

The Bulletin

The Railroad Station Historical Society

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STATIONS AND OTHER STRUCTURES of the LEHIGH VALLEY RR

LVRR Stations in New Jersey in 2019-2020

Photos and text by Jeff Kovacs

As an update to RSHS Bulletins 52-1 and 52-4, the following is a summary of existing stations along the former Lehigh Valley RR in New Jersey. We will begin our journey westbound on the Conrail Lehigh Line between CP-Newark (MP 11.4), formerly known as NK Tower and CP-Port Reading Jct (MP 35.8) where the former LVRR becomes the Lehigh Line of the Norfolk Southern Harrisburg Division.

Although the LVRR discontinued all passenger service in February 1961 and became the largest Class 1 “freight only” railroad at the time, these stations have lived on in varying states of use, repair and “love”. Of the 10 “stations”, 1 isn’t really a station at all (Neshanic Station). Union was constructed for passenger service long after the LVRR ceased to exist, and Roselle Park is the only station with a ticket agent (NJ Transit).



UNION (MP14.2) was opened by NJ TRANSIT on April 27, 2003 with a ground level waiting room and a high level platform (HLP) between 2 main tracks. Adjacent to Kean University, the station has also been a catalyst for residential growth. 24 westbound and 24 eastbound trains stop here daily, providing a 15 minute trip to / from Newark and connections to New York City and

south. One interesting feature is “gauntlets” on both main tracks which provide additional clearance for freight trains to avoid the station platform. November 19, 2019.

ROSELLE PARK (MP 16.0) was constructed as part of the New Jersey DOT “Aldene Plan” which was implemented on April 30, 1967. This project required construction of a “ramp” connection between the LVRR and the CNJ Mainline at Aldene (MP 16.9) to allow CNJ passenger trains to operate over the LVRR to NK Tower (to Hunter on the PRR Main line) to access Newark Penn Station. This permitted the CNJ to cease direct service to and abandon its Jersey City Terminal and ferry boat operation. This service re-alignment also required the elevation of the LVRR through Roselle Park, the elimination of 4 grade crossings, and resulted in the demolition of the former station. The “new” station consists of a ground level waiting room and access to the HLP between 2 main tracks. Due to interlocking configuration, a gauntlet track for freight trains is in place on No. 2 Track only. 24 eastbound and 24 westbound trains also stop here daily.

(West of Roselle Park, NJ TRANSIT passenger trains divert to their “home rails” of the Raritan Valley Line at Aldene (MP 16.9), while freight trains continue west on the CR Lehigh Line.)



BOUND BROOK (MP 33.1) Formerly a small interchange location with the Central Railroad of New Jersey (CNJ), Bound Brook was reconfigured as an interlocking under Conrail to provide operating flexibility to the CSX (former RDG) Trenton Line and the CR Port Reading Secondary. Slightly west at CP-Port Reading Jct (MP 35.8) the CR Lehigh Line becomes the NS Lehigh Line. Hidden in plain

sight is the former freight station along No.2 Track. The current structure was erected around 1950 to replace the prior structure that burned, and the location also included a passenger station which was razed. A freight agent was assigned until the mid 1960’s.



Part of an earlier feed supply complex, and later a recently demolished storage facility, the structure is currently in a staging area for a local residential construction project. (Note new properties rising behind.) Due to the proximity of the property to the NJ TRANSIT passenger station, the future of this structure which is in poor condition is doubtful.



NESHANIC STATION (MP 44.7) Although not actually a station, this structure gets “honorable mention” for looking like a station, and is located on the same site as the former station. It was constructed in 2017 by Century Link, a fiber-optics company, and functions as a “fiber-node” where fiber-optic signals are amplified and branched out to other lines. April 10, 2019



THREE BRIDGES (MP48.6) It has been mentioned that since the focus of the LVRR in NJ was primarily coal and freight, passenger service was a secondary consideration, and some stations looked like residences. If so, Three Bridges meets that expectation, as it is currently used as a residence. At one time it was even an automobile repair shop. Formerly the site of an interlocking tower and a freight station, Three Bridges is currently a very active interchange location between the NS and the Black River and Western RR. November 6, 2019



FLEMINGTON JCT (MP 51.0)
 Constructed in 1880, it was a stop for main line passenger trains until the end of service in February 1961. There was also connecting service on the 1.7 mile branch to the county seat of Flemington. Although the station is in a secure location within the fenced-in property of Suburban Propane, it is in need of structural work and in October 2019 was determined by Suburban Propane to be a hazard. They are now planning to demolish it in the spring of

2020. Photo above, October 28, 2019



FLEMINGTON (MP 1.7) The end of the Flemington Branch had separate passenger and freight stations and a coal dealer, but only the freight station (constructed in 1886) remains. It had a freight agent until the mid-1960's who also handled billing for Flemington Jct. The last passenger train departed on March 17, 1952, and the bus that replaced it was discontinued on October 30, 1955. The branch was officially abandoned by Conrail on July 25, 1982. Although

structurally sound, the freight station formerly occupied by Agway is vacant, and sits on property which is slated for redevelopment. Photo date: October 28, 2019



Although no structure remains, Landsdown (MP 57.7) was the main line junction of 2 separate branch lines to Clinton and Pittstown, which were identified in the LVRR employee timetable as the "Clinton and Pittstown Branch". Passenger service on both lines was discontinued in April 1936.

Photo date: April 11, 2017



CLINTON (MP 1.8) At one time the location of separate passenger and freight stations, the freight station constructed in 1881 remains. When the line was abandoned by Conrail on June 29,1990, the station was bought by long time customer Cyrus Fox Lumber Company, which continues in business and uses the structure as an office in it's secure facility. The former Clinton Branch is now the paved Landsdown Trail. May 22, 2019



PITTSTOWN (MP 3.9) At the end of the Pittstown Branch which was abandoned in June 1969, the forlorn combination station constructed in 1890 miraculously survives. The structure is owned by Franklin Township and is located on the right of way owned by the State of New Jersey, now the Capooling Creek Nature Trail. There have been local attempts to secure and re-use the structure, but it still stands alone and un-cared for, along with an outhouse!

May 22, 2019



BLOOMSBURY (MP 68.6) An active freight agency until the mid-1960's, although it had no electricity (!), it survived with a freight agent as the billing location for Clinton, Pittstown, and the 3 mile Musconetcong Branch which was located 1.2 miles west. It was sold to the local Agway where it was used as a storage shed. However, in a surprising turn of events, it's current owner "Growmark F-S", an active NS customer, has modernized it into an office facility. It now looks the best that it ever has! Pre-rehabilitation, August 10, 1975.

STATIONS AND OTHER STRUCTURES of the LEHIGH VALLEY RR

Part 3 Easton to Slatington, PA

Using our historic archive from the 1950's, provided mostly by Ed Weber, we continue west of Philipsburg NJ into Pennsylvania on the Route of the Black Diamond. The Delaware River forms the border between Pennsylvania to the west and New Jersey on the east. Its historic role in transportation goes back centuries. It was a natural route to exploit the anthracite (hard coal) fields of Pennsylvania, and its early use in Philadelphia proved its viability as a fuel source. Early mining interests in the region spurred development to deliver the valuable mineral first via the natural waterways and then the soon to be constructed Lehigh Canal. Likewise, the Morris Canal across New Jersey carried coal further east to New York City and New England markets. The Lehigh Valley RR expanding out from the coal lands built along the Lehigh River and later acquired the canal and extended its own tracks across New Jersey to the Hudson River.

John C. Dahl, December 2019



Looking west towards Easton, PA from Philipsburg, NJ this is the Delaware River, LV bridge. Undated, RRSJS Collection.



Easton, PA Delaware River, LV deck truss, 1999, J Elliott, Historic American Engineering Record. RRSHS Collection



Easton, PA, LV interlocking tower, August 1, 1952. Ed Weber photo. RRSHS Collection



Easton, PA LV dining car department commissary. The building dates to 1868 and originally served as the second LV station in Easton. Undated photo, RRSHS Collection.



Easton, PA, LV passenger station platforms. Opened February 27, 1927, this was the final LV depot for Easton. Of a unique design, track and platforms were above the baggage and express handling portions of the facility. Undated photo, circa 1953, by Ed Weber. RRSHS Collection.



Tatamy, PA LV station is seen on July 10, 1952. This was on a short branch that diverged at Easton running due north to Belfast and a junction with the Lackawanna. Passenger service had ended by September 1930. Ed Weber photo, RRSJS Collection.



One stop short of Belfast, is the Stockertown, PA LV station, July 10, 1952, Ed Weber photo, RRSJS Collection.



Bethlehem, PA LV-Reading Union passenger station, opened in 1925 and jointly owned by both railroads. June 7, 1953 Ed Weber photo, RRSHS Collection.



Bethlehem, PA May 9, 1953 LV-Reading interlocking tower, milepost 88.6, built 1928. Ed Weber photo. RRSHS Collection (Ed. Note: photo has some damage in the center.)



Allentown, PA LV-Reading East Penn Jct 'OJ' tower, milepost 92.5 December 7, 1952, Ed Weber, RRSHS Collection



Allentown, PA LV-Reading-CNJ Union St tower, November 24, 1950. The Allentown passenger depot is just west of this location. Ed Weber, RRSHS Collection



Allentown, PA. The LV station was constructed in 1890 over Jordan Creek on piers. The top floor was level with Hamilton Street. The track canopies have been removed, and we are looking west. November 24, 1950 Ed Weber, RRSBS Collection



Fullerton, PA LV station, constructed of one of the important commodities of this area, cement. August 14, 1952 Ed Weber, RRSBS Collection.



Catasauqua, PA, LV interlocking tower (located in West Catasauqua village), milepost 87.1, call letters 'CQ', August 14, 1952. Ed Weber. RRSHS Collection



Coplay, PA LV station dated to the 1880s, Architecturally unique, it featured a slate Mansard roof. November 16, 1952. Ed Weber, RRSHS Collection



Cementon, PA LV station, built in 1911, in what was the largest cement producing region of the world. August 14, 1952, Ed Weber photo, RRSHS Collection



Slatington, PA LV-LNE station, built 1862, it also served the Reading's Lehigh & Schuylkill branch. It was demolished on February 2, 1969 when train JB-3 derailed at the depot. Photo date: August 14, 1952, Ed Weber photo, RRSHS Collection. We will continue our westward journey on the Lehigh Valley Railroad in a future Bulletin.

SHORT NEWS ITEMS



Buffalo, NY – the new downtown Amtrak station on Exchange St. is under construction as seen in this photo from the Buffalo News, November 16, 2019. The design recalls the barrel vault in the 1929 Art Deco Central Terminal. Ironically, way back during the construction years of Central Terminal, the New York Central RR had promised to build a replacement for Exchange St. That never occurred. Soon after Central Terminal opened, the Wall Street Crash of October 1929 and ensuing Great Depression, was followed by the emergency of World War II.

Plans for any new station were quickly forgotten until the early 1950s when the State of New York and the railroad relocated the Niagara Falls branch right of way off of Church Street. With passenger service on the decline, a small station was built which only served for less than a decade before the end of passenger trains to Niagara Falls. Amtrak revived this service in 1979, and reinstated a train to Toronto, Ontario. The boarded up Exchange Street depot was rehabilitated and served 40 years from 1979 through the early months of this year while planning and construction got underway.

Now, some ninety-one years after it was promised, an architecturally pleasing rail passenger station will once again occupy the historic Exchange St. site. As a point of interest, here is a postcard view of the New York Central Exchange Street station at its greatest extent about 1900. Parts of the complex dated to post Civil War. It had been expanded several times to accommodate rail traffic, and by the early years of the 20th Century, was hopelessly outmoded.



*Buffalo, NY Exchange Street station circa 1900, postcard view.
Collection John C. Dahl*

SHORT NEWS ITEMS – continued

Fort Wayne, IN – The Fort Wayne Railroad Historical Society plans to move the Craigville Depot from Jefferson Township east of New Haven to a spot just north of downtown Fort Wayne so that the 140-year-old passenger station can be restored. The hope is to restore it outside and in and use it as a visitors center. Built in 1879, the depot served Craigville, just northeast of Bluffton until the 1930s. The station was moved to its current site in 1979 and placed on the National Register in 1984. – Sheila Dorr



Buffalo, NY - In the news...again. The former Delaware, Lackawanna & Western train shed may yet have a chance at re-use. A developer has been engaged and plans for re-development of the space to include a mixture of public and private spaces is progressing. Although we don't look for anything to be departing from Track 1, stay tuned.

Source: Buffalo News. *Photo: Historic American Engineering Record, Library of Congress.*

EDITORIAL RAMBLINGS

This issue of the Bulletin was prepared by John Dahl with the assistance of Ted Xakellis. Adobe PDF electronic format of The Bulletin are available to members. Please email Jim Dent at jdent1@optonline.net if you are interested in a PDF copy.

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