

At Wantagh the smoke was swirling up from under 1648 and we had everyone leave the car. I called the power director to have the third rail "killed" on two track, so we could "pull" the four-point, (bus), jumpers at either end of the car and break off the contact shoes. This effectively kept third rail current out of 1648 and hopefully would result in the "fire" underneath being extinguished. The insulation continued smoking, but not as much, the rest of the way to Babylon. We had to set the car off in the yard for a "roustabout crew" to bring in with a diesel. About once a week that crew went to the various MU terminals with a diesel switcher to pick up "cripples" such as our 1648 and bring them to the shops.

It was "good old 1648's" last trip, as next week I saw her in back of Morris Park shops with a white line thru her number, meaning she was headed for scrap.

Every once in a while, although thankfully not very often, "shoe leads", or electrical cables bringing 650 D.C. Volts from the contact shoe to the motors on the truck of a car would short circuit due to insulation wearing off and the bare current-carrying copper cable would ground on the truck frame. This could cause "fireworks"!

One night we were on track eight in Jamaica going to Oyster Bay when an MU came in to station track three from Long Beach. About the time the MU passed "Hall" tower a "shoe lead" grounded, with the resulting flashes lighting up the night sky, accompanied by tremendous loud "explosions". The passengers must have been terrified in that car! If that had happened in any of the tunnels the passengers surely would have panicked. Apparently the LIRR was lucky, as I never heard of a "tunnel-explosion".

Another time in the summer of 1947 we were coming in from Babylon on Sunday train 4091, a "high wheeler", when the "shoe leads" let go on the rear car at Belmont Jct., west of Babylon. Conductor Ralph, ("chew tobacco"), Miller cut a length of whistle cord and deftly tied up the offending shorted cable so it would not touch the truck frame and away we went. That took nerve, as he did it with the third rail current on!

One spring weekday I was walking in the vicinity of "Fremont" tower on the Bay Ridge Br. when I heard the unmistakable "whine and whir" of electric locomotives close by. Climbing up the stairs from the street to the RR embankment,



**New Haven "Motors" - GE EL-C
Class EF-4's # 310-#309
Fremont Interlocking southbound
Photo/Archive: Art Huneke**

I saw two NH, ("motors"), sitting just west of the tower with a train bound for the floats at Bay Ridge. The engines were ex VGN jobs recently acquired by the NH when the Bay Ridge Br. was again "energized" for AC operation after a lapse of about five years. The train was "pumping-up" the train's air after setting out about thirty Bangor and Aroostook reefers of "seed potatoes" for eastern L.I. farms on the east leg of the Fresh Pond wye.

The conductor was about to get on the lead unit, so I showed him my pass and asked if I could ride to Bay Ridge with them?

"O.K.", get on the second engine, we're going", was his reply. A half hour later or so we were in Bay Ridge. Now I had been to Bay Ridge twice on the New Haven and only once on my own RR's equipment!

About April, the RR bought nine more twenty eight seat, 1 drawing' room type, "heavyweight" parlor cars from the PRR, probably the last the Pennsy had. Promptly they were repainted to LIRR colors, plus renamed, so as to be ready for the new summer timetable going into effect on May seventeenth. The LIRR now had a total of thirty five parlor cars, plus the diner and observation "Setauket" for the "straw hat limiteds". Below is a typical list of "consists" for the 1964 summer.

Montauk Br:

Thurs: # 16 3 Parlors, Diner, coaches. "The Cannonball"
 # 24 2 " " "
 Friday # 12 1 Parlor-Lounge, 4 Parlors, coaches. "Advance Cannonball"
 # 22 3 " " , 13 " , Observation. "The Cannonball"
 # 18 2 " , coaches. "The East Ender"
 # 26 1 Parlor-Lounge, 8 Parlors, Diner, coaches. "The Weekender"

Main Line :

Friday # 212 3 Parlors, coaches. "Shelter Island Express"
 218 1 " " "

*--- No parlors on Main Line Sat.

*--- 1 parlor on each train to and from Montauk on Sat.

Montauk Br:

Sunday # 4007 1 Parlor Lounge, 3 Parlors, coaches. "The Ebb Tide"
 # 4011 3 " " , 9 " , Diner, Observation. "The Sundowner"
 # 4015 1 " " , 2 " , coaches. "Twilighter"
 # 4017 3 Parlors, coaches. "Beachcomber"
 # 4020 Carries passengers in coaches, plus deadheading diner and parlors for westbound trains Monday a.m..

Main Line :

Sunday # 4213 1 Parlor, coaches.
 # 4217 2 Parlors, coaches.

Montauk Br:

Monday # 3 7 Parlors, Diner, coaches. "The Cannonball"
 # 7 4 " , coaches. "Wall Street Special"

With the diner's crew and the parlor car attendants spending overnight at Montauk, the RR bought the PRR, (nee Pullman), "section sleeper" "Cent Hill" for



W37 "Cent Hill" at Montauk Yard.
 Photo/Archive: Steve Hoskins

the men. Painted gray and with the no. "W37", it set all by itself on track four opposite the depot for years. Oddly, the RR had a wooden gondola "W37" also at this same time! If anyone ever noticed it, no one ever corrected it.

In a way, the 1964 summer was the "High Water Mark" as they say, for the "Straw Hat Limiteds" as it was the final season for a dining car to operate. After the season had ended, the shops removed the tables and converted the "Tuscarora Club" to a forty eight seat "lounge" car. I believe the LIRR was the only RR in the U.S. at the time still operating a "solid" parlor car train, as well as having the last open-end observation car in regular service!



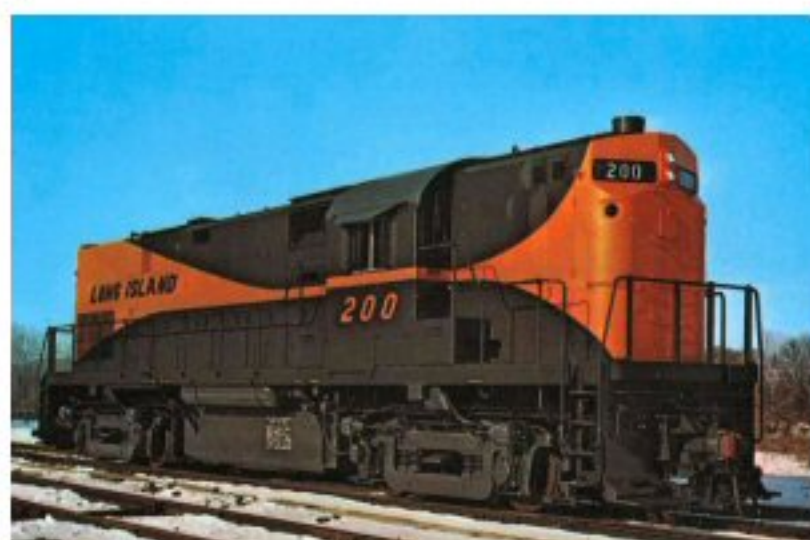
**Cannonball with 17 heavyweights
Connetquot River, Oakdale
Photo/Archive: Art Huneke**

Luckily, the summer's consists were well photographed by Art. Huneke and others for our enjoyment in "duller" years of equipment not too far in the future. "Art's" special place to take photos of "The Cannonball" on Fridays were the scenic woodlands between Great River and Oakdale.



**"General" ex-Western & Atlantic Railroad
Woodside Station, Eastbound
1964-65 NY World's Fair 5/30/1964
Archive: Dave Keller**

Around the last of May, on our way into Hunterspoint Ave. one morning we were suprised to see the famous "General" of Civil War fame with a wooden passenger car setting in the eastbound "Interchange track" east of "Harold" tower. She was on her way to the N.Y. World's Fair to be exhibited for a few days there. She had arrived on the LIRR via the Hell Gate Bridge.



**ALCO C420 #200 Builder photo
"World's Fair" scheme
900/1100 fuel/water capacity tanks
Photo/Archive: ALCO Industries**

The RR now had a brand new fleet of big "road switchers" numbered 200-221 of Alco manufacture and called "Centurys". They all sported the handsome grey and orange paint scheme called the "World's Fair paint job". Even the 461-469 and 1519-1520, as well as 1551-1560 series were adorned in this style. Seven ex D&H yard switchers had also been acquired to replace the remaining Baldwin engines sold to an equipment dealer. The LIRR was now an all "Alco" railroad, except for the two GE shop engines nos. 398-399.

On a beautiful fall Saturday I rode the New Haven's crack "Yankee Clipper" out of Grand Central Terminal to New Haven, it's first stop. Hurrying over to a westbound platform, I was soon on my way west, this time over the Hell Gate Bridge and into Penn. Sta. A nice way to spend a "swing"!

As the rainy fall days closed in on the area, I used my eight hour Sat. "swings" to work on my LIRR photo/map albums, the very ones now in the "LI Collection" at Stony Brook University. No one bothered me over in the old brick Trainmen's building "catty-corner" across Archer Ave. from the Jamaica Sta.. The LIRR Police Dept. Hdq. was in the basement, while the tailor shop was upstairs.

The Wednesday before Thanksgiving I managed to ride the famous "Butler Day Express" to Paterson, N.J. from Susquehanna Transfer. Jim Guthrie and friends urged the N.Y.S.&W. to run this one car train and suprisingly, management went along! The reason for this mid-afternoon train being almost everybody that worked in Manhattan "quitting early" on the day preceeding a "major" holiday.

The rattan seat, ex D&H "Osgood Bradley" coach, (nee R&A), hauled by the "wheezing" Alco "RS-1" rode quite well on the lightly-ballasted track. Vandals threw a rock, breaking a window approaching Paterson. Luckily there were no injuries!