

No. 2509 at End of Line

By REGINALD KAVANAUGH
When old No. 2509 pulls out of Jamesburg station tomorrow night an era in New Jersey railroading goes with it.
The maroon colored single-car train, which has been shuttling between Trenton and Perth Amboy daily, represents the sole passenger service on the once bustling Camden and Amboy division of the Pennsylvania Railroad.
As the empty train is "dead-headed" back to Trenton about 7 p.m., all passenger service be-

tween Perth Amboy and Jamesburg will have come to an end.
Licked by Auto
As has been the case on so many railroads across the country, the line between Camden and South Amboy, which once boasted heavy traffic, started downhill after the invention of automobiles.
Jamesburg Borough Clerk Christopher C. Quinn, a retired PRR man, recalls when the line had six trains daily between the two cities.
That was back in 1907 when

Quinn worked as a freight agent. But as the public turned to autos for transportation and trucks for hauling freight, service on the line went into a decline.
Gradually, the railroad dropped trains until only two which carried passengers remained — No. 2500, the morning train from Jamesburg to Perth Amboy and No. 2509 which made the return trip.
Train No. 2500 goes into history tomorrow morning at 6:36 as it reaches Perth Amboy. It will

stand on a siding until 6:13 p. m. when it moves out with its passengers for the last time.
Pennsylvania Railroad officials plan no ceremony.
"There are only about eight passengers," said one official.
How to Return?
Perhaps a few sentimentalists might decide to take the last run but then they are faced by the very practical problem of how to get back to Perth Amboy.
That one is bothering some of the regulars who have ridden Nos. 2500 and 2509 for years.

When the PRR first announced its intentions of dropping the service, railroad officials suggested the substitution of a bus route which would make one round trip daily between Jamesburg and Perth Amboy.
But negotiations for bus service fell through. And now a number of commuters — there are approximately 10 and an equal number of other passengers daily — must make substitute arrangements.
The railroad expects to save \$18,600 annually by dropping the

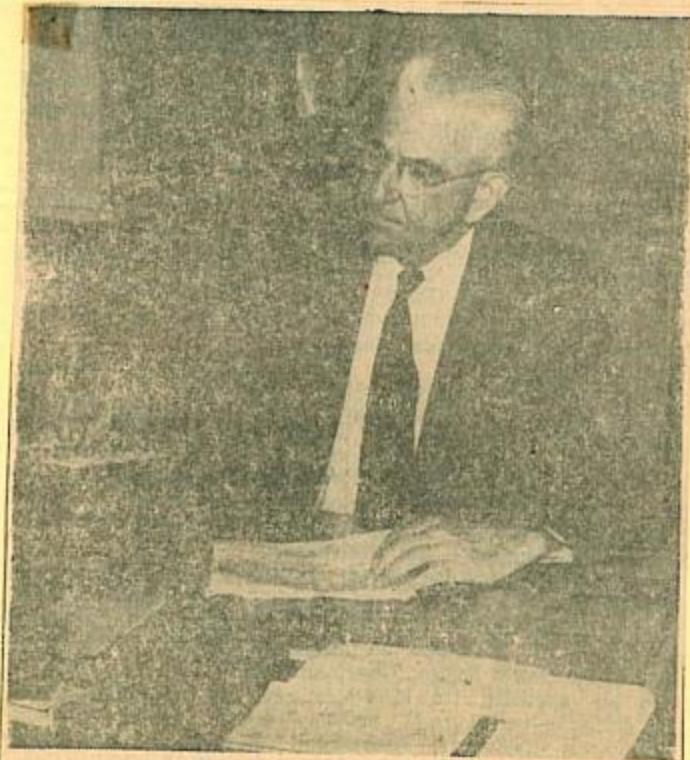
two trains.
Officials of Jamesburg, Spotswood and Helmetta and Monroe Township tried to block the railroad's plan during hearings before the Public Utilities Commission earlier this year.
They tried to show that with the increasing growth in the area, passenger service would pay for itself. But after several sessions, the PUC gave permission to put an end to the service.

Quinn sounded like the ex-railroader he is yesterday as he reminisced about the old days when the Camden and Amboy division was a going concern both passenger and freightwise.
And he looked like a railroad man, too, sitting in the borough clerk's office at his home on Lincoln Ave. Quinn was wearing a somewhat battered green eyeshade, the traditional type used by railroad telegraphers and agents.

Reminded that the headgear was somewhat antique, Quinn chuckled, "I don't remember when I got this."
When the eyeshade was new, Quinn and most of the other freight and passenger agents at Jamesburg, Helmetta, Spotswood and Old Bridge wore them.

Station Gone
In those days steam locomotives

puffed along the line, pulling the passenger and freight trains. At Hightstown eight men, agents and telegraphers, worked at the station round-the-clock. Today the station no longer exists.
Stations at the other towns were fully manned too when Quinn got his first job for the PRR as a baggageman. In the following years he was promoted to telegrapher and then to freight agent.
By the time Quinn retired in 1956 after 56½ years service, the Camden and Amboy division had all but ceased passenger service. Trains 2500 and 2509 were the survivors. But by sundown tomorrow, they too will disappear — being less durable than Quinn's green eyeshade.



CHRISTOPHER C. QUINN