

BULLETIN

of the
New York Division

ELECTRIC RAILROADERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

OPERATION NORTHWEST - by Herbert G. Frank, Jr. & Henry T. Raudenbush

The PCC glided up to it's stop at the corner, and the door popped open. A waiting rider boarded the car, handed the operator a bill, and asked for a ticket on the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Impossible? Not any longer. Since October 26th, the PRR, long known to railfans as "The Big Red Subway", has actually been providing local rapid transit service in Northwestern Philadelphia. The Reading Railroad is also taking part in this operation, which is sponsored by the City of Philadelphia.

In an attempt to encourage people to use public transportation, the city has arranged to subsidize an experiment with reduced fares, increased service, and transfers to a limited number of PTC surface lines in the Germantown-Chestnut Hill area. Here are the new fares, which will be in effect for at least a six-months trial period:

- PRR or RDG - locally on the branches: 25¢
- PRR or RDG - branch to downtown Phila: 30¢
- PRR or RDG - downtown Phila. to branch,
plus PTC transfer: 40¢

Special ticket forms, similar to regular railroad tickets, are sold by all three systems. 40¢-tickets sold by the railroads have 2 coupons, the 2nd for the PTC ride. Ten-trip tickets are sold for the 30¢ & 40¢ rides, the former at a reduction (10 rides for \$2.90).

The city has gone to some trouble to make the operation successful...At all the PTC-railroad transfer stations, there are bright blue-and-yellow signs to direct passengers between trains and surface lines.

The Chestnut Hill branches of both railroads are entirely within the City of Philadelphia, and serve a neighborhood which has no local PTC rapid transit lines. To further improve service, both railroads have added more trains. The increases are greater on the PRR, which had poorer service before: (Figures and number of round trips):

	READING RR		PENNA. RR	
	OLD	NEW	OLD	NEW
Monday-Friday	33	36½	24	36
Saturday	15	30	13½	27
Sunday	6	10	8½	10
Total for week	186	220 5/2	142	217

Service on both railroad branches is with short trains of 11,000 volt AC M.U.cars. Both railroads have numerous other branches in the Philadelphia area. Similar operation might be extended to some of these!!!

Considering its length of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, this BMT operation is one of the most interesting. Its long history can still be traced in stone and steel along the line; it is one of the few off-street routes; and it has had some interesting rolling stock.

To understand the history of the line, one must remember that until the Brighton Subway along Flatbush Ave. was built (1918), this was the main line of the Brighton service, which began as a steam railroad. Originally, it began with a connection to the LIRR in Atlantic Ave., but later it was absorbed by the Brooklyn Rapid Transit, connected to the Fulton St. "L" and electrified. Today's line is basically the same as existed then, except for the results of some reconstruction about 1918; so let's take a ride on it.

Since the Fulton St. "L" was abandoned in 1940, passengers have been given transfers to and from the IND subway at Fulton St. & Franklin Ave. Arriving this way, we take our tickets and climb up four flights of stairs to the BMT, which is above ground on an embankment here. The first thing we notice is a remnant of the Fulton St. Line, which now serves as a foot-bridge over the street. Ten years ago, this was fairly complete; a short piece of Fulton St. track remained, the overhead foot-bridges linking the formerly separate platforms were all in place, though unused, and the old interlocking tower stood in the middle of the platform (just north of today's transfer machines). On the corner of Fulton St., we can see the girders for the connecting curve, about where the change-booth is now. Dropping our ticket in the box, we enter the platforms. There are two; the west used for an entrance, the east as an exit, with but a single track between. We can easily see, though, where the other track was planked over. This was done in the early 1920's, when steel-car shuttles replaced wooden-car through service, and the track connection to Fulton St. was broken.

About half-way down the platform, there is another set of booths and street-stairs; these were added to handle baseball crowds bound for the IND. The location of the booths marks the north end of a third stub track that once existed east of the exit platform.

Walking around to the other platform, we board the train and make the very short journey across Atlantic Ave. to Dean St. station. An automatic interlocking here handles the beginning of double-track, sending the trains in and out of the Franklin Ave. pocket. This station is located in the middle of a yard used by the Structure Department, which is worth some study. On the west side, there are two large warehouses, and a driveway. These are in the location of the old LIRR connection, which was broken when the tunnel in Atlantic Ave. was built. A turnout was provided in the tunnel, and on Atlantic Ave. in front of the brick BMT building, a trapdoor of an exit stairway from this can be seen. The BRT never completed this, however.

Under the BMT tracks between Atlantic Ave. & Dean St., is another building; and east of the tracks in the same block is a wonderful collection of ancient wooden BRT buildings. Looking at these, it is easy to imagine one of the old open-platform trolley box-motors standing in the alley, a handlebar-mustached motorman waiting, while a crew of workmen load freshly-painted signs advertising special summer cars to Coney Island.... But this is 1958, and the low shanties are only a parking space for employees' cars, while work-crews go out by truck.

There is a smaller yard between Dean & Pacific Sts., and in Dean St., the rails of the track connecting the yard with the line are intact.

Beyond this point, there were once two surface tracks, one on each side of the embankment. The one on the west was removed and the land sold very early; but the one on the east can be easily traced right down to Park Place.

Coming into the station here, we notice some steel sticking out to the west. These are girders which help to carry the southbound track, which had to be removed off of the embankment to make room for an extension of the platform. In the middle of the station, the earth ramps for the surface tracks on both sides are easily seen, and then at the end of the station, the line enters a cut. The land sloped up quite steeply in both directions to Eastern Parkway, and this cut was always there, to ease the grades. There are two bridges here, whose stone abutments show their age (the bridges themselves are newer, however), and then we enter a brick arch tunnel under Eastern Parkway.

There was no station here at all in early days, and the present one was built about 1918. At both ends of the station are short pieces of standard subway construction, with a section of open-cut and wood platforms between. There have been two connections to the IRT here. The first was a temporary track put in when the IRT was being built. In these days, before large dump trucks, a BRT trolley-dump car was the best way to haul away the dirt! Then the work was done, there was a mezzanine passageway connecting the IRT and BRT stations, but this may not have been used, and it is now closed off.

Leaving Eastern Parkway, we go under a foot-bridge, where we may notice a brick building atop the bank on the east. This is the Carroll St. Testing Laboratory, where samples of all the thousands of materials that it takes to run the authority's system are tested to insure quality. (This Lab was visited by a group of Division members last Spring).

Two more overpasses go by, and we come to the site of the former Consumers Park station, a flag-stop built to serve a predecessor of Ebbets Field. A sharp look can detect the spaces occupied by two narrow wooden platforms. On the east side there was a freight siding behind the platform. This siding served a huge brewery, now used as a furniture warehouse. We can still see the door through which grain and malt brought in by South Brooklyn was unloaded in days gone by.

Another overpass, and we come to the new cross-over installed last winter to permit Franklin shuttle trains to enter and leave Prospect Park station on the same track, avoiding delays to Brighton Subway trains. The reduction in delays also allows the rush-hour shuttle service to be handled with one train less. We take the cross-over, and enter the station through the original double-track tunnel under Flatbush Ave. When the subway was built, the southbound track was re-located into a new, sharply-curved tunnel to get over to the west side. This tunnel was the scene of the Malbone St. wreck, in which nearly a hundred passengers were killed, on Nov. 1st, 1918. Because of a motorman's strike, the BRT had a poorly-qualified switchman operating the trains, which consisted of 5 wooden cars. The switchman had apparently little experience with main-line operation, and did not know of the curve (which had been placed in service but a few days earlier), and ran the train full speed down the long hill from Park Place. The train turned over in the tunnel, reducing the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th cars to splinters. The first and last cars were not badly damaged, the former (726) surviving until 1957. The ensuing damage suits forced the BRT into receivership, leading to re-organization in 1923 as the BMT.

We cannot say much here about Prospect Park station, which merits an article in itself.

Equipment-wise, the Brighton-Franklin is interesting; several unusual types lent variety to a standard pattern. From the time the line was cut off from Fulton St., which ended regular "BU" operation, the regular cars have been the standard BMT 2000 series A-B types. The Budd Multi-Section car, #7029, homesteaded here for many years up to about 1949. In October, 1957, wooden " " types (1600's) were tried for a few hours; and in February, 1958, regular Multi's (7000's) were used for a week.

Shuttle service to Prospect Park has been the regular thing, but in past years, it was to practice to run Brighton-Franklin expresses to Coney Island in the summer. On certain occasions (Sunny Summer Sundays), these were extended over the Sea Beach and 4th Ave. express tracks to Chambers St. With the gradual decline of Coney Island, and the economy drives of recent years, this service has been whittled away.

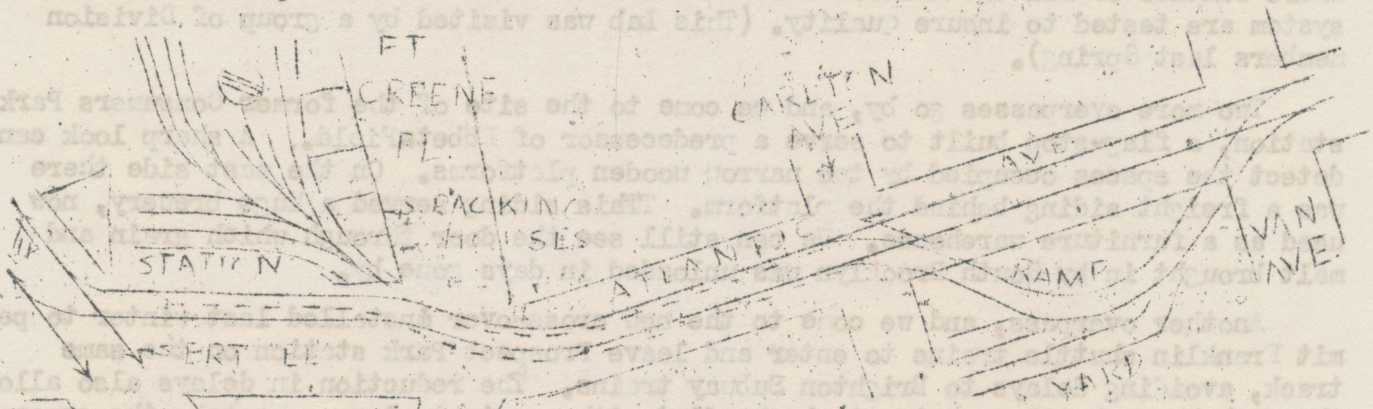
FLATBUSH & ATLANTIC - LIRR TERMINAL

by David Rogoff

The Long Island Rail Road, as we all know, has an underground terminal at Flatbush and Atlantic Aves. in Brooklyn. Few of us realize, however, what a long history this terminal site has, and how many different tracks were here. There were connections to both the IRT & BMT here.

The first railroad past this point was the Brooklyn & Jamaica, which came up the hill from the river in 1834. Two years later, this line was leased to the L.I. In 1861, the LIRR ceased operation of trains west of East New York, because it was becoming too hazardous running trains through busy streets. In 1877, however, there was a change of heart, and trains were extended back to Flatbush Avenue. The section west of there, which included a tunnel (which is still partly in existence, unused), was not used again.

In 1897, the LIRR built a connection to the Fifth Ave. elevated line of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit on Flatbush Avenue. The connection left the LIRR tracks on the surface at the corner of Atlantic & Carlton Avenues, swinging south behind a factory, and up a ramp. It continued as a two-track elevated structure, in the middle of Atlantic Avenue as far as Ft. Greene Pl.; then along the north sidewalk, and into the BRT. There is a schedule in existence showing through service via this connection.



In 1898, the LIRR's terminal was in the same area as now, but on the surface, in an area bounded by Atlantic Ave., Flatbush Ave., Ashland Pl., Hanson Pl., and Ft. Greene Pl. The terminal, however, was much smaller than today, and the west corner of the block was occupied by an armory and a vacant lot; and the north side by brownstone homes. The tracks were in the open, and the lay-out was similar to to-day, but much smaller. There were 7 passenger tracks, and 8 express tracks (including 1 meat track as today), and a turn-table. To the east of the tracks, within the block, there were, and still are, meat-packing houses. The actual station building was beyond the ends of the tracks to the west.

The LIRR ran on Atlantic Ave. as today, but on the surface, in the middle of the street, in an unpaved, fenced-in right-of-way. The Carlton Ave. Yards were also on the surface, in part of the block bounded by Atlantic Ave., Carlton Ave., Pacific St., and 6th Ave. The south side of Atlantic Ave. was occupied by two trolley tracks (Atlantic Ave. Railroad--later, part of the BRT). To get from the LIRR tracks into the yard, there was a two-track turnout, crossing the trolley-tracks at grade.

In 1904, the "Atlantic Avenue Improvement" was begun. This consisted of an entirely new underground terminal (the present station), an elevated merchandise terminal above the east side of the underground terminal, enlarging and depressing the Carlton Ave. Yards, and re-locating the LIRR tracks running on the surface of Atlantic Ave. to a new 2-track subway below Atlantic Ave. The yards were lengthened to Vanderbilt Ave. (for freight), and to 6th Ave. (for M-U storage).

Two separate portals from the subway to the yards were built, each with its own interlocking tower. Only the east portal and tower ("VAN") at the corner of Atlantic Ave. & Vanderbilt Ave. was used. The other portal and tower at the corner of Carlton Ave. & Atlantic Ave. was intended for the "EL" connection. Between the two portals (but underground) an extra two-track structure (an M-U car-shop) was built. The part of the connection to the Fifth Ave. "EL" between 5th & 6th Aves. was also rebuilt at that time. It was re-located out of the center of Atlantic Ave., moved south into the yards, and enlarged to three tracks.



The Merchandise Terminal had 6 tracks in groups of three, separated by covered platforms. It was connected to the rest of the LIRR by the same connection which had been built to connect the LIRR to the 5th Avenue "EL". A bridge and platform was built connecting the LIRR-BRT connection with the Armour & Co. meat-packing house at the north-west corner of Atlantic Ave. & Ft. Greene Pl. A tunnel was also built connecting the same building to the underground LIRR tracks at that point. The tunnel is no longer used.

In 1940, the Merchandise Terminal tracks and the LIRR-BRT connection were torn down. Today only the elevated structure pillars remain. They are used as supports for billboards on the north sidewalk of Atlantic Ave. The LIRR-BRT connection was cut off at a point half-way between 5th Ave. & 6th Ave., along with the north track. A new straight elevated section was added for a short distance from the cut-off point towards 5th Ave. The Armour & Co. platform and bridge were re-built.

The underground terminal is still basically the same as built. The meat-packers still have direct access to the east track (#17) via a special platform. The terminal itself is underpinned by the two-track BMT Brighton Line, which runs south under St. Felix St., under the terminal, and then under the block bounded by Atlantic Ave., 5th Ave., and Flatbush Ave. to meet the IRT under Flatbush Ave. A passenger-way also underpins the terminal from east to west, but only goes under passenger tracks as far as an entrance to the BMT Brighton Line described above. This passage-way connects the IRT & BMT 4th Ave. Line with the LIRR platforms. The track connection between the LIRR and the IRT was to have been from the Manhattan-bound IRT tracks at the Hanson Pl. end of the terminal, and from the outbound-tracks of the IRT at the Atlantic Ave. end of the terminal, (crossing the Manhattan-bound tracks at grade.) Only the Manhattan-bound connection was ever provided for.

The present underground terminal has 7 passenger tracks and 8 express tracks (included are the meat tracks). The layout is such, however, that the station will not clear any of the bigger LIRR cars, including the double-deckers. A small GE diesel switcher, whose number and horsepower are both 400, is stationed at the terminal to handle local freight switching. This engine uses the underground terminal as an engine-house.

Oddly enough, the LIRR owns the station and the yard, but never has owned the line in Atlantic Avenue. For some reason, the LIRR never bought the old Brooklyn & Jamaica; and eventually, the B&J's successor came into the hands of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit. This is one of the reasons why there were three connections built or planned between this line and the BRT. The first was the one at Flatbush Ave. The second was to be at Franklin Ave. There was a connection here at one time, but the connection from the subway was never completed. The third was the one at Autumn Avenue, which was used for BRT service to Rockaway. When the BMT was taken over by the City of N.Y., the line became the property of the City, and it remains so today.

* * *

ROUTE NUMBERS - IRT & BMT

Compiled by Gerald H. Landau & Herbert G. Frank, Jr.

Although many of them were never used, route numbers were assigned to most of the IRT & BMT services. The BMT numbers must have been assigned as early as the mid-20's, for use on the first 6000-series "D"-type cars. The IRT numbers may not have been assigned until 1947, when the R-12 (Flushing Line) cars were built.

IRT

BMT

- 1 - Broadway - 7th Avenue
- 2 - 7th Avenue - Bronx
- 3 - 7th Avenue - Lenox (145th St.)
- 4 - Lexington - Jerome Avenue
- 5 - Lexington - White Plains Road
- 6 - Lexington - Pelham Bay
- 7 - Flushing
- 8 - Astoria
- 9 - Dyre Avenue - East 180th Street

IRT did not assign numbers to shuttles or elevated lines.

- 1 - Brighton
- 2 - 4th Avenue
- 3 - West End
- 4 - Sea Beach
- 5 - Culver
- 6 - Fifth Ave. - Bay Ridge
- 7 - Brighton - Franklin
- 8 - Astoria
- 9 - Flushing
- 10 - Myrtle - Chambers St.
- 11 - Myrtle Ave. "EL"
- 12 - Lexington Avenue (B'klyn)
- 13 - Fulton St. "EL" & 14th St. - Fulton Street
- 14 - Broadway-Brooklyn (Short) Line
- 15 - Broadway - Jamaica
- 16 - 14th Street - Canarsie

THE BULLETIN:

Published by the New York Division, ERA, 145 Greenwich St., N.Y. 6, N.Y.

Publications Committee:

Henry Raudenbush, Chairman
Herbert G. Frank, Jr.
Walter M. Kauffman
David Rogoff
Martin H. Schachne

Division Officers:

Herman Rinke, Chairman
Everett A. White, Vice-Chairman
Martin H. Schachne, Secretary
Paul A. Renault, Treasurer
Lester W. Barnett, Director
Leon H. Macie, Director
Arthur J. Lonto, Director
George R. Eggers, Leon H. Macie,
& Melvin Rosenberg, Ushers.

Stencils cut by Jerry Landau

Mimeograph by Henry Deutch

TRACTION CAPITAL: Of about 14,400 electric railway cars in the USA, some 8400 are used in the New York Metropolitan Area. Of these, 6000 are NYCTA subway cars; the rest are MU's and PSNJ's PCC's. In Canada, the situation is also uneven: of about 1350 cars in the Dominion, some 1040 are in Toronto, 744 of them being PCC streetcars.

PRR MU's run on all passenger-carrying electric lines except Parkesburg-Harrisburg and Newark, Del. to Baltimore, Md.

HTR