

HIGHTSTOWN
NEW



EAST WINDSOR
JERSEY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2007

2006 Christmas Tea at Ely House



Children of Linda Behren's school class singing.



A choir from the Presbyterian Church.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY

- 14 Annual Banquet and Brief Business Meeting, 1:30 p.m., Longstreet Library, Peddie Campus

FEBRUARY

- 5 Business Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Sara Hutchinson West Educational Center

No further information available at the time this issue was printed.

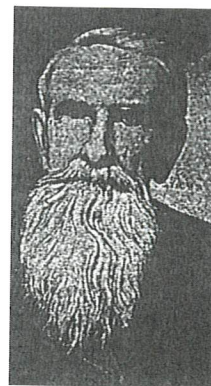
Hightstown's Early Railroading Family

by Richard S. Hutchinson

[The railroading history below comes from an interview I found that was done with Captain John W. P. West by a Trenton newspaper sometime shortly before his death in 1909, wherein he was described as being 86 years old.]

Although there were many railroaders living in Hightstown, Captain John W. P. West, of Hightstown, was the progenitor of a railroading family. He was born on 18 October 1823. Captain John's career began as a member of the crew of the sailing sloop, "Superb," when it carried the first load of stone for the building of Fort Sumter. [The island where Fort Sumter stands was constructed with a foundation of over 70,000 tons of granite

and other rock. For over a decade ships from as far away as New York and the Boston area dumped this material on a shoal in Charleston Harbor]. He later became Captain of the sloop and ran freight along the coastal waters and upon the Delaware River. He also served in the U.S. Navy. West was subsequently employed with the Camden-Amboy Railroad when the company was in the forefront of the beginnings of the railroads in New Jersey.

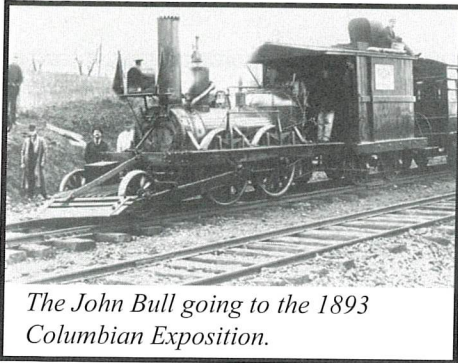


Capt. John W.P. West

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Railroading Family, continued from page 1

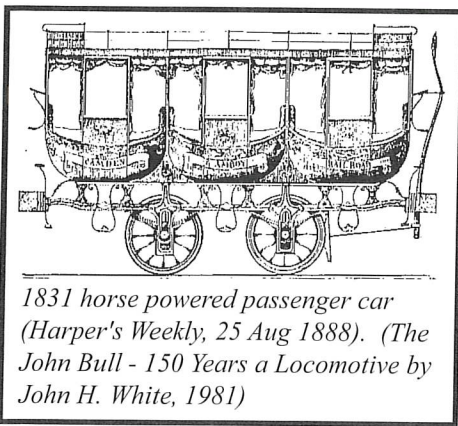
He became an engineer and ran the "John Bull." West moved to Hightstown in 1870 and became a member of the First Presbyterian Church. He retired from the railroad with 47 years of service, and in 1909, he was one of the oldest of the retired engi-



The John Bull going to the 1893 Columbian Exposition.

neers with the Pennsylvania Railroad. In his 86th year, his memory was vivid and he spoke about those early days of railroading in New Jersey.

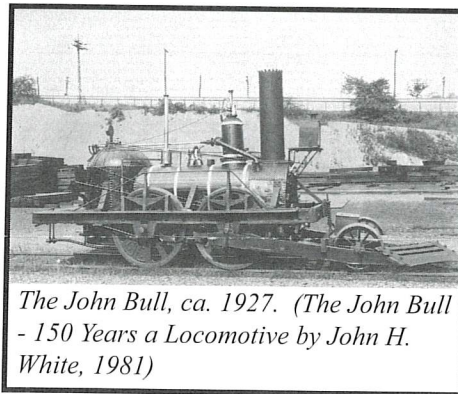
The earliest experiment with steam on a railroad in this country was in 1830 in South Carolina. The first trial trip on partially completed tracks was made in 1831 when the Baltimore and Ohio obtained its first locomotive and the Hudson and Mohawk ran its first train. In 1832, the fledgling New Jersey railroad was in full operation. The Camden & Amboy was



1831 horse powered passenger car (Harper's Weekly, 25 Aug 1888). (The John Bull - 150 Years a Locomotive by John H. White, 1981)

the first railroad to run on all iron rails while others were using wooden rails with iron strapped edges. The railroad tracks were completed from Bordentown to Hightstown in September 1832 and wooden passenger cars, to be pulled by horses, were built for it by Edwin Lockwood at Hoboken. In January 1833, freight cars

were obtained and they, too, were to be pulled by horses. The freight cars were pulled by one horse per car with the freight limitation being 7,000 lbs. In the Spring and Summer of 1833, passengers were carried by boat from Philadelphia, PA, to White Hill, NJ, and thence to Amboy in passenger cars pulled by two horses to a car. The horses, being the best that could be obtained, were driven on a run and three changes of horses were made in order to make the one-way trip of 34 miles, which took nearly 3 hours to complete. In the winter of 1833, the tracks were completed southward to Rancocas Creek, and stage coaches ran from there to Camden to connect with the trains. In the following winter, the tracks were built to Camden.



The John Bull, ca. 1927. (The John Bull - 150 Years a Locomotive by John H. White, 1981)

Due to steam being new, people feared it at first. The first steam locomotive on the Camden & Amboy Railroad was the now famous "John Bull." It was not put into regular service until September 1833, even though it had made a successful trip over the first mile of the railroad's track completed northward from Bordentown nearly two years previous, which was as early as any locomotive that was running regularly in this country. The "John Bull," being the most approved type of locomotive on English railroads, was imported from England for use on the Camden & Amboy Railroad. It was the only locomotive imported for use on the C & A Railroad. Other locomotives were built in Hoboken by Robert L. Stevens and his brother, Edwin A. Stevens, and at the machine shop in Bordentown. However, the first locomotives did not make any

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HIGHTSTOWN

EAST WINDSOR

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Hightstown, New Jersey
founded 1971*

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To educate, while preserving for future generations, our people and our community's history.

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Railroading Family, continued from page 2

faster time than that of the horses used for drawing the cars. The "John Bull" weighed 20,000 lbs. The express trains started at Camden at 6:10 AM and arrived at Amboy at 12:20 PM due to delays along the way of up to an hour. At Bordentown alone, it took about 40 minutes to load up the engine with wood.

West recalled there were new locomotives built for the freight service and they were simply call "Monsters," weighing in at 66,400 lbs. They were designed for fast freight service but their fireboxes were too small and the desired speed could not be obtained. An engineer named John Holland started one Friday morning in the winter on one of the "Monsters" with a heavy load of freight from South Amboy and headed for Camden. He never arrived in Camden until Sunday morning. He reported that along the way, he had picked up a man with a fiddle, and as the train drew into Camden being eager to express his joy of finally completing his trip, he decorated

his engine with evergreens and had the fiddler on top of his tender with instructions to give the people of Camden some of his best selections. He was told that two Irishmen on seeing a locomotive for the first time were astonished and perplexed, and one suggested that it must be a steamboat looking for water.

Research on the John W. P. West Family

John Wesley Pearson West, was the son of Joseph Lippett West & Ann Pearson. John married Lydia Applegate on 4 July 1847 and they had several children. They resided in Hightstown on Franklin Street. In 1907, they celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary and he was reported to be 83 and his wife 82. Those attending on that date were their **children**: Mrs. Joseph B. Schuyler, of South Amboy; Miss Lydia West, of Hightstown; George West of Hightstown; and John W. P. West, Jr., of Jersey City. Their **grandchildren** were:

Mrs. Leroy White, of Jersey City; John W. West and Albert S. Riggs, of Hightstown; Miss Ogarete Applegate, of South Amboy; Hazel West and Leroy West, of Hightstown; and Walter R. West and George W. West, Jr., of Jersey City.

On 12 December 1877, at the home of the bride, Taylor Applegate, of Cranbury, married Miss Lizzie B. West, the daughter of John W. P. West, Esqr., of Hightstown.

On 23 February 1881, George Howell West married Miss Emily A. Bird, of Hightstown, at the home of John W. P. West, of Hightstown by Rev. Davis.

On 25 June 1883, Little Ritchie, son of Taylor and Lizzie Applegate, died at the home of his grandfather, John W. P. West, from a tumor.

On 23 October 1884, Mrs. Annie P. Riggs, daughter of John W. P. West, Esqr.,

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ANNUAL BANQUET



Longstreet Library
Peddie Campus (next to Kalamathia House)
Hightstown, NJ
Sunday, January 14, 2007 1:30 p.m.
\$25.00 per person

Catered Special Buffet

Speaker

John Pearce, Pastor of the Zion Lutheran Church, and a Trustee of the Barnegat Light Historical Society, who will speak on the Pine Barrens.

Send reservations with check payable to: "H.E.W. Historical Society" to:
Christian Kirkpatrick, 128 South Street, Hightstown, NJ 08520 (609-443-3138)

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Railroading Family, *continued from page 3*

and wife of Mr. Marsena Riggs, died from epilepsy. She leaves one child.

On 21 May 1887, Lydia C. West, daughter of G. Howell West, died at her home in Jersey City from diphtheria from which a younger child is recovering. The remains were brought to Hightstown to the home of John W. P. West.

On 10 August 1890, Taylor Applegate, a carpenter with the P.R.R. in South Amboy, died at the home of his father-in-law, Capt. John W. P. West. He was the youngest son of the late Richard Applegate, of Monroe Township. He leaves a widow and a child.

On 20 March 1895, Miss Mary Elizabeth West, daughter of James G. West, of Vincentown, married Leroy Edmond White, of Jersey City, at the home of her grandfather, Captain John W. P. West, of Hightstown.

On 13 August 1895, John & Lydia lost a son, Joseph L[ippett] West, who was also

a locomotive engineer on the P.R.R. He died by drowning when his locomotive ran off the end of a floating bridge. He was 46, a widower, with one child named John West, who now lives with his grandfather, Captain John W. P. West. His obituary stated that he was survived by three brothers, two being locomotive engineers: James West of Vincentown & George West of Jersey City, while the third brother, John West, was a clerk in the Jersey City train yard.

On 5 September 1909, John W. P. West, aged 86, died at his home. He was the oldest railroad engineer of the Camden & Amboy Railroad. His obit stated that he and his wife had 7 children and two were deceased. They were Joseph L. West and Anna P. West, wife of Marsena Riggs. At the time of his death, he was survived by five children: James G. West, Vincentown; John W. West, Jersey City; George W. West, of Hightstown; Mrs. Joseph B. Schuyler, of S. Amboy; and Miss Lydia A. West, of Hightstown.

On 21 August 1914, Mrs. Lydia West, widow of Capt. John W. P. West, died at home on Stockton Street, aged 89. She was living with her daughter, Miss Lydia West, and at the time of her death she was survived by 3 sons and 2 daughters: George H. West, of Hightstown; James West, of Vincentown; John W. West, of Jersey City; Mrs. Joseph B. Schuyler, of S. Amboy, and Miss Lydia West above. She was also survived by the following grandchildren: John W. West, of Hightstown; Mrs. Arthur Danser, of S. Amboy; Mrs. Leroy White, of Jersey City; James West, Jr.; of Riverside; Mrs. Andrew Miller, of Jersey City; Albert Riggs, of Hightstown; Walter West & G. Howell West, of Jersey City; and Leroy West, of Hightstown. She was also survived by 5 great-grandchildren and one brother, Harrison Applegate, of Belleville. Funeral services were held at her home and the Presbyterian Church.

**TO BE CONTINUED IN THE
MARCH-APRIL 2007 ISSUE**

Mrs. Maribelle Taylor
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