

The tender also stayed with the engine as it went over, while the New Haven express car stopped crosswise minus trucks a little west of the overpass. RPO car 737 derailed and remained on the bridge girders and the remains of the main track, being coupled to the three coaches, none of which derailed. Strange as it may seem, no one but the fireman was seriously injured !

Sunday morning I drove over and tried to get some photos, "No. Dice"! The LIPR police were on the scene and would'nt allow any pictures, pass holder or not. It took them all day Sunday to get 3731 "up on her feet", and tow her to the Ronkonkoma team track minus her tender. When I saw her Monday noon she was a muddy mess from stack to railhead, although their did'nt seem to be much structural damage outside of bent hand rails and cab dents. She was back in service in a month or two, none the worse for her experience. I will always remember her whistle, which sounded a lot like a Reading pacific type, not like the typical PRR passenger whistle.

Not far into the year 1947, one Sunday afternoon I was driving to Oyster Bay to cover the afternoon run out of there. Just as I crossed the RR in Kings Park at Indian Head Road I happened to glance to the west and could'nt believe my eyes!



**Kings Park wreck 2/16/1947 - PRR K4s #5406
Aerial - View SE (Daily News-Morrison)**

What I saw was a "ladder" of still connected rails and ties sticking up in the air ahead of a Pennsy K4 buried to her pilot deck in dirt and leaning very much to the north of what had been the main track ! Coaches were "jack-knifed" at all angles, one narrowly missing a thick steel supporting girder leg of the large village water tank.

People were everywhere "rubber-necking" at the big wreck, so I quickly parked my car by the old "Brooklyn Hotel" on the corner of "25-A" and ran west to the scene. Walter Sands, the engineer, and "Kingy" the fireman were walking around their locomotive, so they were "O.K." at least. It was train 4612, due in Kings Park about eleven fifty five a.m., so the wreck had happened about an hour or so before I happened by.

Apparently no one was killed or seriously hurt, which was a miracle in itself, as many Kings Park State Hospital Sunday "visitors" rode that train in the first five cars or so, and had a habit of standing up in the aisles and vestibules. They always did that so they could grab the few available taxies to the mile away hospital grounds.

I had to hurry away as I would soon be due on the job in Oyster Bay. The "big thing" that I remembered from that whole wreck scene was that ugly "facelift" on the K4, which was the 5406. All the way to work, that deliberate changing of the familiar K4's handsome face stuck in my thoughts.



**K4s #5409 Montauk ash pit
1940 - (Sommer-Keller)**



**K4s #5406 Cold Spring Harbor
3/16/47 Archive: Dave Keller**

Since it was the first "facelift" I had seen, the change was great to me and I disliked it and still do. If the "facelift" was so important to PRR operations, why didn't the PRR class E6s and G5s get the same change?

As we worked the Oyster Bay job on thru Sunday evening we finally got the story of why the wreck occurred. It all had to do with the train crew of train 4608, the "Kings Park Hospital Train", that ran directly into the hospital grounds about an hour before train 4612 was due along. About a half mile from "25-A" there was a concrete platform where no. 4608 let off everybody in the grounds, even so most still had a half mile walk to any of the buildings.

After all the passengers were off, the "special" backed up to the main track, reversed direction and went into the passing siding. Leaving all but one coach on that track, the "special" went to Port Jefferson with the engine and a "rider" coach after no. 4612 went by. This was standard operation so the engine could be turned and take on a tank of water.

Somehow, this Sunday, train 4608's flagman when he closed the main track switch to the passing siding after the train was safely in the clear on it, had also "OPENED" the Hospital siding switch which was about two hundred feet west of the passing siding switch, and locked it!

Not too long after the above took place, train 4612 came rushing in to Kings Park behind its K4. Walter Sands had a habit of shutting off the throttle after Comac Road and usually "big-holed" the train in order to make a perfect stop at the depot. Most times it worked great, but not that time! The odd part was that engine and tender went over the incorrectly-lined switch fine, they derailed about two hundred feet east on straight track!

It was conceded later that the "whip-lash" going thru the opened switch caused the water in the tender to slosh violently against its sides derailing it. This in turn pulled the engine off, stopping the train with a sudden "jerk" which caused the head six coaches to "jack-knife". Coach 388 came out the worse with a twisted box girder and the car had to be scrapped soon after. A PRR class P54 "suburban" coach was purchased to replace it in April, receiving the same LIRR number.

One miserable February Sunday on that Oyster Bay afternoon run I had an unpleasant incident to put up with, along with a steady rain. It all began when we arrived in the Richmond Hill storage yard after our first trip in from the "Bay". The conductor wanted me to go over to "The Dutchman's" restaurant and bring back "coffee" for him in that pouring down rain. I refused, so then he asked the flagman, who likewise said he didn't want to get soaked either!

With that, the conductor said, " Things will be a little different tonight at "PW"! The usual move on other Sundays on trains 4234 and 4233 was to take the entire train around the wye, no problem at all as we only had four "pings". As we headed into Pinelawn siding to turn on the wye, the conductor said to leave the train between the legs of the wye and just take the engine around which happened to be this night, PRR E6 1347.



E6s #737 Patchogue 1946
Dave Keller archive

When I asked "Why can't we take the train around?", he said, "just do as you're told, I'm the boss on here". He was right about that of course, so I of course got a unnecessarily soaked between uncoupling and coupling steam, air and whistle lines as well as turning the engine. For his part, the flagman had to turn four cars of seats. The conductor was just getting back at us for not getting the "coffee"!

When we were shoving the train in the "fence" track in Oyster Bay on our last train the conductor apologized to both of us for the "PW" incident. Events such as the above were extremely rare, in thirty three years on the LIRR, I was only a "victim" that one February Sunday!

About April first I got "trimmed" off my "noon" Ronkonkoma job and had no choice but to take the "afternoon, all evening and early morning quit" run out of the same terminal. Actually it was'nt all that bad. Frank Roettinger was the genial "boss", while Ray Gallagher was the head end brakeman, I ^{was} of course carrying the flagging equipment, as the oldest brakeman on a run had his choice of which "end" of a run he wanted. Up on the engine John Dow was the hogger, while Jake Reynolds was firing. For the three months I held this run we never had any other motive power than "class G5s."

This job left "KO", (Ronkonkoma), about 3:30 p.m. with a single rider "ping" for Farmingdale as an extra. We really got a fast but smoky ride skipping all the stops, as those G5s could really travel! At Farmingdale we picked up the express car and went on to "B" tower. He crossed us over



B Tower Bethpage 5/11/1947
K4s #5406 westbound
(Votava-Keller)

so we could back our two cars to the Pinelawn wye. At that place we backed onto five more "pings" to make up our train, no. 239. The five coaches had been left there for us by train 228, a morning eastbound. At this time a local contractor was unloading cement hoppers on the team track next to the coaches. Everyday we would have to bring rags and dust off five cars of "cement dust", that had covered all the seats. Finally the crew of 228 closed the many open windows, ^{AND} eliminated the problem.

Leaving "PW" at five p.m., we were a typical busy afternoon local that took most of the "load" off following train 211. There was one "bright spot" to this very busy "cash fare-wise" trip! Train 5 from Montauk was due by "B" tower a few minutes before us, and sometimes it was late so we would be

held at the "home" signal. Being out with the "banner", (flag), I'd have a good view of "5" with her K4, three or four head-end cars, Pennsy parlor and four PRR air-conditioned P70 coaches as she came around the long sweeping curve off the Central Branch. About the time the engine passed the tower, "Skinny" Amott, the hogger would "open her up again", with the resulting smoke and shower of cinders as she passed. Why didn't I snap a photo?-----"So near, and yet so far"!, (I never brought my camera to work with me, and we're all the poorer for it!)

Coming east on our second train of the job we left Jamaica at seven thirty on no.246. We were quite busy as far as Westbury as we carried a



Roosevelt Raceway, Westbury
½ mile harness racing
Opened: 9/02/1940 Closed: 7/15/1988

lot of folks bound for the "trotters" at Roosevelt Raceway. There was an elderly German baker from Brentwood who nightly brought a big burlap bag of stale bread with him. He wanted me to throw it off by his house east of Brentwood for his flock of chickens which I always did. Those hens must have been mighty good eating!

Arriving at "KO" we turned the the three car train on the wye so we were ready for train 251 due out at ten twenty. The conductor lived up the street a short way so he had supper at home. Ray and I often drove to Smittown Diner for one of their great hamburgers on those fresh rolls that they were noted for. There was still no place to eat near Ronkonkoma sta., nor was there at Speonk.

Going west on no.251 we terminated at Hicksville, where everyone had to get off and wait a few minutes for the train coming in from Port Jefferson. No.647 would take them to Jamaica, while we used the Hicksville wye to turn our train for the next eastbound. We layed on the south siding until train 600 was due just before one a.m.. No.600 would bring all our passengers out from the city and all they had to do was walk across to no.220.our train.

Often no.647 was a little late and we would have completed our "move" to the south siding, before he made his station stop. I'd stand in our rear vestibule and watch "the show" as her K4 rapidly left Hicksville behind. Why didn't ^{THEY} invent tape recorders sooner? They sure missed some beautiful "stack music", not to mention that "Reading-like" whistle the 3731 had!

That hour and a half "swing" in Hicksville was a pure waste of time to me as we could'nt read anything. We had to keep the coach lights out for two good reasons. One was the mosquito problem and the other reason was we would have very dim or no lights on no.220 as the battery would run down.

One midnight Ray and I were walking up Broadway and a long westbound train of potato reefers came by on the Main Line. We were standing on the corner of Marie St..so we saw "reefers" by looking east or north as the seemingly endless parade passed. This was probably the last season for the long potato drags.

1947 began the long series of cold wet Springs that has persisted almost without exception right down to the present day. Even in June we had to couple up the "steam heat" laying in Hicksville at that late hour. It really felt good and don't think the passengers transferring off no. 600 to our three cars didn't love it! People seeing all our "steam leaks" knew they would have a warm trip out the main line. No. 600 of course would be heatless because the storage yard discontinued coupling steam hoses after May fifteenth or so every year.

By this time Levitt and Sons Company was well along with the construction of their famous "Cape Cod type" houses in East Meadow and between Hicksville and Wantagh in what would soon become known as Levittown. All the former farms between Albertson and Roslyn were already gone to new Levitt homes. New commuters were using Hicksville by the hundreds from all the new homes in the area.

It was about this time that what we now know as "junk mail" was in it's very beginnings. Between that and Parcel Post, trains that carried U.S. Mail were being delayed more and more all over the LIRR. To take the load off regular trains, at least in Nassau County, the RR established "the Hempstead Mail job". Hempstead being centrally located in the County, trucks could handle the mail to and from all the surrounding towns.



**Hall Tower view SE c. 1950-51
Photo/Archive: Henry Barsky**

The "Hempstead Mail" train crew waited at Jamaica's "Hall" tower for a DDL to come up "lite" from Morris Park at about seven thirty p.m. They ran non stop to Hempstead, providing "Garden" block sta. did not hold them for a "westbound". Upon arrival in Hempstead the DDL coupled to the PRR "rider" on track one. This car was frequently a deluxe reclining seat coach of the most modern design! That occurred because the PRR Penn. Sta. drill used any car that was handy at the time they made up the "Hempstead Mail".

Setting the "rider" over on track two, the DDL coupled to the six or seven mail cars on track one and "pumped the air up". Mostly the "mail"



PRR Class X29 boxcar

cars were ex PRR class X29 box cars converted for passenger service with signal and steam lines running under the car's underframe. Sometimes there would be ex "Pullman Troop Sleepers" from World War II that were now baggage/express cars. Baggage cars from such railroads as MP, RF&P, SAL, Sou., etc., were also no strangers to the "mail".

After doubling the train over on the "rider", they left Hempstead for Penn. Sta. about eight forty five or so. Some of the cars going west were loaded with Double Days Publishing Co. of Garden City outgoing books for all parts of the country, while one or two of the cars were loaded with

outgoing parcel post and "junk mail" from Nassau County points. During winter months this run was not a nice round trip for the flagman. The "rider" might be deluxe and all that, but it would be unheated as the DDIs never had steam heat boilers!

Going back to Hempstead they left Penn. Sta. after midnight and it was a different move to yard the consist in Hempstead, as the train would have to be backed into Hempstead yard in order to keep the DDI on the west end of the train. This was done by going straight east at "Garden" on the Central Extension until the entire train cleared the "southeast wye connection" to Country Life Press sta. This done, the train was backed into Hempstead. The "rider" had to be set off on track two in order for the rest of the train to be shoved into track one for unloading. After setting the "rider" back on one track the DDI left lite for Morris Park.

The only time I ever fell for this job in 1951, it was on a Saturday evening and only the westbound trip operated. There was no mail to Hempstead on Sunday mornings, the next "Hempstead Mail" would operate on Monday a.m., eastbound.



LIRR S1 #405



**Baldwin VO660 #403
Morris Park 1946
Archive: Jim Gillin**

Dieselization was already started on the LIRR with five Alco "S1" switchers and one Baldwin 660 horsepower switcher. All six must have been working west of Jamaica in some location, as the only "diesels" I had seen up to now were Oil-Electrics nos, 401 or 402 over on the "Johnson Ave. Drill" opposite Jamaica Sta.

C51 class 0-8-0s, or G53 class 4-6-0s still reigned supreme on the "storage yard drill" as well as in Holban Yard. At no time in my



**Oil-Electric #403
Morris Park 2/27/1933
Photo: George Votava
Archive: Mike Boland**

career on the RR did I ever see Oil-Electric no. 403, otherwise known as "Mike and Ike".

Sundays, now that all trainman were returned from the service, I could no longer "hit" a job in the east, end terminals so I was forced to work out of Babylon on the "MUs". A few times my first train left there about six thirty p.m.. Standing in front of the old wooden Babylon station around six provided some "steam action"! Fastbound train 4022 for Montauk came in off the Central Br, to make it's station stop just before six. Always with a K4 and PRR coaches, 4022 would no sooner clear the interlocking when a K4 whistle could be heard somewhere around the curve at Cooper St. Shortly, train 4007 passed thru with PRR equipment also, not making the Babylon stop. She was also enroute to the Central Br. with her K4.

Sometimes on those Babylon Sunday runs we made a trip to Long Beach and back. If you ran extra going out with the equipment for the westbound, a good place to be was the head car. In those days all the highway crossings on the Atlantic Branch from Cedar Manor to Valley Stream crossed the RR at "grade level". This resulted in some mighty fine MU whistling with those big air whistles all the MP 54s were then supplied with. Beyond Oceanside it was all salt meadows unspoiled by the later developments. The smell of the sea came in thru the open windows on a warm summer's evening, All in all, a pleasant ride to get you in shape for the heavy crowds that would be coming west on your next train!



**MP54A #1660 - c.1915
passing Jay Tower
Archive: Jeff Erlitz**

I was unaware at the time that on rare occasions on these MU trains ex PRR cars were in the consists! There were six MP54 coaches numbered 1778 to 1783 inc., and two combines, 1348 and 1349. Built by ACF in 1912 for the PRR, they ran as "shuttles" between Pennsylvania Station and Manhattan Transfer until 1923 when they were sold to the LIRR. Probably they were the Penn. Sta. connection for North Jersey Coast trains that used Exchange Place sta, in Jersey City as a terminal.

These cars had a few most noticeable differences compared to all the other LIRR "MU" cars. Instead of sliding interior doors between vestibule and passenger section, they had hinged doors like any other PRR passenger equipment. Much thicker rattan seats than LIRR ones were also evident. On the exterior, provision for diaphragms could be seen, if needed, something LIRR MU cars never had. For those interested, the combines were PRR nos. 4513 and 4514, while the coaches were PRR nos. 201-206.

Many MU cars, that is the motor cars, had red or white lines under the number in the end side windows. "White" indicated a car with a small headlight, and not to be used in tunnels or in darkness on the head end. They could and were used in daylight on the head end if the train ran Jamaica-West Hempstead or East Williston, etc.

"Red" indicated a "cab-signal head-end motor" with big headlight, to be used anywhere at anytime of day, or night. Any MU train using the North Side Branch or the Montauk Br. from Jamaica to Babylon had to have a "cab signal" motor on either end. Cars with no red or white stripe all had big headlights and were eligible as head end motors to any place, except Babylon or West Hempstead via the Montauk Br. or up to Port Washington on the North Side Br..

At one time, at least in the "twentys" trailer cars also carried the car number in the end side windows. This was discontinued early in the nineteen thirtys. LIRR "big headlight MUs" never had the car number in the side of the headlight as PRR MUs did. Only our "double-deckers" had them.

In mid-July of 1947 I finally managed to get on a "day job" out of Oyster Bay. Probably this happened as the run worked nearly ten hours and got paid only for eight. In those days the RR could "swing" you for up to two hours on any passenger run and you didn't get paid for it. Since I still lived in "Port" with my dad, the new job meant moving to Oyster Bay and finding a room in a boarding house, hopefully not too far from the yard. Fortunately this happened, and I was living only a block from the RR. I had to get up early as we were due on the job at five fifty a.m., but train no. 507 wasn't due out until six eleven.

That evening, having found a place to eat and stay, plus keep my 1941 "Chevy", I strolled down to the dock at the foot of South St. There were a couple of oyster shucking sheds and oyster boats down there at that time. What really caught my eye was the two ancient RR steam cranes on rails on the dock! Very rusty and obviously unused for some time, they appeared desolate-looking indeed. They still had MCB railroad couplers, but the rails they were on were no longer connected with the LIRR. Many years ago LIRR trains of passenger cars used this dock for



**Oyster Bay float bridge
1892-1893
Archive: LIRR - LI Railroader**

a transfer to a car ferry operation to Connecticut, but that only lasted a few years.

Next morning a short walk through the yard of a house across Hamilton Ave from my rooming house brought me the sight of my new job. Sitting on track one waiting for me was Pennsy E6 1238 with five "pings" in the early morning summer sunlight!

"Genial" Joe Healy was the conductor and the flagman was Bill Malloy, a fine crew to be on with. No. 507 did not pick up many passengers until Roslyn. From there in to the city we wound up with a "seated load." With only a half hour in the storage yard, we soon left on train 514, Freddie Green would be our engineer for the rest of the day. During the New York Worlds Fair of 1939-40, he had "ran" the huge PRR S-1 locomotive in the railroad exhibit. She was mounted on rollers so she never traveled very far!

Arriving in Jamaica sta. on track eight, the car inspectors cut-off our G5 and it left to lay up on the "engine spur" east of "Hall" tower. Noting my look of surprise, Joe Healy laughed and said, "Don't worry, we will leave on time, just wait!" About then our RPO car appeared on track eight, being pushed to a coupling with our four "pings" by three MP54s operated by the station drill crew. Train 916 from N.Y. had brought our RPO on it's rear and at Jamaica the three MP54s and the mail car had been cut-off. 916 went on to West Hempstead with a shorter train.

Our engine returned and coupled up, a brake test was given and after our N.Y. and Bkln connections arrived, we left for the "Bay". Going out we had mostly school kids bound for St. Dominics Catholic high school in Oyster Bay. Compared to the "highly mischievous bunch" that rode the "Patchogue Scoots" to Seton Hall High in Patchogue, these kids were fairly well behaved, at least in the a.m.!

When the kids came home on train 539 in the afternoon, a few times they tried to hit me with apples as I was hanging on the express car backing in at Glen St. to pick up the other express car there. Their aim wasn't the best, but they did get me in the arm once! Parcel Post and "junk mail" was delaying us all the way up the branch as it was always increasing. Usually at Mineola we took just long enough unloading mail that "Nassau" tower would hold us for the "Port Jefferson Flyer", (train 617), who went thru town as though Mineola didn't exist!

If one wanted to see "commuter obedience", this was the time and place to witness it five days a week! As soon as the highly visible smoke cloud appeared over the mile distant Motor Parkway bridge to the east, the entire crowded platform of commuters waiting for train 521 moved as a "unit" as far back as they could from the platform edge! "And here she comes." Bang!, our windows would complain on the north side as the air pressure from the rushing K4 and long train passed our train at "65" and more! The people sitting on that side on our cars would "gasp" when the unexpected rush surprised them.



**Oyster Bay turntable
LIRR G5s #29 - 8/12/1948
Photo: John Krause**

As soon as no. 527 departed Oyster Bay we sent our engine to the turntable track where "Vic" the colored hostler filled our tender with water from the standpipe. While our engine crew stayed on the locomotive after "spotting" it on the electric turntable. "Vic" actually manned the controls in turning the engine. That done, we put the RPO on the west end of the four "pings" for train 529, due out at ten forty one.

Upon arrival of no. 516 at ten fourteen, all stray, (and some that were not so stray), dogs congregated at the telephone box on the station platform awaiting conductor Fred Mahon off 516 with his daily ration of free doggie biscuits! Before he would report "arrival" to "Locust" tower, the dogs must be fed.

Train 529, our third train of the day, was for lady shoppers and the "theatre matinee folk". We skipped stops at Greenvale and Albertson, but



**Central Islip Mail Crane
View W - 1916
Archive: Dave Keller**

the mail clerk was busy there. He caught mail pouches off both mail cranes, as well as kicking a pouch off to each as well. Mail pouches used on the "cranes" had a ring on either end, whereas "normal" canvas pouches did not.

One hot August morning "Nassau" tower held us at the home signal at Mineola for what seemed a long time. Joe had to stay at the lineside telephone so he asked me to walk forward and find out what the long delay was all about. Crowds of onlookers were lined up on both sides of the main line from Willis Ave, crossing to the station platforms.

Seems that train 625 from "Port" had hit a tractor-trailer broadside at Willis Ave about an hour before we were due. The remains of the trailer were near the section house on the north side, while the tractor, or cab was laying in front of the Mineola station. The cab was completely burned out inside and the poor driver's charred body was still sitting on the seat remains! The third rail and protection board to it were all torn up and no doubt the resulting "fireworks" had set the truck's gasoline tank afire. George Richter was train 625's engineer and the locomotive was G5 26. The truck had drove right thru the lowered Willis Ave, gates it turned out.

Upon our arrival in the "storage yard " the drill job with it's C51 class 0-8-0 would take our RPO to Jamaica sta. At that point it would be added to the rear of train 735 for N.Y..Some days I rode up on the drill engine to the Jamaica sta. to grab a good lunch at "Fiedlers", (long gone, unfortunately)!

"Fiedlers" was a German bakery/resturant located on Jamaica Avenue about half way between Sutphin Blvd. and King Park on the north side. Their "Oxtail Ragout " would melt in your mouth and so would their delicious baked pies, cakes and cookies!

Train 538 was our last train with an express car and three "pings". We left Jamaica at two thirty p.m..I worked the express car in company with "Herb", the REA messenger. My duty up there was to throw off company mail and a few pieces of checked baggage. Although not required to do so, I helped carry out Pailway Express at Mineola, the only place we unload it. Mainly the messenger picked up "remittences", which were the envelopes of checks and money accumulated during the day at each sta. A portable steel safe for these was in each "messenger" car.



**Glen Cove team track yard
View NW 6/02/1903
(Boerckel-Morrison)**

Upon arrival at Glen St., I had to "cut" behind our express car and back in with it to the freight house platform in order to couple to the "Glen Cove " car that had been set in there by morning train 512. Sometimes when I coupled up to this car the "pin" did not fall, resulting in the Glen Cove car rolling and hitting three or four box cars of L.C.L. spotted at the freight house. Then all the cars would roll west towards Sea Cliff! Our flagman out with the "banner" would have to "hot foot" over and throw the house track switch so the rolling cars would'nt run

through it. Usually they stopped right on the switch, then we had to "respot" the L.C.L. cars.

This problem of the "rolling car" was caused by there being no hand brake on, as the air brake would have leaked off by afternoon. When 512 set the car in, the express office was closed, and as the handbrake was inside the car on "monitor-roof" cars, and the car "sealed", the crew had no choice as to putting on a handbrake. On "Balloon roof" cars the handbrake was on the outside of the car, so they would put it on, and there would be no "roll-away".

After a few "escapades" of this, I would back our car close enough so I could connect the air hoses, but without the cars touching couplers. Then the engine would pump up the brake pipe pressure in the Glen Cove car and I would make the "hitch" between the two cars. If the "pins" didn't fall and the car rolled it would only roll until the air hoses parted, dumping the air and stopping the car. Later on in the 1950s I used this same trick at the freight house in Huntington.



**Huntington Freight Station
View NE - 1969
Photo/Archive: Dave Keller**

On Saturday afternoons we came east on train 536 which got in to the "Bay" at two twenty nine, with no express cars in the consist. The half-days work that many commuters put in on Saturdays was the reason for train 536. This five and a half day's work week was now largely a Mon.-Fri. affair and almost everybody was now off on the weekends. The reason for 536 had now disappeared and the new timetable in September would see many of these early Sat. p.m. trains dropped, including no. 536.

Our run became a Mon.-Fri. job on the new timetable and we were free to work anywhere on the RR on Saturday and Sunday that our seniority rated. If we wanted "off", that too was possible if the crew dispatcher had plenty of men for the open jobs. Again your seniority counted as to "rating off". Many stations were closed on Sat. and Sun. after the new timetable as well and cash fares on the trains on those two days predominated over tickets purchased in the stations.

Most Saturdays I took "off", but Sundays I "didn't come around soon enough", as the old timers were always reminding us younger men. Often on Sundays I was able to hit the only "day" job out of Patchogue. It consisted of an E6, (usually 1238 or 1694), five "pings", and made three round trips to Babylon. The engineer being Eddie Potter and the conductor W.S. ("Doc") Overton. Since we could not take the five cars around the Babylon wye, we left them in the middle track at the station, while I took the lite engine to and from the wye. There were no car cleaners, so we turned a total of sixteen cars of seats by the finish of the run. I would get to work this same job on that much-too-mild Christmas of 1947 in a few weeks!

We were approaching the time of year when certain wealthy people on Long Island hired a Pullman sleeper for their trip to sunny and warm Florida. Three stations, at least that I know of, saw these "Specials". They were Locust Valley for the big estates not too far away; Greenport for Shelter Islands well to do, and Southampton which speaks for itself. Top "extra list men" with probably at least thirty years of seniority always were assigned to these plush runs, which along with the Pullman only had a "rider" for the crew. Needless to say I never was on one of those jobs. The "Specials" brought their patrons back in mid-spring, again in leased single Pullmans. They were attached to regular PRR trains in Penn. Sta. by the drill crews there.

One early Dec. Saturday a.m. the crew dispatcher called me and asked me to do him a "favor" and cover a job out of Speonk, as he was short of men on the list and the job had "opened up" after the crew board for Sat. was put up on the bulletin boards. After the long drive out from the "Bay" to Speonk I parked near the freight house.



150M-5-22-28-2 1/8 x 8 1/2 D

FORM K	The Long Island Railroad Company CLEARANCE CARD	FORM K
	Block Station: <u>MS</u> (M) 11/14/1929	
To Conductor and Engineer: Train <u>L-107-EXTRA 102 WEST</u>		
Proceed at <u>BP</u> as though <u>CLEAR</u>		
Signal was displayed. Report clear at <u>Stubbs</u>		
<small>Treasurer or Block Operator</small>		
<small>The treasurer, or block operator may issue this card only when authorized by the Superintendent. Before issuing it the treasurer, or block operator must have proper understanding with other treasurers or block operators, if any, having authority over blocks mentioned, and must know that blocks mentioned above have been duly reported clear of opposing trains, and clear of trains that may not be followed in the same block by the train addressed.</small>		
<small>The conductor and engineer receiving this card properly filled out and signed, or authorized by the treasurer or block operator to fill it out, may proceed as directed above.</small>		

Form K - Clearance Card 11/14/1929

**"MS" Block Signals
Mastic Shirley 1970
Photo/Archive: Dave Keller**

Charlie Geidi, the conductor, was walking to the train on track two, after getting his "K" card and "clearance" from "MS", (Mastic), block sta. As soon as he spotted me he gave me the "rasberry"! Charlie never let me forget that I came from Cutchogue, a "hick" place in his eyes, and always kidded me about it until he took his pension. Train 35 with it's G5 36, six PRR P70 coaches and PRR PB70 combine was oozing steam leaks everywhere on this quiet, but damp, cold morning. Why the PRR cars on a Speonk train? Seems quite a few LIRR coaches were in for minor repairs that week.

The trip in to Penn. Sta. was not at all busy now that the five day week had become "standard". In early 1948 "little gems" like no. 35 on a Sat. would become a thing of the past. Coming east in the afternoon on train 36 we left N.Y. at three fifty eight, ^{AND} followed "The Cannonball" to Jamaica. No. 20 went east via Main Line and Central Br., while we used the Montauk Br. via Freeport all the way out. It was nice to hear a steam engine whistle over that part of the Montauk Br. for a change! Whenever your train was headed by steam power on the above routing people in the "MU towns" would stare at the train as if it was invading their third rail "paradise"!



**Dropping newspapers on platform
Montauk bound train 7/1971
Photo/Archive: Dave Keller**

I had newspapers in the combine to throw off after the "B&M" messenger got off at Patchogue. "B&M" men were RR employees that handled baggage or newspapers on the trains or at busy stations. They and platform ushers had the same seniority list. Most of their runs were on MU trains out of N.Y.

Christmas Day was a mild sunny one with the temperature near fifty degrees or so. I was on the "day" Patchogue "scoot", the same job I had been working Sundays. Outside of the fact that I had nothing to eat the whole day because all the places to eat in Oyster Bay, Babylon and Patchogue were closed for the holiday, I was doing great! I'll amend that, getting off train 4013 at Jamaica I spotted a paper bag in the parcel rack left behind by someone. "What luck!", an uneaten peanut butter sandwich.

Next morning being Friday, I was back working my run in the "Bay". Walking over to the yard I noticed very fine snowflakes starting to come down, although it did not seem that cold as it was very "still", with no wind. By the time we reached Jamaica at seven on train 507, there were a couple of inches on the ground and it was snowing hard. The next round trip to Oyster Bay went all "O.K." and we arrived in Jamaica at eleven thirty. The section men were busy shoveling about eight inches of the "whitestuff" off the long platforms. They were barely able to keep up, so heavy was the snowfall!

"MU" electrics were "arcing aplenty" as the snow was up to the third rail, making shoe contact difficult in many places. We left on train 538 on time at two thirty p.m. despite the nearly a foot of snow, and all



"Clearing the Switches" 1948
LIFE magazine Photos: George Silk

the oil-fired switch heaters around Jamaica really had their "work" cut out for them! This day, (of all days), we had a 682-691 series baggage car missing an end window on the north side of the car. We would have enough snow in that car by Oyster Bay to make a giant snowman!

"Queens" tower at Queens Village held it's home signal on us for ten minutes or so, and Joe Realy finally went to the trackside phone to see what the delay was all about. By this time snow was even with the third rail "protection board". The news he brought back with him was that we would wait until "things" were cleared-up at Floral Park.

Seems train 524 which had left Jamaica just before noon had hit a kerosene tank truck at Carnation Ave crossing in Floral Park. The tank itself was thrown up on the westbound platform where it remained for some time. The truck chassis was demolished, tearing up all the third rail on all tracks with the debris from it. The train was not derailed, and no one on it was injured. No Hempstead MU trains could go thru without third rail of course, and even steam operated ones were prevented from passing until hours later when the tracks were cleared. All the time we layed at "Queens" we had not seen a train go by in either direction and still the snow kept coming down heavy, although there was very little wind to make it form drifts.

Finally about four oclock we got the "signal" to proceed east,as the mess at Floral Park was passable,although at a slow speed,as workers still were on the tracks.It was now getting dusk as we left Mineola, and as there had not been a train using the eastbound track on the Oyster Bay Branch since no.516 at nine forty a.m.,our G5 would have to be it's own "snow plow" all the way to the "Bay".We sure could have used a "nose plow" on that engine as it was mighty slow going pushing all the snow along,probably 23 inches deep by this time.Our engineer,Freddie Green, had to keep his head out the cab window in order to see,as his front cab window was blocked by snow piled up on the running board of the engine.

When we made our stop at Sea Cliff,conductor Healy thought he ought to call the movement bureau and see if they still wanted us to pick up the express car at Glen St.,as we usually did.I'll never forget him stepping off the bottom coach step.He took one step and he was up to his hips in deep snow,but he was "game" and took his time,trying to



Smithtown Station
Call box - 10/08/1943
(Weber-Morrison)

keep from falling on his way to the phone on the telegraph pole.The phone worked and,"No," they didn't want us to loose any more time trying to pick that car up!



Glen Cove - Nassau Station
1903 - Archive: Dave Keller

Leaving Glen St. sta. it's uphill and mostly curved the half mile to Glen Cove,(Nassau),depot.Our G5 "huffed and puffed" and we all thought each "puff" would be followed by stalling for good.It must have been some sight to see all thatmass of snow on the front of our locomotive! When I saw it in Oyster Bay it was covered completely except for the headlight.By now the snow had ceased and it was nearly nine p.m. as we came into the "Bay". 26 inches of snow had completely obliterated the yard and switches.It was like a "farm field," except for the buildings!

I had to use the engine broom to poke around and locate the switch-stands.Each switch we had to use to put our train "away" for the day had to be laboriously cleaned out,as the "points" must fit snugly to the rail in order to "throw" the lever over and "catch it." It must have taken us at least forty five minutes putting the train to "bed", and the engine on the "plug".The yard was absolutely empty except for our train and loco. Normally at this time of the evening there were at least thirty five passenger coaches and four engines around the yard.

Walking home the kids on my street corner wanted me to join them making a snow man. I replied,"No thanks,maybe tomorrow!" All of the people on Long Island had just "lived" the great 1947 Snow,one that would rank with the 1938 Hurricane as a popular topic whenever folk got together for many years to come!

The next day, Saturday, I was off and stayed away from the RR as I wanted to devote the beautifully clear morning to getting some great snow scenes with my size 616 "Brownie" box camera. Would'nt you know it! -- There wasn't a 616 size film left in any store in town, everyone had the same idea!

While our crew at least got home that night before, many spent the dark and heatless long night with their passengers in marooned MU trains all over the electrified portions of the RR. Many MU cars had their "shoes" burned off so that they no longer had any current coming thru them to the cars to furnish power to move, plus heat and lights. The icing of the third rail of all day Friday had caused much heavy "arcing", resulting in the "shoes" burning themselves up.

Many MU trains had to be either pushed or pulled to the nearest station so their passengers could detrain, by steam locomotives. This went on all Friday night and all day Saturday. Even the seldom used chloride trains were out spraying the third rails so the ice on them would melt off. Oddly, the crew of train 5 coming in from Montauk Friday during the storm's height reported there was no snow at all east of Amagansett!

I had to work Sunday, and by then at least, all steam operated trains were operating "mostly", if not quite to the timetable. As soon as I got down to the crew dispatcher's office in the Jamaica sta. building, I got "stuck" to work a "patrol train", which is a ten car or so MU train that runs up and down repeatedly over a branch to keep the blowing snow clear of the track and away from the third rail. This particular one, our crew had to "pick up" at "Harold" tower, relieving a crew there that was close to "outlawing", (being on duty over sixteen consecutive hours), a violation of a Federal Law.

Our Sunday nights "entertainment" consisted of three round trips on the North Side Br. between "Harold" and Port Washington. There was no regular trains running on that line as yet, so we had the line to our



MUs at Port Washington 1944
Photo: W. J. Edwards
Archive: Dave Keller

selves all night. The yard at Port Wash. was jammed with out of service MUs due to the rigors they had went thru in the "Big Snow". When we finished up in Jamaica on Monday morning my job was already leaving the "Bay", so I got the day off with pay to spend sleeping!

"The beginning of the end" for thru service to and from Penn. Sta. for steam-hauled trains first got it's start in December, 1947 when Greenport trains 281 and 214 were discontinued west of Jamaica. One of the reasons for this was that the new MU double-deckers were becoming more numerous and being "long cars", ten-car consists of them needed a long Penn. Sta. track and platform to use. The usual tracks 17, 18 & 19