

For a Great Vacation, Go by Train! Railroads, Tourism, and Commuters at the Jersey Shore

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Abstract: Nestled halfway between two of America's most important cities, the Jersey Shore seems perfectly positioned to be a vacation destination. What was once desolate beachfront did not become a vacationing mecca overnight. Railroads were the defining factor in creating and shaping the development of the Shore as a center for everything from day trips to whole summer vacations. As the winds of technology changed, the passenger-centric Jersey Shore railroads were able to turn into the breeze and refocus to commuters, redefining themselves and the Jersey Shore as a whole. This work explores railroads and their effects on Jersey Shore, especially vacationing and commuting, focusing through the lens of railroad publications like timetables and advertisements. This work is delivered in expanded form to historical societies along the Jersey Shore.

Introduction

The Jersey Shore has been a playground for the Northeast for over two centuries. With over 120 miles of coastline and an almost equal number of municipalities hugging the ocean, riverfronts, or bay shores, possibilities abound for anyone choosing to brave the Garden State Parkway for a summer weekend and the millions who decided to sink roots. Over these past two centuries, and the many centuries of habitation preceding them, the Jersey Shore has undergone countless changes and reasons for visiting. Once inhabited by Lenape bands, then the intermittent home of pirates, farmers, baymen, fishermen, and wreckers, the Jersey Shore transformed into a resort mecca in a comparatively short stretch of time. While many forces were at play in this shift, the coming of the railroads and the focus on Jersey Shore passenger tourism that they developed

and encouraged shaped “a few desolate beaches” at “the end of the earth” into America’s Playground.¹

Railroads, as a service, usually carry commodities between an origin and a destination, relying on passenger service as a secondary income stream. With little to offer in terms of valuable products to railroads, the Jersey Shore’s relatively untapped seashore offered railroad pioneers a new source of passenger income: tourism. Capitalizing on the few established seashore resorts and the burgeoning middle class and their equally expanding desires and wallets, railroads laid track to nearly every mile of Jersey beachfront and established resort communities trackside. Railroad companies developed new methods to earn passenger revenue at the Jersey Shore, enticing passengers away from cities and even their competition and thereby creating new models of vacationing and excursioning replicated throughout the United States. This cutthroat competition for the tourist’s dollar was reflected in the attention railroads gave to their advertisements, their volume of service, their attention to passengers instead of freight, and even their equipment and infrastructure deployment and innovation. A double-edged sword, a century of passenger-centric business caused the decline of Jersey Shore railroading throughout the mid-twentieth century’s changing technologies and popular travel interests. However, the same reasons people flocked to the Jersey Shore in summer attracted new year-round residents, and it was the railroads’ development of commuter operations that assured their survival.

Early Jersey Shore Tourism

The earliest inhabitants of the Jersey Shore, the Lenape, lived similarly to later visitors. As summer visitors, members of the Unamee and Unalatchigo bands sojourned on the tidal and barrier

¹ Unknown, “Long Beach Island, 1828,” *Shore Chronicles: Diaries and Travelers’ Tales from the Jersey Shore, 1764-1955*, Margaret Thomas Buchholz, ed. (Harvey Cedars, New Jersey: Down the Shore Publishing, 199), 45.

islands to fish.² Likewise, the early European settlers lived off the water, fishing, wrecking, whaling, shipping and pirating, while inland farmers occasionally visited to let their cattle graze on marsh grass.³ Besides these subsistence ventures, the Jersey Shore did not have much to offer settlers trying to eke out a living. The soil was too sandy, inlet currents too strong, winters too brutal, and summers too hot to facilitate further settlement or economic growth.

By the late 1700s, travelers took notice of the natural benefits of the Jersey Shore as a potential destination. Rev. Carl Magnus Wrangel, a Swedish pastor from Philadelphia, noted Little Egg Harbor's "pleasant coolness from the ocean."⁴ Most importantly, Wrangel describes the environment of the Jersey Shore as "healthful" and that "a great many people, with various illnesses, come here in the spring and summer for two or three weeks to bathe in the water and drink it."⁵ In this correspondence, Rev. Wrangel notes one of the earliest noncommercial reasons for travel: health. Even in the 1800s, America was known as a "nation of travelers," usually referring to journeying for commercial reasons or migration.⁶ Leisure travel, including health reasons, emerged after the Revolution and was limited to only the most aristocratic of travelers.⁷ Only the wealthy could afford the transportation and accommodations, but also the sabbatical from their employment. Health travel justified the movement and expense. Doctors noted the health benefits of certain natural conditions, including mineral springs and sea breezes in the years leading up to the 1800s, as treatment for the various lung or skin afflictions of the era, and

² Dominick Mazzagetti, *The Jersey Shore: Past, Present, and Future of a National Treasure* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2018), 25.

³ *Ibid.*, 30-45.

⁴ Rev. Carl Magnus Wrangel, "Pastor Wrangel's Trip to the Seashore," *Shore Chronicles*, Buchholz, ed., 29.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ WWP., "Travel," *Yale Literary Magazine* 25, no. 5 (March 1860), 203-209, and Will B. Mackintosh, *Selling the Sights: The Invention of the Tourist in American Culture* (New York, New York: New York University Press, 2019), 9.

⁷ Mackintosh, *Selling the Sights*, 9-10, and Richard H. Gassan, *The Birth of American Tourism: New York, The Hudson Valley, and American Culture 1790-1830* (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 2008), 3.

prescribed springs or shores to wealthy patients.⁸ By the 1820s, resort communities were established away from the cities at Saratoga Springs and Ballston Spa, New York; Berkeley Springs, West Virginia; and others to fill these prescriptions.⁹ Similarly, the sea breezes attracted a growing number of health visitors to the windswept sand dunes of the Jersey Shore by the first decade of the 1800s: "...Long Branch, a bathing place on the shore of the Atlantic sea, chiefly resorted to by the opulent citizens of Philadelphia...came for the improvement of their health and relaxation from the cares of business, at the most leisure season of the year, rather than to spend their money and time in dissipation—falsely called pleasure!"¹⁰ Even at this early stage, high-born travelers turned their noses to pleasure and opened them to the salt air for their health.

Getting to these resorts in the early 1800s was anything short of leisurely. Stagecoaches and "Jersey or oyster wagons" traversed the new turnpike roads improved by state and federal investment, but muddy roads, unreliable ticketing, weather conditions, limited destinations, lengthy trips, and a generally uncomfortable ride plagued passengers.¹¹ Similar conditions were found on the water, whether oceangoing sailing ship, canal barge, or packet steamer. Canals were reliable, but only passable in winter months and the "canal building craze" connecting new industrial areas did not reach Shore points.¹² Moreover, accommodations in villages were sparse, and sporadic farmhouses boarded visitors in the absence of taverns, inns, or few purpose-built

⁸ Mazzagetti, *The Jersey Shore*, 50, and Thomas Weiss, "Tourism in America before World War II," *The Journal of Economic History* 64, no. 2 (June 2004), 290.

⁹ Mackintosh, *Selling the Sights*, 10, and Gassan, *The Birth of American Tourism*, 2.

¹⁰ Unknown, "Long Branch, 1809," *Shore Chronicles*, Buchholz, ed., 32

¹¹ John H. White, Jr., *Wet Britches and Muddy Boots: A History of Travel in Victorian America* (Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013), 21-23, Mazzagetti, *The Jersey Shore*, 53, Graham Russel Gao Hodges, "New Jersey in the Early Republic," *New Jersey: A History of the Garden State*, Maxine N. Lurie and Richard Veit, eds. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 108 and Michael Birkner, "New Jersey in the Jacksonian Era, 1820-1850," *New Jersey: A History of the Garden State*, Maxine N. Lurie and Richard Veit, eds. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 117.

¹² James and Margaret Cawley, *Along the Delaware and Raritan Canal* (Rutherford, New Jersey: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1970), 11-13.

hotels in established communities like Cape May, Tucker's Island, or Long Branch in addition to the difficulties getting there.¹³ Even with a slightly growing demand, the technology simply did not exist to make a change.

Before the Civil War, the villages of Cape May and Long Branch grew into world-class health resorts. Cape May, frequented by wealthy Philadelphians and southern plantation owners, boasted an invigorating climate and was included as a stop on sloop and packet steamer lines by 1815.¹⁴ Quickly heralded as "America's premier resort," it soon boasted hotels like Congress Hall, housing hundreds of guests at a time and the temporary home of up to 110,000 visitors by summer 1850.¹⁵ Cape May's competition came from Long Branch, hosting its first visitors in 1788 and attracting the elite of New York and the country by 1850.¹⁶ Each resort attracted different clientele and sensibilities but could compare in transportation difficulties.

New technologies developed during the Industrial Revolution heralded changes in transportation, reaching New Jersey early enough to greatly affect the tourist industry. Railroads, even in their infancy, could travel year round, overland, and carry masses of people and freight. Investors flocked to the new technology as early as the 1830s. The Camden and Amboy (C&A) was the first railroad to reach the area of the Jersey Shore, as well as the country's first primarily passenger railroad; it maintained its eastern terminus in South Amboy, reaching the town in 1832.¹⁷ The C&A, chartered in conjunction with the Raritan & Delaware Canal by the New Jersey Legislature, exercised a "Monopoly Clause" backed by the government, preventing competitive

¹³ Mazzagetti, *The Jersey Shore*, 54-64, and Weiss, "Tourism in America before World War II," 299.

¹⁴ John T. Cunningham, *The New Jersey Shore* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1958), 113.

¹⁵ Weiss, "Tourism in America before World War II," 301, and Cunningham, *The New Jersey Shore*, 112-113.

¹⁶ Cunningham, *The New Jersey Shore*, 50, and Sharon Hazard, *Long Branch in the Golden Age, Tales of Fascinating and Famous People* (Charleston, South Carolina: History Press, 2007), 12

¹⁷ John T. Cunningham, *Railroading in New Jersey* (Associated Railroads of New Jersey, 1951), 5, and Christopher T. Baer, William J. Coxey, and Paul W. Schopp, *The Trail of the Blue Comet* (Palmyra, New Jersey: The Kutztown Publishing Company, Inc., 1994), 16.

New York to Philadelphia railroads.¹⁸ This clause effectively maintained the C&A's dominance as the state's main railroad entity for over two decades, hindering attempts for lines throughout the state. However, the C&A's main traffic was through and local freight between those busy ports, and passengers were ancillary.¹⁹ With nowhere else to turn, investors interested in the new technology needed to find other destinations, and other industries, for railroads.

The Jersey Shore and the small but potentially lucrative resort business filled that need. By the 1850s, Cape May and Long Branch were attracting thousands of wealthy New Yorkers, Philadelphians, and Virginians every summer and were ready for railroads. Moreover, these towns, away from the busy New York-Philadelphia corridor hoarded by the C&A, removed legal barriers to construction. The Raritan & Delaware Bay Railroad (R&DB) was approved by the legislature in 1854 "from Keyport all the way down the Jersey Coast to Cape May," intending to link New York and Norfolk, Virginia, by rail with service to both seashore resorts.²⁰ The West Jersey Railroad, chartered in 1853, was to "build a railroad from Camden to Cape May."²¹ Similarly, the Camden & Atlantic Railroad (C&Atl) was chartered in 1854 with the intention of linking Camden with Absecon Island, a barrier island jutting into the Atlantic. The C&Atl would alter the course of the Jersey Shore and tourism at-large.

Changing Tides: The Jersey Shore, Railroads, and the Day Trip

¹⁸ Baer, et al., *The Trail of the Blue Comet*, 16-17.

¹⁹ An 1859 report to the New Jersey State Legislature, on behalf of both the Camden and Amboy and Delaware and Raritan, shows that South Amboy logged approximately 90,000 passengers and 185,306 tons of freight via rail. See *Annual Report of the State of Directors of the Delaware and Raritan Canal, and Camden and Amboy R.R. Co.'s to the Legislature of New Jersey (1859)* (Trenton, New Jersey: Delaware and Raritan Canal and Camden and Amboy Railroad Companies, 1859), 8-13.

²⁰ Don Wood, Joel Rosenbaum, and Tom Gallo, *The Unique New York and Long Branch* (Earlton, New York: Audio-Visual Designs, 1985), 8.

²¹ George H. Burgess and Miles C. Kennedy, *The Centennial History of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 1846-1946* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 1949), 264.

Industrialization had prevailed in the United States enough by 1850 that a new social class emerged. The flourishing of industrial jobs, coupled with the rise of wages, resulted in disposable incomes for many workers and families. As this new middle class climbed the social ladder and earned disposable incomes, many individuals and families attempted to use them to escape overcrowded cities and sickening factories for their own vacations or health retreats, able to travel “at ever-greater distances from home” by mid-century utilizing the new rail network.²² Already frequented by the region’s elite, the Jersey Shore soon piqued the interest of their workers.

Railroads and investors were quick to estimate the importance and financial opportunities of the swelling new middle class. Declining passenger traffic, partially because of the Civil War and loss of military contracts, forced railroads to seek new ways to sell a ticket. Sensing the desire of the middle class to escape their homes and workplaces for a vacation, railroads invested heavier in the tourist trade. The idea was not lost to New Jersey railroad executives and investors. Some took to transforming the fishing community on Absecon Island into a resort community, pushing for a new railroad to what was then virtually just a sand dune.²³ They sought to create a ground-up resort complete with railroad transportation at its conception to skip the hazardous transportation process that Cape May and Long Branch suffered from.

To sell more tickets and reorient vacationing from an upper-class privilege to a middle-class habit, railroad investors had to change perceptions of traveling and create new resorts catering to new tourists. Besides, salty sea air was the health booster, not lying on the beach or frolicking in the surf. Characterizing contemporary opinion and referring to building a mass-market oceanfront resort on Absecon Island, Cunningham wrote:

²² Rudolph J. Vecoli, *The People of New Jersey* (Princeton, New Jersey: D. Van Nostrum Company, Inc., 1965), 177, and Weiss, “Tourism in America before World War II,” 309-310.

²³ Cunningham, *The New Jersey Shore*, 102.

Who needed a bathing village on a desolate island, in a time when people scarcely bathed at home? Visions of proper Philadelphians flocking to Absecon Island [or other beachfront locales] to dip in ocean brine struck most people as ridiculous. Besides, anyone really in need of ocean dipping likely could afford steamboat passage to sedate, established Cape May or carriage fare to equally well established, if less sedate, Long Branch.²⁴

Moreover, the aftermath of the Civil War eliminated an entire group of tourists from the American South to Cape May: destruction and defeat had ruined many wealthy southerners' prospects for vacationing.²⁵ Postbellum visitors needed to be found elsewhere and in greater quantity.

Desolate Absecon Island became the proving ground for this endeavor. A community of "seven families liv[ing] amongst the dunes in 1850," it seemed to few investors to be a city of gold.²⁶ Jonathan Pitney, a traveling doctor, routinely visited his patients on the island and soon became inspired to create an "El Dorado of the East" and transform it into a health resort. Within a few years, Pitney gathered investors and submitted a railroad charter for the Camden and Atlantic Railroad. They also chartered the Camden and Atlantic Land Company, a real estate developer that sought to purchase all the land on the island and either sell or develop it; they incorporated Atlantic City the same year.²⁷ On this land, they laid out streets, stations, restaurants, and hotels, including the United States hotel, hoping to capitalize on every vacation dollar spent between transportation, accommodation, and dining, encouraging wealthy patrons to stay and utilize the C&Atl facilities for extended stays. The C&Atl's intended clientele matched that of Cape May and Long Branch, but the attraction of Atlantic City to the new middle class soon forced the railroads to experiment.

²⁴ John T. Cunningham, *Railroads in New Jersey, the Formative Years* (Andover, New Jersey: Afton Publishing Co., 1997), 94.

²⁵ Weiss, "Tourism in America before World War II," 302.

²⁶ Cunningham, *Railroading in New Jersey*, 95.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 95-96.

Seeing the attraction of the seashore, new middle class Americans boarded trains for new destinations like Atlantic City. The middle-class travelers in the region remained a largely untapped market for the railroads, because in communities like Atlantic City, the railroads built restaurants and hotels, taking every dollar of a wealthy traveler's vacation. Many middle-class travelers had small disposable incomes but not enough to spend on lavish vacations. Furthermore, before arbitration by labor unions, many of these workers did not have the time off to use for a long vacation. With reliable and extensive train service, budgeted vacationers could feasibly leave their homes in the cities and take a day at the beach, returning by evening for their next shift. These tourists became a profit drain for companies like the C&Atl, whose vertically integrated style of resort business depended on wealthier tourists who would remain in their facilities. This was felt especially in Atlantic City, which was designed with those tourists in mind. These day-visitors, namely from the greater Philadelphia area, could likely have been given the name "Shoebies" for their tendency to carry their lunches with them in a shoebox on their day trip from the city, rather than purchase a meal in the railroad-owned eateries.²⁸ Those referred to as Shoebies and other excursionist passengers tended to be "ordinary" tourists and had less financial ability to purchase vacation rates that the railroads offered to the higher-class tourists they were hoping to attract. However, these new shoebox tourists were not spending money in the way the railroad-hotel conglomerates intended.

Plugging the Drain: The Excursion Fare and the Day Tripper

The proximity of the Jersey Shore as a new vacation spot, along with the expediency of train service to the oceanfront towns, allowed many of the lower-middle-class tourists who wished to join the world of tourism to do so without having to spend large amounts of money to travel for

²⁸ Ibid., 103, Cunningham, *The New Jersey Shore*, 102, and Ben Zimmer, "Beach-Blanket Lingo," *The New York Times*, August 5, 2010

the day. Whether dubbed “Shoebies” or not, day-trippers hurt the railroad companies. With little freight service along the oceanfront lines compared to other parts of the state and vacationers not spending money as intended, companies had to find a way to plug the income drain. Railroads tried to offer snacks, trinkets, and souvenirs to the tourists at the beaches to squeeze a few extra cents out of the smalltime vacationers. As a more effective way of stemming these losses while still catering to new tourists, the railroads innovated with excursion rates and excursion trains. These were an attempt for railroad companies to squeeze a fairer profit out of the growing number of excursion passengers, which by the mid-1860s had reached 350,000 per season, and rates still facilitated day-trips but did not cost the railroads money.²⁹ Excursion tickets held a lower-than-the-going-rate fare, enticing day-trippers, but had to be redeemed within a given period or on a specific day that the railroad ran an excursion train. These excursions, between single days and a weekend, were advertised by the railroads far-and-wide in newspapers, magazines, and tackboard flyers. The fares were only valid between two stations for the passenger and personal baggage or from a selection of origin stations and a single Shore destination.³⁰ This limited the waste imposed by monthly fares to the carriers by restricting the passenger to a period in which they could travel, and often expected the round trip to be used within the day of use. Furthermore, the excursion

²⁹ Cunningham, *Railroads in New Jersey*, 103.

³⁰ *The Camden and Atlantic Railroad Pocket Time Card—Season of 1882 to Atlantic City, The Short and Popular Route* (Camden & Atlantic Railroad, 1882), “\$2.00 Round Trip Atlantic City Excursion, Wednesday, July 22, Pennsylvania R. R.,” *Warren Journal* (Belvidere, New Jersey), July 17, 1914, Pennsylvania Lines Eastern Tours from Chicago Summer 1916 (Chicago, Illinois: Pennsylvania Railroad Lines West, 1916), 1-2, 29, and “Plan Now to Join the READING RAIL RAMBLERS on Their One Day Trip to WILDWOOD, the Seashore at its Best!” Advertising flier (Reading, Pennsylvania: The Reading Railroad Company, 1951), *Baltimore & Ohio R.R. 16-Day Vacation Excursions to Atlantic City and other Jersey Coast Resorts, Leaving Saturdays September 1-15 and 29, October 13, 1934, Good returning any time within sixteen days*, Advertising Flier (Baltimore, Maryland: Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1934), and *Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines Public System Time Table Form 4, Excursions to the Shore*, in effect April 24 to June 25, inclusive, 1938 (Chicago, Illinois: The Cuneo Press/Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines, 1938), *Jersey Central Lines Seashore Trains Public Time Table T.T. 102*, effective April 28, 1957 (Jersey City, New Jersey: Central Railroad of New Jersey, 1957), and *Penn Central Transportation Company Conductor’s Tariff 12-E* (Revised, One-Day Coach Excursion Fares, Effective January 7, 1972 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Penn Central Transportation Company, 1972).

ticket acted as a sort of advertising for the railroads, as tourists were more likely to purchase tickets on a line that seemed to cater to their day-tripping interests.

Growing middle class ridership quickly changed railroad companies' attitudes: "an excursionist's dollar looked the same as a millionaire's dollar."³¹ In this sense, even though the fares were aimed at groups or lower-budgeted travelers, the rates were popular and were intended to funnel as many people as possible to the beaches, regardless of status. Mirroring the demand, the West Jersey Railroad and C&Atl financed construction of "excursion houses" in resorts like Cape May, Atlantic City, and Sea Isle City to provide a home base to excursionists, including dressing facilities, meals, and amenities normally reserved for hotel guests.³² The excursion rate remained a popular choice throughout the twentieth century, with the RDG, Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR), and the Central New Jersey Railroad (CNJ) all offering excursion rates as a summer regularity.³³ In this regard, the Jersey Shore railroads, especially due to their proximity to cities and lower-middle-class markets, helped to create and continue to support the day trip as a type of vacation.

Along the Shore: Jersey Shore Railroad Guidebooks

By the end of the nineteenth century, the railroads had embraced the day-tripper as a lucrative source of summer income. In embracing tourist traffic, railroads took on a new role as travel agent. Some offered publications for vacationers to plan their excursions. The idea for railroads to publish guidebooks was not a unique concept; the Union Pacific Railroad had produced guidebooks to entice wealthy tourists to take the new Transcontinental Railroad in the late 1860s

³¹ Cunningham, *The New Jersey Shore*, 102.

³² "Sheet 74," *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of New Jersey Coast Volume Four Cape May Edition* (New York, New York: Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1909), 74, and Susan Tischler, "The Excursionists: A Ticket to Success: *CapeMay.com*, February 1, 2007, accessed June 10, 2024, <https://www.capemay.com/blog/2007/02/the-excursionists-a-ticket-to-success/>

³³ "Plan Now to Join the READING RAIL RAMBLERS on Their One Day Trip to WILDWOOD, the Seashore at its Best!" Advertising flier (Reading, Pennsylvania: The Reading Railroad Company, 1951).

and view “the wonders of the far West.”³⁴ Guidebooks were obtained at stations or by mail order for a free copy from the railroad’s passenger department. Jersey Shore railroads modified the trend and capitalized on guidebooks as prime advertising material annually to different passenger audiences. Depending on the railroad that published them, Jersey Shore guidebooks had different purposes and content tailored to the passengers within their systems.

The goliath Pennsylvania Railroad, with a service network stretching from Long Island to Buffalo, Chicago, and St. Louis, published guidebooks emotionally appealing to the beauty and attraction of the Jersey Shore to entice tourists from across the country to board a train to the coast. Based on the distance many had to travel, these guidebooks catered to longer-stay excursionists and often advertised week, two-week, or month-long excursions. In the post-Civil War era, PRR listed Jersey Shore destinations in their annual *Summer Excursion* guidebooks, distributed to potential travelers from New York to the Midwest. These system-wide travel guides provided brief, emotional descriptions of each tourist destination across the PRR’s vast network, along with pertinent excursion fares and hotel rates.³⁵ These guidebooks were more than half populated with Jersey Shore destinations, and artwork on their covers often depicted Shore scenes. By the turn of the century, interest by PRR travelers nationwide prompted the passenger department to annually publish guidebooks specifically for Jersey Shore resorts. The new series, *New Jersey Seashore Resorts*, listed each town from Long Branch to Cape May with appealing blurbs for each.³⁶ The books espoused the Jersey Shore as “a succession of attractive pleasure resorts, such as are not to

³⁴ Sarah H. Gordon, *Passage to Union: How the Railroads Transformed American Life, 1829-1929* (Chicago, Illinois: Ivan R. Dee, 1996), 155.

³⁵ *Pennsylvania Railroad Summer Excursion Routes Season of 1877* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1877), and *Pennsylvania Railroad Summer Excursion Routes 1895* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1895).

³⁶ *New Jersey Seashore Resorts* (New York, New York: Rand McNally, 1921), *New Jersey Seashore Resorts* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Edward Stern & Co., 1923), *New Jersey Seashore Resorts* (Buffalo, New York: J.W. Clement Co., 1927), *New Jersey Seashore Resorts* (Buffalo, New York: J.W. Clement Co., 1929), and *New Jersey Seashore Resorts* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Cuneo Eastern Press, 1933).

be found in the whole world,” while still advertising the healthful nature of the surf as tingling “the life blood of youth...in your veins,” and conveniently served by the “Pennsylvania Railroad from the West, North, and South.” Quite literally, photographs in the books often had people waving on the beach, beckoning travelers with “THEY ARE CALLING YOU Inviting you to come to the New Jersey Seashore, where joy is unconfined.”³⁷ These books, however, shied away from advertisements of more than the most popular hotels, luring prospective clients from across the network before providing more information via connecting with a PRR travel agent.³⁸ More specific information could be found in individual community guidebook pamphlets, especially in the early years, providing the reader with hotel, route, and attraction information about individual towns like Long Branch or Atlantic City.³⁹

During World War II, PRR moved away from tourist guidebooks, and instead published pamphlets encouraging people to avoid Shore travel, as equipment was reserved for troop trains to Camp Boardwalk, Atlantic City, NAS Wildwood, Fort Dix, and the National Guard camp in Sea Girt.⁴⁰ After company attention shifted from Shore tourism post-World War II, guidebooks were limited to brochures and then cut altogether. Declining passenger revenue linked to the development of state and national highway systems discouraged railroads like the Pennsylvania from investing extra resources into passenger advertisements, and Shore guidebooks and brochures disappeared by the mid-1950s. These last few brochures contained the bare minimum of information in less than three pages but still used emotional text to win passengers away from the

³⁷ *New Jersey Seashore Resorts* (1923), 1-2, 16.

³⁸ *New Jersey Seashore Resorts* (1929), 191-192.

³⁹ *Pennsylvania Railroad. To Long Branch, Ocean Grove, Asbury Park, and All Points on the North Jersey Coast, Form S3* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: PRR, 1883), and *Atlantic City By the Sea: A Winter and Spring Resort for Health and Pleasure Seekers* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1888).

⁴⁰ *Special Information for Summer Travelers to Atlantic City and Other Southern New Jersey Seashore Resorts* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: PRR, 1944).

roads.⁴¹ While they lasted, PRR Shore guidebooks and brochures encouraged travelers from one-third of the United States to visit the Jersey Shore, using idealized language to appeal to passengers to board a train for the sea.

Competitor CNJ, with an exponentially smaller service territory and passenger base, used other guidebook tactics. CNJ guidebooks took a decidedly factual approach, providing the maximum information to potential passengers from Northern New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Early attempts included contracting *New York Herald* contributor Gustav Kobbe to produce a descriptive guidebook of the CNJ's tourist territory. The resultant *Kobbe's New Jersey Coast and Pines: An Illustrated Guide-Book (With Road Maps)* highlights histories, descriptions, hotel rates, fares, mileages, and more for every community served by the CNJ, and is written with logical arguments to visit each location rather than emotional appeal.⁴² The work and style were so poignant that Kobbe published a supplement in 1891 to account for the quick expansion of hotels and tourist infrastructure across the system.⁴³ By the turn of the century, Kobbe's logical approach standardized CNJ's informational style, framing future guidebooks annually between 1895 and 1910.⁴⁴ During the Great Depression, cash-strapped CNJ appealed to its day-tripper local demographic and encouraged "One Day Outings" to "Seashore – Historical Places," or a journey by their "All-Rail Route" or a healthy steamboat excursion from Manhattan to the Raritan Bayshore, encouraging historical trips or pleasure cruises to keep revenue up during the financial

⁴¹ *New Jersey Seashore A Great Place to Vacation!* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: PRR, 1951), *New Jersey Seashore Go by Train Pennsylvania Railroad* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: PRR, 1953), and *New Jersey Seashore For a Wonderful Vacation Go by Pennsylvania Railroad* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: PRR, 1954).

⁴² Gustav Kobbe, *Kobbe's New Jersey Coast and Pines: An Illustrated Guide-Book (With Road Maps)* (Short Hills, New Jersey: Gustav Kobbe, 1889).

⁴³ Gustav Kobbe, *Kobbe's Jersey Central* (Short Hills, New Jersey: Gustav Kobbe, 1891).

⁴⁴ Central Railroad of New Jersey Travelers and Tourists Guide to the Seashore Lakes and Mountains (Central Railroad of New Jersey, 1895), *Seashore and Mountains* (Syracuse, New York: The Mason Press, 1903), and *Along the Shore and in the Foothills, Central Railroad of New Jersey* (New York, New York: The Nation Press, 1910.)

crisis.⁴⁵ Post-World War II, however, the Big Little Railroad entered a passenger revenue decline that contributed heavily to its insolvency, and like the PRR, opted against investing in passenger advertising. The CNJ's approach, more informational than the PRR's, was directly linked to its passenger base, and attracted visitors to the Shore with specific information about their vacation, making the railroad the one-stop-shop as travel planner and carrier.

Double Track Line to the Sea: Timetables and Tourism Advertising

Viewed by every passenger planning a journey, timetables are free publications that list train times and other pertinent information. Distributed at stations or printed in newspapers, timetables listed schedules, mileage, and ridership terms. An integral piece of traveler information, printed timetables were often used as captive advertising by the railroads, as every traveler needed timetables for their train information and usually held space for advertisements. Timetables could be categorized as "System" or "Local"; system timetables listed each major train operated by the railroad across their network, while local timetables included each train for a specific branch or local line. As system timetables were distributed system-, or even nationwide, railroad companies often invested heavier in artwork and graphics into the issues with wider readership. Local timetables were usually distributed in the local stations they recorded and were printed cheaply, with the barest of printing and little artwork. At the Jersey Shore, the railroads focused so heavily on enticing tourist ridership that they invested in the best graphics, artists, and advertisements for both system and local timetables.

⁴⁵ *New Jersey Central Seashore One Day Outings Seashore – Historical Places Fall and Winter 1931* (Jersey City, New Jersey: CNJ, 1931), *Jersey Central Railroad One Day Outings, Summer Edition Effective June 16, 1941* (Jersey City, New Jersey: Central Railroad of New Jersey, 1941), and *New Jersey Central Sandy Hook Route An Enticing Journey on Sheltered Waters down River, Harbor and Bay* (New York, New York: Commanday-Roth Co., 1932).

System timetables are intended for wide audiences. Informational, they include train numbers and times. Excepting revisions, these pieces were usually published quarterly to account for schedule changes. Throughout the twentieth century, railroads like PRR added advertisements for their own nationally recognized name trains and hotels in major cities like New York and Chicago. By the early 1920s, PRR devoted quarter-, half-, full-page, or centerfold advertisements to Jersey Shore resorts, attracting travelers to New Jersey year-round at the expense of any other destination.⁴⁶ These advertisements were included in almost every single timetable issued quarterly between 1910 and World War II, and comparatively little space was dedicated for other destinations or name trains. Usually depicting a woman in a swimsuit in the surf or photographs of a boardwalk, these advertisements acted as truncated guidebooks, enticing travelers with the beauty of a seashore trip with pertinent fares and destinations.⁴⁷ Partial-subsidary Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines worked in tandem with their parent organization. PRSL, whose network and traffic were devoted to southern Shore resorts, depicted Shore scenes on every system issue between 1933 and the 1960s. These graphics reminded patrons of what they could expect at the end of a PRSL journey, with boardwalk scenes, boardwalk carts, and seagulls; because of declining ridership in the 1960s, PRSL used a rotating series of women playing beach volleyball, family kite flying on the boardwalk, and more of the infamous boardwalk carts on their covers.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 1 (System), September 30, 1923 (Corrected to February 10, 1924, 8th Edition)* (Chicago, Illinois: Poole Brothers, 1924), *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 1 (System), April 26, 1925 (Corrected to August 2, 1925, 6th Edition)* (Chicago, Illinois: Poole Brothers, 1925), *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 1 (System), September 27, 1925 (Corrected to February 1, 1926, 7th Edition)* (Chicago, Illinois: Poole Brothers, 1926), *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 1 (System), April 1, 1929 (8th Edition)* (Chicago, Illinois: Poole Brothers, 1929), *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 1 (System), July 31, 1932 (1st Edition)* (Chicago, Illinois: Cuneo Press, 1932), *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 1 (System), September 24, 1933 (3rd Edition)* (Chicago, Illinois: Cuneo Press, 1933), *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 1 (System), March 7, 1937 (1st Edition)* (Chicago, Illinois: Cuneo Press, 1937), and *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 1 (System), June 4, 1939 (1st Edition)* (Chicago, Illinois: Cuneo Press, 1939).

⁴⁷ *PRR Form 1 (1932)* and *PRR Form 1 (1933)*.

⁴⁸ *Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines Form 3 (System), September 17, 1934* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Cuneo Eastern Press, 1934), *Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines Form 3 (System), June 22, 1941* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Cuneo Eastern Press, 1941), *Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines Form 3 (System), September 17, 1934* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Cuneo Eastern Press, 1941), *Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines Form 3*

Local timetables were printed by railroads to cheaply inform the masses of local schedules. Nationwide, local timetables were usually plain, just containing information. Jersey Shore railroads broke that mold, opting to utilize local timetables for more Shore advertising. Early local timetables hired lithographers to craft beautiful beach scenes to attract riders. A notable example is the C&Atl Summer 1882 issue, heralding the “SHORT and POPULAR ROUTE” to Atlantic City and depicting a family outing to the beach with a lighthouse and sailboat.⁴⁹ PRR Atlantic City issues continued to showcase the boardwalk and nautical themes, depicting the new Applegate Pier in the summer of 1890 and imagery like fishing nets and tridents in 1893.⁵⁰ CNJ-PRR jointly owned New York & Long Branch followed the same graphical trend, depicting the Bluffs at Long Branch, modern infrastructure along the route, and wide boardwalks like Avon’s.⁵¹

Railroads concurrently published schedules in newspapers for public notice. Published weekly, these timetables were purely informational and included schedules relative to the paper they were printed in.⁵² These printings were regarded as integral to public knowledge. Seeking more advertising revenue from their timetables, PRR announced in 1906 that they would cease printing in newspapers, with much disdain from commentators: “The published timetable is just as essential to the proper service of a railroad company as the train equipment. In many instances it is the only medium of information that should be provided for by law.”⁵³ Ostensibly, PRR cut newspaper timetables to redistribute funds to further beautify local timetables; soon after, local

(System), April 28, 1963 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Cuneo Eastern Press, 1963), *Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines Form 3 (System)*, October 31, 1965 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Cuneo Eastern Press, 1965), *Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines Form 3 (System)*, June 9, 1969 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Cuneo Eastern Press, 1969).

⁴⁹ *Camden and Atlantic Pocket Time Card of 1882* (Camden, New Jersey: C&Atl, 1882).

⁵⁰ *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 61 (Atlantic City and Philadelphia)*, June 10, 1890 (2nd Edition) (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1890), and *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 61 (Atlantic City and Philadelphia)*, July 1, 1893 (Corrected to August 1, 1893, 9th Edition) (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1893).

⁵¹ *New York and Long Branch Form L.B.*, August 11, 1884 (New York, New York: C.H. Jones & Co., 1884), and *New York and Long Branch (System)*, June 27, 1897 (Long Branch, New Jersey: NY&LB, 1897).

⁵² “New York & Long Branch Railroad Time Table of Nov. 26, 1892,” *Asbury Park Press*, November 26, 1892.

⁵³ “No Newspaper Timetables,” *Asbury Park Press*, December 28, 1906.

timetables gained even more artistic flavor compared to other local issues across the system. 1909 and 1910 Atlantic City issues were printed in full color, with graphics of seagulls and other Shore scenes, and included extremely detailed maps of the city featuring the lines' many stations and facilities.⁵⁴ In the following decade, PRR featured full-cover photographs of the Atlantic City boardwalk, sending a photographer out for each issue to take another photograph from a different perspective, quarterly.⁵⁵ Soon following suit, CNJ Seashore timetables depicted a graphic of the Blue Comet, the railroad's deluxe all-coach express train between Jersey City and Atlantic City, not-so-subtly advertising the railroad's major play for luxury Atlantic City service.⁵⁶ In addition to the Blue Comet, local trains listed in timetables received nautical names like The Boardwalk Arrow, The Sea Lion, The Fisherman's Special, The Navigator, and The Seashore Limited, a convention of mass-naming trains not replicated elsewhere in the country.⁵⁷

During and after World War II, timetables received the same curtailment in advertising as guidebooks. Standardization was applied across-the-board to contribute to the war effort, and later, to save money. PRR wartime timetables universally depicted two soldiers and a sailor, exclaiming

⁵⁴ *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 61 (Philadelphia – Atlantic City), June 25, 1909 (1st Edition)* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1909), and *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 61 (Philadelphia – Atlantic City), September 27, 1910 (Corrected to March 14, 1911, 17th Edition)* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1911). Not to be outdone in the Atlantic City traffic war, the Philadelphia and Reading Railway's local Atlantic City Railroad timetable for the same 1909 date features the same Atlantic City map with their own facilities highlighted. See *Atlantic City Railroad/Philadelphia and Reading Railway Atlantic City, Cape May, Ocean City, Sea Isle City Express Trains, June 25, 1909 (1st Edition)* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Franklin Printing Co., 1909).

⁵⁵ *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 61 (Philadelphia – Atlantic City), June 27, 1915 (Corrected to June 29, 1915, 2nd Edition)* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1915), *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 61 (Philadelphia – Atlantic City), June 28, 1925 (1st Edition)* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1925), and *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 61 (Philadelphia – Atlantic City), June 27, 1926 4th Edition* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1926).

⁵⁶ *Jersey Central Railroad New Jersey Southern Sub-Division, T.T. 103 50-B (New York –Lakehurst, Toms River, Barnegat, Vineland, Bridgeton, Atlantic City), May 25, 1930 (1st Edition)* (Jersey City, New Jersey: CNJ, 1930), *Jersey Central Railroad Seashore Branch, T.T. 102 8A (Seashore – New York-East Long Branch via Matawan), June 17, 1940 (1st Edition)* (Jersey City, New Jersey: CNJ, 1940), and *Jersey Central Railroad New Jersey Southern Sub-Division, T.T. 103 86-A (New York – Lakewood, Lakehurst, Barnegat), September 28, 1941 (1st Edition)* (Jersey City, New Jersey: CNJ, 1941).

⁵⁷ *Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines Form 3 (System), June 22, 1941* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Cuneo Eastern Press, 1941).

“They Come First!” as the railroad’s commitment to the serviceman and not the summer tourist.⁵⁸ CNJ and Reading timetables, whether Suburban, System, or Seashore, gained a similar “Buy War Bonds” treatment, and quickly dropped all graphics, only CNJ’s new Statue of Liberty herald.⁵⁹ Postwar timetables remained plain for all local railroads, and the last timetable to feature even a small Shore advertisement was a PRR issue to Richmond in 1959, begging passengers, “Don't Drive! Be More Alive When You Arrive...Take the Pennsy to ATLANTIC CITY.”⁶⁰

Changing transportation options and travel destinations after World War II spelled the beginning of the end for the glory days of Shore train travel. Competition from state highways beginning in the 1930s and the Garden State Parkway in the 1950s drew more riders away, who could now drive directly to a destination along virtually the same routes as the railroads. Nationally experiencing declining ridership, railroads opted to save money wherever possible. Locally, that translated to removing costly advertisements and guidebooks in the face of declining tourist passenger interest. The railroads still wanted ridership but realized that the best bang for their buck would not be from the seasonal tourist; rather, railroads opted for the exodus of workers leaving the cities as a new, year-round passenger base, and mirrored it in their publications.

Work in the City, Sleep at the Shore: Railroads’ Commuter Reorientation

Focusing on a tourist passenger base made the railroads a lot of money, but only seasonally. Equipment sorely needed for thousands of passengers in summer sat idle in winter, and idle cars

⁵⁸ *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 38 (North Jersey Coast), June 18, 1944 (1st Edition)* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1944), and *Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines Form 61 (Philadelphia – Atlantic City), June 17, 1944 (1st Edition)* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1944).

⁵⁹ *Jersey Central Lines Seashore Branch, T.T. 102 25 A (Seashore – New York-East Long Branch via Matawan), November 12, 1944 (1st Edition)* (Jersey City, New Jersey: CNJ, 1944), *Jersey Central Lines Seashore, T.T. 104, 35B (New York – Bay Head Junction), April 24, 1949 (Corrected to July 3, 1949 (2nd Edition)* (Jersey City, New Jersey: CNJ, 1949), and *Jersey Central Lines Seashore Trains, T.T. 102 49A (North Jersey Coast and Seashore Branch), April 24, 1955 (1st Edition)* (Jersey City, New Jersey: CNJ, 1955).

⁶⁰ *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 7 (New York – Richmond), April 26, 1959 (1st Edition)* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1959).

cannot make money. As the year-round population of the Jersey Shore grew, so did the need for railroad commutation, depicted in their publications.

New Jersey physically transformed in the early 1900s due to a population explosion and subsequent need for jobs and housing that pulled people away from the cities.⁶¹ Railroads, already providing fast summer passenger service between these industrial areas and seashore communities with plenty of land (especially in winter), quickly found a solution to seasonal passenger woes. By the 1910s, railroads adapted their excursion fare to entice year-round passengers to their lines. Published in brochure guidebooks, these new “Commutation Fares” gave the passenger a predetermined number of round trips within a given month, saving money but restricting its terms of use to a home station and a work destination.⁶² Especially pre-WWII, these guidebooks were careful to mention that these destinations were still “Seashore Resorts,” indicating the attention the railroads still placed on Jersey Shore tourism and their view on commuting as secondary.

With a commuter framework in place, railroads shifted some of their valuable timetable space to commuter needs. Some pre-WWII issues entice regular tourists to move to where they vacation, stating “There’s a new life in New Jersey” and “Work in the city, sleep at the Shore” while still regularly depicting Shore attractions.⁶³ The beach advertisement style might have been enticing to travelers who could be potential commuters but did little for people already riding for work.

⁶¹ Brian Greenberg, “The Progressive Era,” *New Jersey: A History of the Garden State*, Maxine N. Lurie and Richard Veit, eds. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2013), 204.

⁶² *Pennsylvania Railroad Commutation Fares BETWEEN New York and Stations on the New York & Long Branch Railroad* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1916), *New Jersey Central Commutation Fares Between NEW YORK and SEASHORE RESORTS via ALL RAIL ROUTE and SANDY HOOK STEAMERS Including Fares to LAKEWOOD and LAKEHURST* (New York, New York: New Jersey Central Passenger Traffic Department, 1932), and *Jersey Central Lines Onne Way and Commutation Fares Between New York, Newark – Elizabeth, and Seashore Resorts via Jersey Central Lines, also including fares to Lakewood and Lakehurst* (New York, New York: Central Railroad of New Jersey, 1953).

⁶³ *Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines Form 3 (System)*, June 22, 1941.

Timetables, expensive to print, became a burden to railroad companies struggling to profit from ticket sales. A partner solution was offered by Transportation Displays, Incorporated, a New York-based printer and advertiser that offered to produce local commuter timetables for free to the railroads if TDI could sell the advertising space. PRR and CNJ happily agreed, and TDI commuter timetables were printed in the millions between the 1940s and 1970s. Advertisements catered to the interests of the commuter, depicting Broadway shows, local financial institutions, car dealerships, and home products, all while saving the railroads precious pennies.⁶⁴ Timetables still published by the railroads lost all their advertising luster and were streamlined with standardized, system-wide graphics, like logos.⁶⁵ After the state government assumed responsibility for commuter services, timetables continued their utilitarian appearance, depicting only line transit maps with no advertisements, mirroring the forced attention the state government and railroad operators placed on commuter service and publishing only because they had to.⁶⁶ Although the railroads' lack of desire to maintain commuter service is evident in the shift away from tourist

⁶⁴ *Red Bank October – 1940* (Red Bank, New Jersey: J.R. Anderson, 1940), *Official Time Table New York & Long Branch Railroad Form PC #2 Matawan Newark and New York, April 1 to 23, 1955* (New York, New York: Transportation Displays, Inc., 1955), *Official Time Table New York & Long Branch Railroad Form PC #7 Pt. Pleasant Newark and New York, April 24, 1955* (New York, New York: Transportation Displays, Inc., 1955), *Official Time Table New York & Long Branch Railroad Form PC #3 Red Bank Long Branch Newark and New York, February 1, 1962* (New York, New York: Transportation Displays, Inc., 1962), *Official Time Table Central Railroad of New Jersey Keansburg, February 1, 1963* (New York, New York: Transportation Displays, Inc., 1963), *Official Time Table New York & Long Branch Railroad Form PC #5 Point Pleasant Beach Newark and New York, April 25, 1965* (New York, New York: Transportation Displays, Inc., 1965), *Official Time Table New York & Long Branch Railroad Form PC #4 Asbury Park Newark and New York, June 27, 1965* (New York, New York: Transportation Displays, Inc., 1965), and *Official Time Table New York & Long Branch Railroad Form PC #1 Perth Amboy South Amboy Newark and New York, October 29, 1975* (New York, New York: Transportation Displays, Inc., 1975).

⁶⁵ “News of Commuters,” *The Asbury Park Press*, November 2, 1933, *Jersey Central Lines Seashore Trains, T.T. 102, October 25, 1964 (1st Edition)* (Jersey City, New Jersey: Central Railroad of New Jersey, 1964), *Pennsylvania Railroad Form 38 (North Jersey Coast), April 25, 1965* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1965), *New York and Long Branch North Jersey Coast, Form LB-2 (1st Edition), April 30, 1967 (Corrected to June 18, 1967, 2nd Edition)* (Long Branch, New Jersey: New York and Long Branch Railroad, 1967).

⁶⁶ *Conrail and N.J. Dept. of Transportation North Jersey Coast Trains, Form LB-2 (4th C.R.C. Edition)*, June 5, 1977 (Trenton, New Jersey; New Jersey Department of Transportation, 1977), and *N.J.D.O.T. North Jersey Coast Line Commuter Rail Service, Form LB-2 (1st C.R.C. Edition)* (Trenton, New Jersey: July 29, 1979).

attention in their publications, carrying commuters ultimately saved many of the lines from abandonment, even if it forced acquisition by public entity.

Conclusion and the Future

Railroads are still a daily fixture of life for commuters, and to a lesser extent, tourists across New Jersey. New Jersey Transit, having assumed control of passenger operations in the state in 1981, operates the former NY&LB as the North Jersey Coast Line and former PRSL trackage as its Atlantic City Line, carrying thousands of passengers a day. In the fine print, NJT reinstated “Special Beach Packages” as a new type of “excursion fare,” hoping to entice tourists to take the train and sometimes offering incentives like beach badges, but these packages are often kept hidden in plain sight, reserving most attention for their chartered commuter mission.⁶⁷ While the Garden State Parkway, Atlantic City Expressway, and highways like Route 35 and US 9 are backed up with tourist and commuter traffic alike, the railroads continue to bring people to and from the beach.

Tourists and commuters alike would not be at the Jersey Shore if it were not for the railroads. For a century from the mid-1800s to World War II, the railroads’ creation, constant investment, advertisement, and promotion of Jersey Shore tourism selfishly served to attract ridership and make a buck. In doing so, the railroads vernacularized vacationing to a growing middle class with cheaper fares and facilities, opening the door to day-tripper-style vacationing that continues to characterize trips to the Jersey Shore. To the new class of riders, railroads became

⁶⁷ *Introducing NJ Transit’s New North Jersey Coast Line* (Trenton, New Jersey: New Jersey Transit, 1985), *NJ Transit is Your Short Cut to the Shore* (Trenton, New Jersey: New Jersey Transit, 1988), *Summer Fun Guide 2000* (Trenton, New Jersey: New Jersey Transit, 2000), *New Jersey Transit North Jersey Coast Line Form R0080, June 4, 2007 (1st Edition)* (Trenton, New Jersey: New Jersey Transit, 2007), *New Jersey Transit North Jersey Coast Line Form R0080, May 19, 2024 (1st Edition)* (Trenton, New Jersey: 2024), and *New Jersey Transit Atlantic City Line Form R0090, May 19, 2024 (1st Edition)* (Trenton, New Jersey: New Jersey Transit, 2024).

travel agents, publishing guidebooks annually to constantly apprise potential travelers of the information, benefits, and appeal of a vacation along the Jersey Coast.

Railroads' attention to vacationing at the Jersey Shore is evidenced by their unique and expensive advertising techniques in their own public publications beyond guidebooks. While cheap, disposable, informational timetables nationally serve to inform the passenger of schedules, Jersey Shore railroads turned them into works of art, dedicated even at the most local level to showcase the beauty and interest of a beach trip. These publications were distributed around the country, enticing visitors to enjoy the surf and other Shore attractions. As tides shifted, railroads recognized the seasonality of their service, ensuring year-round service by encouraging workers to move to where they vacation. The gradual growth of commuter population, tourist shift toward cars and the Parkway, and national decline of passenger rail travel is mirrored by a contemporaneous local shift toward austere, all-business, commuter-oriented publications.

Railroads may no longer be the main way to get to the Jersey Shore, but they were the vehicle that made it easier, popular, and a landmark institution in New Jersey.

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