STORIES of New Jersey

In 1831, two years after the run of the first steam train in America between Honesdale and Carbondale, Pennsylvania, the *John Bull* had a trial run over the Camden and Amboy tracks near Bordentown. The Camden and Amboy completed its route from Camden to South Amboy three years later. At about the same time the Paterson and Hudson River Railroad was finished, and Paterson became the center for a locomotive manufacturing industry that shipped its product all over the world. In a series of mergers the Camden and Amboy gained a monopoly over railroad traffic between Philadelphia and New York. By 1840 the power of the company was supreme: the State legislators accepted 2,000 shares of railroad stock for the State, thus safeguarding the interests of the company. This was common practise at the time. No other railroad was permitted to run between New York and Philadelphia, and New Jersey became known as "the State of Camden and Amboy."

The monopoly of the mighty Camden and Amboy was finally challenged by the little Central Railroad of New Jersey which had begun in 1847. When a railroad in Pennsylvania, later to be absorbed by the Philadelphia and Reading, was laid to a point opposite Trenton, it was planned to link the Jersey Central with the Pennsylvania road to form a new New York-Philadelphia route. The Camden and Amboy fought vigorously for its monopoly. For five years the two railroads battled in the legislative chambers at Trenton. On one occasion the State Militia was called out to quell a bloody fight between road gangs of the rival companies. Public opinion was rising against the exorbitant rates of the Camden and Amboy, and the company, to eliminate this animosity, turned over its holdings to the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1871.

The change in ownership hardly changed the situation. The "Penn" continued the battle against the Jersey Central-Philadelphia and Reading combination by refusing to permit coal from mines controlled by its competitor to pass through the Delaware and Raritan Canal. The canal, which had passed to the "Penn" along with the other holdings of the Camden and Amboy, had been sacrificed for the railroad: it never recovered from this loss of a million tons of freight a year.

Railroad monopoly in New Jersey was finally killed in 1873 by laws opening the State to all railroad companies and taxing them uniformly.

During the 60's the railroads in their struggle for supremacy used every means to secure deep-water terminals along the Hudson River and the Bay. The Jersey Central, in order to extend its property beyond the low water mark, acquired many acres of mud flats on Communipaw Bay in Jersey City and, according to Sackett's *Modern Battles of Trenton*, "for years and years scow loads of the foul refuse of the New York streets were dumped upon the flats to the peril of the health, as well as the discomfort, of the residents of Jersey City..." Other roads were equally unconcerned with public welfare in their effort to reach water deep enough for sea-going vessels. They did not even consider it necessary to take legal title to the land under water. New Jersey contested this bold appropriation, and the courts said that the land would have to be paid for. The State legislature then passed a bill placing all money obtained from the sale of riparian land into a fund for the maintenance of public schools.

One of the greatest advances in railroading has been the substitution of electricity for steam. The pioneer in New Jersey was the West Jersey and Seashore Railroad which began electrified service from Camden to Atlantic City in 1906. Two years later the Hudson and Manhattan Railroad (the "Tubes") ran its first electric trains from Hoboken and Jersey City through tunnels under the Hudson to Manhattan, and in 1910 the Pennsylvania main line was electrified between Manhattan Transfer on the Harrison meadows to New York's Penn station.

Not until 1933 did the Penn extend its electric lines west of Manhattan Transfer in New Jersey. In that year the current flowed into the trains from