

seventh street and Broadway and always carried his accurate "Hamilton" watch with him. He was aware of the fast runs Bob had been giving us all week as he was a nightly commuter. This being a mild evening, the rear coach door was open and he was standing looking out to the rear and knew where the mile posts were. After we left Kings Park he told me we were doing about Eighty five miles an hour over the trestle between mile posts forty one and forty two!

1946 was welcomed in as usual in "Port" at midnight with the hostlers blowing all seven of the locomotive whistles at



Thomas Wilson & Co. Lace Mill  
Port Jefferson aerial view W c.1950  
Archive: Tom Giarrizzo

one time, and the night watchman at the nearby lace mill trying to join in the "happiness" with the "pipsqueak" quill on the factory. I continued on the extra list as the returning war veterans had all the steady jobs in "Port".

One weekday afternoon in January we were eastbound out of Penn. Sta. on no. 650 during a driving sleet storm. The third rail was icing up badly and our DDL electric was barely making contact as we passed "Harold" tower on the slight upgrade. Slower and slower we progressed, finally stalling near the "apex" of the grade just east of the Gosman Ave. bridge. An eastbound MU train was closing in on us very slowly and quickly acknowledged my red flag. The train stopped about twenty feet away and the motorman opened his side door and yelled "Close both knuckles and get on your train, I'll try and get you moving"! I did just that and sure enough we began to move, though with much "arcing" from all the MU's contact shoes. In about a thousand feet we were over the crest of the grade and managed to keep going without stopping all the way to Jamaica.

Saturdays I mostly always was "marked up" on a "Port" run that left on no. 617 and came in early in the afternoon to "Port" on no. 634. The trip in to New York was enjoyable as many commuters were off Saturdays, while leaving Penn. Sta. eastbound we carried the few people that worked half a day. The next summer would see the "five day work week" become standard for just about all commuters and the "Saturday Noon to One rush hour" would vanish forever. Up until summer 1947, all branches had many Saturday only trains to cover that "half day", even Speonk and Manorville.

Since we used the East River tunnels for both train's equipment to and from the L.I. City passenger yard where we "swung", I had about three hours to look around the area. One day I walked the Degnon Terminal "branch" which came off the eastbound Montauk Cut-Off track. A steep downgrade led to such industries



Alco S2 #448 Sunnyside, LI City  
8/13/1966 - Archive: Dave Keller

as the Sunshine Biscuit complex with it's two story high letters on the roof that could be read from the Bronx and American Chic-le Company, maker of popular "Chiclets". The sweet smell of cinnamon always lingered on the air around that place!

The Degnon Terminal was developed by a tunnel contractor of that name around 1910. At one time they operated at least one



PRR B8 #1109 Degnon Terminal  
LI City - View NE - 11/14/1946  
Archive: Dave Keller

0-6-0 switcher with a slope-backed tender which was kept in a small shed near Sunshine Biscuits building. Apparently about 1927 or 28, they sold the locomotive and turned the switching over to the LIRR. Due to the extremely sharp curvature in the "Terminal" only class G53 "steamers" or the three oil electric engines could operate there. Many times leased PRR class B8 0-6-0 jobs worked here. There were many industrial sidings on the line all the way back in to Van Dam St, such as Wheeling Corrugating and Roma Wines, to name only a few.

At one point Degnon Terminal tracks and the Kearney Sidings were only across the city street from one another, but there was no connection. Kearney Sidings branched off the Montauk Cut-off about half way between "Bliss" tower and "M" Cabin.



Harold Avenue Team Yard view E 1942  
Photo: Fred Weber Archive: Mike Boland

One Saturday I walked all the way up to Harold Ave. team yard which is near the PRR Sunnyside Loop Tracks. I wanted to look over the huge new Postal Terminal that had been opened for mainly mail bound for overseas servicemen. This was a PRR operation and was electrified for their "B" class switchers. After the war the Postal Terminal was converted to a parcel post terminal, as this class of mail was growing by leaps and bounds.

If all else "failed" in L.I. City ———→ to entertain one, there was always the Vernon Avenue bridge over Newtown Creek. Constant tug-towing barges were up and down the waterway in those days and the bridge would have to open for nearly all of them. The New York Central tugs had steam whistles that sounded a lot like a "G5", and were about the last "steam" tugs in New York Harbor.

By now restrictions on photography were generally off around railroads, waterfront areas, bridges, etc., and things were beginning to "relax". We no longer had to lower the window shades from sunset to sunrise in the coaches as had been done since early 1942. This was to keep the amount of light coming from objects on land at a minimum. German "U" boats were operating off our shores, sinking a large number of our ships. The subs would see the outline of our ships from the reflected light from the land, and a torpedo was on "it's way", usually hitting it's target!



LIRR G5s #30 - 10/1942  
Engine wipers at Morris Park Shops  
Archive: Ron Zinn

The lady trainmen were quitting right and left as their "hubbys" and boy friends were coming back from our far flung fighting fronts. 1946 was the "Wheels" final one on the RR. LIRR employees as well from all departments were returning in droves too. Camp Upton was getting ready to close down, so troop trains and Sunday night train 222 no longer went in to the camp.



PRR E3sd #4176 - 4/23/1939  
Richmond Hill Storage Yard  
Archive: Dave Keller

The Islands aircraft plants were still turning out planes, but in greatly reduced numbers and with much less help. No longer were ten and twelve car trains from the city to the plants operated. The PRR class K2 and K3 locomotives, unneeded now that the "REX" trains were coming off one by one, went back to the Pennsy and certain scrapping. In their place came several PRR G5s in the 5700 series.

We still had Pennsy L1, M9, E6, B8, K4 types, as well as the last E3sd, no. 2999. She was a regular on the Port Jefferson Br. "REX", and six afternoons a week she sat there, all by herself opposite the bunkhouse in beautiful afternoon sun, only a block from our house. You guessed it! -----I never got her on film, I have since regretted it. By June she had departed the LIRR to become power for the PRR "wire train" stationed at Waverly, NJ yard, I saw her on it in 1947. The L1s would leave during the year as LIRR class H10s were coming back from Altoona Shops with new stokers one by one. As part of that program the new H10 tenders had steam heat-equipped brakeman's "dog houses".

"A late March Sunday and the distinct promise of one of those "vintage" spring days when everything is just perfect weatherwise". These were my thoughts as I detrained at Mineola to catch a Port Washington bound bus. For a long time I had wanted to explore those seldom heard of "sand company railroads,"

that at one time brought out the carloads of sand from the great cliffs on the west side of Hempstead Harbor to waterside where barges would bring the sand to the N.Y. City area for the construction trades.

My earliest memories of this operation was in 1934, when riding with my uncle Dave on a Sunday afternoon drive to Nassau County, we were coming down Beacon Hill and saw below us on the right all the "tiny" locomotives and their strings of "dump" cars. Even though it was now twelve years since that day I had hopes of seeing some of those "sand company railroads" still in operation.

Getting off the bus at the junction of route 25-A and Shore Road I began the northward walk along the cliffs and Shore Road. I had'nt gone over a quarter of a mile when I noticed to the west



**Bucyrus 95 ton steam shovel  
Panama Canal - 11/1904  
Archive: J. David Rogers**

of me in a "pit" two very ancient steam shovels wasting away. These were pure STEAM operated, and of the very same type that excavated Culebra Cut on the Panama Canal around 1912. Even though they were mounted on "caterpillar treads" something about them suggested that at one time they had railroad trucks under them. I photographed both of these "vintage machines" and noted the coal bins of each still contained a few lumps of sort coal!

A half mile further on there was a rusting standard gauge "dump" car still on it's trucks, but no track under it. The real find in another half mile was a group of long abandoned 0-4-0T Porter built standard gauge engines in front of a weathered wooden enginouse. There was no track to be seen and the engines were terribly rusty.

A big "suprise", upon detouring around a still standing "island" of un-excavated sand and gravel was the sight of a four car train of ex "ore jenny" hoppers standing behind what looked like an Interurban "package express" motor. However the car lacked trolley poles as it was powered by a diesel engine housed in the forward end of the car body. Lettered "Metropolitan Sand & Gravel Co.", the car bore no. 647.

The "motor" and it's train transported sand about a half mile from the cliffs to the west to this sand cleaning and sorting plant trestle where I first spotted the train. From here a conveyor-belt brought the refined material to a barge-loading facility on the waterfront, passing beneath Shore Road. Being no one was around I took a photo of the motor and it's consist. Later I found out "the 647" was an ex Cincinnati and Lake Erie Interurban!

The car and the four trailing sand hoppers survived until at least 1958, when they were replaced by a long conveyor belt. The company below Beacon Hill that we had seen in 1934 was vanished without a trace. The cliffs at this northernmost excavation site contain many different hues of clays, not unlike the "Grand Canyon" in some ways. Sunlight at various times of the day brings many colors to the exposed clays. As I walked down Beacon Hill toward the LIRR Port Washington Sta., I thought that this had been a most enjoyable day exploring the mostly "unknown" other former RRs in Nassau County!

A few old automobiles left over from pre war production were being bought by men on the "extra list" and now that gasoline rationing with it's "A, B & C" stickers was ending, the few jobs open out my way were being covered by them. For me, this meant "to Jamaica" to cover a job, as well as Oyster Bay, Patchogue and Babylon. I was seriously thinking of buying a car as it would certainly cut out hours of "deadheading" to jobs, hitch-hiking and Taxi fares.

One Saturday I was marked up on a "double-end run" out of Jamaica with Conductor R.V. Brown. This consisted of train 632 to



Northport Station  
View E 1952  
Photo: John Krause

Northport, an extra to Hicksville where the engine was turned and thence to Jamaica. Time for a "snack" and then train 42 to Speonk, where we layed up most of the train, except for one car, which we took back to Patchogue as a "rider" car.

The Sunday portion of this run started out of "PD", (short for Patchogue), on train no. 4049 at three forty eight in the p.m. . A quick "rounder" to Babylon, and we were back in "PD" around six. Coming east from Babylon we had a large number of "Cadets" to Oakdale for LaSalle Military Academy, returning from their weekend. We had a long "swing" before we left for Jamaica at nine fifty nine so I made the acquaintance of Tom Bayles, the second trick ticket clerk in Patchogue Sta. Tom at first was a "quiet" man, but once you got talking for awhile he really "opened up", and suprisingly was quite the "railfan"!

Tom had been ticket agent at Camp Upton during World War I and he had many memories to relate about RR operations to that busy place. What's more, he alone had photographed a lot of it. (when "security" was'nt looking), and still had the negatives!



Camp Upton draftees  
Sept-Oct, 1917  
Archive: Brad Phillips

Seems that troop moves to Camp Upton in 1917-18 were much heavier than in World War Two.

LIRR locomotives had all they could do to handle the "extra " moves ,plus handle regular assignments in the schedule.A few leased CNJ engines were even on the RR for a short time,although no train orders or "block sheets" have turned up as yet as "proof-positive." The Manorville Br. was heavily used for these troop trains in and out as the west leg of the Eastport wye was in use then.If the Main Line with it's single iron east of "PW" could'nt handle the traffic,it went via the Montauk Br. east of Jamaica, all the way out to Eastport,thence the Manorville Br. and on to Camp Upton via the Main Line.

At other times if the Montauk Br. was too busy,the Main Line would be used.Having double track to Oakdale at the time gave the Montauk Br. a greater flexibility to handle all the troops. The Central Br. between "Bethpage Jct.and Belmont Jct", ( W.Babylon),during this period was hardly ever used as it was weed-grown and had need of much heavier rail and many new ties.It was revamped and upgraded eventually in 1925 for the "Babylon Electrification".

Good friend and former station agent at Central Islip for many years,George Ayling,backed up Tom's WW I memories 100%, even himself remembering the CNJ locomotives! Ayling let me in on a long closely guarded secret a few years hence.Seems an eastbound troop train had derailed about two miles east of "CI" one night during the extremely cold winter of 1917-18.



**Camp Upton Wreck  
East of Central Islip 4/15/1918  
Archive: Dave Keller**

A broken rail had derailed four or five "pings" and several drartees had been killed and many injured as the train was really making "time" .Ayling had walked to the wreck the next morning and taken photos of the wrecked cars after the men had been evacuated and still had the negatives! Looking over the photos I noticed car no. 980,which "in my time ", was an MU trailer car.In 1918 it was used in steam service and had no heat or lights.Ayling related how it had been so cold that winter in those heatless cars that the drartees had wrenched the rattan seat backs from the frames and built "bonfires" with them in the cars just to get a little warmth in those drarty "pings".I can't say I blame them,can anybody?

One job I never was able to "hit" during those "war years" was the Sunday evening run out of Speonk on train 4059. Nothing special about that train, but coming back east on "SK-2" was much more interesting! Normally except for the war, it was an "equipment extra" to bring cars out for Monday's commuters.

During the war it was a "troop train" in a way. Leaving Jamaica around midnight Sunday, it was loaded with Army Air Force men for the Westhampton Air Base and sailors bound for the Navy Torpedo Base at Montauk. "SP"s and "MP"s both rode this train too. Many tales have I heard of this train's "speed records" going east, especially around the three curves between Great River and Oakdale!

Whether they are true or not, at that time there was an extra "guard" rail inside the north running rail on both Main tracks on the second curve east of Great River. Maybe it helped the K4s to keep their "drivers" from straying off into the woods!



LIRR #202 westbound  
passing Speonk Station c.1963  
Archive: Dave Keller

With only a stop at Speonk for water and the Westhampton stop, arrival at Montauk was between two and three a.m.. Coal and water were taken on and then a non-stop fast run to Speonk. Twelve cars of "plush" seats would have to be turned by the car cleaner for train 31, due out in a couple of hours.

How did the servicemen from Montauk and Westhampton get into the "Big Apple"? On Saturday train 4 went east with about ten coaches. The crew came west out of Montauk at one thirty p.m. as a "passenger extra", carrying the Navy men and the next stop was Westhampton for the Air Force personell. All were travelling on reduced-rate "Furlough Tickets" and no civilians were allowed aboard. After the Speonk water stop, the train "highballed" to Jamaica, at times via Freeport instead of the Central Br. and Main Line. PRR class K2 and K3s were mostly the power on that train.

It was during April of 1946 that I was working in Patchogue and saw my first Pennsy G5. No. 5705 was "resting" on the pit from her all night "affair" on the "hound job", so called because it left "PD" on train 65 at five thirty three p.m. and didn't finish up next morning until nearly seven a.m. on the "extra". There were three or four of these PRR G5s roaming about on the LIRR at this time as they replaced the PRR K2 and K3 Pacifics.

Working out of Port Jeff. one afternoon we had the 5706 and another day the 5717. For awhile 5706 and LIRR no. 39 swapped tenders.

We had a little "excitement" one Saturday night in "Port". After laying up our train on Track "two-east" we were all up in the cab of G5 26, coming up the main track on our way to the water plug down on the west end of the layup yard. No.26 went and "stubbed her toe", picking the switch to no."one-east" track. In a flash we were on the ties, both engine and tender. Luckily we were only going about ten miles an hour and stopped within a hundred feet of coaches on track "one-east". The Holban Yard wrecker didn't get the mess cleared up until late Sunday afternoon. The derailment wrenched the drawbar between engine and tender out of line so both had to be towed to Morris Park separately.



LIRR H10s #113 2-8-0  
Main St./25A, Kings Park c.1950  
Photo: Ernie Lanzer  
Archive: Kings Park Heritage Museum

One May evening going to Oyster Bay on train 566 there was no G5 or E6 available so they gave us H10 no.114. She had a tender-equipped steam hose, but no "whistle hose". The conductor had to use "hand signals" to start the train out of each station. No.114 made the "time" both ways with no trouble at all. Seemed odd to be on a passenger train with a "banshee" whistle!

The only other time I ever saw an H10 up to that time on a passenger job was at Huntington in the summer of 1940. No.104 was pulling a special train of New York City Dept. of Sanitation workers bound for a picnic on the grounds of "Kahn's Castle" at Cold Spring Harbor. The men had got off there and walked up to the estate. The train went on to Huntington to "clear up". The "castle" in later times became Eastern Military Academy.

Actually there were two "Sanitation Specials". Dad and I were going into the city that day and "104" and train occupied the north siding at Huntington, while on the south siding opposite was G53sd no.144 with more coaches!

In late May, the "Brotherhoods" called a National Railroad Strike to tie up the entire U.S. effective at four thirty p.m. on a certain weekday. Any train that had begun its run before that time of day would continue to its destination and lay up the equipment.

I was "head end man" on train 642 that day luckily, or so I thought! We were due out of Jamaica at three twenty five p.m., so we would get home to "Port" at least. When our "connections" came in on tracks 6 and 8, a "sea of humanity" poured into our woefully short train of express car and five "mainliner" coaches!

All the commuters that would normally get off work at "five" and later had left the "workplace" early so they could get home before service stopped. The next train to "Port" was no. 650, the four thirty eight p.m. out of Penn. Sta., which of course was not running today or any following trains.

We "packed" them in, at least all that could "squeeze in" and with the help of RR police, platform ushers and our crew finally managed to get the side doors closed. The flagman was isolated on the rear platform, surrounded on all sides by commuters! Conductor Teddy Donahue and myself were let in the express car by Bill Burroughs, the "messenger". The car smelled of wet sawdust and "over-ripe fish" as most "express cars" did, but at least we were on and on the way home!

We left Jamaica twenty minutes late trying to get everybody aboard and at Mineola we went back to the train to open the side doors so we could "spill out" a couple of hundred people. They were still "standees" leaving Syosset that day! President Truman quickly put an end to the strike the next day and the union grievances were submitted to "arbitration".

On the night before the summer "change of timetable" the crew dispatcher called me around midnight and asked me to do him a "favor" and cover train 605 from "Port" to Jamaica the next morning. Probably the "nicest" job and shortest one for me so far! We had K4 3838 and four or so cars, I still remember that day! Mainly that train carried Brooklyn Navy Yard workers at that time.

The summer of 1946 was to be about the end of the Government buying of most of the annual Long Island potato crop for various armed forces camps and bases. Most of the "heavy" potato business was on the main line from Calverton to Southold, but the Montauk



**Wainscott Station view E c.1925**  
Photo: James V. Osborne  
Archive: Dave Keller



**Watermill Station**  
View E c.1925  
(Osborne-Morrison)

Branch at Southhampton, Watermill, Bridgehampton and Wainscott was "potato country" as well. Engineer Bill Nelson once related how he barely made the "top of the hill" at Shinnecock Hills with a seventy car or more westbound freight with many "reefers" during the war!

The Port Jefferson Branch boasted a freight "each way" during wartime potato seasons. Huntington industries that produced landing craft for the Navy and portable army barracks swelled freights on this line also. Both of those industries called for many flat cars to "ship out on."

Sometimes the westbound "potato extras" on the main line would "outlaw" at "KO", (Ronkonkoma), and have to "tie up" on the south siding which held a hundred cars.

This meant the RR would have to send out a "fresh crew" to bring the freight into Holban Yard. Some times the "extra list" in freight service ran out of men to send out to Ronkonkoma. When this



"KO" Semaphore block signals  
Ronkonkoma 1954 - View E  
Converted to position light signals  
12/09/54



KO position light signals  
Ronkonkoma yard 9/17/1966  
(Smith-Morrison)

happened the passenger crew finishing in "KO" on train 220 at one forty five got the job to bring in the "potato extra." While the engine crew took water for the H10, the passenger crew changed uniforms for "denim", which they kept handy in their cars.

About three a.m., or therabouts, they would leave town for Holban Yard, arriving there in an hour and a half if all went smoothly. By the time <sup>THE</sup> men arrived back in "KO" on train 204 in mid-morning they themselves would "outlaw", having went to work the previous afternoon around three. This meant they could'nt cover their job that "p.m." and so they were "off" and got paid what their run made that day. While I owned that afternoon job in Ronkonkoma in summer of 1947, the "potato extra" never once "outlawed".

One summer night I got to work without the "monkey suit", (slang for uniform), on what was known as the "milk job". This went to work in the storage yard at seven p.m. The "storage yard drill" with it's C51 0-8-0 would go over to Sheffield's



DD1 #352 Sheffield Farms Milk Cars  
Receiving Yd Jamaica c.1937  
Archive: Dave Keller

siding off the eastbound Brooklyn Freight track about six thirty p.m. and grab the six or seven empty GPEX milk tank cars, plus the PRR coach or combine used as a "rider". This was brought over to the receiving yard and shortly a DD1 engine was coupled to the consist, called "RJ-11".

For quite awhile Jimmy Westcott was engineer and Bob Davidson the "brains", (conductor), on the "milk" and so they were this particular evening. After the DD1 pumped up the air on the train, the car inspector gave us a brake test and we were ready for a "back-up move" to Jamaica Sta. This was necessary in order to head west on the main line for Sunnyside Yard.

At Sunnyside we backed the train into track forty two for the PRR men to take back to the dairy country in central Pennsylvania. "Laying over" with our DD1, we waited near "Q" tower for the incoming PRR train "RJ-10" that usually arrived about eleven p.m. with milk cars from the same Pennsylvania area, also in GPEX milk tanks.

If we were hungry we could walk east along track one besides the Pullman Company commissary buildings to the Sunnyside YMCA resturant for a late supper as they were always open at any hour.

After the "milk" pulled into Sunnyside our DDI was placed on the east end. Our train also had a PRR class "R50" express refrigerator car between the locomotive and the five GPEX cars. This car we would set in Jamaica's Johnson Ave. yard at the freight house for a small milk outfit in the area. The "R50" contained milk in cans, it was not a "milk tank car". The "rider" was the west car and would stay with the GPEX cars in Sheffield's siding. After a brake test we went up the track connection to the main line where "Harold" tower would back us over to the eastbound tracks for Jamaica.

On our way at last we were an "honest to goodness" LIRR milk train! "Hall" tower put us over on the eastbound Bkln Frt. track so we could back down to the Sheffield plant. Before we could back our consist in their siding the conductor had to energize the third rail serving that track. Normally all private sidings had their power "off" unless a train was switching them. A four-foot long covered box containing a folding "pump-handle" wooden handle connected to a "knife switch" was the type of equipment used all over the RR for this. When "killing" the power after using the siding you wanted to turn your eyes away from the "box", as sometimes when the handle was pulled the "arc" could be quite bright, especially at night!

The cars placed here, we proceeded east to Johnson Ave yd. to place the "R50" at the freight house. Still another "R50" was a daily visitor to the LIRR at this time. That one came out of Sunnyside on the rear of the early morning "Babylon Baggage" and was set off at Lindenhurst.

About two a.m. we left Jamaica "lite" with the DDI for Sunnyside again, this time to bring back a six or seven car consist of Railway Express baggage cars for the storage yd.



**Railway Express Agency car #4212  
Johnson Ave. Yard April, 1962 - View W  
Photo: Brad Stiles Archive: Dave Keller**

The "storage yard drill" would add them to the head ends of early morning eastbounds for "PW", Oyster Bay and Port Jeff.

Express cars for Montauk and Greenport were handled on no. 4 and 204 respectively right out of Penn. Sta. for those lines. Train 4 set off express cars at Bay Shore, Patchogue, Southampton, (summer timetable only), and also had a "working" car to Montauk. Out of New York, train 4 besides its RPO, <sup>NAD</sup>mail storage baggage cars for Oyster Bay, Port Jeff, and until 1941, an "R50" full of milk cans for Sheffield Farms Hampton Bays bottling plant.

Train 4's storage mail cars for Oyster Bay and "Port" were cut off at Jamaica for the "storage yard drill" to add to those trains in the storage yard. Maybe the "11:59 to 7:59" shift at the yard had it "easy" most of those wee-hours, but come four-thirty they were indeed busy with all the "head end car" cuts and add-ons!

One July Sunday the crew dispatcher called and said, "you are "marked up" out of New York tomorrow on run "so and so". This turned out to be one of the few "MU" runs I ever worked as a brakeman over the years! It was what the men called a "rail polisher", consisting of in that order, a round trip to Babylon, a West Hempstead  $\leftarrow$   $\rightarrow$  trip out of Jamaica, but going back into Bkln, and a round trip to Hempstead. Since this was a good paying "day" run, top seniority men such as N.D. Smith was <sup>THE</sup> conductor and F.G.P. Morgan the flagman, I was of course in place of the "head brake".

With the busy Babylon trip over by noon we "swung" until no. 942 for West Hempstead out of Jamaica sta. at two thirty p.m. We had two MP 54 "1400s" and Motor baggage car 1212 on the rear. (I'm only guessing at those no.s, but I saw 942 many times and such cars were often the consist.) This was my very first working trip to West Hempstead even though I had now been on the



Westwood Station view NW  
2/23/1946 - Photo: Fred Weber  
Archive: Dave Morrison

RR for nearly three years! Starting at Westwood every station was on a different "side" from the previous one. Almost all the five miles up the branch you were opening and closing side doors and "traps"! The RR frowned on leaving "traps" open on both sides while trains were in motion.

We uncoupled the "motor baggage" which contained mainly perishable Railway Express and set it over on the express/freight house spur. Motormen making one car "moves" such as this had to be careful not go on a "gap" where there was no third rail and stop! This would mean getting out the "snake," (rubber-covered long cable with copper wires in the center). These were kept in a cabinet in each motor baggage car as well as at towers, etc.. Most MU cars also carried copper strips which could be used between third rail and car contact shoe if the "gap" was no more than a foot or so. The strips were gingerly laid on with a wood "paddle", also carried on most MUs.

Since we had well over an hour before we left on Train 959, we all settled down for a rest in the "rattan seats with the brass handies".

to the intermittent "clumpa, clumpa, clumpa" of the air pump under the car, I reflected how this branch was the most "rural" of any of the LIRR's electrically-operated lines. There was even quite a few acre vegetable farm between Malverne and Lake View, patches of woodland so far untouched, "high-switchstands" with kerosene lights, not to mention all single track with manual block rules including "K" cards, etc.

Most trains except during rush hours were composed of two or three cars. Early in this century wooden coaches pulled by small 4-4-0 steam engines gave sparse service on the line. Then, until 1926 when the line was equipped with third rail from Valley Stream to Mineola, small cars operated by a large



**Battery Cars #4 and #2 Mineola c.1918**  
Photo: George E. Votava  
Archive: Mike Boland

storage battery shuttled between those two points. "Through service" out the main line to Mineola, continuing over the branch to Valley Stream and thence returning to Jamaica via the Montauk Br, and "vice-versa" lasted from June 1926 to Sep+.1935. Much traffic on the highways was being held up by the trains over the busy grade crossings between West Hempstead and Mineola. Civic groups agitated for track elevation on that stretch but the RR did not think the traffic it was carrying between those places worth the huge expense. The RR decided on the termination of all service at West Hempstead from the Valley Stream "end" of the branch. Actually it was cheaper for the RR as all the gatemen and crossing gates were removed from West Hempstead to Mineola. The biggest freight customer on the branch was the LILCO gas manufacturing plant near Franklin Ave in Garden City. DDi electrics hauled West Hempstead Branch freight most of the time. When they ran short of DDis, class H6sb locos did the hauling.



**Vanderbilt Ave Passenger Yard**  
View E from the 6th Ave. overpass  
6/1959 Photo/Archive: Art Huneke

Our final round trip of the day left from Flatbush Ave. Sta. on train 778. The conductor and motorman both had to go over in "VD" yard to pick up the equipment. They got an extra half hours pay for that. The two brakeman got on the train in the station. About ten or eleven long rush hour trains were kept over in the open air "VD" yard weekdays as track space in the terminal itself was very limited.

That summer I finally purchased a "well-used" Studebaker, ("class of 1941"), now I had "wheels" at last and could cover any terminal even on short notice!

In late September I bid for and got the "noon" job out of Ronkonkoma. We left there on no.233 at twelve thirty, returning there on no.242 at five forty five. After train 214 left at six thirty, we went west on the second round trip of the day to Jamaica, as no.249. We headed in at "CI" to meet no.244 if everything was on schedule. Leaving Jamaica at eight fifty five we were back in our home terminal at ten p.m..

What I really enjoyed about the job was riding behind the PRR E6s's on all four trains! Engineman Frank Albin, along with fireboy Charlie Bedell pulled us on 233 and 248, with either Pennsy nos. 51 or 198. The middle two trains, 242 and 249 had John, (tanky), Bell as hogger, mostly always headed by E6 1564 or 1694. Sometimes leaving "CI" we might be a few minutes off the "advertised", and "Tanky" would really get that E6 "rocking and rolling" by the time we passed "Foot's Crossing" down in the woods. Looking out the combine end door at that tender weaving back and forth you wondered what made it stay on the rails, but somehow it always did!

Along about the middle of the winter the job was "revised", in that train 249 was put on another run, leaving us to run as an "equipment extra" back to Jamaica as soon as we turned the engine from no.242. We only had "running orders" as an extra so we had to take the siding for all the scheduled eastbounds. One evening we were delayed for some reason and the dispatcher put us in "Sisters siding" east of Brentwood. Not a designated passing siding, that was a most unusual move! "Sisters" was a half mile spur to the Sisters Of St. Joseph School and used for delivery of soft coal to their power house.

I was lucky to be on with a good crew as Edgar Clerke was my boss and Bert Lowe the flagman. We all worked together and the job was all over for the day before you knew it! Not all runs are that way.



**Medford derailment  
West of N.Ocean Ave.  
12/28/1946 - (Weber-Ziel)**

A rainy Saturday in the last week of December was the night Greenport to New York train 211 was wrecked west of Medford. About a half hour before she was due a flatbed trailer loaded with a big bulldozer on it attempted to go under the RR bridge on Medford Ave., about a half mile west of Medford depot. The "dozer" didn't clear the bridge girders and struck them a hard blow pulling the track a few inches out of "gauge".

The truck driver kept on going, unaware of the serious thing he had done. On that chilly <sup>AND</sup> very "dark" rainy afternoon! Engineer Arlington Smith was getting a good roll on his train after the Medford stop so even if he had been able to see the track on the bridge, he never would have been able to stop in time. The PRR K4, no.3731, went over the bridge, derailling and rolled over on her side down the north embankment.