

The Track and Train Announcement Signs at the CNJ Jersey City Terminal

REVISED 1 June 2010

Many have asked about the track and train announcement signs that are posted on the west side of the concourse of the Central Railroad of New Jersey (CNJ) Terminal at Jersey City, in Liberty State Park. There are some very obvious errors in the placement of those signs which should be corrected for historic accuracy... Let us begin with a bit of background history provided by former CNJ employee, Frank Reilly;

There were at least four major revisions of track assignments at the CNJ passenger terminal in Jersey City. The first was when the terminal was substantially completed in 1914 until April 28, 1918. That period would show CNJ, Baltimore & Ohio Railroad (B&O), Lehigh Valley Railroad (LV) and Reading Railway (RDG) trains using the Terminal. On January 1, 1916, train assignments were: Tracks 1-3 local Newark trains; 4-7 Newark Branch and Lehigh Valley RR trains; 8-12 Baltimore & Ohio, Reading, and CNJ deluxe trains with Pullman cars; and 13-20 Main Line and NY & Long Branch commuter and local trains. That changed on April 28, 1918 when the US Railroad Administration rerouted the B&O trains to Pennsylvania RR Station in NYC and the LV trains were split between Penn Station NY and the PRR's Exchange Place terminal in Jersey City.

The next major change came on September 1, 1926 when B&O trains returned to the CNJ Jersey City Terminal. To compete with the PRR's convenient midtown NYC station the B&O inaugurated their *Train Connection* motor coach service between train-side in Jersey City and various locations in NYC.

To accommodate the new train-side coach service, the CNJ removed Tracks 2 and 3 under the Jersey City Terminal Train Shed and paved the right-of-way. Since Tracks 1 through 4 were underutilized and they were near the roadway that connected with the ferryboats, they were ideally suited for the B&O trains and motor coaches. Just west of the train shed on the paved former right-of-way for Tracks 2 and 3 a small Whiting Co. turntable was built for the B&O motor coaches. The turntable solved the problem of reversing the direction of the coaches on the narrow busway. The 1926 cost to remove Tracks 2 and 3, install the roadway, build the turntable, and other related facilities was \$53,154.03 and was completed on January 18, 1927.

Baltimore & Ohio trains were usually 7 to 12 cars long, except in periods of heavy travel when they were lengthened. The longer trains required the construction of a wooden platform extension on Track 4 in 1928. This was a small job which took less than a month and cost only \$539.38. A few months later the Track 1 platform received a wooden extension which only took one day to build. The next change occurred when the last B&O passenger train departed the Jersey City Terminal on April 26, 1958. In 1967 CNJ and Reading passenger trains were rerouted from the Jersey City Terminal to Newark Penn Station.

Recommended Historically Accurate Track/Train Announcement Signs

The best period to focus on for the CNJ Jersey City Terminal signs would be from 1938 to 1941, when the largest number of named trains were running. Retired CNJ employee, and past president of the Central RR of NJ Veteran Employees Association, Robert Hoeft, recommends the following sign or "Train Curtain" revisions to reflect this period;

Track 1. Now has no curtain - the following is suggested;
This train curtain should have a Royal Blue background with DuLux (gold) lettering;

9:30 A.M.

THE
ROYAL BLUE

WAYNE JCT. (PHILA.)
PHILADELPHIA (B&O STA.)
WILMINGTON
BALTIMORE (MT. ROYAL STA.)
BALTIMORE (CAMDEN STA.)
WASHINGTON, D.C. (UNION STA.)

Track 2. Now has no curtain OK the way it is.

Track 3. Now has 5:42 PM PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS. Move this curtain to Track **9**

Note: There should be no train curtains at Tracks **2** and **3** as these tracks were removed and the right-of-way paved for the use of the B&O train connection buses to and from NYC.

Track 4. Now has 2:00 PM HIGHLANDS EXPRESS. Move this curtain to Track **17**.
New train curtain for Track **4** should have a Royal Blue background with DuLux (Gold) lettering;

3:00 P.M.

THE
NATIONAL LIMITED

WAYNE JCT. (PHILA.)
PHILADELPHIA (B&O STA.)
WILMINGTON
BALTIMORE (MT. ROYAL STA.)
BALTIMORE (CAMDEN STA.)
WASHINGTON, D.C. (UNION STA.)
SILVER SPRING, MD
CUMBERLAND, MD.
PARKERSBURG, W. VA.
CLARKSBURG, W. VA.
CINCINNATI, O. (UNION STA.)
VINCENNES, IND.
ST. LOUIS, MO.

Track 5. Now has 5:57 PM QUEEN OF THE VALLEY. Move this curtain to Track **11**.

New black curtain with white lettering for Track 5 should be as follows;

9:43 AM

NEWARK TRAIN

COMMUNIPAW
PACIFIC AVE.
ARLINGTON AVE.
JACKSON AVE.
WEST SIDE AVE.
KEARNY
NEWARK TRANSFER
EAST FERRY ST.
FERRY ST.
BROAD ST. NEWARK

Track 6. Now reads 5:17 PM HUNTERDON COMMUTER. This is correct except the curtain should be black with white lettering.

Track 7. Now reads 4:42 PM CRUSADER. The silver curtain is correct, however, the lettering should be black.

Track 8. CARTERET-CHROME OK as is.

Track 9. Now reads 5:37 PM ELIZABETHPORT TRAIN. Move this curtain to Track 18. Move PHILADELPHIA EXPRESS train curtain from Track 3 to Track 9 and change curtain to dark green with gold letters. Time is good but change name to;

THE WALL STREET

Track 10. Now reads THE BLUE COMET - it is OK as is.

Track 11. Now reads 8:12 PM RARITAN CLOCKER. Delete this and replace with 5:13 PM THE QUEEN OF THE VALLEY moved from Track 5 . and make the following changes: Change departure time to 5:13 PM. Add "N.J". to the LEBANON now on the curtain and add the following stations below those already shown;

READING
LEBANON, PA
HERSHEY
HARRISBURG

Track 12. Now reads MONMOUTH PARK SPECIAL. This is OK but add departure time of 12:00 NOON and reword to;

MONMOUTH PARK
RACE TRAIN

Track 13. 5:59 PM. THE SUBURBANITE is OK as is.

Track 14. 9:12 PM RARITAN TRAIN. OK, but Manville has only one “n”.

Track 15. Change to 4:52 PM POINT PLEASANT TRAIN. Balance is OK.

Track 16. Create new black curtain with white lettering for;

5:22 PM

BARNEGAT EXPRESS

RED BANK
FARMINGDALE
LAKEWOOD
LAKEHURST
TOMS RIVER
BEACHWOOD
PINEWALD
LANOKA HARBOR
FORKED RIVER
WARETOWN
BARNEGAT

Track 17. Move curtain from Track 4 and change departure time and name to;

4:33 PM

SEA BRIGHT
EXPRESS

and add the following station stops.

HIGHLAND BEACH
NAVESINK BEACH
NORMANDIE
SEA BRIGHT
GALILEE
MONMOUTH BEACH
NORTH LONG BRANCH
EAST LONG BRANCH

Track 18. Move curtain from Track 9 and change departure time and name to;

5:47 AM

ELIZABETHPORT TRAIN

The balance is OK.

Track 19. Create new black curtain with white lettering for;

12.02 AM

THE
WILLIAMSPORTER

ELIZABETH
EASTON
BETHLEHEM
ALLENTOWN
MAUCH CHUNK
TAMAQUA
MAHANOY CITY
ASHLAND
MOUNT CARMEL
SHAMOKIN
SUNBURY
LEWISBURG
WEST MILTON
MONTGOMERY
MUNCY
WILLIAMSPORT

Sleeping Cars May Be
Occupied After 10:00PM

Quiet Is Requested For
The Benefit Of Those
That Have Retired

Track 20. Was used exclusively for trains carrying only mail and baggage - and not revenue passengers - departure curtain board was probably not used. However, we suggest that this track might be used for future Liberty State Park shuttle trains. It could carry a curtain such as;

LIBERTY HISTORIC RAILWAY of NJ
STATUE of LIBERTY
LOGO

LADY LIBERTY SPECIAL

TO VIEW ELLIS ISLAND,
STATUE of LIBERTY
AND VISIT
FREEDOM FIELD,
ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER,
U.S. FLAG PLAZA,
LIBERATION MONUMENT,
SOUTH LAWN,
PICNIC AREAS,
RICHARD J. SULLIVAN NATURAL AREA,
PLAYGROUNDS,
FISHING AREAS,
AND PARK OFFICE

To differentiate from the other historic track/train signs and colors the above could be a red curtain with blue logo and letters outlined with white. Departure times for this Park Shuttle train would vary to satisfy demand. Ideally they would depart when loaded, with minimum one hour base service. Half hour service would probably be the maximum with one train, additional cars could be added as needed.

We believe that the standard track/train curtain/lettering colors for the CNJ Jersey City Terminal were as follows;

CNJ Blue Comet:
CNJ: Black curtain with White lettering
B&O: Royal Blue curtain with DuLux Gold lettering
RDG Crusader: Silver curtain with Black lettering
RDG Wall Street.: Dark Green shade with Gold lettering
Other RDG: Black curtain with White lettering

We would be interested in learning of any recommended corrections to the above. Please contact Bill McKelvey @ wjmckelvey@hotmail.com

“Train Ready”, “Ferry Connection has Arrived” and “Ready to Depart” lights only survive over the train gates on two tracks. The other eighteen should be restored/replaced. These lights were only color coded on the track side. The concourse side displayed white for all three indications. *CNJ FOREVER!*

CNJ JERSEY CITY TERMINAL NAMED TRAIN/TRACK CURTAIN RECAP

1. ROYAL BLUE (B&O) Note: When Train Shed is restored this track is proposed to be used as the terminus of the trolley shuttle connecting with the Hudson Bergen Light Rail line and Liberty Science Center.
2. B&O BUS (NO SIGN)
3. B&O BUS (NO SIGN)
4. NATIONAL LIMITED (B&O)
5. NEWARK TRAIN (CNJ)
6. HUNTERDON COMMUTER (CNJ)
7. CRUSADER (RDG)
8. CARTERET-CHROME TRAIN (CNJ)
9. THE WALL STREET (CNJ - RDG)
10. BLUE COMET (CNJ)
11. QUEEN OF THE VALLEY (CNJ - RDG)
12. MONMOUTH PARK RACE TRAIN (CNJ)
13. THE SUBURBANITE (CNJ)
14. RARITAN TRAIN (CNJ)
15. POINT PLEASANT TRAIN (CNJ)
16. BARNEGAT EXPRESS (CNJ)
17. SEA BRIGHT EXPRESS (CNJ) After restoration of Train Shed it is proposed that this restored track be used for display of CNJ locomotives and cars.
18. ELIZABETHPORT TRAIN (CNJ) After restoration of Train Shed it is proposed that this restored track be used for display of Lehigh Valley locomotives and cars.
19. THE WILLIAMSPORTER (CNJ - RDG) After restoration of Train Shed it is proposed that this restored track be used for display of B&O locomotives and cars.
20. FUTURE "LADY LIBERTY SPECIAL" After restoration of Train Shed it is proposed that this restored track be used for departures of Liberty Historic Railway shuttle trains to the south end of the Park.