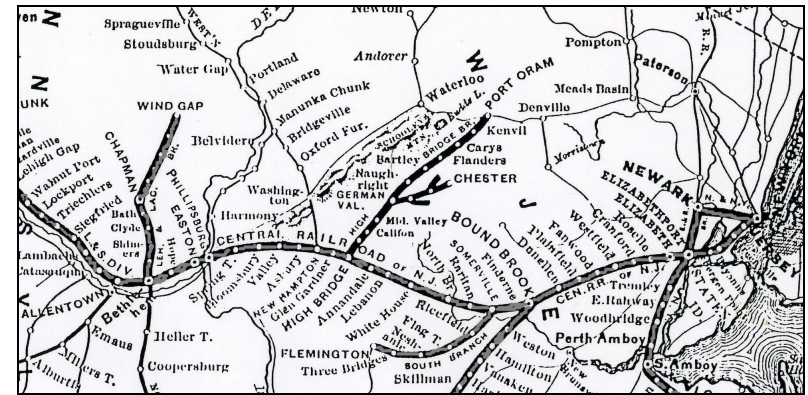


Washington Township Historical Society  
 P.O. Box 189, Long Valley, NJ 07853  
 www.wthsnj.org ■ info@wthsnj.org ■ (908) 876-9696



**Central Railroad of New Jersey – High Bridge Branch  
 1876 – 1976**

1940s, 50s	Railway Express brought freight in and the agent used to split his time between Long Valley and Califon. People picked up their freight at the depot.
1976	The last freight train ran on April 1, 1976.
Today	In the mid 1990s, the Columbia Gas Company of West Virginia constructed a gas line under the rail bed. The surface rights were transferred to County Parks for use as a recreational trail. The trail is relatively flat and is popular for hiking and biking.  There is an access point in Long Valley (with parking) on Schooley's Mountain Road where the railroad used to cross (photo below). This is a short walk from the WTHS Museum. The trail goes all the way to High Bridge.

**Washington Township Historical Society Museum  
 6 Fairview Avenue in Long Valley  
 Open Sundays 2-4pm and by appointment**



Train at Long Valley Crossing, c.1938

Primarily authored by Virginia Allen, 2004  
 Last updated: 2/28/2011 - sah

1876 The first train passed through German Valley on July 1, 1876 over the newly laid tracks for the Central Railroad of New Jersey – High Bridge Branch. The conductor was Samuel A. Crook. Income for the first month and the first year ran behind its running expenses. Afterwards, it became one of the best paying branches of the Central Railroad.

Laying the line provided work for many from German Valley and vicinity. A German Valley merchant, E.M. Bartles, benefited greatly as he had a large contract to supply the needed timber. Bartles obtained the wood by cutting trees on the south side of Schooley's Mountain as well as other places. It is said that E.M. Bartles was one of the largest timber dealers in the area.

1877 On April 10, 1877 the Central RR of NJ contracted for mail delivery to towns on the High Bridge Line from High Bridge to Port Oram (Wharton). German Valley, Middle Valley, and Naughtright now received mail by train instead of by stagecoach.

1880 German Valley residents were distressed when a railroad accident took the life of Jacob Guest.

In 1880, 130 people lived in German Valley – the population of Washington Township was 2,681 (then an all time high). Taxes were \$3.33 per \$1,000; school tax was \$2 per \$1,000.

1881	<p>Dalrymple &amp; Son erected a 150 ft. long building “on the opposite side of the RR” (in the vicinity of the present Somerset Hills Bank). Here he stored hemlock lumber for his lumberyard.</p>	1887	<p>Travel on the High Bridge Line was heavy during the summer. In summer months (mid June through mid September), excursion trains to Lake Hopatcong were a common sight on weekends. One excursion train had 27 coaches divided into 2 sections. The German Valley folks took full advantage of this one day trip.</p>
	<p>Wm S. Naughtright had a Creamery located along the Central RR of NJ in Middle Valley. He shipped milk to NYC, Baltimore, and Philadelphia.</p>		<p>The railroad changed its schedule thus changing the time of mail delivery. At a time when many gathered at the Post Office to await the sorting of the mail, this was quite disrupting!</p>
	<p>The German Valley Railroad Yard was a busy place. A newly built water tower served the many steam engines that came through. It was the only water tower on the line.</p>	1888	<p>The Blizzard of '88 – Sammy Crook’s train coming back from Port Oram got stuck in the drifts between Naughtright and German Valley. The drifts were so high on the tracks that even 3 engines could not move the snow. It took 4 days to get the train shoveled out. Nearby families provided food for those on the train.</p>
1882	<p>In this year, on one day, 188 car loads of iron passed through German Valley carrying 1,830 tons of ore. More than half of all iron ore mined in New Jersey passed over the High Bridge line and so through German Valley. These trains were known as <i>ore trains</i> while <i>potato trains</i> ran from Freehold and other points, <i>oyster trains</i> ran from the shores of the Delaware Bay, and <i>sand trains</i> ran from the sand pits of South Jersey.</p>		<p>On July 2, 1888, a tragic Railroad accident occurred. Charles Trimmer, the 19 year old telegraph operator of German Valley (and for the Railroad), offered to help with the coupling of a train. Something went wrong, he was injured and died.</p>
1883	<p>German Valley had a street called Railroad Ave.</p>	1889	<p>In early October the Railroad ran a special excursion to Trenton, possibly to the State Fair. The ticket agent in German Valley sold 43 tickets.</p>
	<p>Conductor Sammy Crook received a new uniform. It was a police blue, double breasted frock coat and a straight, peaked cap. The locomotive was also new and the cars remodeled.</p>		1891
	<p>This was an election year and also a time of a depression.</p>		<p>The Welsh Farms Creamery operated along the railroad across from the Middle School.</p>
	<p>The Grand Democratic Jubilee was held in Rockaway. The Democratic Club of Washington Township and the German Valley Band traveled to Rockaway on a special train.</p>	1911	<p>On July 30<sup>th</sup>, the first auto/train accident on the High Bridge branch occurred in German Valley. The 3 occupants of the car were injured. As a result, an automatic alarm bell was installed at the crossing. On Sundays a flagman was on duty during the excursion season.</p>
1886	<p>In the Spring, a “Photographic Car” arrived in German Valley and parked on a side track for a week. People paid a small amount to get their picture taken at this popular event.</p>	1914	<p>The <i>Perils of Pauline</i> was filmed in German Valley. This silent film episodic serial is considered the most famous suspense serial in cinema history. Week after week, Pauline (Pearl White) evades attempts on her life. She fights pirates, Indians, gypsies, rats, sharks, and her dastardly guardian. Her most familiar plight is being tied to railroad tracks with a rapidly approaching train.</p>
	<p>Jacob Welsh began shipping milk to New York City by train instead of taking it to the creamery.</p>	1918	<p>German Valley was renamed as Long Valley.</p>
	<p>Middle Valley Iron Mines on Turtleback Road shipped ore to the Port Oram (Wharton) furnace. 250 tons shipped every 3 months.</p>	1935	<p>The last passenger excursion took place this year.</p>
	<p>The telephone was in use in the Township.</p>	1940s	<p>During the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, bombs made at the Bomb Plant on Parker Road were shipped from Long Valley on the train.</p>