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BULLETIN

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Penn RR YMCA, Penn Sta.

Electric Railroaders Assn, Inc.

Use 8th Ave. Elevators

POLO GROUNDS SHUTTLE TO QUIT JUNE 15 The N.Y.C.T.A. has asked permission to discontinue the IRT Div shuttle service between 155th St-8th Ave and 167th St on the Jerome Ave. Line. This abandonment, long expected by many railfans, will not be greatly noticed by the public. In the last few years, traffic on the shuttle has dwindled away almost to nothing - helped, no doubt by the half-hourly headway in use recently, with 15-min. service in "rush" hours. (Trains leave 155 St at 8 and 30 min past the hour normally - and service is run all night!)

This little line, however, although less than $1\frac{1}{2}$ mi. long, is especially rich in history. The station at 155th St is the oldest NYCTA structure, having been opened in 1879 as the north end of the Ninth Ave. El. Putnam Bridge, across the Harlem River, was opened by the NY City & Northern, a steam road to Brewster, in 1881, as an el connection. At the time, its 300-ft span made it the longest 2-track draw. It was & is steam-operated (one of two such remaining). This was also part of a route to Boston, via the NY & New England, a competitor of the New Haven, which lacked access to NY. When the NY&NE collapsed, the NYCC&N became the NY Central's Putnam Division.

In 1916, the bridge was leased to the IRT for 999 years (later it was purchased). As part of the Manhattan El Improvements, it was to be linked by a new tunnel to the new Jerome Ave. Line. NY Central service was cut back to a new joint station at Sedgewick Ave on Jan 6, 1918; the bridge was electrified and IRT ran to Sedgwick on March 1; and through service to Jerome Ave began July 1, 1918. This continued until June 11, 1940, when the Ninth Ave El was abandoned below 155th St, and shuttles ran only from 155th to 167th St. At one time it was planned to use the line as part of a link between 145th St-Lenox Ave and Jerome Ave; this was dropped, perhaps because the walls of the tunnel will not clear subway 3rd rail shoes (the cars used have special shoes cut off short). The big yard at 155th St was torn down after the war to make way for a housing project. Anderson-Jerome Aves station, the only other intermediate one, was the last on the system to use tickets instead of turnstiles, these lasting until about 1950! Steel cars replaced "Composites" in 1949. Last month, one track was taken out of service.

B&O PASSENGER TRAINS LEAVE NEW YORK By: Herbert G. Frank, Jr.

Passenger service of the Baltimore & Ohio between NY and Baltimore ended early in the morning of Sunday, April 27, as train #11, the Metropolitan Special pulled out of Jersey City with 23 cars. An advance section had taken out all other B&O cars at Jersey City earlier.

All through the previous day, the normally half-empty trains of the B&O looked more like those of the Pennsy, crowded to the doors - with railfans and last riders. Ordinarily, however, the B&O was in a class by itself as the only road offering such luxury service from NY. Like the porters on Pullman trains, B&O coaches had attendants, which handled passengers' baggage, offered pillows, and kept the trains spotlessly clean en route. Here the passenger could relax as on no other Eastern road, and enjoy the trip. Aside from railfans, many of the riders have been older people, content with a lieisurely ride (although nearly as fast in time as the PRR). Mt Royal station in Baltimore even had rocking chairs in the waiting rooms. The dining car service was incomparably good, one of B&O's best claims to fame. No one else serves such fine meals at such reasonable prices, and all the extras are provided (even bottled water from a spring owned by B&O). Going so far out of their way to provide this service earned the B&O a big reputation, but little money. The motto of the line was "those who know, go B&O". The trouble was, nobody knew in later years. Most New Yorkers wanting to go west or south by rail think of Penn Station, not knowing that B&O actually had more NY Stations than the PRR! Although the trains ended at Jersey City, buses across the platform took passengers onto the Jersey Central ferries (offering a wonderful view of the city), and through the city to 4 terminals, one in

Brooklyn. The bus trip was included in the fare to NY. Earlier, the B&O trains did run from Penn Station. They were brought in during World War I, when the railroads were under federal control (Pennsy was run by a NY Central man under USRA), and they stayed until 1927, when the PRR threw them out. The B&O still has a foothold in New York, though. A ticket office is still open at 42nd St, there is passenger service on the Staten Island, a B&O subsidiary, and one B&O locomotive works a freight yard on the west side of Manhattan.

The "Royal Blue Route", named for its most famous train, is over 70 years old. The Royal Blue was the only train completely discontinued at this time, all others still running from Baltimore. The B&O might have cut costs to the bone by offering nothing but transportation, but this was not the way of the nation's oldest passenger railroad. They would run good trains or none. On the last Royal Blue, ridden by railfans and railroad officials, mementos and other mementoes were saved by passengers. As the train neared Jersey City, passengers and crew gathered in the observation to sing "Auld Lang Syne" to end the trip.

DYRE AVE LINE TO RUN ALL NIGHT: It has not been officially announced as yet, but it seems to be true that after the next schedule change, probably next month, the Dyre Avenue shuttle will run all night, instead of ending at 1:00 AM. When the line was first operated by the city, it served an area of little population; but there has been a lot of new building there, and there is much more traffic potential now than on the Polo Grounds Shuttle. Recently, with more and more new R-22 cars arriving, they have been used on the shuttle. The #9 route sign, intended for the shuttle, has even been turned up (sometimes by fans).

MYRTLE AVENUE EL CHANGES CARS By David Rogoff

The night of April 10 marked the official changeover of the BMT Division's Myrtle Ave. El line from "BU" to "Q" type cars. (Actually, operation of "BU" cars continued sporadically, as there were not enough "Q"s to cover breakdowns).

The "BU" (Brooklyn Union El RR) cars replaced, numbered in the 1300 series, are open-end convertible el cars. Although their bodies are wood, they have steel floor framing and concrete floors. They were the second group of convertibles built for the old BRT, being turned out by Laconia, Cincinnati and Jewett in 1905-6. Although all 16 side panels may be removed and replaced with gratings for summer service, only 4 have been opened recently; even so, they were wonderful on a hot summer night!

The "Q" cars (Queens) were originally "BU" types of the 1200 and 1400 series. They were identical to the 1300's except that they were not convertible. The 12's were built in 1903, the 14's in 1907, by Bradley, Brill, Laconia and Jewett. Like all "BU"s, they originally had steps and trolley poles for surface operation; they also have Westinghouse "AB" control and straight pneumatic brakes.

In 1938-9 these cars were extensively rebuilt with closed platforms, sliding doors and combined into 3-car sets, with a trailer in the middle. Numbered in the 1600's, with the units of a set marked with letters (i.e. 1600A, 1600B, 1600C), they were orange and blue at first, the colors of the World's Fair, which they served. Later they were BMT el-car brown or green. They were used in BMT service on the Flushing and Astoria lines, which they shared with IRT 9-foot steel subway trains and (until 1942) Second Ave. el trains. In 1939-40, 26 more cars were rebuilt into 2-car "Q" sets; these were often called "QX" types, and all of them are now out of passenger service. When the Flushing line became all-IRT, and the Astoria line had platforms cut back for BMT 10-foot subway trains (Oct 14-17, 1949), these cars were taken to Coney Island and stored, then car-floated to the Bronx for the Third Ave. Elevated.

They were placed on maximum-traction trucks (smaller wheels on the trailer axle) which had been made in 1915 for the IRT Composite cars, when they had been transferred from the subway to the el. The original Composite trucks are under the "Flivvers". The "Q" cars were painted olive drab, but retained their BMT numbers. In 1955, the el was cut back to 149th St, and on Dec 15, 1956, IRT steel "Steinway" cars, also from the Flushing line, took over, leaving the "Q" cars unemployed again.

The "Q" cars once again returned to the BMT, this time by rail, and were repainted inside and out. (How many other shiny, freshly-painted wood cars are there in 1958?). Three made a brief, unsuccessful appearance on the Brighton-Franklin Shuttle on Oct. 17, 1957. Perhaps because of the trouble experienced there, they have had extension sills added to the doors to reduce the gap at 10-foot stations. Unfortunately, they retain the IRT trucks, which are not powerful enough, and they are hardly fast enough to be real "Rapid Transit".

The end of the "BU" cars marks the end of convertible rapid transit cars, and the last open-platform el car operation. At one time, open platform cars were used by the IRT, the BRT (BMT's predecessor), the Boston el and subway, the Chicago el, and the London Underground. Boston was the first to get rid of open platforms; when Chicago's last ran in June, 1957, the 1300's became the only ones in the world in regular service. Many survive, however, as service cars, on the BMT and in Chicago. Stanford has one car, and expects three more, and two ex-IRT cars are preserved in California, on the Key System, where they ran during World War II.

LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD NOTES: By Henry Raudenbush

The Long Island has received permission from the NY State Public Service Commission to single-track the Ozone Park Branch between Whitepot Jct, where it joins the Main Line, and Ozone Park. This is the part of the line owned by the City of NY, and intended to be part of the Subway someday. LIRR would put in a spring switch south of the junction, and remove the dangerously dilapidated high wood platforms at Brooklyn Manor, Parkside, and perhaps Rego Park, replacing them with low cinder platforms. Permission was refused, however, for eliminating one of the two daily round trips, which are each about 5 cars, with half the seats filled. This is a far cry from former days, when this was the main line to Rockaway! The trains do not lay over at Ozone Park, but return to Penn Station. No weekend service is offered.

TIDBITS: Our secretary, who usually compiles the "Tidbits" is on vacation in California this month, so this column will be short..

LIRR - Grade crossing elimination work has begun on the Old Southern (Atlantic) Branch between Jamaica and Laurelton. Roadbed for temporary tracks is being graded. Other projects to start this year: Freeport, Hicksville, Floral Park, Babylon, Maspeth.

PRR - Like almost all railroads, PRR reduced service under new timetables. Also, permission was asked to discontinue one daily round trip of a single MU car between Perth Amboy and Jamesburg, over the Camden & Amboy, the oldest part of PRR. This car deadheads on through Monmouth Jct to Trenton. Connection leaves NY 5:20 PM; railfans riding it must return by bus, unless special arrangement can be made with PRR.

IRT - Platform extensions nearly complete at 42, 50, 59, 66 and 72 Streets on West Side; excavation is now complete at 96th St, but as this job involves moving local tracks to widen platform, it will not be done until Aug. 1959. Other local stations (79, 86) under way. 91st Street will be abandoned, as there will be an entrance at 93rd St.

LIRR - Effective May 8, reverse signalling on middle tracks is complete on Main Line between Jamaica and Hicksville. This will allow smoother rush hour service, with three tracks in one direction. Also, this will be handy later this month, when a new street underpass is installed at 202nd Street, Hollis, when two tracks must be out of service. Business continues to boom on the Port Jeff. line; train 652 now has 16 coaches and a club car - another couple of trains have 15 of the new, larger cars. These are not MU's, however. Longest MU trains are 12 of the big cars.

ERA: Brooklyn tour, Apr 27, earned \$3.40 - not enough for sharing to Div. Members. Many thanks go to various NYCTA personnel who helped run it.

IRT: Recent rush-hour "spotting" on the West Side locals over a period of weeks disclosed only three "Gibbs" (1904) cars: 3562, 3584 and 3631. Just over half the other cars are later "Hi-VI's"; the rest are the Elivvers. One morning last month, a breakdown and block on the uptown local gave 3584 a chance to run on the express track. Obsolete? Sure - but still lively after 54 years!