

# THE RAILROADS OF HUNTERDON COUNTY

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# Overview

- The Big Picture
- Main Players
  - Central Railroad of New Jersey
  - Lehigh Valley
  - Pennsylvania Railroad
- Could Have Been Contenders...
  - Delaware Lackawanna & Western
  - New Jersey West Line
  - Rockaway Valley Railroad
- Decline and Revival
  - Conrail/NS: Mainline Across NJ
  - NJ Transit
  - Black River & Western
- Norfolk Southern Heritage Program

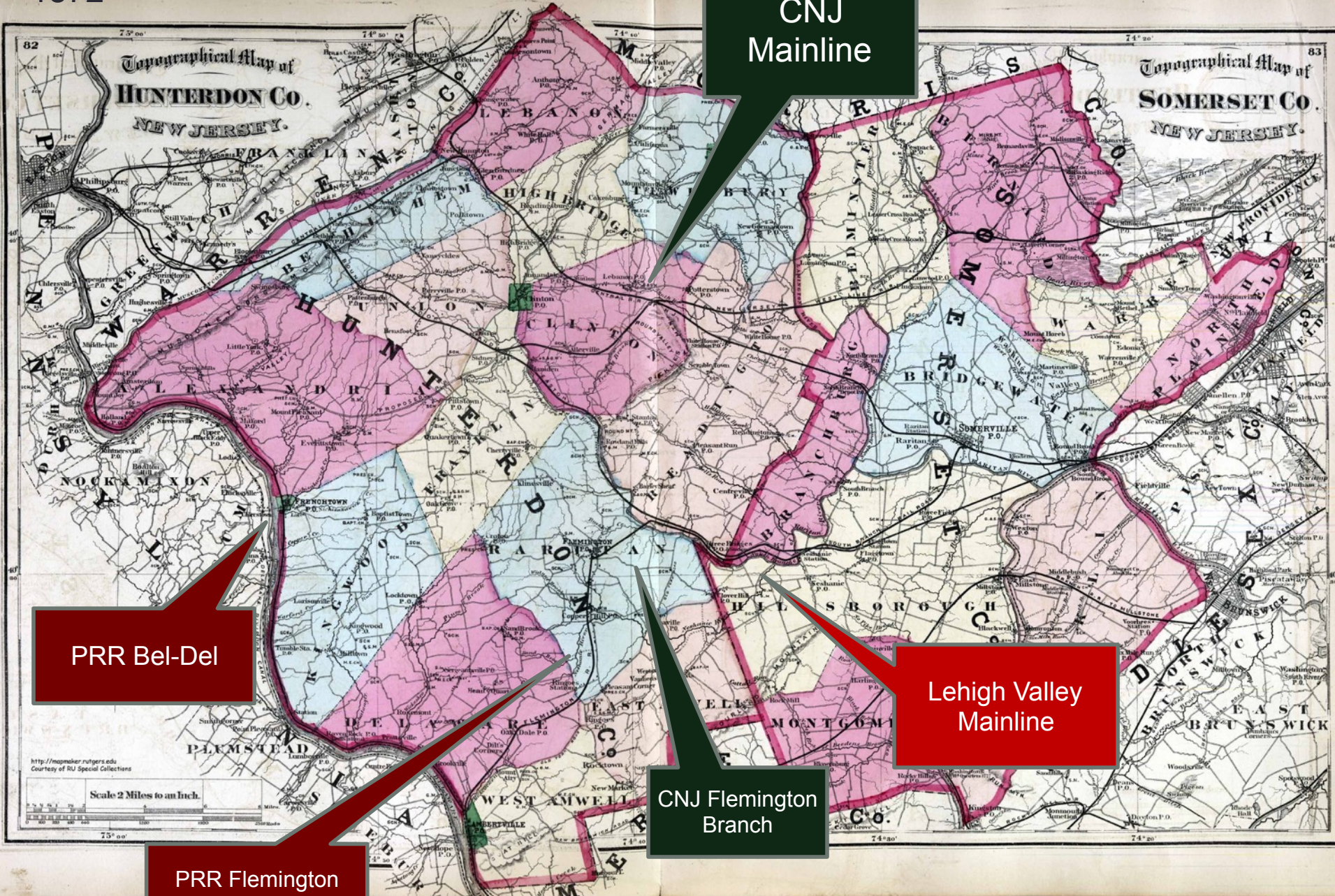
# This talk...

- Focus on why railroads were built, what they did and what happened to them...
- Some industrial archeology
- Some architecture
- Some railroad stuff
- 1800's through present day
- Try to be balanced
- Enough to spark interest to delve into details
- We won't be getting into details!

# 1850-1880

- The Railroad Industry was the “Dot-Com” Business of the Day
- PRR was the largest and most valuable company in the world – the Apple of its time
- Everyone wanted to buy RR stocks and bonds, often sold to the local communities, sometimes backed by big Wall Street players – often with other intentions in mind...
- Major motivators:
  - Moving coal from Pennsylvania to NJ/NY cities
  - Growing steel industry in Allentown/Bethlehem
  - Connecting east and west traffic sources
  - Tapping into local passenger and agricultural freight traffic
- Central/West NJ was largely rural, not much industry to support railroads

1872





# Central Railroad of New Jersey

- Mainline connected Jersey City to Scranton, reaching Phillipsburg in 1852
- Long haul and suburban passenger services; freight service especially anthracite coal
- Hampton was the terminus for most commuter service
- Ludlow Station (Bethlehem Township) was the receiving point for the Asbury Graphite Mill
- Branch from High Bridge to Wharton
- Branch from Somerville to Flemington (South Branch Railroad)

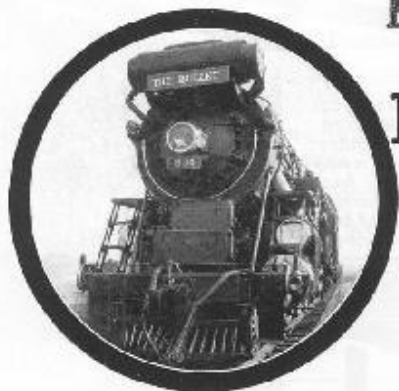


Map showing the Central Railroad Company of New Jersey network, including major cities and rail lines. Key locations include Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, Allentown, Reading, Philadelphia, Trenton, and New York. Major rail lines shown include the Erie, Lehigh, and Reading Railroad, and the Central Railroad Company of New Jersey.

# The Bullet!

**Jersey Central's  
Newest Train**

**Goes on  
November 7<sup>th</sup>**



**It's the "BIG Shot"**  
*between Wilkes-Barre-Allentown  
Bethlehem-Easton  
and New York City~*

Advertisement for  
long haul  
passenger service  
on the CNJ  
Main Line



A CNJ Camelback Locomotive: Designed to burn anthracite coal, it's firebox was too wide to provide for adequate visibility



Annandale Depot



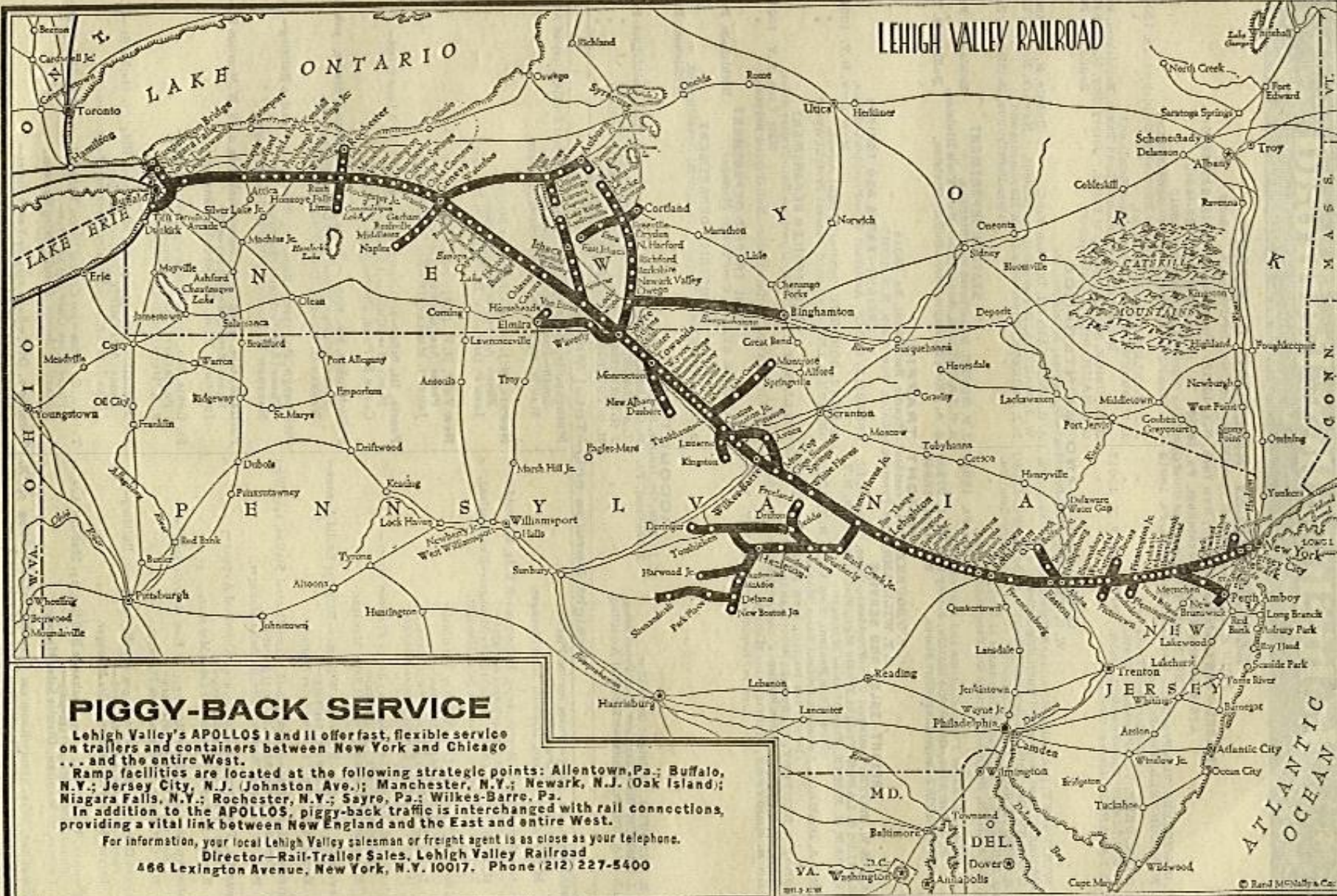
Asbury Depot



# Lehigh Valley

- Easton & Amboy Railroad completed in 1872 to become the Lehigh Valley
- Mainline from Jersey City to Easton. LV continued to Allentown and eventually Buffalo, NY.
- Branches from Landsdown to Clinton and Landsdown to Pittstown
- Branch from Flemington Jct to Flemington served by shuttle trains – “The Dinkey”
- Pattenburg Tunnel completed in 1872 was once the longest tunnel in the eastern US
- Replaced by a double track tunnel in 1928
- Served Bellewood Park from 1904-1916
- President Teddy Roosevelt visited park in 1905
- Jutland Ice House

# LEHIGH VALLEY RAILROAD



## PIGGY-BACK SERVICE

Lehigh Valley's APOLLOS I and II offer fast, flexible service on trailers and containers between New York and Chicago ... and the entire West.

Ramp facilities are located at the following strategic points: Allentown, Pa.; Buffalo, N.Y.; Jersey City, N.J. (Johnston Ave.); Manchester, N.Y.; Newark, N.J. (Oak Island); Niagara Falls, N.Y.; Rochester, N.Y.; Sayre, Pa.; Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

In addition to the APOLLOS, piggy-back traffic is interchanged with rail connections, providing a vital link between New England and the East and entire West.

For information, your local Lehigh Valley salesman or freight agent is as close as your telephone.  
 Director—Rail-Trailer Sales, Lehigh Valley Railroad  
 466 Lexington Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Phone (212) 227-5400

ATLANTIC OCEAN



A Lehigh Valley train fights the  
“Great White Hurricane of 1888”



12976 BELLEWOOD PARK, N. J

LEHIGH VALLEY RAILROAD

Bellewood Park

FERRIS WHEEL, BELLEWOOD PARK, N. J.



HALL-GORRISON



178 MUSC. TUNNEL, WEST END, ROCK FILL AT PORTAL.

3-29-'28



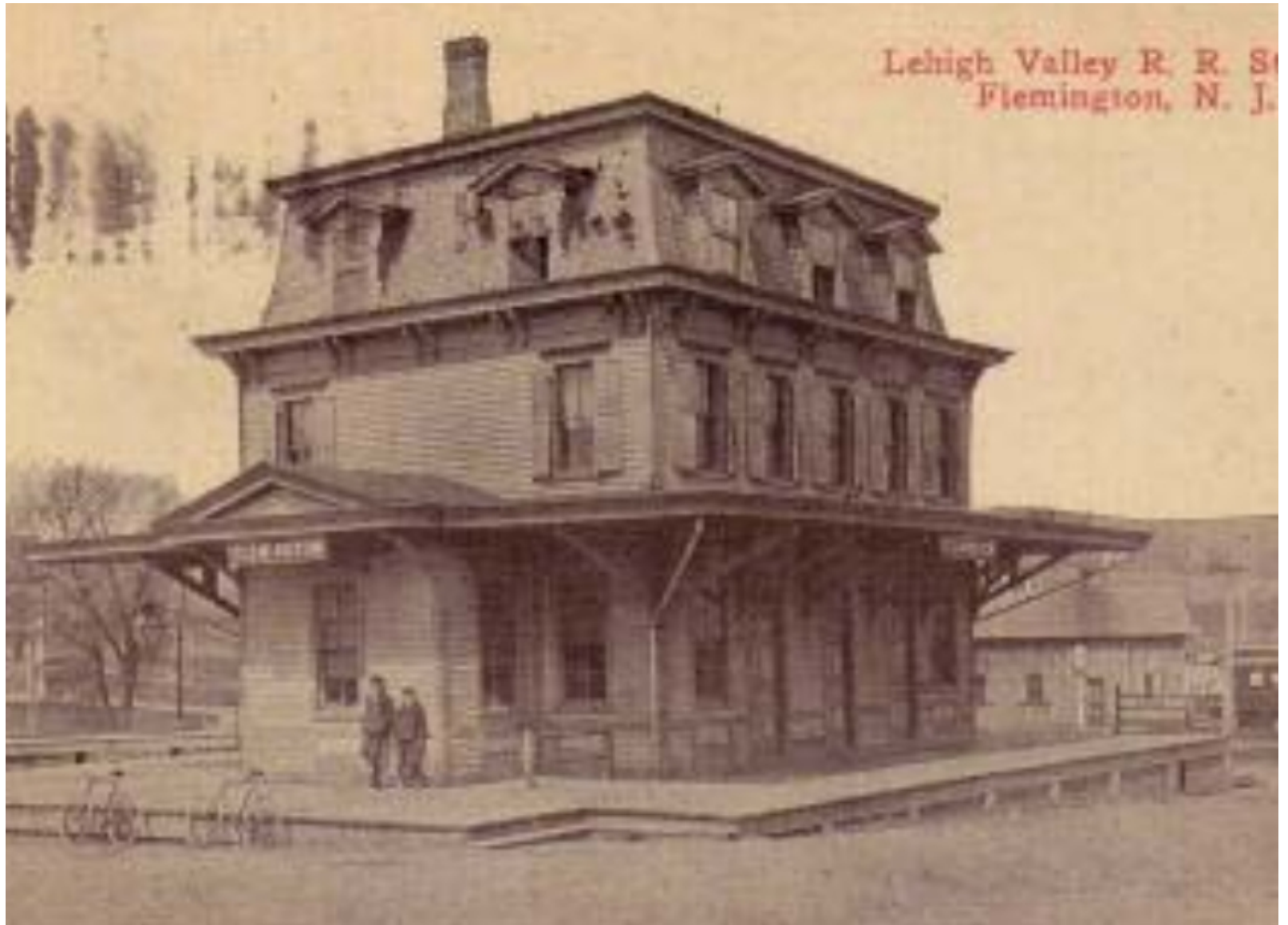
TT MUSCONETCONG TUNNEL, WEST PORTAL CAMP, 4-15-1927



Bellewood Tower, 1928



Jutland Tower and Station, 1908



Flemington Depot



Flemington Junction Depot



Gas Electric “Doodlebug” used in Flemington to Flemington Jct. Shuttle  
(Thanks to Flemington Passenger Rail Facebook Page)



## 15 FREIGHT CARS BURNED.

Train Crew Escapes Crash of Runaway Section at Landsdown.

FLEMINGTON, N. J., Dec. 24.—Fifteen freight cars were burned in a wreck that occurred early to-day near the Landsdown Station of the Lehigh Valley Railroad.

A west-bound freight train parted on the third track at South Jutland, and the rear part came thundering down a heavy grade until it reached Landsdown, where it crashed into a freight train which was just preparing to leave. The trainmen saw the runaway cars coming in time to escape so no one was hurt.

*The New York Times*

Published: December 25, 1906

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# Pennsylvania Railroad

- The Belvidere & Delaware RR was chartered in 1836 to build a railroad running from Trenton to Belvidere, along the Delaware River.
- The Pennsylvania RR took over the B&D in 1872, along with the Flemington Railroad & Transportation Company which owned the line from Lambertsville to Three Bridges and the connection to the Lehigh Valley.
- The PRR also connected to the CNJ's South Branch (Flemington Branch) in Flemington
- Passenger service from Trenton to East Stroudsburg
- Through sleeping cars from Washington DC to Scranton as late as 1960!
- Later local service by gas electric doodlebugs
- The line served the paper mills along the Delaware River and carried anthracite coal to Philadelphia and points south



Classic PRR Steam Locomotive on the Bel-Del in Phillipsburg



Along the Bel-Del

**PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD.**  
**BELVIDERE DIVISION.**  
**DELAWARE VALLEY LINE.**



Time Table in effect December 17, 1888.

**TRAINS FOR TRENTON and PHILADELPHIA.**

Leave Phillipsburg 7.28, 10.46 a. m., 1.00, 4.20 and 7.02 p. m.  
 Leave Riegelsville 7.41, 11.00 a. m., 1.16, 4.37 and 7.15 p. m.  
 Leave Milford 7.52, 11.12 a. m., 1.30, 4.50 and 7.26 p. m.  
 Leave Frenchtown 7.58, 11.18 a. m., 1.36, 4.57 and 7.32 p. m.  
 Leave Bull's Island 8.14, 11.34 a. m., 1.52, 5.14 and 7.45 p. m.  
 Leave Stockton 8.19, 11.41 a. m., 1.58, 5.19 and 7.50 p. m.  
 Leave Flemington 7.50 a. m., 12.40 and 4.45 p. m.  
 Leave Lambertville 7.00, 8.30, 11.52 a. m., 2.03, 5.30 and 8.00 p. m.

**RETURNING TRAINS**

For Stockton, Bull's Island, Frenchtown, Milford and Riegelsville.

Leave Philadelphia Kensington at 6.50, 7.40 a. m., 11.15, 2.52 and 5.35 p. m.  
 Leave Broad Street Station, Philadelphia, at 6.50, 8.20 a. m., 12.00, 4.00 and 6.00 p. m.

**FOR FLEMINGTON.**

Leave Kensington Station, 7.40, 11.15 a. m., 2.52 p. m.  
 Leave Broad St. Station, 8.20 a. m., 12.00 and 4.00 p. m.

**FOR LAMBERTVILLE.**

Leave Philadelphia, Kensington, 6.50, 7.40 a. m., 11.15, 1.58, 2.52 and 5.35 p. m.  
 Leave Broad Street Station, Philadelphia, 6.50, 8.20 a. m., 12.00, 2.30, 4.00 and 6.00 p. m.  
 Leave Trenton 7.45, 9.10 a. m., 1.00, 3.50, 4.54 and 7.05 p. m.

**TRAINS FOR EASTON AND BELVIDERE.**

Leave Lambertville 8.22, 9.42 a. m., 1.35, 5.24 and 7.40 p. m.  
 Leave Stockton 8.31, 9.48 a. m., 1.41, 5.30 and 7.46 p. m.  
 Leave Bull's Island 8.38, 9.55 a. m., 1.49, 5.36 and 7.54 p. m.  
 Leave Frenchtown 8.53, 10.10 a. m., 2.07, 5.50 and 8.13 p. m.  
 Leave Milford 9.00, 10.16 a. m., 2.15, 5.56 and 8.20 p. m.  
 Trains leaving Lambertville at 8.22, 9.42 a. m., 1.35, 5.24 and 7.40 p. m. run to Manunka Chunk.

Additional train leaves Lehigh Junction at 7.30 a. m., arrives at Belvidere at 8.00 a. m., and Manunka Chunk, 8.07 a. m. Additional train leaves Manunka Chunk at 6.10 a. m.; arrives at Lehigh Junction at 7.10 a. m. Additional trains leave Belvidere for Manunka Chunk at 6.40 a. m. and 3.10 p. m., and leave Manunka Chunk for Belvidere at 8.25 a. m., 7.05 and 9.35 p. m.

Connection is made at Manunka Chunk with Delaware Lackawanna and Western Railroad. At Lehigh Junction with Lehigh Valley, Lehigh and Susquehanna, Morris and Essex and New Jersey Central Railroads. At Lambertville with Flemington Railroad, and at Trenton with trains to and from New York, Camden, &c.

For tickets and further information, apply at the station at Phillipsburg.

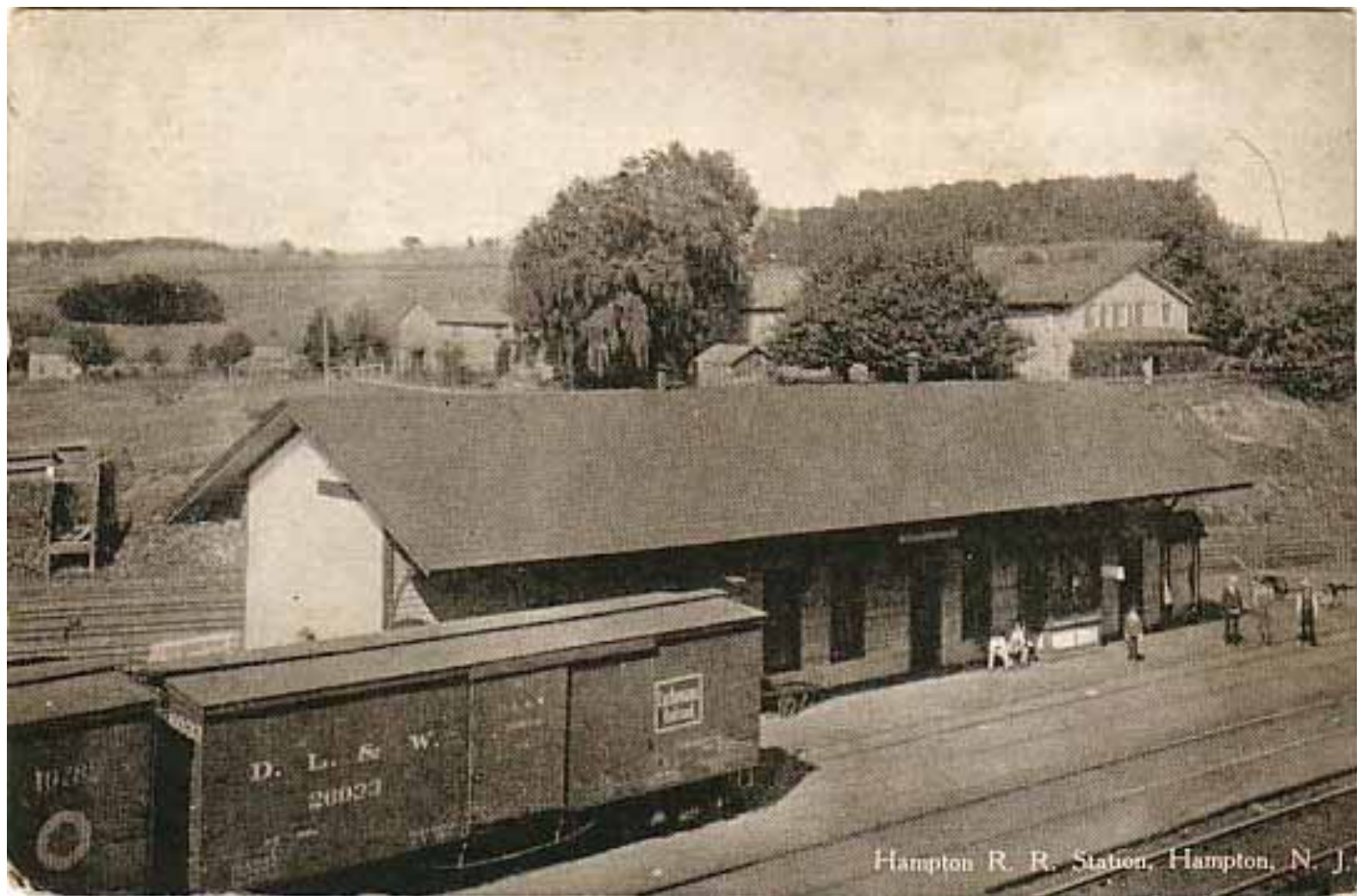
Excursion rate to Philadelphia \$3.00.

<b>CHARLES E. PUGH,</b> General Manager.	<b>J. R. WOOD,</b> Gen. Pass. Agent,
<b>F. W. JACKSON,</b> Gen. Sup. U. R. R. of N. J. Div	<b>FRANK ELLMAKER,</b> Supt. Bel. Div.

They Could Have Been Contenders...

# Delaware, Lackawanna & Western

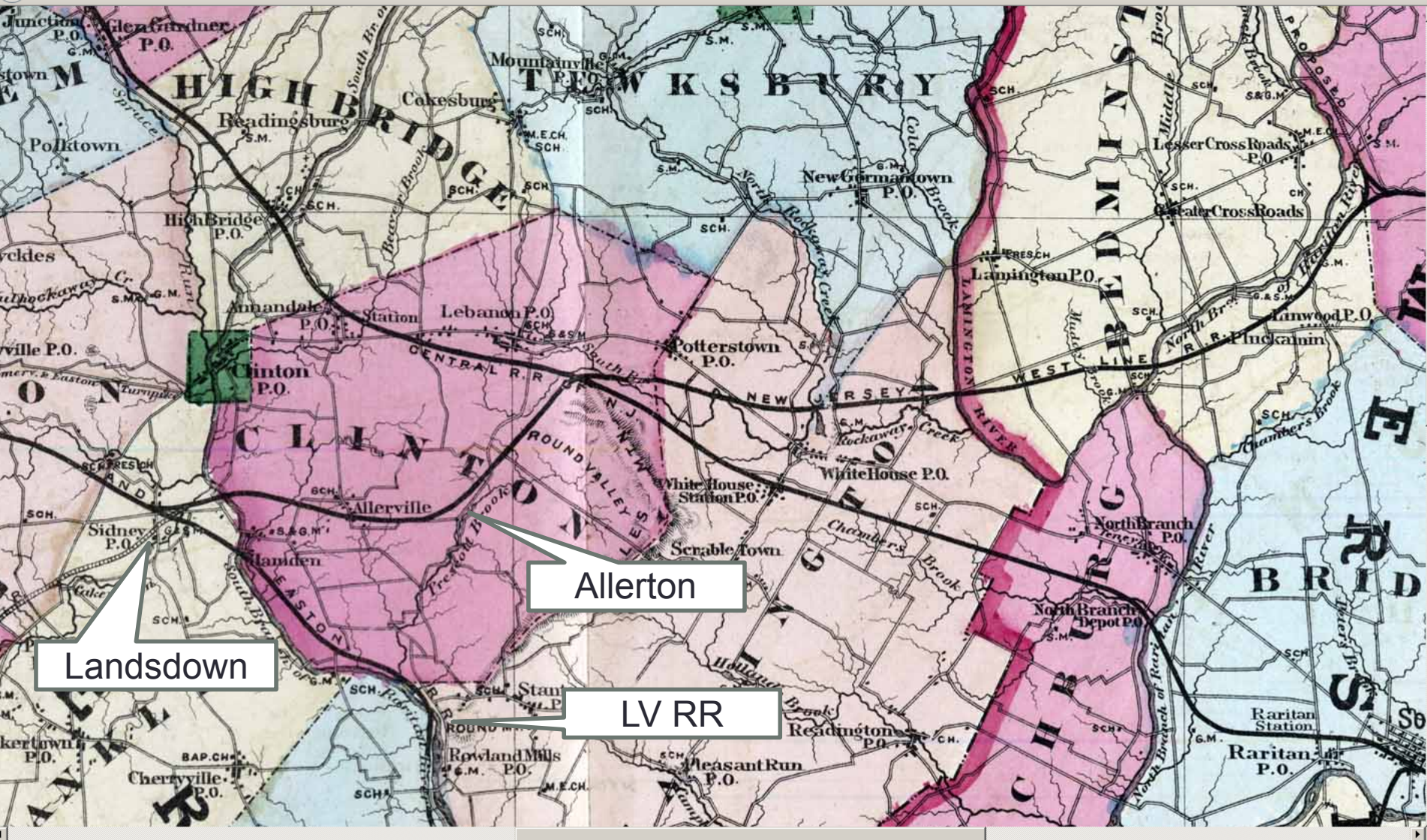
- The DL&W was a major anthracite carrier, but it gave up it's chance to be a major player in Hunterdon in the late 1890's.
- Hampton was originally called Junction – it was the junction between the DL&W and the CNJ
- DL&W operated from Scranton to Washington to Hampton, where trains continued east to Jersey City on the CNJ
- When the M&E and the DL&W merged, the line from Washington to Hampton became a branchline
- The line was abandoned in 1958



Hampton R. R. Station, Hampton, N. J.

# New Jersey West Line

- The New Jersey West Line was conceived as yet another railroad to run from Jersey City across the state to Pennsylvania
- The only part ever built is the current NJT Gladstone Branch from Peapack/Gladstone to Summit.
- A grand plan to extend it to Milford and into Pennsylvania – across Hunterdon County was proposed
- An interest was purchased by Asa Packer (LV's founder) and a new plan was drawn up to connect the LV from around Landsdown to Peapack-Gladstone.
- It fell apart in the Panic of 1873



Allerton

Landsdown

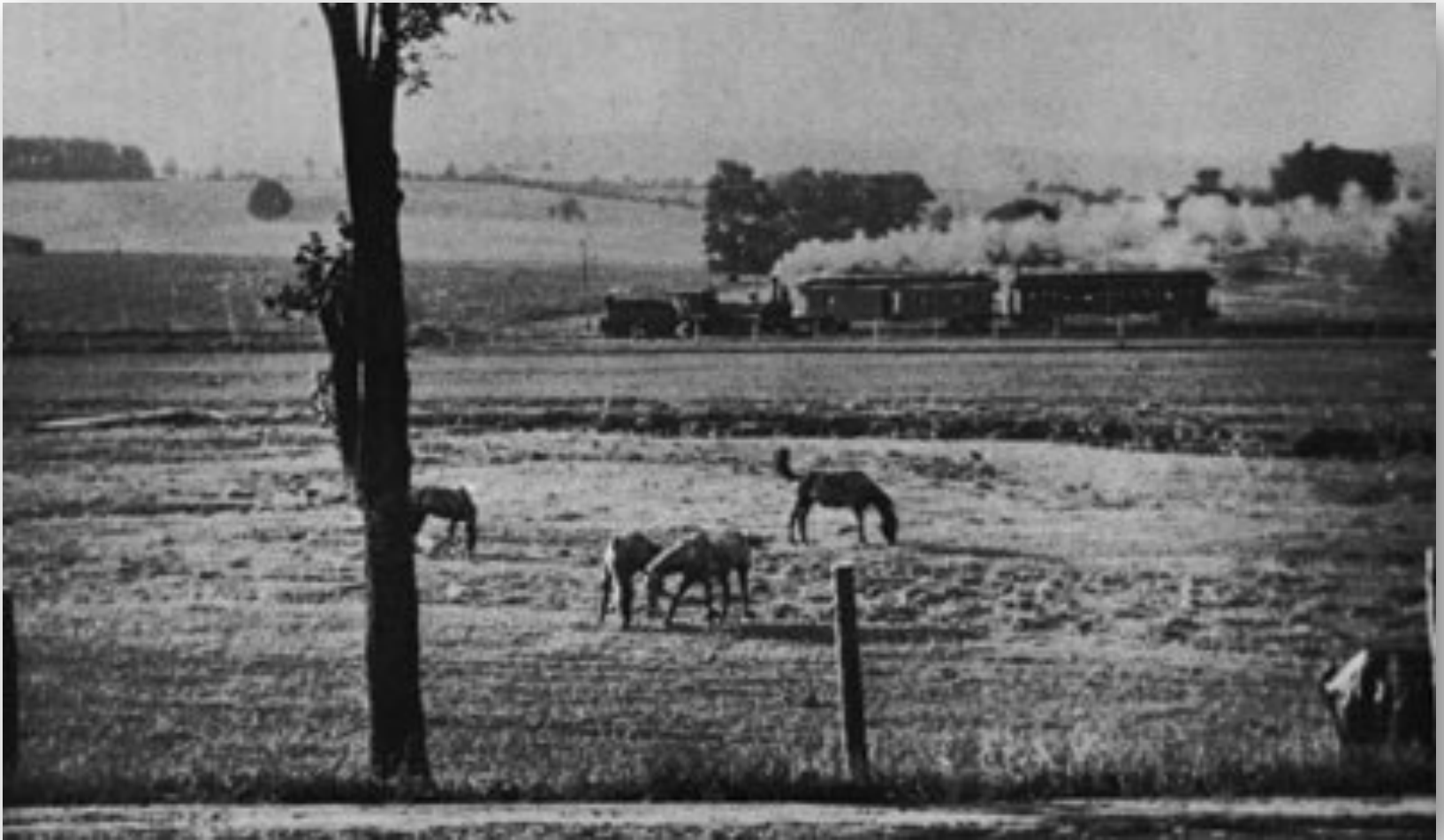
LV RR

One Possible Route of the NJWL Through Hunterdon

# Rockaway Valley Railroad

- The Rockaway Valley Railroad ran from Whitehouse – “almost to” Morristown through Oldwick, starting construction in 1888.
- Known as the “Rock A Bye Baby”
- It’s business was mostly related to carrying the peach crop which was setting records in 1890.
- The railroad’s builder and engineer was John Melick (of the Hunterdon County Melick Family) but he apparently had no formal engineering training.
- It was quickly and poorly built and suffered from many derailments
- Never able to make a connection to the DL&W in Morristown
- Peach blight ruined the line’s traffic base
- It was abandoned in 1913
- Attempts were made to revive it as the Pennsylvania and New Jersey RR, but they failed in 1917 and it was torn up and sold for scrap

Tom Taber III, "The Rock -A-Bye Baby, A History of the Rockaway Valley Railroad"



Believed to be north of Whitehouse, NJ



Courtesy of Canal Society of NJ



Rockaway Valley Railroad Route

# WW-II and Post War Decline

- World War II was one of the zeniths of US railroading – crucial to the war effort – and traffic levels that no one ever believed would be surpassed.
- Post WW-II explosive growth of suburbs, construction of better roads and the Interstate Highway System
- Short haul, perishable freight almost entirely moves to trucks
- Passengers flock to cars, bus, planes – leaving railroads with commuters – an expensive and unprofitable business
- The LV ends passenger service in 1960
- Both the CNJ and LV mainlines are cut down to single track as freight traffic declines
- The Bel-Del sees a bump in traffic though, as ore imported through Philadelphia is moved up the line to the steel mills in Bethlehem. The line is rebuilt with heavy, welded rail
- Railroads freight rates (at the time) favored long hauls on your own lines – putting roads like the CNJ and LV into a very difficult position
- PRR and NYC merge in a dramatic failure. The new Penn Central shores up it's business by refusing to “short haul” itself, taking further business from smaller regional roads



Family and well-wishers gather with World War II draftees before they board a train at the Lehigh Valley Railroad Station in Flemington. Local clergy gave a blessing as the men departed for basic training. (Hunterdon Democrat)



On the LV Main in 1943...

# Revival

- Amtrak was formed under the Nixon Administration, effectively nationalizing long haul passenger service, although intercity service had long since been abolished in Hunterdon
- Railroad deregulation under the Carter Administration made an equal playing field for railroads and their competitors
- Restructuring of antiquated labor regulations
- New Jersey took a leading role in funding improvements to commuter rail – and eventually taking over operations
- Conrail – probably the most successful government “intervention” ever was formed to rescue the struggling Northeastern rail industry.
- Privatized in the 1980’s and finally split between NS and CSX, Conrail is one of the real business success stories and a model for public/private cooperation.
- The CNJ and LV mainlines continue today – in the case of the LV even busier than during WW-II

# Changing Face of Railroading

- Steam engines were replaced by diesels – and then by more powerful and efficient diesels.
- Caboosees were replaced by End of Train Telemetry devices (Flashing Rear End Device – FRED)
- Elimination of long haul passenger and less than carload freight service led to demolition of most stations and freight stations
- Adoption of Centralized Traffic Control (CTC) allowed removal of double track mainlines in many places including the CNJ and LV mainlines.
- CTC also led to the demise of most towers
- Fiber optic cable installations replaced the code line and other communications lines along tracks
- Shortlines formed to preserve service on marginal branch lines.



**N**TRANSIT  
The Way To Go.



# Norfolk Southern Lehigh Line

- Original Lehigh Valley Main
- Clinton Branch abandoned 1983: Landsdown Trail
- Pittstown Branch abandoned approximately 1969
- Future looked bleak until the Amtrak Chase, MD wreck caused Conrail to move freight off the old Penn Central NE Corridor to the LV/RDG routing through Allentown
- Upgraded and rebuilt over recent years to handle doublestack containers and increase capacity

# Norfolk Southern Lehigh Line

- Links North Jersey Terminals to Harrisburg and then to West and South. One of the principle freight routes in the Northeast.
- Trains you see heading east are going to Oak Island (Newark), E-Rail (Port Newark), Kearny and other terminals
- Trains heading west are going to Harrisburg, Chicago, Kansas City, Atlanta, Roanoke and other locations.
- Commodities: intermodal, automobiles, chemicals, metals and general freight traffic
- NS Crescent Corridor from NY/NJ to West Coast
- Eventual plans include restoration of double track



RRPictureArchives.NET Image Copyright Kim Piersol

“New” Pattenburg Tunnel: Modified in 2000 for Double Stacks



Original Pattenburg Tunnel: Once used as a Mushroom Farm,  
Now it is used by RR MOW Trucks



Race Street

Jutland Ice House Foundation

Jutland, NJ Area



Landsdown, NJ: Steep grade west to tunnel begins here



RRPictureArchives.NET Image Contributed by Kevin Wong

LV Freight Station in Clinton

# NJ Transit: Raritan Valley Line

- Former CNJ Mainline from Raritan to Hampton (Intact West to Bloomsbury)
- South Branch from Somerville to Three Bridges abandoned
- High Bridge Branch abandoned
- Through freight to Allentown continued through early 1980's along with 2-3 passenger trains to Phillipsburg.
- “Last stand” when much freight diverted due to reconstruction of the Lehigh Valley
- Line severed at Alpha for I78 and former CNJ Delaware River replaced LV bridge for Lehigh Line mainline.
- Commuter service daily from High Bridge to Newark
- Prospects to restore service west: bleak



NJ Transit Multilevel Push-Pull at Annandale, NJ



Whitehouse Depot: Designed by Frank Bodine



High Bridge Depot

# Black River & Western

- Black River & Western Railroad was started by William Whitehead in Oldwick, in the late 1950s who actually started trying to re-lay portions of the Rockaway Valley in his back yard
- Operations started in 1965 using leased portions of the PRR Bel-Del Flemington Branch from Flemington to Lambertsville
- In 1970, the Black River & Western Railroad took over the ownership and operations of the Flemington to Lambertville line, purchasing it from the Penn Central.
- In 1976 the "Central Branch", which runs from Flemington to Three Bridges, was purchased from the Central Railroad of New Jersey (CNJ), moving the BR&W interchange point to Three Bridges, which it maintains today.
- Base of operations in Ringoes
- Provides freight and recreational passenger service from Ringoes to Flemington and Three Bridges.
- BR&W operates a small locomotive leasing business
- The rest of the PRR Bel-Del is out of service or abandoned, with the exception of a small section south out of Phillipsburg.



Easter Bunny Train!



BR&W #60 Recently returned to service after a 12 year rebuilding project





RRPictureArchives.NET Image Contributed by Kevin Wong

PRR Freight Station in Flemington

# Norfolk Southern Heritage Program

- To celebrate the NS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the railroad had a group of new GE ES44AC and EMD SD70ACE locomotives delivered in heritage paint schemes
- NS worked with various historical societies to “get it right” with paint colors, lettering style, etc... (the days before “fonts”)
- These locos are out and about – but since there are 22 in a fleet of 3000 NS engines they are a rare catch!
- Look for them when you’re stopped for a train!
- NS has also reinstated it’s steam program, although no trips in NJ have been planned.



**NS**  
NORFOLK SOUTHERN®







**NS**  
NORFOLK SOUTHERN®





# To Sum Up...

- Typical of the day – a lot of people thought they would find fortune by building a railroad in Hunterdon County
- Few did, since eventually every one of them ended up in bankruptcy or abandonment.
- Those lines that had value remain to this day – in some cases busier than ever.
- And who knows if some of the others may be reborn yet again as light rail or some yet to be determined form...

# QUESTIONS???

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For Further Info and Links Visit:

<http://www.louisjudice.com>