

TRAVEL

A Special Trip to New York

By Saul Wilson

For a combined present for Christmas, Hannukah and my birthday, I was offered a very special train trip to New York. The best part of the gift was being allowed to make my own schedule and choose which trains we would take. I searched the Web looking for train times that would fit together, giving me extra time in some stations to pick up schedules to add to my collection. While seeking to use as many train companies as possible, I was required to complete the trip between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. This resulted in riding with seven train companies and taking fourteen routes.

The night before my big day I was extremely anxious lest we should miss our six minute connection in Wilmington, Delaware, since Amtrak has a history of being very late on many routes. So I got out of bed and asked my dad if we could buy our next stage tickets to Philadelphia, 30th Street Station, in Baltimore, and stay on the Amtrak train if it were late, otherwise my whole schedule would have been in shambles, and he agreed.

The train was ten minutes late so I was glad we had a back-up plan. In Philadelphia I immediately went to the ticket machines to buy our through tickets via Trenton, New Jersey to New York on South Eastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA). We had to change trains at Trenton on to a New Jersey Transit (NJT).

Our packed-to-overflowing NJT train arrived in New York, Penn Station twenty minutes late, shortening my extra time there to twenty-five minutes. I picked up about one hundred Long Island Railroad (LIRR) schedules and stowed them in my overweight bag and proceeded to the NJT schedule area. Later, we departed Penn Station for Grand Central Station, via Times Square. I took pictures of Metro North Rail Road (MNRR) trains, then we boarded our next train to 125th Street in Harlem. There we saw a Genesis Express Engine, which I had been waiting to see for years. We returned to Grand Central Station on a Harlem Line train, and rushed to the Subway to take the train to 34th Street, where we would catch the Port Authority Trans-Hudson (PATH) train to Hoboken train station. There we saw more MNRR and NJT trains. After this we returned to 33rd Street by PATH, and then walked to Penn Station and ran for the LIRR train to Jamaica, Long Island. While waiting for the train to depart, I saw a new double-decker train, which I had hoped to see.

Once we arrived back in Penn Station, New York, we ate an unusual dinner of steak for me, and hamburger for my dad. After dinner we went to the LIRR waiting area where there were both Departure and Arrival boards for both Amtrak and NHT, which gave, not only times, but the gate numbers. During a previous visit we had learned the trick of looking at the arrival board for our train, which indicates the gate much earlier than the departure board and enabled us to get ahead of the crowd. All worked well and we arrived in Baltimore on time, tired but happy.