

# RAILROADS

*Illustrated*

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# NEW YORK & ATLANTIC RAILWAY

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY  
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NY&A's GP38-2s 270 and 271 pass the Yard Limit sign in Ronkonkoma, New York, in May 2007. The RS-60 crew is heading east on the single-track LIRR mainline for Gershow Recycling in Medford, New York. The crew will switch six empty scrap gondolas for six loads. In the rear of the train are three propane tank cars for Paraco Gas in Riverhead, New York.



270

270

NEW YORK  
&  
ATLANTIC  
RAILWAY

YARD  
LIMIT

**T**his April marks the Long Island Rail Road's 178th anniversary. The railroad's early existence — as evidenced by its slogan, "The Route of the Dashing Commuter" — heavily depended on passenger service. A 25-year decline in freight car loadings led LIRR to redirect its focus on commuter traffic. To that end, in 1997, Long Island Rail Road awarded Anacostia & Pacific Company, Inc. a 20-year concession, with an option for ten more years, to operate LIRR's freight division. A&P's New York & Atlantic Railway division began freight operations over the line on May 11, 1997.

New York & Atlantic serves customers in the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens in New York City and Nassau and Suffolk Counties on Long Island. The NY&A's Fresh Pond Yard is in Glendale, Queens, where it interchanges with CSX and Providence & Worcester (aggregates only). The 1999 Conrail breakup gave Canadian Pacific access to New York City. In a cost-cutting move, Canadian Pacific's direct service to Fresh Pond ended on December 13, 2010. CSX now handles all traffic from CP. Norfolk Southern runs with NY&A interchange cars from Oak Island, New Jersey, to Greenville, New Jersey, and New York New Jersey Rail (former New York Cross Harbor Railroad) then floats cars from Greenville to Bush Terminal at 51st Street and 1st Avenue, Brooklyn. This is the only remaining car float service in New York Harbor. The

Port Authority of New York & New Jersey owns NYNJ Rail. NYNJ interchanges with NY&A at 65th Street and 1st Avenue, Bayridge, Brooklyn, on the Bushwick Branch. NY&A also interchanges with LIRR at Fresh Pond. LIRR receives rail and ballast.

NY&A serves customers in Brooklyn and Queens in New York City and Nassau and Suffolk Counties on Long Island. Major commodities NY&A handles include propane, building materials, lumber, animal feed, food, scrap metal, paper, brick, chemicals, stone, bentonite, contaminated soil, household garbage, and construction debris. The railroad has also delivered subway cars for MTA's NYC Transit Authority and electric MU cars for MTA's Long Island Rail Road. NY&A serves its customers at several yards, transload facilities, and 12 team tracks. At startup, the shortline handled 9,000 cars per year and now averages 2,000 cars per month. New restrictive regulations affecting 18-wheelers traveling over metropolitan-area bridges transferred that traffic to NY&A, including increased carloads of stone, construction debris, garbage, and contaminated soil moves.

NY&A built a new siding on LIRR's Central Branch. This siding, the longest new freight siding constructed on the LIRR in more than 50 years, handles freight for Century Building Materials, Nicolia Industries (stone), and One World Recycling (C&D).

**Below:** NYA SW1001s 106 and 101 moves two centerbeams of lumber for customer C&M Lumber in April 2005. The RS-40 job switches the lumber track at the Long Island City Team Track. The railway also delivers brick, rice, food stuffs, and food oils at the team yard. The author enjoyed a cab ride with the crew from Fresh Pond Yard west to Long Island City returning east to Maspeth Yard and back to Fresh Pond Yard on the LIRR lower Montauk Branch.

**Facing page:** The RS-30 crew sits on the North Freight Track at Bridgehampton, New York. They traveled through the snow on the Montauk Branch from Fresh Pond. Pulver Gas is considered the furthest freight customer at MP 94 (BH Block Limit) off the mainland U.S. PD Tower controls this non-sigaled single-track, issuing orders for eastbound and westbound moves from Patchogue to Montauk. In this January 2005 view, we see the LIRR station platform in Bridgehampton to the right and the crew has their snow-fighting equipment at the ready on the lead unit's front platform.



# New York & Atlantic Railway

## Long Island, New York

map by Todd Gillette





**Left:** NY&A GP38-2 270 and LIRR Jordan spreader W93 share PT Siding in this August 2000 scene. PT Block Limit is in Eastport, New York, where customer Eastport Feeds is located. The 270 was left here with a bent handrail from side-swiping a LIRR brush cutter at Bridgehampton (Pulver Gas). The 270 had to be cleared for station platforms by the LIRR before movement west. The RS-30 crew returned the following week to service Eastport Feeds and pickup the 270. Jordan Spreader W93 was used to spread ballast and as a snow plow. This antique was donated to Twin Forks Chapter of the NRHS and resides at the Railroad Museum of Long Island at Riverhead.

## New York & Atlantic Railway operations as of 3/5/2012

**RS-40:** on duty at 7AM, Monday through Friday at Fresh Pond. Covers the Lower Montauk branches two or three times a week. Also works Central Branch on days RS-60 runs east. This job sometimes performs odd work inside the derrails, e.g. Bushwick or Bayridge runs.

**RS-50:** on duty at 6PM Monday through Friday at Pine Aire. Mainline road hauler to and from Fresh Pond.

**RS-60:** on duty at 6AM Monday through Friday at Pine Aire. Usually goes double-ended to the Central Branch with Duke (Northpoint) thrown in once or twice a week. This job occasionally is called on to report to Fresh Pond and run the same scenario if the RS-50 ran east and there are no empties for the RS-60 at Pine Aire.

**RS-80:** on duty at 6PM Monday through Friday at Fresh Pond. Works mainline, Farmingdale, and Wyandanch.

**RS-100:** on duty at 5PM Monday through Friday at Fresh Pond. Works Bayridge and Bushwick branches.

**RS-301:** on duty at 6AM Monday through Friday at Fresh Pond. Fresh Pond yard job.

**RS Extra or RS-30:** anytime-anywhere.

In 1998, the U.S. Navy turned over a 2,900-acre property that was the former naval testing and final assembly site for the Grumman Company. In 2009, the town of Riverhead, New York, received a \$4.8 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant and \$650,000 from the New York Empire State Development Corporation to rehabilitate the long out-of-service 3.5-mile long Calverton Spur originally built in 1952. New Jersey-based Railroad Construction Company crews recycled the spur's abandoned rail and installed new ties and ballast in numerous locations to reinstate rail service. The spur branches off LIRR's mainline, runs down Connecticut Avenue, and terminates at the west end of the Enterprise Park at Calverton (EPCAL). The upgraded transportation hub, completed last fall, allows freight trains to serve industrial park customers, including Metro Biodiesel, which purchased land in the park that contained storage tanks formerly used as a Navy jet fueling station. EPCAL's newest tenant plans to ship heating oil by rail from Greenpoint, Brooklyn, to its new terminal facility in Calverton. Eastern Wholesale Fence is another customer that waited for rail service to this area and will receive hoppers filled with plastic for fence production. Presently, the company uses NY&A's Hicksville Yard to transload plastic pellets to trucks for delivery to its facility.

### MOTIVE POWER

NY&A maintains a diesel roster of 11 leased Long Island Rail Road engines. The roster includes SW1001s 101, 105 and 106. Owing to their lack of automatic train control, the SW1001s can be used only in the yard and on the Lower Montauk,

Bushwick, and Bay Ridge branches. ATC-certified locomotives include MP15ACs 151, 155, 156, and 159 and GP38-2s 261, 268, 270, and 271. Sister railroad Louisville & Indiana Railroad sent NY&A four locomotives: GP10s 201 and 202 (ex-Conrail) and SW1200s 9373 and 9321. The 202 and 9373 returned to L&I and the 201 was scrapped. The 9321 remains on NY&A property stored out of service. NY&A also owns a former LIRR caboose and passenger coach. The caboose has been used on an occasional "office train" for visitors and politicians.

New York & Atlantic operates around Long Island Rail Road's dense passenger schedules. Delays, track work, and weather can significantly influence NY&A operations. Track work requires the railway to adjust its schedule to service customers either on the weekend or at night. Snow-related delays can completely shut the railway down for a significant amount of time.

Additionally, NY&A's leased LIRR locomotives are subject to recall. LIRR required the use of its GP38-2s 268 and 270 for snow patrol during the winter of 2010-2011. The 270 worked the Montauk Line with no problems. The 268 worked the mainline from Ronkonkoma to Greenport. In Jamesport, the snowplowing 268 got stuck in a large snowdrift that topped the engine's nose. LIRR brought in a payloader to dig out the stranded locomotive. Before returning to NY&A, LIRR repaired the 268 at its Morris Park shop.

NY&A is actively growing its business, with the goal of wooing customers away from trucks on Long Island's congested roadways. With skyrocketing fuel prices and increase trucking costs, NY&A should continue to prosper.



**Left:** Paraco Gas is the largest independent propane dealer in the New York Metropolitan market. NYA RS-60 serves this three-car facility three to four times in the winter months. The entire Long Island market is served by this Riverhead facility and its Smithtown location. Propane is used for home and pool heating, cooking, hot water, temporary heat, and motor fuel. NYA MP15ACs 156 and 151 prepare to pull three empty tank cars and leave three loads before heading back to home base in Pine Aire in February 2002.

**Below:** After the RS-60 traveled east of KO (Ronkonkoma) to serve customers Gershow Recycling and Paraco gas, the crew heads back to Pine Aire. At milepost 47 on the LIRR there is a pedestrian bridge where one can take open views of the main-line. GP38-2s 271 and 268 have 11 cars in tow, including seven scrap gondolas, one spacer car, and three empty propane tank cars in this August 2004 view.

