



Staten Island Rapid Transit (Images of Rail)

Marc Pitanza

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Staten Island's first railroad began in 1860 as a passenger line connecting towns along the island's eastern shore, with ferry service from Vanderbilt's Landing to Manhattan. The Staten Island Rapid Transit was a second line, built in 1885. During the 19th century, major eastern trunk railroads competed for the New York freight market. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad (B&O) was a latecomer but saw opportunity with Staten Island in 1886, buying interest in both railroads. The B&O took control of the island's passenger service and turned it into a thriving commuter railroad with three branches and nearly 40 stations, forever changing transportation in the borough. Reaching Staten Island from Cranford, New Jersey, the B&O built a major freight yard at Arlington and a waterfront terminal at St. George. The railroad's customers ran the gamut from large industries like Procter & Gamble to small one-carload coal dealerships. By 1971, the cash-strapped B&O sold the passenger service to the New York City Transit Authority (NYCTA), and by 1985, the B&O had left New York for good.



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