



John P. Reddington

John P. Reddington was born in Port Jervis, NY around 1871 to Patrick and Catherine Reddington, Irish emigrants.

In 1889, he was hired by the Erie Railroad as a Locomotive Fireman running on the New York Division out of Port Jervis. Around 1900, he was promoted to Engineer, and began running freight trains on the division. Also in 1900, he was married to Amelia Purtell, daughter of James and Bridget McGrath Purtell. The couple would have three children together. They settled in to a home on William Street in the Deerpark section of Port Jervis.

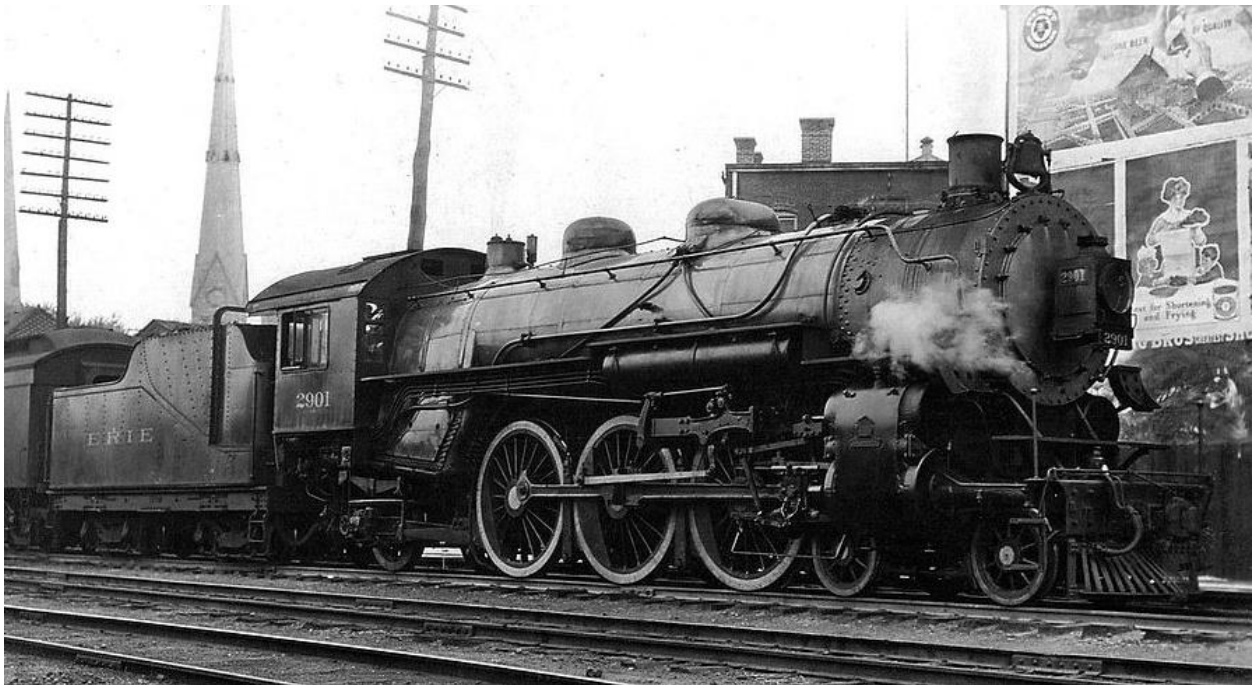
In 1907, he was promoted to Passenger Engineer. Reddington soon became known as embodying the phrases "on the spot" and "spot on," and was known as "Spot" Reddington from that point on.

Reddington was a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. In 1908 he was an officer in the Port Jervis chapter, No. 54.

Later in 1910, the family moved to Passaic, NJ to be closer to Jersey City and the opportunity to run more local passenger trains.

On October 2, 1911, Reddington was at the throttle of a passenger train approaching the River Street crossing at Paterson at 1:30 a.m. Suddenly, an elderly man moved across the tracks west of the crossing and didn't see the approaching train. He was struck by the locomotive and hurled 35 feet forward onto the tracks, where his body was further mangled by the locomotive. Reddington could do nothing to avoid the accident.

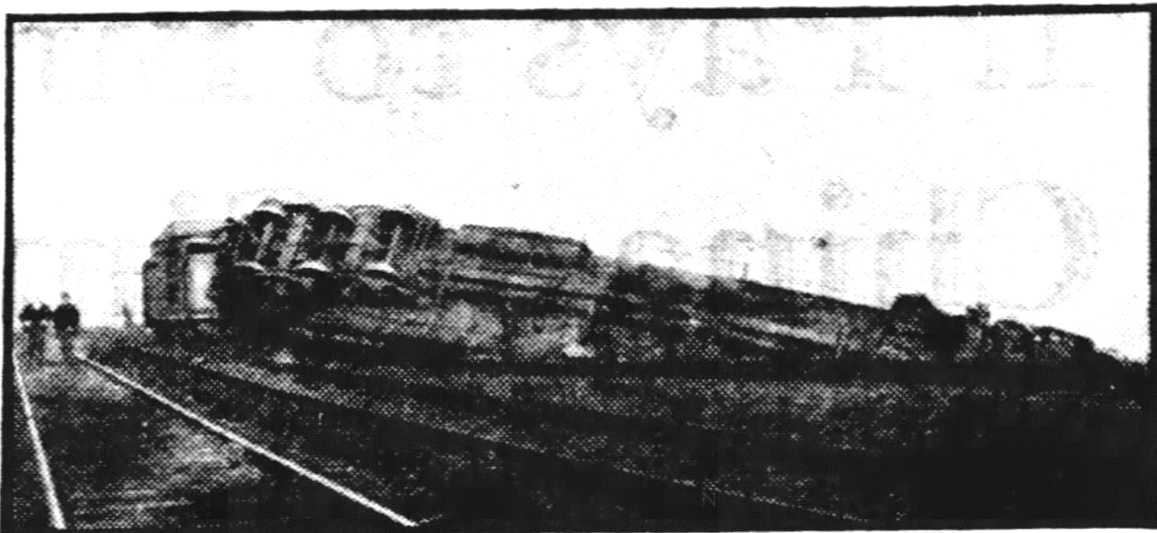
In 1922 and 1923, Reddington was on several occasions entered into the Order of the Red Spot, an honor for engine crews who knew the best ways to run their locomotives most efficiently. During that period, he was running engines #2734 and #2901 on the New York Division.



Erie Railroad #2901 at Port Jervis, operated by John Reddington in 1923

On October 7, 1930, Reddington was at the throttle of engine #2936 hauling express cars on Train #13 from Jersey City to Port Jervis. His fireman was Thomas Mullane of Jersey City. Another engineer, Herman Voelker of Matamoras, PA, was deadheading back to Port Jervis in the engine cab.

When the train steamed past Black Rock at Reynolds Curve, the lead truck of the engine suddenly derailed, overturning the engine in a cut through a rock formation. The three men were pinned in the cab. Seventeen cars behind the engine piled up onto the locomotive, although a car of horses three cars back was spared destruction and the horses were uninjured.



A news photo showing wrecked express cars at the scene.

Broken pipes on the boiler backhead sent boiling hot steam into the cab. Reddington was badly burned and lacerated in the head and upper body. His fireman was also badly burned. Engineer Voelker had cuts and bruises. It was some time before rescue crews could free the men from the splintered wreck. The men were carried by rescuers more than a quarter mile over bogs and swampland to waiting ambulances, which took them to St. Francis Hospital in Port Jervis for immediate treatment of their injuries. Mullane died there on October 16 from his burns. Voelker was treated and released. Reddington remained at St. Francis Hospital until January, 1931, when he was moved to the Post Graduate Hospital in New York City.

After suffering terribly from his burns for five months, Reddington succumbed to his injuries on February 25, 1931. He was about 59 years old.

He was a member of St. Nicholas Catholic Church and was affiliated with the Holy Name society of that church. He was a member of Perez council, Knights of Columbus; Monsignor Stein assembly, of Paterson, fourth degree Knights of Columbus, and the Color Guard of that organization. He was a charter member of the Passaic lodge of Moose and was a member of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.

Surviving were his wife, Amelia; two sons, Francis and William J.; a daughter, Mary L, all of Passaic, and one sister, Mrs. James Murphy, of Paterson.

Burial was in Calvary Cemetery, Paterson.

Sources: 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 U.S. Census; NJ State Census, 1875; *Erie Railroad Magazine*, Jan., 1908, Sept., 1922, Apr., 1923, May, 1923, Apr., 1931; *Passaic Daily News*, Feb. 26, 1931, Feb. 28, 1931; *Hackensack Record*, Oct. 7, 1930; *Binghamton Press and Sun-Bulletin*, Oct. 7, 1930; *Middletown Times Herald*, Oct. 7, 1930; *Paterson Morning Call*, Oct. 2, 1911

Career Profile by James Sponholz, Erie Railroad Internet Employee Archive.