

# The Bulletin



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

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## **The Bulletin**

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## **BRIGHTON LINE CENTENNIAL**

The Brighton embankment south of Glenwood Road is 100 years old. Until this embankment was built, trains ran on the surface. In July, the Brighton Line will be 129 years old. It has been in continuous operation longer than any part of the New York City subway system except the Culver Line, which is three years older.

Our sources for this article were a newspaper clipping furnished by member Robert Wasche, the Edward B. Watson/Arthur J. Lonto collection, and the reports of the Brooklyn Grade Crossing Commission dated 1918.

Because Brooklyn was being built up rapidly at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, operation of steam and electric trains on the surface was becoming dangerous. To correct this condition, the Legislature created the Brooklyn Grade Crossing Commission on May 9, 1913. This commission planned the grade crossing elimination on the Brighton Line and the Long Island Rail Road's Manhattan Beach and Bay Ridge Divisions.

Construction of the west concrete wall began on December 29, 1905. The excavation of the depressed roadbed began at Glenwood Road and followed the construction of the wall, the excavation comprising one-third of the cut. Work was completed in October, 1906. Traffic was maintained along the east side of the right-of-way until the west wall and excavation were completed. Tracks were laid in the new excavation and trains operated there while the east wall and the excavation of the remainder of the cut was completed. After the west wall was completed, construction of the east wall was begun at Church Avenue. As the work progressed, it was followed by the excavation of the re-

maining portion of the cut. The east wall was completed in August, 1907.

The contractor brought a large steam shovel to Church Avenue. It was able to remove 1,500 cubic yards a day from the four-track-wide cut. To complete the work by May 1, 1907, it was only necessary to remove 987 cubic yards a day.

The engineers calculated that the earth removed from the cut could be used to build the embankment as far south as Avenue O. The earth excavated from the Long Island Rail Road's Bay Ridge Division Grade Crossing Elimination project was used to construct the embankment between Avenue O and Sheepshead Bay.

To speed up the building of the embankment, Brighton trains were rerouted on March 5, 1906 to the Long Island Rail Road's Manhattan Beach tracks south of Avenue H. Trolley wire was installed to supply power to the Brighton trains. At Avenue H, the Long Island Rail Road originally crossed above the Brighton Line, as shown on the photos in the March, 2007 *Bulletin*. To install the connection, the Brighton tracks were raised to the same elevation as the Long Island Rail Road's tracks. There was a grade crossing at Avenue H and joint operation south of this point while the embankment was under construction.

Before building the embankment, abutments were constructed at each intersecting avenue, after which loaded gondolas dumped the earth excavated from the cut. Temporary wooden bridges crossing each avenue carried the dump train tracks. When the fill was nearly completed, the wooden bridges were replaced with steel girder

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**Next Trip: NJ Transit Meadowlands Shop, June 24 (SUNDAY)**