



NannYKIDS



Edition #5

The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society Newsletter for "Kids"

Fall 2010

All Aboard!

Welcome to the special "Train Issue" of *NannYkids*, the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society's newsletter for kids and those young at heart. Railroads are a very important part of our area's history, and still a big part of our community's life today. The following story and photographs are from the "Edison Electric Railroad" chapter in David Trumbull Marshall's 1930 book, *Boyhood Days in Old Metuchen*. Copies of this book are available in all of the local libraries.

In 1880 Mr. Edison built his first electric railroad.

The ties were laid over some pretty rough ground.

The track ran down a slope in or near Mine Gully.

The motor was made of one of the ordinary dynamos such as Mr. Edison used in his first electric light installation at the Laboratory.

A dynamo, by the way, may be used as a motor. If electricity be fed into it, power which will turn a pulley and drive a belt is generated.

This first crude electric engine consisted of one of these dynamos laid on its side and belted to the wheels of the truck.

It went but required a deal of tinkering and changing before it was practical.

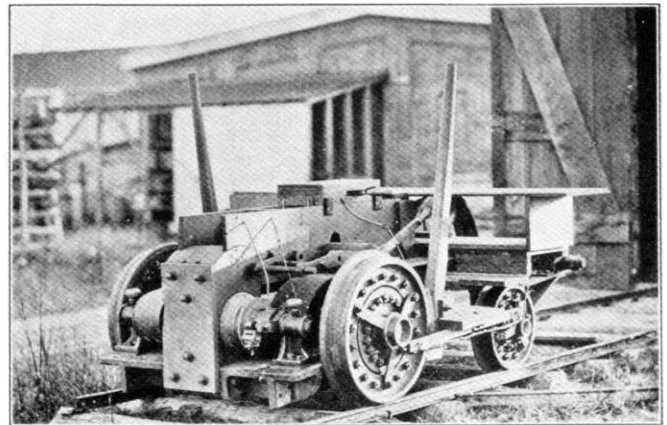
The current which actuated this motor was fed into one rail, crossed over through the motor and returned through the other rail.

Mr. Edison later in 1881 built another electric railroad which ran about two miles out to Dark Lane, northwest of the Laboratory. The track was laid more carefully.

The ties consisted of square-sawed lumber about five inches by five. Each tie had to be dipped in asphalt to render it non-conducting when wet.

I shall never forget the poor guy whose job it was to dip these ties. This lad was a red-headed, freckled-faced Irish boy with a face like a hop-toad.

Day after day I used to see him out in the hot sun down by the Pennsylvania Railroad working at his melancholy job of dipping first one end and then the other of these ties in hot asphalt.



EDISON ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE MADE AT MENLO PARK, N. J., IN 1880. Reconstructed from old parts for Mr. Henry Ford. Locomotive is now at Dearborn, Mich., where it runs on its own power. This photograph was presented to David T. Marshall by Mr. Ford Feb. 26, 1930.

It takes brains and brawn to perfect inventions. Frog face furnished some of the brawn.

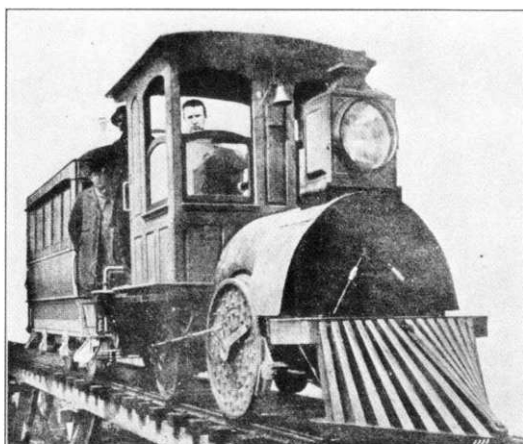
One day Harry Moss and I and some lads tried the experiment of joining hands across the rails of this electric track.

Once was enough. The yank that electric shock gave us was demonstration enough. The other lads did not care to try the experiment.

Some time in 1926 I was browsing over the site of the old electric track way out where it crossed Dark Lane.

A young woman out there told me proudly that "her father leased land to Mr. Edison on which to build his tracks."

Thus all who come in contact with the Great acquire a measure of distinction.



EDISON ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE CONSTRUCTED AT MENLO PARK, N. J., IN 1882.

THOMAS A. EDISON DRIVING.

Picture presented to the Author February 26, 1930

Any comments or suggestions for future editions? Contact us by email at "ayersallenhouse@msn.com" or mail to NANNYKIDS, c/o the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society, P.O. Box 61, Metuchen, NJ 08840.

NannYkids is published by The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society, Tyreen A. Reuter, Editor.



Match-a-Train



Draw a line – or tracks - between the logo to its matching railroad.



Acela

Amtrak

Conrail

Lehigh Valley

NJ Transit

Norfolk Southern

Pennsylvania Railroad



What exactly is a *Nannykid*? J. Lloyd Grimstead, a local historian who took almost 3000 pictures of the Metuchen-Edison area during the 1930s, collected anecdotes, articles, and reminiscences about our local history. Instead of “anecdotes,” he nicknamed them “nannygoats,” which has a similar sound. The Metuchen-Edison Historical Society calls its newsletter *Nannygoats* in honor of Mr. Grimstead, and, since young goats are called “kids,” these editions are called *Nannykids*.

The following story was told by Mrs. Henrietta Peck in 1906. At the time that the first train came through Metuchen, all the children in town went to school in the Old Franklin School house on Middlesex Avenue (next to the firehouse).

“The first train on the Penn. R.R. passed through our little village in 1836 and the children were given an extra hour at noon to go and see the sight and Mr. William Manning and Mrs. Forman are now living who went to see the first engine, but they were afraid to venture very near the iron horse fearing it would shy off the track.



As I watched the automobiles rushing to the Princeton game today I could not help thinking what a change since the first engine passed through and I wondered if it could be possible that this century would show as much progress.”

Just for Laughs...

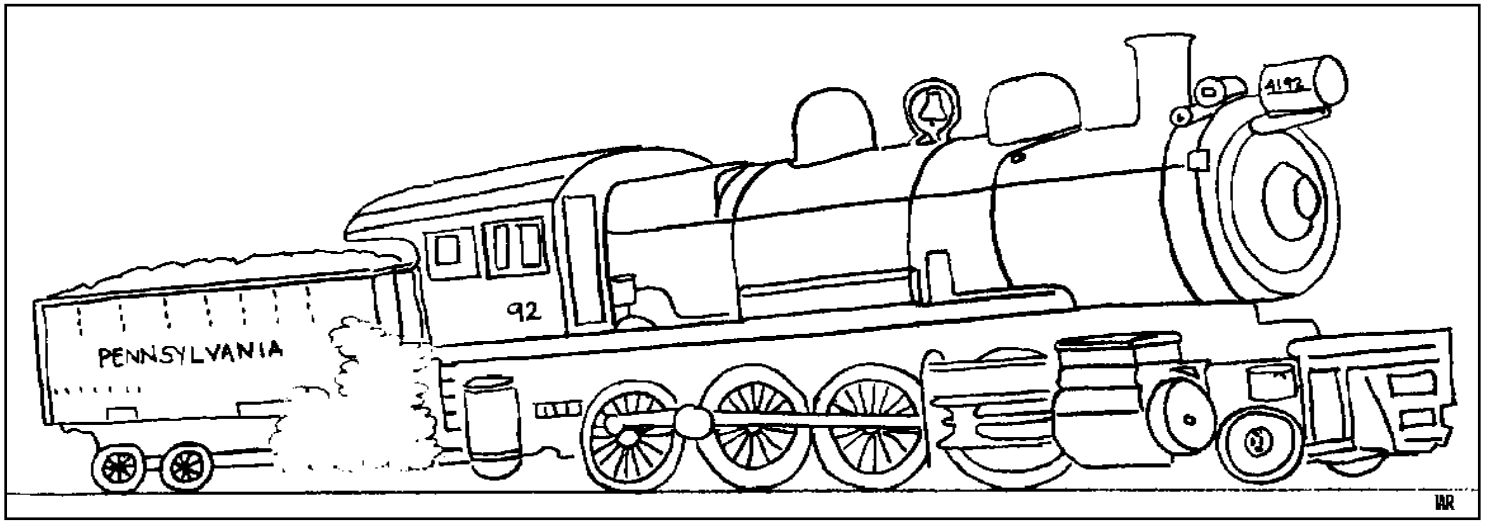
- Q: Did you hear about the fight on the train?
 A: The conductor punched the ticket.
- Q: Why did the taxi driver sneak onto the train?
 A: He was hoping to make some extra money driving the caboose.
- Q: Why was the Mommy Train mad at the Daddy Train?
 A: He was leaving tracks all over the living room carpet.



Colorful History



Have fun coloring this Pennsylvania Railroad Steam Engine and the Metuchen Station.



Enjoy coloring local historic sites? Limited quantities of the Metuchen-Edison Historical Society's *Coloring Book of Metuchen Architecture* are still available for sale. Visit our website at www.metuchen-edisonhistsoc.org for more information. Copies are \$6 each, (plus shipping if applicable).

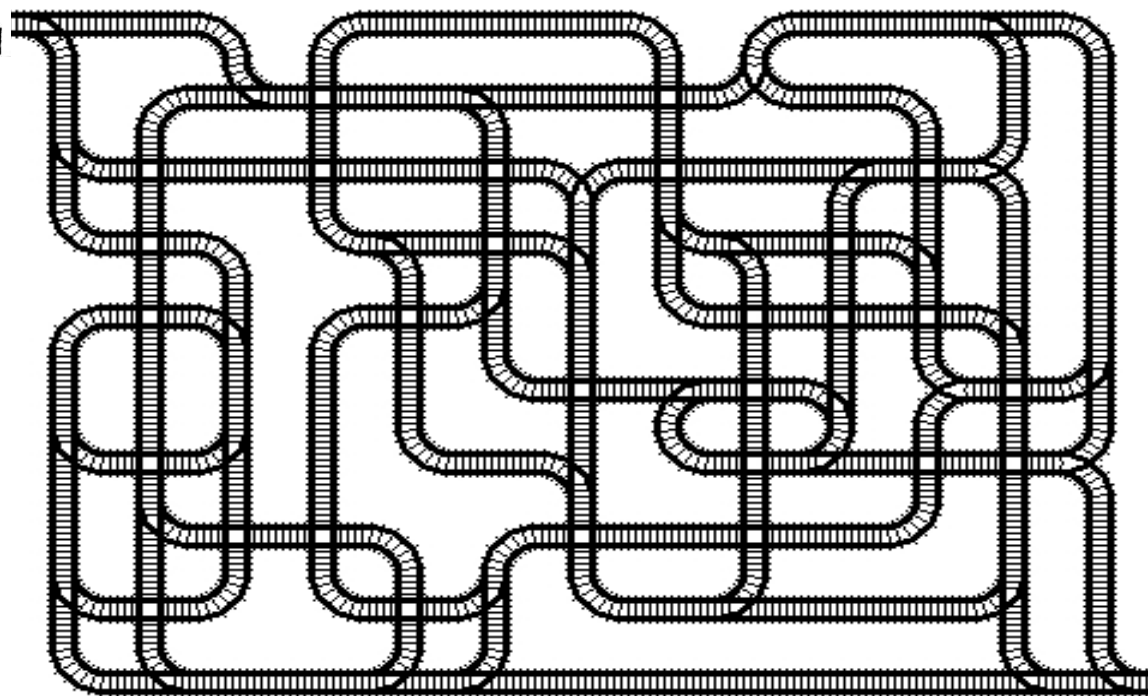




A-maze-ing Railroad



Help the engine reach the station by finding the right rail line!



Word Find



| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Caboose | North | N | E | W | J | E | R | S | E | Y | X | F | E | T |
| Car | Passenger | E | S | S | T | E | A | M | U | M | A | R | I | N |
| Coal | Pay | L | T | T | R | D | I | E | S | E | L | E | A | P |
| Conductor | Rail | E | A | O | A | M | L | T | E | N | G | I | N | E |
| Diesel | Ride | C | T | P | C | W | O | S | S | E | H | G | O | N |
| East | South | T | I | C | K | E | T | A | C | A | R | H | O | G |
| Edison | Station | R | O | A | S | S | I | C | A | S | B | T | R | I |
| Electric | Steam | I | N | M | E | T | J | W | B | T | R | A | I | N |
| Engine | Stop | C | O | N | D | U | C | T | O | R | A | S | D | E |
| Engineer | Ticket | E | G | O | I | A | O | S | O | U | T | H | E | E |
| Freight | Tracks | A | K | R | S | P | A | S | S | E | N | G | E | R |
| Metuchen | Train | L | E | T | O | A | L | A | E | O | G | D | M | E |
| New Jersey | West | F | O | H | N | Y | M | E | T | U | C | H | E | N |