

The Babylon Railroad

MR. DAVID S. S. Sammis, a prominent citizen of Babylon, had opened his Surf Hotel on Fire Island in 1856. It was extended from time to time until it had become a large enterprise. It was not until the Spring of 1871 that Mr. Sammis decided he should provide better transportation for his guests and their baggage from the railroad station in Babylon to the dock, where his own boats ferried them to Fire Island.

There were 1.53 miles of 40 lb. iron rail from the South Side RR depot east a short distance alongside the railroad, then south on the east side of Deer Park Avenue (if Beer's map of 1873 is to be trusted), crossing Main Street and continuing south on Fire Island Avenue. After passing Prospect Street the track shifted gradually to the west side of the road. At the south end of the village there was a sharp jog to the east, for some distance, with track on the south side of the road; then south again on the Neck with track on the east side to the steamship dock

Felix E. Reifschneider

where boats could be boarded for Fire Island. There were two horses and two cars, with road and equipment costing a bit more than \$6000.

Originally Robert O. Colt was President, and John R. Reid, Treasurer, E. P. Wheeler, Secretary. David S. S. Sammis was listed as Superintendent but seems to have owned most of the stock. Various members of the Sammis family were always prominent in the affairs of the road in horse car days. In 1889 Edward F. Sammis was Superintendent while David S. S. Sammis had become President. Mr. J. M. Sammis was connected in an official capacity at one time and Washington F. Norton seems to have succeeded Mr. Colt as President some time after the road opened. Mr. Norton was the father of Mrs. Emelyn Norton Hasbrouck who still resides on Fire Island Avenue, and of the late Dudley F. Norton.

At first the road seems to

have been very prosperous and may have operated all year round or nearly so. However, expenses soon rose and sizable deficits were reported year after year. Those horse cars provided faster and more comfortable transportation, and at much lower cost than the horse drawn rigs and wagons used previously. One possible explanation for the relatively small earnings may have been that Mr. Sammis provided free transportation on his cars for guests and employees of the hotel. After the summer of 1875 or 1876 operation seems to have been confined to a few months in summer. During some years the cars ran for less than three months while at least during one year it was reported that the cars ran for eight months.

The Reports of the Company show that the investment in the property had continually increased year after year. We do not know what these additional investments were but they may have consisted of repairs to the track (which should have been

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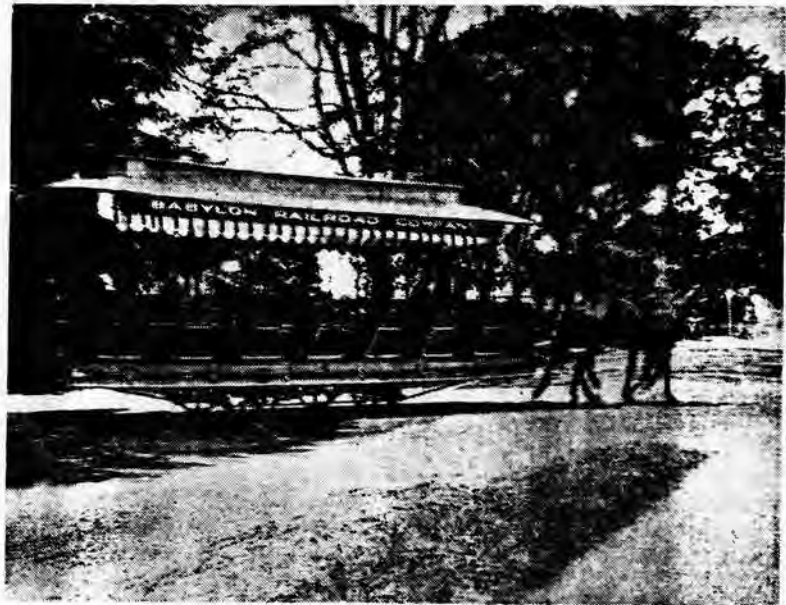
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charged to expense but often weren't in those days) and Mr. Sammis, perhaps aided by other officers, may have made good the yearly operating deficits out of his own pocket as a loan to the company, a sort of subsidy to the railroad from the operations of the hotel on Fire Island, since the railroad was a necessary adjunct to the hotel.

On October 18, 1873 the new depot of the Central RR of Long Island was opened and promised to be a boon to the horse car traffic. Mr. Seyfried, Long Island RR historian, tells us that the depot occupied the site where houses nos. 158 and 164 Fire Island Avenue now stand. The Watson House, a large summer resort hotel, was on the east side of the street facing the depot. Now passengers brought to Babylon on Central RR trains could ride the horse cars northbound to the village or southbound to the Fire Island dock. In June 1874 a track connection was made between the railroad and the car line so that the latter could bring its baggage car alongside the railroad's baggage car, providing quick and easy transfer of baggage between railroad and car line.

Alas! this excellent arrangement was not to last for long, for on November 1, 1874 the Central RR trains began to operate into the South Side depot and regular operation into the Fire Island Avenue depot was discontinued. Some trains may have used it in the summer of 1875 for the benefit of the Watson House and Fire Island traffic, but thereafter the track was allowed to grow up in weeds until eventually torn up. Whether the concentration of traffic at the South Side depot helped or hurt the horse cars, we do not know, but it was soon thereafter that the period of operation was sharply curtailed. We learn in 1890 that the fare was 6c and that there were three box (closed) cars and one open car.



According to an earlier article in the *Forum* Mr. Sammis observed his 75th birthday on May 8, 1893 and sold his Fire Island property to

the State. The Hotel wasn't opened that summer, which aroused the ire of President Austin Corbin of the Long Island RR, who tried and may

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have succeeded to deny access to the railroad station grounds to the horse cars.

At any rate, a new era began in 1898 when the road seems to have passed out of the hands of Babylon men, when New York people took over. The only Babylon men still connected with the enterprise were Washington F. Norton and William G. Nicholl, who became a surrogate of Suffolk County. The new owners issued \$33,000 worth of bonds to replace the old light iron rails with heavier steel rails, rebuild the entire roadbed and purchase two stored steam cars or locomotives, known then as "kinetic motors" altho more familiarly as "fireless cookers". In the absence of a photograph we do not know whether these engines pulled the horse cars as trailers or had accommodations for passengers on the same vehicle, such as the cars on some lines in South Brooklyn at that time, altho the Brooklyn "steam motors" had coal fired boilers. This type of equipment must not be confused with steam "dummies" which were quite different.

The stored Steam cars ran only in summer and were no more successful from the profit standpoint than the horse cars. After steam operation for the summers of 1898 and 1899, and perhaps for a short time in the beginning of the summer of 1900, the road was leased to William (De) Garmo of Babylon, who started up the old horse car service on July 25, 1900 and continued to operate for some summers thereafter. By some miracle Mr. De Garmo succeeded in remaining nearly solvent and in one year reported a profit of exactly one dollar. While insignificant, it did reverse the annual losses of the previous three decades.

On October 9, 1906 the Babylon RR was bought by the Long Island Consolidated Electrical Companies, a holding company owned 50% by the Long Island RR and 50% by the Interborough Rapid Transit Co., operator of subway and elevated railroads in New York City. It was announced that the car line would be electrified, but the project was delayed, as was that of the Cross-Island Trolley, by the Panic of 1907.

When more normal economic conditions returned, the property was sold to the South Shore Traction interests in 1909 who took it over and electrified it. The South Shore Traction, it may be recalled, was the grandiose scheme for building a trolley line from 59th Street and 2nd Avenue in Manhattan, across the Queensborough Bridge, thru Long Island City, Jamaica, St. Albans and the

South Shore villages to Brookhaven.

Only the line in Queens County was substantially completed, plus two short stretches in Suffolk County: the Babylon line with its extension about to be described and a short piece of track in Sayville which was later taken over by the Suffolk Traction, the latter also connected with the South Shore project in the beginning.

In addition to electrifying the Babylon line, and equipping it with some second-hand single truck trolleys, an extension of six miles was built thru Lindenhurst and Copiague to Amityville, where a short stretch of track in the center of town was shared with the Huntington RR (Cross-Island Trolley). For this extension second-hand double truck cars were brought in from N. Y. City. The writer remembers the carbarn, a rather crude corrugated iron building on the south side of the LIRR in West Babylon. At that time it would have been possible to ride by trolley from Halesite on Long Island Sound to the Fire Island Dock on Great South Bay, about a 24-mile trip, in approximately two hours.

The Babylon-Amityville operation has been described in the December, 1973, *Forum*. It led a hand-to-mouth existence for eleven years before it shut down May 15, 1920, outlasting the NY and North Shore Traction by a few weeks and ending almost a half-century of street railway service in Babylon.

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The St. James Area:

The LIRR Brought Fame & Fortune

By Bradley Harris

The hamlet of St. James in the Town of Smithtown was historically known as Head of the Harbor until 1853. In that year, Episcopalians living in the area organized a parish and incorporated a religious society known as the St. James Church of Smithtown.

In following year, a church building was constructed on North Country Road (Rt. 25A) and was formally dedicated as the St. James Episcopal Church.

The name of St. James became associated with the community, because soon after the first church was erected the Federal Government opened its first post office in the area and named the postal district St. James.

When the government opened a post office in the area, it did so in Richard Smith's General Store which was located at the intersection of Mariches and Three Sisters Rd.

On Jun 9, 1856, the St. James Post Office became a reality and this locality in Smithtown has been known as St. James ever since.

Although the population of St. James was much smaller in the 1850s than it is today, the geographical area known then as St. James was much larger since it included the areas known today as the in-

corporated villages of Nissequogue and Head of the Harbor.

The history of these areas, however, goes back much farther than 1853.

A mile to the east was the "quiet little hamlet of Mills Pond, a collection of not more than a dozen houses, on the eastern border of the town."

Here were to be found "extensive orchards of healthy, vigorous-looking fruit trees," and the "commodious mansion of... Wickham W. Mills." The Mills Pond House on the North Country Rd. is owned today by the Town of Smithtown.

The house is interesting historically because it is very old and the west wing is thought to have been built by Timothy Mills, who purchased the land in this area from Adam Smith.

Timothy Mills was one of the first outsiders to purchase land from the Smiths and build a home there. "The original house... was partially destroyed by fire. A descendant, William Wickham Mills, restored what remained in 1858 and built the three-story addition. The building, done under the direction of the architect Calvin Follard, "is a magnificent example of Greek Revival architecture and befitting the man for whom it was built."

The school house, with about 100 scholars in attendance by 1873, was located on Three Sisters Rd.

The business district consisted of three general stores, one of which housed the post office, an inn, and a blacksmith and wheelwright shop.

Most of the people of St. James were farmers, although some made their living from cutting cordwood and hauling it down to the

William Wickham Mills was Supervisor of Smithtown for several years, one of the largest landowners, and a man of much influence."

By 1853, when the St. James Episcopal Church was founded, there were only a few homes to be found along North Country Rd. (25A).

The only concentration of dwellings was in the hamlet of Mills Pond and these homes stretched away to the south along Mills Pond Rd. and Mariches Rd. at its southern end.

The hamlet of St. James as it existed in 1853 was to be found north of North Country Road, where some 80 houses were concentrated, most of them along Mariches Rd., Three Sisters Rd., and Harbor Hill Rd. The center of the village and its tiny population lay situated among the rough hills that are found in this area.

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NYC'S MAYOR JUSTICE GAYNOR called St. James "Deepwells" his summer home.

dock at the end of Cordwood Path.

Others made a living harvesting shellfish, particularly scallops, soft clams and oysters, which were taken from Stony Brook Harbor and shipped by stoop and schooner to New York City markets. Many men made a living as captains and sailors on these vessels. They took the cargoes of shellfish and cordwood into New York City, and returned landed down with horse manure for the farmers' fields.

So lived the people of St. James in the 1850s, but all of this was to change with the coming of the Long Island Rail Road in 1873.

Although the Long Island Rail Road encouraged businessmen to move to St. James and become commuters, not many were willing to

make such a long journey.

The Long Island Rail Road was more successful in promoting tourism.

At the turn-of-the-century, the population of St. James had risen to about 400 permanent residents. Growing in popularity as a summer resort many tourists came to visit and stayed on to live there permanently.

As real-estate values continued to rise, more subdivision of property took place, and many home-owners moved in to enjoy the gracious country life.

The St. James area also began to attract the great and the not-so-great actors of the day.

St. James became an actor's haven. Why this happened is not known, but one story has it that "a group of actors once travelled to this area from New York City on the bicycles." Since the trip had taken most of the day, and they were "too tired for the return trip, and having liked what they saw, they decided to stay a while."

For whatever reason, St. James "became a popular retreat for show business folk during their leisure time."

The show business greats of the turn-of-the-century came to St. James during their holidays" and many purchased homes in the area.

These included such famous names as John, Lionel and Ethel Barrymores, the Bartons, the Collens, the La Russes, the Garricks, and many other including the prize fighter, "Gentleman Jim" Corbett.

The lure of St. James for the great reached its zenith when Supreme Court Justice William J. Gaynor of Brooklyn purchased the estate known as Deepwells. This fine old homestead was recognized as one of the landmarks of St. James when Justice Gaynor bought the house in 1885. Deepwells at that time was largely and unimproved farm and he developed it into a fine estate.

He extended the well at the back of the house and increased the stock of farm animals. Pigs were his passion and he kept 30 "porkers."

In 1916, Justice Gaynor was nominated and elected mayor of New York City on the Democratic ticket. He had run as a "staunch advocate of good government," and had won as a reform ticket.

The fact that the Mayor of New York City had a country home in St. James placed the

and drew more people to the area.

Throughout his term of office, which lasted until his death in 1918, Mayor Gaynor made Deepwells his "Summer City Hall" and used to delight in taking newspaper reporters from the City on a tour of his pig barn.

As more people moved in, the residential area shifted. More people began living on the south side of the railroad tracks, and the St. James business district moved south as well.

On Aug. 15, 1915, the St. James Post Office was moved from its location near the general store to a site on Lake Ave. It occupied the south side of the building that is today Nottlinger's Hardware Store. This store had been serving the community as a drugstore and a chain-store.

Moving the Post Office followed the trend of the business community to move nearer to the railroad station.

Not long after this, the incorporated villages of Nissequogue and Head of the Harbor were created. The residents of Nissequogue as authorized by the laws of the State of New York for the purposes of self-government."

In 1923, the residents of St. James "in the rural area north and west of the turn-of-the-century hamlet of St. James" followed suit and established the "Village of Head of the Harbor."

These villages were "founded so that the residents could govern their own zoning, prevent the extension of commercial areas, and preserve the charm of the terrain of the harbor."

So the community of St. James was split into three separate areas and this division has persisted to this day.

The rest of the story of the hamlet of St. James is one which is still being written. St. James has had continued expansion of population and housing to the south of the railroad tracks. The available open-land areas have almost been swallowed up, and farming as a way of life has practically disappeared.

By sharp contrast, the incorporated village of Nissequogue and Head of the Harbor have carefully controlled their expansion and growth through restrictive zoning and careful planning.

As a result, there is still open-land available in these villages and some residents are still engaged in farming.

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Long Island
Railroad

Beacon
1981

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L.I. Railroad

A History Of The Babylon Railroad

Page 75 - BEACON - Thursday, November 19, 1981



Trolley cars were an important method of transportation in Babylon during the end of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th

In 1871 a horse-drawn trolley was started by David S. S. Sammis for the purpose of transporting the guests of his "Surf Hotel" on Fire Island from the railroad station to the steamboat dock. A trolley and a flat car for baggage was pulled by two horses. In order to keep the franchise the line had to be run all year and usually only consisted of a small car pulled by a horse or a mule.

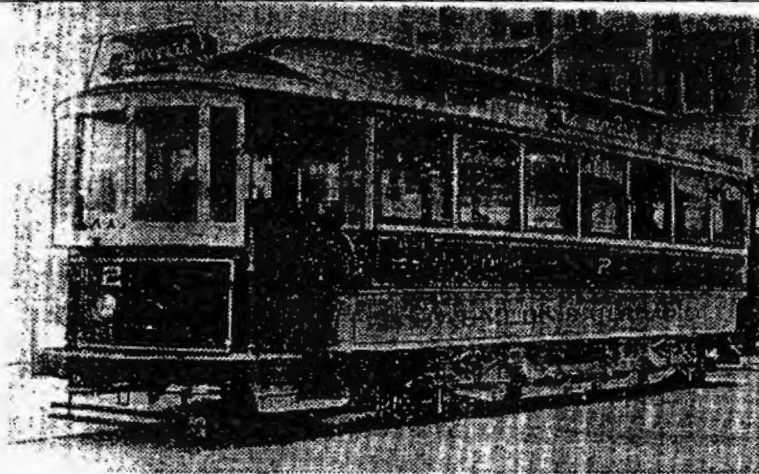
In 1893 Mr. Sammis, who celebrated his 75th birthday, sold his Fire Island property to the state and when the Surf Hotel did not open, President Austin Corbin of the L.I.R.R. was very unhappy. In 1898 the railroad passed out of the hands of Babylon men and it was operated by New York people for several years. They rebuilt the entire track and operated steam cars. They were not successful, and after two years the road was leased to William (De) Garino who resumed the horse car service.

In 1906, the line was purchased by the L.I.R.R. and the Interboro Subway System of N.Y. who announced the line would be electrified. This was delayed due to the panic of 1907. In 1909, the South Shore Traction interests took it over and electrified it. In addition to electrifying the Babylon line,

an extension of six miles was built from Babylon to Amityville using second-hand double truck cars. At one time, one could ride from Halesite on the Long Island Sound to the Babylon docks, a 24 mile trip, in about two hours. The Babylon-Amityville operation has been described in the L.I. Forum, August 1975. It led a checkered existence for eleven years before it shut down on May 15, 1920, ending almost a half-century of street railway service in Babylon.

Beacon
11/19/81





THE OLD LINE. This is one of the old Babylon Railroad Co. trolleys that used to clang their slow way from Babylon to Amityville 40 and 50 years ago, and one of the men who used to help run them, Henry Willmont of West Babylon.

Recollect When Trolley Ran From Babylon to Amityville?

By Tom Collins

Babylon—The "Toonerville Trolley" that wound its slow way from Babylon to Amityville, in the days when the trolley was considered ultra-modern, is still fondly remembered by the oldtimers who were among its customers.

It clanged out the distance in about 35 minutes on the days when it didn't jump the track. "When it did, we just kept on reading the papers until they got it going again," recalls Paul Bailey, the Suffolk County historian, who was a veteran rider of the old line. "We used to call it the Toonerville Trolley."

"That's right," says 66-year-old Henry Ellis Willmont of 103 Arnold Ave., West Babylon, a former motorman on the trolley. "It used to jump off quite a bit and we'd have to run it back on."

The June day in 1910 when the first run was made was—like the trolley line itself after a few years—a disappointment to all. A gala day was planned in which a brass band from Lindenhurst was to play in the village park.

Railroad officials and other dignitaries were scheduled to take an excursion trip and high school children were set to sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee" under the trees in the park. But a storm came up, and the rain drenched the dignitaries and the five spanking new trolleys lined up for the first trip to Amityville. It was an omen of things to come.

The trolleys were small cars with a capacity of about 28 riders. "When there was too much of a load in the back, the front would tip up. The passengers had to be evenly distributed," recalls another oldtimer, Shepard Farrington of 49 Dundee Ave., Babylon.

The trolley ran from the Steamboat Dock up Fire Island Avenue into Deer Park Avenue, and made a left turn into Trolley Line Road, named for the trolley. Then it ran parallel to the Long Island Rail Road tracks through West Babylon, Copiague and Lindenhurst, ending up at Broadway in Amityville, where passengers could catch a north-south trolley that ran at the time across to Huntington.

The Babylon-Amityville line was owned by the Babylon Railroad Co., now defunct.

Another former motorman, Capt. Harold Smaling of 20 Robert St., Babylon, who has just retired from the Babylon Village Police Department, remembers the time when the trolley jumped the track at Main Street and Deer Park Avenue, and smashed into a large cast-iron drinking fountain for horses. "It busted up the fountain pretty bad," he recalls.

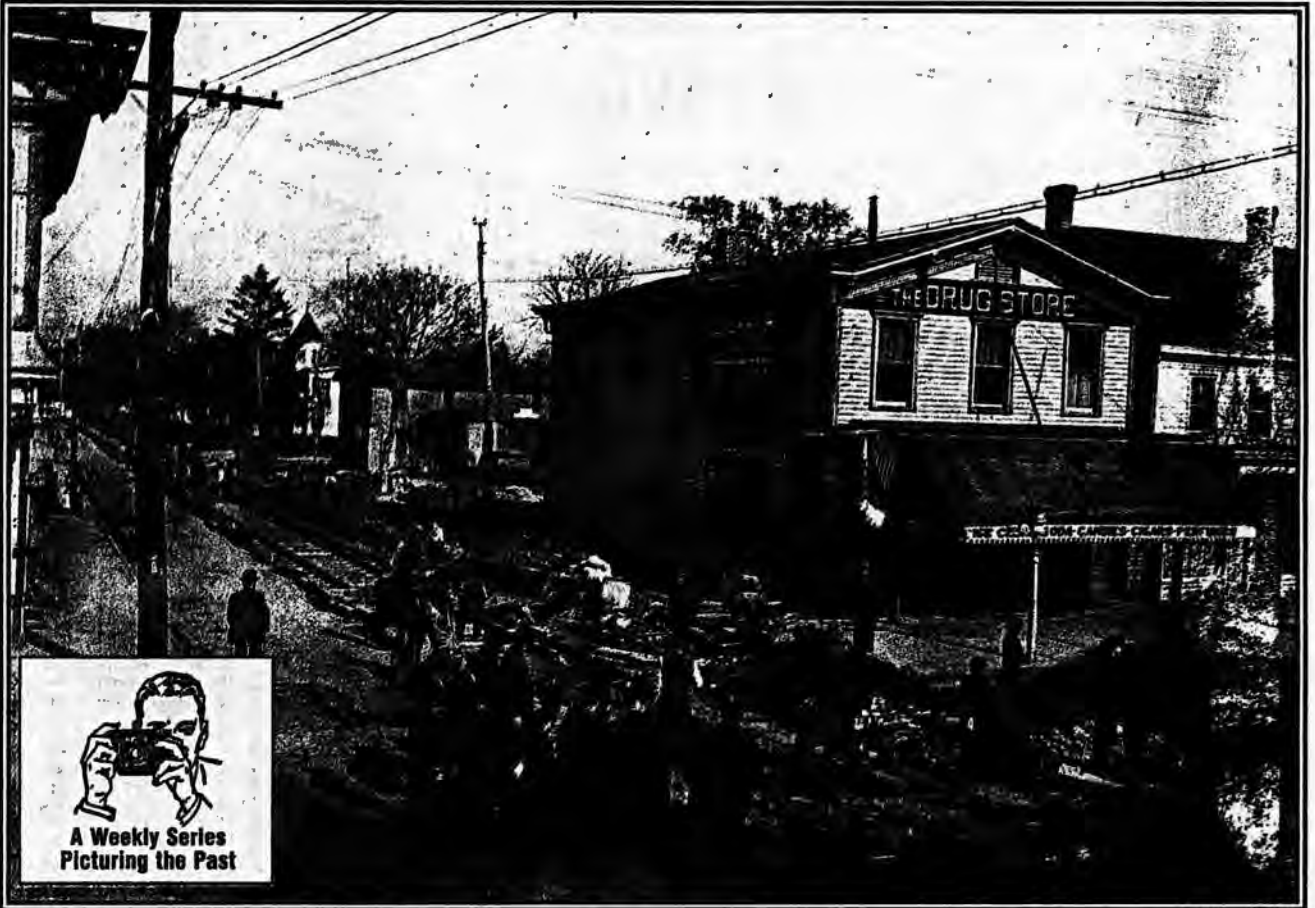
Within a few years after World War I, the trolley made a final run one day and then jumped the tracks into history. Its five cars had long since been reduced to one, and that not in very good shape, and the eight miles of track had deteriorated badly. But the mention of it can still make the oldtimers nostalgic. "Things were kind of peaceful and quiet in those days," Willmont says.

NOTE: The name and date of the publication in which the article first appeared has not been determined.

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A view of downtown Patchogue around 1911. The view is looking north on North Ocean Avenue from Main Street during the construction of the Suffolk Traction Co. trolley line. McBride's drugstore is on the right. Across North Ocean Avenue is the Swezey and Nowins store.

The Brief Heyday Of the Trolley

AS THE 19TH CENTURY turned into the 20th, trolley fever swept across the country, and Long Island was not immune. Light rail lines proliferated, including a line that ran from Patchogue to Sayville. The Suffolk Traction Co. planned another trolley line to run from Patchogue to Port Jefferson, and in 1911 and 1912 the company built 7 miles of line, from the Patchogue town dock north to Holtsville. However, trolleys soon lost out to the automobile and the Patchogue to Port Jefferson trolley was never completed.

THEN & NOW

NEWSDAY, SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 2000



Newsday Photo / Daniel Goodrich

The same intersection as it appears today. The department store, now just Swezey's, remains in the building on the left. The corner once occupied by the drugstore now has a building occupied by O'Neill's, a collateral loan broker.

ANNUAL HISTORY DAY ESSAY CONTEST 2009

**“TROLLEY DAYS:
A history of trolleys in the Town of Babylon”**

RESEARCH PACKET

- **photographs, newspaper and magazine articles, book excerpts and general information about the history of trolley lines that operated in the Town of Babylon.**

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

PRESENTATIONS

- ❖ On Saturday, March 28, 2009, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., at Babylon Town Hall, 200 E. Sunrise Highway, Lindenhurst, the Town of Babylon Historian, Thomas B. Smith, will host an *optional* information session and presentation on trolley history, after which students may ask questions about trolleys in the Town of Babylon. The information presented by the Town Historian will be based on the material provided in this packet.

BOOKS (available at many local libraries)

- ❖ Amityville, written by the Amityville Historical Society, published by Arcadia Publishing, 2006.
- ❖ Babylon By the Sea, written by Anne Frances Pulling, published by Arcadia Publishing, 1999.
- ❖ The Cross-Island Line: the story of the Huntington Railroad, written by Vincent F. Seyfried, 1976.
- ❖ Lost Trolleys of Queens and Long Island, written by Stephen L. Meyers, published by Arcadia Publishing, 2006.

HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

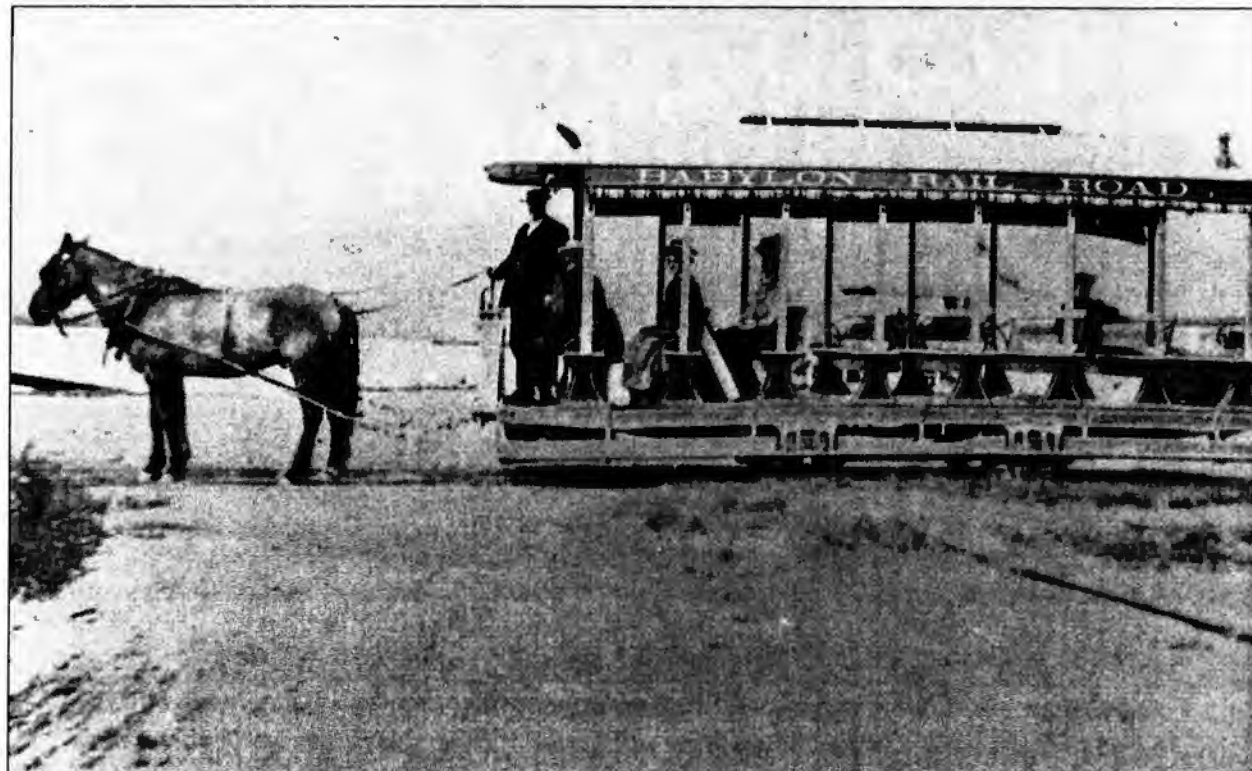
- ❖ Amityville Historical Society: 598-1486
- ❖ Friends of the Deer Park Archives: Contact the Office of Historic Services for more information.
- ❖ Lindenhurst Historical Society: 226-1254
- ❖ Village of Babylon Historical & Pres. Society: 669-1756

LOCAL LIBRARIES

- ❖ Amityville Public Library: 264-0567
- ❖ Babylon Public Library: 669-1624
- ❖ Copiague Memorial Public Library: 691-1111
- ❖ Deer Park Public Library: 586-3000
- ❖ Lindenhurst Memorial Public Library: 957-7755
- ❖ North Babylon Public Library: 669-4020
- ❖ West Babylon Public Library: 669-5445
- ❖ Wyandanch Public Library: 643-4848

BABYLON RAILROAD COMPANY

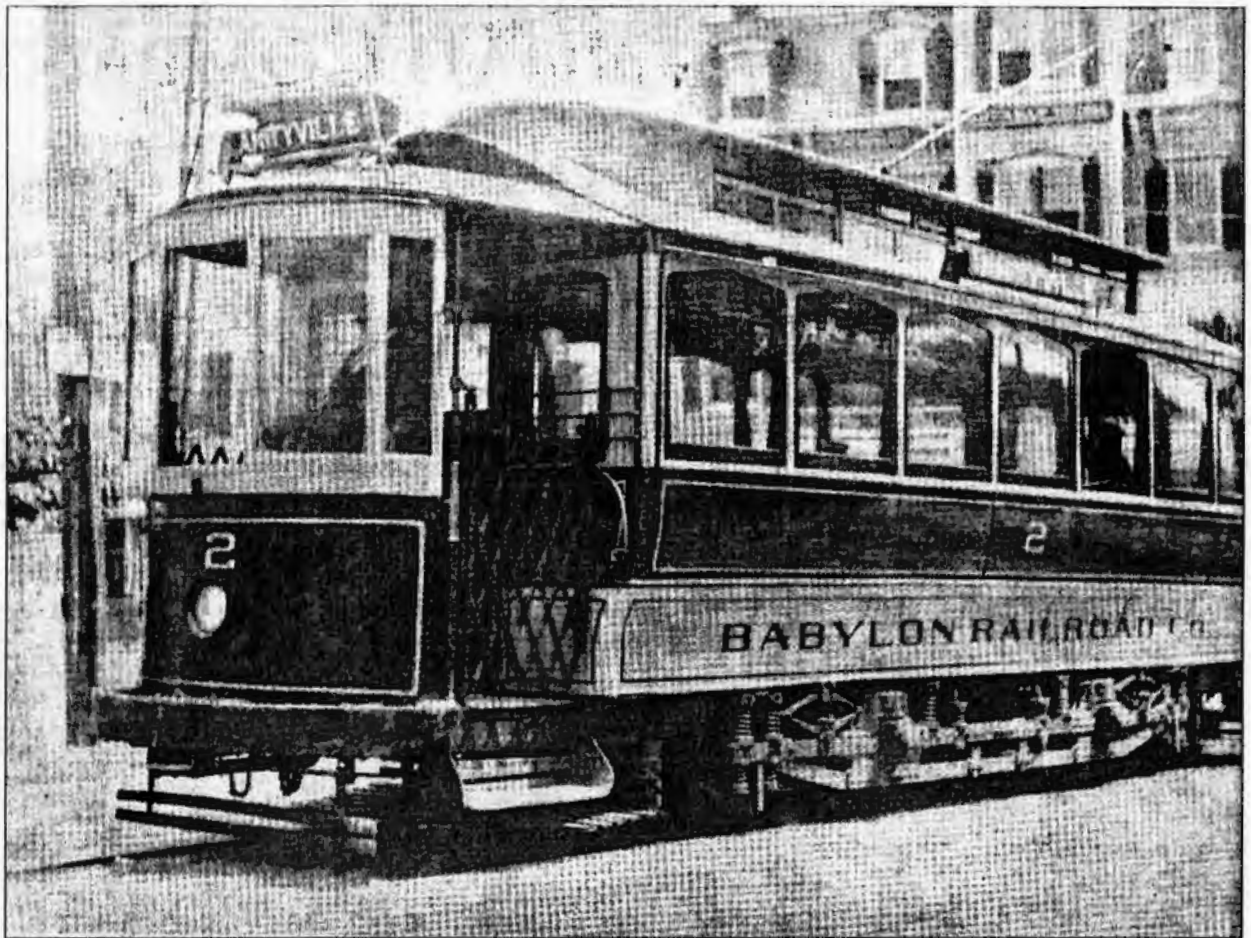
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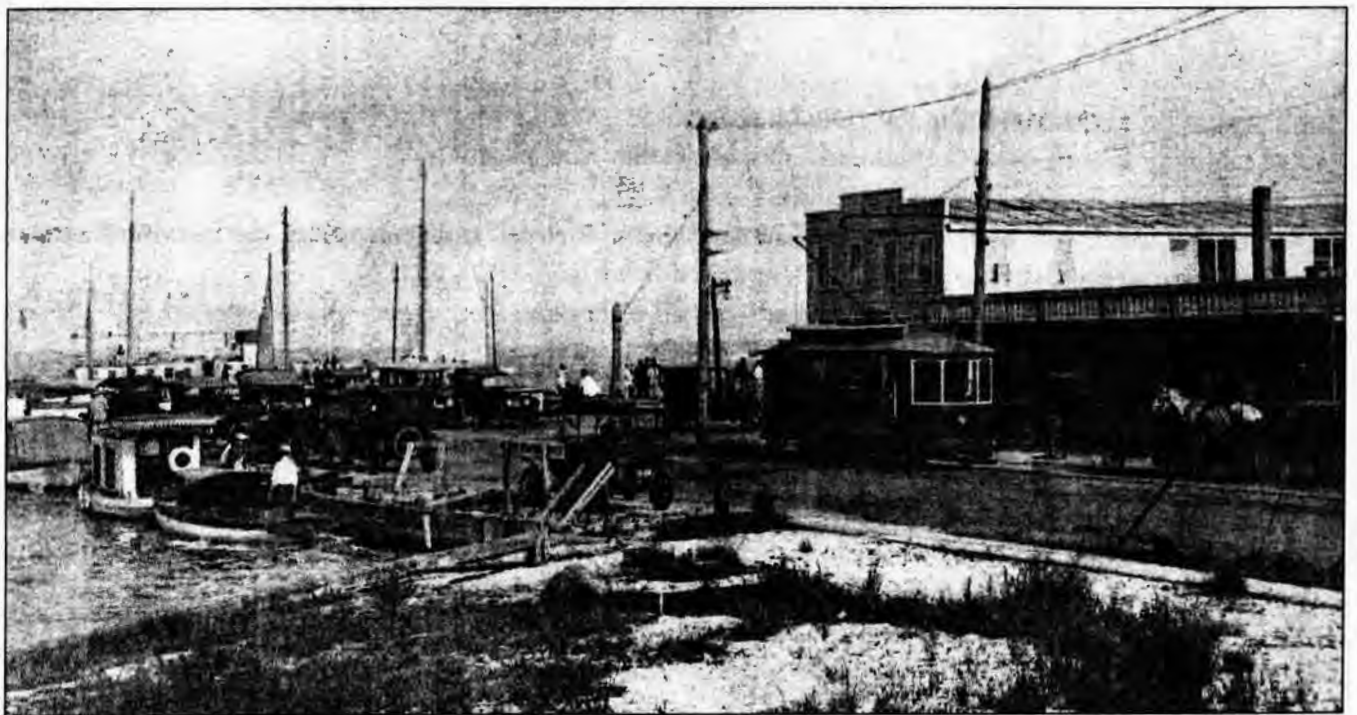
A horse-drawn trolley car of the Babylon Railroad Company, circa 1880s.

Information Provided About the Babylon Railroad:

- Photographs of Babylon Railroad Company trolley cars, page 4.
- Brief Timeline of the Babylon Railroad, page 5
- Map showing the path of the horse-drawn Babylon Railroad trolley line from the Babylon Railroad Station to the Babylon docks, which operated from 1871-1920, page 6.
- Map showing the path of the Babylon Railroad trolley line from Amityville to Babylon, 1910-1920, page 7.
- "Trolley Day Was a Big Success," pages 8-10. This 1910 article describes the opening day of the trolley line from Babylon Village to Amityville.
- "Recollect When Trolley Ran From Babylon To Amityville?," by Tom Collins, page 11.
- "Streetcar Story Retold," by James E. Tooker, page 12.
- "The Babylon Railroad," by Felix E. Reifschneider, pages 13-14.
- "The South Shore Traction Company," by Felix E. Reifschneider, pages 15-16.
- "Recollections of the Trolleys," by Seth Purdy, Jr., pages 24-26, has some information about the trolleys that ran between Amityville and Babylon.



A trolley car of the Babylon Railroad Company en route from Babylon Village to Amityville. Sherman House, which stood on Main Street in Babylon Village, can be seen in the background.



A trolley car approaches the docks at Babylon Village, transporting passengers to the waiting ferry boats.

BRIEF TIMELINE OF THE BABYLON RAILROAD COMPANY

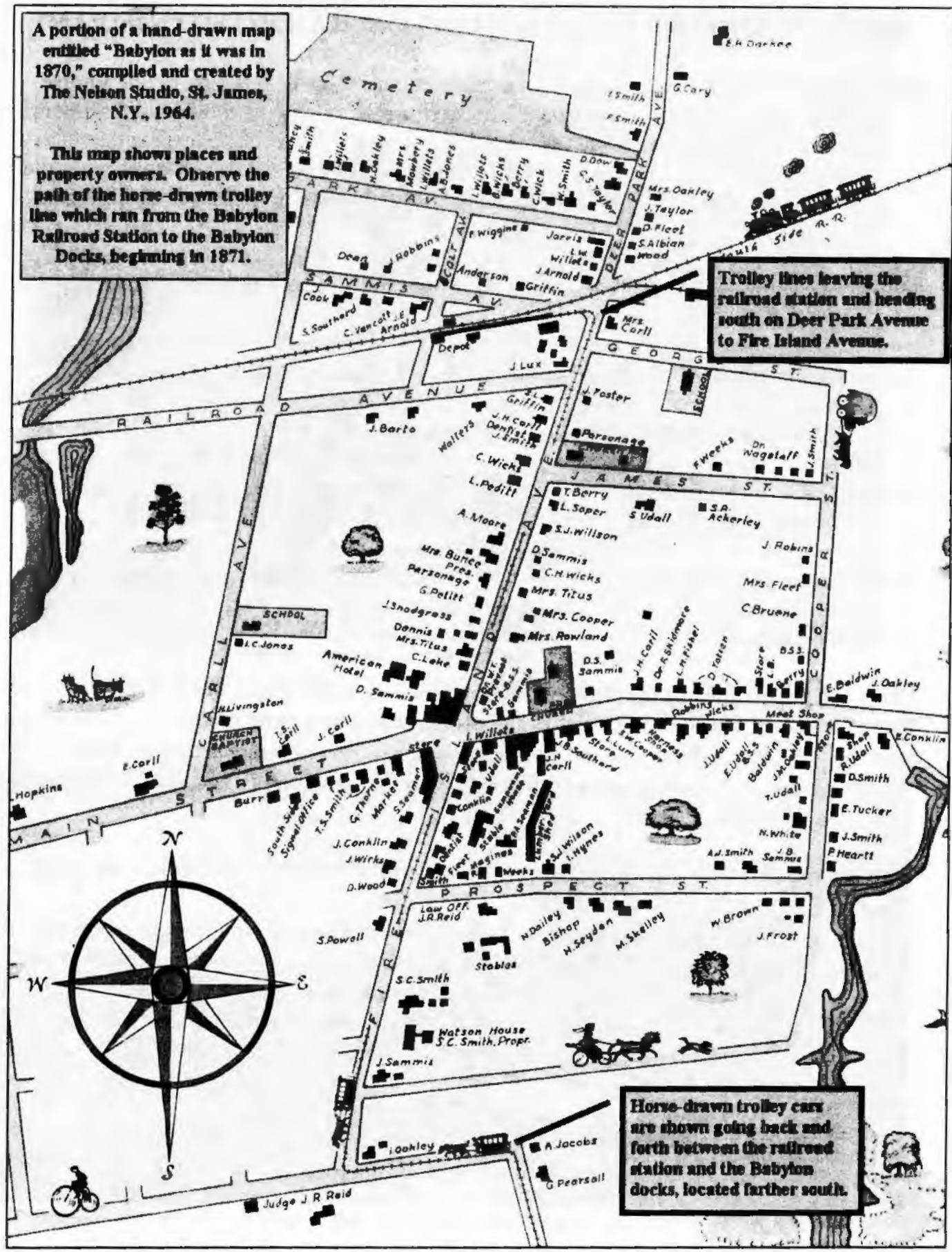
- 1871 (Spring) – David S.S. Sammis, a prominent Babylon Village resident, builds a horse-drawn trolley line to transport passengers from the Long Island Railroad Station in Babylon Village to his ferries at the Babylon Dock. The ferries transport guests to Sammis' Surf Hotel located on Fire Island. The trolley line was 1.53 miles from the south side of the railroad depot to the docks, and consisted of two trolley cars and two horses.
- 1890 – The rolling stock, also known as railroad cars, of Babylon Railroad increases to three closed trolley cars and one open car. The fare is 6 cents.
- 1898 and 1899 – A New York City firm purchases the line and installs motors which operate under steam power. A steam boiler, located in the yard north of the Odd Fellows Hall in Babylon, generates the steam.
- 1900 (July 25th) – William De Garmo leases the trolley company and restarts the old horse-drawn service. For the first time, the company shows a profit - only \$1.00.
- 1906 (October 9) – The line is purchased by Long Island Consolidated Electrical Company with intentions to electrify the operation but the financial Panic of 1907 causes a delay in plans.
- 1909 – The operations of the Babylon Railroad are sold to the South Shore Traction Company, but the name "Babylon Railroad" continues to be used.
- The line is electrified and construction begins on a six-mile extension from Babylon Village going west through West Babylon, Lindenhurst and Copiague to Amityville.
- 1910 (June 11th) – The new trolley line is officially opens with five small trolley cars, each with a capacity of 28 passengers.
- A corrugated metal car barn is built on the south side of the railroad tracks in West Babylon, at Belmont Junction, which was located near the intersection of Great East Neck Road and Trolley Line Road.
 - The fare is 5 cents for the stops at West Babylon, Lindenhurst and Copiague, and 10 cents for the full trip from Amityville to Babylon. The full trip takes approximately 35 minutes.
 - The trolley cars operate at an average of once per hour.
- 1920 (May 25) – Operations of the Babylon Railroad cease.

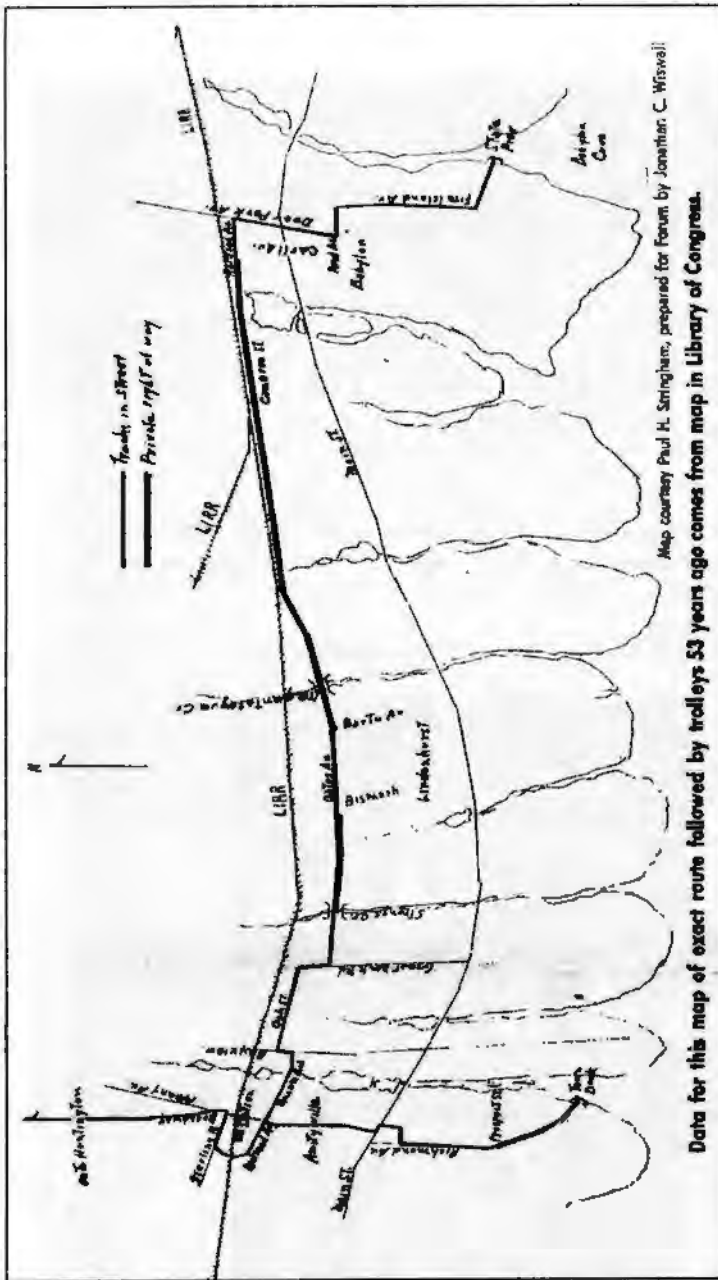
A portion of a hand-drawn map entitled "Babylon as it was in 1870," compiled and created by The Nelson Studio, St. James, N.Y., 1964.

This map shows places and property owners. Observe the path of the horse-drawn trolley line which ran from the Babylon Railroad Station to the Babylon Docks, beginning in 1871.

Trolley lines leaving the railroad station and heading south on Deer Park Avenue to Fire Island Avenue.

Horse-drawn trolley cars are shown going back and forth between the railroad station and the Babylon docks, located farther south.





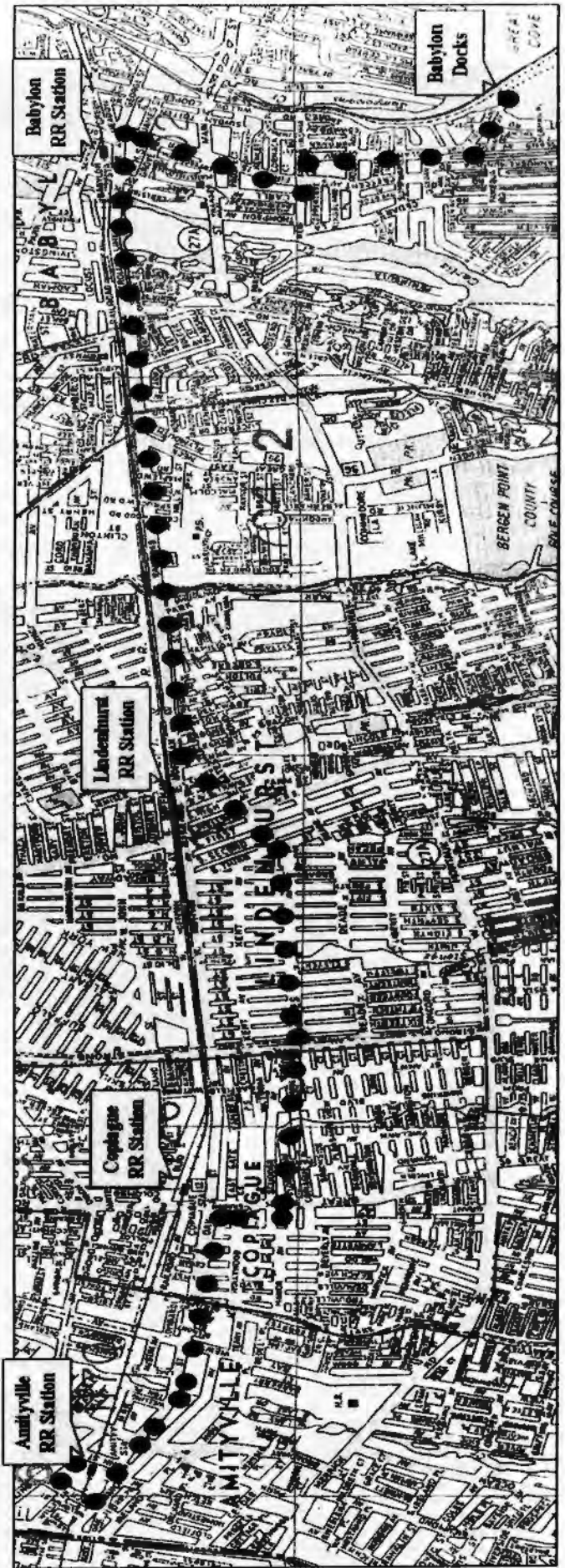
Map courtesy Paul H. Stringham, prepared for Forum by Jonathan C. Wiswall.

Data for this map of exact route followed by trolleys 53 years ago comes from map in Library of Congress.

Maps of the Trolley Line operated by the South Shore Traction Company, also known as the Babylon Railroad Co., between the Villages of Amityville and Babylon from 1910 to 1920.

The hand-drawn map, above, was copied from the article "The South Shore Traction Company," by Felix E. Reifschneider, Long Island Forum, December 1973, pg. 232-233. (A copy of Mr. Reifschneider's article is enclosed with this information packet.)

The map to the right, is the approximate trolley route which has been drawn over a modern-day street map. ("Suffolk County Atlas," by the Hagstrom Map Co., Inc., 1998, pg. 22-23.)



TROLLEY DAY WAS A BIG SUCCESS

THE SOUTH SHORE TRACTION COMPANY COVERED ITSELF WITH GLORY IN ITS CELEBRATION LAST SATURDAY

Damp weather did not mar the festive occasion—The running of the electric cars loudly and enthusiastically greeted—Babylon Village and Town warmly congratulated upon the forward step—Cars now running and well patronized—How the great day was observed.

TWO POPULAR OFFICERS OF THE SOUTH SHORE TRACTION COMPANY



JAMES T. WOOD
President



ARTHUR CARTER HUME
Secretary

(COMPLIMENTS OF "THE HUSTLER")

Although the weather bureau seemed to be "agin" us on Saturday last, the heavy-laden skies and incessant drippings had no effect upon the enthusiasm of our people in their formal observance of the opening of the Amityville-Babylon trolley and the day passed into history as one of, if not the most important that has marked the continued progress of our village and town.

The programme, as outlined by the committee, went through without a hitch, the only deviation in the set arrangement being the decision of the committee to abandon the proposed trip across the bay to Oak Island. Had the weather been pleasant this trip would, no doubt, have been fully carried out.

The village was in gala attire early in the morning and, although the traction company did not connect its electric circuit until late the evening before, the cars were in proper running order and ready for the carrying of passengers promptly at the time scheduled.

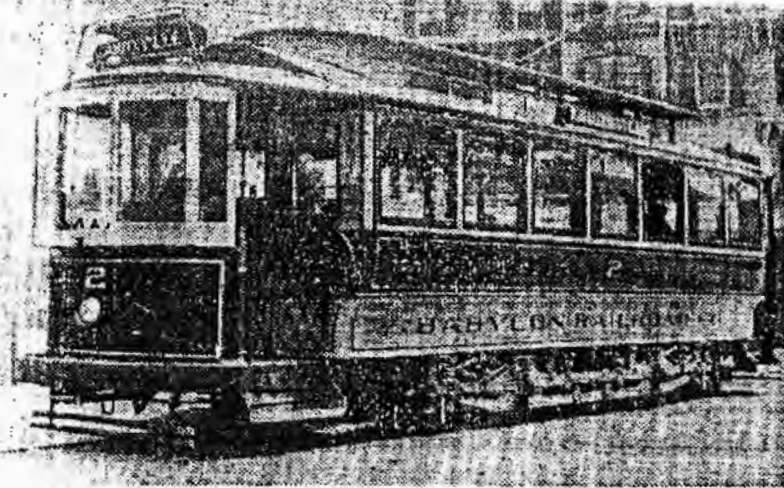
This was in line with the attitude of the traction company throughout its extended transactions, to be ever prompt in meeting the demands made upon it and in accord with agreements and conditions made.

Shortly before noon, the special Long Island train of two cars brought the invited guests of the trolley company from the west and they were immediately driven in stages to the Watson House. The 150 guests included state, county, town and village officials, newspaper men and others prominent in public life. The reception committee of the Babylon Board of Trade met the visitors upon their arrival at the railroad depot and escorted them to the rendezvous at the hotel. Noticeable time was allowed for the guests to renew acquaintances, which about 12:30 P. M. Chairman James W. Eaton extended the formal greeting to the public.

Mr. Eaton said the gathering was in honor of the greatest institution Babylon has known and he congratulated

the people upon their good fortune, tending the right hand of fellowship to the promoters and builders of the road and a hearty welcome to those who had gathered to do honor to the occasion. He reviewed the rapid growth of Babylon and prophesied a great future for the town, saying that as Babylon is now the third in rank in the total amount of receipts to the Long Island railroad it would not be many years before it would head the list as the first village and the first city on the South Side. In closing he said, "I extend, on behalf of the Village and Town of Babylon to the South Shore Traction Company, the only keys we have, the prosperity of the whole town."

Mr. Eaton apologized for the non-appearance of former Senator Clarence Lexow, who was detained at the last minute in court by an unexpected decision, and was compelled, reluctantly, to remain at the post of his legal duty.



THE OLD LINE. This is one of the old Babylon Railroad Co. trolleys that used to clang their slow way from Babylon to Amityville 40 and 50 years ago, and one of the men who used to help run them, Henry Willmont of West Babylon.

Recollect When Trolley Ran From Babylon to Amityville?

By Tom Collins

Babylon—The "Toonerville Trolley" that wound its slow way from Babylon to Amityville, in the days when the trolley was considered ultra-modern, is still fondly remembered by the oldtimers who were among its customers.

It clanged out the distance in about 35 minutes on the days when it didn't jump the track. "When it did, we just kept on reading the papers until they got it going again," recalls Paul Bailey, the Suffolk County historian, who was a veteran rider of the old line. "We used to call it the Toonerville Trolley."

"That's right," says 66-year-old Henry Ellis Willmont of 103 Arnold Ave., West Babylon, a former motorman on the trolley. "It used to jump off quite a bit and we'd have to run it back on."

The June day in 1910 when the first run was made was—like the trolley line itself after a few years—a disappointment to all. A gala day was planned in which a brass band from Lindenhurst was to play in the village park.

Railroad officials and other dignitaries were scheduled to take an excursion trip and high school children were set to sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee" under the trees in the park. But a storm came up, and the rain drenched the dignitaries and the five spanking new trolleys lined up for the first trip to Amityville. It was an omen of things to come.

The trolleys were small cars with a capacity of about 28 riders. "When there was too much of a load in the back, the front would tip up. The passengers had to be evenly distributed," recalls another oldtimer, Shepard Farrington of 49 Dundee Ave., Babylon.

The trolley ran from the Steamboat Dock up Fire Island Avenue into Deer Park Avenue, and made a left turn into Trolley Line Road, named for the trolley. Then it ran parallel to the Long Island Rail Road tracks through West Babylon, Copiague and Lindenhurst, ending up at Broadway in Amityville, where passengers could catch a north-south trolley that ran at the time across to Huntington.

The Babylon-Amityville line was owned by the Babylon Railroad Co., now defunct.

Another former motorman, Capt. Harold Smalling of 20 Robert St., Babylon, who has just retired from the Babylon Village Police Department, remembers the time when the trolley jumped the track at Main Street and Deer Park Avenue, and smashed into a large cast-iron drinking fountain for horses. "It busted up the fountain pretty bad," he recalls.

Within a few years after World War I, the trolley made a final run one day and then jumped the tracks into history. Its five cars had long since been reduced to one, and that not in very good shape, and the eight miles of track had deteriorated badly. But the mention of it can still make the oldtimers nostalgic. "Things were kind of peaceful and quiet in those days," Willmont says.

NOTE: The name and date of the publication in which the article first appeared has not been determined.

History of Babylon:

Streetcar Story Retold

By JAMES E. TOOKER, Official Town of Babylon Historian.

I received a letter from a gentleman who lives in Pennsylvania who wanted to know about Babylon's street railroad, which was later a trolley line. He said his folks were born here, but gave no further information on that point. I wrote him somewhat according to the following:

The history of the Babylon street railroad begins with that remarkable man David S.S. Sammis. He built his hotel at Fire Island, known as the Surf Hotel in 1855. Then he needed a steamer to take patrons back and forth so he had

a ferry line, getting permission from the state legislature to operate it. Then he went further, this was soon after 1870, he had street railroad built from the steamboat dock on the bay to the Babylon railroad station. He ran this for quite a number of years, and different people ran it after that.

I remember William V. De Garmo ran it for awhile. I believe his daughter, I believe her name was Elizabeth but every one called her Libbie, acted as conductor and picked up the fares. Of course, the line ran only in the summer months.

Then later on some other concern acquired this line. They had a new method then, called the kinetic power system. There was a steam boiler in the yard, which was just north of the present Odd Fellows Hall, and their cars had a d and used what they called the stored steam system. But they did not stay in business very long.

Then came along one Joseph G. Robin, who was a railroad man, and he took over the line and electrified it. He got a further franchise and extended the line to Broadway in Amityville. As near as I can remember he began to operate around 1911. When Charles Warla, Jr., who was then town clerk, died in 1914 a number of us had a special car to take us to the funeral.

The line was very useful but the auto was coming on and it gradually forced it out of business. The rails and cars were sold and only the name, Trolley Line Road, remains, on the road which parallels the LIRR on the south in Babylon. I can remember the late George Miller, later a town policeman, and another man William Voss, who worked on this line. Perhaps readers may remember others.

"Streetcar Story Retold," by James E. Tooker, was published in the Babylon Town Leader, November 27, 1958, pages 8 and 16.

The Babylon Railroad

MR. DAVID S. S. Sammis, a prominent citizen of Babylon, had opened his Surf Hotel on Fire Island in 1856. It was extended from time to time until it had become a large enterprise. It was not until the Spring of 1871 that Mr. Sammis decided he should provide better transportation for his guests and their baggage from the railroad station in Babylon to the dock, where his own boats ferried them to Fire Island.

There were 1.53 miles of 40 lb. iron rail from the South Side RR depot east a short distance alongside the railroad, then south on the east side of Deer Park Avenue (if Beer's map of 1873 is to be trusted), crossing Main Street and continuing south on Fire Island Avenue. After passing Prospect Street the track shifted gradually to the west side of the road. At the south end of the village there was a sharp jog to the east, for some distance, with track on the south side of the road; then south again on the Neck with track on the east side to the steamship dock where boats could be boarded for Fire Island. There were two horses and two cars, with road and equipment costing a bit more than \$6000.

Originally Robert O. Colt was President, and John R. Reid, Treasurer, E. P. Wheeler, Secretary. David S. S. Sammis was listed as Superintendent but seems to have owned most of the stock. Various members of the Sammis family were always prominent in the affairs of the road in horse car days. In 1889 Edward F. Sammis was Superintendent while David S. S. Sammis had become President. Mr. J. M. Sammis was connected in an official capacity at one time and Washington F. Norton seems to have succeeded Mr. Colt as President some time after the

Felix E. Reifschneider

road opened. Mr. Norton was the father of Mrs. Emelyn Norton Hasbrouck who still resides on Fire Island Avenue, and of the late Dudley F. Norton.

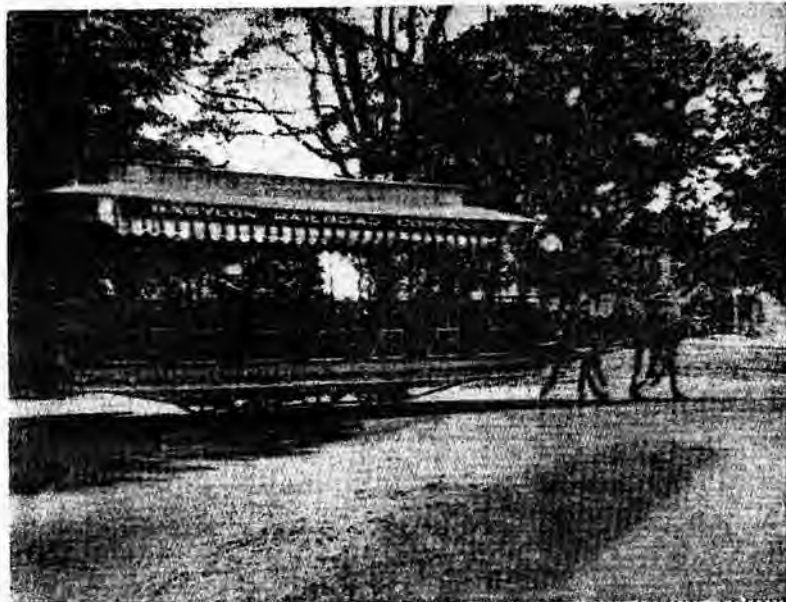
At first the road seems to have been very prosperous and may have operated all year round or nearly so. However, expenses soon rose and sizable deficits were reported year after year. Those horse cars provided faster and more comfortable transportation, and at much lower cost than the horse drawn rigs and wagons used previously. One possible explanation for the relatively small earnings may have been that Mr. Sammis provided free transportation on his cars for guests and employees of the hotel. After the summer of 1875 or 1876 operation seems to have been confined to a few months in summer. During some years the cars ran for less than three months while at least during one year it was reported that the cars ran for eight months.

The Reports of the Company show that the investment in the property had continually increased year after year. We do not know what these additional investments were but they may have consisted of repairs to the track (which should have been charged to expense but often weren't in those days) and Mr. Sammis, perhaps aided by other officers, may have made good the yearly operating deficits out of his own pocket as a loan to the company, a sort of subsidy to the railroad from the operations of the hotel on Fire Island, since the railroad was a necessary adjunct to the hotel.

On October 18, 1873 the new depot of the Central RR of Long Island was opened and promised to be a boon to the horse car traffic. Mr. Seyfried, Long Island RR historian, tells us that the depot occupied the site where houses nos. 158 and 164 Fire Island Avenue now stand. The Watson House, a large summer resort hotel, was on the east side of the street facing the depot. Now passengers brought to Babylon on Central RR trains could ride the horse cars northbound to the village or southbound to the Fire Island dock. In June 1874 a track connection was made between the railroad and the car line so that the latter could bring its baggage car alongside the railroad's baggage car, providing quick and easy transfer of baggage between railroad and car line.

Alas! this excellent arrangement was not to last for long, for on November 1, 1874 the Central RR trains began to operate into the South Side depot and regular operation into the Fire Island Avenue depot was discontinued. Some trains may have used it in the summer of 1875 for the benefit of the Watson House and Fire Island traffic, but thereafter the track was allowed to grow up in weeds until eventually torn up. Whether the concentration of traffic at the South Side depot helped or hurt the horse cars, we do not know, but it was soon thereafter that the period of operation was sharply curtailed. We learn in 1890 that the fare was 6c and that there were three box (closed) cars and one open car.

"The Babylon Railroad," by Felix E. Reifschneider, was published in the Long Island Forum magazine, August 1975, pages 144-146.



According to an earlier article in the *Forum* Mr. Sammis observed his 75th birthday on May 8, 1893 and sold his Fire Island property to the State. The Hotel wasn't opened that summer, which aroused the ire of President Austin Corbin of the Long Island RR, who tried and may have succeeded to deny access to the railroad station grounds to the horse cars.

At any rate, a new era began in 1898 when the road seems to have passed out of the hands of Babylon men, when New York people took over. The only Babylon men still connected with the enterprise were Washington F. Norton and William G. Nicholl, who became a surrogate of Suffolk County. The new owners issued \$33,000 worth of bonds to replace the old light iron rails with heavier steel rails, rebuild the entire roadbed and purchase two stored steam cars or locomotives, known then as "kinetic motors" altho more familiarly as "fireless cookers". In the absence of a photograph we do not know whether these engines pulled the horse cars as trailers or had accommodations for passengers on the same vehicle,

such as the cars on some lines in South Brooklyn at that time, altho the Brooklyn "steam motors" had coal fired boilers. This type of equipment must not be confused with steam "dummies" which were quite different.

The stored Steam cars ran only in summer and were no more successful from the profit standpoint than the horse cars. After steam operation for the summers of 1898 and 1899, and perhaps for a short time in the beginning of the summer of 1900, the road was leased to William (De) Garmo of Babylon, who started up the old horse car service on July 25, 1900 and continued to operate for some summers thereafter. By some miracle Mr. De Garmo succeeded in remaining nearly solvent and in one year reported a profit of exactly one dollar. While insignificant, it did reverse the annual losses of the previous three decades.

On October 9, 1906 the Babylon RR was bought by the Long Island Consolidated Electrical Companies, a holding company owned 50% by the Long Island RR and 50% by the Interborough Rapid Transit Co., operator of subway and elevated railroads in New York City. It was announced that the car line would be electrified, but the project was delayed, as was that of the Cross-Island Trolley, by the Panic of 1907.

When more normal economic conditions returned, the property was sold to the South Shore Traction interests in 1909 who took it over and electrified it. The South Shore Traction, it may be recalled, was the grandiose scheme for building a trolley line from 59th Street and 2nd Avenue in Manhattan, across the Queensborough Bridge, thru Long Island City, Jamaica, St. Albans and the South Shore villages to Brookhaven.

Only the line in Queens County was substantially completed, plus two short stretches in Suffolk County: the Babylon line with its extension about to be described and a short piece of track in Sayville which was later taken over by the Suffolk Traction, the latter also connected with the South Shore project in the beginning.

In addition to electrifying the Babylon line, and equipping it with some second-hand single truck trolleys, an extension of six miles was built thru Lindenhurst and Copiague to Amityville, where a short stretch of track in the center of town was shared with the Huntington RR (Cross-Island Trolley). For this extension second-hand double truck cars were brought in from N. Y. City. The writer remembers the carbarn, a rather crude corrugated iron building on the south side of the LIRR in West Babylon. At that time it would have been possible to ride by trolley from Halesite on Long Island Sound to the Fire Island Dock on Great South Bay, about a 24-mile trip, in approximately two hours.

The Babylon-Amityville operation has been described in the December, 1973, *Forum*. It led a hand-to-mouth existence for eleven years before it shut down May 15, 1920, outlasting the NY and North Shore Traction by a few weeks and ending almost a half-century of street railway service in Babylon.

The South Shore Traction Company

THOSE TROLLEY CARS Farmingdale 1916

If you're a merchant selling goods
Don't yell yourself to death.
No customer
Could hear you, sir.
You'd better save your breath.

If you're a Minister in church
Expounding to your flock,
To hesitate
And calmly wait
Will save you quite a shock.

If you're the Sexton at the bell
Don't try to make it sound;
No living thing
Will hear it ring
If there's a trolley round.

For when the trolley comes along
Its call is so emphatic
It shakes the house,
As cat shakes mouse,
From cellar door to attic!

Paul Bailey

Felix E. Reifschneider

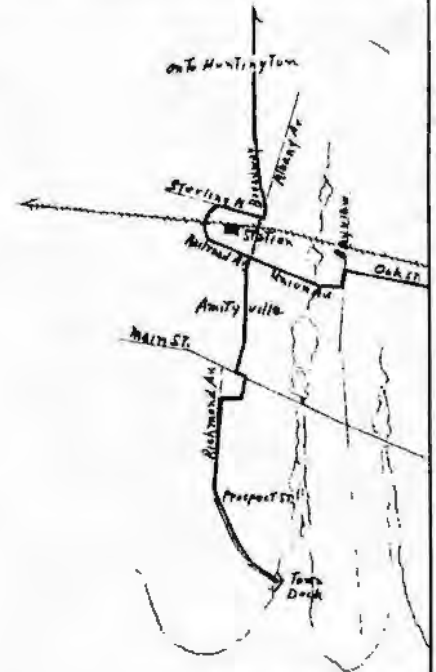
AT THE turn of the century, "trolley fever" hit the country and Long Island was no exception. Trolley lines were built almost everywhere and, unfortunately, in some cases from nowhere to nowhere. It was commonly believed that ownership of a trolley line was a sure path to making millions of dollars and trolley bonds were considered suitable investments for widows and orphans. "People will always have to ride" it was said. Yes, indeed, they surely will and have but no one foresaw that the riding would take place in private autos rather than in trolleys.

The village of Hempstead at a time when its population was only 4000 people sup-

ported a trolley with a car every 30 minutes. Today with a population ten times as great it can't support a bus line with fares many times as high as the trolley fare. Thus has public transportation changed in our life time.

One of the more ambitious projects of its time was the South Shore Traction. It intended to build from Manhattan across the Bridge to Long Island City, thence via Woodside, Newtown, Jamaica, St. Albans, Springfield, Freeport, Babylon and Patchogue to Brookhaven, a total distance of 51 miles. Incorporated on March 2, 1903, it ran into difficulties from the start. No doubt the Panic of 1907 reduced its chances of financing, but there were many other problems, including franchises, a battle in the Courts with the Public Service Commission, but one factor alone was a disabling one. The New York & Long Island Traction built its line from Freeport to Springfield and Brooklyn, and obtained a franchise from Freeport to Babylon, this latter portion never being built. With trolleys already operating along the South Shore in Queens and Nassau counties, any hope the South Shore Traction had of building its line seemed doomed.

The year 1909 was the big year of achievement for the company. It started operation from Manhattan thru Long Island City into Queens County. It built track in Sayville and operated horse cars



Data for this map

there during the summer of that year. It bought the Babylon RR, then a horse car line, from the Long Island Consolidated Electrical Companies (a subsidiary of the Long Island RR), electrified it and began to extend it toward Amityville. It is not quite clear what part the South Shore had in the start of the Suffolk Traction in Patchogue, but it did turn over its track in Sayville to Suffolk Traction for storage battery car operation.

The activities of the year 1909 appear to have been more than the company could handle, for on December 30, 1910, it went into receivership. On November 21, 1912 the route in Queens County was assigned to the Manhat-

No. 103.

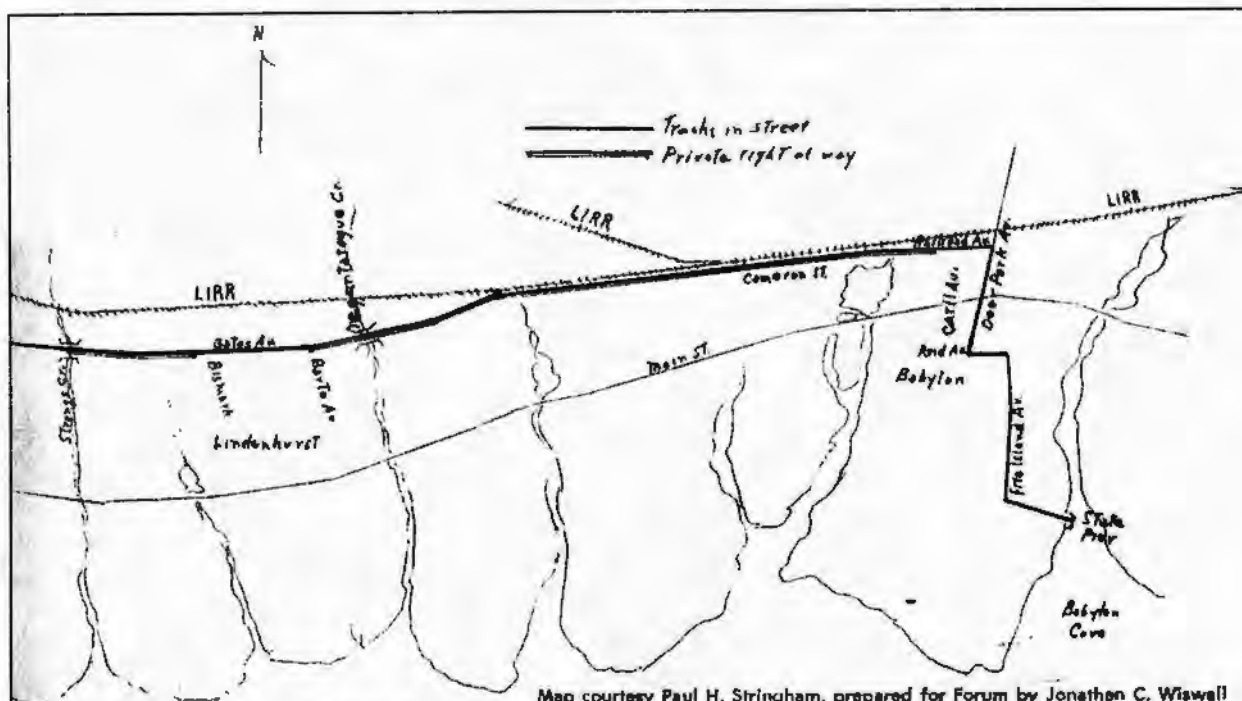
BABYLON R.R.

G. G. Dorland, Superintendent, Babylon, N. Y.

Station	8	9	10	Notes
Amityville.....(18)				Cars run every day. Leave Amityville about 6 55, 8 50, 9 45, 11 10 a.m., 12 10, 1 15, 2 30, 3 30, 5 05, 6 22, 8 05, 7 00, 8 00, 9 10, 10 10, 11 10 p.m.
Copague.....(15)				
Lindenhurst.....	15	8	7 1/2	Leave Babylon about 6 23, 7 21, 7 51, 8 56, 10 11, 11 35 a.m., 12 35, 1 30, 2 55, 3 55, 4 25, 6 37, 8 50, 6 45, 6 32, 7 25, 8 25, 9 35, 10 35, 11 35 p.m.
West Babylon.....	30	10	6 1/2	
Belmont Junction.....	30	10	5 1/2	First trip on Sundays; leave Amityville about 8 00 a.m.; Belmont Junction about 7 30 a.m.
Babylon—Main St.....(13)	30	10	5 1/2	
do. Deck.....(15)	35	10	6 1/2	

Connections—(1) With lines Nos. 70, 75, 84, 91, 93, 97 and 99; and a short distance from Station of Long Island R.R.
(2) With line No. 91. (3) With line No. 99 and near the Station of the Long Island R.R. (4) With lines Nos. 63 and

Portion of a timetable, taken from a Trolley Guide of 1914. Note that times are given as "about" so that the publisher of Guide could not be held for publishing false information.



Map courtesy Paul H. Stringham, prepared for Forum by Jonathan C. Wiswell

exact route followed by trolleys 53 years ago comes from map in Library of Congress.

tan & Queens Traction Co., which operated the line from New York to South Jamaica until 1937.

The 1½ mile line of the Babylon RR from the railroad station to the Fire Island dock was electrified in 1909 or early 1910 and the line extended almost six miles to Amityville, roughly paralleling the Long Island RR and not far from it. See accompanying map. To reach the Amityville RR station, it used the tracks of the Huntington RR (Cross-Island trolley) for a short distance under trackage rights agreement.

The operation from Babylon to Amityville seems never to have been very successful. Second hand double truck cars were bought, probably from one of the companies in Manhattan, the Second Ave. or Third Ave. railways being the most likely source. A corrugated iron car barn was built in West Babylon alongside the Long Island RR tracks.

The distance from Babylon RR station, to Lindenhurst RR station, and again, from Lindenhurst station to Amityville station, was, in

each case, almost three miles. The station at Copiague was not too significant, as only a few trains stopped there. Thus there were many people living along the line who were a long walk from a railroad station. To these people the trolley was a great convenience, with its 5c fare. (Babylon to Amityville, 10c).

The only schedule we have at hand is one for 1914. Cars operated on an average of once an hour, but were bunched in the morning and evening rush hours obviously to make connections with Long Island RR trains, as this was probably the chief source of traffic. While the Cross-Island trolley was abandoned on September 23, 1919, the little Babylon RR outlasted it for almost a year, as it did not cease service until May 15, 1920.

The cars remained at the West Babylon carhouse for

several years afterward, but eventually cars, tracks and wires must have been removed for salvage. Thus disappeared at last the final remnant of the South Shore Traction Co. outside of Queens County.

TO THE BABYLON R. R.

O trolley, dear trolley
 Why did you quit us, pray,
 Just when buds are breaking forth
 Along your right of way?
 Just when scruboak and the birch
 Their summer costumes don,
 And make the landscape fair indeed
 Twixt here and Babylon

O trolley, fair trolley
 We miss your midnight wail,
 We miss the squeal of flattened wheel
 Along each rusted rail.
 We miss, we do, the one-man crew
 Who made us say our prayers
 Each time he let the darned car go
 While he collected fares.

O trolley, sweet trolley,
 Alas, likewise slack.
 No more the thrill, also the spill
 As you jumped off the track
 No more those Barney Oldfield spurts
 As you whizzed round the bend
 And slid us 'long the varnished seat
 From front door to the end.

Paul Bailey

"The South Shore Traction Company," by Felix E. Reifschneider, was published in the Long Island Forum magazine, December 1973, pages 232-233.

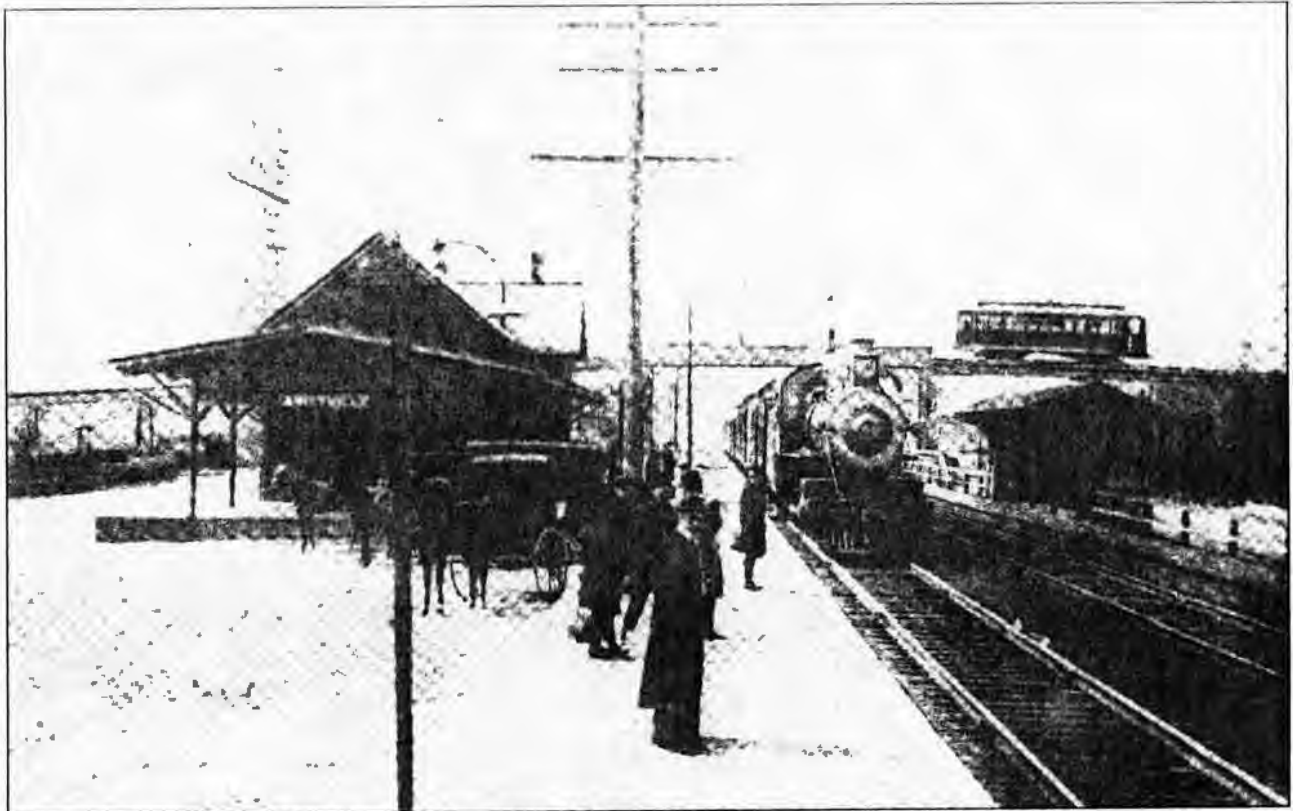
THE CROSS-ISLAND LINE 1909-1919



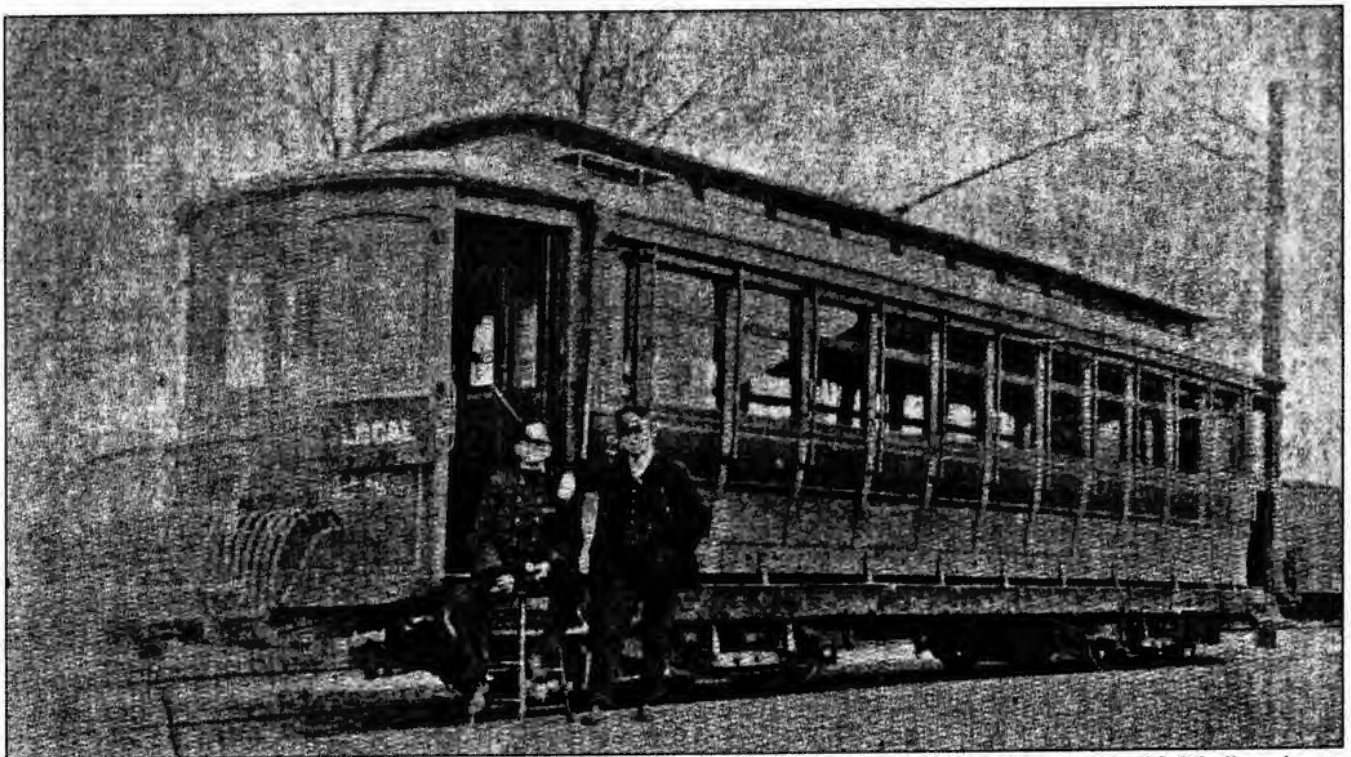
Trolley car on Broadway in Amityville on the opening day of the Cross-Island Line, August 25, 1909.

Information Provided About the Cross-Island Line:

- Photographs of trolley cars from the Cross-Island Line, page 18.
- Brief Timeline of the Cross-Island Line, operated by the Huntington Railroad between Huntington and Amityville, page 19.
- Map showing the path of the Cross-Island trolley line from the Halesite (Huntington) to Amityville, page 20.
- "Carnival a Big Success – Largest Crowd Amityville Ever Saw and all Hands Pleased," pages 21-23. This 1909 article describes the opening day of the trolley line from Huntington to Amityville.
- "Recollections of the Trolleys," by Seth Purdy, Jr., pages 24-26.
- "The Cross-Island Trolley," by Felix E. Reifschneider, pages 27-29.



The Amityville Railroad Station, 1910. Notice the trolley car on the viaduct in the upper right.

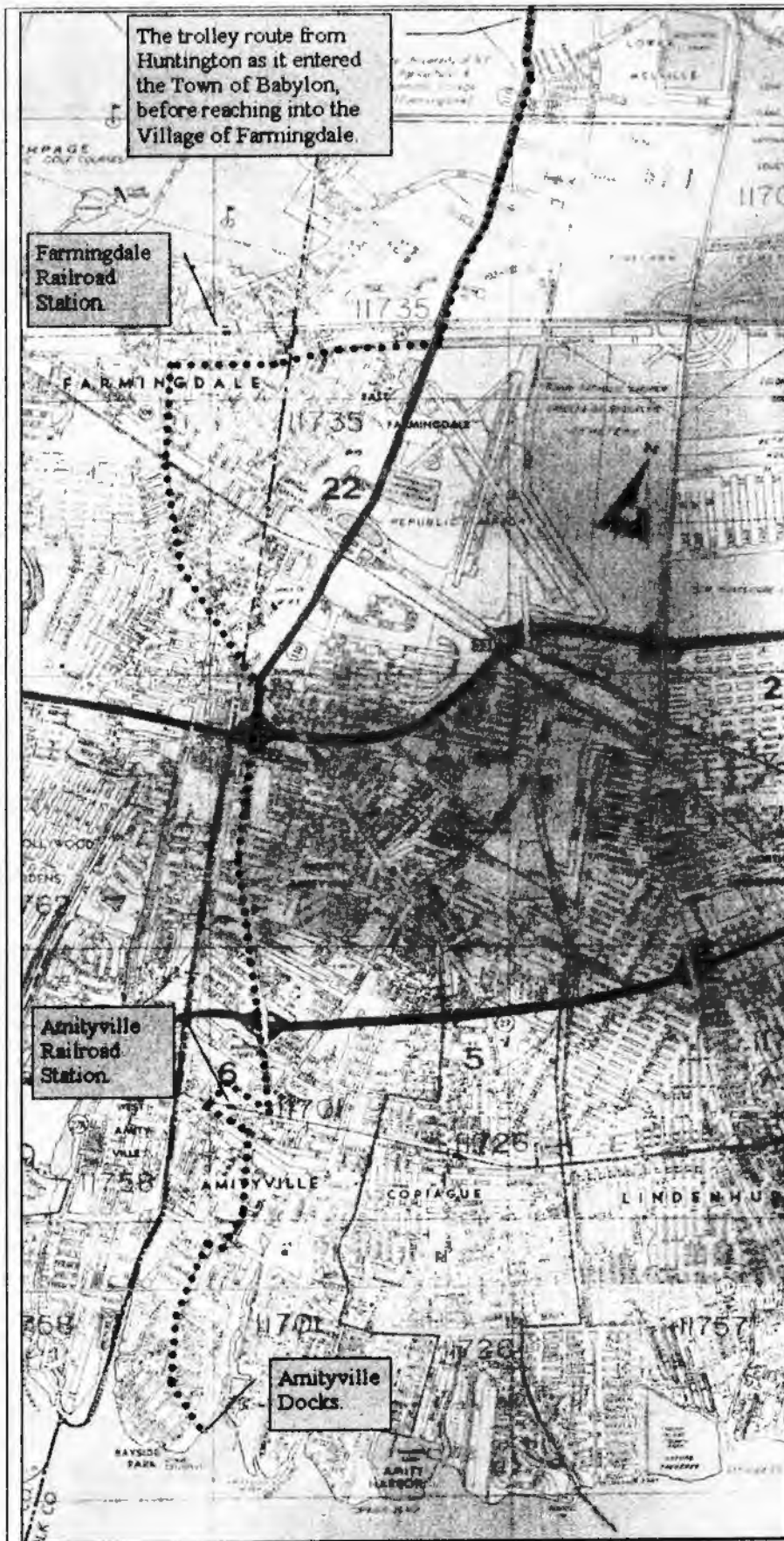


"Car #28, running as an Amityville local at the foot of Richmond Ave., 1910. Motorman "Red Mike" and conductor H. Duryea." From "The Cross-Island Line," by Vincent F. Seyfried, page 80.

BRIEF TIMELINE OF THE CROSS-ISLAND LINE

OPERATED BY THE HUNTINGTON RAILROAD BETWEEN HUNTINGTON AND AMITYVILLE

- 1890 (July 19) – The Huntington Railroad company establishes a three mile long horse-drawn trolley line between Huntington Village and Halesite on the harbor.
- 1898 (April) – The Long Island Railroad purchases the line and electrifies it by June 17th.
- 1908 – The line is extended 18.5 miles south on a right of way, that is the approximate location of the present Route 110. The line travels through Melville and Farmingdale to the dock in Amityville along the Great South Bay.
- The line goes under the Long Island Railroad tracks at Huntington and Farmingdale, and is elevated over the tracks in Amityville.
 - Car barns, used for storage of the trolley cars, are maintained in both Halesite and Amityville. Power substations are located in the railroad stations at Huntington and Farmingdale
- 1909 (August 25) – Service from Huntington to Amityville is commenced. The trolley line maintains an hourly schedule. A one way trip, from end to end, lasts 76 minutes.
- The rolling stock, also known as railroad cars, consists of six double truck, semi-convertible cars and seven single truck cars that provide more frequent service to the local railroad stations.
 - The fare is 30 cents, divided into six 5-cent zones, each about three miles long. Zone boundaries are at (1) the terminal in Halesite, (2) Huntington Station, (3) the DeForest Farm at West Hills, (4) the Duryea Farm at Melville, (5) Farmingdale Station, and (6) the terminal at Amityville.
 - A spur track from Conklin Street to the Farmingdale Railroad Station is created so trolleys can make connections with trains from Brooklyn and New York City.
- 1914 – Henry Ford produces the popular Model T automobile, and more people begin purchasing their own automobiles.
- 1917 – The United States joins World War I. Trolley riders are hit with rising costs and the trolleys lose customers.
- 1919 (September 23) – The Cross-Island service to Amityville ends, primarily due to increased use of the automobile. However, the original portion from Huntington to Halesite is sold to the Huntington Traction Company, which continues operations.
- 1927 (August 15) – The Huntington Traction Company ceases operations completely.



The trolley route from Huntington as it entered the Town of Babylon, before reaching into the Village of Farmingdale.

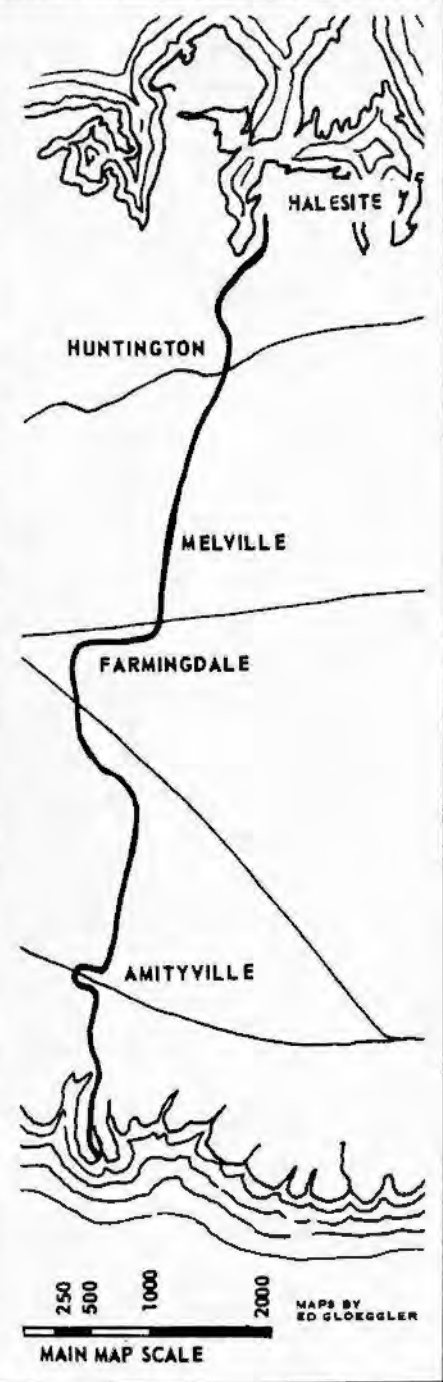
Farmingdale Railroad Station

Amityville Railroad Station

Amityville Docks

(Right) Map of the Cross-Island Line, from "The Cross-Island Line," by Vincent F. Seyfried, 1976, page 73.

(Left) Map showing the approximate trolley route, drawn over a modern-day street map. ("Suffolk County Atlas," by the Hagstrom Map Co., Inc., 1998, pages 3-5.)



CARNIVAL A BIG SUCCESS -

Largest Crowd Amityville Ever Saw and all Hands Pleased

[Transcribed from the "Amityville Record," August 27, 1909.]

It seems to be conceded that it was the biggest day that Amityville ever had. The long labors of the committee were displayed in the perfect smoothness with which the entire ceremony went off, from morning until night, and the large crowds of visitors who flocked to Amityville in numbers which exceeded those of the county firemen's tournament were satisfied with what they got for their pains and money.

Wednesday broke bright and fair, and except that the temperature was a little warm, weather conditions were ideal for the formal celebration of the opening of the new cross island trolley road which connects, Amityville, Farmingdale, Huntington and the intervening villages, and makes it possible to travel with ease, comfort and economy from the shores of New England to the Atlantic Ocean. The plan of holding a general celebration, passing through all three villages, and harmonizing with local celebrations in each community, was found to work perfectly, and from the time when the automobile parade started at the foot of Ocean Ave. in Amityville at eight o'clock in the morning, until the last piece of fireworks had gone up into the air in any of the three villages, and tired eyed but happy folks wended their several ways homeward, there was not a serious flaw or setback.

The number of cars which were run on short headway all day long was a severe strain upon the power of the new road. The road is not at present equipped to run as many as ten or twelve cars close together. At times it was necessary for the cars to slow up a bit. Considering the irregularities of the schedule, however, and bearing in mind that the road had had practically no trying out, it is little short of wonderful

that the day passed off without a serious mishap. Great credit is due to the railroad men for this. They were on the job from sunrise almost until the next sunrise. F.M. Hartenstien, manager of transportation, was in charge, and his urbanity was imperturbable. L.S. Wells, in charge of the electrical equipment, kept an alert eye in the system all day, while Mr. Ludlam, who has charge of the electrical divisions of the Long Island Railroad, wore himself out completely in the day's service.

The fun began at eight o'clock in the morning, when the automobile parade started from the foot of Ocean Ave. and proceeded to Main St., headed by Grand Marshall Fred B. Dalzell in the 40-horse power Buick of his brother, E.T. Dalzell, who made a midnight start from Brooklyn to be on the scene. The procession traversed Main St. to Bay View Ave. to Avon Place, to Broadway, to Main St., to Park Avenue, to Broadway, to Albany Ave., to Dixon Ave., to Broadway and past the reviewing stand, after which it disbanded. The ornamentation of the cars was extremely pretty. The first prize for decorations was won by J. Henry Ruwe, whose car was trimmed with a profusion of hydrangea and the second prize by E.E. Haff, whose machine was a complete bower of pink artificial roses. There was liberal applause for each car as it drew up in front of the grand stand for review by the judges, Davide Minaldi, Eugene Valsor, Rufus J. Ireland, J.F. Mincher, and C.M. Palmer. The first prize was a mammoth bronze statue, mounted on a stone base. The second prize was a silver loving cup. The decorations on Frank W. Donnelly's car, which was ornamented with golden rod and sunflowers, are deserving of especial mention.

Preceding the automobiles and headed by Spedick's Military Band marched the undaunted members of the Amityville Fire Department. In line were about thirty members of the Amityville Hook and Ladder Co., who won the banner presented for best marching appearance, with their apparatus, ten members of the Dauntless Hose Co., who marched with a dignity and evenness which challenged the admiration of the assemblage and brought down thunders of applause. They did not have their apparatus because a majority of the members of the company voted at a special meeting on Monday night not to permit the company to parade. The ten marched in the company uniform as individuals. Because of the political strife which was generally known to have been the cause of the failure of the Dauntless Hose Co. to parade as a company the multitude was in entire sympathy with the members of the company who had spirit enough to parade.

The Amityville Junior Hook and Ladder Co. won a handsome banner for their appearance in line and the Amityville Cadet Corps also won a similar banner.

The cars from Huntington, bringing the Queens and her Maids of Honor, were about an hour late in arriving at Amityville. As fast as they arrived they were stored on lower Broadway, with the band and the queen's float, immediately abreast of the grand stand. Spedick's band played a few selections and Village President Samuel P. Hildreth introduced Assemblyman Alfred E. Smith of New York, who is summering at Amityville. Mr. Smith took the crowd well. He spoke upon "Suburban Development" and by describing with cleverness the growth of the various boroughs which comprise the city of New York indicated the possibilities which lay before Amityville. He cited the fact that the Borough of Richmond, the only borough with which the city of New York has not yet been able to establish adequate transportation

connections, was the only borough which could not raise enough by taxation to pay its operation expenses.

Assemblyman Smith's brief address was unanimously well received, and when he reminded the railroad that with the privileges which had been granted it had come great responsibilities to the public his remarks were greeted with great applause.

At the conclusion of the address the cars were sent to Farmingdale on five minute headway. Owing to a motorman stopping his car on the curve in the middle of the steep grade on the trestle there was a long delay in getting away and the procession was just one hour behind the schedule in leaving Farmingdale.

At Farmingdale an address was delivered by John J. Delaney, former corporation counsel to the city of New York. He spoke about fifteen minutes concerning the auspiciousness of the day's event. He is a fine type of orator and the crowd listened closely to him.

The party then ate a splendid luncheon in the dining room of the Nazareth Trade School. Father Girard personally supervised the function and no one left Farmingdale with any appetite. Village President Adolph Bausch, who has labored long and faithfully in behalf of the celebration, saw to it that the Farmingdale end was held up well. In the evening there was a vaudeville performance at the trade school and a dance in the fireman's hall, with plenty of fireworks on the side. Clarence C. Doud, James T. Hoile, G. P. Sullivan and John Merritt of the local committee were on hand and gave valued assistance.

When the procession finally reached Huntington Village it arrived just in time to fall in with the local procession, but the time for boarding the steamer "Sagamore" was so short

that that it was necessary to send the cars right down to the dock to unload and the visitors saw nothing of the local programme.

The sail on the "Sagamore" to the Chateau des Beaux Arts, escorted by as pretty a procession of decorated yachts as Huntington ever witnessed, was very pleasant. It was well after four o'clock before the diners were all seated and it was getting toward six o'clock before Toastmaster August Heckscher introduced Henry F. Sammis, the first speaker.

Mr. Sammis spoke briefly but eloquently upon the topic "Urban and Suburban New York." Thomas M. Osborne, of Auburn, N.Y., member of the public service commission from this district, made an address upon the topic "The People and the Railroad." He spoke of a change of sentiment toward public service corporations which resulted in the formation of the commission.

Congressman W.W. Cocks who was the last speaker, talked upon "Possibilities of Western Suffolk."

The menu at the Chateau was good and everyone appeared to be well satisfied with the dinner and the luxurious surroundings, with beautiful Huntington Bay, dotted by dozens of pretty craft in the offing.

Andre Bustanoby, one of the Bustanoby Brothers who own the Chateau, who was personally in charge of the dinner, had probably the busiest day of his life up to date, but it would take more than that to ruffle his equanimity. He was here, there and everywhere, and handled the big function with all the taste and delicacy that have made him famous as a host. Particular mention is also due to Frank P. Willets of Huntington, who by his unending efforts to provide comfort for the visitors, covered himself with verbal laurels.

The Amityville programme continued after the departure of the cars for the north side. The baseball game came off according to schedule, but the local enthusiasts were much disappointed by the defeat of the home team. The Waukegan Canoe Club crossed bats with the Patchogue A.C. and was defeated by a score of 6 to 3. Five hundred persons saw the game.

[Results from the day's sporting activities were detailed.] ... The evening programme, which consisted mainly of fireworks, with music by Spedick's Military band, was run off on the depot grounds. Edgar P. Foster in appropriate speeches awarded the prizes for the morning parade. The fireworks presented a good display, and fortunately, all serious accident was avoided, although one woman's skirt was slightly burned by an erratic piece.

At all times during the day the crowds exceeded in numbers those seen at any of the familiar gatherings in Long Island villages.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE TROLLEYS

by Seth Purdy, Jr.



HUNTINGTON BOUND TROLLEY PASSES
AMITYVILLE'S TRIANGLE BUILDING.

A festive feeling permeated the air surrounding Amityville on August 25, 1909.

Flags unfurled freely from their staffs, colorful red, white and blue bunting decorated the small shops along Broadway while crowds lined the sidewalks in the Triangle - each individual hoping to share a part of history in the making. Carriages, both the horse and horseless variety, vied with one another for a vantage parking place with an unobstructed view of the ceremonies.

None less than, Alfred E. Smith, a local summer resident, important state political figure and later governor, was on the platform ready to address the assemblage on this great day.

All was ready when the first trolley rounded the corner from Greene Avenue onto Broadway to pause along side the Triangle Building.

Thus, was inauguration day for the Huntington to Amityville trolley line dubbed the "transportation system of the future".

But, the future was brief for just ten years later in 1919, without fanfare, all service ceased on the line in Amityville.

There is very little tangible evidence remaining to reflect the grandeur of Amityville's trolley era except for the old car barn, hardly recognizable now in its present condition and transplanted location at Clock's Boulevard and Merrick Road.

There are, though, recollections from the old line's passengers which reflect their experiences while riding the trolleys.

Amityville served as a terminus for not only the Huntington line, operated as a feeder line for the Long Island Rail Road, but also for the South Side Traction Company's line to Babylon. The Babylon trolley operated from 1910 to 1920 over a route which passed through Copiague and Lindenhurst.

A number of Amityville men found the trolley to be a means of employment.

Benny Cirincione, George Herbert and Herbert Duryea, all residents of North Broadway were among those who served as motor-men.

Benny is remembered for entertaining the passengers with an aria from an Italian opera while collecting the fares.

George Herbert, who frequently guided the cars on their last southbound run in the evening, would make an unscheduled stop to pick up his bicycle before proceeding to the car barn on Sterling Place in Amityville. When the car had been secured for the night, he would ride his bicycle to his home on the corner of Smith Street.

Herbert Duryea's son, a printer's devil for Amityville's old Long Island Sun newspaper, used the trolley weekly to deliver the paper to be sold at Pike's Store in Farmingdale.

The trolley also proved convenient for commuters, a number of whom worked in the Fulton Truck Assembly Plant near the location of the present Fairchild-Hiller Aircraft corporation in East Farmingdale. Amityville commuters, who had formerly depended upon the stage, found the trolley to be a great improvement in transportation for reaching the railroad station each day. At least one school teacher in the Melville School depended upon the trolley for transportation from her home in Amityville while another young lady in South Farmingdale rode the trolley to reach her place of employment in the Brodtkin's Hat Factory on Amityville's Park Avenue.

The trolley also provided a means for recreation and pleasure. A popular summer outing for Amityville families was a trip across the island for a picnic in the Halesite Park and a refreshing swim in the waters of the Long Island Sound. Others found the trolley a convenient means for traveling to the Richmond Avenue dock to board a ferry to the ocean beaches. Still others, in the days before air conditioning, rode the open summer cars to catch a cool breeze on a hot and humid summer day.

A story is told of a most faithful commuter, a springer spaniel named Jack owned by Mr. and Mrs. Royal T. Carman. The Carmans frequently took the trolley line to the Richmond Avenue dock where they boarded their boat for a sail across the bay to spend a weekend at their Gilgo Beach cottage. Jack, the springer spaniel dog, would become restless before the conclusion of the weekend, make his way home by swimming the bay and walking across the wetlands to come ashore at the Coles Avenue dock, site of Bill Ketcham's fish store.

From there, he would walk to a Richmond Avenue trolley stop. The dog, well known to the motormen, would ride the trolley to the car barn, near the site of the present Amityville village highway department's headquarters, and proceed to his home a short distance away on Sterling Place. On several occasions, it was said that Jack made the same trip in the reverse direction when he had been left at home on one of the beach weekends.

The trolley line was not without its mishaps. Some passengers, sixty being the maximum number, would complain of motion illness from the gentle swaying and rocking of the cars. One car jumped the rail in 1916 coming to rest on the Morris house lawn at number 47 Broadway, Amityville after crashing through their fence. In 1918, Amityville residents, Mr. and Mrs. Chris Haab, recalled being aboard a car operated by their neighbor Mr. Baylis when there was a head-on crash in Melville. A misinterpretation of the time schedule resulted in the motorman's failure to move one car to a siding to allow another car, bound in the opposite direction, to pass on the single track line. Although the passengers were quite badly shaken, no serious injuries resulted from the unfortunate accident.

Young adult members of the community found the Babylon trolley to be a popular means for traveling to Hirsch's Theater Hall, a popular place of entertainment in Lindenhurst. On the way, they often added to the pleasure of the trip by jumping up and down on the rear platform of the car until it left the rail. Then all would disembark to help the trolley men move the car back onto the track.

Boys, who lived along the way on Oak Street in Copiague, were known to throw a wire onto the overhead lines causing a short and an unexpected stop of the car; a thrill to the youngsters but an annoyance to the motorman and the passengers.

The Babylon line, which seemed to have experienced some financial difficulties from the very beginning, attempted to economize by hiring just one man to perform the double duty of motorman and conductor. As a result, the trip to Babylon was somewhat delayed as the trolley passed through the woods near Scudder Avenue in Copiague. The motorman would place the car in low speed and proceed to the rear platform to collect the much needed passengers' fares.

The clang of the trolleys' bells, the hum of the electric traction motors and the shrieking of the brakes as the cars rounded the bends in the tracks are all silent now. But the recollections of those who remembered riding the rails across the island reflect a part of Amityville's heritage that otherwise might be lost to history.

"Recollections of the Trolleys," by Seth Purdy, Jr.,
was published in A Backward Glance,
Amityville Historical Society, 1980, pages 74-76.

The Cross-Island Trolley

ONLY THOSE who remember well the period between 1910 and 1920 have experienced the Wonderful World of the Trolley on Long Island. Living in Hempstead, one could reach Brooklyn, 20 miles away, for only 20c, in about an hour and a half. From Freeport to Brooklyn, several miles farther, cost only 25c and took about the same amount of time. Mineola to Freeport, about 8 miles, cost a dime and took 37 minutes. Those days are gone forever!

But we are going to talk about the Cross-Island trolley, something which had been dreamed about for some decades, but once accomplished, proved to be of little value.

For 50 years Long Islanders living on the South Shore had been grumbling about the long round-about trip westward to Jamaica and then eastward again to reach points in the center of the Island or on the North Shore. Cross-island transportation, they said, was badly needed.

A number of such lines were built, but only one can be said to have prospered, that from Flushing to Jamaica; and the line from Mineola to Freeport, which was only partly a cross-island line, also prospered. The other ventures, either by

Felix E. Reifschneider

railroad or trolley, soon petered out.

It was in 1898 that the Long Island RR became conscious of the trolley. It made an agreement with the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Co. with the object of eliminating cut-throat competition between the railroad and the BRT's trolleys and elevated lines, and out on the Island proceeded to build its own trolley lines, some in collaboration with the Interborough Rapid Transit Co., although most of these had been started by others and taken under the Railroad's wing by purchase from the original owners.

A horse car line from Huntington station through the village to the Harbor at Halesite had started operating over its three miles of track on July 19, 1890. In April 1898 the Huntington RR was bought by the Long Island RR, which electrified it at once, trolleys making their first trips on June 17th. Single truck cars performed a valuable service in local transportation for some years.

In 1907 the little Huntington RR became the nucleus of a much more ambitious project, the long-desired and eag-

erly awaited cross-island line. Due to the Panic of that year, work was suspended but was resumed in 1909, and through service from Amityville (Fire Island dock) to Halesite was commenced on August 25, 1909.

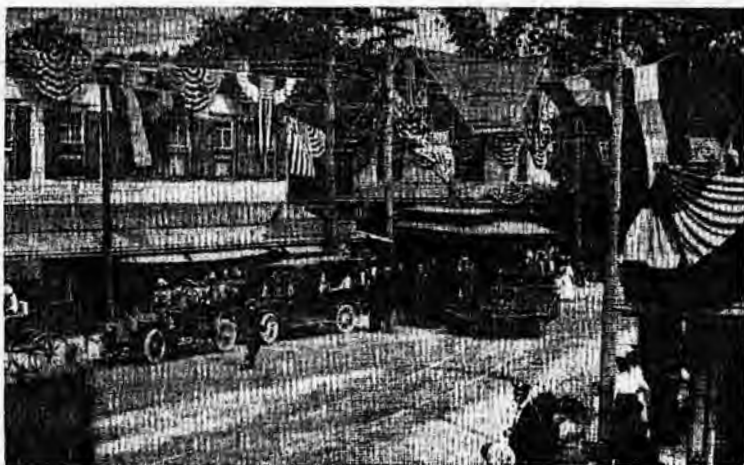
The new line was 18.5 miles long, the trip took one hour and 16 minutes, and the fare was 30c, divided into six 5c zones, each about three miles long. The zone boundaries were at Huntington station, the DeForest farm at West Hills, the Duryea Farm at Melville, Farmingdale station, the north village line of Amityville and, of course, both terminals.

Three cars gave hourly service, in addition to which there was local service from Amityville station to the Fire Island dock and also from Huntington station to Halesite.

The cars on the Cross-Island run consisted of six small double truck convertibles withdrawn from the Ocean Electric at Far Rockaway. They were only five years old at the time, but during the subsequent few years, trolley technology advanced rapidly and the cars soon became hopelessly obsolete.

While the cars were slow, they made remarkably fast time, mostly because the intermediate territory, except for the terminal villages and Farmingdale, was sparsely populated, and the cars made few stops because of the scarcity of passengers.

The line was well built. Except in village streets through the three villages, track was on a reserved strip alongside the highway; just south of Melville, there was a short-cut for two miles on private right of way. Rail was 70 lb. and the overhead was catenary, similar to that used on the largest railroads.



Gala trolley line opening at Amityville.

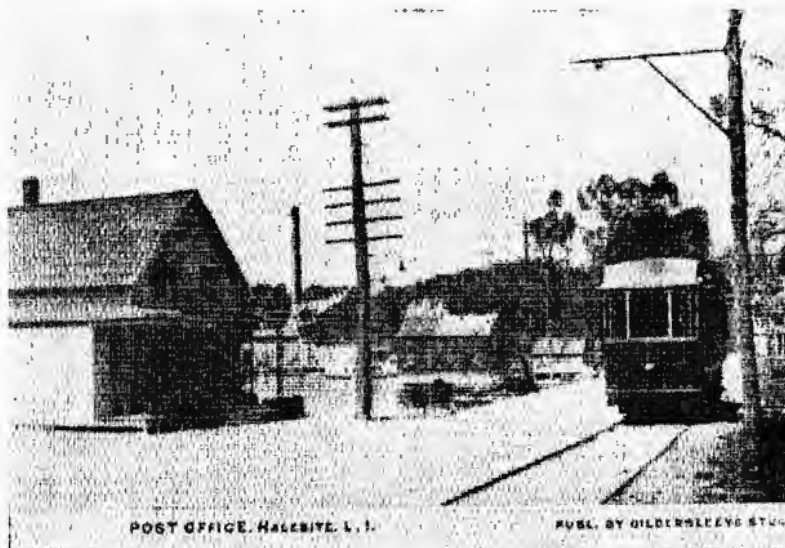
The reason for this great expense was that no line-crew was maintained on the line, and it was hoped that the catenary would require no repairs or maintenance, as this type of construction almost never experiences a broken or fallen trolley wire.

Power substations were located in the railroad stations at Huntington and Farmingdale. At Huntington a new passenger station was built, with the substation on the ground floor. At Farmingdale, a second story addition was built to the existing station for the same purpose.

At Huntington a new bridge was constructed for the Long Island RR, the highway and the trolley track passing underneath the railroad. There were short freight and passenger spurs from the main line to Huntington station, which were used only by the single truck local cars between the station and Halesite, and the freight car. There was also a trolley freight station some distance north of the passenger station.

At Farmingdale, a new bridge was built for the railroad, with the highway and trolley track at Broad Hollow Rd. passing underneath the railroad. At Amityville, southbound cars ran a short distance westward, then turned south on private right of way and crossed the Montauk division railroad overhead on a new steel viaduct.

There was a spur track from Conklin St. to the Farmingdale railroad station, so that trolleys could make connec-



Halesite. The car shown is one of the single truck cars always used between Huntington Station and Halesite, until the end of 1927. This view was taken in pre-Cross Island days, probably 1905, as can be seen from crude overhead trolley wire. Note that ear and hanger are attached directly to the cross arm. In Cross Island days this had been changed to catenary overhead.

tions with the trains from New York and Brooklyn. At Huntington, passengers had to descend a stairway at the west end of the platform to reach the trolleys. A wooden sign in the form of an arch was built over the top of this stairway with the legend "To the Cross-Island Trolley" and this arch remained in place many years after the trolley was abandoned, as a reminder of happier days.

Riding at first was quite good, although never very heavy, particularly in summer, when folks living in inland areas would ride to the Great South Bay or Huntington Harbor, for swimming, boating or fishing. But in 1914 Henry Ford came out with his Model T, and a few years la-

ter World War I hit, with rising costs and reduced patronage. Fares were raised, probably to 6c per zone.

A glance at what was probably one of the last timetables, dated October 1918, less than a year before abandonment, tells its own story. Through service over the entire line had been abandoned, cars running from Amityville dock only to Huntington station, where passengers for the village were obliged to transfer to local cars to complete the trip.

The regular hourly service intended to serve cross-island passengers had been dropped, and cars ran at irregular intervals. Between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., there was a car only about every two hours. There was only one through trip

from Amityville after 6 p.m. (a trip at about 9:30 p.m.) and only one through trip from Huntington station after 7 p.m. (about 11 p.m.) and this did not run all the way to the center of Amityville. From this it is safe to conclude that cross-island traffic had virtually disappeared.

The reason for the irregular interval between cars was that the schedule was arranged to provide connections with the trains at Farmingdale and Amityville, and extra trips were made between Amityville station and the dock, and some between Amityville and Farmingdale. It is safe to conclude that most of the riding was by commuters, to and from the LIRR trains. Riding continued to be heavy between Huntington station and the village, but this was carried on the local cars between those points, not on the Cross-island cars.

Faced with rising costs, the Railroad applied for a 7c fare, but the villages refused to agree, with typical short-sightedness. Deciding to take the bull by the horns, the Railroad, after making the last scheduled trips on September 23, 1919, detoured the six double truck cars to its own tracks at Amityville and hauled them away to be returned to the Ocean Electric at Far Rockaway. This effectively ended the Cross-island trolley.

It is easy to second-guess the situation at this late date. Perhaps a fare increase could have been obtained in time. Service could have been made more attractive and more economical with modern one-man cars. The men assigned by the LIRR to operate its trolley lines were not noted for their skill or ingenuity. But perhaps abandonment could have been postponed for but a few more years, and with the disappearance of the cross-island traffic, the principal function of the line had vanished.

The next year the tracks were torn up and the wires taken down, starting at the Amityville end and working

northward. The writer remembers riding his bicycle to Farmingdale and watching the demolition crew slowly doing its work between Farmingdale and Huntington. In the meanwhile, desperate efforts were being made to save the line from Melville north. A new company was formed, the Huntington Traction Co., with William A. Dempsey of Brooklyn as President.

The demolition crew of the Long Island RR was busy tearing up track northward at the same time that the new company was trying to buy the remaining track from the Railroad. Demolition had gotten as far as Siding 7, about two miles south of Huntington station, when the deal was made. Thus the original goal of operating as far as Melville was lost before the new company got started.

The Traction Co. operated the line from Huntington station to Halesite on a frequent schedule as before, with the President's brother, Edward T. Dempsey as Manager at Huntington. It is not known whether there was an interruption in this service during the transition period. One car was operated from the station south about two miles to Siding 7, but so few passengers

TROLLEY SCHEDULE ADS

Mr. Reifschneider has a 1918 Cross Island Trolley Schedule which carried advertisements around its border. The advertisers probably paid for the printing of the timetable. The six ads read:

Louis Cohn, Ladies and Gent's Tailor, Broadway, Amityville.

W. Powell, Day and Night Taxicab Service, Broadway, Amityville.

F. B. Powell & Son, Hardware and Paints, On Broadway, 30 Seconds from Trolley, Amityville.

The Bank of Farmingdale, The Brick bank on the Trolley corner.

Frank W. Smith, Dry Goods, Amityville.

Best Soda in Town at Heck's Drug Store, Huntington Station, L. I.

were carried at the southern end of the line that service was soon cut back to the Jericho Turnpike, South Huntington. This car carried only about 100 passengers a day at a 10c fare. The \$10 daily revenue being insufficient to pay expenses, the car was withdrawn about 1924.

The same seven single truck cars that started the service in 1898 were continued in operation. No attempt was made to modernize. It is not surprising that all service ceased on August 15, 1927.

"The Cross-Island Trolley," by Felix E. Reifschneider, was published in the Long Island Forum magazine, April 1969, pages 64-67.

ANNUAL HISTORY DAY ESSAY CONTEST 2010

**“TROLLEY DAYS:
A History of Trolleys in the Town of Babylon”**

RESEARCH PACKET

**- photographs, newspaper and magazine articles, book excerpts
and general information about the history of trolley lines that
operated in the Town of Babylon.**

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

BOOKS (available at many local libraries)

- ❖ Amityville, written by the Amityville Historical Society, published by Arcadia Publishing, 2006.
- ❖ Babylon By the Sea, written by Anne Frances Pulling, published by Arcadia Publishing, 1999.
- ❖ The Cross-Island Line: the story of the Huntington Railroad, written by Vincent F. Seyfried, 1976.
- ❖ Lost Trolleys of Queens and Long Island, written by Stephen L. Meyers, published by Arcadia Publishing, 2006.

HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

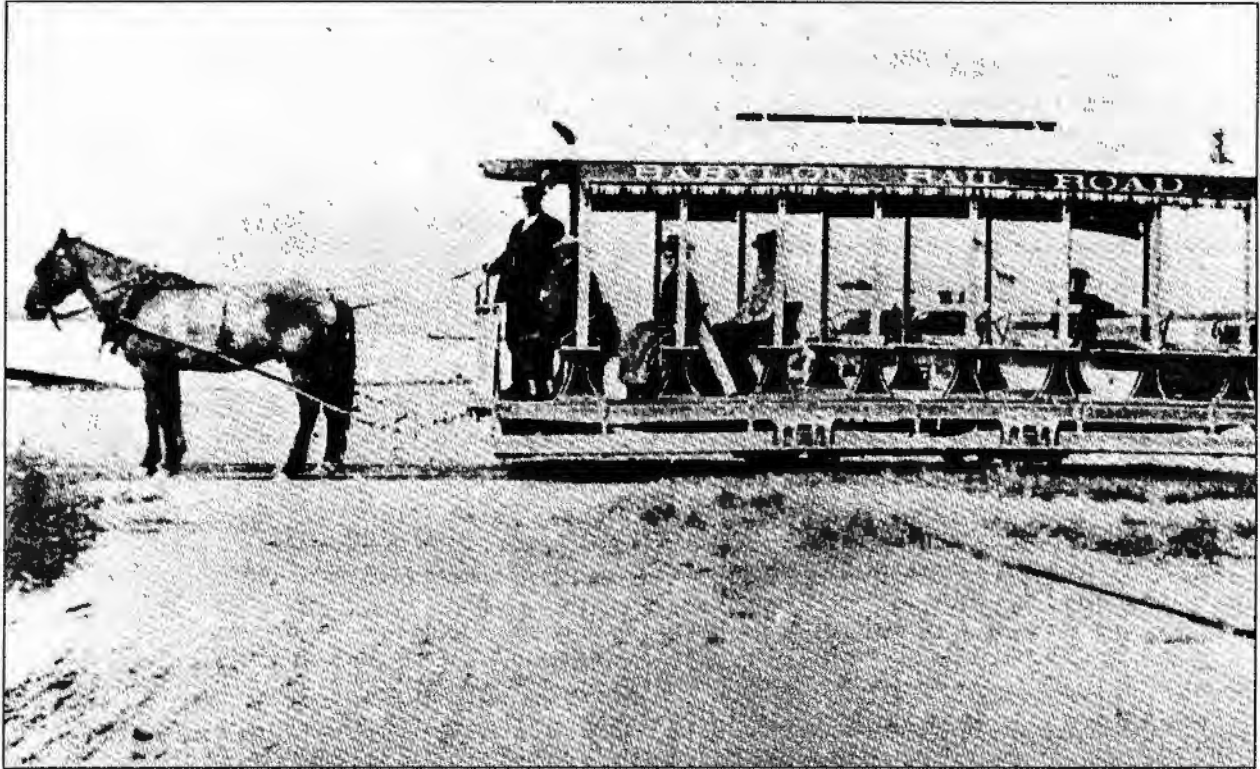
- ❖ Amityville Historical Society: 598-1486
- ❖ Friends of the Deer Park Archives: Contact the Office of Historic Services for more information.
- ❖ Lindenhurst Historical Society: 226-1254
- ❖ Village of Babylon Historical & Pres. Society: 669-1756

LOCAL LIBRARIES

- ❖ Amityville Public Library: 264-0567
- ❖ Babylon Public Library: 669-1624
- ❖ Copiague Memorial Public Library: 691-1111
- ❖ Deer Park Public Library: 586-3000
- ❖ Lindenhurst Memorial Public Library: 957-7755
- ❖ North Babylon Public Library: 669-4020
- ❖ West Babylon Public Library: 669-5445
- ❖ Wyandanch Public Library: 643-4848

BABYLON RAILROAD COMPANY

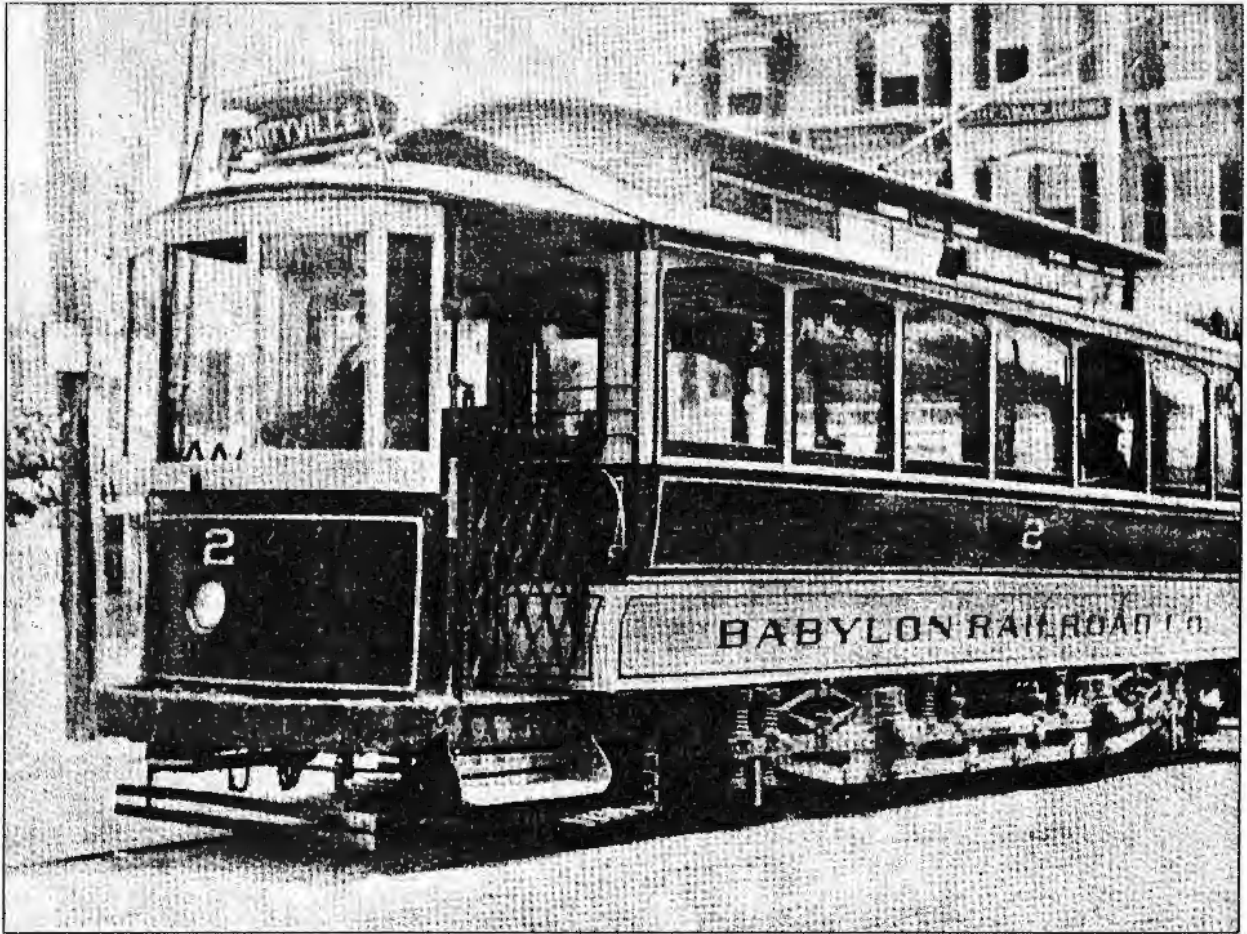
1871-1920



A horse-drawn trolley car of the Babylon Railroad Company, circa 1880s.

Information Provided About the Babylon Railroad:

- Photographs of Babylon Railroad Company trolley cars, page 4.
- Brief Timeline of the Babylon Railroad, page 5
- Map showing the path of the horse-drawn Babylon Railroad trolley line from the Babylon Railroad Station to the Babylon docks, which operated from 1871-1920, page 6.
- Map showing the path of the Babylon Railroad trolley line from Amityville to Babylon, 1910-1920, page 7.
- "Trolley Day Was a Big Success," pages 8-10. This 1910 article describes the opening day of the trolley line from Babylon Village to Amityville.
- "Recollect When Trolley Ran From Babylon To Amityville?," by Tom Collins, page 11.
- "Streetcar Story Retold," by James E. Tooker, page 12.
- "The Babylon Railroad," by Felix E. Reifschneider, pages 13-14.
- "The South Shore Traction Company," by Felix E. Reifschneider, pages 15-16.
- "Recollections of the Trolleys," by Seth Purdy, Jr., pages 24-26, has some information about the trolleys that ran between Amityville and Babylon.



A trolley car of the Babylon Railroad Company en route from Babylon Village to Amityville. Sherman House, which stood on Main Street in Babylon Village, can be seen in the background.



A trolley car approaches the docks at Babylon Village, transporting passengers to the waiting ferry boats.

BRIEF TIMELINE OF THE BABYLON RAILROAD COMPANY

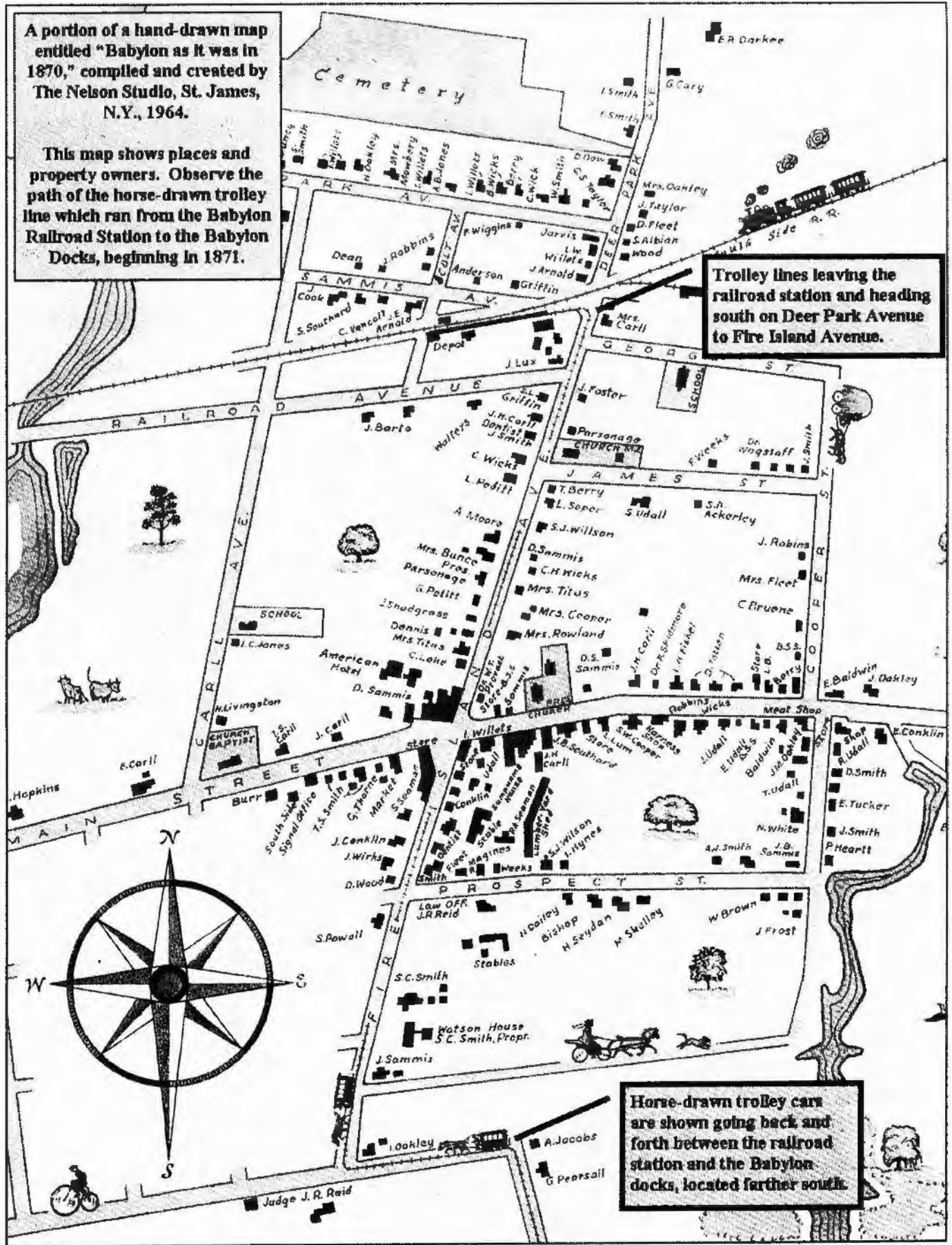
- 1871 (Spring) – David S.S. Sammis, a prominent Babylon Village resident, builds a horse-drawn trolley line to transport passengers from the Long Island Railroad Station in Babylon Village to his ferries at the Babylon Dock. The ferries transport guests to Sammis' Surf Hotel located on Fire Island. The trolley line was 1.53 miles from the south side of the railroad depot to the docks, and consisted of two trolley cars and two horses.
- 1890 – The rolling stock, also known as railroad cars, of Babylon Railroad increases to three closed trolley cars and one open car. The fare is 6 cents.
- 1898 and 1899 – A New York City firm purchases the line and installs motors which operate under steam power. A steam boiler, located in the yard north of the Odd Fellows Hall in Babylon, generates the steam.
- 1900 (July 25th) – William De Garmo leases the trolley company and restarts the old horse-drawn service. For the first time, the company shows a profit - only \$1.00.
- 1906 (October 9) – The line is purchased by Long Island Consolidated Electrical Company with intentions to electrify the operation but the financial Panic of 1907 causes a delay in plans.
- 1909 – The operations of the Babylon Railroad are sold to the South Shore Traction Company, but the name "Babylon Railroad" continues to be used.
- The line is electrified and construction begins on a six-mile extension from Babylon Village going west through West Babylon, Lindenhurst and Copiague to Amityville.
- 1910 (June 11th) – The new trolley line is officially opens with five small trolley cars, each with a capacity of 28 passengers.
- A corrugated metal car barn is built on the south side of the railroad tracks in West Babylon, at Belmont Junction, which was located near the intersection of Great East Neck Road and Trolley Line Road.
 - The fare is 5 cents for the stops at West Babylon, Lindenhurst and Copiague, and 10 cents for the full trip from Amityville to Babylon. The full trip takes approximately 35 minutes.
 - The trolley cars operate at an average of once per hour.
- 1920 (May 25) – Operations of the Babylon Railroad cease.

A portion of a hand-drawn map entitled "Babylon as it was in 1870," compiled and created by The Nelson Studio, St. James, N.Y., 1964.

This map shows places and property owners. Observe the path of the horse-drawn trolley line which ran from the Babylon Railroad Station to the Babylon Docks, beginning in 1871.

Trolley lines leaving the railroad station and heading south on Deer Park Avenue to Fire Island Avenue.

Horse-drawn trolley cars are shown going back and forth between the railroad station and the Babylon docks, located further south.



TROLLEY DAY WAS A BIG SUCCESS

THE SOUTH SHORE TRACTION COMPANY COVERED ITSELF WITH GLORY IN ITS CELEBRATION LAST SATURDAY

Damp weather did not mar the festive occasion—The running of the electric cars loudly and enthusiastically greeted—Babylon Village and Town warmly congratulated upon the forward step—Cars now running and well patronized—How the great day was observed.

TWO POPULAR OFFICERS OF THE SOUTH SHORE TRACTION COMPANY



JAMES T. WOOD
President



ARTHUR CARTER HUME
Secretary

Although the weather bureau seemed to be "agin" us on Saturday last, the heavy-laden skies and incessant drippings had no effect upon the enthusiasm of our people in their formal observance of the opening of the Amityville-Babylon trolley and the day passed into history as one of, if not the most important that has marked the continued progress of our village and town.

The programme, as outlined by the committee, went through without a hitch, the only deviation in the set arrangement being the decision of the committee to abandon the proposed trip across the bay to Oak Island. Had the weather been pleasant this trip would, no doubt, have been fully carried out.

The village was in gala attire early in the morning and, although the traction company did not connect its electric circuit until late the evening before, the cars were in proper running order and ready for the carrying of passengers promptly at the time scheduled.

(COMPLIMENTS OF "THE HUSTLER")

This was in line with the attitude of the traction company throughout its extended transactions, to be ever prompt in meeting the demands made upon it and in accord with agréments and conditions made.

Shortly before noon, the special Long Island train of two cars brought the invited guests of the trolley company from the west and they were immediately driven in stages to the Watson House. The 150 guests included state, county, town and village officials, newspaper men and others prominent in public life. The reception committee of the Babylon Board of Trade met the visitors upon their arrival at the railroad depot and escorted them to the rendezvous at the hotel. Sufficient time was allowed for the guests to renew acquaintances, when, about 12:30 P. M. Chairman James W. Eaton extended the formal greeting to the public.

Mr. Eaton said the gathering was in honor of the greatest institution Babylon has known and he congratulated

the people upon their good fortune, lending the right hand of fellowship to the promoters and builders of the road and a hearty welcome to those who had gathered to do honor to the occasion. He reviewed the rapid growth of Babylon and prophesied a great future for the town, saying that as Babylon is now the third in rank in the total amount of receipts to the Long Island railroad it would head the list as the first village and the first city on the South Side. In closing he said, "I extend, on behalf of the Village and Town of Babylon to the South Shore Traction Company, the only keys we have, the prosperity of the whole town."

Mr. Eaton apologized for the non-appearance of former Senator Clarence Lexow, who was detained at the last minute in court by an unexpected decision, and was compelled, reluctantly, to remain at the post of his legal duty.

praised Mr. Hume and Mr. Weaver upon their able direction of the work.

Mr. Woodward, secretary to President Peters of the Long Island Railroad Company, said he knew if Mr. Peters was present he would express his keen satisfaction of the success of the trolley undertaking. He remarked that it takes money to build a railroad, and that while it took the Long Island Company five years to complete the cross-island route between Huntington and Amityville it occupied but three years to finish up the Amityville-Babylon line. In conclusion he said the South Shore Traction Company has done as well as any company could have done.

Mr. Hanser closed the speechmaking here. President James T. Wood and Engineer Weaver were on the programme for speeches, but their modesty forbade their taking up the time in making an address.

The Seaboard Construction Company deserves mention of its work in completing the local line. After being awarded the contract, it began the actual work of construction in a blizzard on January 17th last. By March 8th it laid the stretch of track from Amityville to the Babylon village line. One of its most rapid pieces of work was its completing the overhead construction from the Babylon village line to the village proper, a distance of 1 1/2 miles, in three days. This company also built the cross-island line between Huntington and Amityville, and made a record in completing the stretch between Melville and Amityville, a distance of 9 miles, in 45 working days.

The beginning of the operation of the section of the trolley line of the South Shore railroad between Amityville and Babylon, says the Huntington Long Islander, will be an important extension of the Cross-Island trolley service that has been maintained between this village and Amityville. It will furnish a through electric service between the Huntington steamboat docks to which run ferryboats from Stamford and Norwalk and the Babylon Steamboat dock from which ferryboats run to Fire Island.

This should result in the creation of a considerable excursion traffic between the manufacturing cities of Connecticut and the South Side beaches. The trolley connection with Babylon will also greatly increase the traffic between the North Side and the South Side villages. It will be followed by a western extension from Amityville to Freeport, about eight miles, from which a connection can be made with Long Beach. All of the trolley extensions of the past and the future will tend to create a greater friendship between the people of the different sections of the island and a greater harmony of interests and will open up large areas for new settlements that are now too far distant from railroad stations to permit of daily travel. They also provide new and attractive routes for pleasure travel.

The traction company began the local section of fare on Monday and also started the bus line at the same time. The cars between Amityville and Babylon. The cars have been very popular and the people who can only get to the village by the trolley will be means of communication. A result of the traffic has been that it has been necessary to make the narrow gauge trolley and which will be so far ahead of the other trolley lines. The trolley cars will be very popular.

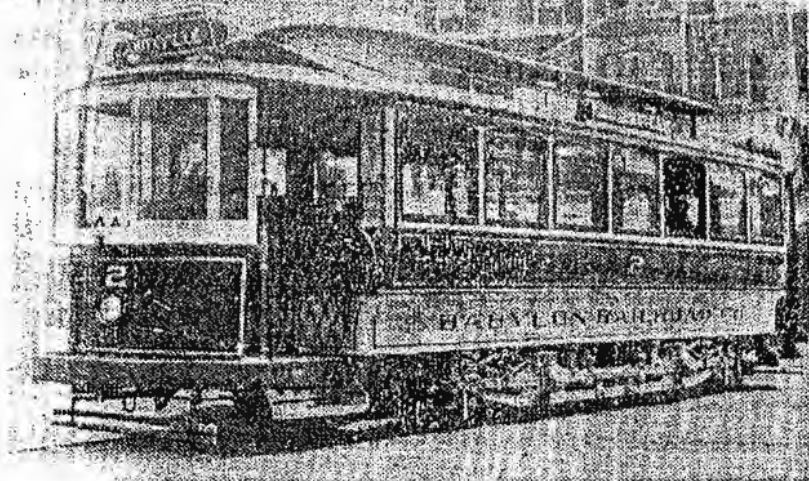
The South Shore Ferry Company announces its schedule and rates of fare between Babylon dock and various points on Oak Island in this issue, to take effect this Saturday. The company promises a first class service with its practically new boat, the Oak Island, and will make connection at Babylon dock with the cars of the Babylon Railroad. Following out its policy of giving the public cheap fares it has adopted a schedule of rates that will meet the demands of the most critical and every pocketbook. Read its advertisement in this issue.

More land between Farmingdale and Amityville is under agricultural cultivation this spring than for many, many years, and the cause of the return to soil cultivation is the trolley. Practical benefits have been accorded by the swift vehicle which spins along on a copper thread, but here, we think, sentiment has been a great factor. The territory has been made cheerful and hopeful by the frequent passing of the busy agent of industry.

The trolley car has given life and hope to a long dormant territory. From sterility it has become fertile. From an expensive burden it has become a producing factor.

Speed the agencies that do things! Welcome the helpful, hopeful, cheerful, modernizing of a rich land, too long, too long out of touch with the march of progress! Long Island has been discovered, and its erstwhile unwilling denizens are made reluctant figures in its triumphant entry at the world's busy arena.—Amityville Record.





THE OLD LINE. This is one of the old Babylon Railroad Co. trolleys that used to clang their slow way from Babylon to Amityville 40 and 50 years ago, and one of the men who used to help run them, Henry Willmont of West Babylon.

Recollect When Trolley Ran From Babylon to Amityville?

By Tom Collins.

Babylon—The "Toonerville Trolley" that wound its slow way from Babylon to Amityville, in the days when the trolley was considered ultra-modern, is still fondly remembered by the oldtimers who were among its customers.

It clanged out the distance in about 35 minutes on the days when it didn't jump the track. "When it did, we just kept on reading the papers until they got it going again," recalls Paul Bailey, the Suffolk County historian, who was a veteran rider of the old line. "We used to call it the Toonerville Trolley."

"That's right," says 66-year-old Henry Ellis Willmont of 103 Arnold Ave., West Babylon, a former motorman on the trolley. "It used to jump off quite a bit and we'd have to run it back on."

The June day in 1910 when the first run was made was—like the trolley line itself after a few years—a disappointment to all. A gala day was planned in which a brass band from Lindenhurst was to play in the village park.

Railroad officials and other dignitaries were scheduled to take an excursion trip and high school children were set to sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee" under the trees in the park. But a storm came up, and the rain drenched the dignitaries and the five spanking new trolleys lined up for the first trip to Amityville. It was an omen of things to come.

The trolleys were small cars with a capacity of about 28 riders. "When there was too much of a load in the back, the front would tip up. The passengers had to be evenly distributed," recalls another oldtimer, Shepard Farrington of 49 Dundee Ave., Babylon.

The trolley ran from the Steamboat Dock up Fire Island Avenue into Deer Park Avenue, and made a left turn into Trolley Line Road, named for the trolley. Then it ran parallel to the Long Island Rail Road tracks through West Babylon, Copiague and Lindenhurst, ending up at Broadway in Amityville, where passengers could catch a north-south trolley that ran at the time across to Huntington.

The Babylon-Amityville line was owned by the Babylon Railroad Co., now defunct.

Another former motorman, Capt. Harold Smalling of 20 Robert St., Babylon, who has just retired from the Babylon Village Police Department, remembers the time when the trolley jumped the track at Main Street and Deer Park Avenue, and smashed into a large cast-iron drinking fountain for horses. "It busted up the fountain pretty bad," he recalls.

Within a few years after World War I, the trolley made a final run one day and then jumped the tracks into history. Its five cars had long since been reduced to one, and that not in very good shape, and the eight miles of track had deteriorated badly. But the mention of it can still make the oldtimers nostalgic. "Things were kind of peaceful and quiet in those days," Willmont says.

NOTE: The name and date of the publication in which the article first appeared has not been determined.

History of Babylon:

Streetcar Story Retold

By JAMES E. TOOKER, Official Town of Babylon Historian

I received a letter from a gentleman who lives in Pennsylvania who wanted to know about Babylon's street railroad, which was later a trolley line. He said his folks were born here, but gave no further information on that point. I wrote him somewhat according to the following:

The history of the Babylon street railroad begins with that remarkable man David S.S. Sammis. He built his hotel at Fire Island, known as the Surf Hotel in 1855. Then he needed a steamer to take patrons back and forth so he had

a ferry line, getting permission from the state legislature to operate it. Then he went further, this was soon after 1870, he had street railroad built from the steamboat dock on the bay to the Babylon railroad station. He ran this for quite a number of years, and different people ran it after that.

I remember William V. De Garmo ran it for awhile. I believe his daughter, I believe her name was Elizabeth but every one called her Libbie, acted as conductor and picked up the fares. Of course, the line ran only in the summer months.

When later on some other concern acquired this line. They had a new method then, called the kinetic power system. There was a steam boiler in the yard, which was just north of the present Odd Fellows Hall, and their cars had and used what they called the stored steam system. But they did not stay in business very long.

Then came along one Joseph G. Robin, who was a railroad man, and he took over the line and electrified it. He got a further franchise and extended the line to Broadway in Amityville. As near as I can remember he began to operate around 1911. When Charles Warta, Jr., who was then town clerk, died in 1914 a number of us had a special car to take us to the funeral.

The line was very useful but the auto was coming on and it gradually forced it out of business. The rails and cars were sold and only the name, Trolley Line Road, remains, on the road which parallels the LIRR on the south in Babylon. I can remember the late George Miller, later a town policeman, and another man William Voss, who worked on this line. Perhaps readers may remember others.

"Streetcar Story Retold," by James E. Tooker, was published in the Babylon Town Leader, November 27, 1958, pages 8 and 16.

The Babylon Railroad

MR. DAVID S. S. Sammis, a prominent citizen of Babylon, had opened his Surf Hotel on Fire Island in 1856. It was extended from time to time until it had become a large enterprise. It was not until the Spring of 1871 that Mr. Sammis decided he should provide better transportation for his guests and their baggage from the railroad station in Babylon to the dock, where his own boats ferried them to Fire Island.

There were 1.53 miles of 40 lb. iron rail from the South Side RR depot east a short distance alongside the railroad, then south on the east side of Deer Park Avenue (if Beer's map of 1873 is to be trusted), crossing Main Street and continuing south on Fire Island Avenue. After passing Prospect Street the track shifted gradually to the west side of the road. At the south end of the village there was a sharp jog to the east, for some distance, with track on the south side of the road; then south again on the Neck with track on the east side to the steamship dock where boats could be boarded for Fire Island. There were two horses and two cars, with road and equipment costing a bit more than \$6000.

Originally Robert O. Colt was President, and John R. Reid, Treasurer, E. P. Wheeler, Secretary. David S. S. Sammis was listed as Superintendent but seems to have owned most of the stock. Various members of the Sammis family were always prominent in the affairs of the road in horse car days. In 1889 Edward F. Sammis was Superintendent while David S. S. Sammis had become President. Mr. J. M. Sammis was connected in an official capacity at one time and Washington F. Norton seems to have succeeded Mr. Colt as President some time after the

Felix E. Reifschneider

road opened. Mr. Norton was the father of Mrs. Emelyn Norton Hasbrouck who still resides on Fire Island Avenue, and of the late Dudley F. Norton.

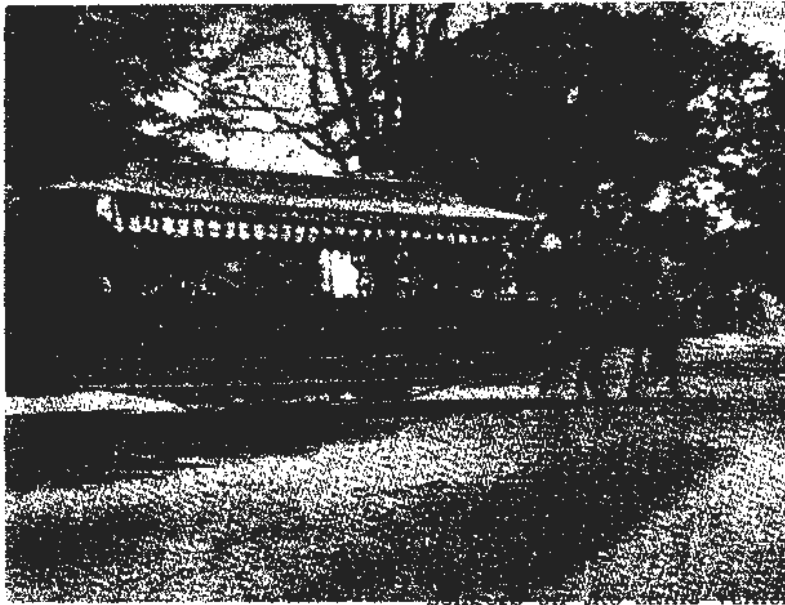
At first the road seems to have been very prosperous and may have operated all year round or nearly so. However, expenses soon rose and sizable deficits were reported year after year. Those horse cars provided faster and more comfortable transportation, and at much lower cost than the horse drawn rigs and wagons used previously. One possible explanation for the relatively small earnings may have been that Mr. Sammis provided free transportation on his cars for guests and employees of the hotel. After the summer of 1875 or 1876 operation seems to have been confined to a few months in summer. During some years the cars ran for less than three months while at least during one year it was reported that the cars ran for eight months.

The Reports of the Company show that the investment in the property had continually increased year after year. We do not know what these additional investments were but they may have consisted of repairs to the track (which should have been charged to expense but often weren't in those days) and Mr. Sammis, perhaps aided by other officers, may have made good the yearly operating deficits out of his own pocket as a loan to the company, a sort of subsidy to the railroad from the operations of the hotel on Fire Island, since the railroad was a necessary adjunct to the hotel.

On October 18, 1873 the new depot of the Central RR of Long Island was opened and promised to be a boon to the horse car traffic. Mr. Seyfried, Long Island RR historian, tells us that the depot occupied the site where houses nos. 158 and 164 Fire Island Avenue now stand. The Watson House, a large summer resort hotel, was on the east side of the street facing the depot. Now passengers brought to Babylon on Central RR trains could ride the horse cars northbound to the village or southbound to the Fire Island dock. In June 1874 a track connection was made between the railroad and the car line so that the latter could bring its baggage car alongside the railroad's baggage car, providing quick and easy transfer of baggage between railroad and car line.

Alas! this excellent arrangement was not to last for long, for on November 1, 1874 the Central RR trains began to operate into the South Side depot and regular operation into the Fire Island Avenue depot was discontinued. Some trains may have used it in the summer of 1875 for the benefit of the Watson House and Fire Island traffic, but thereafter the track was allowed to grow up in weeds until eventually torn up. Whether the concentration of traffic at the South Side depot helped or hurt the horse cars, we do not know, but it was soon thereafter that the period of operation was sharply curtailed. We learn in 1890 that the fare was 6c and that there were three box (closed) cars and one open car.

"The Babylon Railroad," by Felix E. Reifschneider, was published in the Long Island Forum magazine, August 1975, pages 144-146.



According to an earlier article in the *Forum* Mr. Samnis observed his 75th birthday on May 8, 1893 and sold his Fire Island property to the State. The Hotel wasn't opened that summer, which aroused the ire of President Austin Corbin of the Long Island RR, who tried and may have succeeded to deny access to the railroad station grounds to the horse cars.

At any rate, a new era began in 1898 when the road seems to have passed out of the hands of Babylon men, when New York people took over. The only Babylon men still connected with the enterprise were Washington F. Norton and William G. Nicholl, who became a surrogate of Suffolk County. The new owners issued \$33,000 worth of bonds to replace the old light iron rails with heavier steel rails, rebuild the entire roadbed and purchase two stored steam cars or locomotives, known then as "kinetic motors" altho more familiarly as "fireless cookers". In the absence of a photograph we do not know whether these engines pulled the horse cars as trailers or had accommodations for passengers on the same vehicle,

such as the cars on some lines in South Brooklyn at that time, altho the Brooklyn "steam motors" had coal fired boilers. This type of equipment must not be confused with steam "dummies" which were quite different.

The stored Steam cars ran only in summer and were no more successful from the profit standpoint than the horse cars. After steam operation for the summers of 1898 and 1899, and perhaps for a short time in the beginning of the summer of 1900, the road was leased to William (De) Garmo of Babylon, who started up the old horse car service on July 25, 1900 and continued to operate for some summers thereafter. By some miracle Mr. De Garmo succeeded in remaining nearly solvent and in one year reported a profit of exactly one dollar. While insignificant, it did reverse the annual losses of the previous three decades.

On October 9, 1906 the Babylon RR was bought by the Long Island Consolidated Electrical Companies, a holding company owned 50% by the Long Island RR and 50% by the Interborough Rapid Transit Co., operator of subway and elevated railroads in New York City. It was announced that the car line would be electrified, but the project was delayed, as was that of the Cross-Island Trolley, by the Panic of 1907.

When more normal economic conditions returned, the property was sold to the South Shore Traction interests in 1909 who took it over and electrified it. The South Shore Traction, it may be recalled, was the grandiose scheme for building a trolley line from 59th Street and 2nd Avenue in Manhattan, across the Queensborough Bridge, thru Long Island City, Jamaica, St. Albans and the South Shore villages to Brookhaven.

Only the line in Queens County was substantially completed, plus two short stretches in Suffolk County: the Babylon line with its extension about to be described and a short piece of track in Sayville which was later taken over by the Suffolk Traction, the latter also connected with the South Shore project in the beginning.

In addition to electrifying the Babylon line, and equipping it with some second-hand single truck trolleys, an extension of six miles was built thru Lindenhurst and Copiague to Amityville, where a short stretch of track in the center of town was shared with the Huntington RR (Cross-Island Trolley). For this extension second-hand double truck cars were brought in from N. Y. City. The writer remembers the carbarn, a rather crude corrugated iron building on the south side of the LIRR in West Babylon. At that time it would have been possible to ride by trolley from Halesite on Long Island Sound to the Fire Island Dock on Great South Bay, about a 24-mile trip, in approximately two hours.

The Babylon-Amityville operation has been described in the December, 1973, *Forum*. It led a hand-to-mouth existence for eleven years before it shut down May 15, 1920, outlasting the NY and North Shore Traction by a few weeks and ending almost a half-century of street railway service in Babylon.

The South Shore Traction Company

THOSE TROLLEY CARS
Farmingdale 1916

If you're a merchant selling goods
Don't yell yourself to death,
No customer
Could hear you, sir,
You'd better save your breath.

If you're a Minister in church
Expounding to your flock,
To hesitate
And calmly wait
Will save you quite a shock.

If you're the Sexton at the bell
Don't try to make it sound;
No living thing
Will hear it ring
If there's a trolley round.

For when the trolley comes along
Its call is so emphatic
It shakes the house,
As cat shakes mouse,
From cellar door to attic

Paul Bailey

Felix E. Reifschneider

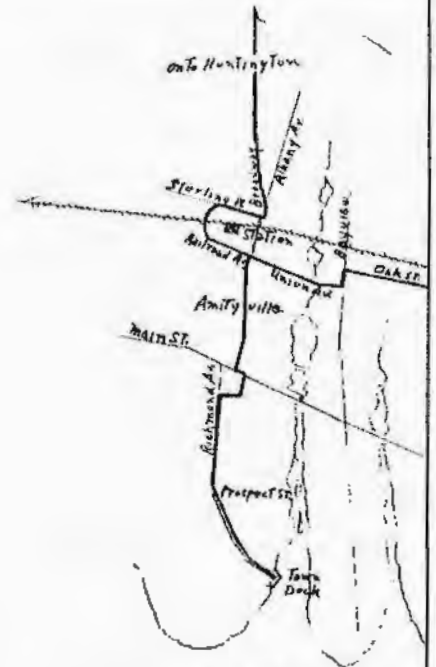
AT THE turn of the century, "trolley fever" hit the country and Long Island was no exception. Trolley lines were built almost everywhere and, unfortunately, in some cases from nowhere to nowhere. It was commonly believed that ownership of a trolley line was a sure path to making millions of dollars and trolley bonds were considered suitable investments for widows and orphans. "People will always have to ride" it was said. Yes, indeed, they surely will and have but no one foresaw that the riding would take place in private autos rather than in trolleys.

The village of Hempstead at a time when its population was only 4000 people sup-

ported a trolley with a car every 30 minutes. Today with a population ten times as great it can't support a bus line with fares many times as high as the trolley fare. Thus has public transportation changed in our life time.

One of the more ambitious projects of its time was the South Shore Traction. It intended to build from Manhattan across the Bridge to Long Island City, thence via Woodside, Newtown, Jamaica, St. Albans, Springfield, Freeport, Babylon and Patchogue to Brookhaven, a total distance of 51 miles. Incorporated on March 2, 1903, it ran into difficulties from the start. No doubt the Panic of 1907 reduced its chances of financing, but there were many other problems, including franchises, a battle in the Courts with the Public Service Commission, but one factor alone was a disabling one. The New York & Long Island Traction built its line from Freeport to Springfield and Brooklyn, and obtained a franchise from Freeport to Babylon, this latter portion never being built. With trolleys already operating along the South Shore in Queens and Nassau counties, any hope the South Shore Traction had of building its line seemed doomed.

The year 1909 was the big year of achievement for the company. It started operation from Manhattan thru Long Island City into Queens County. It built track in Sayville and operated horse cars



Data for this map

there during the summer of that year. It bought the Babylon RR, then a horse car line, from the Long Island Consolidated Electrical Companies (a subsidiary of the Long Island RR), electrified it and began to extend it toward Amityville. It is not quite clear what part the South Shore had in the start of the Suffolk Traction in Patchogue, but it did turn over its track in Sayville to Suffolk Traction for storage battery car operation.

The activities of the year 1909 appear to have been more than the company could handle, for on December 30, 1910, it went into receivership. On November 21, 1912 the route in Queens County was assigned to the Manhat-

No. 103.

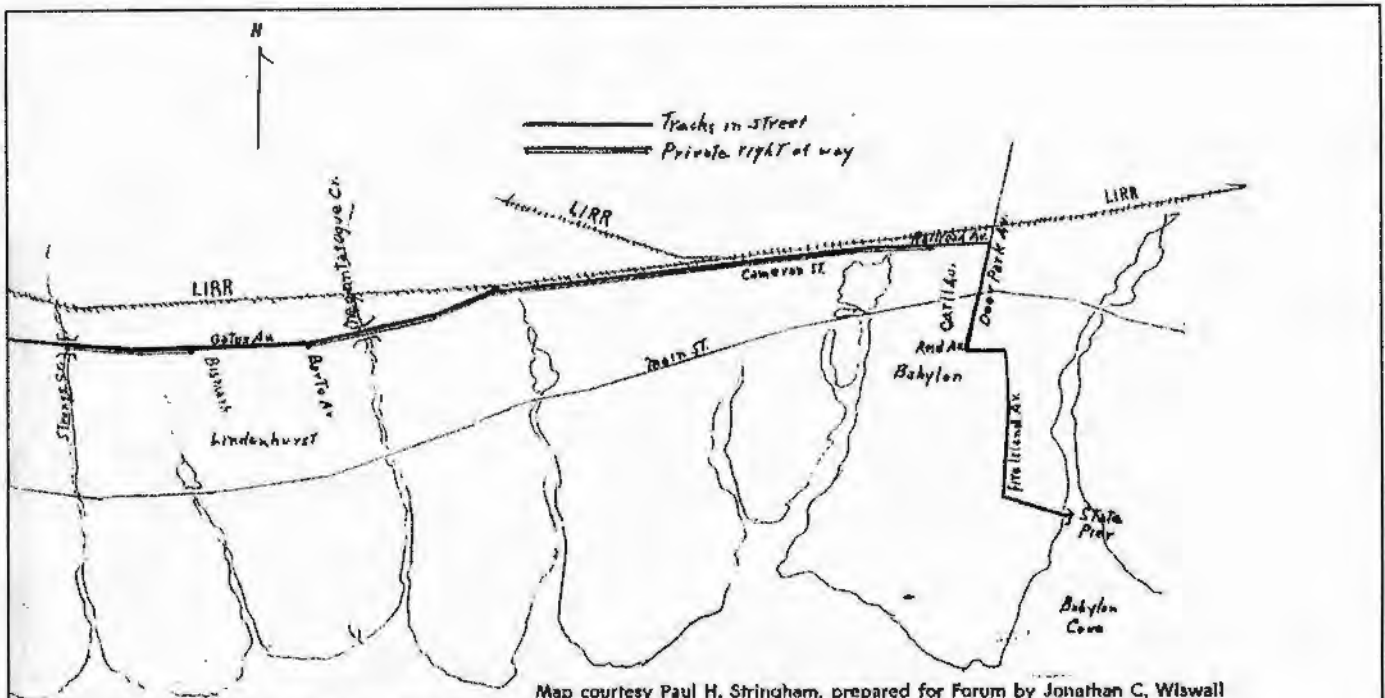
BABYLON R.R.

G. G. Dorland, Superintendent, Babylon, N. Y.

Amityville.....(12)				Cars run every day.
Coppage.....(13)	8	6	1 1/2	Leave Amityville about 6 55, 8 30, 9 45, 11 10 a.m., 12 10, 1 15, 2 30,
Lindenhurst.....	13	6	3/4	3 30, 5 05, 6 22, 6 46, 7 00, 8 00, 9 15, 10 10, 11 10 p.m.
West Babylon.....	20	10	4 1/2	Leave Babylon about 6 23, 7 21, 7 51, 8 56, 10 11, 11 35 a.m., 12 35,
Belmont Junction.....	20	10	5 1/2	1 30, 2 55, 3 55, 4 25, 4 37, 5 30, 6 45, 8 32, 7 25, 8 25, 9 35, 10 35, 11 35 p.m.
Babylon—Main St.....(13)	20	10	5 1/2	First trip on Sundays; leave Amityville about 8 00 a.m.; Belmont
do. Dock.....(15)	23	10	6 1/2	Junction about 7 35 a.m.

Connections—(1) With lines Nos. 74, 75, 84, 91, 92, 97 and 99; and a short distance from Station of Long Island R.R.
(2) With line No. 91. (3) With line No. 88 and near the Station of the Long Island R.R. (4) With lines Nos. 43 and

Portion of a timetable, taken from a Trolley Guide of 1914. Note that times are given as "about" so that the publisher of Guide could not be held for publishing false information.



Map courtesy Paul H. Stringham, prepared for Forum by Jonathan C. Wiswall

exact route followed by trolleys 53 years ago comes from map in Library of Congress.

tan & Queens Traction Co., which operated the line from New York to South Jamaica until 1937.

The 1½ mile line of the Babylon RR from the railroad station to the Fire Island dock was electrified in 1909 or early 1910 and the line extended almost six miles to Amityville, roughly paralleling the Long Island RR and not far from it. See accompanying map. To reach the Amityville RR station, it used the tracks of the Huntington RR (Cross-Island trolley) for a short distance under trackage rights agreement.

The operation from Babylon to Amityville seems never to have been very successful. Second hand double truck cars were bought, probably from one of the companies in Manhattan, the Second Ave. or Third Ave. railways being the most likely source. A corrugated iron car barn was built in West Babylon alongside the Long Island RR tracks.

The distance from Babylon RR station, to Lindenhurst RR station, and again, from Lindenhurst station to Amityville station, was, in

each case, almost three miles. The station at Copiague was not too significant, as only a few trains stopped there. Thus there were many people living along the line who were a long walk from a railroad station. To these people the trolley was a great convenience, with its 5c fare. (Babylon to Amityville, 10c).

The only schedule we have at hand is one for 1914. Cars operated on an average of once an hour, but were bunched in the morning and evening rush hours obviously to make connections with Long Island RR trains, as this was probably the chief source of traffic. While the Cross-Island trolley was abandoned on September 23, 1919, the little Babylon RR outlasted it for almost a year, as it did not cease service until May 15, 1920.

The cars remained at the West Babylon carhouse for

several years afterward, but eventually cars, tracks and wires must have been removed for salvage. Thus disappeared at last the final remnant of the South Shore Traction Co. outside of Queens County.

TO THE BABYLON R. R.

O trolley, dear trolley
 Why did you quit us, pray,
 Just when buds are breaking forth
 Along your right of way?
 Just when scruboak and the birch
 Their summer costumes don,
 And make the landscape fair indeed
 Twixt here and Babylon

O trolley, fair trolley
 We miss your midnight wall,
 We miss the squeal of flattened wheel
 Along each rusted rail.
 We miss, we do, the one-man crew
 Who made us say our prayers
 Each time he let the darned car go
 While he collected fares.

O trolley, sweet trolley,
 Alas, likewise aleck.
 No more the thrill, also the spill
 As you jumped off the track
 No more those Barney Oldfield spurts
 As you whizzed round the bend
 And slid us 'long the varnished seat
 From front door to the end.

Paul Bailey

"The South Shore Traction Company," by Felix E. Reifschneider, was published in the Long Island Forum magazine, December 1973, pages 232-233.

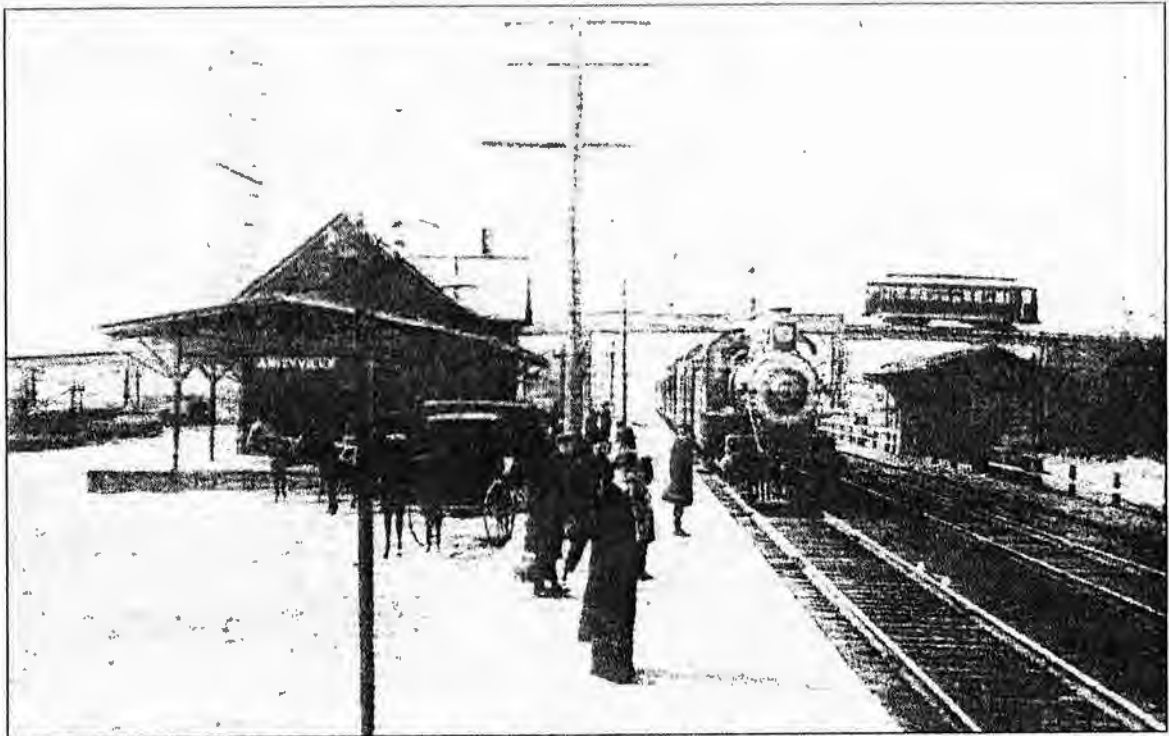
THE CROSS-ISLAND LINE 1909-1919



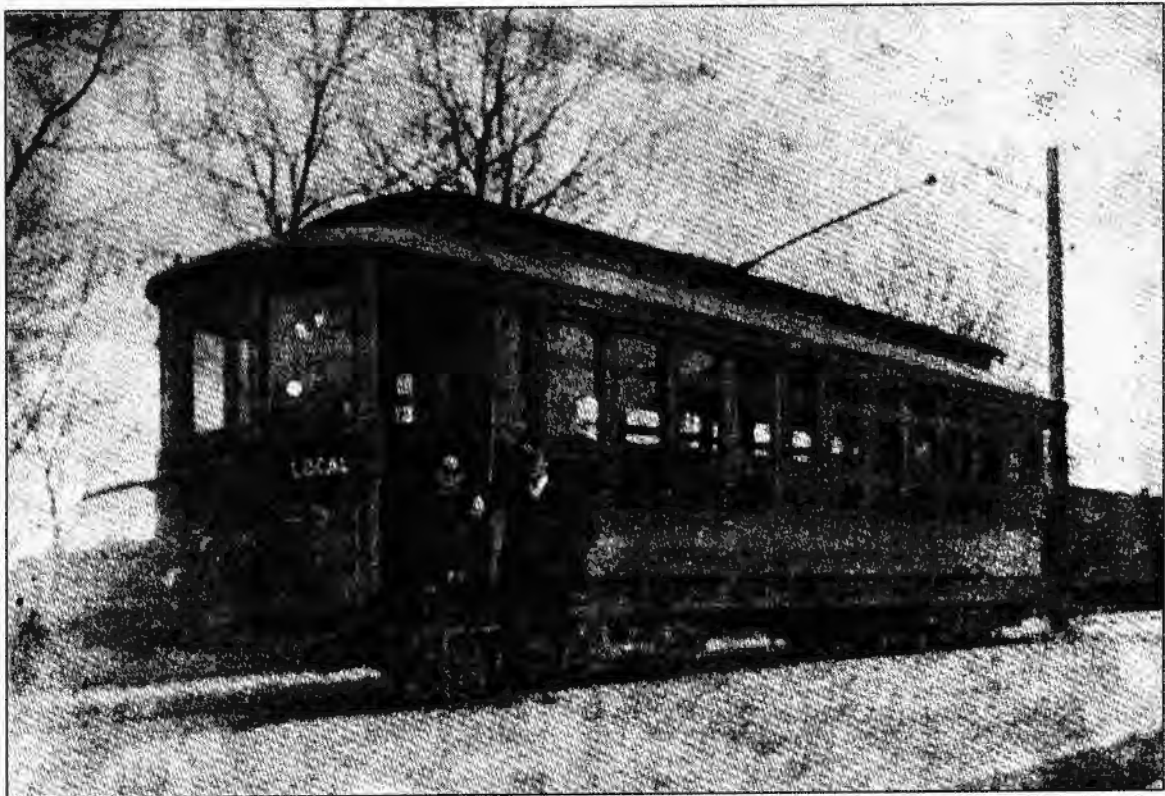
Trolley car on Broadway in Amityville on the opening day of the Cross-Island Line, August 25, 1909.

Information Provided About the Cross-Island Line:

- Photographs of trolley cars from the Cross-Island Line, page 18.
- Brief Timeline of the Cross-Island Line, operated by the Huntington Railroad between Huntington and Amityville, page 19.
- Map showing the path of the Cross-Island trolley line from Halesite (Huntington) to Amityville, page 20.
- "Carnival a Big Success – Largest Crowd Amityville Ever Saw and All Hands Pleased," pages 21-23.
- "Recollections of Trolleys," by Seth Purdy, Jr., pages 24-26.
- "The Cross-Island Trolley," by Felix E. Reifschneider, pages 27-29.



The Amityville Railroad Station, 1910. Notice the trolley car on the viaduct in the upper right.

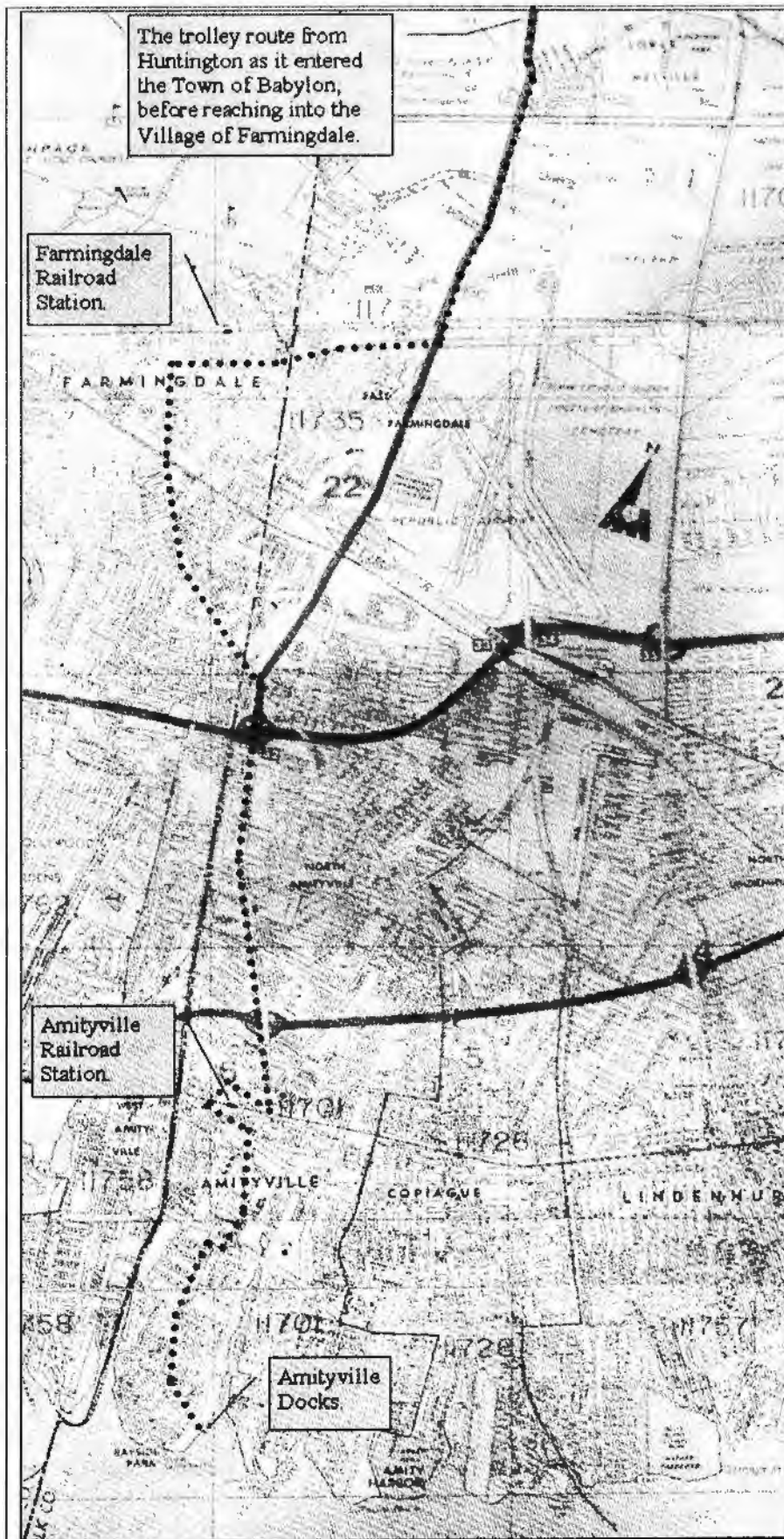


"Car #28, running as an Amityville local at the foot of Richmond Avenue, 1910. Motorman "Red Mike" and conductor H. Duryea." From "The Cross-Island Line," by Vincent F. Seyfried, page 80.

BRIEF TIMELINE OF THE CROSS-ISLAND LINE

OPERATED BY THE HUNTINGTON RAILROAD BETWEEN HUNTINGTON AND AMITYVILLE

- 1890 (July 19) – The Huntington Railroad company establishes a three mile long horse-drawn trolley line between Huntington Village and Halesite on the harbor.
- 1898 (April) – The Long Island Railroad purchases the line and electrifies it by June 17th.
- 1908 – The line is extended 18.5 miles south on a right of way, that is the approximate location of the present Route 110. The line travels through Melville and Farmingdale to the dock in Amityville along the Great South Bay.
- The line goes under the Long Island Railroad tracks at Huntington and Farmingdale, and is elevated over the tracks in Amityville.
 - Car barns, used for storage of the trolley cars, are maintained in both Halesite and Amityville. Power substations are located in the railroad stations at Huntington and Farmingdale
- 1909 (August 25) – Service from Huntington to Amityville is commenced. The trolley line maintains an hourly schedule. A one-way trip, from end to end, lasts 76 minutes.
- The rolling stock, also known as railroad cars, consists of six double truck, semi-convertible cars and seven single truck cars that provide more frequent service to the local railroad stations.
 - The fare is 30 cents, divided into six 5-cent zones, each about three miles long. Zone boundaries are at (1) the terminal in Halesite, (2) Huntington Station, (3) the DeForest Farm at West Hills, (4) the Duryea Farm at Melville, (5) Farmingdale Station, and (6) the terminal at Amityville.
 - A spur track from Conklin Street to the Farmingdale Railroad Station is created so trolleys can make connections with trains from Brooklyn and New York City.
- 1914 – Henry Ford produces the popular Model T automobile, and more people begin purchasing their own automobiles.
- 1917 – The United States joins World War I. Trolley riders are hit with rising costs and the trolleys lose customers.
- 1919 (September 23) – The Cross-Island service to Amityville ends, primarily due to increased use of the automobile. However, the original portion from Huntington to Halesite is sold to the Huntington Traction Company, which continues operations.
- 1927 (August 15) – The Huntington Traction Company ceases operations completely.



The trolley route from Huntington as it entered the Town of Babylon, before reaching into the Village of Farmingdale.

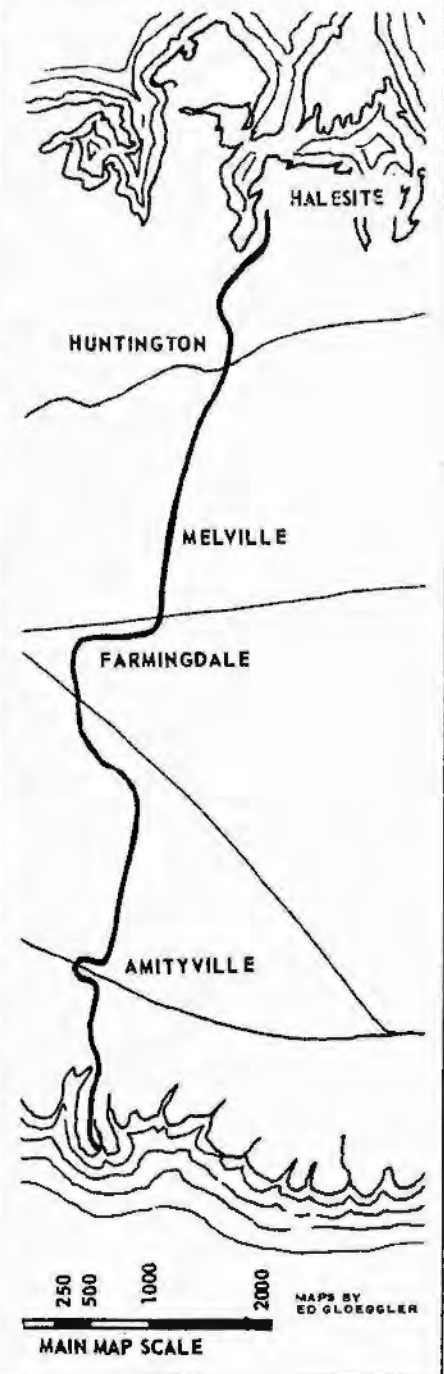
Farmingdale Railroad Station.

Amityville Railroad Station.

Amityville Docks.

(Right) Map of the Cross-Island Line, from "The Cross-Island Line," by Vincent F. Seyfried, 1976, page 73.

(Left) Map showing the approximate trolley route, drawn over a modern-day street map. ("Suffolk County Atlas," by the Hagstrom Map Co., Inc., 1998, pages 3-5.)



CARNIVAL A BIG SUCCESS -

Largest Crowd Amityville Ever Saw and all Hands Pleased

[Transcribed from the "Amityville Record," August 27, 1909.]

It seems to be conceded that it was the biggest day that Amityville ever had. The long labors of the committee were displayed in the perfect smoothness with which the entire ceremony went off, from morning until night, and the large crowds of visitors who flocked to Amityville in numbers which exceeded those of the county firemen's tournament were satisfied with what they got for their pains and money.

Wednesday broke bright and fair, and except that the temperature was a little warm, weather conditions were ideal for the formal celebration of the opening of the new cross island trolley road which connects, Amityville, Farmingdale, Huntington and the intervening villages, and makes it possible to travel with ease, comfort and economy from the shores of New England to the Atlantic Ocean. The plan of holding a general celebration, passing through all three villages, and harmonizing with local celebrations in each community, was found to work perfectly, and from the time when the automobile parade started at the foot of Ocean Ave. in Amityville at eight o'clock in the morning, until the last piece of fireworks had gone up into the air in any of the three villages, and tired eyed but happy folks wended their several ways homeward, there was not a serious flaw or setback.

The number of cars which were run on short headway all day long was a severe strain upon the power of the new road. The road is not at present equipped to run as many as ten or twelve cars close together. At times it was necessary for the cars to slow up a bit. Considering the irregularities of the schedule, however, and bearing in mind that the

road had had practically no trying out, it is little short of wonderful that the day passed off without a serious mishap. Great credit is due to the railroad men for this. They were on the job from sunrise almost until the next sunrise. F.M. Hartenstien, manager of transportation, was in charge, and his urbanity was imperturbable. L.S. Wells, in charge of the electrical equipment, kept an alert eye in the system all day, while Mr. Ludlam, who has charge of the electrical divisions of the Long Island Railroad, wore himself out completely in the day's service.

The fun began at eight o'clock in the morning, when the automobile parade started from the foot of Ocean Ave. and proceeded to Main St., headed by Grand Marshall Fred B. Dalzell in the 40-horse power Buick of his brother, E.T. Dalzell, who made a midnight start from Brooklyn to be on the scene. The procession traversed Main St. to Bay View Ave. to Avon Place, to Broadway, to Main St., to Park Avenue, to Broadway, to Albany Ave., to Dixon Ave., to Broadway and past the reviewing stand, after which it disbanded. The ornamentation of the cars was extremely pretty. The first prize for decorations was won by J. Henry Ruwe, whose car was trimmed with a profusion of hydrangea and the second prize by E.E. Haff, whose machine was a complete bower of pink artificial roses. There was liberal applause for each car as it drew up in front of the grand stand for review by the judges, Davide Minaldi, Eugene Valsor, Rufus J. Ireland, J.F. Mincher, and C.M. Palmer. The first prize was a mammoth bronze statue, mounted on a stone base. The second prize was a silver loving cup. The

decorations on Frank W. Donnelly's car, which was ornamented with golden rod and sunflowers, are deserving of especial mention.

Preceding the automobiles and headed by Spedick's Military Band marched the undaunted members of the Amityville Fire Department. In line were about thirty members of the Amityville Hook and Ladder Co., who won the banner presented for best marching appearance, with their apparatus, ten members of the Dauntless Hose Co., who marched with a dignity and evenness which challenged the admiration of the assemblage and brought down thunders of applause. They did not have their apparatus because a majority of the members of the company voted at a special meeting on Monday night not to permit the company to parade. The ten marched in the company uniform as individuals. Because of the political strife which was generally known to have been the cause of the failure of the Dauntless Hose Co. to parade as a company the multitude was in entire sympathy with the members of the company who had spirit enough to parade.

The Amityville Junior Hook and Ladder Co. won a handsome banner for their appearance in line and the Amityville Cadet Corps also won a similar banner.

The cars from Huntington, bringing the Queens and her Maids of Honor, were about an hour late in arriving at Amityville. As fast as they arrived they were stored on lower Broadway, with the band and the queen's float, immediately abreast of the grand stand. Spedick's band played a few selections and Village President Samuel P. Hildreth introduced Assemblyman Alfred E. Smith of New York, who is summering at Amityville. Mr. Smith took the crowd well. He spoke upon "Suburban Development" and by describing with

cleverness the growth of the various boroughs which comprise the city of New York indicated the possibilities which lay before Amityville. He cited the fact that the Borough of Richmond, the only borough with which the city of New York has not yet been able to establish adequate transportation connections, was the only borough which could not raise enough by taxation to pay its operation expenses.

Assemblyman Smith's brief address was unanimously well received, and when he reminded the railroad that with the privileges which had been granted it had come great responsibilities to the public his remarks were greeted with great applause.

At the conclusion of the address the cars were sent to Farmingdale on five minute headway. Owing to a motorman stopping his car on the curve in the middle of the steep grade on the trestle there was a long delay in getting away and the procession was just one hour behind the schedule in leaving Farmingdale.

At Farmingdale an address was delivered by John J. Delaney, former corporation counsel to the city of New York. He spoke about fifteen minutes concerning the auspiciousness of the day's event. He is a fine type of orator and the crowd listened closely to him.

The party then ate a splendid luncheon in the dining room of the Nazareth Trade School. Father Girard personally supervised the function and no one left Farmingdale with any appetite. Village President Adolph Bausch, who has labored long and faithfully in behalf of the celebration, saw to it that the Farmingdale end was held up well. In the evening there was a vaudeville performance at the trade school and a dance in the fireman's hall, with

plenty of fireworks on the side. Clarence C. Doud, James T. Hoile, G. P. Sullivan and John Merritt of the local committee were on hand and gave valued assistance.

When the procession finally reached Huntington Village it arrived just in time to fall in with the local procession, but the time for boarding the steamer "Sagamore" was so short that that it was necessary to send the cars right down to the dock to unload and the visitors saw nothing of the local programme.

The sail on the "Sagamore" to the Chateau des Beaux Arts, escorted by as pretty a procession of decorated yachts as Huntington ever witnessed, was very pleasant. It was well after four o'clock before the diners were all seated and it was getting toward six o'clock before Toastmaster August Heckscher introduced Henry F. Sammis, the first speaker.

Mr. Sammis spoke briefly but eloquently upon the topic "Urban and Suburban New York." Thomas M. Osborne, of Auburn, N.Y., member of the public service commission from this district, made an address upon the topic "The People and the Railroad." He spoke of a change of sentiment toward public service corporations which resulted in the formation of the commission.

Congressman W.W. Cocks who was the last speaker, talk upon "Possibilities of Western Suffolk."

The menu at the Chateau was good and everyone appeared to be well satisfied with the dinner and the luxurious surroundings, with beautiful Huntington Bay, dotted by dozens of pretty craft in the offing.

Andre Bustanoby, one of the Bustanoby Brothers who own the Chateau, who was personally in charge of the dinner, had probably the busiest day of his life up to date, but it would take more than that to ruffle his equanimity. He was here, there and everywhere, and handled the big function with all the taste and delicacy that have made him famous as a host. Particular mention is also due to Frank P. Willets of Huntington, who by his unending efforts to provide comfort for the visitors, covered himself with verbal laurels.

The Amityville programme continued after the departure of the cars for the north side. The baseball game came off according to schedule, but the local enthusiasts were much disappointed by the defeat of the home team. The Waukegan Canoe Club crossed bats with the Patchogue A.C. and was defeated by a score of 6 to 3. Five hundred persons saw the game. [Results from the day's sporting activities were detailed.]

... The evening programme, which consisted mainly of fireworks, with music by Spedick's Military band, was run off on the depot grounds. Edgar P. Foster in appropriate speeches awarded the prizes for the morning parade. The fireworks presented a good display, and fortunately, all serious accident was avoided, although one woman's skirt was slightly burned by an erratic piece.

At all times during the day the crowds exceeded in numbers those seen at any of the familiar gatherings in Long Island villages.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE TROLLEYS

by Seth Purdy, Jr.



HUNTINGTON BOUND TROLLEY PASSES
AMITYVILLE'S TRIANGLE BUILDING.

A festive feeling permeated the air surrounding Amityville on August 25, 1909.

Flags unfurled freely from their staffs, colorful red, white and blue bunting decorated the small shops along Broadway while crowds lined the sidewalks in the Triangle - each individual hoping to share a part of history in the making. Carriages, both the horse and horseless variety, vied with one another for a vantage parking place with an unobstructed view of the ceremonies.

None less than, Alfred E. Smith, a local summer resident, important state political figure and later governor, was on the platform ready to address the assemblage on this great day.

All was ready when the first trolley rounded the corner from Greene Avenue onto Broadway to pause along side the Triangle Building.

Thus, was inauguration day for the Huntington to Amityville trolley line dubbed the "transportation system of the future".

But, the future was brief for just ten years later in 1919, without fanfare, all service ceased on the line in Amityville.

There is very little tangible evidence remaining to reflect the grandeur of Amityville's trolley era except for the old car barn, hardly recognizable now in its present condition and transplanted location at Clock's Boulevard and Merrick Road.

There are, though, recollections from the old line's passengers which reflect their experiences while riding the trolleys.

Amityville served as a terminus for not only the Huntington line, operated as a feeder line for the Long Island Rail Road, but also for the South Side Traction Company's line to Babylon. The Babylon trolley operated from 1910 to 1920 over a route which passed through Copiague and Lindenhurst.

A number of Amityville men found the trolley to be a means of employment.

Benny Cirincione, George Herbert and Herbert Duryea, all residents of North Broadway were among those who served as motor-men.

Benny is remembered for entertaining the passengers with an aria from an Italian opera while collecting the fares.

George Herbert, who frequently guided the cars on their last southbound run in the evening, would make an unscheduled stop to pick up his bicycle before proceeding to the car barn on Sterling Place in Amityville. When the car had been secured for the night, he would ride his bicycle to his home on the corner of Smith Street.

Herbert Duryea's son, a printer's devil for Amityville's old Long Island Sun newspaper, used the trolley weekly to deliver the paper to be sold at Pike's Store in Farmingdale.

The trolley also proved convenient for commuters, a number of whom worked in the Fulton Truck Assembly Plant near the location of the present Fairchild-Hiller Aircraft Corporation in East Farmingdale. Amityville commuters, who had formerly depended upon the stage, found the trolley to be a great improvement in transportation for reaching the railroad station each day. At least one school teacher in the Melville School depended upon the trolley for transportation from her home in Amityville while another young lady in South Farmingdale rode the trolley to reach her place of employment in the Brodtkin's Hat Factory on Amityville's Park Avenue.

The trolley also provided a means for recreation and pleasure. A popular summer outing for Amityville families was a trip across the island for a picnic in the Halesite Park and a refreshing swim in the waters of the Long Island Sound. Others found the trolley a convenient means for traveling to the Richmond Avenue dock to board a ferry to the ocean beaches. Still others, in the days before air conditioning, rode the open summer cars to catch a cool breeze on a hot and humid summer day.

A story is told of a most faithful commuter, a springer spaniel named Jack owned by Mr. and Mrs. Royal T. Carman. The Carmans frequently took the trolley line to the Richmond Avenue dock where they boarded their boat for a sail across the bay to spend a weekend at their Gilgo Beach cottage. Jack, the springer spaniel dog, would become restless before the conclusion of the weekend, make his way home by swimming the bay and walking across the wetlands to come ashore at the Coles Avenue dock, site of Bill Ketcham's fish store.

From there, he would walk to a Richmond Avenue trolley stop. The dog, well known to the motormen, would ride the trolley to the car barn, near the site of the present Amityville village highway department's headquarters, and proceed to his home a short distance away on Sterling Place. On several occasions, it was said that Jack made the same trip in the reverse direction when he had been left at home on one of the beach weekends.

The trolley line was not without its mishaps. Some passengers, sixty being the maximum number, would complain of motion illness from the gentle swaying and rocking of the cars. One car jumped the rail in 1916 coming to rest on the Morris house lawn at number 47 Broadway, Amityville after crashing through their fence. In 1918, Amityville residents, Mr. and Mrs. Chris Haab, recalled being aboard a car operated by their neighbor Mr. Baylis when there was a head-on crash in Melville. A misinterpretation of the time schedule resulted in the motorman's failure to move one car to a siding to allow another car, bound in the opposite direction, to pass on the single track line. Although the passengers were quite badly shaken, no serious injuries resulted from the unfortunate accident.

Young adult members of the community found the Babylon trolley to be a popular means for traveling to Hirsch's Theater Hall, a popular place of entertainment in Lindenhurst. On the way, they often added to the pleasure of the trip by jumping up and down on the rear platform of the car until it left the rail. Then all would disembark to help the trolley men move the car back onto the track.

Boys, who lived along the way on Oak Street in Copiague, were known to throw a wire onto the overhead lines causing a short and an unexpected stop of the car; a thrill to the youngsters but an annoyance to the motorman and the passengers.

The Babylon line, which seemed to have experienced some financial difficulties from the very beginning, attempted to economize by hiring just one man to perform the double duty of motorman and conductor. As a result, the trip to Babylon was somewhat delayed as the trolley passed through the woods near Scudder Avenue in Copiague. The motorman would place the car in low speed and proceed to the rear platform to collect the much needed passengers' fares.

The clang of the trolleys' bells, the hum of the electric traction motors and the shrieking of the brakes as the cars rounded the bends in the tracks are all silent now. But the recollections of those who remembered riding the rails across the island reflect a part of Amityville's heritage that otherwise might be lost to history.

"Recollections of Trolleys," by Seth Purdy, Jr., was published in A Backward Glance, Amityville Historical Society, 1980, pages 74-76.

The Cross-Island Trolley

ONLY THOSE who remember well the period between 1910 and 1920 have experienced the Wonderful World of the Trolley on Long Island. Living in Hempstead, one could reach Brooklyn, 20 miles away, for only 20c, in about an hour and a half. From Freeport to Brooklyn, several miles farther, cost only 25c and took about the same amount of time. Mineola to Freeport, about 8 miles, cost a dime and took 37 minutes. Those days are gone forever!

But we are going to talk about the Cross-Island trolley, something which had been dreamed about for some decades, but once accomplished, proved to be of little value.

For 50 years Long Islanders living on the South Shore had been grumbling about the long round-about trip westward to Jamaica and then eastward again to reach points in the center of the Island or on the North Shore. Cross-island transportation, they said, was badly needed.

A number of such lines were built, but only one can be said to have prospered, that from Flushing to Jamaica; and the line from Mineola to Freeport, which was only partly a cross-island line, also prospered. The other ventures, either by

Felix E. Reifschneider

railroad or trolley, soon petered out.

It was in 1898 that the Long Island RR became conscious of the trolley. It made an agreement with the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Co. with the object of eliminating cut-throat competition between the railroad and the BRT's trolleys and elevated lines, and out on the Island proceeded to build its own trolley lines, some in collaboration with the Interborough Rapid Transit Co., although most of these had been started by others and taken under the Railroad's wing by purchase from the original owners.

A horse car line from Huntington station through the village to the Harbor at Halesite had started operating over its three miles of track on July 19, 1890. In April 1898 the Huntington RR was bought by the Long Island RR, which electrified it at once, trolleys making their first trips on June 17th. Single truck cars performed a valuable service in local transportation for some years.

In 1907 the little Huntington RR became the nucleus of a much more ambitious project, the long-desired and eag-

erly awaited cross-island line. Due to the Panic of that year, work was suspended but was resumed in 1909, and through service from Amityville (Fire Island dock) to Halesite was commenced on August 25, 1909.

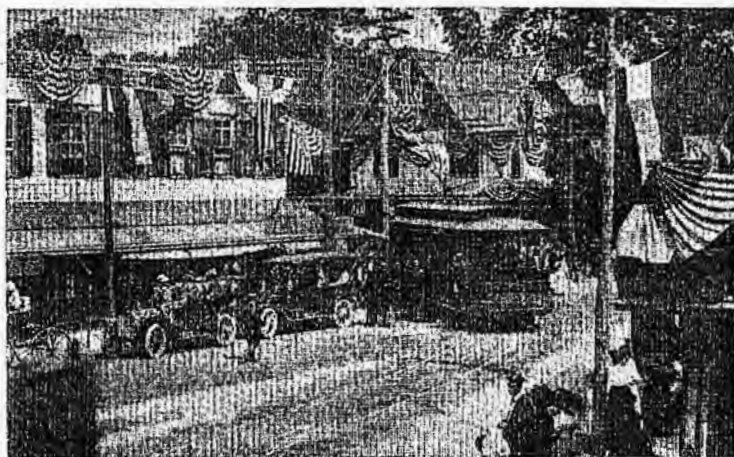
The new line was 18.5 miles long, the trip took one hour and 16 minutes, and the fare was 30c, divided into six 5c zones, each about three miles long. The zone boundaries were at Huntington station, the DeForest farm at West Hills, the Duryea Farm at Melville, Farmingdale station, the north village line of Amityville and, of course, both terminals.

Three cars gave hourly service, in addition to which there was local service from Amityville station to the Fire Island dock and also from Huntington station to Halesite.

The cars on the Cross-Island run consisted of six small double truck convertibles withdrawn from the Ocean Electric at Far Rockaway. They were only five years old at the time, but during the subsequent few years, trolley technology advanced rapidly and the cars soon became hopelessly obsolete.

While the cars were slow, they made remarkably fast time, mostly because the intermediate territory, except for the terminal villages and Farmingdale, was sparsely populated, and the cars made few stops because of the scarcity of passengers.

The line was well built. Except in village streets through the three villages, track was on a reserved strip alongside the highway; just south of Melville, there was a short-cut for two miles on private right of way. Rail was 70 lb. and the overhead was catenary, similar to that used on the largest railroads.



Gala trolley line opening at Amityville.

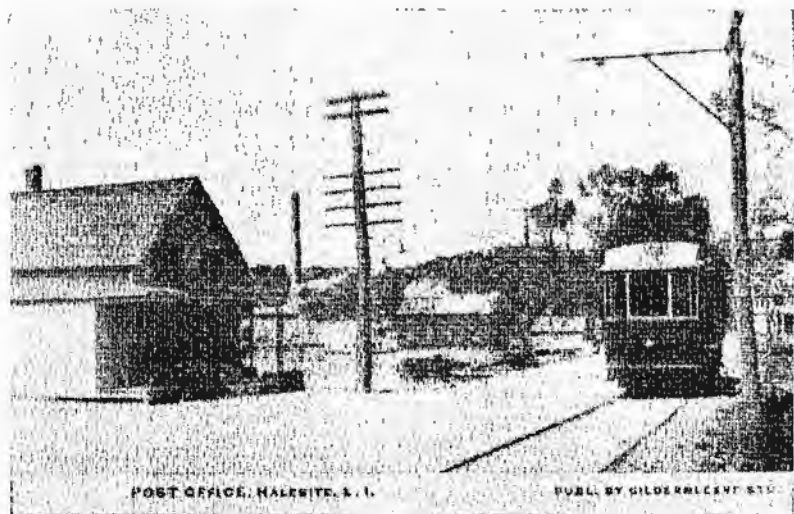
The reason for this great expense was that no line-crew was maintained on the line, and it was hoped that the catenary would require no repairs or maintenance, as this type of construction almost never experiences a broken or fallen trolley wire.

Power substations were located in the railroad stations at Huntington and Farmingdale. At Huntington a new passenger station was built, with the substation on the ground floor. At Farmingdale, a second story addition was built to the existing station for the same purpose.

At Huntington a new bridge was constructed for the Long Island RR, the highway and the trolley track passing underneath the railroad. There were short freight and passenger spurs from the main line to Huntington station, which were used only by the single truck local cars between the station and Halesite, and the freight car. There was also a trolley freight station some distance north of the passenger station.

At Farmingdale, a new bridge was built for the railroad, with the highway and trolley track at Broad Hollow Rd. passing underneath the railroad. At Amityville, southbound cars ran a short distance westward, then turned south on private right of way and crossed the Montauk division railroad overhead on a new steel viaduct.

There was a spur track from Conklin St. to the Farmingdale railroad station, so that trolleys could make connec-



Halesite. The car shown is one of the single truck cars always used between Huntington Station and Halesite, until the end of 1927. This view was taken in pre-Cross Island days, probably 1905, as can be seen from crude overhead trolley wire. Note that ear and hanger are attached directly to the cross arm. In Cross Island days this had been changed to catenary overhead.

tions with the trains from New York and Brooklyn. At Huntington, passengers had to descend a stairway at the west end of the platform to reach the trolleys. A wooden sign in the form of an arch was built over the top of this stairway with the legend "To the Cross-Island Trolley" and this arch remained in place many years after the trolley was abandoned, as a reminder of happier days.

Riding at first was quite good, although never very heavy, particularly in summer, when folks living in inland areas would ride to the Great South Bay or Huntington Harbor, for swimming, boating or fishing. But in 1914 Henry Ford came out with his Model T, and a few years la-

ter World War I hit, with rising costs and reduced patronage. Fares were raised, probably to 6c per zone.

A glance at what was probably one of the last timetables, dated October 1918, less than a year before abandonment, tells its own story. Through service over the entire line had been abandoned, cars running from Amityville dock only to Huntington station, where passengers for the village were obliged to transfer to local cars to complete the trip.

The regular hourly service intended to serve cross-island passengers had been dropped, and cars ran at irregular intervals. Between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., there was a car only about every two hours. There was only one through trip

from Amityville after 6 p.m. (a trip at about 9:30 p.m.) and only one through trip from Huntington station after 7 p.m. (about 11 p.m.) and this did not run all the way to the center of Amityville. From this it is safe to conclude that cross-island traffic had virtually disappeared.

The reason for the irregular interval between cars was that the schedule was arranged to provide connections with the trains at Farmingdale and Amityville, and extra trips were made between Amityville station and the dock, and some between Amityville and Farmingdale. It is safe to conclude that most of the riding was by commuters, to and from the LIRR trains. Riding continued to be heavy between Huntington station and the village, but this was carried on the local cars between those points, not on the Cross-island cars.

Faced with rising costs, the Railroad applied for a 7c fare, but the villages refused to agree, with typical short-sightedness. Deciding to take the bull by the horns, the Railroad, after making the last scheduled trips on September 23, 1919, detoured the six double truck cars to its own tracks at Amityville and hauled them away to be returned to the Ocean Electric at Far Rockaway. This effectively ended the Cross-island trolley.

It is easy to second-guess the situation at this late date. Perhaps a fare increase could have been obtained in time. Service could have been made more attractive and more economical with modern one-man cars. The men assigned by the LIRR to operate its trolley lines were not noted for their skill or ingenuity. But perhaps abandonment could have been postponed for but a few more years, and with the disappearance of the cross-island traffic, the principal function of the line had vanished.

The next year the tracks were torn up and the wires taken down, starting at the Amityville end and working

"The Cross-Island Trolley," by Felix F. Reifschneider, was published in the Long Island Forum magazine, April 1969, pages 64-67.

northward. The writer remembers riding his bicycle to Farmingdale and watching the demolition crew slowly doing its work between Farmingdale and Huntington. In the meanwhile, desperate efforts were being made to save the line from Melville north. A new company was formed, the Huntington Traction Co., with William A. Dempsey of Brooklyn as President.

The demolition crew of the Long Island RR was busy tearing up track northward at the same time that the new company was trying to buy the remaining track from the Railroad. Demolition had gotten as far as Siding 7, about two miles south of Huntington station, when the deal was made. Thus the original goal of operating as far as Melville was lost before the new company got started.

The Traction Co. operated the line from Huntington station to Halesite on a frequent schedule as before, with the President's brother, Edward T. Dempsey as Manager at Huntington. It is not known whether there was an interruption in this service during the transition period. One car was operated from the station south about two miles to Siding 7, but so few passengers

TROLLEY SCHEDULE ADS

Mr. Reifschneider has a 1918 Cross Island Trolley Schedule which carried advertisements around its border. The advertisers probably paid for the printing of the timetable. The six ads read:

Louis Cohn, Ladies and Gent's Tailor, Broadway, Amityville.

W. Powell, Day and Night Taxicab Service, Broadway, Amityville.

F. B. Powell & Son, Hardware and Paints, On Broadway, 30 Seconds from Trolley, Amityville.

The Bank of Farmingdale, The Brick bank on the Trolley corner.

Frank W. Smith, Dry Goods, Amityville.

Best Soda in Town at Heck's Drug Store, Huntington Station, L. I.

were carried at the southern end of the line that service was soon cut back to the Jericho Turnpike, South Huntington. This car carried only about 100 passengers a day at a 10c fare. The \$10 daily revenue being insufficient to pay expenses, the car was withdrawn about 1924.

The same seven single truck cars that started the service in 1898 were continued in operation. No attempt was made to modernize. It is not surprising that all service ceased on August 15, 1927.

From Horse-Buggy To the LIRR...

By HANK RODEN

Way back when, a Long Islander usually got from here to there by horse or shanks mare; rather slow and singular means of travel. Horses were so valued in these times, that when a fine equine passed away, his obituary might be found in the local newspaper. (Today's Pinto would hardly be given such respect.)

Those travelers in 1821 seeking companionship and having a few coins in their pockets could take one of the many stagecoaches that traveled throughout Long Island, stopping at Inns and Taverns, to allow a rider a glass of spirits to ease the aches of a bumpy ride. John Suptin ran a daily 8 a.m. stage from Hewlett-Creed's Inn in Jamaica down to Brooklyn and another coach ran from Job Hick's Tavern at the Brooklyn Ferry out to Far Rockaway.

Ferries provided service for those wishing to visit Staten Island or Manhattan, and larger boats crossed the Sound to Connecticut, but by and large, our citizenry depended on a fast steed and a good road to get about.

BY ROAD

IN THE EARLY 1800's even the finest roads were just packed dirt. The best of these were the privately owned toll roads such as Jericho Turnpike, Jamaica Avenue and Coney Island Plant Road. Toll booths along the way extracted fares of 8 cents for a score of sheep (anything that moved was welcome) and 12 cents for a sulkey. An early Gazetteer described a trip along Coney Island Toll Road as: "a pleasant passage through fields of luxuriant turnip tops, (and) reddish-green beet leaves . . ."

The roads were later planked, but charges went up (naturally) and when complaints of citizens mounted, the roads were taken over by the state and made free. Private highways were responsible for helping develop the Island, Jericho was called: "The very life stream . . . responsible for the formation . . . of numerous villages."

Trips on the eastern roads could be bewildering, with

(Turn to Page 38)

L. I. Press
5-21-71

Tribulations of Travel Are Part of LI's History

(Continued From Page 33)

signposts rare and one traveler complained that "a stranger is liable to go astray and might remain a whole day without meeting a person to set him right."

THE CHANGES OF road names also caused problems. Queens Boulevard, one of the early paved roads, was also dubbed Hoffman Boulevard and White Pot Pike. Really. The island's first car-only parkway was the famous creation of William K. Vanderbilt Jr. that ran from Queens to Lake Ronkonkoma. Built in 1908-13, the road, Motor Parkway, eventually went bankrupt but stretches of it are still in use in Suffolk and many concrete interchanges can be seen along Kingsbury Avenue in Queens Village.

Long Island's maze of parkways were begun in 1927 when Southern State opened from Queens to Rockville Centre. During the next nine years, Southern was extended, Grand Central, Wantagh, Northern State and the Interboro parkways were built.

Unfortunately the begetting of autos kept up with the building of roads. By 1936, three years after it was opened, the Grand Central was jammed with cars. A Press editorial then suggested Horace Harding Boulevard be widened as an alternate route. It was the mid-1950s when this became the Long Island Expressway, and was immediately snarled with cars.

Long Island's attitude toward roads has always been a love-hate affair. In 1937, a newspaper noted Jericho was widened because of public demand, but said the construction was "accompanied (by) rural protests and lawsuits." Similar feelings of "roads, yes, but not in my back yard," have delayed and stopped new road construction to this day, as evidenced by the dead-ending of the Clearview Expressway.

BY TROLLEY

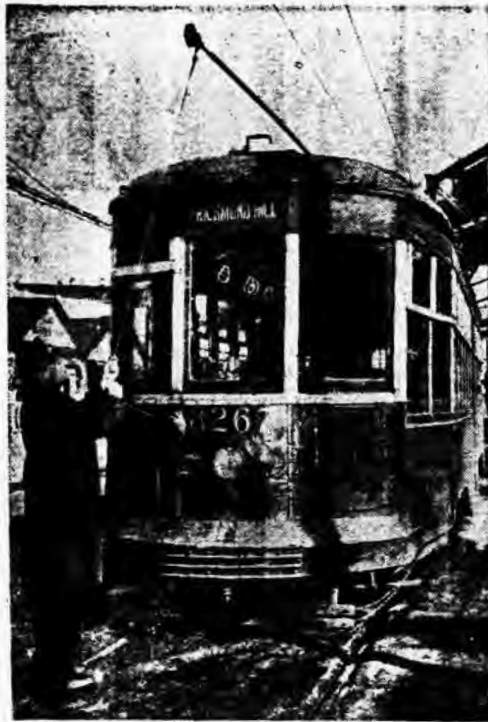
AS TROLLEYS used a combination of road and rail, they deserve a place of their own in this history. Besides, they were a little strange. One running through Queens and Nassau was called the "Banana Line" as it swayed (in an arc resembling a banana), and had yellow cars that "traveled in bunches."

The first trolley was horse drawn and arrived in 1863 on a run from Brooklyn to Jamaica. Hay and straw were carried to keep passengers' feet warm on winter days, and presumably, to feed the locomotive source. The driver on these stagecoach-like contraptions sat on the roof and communicated with passengers by foot and club.

If he noticed through his mirror that he had more passengers than 10-cent fares in the "conscience box" inside the car, the driver would pound on the car roof with a club until the culprits paid up. Passengers wishing to get off used the first pull cord—a strap attached to the driver's foot—and were seldom ignored.

THE ELECTRIC trolley arrived in 1887 and had its own problems. Electricity often leaked into the car frame and shocked the heck out of passengers. Riders found it difficult to check if the trolley was on time, as the current magnitized and stopped their watches.

Charmed by these clanky machines, Long Islanders



This trolley car ran on the old Myrtle Avenue line.

demanding more and more until, at its peak, trolley transport covered 300 miles of track in Queens alone and had 50 million riders annually, city-wide. But by the early 1930s, the romance was over and people demanded a change to buses, which were considered more versatile and comfortable.

At a 1934 city hearing, one rider testified: "I am certain

Horses Pulled Trains

The mocking call: "Get a horse," was a popular cry directed toward a stranded automobile owner in the heyday of the Tin Lizzy, but it also had its counterpart on the railroads and trolley lines on Long Island.

In the 1830s, the Long Island Railroad ran from Jamaica to South Ferry under locomotive power only to Clinton Street, Brooklyn. The grade was too steep from then on to the Ferry, so the engines had to be shunted aside and horses hitched up to pull the passenger cars along.

And from 1897 to 1899, when the electric trolleys were coming on strong, the power supply was as unreliable as it is now during a heat wave. Horses were kept at the ready to pull the trolleys when the electricity failed, prompting jeers and complaints from riders who expected more from new-fangled transportation.



Horses pull an old street car along Jamaica Avenue near Washington Street in 1887.

that using (trolleys) has jolted years off my normal life span." In 1937 Ridgewood residents took a trolley line to court, claiming that as it meandered through backyards its noise constituted harassment.

Yet the demise of the trolley was slow. Although buses were operating in many areas by 1937, the last trolley run was in 1957 on a 1.4 mile track over the Queensboro Bridge.

Electric buses replaced the trolleys in some areas, but these soon gave way to the kerosene-burning coaches we now see. Buses were so ubiquitous in the early 1940's, causing traffic jams, that commuters were urged to drive their cars to subways. (For the nostalgic, small sections of trolley rails can be seen under the worn pavement on Archer Avenue in Jamaica and other roads.)

BY RAIL

THE FIRST Long Island Railroad (or Rail Road for the oldsters), ran in 1836 on a 10-mile stretch from Jamaica to Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn. That same year, the line had its first accident, when the forward of two engines hit a cow and was plowed into by the second "boiler-on-wheels."

Before long the rails were reaching Mineola, Farmingdale and, by 1844, Greenport. The LIRR was built as a link in the Washington, D.C. to Boston rail system, with boats covering the L.I. Sound portion, because build-

ing track through swampy southern Connecticut was deemed impossible. In 1850 the Connecticut run was built.

During the late 1800s, various companies were organized to build railroad lines, some reaching new areas of the Island, some competing with existing routes. The LIRR ran into problems in the 1860s; Brooklyn residents chased it out for being too sooty and noisy, and even walled up its its underground tunnels.

SUFFOLK FARMERS were upset about trains running on the sabbath and the engine sparks setting woods and fields afire and so staged vandalism attacks on the line. The railroad stopped its Sunday runs for several years and bought off the other complainers with cash.

Land speculation was the biggest sport in the 19th century, and fortunes were lost and made according

(Turn to Next Page)

L. J. Press
5-21-71

Commuting Woes Are Nothing New To Hearty Llers

(Continued From Preceding Page)

to the path of the railroad took. Arguments between the LIRR and citizens in Cold Spring Harbor and Huntington Village result in the by-passing of these communities.

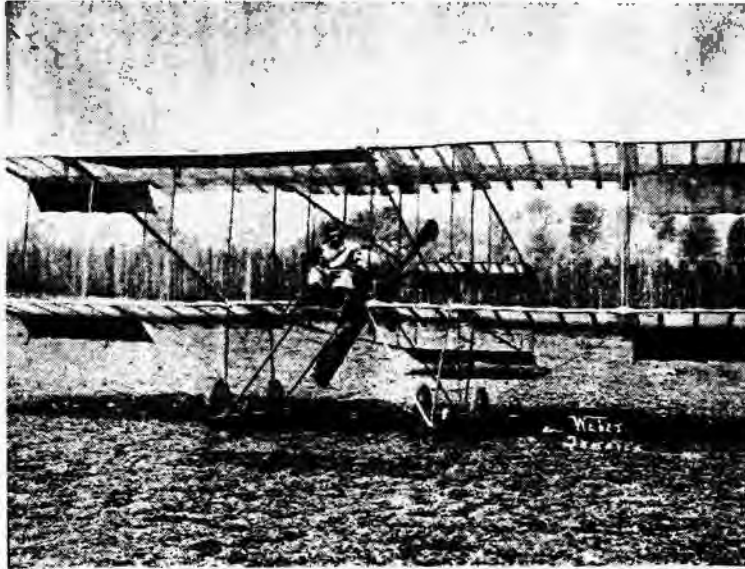
Bought by the Penn Central in 1900, the LIRR remained a financial drain whether it was lightly or heavily used, thanks to the lack of freight cartage and in 1965 the state took it over. You know the rest.

Just after the turn of the century, (about 1908) New York City officials decided to build a Brooklyn extension of the new Manhattan IRT system. Currently a new subway line from Queens to Manhattan is planned. Between these times, a maze of plans, construction, ownership and control of mass transit took place.

NOT LONG after the IRT came over the Manhattan Bridge, the city began building its first tunnel under the East River. Except for a few mishaps, as when tunneler Dick Creedon was pushed through a leak in the tunnel by its compressed air. Dick plowed upward through 30 feet of sand and water, but made it in one piece.

In 1911 Queens got two elevated lines, joining at Queensboro Bridge Plaza and running to Astoria and Corona. Brooklyn was not wasteful and used much of its old railroad track (after the LIRR was booted out) for subways, including the Sea Beach and Brighton lines. Elevated lines in both boroughs were built, torn down, and built again. The Myrtle Avenue El, built in 1888, lasted until just recently.

The subways not only followed growth of the communities, but also created it. "It is almost impossible to exaggerate the effect of (the subways) had on the future development of Queens," a chronicler said in 1925.



This man is about to take off in an old Farman biplane, back in 1910.

Crowds on the subways were so bad, that in 1948 Mayor O'Dwyer suggested businesses stagger their work hours to lessen the rushhour jam.

IN THE AIR

LONG ISLAND'S topography (flat) and location (about as east as you might want to be) lent itself to aviation. It provided a place for planes to take off and balloons to crash.

Our first aviation experience was in 1833 when a well-known balloonist took off from the Brooklyn Battery and unexpectedly landed at the Union Course racetrack in Jamaica. In 1877, two balloonists and a New York Daily Graphic reporter left Brooklyn for a trip across the Atlantic. They crashed a few hours later, this side of the ocean.

French Flyer Henri Farman wowed the folks at Brighton Beach racetrack with Long Island's first plane flight on Aug. 2, 1908. Henri's flight lasted about two

minutes. By 1909, the Hempstead Plains were discovered and during the next 20 years were the site of many breakthroughs in aviation. That first year a pilot won \$10,000 for staying up a half hour in what was described as "an enlarged box kite" that "fairly collapsed from the strain."

The first military-type use of a plane was in 1910 when an Army lieutenant shot a rifle from the wing of a biplane over Brooklyn. That same year, at Belmont Park, a world's altitude record of 9,714 feet was set by a pilot who rose in circles until he ran out of gas. The next year two men flew from Mineola to California, arriving after 49 days, several "forced landings" and many repairs.

Soon after the world's first air mail run was made from a Mineola field to the Mineola Post Office, six-miles away. Greater accomplishments came during and after World War I when the army developed Roosevelt Field and civilians created Mitchel Field.

LAWRENCE SPERRY developed the gyroscope that



This is the Grand Central Parkway shortly after it opened. The photograph was taken near the Parsons Boulevard exit.

revolutionized aviation and even flew "hands off" in guided missile-planes. (He'd take the controls eventually to avoid wasting planes). The Curtiss company located at Garden City built many of the record-setting aircraft, including one used in 1919 for the first trans-Atlantic flight from Jamaica Bay to Europe.

In 1927 Charles Lindbergh made his historic non-stop cross-Atlantic flight from Roosevelt Field and in 1938 "Wrong Way" Corrigan set the world laughing when he left Long Island for California and wound up in Ireland.

Long Island got its first major commercial field in 1939, when Mayor LaGuardia decided New York city should no longer have to use Newark's airfield. Built at North Beach, an old amusement park, LaGuardia Airport soon became the world's busiest. Idlewild (now called Kennedy International Airport) followed.

Although aviation is the most modern of Long Island's transportation, it does owe a debt to the past: Floyd Bennett Field is built on an old horses' graveyard.

Community News

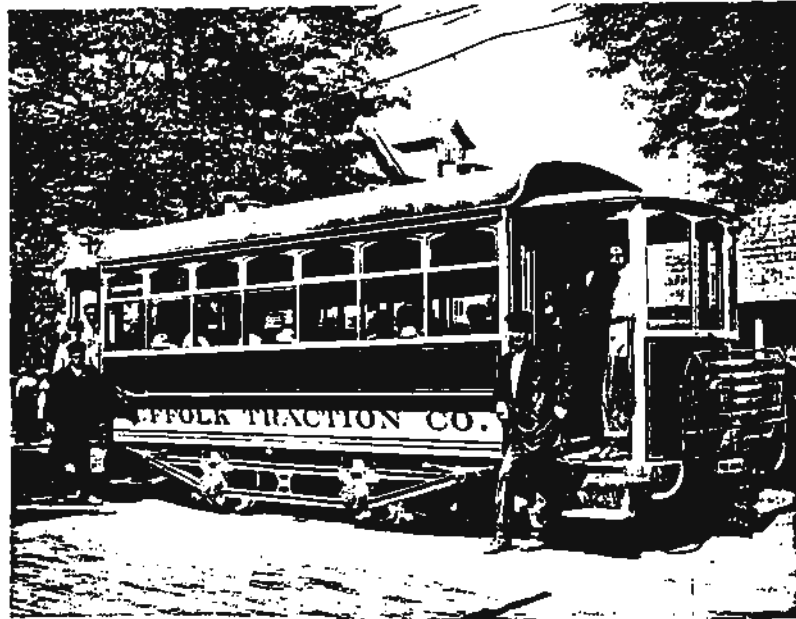
TURN OF THE CENTURY TROLLEY RIDE - August 17, \$5.00 per person - Trolley leaves from Meadow Croft 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. - 4 p.m. Parking at St. Ann's South Parking Lot. Send stamped, self addressed envelope with check to Bayport Heritage, P.O. Box 2. Blue Point. Indicate choice of time.

Historic Narration Provided Souvenir Booklet & Refreshments.

TRANSPORTATION - NYS -
LONG ISLAND

LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION
BABYLON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Suffolk Traction Rides Again!



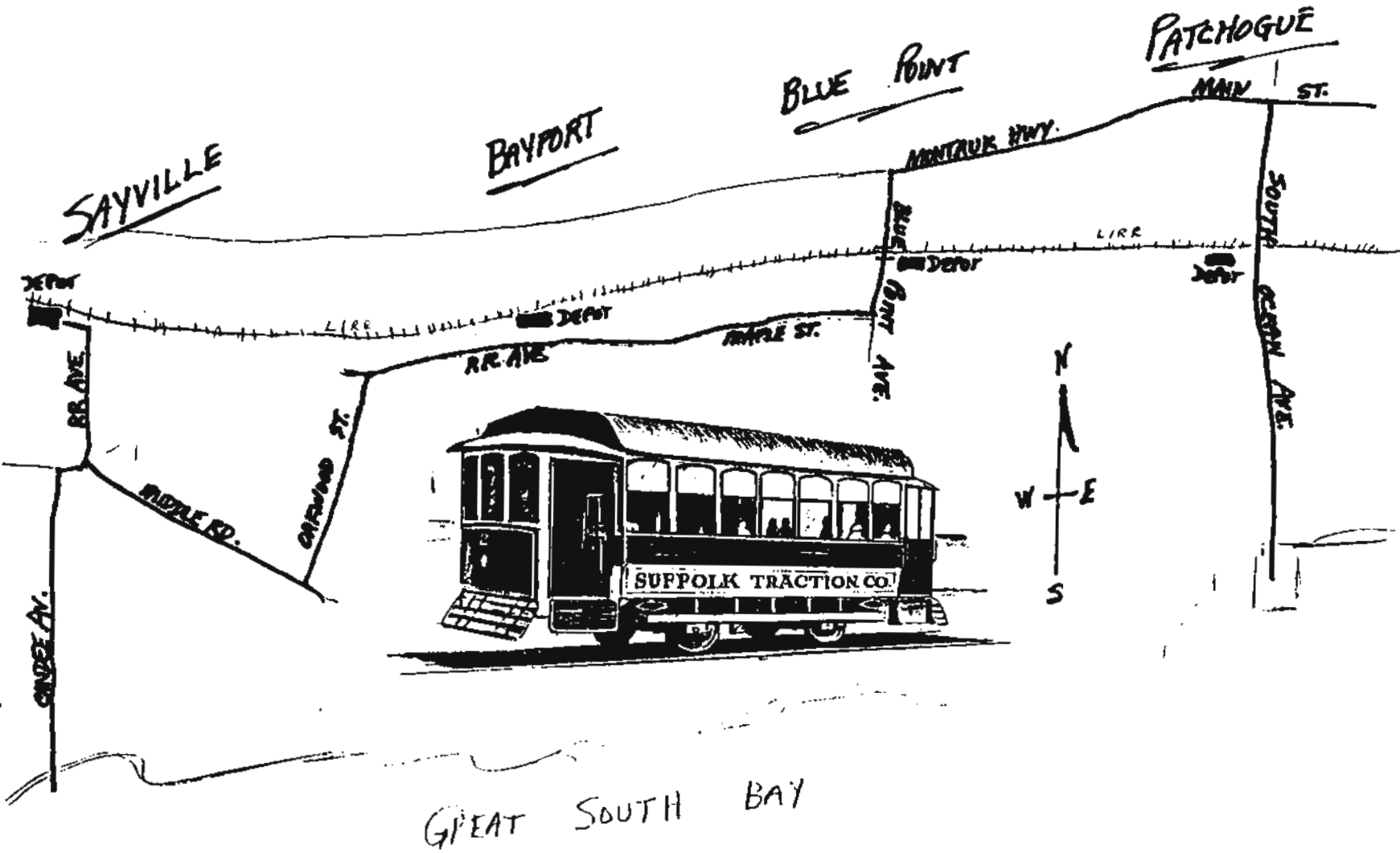
**A Reenactment of the original Suffolk Traction Street
Car Route Through Patchogue, Blue Point, Bayport,
and Sayville 1911-1919**

Sponsored by Bayport Heritage Association

With Assistance from:
Hans Henke, Patchogue
Gene Horton, Blue Point
Carole Pichney, Bayport

Constance Currie and
Chuck Webber, Sayville

SUFFOLK TRACTION 1911-1919



1



KENSINGTON HOTEL: Renovated in 1895 from the old Bedell Tavern; Scene of German espionage in World War I. Torn down in 1954.

2



A DEPARTMENT STORE AT SAYVILLE, L. I.

Sept 8, 1905

Dear Florence:

I bought
these portals at this store.
Helena

GERBER'S DEPARTMENT STORE: North side of Main St. just east of the Kensington Hotel. Mr. Gerber, originally a peddler, was the first Jewish merchant in Sayville.

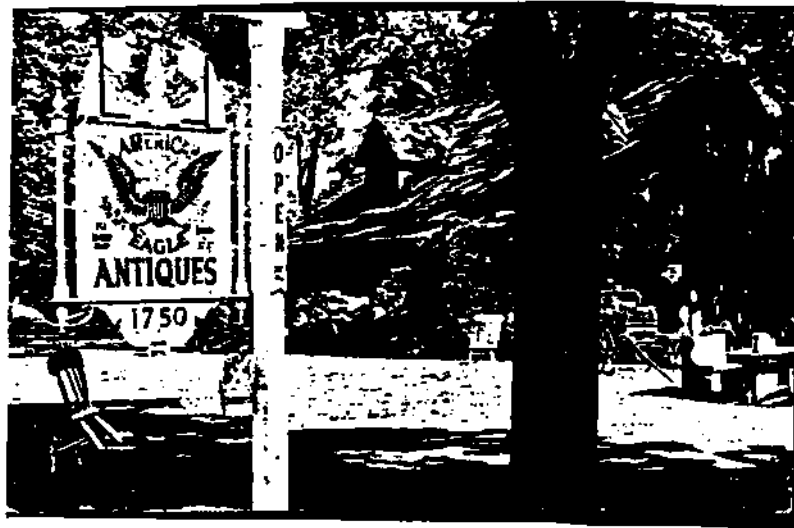
3



SOLDIER'S MONUMENT AT SAYVILLE, L. I.
1918

SOLDIERS MONUMENT at Sayville: The EAGLE was given to Elward Smith (c. 1919) by the famous Pulitzer family. It had been over the doorway of the first NEW YORK WORLD newspaper building in NYC.

4



Old ROBINSON HOUSE; originally in Bayport;
Dr. Robinson was a well-loved Sayvillian.

Prapp Court House, Sayville, L. I.



5

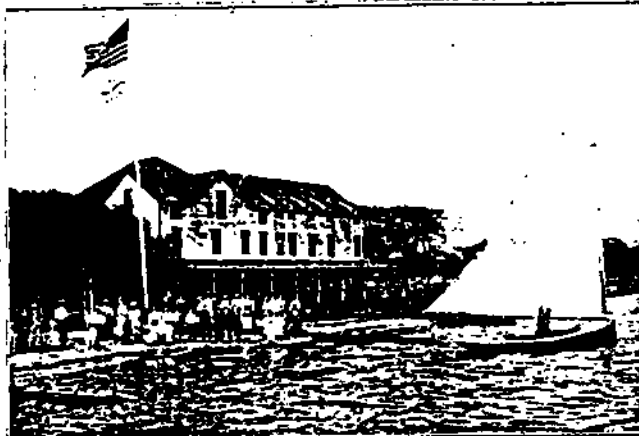
Built in 1912; Designed by I.H. Green. It originally held the village 'lock-up.'



4008 OPERA HOUSE, SAYVILLE, L. I.

6

Built c. 1900; Designed by I.H. Green for the fire department and local vaudevillians. Burned in 1961.



SOUTH BAY HOUSE 177 FEET FROM WATER, SAYVILLE, L. I.

7

One of the many inns frequented by guests. Burned in 1926.



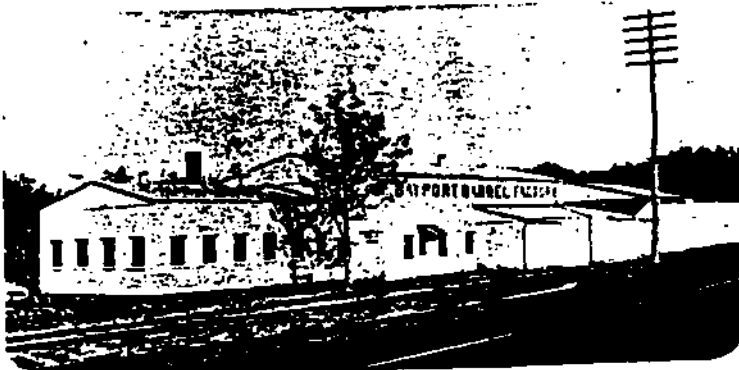
1

The owner of this home, Mr. Asher, sued the trolley company for \$12,000 in damages for running the trolley in front of his home. He was eventually awarded \$200.



2

This LITTLE OLD TEA HOUSE stood on the northwest corner of Middle Road and Oakwood Ave. where the trolley made its turn toward Sayville.



3

The BAYPORT BARREL FACTORY was established in 1904. Barrels for shipping oysters were made here. 100,000 barrels a season were turned out here. By 1938, this structure was gone.

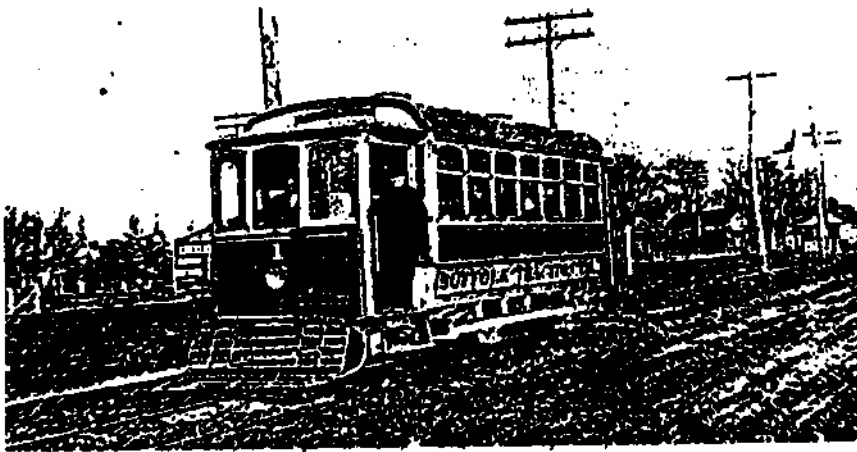
The Bayport Barrel Factory covered half an acre and before being torn down was at Oakwood and Oakwood

4



LIRR STATION at BAYPORT: Built in 1903 on land donated by Mrs. Edward Gillette. Station cost \$8,000. Demolished in the early 1960's.

5

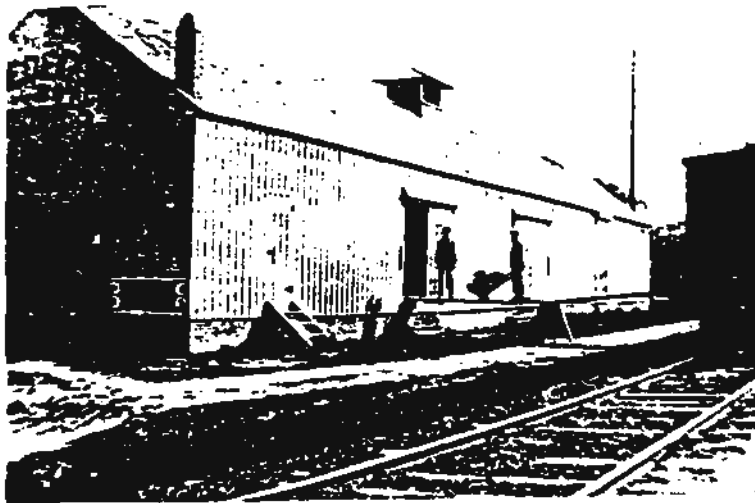


SUFFOLK TRACTION Car # 1 is shown approaching the Bayport LIRR station.

6



William B. Arthur of Blue Point had his house moved to Bayport, where Saltbox Realty is today. He operated a general store here and was Bayport's first station-master and postmaster.



SNEDECOR & SQUIRES GRAIN AND FEED STORE: Built in 1904 north of the LIRR tracks east of Bayport Ave. The feed business was run as an extension of their general store on Middle Road.

7



In June, 1907, an injunction was issued against Suffolk Traction Co. which began laying tracks in front of the Purdy estate. All work was stopped leaving Middle Road almost impassable. This caused much anger among the citizens of Bayport.

The Purdy estate was cut in half and now is located at #78 and #84 Connecticut Ave. in Bayport.

8



1

Downtown BLUE POINT, c. 1915: Notice the doors of the Blue Point Fire Department on the right & the tracks of SUFFOLK TRACTION on the left. Site of Firehouse Deli today.



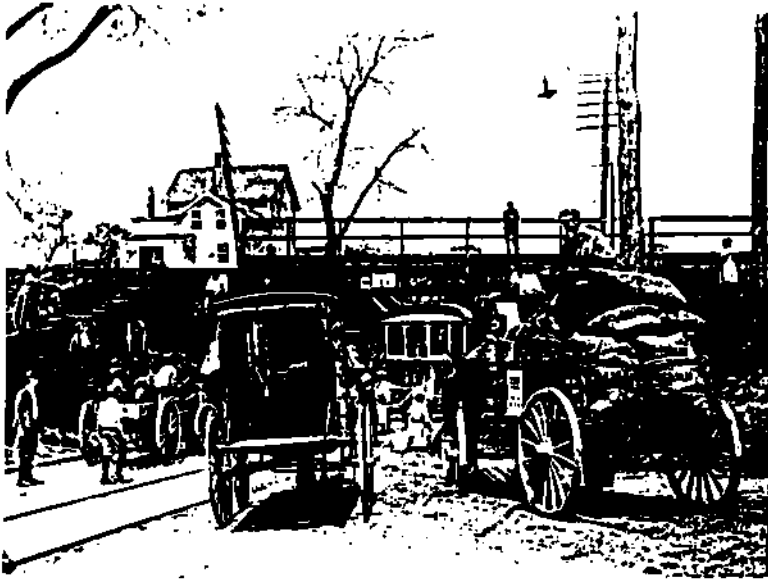
1838

THE STATION, BLUE POINT, L. I.

ILLUSTRATED POST CARD CO., N. Y.

2

LIRR depot in Blue Point; east side of Blue Point Ave. opposite liquor store. The station was built in 1900 & dismantled in 1951.



3

TROUBLE AT THE BLUE POINT AVE. TRESTLE, c. 1914. Suffolk Traction streetcar appears stuck.



4

Another flood at the LIRR underpass on Blue Point Ave.

5

Blue Point Inn; site of North Fork Bank today; Inn was built in 1888; burned down in 1963.



6

YE OLE ANCHORAGE INN; northwest corner of Montauk Hwy. & Kennedy Ave., Blue Point.

One of the 'pharos' (lighthouses) still stands on the property today.



YE ANCHORAGE INN c. 1915



7

Another view of YE OLE ANCHORAGE INN, c. 1915. Home of THE SHPINX (now in Bayport.)

ANCHORAGE INN burned down in 1928.



1

West Lake; track on north side;
Actor Elmer Grandin's house on lake.



2

Leo's Inn; once a private home; became
an inn around 1910.



3

First spikes for tracks driven by
Mr. Breckenridge, 1907, in front of the
Lace Mill.

Trolley shed stood opposite mill; long
gone.



4

Shand's store on Havens Ave.
Building was old Haven's store;
Built c. 1850;
Sold to Shand, 1914.



5

West Main St., 1907; Buildings
from L-R: Mueller's White House
Hotel, Masonic Temple built 1907,
burnt 1974; small house ?;
Large brick building = Syndicate
Building (now Wedge Wood), built
1898; fire burnt upper story, 1967.



6

Trolley on Main St., 1912.



7

The MILL'S BUILDING; gabled center part built in 1876, left and right sections built in 1898;

Home of HAMMOND-MILL'S DEPARTMENT STORE;

Burned down in 1956.

The Station, Patchogue, L.I



8

PATCHOGUE RAILROAD STATION; In 1869 the railroad reached Patchogue; end of line until 1872. This picture 1905;

1869 = 4 trains per day each way;
90 minutes to NYC.

1904 = 14 trains each way.



9

Joseph Bailey residence; son of Ed Bailey, founder of lumbermill business. Elaborate wood interior; everything made in Bailey's mill. Now convent home.



10

St. Francis de Sales Church was built in 1888 on East Main St. and moved here in 1906. Move took three months in bitter cold winter

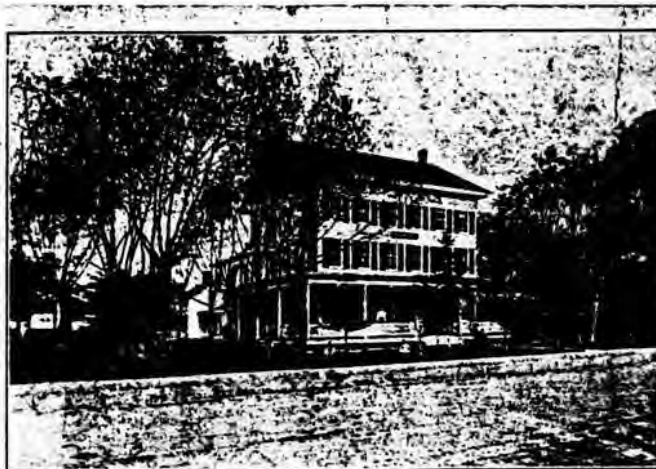
Architect: I.H. Green of Sayville.



11

Laurel Hotel on NW corner of Laurel St. and So. Ocean Ave.; built c. 1880 as a summer hotel by John N. Silsbe, Sr.

Demolished in late 1930's.



SMITHPORT HOTEL, PATCHOGUE, L. I.

12

The Smithport Hotel; built c. 1880 as a summer hotel by Capt. Samuel N. Smith; 40-bed hotel; 1898: bought by Augusta J.S. Weeks



13

Trolley in front of the new MASCOT HOTEL, July, 1911. The NEW MASCOT was just north of the new Felice's Restaurant.

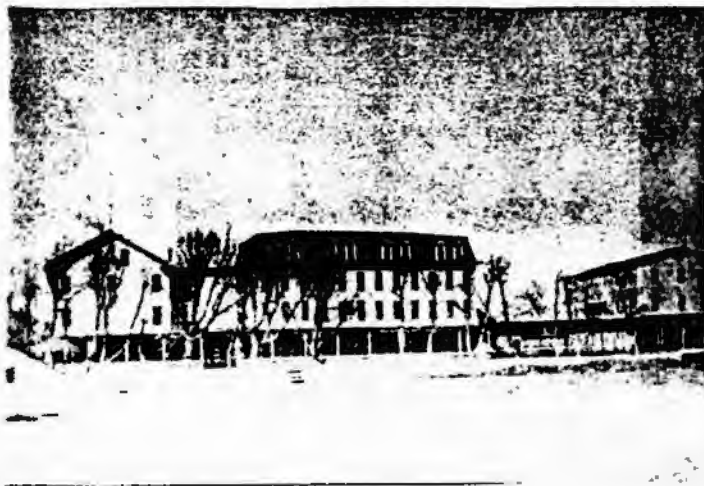


OCEAN AVENUE HOTEL, PATCHOGUE, L.I.

14

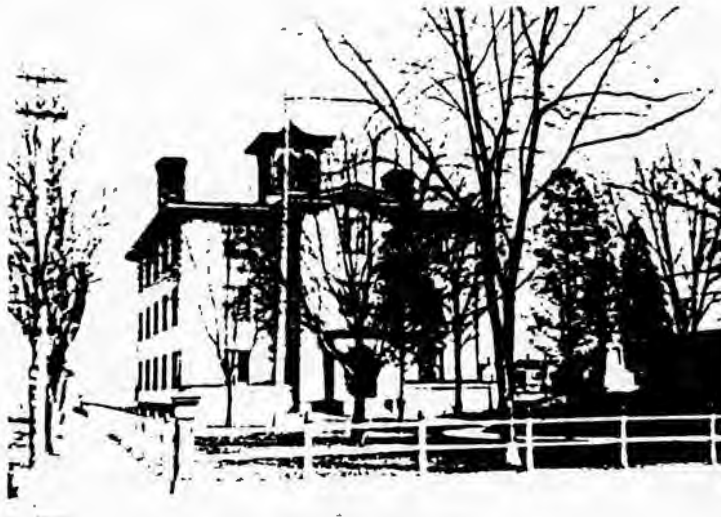
OCEAN AVENUE HOTEL on left; Built c. 1878 and enlarged to double size; proprietor Sanford Weeks; Daily rate: \$2.50 to \$3.00 in 1900; 275 guests; hotel bulldozed in late 1930's

Old Mascot at foot of South Ocean Ave. Stood on a pier; built in 1880; moved in 1905.



15

Looking from Mascot dock; just after turning trolley bus; Ocean Ave. Hotel original on left; addition on right. On extreme right is Roe's Annex to the hotel connected by covered walkway.



16

Academy Street School; just north of the LIRR tracks; built in 1871; first big Patchogue school building. Used until 1924. Demolished in the 1930's. Part of it saved and was moved down the street.



H. S. Goodwin, Patchogue, N. Y.

METHODIST CHURCH, PATCHOGUE, N. Y.

17

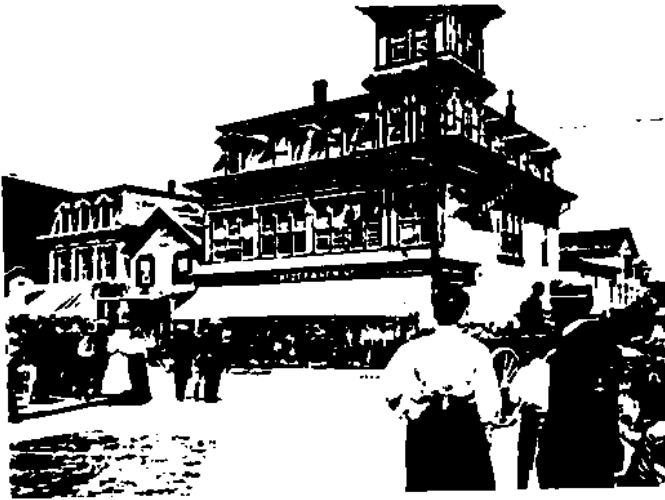
Methodist Church; built in 1891; approx. \$40,000. Home left of church moved to Jennings Ave. and Lakewood; Hose past church moved to Bay Ave. to make room for Union Savings Bank.



St. Green Avenue and Main Street, Patchogue, L. I.

18

South Ocean Ave., 1910.



19

Swezey's & the Four Corners, c. 1907



20

Congregational Church on N. Ocean and corner of Lakewood St.; built in 1855; Served until 1895; then became part of the Lyceum.



21

Fire House on Lake St. built 1904-1905. Demolished in 1971

The Lyceum, Patchogue, N. Y.



22

The Lyceum, 1895 to c. 1916 (burned); Center part is old church (gable on left & steeple in center); stage plays, vaudeville shows; local amateur plays, movies, concerts. 550 opera chair seats. Al Trahern shows here.

Architect: I.H. Green of Sayville.

L.I.L. 19 Public Library, Patchogue, Long Island, N. Y.



23

The LIBRARY; built with grants from Andrew Carnegie. \$10,000 first grant, 2nd grant \$5,000. Opened Wed. evening March 6, 1908.



24

Patchogue Plymouth Mill; 1st part of mill was Justus Roe mill 1850 (Union Twine Mill). Steady expansion. 1880: Scotch firm made crenolines & bleached curtains. 1890 Lace manufacturing & table cloths 1896 = 200 employees, weekly payroll \$1,300. 1922 = 600 employees 1954 = operations shut down.



Trolley in lake; c. 1915. Easily derailed by mud, stones and bad boys!

TIME TABLE SUFFOLK TRACTION CO.
Bayport and Blue Point Line

OCT. 24, 1913

Leave Main St. and Ocean Ave.	Leave Bayport Snedecor Ave.	Leave Blue Point Post Office
76 20 a. m.	6 40 a. m.	*6 45 a. m.
77 00	7 20	7 25
8 00	8 20	*8 25
9 00	9 20	9 25
10 00	10 20	10 25
11 00	11 20	*11 25
12 00	12 20 p. m.	*12 25 p. m.
1 00 p. m.	1 20	*1 25
2 00	2 20	*2 25
3 00	3 20	3 25
4 00	4 20	4 25
5 00	5 20	*5 25
6 00	6 20	6 25
6 40	7 00	*7 05
7 20	7 40	7 45
8 20	8 40	8 45
9 20	9 40	*9 45
10 20	10 40	10 45
11 20 Sat. Only	11 40	*11 45

† Will not run on Sunday * To Bay Ave.



Babylon

(Long Island)

Reminiscences

—
FIELD

I NTRODUCTION



Newcomers to a village, as well as the natives and "old timers," usually seek with eagerness, reminiscences of their home surroundings. To the student or reader of history, these tales of times past, convey, like old pictures, the delineation of incidents perhaps forgotten, and unknown to the present generation. It is for the purpose of stimulating an interest in our village past and present, that this book is brought before the public.

We are fortunate in having as a neighbor among us, an octogenarian, endowed not only with a memory, vivid with early incidents, and pictures of our village, but gifted with the power to portray the usages and characteristics of old Babylon folks, and to depict the appearance and location of old buildings of sixty years ago. Perhaps, some part our good fortune in having our friend and author still among our number, is due to his good wife. For if, like the writer, you, our reader, had grown up with the Field family and had been brought into contact with the kind and loving wife and mother, and heard every day for many years, from some of her children, "No, we had better not do that, Mother would not like it," you would have learned a mother's influence, always given in the kindest and sweetest way. With such a life-companion, who cannot have more admiration for our author and his well-rounded life? We wish our author many more years of usefulness, and may his reminiscences go down to posterity as a monument to one who has loved Babylon and its people.

It has been thought fitting to include in this book a brief biography of our author by his friend, James B. Cooper, and a sketch of the history of our village—merely an outline of its progress—by the writer, to whom Babylon will always be endeared by many tender associations.

J. W. E

September 1, 1911.

W. Larned, first assistant, and Gustav Fishel, second assistant engineer of the fire department.

In 1895 D. Ricketts, Jr., was elected president, Edward Daily, Joshua Taylor and Treadwell B. Kellum, Trustees and James B. Cooper, Jr., was appointed Clerk.

December 10, 1895, petition of Sumpawams Hose Company to form a company was granted.

January 21, 1896, a special election to determine whether Babylon Village should remain incorporated. The election resulted in a majority of votes being cast in favor of sustaining the government. In 1896 Andrew J. Weeks was elected trustee in place of Joshua Taylor and William G. Nicoll was appointed Clerk. October 15, 1896, a map of the village was ordered to be made by Oscar Darling for the sum of \$600.

March 22, 1897, the offer of the Babylon Woman's Exchange for a drinking fountain to be erected on Fire Island avenue and Main street was accepted. In 1898. H. Van Weelden was elected president, Edward Daily and Henry Oakley, trustees and Eugene Fishel was appointed Clerk. In 1899 the same officers were re-elected.

In 1900, Edward Daily was elected president, Charles S. Hendrickson and Henry Oakley, trustees, and Eugene Fishel was appointed Clerk. F. S. Thorpe was elected chief of the fire department. In 1901 and 1902 the same officers were elected and Eugene Fishel remained Clerk. In 1903, Treadwell B. Kellum was elected president, Henry Oakley and Charles S. Hendrickson, trustees, Eugene Fishel was appointed Clerk. In 1904, B. B. Wood was elected president, Henry Oakley and John Arink, trustees, LeRoy M. Young was appointed Clerk. In 1905 and 1906 the officers remained the same, but on February 13, 1906, the resignation of Henry Oakley was accepted and Elmer W. Howell was appointed to fill the vacancy. In 1907 B. B. Wood was elected president and John H. Arink and Elmer W. Howell, trustees, LeRoy M. Young was appointed Clerk. In 1908 Chester O. Ketcham was elected President, Carll Jackson, James C. Burns, trustees, and James B. Cooper was appointed Clerk. In 1909 and 1910 the officers were the same. In 1911 E. S. Alley was elected president and David C. Ricketts, who with Carll Jackson formed the Board, and James B. Cooper was appointed Clerk.

The village has made rapid improvements under incorporation and now has many advantages over other villages. It is an express station,

not without its misfortunes. The Huntington Railroad could not compete with the increased use of personal automobiles and the rising costs resulting from the United States' entry into World War I. On September 23, 1919, the Cross-Island service to Amityville ended. However, the original trolley line between Huntington and Halesite, sold to the Huntington Traction Company, continued until 1927.

100th Anniversary of the Trolley

Lines

These two trolley lines are a fascinating part of Babylon Town history. To commemorate the upcoming 100th Anniversaries of the Cross-Island Line (August 25, 1909) and the Babylon Railroad (June 11, 1910), the Town of Babylon Historic Preservation Commission and the Office of Historic Services chose the theme "Trolley Days: A History of Trolleys in the Town of Babylon," for its Annual History Essay Contest.

The History Essay Contest has been held since 1989; however, this year's contest garnered the highest participation in its history. Over 1,800 4th grade students from 17 elementary schools throughout the Town of Babylon wrote essays about local trolley history. A selection of winning student essays will be posted on the Town of Babylon website (www.townofbabylon.com).

Winning students, whose essays were selected by their classroom teachers, received award certificates from Town Supervisor Steve Bellone, Town Clerk Carol Quirk, and the Historic Preservation Commission, at an awards ceremony held at Babylon Town Hall on May 30, 2009. Councilwoman Jacqueline A. Gordon and Councilman Tony Martinez were also present at the awards ceremony.

Two other award ceremonies were also held. On April 24, 2009, students at the Park Avenue Memorial Elementary School, Amityville, received certificates during the school's quarterly awards ceremony. Students from the John F. Kennedy Intermediate School, Deer Park, received awards certificates from Town Clerk Carol Quirk at a school ceremony held on May 28, 2009.

Article compiled and written by Mary Cascone, C.A., Director of the Office of Historic Services, and Thomas B. Smith, Town Historian, Town of Babylon.

Reader Comments

No comments have been posted. Be the first!

Add Comment

Other Stories With Comments:

Article	Comments
Opposition to drilling by Congress is a pain in the	3

<u>gas</u>	
<u>Editorial</u>	2
<u>Legals</u>	1
<u>John Bartow, 45-year volunteer Babylon firefighter</u>	1
<u>Edward J. Peterson, Good Samaritan Hospital administrator</u>	1
<u>Happy Holidays to all!</u>	1
<u>William Zaruka, longtime Babylonian, veteran and volunteer</u>	1
<u>West Babylon Alumni Foundation installs new officers</u>	1
<u>Heard It On The Grapevine</u>	1

The Babylon Railroad

David Sturgis Sprague Sammis, a prominent Babylon Village businessman, opened the Surf Hotel on Fire Island in 1855. In order to transport hotel visitors from the Babylon Railroad Station to the ferry docks, Mr. Sammis established a horse-drawn trolley line in 1871. The horse-drawn line traveled 1.53 miles from the railroad station, proceeded south on Deer Park Avenue, crossed Main Street and continued south on Fire Island Avenue to the Babylon Docks. The entire operation consisted of two trolley cars and two horses.

By 1890, Sammis increased the rolling stock, or trolley cars, to three closed cars and one open car. The closed cars were enclosed with sides, while the open cars were exposed to the weather elements. The fare from the railroad station to the docks was 6 cents. In response to the 1892 cholera epidemic, Mr. Sammis sold the Surf Hotel and surrounding property to New York State for the quarantine of cholera patients. The land that once housed the majestic hotel is now part of Robert Moses State Park.

The demise of the Surf Hotel did not destroy the trolley business. In 1898, a New York City firm purchased the trolley line, known as the Babylon Railroad, and installed steam power motors in the trolley cars. A steam boiler located in the yard north of the Babylon Village Odd Fellows Hall generated the necessary steam. Steam power was effective, but it was unpredictable. After just two years of steam power operation, Babylon resident William De Garmo leased the trolley company and reinstated the horse-drawn service. While horse service may have seemed a backwards choice, Mr. De Garmo's initial year of operation realized the first profit for the Babylon Railroad - a total of \$1.00.

The next owner of the Babylon Railroad was the Long Island Consolidated Electrical Company (a subsidiary of the Long Island Railroad), which had plans to electrify the line, but the financial Panic of 1907 delayed their plans. In 1909, the final transfer of the Babylon Railroad occurred when it was purchased by the South Shore Traction Company. The name "Babylon Railroad" continued to be used.

By the early 20th Century trolley lines were built all over the United States and Long Island

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<p>FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 15 Broadway, Massapequa 11758-0001 Rev. Dr. Louis Simon-John Parris</p> <p>Sunday Services Early Morning Worship: 8:00am Morning Worship: 10:00am Sunday School & Church School</p> <p>All are welcome to join God's Church! HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE</p>	<p>ST. MARTIN OF TOURS 1700 Main St. Kingsville 11757-0402 Rev. Richard J. Van der Pelt</p> <p>10:00 AM Mass 10:30 AM Church School 11:00 AM Holy Communion 11:30 AM Bible Study</p>
<p>SIMPSON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 45 Lewis Ave., Massapequa 11758-0001 Jack E. Peltis, Pastor</p> <p>SUNDAY Church School 9:00 AM Worship Services 9:30 AM You are our strength & joy!</p>	<p>ST. JESUS CATHOLIC CHURCH 147 Park Ave., Amityville 516-4770-0000 (516) 477-0072 Rev. Dennis W. Anglin, Pastor</p> <p>Mass: 8:00am, 10:00am, 12:00pm Ascension: 10:00am Holy Communion: 10:00am, 12:00pm 1:00pm, 5:00pm, 7:00pm 8:00pm (Seasonal)</p>

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was no exception to the "Trolley Fever." The original plans of the South Shore Traction Company were to build a 51-mile trolley line from Manhattan, through Queens, Freeport, Babylon and Patchogue, ending in Brookhaven. Although the South Shore Traction Company operated several small trolley lines, those full-scale plans never materialized.

In 1909, the South Shore Traction Company successfully electrified the existing trolley line between the Babylon Railroad Station and the docks, and extended the line westward through West Babylon, Lindenhurst and Copiague, to the Amityville Railroad Station. The approximate route of the Babylon Railroad, east to west, was this: starting from the Long Island Railroad Station in Babylon Village, the line proceeded west, on what is now known as Trolley Line Road; continuing through West Babylon, the line traveled along the south side of the Long Island Railroad tracks, known as Railroad Avenue; in Lindenhurst, where the road becomes Hoffman Avenue, the line turned south from Hoffman Avenue along the approximate route of East Gates Avenue crossing Broadway to West Gates Avenue; entering Copiague from West Gates Avenue, the trolley rolled westward down Scudder Avenue to Great Neck Road where it turned north and then quickly proceeded west on Oak Street; following Oak Street to Amityville, the trolley line ended at the Railroad Station.

On June 11, 1910, a reportedly rainy day, the new electrified trolley line officially opened with five small trolley cars, each with a capacity of 28 passengers. The fare for stops at West Babylon, Lindenhurst and Copiague was 5 cents, while the full trip from Amityville to Babylon cost 10 cents. The full trip took approximately 35 minutes and trolley cars operated at an average of once per hour.

Stories of trolley mishaps abound. Henry Ellis Willmont, a former trolley motorman, recalled that the trolley "used to jump off [track] quite a bit and we'd have to run it back on." Others have described the need to distribute passenger weight evenly on the trolley cars, otherwise the cars would tip. No reported deaths were attributed to trolley accidents, but one of the most memorable stories of trolleys gone awry was dismaying to many Babylon Village residents. On the southwest corner of Main Street and Fire Island Avenue, there was once a large, ornate, cast-iron drinking fountain for horses. The public fountain was demolished by a trolley that had jumped the track. The fountain had been a prominent feature in the heart of the bustling village.

In his article "Recollections of the Trolleys," published in "A Backward Glance" by the Amityville Historical Society, 1980, Seth Purdy wrote: "Boys, who lived along the way on Oak Street in Copiague, were known to throw a wire onto the overhead lines causing a short and an unexpected stop of the car; a thrill to the youngsters but an annoyance to the motorman and the passengers."

For ten years, the Babylon Railroad transported residents and visitors across the southern part of the Town of Babylon. Despite its decadelong service, the trolley business was never a

profit-making enterprise. On May 25, 1920, the operations of the Babylon Railroad ended.

The Cross-Island Line

The history of the Cross-Island Line, which ran across Long Island, from the Long Island Sound in Huntington to the Great South Bay in Amityville, began with the Huntington Railroad Company. In 1890, the Huntington Railroad Company established a three-mile long horse-drawn trolley line between Huntington Village and Halesite on the harbor.

The line was later purchased by the Long Island Railroad, which electrified it in 1898. The electrified line between Halesite and Huntington ran for ten years before it was extended 18.5 miles to Amityville Village, following the approximate route of the present day Route 110. The line traveled south through Melville, stopping at both the Farmingdale Railroad Station and the Amityville Railroad Station, to the dock in Amityville along the Great South Bay.

The trolley tracks traveled under the Long Island Railroad tracks at the Huntington and Farmingdale Railroad Stations, but were elevated over the tracks at Amityville. Car barns for the storage of trolley cars were maintained at both ends of the line, in Halesite and Amityville; and power substations were located at the Railroad Stations in Huntington and Farmingdale.

With construction complete, the Cross-Island Line was officially opened on August 25, 1909. The opening day in Amityville was a festive occasion, with an automobile parade, fireworks and other amusements. Maintaining an hourly schedule, a one-way trip, from end to end, lasted 76 minutes. The rolling stock consisted of six double-truck, semi-convertible cars and seven single trucks, which provided more frequent service to local railroad stations. The fare was 30 cents for the full trip, divided into six 5-cent zones, each approximately three miles long: (1) the Halesite terminal, (2) Huntington Station, (3) the DeForest Farm at West Hills, (4) the Duryea Farm at Melville, (5) Farmingdale Station, and (6) the terminal at Amityville. A spur track from Conklin Street to the Farmingdale Railroad Station was created so that trolley passengers could make connections with trains to and from Brooklyn and New York City.

The following year, in 1910, passengers could connect from the Cross-Island Line to the Babylon Railroad at the Amityville Railroad Station. With so many intersecting trolley lines, passengers had an increasing number of travel options. The trolleys were a convenient source of transportation for commuters, such as those who worked at the Fulton Truck Assembly Plant in East Farmingdale. The line was also frequented by beach goers traveling between the refreshing waters of the Long Island Sound and the Great South Bay. Benny Cirincione, a Cross-Island motorman, is remembered as serenading passengers with Italian opera arias, while collecting fares.

Comparable to the Babylon Railroad, the Cross-Island Line was