

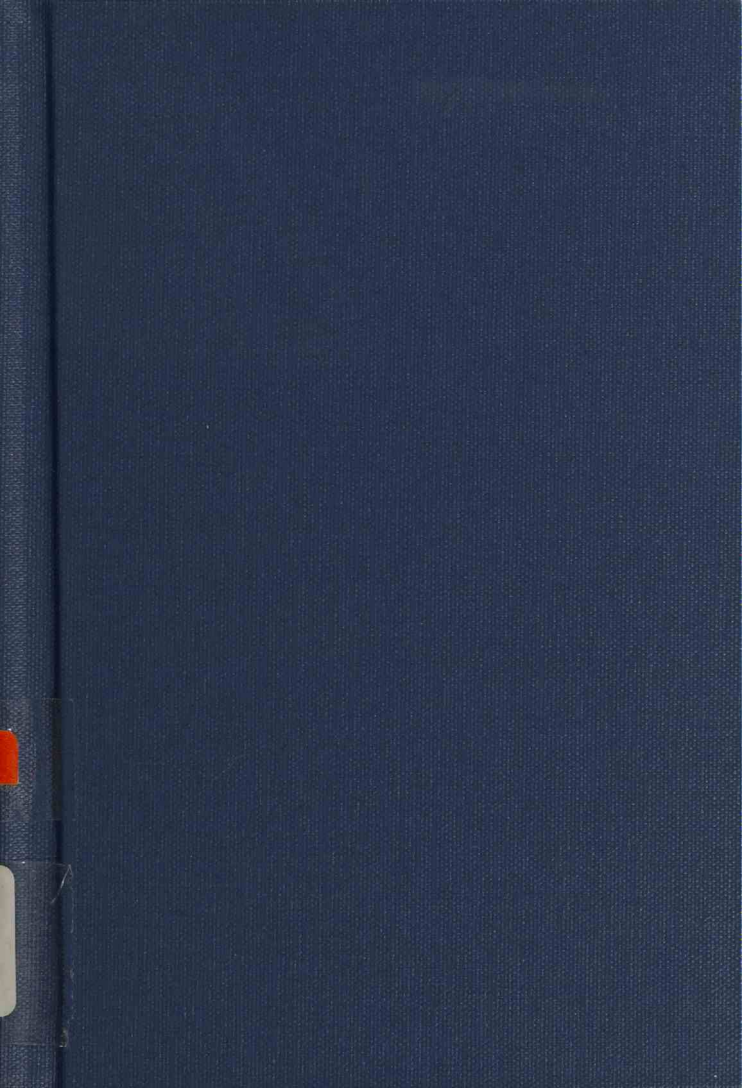
THE  
LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD  
A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY

by  
*Vincent F. Seyfried*

*Part Five*

The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R. R.  
The New York & Rockaway Beach Railway  
The New York & Long Beach R. R.  
New York & Rockaway Railroad  
Brooklyn Rapid Transit Operation to Rockaway  
Over L. I. R. R.

Published by  
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## **Preface**

This fifth volume of the Long Island R.R. series presents the story of the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R. and its successor, the New York & Rockaway Beach Railway, plus the Brooklyn Rapid Transit operation over the Long Island R.R. to Rockaway Beach. All the surviving early newspapers have been combed for information not only about the cross-bay operation but also for the history of the big hotel, the first beach communities, the fishing stations, highway openings, etc. which affected the railroad and its patronage. Much of this material appears here in print for the first time and sheds much new light on the local history of Jamaica Bay and the Rockaways. The latter third of the book is given over to the New York & Long Beach R.R. and the development of Long Beach itself as a resort from 1880 to 1904.

The author is once again indebted first and foremost to Mr. Felix Reifschneider for the unfailing moral and material support which he has extended for the ten years that this project has been under way; to Mr. Harold Fagerberg for equipment pictures; to Mr. Harold Goldsmith for the engine rosters; to Mr. Edward Watson for sundry illustrations; to Mr. Robert Friedrich of the Queensborough Public Library for suggesting and providing miscellaneous material; to Mr. Robert Presbrey for right-of-way views; to Mr. Ron Ziel for items from the Weber Collection; to Mr. Donald Harold for old tickets; and finally, to the Long Island Historical Society, without whose unique files of old Long Island newspapers this work would have been unthinkable.

Vol. VI will, hopefully, be devoted to "The Golden Age of the Long Island R.R.", 1881-1900.

Garden City, L.I.  
July 1971

VINCENT F. SEYFRIED

## CHAPTER 1

### *Rockaway Beach*

**T**HE ROCKAWAY PENINSULA extends some nine miles along the Atlantic shore line and is in fact the western continuation of the great barrier beach running along the southern shore of Long Island. In colonial times and in fact down to 1898, Rockaway had been part of the Town of Hempstead and was thus administered as a part of what is now Nassau County. Not until 1899, when the western townships of Newtown, Flushing and Jamaica joined the greater City of New York, was Rockaway detached from the Town of Hempstead and included in New York City.

The eastern end of the peninsula, Far Rockaway, is the oldest inhabited part of the Rockaways. In 1685, the Indians, Tackapousha and Paman, sold their interest in the peninsula to a colonist, John Palmer, who two years later, resold the tract to Richard Cornell, an ironmaster of Flushing. In 1690, the Cornell family moved to the Rockaways and built a large frame house, the first on the peninsula, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean at Far Rockaway. In 1833, the house was demolished to make way for the Marine Pavilion, Far Rockaway's first large hotel. This hotel was erected at the then-record cost of \$43,000, and during its existence, many noted men were its guests, including Longfellow and Washington Irving. To the Pavilion also came the wealthy old families of early New York, the Astors, Langdons, Hones, Schermerhorns, etc. Sea bathing was not a custom in those days, and guests at the Pavilion amused themselves with promenades, drives and elegant balls in the evening. The old Pavilion House was destroyed by fire on June 25, 1864, and with it the gracious ante-bellum era of Rockaway ended.

The peninsula west of Far Rockaway, the area we are concerned with here, began at Norton's Creek, a now-vanished inlet connecting the bay and the ocean on the line of the present Beach 32nd Street. This was, down to as late as 1880, a wild,

unspoiled beach largely in its natural state. Dunes and hillocks of sand created a rough, uneven terrain, the hollows overgrown with dense thickets of cedar. Title to the peninsula originally was vested in Richard Cornell. During the 18th century other colonists had bought or rented land from time to time from the Cornell heirs. In 1808, commissioners were appointed to partition the Rockaway peninsula among the numerous tenants in common. Lot #1, embracing the peninsula west of Far Rockaway was assigned to William Cornell; lot #2 covering Far Rockaway went to other owners.

Cornell sold his huge tract very shortly to Nathaniel Ryder and from him the peninsula passed into the hands of several successive owners over the years until, in 1855, it was sold at foreclosure sale for \$550 to James S. Remsen, considered to be the "father of Rockaway Beach." Remsen was born in Queens Village in 1811, where his father kept a hotel. He married about 1840 and his wife, Ann, who bore him ten children, died in November 1864 at age 46. Remsen for many years conducted the Jamaica Hotel, which he had purchased in 1840. When he purchased the Rockaway peninsula in 1855, his neighbors and friends thought him a fool to throw away so much good money on a sandy wasteland. His title, the last owner informed him, extended to the point of Rockaway Beach. Remsen did not at once move to the beach, but he did erect in 1856 one of the earliest public houses midway on the peninsula, calling it the "Sea Side House." This was on the west side of what is now Beach 103rd Street (old Remsen Avenue). The house was a sort of refreshment stand for fishermen and boatmen serving chowder, clams, etc. Remsen also built a house far to the west near the Point in token of his possession of the land. He pastured cattle on the beach salt grass and established his presence. From 1856 to 1870 inclusive, he leased out the "Sea Side House" to professional hotel men; from 1871 to 1884, he ran the place himself. In the spring of 1876, Remsen took in a partner, William Wainwright, who helped him in the operation of the place. Remsen died in 1887, a rich man thanks to his Rockaway investment.

William Wainwright was born in Philadelphia in 1836 but came to Williamsburgh in Brooklyn with his parents as a boy. He worked for a newspaper at first but then went into the hotel



business. In 1875, he turned his attention to Rockaway and leased the "Sea Side House" from Remsen. He did so well that in 1876 Remsen took him in as a partner, and after Remsen's death in 1887, he continued to manage the hotel, improving and enlarging it as the years went by.

In order to attract fishermen and summer excursionists to the "Sea Side House," Remsen, in 1863, offered to DeWitt C. Littlejohn, ex-mayor of Oswego, New York, a prominent merchant and Speaker of the Assembly in Albany and a vigorous railroad promoter, an inducement of \$1800 and a gift of 200 acres at Rockaway Beach if he would agree to build a railroad line from East New York to Canarsie and from there operate boats to Rockaway. Littlejohn accepted the offer, built the Brooklyn & Rockaway Beach R.R. in 1864 and in October 1865 opened the new connection to Rockaway. Remsen thereupon transferred to Littlejohn title to all the western end of Rockaway, reserving to himself only a strip of land 1150 feet wide between 102nd Street and 107th Street and running from the bay to the ocean, on which tract his "Sea Side House" was located.

As soon as Remsen began to transfer title to land at Rockaway, complications began. The sea over the years had steadily built up the Point by sand drift, moving it ever westward. The 1808 boundaries of lot #1 which Remsen had purchased were thus quite different from the situation that obtained half a century later. Not only had the sea added a great deal of beach west of the line of 1808, but it had carved out and then filled in various inlets.

During the War of 1812 the United States Government had erected a blockhouse on an island just west of what was then the westernmost tip of Rockaway. The island was separated from the then-Point by the "Gut or Inlet" as the old deeds called it. After the war ended, the government demolished the block house (1818) and withdrew, and later New York State inherited title to the tract on the northern shore of the then-Point. As the years passed, the storms and tides closed first the Gut and then absorbed the island and built land west of it. The old Gut was located about on the line of Beach 119th Street in today's Belle Harbor. All the remaining peninsula including Neponsit, Jacob Riis Park, Fort Tilden and Rockaway Point has been formed by the sea since the War of 1812.

After the Civil War when James Remsen's venture proved the tremendous potential value of Rockaway real estate, an enterprising and wealthy resident of Jamaica, Col. Aaron DeGrauw, thought that he saw a legal way to secure Rockaway Point, or at least that part of it west of the old Point of 1808, the limit of the Littlejohn grant from Remsen. Through the good offices of Congressman Benjamin F. Butler of Civil War notoriety, DeGrauw secured a 99-year lease to the former federal tract, formerly about 160 acres, but now in 1866 some 600 acres, that had been created by the sea lying west of the Littlejohn acres. In the title deed from the government lay a flaw, for the deed stipulated that DeGrauw might exercise ownership to all Federal lands at Rockaway Point "if the government has any title therein." Since the government transferred formal title to the state, DeGrauw's hold on the Point rested on shaky foundations.

When the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R. came to be projected across the Jamaica Bay, a New York banker, Henry Y. Attrill, became one of several investors interested in erecting a giant hotel at the railroad's terminus. Attrill decided, as part of the hotel scheme, to secure control of the entire western end of the peninsula, and in July 1879, bought out DeGrauw's lease for \$200,000. He then went ahead and bought out Littlejohn's tract in Belle Harbor and Rockaway Park for \$80,000. In 1882, he secured an act of the legislature to legitimize his title to the ex-federal lands of DeGrauw. This was the situation on the eve of the railroad's entry onto the Rockaway peninsula.

Besides James S. Remsen and his Sea Side House, there were other pioneers to the east operating their own boarding houses or hotels in what is now Seaside, Holland and Hammels. Immediately to the east of the Remsen land lay the tract owned by Michael P. Holland, who in 1857 purchased the section named after him. He built a boarding house which he named the "Holland House" on the west side of Beach 92nd Street and facing the old South Side R.R. track (presently Holland Avenue). Holland died in 1859, and the original hotel was destroyed by fire on April 9, 1883, but it was soon rebuilt. His widow, Fanny, continued the business for many years and grew rich on land sales and rents. Mr. Holland's son, Michael, Jr., was the first

postmaster of Rockaway Beach, then called "Oceanus," receiving his appointment in June 1874.

The other old pioneer was Garret V. W. Eldert (1824-January 19, 1890). He married Matilda Ryder, granddaughter of Nathaniel Ryder, the original purchaser of the whole Rockaway Peninsula in the partition of 1808. He conducted a large restaurant and bar on Beach 85th Street, where he served clams, eels, chowder and other seafood specialties. On September 6, 1875, his establishment burned to the ground but he soon rebuilt on a larger scale. The site of his hotel and chowder house was the Third Landing for the big steamboats from New York, a circumstance which assured him a thriving business over the years.

Associated with Eldert was Louis Hammel, a comparative latecomer to the beach. Hammel came to Rockaway from Elm Park, Staten Island, and leased the hotel from Garret Eldert in August 1869 and later erected his own large family-style boarding house overlooking Jamaica Bay at 85th Street (old Hammel's Avenue).

The New York, Woodhaven and Rockaway was not the first railroad to penetrate the Rockaway peninsula. The South Side R.R. reached Far Rockaway on July 29, 1869, and the Sea Side House at Beach 103rd Street on July 4, 1872. Three years later (in May 1875) the rails were extended to the Neptune House (Beach 107th Street). The old South Side right of way west of Far Rockaway followed the present-day tracks up to just east of the Rockaway Beach Boulevard at Beach 55th Street where it dropped south, running roughly 200 feet south of Ocean Avenue and Rockaway Beach Boulevard. The present Holland Avenue between Beach 87th and Beach 94th Streets preserves the actual roadbed of the former railroad. From here the track ran about 60 feet south of Rockaway Beach Boulevard and parallel to it to Beach 107th Street, the old terminus (Neptune House). The South Side R.R. offered the sole means of communication along the peninsula for there were no roads at all until June 1885, when Rockaway Beach Boulevard was completed.

Before the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R. arrived, access to Rockaway Beach was possible by the railroad via Far Rockaway, but far larger groups of excursionists came to the few hotels and chowder houses of that day by boat. The

little steam launches of the Canarsie railroad brought a trickle of visitors to the beach but the majority came on the excursion boats of R. Cornell White's Iron Steamboat Co. These were the *Columbia*, the *Grand Republic*, *Cygnus*, *Cepheus*, *Cetus*, *Sirius*, *Perseus* and *Pegasus*. These handsome white vessels operated from West 23rd Street, New York and the Battery, sailed down New York harbor into the Atlantic, passed Coney Island, threaded their way cautiously through Rockaway Inlet and debarked their cargo of 2500 to 3500 people at three different "landings": the first at the Neptune House (Beach 107th Street); the second at the Sea Side House (Beach 103rd Street) and the third at Garry Eldert's (Beach 85th Street).

After debarking, excursionists crossed the sands of the narrow peninsula to the ocean beach or whiled away their time eating and drinking at the hostleries at the landing. Slowly, the few well-worn paths to the surf became board walks lined with flimsy one and two-story shacks offering amusement and attractions. Beyond the one street leading to the landing, the empty sands stretched as far as the eye could see, dotted with clumps of cedars and devoid of habitation. Such was the unspoiled Rockaway of the 70's before the coming of the cross-bay railroad.

## ***The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R.***

### **CHAPTER 2**

**T**HE CROSS-BAY RAILROAD idea was the brain child of James M. Oakley, in the 1870's and 80's a prominent politician of Queens County. Born in Coram, Long Island on June 19, 1838, he clerked in a general store and then came to Jamaica as a young man. He lost his father at an early age, but his mother took as her second husband Richard W. Smith, Republican leader in Queens who groomed the boy for a career in politics. Young Oakley helped to advance his prospects by marrying Hester Durland, daughter of the sheriff of Queens County, and the Democratic leader in Queens. During the Civil War, Oakley was made a brevet colonel and was connected with the provost marshal's office for the 1st Congressional District at Jamaica. In 1864, Oakley voted for General McClellan and switched to the Democratic party. He was elected to the State Assembly in 1870 as the representative of Queens, Suffolk and Richmond and served four terms (1871-1874) and chaired many important committees. In 1876 he was appointed Commissioner of Quarantine of the Port of New York and served three years. In 1877, he received the nomination for State Senator and won, remaining for two terms. Thanks to this strategic position in the Albany Legislature, the dreams of a cross-bay railroad eventually became a reality. In private life, Senator Oakley amassed considerable wealth in the buying and selling of real estate.

Oakley, thanks to his position as State Senator, came to know all the important people of that day, both in political and financial circles, and eventually succeeded in interesting a group of 28 investors, the majority of them New York men. A corporation was formed under the name of the New York, Woodhaven and Rockaway Railroad. The capital stock was set at \$600,000 in denominations of \$100 each, and each of the stockholders subscribed for from three to thirty shares. Daniel D. Conover, an investor and director in several New York horse-car lines and

ex-Street Commissioner of New York City, was elected president of the new road and J. C. Lane of Brooklyn was chosen chief engineer. The plan of the fledgling company was for a two-track narrow-gauge road from Long Island City across Van Alst Avenue to Meadow Street and thence across the villages of Winfield, Maspeth, Middle Village, Glendale and Woodhaven to the junction of Hawtree Creek and Jamaica Bay, and thence directly across Jamaica Bay to Rockaway Beach. The chief novelty of the plan lay in the idea of building a railroad "out to sea," for five miles more or less of trestle work would be necessary to cross Jamaica Bay in order to reach Rockaway. The great advantage of the overwater route lay in the saving of time. To reach Rockaway via the South Side or Long Island Railroads, one had to travel all the way out to Valley Stream or Springfield and then back-track down the Rockaway peninsula to Rockaway Beach, a trip taking an hour and a half. By the new route the same trip could be made in thirty minutes.

On April 24, 1877, Senator James Oakley appeared before the Jamaica Board of Supervisors and presented a petition in the name of the New York, Woodhaven and Rockaway R.R. for permission to build, construct and operate a railroad over Jamaica Bay and to construct the necessary bridges, draws, etc. The bridges would be of iron with an opening of 30 feet in the clear and would cost \$36,000. The presiding supervisor set April 30 for a public hearing and gave notices by advertisement and handbills to property owners and all other interested parties to appear and make their views known on the proposed road. When the hearing opened on April 30, no one appeared in opposition, and after waiting for two or three hours, the town fathers granted the railroad's petition. A 99-year lease was granted, provided the company would pay a yearly rent of \$250 in advance, which, if not paid in 10 days, would invalidate the lease.

While this was going on, surveyors were at work making surveys for the new road through Blissville, skirting the north side of Calvary Cemetery and then inland through Maspeth toward Fresh Pond Road. Just as the new company was about to begin work, a rival company appeared on the scene, called the New York, Brooklyn and Seashore R.R. Chartered in November 1876, the company was formed to construct a road from the East River

front in Brooklyn through East New York and Newtown to Jamaica Bay. The company began driving piles in Jamaica Bay without having obtained permission from the Jamaica Board of Supervisors or acquired the right of way from the Town board and the Supervisors stopped them by injunction. The company delayed until June 2, 1877, as it was, to file its Articles of Incorporation in the Queens County Clerk's office.

On June 11, 1877, at a joint meeting of the Town board and the Town Trustees of Jamaica, the New York, Woodhaven and Rockaway R.R. was granted the right of way across Jamaica Bay to Rockaway Beach, the Town having first satisfied itself that there would be no injury to the fishing and clamming privileges nor any menace to navigation. Mr. Conover, president of the road, emphasized to the board that the road would be a Queens County enterprise and that taxes from the land that the railroad would occupy would net the Town \$12,000 a year. The board set a price on the right of way over the bay at \$3000 and \$1 a year during the life of the corporation, figuring that \$3000 at 6% would yield the Town \$180 a year. Mr. Conover objected that the money was worth 7% to the company and asked the board to fix the rent at \$200 a year and the board consented. On July 3, the Board of Supervisors together with a committee of railroad men made a joint survey as to the location of the draw-bridges, etc. of the new company. In the last days of August the New York, Brooklyn & Seashore road, seeing itself shut out from any chance of building its cross-bay railroad, approached the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway officials and suggested some sort of compromise. According to the proposal the New York, Brooklyn & Seashore was to construct the roadbed and draws across the bay on a line approved by the Queens County Board of Supervisors and the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway road was to have the privilege of running over the track at an annual rental. There is no evidence that the Woodhaven company ever accepted the Seashore company's merger proposal.

The pile driving that had been started by the New York, Brooklyn and Seashore and which had been stopped by injunction, had meanwhile brought the company's contractor, Charles DeGrauw of Buffalo, to ruin. Two months of enforced idleness strained the man's financial resources to the breaking point, and the sheriff of Jamaica, acting under a writ of the court, attached

all the piling material that Mr. DeGrauw had assembled, 1200 railroad ties, a steam launch, 75,000 spruce piles, much rope and chains and 1,200,000 feet of hemlock timber.

Over the winter of 1877-78, Senator Oakley and the officials of the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway sounded out the Long Island Rail Road as to their attitude on using their tracks into the existing terminals at Long Island City, Bushwick and Flatbush Avenue. The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway, in its search for a deep-water terminus in Long Island City or Brooklyn, had already experienced considerable difficulty in locating a suitable waterfront site and was beginning to wonder whether it might not be cheaper in the long run to pay rent to one of the older roads than to go to prohibitive expense in acquiring an East River terminus. This meant that the original plan of building a narrow-gauge railroad would have to be abandoned in favor of a standard gauge road. The projectors of the road decided that, for the time being at least, they would build from Glendale where a connection with the South Side R.R. would be made, south to a crossing of the Long Island R.R. at Woodhaven, and then on across Jamaica Bay. The Long Island R.R., under its receiver, Col. Thomas R. Sharp, showed no opposition to the Rockaway Company's overtures and in fact progressed to the formulation of a tentative rate schedule: for every passenger carried by the Rockaway road into Hunter's Point or Flatbush Avenue or Bushwick, the Long Island R.R. would receive 20¢ and pro rata for passengers to other stations. The Rockaway company, in an explanation of its financial backing, indicated that it had the support of several wealthy men, and in addition, revealed that Drexel, Morgan & Co., the great Philadelphia banking house, was prepared to make any additional financial support available.

The cross-bay project lay quiescent through 1878 but awoke to vigorous life in 1879. In July of that year the company recorded a \$1,200,000 first mortgage to secure bonds of a like amount, the money to be used in building and equipping the new road. The chief contractor for the over-all work of building the road was Benjamin E. Smith of Columbus, Ohio, who agreed to build the road and equip it for the bonds of \$1,200,000. The firm of Swift & Aiken of Brooklyn were appointed the sub-



contractors for driving the piles and constructing the trestle work across Jamaica Bay, a distance of 4.8 miles.

On Thursday, July 10, 1879, the first ground was broken for the new road at a point halfway between the Neptune House (Beach 107th Street) and the Seaside House (Beach 103rd Street). During the next two weeks of July, 25 laborers were at work grading the right of way in the vicinity of Beach 103rd Street. All the hotel owners along the beach agreed to donate the right of way wherever it was needed in the belief that the new railroad would greatly increase the number of people visiting the beach. The railroad in return had to promise in writing that trains would be running by July 1, 1880, or the land ceded would revert back to the owners; also, the railroad had to agree to build stations on the lands of Louis Hammel and Michael Holland and to promise that these two stations would bear the names of the donors in perpetuity. The road would have its terminus on the lands of Henry Y. Attrill, who owned the property west of Beach 107th Street. During July, markers were driven in Jamaica Bay itself to indicate the line of the road to the pile driving crews. By the end of July 1879 other gangs of men were at work along the right of way in Woodhaven along the line of the present 100th Street down to the Jamaica Bay shore line at Remsen's Landing on Hawtree Creek, today's Hamilton Beach. The flatness of the ground along here made the grading an easy task.

The syndicate of New York bankers and Western capitalists, to which passing reference has already been made, matured their plans by the summer of 1879, and it is now appropriate to set forth in some detail the rather grandiose project that they had in contemplation. The syndicate comprised:

- Collis P. Huntington, President of Central Pacific R.R.
- Senator Jerome B. Chaffee of Colorado
- David Moffat of Denver (who contributed a million dollars)
- H. C. Lord of Cincinnati
- Benjamin E. Smith of Columbus, Ohio, president of the Cleveland, Columbus & Indiana Central R.R. and contractor for the cross-bay road
- Henry Y. Attrill, New York banker

Fisk & Hatch, investment bankers (William B. Hatch, President)

Morton, Bliss & Co., whose president Levi P. Morton was also a prominent politician

Frederick Taylor, President of The Continental Bank

The formal title of the syndicate was the Rockaway Beach Improvement Co. On July 18, 1879, Henry Attrill, in the name of the syndicate, purchased from DeWitt C. Littlejohn for \$80,000 the latter's property from a point midway between 109th and 110th Streets and running 4000 feet to the westward to about Beach 125th Street, 150 acres in all. Not content with this large tract, Attrill also purchased for the syndicate from Aaron A. DeGrauw of Jamaica on August 20, 1879, the supposed leasehold from the government for all additional land westward to the Point for \$200,000.

On this vast tract—today Rockaway Park, Neponsit, Belle Harbor and Fort Tilden—the syndicate proposed to lay out a 700-acre park, on which would be erected several hotels, pavilions, accommodations for both surf and still-water bathing, a race course and a theatre. The promoters planned to transform the natural rolling beach, dotted with clumps and groves of cedar trees, into landscaped hills and valleys. A narrow-gauge railroad, three miles in length, would wind around the edge of the beach to carry sight-seekers at a nominal price to all points of interest, without fatigue. At the tip of the Point a pavilion was planned where persons could sit and enjoy the scenery and breezes. Between 111th and 116th Streets a mammoth hotel was to be built, the largest in the world, commanding a fine view of the ocean and in a position to trap every breeze from bay or ocean. The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R. fitted into this ambitious plan in the role of an access road only. It would be an excursion railroad, operated in summer only, which would convey the sweltering thousands from New York and Brooklyn from their airless and stifling living quarters to the windswept, outdoor playground by the sea. Only two years before, the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway had been built to serve exactly the same function: to serve as a private transportation facility for the resort hotels at the seaside.

During August 1879 surveyors were engaged in staking out

the exact route of the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R. The line began at 3rd Street, Long Island City at the Pigeon Dock, skirted the north end of Old Calvary Cemetery, then ran along the line of Borden Avenue to 58th Street, where it turned south paralleling Fresh Pond Road to a point near the Ridgewood Reservoir, next swung southeast through farmlands to the mouth of Hawtree Creek, then across Jamaica Bay. In passing over the bay only two navigable channels were crossed and these were to be bridged. On Rockaway Beach the road would run east and west from 116th Street to the Far Rockaway Village line. The railroad company in July 1879 tried to buy the Clark property just west of Far Rockaway Village for \$100,000 but the family refused to sell, so the company did the next best thing and purchased 150 acres of land and meadows adjoining from the Norton estate for \$100,000.

By August 15 the roadbed on the beach from 116th Street to Hammels had been graded and three pile drivers were at work driving piles into the bay bottom. Two schooners from Florida, laden with four million feet of yellow pine timber for construction, arrived August 9th. In mid-September the road's first locomotive was placed on the new roadbed near the bay-front on the Rockaway peninsula and a connection with the Long Island R.R. was made at about 109th Street to transport shipments of iron, ties, etc. Meanwhile, the fourth shipload of timber and ties arrived from the South. The contractors at work on the piling had already used up their initial hoard of 3000 piles. On September 27, one of the drivers struck a spring of fresh water out in the bay some 800 feet from shore, and rather than waste this lucky find, a tube was sunk and the spring water utilized to supply water for the steam engines at work.

The pile driving suffered its first severe setback over the week-end of October 4th. The contractor on that Saturday had discharged a number of his men for incompetency. Usually, a watchman was on duty to guard the vessels out in the water but this had been neglected. On Monday, when work resumed, it was found that four of the seven steam pile-drivers in use had been sunk and the engines and gearing of the rest so badly broken that they could not be used. Steam and water gauges and connecting rods had been cut off and thrown into deep water. When the tide ran out, three of the pile-drivers were found

to be resting on mud flats on the bottom. These were soon pumped out and the holes which had been bored into the bottoms caulked up so that they were soon re-floated. The fourth pile-driver lay in a channel 15 feet deep at low water and machinery had to be used to hoist it off the bottom. Several weeks were lost before the machines were fully in working order again and the loss amounted to over \$3000.

On October 24, 1879, the Supervisor of the Town of Jamaica and the Trustees visited Rockaway Beach and then took to boats to inspect the location and condition of the trestle work. They also checked on the locations of the draw bridges and found the work and plans satisfactory. Later, the party were given a ride in a car drawn by the construction locomotive on the section of track completed along the beach. Not everyone was equally pleased with the progress of the road; some of the baymen began stirring up an opposition, alleging that the piling was not driven in the prescribed place or the manner stipulated. Claiming that the road constituted an impediment to navigation, they attempted to stir up an opposition campaign among the property owners.

The company suffered another setback on the night of November 27, 1879, when a winter gale blew the pile-drivers from the safety of their moorings and dashed them against each other, causing much damage. The woodwork for the caisson of the bridge across Broad Channel was broken and swept away leaving nothing but the filling of stones. Despite these misfortunes almost three-fourths of the trestle work was in a completed state by December 1. The width of the trestle structure was twenty-one feet with a space of eight feet between the tracks. All the trackwork was protected by guard rails. Three openings were left in the trestle for draw bridges, one in Beach Channel, one in Broad Channel and one in Broad Bay. A section of double track along the beach from the proposed terminus at 116th Street up to and connecting with the trestle had also been completed. The ties on this stretch were all heavy chestnut and the rails were iron connected with the new fish-plates which were then making their appearance on American railroads.

As the year 1879 drew to a close, it became increasingly evident to the sub-contractors, Messrs. Cochran of Ohio, that

the railroad was not going to be able to secure its right of way on the mainland in time for the contract date of July 1, 1880. Not only had nothing been done in the Hunter's Point area, but the right of way through Woodhaven was being actively contested by the injured land owners, and the commissioners appointed by the court to appraise the lands affected had found it necessary to hold many meetings. Mrs. Henry Drew was awarded \$1700 and Mrs. Kammerer \$550, nearly double the amount that the company had originally offered them. The largest sum went to John B. Napier of Jamaica Avenue, Woodhaven, whose farm was cut vertically in half with the loss of eight acres of land. The commissioners awarded him \$12,500. The company, under increasing pressure, was now giving serious thought to the earlier proposal to join its tracks with the Long Island R.R. at Woodhaven and thus obtain an outlet for its road inside Brooklyn.

In the last days of December 1879, further delay was occasioned by a squabble among the contractors. Cornelius J. Ryan, who had sub-contracted to do the masonry work on the caissons for the drawbridge, failed to complete his portion of the work by his contract date of December 1, and, as a result, the chief contractor, Silas W. Cochran of Ohio, withheld a portion of Ryan's money as a penalty as provided by the terms of the contract. Ryan disputed the forfeit, some \$6225, in court, and on December 21 the sheriff of Queens County went to Rockaway Beach and attached several steam launches, sailing vessels and some lumber pending a settlement of the case in court.

Meanwhile, Henry Y. Attrill, representing the syndicate of developers of the Rockaway Beach site, broke ground for the big hotel on November 26. The plans had been somewhat altered in the course of the year by the architect. The mammoth hotel was to have a frontage of 1165 feet, extending from the present 116th Street to 111th Street and with two wings on each side extending rearward 400 feet. On the front of the building was to be a grand piazza running the entire length and eighty feet deep. The hotel was to contain 1000 rooms. The building was to be four stories high, the first to measure eighteen feet in height, the second and third fourteen feet and the fourth twelve feet. There was to be a promenade on the roof with a turret

which was to be lighted during the evenings. About 1300 permanent guests were to be accommodated and the dining room was planned to seat 7000 persons.

A sawing and planing mill was set up on the beach and by New Year's Day 1880, a large force of workmen, mostly Canadian, had been assembled on the scene to clear the ground. A force of 300 carpenters was engaged in order to have the building completed in time for the 1880 season. The hotel and boarding house proprietors along the beach were delighted with this influx of workmen in mid-winter; most agreed that they were making more money boarding and feeding the laborers than they made during the 1879 season. There were then at work on the railroad and the hotel, 500 men and 100 teams. Most of this small army were involved in levelling the sand hillocks, removing the cedars and underbrush and loading the wagons and carts with sand for filling up the low places.

In January 1880 the baymen renewed their opposition to the cross-bay railroad with a new demand for five drawbridges instead of the three originally planned, and in this they seemed to be backed up by the citizens and officers of the Town of Jamaica. An indignation meeting was held in the Town of Hempstead by ship captains and others. The railroad route crossed two navigable channels. The drawbridge was being erected in the south channel while the owners of the larger class of vessels claimed that the north channel had a more direct course and better "sea room." The Supervisor of Hempstead met the railroad managers on January 3 and was surprised to find a large number of captains there to oppose any change in the drawbridge location. He was further astonished to find several who were previously in favor of the north channel had been brought over to advocacy of the south channel. Being thus confronted, the Supervisor called a mass meeting for January 15, 1880, to ascertain by vote the exact wishes of the captains. At the meeting a large crowd turned out but was very disorderly; the Supervisor after some difficulty took the sense of the meeting which was opposition to the closing of the north channel as the best navigable water. On January 17, the Town Board then voted unanimously that the north channel should not be closed.

An important change in the roadbed in the interests of safety was made in January 1880 by the cross-bay railroad. The man-

agers agreed to run the railroad on an embankment from the hills above Jamaica Avenue to south of Woodhaven. The advantage of this was that the Long Island R.R. and the Jamaica horse-car line could be crossed without risk of collision, a very real danger on a busy summer excursion railroad.

By the first of March 1880, the piling across Jamaica Bay was complete and some of the track had been laid on the trestle. To speed the work, a curve was laid at Woodhaven on February 28 connecting the new road with the Long Island R.R., and at Glendale another curve was laid so as to facilitate the delivery of ties, rails and other needed supplies. Even at this late date, the remaining route of the railroad from Glendale to Hunter's Point remained uncertain, several routes having been surveyed. It seemed certain that for the 1880 season at least, no attempt would be made to build the rest of the road.

On the beach an immense amount of work still remained to be done aside from the big hotel. On that structure nearly 600 men were employed and the woodwork of the first story was nearly all in place. There was a gas works and a water supply works largely finished.

The terms of the lease of the Long Island R.R. tracks into Flatbush Avenue and Hunters Point were published at the end of March. The Long Island R.R. in 1880 was still legally in receivership under the management of Colonel Thomas R. Sharp, who had been appointed by the courts to salvage the Long Island system from its ruinous involvement with its bankrupt rivals. Sharp, as receiver, could not legally enter into a contract to lease out the trackage of the Long Island R.R. to other roads without the authorization of the Federal Court. The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway petition was submitted on March 25, 1880; the court approved a contract between the two roads which provided that the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway might run its trains into Long Island City and Bushwick and its cars into Flatbush Avenue for a 50-year period; that the Long Island R.R. would furnish depot facilities at Long Island City, Bushwick and Flatbush Avenue; that the Long Island R.R. was to get 25% of the gross earnings of the Rockaway road for passenger traffic into Long Island City and Bushwick, and 35% of its gross earnings for passenger traffic into Flatbush Avenue.

The Long Island R.R. Co. was to furnish motive power be-

tween Flatbush Avenue and Woodhaven. In addition, the Rockaway road bound itself to furnish the Long Island R.R. with moneys necessary to construct a second track between Long Island City and Fresh Pond, to be repaid by deducting 25% from the Long Island R.R. portion of the gross earnings, but the deduction was not to be made in any one year until the Long Island R.R. had received \$37,000 in that year. The Long Island R.R. agreed to furnish depot facilities at Flatbush Avenue and to stop the running of its own trains to Rockaway Beach from Long Island City, Flatbush Avenue and Bushwick.

The Long Island R.R., in anticipation of heavy Rockaway traffic, immediately let out to contract the double-tracking of its own right of way between Richmond Hill and Long Island City and the rebuilding of the bridges along that stretch of line. The running of trains on this section of the Montauk Branch was altogether discontinued between May 3 and June 25 to facilitate the work. The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway bent its efforts to cutting through the range of hills north of Jamaica Avenue so as to reach the junction with the Long Island R.R. at Glendale. When the construction gangs reached Myrtle Avenue in Glendale, they proceeded to follow the blueprint in putting the track in an eighteen-foot-deep cut and to carry Myrtle Avenue over the cut on a wooden bridge sixty feet long. The Highway Commissioners of the Town of Newtown took offense because the railroad had neglected to seek their permission to cross the highway and they expressed serious doubts as to the adequacy of the wooden bridge proposed. On April 24, the Commissioners commenced a suit against the railroad company and applied for an injunction restraining the company from further work in the excavation. The court granted the injunction but vacated it a month later after a compromise had been reached.

During the middle of May 1880 the drawbridge over Deep Channel was completed. At the request of President Thompson of the railroad, who personally appeared before the Town Board, a change was made in the annual rental for the right to cross Jamaica Bay. The president asked the board to give the company title to the right of way which had been leased to the company for ninety-nine years three years before at \$200 a year. The board agreed to accommodate the railroad and fixed



the price at \$3334, the interest on which, at 6%, would bring to the Town annually the amount realized from the lease.

In the latter days of May and early June track laying went on rapidly all along the completed road. On May 26 the Italian track layers employed on the sector between Grand Street and Metropolitan Avenue struck for \$1.25 a day. The increase was granted by the contractor and the workmen resumed with renewed vigor. On Friday afternoon, June 6, 1880, the first train of cars ran over the new rails across Jamaica Bay and up to Woodhaven, carrying about 500 laborers. On June 11, the first train of new cars crossed the bay from the hotel to Woodhaven. As long ago as April 5, the first locomotive for the new road had arrived at Hunter's Point but it was only during June 7-11 that the first passenger coaches arrived, making this parade of shiny new rolling stock possible.

In the midst of rapid progress made on the road and with opening day almost in sight, the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway became short of ready cash and found itself unable to meet the payments to the Long Island R.R. to double-track the Montauk Division into Hunters Point. On June 8, Receiver Sharp ordered the work on the double track from Richmond Hill to Hunters Point halted until further notice, explaining to the press that the cross-bay road was "considerably behind in its payments." Within a few days it was rumored that Drexel, Morgan & Co., who, through the failure of the Poppenhusens, were the principal owners of the Long Island R.R., had quietly purchased the "Oakley road" as it was known at this time. A few days later it was revealed that the banking house of Fisk & Hatch had purchased the road as an investment, installed Mr. A. S. Hatch as president of the road, and notified Sharp that the back payments were available and that he should continue with the track work without delay.

In the first week of July 1880, sub-contractor Wright with a large gang of men was laying rail on the land trestle through Woodhaven. By mid-August it was reported that the Long Island R.R. had done its part by completing the double track from Woodhaven to East New York on August 21, and from Richmond Hill to Hunters Point on August 22. By August 10, one track had already been laid from the beach to Woodhaven and the second track half way. However, the syndicate had suf-

ferred a shortage of money and the wages of laborers on the railroad was now in arrears back to June 1. Before a strike could cripple the almost-completed road, Contractor Smith scraped together the money and paid off the men on the 11th. On August 12, 200 tons of steel rail arrived at Hunters Point and more was on the way. Three hundred men were now at work laying the rails and these were supplemented by laborers from the big hotel.

The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway announced on Sunday, the 22nd, that the road would be formally opened on Tuesday, the 24th. On the 22nd men were at work on the terminal ticket offices and platforms alongside the western end of the great hotel. Meanwhile, the rolling stock was all in readiness and lay on the Long Island R.R. tracks at Hunters Point. On the morning of the 24th, Mr. Torrey, Master of Transportation on the new road, and Mr. Laffan, Long Island R.R. General Passenger Agent, were forced to announce to a disappointed public that the contractors had miscalculated the extent of the work to be accomplished and had failed to get all the rails laid as of the evening of the 23rd. The opening was then promised for Thursday, the 26th. On the 23rd, Receiver Sharp of the Long Island R.R. rode over the new road on a last-minute trip of inspection. Finally, on the night of the 25th, the double track on the Long Island R.R. between Hunters Point and Glendale was completed and the connection between the two roads spiked down.

At 5:45 AM on the morning of the 26th, the cross-bay railroad opened as promised. Large crowds of excursionists turned out to ride the new road. Seventeen trains were run each way on opening day. On this same day the Long Island R.R. by agreement ceased to run its own trains to Rockaway Beach via Valley Stream; for the short time left in the season, however, the Long Island did run four shuttle trains a day from the Neptune House terminus to Valley Stream to make it possible for Rockaway people to visit the newly-opened resort of Long Beach.

The first day's operations revealed that the Long Island R.R. double track on the Atlantic Division was still not fully completed even on this morning of the 26th, but the management was struggling to make it usable by the following Sunday, the 29th. A large gang of men was still at work as the first Rockaway trains

passed. As it happened, the first Brooklyn-bound train killed a cow on Atlantic Avenue. Then, a few hours later, the 1:30 P.M. train from Rockaway made a "flying switch" at Woodhaven about 2 P.M. where as yet the double track had not been completed. As the car passed onto the main track of the Long Island R.R., an eastbound Long Island R.R. train at that instant was rapidly gaining speed after a stop at Woodhaven station. Fortunately, the Rockaway brakeman instantly applied the brake on his slow-moving coaches, and the Long Island R.R. engineer managed to stop his train, narrowly averting a bloody baptism for the new road in the first hours of its life.

The use of the "flying switch" tactic at Woodhaven Junction came close to producing a serious accident on Sunday, the 29th, the fourth day of operation. A train consisting of six passenger cars started from Long Island City at 11 A.M. It was scheduled to pick up at Woodhaven by means of the "flying switch" three more cars that had come up from Flatbush Avenue. The Long Island City train waited just below the junction while the three cars were disconnected from a moving Long Island R.R. train and allowed to coast around the curve, to be coupled onto the rear of the Long Island City coaches. Owing to awkward handling of the brakes, the three Flatbush Avenue cars crashed into the six waiting cars with such force that they shook up the 500 passengers inside. The passengers in the three Flatbush cars were frightened and many bruised by being flung against the woodwork. Many of the windows were jarred loose and cracked and flying glass cut nearby passengers. A panic ensued, causing a rush for the end platforms. When it was seen that there was no further danger, order was restored. Eighteen persons were injured.

Seven hours later, the train on the road which started from Rockaway with ten cars at 6 P.M. and reached Woodhaven at 7, ran into a landslide between Glendale Junction and Woodhaven. The accident was in a cut 150 feet long and from 12 to 15 feet wide. The ground where the slide occurred was very dry, and a shower the day before caused it to slip down onto the tracks. The train hands at once set to work to clear the road. Meanwhile, other trains from Rockaway collected in the rear so that about 1800 or 2000 passengers were delayed. After a stoppage of an hour and a half, the blockade was lifted.

In these brief days of operation before the summer season of 1880 drew to a close—scarcely two weeks in all—the travel over the new road increased daily. For the first seven days the number of passengers carried aggregated 65,000 or about 9000 a day. The crews had become familiarized with the road and the rolling stock and the superintendent had managed to cut down the running time. Nevertheless, a large number of men were still employed ballasting and grading and a good deal remained to be done before the road could be considered completed.

## CHAPTER 3

### *The Tragic Story of the Big Hotel*

THE BIG HOTEL, in the minds of its promoters, the Rockaway Beach Improvement Company, was the centerpiece of the grand design that would transform an empty sandy waste into the playground of New York City. The hotel that the promoters finally settled on was consciously designed to be the largest in the world. Everything about it would have to be described in superlatives. The sheer immensity of the structure taxed the vocabulary of journalists of that day and they sought to convey to their readers some concept of the size of the hotel by comparing its dimensions to famous familiar buildings of that day. Since these landmarks have themselves disappeared, the most meaningful comparison still valid for us today is that the hotel was equivalent to seventy full-sized private houses side by side.

On November 26, 1879, work began to clear the site at the beach. Men and teams leveled out the rough terrain and cleared away the cedar brakes. A sawing and planing mill was set up on the open beach in December and by January 1, 1880, a large number of men had been recruited to work on the building. Local labor was insufficient for such a vast undertaking and the organizers spread their net wide to attract workmen. The full recruitment effort will probably never be known, but there is record that sixty carpenters were engaged at Rochester, N. Y., and thirty more at Palmyra, Pennsylvania for \$2.25 a day. The *Toronto Mail* of Toronto, Canada, for April 15, reported: "Another party of masons and bricklayers left Ottawa last night for Rockaway Beach to work on the new hotel. On Wednesday, 223 masons arrived at the new hotel from Ottawa. They are paid from \$2.50 to \$3.25 a day, carpenters \$2.50, and nearly all of them work overtime, making about \$3.50 per day."

Accounts vary widely as to the number of men that worked on the hotel, but court records later set the number at an average of 1200 at any one time. The work force was quartered at

the different hotels and boarding houses along the beach, which would otherwise have stood empty in mid-winter. The Improvement Company guaranteed the payment of the food and lodging expenses of its men.

Work on the hotel began on February 17, 1880, with the driving of the first uprights into the sand. Construction was pressed intensively day and night. Batteries of big calcium flares set up all along the beach illuminated the site at night so that nothing might slow down the pace of construction. It was hoped that four and a half months would suffice to complete the hotel and that it would open together with the railroad on July 1, 1880.

The front of the big hotel was no less than five blocks long or 1184 feet, extending from the present Beach 111th Street to 116th Street. The depth of the hotel varied because of three wings, giving it an E-shape. In this way each room was an outside room facing the bay or the ocean. In height the hotel varied from four to seven stories. The architectural style was that of Queen Anne, so far as practicable, with alternate gables and towers along the front.

The first floor and basement were devoted to general refreshment purposes. The four floors above were devoted to guest rooms, 1200 in all with 300 bathrooms. One of the most unusual attractions of the great hotel was the promenade on the roof where 2000 people could stroll or sit down, and while sheltered from the sun, could enjoy the ocean breezes and the superb view. Elevators were available to convey the public to the promenade. The main hall from end to end of the building was thirteen and a half feet wide. There were two dining rooms, each 170 x 125, and twenty smaller dining rooms on the first floor capable of feeding 6000 people at once. There were fifty entrances along the main floor. The front piazza, raised eighteen feet above the beach, was seventy feet wide and 1400 feet long, with five stairways leading down to the surf. The upright posts to support the awning on the piazza were of Georgia pine, eighteen feet high and four feet in circumference. The piazza at the ends of the hotel were fifty-six feet wide and 400 feet long with upright posts of the same dimensions as the front piazza. The kitchen in this vast building was 140 x 160, covering seven-eighths of an acre. There were four immense ovens, each 18 x 60, and the drying room in the basement beneath was 15 x 56. There were



James M. Oakley (1838-1887) New York State Senator (1877-78) and builder of the New York Woodhaven & Rockaway RR (Queensborough Public Library)

ORGANIZED UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

# The New York, Woodhaver and Rockaway Railroad Company.



SHARES

CAPITAL 50

500, EACH

CAPITAL 50

## and Rockaway

## Railroad Company.

CAPITAL \$1,000,000

This certifies that *James H. Cassidy* is entitled to *Five* Shares of the New York, Woodhaver and Rockaway Railroad Company, transferable only on the books of said Company in person or by the owner upon the surrender of this Certificate.

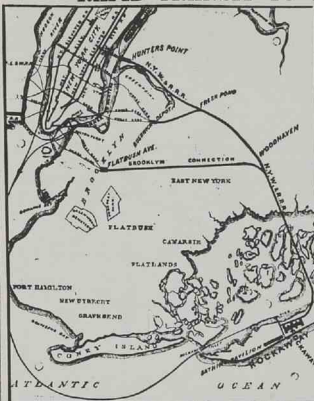
In Witness Whereof, the said Company has caused its corporate seal to be hereunto affixed, and this Certificate to be signed by its President and Secretary in the City of New York, this *sixth* day of *October* 18*88*.

*J. H. Cassidy* Secretary  
*Brooklyn* President

Stock certificate signed by Oakley (Queens. Pub. Lib.)



## RAPID TRANSIT TO THE SEA.



Time, 30 Minutes to the Surf,  
BY THE

### N. Y., Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R.

A most beautiful ride across Jamaica Bay, on one of the longest Bridges in the World, to

## ROCKAWAY BEACH

### Hourly Excursions.

See Index on last page of Bulletin's Monitor Guide for time-table.

For Fishing Excursions, Jamaica Bay is without a rival within the limits of a day's trip from New York. Boatmen, with Boats to Hire for fishing and fishing purposes, are to be found at each Station.

The Beach is Nine Miles long, and is, throughout its length, one of the finest on the Atlantic Coast, and incomparably Superior to any other near New York, and affords Surf and Still Water Bathing and as Pleasant Promenading as can be asked for.

TICKETS for sale at the Depot of the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R., Hunter's Point; Long Island R.R., Bushwick and Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn, and at Hunter's Point Annex, Pier 7 E.R.; James Slip, 7th St. and 34th St. Ferries, New York City.

### Round Trip Excursion Tickets

#### FIFTY CENTS.

Liberal arrangements will be made for Large Excursion Parties by Societies, Lodges, Clubs, Schools, etc.

C. S. JUDSON, Gen'l Passenger and Ticket Agent, 68 Wall Street, New York.

## SEA SIDE HOUSE,

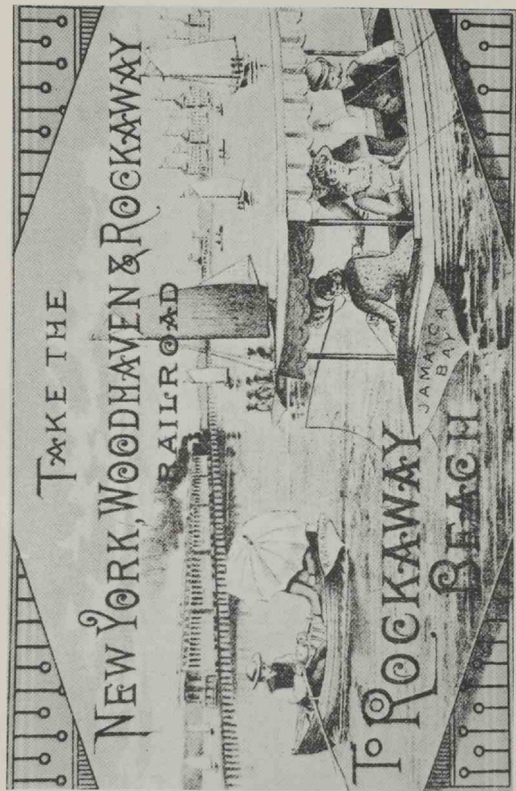
Rockaway Beach, L. I.

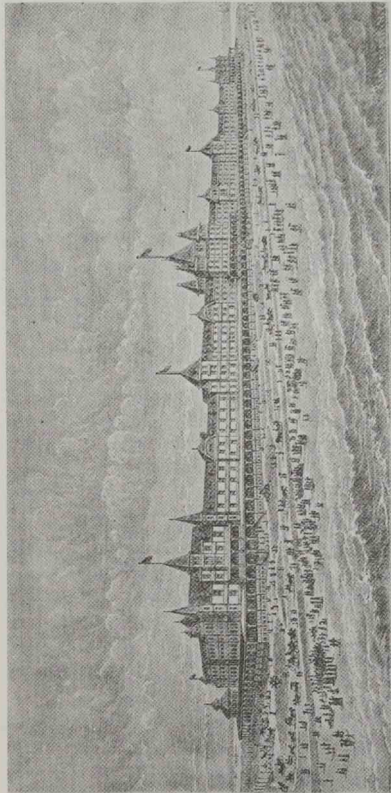
REMSEN & WAINWRIGHT, PROPRIETORS.



Accommodations for 400 Guests.

Finest Surf and Still Water Bathing in the World. 1,200 Bathing Houses  
All Trains and Boats stop at this House.



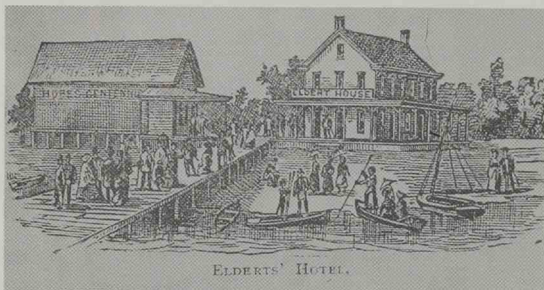


# ROCKAWAY BEACH HOTEL

O. G. BURNAP, Manager

JAS. W. HUSTED, RECEIVER.

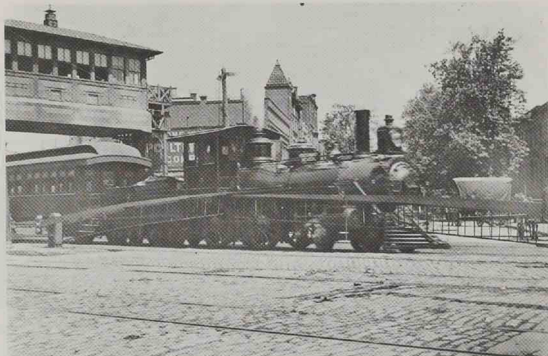
Cut of big hotel from stationery letterhead of 1881 (Queens. Pub. Lib.)



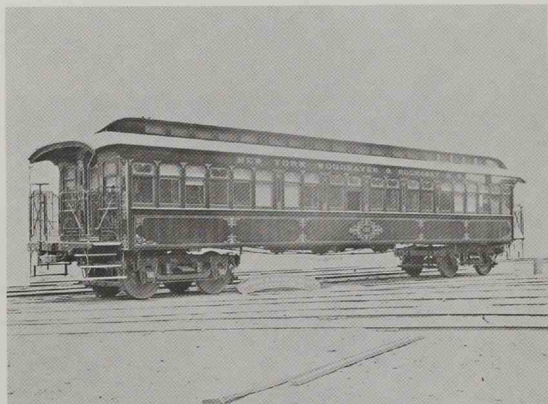
Eldert House in 1877, a typical Rockaway boarding house of that day



Uncompleted bathing pavilion attached to big hotel, 1880 (LHS)

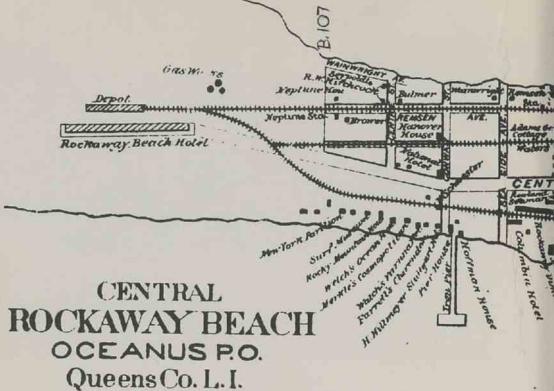


Engine No. 3 on Atlantic Ave. at Ft. Greene Pl. in 1898 (Watson)



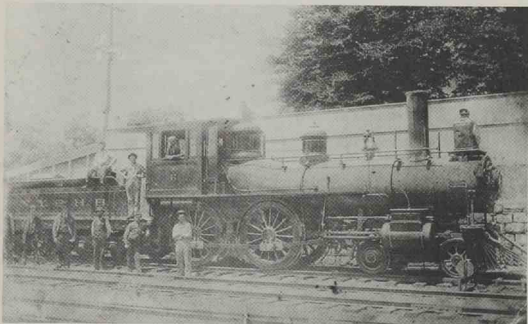
Jackson & Sharp builder's photo of coach No. 101 in 1880 (F. Goldsmith)

# J A M A I C A



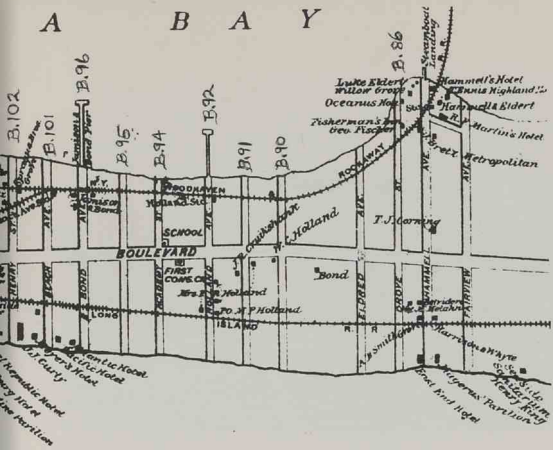
## CENTRAL ROCKAWAY BEACH OCEANUS P.O. Queens Co. L. I.

Oldest detailed map of

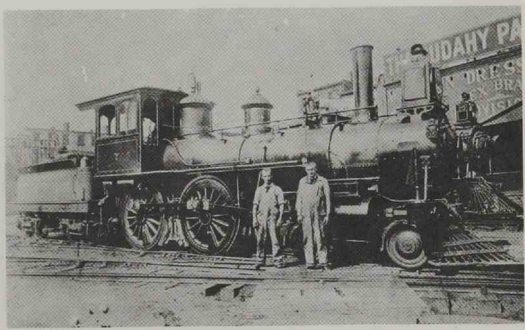


Engine No. 6 at Jamaica in the 90's. Became No. 301 in 1898 (Fagerberg)

# A B A Y



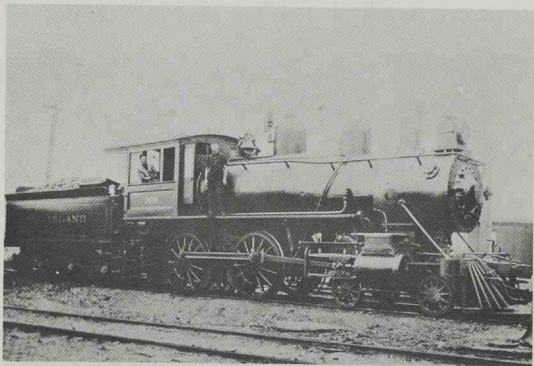
ways — **BEER'S** Driggs map of 1886



Engine No. 7 at Bushwick depot. Became No. 307 in 1898 (Fagerberg)

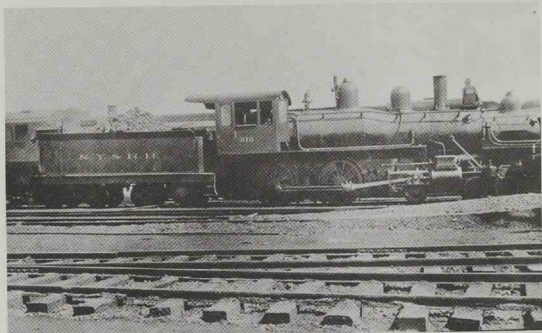


Engine No. 308 built in 1893. Formerly No. 1; became No. 308 in 1893 (Fagerberg)

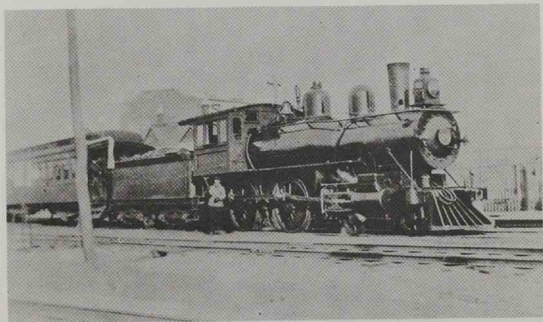


Engine No. 309 at Rockaway Park in 1906. Formerly No. 9 (Fagerberg)





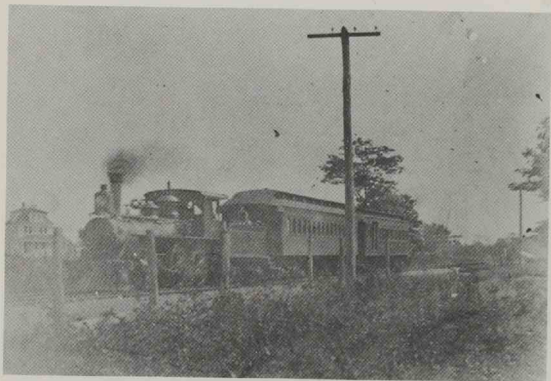
Engine No. 310 at L.I. City in 1898. Formerly No. 10 (Fagerberg)



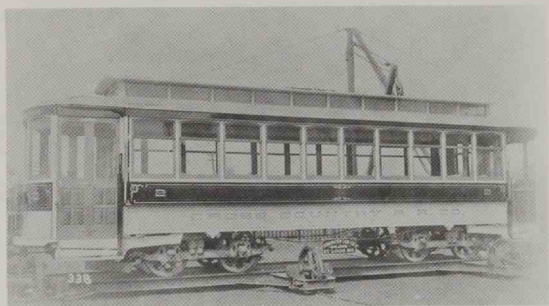
Engine No. 312 built in 1893; formerly No. 12 (Fagerberg)



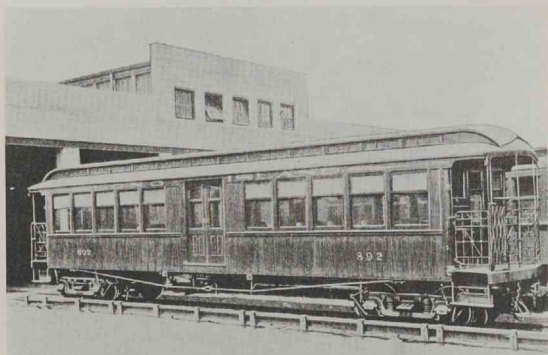
LIRR train in Rockaway Park yards in 1912. These are original Jackson & Sharp coaches shorn of their elegance (Presbrey)



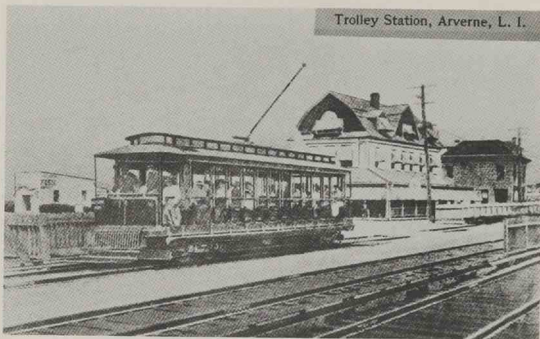
Long Beach shuttle between Lynbrook and East Rockaway in 1903 (Fagerberg)



Cross Country RR trolley, ordered for anticipated Jamaica Bay service (Votava)



LIRR car No. 892 used in Rapid Transit and Rockaway service



Trolley Station, Arverne, L. I.

Ocean Electric 15-bench car at Arverne station (Silleck)



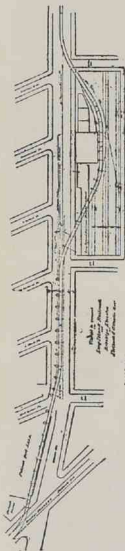
Ocean Electric No. 30 and No. 7 at Beach 84th St. Hammels in 1922. Note both trolley pole and shoe (F. Goldsmith)



Only known photo showing LIRR train on Flatbush Ave. connection in 1903 (N.Y. Hist. Soc.)

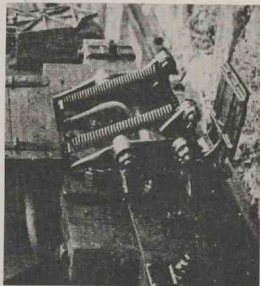


Chestnut St. Incline west of Crescent St. in 1913 (Presbrey)

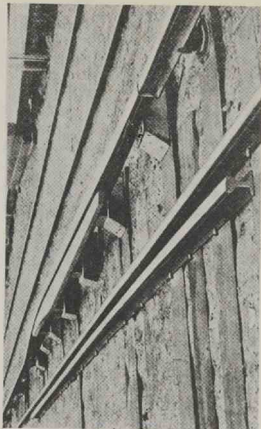


PLAN OF THE INCLINE WHICH NOW CONNECTS THE LONG ISLAND RAILROAD AND THE BROOKLYN ELEVATED RAILROAD.  
 This Incline is to be operated with the Brooklyn Elevated Railroad.

Engineering drawing of Flatbush Ave. Connection 1899



Shoe adapter on cars



Special third rail on Chestnut St. connection

twin ranges large enough to cook for 10,000 people and two auxiliary ranges able to provide for another 5000. The chimney in the kitchen was 150 feet high and 100 feet in circumference and served as well as a ventilating shaft.

The materials consumed in the construction of this vast edifice were impressive even by today's standards. The amount of mortar plaster required in the interior of the building was equal to ten square miles. In the 120 days between February 17 and June 17, 130,000 feet of lumber had been consumed daily or 15,600,000 feet in all. Three thousand bundles of red cedar shingles had been used to cover 12,000 square feet of frontage. Thirty miles of water pipes and about the same of gas pipes had been laid underground and throughout the building. The piazza flooring required three acres of wood and the white pine laid in rough flooring covered more than thirty acres of ground. To avoid any risk of fire, thirteen different iron staircases were provided, all enclosed in solid masonry. Fire hose was stationed on every floor for use at a moment's notice.

In addition to the vast hotel were the facilities serving it. Hardly less impressive than the hotel building itself was the bathing pavilion built just west of the hotel. This was 1100 feet long and two stories high. There was to be a wing at either end 200 feet long and 50 feet wide for restaurant and bar purposes. There was an elegant dining hall in the second story. On the ground floor there were 3000 bath houses, each provided with gas and a shower bath.

A gas house was erected near the hotel large enough to supply not only the hotel but also three times as many hotels as then existed at Rockaway Beach. In the great hotel itself and on the piazzas there were 10,000 burners and when all burned at once, the consumption was computed at the rate of 20,000 feet per night. The works had a capacity of 100,000 feet a day. Some provision for lighting by electricity was made, but from the paucity of information that has come down to us, it must have been considered too novel a form of illumination to be relied on.

The water works was situated behind the hotel; the Holly system was used. There were four large pumps with a capacity of one and a half million gallons per day. There was no reservoir. The water was drawn from forty tile wells sunk fourteen feet deep in the sand between the bay and the ocean front. The first water

pumped proved to be salt, but a few days' pumping brought up fresh water. The four pumps had capacity enough to supply the whole beach with water but no more than one was pressed into service. The water works, operating at capacity, would burn a ton of coal every fifty-three hours.

The sewage from this vast hotel was to be collected in a large cistern and at every tide forced through pipes leading two miles away and out to sea, the time chosen being when the tide would be outgoing.

An iron pier 1200 feet long was the final touch, costing the company about \$1,200,000. It was not enclosed but a building was put up on the outer end for passengers to wait for the steamboats that would call there. The pier was so long that when one of the big steamers like the *Columbia* was made fast fore and aft, passengers could be discharged from bow and stern at once. In the 1880 season the steamer *Twilight* made two trips every Sunday to this pier until the waters became too silted for safety.

As early as the first week of March, the framing of the first story of the big hotel had been completed. During May work upon the immense structure progressed rapidly; the eastern end was slated to be completed by mid-June. Already the gas house and water works were finished and 600 plumbers were at work running water and gas pipes through the building. Colonel John Moore, superintendent of construction, estimated that the hotel would be in the hands of an army of scrubbers and cleaners for an opening on June 15. Although 1400 men were then employed daily, they were hard to find in the vast building. No night work was then being done owing to the lack of sufficient materials.

The work had been divided into sections from A to K, each section having a foreman and two assistants. The plumbers somewhat delayed matters, being themselves held back by shortages of supplies. When the presumed opening date of June 15 came and went, it was then announced that the new hotel would be open by June 28 but this too proved over-optimistic. On Sunday, July 5, the ground floor was opened for inspection and huge holiday crowds from New York and Brooklyn tramped all through it gratifying their curiosity.

Just as the monster hotel was almost completed, the first hint of trouble came on July 8, 1880, when 150 painters, employed by Peter Woods of 313 Third Avenue, New York, who had the



painting contract, quit work because they failed to receive their pay on July 7 as usual. The oversight was explained by Colonel Moore, Superintendent of Construction, as due to a mix-up between Woods and Contractor Smith, the company treasurer in New York. About 1000 workmen in other trades continued to work on the building, unaffected by the mix-up.

Full paralysis struck the hotel on July 18, when every mechanic and laborer to the number of over 1000 went out on strike because they had received no pay since June 1; the total amount in default exceeded \$60,000. On July 20, the paymaster of the company virtually conceded bankruptcy by offering the men 20¢ on the dollar. This offer simply created alarm; some hot-heads became so excited that they threatened to burn down the hotel if not paid in full. Finally, cooler heads prevailed; the men held a meeting and appointed committees to call on certain lawyers to ascertain what could be done.

It gradually became known that the great hotel was in debt for more than wages. To complete the hotel itself, it was estimated that at least \$300,000 more would be needed. In addition, the company had contracted with the local boarding-house keepers to board the army of laborers; the boarding-house proprietors who had received the same offer of 20¢ on the dollar refused, and at a conference agreed to continue to board the men no longer than 24 hours unless their claims were met. The combined claims of the proprietors amounted to about \$18,000. The hotel men were in turn in debt to the wholesale grocers for large sums, so that few persons on the beach were not involved in some way by the default.

The contractors for furnishing the interior of the hotel were likewise affected by the sudden failure. The carpet dealers refused to cut carpeting for the hotel until their payment was guaranteed. Meanwhile, sixteen freight cars loaded with furniture for the hotel that had traveled all the way from Chicago were detained on a siding at Far Rockaway.

The officers of the Improvement Company pleaded with the men that if they would accept 20%, they would soon get the rest because negotiations were already in progress for a half million dollar loan. All but about 100 of the men refused and these few were forcibly prevented from resuming work. The men were in an ugly mood and violence was anticipated. One of the

counselors, fearing that an attempt would be made to fire the hotel and the railroad trestle that very night, brought 100 of the most vocal men to his home in Valley Stream to insulate them from their fellows.

The following day the company tried to reason with the workmen, intimating that they might be discharged if they did not return to work at once, but the tactic failed. The men milled about the hotel making threats but the presence of a strong force of deputies hastily collected checked any violence. The boarding-house keepers had not yet as yet carried their threat into execution to turn the men out, an action which many felt would trigger decisive action.

Days passed; then in the last days of July the imminent arrival of Brooklyn's Thirteenth Regiment for its summer camp and maneuvers at the beach induced a few artisans to resume work on the hotel in the hope of getting it ready for business. Carpenters and plumbers tried to get at least the first floor bar and sanitation facilities ready, but the soldiers came and went and in the end the hotel failed to open.

On August 2 the affairs of the Rockaway Improvement Company were placed in the hands of a receiver. Meanwhile, the effort to get the most essential work completed on the hotel had raised the total of unpaid wages of the workmen to \$90,000. It is surprising that the prestige of the big hotel was still so great that new workmen could be recruited who were willing to work simply on a promise that their wages would be forthcoming eventually. The working force totaled about 500 now, and in their effort to make every penny go as far as possible, many bunked in shanties along the beach, cooking food over driftwood fires; others bunked in the hulk of the condemned steamboat *Traveler* moored at Holland's pier. The court appointed as receiver the man who was to have been manager of the hotel, Mr. John A. Rice. Rice visited the beach, made a speech to the workmen and gave them hope for a payday in the immediate future.

On August 12, work was suspended altogether and the men stood idly about speculating on their chance of getting any wages at all. Receiver Rice began issuing receiver's certificates but only the most destitute among the men would accept the paper. Fortunately, the men were quiet and orderly and con-

fined themselves to denunciations and curses against Mr. Rice who they felt had misled them.

By August 13 the failure of the company to make any effort to alleviate the financial distress of the workmen inflamed them to a stage of excitement and indignation which threatened to break out into open riot. One of the most able and intelligent of their number was delegated to go to New York and to attempt to negotiate the sale of the receiver's certificates. The best offer thus far had been for 75¢ on the dollar. Although sixty watchmen guarded the hotel, they would have been as nothing if the workmen had really determined on firing the hotel. On the following Sunday, thousands of beach visitors from the city wandered all over the great piazzas and corridors with the workmen remaining aloof. In the following week the receiver was moved to promise \$10 in cash to each workman and the rest in certificates, but this offer was also indignantly refused.

The tension finally broke on August 16 when the representative of the men returned from New York with the news that several bankers had agreed to redeem the certificates without discounting them. Drexel, Morgan & Co. agreed to take half of the certificates (\$55,000). Morton, Bliss & Co. agreed to redeem the other half. When the representative returned to the beach with the news, he received an ovation from the men, who sang and danced with relief well into the night. The next day the men were paid off and left the beach. The total indebtedness for wages for the men just paid off and those still working was now \$161,078.35.

In the last days of August some efforts were made to use the little money remaining to open the hotel. It was reported that 10,000 chairs were stored in the cellar and \$25,000 worth of liquor. On the twenty-third, the sixteen carloads of furniture stored for ten weeks on the Far Rockaway siding were unloaded at the hotel. With the workmen paid off, the boarding-house keepers now began clamoring for a settlement of their debts too. They had been guaranteed payment by the Improvement Company and their claims extended back to June, amounting to about \$35,000 in all.

As September and fall weather arrived, no men at all were at work on the bath houses or pavilion and but thirty carpenters and painters inside the hotel. The police force of twenty-three

by day and forty by night was still retained. Cabinet makers put furniture together and mechanics labored on the elevators. A few carpenters put in glass and enclosed the basement against the oncoming winter. Over fifty liens had been filed thus far in court for sums ranging from \$30 to \$22,000 and totaling more than \$185,000.

We are fortunate, thanks to the industry of an *Eagle* reporter, in having the following good picture of the furnishings of the hotel at the end of the 1880 season:

"The wine cellar, the most gigantic affair of the kind in this country, as the hotel is the largest, is well stocked. The goods stored are worth perhaps \$100,000. Some forty carloads of furniture have arrived within a week from New York, Boston and Chicago, and the ground floor of the hotel is pretty well filled with the pieces. There are 620 suites of black walnut bedroom furniture and thirty men are at work putting them together. The style is a little on the Eastlake order. There are no carpets in the hotel. The chamber furniture will be put into the rooms on the upper floors as fast as made ready after the rooms have been cleaned. It was all manufactured in Chicago. A contract was made some time ago for 400 suites of chamber furniture of a better quality, including marble tops for the bureaus and commodes. A house in New York whose factory is in Massachusetts has supplied 3000 basket rockers and flat chairs, 1000 cane-bottomed chairs and about 3000 plain wooden chairs. A New York iron works company has furnished 500 settees with iron frames and slatted bottoms and backs. Another New York house has the contract for supplying 2000 tables of varying sizes. Part of the contract has been filled. A New York house contracts for supplying 620 forty-pound hair mattresses and as many springs and 400 inferior mattresses for the servants' use and a Chicago manufacturing company has under way 400 bedroom suites for the use of the servants. There are about 8000 chairs on the premises and seating capacity for about 15,000 people. In the cellar there are several hundred crates, barrels and hogsheads filled with chamber and dining room china and kitchen utensils. The silver has not been delivered but there will be about twenty tons of it."

In the spring of 1881 the holder of the mortgage for the 600 acres of beach bought by Contractor Smith and turned over to

Henry Y. Attrill, the leading spirit in the monster hotel enterprise, began foreclosure proceedings. The \$200,000 purchase price agreed on had been financed with only \$25,000 cash and the rest—\$175,000—placed on mortgage. At the court sale the property went for \$185,000 to an agent of Henry Y. Attrill.

The property on which the hotel itself stood, which had been bought from Littlejohn, was mortgaged for \$70,000 and there was a second mortgage on the building represented by the company's bonds for \$700,000. It was estimated that the hotel could not be put into operation for less than \$250,000. On top of all this indebtedness came the receiver's certificates of \$200,000, which took precedence over the \$700,000 mortgage. The cost of caring for the property in 1881 was running to about \$100 a day. About eighty men were employed as policemen or workmen in the hotel, gas house or water works. The water works was kept in partial operation to guard against fire; the twenty policemen who patrolled the grounds did not permit so much as a lighted cigar on the premises.

In the spring of 1881, Mr. John A. Rice, as receiver, decided to go ahead and do what was necessary to get the hotel open by June 1. This meant purchasing essential materials and employing enough workmen to make at least part of the hotel habitable. This would cost \$200,000. Attrill offered \$50,000 provided that others would contribute the balance. He also urged a reorganization of the company whereby the holders of bonds would take preferred stock instead. Benjamin Smith, the other major bondholder, fell out with Mr. Attrill over the reorganization scheme and had the Attorney General bring suit against Receiver Rice for conspiring to defraud the creditors, for doing nothing to open the hotel, and for issuing receiver's certificates illegally. After lengthy hearings, decision was finally handed down on July 21, 1881, resulting in the removal of Receiver Rice for making too liberal payments to himself for his services to the company. General James W. Husted was appointed by the court as the new receiver. Husted visited the property, took an inventory and made preparations to open at least part of the hotel in August before the 1881 season should close. Drexel, Morgan & Co. and Cyrus P. Huntington, the major bondholders, ranged themselves behind Husted in opposition to Henry Attrill.

Husted concentrated on the octagon building at the end of the

northwest piazza which contained the bars. These were large enough to contain 200 people at once. The restaurant was also readied for opening. At least 100 of the bedrooms were filled with furniture to accommodate permanent guests. The bathing Pavilion, never completed, was beginning to fall apart, but 400 bathhouses were sufficiently intact to be usable and 400 bathing suits were acquired to attract bathers. The court allowed Husted to issue up to \$20,000 in receiver's certificates for necessary expenses.

On Saturday, August 6, 1881, the great hotel was partially thrown open to the public. With great effort 150 rooms had been got ready and were speedily taken. At least 200 people seeking accommodations had to be turned away. The great dining room that evening managed to serve 300 people. The bill of fare was remarkably varied, and while the price of \$1.50 seems modest to us today, it represented in 1881 almost a day's pay. The room rates were \$4 a day and upward. On the first evening the gas jets burned with funereal dimness but the guests took it all in stride. The piazza was illuminated with electric lights.

The public opening of the hotel forced the Improvement Company to give it a name. It had always before been referred to as "the big hotel" and the "mammoth hotel" but it now received the grandiloquent name of *Hotel Imperial*.

Colonel James M. Oakley, president of the cross-bay railroad, was appointed by the court assistant receiver of the hotel. General Husted hoped by keeping the hotel open to defray at least in part the \$2500 a month it was costing to maintain and police. The Imperial remained open until Monday, September 26, and earned enough to pay expenses, but not enough to pay off the \$20,000 in receiver's certificates required to open it.

On March 4, 1882, the courts directed James W. Husted to sell the property, consisting of the hotel, eighty acres of land and the water works. The property was so encumbered with liens that Husted found it impossible to find a buyer at first, and petitioned the court to let him sell the property free and clear of liens and then apply the liens to the sum realized. The court on April 4, 1882, agreed to this arrangement. On May 1, 1882, the property was sold at foreclosure of the ground mortgage of \$70,000. The bondholders bought it in for \$10,700. It came out at the sale that all the furniture and carpets, elevators, heating

apparatus, gas fixtures, electric light dynamo, etc., moved into the building in 1881 in order to open it, had been loaned merely, the title to the property being retained by its owners. Despite all its troubles the great hotel obviously still commanded sufficient prestige in the business world to induce merchants to make deliveries. A reorganization of the hotel was now undertaken whereby the bonds and receiver's certificates were to be exchanged for dividend-bearing stock. In the judgment of the creditors, it was too late in the 1882 season to open the hotel to the public, but they made plans to raise a further \$500,000 by loans to complete the hotel and lay out the grounds and to open on a magnificent scale in the season of 1883.

A second foreclosure sale to satisfy a mortgage of \$72,000 was held in June and the property was again bought in by the creditors. The newly reorganized Rockaway Beach Improvement Company managed to attract some additional backing from William B. Hatch of Fisk & Hatch, Mr. Morton of Morton Bliss & Co., Collis P. Huntington of the Central Pacific and Frederick Taylor and the Continental Bank. All the creditors received stock in the new company, while old stockholders received new stock in exchange for old at 50¢ on the dollar. The new company made substantial efforts all during the summer and fall to raise the half million needed to complete the hotel but failed in the end, and in December 1882 notified Receiver Husted to schedule a resale.

On January 20, 1883, the personal property was sold off, but not the hotel; on the 26th the hotel itself was knocked down to Drexel, Morgan & Co., the famous Philadelphia bankers, for \$175,500. Transfer was effected February 3. The deed covered all the property of the Rockaway Beach Improvement Company except twenty-one acres on the bay side released to the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R. for terminal space. Drexel, Morgan & Co., in a press statement, said that they proposed to complete the great hotel up to and including the fourth story, furnish the rooms in good style and open for business in June 1883. The bathing Pavilion to the west was also to be completed so as to accommodate 600 bathers. The foreclosure sales cleared up some of the indebtedness but there were still outstanding claims amounting to \$1,800,000. In April, reports circulated that the hotel had been leased to Major Burnap of The Manhat-

tan Beach Hotel for \$40,000; supposedly, the deal fell through because Drexel, Morgan & Co., the owners, refused to invest \$250,000 to complete the interior.

Whatever the intentions of Drexel, Morgan & Co., the big hotel remained closed for the summer of 1883. A reporter for the *Eagle*, visiting the place in July, was moved to comment:

"The thousands of people who go to Rockaway seem never to tire of looking at the fading woodwork of the great hotel. It is deplorable to witness a property so grand in architecture and which costs many hundreds of thousands falling into decay. The broad piazzas are boarded up and a patrol has an exclusive charge of the place to guard against smokers. It has been definitely settled that the hotel will remain closed. The reason has just leaked out. Those persons, stockholders and creditors, who were frozen out by the bankers' syndicates, created an opposition pool and so far have been able to prevent a confirmation by the Supreme Court of the referee's report of sale, and they have confidence that they will be able to upset the sale by the allegation in these affidavits that they were willing to give more money than was bid for the property and are still willing. . . . The hotel is an injury to the beach in its dead state. Many thousands of people would frequent the place were it possible for them to enjoy the hospitality of the largest caravansary in the world."

In September 1883, despite all the litigation, the big hotel was painted. The *Eagle* commented:

"It is badly in need of it as it was never more than primed. The intense heat cracked the boards and widened the joints, and the rain entering, has done the interior of the building great damage. It is said that it will take \$22,000 worth of paint to cover the building."

More lawsuits struck the hapless Rockaway Beach Improvement Company in November 1883. Creditors attempted to hold Henry Y. Attrill and other directors of the company personally responsible for the debts incurred by that corporation. It was claimed by the plaintiffs that the directors were personally liable because they violated the law of 1875, which held the directors of a corporation which assumed a debt greater than its capital stock should answer to the creditors. The capital stock of the company was \$700,000 but the indebtedness was allowed to reach \$1,800,000.



The litigation in which the Improvement Company was now enmeshed defied all hope of solution. There was a flurry of interest on the part of Boston capitalists in 1885 but this flickered out when Fisk & Hatch, the bankers, started a suit to recover \$163,695 loaned the company in 1880. The court awarded a verdict in their favor in November 1885 but it was impossible to collect.

The end of the long controversy came at last in 1889. On April 24, the mammoth hotel which by now had become a byword in Rockaway and had come to be known as the White Elephant, was sold at public auction to Charles H. Southard & Co., dealers in building materials, for \$29,000. They had one year in which to remove the structure. The wrecking company put a force of 100 men on the monster building, and offered for sale in lots to Rockaway builders the best joists, flooring, doors, sash, trimming, etc.

Austin Corbin of the Long Island R.R. bought the land, running from Beach 109th Street to 121st Street and made plans to develop it as "Rockaway Park." He also purchased from Charles Southard a portion of the west end of the big hotel for \$40,000, to be used as a Rockaway Park hotel. By October 1889, the great hotel was but a memory; the 400 feet of it saved was moved to the west side of Beach 116th Street and set down facing the Boardwalk, where it became Curley's Atlas Hotel. So passed into history Rockaway Beach's greatest and saddest enterprise.

## CHAPTER 4

### *Operations of*

### *The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R.*

**T**HE NEW YORK, WOODHAVEN & ROCKAWAY R.R. as actually built was 10.34 miles long, all double tracked, extending from Glendale Junction to Rockaway Beach. In addition to its own track, the road used 6.46 miles of the Long Island R.R.'s track from Glendale Junction into Long Island City and 6.5 miles of line from Woodhaven Junction into the Flatbush Avenue depot in Brooklyn.

From Glendale Junction the road curved directly south through several deep cuts. From Jamaica Avenue, where the line emerged from the hills, the road continued on trestle work 1200 feet long, crossing the Jamaica Avenue horse car line and the Atlantic Branch of the Long Island R.R. above grade on iron truss bridges made by the Passaic Bridge Co. At Woodhaven Junction the two railroads were connected by a switch in the southwest quadrant. South of Woodhaven the road again came to ground level; at a point south of Aqueduct depot, there were two pile bridges 100 feet and 150 feet over loops of Hawtree Creek.

At the shore of Jamaica Bay the big trestle began and continued for almost five miles. There were 1719 pile bents, each consisting of eight spruce piles one foot in diameter on which rested caps, 12 x 12 and 30 feet long. Between the bents the distances varied from 12 feet to 17 feet. The ties under the rails were 8 x 6 inches and 22 feet long, running under both tracks. Although the trestle was 4.8 miles long, at low water the greater portion was on tidal flats above water; the water in the bay varied in depth from 3 to 20 feet and the top of the rail was about 9 feet above mean high water.

After leaving the mainland shore the trestle crossed Grassy Bay for a distance of roughly 4200 feet and then crossed a grassy hummock at the edge of which was Goose Creek "station," a platform and pier for fishermen. Just below was Goose Creek draw, the smallest opening with only one span which was seldom opened. From here, the road struck land, if that term may be applied to the two small swampy, grass-grown hummocks traversed. On the southern edge of the lower island was The Raunt station, another platform on piling and used only by fishermen and boatmen.

Below The Raunt the tracks crossed to Big Egg Marsh Hassock, today the bungalow colony of Broad Channel. The upper middle of this island was above high tide and on the dry ground were a few fishermen's shacks. Between Broad Channel and the next islet lay about 2300 feet of open water and near the upper end was Broad Channel draw, an iron fifty-foot two-pivot, double-opening structure. The last island crossed was a very small grass-grown hassock on which Beach Channel "station" was located, again a small platform on piles.

Finally, the railroad crossed the last large stretch of open water about 2400 feet before striking the Rockaway peninsula at about Beach 90th Street. At the upper end of this crossing was located Beach Channel draw, the other fifty-foot two-pivot, double-opening bridge. All three drawbridges were guarded by proper distance signals and a watchman was stationed at each.

At the Rockaway shore line, the road curved sharply to the westward and then on a right of way fairly close to the shore line of the bay to the terminus behind the big hotel at what is now 116th Street. At the Rockaway Beach terminus was (after 1882) an engine house and a train shed with a large depot building.

All the rail on the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R. was fifty-six-pound, about equally divided between iron and steel. The rolling stock on the road consisted of four Baldwin 4-4-0 locomotives for the 1880 opening season. In 1881, four additional Baldwin engines of the same pattern were received. The coaches, fifty-three in 1880-84 and fifty-six in 1885-87, plus six combination cars, were largely from the works of Jackson & Sharp in Wilmington, Delaware. From a contemporary

description we read that "the coaches are finely polished in hard woods and handsomely frescoed, containing patent lamps and perforated seats similar to those in use by the New York Elevated R.R. Miller's buffers, couplers and platforms are used. The wheels are 42" in diameter, being the largest in use."

A second description gives us even better information:

"The coaches of the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R. are broader than ordinary railroad cars and seat sixty-eight persons. The interior is furnished the same as the elevated cars in New York, dark russet-colored leather cushions with cross seats in the center and two-thirds of the seating room extending along the sides. With standees the cars will hold 100. The outside color is dark plum with trimmings to correspond."

A third account adds a few details:

"The interior is finished in birdseye maple with Japanese ornamentation in decidedly sober colors. The seats are finished in walnut with spring bottoms and hair cushions upholstered in Russian leather. They face each other in pairs. Some of these cars have these seats only in the middle, side seats filling the remaining space."

The stations on the road were as follows:

Long Island City  
Woodhaven  
Ozone Park (after 1882)  
Aqueduct  
Goose Creek  
The Raunt  
Broad Channel  
Beach Channel  
Hammels (Beach 84th Street)  
Holland's (Beach 92nd Street)  
Beach Avenue (Meyer's)  
Sea Side House (Beach 103rd Street)  
Neptune House (Beach 107th Street)  
Rockaway Beach (Beach 116th Street)

The fare to Rockaway Beach one way was 35¢; the excursion rate 50¢. There were no depot buildings of any kind when the road opened in 1880. In nearly all cases long wooden platforms alongside the track served the purpose. The timber for these walks was often locally procured. One order is known for such timber placed with the T. B. Hyatt steam saw-mill in Woodside in November 1880. The specifications were for 100,000 feet of chestnut planks, 2 x 4", in strips of 12 feet, 14 feet and 16 feet lengths.

The car house and shop facilities of the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway were almost nil in the beginning. Over the winter of 1880-1 the locomotives stood on the terminal tracks at Rockaway all through the winter exposed to the salt air, snow and blowing sand. The coaches were partly stored in Long Island City but space there on the Long Island R.R. tracks was at a premium. The westerly train sheds, formerly used by the Flushing and North Side R.R. were used, but these were long enough to hold only seven cars. The engines had to share one of the two Long Island R.R. roundhouses at Long Island City. In March, April and May 1882 the company built a car shed 400 feet long for the shelter of the rolling stock at the Rockaway Beach terminus.

The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway was essentially a seasonal railroad serving a seaside resort; train service therefore fluctuated from a mid-summer high of sixteen trains a day each way to as few as two during the winter. Trains left in summer for the beach as early as 5:30 A.M. The last train left the beach for the city at the decorous hour of 10:35 P.M., quite a contrast to the late hours that prevailed at Coney Island. Trains left for Rockaway Beach from both Long Island City and Flatbush Avenue more or less alternately in the warm season, so that there was in effect a half-hourly service on the line below Woodhaven. In addition, there was a shuttle service out of Bushwick terminal which met most of the Rockaway trains at Fresh Pond station or Bushwick Junction.

Daily and Sunday service from Long Island City for 1881 through 1886 is listed below in chronological order, with roman figures denoting daily service and italic numbers indicating Sunday schedules:

	Jan.	Mar.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1881			5	14		14		7		
1882	3		4	8	11		4	4		2
	2		4		15			3		3
1883			3	8	12			4		
			4		15			3		
1884	2	3	10	14		12		3		
	2	4				14		4		
1885			4	10	13		4		2	
			6	12	16		5		3	

Service out of Flatbush Avenue was as follows:

	Jan.	Mar.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1881			4	13		13		4		
1882	2		4	7	8	9	4	4		2
			2		12	12		2		2
1883			3	8	9	10		3		
			2		13			3		
1884	2	3	9	11		11		3	2	
	1	2						2	2	
1885			4	11	12		4		2	2
			6	12	13		4		3	3

A study of the service from the two terminals would seem to indicate that perhaps 60% or so of the patronage of the beach came from New York or the solidly German Williamsburgh section of Brooklyn and the other 40% from downtown Brooklyn and the suburban stations along Atlantic Avenue. For the season as a whole (number of trains run through the year) we have the following:

1881	7153
1882	6024
1883	8860
1884	8505; freight trains 208
1885	8348; freight trains 208

The scant three weeks of operation in the season of 1880 did little more than test the equipment and give the personnel a chance to familiarize themselves with the layout and operation of the road.

In April 1881, James Oakley was elected to the presidency of the road he had worked so long to make a reality, and in his eagerness to insure the success of the enterprise, moved to the beach as soon as his political responsibilities permitted and personally conducted the business of the road where he could feel himself in the thick of things. To everyone's surprise, he took a number of rooms at Datz' Hotel on the east side of Beach 103rd Street which overlooked the railroad tracks and made this the railroad's main office.

Business on the new road in the first full season of 1881 was excellent from the start. Part of this could be attributed to a wise reduction in May of 10¢ on the single ticket to Rockaway, bringing the rate down from 40¢ to 30¢. Excursion tickets were 50¢. As early as June 5, each train carried from five to seven loaded cars. By the end of the month the road was running hourly trains which were all well filled. Over July 3 and 4, traffic on the road surged to 50,000. The railroad had about all the business it could handle. Trains were run as frequently as possible without regard to the time table. President Oakley gave his personal assistance to Superintendent Lunt in the despatching of trains, so that the press of the day paid him the compliment of remarking that he "seemed as capable of handling a railroad as he was of representing the people at Albany." The railroad stationed men at every platform to warn passengers in advance of the approach of the train and to what point it was bound. No accident occurred to mar the orderly systematic management of the trains.

The favorable volume of traffic maintained itself through July, for on the 24th, thirty thousand came to Rockaway Beach. Early in the morning it became necessary to run special trains from Hunter's Point to accommodate the rush and again in the afternoon. Twelve- to seventeen-car trains ran all day and with standing room only. President Oakley and Superintendent Lunt again earned commendation for excellent judgment in despatching, trains following each other as promptly as considered safe. A lucky chance comment in a newspaper informs us that up to

August 4, the number of excursion tickets sold to the beach from New York and Brooklyn totaled 151,293. The news that the Hotel Imperial would be at last partially open to the public for the first time on Saturday, August 6, attracted the largest crowd of visitors ever seen at Rockaway, with rails and steamers bringing over 40,000.

One of the principal attractions certainly of the New York, Woodhaven and Rockaway, was the long overwater run of 4.8 miles across Jamaica Bay. Passengers jaded by ordinary railroad travel found it novel and exhilarating to ride "out to sea" and to be able to look down on lapping waves and boat parties on the bay below. Since the trains slowed down on the run across the water and through the three drawbridges, passengers normally had a minimum of 15 minutes to enjoy the marine scene. The other great advantage, of course, of the bay route was its great saving in time. The old Long Island R.R. route via Valley Stream normally consumed an hour and a half and a single fare cost 55¢. The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway took only forty-five minutes and the fare was 30¢.

The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway, although it did well in volume of traffic carried to the Rockaway peninsula, would have been even more financially secure had it been able to establish a monopoly of rail travel in its own area, the Rockaway peninsula. The Long Island R.R., in its agreement with Oakley, had promised to refrain from running through trains from New York and Brooklyn, but had said nothing about abandoning the old South Side Rockaway track running close to the water from Far Rockaway station to the Neptune House at Beach 107th Street. Oakley recognized quite clearly that the loss of the peninsula traffic was a loss to his own beach railroad, and as early as February 1881, made overtures to Austin Corbin to buy out the branch but was rebuffed. Several investors who had sought to lease the line for a horse car road were also turned down. The Long Island R.R. began to realize that the cross-bay railroad had changed the whole character of the lower peninsula, bringing with it record crowds and undreamed-of prosperity. In an effort to realize some profit from this windfall, the Long Island R.R. on Saturday, June 25, 1881, opened a rapid transit service for the first time along the Rockaway peninsula from the terminal station at the Neptune House to Far Rockaway



station on a half-hourly schedule and for a 15¢ fare. This rapid transit service continued through the summer seasons of 1882-1887 until the old South Side right of way was abandoned.

President Oakley did not give up the idea of a line of his own to Far Rockaway. In March 1882 we hear that surveyors of the railroad were mapping out an extension from Hammel's Station eastward through Far Rockaway to a terminus in Lawrence.

Passenger traffic on the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway held up very well each year and even increased:

1881	611,911	1884	618,242
1882	572,891	1885	623,782
1883	604,236	1886	776,753

Despite the steadily rising traffic the railroad earned only a slight operating surplus in the years 1881, 1882 and 1883. In 1884 and 1885 the road lapsed into a deficit and the meagre surplus earned in 1886 was swallowed up by the mounting deficit. It was obvious to the road's investors that it was not the bonanza that they had hoped and that there would be no money left for improvements or for paying dividends. The road's chief expenses were largely unavoidable; the Long Island R.R. received a large share of the road's earnings for the use of the three city terminals. Maintenance of the road proved another heavy drain. The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway was unique among railroads in the country in that almost half of its trackage was on wooden trestle work, which, because of the heavy equipment used and the great volume of traffic, had to be kept in prime condition. When winter came, the shallow waters of Jamaica Bay froze over and winter gales often drove boulders of ice against the trestle pilings, forcing them out of alignment. In summer time the greatest damage was done below the surface of the water by the shipworm or teredo which drilled its way into the timbers and in a short time honeycombed them with tunnels. The superintendent of maintenance annually sent professional divers to the bottom to examine the piling. In the beginning all the piles were untreated, but after 1883 creosoted piles were installed. In addition, the road had to pay the Long Island R.R. for shopping its locomotives and cars, having no heavy facilities of its own to do this work.

The railroad under Oakley's presidency was energetically managed despite a constant shortage of ready cash. Oakley had hoped to establish a car yard and engine shop at Woodhaven and in July 1881 bought the 26-acre farm of John Drew at that place for a reported price of \$650 an acre. For reasons unknown, nothing came of the plan. In July 1881, a pool with Senator Oakley at its head purchased from Garry Eldert and from Harper & Stumpf who operated a pavilion and bath houses in Eldert's Grove at Hammel's an extensive strip of land running from the bay to the ocean for \$31,500. The intention was to erect a hotel and pavilion on one side of the road and a number of cottages on the other side. Again in July 1882, President Oakley purchased a tract of land at Rockaway from Eldert. The tract was 100 feet wide and ran from the bay to the ocean, 12 acres in all and cost \$18,500. Apparently this strip was an enlargement of the former. At that time there was a heavy demand for cottages on the Rockaway peninsula. The plots were to be 50 x 118. This seems to have been another dream for we hear nothing more of it in the press.

The 1882 season was as great a success for the railroad as could be reasonably hoped. As early as May 21, a Sunday, the early morning train carried down 700 fishermen. An entrepreneur named Charles A. Denton put up a fair-sized hotel on the previously uninhabited marshland at Broad Channel, which contributed new traffic to the railroad. On Sunday, June 25, the road had to put on extra trains to accommodate the early season patronage. On July 2, the Sunday before the holiday, the road carried 11,000 people, some of whom were pleasantly surprised in the evening to see the newly installed electric lights at the principal station on Remsen Avenue (Beach 103rd Street). The July 4 crowd at the beach proved enormous. The early morning trains were packed and each succeeding train carried more cars. President Oakley was everywhere at the beach, supervising the crowds and it was due to his care and caution that 27,000 people were transported without accident. The Monday before the holiday netted 22,000 passengers. As a precaution, Oakley installed fences and gates at Remsen Avenue station to prevent the eager homebound crowds from jumping onto the trains before they had a chance to stop.

One of the most unusual innovations of the 1882 season on the

railroad was the arrangement with the managers of the steamboat *Plymouth Rock* to honor each other's tickets, so as to give travelers the option of coming and going by boat or train. Oakley was seriously considering the building of two steamboats to serve Rockaway in conjunction with the cross-bay railroad. He asserted that nine-tenths of the people enjoyed traveling one way by train and one way by boat in journeying to Rockaway and the two boats would give passengers the option of using either means without additional expense. He visualized a boat on the model of the Hudson River Day Line vessels, but larger.

On July 16, the railroad again had to dispatch extra trains to accommodate the masses. In the evening train after train was dispatched under a 10-minute headway, just long enough to insure safety. Oakley encouraged further patronage by reducing the excursion fare from 50¢ to 45¢. July 23 brought another record crowd, 6000 over that of the previous week. The company added this week a number of open excursion cars which must have been borrowed from the Long Island R.R.'s fleet of 52. July 30, the last Sunday of the month, continued the heavy patronage. The *Eagle* commented:

"The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway carried nearly 30,000 passengers with safety and did its work with the utmost regularity. The demands made upon it brought into requisition every one of its cars. The business at the beach end was attended to personally by the president, Hon. James Oakley who was persevering and continuing in his efforts to make the accommodations of his road agreeable as well as serviceable. The road is now an unquestionable success and as a short method of reaching the beach is growing in favor with the seaside going people. . . . With the vigorous supervision of President Oakley, courteous conductors and watchful police officers on the trains, the road by way of Woodhaven could hardly be other than a triumph."

Patronage continued excellent through August 1882. On the 13th, it was estimated that 40,000 people came to Rockaway, three-fourths of these on the cross-bay railroad, and on the 20th, the same press of travel filled the cars of the company.

In the 1883 season Senator Oakley again came down to the beach and gave his personal attention to the road. The most

important change in management at this time was the replacement of the road's own superintendent, Mr. James M. Lunt, by Isaac D. Barton, the superintendent of the Long Island R.R. By this change, all the roads of the island were brought under Barton's day-to-day supervision. While this change seemed to bring the cross-bay railroad rather close to Long Island R.R. control, the fact was that all the company's rolling stock was already being serviced and maintained in Long Island R.R. shops.

The Long Island R.R. in the season of 1883 reactivated its Rockaway Rapid Transit schedule to offer eight trains a day from 7:30 A.M. to 8:30 P.M. and at a reduced fare of 10¢.

Even before the 1883 season opened, the Town of Jamaica, on March 8, held a supervisors' meeting at which complaints of vessel owners against obstruction to navigation by the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway were freely voiced. The general complaint was that the road was an obstruction to navigation and that the bridges had been constructed in violation of the plans and the charter; that the drawbridges were not operated as required by law so as to permit vessels to pass without loss of headway. Complaint was made that the bridges over Broad Channel and Goose Creek had sunk and were so badly out of repair that they could not be operated at all and boatmen were compelled to go miles out of their way. It was alleged that the bridge over Broad Channel was constructed diagonally to the channel so that during certain wind patterns, no vessel could pass through without striking the abutment and receiving injury.

The railroad responded by a promise to repair the trestle and within a few days awarded a contract for re-piling the road to John Gillies of New York. The number of piles to be driven, both 30-foot and 50-foot lengths, was 1000 and the contract price \$8000. Work was commenced on April 3, 1883, and was pushed forward with great vigor to insure completion before the onset of heavy summer travel.

The 1883 season was a good one for the railroad. In July the company was running thirty-eight trains a day. The first trains out of New York and Brooklyn carried largely fishermen who crowded the cars with their tackle and willow baskets. Most of these men got off at The Raunt and Broad Channel and took to rowboats which rented briskly for as much as \$5 a day. Those

who balked at these rates fished from the railroad trestle and the docks along the bay front. The first trains carrying excursionists usually arrived around 8 A.M. and the size of the trains gradually increased from three and four cars to nine and twelve. Over July 4, 1883, the road carried more than 20,000 passengers.

The year 1884 witnessed an important change in the ownership of the road. The banking house of Fisk & Hatch, owners of the New York, Woodhaven and Rockaway for the last four seasons, failed for several million dollars on May 15, 1884, and their losing investments in the railroad and the big hotel were to a great extent responsible. President Oakley minimized the disaster, stating that he had no fear for the railroad company and that if the controlling interest in stock which Fisk & Hatch held were sold, it would in no way affect the management. Fortunately for the Rockaway R.R., President Oakley's prediction proved true. Fisk & Hatch, who suspended in May, resumed payment on June 2 and were readmitted to the Stock Exchange. The reorganization of the company involved among other changes a sale of certain of the assets, among which were the firm's holdings of New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway stock. On June 23, 1884, James M. Oakley bought control of the railroad by adding to his own 1100 shares the holdings of Fisk & Hatch, giving him just over 6000 of the 10,000 existing shares of the company.

The 1884 season like those of previous years went off very favorably. The first good day was June 22, when about 12,000 people visited the beach. The trains of the Oakley road carried great crowds, some of the locomotives being required to draw 15 coaches. The railroad treasurer reported that the June earnings of the company exceeded those of any other year by \$2000.

The great success of the road and the crowds that it drew began to attract the attention of the criminal element in New York and pickpockets in great numbers mingled with the packed thousands on the beach and in the trains. President Oakley was incensed at the inadequacy of the police and determined to personally prevent these light-fingered gentlemen from operating on his railroad. He and a friend, Alderman Datz of Datz' Hotel, boarded the 6 o'clock train at Hammels station one evening in time to see five known pickpockets get on as well. In no time at all, Oakley spotted one of the thieves with his hand in a lady's

pocket while Datz observed another encircle the waist of a man wearing collar studs and pocket watch. Oakley drew a gun from his pocket and smashed the butt on the thief's hands. The thief put up a battle but the brakeman entered the car and together the men wrestled the pickpocket off the train and into the custody of a policeman on the platform. Datz had already secured his thief but the man broke away on the platform and ran down the track. Suddenly, he wheeled around and fired one bullet from a pistol but it missed Datz, who coolly drew his own and returned the fire. The chase continued across the meadows and the underbrush, until the thief, cut off by the waters of the bay, stopped and surrendered. Oakley and Datz both went to the Hammel's station house and pressed charges against the two thieves, who, it turned out, had been arrested just the previous Sunday. Both had gained their freedom because the victim failed to go to court and prosecute.

The spectacular gunplay in full view of hundreds of spectators prodded the undermanned police into more vigorous activity and on the following weekends, the officers arrested the pickpockets as they arrived by boat or rail and sent them back to New York. Detectives rode all of Oakley's trains and no increases of pocket picking were reported to him.

The July patronage of the railroad proved so good that thirty daily trains were added to the timetable. On Sunday, August 6, 1884, 15,000 people swarmed to Rockaway, some of them, at least, attracted by Oakley's offer of a free ticket of admission to a newly-opened skating rink.

In a move to compete with Brighton Beach and Manhattan Beach, Oakley arranged for a fireworks display from the long dock of the Sea Side House and contributed \$1000 for the purchase of set-pieces. The Twelfth Regiment Band was also engaged to provide music, and for the remaining weekends of August and September 1884, this weekend display proved a powerful attraction. The hotels were jammed on weekends and the taverns and gardens did an immense business. On Sunday, the 24th, 87 trains were run to and from the beach in the course of the day. August 31 and September 7 were further banner days for the railroad. The season which had begun inauspiciously closed on September 21 with the last trips of the Iron Steamboats and the special railroad excursions.

The most unusual event of the 1884 season had been an earthquake on Sunday, August 10. A tremor passed through the Long Island coast at 2:07 P.M. which rocked the ground. Guests at Rockaway ran frightened out of hotels, even the musicians laying down their instruments in fear. Dishes danced on the table, buildings creaked and the walls cracked. Two long trains that happened to be crossing the bay trestle felt the shock so keenly that their engineers brought the cars to a standstill hastily, fearing that the trestle-work was giving way. The tremor passed without repetition and the trains started up again, though with many passengers uneasy over the unexpected sway of the cars.

The year 1884 witnessed the successful completion of another big project that affected the railway. The Rockaway peninsula in the beginning had no roadways and those that grew up at first were simply paths leading from the ocean to the bay. The first settlements were at the "Landings," places where launches, rowboats and later the Iron Steamboats debarked their passengers. Landing #1 was at the Neptune House (Beach 107th Street); the second Landing was at the Sea Side House (Beach 103rd Street) and the third Landing at the Holland House (Beach 92nd Street). No intercommunication between the settlements was possible except by boat or a walk along the sands. Gradually a need arose, particularly after the New York, Woodhaven and Rockaway began to bring dense crowds to the west end of the peninsula for a public road to link the hotels and amusement centers together. The first move in this direction came in February 1881 when the principal owners along the beach, including Senator Oakley, William Wainwright, Benjamin Downing and Philo Vance, paid the expenses of the Highway Commissioners of the Town of Hempstead for a surveyor to lay out a boulevard extending nearly five miles along the beach. The projected highway followed a line generally north of and parallel to the South Side R.R. track up to the big hotel, where the road curved north and then continued west running about 128 feet north of the hotel. The highway idea was really part of a larger movement to have Rockaway Beach incorporated as a village, for then the hotel owners and lease holders could make their own local laws, collect their own local taxes and run their own police force. On October 31, 1882,

the taxpayers and lessees of property at the Beach held a meeting, voted unanimously to procure a village charter and to go ahead with the proposed road.

In March 1883 the work of surveying the new Rockaway Beach Boulevard was commenced. At a meeting of the Town board of Hempstead, an appropriation of \$5000 was made for the construction of a road from Norton's Creek, a waterway formerly on the line of Beach 32nd Street, to Sea Side. In the spring of 1883 the highway was let out at contract to a man named Hance and work was pushed west of Norton's Bridge. The contract date for completion was March 1, 1884. The highway as laid out was a far cry from what it is today. The crown of the road was only three to four feet above high tide. The roadbed was formed of meadow ditching covered over with one foot of sand and with a top dressing of nine inches of loam and was twenty-four feet wide on the top. Five feet from either side of the roadway was a big ditch ten feet across and three feet deep in which the tide rose and fell. The outer edges of the ditches were a foot inside the land taken for highway purposes, while the five-foot hip between the ditches and the roadway protected the roadbed. By the last days of 1883 the contractors had advanced 800 feet on the road and about 3000 feet with the ditching.

Severe storms put a stop to the work in December 1883 but work pressed on all during the 1884 season. The property owners were so pleased at the prospect of an end to their isolation that in November 1884 they subscribed \$7000 to the building fund. In January of 1885 the Rockaway Beach Boulevard was completed to its contract terminus—Conway Street (Beach 105th Street). In June 1885 the boulevard—six miles long—was pronounced completed.

In spite of all the projects on which James Oakley was engaged—the big hotel, the village incorporation, the railroad, the boulevard—he was unable even with four years of active supervision and watchfulness to make the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R. pay its expenses. In the year 1884, when he secured control of the road from Fisk & Hatch, the road went into debt for the small sum of \$418. In 1885, the road reported a deficit for the year of \$26,431. The last season that Oakley had control of the road—1886—there was a surplus for the year of \$3362, thanks to a remarkable surge in passenger traffic of



about 24% in one year. In August 1886, word was leaked out to the press that Oakley had consented to sell his controlling interest in the railroad to Austin Corbin of the Long Island R.R. Mr. Corbin was said to have contracted for the purchase of a majority of the first mortgage bonds of the road, the whole issue being \$600,000. The transfer of the road was not to take place until October when the season would be over.

What Oakley's motives were for selling his road is a mystery difficult to fathom after eighty years. Certainly he had been the chief inspiration for the railroad at the beginning and the solicitous guardian of its fortunes during most of its years. After his brief term as State Senator, Oakley withdrew from politics and had devoted most of his time and effort to the betterment of the railroad and the territory it served. Few railroad presidents were so close to their roads as to live next to the tracks and to oversee the actual dispatching of trains. Nor was Oakley an old man at this time; he was on the contrary a man of 48 and in the prime of life.

By one of those curious ironies of fate that recur so often in life, Oakley did not long survive the separation from his beloved railroad. On March 25, 1887, Oakley died of pneumonia at his home in Jamaica at the early age of 49, a few short months before his road was swallowed up into the Long Island R.R. system.

## CHAPTER 5

### *The New York & Rockaway Beach Railway Co.*

**1887-1898**

THE SEASON OF 1886 was the last under the progressive Oakley management. In the previous year something like thirty tons of steel rails had been distributed over the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway road as a first step in the phasing out of the old all-iron track. In March divers were sent down to the bottom of Jamaica Bay to check on the piling which was found to be in fairly good condition. One hundred and fifty new piles were scheduled to be driven over the spring to reinforce bents that appeared to be failing or ice-damaged.

As of September 1886, Austin Corbin of the Long Island R.R. was elected to the board of directors of the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway and public announcement was made that the Long Island R.R. was in fact taking control of the road, confirming rumors that had circulated for some months. In October, a majority of the first mortgage bonds of the road, the total issue being \$100,000, passed to Mr. Corbin who had in the meantime secured stock control also. In December 1886, a proposition to reorganize the road was sent to each of the stock holders by Austin Corbin and approved. New first mortgage bonds were issued to the amount of one million dollars, but bearing interest at 5% instead of 6%. More important, it was decided to purchase the Rockaway branch of the Long Island R.R. and physically link it with the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway by means of a new roadbed. To this end the stockholders were assessed at 5% of their holdings and bondholders at 10%, the proceeds to be earmarked for the purchase. Part of the reason for the new link was to get rid of the old South Side track along the beach which was too near the ocean front and was complained of by the hotel keepers; the other reason was to give fast service to Far Rockaway with through trains from New York via the bay trestle.

The first step in the physical linking of the cross-bay railroad and the Long Island R.R. along the Rockaway peninsula was taken between November and December 22, when surveys were made along the beach from Hammel's Station eastward to Life Saving Station #34 at Beach 55-54th Streets, the point where the new road was planned to join the old. By the time the worst of the winter weather had passed by March 1887, the railroad engineers had revised their plans slightly. The new route was planned to run from Hammel's Station skirting the Jamaica Bay shorefront and effecting a junction with the old South Side track at the present 54-53 Streets, using the old line for the rest of the way to Far Rockaway. With the beginning of April 1887, work on the new 1.66-mile link was begun with the distribution of rails along the route. On Monday, May 16th, the track layers put down the first rails. Although the distance was short, difficulties not now clear to us caused the project to be quietly dropped in August. In the following spring of 1888, the work was resumed and completed. On May 26, 1888, the first train passed over the new single-track road. The point of union of the new track with the old South Side R.R. right-of-way at 53rd Street became known as "New York & Rockaway Beach Junction." The old South Side right-of-way westward from Beach 53rd Street to the Neptune House at Beach 107th Street was now abandoned and torn up between August and December 1888 to the satisfaction of the hotel men along the beach.

While these physical changes were going on, the corporate structure of the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway was being reorganized. On April 1, 1887, a referee was appointed in Supreme Court to take testimony in the proceedings of the Metropolitan Trust Co. of New York to foreclose the \$600,000 mortgage of the old company. On June 28, 1887, the entire property of the road was sold under foreclosure in Jamaica and was bid in by the Long Island R.R. for the amount of the mortgage. The first step in the reorganization was effected in October when the Long Island R.R. incorporated the New York and Rockaway Beach Railway Company to take over the former road. As of September 1, 1887, the capital stock was one million dollars divided into 10,000 shares of \$100 each. The directors were largely the same as those on the Long Island R.R.

When the 1887 season came to an end and the routine check-

ing of the bay trestle was undertaken by divers, it was discovered that shipworms had made considerable havoc with the piling in Broad Channel and other deep waters. In some bents two or three piles were found entirely eaten off at nine feet below low water mark. In November 1887, contracts were let for re-spiling at a cost of \$60,000, using yellow pine timbers. During January about 900 creosoted piles were installed, sufficient to uphold the superstructure. Several hundred more were driven on the low ground. On August 4, 1887, the trestle had sustained its first fire, caused by hot coals dropped by the last train and a 25-foot section had burned through. This damage plus the shipworm damage could now be thoroughly repaired.

The season of 1888 was largely uneventful. On July 4, the new extension from Hammel's Station to Far Rockaway was thrown open to the public with the seasonal opening of the rapid transit service between Far Rockaway station and Beach 116th Street. In August, steam service over the new road was opened with through trains from Long Island City and Brooklyn to Arverne and Far Rockaway. There were five such trains on both weekdays and Sundays. The fare was 35¢ for a single ticket and 60¢ for an excursion. A wye had to be built at Hammel's Station to permit continuous running along the peninsula.

A new station was opened in April 1888 by Thomas A. Smith of Freeport on the point where the railroad crossed Beach Channel. Smith leased the land from the railroad company and put up a two-story building 42 x 50 where he served meals to fishermen, furnished fishing tackle and hired out 25 boats. The railroad for its part agreed to stop its trains at the new station for the accommodation of fishing parties.

Another major improvement of 1888 was the enlargement of the Sea Side station (Beach 103rd Street), at that time and for many years thereafter the heaviest station on the Rockaway peninsula. The railroad purchased in April from E. E. Datz, a Jersey City alderman, his "Metropolitan Hotel," located on the east side of the avenue and just south of the track, and transformed it into one vast depot with comfortable waiting rooms and other conveniences. A high picket fence with sliding gates was erected between the two tracks on the railroad to prevent the milling and confusion that attended the stopping and de-

parture of the through trains and rapid transit trains at this busy station.

During the summer and fall of 1888 further extensive renewal was done on the bay trestle. Many bents were repaired; those not previously reinforced in January had creosoted piles of large size driven in them. In deep water, eight new piles were driven, four under each track and six where the water was shallow. The bridges were also renewed where necessary with new caps, stringers and ties. In all, 6000 creosoted piles, 1300 stringers, many double cross-ties and vertical sway braces were installed, the greatest renewal program since the building of the trestle. An engineer of the Railroad Commission estimated that \$100,000 was being expended by the Long Island R.R. on the bay trestle to combat the ravages of the shipworm. To lessen future expenses, some filling in of the trestle was done at Broad Channel.

Large crowds again patronized Rockaway Beach in the 1888 season, the figures running 40,000 ahead of 1887. The very size of the crowds, however, was an irresistible temptation to thieves both on and off the trains. Many of the receipts were pocketed by dishonest conductors who were hired for the season only and who could not be detected in their peculations because of the crowds. To prevent some of this loss, the railroad resolved in the 1889 season to collect tickets at the stations on the arrival of the trains. We have no record whether this seemingly impractical method of collection was actually attempted.

The pickpockets who again swarmed on the beach were made the target of a special campaign by Austin Corbin who contracted with the famous Mr. Pinkerton to put a special corps of detectives along the beach. Beginning Sunday, July 8, 1888, detectives met the trains as they arrived and numbers of notorious pickpockets, card-sharps and confidence men were put back aboard the cars and warned never to return. Detectives were now routinely stationed at each station and the number of policemen increased.

The year 1889 is notable on the New York & Rockaway Beach chiefly for the founding of Rockaway Park by Austin Corbin. At the Rockaway Beach terminus up to this time the immense bulk of the Imperial Hotel dominated the whole beach front stretching from Beach 111th Street to 116th Street. On April 24,

1889, the dilapidated hulk of the old hotel was sold at auction to a wrecker for \$29,000. Between May and October the great structure was dismantled and the beach front was left clear once again. In March, Austin Corbin, acting through the Long Island R.R.'s real estate subsidiary, the Long Island Land Improvement Company, acquired 140 acres of the land from Morton, Bliss & Co., the owner.

The company took immediate possession of the land and set about to improve it as a seaside colony for cottages and villas. Washington Avenue, now Rockaway Beach Boulevard, was extended a mile further to the westward beyond the railroad station, laid out as a 100-foot street with a mall, and was intersected by thirteen new cross streets, numbered Fifth Avenue to Tenth Avenue and eight named streets (Beach 116th Street to 129th Street). The name "Rockaway Park" was given to the new community and 11,000 lots offered for sale. To operate the new village, Corbin incorporated the "Rockaway Land Improvement Company" on July 27, 1889. According to its charter, the company's object was to:

"Develop Rockaway Park on Rockaway Beach, the buying and selling of real estate on the beach and elsewhere; the building and construction of hotels, cottages, houses, bath houses, amphitheatres, concert halls and other buildings and streets, and the maintenance and operation thereof; to construct and maintain walks, drives, avenues and streets, parks and other ways; to manufacture and supply gas or electric light for the purpose of illuminating the park, and to construct, operate and maintain all the buildings and machinery therefor; to supply water and heat to the Park and buildings therein, and to construct and operate all machinery, mains, sewers, ways necessary therefor."

The capital stock was fixed at \$25,000 divided into 250 shares of \$100 each. Corbin's nephew, Frederick Dunton was the main spirit in the enterprise. In September, Corbin bought from the wrecker of the big hotel the western third of the huge structure adjoining 116th Street for \$40,000 and remodeled it as the Rockaway Park Hotel, the sole such establishment to be permitted to operate in the Park area.

The year 1889 witnessed a few additional betterments on the railroad: a new car house at Rockaway Beach (hereafter Park) station. At Woodhaven Junction the Town authorities wished

to extend Atlantic Avenue eastward as a roadway and to this end, it became necessary to take down the tower on the Rockaway Beach Railway which blocked the roadway and to set in a stone abutment as a support for the trestle work. The work was done in the first days of February 1889. At the same time a double track connection with the Atlantic Avenue Division was installed and an interlocking machine put in at Ozone Park.

Two new depots were added to the Rockaway line this year, one at Hammel's Station with covered and fenced platforms, and an attractive frame depot at the new resort of Arverne. Arverne was the personal creation of Remington Vernam, a New York lawyer. In 1878 he became interested in the beach and conceived the idea of laying out the empty lands into streets and villa plots. He and his wife Florence bought up nearly all the land between Hammel's Station and Edgemere and began to develop it. His wife conceived of the name "Arverne" from her husband's signature. On July 4, 1888, the village with its new hotel was opened to the public. Vernam had then expended \$600,000 on the tract. In October 1895 Arverne became an incorporated village with its own officials and government. Vernam died July 3, 1907, having lived to see the lasting success of his pioneering work.

Even in the face of the extensive renewals of the bay trestle in 1887-8, some new work had to be done in 1889. Two hundred additional creosote piles were driven; by this time each of the bents had from four to six or more new creosoted piles of large size; 160 new caps and 450 new double-track ties were installed. The years 1890-91 were relatively uneventful ones on the New York & Rockaway Beach road. A new brick depot was erected at Far Rockaway, 30 x 70. The foundations were laid in the last days of April and the building was finished in late July 1890.

In April and May 1891 the physical separation between the Long Island R.R. trains and those of the New York & Rockaway Beach in the Long Island City yards was abolished. The train sheds of the old Flushing & North Side R.R. had been used by the Rockaway trains since 1880 but now many alterations were made in the terminal yards and the New York & Rockaway Beach tracks were thrown into the same system with the Long Island R.R. tracks, and henceforth all trains left from the Long Island R.R. depot.

Incredible as it may seem, an inspection of the big trestle in late 1890 revealed that the structure had again lapsed into a condition which caused apprehension for its safety. It is easy to see, in the light of these constant expensive renewals, why Colonel James Oakley with only his own limited resources to fall back on, could not make the road pay. More creosoted piles were driven as usual. Quite a number of bents had settled unevenly and all were made upright once again. Thirteen hundred new piles in all were driven over 1890-91. Many new cross ties, 7 inches x 14 inches, were fitted into the trestle deck. To shorten the long trestle and save renewals, 40 bents of about sixteen feet each were filled in at both land ends with clay, sand, gravel and stone, larger stones being left on the outside to provide a buttress against the waves. In the opinion of the State Engineer all but about 400 of the bents could probably be filled in where the ground was exposed at low tide. The remainder, located in deep water, would still require permanent maintenance. It was fortunate that the 3000 feet of trestle on land between Jamaica Avenue and Ozone Park required only occasional strengthening and replacement.

In the year 1892 there broke out at the peaceful village of Arverne, an acrimonious dispute that eventually went to the Supreme Court of New York State and the Board of Railroad Commissioners in Albany before a settlement was reached. When Remington Vernam opened his little village on the Fourth of July in 1888, he was able to take satisfaction in the fact that his resort boasted that accolade of distinction of every self-respecting 19th century town—a railroad station of its own. Vernam came to Austin Corbin and offered to construct a station with proper facilities for passengers and baggage and freight, and to convey the property absolutely to the company. Although there seemed no real need of a station in the barren sandy waste that marked the site of Arverne in 1888, the railroad with an eye to the future consented.

The station opened with eclat along with the rest of the village on that Independence Day but in the years that followed, the station proved to be a doubtful blessing to the railroad. Mr. Vernam postponed repeatedly the conveyance of the depot property to the railroad, and in fact maintained a real estate office on the first floor of his station and kept tenants in the



second-floor rooms. The railroad's freight and express business was confined to a small area of the first floor and suffered from inadequate space. Worse still, the passenger ticket office was twice robbed, once by a tenant of Mr. Vernam's.

The railroad company, goaded by its inability to assert mastery in what was to have been its own house, finally lost patience with Mr. Vernam and resolved to leave the station building in November 1891. When the summer season was well under way, the railroad, on June 27, 1892, suddenly shifted the Arverne station 1900 feet to the west, declining to stop any trains at the old station. The residents of Arverne, outraged at what they considered high-handed action, and convinced that they had caught the railroad in an illegal act by changing stations without permission of the Railroad Commissioners, hauled the railroad before the State commission. On July 19, 1892, the commission granted a hearing to both sides in New York. The railroad lamely attempted to deny that it had ever established a station at Arverne at all, a declaration regarded with incredulity by the commissioners and which tended to create a bad climate for its case. On July 26, a second hearing was held. The residents declared that the removal of the station was a great inconvenience and damage to the community and demanded redress; the railroad claimed that Mr. Vernam, acting like the lord of the manor, had repeatedly interfered with the transaction of business and that the sole cause of removal was the road's inability to secure adequate facilities. The Commission endeavored to compromise the quarrel but the railroad refused to yield unless the station were deeded to them and Mr. Vernam would get out. Vernam denied any agreement to deed the station and claimed that the railroad was trying to get \$25,000 worth of real estate for nothing.

Fearing that they would lose their case either by adverse decision or long delay, the citizens applied in Brooklyn Supreme Court for three writs of mandamus: one on the ground that the company had no legal right to change its station; two, that property values suffered; and three, seeking to compel a restoration of service at the old site. On August 8, this suit was heard in the Supreme Court in Brooklyn, but after hearing the arguments of both sides, the court reserved decision.

On August 16, the Board of Railroad Commissioners reached

a decision. It found that the people of Arverne had purchased their property and erected their dwellings with reference to the old station and recommended that four trains each way, as would most satisfactorily accommodate the public, be stopped daily at the Gaston Avenue station. If the railroad failed to comply with the recommendations within ten days, then the matter would be turned over to the Attorney General for action.

On August 16, the Supreme Court in Brooklyn similarly found for the plaintiffs, directing the railroad to reinstitute service as before, but fixed no specific number of trains per day.

Within a month after the settlement of the great dispute over Arverne station, the first great fire in Rockaway's history gutted its most important station, Sea Side. Individual buildings at Rockaway had from time to time during the 70's and 80's succumbed to the flames, but the fire of September 20, 1892 was the first to sweep an entire neighborhood and to leave about thirty-two hotels, restaurants and stores in ruins. The fire broke out in a museum fronting Sea Side Avenue (Beach 104th Street) at 10 A.M. A strong northeast wind spread the fire from building to building southward down the west side of the avenue to the ocean front and then along the shore for another block. The Sea Side railroad station (formerly Datz' old hotel) was completely destroyed. The railroad made haste to have a replacement station ready for the summer traffic of 1893. On August 29, 1893, less than a year since the last fire, the new station, a two-story frame building, took fire from an oil stove used by a trackworker, and in less than five minutes the whole building went up in flames. Two families, five of the company's gatemen and a number of Italian laborers employed on the railroad were asleep in the station building. All narrowly escaped with their lives. The flames crossed the street and attacked E. E. Datz' new hotel on the east side of Remsen Avenue and burnt out the interior. The loss upon the railroad station, about \$10,000, was fortunately covered by insurance.

These setbacks hardly affected the excellent business done by the road in the 1892 and 1893 seasons. Contemporary accounts tell us that no less than 50,000 people went to Rockaway Beach on June 12 and again on June 20, 1892. The steamboat *General Slocum* carried 1000 persons on each trip. In these happy, pre-pollution, pre-airport days, over 1000 small boats anchored

between Canarsie and Rockaway, each in a favorite fishing ground, but the majority at Broad Channel.

When the fishermen had their fill of angling, they rowed to the several fishing stations on the bay trestle and whiled away the minutes until train time by drinking at the saloons built out over the water. Each of these saloons had to pay the New York & Rockaway Beach Railway \$200 per season. In 1892 the railroad demanded \$500 from the saloon keepers but only a few of the large houses could meet this price and the railroad had to be content with the former rental from small operators.

Passenger traffic continued excellent year after year. We read that in mid-July of 1893 ten-car trains arrived at Rockaway every ten minutes with standing room at a premium. On Sunday, July 16, the Rockaway service consisted of twenty-four trains from Flatbush Avenue, twenty-eight from Long Island City and sixteen from Bushwick station, sixty-eight in all! The 1894 crowds broke all records: 60,000 to 75,000 people at Rockaway Beach on July 29. Trains returned to the city dangerously overloaded with women and children on the outside platforms and boys and men clinging to the steps, while those inside the cars just about lost whatever benefits they had derived from the day's outing in the stifling atmosphere.

Passenger statistics for the first decade of Long Island R.R. operation show an irregular but generally upward pattern:

1887	522,862*	1893	1,465,186
	85,194†		
1888	1,134,358	1894	1,301,998
1889	1,267,210	1895	1,384,965
1890	1,289,025	1896	1,514,010
1891	1,434,457	1897	1,220,315
1892	1,389,853		

\*to August 31

†after Sept. 1

Whatever profits were derived from this record patronage were as usual largely consumed in maintenance of the disproportionately large amount of trestle work on the road. When the 1892 season began, the officers of the New York & Rockaway Beach were confronted with the necessity of building a whole

new 1400-foot land trestle on the stretch from Jamaica Avenue to Woodhaven Junction or filling in the old one with earth to make travel safe. To save expense, they concluded to fill in the trestle and began work on February 22, 1892. The earth was taken away from the steep slopes along the right-of-way north of Jamaica Avenue. The work was carried on all summer and completed by fall. The long trestle over the bay remained a problem but divers reported that the piles were still in fair condition. To avoid any risk of fire, the company set up a patrol of six men each of whom took responsibility for a section and patrolled it on bicycles with wheel flanges until the last train passed.

Again in 1896 a new stringer was placed under each rail for almost the entire length of the bay trestle. The decayed timbers from the old trestle bents on the Woodhaven land trestle were pulled up at the same time.

Other important improvements were made in the physical plant in these last years of the 90's. In 1893, a new brick freight house went up at Holland's Station, 22 x 80 and alongside it an express building 20 x 80. An interlocking signal tower was placed over the Ozone Park station to control the Flatbush Avenue movements. In 1894, eighty-pound steel rail was installed on the curves and tangents from Glendale Junction to Hammel's Station; in 1895 and 1896, eighty-pound rail replaced all the old fifty-six-pound rail on the whole division. On June 21, 1895, a new station was opened at "Edgemere," Beach 35-36th Streets, to serve the newly completed Edgemere Hotel. During July of 1895 the station at Woodhaven Junction was moved east a block to enable passengers from Brooklyn to transfer upstairs to the Rockaway Branch all under cover. The most surprising improvement of all was the purchase in 1893 of five new engines and ten new coaches, the former costing \$50,168 and the latter \$59,277.

The most important later change in operation came in 1895 when the train service to Arverne via the bay trestle ceased, apparently beginning with the March timetable. Thereafter, the railroad ran loop trains, via Valley Stream to Far Rockaway, and then via the Bay back to New York. This continued to be the custom right down to the end of Long Island R.R. service on the peninsula.

Herewith are listed a few surviving statistics on train scheduling:

RAPID TRANSIT

	March	May	June	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.
1895	2	2	6 6*		6 6*	3 2*	
1896		3	6		3		3
1897		3	7 6*		2 3*	3	
1898		2	6	6			

LONG ISLAND CITY TO ROCKAWAY PARK

	Spring & Fall	Midsummer	Winter	Arverne
1887	5 5*	14 23*	5 5*	
1888	6	16	5	5
1889	6 8	23 15	5 7	5 6
1890	11 9 11*	23 19 31*	6 7 6*	4 6 5*
1891	9 10	16 15	5 5	7 4
1892	9 12	16 28	8 7	8 4
1893	11 11	16 28	8 6	9 5
1894	11 8	16 28	8 5	9 5
1895	13 11	16 28	9 9	
1896	11 12	17 28	10 7	
1897	14 12	17 28	10 7	

\*Denotes Sunday

The amazing immunity from accident that had been the pride of the Oakley regime could not reasonably be expected to last indefinitely, and under Long Island R.R. management the first accidents occurred, though none of them were serious:

June 17, 1892: Engine #82 derailed by open switch between Woodhaven and Ozone Park. Passengers shaken up.

July 22, 1892: Engine #8 strikes coach at grade crossing.

Aug. 20, 1888: Two trains on the same track crash into each other near Hammel's Station. Crews jump. One engine wrecked, other derailed. Three persons injured.

Sept. 30, 1895: A train of cars, left to coast into Rockaway Park Station on a "flying switch," runs out of control and smashes its platforms on striking the bumpers at the end of track.

## CHAPTER 6

### *The Brooklyn Elevated--Long Island R.R. Joint Service*

ONE OF THE MOST UNUSUAL and imaginative inter-line operations ever attempted in New York City was the joint service of the Brooklyn Elevated R.R. and the Long Island R.R. to Rockaway Beach. Such joint service was not a new thing for the Long Island R.R. As early as 1885 the railroad had made such an agreement with the Culver line to operate trains jointly over each other's tracks. Later, in August 1895, the Long Island R.R. had concluded an agreement with the Brooklyn Elevated by which the latter operated through elevated trains from the Brooklyn Bridge terminal to Manhattan Beach.

What were the motives that impelled the Long Island R.R. to share its monopoly of the Rockaway traffic with another company? Some hint is obtained from a remark in the Long Island R.R.'s Annual Report for 1897, which attempted to explain the Rockaway road's poor showing:

"The earnings of the New York & Rockaway Beach Railway have suffered since the year 1894 because the class of business attracted by that resort has been satisfied with the resorts reached by cheaper rates. With the return of better business conditions, however, there will be a largely increased traffic to Rockaway."

The reference was, of course, to Coney Island, where heavy trolley competition provided cheap five-cent rides within the means of even the poorest city dweller. The Rockaway road, despite heavy patronage, had failed to earn a profit in most years and the occasional small surpluses had been more than eaten up by the high costs of maintaining the long wooden bay trestle. The railroad had also been forced to make sizeable investments in new rails, fences, platforms, etc. because of the extremely heavy summer riding and the frequency of the train movements.

In the spring of 1897 a delegation of Rockaway people called on President Baldwin of the Long Island R.R. with a view to

better train service and lower rates. Baldwin replied that the railroad was thinking about electrifying the Rockaway branch so as to provide more frequent service on the peninsula and at a lower fare. During the summer of 1897, President Baldwin sounded out President Uhlmann of the Brooklyn Elevated R.R. about running some sort of joint service to Rockaway Beach along the lines of what the two roads were then doing over the Culver line to Coney Island. The elevated railroad was inclined to listen favorably to the Long Island R.R. overtures because it had already slipped into receivership and the trolleys had badly cut into the elevated's revenues. The suggestion was made that the Broadway elevated line might be extended from its Cypress Hills terminus along Jamaica Avenue to an intersection with the Long Island R.R.'s Rockaway tracks at 100th Street but nothing came of this.

Negotiations continued behind the scenes during the summer of 1897; finally, on March 31, 1898, both companies issued a press release that revealed a detailed and carefully worked out scheme of interline operation to Rockaway Beach. The Memorandum of Agreement was dated April 13, 1898, and appeared as a pamphlet consisting of thirty-one closely-printed pages. The agreement, couched in legal terminology, was in substance as follows:

1. A double-track connection was to be constructed on the line of the elevated railroad on Fulton Street at a point east of Chestnut Street by Long Island R.R. workmen and with the advice and consent of the Brooklyn Elevated engineers, and this connection was to extend one block south over private property to the Long Island R.R. tracks on Atlantic Avenue, where two ramps would be constructed to bring the elevated tracks to grade, there to connect physically with the Long Island R.R. tracks.
2. The Brooklyn Elevated R.R. was to buy the private property needed to construct the connecting spur. The expense of the structure was to be borne equally by both companies. Title to the real estate would be vested in a Trust Company.
3. The Long Island R.R. and the Brooklyn Elevated R.R. will jointly operate trains from Broadway Ferry through to Rockaway Park. Such service shall be at least hourly between



the hours of 9 A.M. and 7 P.M. during the summer season of June 1 and September 15 of each year.

4. The fare is not to exceed 15¢ to Rockaway Beach and the Brooklyn Elevated is to receive at least five cents of this.
5. Maintenance of the Chestnut Street spur shall be done by the Long Island R.R. but at the joint expense of each.
6. Both companies shall jointly supply locomotives, cars, crews and power and an accounting shall be made monthly.
7. Accident liability shall be a joint charge.
8. All trains may take up and drop off local passengers at any and all intermediate stations and fares retained by the company furnishing such travel.
9. Both parties shall run as frequent trains as the traffic demands.
10. Ticket sales shall be made so as to insure each company its fair share of the traffic and daily statements shall be kept of all receipts.
11. Even if electric power is adopted by one company, the other company shall use the motive power peculiar to it on the other's tracks and at its own expense. However, after five years, the non-electrified partner must electrify or accept a termination of this agreement and refund the costs of the Chestnut Street spur.
12. This agreement is to last for fifty years.

In addition to this Chestnut Street Agreement for joint service to Rockaway, a second important agreement was concluded between the two companies on the same date (April 13, 1898), providing for a second track connection, this time at the junction of Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues between the Long Island R.R. and the Fifth Avenue Elevated road. The purpose of this latter connection was twofold:

1. To permit the Long Island R.R. to carry its passengers beyond the Flatbush Avenue terminal directly and without change of cars to the elevated railroad loop at the Brooklyn Bridge.
2. To enable Brooklyn Rapid Transit trains to operate a summer-time Rockaway service from the Brooklyn Bridge loop to Rockaway Park.

This second arrangement between the Long Island R.R. and

the Brooklyn Rapid Transit bore the title, "Flatbush Avenue Agreement" and ran to eleven pages which, shorn of legal terminology, provided for the following:

1. Within four years of the opening of the Chestnut Street connection, the Long Island R.R. will build at its own cost and expense an incline or other connection at or near Atlantic and Flatbush Avenues, together with the stations, tracks, buildings, platforms and signals that are necessary, all subject to the approval of the chief engineer of the elevated road.
2. The Elevated road will build this connection if requested to do so by the Long Island R.R. and will then be compensated for the expense. The maintenance of the connection will be at the sole expense of the Long Island R.R. The Elevated road will be recompensed by the Long Island for the maintenance of any special signalling devices or other needed installation.
3. The Long Island R.R. may operate its cars over the Elevated tracks to the Bridge loop. Long Island R.R. passengers will not be entitled to any transfers to the Elevated railroad trains; however, they may transfer to Bridge trains bound for New York.
4. Long Island R.R. crews shall be examined by the Elevated railroad in respect to proper operation over the Elevated company's tracks and such crews shall be subject to control of the Elevated railroad while running on Elevated railroad tracks.
5. The Elevated company shall furnish suitable facilities to the Long Island R.R. trains to make their runs. The Long Island R.R. shall have the right to run at least one train every ten minutes over the Elevated company's tracks.
6. The Elevated road shall sell Long Island R.R. tickets or offer facilities to Long Island R.R. agents to sell such tickets.
7. The Long Island R.R. may use the electric power of the Elevated road to run its trains to the Sands Street loop if such electric power is available, and will recompense the Elevated road.
8. The Long Island R.R. will pay to the Elevated road  $2\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$  per passenger for each such passenger hauled by the Long Island R.R. over the Elevated road and an additional sum

- of 1¢ for each passenger going to or from a point east of Jamaica.
9. The Long Island R.R. will take into its cars only passengers coming from or going to points reached by the Long Island R.R.
  10. The Long Island R.R. may electrify the connection or use the Elevated road's electricity with compensation; however, if the Elevated road is not electrified, then the Long Island R.R. shall have the right to operate with steam.
  11. Each company shall be financially responsible for any damage done by each. However, if negligence by one company shall cause an accident, then the negligent company will be financially liable.
  12. Cars, engines and motors operated by the Long Island R.R. shall be suitable for the Elevated road, and the Elevated road may reject any equipment it deems unsuitable.
  13. If the Long Island shall fail to perform any provisions of this covenant, then the Elevated road may terminate this agreement.
  14. This agreement is to run fifty years.
  15. If great crowding shall result because of this joint operation, then both roads shall unite in constructing additional connections.

This Flatbush Avenue Agreement was modified just a year later—April 1, 1899—in a document of seven additional pages. In the matter of furnishing facilities to the Long Island R.R., these words were added:

“Said facilities shall be proportionate in amount to those which the Elevated shall from time to time furnish for its own trains, and for all cars and trains of any Transit System Company using said structure, the proportion to be based upon the number of passengers of each company using the same, but the Long Island R.R. shall have in any event the right to run over said structure at least one train in each direction every ten minutes until the cars or trains of the Long Island R.R. thereon shall be operated by electricity, and thereafter every five minutes, and such additional trains or cars as shall be its proportionate share of the use of said structure on the basis aforesaid. The Long Island R.R. trains shall be accorded equal facilities

for prompt and efficient operation as the Elevated to its own trains.”

The article on electrification was also modified. If, by reason of the adoption of different systems of electric traction by the Long Island R.R. and the Elevated or for any other cause, the electric appliances of the Elevated are unsuitable for furnishing power to the Long Island R.R. trains, then the Long Island R.R. may furnish, construct and operate on the Elevated structure such electric appliances suitable to it alone.

Curiously, nothing is said in the Flatbush Avenue Agreement about the destination of the trains (Jamaica and Rockaway Park).

Almost as soon as the agreements were concluded, work was begun on the Chestnut Street connection. In March, President Baldwin of the Long Island R.R. announced that the Brooklyn Elevated R.R. had already bought a strip of private property at Chestnut Street 400 x 125 feet, extending through from Fulton Street to Atlantic Avenue and that Long Island R.R. engineers were preparing the necessary drawings for the building of the inclines.

On the morning of April 4, 1898, work was begun at the Chestnut Street Connection, which was scheduled to be completed by June 15. On April 4, a conference was held by the engineers of both companies and representatives of various car builders as to the proper design for an electrically equipped car which would meet all the requirements of Long Island R.R. surface operation, elevated operation and possible bridge operation. The design agreed upon was a compromise between the coaches of both roads. The main difference was that the proposed cars would contain side doors similar to those on the Brooklyn Bridge R.R., so that rapid loading and unloading would be possible. Twenty-five cars were placed on order at once with the Pullman Car Co. These cars became LIRR #852-876; later an additional order was placed for #877-906.

As soon as the plans for the spur and inclines were ready, they were submitted at once to the iron bridge manufacturers of the country for bids. The building of the Chestnut Street connection had the indirect effect of causing a change at this time in the location of the Crescent Street Rapid Transit station. The inclines leading up to the elevated structure from grade level

would have partly overlapped the station site, and to avoid this, the Long Island R.R. moved the station eastward to Railroad Avenue (today Autumn Avenue) and this became the new City Line station.

Two weeks later, President Baldwin of the Long Island R.R. reported that the preparation of the iron work for the inclines was proceeding rapidly and it was expected to have the Chestnut Street ramp completed and in working order by June 10. On April 20, the contract for the iron work was awarded. By June 24, most of the structural work at the incline was in position and July 15 was fixed for the new opening date. As usual, this day came and went with the work still lagging, but by the 16th, all the work with the exception of the finishing touches had been completed and the officials of both roads were anxious that the new route should be open in time for next Sunday's business. The last necessary frog was installed on the incline the night of July 13.

On Saturday, July 16, 1898, the first train to run from the Broadway Ferries via Broadway, the Chestnut Street incline and the Long Island R.R. left the Broadway Ferry terminal at noon. It was a special train carrying the officials of both roads and many invited guests. A two-car train, drawn by one of the elevated engines, left the B'way. Ferry terminal promptly at noon and reached the Chestnut Street incline in ten minutes. Twenty-eight minutes later the train reached Hammel's Station where a victory dinner was served at Westernacher's Hotel. Presidents Baldwin and Uhlmann both presided at the dinner and a number of toasts were drunk. After dinner there was a short tour of Rockaway Beach, after which the party returned to the special train for home. The following morning, Sunday, July 17, regular passenger service began at 6:10 A.M. There were hourly trains only in the morning but in the afternoon the trains ran in both directions on a half-hourly headway until midnight. This late service was welcomed at Rockaway because the last Long Island R.R. train left the beach early in the evening. On this first day of operation over 10,000 people were carried over the new route; of these, 1200 bought their tickets at the Manhattan end of the Brooklyn Bridge, rode out on the Lexington Avenue elevated, and changed to the Rockaway trains at Gates Avenue and Broadway.

Three short months had sufficed to bring the Chestnut Street Connection from drawing board to completion. The Flatbush Avenue Connection proved to be a far slower project. Days after the connection was announced to the press in April 1898, President Baldwin of the Long Island R.R. explained its value to the railroad:

“The incline at Flatbush Avenue can be constructed over the property of the company. The necessary changes are being prepared for the building of the inclines and work will begin soon. Under the new system, we shall dispatch cars at once from Jamaica Station for the Brooklyn Bridge on the arrival of every train. There will not be a moment’s delay. When the westward train arrives at Jamaica, a Brooklyn Bridge car will be alongside the platform ready to start as soon as passengers are transferred.”

From this statement it is clear that the Long Island R.R. did not regard the Flatbush Avenue Connection as a valuable link to the Rockaways. The Rockaway travel was seasonal at best, and it was the Chestnut Street Connection that was thought of as the main Rockaway route. The primary purpose of the Flatbush Avenue Connection was to avoid discharging passengers at a point where few wanted to go, and to carry them instead without change of cars to the Brooklyn Bridge entrance, where the bulk of the traffic could easily reach New York. The fact that trains could operate to Rockaway as well from the Sands Street Loop was convenient, but it was a supplementary service at best.

The original intention of the Long Island R.R. was to finish the Flatbush Avenue Connection within a month of the Chestnut Street Connection and the press was furnished a date of July 15. The chief electrical engineers of both systems meanwhile made a tour of the Chicago elevated system and on their return issued a statement:

“It is not intended to operate trains of the Long Island R.R. over the Bridge or over the new bridge under construction (Williamsburgh). The elevated structures would not permit of the general operation of these heavy cars, the curves on the structures precluding the possibility of doing so. However, the passengers will be entitled to transfers.”

As time passed, both the Brooklyn Elevated R.R. and the Long Island R.R. became absorbed in other projects and the Flatbush Avenue Connection was pushed forward to "early fall." The Brooklyn Elevated R.R. was currently absorbed in physically connecting its Myrtle Avenue L structure with the Brooklyn Bridge structure at Washington and Concord Streets so as to permit through elevated train operation over the bridge. This was achieved, and on June 18, 1898, the Brooklyn Elevated trains of the Lexington and Fifth Avenue lines began operation over the bridge. In addition to this achievement the Brooklyn Elevated began its first electrical operation between the Brooklyn terminal of the bridge and Bridge Street station. The Long Island R.R., for its part, was equally absorbed in the construction of the Chestnut Street Connection.

In mid-September 1898, the two roads announced that the work on the connection would begin in October. The Long Island R.R. announced that the strain on its resources due to the demands of the Spanish-American War, and the establishment and servicing of Camp Wikoff at Montauk Point had caused the delay in the commencement of the connection. It was said that plans and specifications were all ready and that contracts for the work had been partly awarded. In December 1898, the local Taxpayers' Association sued for an injunction against the construction of the Flatbush Avenue Connection but this was dismissed by the courts.

On Monday, February 27, 1899, work was begun by the Brooklyn Elevated R.R. on its portion of the work. The Long Island R.R. was pushing its part of the work forward and the engineers began speaking of a completion date in April. The impression had meanwhile gotten about that the Long Island R.R. was going to run trains over the Brooklyn Bridge and there had been indignation in some quarters that the railroad was seeking to evade payment to the city for the privilege of operation. Both the Brooklyn Elevated and the Long Island R.R. issued disclaimers, explaining that the Long Island R.R. cars would run only as far as the Brooklyn terminal of the bridge and would then turn around via the Sands Street Loop. The chief advantage, the Long Island R.R. explained, was that the Flatbush Avenue Connection would give passengers a much better and faster route to Manhattan than the current Long Island

City route and the uncertainties of the Thirty-fourth Street Ferry.

During March 1899, the Brooklyn Elevated R.R. moved its Flatbush Avenue station on the Fifth Avenue L line about 100 feet west of the old location so as to give room for a double-track branch-off. By the third week of March, the girders for the span on Atlantic Avenue and the incline were in position and pending the relocation of the elevated railroad station, the arrangements for which were nearly completed, the girders at the junction on Flatbush Avenue were ready to be placed in position. The work of track-laying was expected to be completed by the middle of April.

The managers of both companies arranged a tentative timetable for the operation of trains between the Brooklyn Bridge and Jamaica to go into effect on or about May 1, 1899. The running time of the express trains between the bridge and Jamaica Station was to be thirty minutes. Way trains for Jamaica were to be dispatched between the express trains and during the rush hours of the morning and evening would leave the two terminals at ten or fifteen minute intervals.

On May 4, 1899, it was officially announced to the press that the Flatbush Avenue Connection would be completed and opened to traffic on May 15. The masonry incline at Flatbush Avenue was pronounced finished, the Fifth Avenue elevated station moved westward, and all was in readiness except for the tracks on the incline and at the junction. At the Jamaica end the Long Island R.R. was laying new tracks at Rockaway Junction (now Hillside) for the storage of the Brooklyn Bridge trains and that station was to be made the terminal for the new service.

As the deadline for the opening of the new service approached, the final finishing touches were added. The incline was practically completed and a number of trains were run to test the structure. All that remained to be done was the construction of an intricate interlocking block signal system to prevent collision at the junction. The Long Island R.R. announced that the Jamaica Express would be scheduled to make but one stop and this at the City Hall station of the elevated road.

As so often happened, the target date of May 15 came and went, but an announcement came from the Brooklyn Elevated



that the new route would be physically completed on May 17 and that the delay was due solely to the complicated installation required by the signal system at Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues.

On Wednesday, May 24, 1899, the new spring timetable of the Long Island R.R. went into effect, and the railroad chose this day for the opening of the new connection. The railroad announced that three engines and fifteen cars would be assigned at first to the service, and that later ten trains of five cars each would be operated. The fare was set at 10¢.

On the morning of the 24th, a totally unforeseen difficulty arose. The Commissioner of the Bridge Department refused to permit the Long Island R.R. trains to go around the Sands Street Loop because the loop was built on bridge property. The morning trains that attempted to use the new route were compelled to stop at Flatbush Avenue station on the Fifth Avenue L line and discharge their passengers there. The unexpected stoppage threw the Commissioner of Bridges on the defensive and he hastily issued a public statement:

“I have received no application from the Long Island R.R. to run its trains over the bridge. To a layman, the point would not seem to be much, but to lawyers who are protecting the great interests involved, it is of sufficient consequence to require immediate attention.”

The Long Island R.R., on receipt of the message acted immediately, and during the morning hours of the 24th, prepared the necessary documents and delivered them to the Commissioner. At 4 P.M. that same day the first Long Island R.R. train was permitted to run over the loop. The evening papers carried the explanation to a puzzled public:

“The cause of the delay was simply the neglect on the part of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit to make an application to run the Long Island R.R. cars over the Bridge property known as the loop. As soon as the application was made, it was granted. The Long Island R.R. has also been permitted to establish ticket offices on each end of the bridge.”

As completed, the Flatbush Avenue Connection branched off from the Fifth Avenue Elevated about fifty feet west of the street junction, and ran across the land of the Long Island R.R. just

inside the property line and parallel to Atlantic Avenue (the pillars facing the street are still intact as of 1971). At Fort Greene Place the structure moved out into the middle of Atlantic Avenue and so continued to Sixth Avenue, at which point it swung south on a diagonal into the Long Island R.R. freight yard and then descended via the incline to street level. The tracks then left the freight yard at the corner of Carlton Avenue and Atlantic Avenue and swung out to join the tracks in Atlantic Avenue.

There was one important difference worth noting between the Flatbush Avenue Connection operation and that on Chestnut Street. Service from the Brooklyn Bridge to Jamaica was given by the Long Island R.R. exclusively. No Brooklyn Elevated R.R. trains were authorized to run to Jamaica, since this would have competed with the Rapid Transit. Conversely, the Brooklyn Bridge service to Rockaway was given exclusively by the Brooklyn Elevated R.R. and no Long Island R.R. trains from the bridge ran to Rockaway. This is in contrast to the Chestnut Street Connection where joint service by both roads was maintained.

Just as there was express service to Jamaica, so also express trains ran from the Brooklyn Bridge to Rockaway. The service proved very popular from the start and each train was taxed to its utmost capacity in this first summer of 1899. From the local Rockaway paper we learn that some of these Rockaway Expresses, much fewer in number compared to the regular trains that came from the Broadway Ferry via the Chestnut Street Connection, ran also to Far Rockaway. To handle the August 1899 crowds, trains via Chestnut Street ran as frequently as every eight minutes and expresses via the Flatbush Connection every twenty minutes. In 1900, the Brooklyn Rapid Transit trains were credited with bringing down to the beach the bulk of the Sunday visitors. In this season Chestnut Street trains ran as frequently as every seven minutes on Sundays and Flatbush Avenue Expresses every fifteen minutes.

The Rockaway operation was a most interesting one and worth detailing. The trains coming from the Brooklyn Bridge presented no special problem in fare collection because patrons could buy tickets on both the New York and Brooklyn side of the bridge. As it turned out, Rockaway service via the Flatbush Avenue

Connection proved short-lived beyond anyone's expectations. In 1903, the Long Island R.R. resolved to upgrade the terminal facilities at Flatbush Avenue which had long been inconvenient and over-crowded. This project was a part of the much larger Atlantic Avenue Improvement authorized by the Legislature in 1897. The Improvement called for the complete rebuilding of the Flatbush Avenue station by acquiring all the land along Flatbush Avenue and Hanson Place, digging out the whole space and creating an underground terminal with six passenger tracks and six more freight tracks.

This extensive rebuilding was undertaken in late 1904 and for the 1904-1905 season, the Long Island R.R. was deprived entirely of its Flatbush Avenue terminal. In order to find space to discharge its Brooklyn passengers, the Long Island R.R. took over the elevated connection at Flatbush and Atlantic Avenues on the edge of their excavation, built a temporary wooden platform on it, and discharged its passengers there. This new use of the connection put an end to the through service to Jamaica and Rockaway, the latter ceasing after Labor Day of 1904. When the new Flatbush Avenue depot (still standing unchanged in 1971) was opened in 1906, the through service to Jamaica and Rockaway was not resumed.

Joint Brooklyn Rapid Transit-Long Island R.R. Rockaway service continued to be given via the Chestnut Street connection during this period of change and for many years thereafter, and because of its longer duration, we have much fuller information. Since both roads furnished the equipment and crews, the trains were dispatched from Broadway Ferry and Rockaway Park alternately, an all-Long Island R.R. train (both equipment and crew) and then an all-Brooklyn Elevated R.R. train. There was no union problem involved in the operation of trains in this happy, far-off day because in the days of steam, both Long Island R.R. and Brooklyn Elevated conductors and engineers belonged to the same union, the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.

A train would leave Broadway Ferry and run down Broadway and then Fulton Street in the usual way. Just west of Norwood Avenue station the Brooklyn Elevated R.R. towerman would throw the switch for the double-track spur that branched off Fulton Street midway between Chestnut Street and Euclid

Avenue. The spur turned south, descending slightly as it ran down to Atlantic Avenue, a distance of 644 feet. The spur then turned eastward and descended a pair of inclines, each 350 feet long.

The Long Island R.R. used for its interline service the center-door 800 series cars and the light rapid transit engines. The Brooklyn Elevated used its newest and best equipment. Thanks to the accidental preservation of an engine repair journal of the Brooklyn Elevated R.R. for the years 1900-01, we know the exact numbers of the Long Island R.R. and Brooklyn Elevated R.R. cars in Rockaway service during that interval:

Long Island R.R.: 827, 830-836; 838-847; 849-850

Brooklyn Elevated R.R.: 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10-11, 14, 17-20, 22-23, 25-26, 29, 35, 39, 41, 45, 66, 68-69, 71, 73, 80-81, 87-88, 93, 97, 99, 100-101, 105, 107, 109, 112, 114-115, 119, 121-126, 129, 132-134, 136, 143-144, 153-154, 155, 157-158, 161, 163, 168, 170, 172, 176, 182-183, 186, 189, 194, 198, 200, 206, 210, 213, 219, 225, 228, 230-232, 235, 239-240, 254, 298, 300, 303-304, 307, 396

Kings County Elevated R.R.: 202, 242, 390

When the outbound trains entered onto the Chestnut Street connection, they slowed down markedly in order to give the conductors the opportunity to collect the extra dime carfare from those who had no tickets and had paid only five cents at some intermediate station. By a lucky accident a sheet of instructions issued to conductors on the Brooklyn elevated trains in Rockaway service and dated June 11, 1909, has been preserved and gives us some interesting details on fare collection:

EAST BOUND: "Immediately after leaving Norwood Avenue Station, conductors will proceed to collect fares (cash or tickets) from all passengers six years of age or over. All tickets collected will be cancelled in the presence of the passenger and from all passengers not provided with tickets, a cash fare of 15¢ will be collected and Duplex Tickets issued therefor to each passenger, punched 'Delancey Street or any other Brooklyn Union Elevated Railroad Station' and 'Rockaway Park.' "From passengers boarding trains at Ramblersville, or any other station on the Long Island R.R. portion of the route, cash

fares will be collected in accordance with the rates shown on Joint Tariff No. 2, dated May 28, 1909, and Duplex Tickets issued therefor with the stations punched between which the passenger has paid fare.

“Mileage coupons of the Long Island Railroad Company will be honored and collected between Railroad Avenue (Chestnut Street Junction) and Rockaway Park, as follows: One coupon for each mile or fraction thereof but not less than three coupons will be accepted for one ride.

**WEST BOUND:** On westbound trips, conductors will accept tickets of the Long Island Railroad Company reading from Rockaway Beach points to Warwick Street, East New York, Nostrand Avenue, Flatbush Avenue, Richmond Hill, Glendale, Bushwick Junction, Bushwick or Long Island City for passage to Delancey Street, or any other Brooklyn Union Elevated Station north of Avenue U. Mileage coupons of the Long Island Railroad Company will be honored and collected between Rockaway Park and Railroad Avenue (Chestnut Street Junction) as follows: One coupon for each mile or fraction thereof, but no less than three coupons will be accepted for one ride. On westbound trips, from passengers presenting mileage coupons and wishing to go beyond Chestnut Street Junction, conductors will collect mileage to that point, and, in addition, a **CASH FARE OF FIVE CENTS** issuing therefor Duplex Tickets punched ‘Chestnut Street Junction’ and ‘Delancey Street or any other Brooklyn Union Elevated Railroad Station.’

Commutation tickets for the Rockaway Beach Division of the Long Island Railroad Company will be honored for fare between Rockaway Park and Chestnut Street Junction, and will be properly punched and returned to passengers. From passengers tendering Commutation Tickets, who desire to proceed beyond Chestnut Street, conductors will collect a **CASH FARE OF FIVE CENTS** issuing therefor Duplex Tickets punched Chestnut Street Junction and Delancey Street or any other Brooklyn Union Elevated Railroad Company Station.

Brooklyn Union Elevated strip tickets, Employes, Police and Fire Department and Hospital Tickets will not be accepted for fare between Rockaway Park and Chestnut Street Junc-

tion in either direction, nor will B. R. T. badges be honored for passage on the Long Island R.R. portion of the route.”

During the years 1901 and 1902 the Brooklyn Elevated Railroad began to electrify its lines section by section. On May 23, 1901, the last section of trackage used by the Rockaway interline service (East New York loop to Cypress Hills) was electrified, but steam locomotives still had to be used because the Long Island R.R. had not yet been electrified. Because of the pressure exerted by the more rapid modernization of the elevated road, the Long Island R.R. resolved that its first electrification would be the Rockaway line, including necessarily the Atlantic Avenue Division. On Wednesday, July 26, 1905, Long Island R.R. electric service was inaugurated to Rockaway Park. In the same year of 1905, a third and fourth track was built between the Chestnut Street incline and Woodhaven Junction to separate local and express traffic along Atlantic Avenue. It was then too late in the season to attempt the electrification of the interline service, so this was postponed to 1906.

The electrification of the whole interline route to Rockaway posed an interesting technical problem that had to be resolved. The third rail that had been adopted as standard by the Brooklyn Elevated R.R. was twenty-two and a quarter inches outside and six inches above the rail. The later Long Island R.R. third rail adopted as standard was twenty-six inches outside and only three and a half inches above the rail. Such a major difference could force a cessation of the service, a change of cars at the Chestnut Street interchange, or inspire the creation of some sort of mechanical solution to the problem. American ingenuity rose triumphantly to the occasion. On the new electrical equipment—the 1200's, 1300's and 1400's series cars of the Brooklyn Elevated and on the Gibbs cars of the Long Island R.R.—an adjustable third rail shoe was mounted which could operate on either third rail without any hand adjustment by a train crewman. From the inventor the device was called the “Boyd Adapter.” It consisted essentially of a hinged slipper type shoe mounted upon a moveable lug which was held in either position by means of coiled springs and was actuated by an arm that engaged with a stationary cam mounted along the side of the track in line with the third rail. The movement of a car past

a car in either direction moved the shoe from the inner to the outer position or vice versa. This change of position required operation at very slow speed—about five miles per hour—but this proved no problem because the Chestnut Street spur was the collection point for the extra fare. Very crowded trains on weekends sometimes spent as much as twenty minutes to a half hour on the spur while the conductors elbowed their way through the cars.

The next development in the Rockaway service was caused by the completion of the "new" or Williamsburgh Bridge in December 1903. Both the Brooklyn Elevated lines and the trolleys running to Broadway Ferry had long since made arrangements with the city to extend their routes over the new bridge as soon as it should be completed. A contract for the construction of an underground station for the Brooklyn Elevated trains and trolleys was entered into on July 12, 1902, with the Snare & Triest Co., contractors. This new underground Delancey Street terminal was opened to trolley traffic on May 18, 1908, and to the elevated trains on September 16, 1908. In the following summer, the Long Island R.R. along with the Brooklyn Rapid Transit (successor to the Brooklyn Elevated) opened the Rockaway interline service on May 30, 1909. In this roundabout way was realized for the first time one of the oldest and cherished dreams of Austin Corbin, long-time president of the Long Island R.R.—a Long Island R.R. terminal on Manhattan Island. In the two-track Delancey Street terminal, thirty eight-car trains per hour could be accommodated. Four years later, the rapid transit tracks over the Williamsburgh Bridge were continued past Delancey Street and down Center Street to a new terminal at Chambers Street. On August 4, 1913, this new terminal was opened.

The traffic statistics for the interline operation during its early years are not available, but the statistics for the Brooklyn Elevated side of the operation during the later years show a marked decline in fares:

1912	163,153	1915	143,306
1913	153,345	1916	127,920
1914	144,149	1917	68,593

Neither party in the interline operation was making any money from the Rockaway service. World War I provided a convenient and plausible pretext to terminate the arrangement. When Congress declared war in March 1917, the national mood became one of proper austerity and patriotic service rather than the pursuit of frivolity and self-indulgence. The interline Rockaway service in the summer of 1917 fell to almost half of that of the previous season, and both roads seized on this circumstance to arrange a mutual termination of the Agreement of 1898. On September 3, 1917, Brooklyn Elevated-Long Island R.R. interline service ceased permanently. The connecting spur was not torn down though the inclines leading to it were dismantled and the track on the structure taken up. The old spur simply ceased to be maintained and for twenty-six years gradually rusted away under the wear and tear of wind and rain and snow. Finally, in 1943, the old structure was razed, obliterating the last memento of an interesting and unusual experiment.



## CHAPTER 7

### *The Beginnings of Electrification*

#### *The Ocean Electric R.R., 1889-1905*

**I**N THE MIDDLE and late 90's the Long Island R.R. because of its close relationship with the Brooklyn transit companies, began to be influenced more and more by the rapid transition to electric operation in Brooklyn. The street railway companies had long sought a reliable, inexpensive, substitute for the animal traction of the day. Horse car service was very slow—five or six miles per hour—and required the maintenance of a large stable of horses. The horses were subject to disease and could be worked just so many hours per day. Although city traffic was rapidly increasing yearly, the size of a car could not be increased beyond the ability of two horses to draw it. Steam had been tried briefly in 1878-1882 but had not been found suitable for street running. When electricity appeared on the scene in the mid-80's, many companies showed keen interest in its possibilities. In 1886, the first city systems began to be operated by electric power and soon proved their worth. The borough of Brooklyn, which had the largest street railway system in the country, began to electrify its street car lines in 1891 and by 1896 all its routes had been converted. The Brooklyn and Manhattan elevated systems, the largest in the country, were slow to adapt and continued to operate steam-powered trains until they began to lose revenue to the faster electric trolleys that paralleled their routes. Between 1899 and 1902 the Brooklyn elevated roads electrified their lines and Manhattan followed in 1902-03.

In its Annual Report to the stockholders for 1898, the Long Island R.R. announced its policy of acquiring or building electric trolley systems thus:

“The efficient service established by the electric car connection with all trains has met the needs of the public. The same policy

of building short electric roads as feeders to the steam road will be followed wherever such roads are needed."

One of the very first purchases made by the Long Island R.R. under this new policy was the old Far Rockaway Village Railroad which operated a single-track one-mile road from the railroad station to the beach, using cast-off antique horse cars. The road had been built in 1886 and had operated thereafter each summer season. On March 18, 1898, the road with its ten horses, 1.1 miles of old forty-seven-pound center-bearing rail and four ancient cars was sold under foreclosure by the Knickerbocker Trust Co. and was bought by the Long Island R.R. for \$10,000.

The Long Island R.R., following its usual custom, created a new trolley subsidiary called the Ocean Electric Railway to operate the local road, and this new company took title to the former village railroad on August 5, 1898.

The Long Island Railroad's plan was more far-reaching than just the electrification of this little one-mile beach line. Charles D. Shain, electrical engineer and president of the Rockaway Park Improvement Co., the railroad-backed community venture, had tried on many occasions to interest President Baldwin in giving better service and accommodations to the people of Rockaway by building a trolley road. At last, in February 1898, he won from President Baldwin permission to draw up plans to build a trolley line along the Rockaway peninsula using the existing tracks of the New York & Rockaway Beach Railway. The plan was to run trains from Long Island City and Brooklyn to Hammel's Station, where passengers would be transferred to the trolley cars and carried to their destination in either direction. Stops would be made wherever a passenger wished to board or alight, thus doing away with the inconvenience of a long walk to a station. An imposing depot would be built at Hammel's Station on the wye and the steam road would terminate there. In March, the railroad began negotiating with several electrical houses for the machinery necessary to operate the road and for the equipment for a power house.

President Baldwin's decision to go ahead with the electrification of the Rockaway line was not entirely motivated by benevolence and solicitude for Rockaway Park. The fact was that the Nassau Electric R.R. of Brooklyn was planning to build a trolley

trestle across Jamaica Bay from some point in Gerritsen's Mill or Bergen Beach, Brooklyn, to Rockaway. The plans called for a trestle eighty feet wide and containing a roadway and cycle path as well as trolley tracks. A public hearing was held on April 28 on the Nassau Electric plan, attended by many people from Rockaway urging approval of a permit to build. On the 31st of May the New York & Rockaway Beach Railway thought the threat serious enough to appear in court against the Nassau Electric, where an injunction was secured restraining the trolley company from any possible crossing of the steam railroad tracks.

In addition to the threat from the Nassau Electric R.R. in Brooklyn, Remington Vernam, founder of Arverne, decided at this time to begin the construction of a trolley line in his own village before a franchise, granted to him in 1897, should expire. On Decoration Day, May 30, when the courts were closed, Vernam suddenly put 100 Italian laborers on Fairview Avenue (Beach 84th Street). The force of men worked all through the night and into the dawn of May 31, and by morning several hundred feet of track had been laid. On Tuesday, when the courts reopened, the work was stopped by injunctions obtained by property owners along the route. The New York & Rockaway Beach Railway also took no chances and obtained an injunction of its own against Vernam. The Long Island R.R.'s two potential trolley rivals were thus both blocked by litigation for the time being.

To avoid losing revenue during the 1898 summer season by letting the newly purchased Far Rockaway Village Railroad lie idle, the Long Island R.R. opened the old horse car line on Thursday, June 2, using the old equipment.

On February 9, 1899, the Long Island R.R. ordered for the peninsula rapid transit service six fifteen-bench open trolleys from the Brill Co. in Philadelphia. These were delivered June 1 and because they were the Long Island R.R.'s first pieces of electric rolling stock, received the designation E1-E6. On March 23, 1899, the railroad ordered from the same firm two ten-bench open cars for the local Far Rockaway service to the beach. These were delivered June 15 and were numbered simply 1 and 2.

Meanwhile, during the winter and spring of 1898-99, Long Island R.R. engineers equipped the 3.03 miles of peninsula railroad between Rockaway Beach and New York & Rockaway

Beach Junction (Beach 53rd Street) with overhead trolley wire at a cost of \$24,953. This section was completed at the expense of the New York & Rockaway Beach Railway; the Long Island R.R. financed the wiring of the remaining section from the Junction to Far Rockaway station at a cost of \$11,433.

During late February and March 1899, the Long Island R.R. had a large gang of men at work grading and filling in the roadbed between Hammel's Station and Far Rockaway. About one mile was ready for the laying of track. In late March the railroad made application to the Department of Public Buildings, Lighting and Supplies of the City of New York to erect poles and string electric wires over the company's own roadbed between Far Rockaway and Rockaway Park. During April a large force of men began laying the second track between Hammel's Station and Far Rockaway alongside the old steam track. The work went so smoothly that the railroad made tentative plans to open the new road by Decoration Day. At Hammel's Station the platform in front of the ticket office was cut back twelve feet so as to allow space for the new trolley track. The work of erecting the poles for the trolley wire was now begun.

During May difficulties developed in obtaining consents to expanding the right-of-way and the work came almost to a standstill. The railroad used the delay to distribute fresh supplies of poles and ties all along the whole route. On May 25, switches were installed at Hammel's Station connecting the trolley track with the Long Island R.R. track, and a waiting room for the trolley passengers was erected. By the end of May sufficient land and consents had been obtained to enable the railroad to push the work on the new road. A new target date of June 28, when the summer timetable was to go into effect, was now set. During June the overhead was strung and the work of widening the railroad trestle across Norton's Creek at Edgemere rushed to completion. June 28 came and went but it was found impossible to open the electric road as promised. This was a severe set-back because 50,000 swarmed onto the beach over July 2 and 3, and the rapid transit trains had to be sandwiched in among the Brooklyn Elevated and Long Island R.R. trains. Finally, three weeks later, on Sunday, July 23, 1899, the electric road was thrown open to the public. As it turned out, the day was stormy and fewer people came down to the beach than usual. Cars were

run under an hour's headway instead of the expected ten minutes between Far Rockaway and Rockaway Park. The residents and business people along the line were highly pleased with the new service and the convenience it offered; for the first time since 1881, it became possible to ride from any one street to any other on the peninsula without walking to a steam railroad station.

The Long Island R.R. did not advertise the name Ocean Electric on the cars; instead the letterboard bore the simple legend "Long Island." The power to operate the peninsula trolley service came from the Queensborough Light, Heat & Power Co., which had just months before opened its first plant in the Rockaways fronting Jamaica Bay on Bayswater Channel, Far Rockaway. To guard against the possibility of an interruption in power service and to ensure plenty of energy during periods of heavy demand at the west end, the Long Island R.R. built a large storage battery reserve bank in the wye behind Hammel's Station.

The trolleys very quickly carried peak loads. On July 30, 40,000 people came to the Rockaways and strained the facilities of the new trolley service which, after all, could seat ninety people per car, or only 540 for the whole fleet of six. On August 2, the railroad operated its first private trolley party over the road, the distinguished guest being Bird S. Coler, comptroller of the City of New York. On August 1, the railroad added to the fleet the two much smaller ten-bench open trolleys, which made possible a twenty-minute headway. On August 6, crowds of 50,000 people and more so overwhelmed the facilities of the road that steam rapid transit trains had to be run once more to supplement the trolley service. Towards the end of the season the railroad management had to face the decision as to what sort of service to furnish over the winter. The electric cars were all open-bench types unsuited to winter use, yet the electric service was much cheaper and easier to furnish than the older steam service. The railroad tried to solve the problem by fitting up two of its old Rapid Transit coaches from the Atlantic Avenue Division with motors and electric brakes and heating; on completion, however, these must have proved unsatisfactory, for on October 1, 1899, steam trains were restored, giving hourly service for the winter.

During the 1899 summer season the monopoly of the Ocean Electric Railway in its own territory was seriously challenged by the Long Island Electric Railway, a trolley road that had pushed south from Jamaica and reached Far Rockaway R.R. station in June 1897. The Long Island Electric wanted to extend down to the bathing beach and to build several local branches in the the villages. The Long Island R.R., which had just purchased the old village horse car line and was intending to invest considerable sums in upgrading the line as a local feeder, had no intention of permitting an outsider to expand in Far Rockaway and hastily filed for several route extensions of its own before the City Council.

The first extension requested called for a loop through the fashionable Bayswater section along Mott Avenue, Dickens Avenue, Ocean Avenue and Beach 22nd Street. The second called for another loop over part of the existing village railroad through Central Avenue (today Beach 20th Street) from the railroad station to South Street and returning through Broadway (today Beach 19th Street) to Mott Avenue.

On July 21, the City Council's Committee on Railroads held two more public hearings on applications for franchises by the Ocean Electric Railway. The residents were strongly opposed to the extensions, alleging that the road would ruin highways, make noise, bring in undesirable persons and served no real need. The Long Island R.R. counsel showed that the opposition had attempted a smear by printing posters entitled "Street Steal" and the meeting became heated. In the long run neither company received the requested franchises and the matter lapsed. To insure that there would be no further attempt to build street railroad lines on Far Rockaway's residential streets, the Fifth Ward Taxpayers' Association had a new law passed (Doughty Bill) which added many new streets to those already exempted through an earlier statute, Chapter 686 of the Laws of 1894.

Early in 1900, the Long Island R.R. turned its attention to the electrification of the old Far Rockaway Village horse car line running between the station and the beach. In August of 1899, the railroad had taken up the old forty-seven-pound horse car rail and replaced it with heavier fifty-two to eighty-five-pound rail. Then the work was allowed to lapse for the season. In April

and May of 1900, construction was resumed. The track work and installation of the poles was completed on Friday, May 18. The stringing of the wires took all that night. On the morning of May 19, a flat car drew up at Far Rockaway station with one of the single-truck open cars on board. A crowd of men, on hand to watch the work, were so excited by the arrival of the new car and the historic significance of this day in the history of the village that they pitched in to unload the car and personally dragged it across the station plaza and across Mott Avenue to the completed track in Central Avenue (Beach 20th Street). Test runs were made the rest of the day and next morning, May 20, 1900, regular service began.

Two weeks later, the final touch was added. The old horse railroad had ended at the head of Beach 20th Street, just below Mott Avenue. Since the continuation of this terminus would have left the beach trolley physically isolated from the tracks of the Long Island R.R., with no place to shop the electric trolleys, it became necessary to cross the sixty-foot width of Mott Avenue and then the wide plaza in front of Far Rockaway station. Anticipating some trouble from some half a dozen summer property owners, the Long Island R.R. forestalled any possible injunction and during the night took down on a flat car all of the necessary rails and wire and began work before dawn. As a further precaution, the railroad had secured the consent of the Department of Highways to cross Mott Avenue and had entered into a contract with the telephone company and the electric light company to string wires on their poles.

With all these precautions taken, the track gang began work at 4 A.M. and by 9 o'clock the cars were running over the newly built 600-foot section. The beach branch of the Ocean Electric Railway was now complete. One year later, in the last days of June, 1901, the railroad improved the station trolley facilities by installing a loop track on its own property at the plaza so that loaded cars could turn around without changing ends.

In the spring of 1900, the Ocean Electric Railway, under stimulation from James Caffrey, one of the biggest landowners and bathhouse operators, applied to the city authorities to extend the terminus of the beach branch from the foot of Beach 20th Street east for one block on South Street, thence down Grandview Avenue to the water line and over Rockaway Inlet on

1600 feet of trestle work to Caffrey's Bathing Pavilion on the outer beach (Hog Island). Caffrey circulated a petition among the residents of Far Rockaway; the Long Island R.R. was willing to build the line since it would give the trolley line a monopoly of the travel to the surfside. The Municipal Council took up the matter on May 29 but adjourned without decision.

A month later, on July 30, 1900, there was a public hearing on the motion. Although some residents and business men appeared for the application, it was opposed by the Fifth Ward Taxpayers' Association who asserted that the Ocean Electric Railway should build its trestle directly from the foot of Beach 20th Street and should be compelled to build footpaths so that residents could reach the outer beach without paying the trolley company. This the Ocean Electric balked at doing. The businessmen of the village, armed with a petition signed by 140 prominent business men, continued to push for the extension before the Railroad Committee, but the matter died by the end of the year. In the long run, it was probably just as well that the Hog Island Extension was not built, for on April 8, 1902, a violent spring storm washed over the whole island, wrecked all the amusement structures and all but eroded the island.

The 1900 season on the main-line trolley opened on May 28, a Saturday. The weekend crowds again reached record highs with the newspapers regularly recording crowds of 40,000 to 75,000 people depending on the weather. The six big open-bench trolleys were never really adequate in moving such peak loads but they carried hundreds of excursionists, moving as rapidly as it was possible to find space between Long Island R.R. and Brooklyn Elevated trains.

Beginning in 1902, the Ocean Electric Railway began its first efforts towards securing a franchise for what would be later its main-line operation, running along the main east-west street of the Rockaways—Rockaway Beach Boulevard from 116th Street to Beach 75th Street (Park Avenue). The railroad had compelling reasons for making this move. The summer traffic over the railroad had reached saturation, especially on the stretch between Hammel's Station and Rockaway Park, where the steam trains of the Long Island R.R., the elevated trains of the Brooklyn Rapid Transit and the trolleys all operated together on the same two tracks, and, at peak times, almost in a continuous line. The



railroad reasoned that if the trolley traffic at least could be diverted from the railroad tracks to the public street, then some of the crowding on the steam railroad would be lessened and there would be less danger of a serious accident.

On January 27, 1902, the company filed its first application for a franchise with the city. On March 7, 1902, there was a meeting of the Rockaway Beach property owners to sound out public opinion and the citizens adopted resolutions protesting the extension. In April 1902, the Board of Aldermen of New York City gave its approval to the Ocean Electric Railway to lay its tracks on the Boulevard from Rockaway Park to Hammels and from the Far Rockaway terminus to Hog Island. The matter then moved to the Board of Estimate.

On May 6, a largely attended meeting of property owners at Rockaway Park listened to William F. Potter of the Long Island R.R. explain the importance of the new extension along the Boulevard and why the Long Island R.R. felt that it was necessary. The tracks would extend from 110th Street (Eastern Avenue) to Beach 75th Street (Park Avenue) and up Beach 75th Street to a connection with the Long Island R.R. The taxpayers were about evenly divided on the matter; some felt that the fifty-foot width of Rockaway Beach Boulevard was too narrow for double trolley tracks and asked why, if the Long Island R.R. owned a right of way forty-eight feet wide, it could not build trolley tracks on either side of the steam tracks. Others felt that the franchise was very valuable and that the company should pay well for the privilege by paying half the expense of asphaltting the Boulevard from curb to curb.

On June 13, 1902, a public hearing was given before the Board of Aldermen. The taxpayers, meanwhile, had met two nights before and adopted a resolution against granting a franchise. The aldermen heard arguments from numerous speakers. The principal opponent to the granting of a franchise turned out to be the Jamaica Bay Turnpike Company, controlled by P. H. Flynn. His agent testified that the Boulevard was the main residential thoroughfare in Rockaway Beach and that the citizens did not want it disturbed. He neglected to mention, of course, that his own company had plans of its own for the road. The Long Island R.R. had systematically thwarted the plans of the cross-bay turnpike company so effectively that it was a plea-

sure to turn the tables and oppose the Long Island R.R. in one of its own projects. The friends of the extension said that nine-tenths of the property owners and business men on the Beach had expressed themselves in favor of an extension and that they were doing all they could to promote it. The Board, after listening to all sides, adjourned the hearing and deferred action. In the next few weeks, a Far Rockaway group began seeking to renew interest in the loop through the Bayswater section of that village first proposed in 1899.

On June 19, 1903, the Board of Estimate granted the application of the Ocean Electric Railway for the Boulevard extension. The franchise required the railroad to pay during the first five years \$500 "which shall be equal to 3% of its gross annual receipts if such percentage shall exceed the sum of \$500"; during the next five years, \$1000 (5% of gross receipts) and during the remaining fifteen years, \$1000. Another important requirement was that the railroad would have to pay for paving one and one-eighth miles of the Boulevard from curb to curb. The mayor signed the franchise on August 18, 1903, clearing the way for the Long Island R.R. to begin construction.

In December 1903, the Long Island R.R. quietly submitted an application for permission to lay the trolley tracks along the sides of the Boulevard two feet from either curb. The business men learned of the existence of the application for the change and pressured the city into refusing its permission.

In mid-December 1903, the Long Island R.R. began to send down to Rockaway Beach ties and iron poles to begin the work. Two winter months elapsed; then at the end of February 1904, more carloads of rails arrived, while the iron poles for the trolley wires were distributed between Rockaway Park and Arverne. In March, the railroad completed the purchase of a short stretch of right of way from the Boulevard to the railroad tracks between Beach 109th and Beach 110th Streets.

Even before the Ocean Electric began to lay its tracks, trouble appeared in the form of opposition from the property owners along the route. On Beach 75th Street (Park Avenue) especially, all the property owners were united in their opposition to track laying on their street and had even gone so far as to engage counsel to protect themselves against the encroachments of the trolley company. The basis of their opposition was that the street was

very narrow (forty feet), and should the trolley go through, the street would be practically closed to traffic. The Ocean Electric Co. tried to overcome this objection by negotiating for the purchase of a right of way through the middle of the block between Beach 80th Street and Beach 79th Street (Pleasant & Kane Avenues) from the Boulevard to the railroad tracks, but one property owner blocked this scheme by demanding \$2500 for his land with the stipulation that if the company at any future time would discontinue its cars over this route, the property would revert back to him. Had the Ocean Electric Co. tried to get through by this route, it is estimated that it would have cost the company about \$12,500.

In the first days of March the company began to distribute ties and rails along the route. In addition, the Long Island R.R. erected a large one-story building on vacant land at the Hammels wye as a dormitory for the Italian laborers while the road was being built. Another temporary building was put up on the Boulevard at Holland's Station to be used for the storage of tools and for a forge.

Work began on March 21, on which day 300 Italian laborers were brought down to the beach. The first task was to plow up the Boulevard preparatory to grading and laying the rails. One gang started at the Rockaway Park end and the other at Arverne, both gangs working toward the middle. Although the company expressed its determination to hurry the work along so as to finish by the time the summer traffic began, there were serious problems because the Boulevard had never been properly graded and curbed since its opening in 1885. It would now be necessary to raise the grade anywhere from four to eighteen inches in various sections. The property owners along the street were profoundly disturbed over the effect of the adoption of a new grade on their properties. It was thought highly likely that at least seven-eighths of the buildings along the Boulevard would be left below grade and would require expensive raising. Many blamed the trolley company for raising the issue of grade and stirring up trouble.

The loss of the Boulevard to traffic was a heavy blow at this time. The Boulevard was the only through street. Everyone could foresee that the wings of the roadway would be in poor shape for some months to come and that it would be difficult to

cross the trolley tracks where the grade was raised from eight to eighteen inches. To avoid disruption to traffic, Superintendent Casey, who was in charge of the work, tore up only one side of the Boulevard at a time.

During the first week of March 21-28, the big pavement plow, drawn by six horses, tore up the macadam roadway, while the material was shoveled in heaps along the roadway by a small army of laborers. The work was started at Beach 75th Street and by the first evening, half the roadway up to Beach 81st Street had been plowed up. During this week the matter of the final pavement was also ironed out. The company had planned to put down a macadam pavement when the Taxpayers Association took up the matter with Queens Borough President Cassidy and urged him to use his best efforts to procure a brick or asphalt pavement. The Long Island R.R. was approached and an amicable settlement was arrived at. The railroad estimated that the cost of a macadam road would have been \$23,000 and agreed to turn this amount over to President Cassidy if he could secure matching funds from the city to put down a brick or asphalt pavement. President Cassidy was successful in his suit and a brick pavement was contracted for.

As the work progressed, there were the expected complaints about the impossible condition of the Boulevard, or that the one lane left open was inadequate to the volume of traffic. Others complained about the piles of ties obstructing the sidewalk. More serious in the eyes of the Long Island R.R. was the threat of several of the property owners to secure injunctions against the company with a view to preventing the tearing-up of the roadway and the laying of tracks.

By the end of March 1904 the tracks had been laid all the way from Beach 75th Street to Beach 85th Street (Hammels Avenue), a distance of half a mile. As the tracklayers approached Beach 84th Street, a legal snag developed. Remington Vernam, the developer of Arverne, had, in 1897, chartered his own street railway company, and in 1898 had laid two blocks of track along Beach 84th Street from the Long Island R.R. track to the Boulevard. When the tracklayers reached Beach 84th Street on March 25, they began to saw their way through the half-buried rails of the old Rockaway Electric Railway Company. Word was carried to Remington Vernam who shortly appeared on the scene and ordered the workmen to stop under threat of arrest.

On the 28th a happy solution to this dilemma was hit upon; since the track laying involved many changes of grade anyway, the workmen laid the new rails over those of the Rockaway Electric Railway. This necessitated the raising of the grade about eight inches at the Fairview Avenue crossing. The rails were then spiked down and the track laying proceeded.

On April 1, 1904, the difficulty with Vernam was ironed out. The Long Island R.R., expecting trouble with the property owners on Park Avenue if it attempted to lay its rails, and having been balked in its attempt to buy a private right of way, realized that the Beach 84th Street track would offer a very convenient solution to its current difficulties. Negotiations were opened with Vernam to lease all the rights, franchises, consents, etc. he possessed in Beach 84th Street. Vernam agreed, on condition that he would not thereby waive any of his rights to operate his own road; however, he agreed that such operation would not conflict with the interests of the Ocean Electric Railway. In this simple way, the Long Island R.R. secured the needed connection between its own rails and the Ocean Electric tracks on the Boulevard.

To forestall any possible trouble from opposing property owners along the Boulevard, the Long Island R.R. resolved on a stratagem often employed in the days of street railway construction. On Saturday at midnight of April 9, after the regular day shift had gone home, the railroad brought in a second gang of laborers who tore up the brick pavement at the Remsen Avenue crossing (Beach 103rd Street) Sea Side, and hastily laid the trolley tracks over a stretch of several hundred feet. Since no injunction could be obtained on a Sunday, the property owners who had vowed that the track should never be laid in front of their properties were out-manuevered.

During the remainder of May, the workmen completed the laying of the track westward to Beach 110th Street uneventfully. During the last week of May 1904, the trolley poles were planted, beginning at Rockaway Park and working eastward. More surprisingly, the tracks were laid down beyond Rockaway Park along Rockaway Beach Boulevard, Beach 124th Street (Lincoln Avenue) and Newport Avenue to Beach 128th Street in Belle Harbor, although operation on this outer extension was not expected to begin for some time.

On Monday, May 30, 1904, at 3 P.M., the first trolley car

ran over the newly-laid tracks on Rockaway Beach Boulevard, filled with Italian workmen and a sprinkling of citizens eager to ride the first car. On the second trip fares were collected and regular service began immediately between Beach 75th Street (Park Avenue) and Beach 116th Street. Because the line was still only partially completed, especially the overhead, the cars were restricted to operating over one track only. The schedule called for a headway of twenty minutes between 9 A.M. and 6:30 P.M. and a half-hourly thereafter to 9 P.M., when the last car departed.

The last exciting moment in the building of the road occurred in Hammels on Saturday, June 4, 1904, at Beach 84th Street (Fairview Avenue). The Long Island R.R. had come to an agreement with Remington Vernam for the use of this street but had made no move to lay its own track or to rip out the light rails laid by Vernam in 1898. Late Saturday, the 4th, a gang of laborers began to dig holes on one side of Beach 84th Street, but property owners thought the telegraph company was setting new poles. When they awakened on Sunday morning, they found two or three hundred Italians ploughing up the road, while the trolley company had already laid a long stretch of track. The supposed telegraph poles bore the feed wire and a double switch was being installed at the Boulevard. Although protests were made by the abutting property owners, they proved fruitless, and by Sunday night one track had been laid and connected with the Boulevard.

In mid-June the double-track switches and connecting spur to the east end of the Long Island R.R. terminal yard at Beach 110th Street were installed and on Sunday, June 19, 1904, cars began operating over both tracks on Rockaway Beach Boulevard and via Beach 84th Street through to Far Rockaway. As expected, the removal of the trolleys from the steam tracks between Hammels and Rockaway Park helped to speed up the running of steam trains and permitted safer operation and wider intervals between train movements.

Up to this time the Long Island R.R. had continued to operate the same six fifteen-bench open trolleys on the Ocean Electric road. Occasionally, as in the spring of 1902, cars from the railroad's other trolley subsidiaries such as the Northport and Huntington lines, were imported for brief periods. For the new

Boulevard traffic four double-truck, fifteen-bench opens were ordered on January 4, 1904, and delivered on March 20. On October 6, two closed cars were ordered from Brill, a double truck convertible and a smaller single truck convertible; these were delivered on November 14, 1904.

It is inappropriate in this chapter to attempt to give a detailed history of the Ocean Electric Railway after the major changes of 1904; however, for completeness' sake, a few highlights are worth recording. The Ocean Electric trolleys continued operating over the Long Island R.R. tracks between Hammel's Station and Far Rockaway for another quarter century. After Rockaway Park had been thoroughly developed in the first years of this century by the real estate interests, the developers turned their attention to the sandy areas to the westward, and gradually the Belle Harbor and Neponsit communities were laid out and sold for residential development. To provide transportation, the Ocean Electric Railway was extended into Belle Harbor at Beach 138th Street in September 1908, and into Neponsit from Beach 138th Street to Beach 147th Street on July 5, 1912. The final extension to 149th Street was opened on June 8, 1916.

Perhaps the most interesting change in all this period came at the end of the 1911 season, when the Long Island R.R. took down the trolley wires over the steam railroad tracks between Rockaway Park and Far Rockaway, and fitted the trolley cars with third-rail shoes. Thereafter, the motormen, when they reached Hammel's Station, had to either put up the trolley pole on the car or drop down the pick-up shoe on the trucks before proceeding.

In 1924, the Long Island R.R. made the decision to get out of the street car feeder operation and one of the first lines to go was the little Far Rockaway road between the railroad station and the foot of Roche's Beach on September 14, 1924. On September 9, 1926, the trolley service between Hammels and Far Rockaway over the Long Island R.R. right-of-way was abandoned. When the twenty-five year franchise on the main line expired in 1928, the railroad shut down operation between Neponsit and Hammels on August 26, 1928.

## CHAPTER 8

### *The Threat to L.I.R.R. Control: The Flynn Cross-Bay Project*

**T**HE ENORMOUS and ever-increasing traffic to the Rockaways in the late 90's and early years of this century could not fail to attract the attention of entrepreneurs and investors eager to share in the profit bonanza supposedly enjoyed by the Long Island R.R. alone. Coney Island with similar attractions had inspired the building of five or six rival steam roads and the incorporation of many more on paper. In any case, the route to Coney Island was overland, relatively short and offered no obstacles; the route to Rockaway, however, was quite another matter. The great bulk of Jamaica Bay cut off the Rockaway peninsula from the city and the formidable expense involved in bridging and trestling the many miles of marshland and water frightened off all but the wealthiest syndicates.

The first dangerous rival to the Long Island R.R.'s monopoly on the peninsula had been the Nassau Electric R.R., a vigorous and energetic trolley company that in 1895-1896 had expanded phenomenally in South Brooklyn in the teeth of strong opposition from the older and wealthier Brooklyn City R.R. The president of the Nassau Electric R.R., Patrick H. Flynn, conceived, in 1897, the bold idea of extending a line from a point somewhere in the Gerritsen's Mill section of Brooklyn across Rockaway Inlet to the beach. In April 1898 public hearings were held in New York on a proposal to build a trestle across Jamaica Bay eighty feet wide and containing besides a double track trolley line, a cycle path and a driveway.

A public hearing held at Rockaway Beach by the property owners association endorsed the idea and a petition to the city circulated by the promoters received many signatures. Patrick H. Flynn then made overtures to Remington Vernam, founder and owner of most of the land at Arverne, to join him in the enterprise and to start work in the streets of Arverne and Ham-



mels. Vernam had already incorporated the Rockaway Electric Railway Company in February 1897 but had done nothing in the way of construction. Encouraged by Flynn's support, Vernam gathered a track gang, and early in the morning of May 30, 1898, a legal holiday, tore up Beach 84th Street and laid some track. The property owners secured an injunction the next day, and the Long Island R.R., fearing competition, secured another.

The rest of 1898 passed with no further moves on the part of Vernam or the Nassau Electric. Patrick Flynn was himself becoming increasingly involved with his directors and stockholders in the matter of a proposed sale of the system to the Brooklyn Heights R.R. which was gradually merging all the Brooklyn trolley and elevated lines into one system.

On May 1, 1899, the Brooklyn Heights R.R. formally took possession of the Nassau Electric R.R. and Patrick Flynn retired from active management of the road into private life. His fertile mind and restless energy, however, needed an outlet and in May 1899 he and several investor friends and politicians filed certificates of incorporation in the Queens County Clerk's office for three companies at once, all designed to further his grand scheme to bridge Jamaica Bay and open up the Rockaways to Brooklyn and the suburban villages of Queens.

The first company was a re-incorporation of the "Rockaway Electric Railway Company" with a capital of \$250,000, which would build a street surface railroad four miles in length from Far Rockaway to Hammel's Station largely over Rockaway Beach Boulevard. The second company was the "Cross Country Railroad," also with a capital of \$250,000. The Cross-Country was a rather ambitious undertaking which proposed to construct a trolley line fifteen miles in length from College Point and Willet's Point through Flushing to Jamaica and then through the villages of Richmond Hill and Woodhaven to the old City Line at Liberty Avenue. The third company was the Brooklyn and Jamaica Bay Turnpike Company which was to build the causeway across Jamaica Bay. Its capital was \$100,000. All three companies had substantially the same board of directors and Flynn himself was to be the contractor for the big Jamaica Bay bridge and trestle project.

In the first days of March 1899, surveyors were at work over

the proposed route from Bergen Beach or Canarsie to a point near Holland's Station. Some time during March or April the route was changed to run wholly in Queens County. The road was to start at City Line at Glenmore Avenue, run a few blocks east to Bayside Cemetery, then drop straight south over the marshes to a small promontory into the bay called Long Point. Then the road was to cross the bay on the longest trestle to Black Bank marsh and over Goose Creek to Ruler's Bar Hassock; from this point it followed the present alignment of Jamaica Bay Boulevard, touching the Rockaway peninsula at Elderts Avenue (Beach 87th Street).

The completed blueprint projected a road that would ultimately cost \$1,250,000 to finish; it would be about seven and a quarter miles in length and would be completed before the close of the year 1900. There would be a seventy-foot roadway across Jamaica Bay more or less parallel to the bay trestle of the Long Island R.R. and about 500 yards west of it. The road across the marshlands would be filled in, while across the channels there would be trestle work with drawbridges. There would be a macadamized road twenty feet wide with two trolley tracks and a cycle track on either side. The distance across Jamaica Bay proper was four and a quarter miles and for two and three quarters miles of this distance, the road would traverse the islands and hummocks that stud the bay. The remainder of the stretch—one and a half miles—would be over open tide channels which would be crossed by open trestle work, permitting an unobstructed ebb and flow of water. Forty-two hundred large creosoted spiles were ready for use to be driven into the bottom twenty to twenty-five feet long. For the rest of the distance the dirt and gravel was to be dredged from either side creating a causeway, the top of which was to be at least six feet above the surface of the water at high tide and the whole covered with loam, then gravel, and finally, macadam.

Aside from the enormous trolley traffic which would come from all over Brooklyn and Queens, the macadamized toll road would furnish a splendid route to the seashore. It would build up all the marshlands, and enable sportsmen to reach their favorite fishing and shooting grounds. The causeway would also be the means of making the run by bicycle from any part of Brooklyn and Manhattan as easily and over as fine a route as

to Coney Island, the distance being about equal. The broad driveway would enable carriage drivers to reach the beach in an hour and do away with the long thirty-mile drive via Jamaica and Valley Stream.

Plans called for a start on the project early in May 1899, but in fact physical work began only in the first days of July. Construction was entrusted to the New Jersey Construction Co., which sublet part of it to Contractor N. Lorton of Brooklyn. Lorton commenced driving piles for the trestle work at Goose Creek on Tuesday, July 11. Within two weeks' time two rows of large spiles had already been driven across The Raunt Channel. A large dredging machine, 150 feet long and 34 feet wide with 460 HP condensing machines and boilers, delivering steam at 125 pounds pressure and requiring sixteen flat cars to transfer it from Boston over the New York, New Haven & Hartford R.R., was then being set up in Mr. Flynn's yard at the foot of Delancey Street. The machine was expected to dredge out not less than 200,000 cubic yards per day or 6000 tons of earth from the bottom of the bay. By the first of August almost all the spiles for the trestle across the channel at The Raunt were in place.

The grandiose project took a giant step forward on August 12, when the Cooperative Society of New Jersey, of which ex-Supervisor Dunton of the Town of Jamaica was secretary, leased to the Brooklyn and Jamaica Bay Turnpike Co. a strip of land 150 feet wide, extending from Long Point on the mainland across Jamaica Bay to Far Rockaway, about four miles in length. This strip was a part of the Jamaica Town lands leased to Dunton in 1892 and 1897, and assigned by him to the New Jersey Society. The terms of the lease called for a payment of \$150,000 by Patrick H. Flynn to the Society.

It was agreed to establish two toll gates, the northerly one on the mainland at Long Point and the southerly one on the south side of Big Egg Marsh (Broad Channel). The contract specified that the work of filling in, trestling and macadamizing was to begin in sixty days and to be completed in 300 days thereafter. The opening of the Beach Channel drawbridge was to conform to the regulations of the War department and in the North Channel a bridge was to be constructed at least twenty feet wide.

The motive of the Cooperative Society of New Jersey and its

backer, Frederick W. Dunton, was clear enough. The causeway would provide access to all the islands and marshes half under water, making possible the transformation of these lonely areas into resorts. Dunton included in the lease a right to extend gas and water mains from the mainland to his island in the bay. Two or three of the islands had been partly filled in by Dunton in the summer of 1896, and from the results obtained, Dunton felt that the other islands could be filled in at a reasonable price and the land covered over with soil so that parks and shore drives could be laid out on the largest islands and thousands of beautiful villa plots sold. It was thought that Patrick H. Flynn was himself interested in this scheme and that his dredging machines would build up the islands and deepen the channels as soon as the causeway was completed.

On top of this, Flynn achieved another important coup on the Rockaway side of his project. Julia E. and Luke Eldert, owners of the land on the Rockaway peninsula between Beach 87th and 86th Streets (old Eldert and Grove Avenues) running from the Long Island R.R. on the south to Jamaica Bay on the north, 800 x 500, conveyed to the Cross Country R.R. Co. the right of way for the construction of an electric railroad on the waterfront and across the land of "Eldersthurst Park," as the Eldert tract was then called. There was also conveyed the right-of-way on Beach 87th and 86th Streets; since these avenues were only twenty feet wide, too narrow for a double track, the right to construct an avenue fifty feet wide across the upper end of Eldersthurst Park for a loop and railroad terminal in front of the park was also given with the right to stand cars there. In return for these rights the Cross Country R.R. was to construct a large and substantial dock and approaches outside of the track, together with carriage and bicycle paths to be given for the free use of the Elderts. A bulkhead 150 feet long upon the waterfront west of Eldert Avenue was to be built and that avenue and Grove Avenue were to be paved.

In the last half of August, Patrick Flynn successfully obtained the plot on the southwest corner of Eldert Avenue and the Long Island R.R. 100 x 137 from Harry Darde with the three-story hotel upon it; also the property directly opposite owned by Jane Haffen. All these conveyances gave the Flynn syndicate one of the most valuable tracts of land in the Hammels area, and with

the rumor of the trolley terminal, real estate values were greatly enhanced. By discharging passengers at the Hammels end of the beach, another excursion ground similar to Sea Side would be opened and the land along the neighboring streets developed. Through the agency of the Rockaway Electric Railway Company, Flynn planned to extend the cross-bay trolley through Beach 87th Street and then west along Lefferts Place (Holland Avenue), the bed of the former South Side R.R., to Sea Side, then the major amusement area on the peninsula.

On August 25, 1899, four hundred more spiles were delivered at Broad Channel and extra pile drivers were expected within a few days. A big scow, with a second story for living quarters, arrived on the same day and anchored in Broad Channel. Flynn sent notices to all the fishing clubs having business on the waterfront at Elderthurst Park to move, so as to clear the way for the workmen who would shortly begin operations there.

The Long Island R.R. had been watching the seemingly irresistible progress of the Flynn cross-bay project with mounting alarm but had not as yet seen any practical means of stopping it. Although to our modern eyes the prospect of a trolley line might hardly seem very menacing competition for a large, wealthy and prosperous steam railroad, the fact was that the Long Island R.R. had once before been badly injured by Flynn, and had been compelled to retire from the field licking its wounds in defeat. The Long Island's Manhattan Beach Branch and its Culver Line had before 1895 carried capacity loads of Brooklyn residents to Manhattan Beach, Coney Island and Brighton Beach for many years. Then, Patrick Flynn, as manager and guiding genius behind the Nassau Electric R.R., had extended one of his trolley lines from the 39th Street Ferry down Rogers and Ocean Avenues to Sheepshead Bay in 1895 and began carrying passengers to the beach at a 5¢ fare. Then, in 1896, Flynn had absorbed the Atlantic Avenue R.R. (which had itself bought up the West End line to Coney Island) and so obtained additional routes to the beach, paralleling and even encircling the Long Island R.R.'s Culver Line. From this moment, the Culver Line had ceased to pay and the Long R.R. had had to sell it to avoid subsidizing annual deficits. The Manhattan Beach line had been forced to curtail service to break even. Now Flynn was threatening to break into a territory

where the Long Island R.R. had for years enjoyed a monopoly and into which it had poured very large sums, especially for the maintenance of the very costly bay trestle. The railroad would not only lose all the passenger business to Flynn but would also lose just about all the freight traffic on the peninsula west of Far Rockaway, because a court decision had established the right of trolley lines to carry freight in their own freight cars and Flynn had taken care to safeguard expressly this right in his agreement with Dunton and the New Jersey Cooperative Society.

Some way had to be found to stop Flynn and the railroad lawyers went to work on the rival company's corporate organization and its leases. The first maneuver tried was the same one which had been used to harass the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R. in 1880—obstruction to navigation and threatening the shellfish industry that was then the livelihood of many baymen. In September 1899, the Long Island R.R. in the person of David N. Carvalho, a resident of the Breezy Point section of Rockaway, brought suit against the Flynn syndicate on the ground that the ebb and flow of the tides would be impeded and that the navigation in the west end of the bay would be harmed. Long Island R.R. lawyer William J. Kelly argued Carvalho's case in court. Flynn's lawyers rebutted that the Legislature had given its permission and that there would be drawbridges to permit the free movement of sailing craft. Then a group of oystermen was encouraged to sue for an injunction on the ground that the causeway would threaten the spawning beds and ruin the shellfish industry. The court granted the injunction against Flynn and the work of building the trestle at The Raunt was brought to a stop.

During the winter Flynn reached an understanding with the oystermen by agreeing to change slightly the line of the causeway if the War Department would go along with the changes. The injunction was vacated and in April of 1900, work on the cross-bay road was resumed. The pile-driver at the Raunt began where it had left off and by May 1, the Raunt Channel was nearly spiled across. The most spectacular progress could be seen on the shore of Jamaica Bay. The giant dredge, which had been imported in the 1899 season from Boston, was then raising 18,000 cubic yards of solid matter each twenty-four hours and discharging it onto the marshes through a twelve-inch pipe. Ten

acres of meadow along the shore had been elevated a distance of eight feet since pumping began. That part of the roadway on high ground from Glenmore Avenue to the Bayside Cemetery and a little way south, a stretch of two miles, had been graded for the double-track roadway and ties and rails were already in place. The ties and iron were distributed along the ground for the remainder of the route and were to be laid as soon as the causeway had settled enough to permit the transportation of ballast. The bay shore-front was to be converted into a village development called "Nassau Beach."

As soon as the Raunt Channel had been spiled, the pile driving machines were moved to Grassy Bay in August 1900 and set to work on the long trestle to the mainland. Fresh supplies of spiles were unloaded, and additional rafts with reserve supplies were waiting at anchor off Barren Island.

Late in September 1900, public hearings were held by the Army Corps of Engineers on the proposed changes in the route of the causeway to appease the oystermen. However, many property owners from Rockaway Beach and others favored the original plans.

In April 1901, the great dredge used by Flynn was again started up and put to work six days a week. It was then sucking up 100,000 cubic yards of sand and earth per month, moving it through great iron mains 2000 feet long and depositing it over the meadows and shallows. In its wake there was now a plateau of hard beach sand and earth about 350 feet in width and of an average height of ten feet at its center. The extra land on either side of the seventy-foot roadway was earmarked for building purposes. This plateau extended from Liberty Avenue at the City Line south to Long Point and 1500 feet into the bay, the marine section bulkheaded in a substantial manner. A construction railroad ran the whole length of the completed causeway.

The other great accomplishment was the filling in to required height of the causeway from the southern to the upper end of Big Egg Marsh, a section which forms today the roadbed of Cross-Bay Boulevard through Broad Channel. The engineer in charge of the work estimated that if no interruptions occurred, the causeway could be finished by the end of 1901.

The continued progress of the Flynn project put increased pressure on the Long Island R.R. to stop the threat to its posi-

tion before it was too late. In the first days of May 1901, a taxpayer named Henry L. Wenk, president of the Brooks Railroad Supply Co., with offices at 51 Dey Street, New York, very possibly with the backing of the Long Island R.R., brought suit to block the whole cross-bay causeway project on the ground that the lease of the right-of-way given by the Cooperative Society of New Jersey to the Brooklyn and Jamaica Bay Turnpike Co. was illegal because the means by which the Cooperative Society had itself come into possession of the meadowlands was fraudulent and a steal of the public rights to the common lands. What triggered the suit was the action of the Turnpike Company which had begun to dispossess scores of tenants on Shad Creek and other waterways, many of whom owned substantial homes. One owner, who had actively resisted the company's order to vacate, had been forced to witness the spectacle of the Queens County sheriff throwing all his furniture out of his house.

Lawyers who had delved into the background of the Cooperative Society's acquisition of the bay lands uncovered a remarkable story. On August 19, 1892, the old Jamaica Town Board, of which Frederick W. Dunton was president, leased all of the Common Lands and meadows of the Town to Alonzo E. Smith, a business associate of Dunton, for 50 years at an aggregate rental of \$1025 per year. The proposal of the board to lease the lands had been published only in an obscure way in the village newspaper. It did not appear in a single New York or Brooklyn paper and was so worded as to discourage bidders. The suit charged that Supervisor Dunton, in furtherance of his scheme, got Alonzo E. Smith and George E. Hagerman, both his associates, to put in rival bids and thus make a show of competition.

On July 11, 1893, this lease was assigned to the United States Land & Improvement Company, a corporation which Dunton had heretofore formed and organized. Thereafter, Dunton formed the Cooperative Society of New Jersey and on August 8 assigned to it the lease of the Jamaica Bay tract. Finally, on December 29, 1897, on the very eve of consolidation, the Town Board of Jamaica of which Mr. Dunton was president, leased the entire tract for an additional fifty years from 1942 to 1992 to one of the clerks in his office, one William H. Boynton, who



had served as a front for Dunton once before in the bicycle railroad scheme.

It was further shown that Mr. Dunton had paid all the installments of rent for the tract himself and that the United States Land & Improvement Company was really composed of Alonzo E. Smith, George Hagerman and George B. Finch, and incorporated at Easton, Pennsylvania. Finch and Hagerman owned only one share of capital stock each and Smith all the rest. Counsel for Mr. Wenk asked the court to declare all of the above-named leases null and void and that the Turnpike Company be restrained from taking any further possession of the marsh lands.

Patrick Flynn was a man long familiar with lawsuits and injunctions devised to harass and to stop his progress; he had triumphed over many similar challenges in the past and gave no sign now of being intimidated by this latest suit. On July 2, 1901, Flynn scored a particular triumph when the Board of Railroad Commissioners, after a three years' fight, granted him a certificate of convenience and necessity for the first small portion of his road from City Line eastward and southward to the Sunrise Highway. A certificate of convenience and necessity constituted an official recognition from the State that there existed a need for a street or steam railroad, and could be granted only after investigation and public hearings. The granting of the certificate was a necessary prelude under State law, to beginning rail operations anywhere in the state. For the Long Island R.R., the award of the certificate to Flynn was a major setback. The company lawyers immediately filed notice of an appeal from the decision. In the meantime, Flynn, emboldened by his success, went so far as to order rolling stock from the J. G. Brill Co., several double-truck, closed trolley cars. One car of the completed order was photographed and appears today in the Brill Collection at Philadelphia.

On August 23, 1901, the big steam dredger and sand pump was moved from Broad Channel over to The Raunt and set to work pumping sand filling in the meadows for the turnpike roadbed. By Labor Day of 1901, Chief Engineer Gahagan was able to report that he had completed all the dredging and filling of Broad and Beach Channels, and the partially submerged islands and meadows north of these channels to the Little Raunt

where the big dredge was then filling in at the rate of 100 lineal feet a day. Between three and four miles of solid roadbed for the turnpike had now been formed, with only a mile and a half remaining to be done of open trestle work over the deeper water sections between the island and the two proposed drawbridges over Broad and Beach Channels.

O'Connell & Kennedy, Brooklyn contractors, won the contract for this trestle work. Four pile drivers and three barges stood ready at Broad Channel to begin work on September 10. Great piles of forty-foot spruce logs had been assembled; about half a mile of this trestle was to span Broad and Beach Channels, and three-fourths of a mile across Grassy Bay and The Raunt and Goose Creek. The pile driving was scheduled to go on all winter till completion in the spring; summer was expected to see the whole great project accomplished.

The success of Flynn's project seemed such an assured thing in the fall of 1901 that the owners of houses and fishing shacks on the various islets and canals began to accept the Flynn-Dunton presence as a reality to be lived with, and in tacit recognition of its legality, applied to the Cooperative Society of New Jersey for leases of meadowland tracts at \$10 a year.

In November 1901, the Flynn interests in the guise of the United States Improvement Company, interposed a demurrer to the suit of Mr. Wenk, alleging that he had no cause for action and that he had no standing to maintain an action against a lease which had been made long prior to consolidation. In December 1901 the issues raised by both parties were tried in Brooklyn Supreme Court and the presiding justice sustained the demurrer. Wenk, undeterred by this check, then carried an appeal to the Appellate Division in January 1902 and that court also unanimously affirmed the judgment. Again refusing to accept an adverse verdict, Wenk in April appealed to the Court of Appeals, the state's highest court, and meanwhile filed a separate action against Flynn, alleging that Flynn's consents from the War Department to build roads and bridges in Jamaica Bay had been abused and that he had no right to obstruct waterways such as Shad Creek, on which Wenk maintained a summer home. The waterway, formerly seventy feet wide, had been constricted to only fifteen feet because of the filling operations. While this suit was being tried, Flynn's workmen, who were anxious to

resume their three-year long labor on the cross-bay turnpike and bridges, at a standstill since September 1901, were forced to remain idle and to discharge their workmen. Wenk's suit not only delayed the cross-bay project during the valuable spring months when progress might have been made, but it also opened the prospects of great expense for Flynn. The court might order that Shad Creek be dredged out to its former width and depth, or that a whole new drawbridge be installed across the creek to avoid obstructions to navigation.

In a second hearing before the court on April 25, 1902, Flynn's counsel admitted that Shad Creek had been stopped up "to a certain extent" but promised that the company, if given time, would clean out the creek satisfactorily. The court declared that the action could not be dismissed on the strength of a promise.

Meanwhile, Flynn, to show that lawsuits had not dampened his determination to build and operate a trolley to Rockaway, gave a mortgage of \$250,000 to the Hamilton Trust Company of Brooklyn in the name of the Rockaway Electric Railway Company, the proceeds to be used to build a trolley line in Sea Side, Hammels and Hollands.

In the first week of July, the Flynn syndicate won a victory by successfully claiming that Shad Creek was not a navigable stream within the definition of a recent Supreme Court decision on the subject, and the court agreed. This small victory proved a hollow one. On June 27, 1902, the suit which Wenk had maintained in the lower courts and had appealed all the way up to the Court of Appeals, now reversed the action of the Supreme Court and the Appellate Division and declared in Wenk's favor, and with costs, declaring invalid the lease of 1892 to Alonzo E. Smith.

This stunning blow to the Flynn-Dunton interests proved the beginning of the end for the whole ambitious cross-bay project. For Wenk, it had proved an astonishing and almost unlooked-for victory, won only at the cost of great legal expense and through a dogged faith in the justice of his cause. Even with the basic prop knocked out from under his whole structure, Flynn did not immediately give up. When the Appellate Division, in September 1902, threw out the certificate of convenience and necessity for the Cross-Country R.R. at the insistence of the Long Island R.R., whose lawyers had uncovered certain flaws and informali-

ties in the application, Flynn lost no time submitting a new application in proper legal form (October, 1902).

Somewhat in personal retaliation, Dunton filed suit against Wenk in September, seeking to eject him from the land on which his summer house stood on Shad Creek.

The final blow to the Flynn-Dunton syndicate came in October 1902, when the Corporation Counsel of Queens, acting in the name of the City of New York, filed suit against Dunton's Cooperative Society of New Jersey, on the same grounds alleged by Wenk in his 1901 suit. This action was designed to have the leases of 1892 and 1897 declared fraudulent, and to recover for New York City the undisputed title to all the former Town lands and waters in Jamaica Bay. For five months the suit remained before the courts and then to the surprise of everyone, an offer of acceptance of judgment and surrender of the leases was received from Dunton in the name of his United States Land & Improvement Co. and the Cooperative Society of New Jersey, and from the sub-lessees, Charles E. Twombly and John H. Eldert (March 1903). This unlooked-for victory was a virtual admission by Dunton and his attorneys that their hold on the Jamaica Town lands was indefensible. In order to salvage something from the wreckage of his schemes, Dunton attached a condition in return for his voluntary surrender of the leases: that the city repay to himself and his sub-lessees all moneys paid in to the Comptroller for rents, amounting in all to \$9000, and that the city pay off a lien of \$3500 on the lease held by Twombly & Eldert. This offer was accepted by the Corporation Counsel.

A large labor organization, the National Industrial Federation, which had meanwhile paid \$16,000 to \$17,000 to Dunton for the lease of several islands in the bay for the erection of summer houses, added to Dunton's woes by forcing him to repay the money under threat of suit.

The Brooklyn & Jamaica Turnpike Company of Patrick H. Flynn refused at first to yield the lease for its narrow right-of-way across the bay, but the city easily invalidated the company's hold, terminating Flynn's hopes for a cross-bay road and water playground.

The Long Island R.R., watching all this from the sidelines, took great satisfaction in the decisions and breathed easier. The

upgrading of the railroad facilities on the peninsula and the decision to expand the Ocean Electric Railway could now be regarded as safe investments.

The loss to the Flynn syndicate must have been almost a million dollars, if not more. A vast amount of dredging had been done and several miles of roadbed had been built up, all of it for nothing. For years thereafter, the roadways and embankments lay abandoned and sand-blown. In the 1920's when the City constructed Jamaica Bay Boulevard through Broad Channel, it used the already constructed roadway of the Flynn turnpike for the roadbed of the modern highway. The double-track trolley line on the mainland from Liberty Avenue and Ruby Street to the shore at Jamaica Bay was still fully in place in December 1909, when an inspection was made for the Public Service Commission. The explosive growth of housing in the 1930's in southern Queens finally obliterated the last remnants of the old right of way.

## CHAPTER 9

### *Electrification and Modernization of the N.Y. & R.B.*

**W**HEN the Twentieth Century Dawned there had been few physical changes on the Long Island R.R. Rockaway line for some years. From Hammel's Station to Rockaway Park, there were two tracks used by both the steam trains and trolleys. Between Hammel's Station and Far Rockaway there had been one track for steam service, and in 1899 a second one had been built for the trolleys. For a year or two only minor improvements were made. In both 1899 and 1900 extensive and expensive repairs were made to the bay trestle; again in 1904, 475 creosoted yellow pine piles were driven and 715,000 feet of yellow pine timbers used for replacements.

Because of the congestion at the Rockaway Park terminal between Long Island R.R. trains, Brooklyn Rapid Transit trains and trolleys, an enlargement of the facilities was completed in May 1899. Extra terminal tracks were laid from Sea Side to Rockaway Park and the Brooklyn Rapid Transit elevated trains were turned about by running them up a ramp, around an elevated loop and down again to the surface on another ramp.

In August 1899, the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway received from the State Land Office seventeen acres of land behind Hammel's Station then under the waters of Jamaica Bay. The railroad enclosed these lands with bulkheads and on part of the tract enlarged the wye and erected a storage battery house for the operation of the trolleys along the peninsula. The electric power available made possible another improvement in May and June 1900. Electric motors were installed on the Beach Channel draw. During the summer months the bridge at Beach and Broad Channels had to be opened many times each day to allow pleasure boats to pass to Far Rockaway and two men had previously been needed to operate the winches. On July 9, the motor was set in position and began operation of the draw the next day.

Very early in 1902, the Long Island R.R. further improved

the acreage at the Hammel's wye with the staking out of a site for a sizeable power plant costing \$50,000. The idea behind this move was to furnish power not only to the trolleys operating between Rockaway Park and Far Rockaway but further to electrify the entire Rockaway Beach Division. A companion station was to be built at Mineola, and a regular trolley system installed, with high-tension feed wires and standard trolley wire of 600 volts over the tracks. Large electric cars, operating at ten- to fifteen-minute intervals would provide a fast service over the line.

On April 28, 1902, a freight train bearing two large converters for the Hammels sub station was derailed in Arverne, and the shock of bumping over the ties caused the couplings to part and the cars to overturn, dumping the electric equipment down an embankment into a ditch. This mishap, plus several delays in delivery, retarded the progress of the sub station. Construction had begun April 1, and the contract called for the plant to be finished by June 15. To meet the deadline, two gangs of men were put to work, one working the day shift and the other at night, laboring seven days a week.

While the sub station was moving rapidly toward completion, the railroad undertook to fill in a triangular four-acre tract of the low land that it had acquired in the Hammels wye area. As it happened, the road was then at work on the Atlantic Avenue Improvement in Brooklyn, which involved building tunnels for its tracks through a lengthy section between Bedford and Flatbush Avenues and between Rockaway and Van Sinderen Avenues. These great excavations furnished up to 100 or more carloads of dirt and gravel daily which were run down to the Rockaway peninsula and dumped in and around the Hammels wye.

Since dump cars had not as yet been invented in 1902, the Long Island R.R. used its ingenuity to empty the loads. The dirt was pushed from the cars by a large plow-shaped iron contrivance about eighteen feet long which was operated by a steam windlass. A train of cars was run on a temporary siding, the car with the windlass being at one end. The plow-shaped apparatus was placed on the last car and a signal to start the windlass was given. As the lone wire cable was wound around the drum, the

plow was drawn from one end of the train to the other, the dirt on each car being shoved off. In this manner a train of ten cars was unloaded in a quarter of an hour, where formerly a gang of fifty or more shovelers had to be hired. Some of the dirt and gravel was also dumped along the right-of-way between Woodhaven Junction and Ozone Park, permitting the filling in of the old trestle as had been done in 1892 on the stretch north of Woodhaven Junction. Still another portion of the fill available was dumped along the right-of-way between Hammel's Station and Far Rockaway to raise the grade of the track and to provide for better drainage.

During the summer of 1902 the railroad undertook a few improvements along the peninsula right-of-way. The roadbed was widened at Rockaway Beach on the north side so as to allow for the installation of four tracks if needed. All the railroad stations along the Rockaway Branch were wired for electric lights in June 1902 and one by one the old oil lamps were displaced. One of the most important improvements ever undertaken on the Rockaway road was the updating of the signal system along the peninsula. During June, July and August 1902 the work of installing semaphores went on and by August 15, the work was completed. The blocks were spaced about 800 feet apart and were worked electrically in relatively modern fashion. As a train passed over a stretch of track at one end of the block, the red danger signal was set, remaining so until the train reached the next block ahead, when the danger signal on the first block changed to the "all clear" green signal.

In the summer of 1903 the Long Island R.R. completed the double-tracking of its own Rockaway Branch from Valley Stream south to Far Rockaway. The track reached Lawrence by August 1 and Far Rockaway by August 15 and was promptly put into use for the summer operations. The switch and signal system was also greatly upgraded and this aspect completed by August 1, 1904.

Before the 1904 season began, the Long Island R.R. decided to relieve the desperate crowding of train movements along the peninsula by removing the trolley operation from the steam railroad tracks between Hammel's Station and Rockaway Park. This was done in two stages. First, the railroad secured franchises from the city to lay tracks through Beach 84th Street and



Rockaway Beach Boulevard westward to Beach 116th Street. This took the trolleys off the steam railroad tracks through Sea Side, the heaviest patronized station and eliminated them from the crowded Rockaway Park terminus, where the railroad crews had all to do to handle the Long Island R.R. and Brooklyn Rapid Transit trains. One must remember that the trolleys made frequent stops along the line and this created additional delays to steam trains following behind. Between Hammel's Station and Far Rockaway the Long Island R.R. got the trolleys off the two steam tracks by laying a third track for the exclusive use of the electric cars. Beginning in December 1903, the railroad began the work of grading for the new track. When the workmen arrived on the scene to grade the right-of-way, property owners began suit in the Supreme Court against the railroad, alleging that the railroad company had title to only a sixty-foot width. The railroad, on the basis of an old condemnation suit of thirty years before, claimed a ninety-nine-foot width. The matter came to be decided in the railroad's favor and the work went on. At 10 P.M. on the night of June 26, 1904, an army of laborers began the connection of the newly completed third track at Hammel's wye and the work continued all night long until 7 A.M. on the 27th. On Wednesday, June 29th, the new track went into use, just as the summer time table went into effect.

Because of the great vulnerability of the bay trestle to fire, the Long Island R.R., in March 1904, installed two hand suction pumps, intended to be manned by four men, and several lengths of hose in a tool shanty at Broad Channel. In case of emergency, these pumps could easily be transported in a hand car to any part of the trestle and were effective providing the fire was minor and had not made too much headway.

At the same time that this was going on, gangs of workmen were busy filling in and grading on each side of the New York & Rockaway Beach tracks from Aqueduct Station to the shore of Jamaica Bay. Work began in November 1903; during January 1904 the third track was about finished and the fourth track was installed by the end of March.

On the peninsula, as a necessary accompaniment to the widening of the roadbed, the old Norton's Creek trestle, installed in 1887, came in for rebuilding to accommodate three tracks. On November 20, 1903, workmen began operations on the structure

to add eighteen feet to the width. On June 5, 1904, the first of the new girders was installed in the bridge span.

In the year 1903 was made the momentous decision to electrify the whole Rockaway Division. The general adoption of electricity as a motive power on the whole western end of the Long Island R.R. had been made by the Pennsylvania management as soon as it took over the Long Island in 1900. It was felt that the Rockaway electrification would shorten the time between Long Island City and Rockaway from ten to twenty minutes, and that express trains could make the trip in half an hour. In addition, the change would boom real estate and contribute largely to making Rockaway a year-round place of residence. Finally, it would enable the Brooklyn Rapid Transit to terminate the last of its steam operations, for the Brooklyn elevated roads had long since changed over to electric operation.

In October 1903, the Long Island R.R. broke ground in 3rd and 4th Streets, Long Island City, on the water front, the site chosen for a giant power house. The great weight of the machinery and the marshy nature of the ground made it necessary to drive 9500 piles for a solid foundation. The power house that gradually rose was wholly steam-turbine driven, supplying 11,000 volts AC at 25 cycles. The high tension current was carried over a transmission line to the sub-stations. This line was carried in underground ducts from the power house through the streets of Long Island City to Dutch Kills. From here to White Pot Junction (Rego Park) it was borne on lattice steel poles along the railroad right-of-way. At Whitepot, the line for the Rockaways branched off and struck out on what was then private right of way to Glendale Junction, where it picked up the Rockaway track and followed it to Woodhaven Junction at Atlantic Avenue. Here was erected one of the large sub-stations. On April 11, 1904, President Baldwin authorized the purchasing department to buy materials for the construction of the Woodhaven Junction sub-station and for another at Hammel's Station on the peninsula.

The plan was that from the sub-station at Woodhaven Junction, one duct would lead westward to sub-station #1 at Grand Avenue, Brooklyn; another line on steel poles would lead eastward to Rockaway Junction (Hillside), the site of sub-station

#4. The third, on steel poles, would carry a line to South Ozone Park. It would then be carried on wooden poles built across the Jamaica Bay trestle to Hammel's Station, where was to be located sub-station #5. At the drawbridges the line was carried across the gap in cables sunk four feet deep in the mud on the bottom of the bay.

On May 21, 1904, plans were approved for the Hammel's sub-station. The building was to be two stories and of brick construction, 35 x 69 with an extension 62 x 100, to be built behind the Hammel's depot and 100 feet north of Bayview Avenue, at a cost of \$40,000. The contract for the Hammel's sub-station and the one at Woodhaven Junction called for the completion of both structures by January 1, 1905.

In November 1904, the first order for new electric cars was placed with the American Car & Foundry Co. Both the cars and their trucks were designed by George Gibbs, who also designed the New York subway cars. One hundred thirty-three cars were eventually delivered, numbered 1001-1133. They were 51'4" overall, 8'8" width, 12'1½" high and weighed 79,564 pounds. They were of all-steel construction, the first in the country; their maximum speed was 55 mph. They received the class designation MP 41. There were also five wooden baggage cars, 52 feet long, known as the MB 45 class. All the cars were assembled and equipped at the new car shops on the Long Island R.R.'s Rockaway Division built in 1895 between Baisley Boulevard and Farmer's Avenue in Springfield. Permanent inspection sheds were provided at Morris Park, Dunton and Rockaway Park.

The third rail adopted by the Long Island R.R. was different from the type that had been in use on the Brooklyn elevated lines since 1899. The Long Island's third rail was a low squat T-shape, 100 pounds to the yard in 33-foot lengths. It was supported every ten feet on vitrified clay insulators mounted on extra length ties. The Stillwell-Slater type of guard was used consisting of steel brackets attached to the rail and bolted to wooden uprights. Separate bolts held a wooden plank four inches above the top of the rail. At each side of grade crossings the third rail flattened out into a broad flat shoe, heavily insulated wire cable in a concrete duct carrying the current under

the crossing. The third rail was of the top contact type. A hinged slipper, cast-iron shoe mounted on a wooden beam attached to the truck of the car picked up the current.

By the end of April 1905, the army of 1275 men at work on the electrification had largely completed the bonding of the rails, the building of the sub-stations, the installation of electrical conduits and the third rail alongside the track. About a dozen of the new steel cars had arrived from ACF and 74 of the 200 HP motors had arrived along with the multiple-control air-brake equipment from Westinghouse. The cars were continuing to arrive eight to twelve at a time.

At Hammel's Station, meanwhile, the largest single storage battery in the country was completed. The battery comprised 300 cells with a capacity of 3200 amperes hourly rating and 9600 amperes momentary discharge. This was to be used during rush hours in summer on the beach division to boost the sub-station output.

Operating tests of the new MP-41 cars were first made during the week of May 14-20 along the five-mile stretch of track between Aqueduct and Hammel's Station. This was selected because there were no grade crossings, there was as yet very little train travel, and the stretch was absolutely straight. On May 19, a train made a speed of forty-five miles per hour over a four-mile trial course on the trestle. On the 22nd, an official inspection trip was run with President Peters of the Long Island R.R., Queens Borough President Cassidy and a party of city officials and electrical engineers from Long Island City to Rockaway Park, then via Far Rockaway to Springfield shops. The party then toured the main line between East New York and Belmont Park, while President Peters acted as guide, explaining all the installations enroute.

On July 19, 1905, the first electric train was run between Woodhaven Junction and Flatbush Avenue and back, the purpose being to test the clearances of the contact shoes on the third rail. A speed of from thirty-five to forty miles per hour was maintained without difficulty on the elevated portion of the track. On July 23, further inspection trains were run on the New York & Rockaway Beach line with some of the city officials whose permission would be necessary to begin service and also the electrical superintendent and the chief inspector of the

road. A speed of from fifty to fifty-five miles per hour was maintained.

On July 26, 1905, the regular electric train service from Flatbush Avenue to Rockaway Beach was opened to the public. Twelve round trips were made and a total of nearly 5000 passengers was carried. The first train left Rockaway Park at 7:55 A.M., arriving at Flatbush Avenue thirty-five minutes later after making thirteen stops in the sixteen miles. Three trains of seven cars each were in use, each train making four round trips. This was to be the regular weekday schedule with two additional trips on Sunday.

With the electrification of the Rockaway Division completed, the old New York & Rockaway Beach Railway had reached the peak of its development. In eighteen years it had been upgraded from a deficit-ridden country steam road to a modern, heavily traveled, electrified road.

Some corporate changes occurred about the same time. Beginning July 1, 1901, the board of directors of the New York & Rockaway Beach Railway had begun leasing their road to the Long Island R.R. on an annual basis and the lease had been renewed in 1902 and 1903. On May 26, 1904, the stockholders of the New York & Rockaway Beach ratified a resolution adopted by its board of directors on March 12, providing for the leasing of the company's railroad to the Long Island R.R. for an extended term of fifty years beginning July 1, 1904. Under the terms of the contract all the profits of operation after payment of fixed charges and operating expenses went to the New York & Rockaway Beach Railway. About the same time, the New York & Rockaway Railroad, the subsidiary of the Long Island R.R. which owned the right-of-way from Rockaway Junction (Hillside) to Far Rockaway and all of whose bonds were owned by the Long Island R.R., was unable to pay the principal on those bonds at maturity and was therefore sold under foreclosure sale on May 27, 1903. The property was, of course, bought in by the Long Island R.R. and reorganized as the "Jamaica and South Shore Railroad Company."

As the years went by, there were many minor physical changes. The railroad, in an effort to keep down the great expense of maintenance on the bay trestle, filled in from time to time some of the marsh area. In January 1906, tons of rubble from the

Pennsylvania tunnel excavations were dumped at Goose Creek, The Raunt and Broad Channel. While the work of dumping was going on, hundreds of creosoted piles were driven in and the old ones pulled up; the few trains at this season used one track only during the renewal. Again between February 1909 and June 1910, there was extensive filling in at the two ends of the bay trestle. There is record of additional filling in at Broad Channel in 1917.

Train operation on the Rockaway peninsula, in addition to the usual hazards of intense crowding and very close headways in summer, suffered from still another hazard uniquely peculiar to the peninsula; the densest concentration of grade crossings on the whole railroad. Had the stations not been so close together which reduced train speeds to a crawl on busy days, it is likely that many serious grade crossing accidents would have occurred.

The Village of Far Rockaway was particularly afflicted with crossings, six heavily traveled streets intersecting the track in a distance of a quarter mile. These were: Sea View Avenue, Hollywood & Cornaga Avenues; Park and Atlantic Avenues; and Smith Street. In the summer of 1901 the first attempt at grade crossing elimination in the Rockaways was launched, a campaign that was destined to go on for decades until final victory in the 1940's. The Taxpayers' Association of the Fifth Ward interested the Board of Railroad Commissioners, in 1901, to prod the railroad into formulating a plan for the Village of Far Rockaway alone. The railroad presented a scheme that called for a partial depression of the tracks, the closing of some streets (Park, Smith, Hollywood, Sea View), and the carrying of some others (Cornaga, Atlantic) over the railroad cut on bridges. Unfortunately, the shallow depression of the tracks would necessitate a three to five per cent approach to the bridges on each side of the cut. This the residents strongly opposed as unsightly, and injurious to property values.

The Taxpayers' Association countered with its own plan, calling for the deeper depression of the tracks to sixteen feet to make possible the bridging of all six streets at grade level, and to extend this railroad cut eastward all the way to the city line. This plan was estimated by the railroad to cost \$150,000, and would necessitate the lowering of the whole station and plaza area at Far Rockaway station. The Long Island R.R. resolutely opposed

this drastic plan as being far too costly, and that it would gobble up in one project all the State funds applicable to grade crossing elimination on Long Island for two years, leaving nothing for projects elsewhere on the island. The Board of Railroad Commissioners discontinued hearings after giving audience to both sides and there the matter rested for a decade.

In November 1911, the Long Island R.R. released plans to elevate the whole line from Hammel's Station to Carlton Avenue, Far Rockaway. The tracks were to run on a viaduct within concrete retaining walls, leaving crossings open and arched. Since there were about twenty grade crossings on this stretch, the elimination of them all would make the running of trains much safer and several minutes faster. Part of the decision arose from a controversy over Thetis Avenue (today, Beach 109th Street), previously an informal crossing. The railroad put up a fence and carried the third rails across to enforce closure of the crossing, but the local Fire Department protested and the workmen of the Department of Highways chopped down the fence. The railroad, however, held the trump card, in that the third rail remained a barrier, and to avoid tampering, the railroad stationed two trolley cars of the Ocean Electric R.R. across the gap.

In August 1915, an agreement was reached by the city officials and the Long Island R.R. for eliminating grade crossings in the Far Rockaway district at a cost of one million dollars. The crossings to be eliminated were the same ones proposed in 1901: Atlantic Avenue, Park Avenue, Smith Street, Cornaga Avenue, Clark Street, Hollywood Avenue, Sea View Avenue, Mott Avenue, Carlton and McNeil Avenues. Because of the great expense of the work—ten times the old estimate—and the rise in the cost of materials with the onset of World War I, the whole idea of grade crossing elimination on the Rockaway peninsula was shelved once more.

Meanwhile, other sections of the New York & Rockaway Beach Railway came up for consideration at intervals. In 1909, work was begun on elevating parts of the roadbed extending from Glendale Junction through to Ozone Park. This extensive task was completed at a cost of \$80,000 in 1911.

A few months later, in February 1912, the railroad presented an elevation plan to the Public Service Commission for the

tracks through Ozone Park. The plan that met with the most favor envisaged carrying the tracks at an elevation of about twenty feet through the village for over a mile on a series of concrete arches with thirty-foot openings. At the main highways the four tracks at this point would be carried by means of steel girder bridges. The cost was estimated to reach \$833,440. Half the cost was to be borne by the railroad, one-quarter by the state and one-quarter by the city. The high cost of this concrete arch structure led the railroad to propose a substitute of a solid concrete retaining wall with dirt fill. However, the citizens of Ozone Park almost unanimously denounced this plan as a Chinese wall and were determined to defeat it. Because of this local opposition the matter died down for a while, but in July 1914, the railroad again made motions to eliminate the Ozone Park crossings by proposing a low elevation of the tracks and the dipping of important streets below the tracks. This, too, met with strong local opposition and died.

Between 1912 and 1914 the New York & Rockaway Beach railroad bridge over Jamaica Avenue carrying the two tracks of the Rockaway line was widened. At that time the original stone abutments of 1880 still supported the bridge girders, and the opening between them was so narrow that there was no room for sidewalks and barely enough for the trolley tracks. Half the cost would be borne by the railroad and half by the city. It took ten months for the official bodies to approve the plans. The work was accomplished in 1913-14 and cost the Long Island R.R. \$32,000.

Over the years there were occasional improvements in freight facilities. Additional freight delivery tracks were installed at Ozone Park in 1913 and the yard paved in 1914. An additional siding track went in at Rockaway Park in 1913.

To move trains more effectively on the Rockaway Branch, automatic block signals were installed from The Raunt south to Far Rockaway. Installation was begun in April 1909 and completed in 1910. The large battery in the Hammel sub-station was taken out of service in 1916 after only eleven years' use and dismantled. The power supply from Long Island City had proved so secure and so adequate to cope with peak summer loads that this stand-by installation proved unneeded. Perhaps the last roadbed improvement of consequence down to World War I was



the installation of heavier rail on the Jamaica Bay trestle in 1917.

Two track improvements which took place on Long Island R.R. right-of-way but which benefited the New York & Rockaway Beach Railway were the third tracking of the line from Cedarhurst to Far Rockaway, and much more important, the construction of the Glendale cut-off. In all these years previously, Rockaway Beach trains had access to Long Island City only via the Montauk Division which was not electrified. This meant that electric train service to Rockaway could operate from Flatbush Avenue only; trains from Long Island City continued to use steam long after the electrification of 1905. The Long Island R.R. and the Pennsylvania Railroad, then occupied with the cross-river tunnels, saw the desirability of connecting the New York and Rockaway Beach Railway with the Main Line. Fortunately, the Long Island R.R. already owned part of the Glendale right-of-way through purchases made when the high-tension line was run from Whitepot Junction south to Glendale in 1905. On August 23, 1908, work began on the new cut-off. Three hundred thousand yards of earth were taken from the Sunnyside Yard excavations and used for the embankments on the cut-off. The connection was completed in 1909 at a cost of \$103,555.

Significant changes were taking place in the various passenger stations along the New York & Rockaway Beach during the first two decades of the century. Along the peninsula a new station was opened in August 1901 at Beach 98th Street to accommodate the Steeplechase ride and amusement center. Rockaway's first boardwalk, running from Sea Side to Holland's, had itself opened in June 1901 and the Steeplechase was but one of many new attractions along its length.

Balancing the gain of one new station was the loss of two along the trestle. On Sunday morning, December 13, 1903, Beach Channel station, one of those built out over the water, was totally destroyed. Two two-story frame hotels on the east side of the trestle and several hundred feet north of Beach Channel draw, caught fire at 3 A.M. and burnt down completely, taking with it the wooden railroad platform and about 300 feet of the trestle timbers. Railroad firemen worked hard to save the whole trestle, but despite their efforts, the flames burnt off the timbers to the water line. The following day the pile driver came down and drove new piles all day to get the line reopened. As of January

11, 1904, trains no longer stopped at Beach Channel station. On March 13, 1905, the railroad applied to the Public Service Commission to discontinue the stop and on May 31, 1905, received permission.

In December 1907, the station at Howard's Landing was lost after just ten years of use. William H. Howard, the developer after whom today's Howard Beach is named, opened a hotel out over the water some distance off shore from the west bank of Hawtree Creek. In 1900, Howard had built a walkway on piling about a third of a mile long connecting his hotel to the railroad track. The hotel, dancing pavilion, and eighteen cottages, all linked together by a one-street plankwalk, flourished every summer thanks to the patronage of clubmen and fishing parties. On October 23, 1907, fire attacked the little colony then shuttered for the season and burned it to the water line. Howard never rebuilt his place and the railroad abandoned the stop.

In January 1904, Hammel's Station, which had become shabby and dilapidated, was extensively repaired, cleaned and painted. Two years later, however, the station had lapsed into disrepair again, but no replacement appeared.

Arverne came in for extensive improvement in 1910-12. Plans were drawn up in 1908 for a new building at Gaston Avenue where the railroad had reduced accommodations to just a ticket office in the summer months. In the summer of 1910 the railroad announced that the new station would be built on a new site between Vernam (Beach 67th) and Remington Avenue (Beach 69th) as soon as the Public Service Commission gave its approval. The commission noted that the old station had become "antiquated" and that Gaston Avenue was no longer the center of the resort, population having shifted westward. Grading was begun in August 1910, on the north side of the tracks.

Active work began in 1911. The station was to include five separate buildings; the tracks of the railroad were spread apart so as to permit the placement of island platforms. The main station and adjacent shelter went up on the north side of the track; the island platform was a raised platform with a waiting room at either end and a ticket office and lavatory in the center. The material used on the outside was stucco. The main station including the platform was 481 feet long and 19 feet wide. In

May 1912, the station was completed and opened to the public.

In July 1912, the Public Service Commission gave the Long Island R.R. permission to build a new station at "Howard Estates" (Ramblersville). In April 1913, this small one-story building was completed.

A wholly new station "Brooklyn Manor" was built on the south side of Jamaica Avenue in 1911. In 1914 shelter sheds were added to the platforms, and additional ones in 1916 and 1917.

The biggest station improvement of all was at Rockaway Park in 1917. There a new and much larger building was put up after razing the wooden structure built in 1882. At the same time an extensive track rearrangement was undertaken. The old BRT elevated turning loop was torn down in the mid '20's after the BRT joint service ended and the terminal yard made wider.

The accident statistics over the years for the New York & Rockaway Beach reflect very favorably on the company:

June 12, 1900: The engine of a special plows into the rear of a regular train at Goose Creek at 11 P.M. Rear coach derailed; eighteen injured.

August 24, 1904: Engine fire box drops out at Howard's Landing and hot coals set fire to trestle, burning out about sixty feet.

October 2, 1906: Steam train from Long Island City breaks piston rod just south of Broad Channel station; electric train from Flatbush Avenue stalls behind it; suddenly, steam express from Long Island City appears and crashes into stalled electric; six injured.

November 14, 1907: Red hot coals dropped by an engine set fire to trestle midway between Goose Creek and Broad Channel. One hundred fifty feet of top of trestle burned.

May 31, 1908: Electric train blows out motor just north of The Raunt station and car goes afire amid panic. No damage done to trestle.

June 20, 1909: Ten-car electric train breaks apart just south of Goose Creek and last three cars drift. No one hurt.

September 3, 1911: Steam train from Long Island City plunges into electric train at Holland's Station because of air-brake failure; twenty-nine injured.

June 29, 1913: Two rear cars of city-bound BRT train develop

fire from short circuit on trestle between The Raunt and Goose Creek, and set fire to trestle for a distance of 600 feet.

Passenger densities on the New York & Rockaway Beach Railway increased over the years; regrettably, after 1904 lease to the Long Island R.R., separate statistics were no longer recorded:

1898	1,430,886	1900	2,069,353
1899	1,988,219	1901	2,976,449
	1902	3,400,629	

As usual over the years, the metropolitan population flocked to the beaches in record numbers and from the turn of the century onward, it became commonplace to report crowds of 60,000 to 75,000 on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays in summer. The newspapers report ten and twelve-car trains consistently. In June 1901, the first boardwalk was opened along the ocean-front from Sea Side to Hollands and the amusement places and bath houses that soon lined it attracted additional crowds.

While summer patronage at the Rockaway surfside resorts continued at a relatively consistent high level over the years, traffic to the little fishing stations on the trestle went into a steady decline. Jamaica Bay, down to the end of the 19th century, was a fisherman's paradise, a center of the shellfishing industry and a joy to boatmen and yachtsmen. Then, in 1899, the Town of Jamaica began for the first time to discharge its raw, untreated sewage into the bay. Not long after, similar pollution from Canarsie and East New York followed. By World War I, the shellfishing industry had been ruined and by the 1920's, fishing had become hazardous to health. Boating parties from the city ceased to patronize the boating stations at places like Goose Creek and The Raunt, and Prohibition completed the ruin of the old way of life by shutting down the saloons in the little waterside bars and boarding hotels. Finally, the opening of the city's Cross-Bay Boulevard in 1923, giving automobile access to Broad Channel and the other islands, spelled the doom of the little waterside stops.

Beginning in 1911, we get some idea of the commuter traffic on the New York & Rockaway Beach Railway:

	1911	1912	1918	1919	1920	1921
Brooklyn Manor					8437	9985
Ozone Park			2157	3222	4239	5617
Aqueduct			282	300	607	778
Ramblersville			1264	1969	2420	2968
Hamilton Beach					711	1005
Goose Creek			12	14	20	16
The Raunt			75	65	46	37
Broad Channel			220	390	520	799
Rockaway Park	2617	2925	26,091	32,605	40,383	49,974
Arverne	2197		13,286	17,568		
Far Rockaway	2194	6131	18,793	25,233		

A glance at these figures indicates that the spread of one-family homes in Richmond Hill, Ozone Park and Howard Beach was having its effect in the steady increase of commuters on the railroad. The figures for the Rockaway peninsula increase so dramatically before and after World War I as to strain belief.

The last act in the drama of the New York & Rockaway Beach Railway came in 1922. On June 30, 1922, the company was formally merged into the Long Island R.R. and ceased to exist as a separate entity after thirty-five years of independent life. Although this is technically the end of our story, it is perhaps appropriate for completeness' sake to record briefly the later tremendous changes of the 1940's and 1950's. In 1939, complete grade crossing elimination was begun on the peninsula railroad by elevating the entire line, a project that completely transformed the appearance of the road and fulfilled the dreams of civic planners going back to 1901. The elevated structure was completed to Hammel's in 1941 and between Hammel's and Far Rockaway in 1942.

On May 7, 1950, the most disastrous fire of the many that occurred on the trestle in its long seventy-year life gutted the timbers so extensively that the Long Island R.R., then bankrupt, declined to spend the huge sum needed to repair it. After lying idle for three years, the Long Island R.R. in 1953 sold the cross-bay line to New York City for inclusion into the rapid transit system for the sum of \$8,500,000. Service to Rockaway Beach, meanwhile, had been furnished by way of Valley Stream. At

the end of the summer season of 1955, the Long Island R.R. stopped running trains on the peninsula after seventy-five years. On the evening of October 2, 1955, the last train left Flatbush Avenue for Rockaway Park at 9:53 P.M. and the last train out of Rockaway Park departed at 11:29 P.M. During the winter of 1955-56, no trains ran so as to give the New York City Transit Authority the opportunity to make changes necessary for rapid transit operation. The mainland remnant of the Rockaway line between Rego Park and Ozone Park continued to be serviced until June 8, 1962, when the operation was abandoned.

The city, meanwhile, undertook the gigantic task of rebuilding stations, raising tracks and power lines and constructing new platforms and train storage facilities at the Rockaway Park terminal, where the existing station was subjected to alterations. A new station had to be built at Mott Avenue, Far Rockaway. In the spring of 1956, the track and switching layout was rearranged at Rockaway Park, and a modern signal system, turnstiles, railings and change booths were installed. The cross-bay trestle, the source of so much expense and trouble, was totally rebuilt on steel and concrete piling, and the islands beneath it were reshaped to provide a dry sandy base for most of its length. On June 28, 1956, the rapid transit service was opened to Rockaway Park and Far Rockaway with trains of the Independent Division of the subway.

## CHAPTER 10

### *The Beginnings of Long Beach*

**T**HE EIGHTIES AND NINETIES were certainly the heyday of the great watering places. Brighton, Manhattan Beach, Long Branch—all these names conjure up for us visions of hotels of baronial proportions set on a wide beach, their broad porches thronged with the great and the near great, their dining halls, salons and parlors glittering with the pomp and pageantry that real society affected in an age unashamed of affluence and public ostentation.

The Long Island R.R. had been an interested spectator in the foundation and spectacular growth of two of these great resorts, Brighton Beach and Manhattan Beach. Both had arisen as if by magic from empty worthless sand wastes and in a very few years had flowered into resorts that attracted the best society. The Long Island R.R. had come through a trying period in the late 70's with foreclosures, repeated court sales, reorganizations, etc. and the road longed for the prosperity and glamor of a seaside resort traffic of its own. But where could such a dream be realized? The nearby shores of Coney Island, the nearest to the big city, had already been pre-empted by half a dozen rival roads. It was true that there was a vast, unexploited shore line to the east, but these potential sites suffered from the disadvantage of considerable distance from the city that alone could give them life.

The one person in the railroad hierarchy most concerned with the development and furtherance of such traffic is normally the general passenger agent and it so happened that as of October 1, 1879, the railroad was blessed with a young man who had the energy and vision to see the possibilities of a new and not too distant site. William M. Laffan, during many years' residence at Far Rockaway in the summer seasons, had taken trips about in the neighborhood and explored the shoreline with a purpose. He crossed the Inlet between Rockaway and Long Beach and

there gazed upon what he deemed would be the right spot: a level beach almost seven miles long and containing in all 1800 acres, divided at that time into two parts by an inlet deep enough for navigation. The project then grew within him that here would be the place to build a popular summer hotel and a number of cottages, all to be of high order and calculated to attract a class of people like those going to Newport or Long Branch. Laffan pronounced Long Beach to be the finest beach in the world and he was confident from the experiences of travel to judge correctly.

The big problem was to sell this idea to the right people. The Long Island R.R. was, since October 1877, in receivership, and thus technically not in a position to launch an expensive venture. However, the railroad had at its head an energetic and far-seeing man who could recognize potential and who was not encumbered with the over-caution and mouse-like timidity of the usual run of court-appointed receivers. Colonel Sharp had been a military man and had come to the Long Island with a solid background of railroad experience on the Baltimore and Ohio and on the Confederate railroad system during the Civil War. Colonel Sharp took the lead in forming a private corporation of capitalists who would be in a position to finance Laffan's—now the Long Island R.R.'s—dream. The officers of the new corporation were:

Thomas R. Sharp, president

F. Hopkinson Smith, vice-president, writer, architect, civil engineer

William M. Laffan, general manager, soon to be manager of "N. Y. Sun."

The directors were: Frederick Tappan, William M. Fiess, John Hoey, Louis A. Hall of the Export Lumber Co. and Christian Christenson of Drexel, Morgan & Co.; Washington Lee; and Conrad N. Jordan, late treasurer of the United States. The company was incorporated at Hartford, Connecticut, under the laws of that state. The capital stock was set at one million dollars, of which it was supposed that about \$800,000 would be needed to set the enterprise fairly on its feet.

At the time that the Long Beach project was launched, Long Beach had only two buildings along its entire length, both Life Savings Stations, the one at "Long Beach" near Lucy's Inlet on



the West End (#30), and the Point Lookout station on the east end. Even these lonesome stations were manned only from September 1 to April 30 with a crew of six men and a keeper. The title to the entire beach was vested in the Town of Hempstead which held them as Common Lands. The beach had always been regarded as barren and almost worthless and the sole revenue it provided was a small sum annually for the right to cut sedge grass.

The first step of the syndicate was to survey the outer beach front in September 1879. A lawyer representing the syndicate, William H. Bartlett, called on Supervisor Clement of the Town of Hempstead and offered \$25 per year to lease the beach. Clement informed him that \$25 was not worth considering; thereupon, Bartlett offered to pay \$300 per year for a term of years. Supervisor Clement prepared for the syndicate a draft of a lease by which the company was bound to erect a hotel or boarding house to cost not less than \$24,000, and in twelve months' time; it was understood that the rights of the citizens of the Town of Hempstead—gunners, fishermen, clammers and others—were not to be curtailed in respect to crossing and re-crossing the beach at pleasure. The \$300 rent was to be paid in advance under penalty of forfeiture of all the improvements, and the company bound itself not to erect any nuisance building such as a fish factory, bone-boiling establishment, etc.

It was at first thought necessary to call a Town meeting, but on consulting the charter, it appeared sufficient to summon a public hearing at which all the citizens could assemble and air their views. The Town officers privately favored the project for it promised to bring in new revenue, develop a hitherto worthless beach area and would create a market for the Town's main products—fish, clams and vegetable produce.

On September 15, 1879, the Town Board met at Mott's Hotel at East Rockaway and presented the proposition to the audience. About 75 citizens were in attendance. Supervisor Clement proposed a 20-year lease at \$300 a year with suitable bonding. After some discussion there was agreement on the proposition. On Saturday, September 20, the officers of the Town of Hempstead signed the lease for Long Beach, but delayed delivery for a week on the odd objection that President Sharp of

the Long Island R.R. owned no real estate and so could not serve as bondsman. Colonel Sharp assured the board of his own and his syndicate's solvency and offered to furnish any bond in cash.

The lease defined the area of the grant as from East Rockaway Inlet down to Luce's Inlet and then to the Atlantic Ocean; then all the way west to East Rockaway Inlet and north up this Inlet to the point of origin, two miles in all of the seven miles of Long Beach. The lease was to run twenty years from September 1, 1879, and for \$300, payable in advance. The right of access to the beach for all private persons was reserved so long as they committed no nuisance; the prohibition against guano and bone factories was repeated and the company bound itself to put up at least \$25,000 worth of improvements.

On Saturday, October 11, 1879, while the Town Board was in session at Hempstead, a surprise messenger arrived, requesting the Board to come over to the railroad station where President Sharp of the Long Island R.R. had ready in his palace car the plans and exhibits of the syndicate for the development of Long Beach. The Board concluded their routine business hastily and adjourned to the depot to partake of Colonel Sharp's hospitality and to view the plans for the new resort.

The blueprints for the new Long Beach dazzled the Board. A hotel was planned 900 feet long, rivalling the Big Hotel at Rockaway. It was to be 150 feet in width with piazzas twenty-five feet wide on either side. It was to be in the Queen Anne style, unostentatious in appearance. The first story was to be devoted to extensive restaurants, offices, bar and ladies' waiting rooms. Upstairs, there were to be 229 rooms. The bath-houses in a building adjoining were to be double the size of those at Manhattan Beach, well-lighted and ventilated, each guest to have a bath-house to himself. The hotel was expected to cost \$500,000 but because of its size, completion was expected to take two years. Colonel Sharp explained that the whole object of the enterprise was to furnish business for the Long Island R.R. and that the Town of Hempstead could not fail to be greatly benefited. It was the railroad's intention to make Long Beach a first-class summer resort and passengers from Long Island City could be conveyed there in less time than to Brighton. The plans also included provision for the erection of numerous cottages, a large music

stand, etc. If successful, the promoters visualized an annual investment of about \$75,000 in improvements utilizing local labor. President Sharp then mentioned the project of building a railroad that would branch off from the South Side line at Pearsalls (Lynbrook), strike south through East Rockaway and Barnum Island, cross to the beach on a trestle and terminate behind the hotel. The revelation of all these grandiose plans and the colonel's fine sherry and good cigars served in the luxurious atmosphere of a palace car, mellowed the Town Board to such an extent that they agreed to amend the lease there and then to a two years' grace in construction time and to banning any steamboat access to Long Beach that might interfere with the railroad's monopoly. Colonel Sharp in gratitude took the occasion to hand over graciously the first \$300 payment to the surprised but pleased board members.

While winter still held Long Island in its icy grip, surveyors for the railroad sought shelter and a day or two lodging at Life Saving Station #30 to survey the beach, lay out the hotel and cottage sites and the railroad alignment.

The initial route of the Long Beach R.R. was quite different from what came later to be adopted. The first route ran from Ocean Point (Cedarhurst) across Hicks Beach and Broad Channel to Long Beach. Within a short time the difficulty of securing the right-of-way and crossing the channel at that point caused the railroad engineers to drop the Ocean Point route and to turn instead to the Rockville Centre vicinity. By mid-March company representatives succeeded in securing the right-of-way on nearly the whole line and for much less cost than the Ocean Point route.

While the field work for the new railroad was going on, Colonel Sharp was taking care of important legal details. The new road was incorporated as the "New York and Long Beach Railroad Company" on February 3, 1880. Since the Long Island R.R. was in receivership at this time and under the jurisdiction of the Federal courts, Colonel Sharp found it necessary to secure the permission of the court to conclude a contract with the Long Beach road, which permission was given on March 1, 1880. The contract, dated February 27, 1880, specified that the Long Island R.R. would furnish passenger and freight service from Long Island City to Long Beach; the Long Beach road was to

receive  $12\frac{1}{2}\%$  of the gross receipts and the Long Island R.R.  $87\frac{1}{2}\%$ , and in case of the extension of the road,  $20\%$ . The contract was to run for 50 years. The road was to be completed and opened by July 4.

At the same time Colonel Sharp negotiated a second contract of lease with Supervisor Clement of the Town of Hempstead for the balance of the beach, the five miles from Luce's Inlet (as then situated) to the Channel at Point Lookout. Hempstead Town was to receive \$1000 a year cash in advance for a period of 50 years. It was stipulated in the agreement that \$100,000 in improvements should be placed on the beach within two years, and that in case of failure to pay, the property with its improvements should revert to the Town.

In the third week of March work on the railroad was begun. It was now definitely settled that the road was to branch off at Pearsalls (Lynbrook) run south through East Rockaway, crossing Powell's Creek south of East Rockaway, then straight across Barnum Island to the beach. There were to be drawbridges at Hog Island Creek and at Old Wreck Lead. Nearly all the owners of property through which the road passed were glad to give the right-of-way in consideration of the improvements to be made and the increase in the value of their property. One Charles Wood who owned a piece of meadowland balked at giving land and even refused offers of \$250. A commission eventually awarded him \$40. An East Rockaway man, Lockwood Pearsall, suffered real injury because of the railroad running so close to his house, and was awarded \$750. The survey line was finished on March 16 and several train loads of material were accumulated at Pearsalls.

The Supervisor of Hempstead Town, in granting the railroad a right-of-way over Town land on Barnum Island where was located the County Poor Farm, required the road to build a depot on the island and to stop at least two trains daily when required. The railroad agreed and in consideration of the nominal sum of \$1, secured the right-of-way.

On Thursday, March 18, 1880, the first ground was broken for the new road at Pearsalls. On April 5, three hundred Italian laborers were set to work. The railroad building was done under the supervision of Henry C. Moore, ex-superintendent of the Flushing & North Side R.R. (1869-70) and presently roadmaster

of the Long Island R.R. Swift & Son held the contract for the pile driving.

The hotel of Elbert Abrams south of and opposite Pearsalls depot was dragged off its old foundation by locomotives and moved 150 feet east by the workmen, who graded the turnoff through the site. Abrams received \$3000 damages and \$500 for his lot. By the 15th of April the workmen had graded the route and laid ties as far as Ocean Avenue, East Rockaway, the site of the present station. The railroad dealt generously with the property owners whose land was touched by the survey line; we have record of the following:

Forrest Smith, \$600; Charles Brower, \$2712; Hiram Brower, \$300; Elisha Brower, \$300; Rev. Smith Abrahams, \$92.

By April 19, the grading had reached Barnum Island, and by April 23 the rails were laid as far as East Rockaway. Telegraph poles were installed and wires strung on the 22nd. Meanwhile, the building of the road was changing the appearance of Pearsalls (Lynbrook) station; the railroad depot was moved from the north side of the tracks to the south side and set up at the junction between the two roads.

On April 18, 1880, an excursion was made to Long Beach by the directors of the company, invited guests and members of several clubs. The purpose of the latter was to judge of the desirability of erecting a club house beside the hotel, but separate from it, in which it was proposed that a sort of composite club should have its quarters. Two special cars with elegant fittings and furniture with a separate compartment in each would carry the clubmen. The directors' car of the Long Island R.R., the *Gem*, drawn by engine #33, steamed out of Hunter's Point early Sunday morning with Master Mechanic Meehan at the controls and proceeded at express pace to Pearsalls. Here the train entered onto the new steel rails laid just two days before. At the head of East Rockaway the excursionists paused for an hour to lunch on fresh Hempstead Bay oysters. From here to Long Beach the trip was made in a sloop. The clubmen paced the beach for several miles, studying it with the air of connoisseurs and admired the site proposed for the club house. The party then returned on the sloop to the railhead at East Rockaway and dined in the car on the way back to New York.

Rockville Centre profited handsomely these days from the

construction of the road. Fifty more Italians were hired and brought in by the Long Island R.R. and these plus many others put up at the La Roza House and Crossman's Hotel, this increasing local trade. Foreigners were still something of a curiosity in old Yankee villages like Rockville Centre and the people marveled that those sons of Italy could be so easily satisfied on a diet of salt pork, bread and water, and sleep four and five in a bed head to foot like so many spoons in a chest.

By April 30, the rails had been laid below East Rockaway, and a double track part of the way. Men were working night and day on the road to meet the July 4 deadline. Parsonage Creek at East Rockaway was crossed on a trestle bridge which permitted the inhabitants to continue to enjoy the boating that had been traditional along the stream. By May 7, the double track reached East Rockaway.

At the point where the road left East Rockaway and entered onto the meadows, Swift & Co. were hard at work on the pile driving. By this time, of the 4200 piles to be driven, 3600 had already been set in place by means of the company's three hydraulic rams. The location of the drawbridge at Wreck Lead caused dissatisfaction from the very beginning because, instead of crossing the channel at right angles, the trestle was angled diagonally. The baymen complained vigorously, charging that it would be impossible for a sloop to come up at low tide and that Wreck Lead offered the best water of any of the creeks. They complained that the telegraph company had also erected their wires so low that even a small boat could not pass without lowering the mast. Other critics voiced their objections to the fact that the new railroad curved sharply to the west on Barnum Island when a seemingly shorter and more direct route could have been built across the meadow to the beach. These criticisms elicited no reply from the Long Island R.R. but a glance at the map would seem to indicate that it was the intention of the engineers to strike Long Beach at its western end and not midway toward Point Lookout.

In the week between May 21 and May 28, 1880, the Long Island R.R. opened regular passenger service between Pearsalls and East Rockaway. On Saturday night, May 29, the railroad reached the beach, and a train loaded with workmen, supplies, etc., made the first crossing to the beach on Monday, the 31st.

During the first few days of June, trains ran regularly to the new resort, bearing men and supplies for the hotel. William M. Laffan, the general passenger agent, lost no time running this ad:

"The trains now cover the distance of 22 miles, are equipped with palace cars and the roadbed is laid with a double track of the heaviest steel. By special arrangement from Pier 17, East River, fast boats will run in 15 minutes to Hunter's Point, connecting with all express trains and the beach is within 50 minutes."

In addition, the huge sign on the Brighton Beach pier of the Wall Street Annex boat overlooking the East River was painted out, and the words "Long Beach Pier" substituted.

To handle the anticipated heavy travel to Long Beach, the Long Island R.R. began the construction of a switch tower and interlocking plant at Pearsalls Station. A brick foundation about 12 feet square was laid just north of the tracks on Atlantic Avenue. The whole tower was to cost the railroad about \$2000. The switchman was to sit in the tower and with one movement unlock one switch and lock every other, change signal lights and lower the crossing gates on the approach of trains. Such a tower in 1880 was still a novelty and a rarity.

On June 5, 1880, the Long Island R.R. opened its new branch to Long Beach with four trains each way daily on the following schedule:

Pearsalls	6:20	9:25	11:54	4:21
East Rockaway	6:25	9:30	11:59	4:26
Barnum Island	6:30	9:35	12:04	4:30
Long Beach	6:40	9:45	12:15	4:40

As completed the new railroad was 6.094 miles long, single track, with half a mile of double track at either end, and a mile of passing sidings. We know that at least one of these passing sidings was on Barnum Island.

We must now turn our attention to the Long Beach Hotel, the center-piece of this grand design and the reason for the new railroad's existence. Legally, the hotel and cottage construction had no connection with the New York & Long Beach R.R. and was managed instead by a separate organization, the Long Beach Improvement Company. Work on the hotel began early in May 1880 with a force of 500 men. Grading for the foundation

of the hotel was begun with the levelling of the low sand hills. At the same time the frames for several cottages were raised. The 50 cottages which the company originally intended to erect were quickly leased sight unseen to New York families and applications from numerous other families in Philadelphia, Baltimore and other southern and western cities had to be turned down. The company began to consider the idea of building additional summer cottages and this necessitated a slight change in the route and terminus of the railroad on the beach, the track striking the beach a little farther to the west than at first intended. The cottages were to be strung out along the beach east of the hotel.

In the third week of May about 300 men were at work grading the hotel foundations and moving all the sand by hand with wheel barrows. The foundation timbers were Georgia pine 14 x 4 and these supported the uprights, some of which had already been raised. Many of the workmen were mechanics and boatmen from the south side villages but 40 of the carpenters had been recruited from Lowell, Mass. The workmen received \$2 to \$3 a day. All the timbers used up to that time had been rafted and boated from East Rockaway. The heavy timbers were run up through a small canal about 200 feet long to within a short distance of the hotel site. A workshop on the beach 75 x 25 finished the timbers. Some of the workmen lived right on the beach in a bunkhouse called the "Hotel DeMott," 25 x 100 feet and fitted up with about 250 berths. A crude dining room alongside, 60 x 25, accommodated about 200 men at a time. The American workmen paid DeMott \$4.50 a week for a berth and meals. The Italians lived in a cramped bunkhouse 90 x 25 into which about 200 men were packed. They lived chiefly on sour bread. By the third week of May the first two "cottages" were almost finished. These were really large dwelling houses, 38 x 50, two-story and attic with large cellars. They were attractive architecturally and finished in first-class style at a cost of \$2800 each.

By mid-June, the first, second and part of the third story of the hotel had been raised. Part of the reason for the speed of construction was that the framework and all other practicable portions of the new hotel were made and put in shape at the Long Island R.R. car shops at College Point, then shipped by



rail to Long Beach and bolted together. By this process much time was saved. A large force of men worked day and night on the pre-fabricated sections. A personal tour of the College Point machine shops afforded to a reporter permits us to gain an idea of the kind of work done and the materials used. The work of filling in orders for the Long Beach Hotel began at College Point on May 13, 1880, and by mid-June over 100,000 feet of yellow pine timber was planed, sawed, bored and shipped to the site of the hotel. Aside from the work done at College Point, 30,000 feet of lumber had been shipped from Long Island City and as much more from Bushwick, making in all 260,000 feet. The largest beams measured 10 x 14 with an average length of 26 feet. A force of some 50 men toiled night and day to put out the orders. The chief machines employed were two mammoth planes, a cut-off saw and a boring machine. The entire work of construction was under the supervision of C. McLean, Master Builder of Bridges & Buildings for the Long Island R.R.

By mid-June nine of the cottages had been built and a large force of men was at work on others. A bathing pavilion containing 1000 bath houses was also progressing well. This big building, 600 x 65, was two stories high and covered an acre of ground. In the rear of the upper story were storage rooms and departments for washing and drying the bathing suits. On the ocean side was a grandstand where people could sit and watch the bathers. J. N. Smith of Brooklyn had the contract for the bathing pavilion and the contract price was \$60,000. Fifty carpenters worked on the building.

As the July 4 deadline approached, work on the hotel, bath houses and cottages became more feverish. More and more workmen were engaged. Many rooms in the hotel were plastered by July 1 and it was planned to lay carpets in a day or so. On June 30, a band of 61 musicians arrived from Germany to furnish music, but for lack of accommodations they had to be taken to Shelter Island to recover from their sea voyage.

The great July Fourth holiday came and went with Long Beach closed despite the most strenuous efforts. Twenty carloads of excursionists came down on the railroad to visit the beach but found the hotel closed and no refreshments for sale. Although the visitors found everything still in an unfinished state, they showed obvious approval of the place and had an oppor-

tunity to gain some impression of what the completed place would look like. Professor Schreiner's ban of 61 musicians performed in the afternoon. It took the railroad until 2 A.M. Tuesday to get the holiday passengers back to the city.

Colonel Sharp, when questioned by the press, explained that there had been a little delay on the part of the contractors in delivering the water and sewer pipes and this was delaying the opening by one week. He announced that the Park Theatre in Brooklyn at 383 Fulton Street had been leased for a ticket office and headquarters for the summer season and would be connected with Long Beach by telegraph. Parlor cars on the railroad and rooms at the hotel could be engaged in advance.

On July 12, a special train brought a large number of members of the press and other invited guests to Long Beach. A sumptuous dinner was served at the hotel which was scheduled to open to the public for the first time on Saturday, July 17, 1880. The hotel did open as scheduled but only the west end of the structure was ready to receive visitors. On Sunday, the 18th, the first large crowds came to patronize the new resort. The railroad accommodations were excellent and a large number of trains was run. The dream of a new resort had at last been realized.

## CHAPTER 11

### *The Long Beach Marine Railway*

**T**HE IDEA of running a railroad the whole seven-mile length of Long Beach was a part of the grand design for Long Beach right from the beginning. At first the railroad was thought of as a shuttle to give the renters of the cottages strung out along the beach easy access to the hotel and the main railroad station, but before the first season was ended, the original idea of a shuttle road came to be expanded into a four-mile line operating as a separate entity from the New York & Long Beach Railway.

In February 1881, the promoters of Long Beach set up a second and separate company to develop the eastern four miles of the Long Beach peninsula. This was called the Long Beach Construction Company. The Construction Company in turn, on February 12, 1881, filed articles of association at Albany for the Long Beach Marine Railway, which was to "commence east of the Long Beach Hotel, running east along the beach by the most feasible route and terminating at the east end of Long Beach." The capital stock of the road was to be \$100,000, with 100 shares of stock of \$1000 denomination.

The Long Beach Construction Company set to work in March 1881 to lay the road with the intention of having it completed by May 1. Light fifty-pound rail was used. There were no particular obstructions to overcome on the flat sandy beach and it was easy to complete the work. There was one small inlet from the sea that was easily spanned by a 100-foot trestle. The beach at that time was entirely destitute of buildings, the only structure on it being Life Saving Station #32 at Point Lookout, 1.65 miles west of the actual point.

The chief attraction at Point Lookout was to be a large pavilion, bathing houses and several cottages. In order to get the lumber and other building materials to this remote site, the promoters hurried along the construction of the Marine Railway.

As early as April 1, a mile of the track was ready for use. Instead of buying second-hand equipment from the Long Island R.R. to operate the line as one might reasonably expect, the promoters chose instead to buy their second-hand rolling stock from the New York Elevated R.R. in New York at bargain prices: \$5000 for the two locomotives and \$2000 for the two cars. Regrettably, the records of the New York Elevated R.R. (9th Avenue) do not show which two of their twenty-one steam dummies were sold to Long Beach, but we can with a high degree of probability surmise that the two engines were built by Brooks or Baldwin in 1875-77; that the size of the drivers was 30" and the cylinders 8 x 10" and the weight six to seven tons. These old dummy engines were gradually replaced by newer Forney engines during the years 1878-79 and this accounts for their sale to Long Beach. As for the two coaches bought from the New York Elevated R.R., we know that they were open platform cars built by either Jackson & Sharp or Cummings between 1872-75. They were 35 feet long and weighed 9400 pounds. An odd feature of these cars was that the floors between the trucks were dropped to within a few inches of the running rails so that the passengers would not be frightened by being so high, and also to give the cars a very low center of gravity.

By May 20, 1881, the Marine Railway was in full running order and the elderly baymen who had virtually owned these remote areas all their lives were startled to hear and see a railroad engine and cars running along the lonely eastern end of the beach. A reporter who rode on the new road during its first week remarked that the track had been laid with great care and ballasted carefully. The cars moved smoothly and without rocking even when run at great speed. This, according to the company's report, we might add, averaged sixteen miles per hour.

With the Marine Railroad completed it became possible to transport materials for the construction of the pavilion at the east end. The ground plan of the building was 160 x 80 and during the first week of June, the uprights were installed and the sills laid. One hundred carpenters and painters, many of them from the south side villages, were employed on the hotel by contractor James H. L'Hommedieu, and foundations for six cottages east of the pavilion were readied at the same time.

By the third week of August 1881, the new pavilion at Point

Lookout was finished and opened to the public. The building was a smaller edition of the Long Beach Hotel but was pronounced "neat and commodious" by the press. It was supplied with gas from the main house.

The Marine Railway was the sole access to the newly opened pavilion. Large numbers of people rode down from Long Beach to Point Lookout to look over the new facilities. A dock had been built near the hotel and a fleet of yachts under the charge of Captain E. Southard took parties for sailing and bluefish angling. The railroad fare was 10¢ each way and the trains ran every hour. The entire crew of the road seems to have consisted of two people, the superintendent, Mr. Avery Marsh, and the conductor, Charles Hicks of Rockville Centre. Because the pavilion and railroad opened to the public so late in the season, neither could earn much money to recover the costs of construction, which for the railroad totaled \$138,575. Yet as many as 1080 passengers were carried on the little railroad on one day and on the average, 300 to 500 people used the road.

Over the winter of 1881-82 several high tides damaged the Marine Railway near Luce's Inlet and the owners had to make repairs during April 1882. The Point Lookout pavilion did a very good business during this 1882 season. By July the hotel and cottages were completely filled with permanent guests attracted by the breezes and the excellent fish and game dinners at the pavilion. No less a personage than the famous English playwright, Oscar Wilde, visited the pavilion during the week of July 16-22. To accommodate the numerous guests, the Marine Railway ran trains every half hour. By the end of the 1882 season, the railway had carried 18,324 persons, and ran up a loss of \$3,419.11.

For the 1883 season we know only that the Marine Railway carried 15,449 people and again lost \$2257.87. In the summer of 1884, the little road went into the hands of a receiver, Henry T. Chapman. Over the season 17,683 passengers were carried and \$1889.87 was lost. Over the winter of 1883-84 the road must have been wrecked again by the tides, for in March 1884 there was an obscure quarrel mentioned in the press between one of the Highway Commissioners of the Town of Hempstead and the Construction Company about the latter having taken all the wreckage away without permission.

In March of 1885, the Long Beach Construction Company which built the railway and owned its entire bond issue, was sold at foreclosure sale and bought in by the bondholders who reorganized the property as the "Point Lookout Improvement Company." The new corporation was unwilling to operate a beach railroad that always lost money and within three months, itself became insolvent, and the major backers, Drexel, Morgan & Co., sold the road to President Corbin of the Long Island R.R. The company's report of this transaction notes sourly:

"The railway never made expenses and probably never will, as it is always washed away during the winter storms and it takes a large sum to put it in working shape in the spring or summer."

By the end of 1885, the Long Island R.R. through Austin Corbin had also acquired full ownership of the Long Beach Hotel and all the property on the beach and with an investment of this magnitude at stake, there was strong inducement to undertake the repair and operation of the Marine Railway. The roadmaster of the Long Island R.R., George Offutt, to whom fell the responsibility of rehabilitating the ravaged railway, made this revealing comment:

"The Marine Railway between Long Beach and Point Lookout, being in a terrible condition on account of the long sections of it being washed completely away, ties and iron carried by the water over 1000 feet from the original line and the decay of ties, required a thorough overhauling and was put in good condition as to timber with the old rails relaid. I would respectfully suggest that at least 400 feet of this track be put on pile work. As it is at present, it will have to be virtually rebuilt every year at considerable expense."

The short trestle over an arm of Luce's Inlet was rebuilt as well. A sand train manned by a gang of Italian laborers moved up and down the Long Beach road carting sand to fill in the excavations made by the sea. In the 1886 season the Point Lookout Branch was incorporated into the Long Island R.R. system, and for the first time it became possible to operate through trains from Long Island City to the Point. Long Beach, however, continued to be the terminus for the majority of the trains.

Three more years—1887, 1888, 1889—passed uneventfully on the Marine Railway. Then, on September 9, 10, 11, 1889, a

severe equinoctial storm struck the island, whipping up huge waves and very high tides at Long Beach, Rockaway and Manhattan Beach, and inflicting fearful damage. Two miles of the Marine Railway were completely washed away. Two miles east of the Long Beach Hotel the ocean gouged out a new inlet where Story's Inlet had been thirty years before, further ruining the railway.

Although better than half the mileage of the Marine Railway had been destroyed, the Long Island R.R. rebuilt the road once again. In the time-tables for the 1890 season, six of the nine trains operated to and from Point Lookout. This season, however, proved to be the last. When the winter storms of 1890-91 again cut the railroad, Corbin declined to order repairs. In the spring of 1892, Austin Corbin made the decision to move the eight cottages at Point Lookout to the row already stretching out to the east of the Long Beach Hotel. To accomplish this, the Marine Railway was relaid for the last time to the Point, so that the buildings could be dismantled and loaded in sections on a train of flat cars, and then transported back to Long Beach. The track was then abandoned.

In the 1893 season the financial condition of the Long Beach company was so precarious that its board of directors voted not to open the resort at all. The hotel remained shuttered and sand drifted over the tracks. The end for the Point Lookout branch came in the following winter. Between February 12 and 16, 1894, a work train made its way slowly along the sand-drifted track, tearing up the rails and roadbed. The pavilion at the Point, forlorn and abandoned and left in the care of a watchman, did not long survive the railroad. In the second week of April 1894, it caught fire and burned to the ground.

The Long Island R.R. carried the Marine Railway nominally in its listing of the Long Beach Branch as beginning in Pearsalls and ending in Point Lookout for the 1893 and 1894 seasons; then in 1895, the Branch is officially described as terminating in Long Beach. In this silent and obscure way the little known Marine Railway drops from history.

## CHAPTER 12

### *Long Beach, 1880-1904*

THE OPENING of the Long Beach Hotel came a little late in the season but the glowing descriptions of the place in the newspapers and the curiosity of Long Islanders eager to see the new watering place at their own doorstep insured a large crowd of visitors. Harper's Weekly, the national weekly with which William Laffan had a business connection, circulated the fame of Long Beach country wide by running an illustrated feature article on the resort in its issue of August 1880.

The difficulties that the hotel had had on July 4 with the water supply were gradually resolved. The well for supplying Long Beach was located at the East Rockaway depot. It was 38 feet in diameter and had a depth of 15 feet. The water was sent to the beach at 40 pounds pressure through a six-inch pipe by two large force pumps. A break developed in the pipe on the first day and this had caused the awkward situation on July 4. One of the locomotives on the Long Beach road, the *Bay State* was at first used to pump the water, but was soon returned to passenger duty. Within two weeks the old boilers were replaced with new ones and Long Beach thereafter enjoyed pure water at 150 gallons a minute.

On July 25, 1880, a Sunday, about 5000 people were conveyed to the beach by twenty-seven trains and it was estimated that \$30,000 was taken in by the bar, restaurants and bathing houses. During the last week of July, sizeable crowds patronized the hotel every day, the receipts varying from \$809 to \$1200 a day. On August 1, 1880, about 10,000 visited Long Beach. The music stand was finished and used for the first time. Some of the visitors complained that the prices were high; a dinner at the restaurant could be bought for \$1, while the price of bathing suits was 25¢, both very reasonable compared with resorts like Newport or Cape May. Everyone pronounced the bathing excellent; the sand was hard and smooth and the water clear. The switchman



in the Pearsalls tower reported that 116 cars passed through Pearsalls to Long Beach besides the local trains. Both through trains and locals operated to accommodate the travel from the south shore villages, where an excursion ticket could be bought for 25¢.

By the end of August the Long Beach management had begun to use one of the main techniques for attracting crowds at Coney Island and Rockaway—a fireworks display featuring what was then called “set pieces,” specialty displays, one of which emblazoned on the night sky the words: “Success to Long Beach!” Sunday, August 22, was the most successful day of the season with fully 14,000 people present on the beach.

The Long Island R.R., to encourage riding, operated for a trial period of about one month (August 15 to September 15, 1880) an unusual service. Four trains per day left from Rockaway Park station and ran the length of the peninsula to Valley Stream, then to Lynbrook and down the Long Beach Branch to Long Beach. By August 15, the Long Island R.R. was running sixteen trains a day to Long Beach from Flatbush Avenue and a similar number from Hunter’s Point. The trains were crowded with passengers, the parlor cars being surprisingly well patronized. On Sunday, the 15th, it was estimated that nearly 5000 persons went to Long Beach from Brooklyn and as many more from Hunter’s Point. Many brought lunches and about 2000 went swimming. The Long Island R.R. further boosted traffic by running a series of cheap excursions from the interior villages of Long Island to the beach and this helped to familiarize Long Islanders with Long Beach. On Sunday, the 22nd, ten to fifteen thousand people appeared at Long Beach. A fireworks display attracted crowds and the entire 900-foot facade of the hotel was brilliantly illuminated. One hundred additional waiters had to be summoned and even then hungry patrons had to wait 20 to 30 minutes to be served.

On August 29, a crowd close to 15,000 persons again appeared at Long Beach. The new hotel offered oysters fresh from the beds as a fall attraction and lighted the fire in its huge fieldstone fireplace for effect. Even the local stations like East Rockaway contributed a sizeable group of passengers to the new resort. On the 27th, nearly 300 people made the round trip from this

way station, with 386 tickets sold and 192 riding without them after the supply gave out. On September 5, there were carried to Long Beach 160 carloads of people. Although some open cars were used on the Long Beach line, most people disliked them because of the smoke and the sandy roadbed, and they were thereafter withdrawn.

The Long Beach Hotel closed its initial season on September 25 and the *New York Herald* estimated that about 300,000 persons had visited the new resort in the 1880 season, spending on an average of \$2.50 or \$750,000 altogether. After the close of the season a little dummy engine gave local service on the Long Beach road to Pearsalls. On November 5, 1880, the Branch shut down altogether for the winter.

For the season of 1881 the Improvement Co. decided to lease out the hotel rather than run it themselves. The successful bidder for the lease was Richard H. Southgate of the Windsor Hotel in Montreal and former proprietor of the United States Hotel at Saratoga, the largest in the country, who agreed to pay \$40,000 for the season and 50% of the new profits. The Improvement Co., bound itself to keep the furniture and buildings in repair and to engage music, one-third of the salaries to be paid by Mr. Southgate, and the cost of maintaining the musicians to be borne by the company. The other important change was the organization of a new company, the Long Beach Construction Company, to develop the eastern five miles of the Long Beach leasehold. The bathing houses at Long Beach continued under the management of the Improvement Company. In December 1880, Colonel Thomas R. Sharp withdrew entirely not only from the Long Beach enterprise but from the presidency of the Long Island R.R. as well, and Mr. F. Hopkinson Smith assumed his duties. Additional cottages and two club houses were slated for erection in the spring of 1881. During March the third floor of the hotel was completed inside and made ready for the public. The kitchen was removed from the basement to the first floor for convenience and in the basement was put a playground for children, a billiard room and servants' quarters. Also finished was a row of seventeen cottages extending eastward from the hotel. These the Improvement Company leased out at \$1000 to \$1500 for the season, furnished completely for housekeeping and with free gas and water.

The company in March contracted with a builder to erect ten new cottages and a two and a half-story pavilion on the beach to be completed by June. In the last days of April, Mr. Southgate took possession of the hotel, and his chief colored assistant, Ezra Schuyler, recruited 150 colored waiters, laundrymen, cooks and helpers and outfitted them in dark blue uniforms.

Southgate used the month of May to complete alterations, repainting, etc., expending about \$20,000 of the Improvement Company's money. Fortunately a warm spring induced many to apply early for rooms, the greater number of which were already engaged. During May many carloads of sod were brought from Jamaica and placed around the hotel and cottages on the beach. The hotel grounds this year were beautifully arranged and adorned with flowering plants, trees and shrubbery. The bath-house to the west of the hotel was put in thorough repair. About 250 special rooms were reserved for the hotel guests, some 550 for public use and about 200 for women exclusively. A big fresh water shower bath was installed in each section. Electric light was tried out to light the grounds and the water at night.

The large music stand in front of the hotel was again to be occupied by Schreiner's orchestra of sixty-two pieces, engaged at a cost of \$32,000 and imported from Germany. The gas works west of the hotel were also completed at this time and were capable of supplying 8000 burners at night. During June the frames of six cottages were raised and the pavilion likewise, with one hundred carpenters at work. The pavilion site was about three miles distant from the hotel.

The owners of Long Beach were determined to maintain the high tone of the place, and to exclude bars, cheap restaurants and low entertainment. Certainly, the cottage dwellers were of the highest status: the University Club, the Knickerbocker Club, ex-Mayor Wickham, later Mayor-to-be Low, and other prominent business men and financiers.

As early as May 29, 1881, over 1000 visitors came to Long Beach on the six daily trains then running. During June the contractor finished up cottages 18, 19 and 20, and by July 10, cottages 21, 22 and 23. The new pavilion was finished on July 15. On the July Fourth holiday the crowd at Long Beach was estimated at from 8000 to 10,000 people, most of them parties from the city. The hotel did an immense business for the first

time. The reputation of Long Beach stimulated the establishment for the summer of a "stage" line over Hempstead Avenue from Hempstead Village to Lynbrook to carry persons to Long Beach. The charge was 50¢ round trip.

During the July 15–August 15 period the Long Beach Hotel was well patronized and the proprietor reaped a harvest sufficiently remunerative to make up for the dull times in the earlier part of the season. For three weeks the hotel had 500–600 boarders at \$5 to \$10 a day, according to the location of the room. On one Saturday the room clerk had to turn guests away although the hotel accommodated over 700. Cool weather in August cut down heavy demand and moved the management to light driftwood fires at dinner. The music of Kleophas Schreiner's orchestra continued to attract patrons, some to hear his afternoon military concert, and some to enjoy the dinner hour string orchestra. Sunday, August 14, netted the company from all sources over \$11,000.

The rates at the hotel for rooms and food caused much comment. Five dollars to \$10 a day at that time was within the means of only the very wealthy. The restaurant offered food and service of the highest quality only and prices varied from \$2 for a first-class dinner or \$1 for a good dinner to 75¢ for the ordinary meal.

In the face of all this seeming prosperity, it comes as a surprise to us to hear that on August 8, 1881, A. T. Stewart & Co. of New York brought suit against the Long Beach Improvement Co. to secure a claim for goods furnished and services rendered the company for \$20,039. Stewart obtained an order for attachment on the ground that the company was a "foreign" corporation (out of state). The suit was quietly settled satisfactorily. All was not well, however, and on October 27, 1881, the sheriff seized all the furniture in the hotel and cottages belonging to the Long Beach Improvement Co. under an execution against the company. On November 1, the Improvement Company defaulted in the payment of interest on its first mortgage bonds, hitherto paid upon presentation by Drexel, Morgan & Co. Proceedings toward foreclosure of the first and second mortgages on the property were begun by the Farmers Loan and Trust Co., as trustees, as a step toward reorganization of the company. The proceedings were friendly, for the bondholders

were also the stockholders; the vice-president Lewis A. Hall came to be appointed as joint receiver with Mr. Christenson, business manager of Drexel, Morgan & Co.

How could a venture which seemed so sound come to grief? One explanation offered was careless management during construction. The hotel building and other improvements were said to cost at least one third more than was necessary. Others claimed that the hotel should have been built much smaller and more cottages built, for these turned a handsome profit. Others pointed out that people came to Long Beach in droves at first, but did not care to go down a second time because there were no shows of a common order to attract. People did not really want pure air and fine surf bathing beyond anything else. They wanted noise and bustle and confusion, not rest or mere recreation.

As far as the hotel and cottages were concerned, there was really no failure of patronage as every cottage and every room in the hotel had been occupied during the season. The actual falling off came in the transient trade for which extensive and costly preparations had been made. For this the railroad got part of the blame because of the increase in the cost of excursion tickets and the lesser number of trains.

Perhaps all the explanations were true. At any rate, on December 6, 1881, the sheriff sold at auction all the buildings and their furnishings. In the reorganization that followed the sale, the bondholders agreed to accept preferred stock for bonds dollar for dollar and then make a new first mortgage for \$500,000. With this money it was proposed to complete the hotel and erect thirty new cottages.

The railroad service to Long Beach in 1881 and subsequent seasons differed in some respects from that of the first season. In the beginning, two of the top men in the Improvement Company were themselves officers of the Long Island R.R. and in a position to furnish anything the fledgling Long Beach R.R. required. In the last days of 1880, Colonel Thomas R. Sharp had retired from the presidency of the railroad, yielding place to Austin Corbin, president of the New York & Manhattan Beach Railway, who had purchased control of the road. Thomas Laffan retained his post on the Long Island R.R. for awhile but could not be as effective as before without the powerful backing of Colonel Sharp. Austin Corbin had founded and developed with vast

effort and much investment his own seaside resort of Manhattan Beach and could not be expected to extend to Long Beach the same solicitude and interest that he lavished on his own properties. Austin Corbin was not offered and did not become a director in the Long Beach enterprise like his predecessor, Colonel Sharp, and as a result the relationship between the Long Island and Long Beach railroads was much less cordial and much more official. It is true that Corbin did honor the old contract of 1880 to run trains to Long Beach, but he made no special effort to accommodate the traffic as did Sharp. Neither did he renew Sharp's policy of encouraging riding by offering cheap excursions. As soon as Corbin took over the Long Island R.R., he raised fares substantially despite great outcries from the inland villages and Long Beach along with other places. However, what is really significant is that Corbin saw fit to raise the price of the excursion ticket from Jamaica to Long Beach from 40¢ in 1880 to 75¢ in 1881, almost a 100% increase. This plus a considerable reduction in the number of trains run seems to indicate Corbin's real feelings toward Long Beach.

A hint of the changed climate between the roads came within three weeks of Corbin's take-over of the Long Island R.R. The huge signs on the Wall Street Annex ferry boat slips overlooking the East River and on the Long Island R.R. depot at Long Island City which in 1880 had advertised Long Beach were quietly obliterated by a coat of white paint. It was clear that Corbin had no intention of advertising Long Beach to the detriment of his own Manhattan Beach hotels.

An even more overt indication of coolness between the roads occurred on March 28, 1881. When Superintendent Avery Marsh of the Long Beach R.R. woke up on Monday morning, he found all his engines, cars and rolling stock had disappeared from the track at Pearsalls. The night before he had hooked onto a carload of ties consigned to the Long Beach R.R. and standing on the Long Island R.R. track, the ownership of which was in dispute. After the Long Beach train retired for the night, the Long Island R.R. employees had stealthily crept up on the Long Beach train and removed it. Only when the Long Beach crew woke up in the morning did it dawn on them what had happened. During the day the difficulty was composed after some frantic telegraphing and the kidnapped rolling stock returned.

HALF O FARE	<b>LONG ISLAND RAILROAD CO. AND NEW YORK CONSOLIDATED RAILROAD CO.</b> <b>Not Good For Passage</b>					177-Series 16 <b>63941</b>
	<p>This Memorandum must be punched before it is separated, and this colored half delivered to passenger paying fare to the Conductor. Punch Marks must indicate the Stations From and To which fare is collected.</p> <p>The Long Island Railroad Company, in issuing this Conductor's Memorandum, assumes no responsibility beyond its own line.</p>					
Rockaway Beach	Suffolk County	Holland	Hempstead	Brookl'n City	The Beach	Suffolk Co.
* * * * *	* * * * *	* * * * *	* * * * *	* * * * *	* * * * *	* * * * *
					Chambers Street, Manhattan, and other stations of Center Street Loop, or any New York Consolidated Railroad Station north of Brighton Beach, or West End Terminal.	* * * * *

**LONG ISLAND RAILROAD**

GOOD FOR ONE CONTINUOUS PASSAGE  
**ROCKAWAY BEACH to  
BUSHWICK (Brooklyn)**  
Via SHORT LINE  
Good only on a Rockaway Beach Train.

**28419**

In consideration of reduced fare, this ticket will be valid after Sept. 24 of year issued. Liability for baggage limited to one hundred dollars.

*Wm. Smith*  
Gen'l Passenger Agt.

Issued by **NEW YORK CONSOLIDATED R. R. CO.**  
Acct. Long Island Railroad Co.

GOOD FOR ONE CONTINUOUS PASSAGE FROM  
**CHESTNUT ST. JUNG. to  
ROCKAWAY BEACH**

In selling this ticket the New York Consolidated R. R. Co. assumes no liability for the L. I. R. R. Co. and assumes no liability beyond its own line.

*Wm. Smith*  
Gen'l Passenger Agt.

**832023**  
**57025**

**New York & Rockaway Beach Railway.**

Pass *B. Guinning*

(EMPLOYED AT THE RACES BY THE QUEENS COUNTY RACING ASSOCIATION)

Between L. I. City or Brooklyn and Race Track, Aqueduct.

ON RACE DAYS FROM OCT. 23 TO NOV. 7, INCLUSIVE.

**Fall Meeting, 1899.**

GOOD ONLY ON RACE DAYS OF THE

**QUEENS COUNTY RACING ASSOCIATION.**

No. **76**

*Wm. Smith*  
General Superintendent.

**LONG ISLAND RAILROAD**

**Rockaway Beach (Sea Side) and Manhattan Beach**—By either the Union's R. R. line.

In consideration of the reduced fare, this ticket is good only for continuous passage between Rockaway Beach (Sea Side) and Manhattan Beach or any beach or Union Elevated R. R. Station (North of Brighton Beach) via Long Island Railroad and Brooklyn Union Elevated R. R. The Long Island Railroad Company in selling this ticket for passage responsibility beyond its own road.

**NOT GOOD ON L. I. R. R. TRAINS.**

**VOID AFTER SEPT. 15th OF YEAR ISSUED.**

The express attached to this ticket may read: *Wm. Smith*  
Series 4

ISSUED FOR ACCOUNT  
**BROOKLYN UNION ELEVATED R. R. CO.**

**Chestnut St. Jc. to Manhattan Beach**  
Or any Brooklyn Union Elevated R. R. Station (North of Brighton Beach). In selling this ticket, the Long Island Railroad Company assumes no liability beyond its own road.

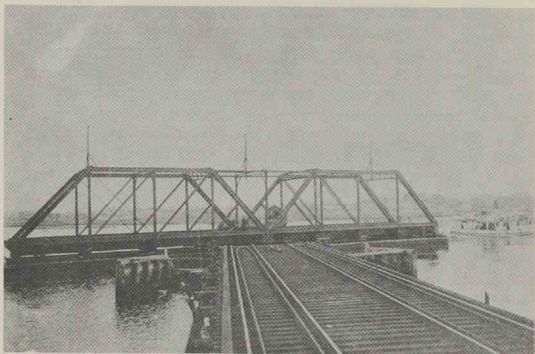
**Rockaway Beach to Chestnut St. Junc.**  
(Sea Side)

Subject to conditions of contract. Void if detached. Series 4.

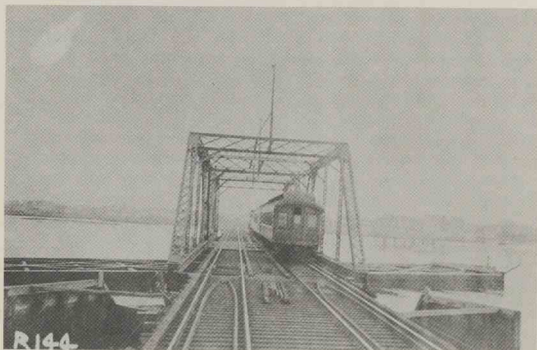
**91812**

**91812**

Varieties of LIRR and Joint Service tickets with BRT

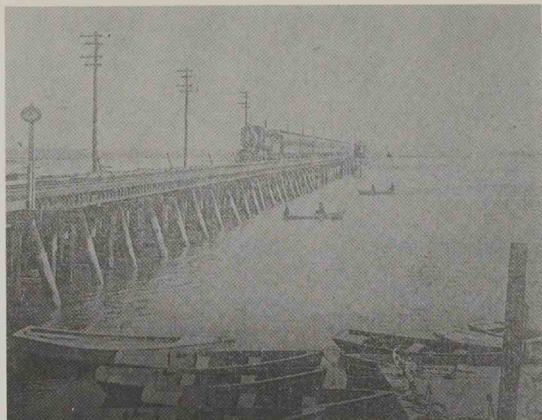


Beach channel draw, open position (Queens. Pub. Library)



Beach channel draw closed position (Queens. Pub. Library)

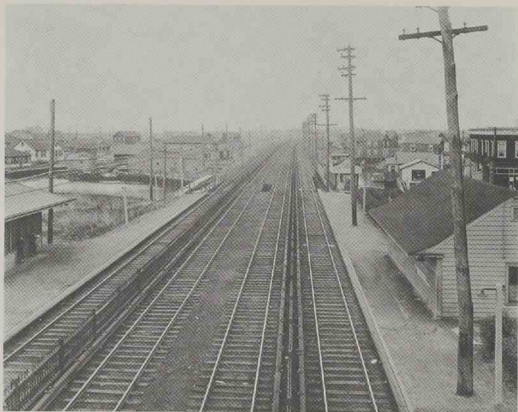




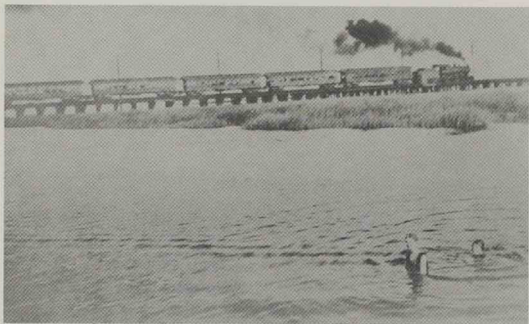
**Mother Hubbard engine on trestle near Broad Channel in 1906 (Eagle)**



**Steam train crossing Jamaica Bay at Beach Channel in 1903 (Tribune)**



Howard Beach station in 1934 (Presbrey)



Bathers at Broad Channel in 1914, train in background



Hammel's wye, east end, in 1911 (Presbrey)



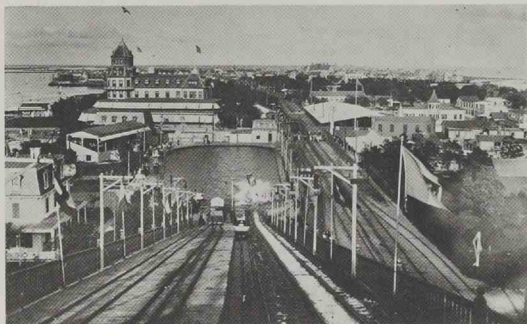
Hammel's wye, west end, in 1910 (Presbrey)



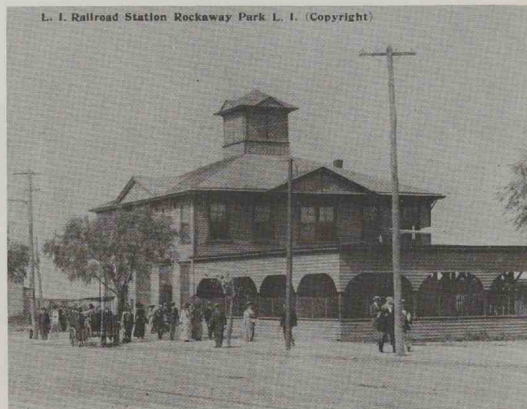
Arverne (Straiton Ave.) in 1910 (Presbrey)



Far Rockaway station in 1915 (Presbrey)

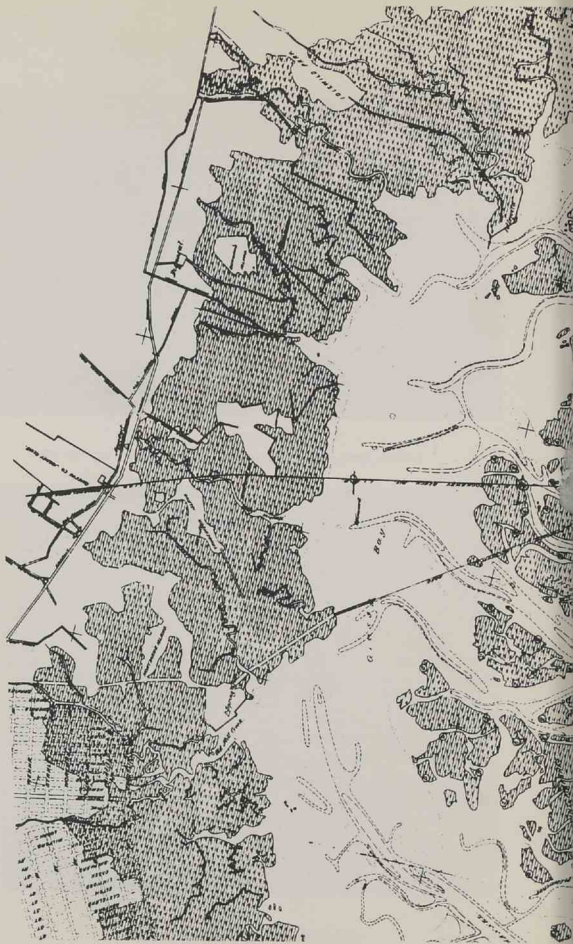


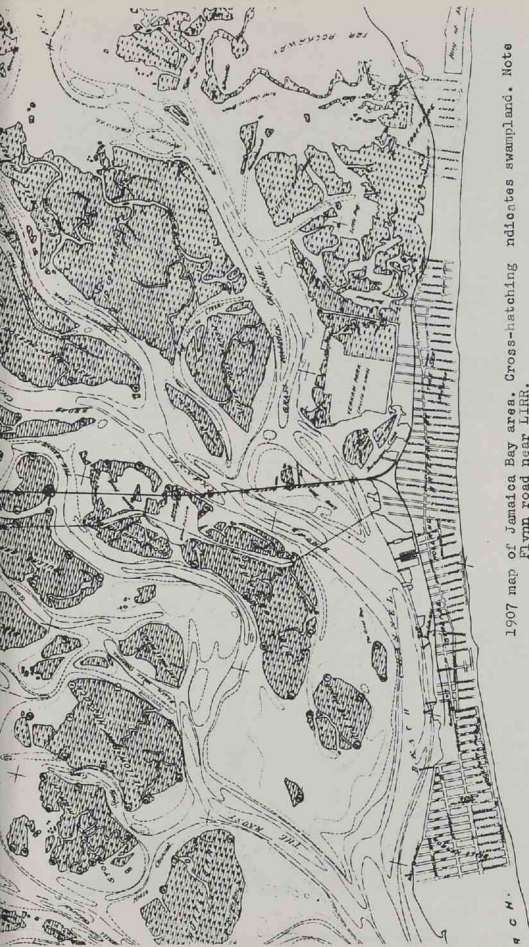
Looking down on Sea Side station from the chutes in 1899 (Ziel)



L. I. Railroad Station Rockaway Park L. I. (Copyright)

Rockaway Park station, 1882-1917





1907 map of Jamaica Bay area. Cross-hatching indicates swampland. Note Flynn road near LIRR.

A.C.M.



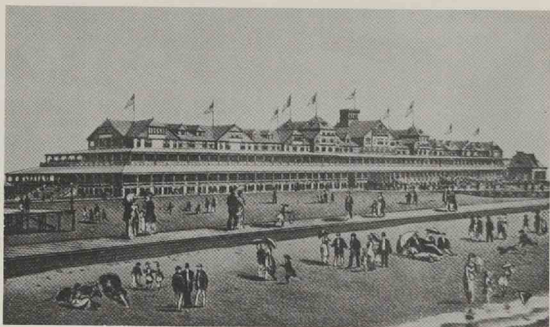
Rockaway Park station showing BRT loop and Ocean Electric trolleys in 1916 (Presbrey)



Rockaway Park terminal in 1901 showing BRT train, Ocean Electric car E-3 and LIRR train







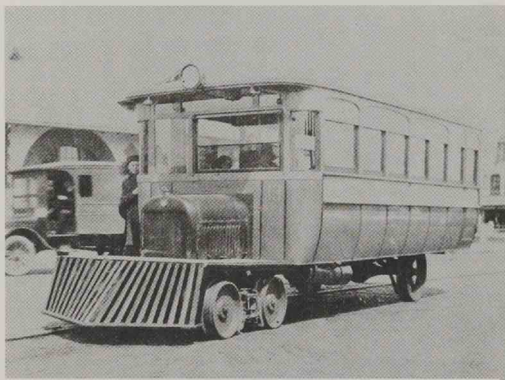
Long Beach Hotel in 1880 (LIHS)



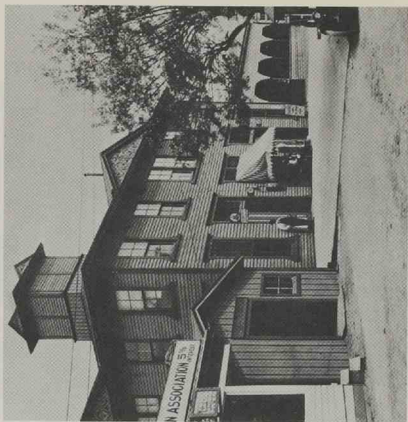
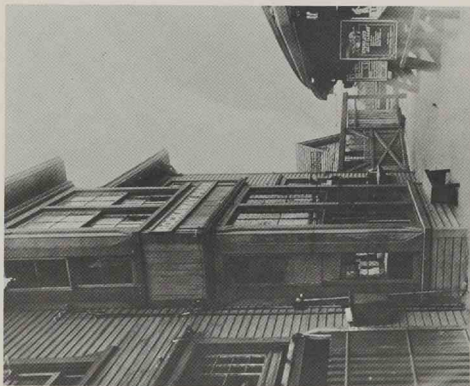
Old Long Beach station in 1906 (Eagle)



New Long Beach station in 1911 (F. Goldsmith)



Long Beach rail bus which operated 1923-1926



Rockaway Park station in 1916 (David Keller)

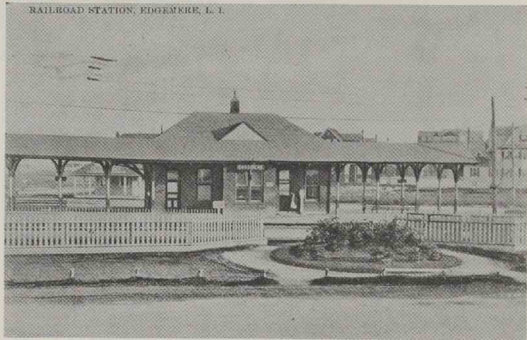


Seaside station looking east in 1916 (David Keller)



Steeplechase station looking east in 1916 (David Keller)

RAILROAD STATION, EDGEWERE, L. I.



Edgemere station (1909)

Holland Station, Rockaway Beach, N. Y.



Holland station (1909)

The Long Beach R.R. fell afoul of the Queens County authorities during June when the trains failed to stop at Barnum Island as had been agreed upon as the price of the right-of-way across the Town Poor Farm. Two of the County Commissioners reminded the railroad of the omission and within less than a week, orders went out to stop two afternoon trains a day as required.

In September at the end of the 1881 season, the Long Island R.R. dismantled the switch tower at Pearsalls (Lynbrook) at the junction of the Long Beach R.R. built just the year before. It had not been in use during the 1881 season and the railroad had decided that it was more convenient after all to work the switches by hand on the ground.

In the spring of 1882, the Long Beach Improvement Company, although in the hands of receivers, showed renewed vitality. Drexel, Morgan & Co. agreed to cash certificates for \$107,000 allowed to be issued by the court, and with this money make important changes. Several new cottages were to be erected and the first story of the hotel, which was formerly devoted to the bar, billiard room and dining hall, was to be partitioned into suites of rooms for permanent guests. The upper story was to be finished, and when all these rooms were ready, the hotel would have accommodations for at least 800 people.

Most surprising of all, the Long Beach Improvement Co. in its financial dilemma, agreed to sell to the Long Island R.R. its railroad from Lynbrook to Long Beach for a price reported to be about \$40,000. Since the total cost of the railroad had originally been about \$591,000, the Long Island R.R. got a bargain. The transaction was completed about April 1, 1882. During April the Improvement Company used the cash to construct suites of rooms in the hotel and to put up a new dining room for the use of hotel guests only. The pavilion was to be altered into a restaurant which would serve transient guests. Mr. R. H. Southgate was again the manager of the hotel for the 1882 season.

By the end of May the Improvement Company announced that about 200 new bedrooms were available with suites of three to six rooms and parlors connected with baths and all conveniences. Schreiner's orchestra was again engaged to play.

As early as May 30, a locomotive and one car began running between Pearsalls and Long Beach without any schedule, and two of the Long Island R.R. afternoon trains were met at Pear-

salls. On Saturday, June 17, regular trains began running on the Long Beach Branch and many hundreds availed themselves of the opportunity to visit. On Sunday, the 18th, the trains ran almost hourly. So far as fares were concerned, the rates remained high, 45¢ one way from Jamaica and no special round trip rate. A slightly improved train service was run during the 1882 season with fourteen trains on weekdays (four of these from Flatbush Avenue) and nineteen on Sundays (eight from Flatbush Avenue). Train service was taken off altogether in October.

On September 19, 1882, the Long Beach Hotel, with the pavilion, bathing houses and all furniture, was sold under foreclosure of the first mortgage. The only bidder was the attorney for the bondholders to whom the property was knocked down for \$200,000, and the personal property for \$4000.

While the Improvement Company was still in receivership in 1883, the court granted permission to lease out the property as usual. On March 14, 1883, a deed was filed as a result of the foreclosure sale, transferring the Long Beach Hotel and all other property to the Hempstead Improvement Company, Limited, for a consideration of \$1,800,000, subject to a mortgage of \$200,000. The change of name carried with it no change of control; the move was a purely formal one designed to settle the affairs of the company.

In April, Mr. Southgate took over the management for the fourth season and on May 29, the hotel opened. Many of the guests were persons who had engaged their rooms at the close of the previous season. The hotel, cottages and pavilion had all been decorated anew and electricity had been introduced. The first floor presented the appearance of a group of cottages with ten suites containing six rooms and bath each. The train service this season was ten trains on weekdays and eleven on Sundays.

A reporter for the *Brooklyn Eagle*, visiting the beach in June 1883, gives us this vivid sketch:

“Long Beach is a bar of hard sand and the hotel is located several hundred feet back from the ocean with broad walks running down to it and a planked roadway extending along the ocean front several hundred feet. From the piazza of the hotel and the balconies a panorama of the ocean is spread out before the eye. Instead of almost being level with the beach, the hotel veranda is many feet above it and thus the heat reflected by the



sand is avoided. By an admirable design of the architect the first floor can be thrown entirely open or closed tightly and the temperature regulated to the comfort of the guests. Every building at Long Beach is in the Queen Anne style; the hotel is the purest specimen of this style in the country. Its internal arrangements are perfect. The great parlor with its polished floor and solid fittings covers about half an acre of space. Adjacent to this are ten suites of rooms running from front to rear with swell fronts. Each suite is in itself a cottage having every luxury of a well-planned city house and railed off from the main piazza into charming privacy.

"The floors are strewn with rugs and Queen Anne furniture in polished ash. The main corridor is in the center of the building. On one side are a spacious reading room, the offices, telegraph offices and newspaper bazaar. Outside the hotel but approaching from the main rear piazza is the refreshment room and opposite on the east side the billiard room. The doors of the great dining hall open into the center of the building on the east side. The polished floor is reflected in the great plate glass mirrors of the immense sideboards which seem to be laden with tons of shining silver. The ash furniture and the spotless linen spread upon the tables scattered throughout the hall for the accommodation of a thousand people at a sitting present a picture that ought to rally the digestion of a confirmed dyspeptic. Eastward of the dining hall are more suites for families extending to the end of the building. The bathing pavilion has accommodations for 1000 people and the space is equally divided for the use of the sexes. The upper story of the pavilion is devoted to the accommodation of the band, Herr Schreiner and seventy-two men, each able to play at least two instruments."

The following season of 1884 brought no changes of any consequence to Long Beach. In March 1885, the whole Long Beach property, fifty bonds of \$1000 each and all the capital stock except 1000 shares, were sold under a judgment of the Farmers Loan & Trust Company for \$200,000. The purchaser, who represented \$180,000 of the bonds, was one E. P. Schmidt, who bid \$12,100. The sale wiped out all the floating debt and allowed a reorganization of the company. Then, on March 26, the property of the Hempstead Improvement Company and the Long Beach Construction Company, comprising the leases of Long

Beach and all the property except the hotel, were sold under foreclosure of a mortgage of \$500,000. Again the property was bid in for \$170,000.

In June of 1885, a new corporation called the Point Lookout Land & Villa Company was formed with a capital of \$50,000 to acquire and maintain land and to erect buildings. The idea was to erect a club house and about ten cottages and to limit membership to 500 wealthy business and financial figures. Finally, the hotel and cottages were knocked down to Austin Corbin of the Long Island R.R. for \$375,000, and he took title November 1. Corbin on September 25 organized the Long Beach Hotel and Cottage Company to take over the property. The new corporation was based at Hempstead and was capitalized at \$400,000. Corbin's final coup was brought off on May 5, 1886, when, at a foreclosure sale of the Point Lookout clubhouse, eight cottages and all the bonds of the Long Beach Marine Railway, he bought the whole package for \$15,000. He now controlled the whole seven miles of Long Beach as well as Manhattan Beach, the greatest assemblage of valuable waterfront property by one individual in the history of Long Island.

It might be instructive at this point to mention some of the improvements made on the Long Beach R.R. during the 80's and 90's. As might be expected from the Rockaway experience, the trestle bridge over Wreck Lead provided the greatest single source of trouble. The bridge had scarcely been built when complaints arose from the baymen, then a very important element in the economy of Long Island, that the structure had been angled wrong to the current of the channel. In addition, the draw operator aroused the fury of the baymen by disdainingly to open for catfish boats and sloops until compelled. Because of the awkward machinery of the hoisting mechanism, boats were sometimes delayed for hours trying to pass the draw. Complaints became so vocal that the Supervisor of the Town of Hempstead interceded with the Improvement Company to install a new bridge, and implied that the Town might institute a lawsuit. Tensions between the baymen and the railmen ran so high that a train-wrecking was actually attempted on October 18, 1881. As a train was coming up from Long Beach, the crew found that the drawbridge at Wreck Lead was up and someone had taken the rowboat used to cross. A check showed that the track had

been pried up four inches and that the bridge mechanism had been jammed. The machinery of the draw was on the mainland side and the locomotive fireman had no choice but to plunge into Wreck Lead and swim to the other side to lower the draw. In the effort to unjam the machinery, the engine ran out of water, and by the time the draw was in place, the crew just made it to Pearsalls.

In November 1881, the question of obstructing waters came up at a Hempstead Town Board meeting in reference to Powell's Creek, Hog Island Creek and Wreck Lead. Two officers called on the railroad and had a conference with the traffic manager relating to him the grievances. The manager promised to place men on the bridges that the same might be opened or shut as required, and when the road shut down for the winter, he would see that the draw should be opened and left open so that navigation should not be interrupted.

By 1882, the untreated piles of the original Wreck Lead Draw were badly eaten by shipworms and had to be renewed during April. The Town officers were dissatisfied with this attempt to renew a structure they objected to and notified the railroad that if the bridge were not replaced immediately after the 1882 season, they would bring an action in court to compel compliance.

In the spring of 1883, a whole new drawbridge and trestle was installed using creosoted piles throughout. Even then there was some lingering dissatisfaction and a vessel owner brought suit against the railroad company for damages due to obstruction to navigation. The suit was compromised for a payment of \$60 and a promise to open the bridge promptly thereafter.

In July 1883, the whole drawbridge problem was solved when the railroad contracted to install a new swing bridge which could be opened and closed in two minutes. The company agreed to have the drawbridge in working order not later than November 15, 1883. The installation of this improvement put an end to the friction.

The next improvement of record was the construction of a block signal tower at Pearsalls in May 1887 to control traffic at the junction. In 1888, a coal trestle was erected at Long Beach terminal and a new floor was installed on the Long Beach trestle. The only other improvement recorded was the filling in of the trestle over the mill pond on Parsonage Creek in East

Rockaway and removing the depot across the mill dam (1892).

It would be pleasant to be able to record the volume of passenger traffic over the years on the Long Beach Branch, but exact statistics are preserved for only three years:

		pas- sen- gers	freight tons
1885	East Rockaway	7166	143
	Long Beach	95,934	2364
1886	Pearsalls	58,594	
	Long Beach	98,320	2574
1887	Long Beach	103,499	3872

The era during which Corbin's Long Beach Hotel & Cottage Company exercised control over the property was the worst in the history of the beach. The cottages continued to make money and the hotel to lose money. The continued high fare of 80¢ from New York or Brooklyn to Long Beach coupled with the relatively high prices for food and hotel rooms discouraged the patronage of the predominantly middle-class Long Island population and restricted the resort to the wealthy few.

The fortunes of Long Beach reached their lowest ebb in 1893, when the resort not only failed to open in June but remained closed through the entire season. The managers decided not to increase the floating debt and voted not to expend the \$25,000 to \$40,000 needed to put the hotel in first class shape. In the meantime, the railroad track became covered over to a depth of several inches with sand drift and so at least protected the road-bed from washing out. The shutdown of the hotel proved a hardship on many of the men in the south side villages who had made their living as fishing guides, boat men, handy men, etc., at the beach. Worse still, the pavilion at Point Lookout caught fire in the second week of April 1894 and burned to the ground in a blaze that illuminated the beach and bay for miles. The loss was between \$25,000 and \$30,000.

Although the original stockholders of the Long Beach enterprise had long since been frozen out, the leading bondholders could not be prevented from exercising an important role in the Long Beach company's affairs. These men, strongly dissatisfied with the virtual abandonment of Long Beach by Austin Corbin,

now became instrumental in the formation of an association. These bondholders were Conrad N. Jordan, sub-treasurer of the United States in New York, General C. C. Dodge, General Thomas L. James, Vandewater Smith and J. S. Brownell and other well-known philanthropists of the day, with the idea of making Long Beach a "Chatauqua-by-the-Sea." "Parliaments of Religion" and other conventions of educational and philanthropic workers were scheduled for the 1894 season and the hotel was reopened as a strictly temperance house.

The program set for 1894 went off very smoothly but the times were not right for the adaption of so large a plant as the Long Beach Hotel and the scheme had to be abandoned in the second year. In 1896, management of the hotel was entrusted to an experienced man, George Murray, who made a brave attempt to retrieve the failing fortunes of the association, but without success.

The Long Beach Hotel & Cottage Company went into receivership and Paul K. Ames of Rockville Centre was appointed receiver. Ames made a contract with Colonel A. E. Dick of the Tampa Bay Hotel to run the facilities for a five-year period, 1897-1901. Colonel Dick brought up his entire staff from Florida, upgraded the service, intensively wooed the transient trade and successfully retrieved the fortunes of the association.

The Long Beach R.R. began to share in the economic revival of the resort. Even before the hotel opened, usually in the second week of June, a dummy and one car operated at the expense of the Long Beach property and under its supervision, between Lynbrook and the beach on an irregular schedule. The railroad and the hotel management now began to encourage for the first time the patronage of fishing parties to the channels and marshes in the bay and established several new fishing stations. The first had been Wreck Lead in June 1888. Then, in April 1898, flag stations were opened at "The Dykes" on Barnum Island; Inner Beach (later Queenswater) on its own island, and Club House on the Long Beach shore. Best of all, the fare from Lynbrook to Long Beach was reduced to 15¢. The encouragement of the railroad met with an almost immediate response; in May and June 1898, for example, two or three carloads of fishermen debarked at the new stops.

Other improvements were undertaken in the 1898 season. In

the last days of March, a gang of workmen busied themselves altering the grade of the curve and switch at Lynbrook from the Montauk Branch into the Long Beach Branch. More important was the project of rebuilding the old bridges over Powell's Creek and Wreck Lead, which, though often repaired, were now in poor condition. All during March 1898 the repairs were on and then well into April. Not till the morning of April 23 could the dummy engine begin its pre-season trips between Lynbrook and Long Beach. With the two trestles safely strengthened, the Long Beach Company bought one other small locomotive to handle the traffic.

The most important event of the year 1898 was the decision by the authorities of Queens County to sell the alms house or poor farm on Barnum Island. The island had been purchased at the instigation of and through the instrumentality of the Queens County Visiting Committee of the State Charities Aid Association of which Mrs. S. A. Barnum had been chairwoman. The island was acquired in 1874 and named in her honor. In November 1874 a road was built to connect the island with the mainland. Since that time paupers and other Town charges had been kept at the island. When the three western townships of Jamaica, Newtown and Flushing were consolidated into New York City in 1898, the alms house was declared surplus, for Hempstead, North Hempstead and Oyster Bay all had poor farms of their own.

On March 4, 1898, the superintendent directed that Barnum Island be placed on the market. A year passed without action and not until March 1899 were the inmates of the institution actually moved out. Again politics delayed a settlement, and only in May 1901 was the property actually put up for auction. In the advertisements for the sale, the property was described as comprising 450 acres, 80 upland and 370 salt meadow. The buildings on the property consisted of a 12-room cottage, which, eight years before, cost \$6000 to build; a women's building that cost \$5000; a large tramp house which cost \$4000, a barn costing \$800 and a few other minor outbuildings. The property was sold May 16, 1901, and brought \$40,000, going to a syndicate composed of five persons: Senator Peter McNulty, John W. Wainwright of Rockaway Beach; ex-Charities Commissioner

Robert Wright of Oceanside, George W. Smith of Rockaway Beach and John Lyons of Rockville Centre. These men in the following month organized the Jekyl Island Realty Company.

The syndicate announced that the name of the island would be changed to Jekyl Island and that golf links and tennis courts would be laid out. A new club house was erected on the southern end of the island on the Long Beach Road. The rest of the island was slated to be laid out in five-acre tracts for private residences.

The year 1899 proved the landmark year in the history of Long Beach. For many years, almost since, in fact, Long Beach had been leased from the Town of Hempstead, the various companies, one after another, had sought to buy Long Beach outright rather than be satisfied with a leasehold. In 1881, 1889, 1890 and 1892 offers had been made and all were turned down. The townspeople felt that the beach was worth anything from a quarter million to a full million dollars and spurned the much more modest offers of the companies. The bankruptcy of the successive companies and the threat to abandon Long Beach altogether, plus the 1893 season when the beach had remained shuttered and forlorn, seems to have sobered the electorate of Hempstead Town, and when the officers of the Land & Cottage Company informed them that no one would ever invest again in Long Beach without a clear title to the land, they were more disposed to listen. The movement to let Long Beach go for a reasonable figure to the Land & Cottage Company, provided it would reorganize and attract substantial new investment grew during the late 90's, and to the surprise of many, the townspeople voted in May 1899 to sell a part of the beach to the company. The sale was scheduled for the following year.

The projected sale of the public lands had the effect of reviving an old dispute as to who actually owned Long Beach. Briefly, the dispute was as follows: On Christmas Day 1678, the Town Council of Hempstead met and allotted certain properties to 42 freeholders, the eastern boundary of which was Brockleface Gut. In 1725, 59 of the descendants met together and deeded the property to Jacob Hicks, and from him, the Lawrence family acquired the property. The Lawrences deeded a part to Carman Frost, now living in 1899 and a clammer on the bay. Frost sold one-third of his property west of Brockleface Gut and east of

East Rockaway Inlet to another living individual, Richard Sandivoort. This gave Sandivoort a provisional claim to all of Long Beach and east to Jones Beach.

In 1898, Sandivoort brought suit to divide the property so he could get his one-third and Frost was made a party to the suit. The crux of the whole suit was the original location of the long-effaced Brockleface Gut. Frost insisted that Brockleface Gut was now represented by Zach's Inlet. The Town of Hempstead claimed that this was too far to the east by ten miles and contended that the old Gut was really a part of East Rockaway Inlet. The case went on in the courts for four years and in the last week of February 1902, the court ruled in favor of the Town of Hempstead.

In the meantime, the Town had prepared to sell Long Beach, as authorized by the voters in April 1899, for the sum of \$25,000 to the Long Beach Land Company, the new name for the newly reorganized Long Beach Cottage & Land Company, which had been incorporated on March 11, 1899, with Paul K. Ames, the ex-receiver, as president. The capital stock was only \$5000, consisting of five shares of \$1000 each; Ames held 3 shares, and John H. Corwin and Percy Jackson, both of Philadelphia, one each.

In the spring of 1900, the Pennsylvania R.R. was in the process of acquiring ownership and control of the Long Island R.R. and this explained the new interest of Philadelphia financiers in Long Island and its watering places as investments.

On the morning of September 8, 1900, a transfer arrangement was perfected. The new deed carefully defined the boundaries of the beach front to be sold, for, whereas the old lease of 1880 had covered the property from inlet to inlet, the electors of the Town of Hempstead had authorized the sale of only the main portions of the beach. The eastern boundary was  $73^{\circ}36''$  and the western  $73^{\circ}41''$ , or, in modern terms, from the west end of Atlantic Beach up to but not including Hempstead Town Beach. The deed gave the company 18 months to pay the whole \$25,000 and expressly protected the rights of the people to walk about, fish, clam, etc. On September 10, 1900, formal title passed to the Long Beach Land Company. The Town Board agreed to lease to the company the remaining land at Point Lookout at \$500 a year.



This historic sale was the beginning of modern times for Long Beach. The new Land Company now prepared to reorganize itself and increase its capitalization to more realistic levels suitable to a big investment and development program at the beach. The incorporators elected John L. Young, a well-known financier, president; the secretary and treasurer was Joseph Thompson, ex-mayor of Atlantic City and owner of several of the larger hotels there. The directors were John T. Gardner, a well-known Congressman, and Messrs. W. H. and George T. Ford, attorneys for the Pennsylvania R.R. The new officers acquired title to all the outstanding bonds held by J. P. Morgan & Co. as trustees and bought quit-claim deeds from the old companies to perfect their title.

While these profound changes were taking place in the status of Long Beach, various improvements were being made in the hotel and surroundings. In the summer of 1899 a new macadam road was opened all along the beach to connect the hotel and cottages, new stables were built, several new cottages and a new small hotel. To avoid the necessity of pumping fresh water four miles from East Rockaway, the new managers drove a well on the beach, where clear, sweet fresh water was struck at a depth of only 150 feet. In the 1900 season the improved facilities attracted one of the largest crowds ever to visit Long Beach over the Fourth of July. The golf links and tennis courts were well patronized and in the evening, a fine display of fireworks was given in Cottage Row. In 1900, Point Lookout was revived as a resort after seven years of abandonment. Numbers of cottages were built and more were projected. With the Marine R.R. gone, access now was by boat from Freeport, Baldwins or Merrick or by a walk along the beach from Long Beach. Land for cottages could be rented from the Town of Hempstead at \$50 to \$75 a year.

In the spring of 1901, the Long Beach Transportation Company, of which Paul K. Ames was president and principal stockholder, began a ferry service for the first time between Point Lookout, Long Beach and Freeport, using three launches, the *Sea Gull*, the *Mascot* and the *Augusta*. The company dredged some of the channels for better navigation and dock space and so reached Woodmere. Before the first season was over, the company extended its service to Babylon and Fire Island. The

hotel, which was enjoying a profitable season, suffered an unexpected setback when a boiler exploded on August 11; many guests, unwilling to face inconvenience, left before the season closed.

The 1902 season at Long Beach reflected the now usual greater prosperity. The hotel had accommodations for 1000 guests and found no difficulty in filling every room. The cottages as usual were all rented. A new kitchen and ranges were installed after the boiler damage of 1901, and the steam and power facilities were housed in a new building north of the railroad track. The Inn or Annex to the hotel reopened again and profitably. The twenty-two cottages were increased by one or two additions. The Long Beach Transportation Company expanded its service into three divisions. The Freeport Division between Freeport, Point Comfort, Point Lookout and intermediate landings; the Long Beach Division between Long Beach, Wreck Lead, Point Lookout and intermediate landings; the Great South Bay Division, between Babylon, Fire Island, Havemeyer Point and intermediate landings.

The Long Beach R.R. experienced no great changes during the last years. In October 1901, the Long Beach Transportation Company purchased a thirty-ton locomotive for use in hauling special trains and material for building docks after the regular train service ceased for the season. For the 1902 season, the road carried out extensive renewals, replacing over 1000 ties and spreading 100 carloads of cinders in ballast. Much new piling went into the trestle work. During April-July 1903, the railroad dumped hundreds of carloads of earth from the Jamaica Widening Project and the Atlantic Avenue Improvement along the trestle work over the meadows between East Rockaway and Wreck Lead. The last extensive repairs to the Long Beach trestle were made in 1904 when 300 new creosoted piles were driven.

The train service in this turn-of-the-century era was good and left no room for complaint. The lowered fare of 55¢ one way and 80¢ round trip from New York could not be said to be competitive with Coney Island or Rockaway, but was commensurate with the distance. Train service is shown on the next page.

The fact that the operation of the Long Beach Branch was seasonal probably explains why there were so few accidents, and even these few hardly more than derailments:

		<i>Pre- Season</i>	<i>Sum- mer</i>
1894	Daily	5	11
	Sunday	2	4
1895	Daily	5	11
	Sunday	3	4
1896	Daily	3	11
	Sunday	1	4
1897	Daily	?	13
	Sunday	?	10
1898	Daily	7	10
	Sunday	4	8
1899	Daily	8	6
	Sunday	6	7
1900	Daily	?	9
	Sunday	?	4

September 4, 1899: While turning the Long Beach train at Lynbrook, the engine broke loose and the sudden halt derailed the rear car.

June 26, 1901: open switch at Lynbrook derailed engine #505 and two cars on 6:45 A.M. train, shaking up passengers.

At the annual meeting of the directors in the spring of 1904, the Long Island R.R. decided to make certain corporate changes. The directors, although they saw fit to make a long-term 50-year lease of the New York & Rockaway Beach R.R., decided to end altogether the corporate existence of the New York & Long Beach R.R. On July 22, 1904, the Long Beach line was formally merged into the Long Island R.R., ending a quarter century of semi-independent existence.

So far as the New York & Long Beach R.R. is concerned, our story properly ends here; however, it is worthwhile to mention in passing some of the important events of the next few years. In the fall of 1907, the Long Beach Branch was put on an all-year status for the first time. Beginning November 1, 1907, four trains were assigned to the winter schedule.

Much more important was the foreclosure by the Farmers Loan & Trust Company of a \$700,000 mortgage on the Long Beach Hotel & Cottage Company. On February 8, 1907, a syndicate organized and headed by Henry Morgenthau bought

in fee simple the title to Long Beach, the hotel and the cottages. The price paid was about \$3,000,000. The chief bondholders of the property were now Senator Patrick H. McCarren, and ex-Senator William H. Reynolds. Reynolds became president of the "Estates of Long Beach," organized to develop Long Beach into a resort rivaling Atlantic City. Before any physical changes could be made on the property, the huge old hotel caught fire and burned down unexpectedly on July 29, 1907.

The developers, who had planned to demolish the sprawling, old-fashioned edifice after the 1908 season in any case, opened a new, more modern "Nassau Hotel" on May 30, 1908. The most spectacular of all the changes was the dredging of four miles of Wreck Lead Channel into a waterway 1000 feet wide and 40 feet deep. The immense quantity of sand and mud excavated was made to fill in the many small islands and channels on the bay front and to enlarge greatly the Long Beach area. Streets were laid out, curbed, guttered and graded, and home sites sold.

The spectacular growth of the new resort encouraged the upgrading of the railroad facilities. The long curve at the ocean front and the track along the beach to the end of the line of cottages was torn up, and a whole new depot and terminal area was built on a site provided by the Estates. The new station opened in June 1909. In the spring of 1910, the work of installing the third rail between Lynbrook and Long Beach began. On August 27, 1910, the electric current was turned on and a test train made the run to the beach. On September 8, 1910, the same day that the service into the Pennsylvania Station began, the first electric train with passengers made the run to Long Beach. The final installation was the erection of a concrete sub-station at Wreck Lead to service this branch.

In the years that have followed, Long Beach has grown greatly and became a city in June 1922. Today with its miles of boardwalks, hotels, stores, etc., Long Beach is easily the Atlantic City of Long Island, the fulfillment of the dream of its founders a century ago.

## **Roster of Stations, Locomotives, Cars, Trolleys**

### NEW YORK & ROCKAWAY BEACH RAILWAY

*Parkside:* The Public Service Commission adopted an order for a station on the north side of Metropolitan Avenue in March 1927. The station opened September 15, 1927. The station at first carried the name "Glendale" because it opened as a substitute for the Glendale station on the Montauk Division, which closed at the same time. On October 23, 1927, the new name "Parkside" was nailed up on the station structure.

*Brooklyn Hills:* (6.62 miles from Long Island City) In the last days of December 1888, the Brooklyn Hills Improvement Co. bought a large tract extending from Jamaica Avenue north to Myrtle Avenue and parallel to Woodhaven Boulevard for residential development. The New York & Rockaway Beach R.R. was induced to stop trains at Myrtle Avenue near Woodhaven Avenue on signal. The tract was very slow to develop and produced practically no business for the railroad. The station was discontinued in May 1910 in favor of Brooklyn Manor to the south.

*Brooklyn Manor:* In April 1910 the railroad applied to the Public Service Commission to remove the station from just south of Myrtle Avenue in a sparsely settled territory 3000 feet south to Jamaica Avenue. Permission was received in May. A temporary platform for the use of patrons was opened in November 1910. The full station was opened on January 9, 1911. Since it was built with high platforms, it could be used only by electric trains from Penn Station; Long Island City trains skipped this stop. In 1917 the railroad enclosed the back of the shed on the westbound platform between the waiting room and the shelter shed, also a canopy over the eastward platform from the head of the stairs to the shelter shed. Brooklyn Manor, as defined by the realtors, was bounded by Forest Park on the north, 96th Street on the east, Jamaica Avenue on the south, and Woodhaven Avenue on the west.

*Woodhaven Junction:* (7.61 miles from Long Island City) One of the original stations. The Long Island R.R.'s rapid transit station was shifted slightly east one block in July 1895 to enable passengers from Brooklyn to walk upstairs to the New York & Rockaway Beach platforms and under cover of a canopy. There was never a depot building on the upper level New York & Rockaway Beach platform.

*Ozone Park:* (7.91 miles from Long Island City) The village was named and developed by Benjamin W. Hitchcock, the same active real estate developer who founded Woodside, Garden City Park, the south side of Flushing, and other places, along with Charles C. Denton in July 1882. The wooden frame depot was erected in 1884 at a cost of \$1767.49. It was located on the south side of Broadway (today 101st Avenue) and on the west side of the tracks. In 1911, the Long Island R.R. petitioned the Public Service Commission to move the station either 1200 feet or 1750 feet south, but the commission after numerous hearings ruled (May 1911) that the depot must remain at its old site.

*Aqueduct:* (9.25 miles from Long Island City) The station was located just north of Old South Road (today Sunrise Highway) and on the east side of the tracks. No depot is ever mentioned in the press. The station is first mentioned on the timetable of February 1888.

In September 1894, the Queens County Jockey Club filed its certificate of incorporation to engage in "racing and improving the breed of horses." During September 1894, the New York & Rockaway Beach laid side tracks, extended platforms and made other improvements to accommodate the expected racing crowds. The track opened September 15, 1894.

*Ramblersville:* (9.75 miles from Long Island City) later Howard Beach. The station was first opened in mid-June 1899. There was no depot building; a boardwalk alongside the tracks served to mark the stop. This was on the east bank of Hawtree Creek at today's 160th Avenue. A 1902 article commented: "If you want to stop off here, you must tell the conductor of the train beforehand, and once there, if you want to have a train stop for you, you must go to the end of the long and narrow platform, pull down a "Stop" sign yourself which is

attached to a post, and never mind looking around for a station agent." (*Eagle*)

Long before the coming of the railroad in 1880, fishermen began building homes on stilts on either bank of the winding Hawtree Creek. In August 1903, the *Eagle* described Ramblersville: "It is a picturesque village on stilts. When the tide is low, there is almost no water, but at high tide sailboats come to the back doors of the villagers, all of whom are fishermen, clam diggers, oystermen or caterers to the city people who want to go fishing. The principal business is fishing, crabbing and clamming for the New York market."

William H. Howard, a Brooklyn leather manufacturer, developed a village here on 300 acres of landfill in 1911-12. He also dredged a canal a mile long, 150 feet wide and 30 feet deep and built model homes. In April 1913, the Long Island R.R. opened a new station for the "Howard Estates" just south of 159th Avenue and on the west side of the tracks. This became the new Ramblersville station. On April 6, 1916, the Public Service Commission allowed the railroad to change the old name of Ramblersville to Howard Beach over the opposition of most of the 200 residents. The order was issued to make the name of the station conform to that of the Post Office. The modern IND station was opened on June 28, 1956.

*Howard's Landing*: (10.74 miles from Long Island City). William H. Howard built a hotel over the water some distance out into the bay off the west side of the mouth of Hawtree Creek. The railroad station first appears on the timetable of 1898. It was a plank walk over the water alongside the southbound track only. Persons boarding northbound trains had to pick their way over the southbound track and climb into the cars from the inner side of the trestle. This curious and rather dangerous arrangement resulted in a fatality in the season of 1901 when a woman on a northbound train, unaware of the lack of a platform alongside the track, stepped off the train into the darkness and tumbled headlong into the swirling waters below, where the tide swept her to her death. In May 1902, the railroad built a platform on the east side of the trestle to avoid a similar accident.

In April 1899, the boardwalk on the west side was lengthened to several hundred feet. In the spring of 1900, Howard

built a footpath trestle almost half a mile in length from his hotel to the railroad trestle. Since this closed off the mouth of Hawtree Creek, he included a hand-operated 34-foot draw to permit boats to enter and leave Hawtree Creek, much to the irritation of the boatmen. In the *Eagle* of 1903 we read: "Howard's Station is a hamlet on piles some distance out into the bay, a popular boating resort and has the most pretentious hotels and cottages in the city's Venice. It has one long planked street about eight feet above high tide and at extreme low tide boasts no dry land. A walk on piles nearly a quarter of a mile in length leads from the railroad trestle to this unique village."

The hotel, dancing pavilion and eighteen small cottages of Howard's Landing were wiped out by fire on October 23, 1907, and the colony was never rebuilt.

*Goose Creek:* (11.67 miles from Long Island City) The station first appears on the timetable of July 1888. It was built on a tiny patch of dry land that rose on the south end of a clump of meadowland facing Goose Creek. In 1899 there were "six neat little club houses, two saloons and a hotel." A 1903 article described Goose Creek as "a fishing station famous for its weakfishing for more than 20 years; it has more boats to let than any other canal. All the buildings are erected on piles and at high tide are entirely surrounded by water. There are some half dozen club houses, the Pioneer being one of the oldest." (*Eagle*)

*The Raunt:* (12.63 miles from Long Island City) First listed on the timetable of July 1888. The *Eagle* of 1903 said: "The Raunt is the home of more rod and gun clubs than any other part of the bay, some composed of politicians, and others of the same trade or profession." Again, in August 1904: "Substantial hostelries are built on either side of the structure, which are largely patronized in season by fishermen."

*Broad Channel:* (13.46 miles from Long Island City) This became a stop on the railroad in June 1881. In the *Eagle* of June 20, we read: "A hotel has been erected here on one of the marshes by Charles A. Denton and the railroad has made it a stopping place. It is called Broad Channel. The largest part of those bent on angling alight here seek lucky spots in rowboats." In August 1903, we read, "Broad Channel boasts a fairly good



hotel and caters chiefly to fishermen who can afford luxuries in both boats and bait. The Broad Channelers are all shrimp fishermen who get 75¢ a quart."

*Beach Channel:* (14.20 miles from Long Island City) Began as an overwater fishing stop in the spring of 1888. Thomas A. Smith of Freeport, an ex-Congressman for the Town of Hempstead, leased from the New York & Rockaway Beach Railway a site and built a fishing station just north of the railroad's Beach Channel Draw. Here he erected a two-story house, 42 x 50, served meals and rented out fishing tackle and 25 boats.

At 3 A.M. on the morning of June 13, 1903, the hotel on the east station platform was totally destroyed by fire, including about 300 feet of the trestle. The hotel on the west side platform and a club house were not touched. The railroad thereafter discontinued stopping trains there, and in 1904, the two surviving buildings were moved to the mainland. To legalize the abandonment, the railroad asked for permission from the Public Service Commission. This was approved May 31, 1905.

*Hammel's Station:* (14.67 miles from Long Island City) Louis Hammel's Hotel faced Jamaica Bay and was located on the west side of the railroad tracks at the shore line. A little farther westward stood the hotel of Garry Eldert also overlooking Jamaica Bay. In June 1880, Eldert put up a railway depot on his own property at a cost of \$3000. The structure was 30 x 70. The long plank walk alongside both tracks must easily have served both hotels. In May 1886, a larger platform was added and some attempt at beautification was made by laying out lawns. For some reason not now clear, a new station building was erected by the railway in the spring of 1888. Nothing is known about the fate of Eldert's structure which must have been two stories judging by its cost.

In January 1904 the station was described as "dilapidated" and received the benefit of carpentering and painting. In January, 1906, the residents were petitioning for a new station building because the present one was "falling to pieces." Down to the end of New York & Rockaway Beach Railway days in 1922, the old depot continued in service. Closed 1941.

*Holland's Station:* (15.06 miles from Long Island City) Discon-

tinued as a station in 1941. Named for the hotel of Michael P. Holland at what is today the northwest corner of Holland Avenue and Beach 92nd Street. On April 16, 1883, the original hotel burned down but was quickly rebuilt. The Holland Hotel faced the South Side R.R. track and had its own station there till the abandonment of the track in 1887. The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway station was on the east side of Beach 92nd Street and south of the tracks. It was built in May-June 1880 and was described as a "fine Gothic structure, 36 x 52, two stories and handsome." A small freight station was added in 1887 for \$188. Then in 1893, a new freight house of brick, 22 x 80, and an express building, 20 x 80, were added. The station building was "overhauled" in April-May 1899; a new baggage room was added in 1914.

*Steeplechase:* In May 1900, George C. Tilyou of the Coney Island amusement family, bought up the Ward Estate between 97th and 101st Streets with the intention of starting an amusement park. He then bought up cheaply most of the amusement equipment at the Buffalo Exposition of 1901 and brought it to Rockaway Beach, where he established a new amusement centre called "Steeplechase Park." In it was a scenic railway, an Old Mill or Aquarama, Merry-go-round, Zoological Garden, etc. On the beach front he built a large bathing pavilion, 200 x 183 with 1800 bath houses, with a fronting colonnade nearly 1000 feet long. Later named Playland.

On August 8, 1901, Tilyou got the Long Island R.R. to establish a station at Beach 98th Street (Ward Avenue) especially to give easy access to Steeplechase Park. Trains and trolleys began stopping there for the first time on Sunday, August 11, 1901. The station extended from Beach 98th Street to Beach 101st Street. A depot building was started in the last days of April 1902. On May 10, 1902, eight carloads of lumber arrived and work started on framing the building, 20 x 30 feet (another account says 18 x 25) and also a large covered platform 400 feet long and 60 feet deep. The station opened in April 1903.

*Beach Avenue:* One of the original stops on the road at Beach 101st Street. The boardwalk platform was on the east side of the street and south of the tracks. The stop appears to have been abandoned after the 1887 season, for what reason is unknown.

*Sea Side:* (15.55 miles from Long Island City) This station was for decades the heaviest on the road, the stop for all the bath houses and amusements. The original station of 1880 was midway between Sea Side (Beach 102nd) and Remsen (Beach 103rd) Avenues. An article of 1880 describes the building as having two stories and with cupolas at either end and one in the center.

By 1888, this depot had grown hopelessly inadequate to accommodate the crowds. In April 1888, the railroad bought the Metropolitan Hotel from Jersey City Alderman E. E. Datz, located on the east side of Beach 104th Street and just south of the track, and transformed it into a large depot with waiting rooms, etc. This building, which had opened as a hotel on June 1, 1881, extended 250 feet along the railroad track and 100 feet on Sea Side Avenue. Before remodeling, there had been on the first floor a bar 85 feet long and a dining room seating 800, and a billiard room with 14 tables. On September 20, 1892, this huge station burned down. A successor station, this time a smaller, two-story frame building, was built on the same site. This was accidentally set on fire by an oil stove of one of the railroad employees and burnt to the ground on August 29, 1893. A fourth station was erected in 1894, apparently a large one-story train shed. This station was "overhauled" in April-May 1899.

*Rockaway Beach:* (16.30 miles from Long Island City) The New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway built as its Rockaway terminal a large, two-story depot in April-May 1882. On the ground floor were ticket offices and waiting rooms; in the upper story were the offices of the superintendent and dispatcher, the telegraph operators and a private suite for the president. Contemporary accounts say that "the new depot surpasses anything of its kind in that section. It is handsomely furnished and complete in all its appointments."

The name of the station was changed to Rockaway Park in 1889 when the village was laid out for development. In the same year a new car house was completed. In the spring of 1899 the depot area was enlarged with extra tracks and an elevated loop to turn the Brooklyn Rapid Transit trains.

In the spring of 1917 a new brick station was built on the east side of Beach 116th Street with a frontage of 201 foot and a depth of 60 feet.

## FAR ROCKAWAY BRANCH

*Far Rockaway:* The South Side R.R. had a station here when service began in June 1869. There is no evidence for the presence of a depot building. On October 1, 1881, a station building was opened for service. The growing importance and traffic of Far Rockaway brought pressure for better facilities, and on March 31, 1890, a new site close to the old station was staked out. The contract went to a man named Foster; specifications called for a brick building 30 x 70. The new station opened in July 1890. The old depot was purchased by the Protective Hook & Ladder Company and moved to Central Avenue (Beach 20th Street), where it was fitted up as a truck house and opened in mid-October. The old express office and storage room was moved to the dock at the foot of Union Street to serve as a brick and lime storehouse.

*Wavecrest:* at old Healey Avenue, now Beach 25th Street Station at crossing of Far Rockaway Boulevard. Continued in use till end of service on October 2, 1955.

*Edgemere:* Edgemere was first developed in 1892 by Frederick J. Lancaster who was president of the Lancaster Sea Beach Improvement Company. The area was then a sandy waste with only two or three houses and a hotel, the Halfway House. Lancaster first called the place New Venice. On June 22, 1895, the big new Edgemere Hotel opened for business. To accommodate the hotel, the Long Island R.R. opened a new station on June 21, 1895.

*Frank Avenue:* located at Beach 44th Street. Originally a trolley stop, but became a train stop in 1922 and continued in use till the end of service on October 2, 1955.

*Arverne:* Remington Vernam, a New York lawyer, bought up the sandy wastes now constituting Arverne and spent \$600,000 in laying out a seaside colony, which was opened to the public on July 4, 1888. Mrs. Vernam was inspired to name the new development "Arverne" from the way her husband customarily signed his checks. The railroad station was located at Gaston Avenue, Beach 66th Street.

In 1892, as a result of a quarrel with Vernam over the ownership and use of the station building, the railroad refused to stop trains as of June 27, and began stopping instead several blocks to the east at Straitton Avenue (Beach 60th Street).

The matter went through the courts and the railroad was ordered to resume some service to the Gaston Avenue station. The Straitton Avenue station was a new brick structure, located between Beach 59th and Beach 60th Streets.

The permanent effect of the 1892 quarrel was to create two Arverne stations, the one referred to on the timetables as "Arverne, Gaston Avenue" and the other as "Arverne, Straitton Avenue."

In 1911-12, the Arverne station at Gaston Avenue was completely rebuilt on a new site between Beach 67th Street and Beach 69th Streets, west of the old site. The station building and shelter went up on the north side of the track; in the center was a high-level island platform with a waiting room at either end and a ticket office and lavatory in the center. The new station was opened in May 1912.

#### LONG BEACH STATIONS

*South Lynbrook:* mentioned as a flag station on the April 1898 timetable. In October 1911, the railroad announced, under prodding from the Public Service Commission, that it would erect a station for South Lynbrook. A shelter was put up with electric lights along the platform. The station was on the east side of the track between Rocklyn and Centre Avenues. This is the site of the present Centre Avenue station. In 1925, the station name was changed to Centre Avenue.

*East Rockaway:* (18.91 miles from Long Island City) The first station building was put up by the Long Beach Improvement Co. A Mr. Lewis was said to be at work on the plans for the station in September 1880. The building was to have steam heat, a ticket and telegraph office and 150 feet of platform. Work was begun in mid-September 1880 and finished in the last days of October. East Rockaway was always a regular stop from the beginning. The station was located on the west side of Ocean Avenue and on the east side of the track.

In later years Mill Creek was filled in from either side, leaving a narrower stream for boats. In the 1950's the new East Rockaway station was moved to the east side of Mill Creek on filled ground halfway between Ocean Avenue and Atlantic Avenue, giving passengers access to either.

*Atlantic Avenue:* (19.14 miles from Long Island City) First men-

tioned as a signal station on the timetable of April 1898. Located just south of Atlantic Avenue and on the east side of the track. Because of its closeness to East Rockaway (only 1100 feet), the station was discontinued in the 1950's. As early as November 1912, the Long Island R.R. petitioned to discontinue the station but the PSC refused permission.

*Oceanside:* The name is first mentioned as a stop on the pre-season shuttle run in the spring of 1897. Oceanside Park was developed about 1910 and the first depot was built at Windsor Parkway on the east side of the track in the spring of 1915. On May 1, 1915, trains began stopping daily at this station. It was a brick and concrete structure with waiting room, station agent's rooms and baggage accommodations.

*Barnum Island, Jekyl Island:* (21.17 miles from Long Island City) One of the original stops. The island was named after Mrs. Sarah A. Barnum who purchased it in 1874 as a site for a poor farm and deeded it over to the State Charities Aid Association. The Long Beach R.R., in return for the right to cross the island, had to agree to stop at least some trains daily at the Alms House buildings. For twenty-five years the island sheltered the aged, the poor and the tramp population of Queens (then including Nassau) County. After consolidation in 1898, the island was sold to a private realty firm (January 1901) who renamed it Jekyl Island. In December 1905, it was resold for \$120,000 to a Brooklyn syndicate, of which Senator McNulty was a member. Later, the tract was resold to the Sea Coast Realty Co. of which Robert W. Higbie of Jamaica was a member. In June 1914, a Philadelphia syndicate bought the property and much of the land in Oceanside for a reported price of one million. During 1922-24, Barnum Island station served as the temporary Island Park station; then it was discontinued in 1924. The original station was on the Long Beach Road where the track crossed it at the north end of the island.

*The Dykes (Island Park):* First mentioned as a signal stop in April 1898. For years it remained a flag stop. The station was located on the east side of the Long Beach Road and south of the tracks. In May 1922, the name of Jekyl Island was changed to Island Park by Edgewater Smith, the developer of Kew Gardens, who headed a syndicate formed to develop Jekyl

Island into a seaside home community. In 1924, the station became Island Park.

*Wreck Lead:* (22.49 miles from Long Island City) First mentioned on the June 1888 timetable. This was a stop on the north side of Wreck Lead Channel (now Reynolds) and served a number of fishing clubs and hotels. In 1911, there was a wooden plank station on the west side of the tracks. Station discontinued in 1924.

*Inner Beach (Queenswater):* (22.64 miles from Long Island City)

Inner Beach was formerly a marshy island in Reynolds Channel. It is first mentioned as a signal stop in April 1898. On the May 1899 timetable, the name is changed to Queenswater. The station served the fishing shacks and Molitor's Hotel on the island.

In 1909, the Estates of Long Beach filled in the small channel between Inner Beach Island and Long Beach and graded over the land for streets. In July 1910, the Long Island R.R. applied to the PSC to discontinue the station permanently since it had lost its original purpose, and was only 1800 feet from the Long Beach station. The PSC refused. The Long Island R.R. tried again in May 1915 but was ordered to stop four trains daily each way as a convenience to fishing parties who used the Queenswater dock to go out to the fishing grounds.

*Club House:* First appears as a signal stop on the timetable of April 1898. This was located on the present Market Street and a few feet west of National Avenue. A path led to the Club House on the Channel. The station was eliminated when the Long Beach line was cut back and relocated in 1909.

*Long Beach:* Curiously, there are no descriptions whatever of the original Long Beach terminal of 1880 in contemporary newspapers. A newspaper photo of the station in 1906 is the only evidence we have of the appearance of the old station. This reveals a low, two-story, frame structure topped with a cupola containing a clock. This station was some distance west of the old Long Beach Hotel site and considerably closer to the beachfront.

In modern terms the old hotel occupied the square block bounded by Broadway, Penn Street, Edwards Boulevard and

Riverside Boulevard. The old Long Beach R.R. station occupied the present square block bounded by National Boulevard, Edwards Boulevard, Beech and Olive Streets.

Employees' timetables from the turn of the century reveal that the Long Island R.R. ran some passenger trains through to Cottage 17, to accommodate the prominent and wealthy renters of these beach houses. Since the long line of cottages, numbered #1-22, began east of the old hotel, this terminus must have been half a mile east of the official Long Beach depot.

In January 1909, the Long Island R.R. petitioned the PSC for consent to change the location of the passenger and freight station to a point about 1000 feet north. This plan was fully endorsed by the Estates of Long Beach, which effected an exchange of land with the railroad to make the new site possible. In February 1909, the PSC granted the permission, provided the new station would be larger and more convenient. The railroad began work immediately and expended \$40,000 on the improvement. The old track near the shore and parallel to the beach was taken up and a new depot was built on the north side of Park Avenue between Centre Street and Park Place. The new depot (still in use) opened in June 1909. It is built of brick and stucco with stone trim and measures about 120 x 60.

#### NEW YORK, WOODHAVEN AND ROCKAWAY RAILROAD CO. LOCOMOTIVES

- 1 One locomotive—delivered at Hunter's Point in September 1879 and used for construction of the first track along the Rockaway Peninsula. Later a switching engine.
- 2-3 *Hinkley*—late 1879, type 4-4-0. Construction number unknown; cylinders 16", stroke 24", drivers 60". The Hinkley builder's records are incomplete; these may have been second-hand engines. Renumbered to #302-303 in October 1898. Retired September 1905.
- 4-5 *Rogers*—late 1879; type 4-4-0. Construction numbers unknown. Cylinders 16", stroke 24", drivers 60". These engines cannot be traced in the surviving Rogers records; they may have been second-hand engines. Renumbered to #304-305 in October 1898. Retired September 1905. In the *Railroad*



- Gazette* of April 9, 1880, the Hinkley Locomotive Co. of Boston and the Rogers Locomotive Works of Paterson, New Jersey each reported orders for four engines from the New York, Woodhaven and Rockaway R.R. The newspapers report the delivery of three engines on April 5, 1880.
- 6-7 *Rogers*—May 1880; type 4-4-0. Construction numbers 2589-2590. Cylinders 16", stroke 24", drivers 62" when new. Later rebuilt to 17" cylinders, 24" stroke and 60" drivers. #6 renumbered to #301 and #7 to #307 in October 1898. Retired June 5, 1906.
- 8-9 *Rogers*—June 1880; type 4-4-0. Construction numbers 2602, 2604. Cylinders 17", stroke 22", drivers 62½" when new. Later rebuilt to 17" cylinders, 24" stroke and 60" drivers. #8 renumbered to #306 in October 1898. Retired June 5, 1906. #9 sold or scrapped by 1893.
- 1 *Baldwin*—(replacement) May 1893; type 4-4-0. Construction number 13440. Cylinders 18", stroke 24", drivers 60½". Renumbered to #308 in October 1898; absorbed into the Long Island R.R. fleet by March 1906, class D-54A. Retired between August 25, 1914, and April 25, 1917.
- 9 *Baldwin*—(replacement) May 1893; type 4-4-0. Construction number 13441. Cylinders 18", stroke 24", 60½" drivers. Renumbered to #309 in October 1898; absorbed into the Long Island R.R. fleet by March 1906 as class D-54A. Retired between August 25, 1914, and April 25, 1917.
- 10 *Baldwin*—May 1893; type 4-4-0. Construction number 13442. Cylinders 18", stroke 24", drivers 60½". Renumbered to #310 in October 1898; absorbed into the Long Island R.R. fleet by March 1906 as class D-54A. Retired between August 25, 1914, and April 25, 1917.
- 11-12 *Baldwin*—June 1893; type 4-4-0. Construction numbers 13473-13474. Cylinders 18", stroke 24", drivers 60½". Renumbered to #311 and 312 in October 1898. Absorbed into the Long Island R.R. fleet by March 1906 as class D-54A. Retired between August 25, 1914, and April 25, 1917.

## PASSENGER CARS

- 1-20 Gilbert & Bush of Troy, N. Y. In the *Railroad Gazette*, April 9, 1880, Gilbert & Bush reported building 20 passenger cars for the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R.

21-62 Jackson & Sharp of Wilmington, Delaware, 13; Bowers, Duer & Co. of Wilmington, Delaware, 10; Harlan & Hollingsworth of Wilmington, 6.

The *Railroad Gazette*, August 20, 1880, reported that the largest shipment of railroad cars ever made at Wilmington, Delaware, in one day took place on August 14, 1880, when twenty-nine cars were sent to the New York, Woodhaven & Rockaway R.R. by the three companies. A large number of "elegant new cars" was received at Long Island City depot on August 18, 1880.

The *Flushing Times*, August 31, 1880, reported "31 new passenger and 6 combined coaches have arrived at the Long Island R.R. freight depot from the Jackson & Sharp Co. at Wilmington; 15 more cars are now on their way from the works."

"New coaches" were reported delivered Saturday, July 23, 1881. 'Woodruff Parlor coaches are to be introduced next Sunday, August 14.' In 1885, they are reported running on this line, with a 12¢ per mile charge.

We have several descriptions of the coaches from contemporary papers:

"The passenger coaches are furnished in mahogany, black walnut, and ash. Roman mosaic work ornaments the roof of the cars and the platforms are furnished with strong iron gates. No graining or staining has been done to the interior of the coaches, owing to the fact that the variegated natural woods present without any artificial embellishment a pleasing contrast of colors." (*New York Times*, September 3, 1880)

"The passenger coaches are wide, open worked, with French plate glass windows, and seat 68 persons. The interior is finished like the Sixth Avenue New York Elevated cars. The seats extend along the sides for two-thirds of the car and crosswise in the center. The cushions are made of dark, russet-colored leather. The exterior of the cars is painted a dark plum color with trimming to correspond." (*Brooklyn Eagle*, June 19, 1880)

"The cars have higher wheels (42" diameter) than the ordinary car. The interior is finished in birdseye maple with Japanese ornamentation in decidedly sober colors. The seats are finished in walnut with spring bottoms and hair cushions

upholstered in Russian leather. They face each other in pairs. Some of these cars have these seats only in the middle, side seats filling the remaining space." *Brooklyn Eagle*, August 29, 1880)

## RAILROAD COMMISSIONERS' REPORT ON CARS

	<i>Pas- sen- ger</i>	<i>2nd-Class</i>	<i>Bag- gage, Mail, Express</i>	<i>Total</i>
1880	53		2	55
1881	52	6	2	60
1882	53	9		62
1883	53	9		62
1884	53	9		62
1885	56		6	62
1886	56		6	62

## OCEAN ELECTRIC RAILWAY

## TROLLEY EQUIPMENT

(in the order of its appearance on the road)

21-26 *Brill* (originally E1-E6)—1899; six 15-bench opens; ordered February 9, 1899; delivered June 1, 1899. 42'7½" x 33'4" x 8'8" x 12'7½". Cross seating, 75 capacity. Brill 27E trucks; two GE 57 motors; Christenson brakes, K-10 controller; cost of body \$950.

Began service July 23, 1899, on the Long Island R.R. right-of-way between Rockaway Beach and Far Rockaway stations. The body of car #22 was destroyed by fire at the Springfield Shops on November 20, 1917. All cars rebuilt in 1910 to pay-on-platform type and with screened sides.

All retired June 1927.

1-2 *Brill*—1899. Two 10-bench opens; ordered March 23, 1899; delivered June 15, 1899. 30'6" x 7'10" x 11'8". Cross seating; 50 capacity. Brill 21E trucks; two GE 67 motors of 35 HP each; hand brakes; K-10 controller; cost of body \$500.

Began service August 1, 1899 on the Long Island R.R. right-of-way along the peninsula; transferred May 20, 1900, to the Far Rockaway Branch.

Operated in 1910 on Northport Traction. Retired June 1927.  
 29 Brill—1902. One single-truck convertible; ordered January 10, 1902; delivered April 15, 1902. 31'4" x 20'7" x 8'5" x 12'1 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Cross seating; 28 capacity. Brill 21E truck; two GE 67 motors of 35 HP; K-11 controller. Cost of body \$550. Brill hand brakes.

Used on the Clinton Road shuttle, Garden City, in 1918. Retired June 1928.

28 Brill—1902. One double truck convertible; ordered January 10, 1902; delivered April 15, 1902. 41'10" x 30'8" x 9'4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 13'0". Cross seating; 60 capacity. Brill 27F truck; two GE 57 motors of 65 HP; K-11 controller; cost of body \$1850. Christenson brakes.

Operated on the Huntington R.R. from 1910 to 1919 as #512. Retired June 1928.

27 Brill—1903. One 10-bench open. Order and delivery date unknown. 30'5" x 21'8" x 7'11 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 11'8". Cross seating; 50 capacity. Brill 21E truck; two GE 67 motors; Brill hand brakes; cost of body \$1020.

Converted to a flat car Fall 1911.

5-8 Brill—1904. Four 15-bench opens; ordered January 4, 1904; delivered March 20, 1904. 42'7 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 33' x 8'8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 12'8 $\frac{5}{8}$ ". Cross seating; 75 capacity. Brill 27E trucks; four GE 57 motors; K-11 controller; Christenson brakes; total cost of four bodies \$9240; equipment \$6953.

Rebuilt 1910 to pay-on-platform type and with screened sides. Retired June 1927.

3 Brill (originally 15)—1904; one double-truck convertible; ordered October 6, 1904; delivered November 14, 1904. 41'10" x 30'9" x 9'4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " x 13'0". Cross seating; capacity 44. Brill 27F trucks; two GE 67 motors; K-11 controller; cost of body \$1050. Christenson brakes.

Operated on the Huntington R.R. as #515 from 1910 to 1919. Retired June 1928. A photo and article on this car appeared in the *Street Railway Journal* for April 1905.

4 Brill (originally 20)—1904; one single truck convertible. Ordered October 6, 1904; delivered November 14, 1904. 31'4" x 20'7" x 8'5" x 12'1 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". Cross seating; 28 capacity. Brill 21E truck; two GE 67 motors; Brill hand brakes. Cost of body \$700.

Operated on the Huntington R.R. from 1910 to 1919. Retired 1928. Photo and article on this car and the preceding appeared in the *Street Railway Journal* for April 1905.

11-14 Brill (originally 21-24)—1905. Four double-truck convertibles. Ordered July 12, 1905; delivered October 25, 1905. 46'6" x 30'8" x 9'4½" x 13'. Cross seating; capacity 60. Brill 27F trucks; two WH-112 motors; K-28B controller; Westinghouse hand and air brakes. Cost of bodies \$5977.

#11 was the first car to operate on the Garden City shuttle.

#11, 13, 14 operated on the Huntington R.R. from 1910 to 1919 as #511, 513, 514. Car #12 operated on the Huntington R.R. as #519. All four retired June 1928.

30-35 St. Louis (originally Huntington R.R. 511-516)—1909; six pay-on-platform closed cars. 48'5" x 42'2" x 8'8" x 12'4". Four longitudinal seats and 18 cross; capacity 48. St. Louis #7 trucks; two WH-112 motors of 65 HP; K-28B controller; Westinghouse traction brakes. Cost of bodies \$5597.

Sent to the Ocean Electric in 1910 when still new in exchange for #3, 4, 11-14, 28. #30, 33, 35 retired in 1928.

#31, 32, 34 retired from Rockaway service at the close of the 1926 season and went into service on the Country Life Press Shuttle till the close of trolley service in 1933. Retired 1935.

They were renumbered: 31 to 997; 32 to 998; 34 to 999.

15-20 Brill—1910; six pay-on-platform closed cars. 46'3" x 8'7" x 12'9⅓" four longitudinal seats and 18 cross for 48 capacity; Brill 27F1 trucks; two Westinghouse 112 motors of 65 HP; K-28 controller; Westinghouse hand & air brakes; cost of bodies \$6407.

Retired from Rockaway service June 1928. #15 is known to have been used on the Clinton Road Shuttle, Garden City, about 1921.

36-41 Brill—1918; six double truck steel closed cars from the Philadelphia Railway Co.; bought 1922 (ex144-147 and 149-150). 47'8" x 34'8" x 8'2" x 11'3¾". Brill 77-E-1 trucks; four WH-514A motors; K-35C-2 controllers; capacity 52.

Placed in service between September 30 and November 16, 1922. Sold to the Atlantic City & Shore R.R. in 1927, where they became #6845-50. They operated until December 28, 1955.

4 Long Island R.R.—1923, single-truck wrecker, acquired from

- the Northport Traction Co. in December 1922. (ex-603 baggage car). 23'5"; Brill 21E truck; two GE 67 motors; K-10 controller. Placed in service November 30, 1923. Retired 1926.
- 9 *McGuire Cummings Co.*—1905; one single-truck sprinkler, 28'4½"; McGuire-Cummings truck; two GE 57 motors. Retired 1928.
- 10 *McGuire-Cummings*—1905; one single-truck snow sweeper; 24'6"; two GE 57 motors; retired 1928.
- Ocean Electric Railway*—1911; one single-truck flat car; 30' 10". Rebuilt from #27; two GE 67 motors; K-10 controller. Retired 1928.

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