

# The Bulletin



**New York Division, Electric Railroaders' Association**

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## **The Bulletin**

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## **ALDENE PLAN TURNS 40 YEARS OLD** by Larry Kiss

April, 1967 was an important month for commuters of the Central Railroad Company of New Jersey (CNJ). As ridership decreased and expenses increased, the railroad was looking for ways to cut service and hence expenses. Since the state of New Jersey subsidized passenger service, it too was looking for ways to economize.

Both the railroad and the state realized that the biggest saving would be the elimination of the ferry between Jersey City and Liberty Street, Manhattan. This ferry service met all trains and ran practically around the clock, seven days a week. A way had to be found to reroute CNJ trains to another terminal with convenient connections to Manhattan.

The answer was found by studying some recent history. Until February 4, 1961, Lehigh Valley Railroad passenger trains had switched to the Pennsylvania Railroad's Northeast Corridor at a point about two miles south of Penn Station, Newark. Since the New Jersey Mainline passed under the Lehigh Valley at a point called Aldene, it was decided to build a one-track connection to allow CNJ trains to be rerouted to Penn Station, Newark. This idea became known as the Aldene Plan.

Beside the CNJ mainline trains there was the problem of what to do about the Seashore trains. The Seashore trains originated at Bay Head Junction and shared trackage with the Pennsylvania's North Jersey Coast trains north to Perth Amboy, where Pennsylvania trains diverted to Rahway or the Northeast Corridor, while CNJ trains continued to a connection with the CNJ mainline at Elizabethport. The simple solution was to reroute

CNJ trains to Newark Penn Station by the same Rahway route as the Pennsylvania trains.

These reroutings would allow the closure of the ferry from Jersey City to Liberty Street, Manhattan. CNJ trains would now terminate at Penn Station, Newark where connections could be made via PATH and Pennsylvania Railroad trains to Manhattan. A new yard was constructed in the Meadows part of Harrison, New Jersey for storage and turnaround facilities for CNJ trains.

In addition to the rerouting, many other related changes were made to the CNJ operation:

- Service between Elizabethport-Kearny-Newark would be discontinued and the CNJ Newark Terminal on Broad Street would be abandoned
- All CNJ Mainline service north of E. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, Bayonne to the Jersey City terminal would be discontinued and a shuttle meeting all mainline trains at Cranford would operate from W. 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Bayonne (E. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street in rush hours) serving the old Mainline across the Newark Bay Bridge and through Elizabeth. This shuttle operation lasted until August 6, 1978
- *The Queen of the Valley* interstate train beyond Hampton, New Jersey to Phillipsburg, New Jersey and Bethlehem and Allentown, Pennsylvania would be discontinued
- The two Reading Railroad Philadelphia trains, *The Wall Street* and *The Cru-*

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**Next Trip: 207<sup>th</sup> Street Shop Tour—April 21**