

# The Bulletin



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

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## **The Bulletin**

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**In This Issue:**  
**Brooklyn's  
Cable  
Cars...Page 2**

## **CANARSIE LINE EXTENDED 80 YEARS AGO**

Trains started running on the Canarsie Line between Sixth Avenue and Rockaway Parkway 80 years ago, July 14, 1928. BMT, Transit Commission, and civic officials rode the first train, a six-car train with a flag draped on the front, which departed from Sixth Avenue at 2:06 PM and ran non-stop to Rockaway Parkway, where the officials were transferred to 50 automobiles for a tour of Canarsie. Then they ate dinner at Ridgewood Gardens on Myrtle Avenue.

A celebration was held in Bushwick, where 1,000 people marched in a parade. Canarsie residents celebrated, too. They erected a bandstand at E. 105<sup>th</sup> Street and Flatlands Avenue, a short distance south of the E. 105<sup>th</sup> Street station and grade crossing. In front of the speaker's platform, a huge milk truck got stuck in the mud just before the celebration. Unfortunately, the tractor that tried to haul the truck drowned out the speakers. The driver decided to leave the truck in the mud until the speakers left.

On June 30, 1928, the third rails were energized between Montrose Avenue and East New York. From July 1 to July 9, test trains were operated in this area. From July 10 to July 13, supervisors were breaking in the crews. On July 14, the first revenue trains departed from Sixth Avenue at 2:11 PM and Rockaway Parkway at 2:18 PM, twelve years after ground was broken on April 8, 1916.

Construction of the portion of the line between Sixth Avenue and Montrose Avenue began in the fall of 1916 and was delayed due to the wartime shortage of materials and manpower. Although the trains started running on June 30, 1924, work on the Montrose Avenue station was not completed until September 27, 1924.

The original plans called for an elevated structure east of Montrose Avenue. But it was never approved because the local residents objected to an elevated structure on Wyckoff Avenue. Plans were changed several times until the existing route — a subway under Wyckoff Avenue — was approved in 1924. Construction began at the Myrtle Avenue station on February 17, 1925 and was completed at the Wilson Avenue and Bushwick-Aberdeen stations on August 1, 1928, two weeks after trains started running there.

### **LIGHTWEIGHT METAL CARS**

In the late 1920s, BMT was operating wooden elevated cars that were built between 1884 and 1908. To replace these cars, it needed a lightweight metal car that could be operated on the elevated lines without requiring large expenditures for reinforcing or reconstructing the elevated structures.

To solve this problem, the Transit Commission appointed a committee of engineers in 1927. After a thorough study, the committee reported that aluminum alloys and special high-tensile strength steel were being developed. They believed that a lightweight metal car could be built. A few years later, the Commission authorized the purchase of two experimental trains, which were placed in service in 1934. The stainless steel train, nicknamed the Zephyr, was built by the E.G. Budd Manufacturing Company. The aluminum alloy train, nicknamed the Green Hornet, was built by the Pullman Car and Manufacturing Corporation. It was the prototype for the Multis that were placed in service on the Canarsie Line in 1937. With a balancing speed of 55 miles per hour and acceleration and deceleration of 4 miles per hour per sec-

*(Continued on page 4)*

**NEXT TRIP — SCRANTON (STEAMTOWN/ELECTRIC CITY TROLLEY), JULY 26**