

Riding the Parkway Limited from Pitcairn to Pittsburgh

In March of 1981, a reconstruction of the Parkway East was begun. For two years Parkway travel would be reduced to one lane each way. Furthermore during peak travel times, westbound in the morning and eastbound in the afternoon, only cars with three or more riders would be allowed access to the Parkway.

At this time I, a resident of Monroeville, was working at the U. S. Steel building in downtown Pittsburgh and, like 80,000 others, was using the Parkway East to get there. I tried taking the bus and car-pooling and then, when PennDOT and Conrail worked out the arrangements, rode the train from Pitcairn to the Pennsylvania Station in Pittsburgh.

The "Parkway Limited" train service between Greensburg and Pittsburgh began on March 3, 1981 with stops at Jeanette, Irwin, Pitcairn, Swissvale and Wilkinsburg. Each train had ten cars that would hold a total of 500 seated and another 150 standing. In the morning the westbound train stopped at Pitcairn at 7:06 am arriving in Pittsburgh at 7:40 am. There was another leaving at 8:13 am arriving at 8:37 am. In the afternoon the eastbound train left Penn Station at 4:15 pm arriving at Pitcairn at 4:46 pm.

Another left at 5:25 pm arriving at 5:44 pm. The cost to begin with was \$2 each way but that was later increased to \$3.

It took me less than 10 minutes to get to Pitcairn from my home. The entrance to the Pitcairn "station" was at the corner of Broadway and Wall Avenue. The Park-and-Ride lot was about 200 feet south from the corner over a bridge. That road, although inaccessible, can be seen today. There was no building or platform so one boarded the train from the ground. Once on, the ride to Pittsburgh was short and quite comfortable.

On the first day, March 3rd, the train was packed with standing room only with 150 riders from Pitcairn alone. I took the Parkway Limited about 3 days a week until it was stopped in November of 1981. The ridership had dwindled down from the auspicious start of more than 600 to less than 200. Only a couple of dozen got on at Pitcairn. The cost per passenger of almost \$20 was just too much for PennDOT to continue to support. I had only one bad experience riding the Parkway Limited; my car was broken into in the Park-and-Ride lot. Without the train, I went back to car-pooling and riding the bus for the remainder of the two years.



Pitcairn - March 3, 1981



Penn Station - March 3, 1981