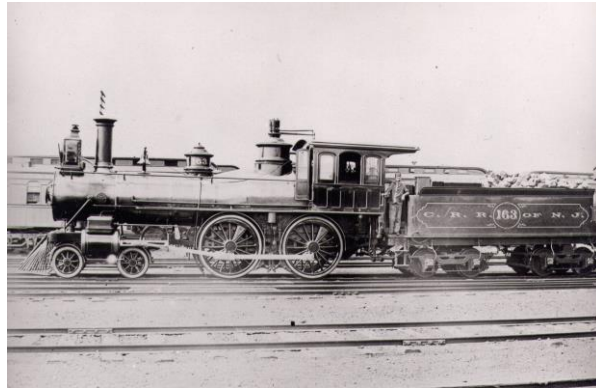


A Locomotive Named Craneville

By George Wankmueller



Long before there was a ferryboat named *Cranford* and long before there was a cargo ship named *S.S. Cranford*, we had a locomotive named for our hometown.

It happened in 1857, when the Central Railroad of New Jersey made a connection with the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western RR at Hampton, N.J. (originally named Junction). At the time, the D.L. & W. had trackage in the Pennsylvania coal fields, but didn't have access to a tidewater market.

When the connection was made the D.L. & W. had a track gauge of 6 feet (gauge is the distance between rails). The Central RR of New Jersey was of standard gauge (4'-8 1/2"). Therefore, a third rail was laid from Hampton to Elizabethport where the railroads built coal piers on the shore of the Arthur Kill. From there, the coal was transported by barge to the growing markets of New York City.

This prompted the Central RR of New Jersey to purchase 12 wide gauge locomotives to accommodate this trade.

The New Jersey Locomotive and Machine Co., located in Paterson, N.J. was contracted to build 12 wood burning locomotives of wide gauge, 28-ton engines.

Railroads in the 1800's were accustomed to naming their engines after famous people, notable landmarks and the towns that their rails pass through.

Locomotive No. 23 was originally named *Craneville*. In 1860, the locomotive was converted to burn soft coal. It was renumbered to 26 and its name changed to *Cranford* in 1869 (5 years after the village changed its name.)

In 1875, the D.L. & W. acquired the Morris and Essex Railroad, thus securing its own tidewater connection.

Our little *Cranford* was rebuilt to standard gauge in 1876 and its number changed to 34 in 1872. After being rebuilt a few times with a new boiler and firebox, it went on to serve the railroad and Cranford until about 1899 when it was dismantled in Elizabethport, N.J.