

# UNITED RAILROAD HISTORICAL SOCIETY of NEW JERSEY

[www.URHS.org](http://www.URHS.org)

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## ● PERTH AMBOY ●

### A PROPOSED SITE FOR THE NJ TRANSPORTATION HERITAGE PARK (THP)

FINAL DRAFT

#### OVERVIEW

At the urging of Tracy Jordan, a local resident formerly with the Perth Amboy Urban Enterprise Zone, Tony Hall and I inspected the proposed site on the afternoon of 19 November 2013. We explored a plot of vacant, fenced land about 250' by 1500' (the former Goldberg scrap yard of about 8 acres now owned by the City of Perth Amboy) lying east of the New Jersey Transit (NJT) North Jersey Coast Line (NJCL) - formerly the Central RR of NJ (CNJ) and west of Second Street, extending north from the bank of the Raritan River. A second corridor plot (owned by NJ Transit) runs south from Market Street (the NJT Rail Station is on the north side of Market - *Note A*) and connects with the Goldberg property. The two properties together could provide a narrow corridor from Market Street to the River of one half mile. (*Note B*) North of the Goldberg property are several miscellaneous businesses. Some of this area could be considered in need of redevelopment." A sidetrack from the NJCL into the site can be seen looking south from the Market Street bridge over NJT (as well as Google Satellite View) and could be the delivery point for rail equipment destined for the proposed THP. From the same bridge a Belgian block road entranceway was noted to what was the former CNJ freight house, team tracks and yard. (*Note C*) The Goldberg property has many concrete pads or paved areas - evidence of the demolition of prior buildings. On the NJT - owned property, parallel with the NJCL, we found at least a thousand feet of abandoned track of the former CNJ freight yard. This track which has obviously been out of service for many decades, was light weight, well worn, with cannibalized parts, and probably a candidate for scrapping, although much might be re-useable at the THP. (*Note D*)

#### GENERAL AREA

Immediately north of Market Street is the Perth Amboy Rail Station with a large parking lot. On the east side of Second Street there are older residences, a substantial private preschool facility, a Public Elementary School and the Main Pumping Station. At the south end of Second Street there is a public parking lot for those who might want to fish or walk east along a paved walkway along the River, which leads to a 3.65 acre city park and the city marina district. West of the NJT NJCL are the very large buildings of the former Raritan River Steel plant (*Note E*) which are marginally used at this time.

## THE POTENTIAL

The narrow, but long configuration of this site, without intervening cross streets, is ideal for on-site operations of a Transportation Heritage Park. (*Note F*) There is adequate room for storage / display buildings plus back and forth shuttle operation for railroad (both full size and narrow gauge), trolley, as well as a roadway for bus, truck, and even horse-drawn vehicles. Since these activities are planned to run in parallel they will allow riders on the various vehicles to pass and observe each other in their travel, enhancing their heritage travel experiences. Being adjacent to an active passenger and freight rail line is an ideal situation. It affords the opportunity for museum attendees to observe the active railroad and vice versa as well as allowing visitors to arrive via NJ Transit passenger rail. Some of the venues for which this location could be adopted are as follows;

1. Display of locomotives and passenger equipment which once operated on the adjacent active railroad. Examples: 1. A restored GG-1 electric locomotive, 2. A NJ DOT diesel locomotive; 3. A Jersey Central Lines diesel locomotive; 4. A Pennsylvania RR MP-54 electric coach; 5. An observation lounge car from the famous *Blue Comet* train; 6. A Jersey Central Lines box car; etc., all of which the United RR Historical Society (URHS) owns. Recordings of the powered equipment in operation would be a wonderful way of increasing the ambience of static exhibits for visitors. This location would also facilitate promotion of the Transportation Heritage Park to passing rail travelers via an advertising sign painted on the side of the rail equipment display building. (*Note G*)
2. It would be both possible and desirable to provide a trolley shuttle connection from the NJT Perth Amboy station south through the proposed Transportation Heritage Park to the bank of the Raritan River, where passengers could watch trains crossing the long Raritan River bridge (*Note H*) as well as commercial and pleasure vessels in transit on the River and Raritan Bay.
3. A linear paved roadway in phase two could allow historic buses, taxis, jitneys, omnibuses, trucks, military vehicles, and even stage coaches to safely operate, isolated from public traffic to give museum visitors unique "ride experiences." We should not overlook a vintage school bus - the most common bus vehicle on the road - which could be enjoyed by visitors of all ages.
4. A single track horsecar line would also be feasible / desirable for this site and would be a great attraction in phase three.
5. A narrow gauge rail ride experience similar to the Jenkinson's Point Pleasant "Beach Train," the Camp Halluwas train or Bob Stanton's amusement park train (the latter two are in South Jersey) could also be provided in phase three. Such a unique train ride could be extended east along the linear park on the shore (which has sand) of the Raritan River to the Community Center and tennis court area at Sadlowski Parkway and Brighton Avenue. This river-front city park was a former bathing beach and once had a boardwalk.
6. A dining or lounge car (perhaps the open end observation car URHS has from *The Blue Comet* train) could be parked at the south end of the property for birthday parties; meal service

and / or business meetings. During this use the “passengers” could observe trains on the Raritan River bridge and vessels on the river.

7. A Youth Transportation Technology Institute might be co-located at the proposed Transportation Heritage Park in phase four. This institute would educate local high school students about the many and varied key technologies in past and current transportation modes, perhaps with special focus on ever-advancing computer sciences applied in public transit equipment, operating systems and safety. By studying these critical technologies with ample opportunities for “hands-on” learning and practical experience, students would gain a strong grounding in electronics and mechanical applications as well as practical skills. OR, the site could be a satellite location of the nearby Rutgers University National Transit Institute / Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy. Either could help in potentially leading to good careers in the transportation sector.

8. The Raritan River was for 100 years used by canalboats, which traveled on this waterway by the thousands and up Arthur Kill past Perth Amboy between the Delaware & Raritan Canal and New York / New England during the canal era.*(Note I)*

## CITY OF PERTH AMBOY

... in Middlesex County, is considered part of the NY Metropolitan area, and is known as the “City by the Bay” and a “City of Firsts”. The population of the city is about 51,000 and its area is almost 6 square miles. The current Mayor of Perth Amboy is Wilda Diaz. Her husband, Greg, is employed at NJ Transit HQ in Newark. The city has an Urban Enterprise Zone, a Redevelopment Authority, an Economic and Community Development Department, an Historical Commission, and a Chamber of Commerce.

## PERTH AMBOY MUNICIPAL HISTORY

The city was settled in 1683, and was incorporated in 1718. Perth Amboy served as a capital of the Province of New Jersey from 1686 until 1702.*(Note J)* Following the union of East and West Jersey in 1702 Perth Amboy became an alternate colonial capital with Burlington until 1776. In pre and post Civil War years Perth Amboy became a resort - fine hotels drew visitors for their summer vacations from Newark and New York. The city vigorously promotes their heritage and tourism potential eg: “Old Perth Amboy Walking Guide” with 53 identified sites, is published by the local Historic Preservation Commission.

## PERTH AMBOY MARITIME HERITAGE

Perth Amboy, a colonial port and port of entry, is located at the mouth of the Raritan River and its confluence with Raritan Bay and the Arthur Kill. The city has over 15 miles of waterfront. During the colonial period and for a significant time thereafter, Perth Amboy was an important way-station for travelers between New York City and Philadelphia, as it was the site of a ferry that crossed the Arthur Kill to Tottenville, Staten Island. The native Lenape Indians provided

crossings to settlers as early as 1680. Regular service began in 1709. Steam ferry service was introduced in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which owned and operated the Staten Island Rapid Transit system with which the ferry connected at Tottenville. This ferry became less important when the Outerbridge Crossing opened in 1928, but continued to operate until 1963. The Perth Amboy Ferry Slip was restored in 1998 to its 1904 appearance. A replica of the ticket office has been constructed and is used as a small museum.

The Raritan Yacht Club, one of the oldest in the nation (established in 1865), has a rich and colorful history. Perth Amboy caters to pleasure boaters with its Municipal Marina a/k/a Harborside Marina.

The large Perth Amboy Dry Dock facility on the Arthur Kill, initially a shipbuilder, later serviced sailing vessels, tugboats, canalboats, freighters, tankers, barges, and naval vessels between 1884 and the 1980's. The historic waterfront of the city has gone through significant revitalization while maintaining its historic and marina culture surrounded by water.

The 452 ton tugboat *Perth Amboy* was constructed by Staten Island Shipbuilding (Bethlehem Steel) in 1912 for the Lehigh Valley Railroad. This may be the very same vessel: "The 140 foot iron hull tugboat *Perth Amboy* and four coal barges with her were sunk by German submarine U-156 off Orleans, MA on 21 July 1918." It may have been the same *Perth Amboy* which was raised, rebuilt, and acquired by the Moran Towing Company of NY, NY in 1936 and renamed the *Nancy Moran*. She sank in 1946. ,Amboy Towing tugboats *St. Thomas*, *St. John* and two

others were tied up at Perth Amboy in the 1950's. ,Current Perth Amboy based operators are: K-T Marine, Inc., 160 State St., Ste. 5, Perth Amboy, Performing both large contract work and routine maintenance and dockbuilding for liquid and bulk terminals, ferry terminals, and marinas along Arthur Kill, Kill Van Kull, Hudson River, Brooklyn, Long Island, Raritan Bay, etc. Their yard, shop, and office are located on Arthur Kill. They have three tugs (*Harry McNeal*, *Huntress*, and *Clyde*); 4 crane barges, 3 deck barges, 4 pile drivers, and much other construction equipment. And, lastly, Key Marine Service (Boat towing, transport, sales, service, maintenance & repair)

## PERTH AMBOY LAND TRANSPORTATION HERITAGE

The Perth Amboy Turnpike was chartered in 1808 and constructed soon thereafter. It connected with Metuchen and Piscataway on a route which is now known as New Brunswick Avenue or County Route 501. New Jersey's first railroad, the Camden & Amboy - just across the Raritan in South Amboy, fully opened in 1832. The first RR in town was the Perth Amboy & Woodbridge (1869). Initially it was an isolated line to Rahway and did not connect with the NJ RR & Transportation Co. On 25 June, 1875 the inaugural train of the CNJ departed Jersey City to travel through Perth Amboy on the NY & Long Branch RR. Their bridge over the Raritan River was the longest drawbridge in the world at the time. In 1882 an agreement was signed between the CNJ and the Pennsylvania RR establishing the NY & LB RR as an independent facility open to trains of both railroads operating through Perth Amboy. The first official outbound PRR train

from their new Midtown Manhattan - 33<sup>rd</sup> Street station was a local to Perth Amboy in 1910. *The Blue Comet* train of the CNJ between Jersey City and Atlantic City traveled through Perth Amboy on its famous runs between 1929 and 1941. The Pennsylvania RR electrified the line through Perth Amboy in 1935. However, steam locomotives continued operating on both the PRR and the CNJ, until the final runs powered by the famous PRR K4 locomotives in August 1956. However, special steam powered excursions were operated after this date.

The Lehigh Valley RR completed its New Jersey Division (chartered as the Easton and Amboy RR) from Easton, PA to Perth Amboy in 1875. The city became a tidewater terminal for the Lehigh Valley Railroad and a coal transshipping point.

The Perth Amboy RR was chartered in 1898 to develop local streetcar lines in Perth Amboy. A total of 3.8 miles of lines began operating on 17 April 1900. The Raritan Traction Co. soon leased the Perth Amboy RR and built two extensions: to Metuchen and Woodbridge Creek. In 1901 the new East Jersey Traction Co. consolidated with the Perth Amboy RR and the Raritan Traction Co. to form the East Jersey Street Railway. The latter was merged with the Middlesex & Somerset Traction Co. into the Elizabeth & Raritan River Street Railway on 30 April 1904. One day later the new company was leased to Public Service Corporation, which became the North Jersey Street Railway in 1907. A month later it was consolidated with the Elizabeth, Plainfield & Central Jersey Ry, which became the United Street Ry Co of Central Jersey. A month later all these companies became part of the Central Division of the Public Service Ry and many improvements were initiated. *Streetcars of New Jersey by Joseph F. Eid, Jr. and Barker Gummere*. The last streetcars operated through Perth Amboy on 11 June 1933. Public Service buses took over the following day. (*Note K*)

In 1911 the Jersey Central Traction Co. built a bridge across the Raritan from South Amboy and began providing trolley service between Keyport and the business district of Perth Amboy. Their line began at the ferry slip at the east end of Smith Street on Public Service Ry tracks; operated west to Division Street (which at some point was renamed Davidson Avenue), where they switched to their own tracks and operated one block south (this one block of track remained until 2014 - 103 years!) and west on Market Street for four blocks; turning south on Sheridan Street, continuing on their trestle to South Amboy and beyond. Note that at the south end of Sheridan Street a paved walkway on the former trolley embankment leads south to the Cornicopia Cruise Line site. In addition, JCT Co. also operated a Perth Amboy - Maurer shuttle entirely over Public Service Ry on trackage rights from Smith Street, north on State Street to end at Woodbridge Creek, total 2.15 miles. It basically operated as a factory shift change car to connect with their Keyport cars on Smith Street. Public Service Ry required the car to use a coal stove for heat in the wintertime in order to conserve on electric power as was the practice for their own cars. The JCT Co. cars were painted green with gold trim. Following several years of losses, a strike, and deteriorating maintenance, the company filed for abandonment and ceased operation at midnight on 28 July, 1923 - ending only a dozen years of trolley operation in Perth Amboy. *Streetcars of New Jersey by Joseph F. Eid, Jr. and Barker Gummere*.

#### PERTH AMBOY ATTRACTIONS

Cornicopia Cruise Line has three vessels based at 401 Riverview Drive, Perth Amboy to provide day and evening cruises for parties of up to 1200 guests, for banquets, weddings, private parties,

corporate events, holiday parties, birthdays, proms, graduations, conferences, conventions, moonlight cruises etc., with special cruises for New Years Eve, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks Displays, Mothers Day, etc. They also have the Casino St. Charles, a 2,000 seat dockside restaurant. For further info call: 800-924-8477; [www.cornucopiacruise.com](http://www.cornucopiacruise.com) [info@cornucopiacruise.com](mailto:info@cornucopiacruise.com)

The New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route begins at Perth Amboy and extends along the eastern and southern coast of our state for nearly 300 miles. It travels along the shore of Raritan Bay to Sandy Hook, along the Jersey Shore at the Atlantic Ocean to Cape May, and along the Delaware Bay to the Delaware Memorial Bridge. The trail encompasses a variety of NJ State Parks along with facilities under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. The Transportation Heritage Park rail shuttles could provide a link between the trail along the Raritan River in Perth Amboy and the NJT rail station allowing trail walkers to connect with the balance of the trail southward at South Amboy.

The City Hall is the oldest City Hall still in use in the US.

The Proprietary House Museum

The 1901 Free Public Library is the first of NJ's original 36 Andrew Carnegie libraries.

Ferry Slip Museum

Kearny Cottage Museum and Perth Amboy Historical Society

Art Gallery

The Barge is a well-known restaurant on the Perth Amboy waterfront near the Municipal Marina.

A restored, operational, 1926 Ahrens Fox piston fire pumper is in a museum bay in the central firehouse

A privately owned 1956 Ford Fairlane sedan is lettered for Perth Amboy Police Department

#### OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

Thomas Edison Center @ Menlo Park, Edison

Raritan Bay Waterfront Park, So. Amboy

Kidz Village, Woodbridge

Barron Arts Center, Woodbridge - Has had an Annual Holiday (December) Free Exhibition of model trains since 1990.

Raritan Landing / Road Up Raritan Historic District / River Road Historic District / East Jersey

Olde Towne Village, Piscataway - An important inland port on the Raritan River during the 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

McMyler coal unloader, on Arthur Kill @ Port Reading, Woodbridge - This former Reading RR structure, built in 1917 to transfer coal from RR cars to vessels for delivery to consumers is now derelict, abandoned and seriously deteriorated. In 2004 the facility was placed on the list of 10 most endangered historic sites in NJ by Preservation NJ. It is the last of 8 such McMylers which once operated in the NJ-NY harbor area. Coordinates: 40° 33' 41" N 74° 13' 52" W At some point it may be scrapped - At that time artifacts such as the "Barney Car" might be saved for display at the THP.

## NEARBY HOTELS

Hampton Inn, Woodbridge - 1.5 miles

Extended Stay America, Woodbridge - 1.5 miles

Residence Inn, Woodbridge (Raritan Center) - 2 miles

## ACCESSIBILITY

Perth Amboy is ideally located as to both the geographic and population center of our state. The city is accessible via the NJ Turnpike, the Garden State Parkway, US 1 & 9, I-287, NJ Route 35 and Highway 440 which connects with the Outerbridge Crossing to Staten Island, NY. There is excellent, frequent NJT rail service to the Jersey Shore, Elizabeth, Newark, Hoboken and NYC. With a change of trains at Rahway, Newark, Secaucus Junction, or Hoboken nearly all NJT regional rail and light rail lines can be accessed. Connections can also be made to access the Trenton - Camden RiverLine Light Rail and the Atlantic City line. From Perth Amboy NJT buses serve Elizabeth on the 48 route, the Port Authority Bus Terminal (NYC) on the 116 route, Metuchen & Middlesex County College on the 813 route, East Brunswick & Woodbridge Center on the 815 route, and South Amboy to Middletown on the 817 route. Each of the above routes connects with NJT at the Perth Amboy station. Travel time to NYC is one hour by rail or bus and one hour + or - to various NJ shore communities served by rail. Perth Amboy also has four taxi companies.

It should also be noted that Perth Amboy is home to the second largest garage of the Academy Bus organization, which has a total of 650 buses. They are a leading provider of commuter, charter, contract, casino travel, cruise connection and tour buses on the east coast. Their Florida Grove Road location is also the base for Rutgers University Campus buses; former Staten Island, Atlantic Express commuter routes; and NJ Transit buses used on contracted route operations in Plainfield and Middlesex county.

## ASSETS WHICH COULD BE CONTRIBUTED

1. The URHS has many items of railroad rolling stock which would be appropriate to be

displayed in a Perth Amboy THP, including a dozen items which historically operated through Perth Amboy. URHS also owns a prefabricated, unassembled, 60' x 180' steel building which could serve as a display facility and to protect rail equipment / vehicles from the elements.

- 2.** The North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society owns, and has restored to operation, a trolley car similar to those which operated in Perth Amboy. Other trolley cars which could be made available are owned by the Friends of the NJ Transportation Heritage Center and NJ ERHS.
- 3.** A trolley car which was built in Elizabeth in 1906, operated its entire working life in Lisbon, Portugal, and has been returned to NJ. This car could be cosmetically painted green with gold trim to represent the Jersey Central Traction Co.
- 4.** The Friends of the NJ Transportation Heritage Center has a collection of over 30 vintage NJ buses, most in operating condition. They would welcome an opportunity to store and display some of their collection in a “garage” in Perth Amboy on a rotating basis. It is an easy run from their facility in Lakewood to Perth Amboy. The following buses in the NJTHC collection operated in Perth Amboy: G-572 worked the former 62 Perth Amboy - Newark route; The final service of Asbury Park - NY Transit #125 was for the Faith Temple Church of God in Perth Amboy; L-726 was assigned to the Perth Amboy garage for a time; #1966 also ran on the former 62 Perth Amboy - Newark route; 6106 and probably the 5531 (Eagle) ran on the 116 route occasionally; and buses operated through Perth Amboy in express service. NJTHC also owns a prefabricated, unassembled, 60' x 120' steel building, which could serve as a shop structure.
- 5.** Well over two miles of good relay rail, two loops, tie plates, joint bars, track bolts, spikes, switch machines, good relay ties, gauge bars, signals, etc. are stockpiled at Phillipsburg and could be made available.
- 6.** Over 8 tons of steel parts from the recently demolished “Victory Bridge” could be provided to make a most unique display very close to the original location. Items include two 2-ton segments of the bridge pier ring gear; the drive pinion gear which opened and closed the bridge; one of the steel wheels which supported the weight of the moveable span; one set of the roadway crash gates; the marine warning air horn; navigation lights, and segments of the bridge railings. We also have a cast iron RARITAN RIVER sign.
- 7.** Approximately 40 original Camden & Amboy RR ca. 1830 cut stone sleepers are available for interpretive display. Rails could be set on them and they could be used to support active track.
- 8.** A small (45 ton) restored diesel electric locomotive could be brought in for display as well as operations.
- 9.** An operating vintage taxi cab and a 1927 Yellow Coach parlor bus (under restoration) in private ownership are pledged to the NJ THP.
- 10.** A great array of vintage transportation artifacts, signs and displays could be made available. These include vintage cast iron railroad and highway markers and signs, including a vintage



stamped steel “New Brunswick Avenue” sign. A “Heritage Sign Garden” could be “planted” for the enjoyment of visitors.

**11.** Extensive transportation libraries, photographs and research materials owned by the Friends of the NJ Transportation Heritage Center and the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society are looking for permanent homes. They could form the nucleus of a transportation library in Perth Amboy.

**12.** Supplies of vintage Belgian paving blocks and paving bricks stockpiled at Phillipsburg and Berkeley Heights, are available to help provide historic streetscapes.

**13.** Steel trolley poles, span wire, trolley wire, hangars and insulators are available to assemble an overhead power supply for trolley cars. Preserved steel and cast iron items could reproduce a Newark City Subway entranceway and original structural materials are available for a passenger waiting canopy.

**14.** Significant volunteer labor could be assembled from constituent and associated URHS groups and substantial seed funding could be provided by Liberty Historic Railway.

**15.** Tools, steel rebar, construction materials, hardware and other useful items could be contributed from stockpiles in Phillipsburg.

**16.** Hundreds of lovingly restored antique trucks are owned by the many NJ members of the American Truck Historical Society and the Antique Truck Club of America. Permanent, term and rotating exhibits of such vehicles could be readily arranged with a secure display building constructed on the proposed THP site. (The James J. Keating Trucking Co. was formerly located on Second Street, PA.)

**17.** Many Garden State Railroad and Transportation artifact and memorabilia collectors have wonderful collections. The establishment of a NJ THP would be the incentive for them to loan or donate superb items for display.

**18.** A collection of historic NJ fire apparatus has been looking for a home (NJ Fire Museum) for decades. Some of these antiques could be displayed in Perth Amboy if a building was erected. The Perth Amboy Fire Department has a restored, operational, 1926 Ahrens Fox piston pump fire engine.

**19.** NJ members of the Historic Construction Equipment Association have collected and restored many vintage items. These might not only be utilized to build the THP, but would make fine display pieces as well.

**20.** Many NJ members of the Military Transport Association have finely restored vehicles which could be enticed to be displayed with the provision of a secure structure at the Park. The MTA owns a small diesel locomotive which has been pledged to the THP.

**21.** A model railroad layout could be built depicting the rails of the local area, with special emphasis on the former extensive narrow gauge system which served the Raritan Copper Works.

Displays could showcase operating models of the Camden & Amboy RR *John Bull* locomotive and train; Public Service “Rahway” and “Fast Line” route trolleys (which operated in and near Perth Amboy); Jersey Central Traction Co trolleys; Pennsylvania RR electric multiple unit passenger cars as well as the famous GG-1 locomotives; a Lionel *Blue Comet* train; a Newark PCC car; and others.

**22.** A preserved 60' tall steel flag pole from the CNJ Elizabethport shops could be installed at the proposed THP site. It would be most appropriate for it to be placed along a rail line built in PA by the CNJ.

**23.** A full set of the cast iron letters “CENTRAL RAILROAD OF NEW JERSEY” which were on the CNJ Elizabethport locomotive shop building have been preserved. Each is about 20" high and weighs about 35 pounds. They could be most appropriately reinstalled in a prominent location on a new building at the proposed Perth Amboy THP.

**24.** Perth Amboy would be an excellent location for the storage and display of two surviving PATH cars recovered after the collapse of the World Trade Center Twin Towers. They have been stored by the Port Authority of NY & NJ since 9-11-01.

**25.** Two cast iron coal stoves are available to create the appropriate heating atmosphere in replica buildings.

**26.** A vintage “armstrong” interlocking system, (along with preserved rods, rocker arms and rollers) could be installed in a replica tower to actually operate crossing gates, track switches and a semaphore signal.

**27.** Blue Comet schedule signs were erected at the Route 33/34 overpass over the CNJ at Collingwood Park, NJ. The lettering on the approximately 4' x 6' wood signs was: “THE BLUE COMET PASSES HERE AT 10:55 A.M. Everyday; 12:17 P.M. Everyday; 4:45 P.M. Everyday; 6:17 P.M. Except Sundays; 7:10 P.M. Sundays Only NEW JERSEY CENTRAL.” A replica sign with the historic times the Blue Comet passed through Perth Amboy could be erected along the tracks it once traveled on in the Transportation Heritage Park at Perth Amboy.

**28.** Surviving vintage iconic Atlantic City Jitneys (operations began in 1915 with Model T Fords) could be acquired for preservation and operation at the NJ THP. One such historic Jitney is in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution.

**29.** An historic school bus could be acquired, lettered “Jersey Public Schools” and operated to provide ride experiences for children of all ages.

**30.** Significant architectural artifacts survive from the Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines Atlantic City rail station which later became the NJ Transit bus terminal and could become part of a proposed THP Bus Terminal.

**31.** A surviving NJ American Legion “40 & 8” parade vehicle could be moved to the THP for preservation and operation.

**32.** A vintage PRR, wooden, single axle, mail and baggage cart saved from the nearby Woodbridge station would make a most appropriate display.

**33.** More ???

#### INCOME GENERATING VENUES AND SPECIAL EVENTS FOR THE THP

**1. March:** Pre-season Spring opening celebration centering around St. Patrick's day. All visitors arriving dressed in green would get admitted for half price. Track car or speeder rides could be provided on the trolley loop track.

**2. April:** Easter Bunny rides for children young and old. Cherry trees planted on site would be in bloom! Antique and classic car show and parade. Touch-a-Truck event.

**3. May:** Mother's Day: All mothers admitted for half price. Armed Forces Day: All visitors arriving in military uniforms admitted free. Military vehicles of all types invited for show and parade. Memorial Day: Flags, flags and more flags decorate the vehicles and the grounds.

**4. June:** Flag Day - Decorations all over the Park; Father's Day - all fathers admitted for half fare. Antique fire apparatus show and parade. A VFW flag could be given to each visiting family.

**5. July:** Flags and fireworks for Independence Day. Picnic grove with tables and benches open near the river.

**6. August:** Flower beds at the Park are at their peak. Open window rail cars, trolleys and buses could be put to good use.

**7. September:** Labor Day and Patriot Day Celebrations. Historic construction equipment show.

**8. October:** Fall foliage and pumpkin specials. Halloween - all visitors in costume admitted for half price. Model railroad show and sale.

**9. November:** Veterans day - repeat as for Armed Forces Day. Thanksgiving decorations.

**10. December:** Special Santa trips on various vehicles - each copiously illuminated with Christmas (Holiday) lights. There could be a "Santa's Streetcar." The site could be decorated in a "Festival of Lights." A live Christmas tree planted at the Park would be all decked out. An extensive collection of vintage RR bells, whistles and air horns (and the preserved Woodbridge Twp. Fire whistle) could be utilized for a wonderful New Years Eve celebration. End of season.

#### FLOOD EXPOSURE

Latest online FEMA flood maps show only a small portion of the south end of the proposed site,

adjacent to the Raritan River, as being in the flood zone. None of the property was inundated by Superstorm Sandy in 2012. This was verified by observing the flood high water mark inside the City Sewage Pumping Plant of 55" above the main floor. This translates to 4" up on the glass on the four windows on the south side of the building - facing the Raritan River. The Goldberg property near the river is 1.5 to 2 feet higher than the Sandy high water mark.

## CONTAMINATED SOIL

Goldberg's Scrapyard was closed in the 1980s and some pollution cleanup was completed ca. 1988-9. Current status of the property: A mitigation plan has been approved by the Federal EPA; funding for the cleanup is available; and work should be under way soon.

## TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)

Perth Amboy is working toward establishing a TOD area around their NJ Transit rail station. The THP would provide an outstanding synergy with the TOD as it would draw visitors and tourists to PA via rail and bus and promote increased transit use, especially during off-peak ridership times. The THP would provide a link between the transit hub (NJ Transit Station) on the north and the Raritan River waterfront / walkway as well as the NJ Coastal Heritage Trail on the south. The narrow corridor of land desired for the THP, being down at the level of the North Jersey Coast Line and adjacent / parallel to the active tracks should make it least desirable for commercial development.

## NOTES

**A.** A view of the early, three story, wood, CNJ Perth Amboy station appears on pg. 123 in *Central Railroad of New Jersey Stations, Structures & Marine Equipment* by Benjamin L. Bernhart. In 1922 the CNJ began a grade crossing elimination project in Perth Amboy. At this time the original station was almost demolished. On short notice in 1927 it was sold to track foreman William M. Stonaker. He had it moved to 210 Lewis Street where, with slight modifications, the former station became his residence. It remains at that location to this day. Track was depressed from Market Street to Hall Avenue and the project was completed in 1928.

**B.** For those who might question the viability of a rail shuttle ride of only one half mile in length, please note that more than one half of 120 operational heritage tourist rail lines in the United Kingdom are less than one mile in length. The shortness of the potential Transportation Heritage Park line in Perth Amboy would be more than made up by: its paralleling an operating NJ Transit / Conrail line with views of an industrial shortline also possible; views of commercial and pleasure boating on the Raritan River at the south end; the attraction of passing parallel heritage rail, trolley and road vehicle operations; providing connectivity between the NJT rail station/bus transit hub and the waterfront with its parks and NJ Coastal Heritage Trail; and views of transportation artifacts and signs displayed along the route.

**C.** Views of the freight house and other structures appear on pg. 124 in *Central Railroad of New*

*Jersey Stations, Structures & Marine Equipment* by Benjamin L. Bernhart.

**D.** The New Jersey Transportation Heritage Center has an extensive stockpile of good rail (over four miles) suitable for relay purposes.

**E.** Raritan River Steel (RRS) was acquired by Gerdau Ameristeel (GA) and steelmaking closed in 2009 after 30 years of operation. The plant is now used by GA as a support location to their Sayreville plant which produces mostly steel wire. The Perth Amboy plant receives and cuts up old covered hopper and tank cars to feed the Sayreville plant with scrap steel. An EMD SW 1200 diesel locomotive (formerly CSR #1212) which remains on the property out-of-service has been replaced by Rail King trackmobile #337. Interestingly, a diesel-hydraulic locomotive used at the plant between 1978 and 1980 survives in Fox Creek, Alberta, Canada and at last report was still in operation by SemCAMS. It was one of four experimental units built in Canada by General Motors Diesel in 1961. They are center cab locomotives with very unusual automobile type stream-styling. The former RRS No. 3 unit (Serial #A1811) has Detroit Diesel Series 71 engines and was rebuilt in the 1980s. Since one of these unique locomotives is preserved in a Canadian museum, it would be most desirable to seek the return of RRS's old #3 to Perth Amboy for preservation.

The RRS site was originally occupied by the Raritan Copper Works (RCW) which began operations in the late 1800s. The firm quickly became the largest electrolytic copper refiner in the world and Perth Amboy became the world's largest copper manufacturer. In 1911 the RCW was acquired by The International Smelting & Refining Company and became a subsidiary of Anaconda Mining Co. In 1934. A 1939 report stated: "(it) is the foremost refining plant for copper, silver and gold imported at Perth Amboy. Foreign nations send more than \$1,000,000 in gold and silver into NJ through the port of Perth Amboy; a similar amount enters Perth Amboy via the port of NY, and an even greater quantity comes by rail from American mines. All commercial forms of refined copper, such as wire, bars and ingots are produced in addition to by-products of refined silver, gold, platinum, palladium, selenium, tellurium, copper sulfate, and nickel sulphate. The plant is one of the largest in the world using the electrolytic process of refining." Several of the original brick RCW buildings with copper sheathed roofs survive as part of the former RRS plant at the south end of Elm Street. Many years ago the Goldberg property was filled and elevated using waste and slag from the RCW.

Over the years the RCW utilized a fleet small, 30 inch gauge 0-4-0 steam locomotives built mostly by Porter, but also by Pittsburgh Locomotive Works. They also had internal combustion locomotives built by Vulcan and Plymouth. In 1956 the RCW donated their 1924 Porter-built steam locomotive #9 to The NJ Transportation Museum (Pine Creek RR). The locomotive remains at their Allaire State Park location in dead, but covered storage - they have no 30 inch gauge track. No. 9 would be an outstanding locomotive to display at a Transportation Heritage Park in Perth Amboy. And, it might even be possible to restore it for demonstration operations... The RCW facility closed in 1976 and was mostly razed. *Shortlines & Industrial Railroads of New Jersey, Vol. 2*, by Benjamin L. Bernhart.

Another of the Porter locomotives from RCW / Perth Amboy has been restored, was re-gauged to 2', and is operating at Edaville, MA. One other of these little locomotives was reportedly

restored and operating on a privately owned 30" gauge line in OH in 2012.

Interestingly, in past years a model of one of Raritan Copper Works narrow gauge steam locomotives (No. 2) was produced by model maker K-line which Walthers also sold. One of these models has been acquired for operation at the proposed Transportation Heritage Park. The RCW / RRS facilities were at one time served by the Lehigh Valley Railroad in addition to the CNJ and the Pennsylvania Railroad. The site continues to be served by Conrail Shared Assets Organization.

**F.** See: *A Master Plan for the New Jersey Transportation Heritage Center* (Executive Summary) by Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC. What is being proposed for Perth Amboy is a greatly scaled down version, but with similar benefits to the city.

**G.** See the website [www.URHS.org](http://www.URHS.org) for a full listing of over 70 items of railroad rolling stock which are available for display and / or operation. Some of these items, owned by the United Railroad Historical Society of New Jersey, would be most appropriate for display at Perth Amboy.

**H.** The RR bridge over the Raritan River to South Amboy is a favorite location for photographers as there is a clear view to photograph northbound trains from the Perth Amboy side in the morning and southbound trains from the South Amboy side in the afternoon. The installation of a replica interlocking tower at the proposed Transportation Heritage Park would increase the opportunities for photographers to take striking photos, provide an excellent viewing platform for museum attendees and give an excellent interpretive experience of towers which used to be common along railroads. We have the cast iron spiral stairs, the armstrong interlocking hardware, a vintage wooden chair, and a suitable CNJ coal stove for installation in such a tower.

**I.** The Delaware & Raritan Canal was in operation from 1834 to 1932. For views of the great variety of vessels which transited this canal (and passed by Perth Amboy as well) please see *The Delaware & Raritan Canal: A Pictorial History* and *Champlain to Chesapeake: A Canal Era Pictorial Cruise* both by William J. McKelvey.

**J.** A few of the colonial era buildings still stand in the waterfront area of the city. Most notably is the 1762 Proprietary House which was the mansion of William Franklin (son of Benjamin Franklin), the last Royal Governor of New Jersey. Perth Amboy is also home to the oldest City Hall in continuous use in the United States, built in the early 1700's. It was in this City Hall that the State of New Jersey became the first state to ratify the Bill of Rights.

**K.** The Rahway Car Line, operating between Perth Amboy and Westfield was replaced by buses on 3 June 1928. The Perth Amboy Car Line, operating between Perth Amboy and Newark was replaced by Public Service bus route 62 on 11 June 1933. The trolley car barn was later used for the Public Service buses. For history and maps of the routes see pgs. 296 to 302 in *The Public Service Trolley Lines in New Jersey* by Edward Hamm, Jr. Note: The Perth Amboy car house / bus garage at the corner of Smith Street and Davidson Avenue (formerly Division Street), near city line, survives and has been adaptively reused by American Industrial Supplies and Royal

Dinettes & Stools.

#### ADDITIONAL & HELPFUL PERTH AMBOY RESOURCES;

Anaconda Company (Raritan Copper Works) v. City of Perth Amboy 157NJ Super 42 (1978) and 348A 2de 531 Litigation involving the taxing of the RCW which provides an excellent description of the works near the end of their operations.

A most helpful and interesting website is [Historicaerials.com](http://Historicaerials.com) which provides historic aerial views of the proposed Transportation Heritage Park site. It is interesting to compare what used to be on the site (many RR tracks) to the current view.

*Perth Amboy, City of Firsts* is a 20 minute Youtube video (available on the internet - [www.youtube.com/watch?v=bW91f9Tsdk8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bW91f9Tsdk8) ) produced by News 12 NJ. It is a look at historically significant firsts related to the City of Perth Amboy.

Perth Amboy Historical Maps:

[http://www.njdigitalhighway.org/search/results.php?key=NJDH+orderby=relevance+rtype\[\]=&query=perth+amboy](http://www.njdigitalhighway.org/search/results.php?key=NJDH+orderby=relevance+rtype[]=&query=perth+amboy)

Perth Amboy Descriptive Data:

[http://nynjbaykeeper.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/PerthAmboy\\_Final\\_Draft.pdf](http://nynjbaykeeper.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/PerthAmboy_Final_Draft.pdf)

*Perth Amboy Railroad Station Accessibility Improvements Project: Historical Architectural Resources Background Study*, Prepared by Lynn Drobbin & Associates for Stantec (for NJ Transit)

*Kobbe's Jersey Coast and Pines*, by Gustav Kobbe (1889) is an illustrated guidebook which has one chapter describing the all-rail route via the NY and Long Branch RR through Perth Amboy.

*NJ Historical Buses at Two Recent Displays*, in National Bus Trader, October, 2013

The original Victory Bridge was documented by the Historic American Engineering Record (NJ 120; State Bridge #1223-150)  
Blue Comet history video.

Pennsylvania RR GG-1 videos.

*The Modern Streetcar: Transit or Time Machine?* by Alexander B. Craighead in NRHS Bulletin, Fall 2013

*Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines*, Infosheet by Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance

*Open Waters Initiative: Unlocking the Waterways for People and Boats*, Infosheet by Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance

*Public Access From the Water*, by Harvey Morganstin, PE, Retired

*James Porterfield: Promoting Railway Heritage*, by Therese Cox in Rails to Trails, Spring/Summer, 2014

*The Modern Streetcar: The new "old" mode of transportation*, by Philip G. Craig, VP, NJ Assn. of RR Passengers

*Reimagining our Watershed: A Renaissance on the Raritan*, a 30 minute film written and directed by the Sustainable Raritan River Initiative.

The Smithsonian Institution Presents the *John Bull*: A film of the restored original locomotive operating under steam in the Washington, DC area in 1981 for the *John Bull*'s 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary; <http://youtu.be/FxcdY2CjnQ>

#### SOME LOCAL PERTH AMBOY TRANSPORTATION EVENTS AND INCIDENTS;

**1664:** On 12 March, England's King Charles II made a land grant in the new world to his brother James, Duke of York. It included the territory between the Connecticut and Delaware Rivers. James, in turn, on 24 June, granted portions of this land - the vast area bounded by the Delaware River, the Hudson River and the Atlantic Ocean - to two loyal noblemen, Sir George Carteret and Lord John Berkeley. This royal grant is considered New Jersey's birth certificate.

**1683:** Perth Amboy was settled. "Upon our view and survey of Ambo Point (Perth Amboy), we find it extraordinary, well situate for a great town or city, beyond expectation." *Thomas Rudyard, first deputy royal governor, 30 May.* ♦ Miles Forster, New Jersey's earliest recorded shipbuilder, built his first vessel in Perth Amboy.

**1684:** East Jersey Proprietors encouraged a road to unite Perth Amboy and Burlington. It was completed along with a ferry connection to New York by Deputy Governor Lawrie and became known as "Lawrie's Road." It grew in importance in the first half of the eighteenth century and over it the first public accommodations for passengers and freight were established in New Jersey. , Redford's ferry (either sail or oar powered) began operating between Perth Amboy and South Amboy.

**1686:** Perth Amboy became the seat of the government of New Jersey.

**1687:** Redford's horse powered ferry began as a commercial venture to connect South Amboy and Perth Amboy. ♦ (Approximately 1687) New Jersey's first recorded common carrier, Mr. Dellaman, was granted permission by Andrew Hamilton, Deputy Governor of East Jersey, to drive his wagon on the Amboy Road for the accommodation of passengers.

**1692** The American post office was established by King William III and put in charge of



Andrew Hamilton. Hamilton, the East Jersey Deputy Governor, made the Amboy to Burlington road the route the postal riders followed.

**1706:** Hugh Huddy was granted the sole right of transporting goods over the Perth Amboy to Burlington road. This was the first American transportation monopoly on record, but it was struck down two years later.

**1733:** Solomon Smith and James Moore of Burlington advertised their frequent and regular "Stage-Waggon" to and from Amboy. This was the first known advertisement of such a stage line. From it have grown all the schedules, time-tables, and the whole complex system of movement that has become such an indispensable feature of American life. It may fairly be called the first regular overland transportation service offered the public in America. (*Seymour Dunbar, A History of Travel in America, Vol. 1, p. 180*) (*Alex Roggero in "Go Greyhound" says this service began in March, 1732.*)

**1755:** Joseph Borden, Jr. and partners started a stage line which became the first regular service between New York and Philadelphia. Only the Bordentown to Perth Amboy segment was by land. Boats were used at either end of the trip.

**1776:** On 21 May, George Washington and Martha departed from NY City by ferry for Perth Amboy. There they spent the night (most likely) at the King's Arms Tavern, Perth Amboy's foremost hostelry before and after the revolution. While at Perth Amboy, Washington dispatched eight regiments from his already-meager force to protect the exposed coastline between Perth Amboy and Elizabethtown Point to prevent the British from staging a strike into the New Jersey interior. The Washington's departed Perth Amboy the next day for Philadelphia. *Historian Donald J. Peck - www.donaldpeck.com*

**1806:** The first *New Jersey Turnpike*, also chartered in this year, ran from New Brunswick to Bound Brook, Somerville, Potterstown and Bloomsbury to Phillipsburg. It was later extended through Metuchen to Perth Amboy

**1830:** Charters for the Delaware & Raritan Canal and the Camden & Amboy Railroad were granted. Ground was broken and construction was started on both. The railroad was completed in 1832 and the canal in 1834. *The Delaware & Raritan Canal: A Pictorial History* by William J. McKelvey, Jr.

**1831:** The John Bull, the first steam locomotive to operate in NJ began working for the Camden & Amboy RR.

**1836:** An 8-wheeled passenger car was built for the Camden & Amboy Railroad. It is preserved in the Smithsonian institution and is the oldest such car in existence.

**1839:** The *ROBERT F. STOCKTON* was built in Birkenhead, England in 1839 as a steam towing vessel for the Delaware & Raritan Canal Company. Because it could not carry enough coal for the voyage it was rigged as a sailing vessel. It was the first iron-hull vessel to cross the Atlantic and the first commercially successful vessel utilizing the screw propeller. It took the *STOCKTON* 40 days to cross the Atlantic, arriving at New York 21 May 1839. Soon thereafter she steamed past Perth Amboy on her way to the D&R Canal. *STOCKTON* was renamed *NEW JERSEY* by an Act of Congress on 8 May 1840. *The Delaware & Raritan Canal: A Pictorial History* by William J. McKelvey, Jr.

**1842:** The first American, twin screw, steam canalboats - *ANTHRACITE*, *BLACK DIAMOND*, *IRONSIDES*, and *VULCAN* - were built at New York City for the Delaware & Raritan Canal Co. These iron hull vessels carried coal through the canal and past Perth Amboy north and east of New York Harbor. *The Delaware & Raritan Canal: A Pictorial History* by William J. McKelvey, Jr.

**1846:** A series of excursions were operated by the Camden & Amboy Railroad from Philadelphia. Passengers took a steamboat to Bordentown, the railroad to (South) Amboy and another steamboat to cruise around Staten Island. Return was again via the C&A RR and a Delaware River steamboat.

**1860:** The Perth Amboy to Tottenville, SI, NY ferry commenced operation.

**1861:** Early in the Civil War a flotilla of fourteen steam canalboats departing NY Harbor, traveling past Perth Amboy and through the Delaware & Raritan Canal were employed to carry 3,000 New Jersey troops and equipment south to the defense of the Nation's Capital at

Washington, D.C. *The Delaware & Raritan Canal: A Pictorial History* by William J. McKelvey, Jr. , In November, during the Civil War, arrangements were made to run through trains between NY and Washington via the Camden & Amboy RR.

**1862:** The *NAUGATUCK*, a small ironclad steamer (the first), was presented to the national government for the (Civil) war effort by E.A. Stevens. She was rebuilt at Bordentown, received her armament at Hoboken, traveled past Perth Amboy and through the Delaware & Raritan Canal en route to Fort Monroe.

**1863:** Dr. Solomon Andrews was the first man in the world to steer an airship (the dirigible *Aereon*) with any success, and it was done over Perth Amboy on 1 June.

**1867:** The Delaware & Raritan Canal Co., the Camden & Amboy Railroad & Transportation Co. and the New Jersey Railroad & Transportation Co. were authorized to consolidate their interests with each company retaining its separate organization. The new parent conglomerate was known as the United New Jersey Railroad and Canal Company. , The steamboat *BLANCHE PAGE* agreed to tow two Schuylkill canalboats, *CORNELIUS HAGGERTY* and *JOHN HAYS* loaded with anthracite coal, from New Brunswick to NYC on the morning of 5 July, by way of the Raritan River and the Kills. On reaching the mouth of the river, inside of which there was good anchorage and a safe harbor, there was found outside a high wind and a heavy sea. The steamer, however, went out, and, not being able to cross the flats, the tide being ebb, took a circuitous route by the channel, going by South Amboy and down around the buoy at the tail of the flats, and so around to Perth Amboy. While making this passage, two of the canalboats were sunk by the violence of the sea and the dashing of the boats against each other. *Held*, that it showed a want of ordinary care for the steamboat to venture out with such a tow when she did. Note: the *HAGGERTY* was never raised. *Federal Cases Nos. 1,523 & 4, The BLANCHE PAGE, District Court, S.D. New York, May Term, 1870.*

**1870:** On Wednesday evening, 9 September, the tugboat *RED JACKET* took in tow two coal-barges at New Brunswick, and during the night proceeded toward New York. At 2 o'clock, while opposite Perth Amboy, the boiler of the tug exploded, tearing the boat to pieces and killing three men. Robert Brown, the pilot, was hurled into the air, and his body torn to pieces. The engineer, Daniel Thomas, of South Amboy, and a fireman named Strong, were almost instantly killed by flying fragments of the iron and woodwork. Three of the deck hands, though not known to have been killed, have not been seen, and it is supposed that they also are lost. The cause assigned for the accident is that the boiler was almost entirely empty, and upon its being filled with water exploded. The loss to the owners of the boat (tug) will probably be about \$25,000 or \$30,000. *New York Times, 9 September 1870.*

**1871:** This was the peak traffic year for the Delaware & Raritan Canal. Nearly three million tons of cargo came through the canal and past Perth Amboy in 13,215 canalboats, 1,545 steamers, 668 sailing vessels, and 434 rafts. *Champlain to Chesapeake: A Canal Era Pictorial Cruise* by William J. McKelvey, Jr.

**1872:** The Easton & Amboy RR was chartered to build a double track line east from the Delaware River to link the Lehigh Valley RR with tidewater at Perth Amboy. The parent LV viewed the Morris Canal, which they leased, as a second-best option to reach NY Harbor. It is not surprising that when they were finally granted permission to construct the E&A they immediately requested permission to cease maintenance of the Morris Canal as a navigable waterway.

**1874:** The Central RR of NJ opened their Perth Amboy branch from Elizabethport.

**1875:** The NY & Long Branch RR was leased by the CNJ and opened between Perth Amboy and Long Branch. The NY & LB single track bridge over the Raritan River was, at the time, the longest drawbridge in the US. The CNJ operated a special excursion train to tour the just completed railroad. President Grant helped to inaugurate the new line. His private car was attached to the train which traveled from Jersey City to Long Branch. The bridge built for this line over the Raritan River was called a "mammoth triumph of civil engineering." , The Easton & Amboy Railroad (LV RR) was completed from Phillipsburg to Perth Amboy and included the 4,827 foot long Musconetcong Tunnel.

**1879:** When the Reading RR secured a lease of the North Pennsylvania RR they blocked use of that line by the Lehigh Valley RR for delivery of their coal to Philadelphia. The Lehigh Valley retaliated by initiating a price war. By routing its anthracite coal shipments to Perth Amboy over its recently completed New Jersey Division, thence to Philadelphia via boats on the Delaware & Raritan Canal, the Lehigh Valley was able to slash its shipping rates to match those of the Reading. *A history of the Lehigh Valley Railroad "The Route of the Black Diamond" by Robert F. Archer*

**1880:** Thomas Alva Edison demonstrated his electric railroad at Menlo Park, NJ on 13 May. His crude locomotive hauled two cars for passengers and proved the practicality of electric traction. , The Great Beds Lighthouse, off Perth Amboy at the intersection of the Raritan River and Perth Amboy channels, began operation on 15 November. In 1898 a 1,227 pound fog bell

was added. The lighthouse has been struck many times by vessels, but survives, and was placed on the National Register in 2008. It was declared excess property by the US Coast Guard in 2010 and was auctioned off the following year to an individual for \$90,000.

**1882:** The NY & LB RR was completed when it reached Bay Head. The RR was initially operated exclusively by the CNJ. When the Pennsylvania RR threatened to build a competing parallel railroad the CRR entered into an agreement which permitted the PRR to jointly use the NY & LB RR, in this same year.

**1884:** The New York, Susquehanna & Western RR operated, jointly with the PRR, a through coach from Paterson to Asbury Park.

**1893:** On 19 February the schooner *JAMES BUTLER* from Perth Amboy sank at Sandy Hook with a cargo of coal.

**1896:** The Danish community of Perth Amboy gifted a life-sized commanding terra cotta statue of George Washington, the work of a local sculptor Nels Alling, to commemorate the visit of George Washington in 1776. Washington Street and Washington Park in Perth Amboy are named in his honor. *Historian Donald J. Peck - [www.donaldpeck.com](http://www.donaldpeck.com)*

**1899:** The Spanish warship *ALVORADO*, was captured when Santiago, Cuba fell to American forces in the Spanish American War. On 6 April it cleared the Delaware & Raritan Canal and went past Perth Amboy enroute to Portsmouth, NH. , The *USS HOLLAND*, designed by New Jersey Professor John Holland and the first submarine to be accepted by the US Navy, was towed past Perth Amboy and through the Delaware & Raritan Canal enroute to Washington, DC. *Champlain to Chesapeake: A Canal Era Pictorial Cruise* by William J. McKelvey, Jr.

**1904:** The Central Stock Yard and Transit Company of NJ began operating at Harsimus Cove, Jersey City under a contract and lease of property from the Pennsylvania RR. They constructed a large stock yard and abattoir (slaughter house) there. In 1877 the CSY & TC purchased from the PRR the *John Stevens*, a former C&A RR passenger steamboat, rebuilt into a freighter after burning. She now found herself a floating cattle barn servicing the ocean steamers exporting or importing cattle, and transporting cattle from the stockyards to Manhattan's slaughterhouses. On 4 August 1904 the *Nautical Gazette* reported that the *Stevens* was being scrapped at Gregory's yard in Perth Amboy. After 58 years of faithful service, it hardly seemed a fitting end for a steamboat once described as the "most elegant and fastest on the Delaware." *The John Bull-etin, Vol. V, No. II, Summer 2011*

**1906:** On 18 June the first vehicular bridge spanning the Raritan River between Perth Amboy and South Amboy opened. It began at the foot of Sheridan Street in Perth Amboy on timber approaches from both shores to a steel, center swing span. *Historic American Engineering Record report for the Victory Bridge.* , The Central RR of NJ, having acquired newer propeller driven ferryboats, retired their last two sidewheelers, the *COMMUNIPAW* and the *FANWOOD*. Both were burned in a Perth Amboy "bone yard" on 4 July.

**1908:** The original NY & Long Branch RR single track bridge over the Raritan River was replaced by the present double track bridge.

**1909:** President Theodore Roosevelt visited Perth Amboy by train.

**1910:** The CNJ operated a through train between Scranton, PA and Point Pleasant with Pullman buffet parlor cars. Called *The Mermaid*, it ran this Summer and for a few years after.

**1911:** The Jersey Central Traction Co. installed their track on the vehicular bridge across the Raritan from South Amboy and began providing trolley service between Keyport and the business district of Perth Amboy. Their line operated north on Sheridan Street, east on Market Street and north on Division Street (now called Davidson Avenue), where they switched to Public Service Ry tracks and traveled east on Smith Street, terminating at the ferry slip.

**1912:** Perth Amboy claims the first airmail delivery in the world. It was made from South Amboy to Perth Amboy in a hydroplane in this year.

**1913:** Public Service RR, a separate new subsidiary of Public Service Corporation was created to construct the new Short Route of the Newark to Trenton *Fast Line* which opened in this year.

, Perth Amboy, the oldest port of entry in the US was merged with the Port of New York.

**1914:** The Lehigh Valley RR had wooden covered lighter #79 constructed at Perth Amboy in this year. It has been kept afloat and in use by the Hudson Waterfront Museum & Showboat Barge which was founded in 1986. It is the last vessel of its kind and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

**1916:** On 30 April the New Jersey Central operated a special excursion train to Philadelphia picking up passengers on the NY & Long Branch RR between Point Pleasant and Perth Amboy. The train was routed via Elizabethport and Bound Brook to the Reading line south to Philadelphia and return - all for only \$1.50!

**1918:** On 21 July, the big Lehigh Valley RR coastal steam tug *PERTH AMBOY* was the victim of the only U-boat attack that landed shells on US shores. The German submarine U-156 fired at the tug and its barges, sending some shells onto Nauset Beach, Cape Cod. There were no deaths or injuries and only minor damage to the tug which was sold in the 1930's to Moran and became the *NANCY MORAN*. , On 4 October the T. A. Gillespie ammunition plant in nearby Morgan, NJ exploded and the resulting fire triggered a chain of explosions which continued for three days, destroying more than 300 buildings and forcing the evacuation of about 62,000 civilians.

**1921:** Nine volunteer members of the Eagle Hose and Chemical Co. were killed when their fire truck collided with a train at Market Street, then a grade crossing. The crossing guard had left the gates open, resulting the tragedy. They were racing to a fire at a Second Street junkyard. Shortly thereafter the grade separation project in Perth Amboy was initiated.

**1923:** Following several years of losses, a strike, and deteriorating maintenance, the Jersey Central Traction Co. filed for abandonment and ceased operation at midnight on 28 July, ending only a dozen years of trolley operation in Perth Amboy.

**1926:** The original Victory Bridge over the Raritan River opened to traffic. It carried Route 35 between Perth Amboy and Sayreville and, at 360 feet, had the longest swing span in New Jersey. It replaced the 1906 structure and was dedicated to the US Troops who served in WWI.

**1928:** CNJ completed a grade crossing elimination project in Perth Amboy by depressing track from Market Street to Hall Avenue. The original station was moved the year before to 210

Lewis Street where, with slight modifications, it became a residence. , Outerbridge Crossing (between Perth Amboy and Tottenville, Staten Island), the first bridge built by the Port Authority of NY & NJ, was opened. , On 19 October the *Graf Zeppelin*, the first powered, lighter than air ship landed at Lakehurst, NJ, Naval Air Station. The Central RR of New Jersey had a contract with the Zeppelin company to carry passengers, mail and freight between NYC and Lakehurst (via the Amboys) for every landing and departure. They also capitalized on this pioneering and awe-inspiring Zeppelin service by operating special "sight-seer" trains to Lakehurst. *Frank T. Reilly*

**1929:** The Central RR of NJ *Blue Comet* train with fine quality dining service was established between Jersey City Terminal and Atlantic City via Elizabethport and Winslow Junction. It was designed by C RR of NJ president R. B. White in 1928. The colors chosen for the locomotive and train were ultramarine, for the sea and sky, cream for the sandy coastal beaches, and nickel. A special deep toned whistle (described as a cross between a steamboat whistle and a cathedral organ) was installed on each *Blue Comet* locomotive. Tickets for the train were blue, dining car chairs were upholstered in blue, and the porters were dressed in blue as well. It was the first all reserved seat, all coach fare, named train and the first east of the Mississippi to be equipped with roller bearings.

**1932:** On 25 August the barge *RED FOX* sank at Perth Amboy drowning the captain.

**1934:** Lehigh Valley RR passenger service between Perth Amboy and South Plainfield ended.

**1937:** The Zeppelin *Hindenberg* went up in flames upon arrival at Lakehurst Naval Air Station on 6 May, thus ending the Jersey Central trains which carried passengers, sight-seers, mail, and freight to and from NYC for each flight. *Frank T. Reilly* , The largest single excursion on the CNJ operated between Bayonne and Asbury Park, carrying 17,347 passengers on 19 trains of 12 cars each.

**1938:** For many years the Central RR of NJ operated the largest number of special trains in the US for one organization - the Donohoe League of Bayonne. The record one day outing on 31 July required 21 trains, three of which made two round trips each. Each consisted of 12 coaches (that's a total of 252 coaches) to transport 19,233 people through Perth Amboy to Asbury Park

and return. *Rdg - CNJ employee magazine Sept. 1938.* , The Central RR of NJ operated a trip around Staten Island on a steam lighter to tour NY Harbor and circle Staten Island on the afternoon of 1 October. They passed: under the Bayonne, Goethals, Outerbridge and B&O RR bridges; Port Reading and Perth Amboy. A continuous buffet lunch was included in the fare of \$1.75. *Frank T. Reilly.*

**1939:** The CNJ operated a railfan trip on 16 April with 4-6-0c loco #758; CNJ dining cars; and a *Blue Comet* observation car for \$4. The route was Jersey City to Perth Amboy on the CNJ; Perth Amboy to Red Bank on the NY&LB; Red Bank to Barnegat on the CNJ Southern Division; then onto the Southern NJ RR at Barnegat, where two SNJRR steam locomotives replaced the CNJ locomotive. The entire SNJRR was traversed from Barnegat to Tuckerton and return. They then covered the CNJ Southern Division from Barnegat to Bridgeton (where the roundhouse was opened for the railfans) and return. *Railway Age Magazine*, 11 June 1938, pg 981.

**1941:** Last run of the CNJ, NY to Atlantic City *Blue Comet* train was made on 27 September. On board were 157 members of the Railroad Enthusiasts, who turned out to pay their respects on the passing of the famous train. (*The Railroad Enthusiast*, February 1942) All three of the observation cars used on this train survive: No. 1169, *Tempel*, @ Tuckahoe, NJ; No. 1178, *De Vico*, @ in the United RR Historical Society (URHS) collection partially restored @ West Boonton Yard; and No. 1179, *Biela*, @Clinton Station Diner, I-78 West of Clinton. Several *Blue Comet* coaches also survive.

**1946:** On 3 February 3,500 New York area tugboaters went on strike. At the time 65% of the city's coal was delivered by barges (many of which were loaded in the Amboys) and 95% of fuel oil arrived by water. The strike ended on 13 February after intervention of NYC Mayor

O'Dwyer and President Truman. , New 2,000 horsepower, double ended, diesel locomotives (the first for CNJ passenger service), built by Baldwin Locomotive Works, were put in regular service on the NY & Long Branch RR.

**1947:** The NY & LB RR completed the terminal tracks, wye and storage track at Monmouth Park Race Track. PRR and CNJ train service through Perth Amboy direct to the Grandstand

began on 19 June. , A special "Off the Beaten Track" excursion was operated by the Pennsylvania RR from Jersey City on 26 October. It covered branch lines to Bonhamtown\*, East Millstone\*, Kingston\* / Rocky Hill\*, Coalport\* - Trenton\* to Bordentown\*, and return through Jamestown and Perth Amboy with a steam locomotive, three coaches and one low side gondola. \**These points were all on or along the Delaware & Raritan Canal.*

**1948:** On 19 September the Philadelphia Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society sponsored a Railfan Special over the Reading Railway from Philadelphia through Perth Amboy to Port Reading. The return was via Elizabethport, Bethlehem, PA and the Perkiomen Branch.

**1950:** On 19 May 150 tons of military explosives and gelatin dynamite exploded at a pier in the South Amboy Munitions explosion. A huge number of building windows were blown out all over Perth Amboy.

**1954:** Jersey Central Lines completely diesel-ized their passenger service and entirely new passenger schedules were inaugurated on 21 April. , On 11 July an excursion covering the entire NY & Long Branch line was sponsored by the North Jersey Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society using CNJ Camelback steam locomotive No. 774, the last still in service. The famous Pennsylvania Railroad K4 steam locomotives were still in full force at Bay Head. , Pennsylvania Railroad Atlantic locomotive #460 (the Lindbergh Special engine) headed a railfan excursion from Newark to Atlantic City in January. It was the last passenger train to traverse the venerable Camden and Amboy line between South Amboy and Camden. ,PRR Alco PA diesel locomotives #5752 and 5753 were sent to the NY & LB RR for evaluation as replacements for the K-4 steam locomotives.

**1955:** On April 2<sup>nd</sup>, a railfan excursion on the Jersey Central from Jersey City (through Perth Amboy) to Bridgeton was powered by 4-6-0 camelback locomotive #774. , The Garden State Parkway opened.

**1957:** A farewell run of the famous Pennsylvania RR K-4s Pacific steam locomotive was made on a Sunday, 20 October excursion, sponsored by the Branford Electric Railway Assn. The routing was: NYC, Newark, Elizabeth, Rahway, Perth Amboy/South Amboy, Long Branch, Asbury Park, Manasquan, Freehold, Jamesburg, Spottswood, South Amboy/Perth Amboy and return to NYC. However, that same locomotive, No. 612, made the last steam powered revenue trip from Bay Head, through Perth Amboy, to Exchange Place, Jersey City with the *Broker* on 20 November.

**1959:** On 17 May the Philadelphia Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society sponsored a "GG-1 Silver Anniversary Special" excursion powered by Pennsylvania RRs first GG-1 electric locomotive, No. 4800 ("Old Rivets"). They departed Philadelphia on the main line north to Trenton and at Monmouth Junction turned east to Jamesburg and then north on the original route of the Camden & Amboy RR. At South Amboy they joined the NY & Long Branch RR, continuing through Perth Amboy and rejoined the main line at Rahway for NYC and on over the Hell Gate Bridge to New Haven. There they boarded chartered buses for the Branford Trolley Museum. At the end of the day they returned to Philadelphia directly via the PRR main line. , "Runaway locomotive through Perth Amboy." A crew-less, runaway diesel locomotive, #1706 departed the CNJ Jersey City Terminal yards moving west. At Elizabethport it was shunted south toward Perth Amboy. The engine roared out of control at speeds averaging 40 miles per hour for 36 minutes until it was finally "caught" by another locomotive which got up to speed ahead of the runaway and stopped it near Red Bank. The throttle of the "ghost locomotive" was found wide open... The incident was later documented by Fales, E.D., Jr. in an article, "Runaway Engine on the Main Line!" in the October 1961 issue of *Popular Science Magazine*. URHS has a similar locomotive in their collections. , In a study, the PRR offered to



turn over their passenger service on the NY&LB RR to the CNJ and allow the CNJ to use their Exchange Place, Jersey City terminal. The change only took place for a short time in 1961 due to necessity. , The last passenger run on the oldest railroad line in New Jersey ended 127 years of service on the former Camden & Amboy line between South Amboy and Jamesburg.

**1961:** Due to a NY/NJ harbor workers strike in January, four CNJ trains from the NY & LB RR operated via Newark, on PRR / Hudson & Manhattan RR tracks, to Exchange Place, Jersey City. Travelers on other CNJ NY & LB trains were advised to take a shuttle train from Elizabethport to Ferry Street, Newark and walk to Newark Penn Station.

**1962:** The Reading Company operated a special Iron Horse Ramble from Wayne Jct., Philadelphia through Perth Amboy to Port Reading and return on 23 June, 1962 using one of their big 4-8-4 steam locomotives. The area adjacent to the McMyler coal dumper and pier at Port Reading was restricted to passengers. The round trip fare was \$6.00.

**1964:** The National Railway Historical Society annual convention was based at Newark on September 3<sup>rd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup>. One of the excursion trips was via the CNJ and Perth Amboy to Asbury Park and Bay Head.

**1966:** A tanker rammed and so damaged the Raritan River railroad bridge that it was shut down for six weeks for repairs. A special shuttle bus operation was established to ferry rail riders between Perth Amboy and South Amboy stations. , CNJ Monmouth Park Race Train service ended, but was revived between 1972 and 1975.

**1967:** A High Iron Co. Steam Excursion which originated at Elizabethport went to Bridgeton, NJ and return via Perth Amboy. It was powered by former Canadian Pacific 4-6-2 steam locomotive #1286. , The Aldene Plan was implemented with all CNJ trains operating into the PRR Newark Station instead of the CNJ Jersey City Terminal, allowing CNJ ferry service to be eliminated.

**1974:** The CNJ ran a train called *The Mermaid* between Raritan and Bay Head via Elizabethport for one Summer.

**1975:** Mainline Steam Foundation sponsored a *Blue Comet* Nostalgia Special from Raritan to Bay Head behind ex-Florida East Coast Railway steam engine No. 148 hauling nine CNJ coaches.

**1976:** The CNJ and other bankrupt railroads of the northeastern US were taken over by the government created Consolidated Rail Corporation. The NJ DOT Commuter Operating Agency contracted with Conrail to operate the commuter rail system service in NJ.

**1977:** The NJ DOT received a \$40.7 million grant on to purchase 50 high-speed Arrow multiple unit commuter cars and to extend electrification of the NY&LB RR from South Amboy to Long

Branch.

**1978:** NJ DOT purchased NJ commuter lines from Conrail.

**1979:** New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ Transit) was created by the state legislature, replacing the former (NJDOT) Commuter Operating Agency, and was charged with the responsibility of overseeing most bus and rail service in NJ. , The State of New Jersey responded to the gas crisis with *The Seashore Special* train. It was run direct from Trenton via Rahway for shore points to Bay Head on summer weekends. It was withdrawn after a few weeks due to poor patronage.

**1981:** The restored original *John Bull* locomotive was taken from the Smithsonian Institution and operated under steam in the Washington, DC area.

**1983:** The American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners, Inc. held their Eastern Regional Meeting during a trip with the privately owned cars *Clover Colony* and *Lehigh Valley 353* while operating from NY to Bay Head, NJ on Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>.

**1984:** NJ Transit initiated the *Shore Express* train on summer weekends and holidays between Newark and Long Branch with intermediate stops between Long Branch and Bay Head. The train was well patronized. , An effort to establish a NJ Transportation Heritage Center in South Amboy was launched. It failed to gain traction.

**1985:** The United Railroad Historical Society of New Jersey was incorporated, as NJ Transit wanted to deal with one NJ organization on multiple requests from numerous organizations for donations of heritage rail equipment.

**1987:** NJ Transit E-8 #4253 hauled the last steam-heated train on 31 August. , NJ Transit Office of Special Operations ran (and sold the tickets) for a "Farewell to the E-8's" excursion from Hoboken to Bay Head and return. The \$15 round trip fare was good systemwide on the day of the trip, 13 September.

**1988:** Electrification of the North Jersey Coast Line was extended from South Amboy to Matawan to Long Branch. The last engine change was made at South Amboy on 2 July.

**1990:** URHS excursion from Hoboken to Bay Head with Erie E-8 locomotives on 17 November.

**1991:** URHS excursion to Monmouth Park with Erie E-8 locomotives on 27 July. , URHS excursion to Monmouth Park with Erie E-8 locomotives on 18 August.

**1999:** Governor Christine Todd Whitman launched the Transit Village Program to "create development and investment centered around rail passenger stations." Rutherford, Morristown,

Pleasantville (bus), Riverside, South Orange, and South Amboy were designated. Perth Amboy was added later.

**2004:** The first half of the replacement Victory Bridge, connecting Perth Amboy and Sayreville opened on 8 June. The original Victory Bridge was then demolished for the parallel second span of the new bridge. Over six tons of significant artifacts from the earlier Victory Bridge were secured for preservation by Bill McKelvey. They included two segments of the center pier ring gear, one of the swing span rollers, the pinion drive gear, one pair of the crash gates, segments of the bridge railing, the bridge warning horn, and other items.

**2005:** In September the second, parallel, span of the new Victory bridge was opened to traffic. These two bridges have 440' main spans, the longest precast concrete cantilever segmental construction in the US.

**2006:** On 15 June Bennett Levin's restored Pennsylvania RR GM EMD E-8 locomotives #5711 & 5809 pulled a special inspection train for the American Public Transit Association Scholarship Fund as well as the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Railway Age magazine from Hoboken to Bay Head on the NY & Long Branch RR and return. Use of all rail equipment was donated by Juniata Terminal and the Morristown & Erie Railway.

**2013:** Bill McKelvey, Chairman of the United Railroad Historical Society Site Committee, began exploration in Perth Amboy as a location for a prospective Transportation Heritage Park along the North Jersey Coast Line between the NJT Perth Amboy station and the Raritan River. A tour of the location was conducted by Site Committee

**2014:** On 11 January a tour of the Perth Amboy location was conducted for the Site Committee and locals with interest, followed by a discussion meeting with coffee and Danish at American Industrial Supply. The Site Committee began in-depth research to produce a map of the site; this Site Proposal; and an Executive Summary. At no time during this process was any encouragement or positive response received from Perth Amboy city administration. In fact, the Business Administrator, and City Planner, Annie Hindenlang were continually negative. , On 28 February the Perth Amboy Bay City Transit District Strategy, Phase 1, was concluded with a Walk, Talk, and Act Tour. Project partners: City of Perth Amboy; Middlesex County; NJ Transit, and Jewish Renaissance Foundation. (The Site Committee was unaware of this activity.) ,On 11 June an Editorial, "A shot in the Arm Proposal," promoting the Transportation Heritage Park initiative for Perth Amboy appeared in the local Amboy Guardian newspaper. , On 17 June the Perth Amboy Bay City Transit District Strategy study final report was released. ,On 9 July a letter from Tracy Jordan "Attracting Tourists to Perth Amboy" (focusing on the benefits of a Transportation Heritage Park for Perth Amboy) appeared in the local newspaper, Amboy Guardian. , On 15 August at a meeting at NJT Hq. with the Executive Director and key department heads, the Site Committee requested the Perth Amboy (former CNJ freight yard) and

East Boonton Yard properties. ,On 10 and 17 September 2/3rds page ads in color promoting the Transportation Heritage Festival at Boonton on 21 Sept. appeared in the local Perth Amboy newspaper, Amboy Guardian. ,On 2 October the news of the planned Perth Amboy 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Park was released. The Site Committee communicated with and submitted to the consultant, working on this park, our proposed Transportation Heritage Park map and text well in advance. Our initiative was rejected by the consultant. We took great pains to demonstrate that our initiative would not preempt the park and was totally compatible with the park. We would only have needed a narrow corridor on the west of their park parallel to the NJT NJCL track. , On 8 December the Site Committee Chair advised NJT contacts that we were proceeding with the preparation of Business Plans for both the Perth Amboy and East Boonton Yard locations in preparation for making presentations to the councils of both municipalities early in the new year. Within hours the Chair received a call from John Leon, NJ Transit's Sr. Director of Governmental and Community Relations and Jeff Nadel, NJT Real Estate. They stated that the PA site was NOT AVAILABLE due to the station restoration which will be ongoing for the next five years. They asked us not to meet with PA officials. We agreed to cease all Site Committee activity in relation to PA. I told them that we would diary PA for 2020 and re-contact the city and NJT at that time.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.** The Map, Full Perth Amboy Site Proposal, and Executive Summary of this initiative should be filed/stored in the URHS Cloud Site.
- 2.** The URHS Perth Amboy initiative should be put on diary for the year 2020 or sooner. The completion of the PA station renovation should be monitored. When the station work is completed our proposal should be reinvestigated. The URHS Site Committee should explore the advancement of a NJ Transportation Heritage Park in Perth Amboy. Our initiative should be presented to the Perth Amboy City Council, Urban Enterprise Zone, Redevelopment Authority, Economic and Community Development Department, Chamber of Commerce, and hopefully, a new/more receptive City administration.
- 3.** Steps should be taken to secure the unused and excess lands owned by NJT along the North Jersey Coast Line and to preserve the sidetrack and switch which could be used to access the property.

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