Bay", agreed to go along to share expenses and help drive. We had no place particular in mind as a destination, just get on the road and head "West". Many people get this urge sometime in their lives, but few are able to do it, what with family responsibilities or lack of money, etc..

When we left early Sunday morning it was chilly and foggy. Even though it was late in April the trees on L.I. were barely in bud. When we arrived in western Pennsylvania late the same day, not only was the temperature in the high seventies, but all the trees were in full-leaf! So much for Long Island "Springs"! This was indeed the time to be on the "open road"; as automobile production was just beginning to catch up after being shut down all during WW II. The weather was made to order in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, etc. and the scenery as yet unspoiled by "Interstates" and shopping centers all over the place. Traffic was no problem, even in cities such as Cincinatti or St. Louis.

We eventually got to Memphis before turning back east again, visiting Chattanooga before going north on the Skyline Drive in Virginia. For the "record" as far as "railfans", we saw B&O pacifics around Wheeling, W, Va.; an L&N mikado near Mt. Vernon, Ill.; Frisco streamlined 4-6-2s at West Memphis, Ark.; Sou. 4-8-2s at Sheffield, Ala.; and DL&W Pacifics at Washington. N.J..

Right after Independence Day I was able to bid a "overtime" job in out of the "Bay". Overtime for passenger men did not mean "time and a half " after eight hours, just "straight " hourly rate no matter how many hours the job worked. Freight and Yard men did get "time and a half " after the first eight hours, something the pass. men would have to wait nearly twenty five years more to achieve!

Train 519 to L.I.City was a ten car train of "pings" .Nine were on the "hole" track,while one was on the "freight" track coupled to G5 41,which



G5s #40 "ping" train

already had the "tiny" nos. on the keystone.Looking up at the engine cab I noted Pete Hornosky was the engineer,he could "bust your chops" if he wanted to as I soon found out. It was necessary to "double-over" the one car to the other nine.Ordinarily on straight track,this was no problem, but this "hitch" had to be made on a sharp curve where the two "knuckles" had to be adjusted to compensate for the "off-center" coupling between the two cars.Sometimes I would not do the "adjusting" quite correctly, and the knuckles would slide by each other and we would have to do it over again.This always made Pete become irritated and he would yell back, "Hey kid,need a piece of string to tie it together?"

Once the hitch was "made" and the "air" or brake pipe pressure pumped up to the proper amount,Pete would apply the brakes.Then I would walk the ten cars to the rear and check to see if the brake pistons were out on each car,as well as a general look under each car for any air leaks,etc. Walking back to the engine after Pete released the brakes,I'd again checked the pistons,this time making sure they were all in the brake cylinders.

When I gave Pete the "okay on the brakes", he'd sometimes complain to me that there was a leak somewhere on the train as he didn't have the required ninety lbs. on his gage.So he again applied the brake and again I "walked it".Always when I told Pete there was no leaks anywhere that I could hear,he'd say,"It's cleared up ".That was his way of getting even with me for messing up the "coupling"! Meanwhile,I had walked forty cars before we even left the "Bay". No. 519 was the heaviest commuter train on the branch as far as Jamaica,where ninety percent changed to MUS to N.Y. and Bk'ln.

We went over the Montauk Branch west of Jamaica dropping four or five at each stop,with most getting off at L.I.City to walk up and take the I.R.T. subway to Manhattan. We deadheaded back to the storage yard on a DDL as our next train was no.236 to Ronk.,leaving Jamaica at one fifty six. p.m.. My conductor was Arthur Menger,a real gentleman and a minister on Sundays too.

He detested swearing and didn't hesitate to let you know about it,so you "had to count to ten " whenever you got mad if Arthur was around!

No. 236 left at a very hot time of the day,luckily I was "baggage man"on that train,and could shed my coat and hat.My combine was loaded to the roof with parcel post sacks and parcels,early afternoon editions of newspapers,



**Pinelawn Station
Southeast side of Wellwood Ave.
(Sturm-Fehn)**

and quite often,flag-draped coffins for the National Cemetery at Pinelawn. Thursdays were the heaviest,as the then popular "Life" magazine came out, those sacks were indeed loaded to the weight limits! Hicksville got most of

the mail as Levittown was really big and still growing daily. Eventually all the beautiful and productive farmland around Hicksville would "succumb" to housing. Potatoes were still being grown and shipped out of here in 1948, but it would not last much longer. Nick Shandel with his favorite G5 43, was our hogger on 236, and coming back on 237 John Dow was the hogger.

No. 237 was very heavy "cash fare wise" as most stations were closed by the time we came west. We had an express car to pick up at Farmingdale also. After



Farmingdale Station 9/29/1909
Atlantic Ave and Depot Ave
Photo: William J. Rugen
Archive: Queens Public Library

a brief half hour in the storage yard we left on train 562 with nine "pings". Another heavy commuter train, this time in the "hands" of Cecil Craft, an engineer much better known to most of the railroad as "Crafty". On real hot days after we shoved our train to the "hole" track and the engine was taking on a tank of water in care of the hostler, "Crafty" would strip to his shorts and pour cold water over himself by the pumphouse with a hose. This in plain view of anybody who happened to pass by!

Saturdays on this run were something "Special"! After arriving in L.I. City on 519 at eight forty a.m. we were "free" until train 558 left at five twenty p.m., almost nine hours to do whatever we wanted to do! As a "railfan" of sorts I had unlimited places to explore such as New York's "Els" and subways, trolleys in four boroughs, ferry boat crossings, various Railroads on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River, Staten Island, the NYC and NH out of Grand Central Sta. to nearby points, etc. "Mind-boggling" it seems now when looking back on it! There was so much to see and photograph, one didn't know where to start. I made a couple of trips to Broad St. Sta. in Phila. on the PRR with trip passes, as far as "traveling". Mostly I spent the time in air-conditioned movie houses in Manhattan.



Haberman View NW
Signal S24 - Haberman Ave.
Photo: LIRR Archive: Dave Morrison

Train 558, at least as far as Jamaica, was nearly empty except for the half-dozen getting on at Haberman from the trackside wine-bottling works. I have often wondered why the RR ran any passenger trains over the Montauk Br. west of Jamaica, wonder if it has something to do with "franchise reasons", or something else of that nature??

With the change to the "winter" timetable in September I wound up with a better job than my summer one. I didn't rate this job with my seniority of five years, Both conductor and the other brakeman on it had over twenty years on me. The older man whose place I was in was off on injury, so he was not able to pick this run on the "change" in Sept. With each timetable change in June and Sept. all passenger men got to pick what runs they wanted for the duration of that timetable, depending on their seniority of course.

Leaving the "Bay" at six fifty on no.515 to Jamaica,then a middle round trip back to Oyster Bay on trains 516 and 533,and back to Jamaica was'nt as much work as it seemed and we had most of the afternoon off from twelve thirty on. F."Quack" Warren was our engineman on the first and last trains, while Nick Shandel with his favorite G5,"the 43," made the middle trip with us.

Our last train was no.554 out of L.I.City at five twenty p.m..Instead of deadheading there from the storage yard via a DDL,some days I took a leisurely trip there via streetcar! By walking up to the corner of Jamaica and Metropolitan Avenues I could board a "Metropolitan Ave" car that would take me deep into Greenpoint where I could transfer at Manhattan Ave, to a "Graham Ave" car that carried me north thru Greenpoint and over the Vernon Ave Bridge,letting me off right at the yard stairway on the viaduct over it.

That Vernon Ave lift span over Newtown Creek was sure busy! They would have to open it every time any vessel over eighteen feet high over the water blew three whistles to pass under it.Vehicular traffic,including the trolleys,over the bridge was very heavy in the afternoons and when the two lift spans were open long moments for the usually slow-moving vessels passing thru,the traffic on the bridge approaches would be tied up for blocks in both directions!"Horns and more horns",nobody wanted to be delayed it seemed. No sooner was the bridge closed and traffic starting to move again when another tug with a lighter or barge could be heard tooting for the bridge.Out the bridgemen would go again to try to swing the big steel gates across the roadway of the bridge and the whole scene above was repeated all over again!



Blissville Freight Station 1963
View NW Photo: John Scala

One fine early October afternoon I walked to the Blissville engine terminal to take photos. Besides PPR class B8 2784,there was a LIRR C51 and H6sb.No diesels were therabouts,but later that same day down at the float bridges I noted Alcos 404 and 405 pulling and loading floats. For want of something to take pictures of,I finished the film up on various freight car types. Looking back on it nowadays,it was too bad more of us didn't take more of equipment and buildings,especially for modeling purposes!

The trip back to Oyster Bay on train 554 with ten "pings" was "pure pleasure " for the flagman,(me),.Only the first five cars were used as far as Jamaica as only about fifty passengers,mostly on at Haberman and Fresh Pond rode with us.It was an excellent chance for me to study the layout of the Montauk Br. west of Jamaica which would come in handy the following May when I and others around my seniority would have to pass a exam on the "physical characteristics " of every part of the LIRR in order to become conductors.

If we passed that exam, we would only be qualified on the LIRR as far west as "Harold" of "F" towers on the run into Penn. Sta.. The LIRR only had trackage rights over what was PRR trackage from those two towers if you were going into N.Y.. The "conductor's exam" over that PRR portion was a separate one, given by PRR men over in Penn. Sta. LIRR book of rules and "conductors exams" were presided over by A.L. Arnold on the third floor of Jamaica sta.



**Jamaica Station c.1925
Sutphin Blvd. View S
Archive: Dave Morrison**

Although this run was a "five day a week affair", I was still eligible to work on the weekend if I chose. Saturdays I took off, but Sundays they said I did not as yet rate "off" with my seniority, at least not until later in the fall. There was a nice Sunday collectors run out of Queens Village that I tried to work until I could "rate" off.

Mainly the run was trains 4232 and 4229, a round trip from Jamaica to Camp Upton Junction, where the train was turned on the wye and took water. We always rated a K4 so we could "make the time" with our ten "pings", and Cecil Craft, ("Crafty"), was the engineer every Sunday. He always said he worked this round trip to Camp Upton Jct. to "shut-up" all the wise guys who always kidded him about "not being Qualified east of Mineola on the Main Line"! There was some credence to what they said, as "Crafty" for many years made two round trips from Oyster Bay to Jamaica.

Why this train went east of Ronkonkoma was always a "mystery" to me as there were never more than three people eastbound or half a dozen westbound



**Yaphank Depot 1921
LIRR valuation photo
View E - Archive: Dave Keller**

beyond that point. Coming west leaving Yaphank I'd flip over a rattan seat, open a couple of those warped windows and listen to "Crafty" assaulting Yaphank hill with the K4! Leaving Medford the "stack music" was 'nt hard to take either. Of all the "Pennsy steam sounds" records that I have heard, not a one has a "peppy K4" leaving a station! All make the K4 sound like the hogger is afraid to open the throttle or the engine is pulling twenty heavy Pullmans!

After arrival in Jamaica there was time for a giant cold turkey club sandwich at "Pandlers" place just up from the station on Sutphin Blvd. I still had two more trains to work before the evening was done, Nos 5459 and 5470, a round trip to Flatbush Ave. All in all this job was not a "grind" if you could 'nt rate "off"!

Around November first, 10 and behold one Sat. afternoon when I consulted the Sunday crew board in the stationmasters office in Penn. Sta., I was astonished to see "Last Man Off"-R.M. Emery on the top line! E.R., ("Eveready"), Smith who worked out of Freeport terminal must have seen it too. Until I retired, everytime over the years when we met, he would say, "Last Man Off", with a smile!

Since I would probably rate Sundays off until next spring, I decided to bid for an afternoon run out of Port Jeff. and moved back there in mid Nov. Train no. 635, the slowest westbound on the branch, left at three thirty six, with Rob Gerrity as engineer and Stanley, "S.H.", Bennet as conductor. We made



Greenlawn Station 1918
Photo: LIRR valuation
Archive: Dave Keller

all stops to Floral Park and headed in at "GR", (Greenlawn), for superior train 642. The express car set off at Huntington frt. house by no. 606 in the



Huntington Freight House
View W - 1962
Archive: Brad Phillips

morning had to be picked up by our train and about ten minutes there were allowed for that purpose. The freight always set the empty car over on the "trolley track" so we backed in with our engine to couple on. Backing it to the rest of our train in the station, you did not want to be hanging on the side of that car as you went thru the close-to-the-track bridge girders over New York Avenue. In 1944 a freight trainman working the Port Jeff. frt. was doing just that and was crushed to death between the box car and the girders!

We handled a lot of parcel post so usually we arrived in Jamaica too late for our connections to N.Y. and Brooklyn. Before leaving "Port" on 635 there was a bit of switching to do as the express car was on "one east" track, the RPO, combine and three coaches on "two east" track, and our engine opposite the bunk house on "one west". One afternoon after I had put up those heavy "LIRR" markers on the combine I heard a rumbling sound coming from "one east", like a car was rolling by itself without a locomotive!

Hurriedly looking out the combine's big door, sure enough, the lone express car was drifting towards me on the downgrade. The engine had apparently hit the car too hard in coupling and neither "pin" fell to hold the car to the tender. The air had leaked off and since there was no hand brake applied, that had also contributed to the "runaway". I knew there had been one or two cars that had "got loose" before today and they had got enough speed up to go off the end of track beyond milepost fifty eight!

I quickly ran and threw the switches that would line the rapidly-closing on me car for the sharply curving track on the wye's west leg. I hoped the wye would slow the car a little so when it hit the steel bumping post at the "tail" of the wye it would'nt wind up on the highway! As it rushed by I ran after it, sure enough, the sharp curve cut the speed enough so I could board it and wind the handbrake on, stopping it right on the wye's "divider switch", which luckily was lined up. The express messenger inside the "balloon-type" car was not even aware the car had run away, so busy was he with his paper work.

One afternoon we were getting our train made up when Baldwin "demonstrator" locomotive no. 200 lettered "Lehigh Valley" came into "Port". It was pulling five "mainliner" coaches for a trail run.

On this job we had a "PXT" move due out of the storage yard about seven thirty p.m..A fairly long train made up of express cars from all the steam terminals, and a few from intermediate stations as well, Express cars off trains 5 and 211 that went on into Penn. Sta. were cut off at Jamaica sta. and brought into the storage yard by the steam locomotive, and "cut-off" there by a car inspector.

If the evening was forty degrees or more we got a DDL for power,if the temperature was below that we either had a G5 or H10 as they both had steam hoses on the tenders to supply steam heat to the train.Quite often "livestock" such as dogs,cats,baby chicks and even small pigs were in the cars so the regulations for heat had to be followed.We had four "express messengers" traveling with us besides,one from each "steam" branch and the main line.

The "rider" was usually a "ping" combine,but one cold night we had a PRR PB54 with a caboose stove and coal bin in the passenger end.Conductor Bennet wanted me to build a fire in it as the car had no steam hoses.I scrounged around in the dark to find enough kindling and scrap paper to get the fire hot enough so the "soft" coal would "catch".In no time at all we had a roaring fire in that tiny stove,so much so,that sparks flying out of the car's chimney when we went by "WIN" tower prompted the



**WIN Tower Winfield Junction
1967 Photo/Archive: Dave Keller**

towerman to call ahead to "Herald" tower to hold the signal on us so he could inform us ^{THE} train was on fire!

One night going to "PXT" Morris Park must have been really short of power, as they sent over H6sb no.314! The first and last time I ever rode behind, or in the cab of one.Pennsylvania Express Terminal,(PXT),had eight long tracks in their huge,long brick building,reached by a ramp for trucks via the Harold Ave. bridge over Sunnyside Yard.We always backed our train in on the southmost track,which held about eleven sixty foot cars.Even at that hour the place would be very busy with packages on conveyor belts moving in all directions,etc..

There was always a "mystery" right outside the building on the south side,right underneath the Harold Ave bridge. A huge tarpulin completely covered a wooden six wheel truck observation car.I could never raise the "tarp" enough to get a name or number off the car to identify it.Wonder if it belonged to some high official in REA ?.The car was there for years.

We went back "lite" to the storage yard,with all of us either standing or sitting all the way.That of course depended upon whether the loco. was electric or steam.If it was a DDL we could ride in the other unit and



**H10s #103 at Holban Yard-Hollis
Brakeman's Shelter "Doghouse"
10/1954 - Archive: Dave Keller**

"sit".The only time we "sat" on a steamer was when it was a H10 with a brakeman's "dog house" on the tender.

You had to be very careful climbing up over the rear of the "tank" as the 11,000 volt wire was only a few feet over the roof of the "doghouse" in the confines of PXT with it's "low wires."

On our last trip we left Jamaica at nine fifty eight with the late office workers and theatre crowd who had spent the afternoon and evening in the "Big Apple", but we didn't call it that then! We had a Ronkonkoma connection on the south siding at Hicksville. "Until a couple of "time-tables" ago the connection had been one going to Babylon via the Central Br. Known as train 276, it was part of a Patchogue "scoot" job and in 1940 and 1941 had picked up a PRR "R50" express reefer of milk cans from way up in central Pennsylvania here.



**DIVIDE Tower 1962
Hicksville View SE
Archive: Dave Keller**

The train I was on presently, no. 666, cut the car off in the station. As soon as 666 cleared "Divide" tower, no. 276 who had been laying on Main line two by "Divide", backed up to the milk car and picked up the few passengers no. 666 had left for it. Finally getting into Patchogue early the next morning the "scoot" spotted the "R50" at the freight house for Sheffield Farms to unload. Coming west the empty "R50" left on the rear of the two p.m. out of Patchogue which backed it to Babylon yard. From there it went west on the rear of the afternoon "Babylon Baggage". This "R50" operation was discontinued in late 1941.

Engineer Bob Gerrity always gave us an "on time arrival" in "Port" at eleven twenty five, no trouble at all with our daily K4. The engine crew and head brakeman earned an extra hours pay by placing "steam heat engines" to heat coaches on the east end of the yard every night.

Christmas Day was a bitter cold one and being our job was "off" I had to work in Patchogue that evening. Since there were better places to eat "turkey and the trimmings" in that town than in "Port", I went over early in the afternoon. My train, no. 4057 to Jamaica, did not leave "PD" until seven thirty eight.



**PD Tower - View W
Ocean Ave., Patchogue
Last Steam Special 11/26/1967**



**PD Tower levers - Manual gate cranking mechanism
1/1968 Photo: Robert B. Dunnet - Archive: Dave Keller**

Walter Marpman, the second trick towerman, was on duty in "PD" tower when I went up there to sign the register sheet and ask where the equipment was. Talk about a busy place! Walter had his hands full handling the "manual block system" from "Y", (end of double track, east of Sayville), to Montauk. He had two block sheets to keep up to date with train movements, one from "PD" on west and the other from "PD" on east. Every time a train or lite engine went over South Ocean Ave. by the tower, Walter had to crank the manual crossing gates up and down, in addition to making sure he started the crossing bell to warn pedestrians and auto traffic the gates were about to be lowered. All the levers in the tower gave Walter plenty of exercise in addition to his running up and down the stairs to deliver train orders,