

Be Ri 24.4

Railroads

By Kevin Curtin

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updated by Deborah Popowski, 2022

Object ID: 2022.001.001

Ridgewood Public Library: Bolger Heritage Center

125 North Maple Avenue

Ridgewood, NJ 07450

201-670-5600 x135

www.ridgewoodlibrary.org

Descriptive Summary:

Creator: Ridgewood Public Library, Bolger Heritage Center Staff

Title: Railroads

Dates: 1832-present (bulk, 2001-present)

Quantity: 6 linear ft (3 mss. boxes)

Abstract: Railroads have played an important role in the development of Ridgewood and continue to shape it today. The Railroads collection consists of 6 linear feet (3 mss. boxes) of mostly textual and photographic material related to the regional and local railroads and trolley lines that have impacted the Village of Ridgewood from 1832 to the present day. The collection sheds light on the evolution of the structures that constitute and predate the current Ridgewood station, with extensive documentation (including state transit agency assessments, historical and environmental impact plans, and architectural surveys) pertaining to efforts to bring the station into compliance with the American with Disabilities Act.

Collection No.: Be Ri 24.4 Railroads

Language: English

Repository: Ridgewood Public Library: Bolger Heritage Center

History of the Railroads in Ridgewood (1848-present):

The railroad came to “Ridgewood” (then, part of Franklin Township) in 1848 as part of the Paterson and Hudson River Railroad, which first opened in 1832. This line, along with the Paterson and Ramapo Railroad (chartered in 1841, opened in 1848) connected the Erie Railroad at Suffern, NY to New York City, via the Jersey City ferry.

Godwinville Station was built in 1852 and added to the railroad line at Ridgewood Avenue. With the establishment of the Ridgewood Post Office in 1865, Ridgewood residents lobbied successfully to change its name to Ridgewood Station in 1866. Early train station structures included an old rail car, an old house, and a depot built by the residents, followed by a depot and freight station built by Erie in 1873.

The railroad’s arrival brought change to Ridgewood, transitioning the area from a farming community to a bustling suburb. Businesses developed around the station, and the town center moved closer to the tracks. As a result, farmland was sold off to become houses and stores. By 1915 there were four tracks running through Ridgewood, by then a Village of almost 7,000 residents.

In 1915, following decades of pressure from Ridgewood, Erie Railroad agreed to build a new station to replace the aging 1873 station and eliminate dangerous rail grade crossings at Franklin, Ridgewood and Godwin Avenues. Designed by W.W. Dinker and Frank A. Howard in Mission Revival Style, the new station opened in 1916.

The population growth that began in 1900 continued through 1970. While railroads throughout the country went into decline following the construction of the interstate highway system, the rail line through Ridgewood remained an active commuting corridor. In 1968, the Village of Ridgewood acquired the station property from the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad. In 2004, the State Historic Preservation Office determined the Ridgewood Village Center Railroad Station Historic District to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register for Historic Places.

Efforts to bring the Ridgewood station into compliance with the American with Disabilities Act began in 1992. Following 2009, following decades

Personal Names:

Adams, Arthur G. – Author

Aljian, Aaron – Photographer

Baxter, Raymond J. - Author

Callender, Dara - NJ Transit – Supervising Compliance Specialist

Dinker, W.W. – Erie Railroad – Principal Assistant Engineer

Fricke, Janet G. – Village of Ridgewood – Assistant to the Village Manager

Howard, Frank A. – Erie Railroad – Engineer of Bridges and Buildings

Judd, Martin - Environmental Services – Senior Director

Materna, Angela – ARCH2, Inc. – Historic Preservation Specialist

Norris, Peggy – Ridgewood Village - Historian

Oberholtzer, Jean – Ridgewood Village – Historian

Suplicki, Joe – Ridgewood Village – Historian
Ten Hoeve, Jim – Ridgewood Village – Manager
Warren, Jennifer – ARCH2, Inc. – Architectural Historian
Wong, William – NJ Transit – Project Manager
Wrege, Charles D. – Academy of Management – Historian
Wrubel, Arthur – Historic Preservation Commission – Chair
Zerbe, Nancy L. – ARCH2, Inc. – Project Manager

Place and Corporate Names:

Academy of Management
ARCH2, Inc. – Sub-Consultant
Bergen County Railroad
Block Line – Tri-State Chapter Newsmagazine
di Domenico and Partners LLC
Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association
Erie Railroad
Franklin Township
Godwinville Station
HJGA Consulting Architecture & Historic Preservation, Inc.
Louis Berger Group, Inc.
New Jersey Transit
Paterson and Hudson River Railroad
Paterson and Ramapo Railroad
Public Service Hawthorne Line
Ridgewood Coal Trestle
Ridgewood Historical Preservation Committee
Ridgewood Railroad Station
Ridgewood Taxi Company
Stantec
Submittal Urban Associates, Inc.
Urbahn Associates, Inc./ Daniel Frankfurt, P.C.
Village News

Scope and Content Note:

The collection is 6 linear ft housed in 3 mss.boxes. The entire collection spans the years 1832 to the present, with the bulk of the information pertaining to the years 2001 to the present. The type of documents within the collection include architectural plans, assessment reports, historical surveys, academic articles, newspaper clippings, photographs, event materials, postcards, route maps, correspondence, and a stock certificate. The collection is sorted into 2 series: Regional Railroads and Ridgewood Railroads. Within each series, material is arranged by subseries according to topic or material format; files and items within each subseries are arranged chronologically where the material permits.

The Regional Railroads series contains information pertaining to the broader rail systems that impacted Ridgewood, including the Erie Railroad in its various corporate iterations, the Paterson and Hudson River Railroad, and the Paterson and Ramapo Railroad. These folders contain news and academic articles, maps, photographs, prints, a pictorial essay, and a Bergen County Railroad Stock Certificate pertaining to the early beginnings of the railroads in the area. The series spans from the years 1838 to 2015.

The Ridgewood Railroad series includes railroad and light rail information specific to stations located in Ridgewood. These folders contain news and academic articles, maps, architectural plans, photographs, postcards, artistic renderings, a CD-ROM of scanned photographs, accessibility renovation reports, and historical surveys. The series also includes uses for the station during different events in order to show the impact the station had on the history of the Village. This series spans from the years 1848 to the present date, with the bulk of information dating from 2001 to the present and relating to efforts to bring the station into compliance with the American with Disabilities Act.

Arrangement Note:

The records of the Railroads collection are arranged in the following 2 series and then their subseries:

- I. Regional Railroads, 1838-2015**
 - a. General History, 1838-2015
 - b. Erie Railroad, 1898-2011
 - c. Maps & Geography, 1924-1939
 - d. News Articles, 1847-1971
- II. Ridgewood Railroad, 1848-present date**
 - a. History, 1848-1994
 - b. News Articles, 1858-present date
 - c. Images, 1900-present date
 - d. Trolleys, 1900-2016
 - e. Accessibility Improvements, 2001-2018
 - i. News Articles, 2001-2018
 - ii. Reports, 2001-2008
 - iii. Historic Surveys, 2003-2009

Related Material:

For additional information and collections relating to railroads in Ridgewood see:

The History of a Village Ridgewood N.J.

Ridgewood Public Library Heritage CATalog

Administrative Information:

Preferred Citation

Ridgewood Public Library: Bolger Heritage Center (Be Ri 24.4 Railroads)

Container List:

This container list provides the titles of the folders that are organized in the collection and their locations in the numbered boxes.

I. Regional Railroads Files, 1838-2015

Arrangement: The material is arranged in subseries according to topic or material format. Within each subseries folder, items are arranged in chronological order where the material permits.

Summary: The Regional Railroads series contains information pertaining to the broader rail systems that impacted Ridgewood, including the Erie Railroad (in its various corporate iterations), the Paterson and Hudson River Railroad, and the Paterson and Ramapo Railroad. These folders contain news and academic articles, maps, photographs, prints, a pictorial essay, and a Bergen County Railroad Stock Certificate pertaining to the early beginnings of the railroads in the area.

Box	Folder
1	1 Regional Railroads – General History, 1838-2015
1	2 Regional Railroads – Erie Railroad, 1898-2011
1	3 Regional Railroads – Maps & Geography, 1924-1939
1	4 Regional Railroads – News Articles, 1847-1971

II. Ridgewood Railroad Files, 1848-present date

Arrangement: The material is arranged in subseries according to topic or material format. Within each subseries folder, items are arranged in chronological order where the material permits

Summary: The Ridgewood Railroad series includes railroad and trolley information specific to stations located in Ridgewood. These folders contain news and academic articles, maps, architectural plans, photographs, postcards, artistic renderings, a CD-ROM of scanned photographs, accessibility renovation reports, and historical surveys. The series also includes uses for the station during different events in order to show the impact the station had on the history of the Village.

Box	Folder
1	5 Ridgewood Railroad – History, 1848-1994
1	6 Ridgewood Railroad – News Articles, 1898-present date
1	7 Ridgewood Railroad – Images, 1900-present date
1	8 Ridgewood Railroad – Trolleys, 1900-2016

Box	Folder
2	1 Ridgewood Railroad – Accessibility Improvements – News Articles, 2001-2018
2	2 Ridgewood Railroad – Accessibility Improvements – Reports – Reports & Correspondence, 2006-2008
2	3 Ridgewood Railroad – Accessibility Improvements – Reports – Plans, 2007
2	4 Ridgewood Railroad – Accessibility Improvements – Reports, 2001-2003 [<i>multiple binders</i>]

Box	Folder
3	1 Ridgewood Railroad – Accessibility Improvements – Historic Surveys, 2003-2008 [<i>multiple binders</i>]
3	2 Ridgewood Railroad – Accessibility Improvements – Historic Surveys – Photographs, 2008 [<i>binder</i>]
3	3 Ridgewood Railroad – Accessibility Improvements – Historic Surveys, 2009