

This would turn out to be a "newsworthy year", starting with the PRR-NYC merger of Feb. 1, 1968. The New Haven, as a condition of the merger, would be absorbed into the Penn Central also, but not until Jan. 1st., 1969. On the LIRR, the latest "state of the art" in electric MU cars would arrive in the form of the "M-1s" as the year wore on. Eventually they would add up to 770 cars. In late summer, eight more Alco "Century" C-420 diesels, the last new Alco power the RR would ever acquire, arrived also.



**C420 #209 Eastbound
VALLEY Tower
READING RS3's 466,469-470
Photo/Archive: Art Huneke**



**Reading leased #469
Westbound Scoot at Islip
View NE c.1968**

Early in the year, three leased Reading engines helped ease a power shortage in locomotives until the eight new Alcos above were all here. The three Rdg. Alco "RS-3s" were nos. 466, 469 and 470. Quite often they were the "second-engine" of a "double-header", as they had no LIRR "Speed Control" on them. Trains 621-652, 32-35, the "coal extra" to Island Park for LILCO's generating plant, and sometimes on the "Patchogue Scoot", were ^{WHERE} usually could see those three at work.

One morning deadheading from L.I. City to Jamaica, I "caught" a ride with hogger "Albie" Sollar on a Rdg. engine. It was the 470 and the thing that caught my eye right away was the dual-controls on either side of the cab, something our Alco "RS-3s" did not have.

Starting on April first I was back on the "extra list" again and looking forward to going out to Greenport and Montauk again with the advent of the "summer timetable". Commuter trains are fine, but punching the same tickets from the same people five days in a row, week after week, can get monotonous! That's why I liked to go out beyond "commuterville" once in awhile, it was a refreshing view of the railroad, and of the Island itself. The further east you traveled, there were more and more woods and farms, my kind of "world"!

Almost before I knew it, Sunday May fifth arrived and with it, the "annual bike special". This year it would come out of New York's Penn. Sta. behind a P-C GG1 and "change power" at "Harold" tower in L.I. City to a LIRR Alco "Century". A Woodside and Jamaica stop for more bicycles and their riders was made and then we ran non-stop to Southampton where everybody "took off" for a grand tour of the springtime "south fork" of the Island.

We brought the train to New York from Jamaica. At "F" tower we exchanged our "Alco" for GG1 no. 4889, which also brought us back out of the tunnel going east. We had six "balloon roof" baggage cars for the bikes, a "bar car" and five 2900 series coaches. It's a real good job for the train crew as the bicycle club takes care of loading, stacking and unloading the cycles at all stations. There's no ticket-collecting as that's all handled by the RR's Tour Dept. About the only thing to do was "patrol" the train at intervals to make sure all traps and doors are closed. Those "bike people" were really a well-behaved bunch, no trouble at all, either way! At Southampton, after we had unloaded the crowd with their bikes we put the train in the passing siding opposite the sta. and put the engines on the "west" end.

That accomplished, Homer Tomlinson of the RR's tour dept., beckoned Arthur Hintze, the conductor and us two trainmen over to the sta. platform. He explained the "bike club" was treating him and the train and engine crew to lunch at the famous "John Duck's" restaurant nearby! The best part of it all, was that we were free to order any thing on the menu. I think most of us enjoyed the roast L.I. Duckling, as that is what the place is famous for serving.

Homer really did a lot of work for the RR, being head of the Tour Dept. for quite a few years. He built up the "tours" into a sizeable business, one that made money for the line. The RR could'nt have found a more "personable" man, one that also knew well the many attractions Long Island had to offer train travelers. For the "record" going back into Penn. Sta., GG1 no. 4918 pulled us thru the tunnel and also back out to "Harold" tower.

On the day before Memorial Day, a Wednesday, the RR decided to run a "parlor car extra" a few minutes ahead of train 18, the regular afternoon train to Montauk. For motive power we had two Alco "RS-3s", with the second engine, no. 469, of the Reading. Making Westhampton the first stop we managed to stay well ahead of "18" all the way out. We had ten "heavyweight" cars, as the soon to arrive ex PRR and KCS "lightweight" sleepers that would serve as "parlor cars" on the LIRR had not yet shown up. After no. 18 came into Montauk we ran extra back to Jamaica non-stop. This was one of the most "enjoyable trips" I had ever made on an all "parlor" consist, everything, including the air-conditioning seemed to work out "just right".



ex-KCS "Job Edson"
Richmond Hill - 5/1969
Photo/Archive: Bill Mangahas

During mid-summer the "second-hand lightweight sleepers", which included three KCS and thirteen PRR cars arrived. The three ex KCS ones being of the 14 roomette-4 bedroom type, while the ex PRR cars were of three different types. The "Falls" series, (5 cars), had a buffet-lounge and six double bedrooms, while the "Imperial" series, (5 cars), had two drawing rooms, four compartments and four bed rooms. The other three cars of the "County" series had thirteen double bedrooms. Using "sleepers" as parlor cars was really nothing new, as old "Official Guides" indicate this was a regular practice on the NYC for years on certain trains. No doubt the PRR did it also at times, although I could not find it in any of the older "Guides".



AMAGANSETT #2000
ex-B&O #7500 NAPPANEE
Acquired October 1968
Photo/Archive: Mike Boland

About the same time as the thirteen cars came, the ex B&O "Napanee", a buffet-lounge observation with five double bedrooms arrived also. Almost as soon as the "lightweights" could be inspected by the ME Dept., they went into service. Seven of the PRR cars became the first seven on the Thurs. and Fri. "Cannonball", displacing the faithful old six-wheel truck jobs, while the other six PRR cars went on the "Advance Weekender" Fridays, along with the KCS cars. "Napanee" served as a "lounge" on various trains that summer.

Two leased NH cars, the "Pine Tree State" and "Nutmeg State", both "lightweight" stainless-steel, buffet-lounges with six bedrooms saw service on the RR the summer of 1968. They would turn out to be the last leased passenger equipment the RR would ever need.

As the "lightweights" went into service, a like amount of the "heavyweights" were retired, to be stored back of the shop buildings. The "ice system" AC on most of these cars was very ineffective in keeping the cars cool, and needed a lot of work done to bring it up to "par". Working those "ice cars" on sweltering summer afternoons on trains 12, 22 or 212 was pure "murder" wearing a uniform coat and I felt sorry for the poor passenger paying those higher fares and sweating and fanning themselves all the way out!

Even though the cars were well-stocked with big cakes of ice during the afternoon in the "storage yard", most of the "heavyweights" were very hot, with only tiny fans at either end of the car stirring up the stuffy air. If it was the "design" of the RR, (and I do not think it was), to sell more liquor to keep the passengers "cooled-off", it certainly worked out that way!

By contrast, the "electro-mechanical system" of AC on the "lightweight" equipment was very pleasant indeed, the only "catch" being that the car's batteries be fully-charged to keep the system working properly. "Stand-by" jumper cables from diesel generating sets were installed at the storage yard, as well as at Hunterspoint Ave and Montauk. How pleasant it was working cars that were truly "cool" with your coat on! The passengers had all kinds of praise for the change too.



**Shelter Island Express LIRR #213
Westbound at Yaphank - c.1973
Photo/Archive: William H. Birkholz**



**Shelter Island Express - c.1968
Eastbound passing NASSAU Tower
Photo/Archive: Richard Glueck**

All during July I was the conductor on the Friday only "Shelter Island Express". This was a pleasant sort of run to Greenport from Jamaica with Riverhead the first stop. No. 212 had none of the "hustle and bustle" of the Montauk summer trains. We only carried two "heavyweight" parlors and three "ping" coaches. The job only called for one trainman and myself, but we managed to get over the road just fine.

Upon arrival in Greenport, we had to switch the coaches and parlors so that the "pings" were on the rear so we would have electric markers on the train. Of all the "heavyweight equipment", only business cars "Jamaica" and "Setauket" had electric markers. Usually one of the parlor car attendants would bring back coffee and sandwiches for the crew to enjoy going back to Jamaica. No passengers were carried westbound, it was strictly an "equipment" move. We all had a parlor car seat going west on those enjoyable summer evenings. Quite a few Fridays "Rich" Makse was an attendant, so there was much "railroad talk" to while away the trip going west.

Labor Day evening the RR ran an "experimental" late evening train out of Montauk in response to numerous requests from on-line communities "out east".

We ran as an "extra", carrying no passengers from Jamaica to Montauk. We had ten of the recently arrived ex KCS reclining seat coaches, along with the parlor lounge "Oneida Club". The KCS cars were immaculate, with tiled floors, end-



**Parlor Club #2036 Oneida Club
Montauk Yard 1969
(Votava-Keller)**

mirrors and the remains^{of}, but not working, public address system "speakers". Some cars even sported "conductor's desks". So far they still retained their diaphragms.

Leaving Montauk at ten p.m., we were to make all stops to Westhampton and then Jamaica would be the next stop. Who ever the people were that wanted that "late train", they never showed up for it. The total passenger count was fifty two, hardly enough to fill one KCS car!

Early in October it was time for the annual Inspection train to again make it's "rounds". This time, the conductor layed off at the last minute and I was elected as his replacement. "Winnie" Boerckel with his faithful "walkie talkie" was aboard again, assuring us of the "railroad" wherever we might venture! Leaving Jamaica off platform "C" we headed for Fresh Pond over the Montauk Br.. From "Pond" tower we were to back the two car train all the way to Bay Ridge over that branch. The "Setauket" and "Napee" were back to back this year, with their observation-ends at either end of the train.

"Win" and I rode the "Setaukets" observation platform, as we backed down the branch, watching for signal aspects and to warn any trespassers that we were coming with our "peanut whistle" mounted on the car's railing! We were only doing about twenty miles an hour, so we had ample opportunity to look over the sidings, etc. Our Alco "RS-1" was just the right engine for a train of this type, as they still had their steam heat boilers.

Those three position "color light" signals on this branch were the only ones of their type on the RR and very rare in the east. The only place other than here that I recall seeing them was on the Reading out of Phila. on it's electrified routes. Most LIRR signals were of the PRR "position light" type except for this branch and the "color light" signals on the Long Beach Br. Signals in the Atlantic Br. tunnels were all of the "color light" type, but of course in very small units mounted on the walls.

This train today, was quite likely the last LIRR "inspection train" that would go to Bay Ridge. As of January first 1969, the newly-formed Penn-Central RR would also absorb the New Haven R.R.. At that time the float operations between Greenville, N.J. and Bay Ridge would cease and the big Bay Ridge yard closed. The P-C would buy the LIRR's Bay Ridge Br. and the remainder of the Evergreen Br. "Fremont" tower would be manned

P-C men instead of LIRR employees. Freight from New England would continue to be interchanged at Fresh Pond with the LIRR as in the past, but industrial



Fremont Tower - View N
Photo/Archive: Richard F. Makse

sidings from "Fremont" to Bay Ridge would now be served by P-C crews based at Oak Point yard in the Bronx. The 11,000 volt "overhead" on the branch would be "turned-off" again, this time it was permanent.

After a short visit at the Second Ave. yardmasters' building in Bay Ridge yard, we returned to Fresh Pond, "engine first," so as to head west on the Montauk Br. to "Bliss" tower. From there we traveled the freight-only Montauk Cut-Off to Yard "A", stopping by the Thompson Ave. overhead bridge. The switchman lined us up so we could back-up past the westbound empty yard hump and yard to the float bridges. This line is known on RR blueprints as the "North Shore Freight Br." and trains of passenger equipment over it such as ours are rare indeed!

After a brief inspection of the float bridges by "B&B" Dept. men on our train, we retraced our route to Thompson Ave. Now we had to back-up on the "Cut-Off"'s eastbound running track in order to use "The Main Line Cut-Off". This we would use to reach the Main Line tracks by "Harold" tower and then on to the North Side Br., as we were going to Port Washington.

About a half an hour later we arrived in "Port Wash.", and pulled into the yard to give the frequent MU trains "the railroad". We also had to put the locomotive on the west-end of the train by "running around" same. Then it was time for a fine buffet-lunch for all in the "Napanee", now the "east" car. Returning to "Win" tower on the North Side Br., we backed from there to Jamaica on the Main Line. After a "reverse" move in order to get on the eastbound "Hall-Holban Secondary Track", we made our slow way to and thru Holban Yard, rejoining the Main Line east of Hollis. We continued backing up with the var-



NAPPANEE in B&O livery
Renamed AMAGANSETT
Greenport in 1970.
Photo/Archive: Joseph D. Korman

ious "Depts." getting good track views from the observation end of the "Napanee".

Backing the length of the Hempstead Br., we soon arrived there, only pausing long enough for scheduled trains to clear the single track between Hempstead and "Garden" block sta. Then a quick trip back to Jamaica in order to switch to the Atlantic Br., as we still had to cover the West Hempstead Br. We backed to West Hempstead sta., and it was here I would do the most "conductoring" of the entire day! After reporting us clear of the manual block at "WM", in order for our train to head west over the branch to Valley Stream, I had to copy a form "19" train order, a "K" Card by "WM" and of course a "Clearance" card.

We were soon on our way to Jamaica and the end of my experiences on "Inspection trains." Why "Win" Boerckel was never made Superintendent will always be a mystery to me, (and others)? He certainly "knew the railroad" and how it should be operated better than anyone else over the years. He had been a train dispatcher for years, and block operator/towerman before that. Certainly the railroad was the poorer in many ways for not having "Winnie" at the helm!