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The New York Subway

From the very end of Far Rockaway all the way into the concrete jungle that is Manhattan, the subway has been a reliable mode of transportation for me and New Yorkers everywhere. There is no place the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) subway lines won’t take you. The subway lines are life for New Yorkers as well as tourists. They mean diversity, they are cultural enrichment, a testament and an icon of modern engineering, and it is the moving metropolis beneath and above our boroughs.

The subway is a systematic maze taking you from borough to borough in a fast and efficient way, which from the time of its debut has seen the extensive and ample expansion of its routes. Since when it opened in October 27th, 1904 the subway has been considered one of the most beneficial marvels and achievements of the 20th century. According to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, The New York Subway system is by far one of the largest public modes and organization of transport in the world and in the Americas, with more than over a 277 stations in full operation.

Stretching as far as to cross bodies of water and long enough to rapidly cruise under the city streets, the building and construction of the subway was the work of brilliant engineers, however all was not so easy. According to Hood, the subway saw its birth through a series of contracts and private companies laying the foundation of its first underground subway line in 1904, 35 years after the first surface line. The subway would see its division by two companies the Brooklyn Rapid Transit (BRT) and the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) both privately owned organizations that would soon be bought by the city. The Independent Subway System (IND) built and owned by the city would see its competitive rise, as at the beginning of its own construction of lines with the charge of fare to compete with the private companies.

According to Derrick, during the subway system construction, there were two distinct methods that were employed. While the following methods were efficient, they saw their negative impacts wrought on the bustling city above. In chronological order one of the methods utilized to construct the vast routes of the subway line was called ‘cut and cover’. Contractors used the ‘cut and cover’ method because of its low level of difficulty and its monetary value. It was easy and cheap. The ‘cut and cover’ method involved the removal of the street cover, digging and creating the hole for the subway line and then once again the road or street is newly made and constructed. For all the good, the ‘cut and cover’ method it is by far one of the most disruptive methods. Becoming apparent when the subway got constructed on existing street grids with the disruption of traffic and commerce for long periods of time, since after all requires the deconstruction of streets.

Another method is ‘deep bore tunneling’. Deep bore tunneling is a modern achievement. It is a method that is barely noticeable as it tunnels and plows its way through the city’s undergrounds to build extensive tunnels for the subway lines. With deep bore tunneling a hole is built in which the boring machine enters. These large machines usually allow for one shape in the tunneling process which is circular. They can excavate up to eighty feet in one day. With deep bore tunneling there is much more freedom and flexibility when constructing these canals. While it is the preferred method it is a costly one. While both methods are used contractors are dependent on the conditions of the soil, weather and so forth that the decision for which method to employ is utilized.

As the train rails kept spreading up north in the island of Manhattan, away to the boroughs around it and connecting to other cities. The masses of immigrants overcrowding Lower Manhattan began to move as far as the railroads could take them. For the first time the working class did not have to live close to their jobs. The New York subway service is over 110 years old and it has a fascinated history on its own.

In the actuality and according to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), since the subway runs 24 hours and seven days a week is one of the most extensive rail services in the United States. Therefore, making the Grand Central Terminal the largest railroad station in the world and holds the most number of platforms.

Since its debut the subway has made history. A marvel in its construction, purpose and culture the intersecting and ample routes have taken us to so many places within our own city. We ourselves have experienced it in our own historical travels. It has been the source and a child to our modernism. It is an integral part of our daily lives, in its importance and that alone impacts us and history alike.

# References

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