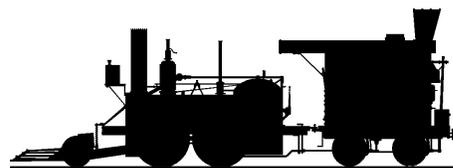
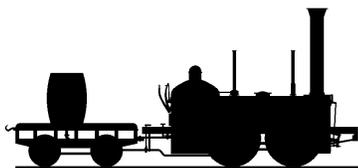


The  
Camden & Amboy  
Railroad  
Historical Group



THE **John Bull** - ETIN

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## NYC's Penn Station Opened 100 Years Ago

By John Kilbride

September 2010 marks the 100th anniversary of the opening of New York's Penn Station and while notable on its own accord, the construction of that facility was only a part of a larger expansion project undertaken by the Pennsylvania Railroad. Only when the technologies of both tunneling and electrification were perfected could the full project have been undertaken. Sadly, the structure was judged to be too expensive to operate and was demolished beginning in 1963. The story of its construction, and the entire New York expansion remains a tribute to the corporate might of the Pennsylvania Railroad.



*More than any other individuals, the two men pictured above, Alexander Cassatt (left) and Samuel Rea (right), were responsible for bringing the Pennsylvania Railroad into the heart of Manhattan.*

### **The Need**

While the mighty PRR could boast of reaching into some of the nation's most populous cities, that claim could not be made with regard to NYC. Since 1871, its services terminated on the west bank of the Hudson River, when it acquired the United Railroad and Canal Companies of New Jersey, whose main line connected Jersey City with the original Camden and Am-

boy line to Trenton and Philadelphia. Passengers had to transfer at Exchange Place for ferry service to Manhattan.

To reach the city itself, the railroad pondered building a bridge or boring a tunnel. Financial constraints eliminated thoughts of spanning the river; operating steam-powered trains under water prohibited tunnel construction.

Bridge planning was initially examined. In 1884, PRR president George Roberts asked his assistant engineer Samuel Rea to find a bridge engineer on "how it might be possible to go over the river." Gustav Lindenthal, a noted

bridge builder was commissioned to work up preliminary plans for a span. His preliminary plans were submitted for review, and while the railroad was enthusiastic, the US War Department was not, for the bridge's piers were located in the river's navigable channel. A revised plan, with a ten track width on a suspension bridge, was judged too expensive for the railroad to construct and after an attempt to get the support of

*(Continued on page 8)*

## **EDITORIAL: *Let's Make Membership A Learning Experience!!***

*We know the theme is old, but the reason is new!*

*New officers have been installed, ready to manage the challenges of providing a meaningful experience for those who have chosen to join our membership rolls. While the Camden & Amboy Railroad remains our chief interest, the Pennsylvania RR also has a place within our manifest and is most worthy of receiving our attention, especially when it is recognized that our Group is the only Garden State-based PRR historical entity. Quarterly we meet to share information; twice a year we seek to publish our research. With that realization, we're as good as the sum of all our pieces.*

*Much like train crews, we need the assistance of many to make things run right; the conductor can't operate the train by himself, he needs an engineer and brakeman to keep the schedule and run safely. (...and if he's aboard a passenger train, additional on-board personnel are there to provide services to passengers!) All work together to make the train run!*

*Our web site continues to bring interesting queries to our attention. While the basic information on the C&A's construction and early operations are well known, the secondary level of information remains a bit elusive. We'd like to be able to provide accurate information as quick as possible. (.....although we've had to alert some requests we do not have access to personnel records, and have now indicated a source for such information on the web site, so as to avoid repetitive answers while on increasingly-valued time!) In this regard, we want to develop a committee of C&A "scholars", to help develop answers to the questions we receive.*

*We're going to begin to publish those topics too, so we can make this a learning experience for all.*

*As examples of recent web site subject matter: (some responses still being developed!!)*

*\* Did you know the C&A used "chairs" to affix the rail to the sleepers?*

*\* How did the C&A construct "turn-outs" at those passing sidings?*

*\* How long did it take the C&A to replace the sleepers with wood ties? (.....and was it before construction began on the Camden "branch?") Some type of plate was also used with the sleepers; impressions appears on most of the stones spotted, (including those viewed at a recently-discovered site north of Jamesburg!)*

*\* Ashbel Welch - the subject of a forth-coming J.B. article - came aboard the C&A after years of service on the D&R Canal, built the infamous Mercer & Somerset and is credited with the development of a telegraphic safety signal system that became the forerunner of railroad's block system.*

*Will you step forward to help us with this renewed emphasis on research? We need your help! (Let an officer know of your willingness to assist and we'll get you onto our research committee.)*

*.....Will our Group run smoothly, and provide a meaningful experience to all? With your help, we can, and get there safely and develop a reputation for quality service to all, much like the PRR .....*

*(jjk)*

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