Goings On at Seashore -

Art Intensive Experience Featuring Nagasaki Tram 134:

The following briefly relates a very interesting project undertaken at Seashore during early August. The majority of the information and pictures that follow are summations or straight lifts from Seashore Museum postings on Facebook during the period. For those interested in more depth there are links in the article to various postings of text and images.

Nagasaki 134

A four wheel closed car, No. 134 was donated to Seashore Trolley Museum by the Nagasaki Electric Tramway Co., Ltd., of Japan in 1960 to honor the 100th Anniversary of the opening of trade relations between the United States and Japan. Built in 1911, it originally ran in Osaka, and was transferred to Fukuoka in 1929 and to Nagasaki in 1953.

No. 134, which, like Middlesex & Boston Street Railway #41, was built with enclosed platform vestibules and a railroad roof, features straight, vertically sheathed sides (instead of the convex-concave panels of the American streetcars, which were a holdover from stagecoach practice, with the need to provide clearance for high wagon wheels). The longitudinal seats in No. 134 are very short in order to permit a maximum standing capacity. The truck on the car was built in the United States and it is equipped with General Electric motors. It has the usual "stem-winder" hand brake, but also equipped with regenerative brakes, which utilize the motors to bring the car to a halt.

When shipped to the United States from Japan aboard the S.S. Pioneer Minx, No. 134 was protected by a quite amazing giant wood-slatted crate to prevent its being damaged in transit. (It resembles the container in the scenes from the original 1933 King Kong Movie).
From August 4th-August 10th local youth ages 14-18 participated in an art intensive experience surrounding Seashore’s Nagasaki Tram. Youth were selected through application/interview/referral by local school districts. The youth repainted the tram along with Museum volunteers and members of the Friends of Aomori group in the community. In the afternoon, youth learned about Japanese culture and history post-WW2. Lyell Castonguay, a local woodblock printmaker, mentored the group in creating a woodblock exhibit to be displayed in the Nagasaki Tram.

Grant funding from the Maine Humanities Council, Maine Arts Commission, a donation of the paint by Fine Paints of Europe, and financial support from members created the opportunity for high school students from the community to paint the exterior and the interior of the tram.

This project was led by local artist and new member Ann Thompson, of Friends of Aomori. Several Seashore members and
volunteers were inspired by the energy around this project and donated their time to work alongside to six youth artists from the community who applied to participate in this once-in-a-lifetime experience. Together these young minds —Thalia Tucker, Metis Tucker, Blake Pennington, Carlie Hutchins, Amy Bradford, and Nia Farago-Dumsch — took the lead and transformed the tram outside and in, also creating a display using woodblock printmaking to tell the story of one of the tram’s operators, Wada Koichi, who lived in Nagasaki pre- and post-World War II.

A sample of their artwork is included here and displayed completely in the Facebook posts. Take a moment to admire the detail and stories each print tells.

The work is not quite finished. You can get involved in this project by helping Seashore cross the finish line. One end of the tram had sustained damage previously, and was further disrupted in the move out of storage to the Restoration Shop. Repairs are needed here, as well to the tram’s roof, which needs new canvas and a fresh coat of paint. Roll signs for the tram also need to be re-created.

To be part of this incredible transformation, please consider donate to the project. No amount is too big or too small! Visit www.trolleymuseum.org/support/donate and designate your gift to the Nagasaki Tram, fund #773.

Special thanks to the Restoration Shop Technician Heidi Schweizer for taking the lead on the restoration half of the project, and to volunteers Jim Mackell, John Mercurio, Karen & Ed Dooks and Tom Tello for working alongside the students. Thank you to the Restoration Shop Team, led by Randy Leclair and Brian Tenaglia, and the Yard Department Crew, led by Dan Vardaro and Rich Pascucci, for helping to relocate the tram.
Jim Mackell has reported that due to more donations coming in for the Nagasaki Tram later in the month, volunteers Eric Gilman, Tom Tello and Jim Mackell have started to repair, recanvas, and repaint the tram’s roof. Additional donations coming in will be used to reinforce one of the tram’s ends, and then it will be possible to get #134 on the pit to see what it will take to return the tram to operational condition!


Do You Recognize?

Last Month’s Do You Recognize -

Last month’s Electric Railroad, the Iola Electric Railway, came into being in 1901 to connect the two small towns of Iola and La Harpe Kansas about 10 miles distant and a couple of yet smaller communities, Gas City and Concrete, in between. Iola, the namesake town of the railroad, began its expansion from a couple of stores when in 1895 the large natural gas deposit in the area was tapped. Oil drillers had actually hit the gas deposit in the early 1870s but demand and technology needed to catch up. With the coming of the natural gas the city
was able to offer free gas to induce industries to move to the area as well as very cheap gas use in residences. Metal smelters and a concrete plant were among those attracted. In 1900 Mr. Frank V. Crouch of Carrolton, Missouri moved to Iola, also the county seat, and succeeded in attracting capital from St. Louis to invest in an electric railroad. Construction was announced at the start of 1901 with construction beginning in May and the first cars running the day before Christmas of the same year.

Also in December of 1901 it was announced that a site along the route for an amusement park was being explored. Negotiations for land at the western end of the line failed and it was then decided to use a thirty acre plot just east of the company’s namesake city. The park would be adjacent to the powerhouse/car barn of the system.
The summer of 1902 saw some activity at the location, likely as a picnic ground. By 1904 the city newspaper carried ads concerning events at the park. Things appear to have peaked in 1906 with a large number of amusements available. In 1907 250,000 admissions to the park were collected and it was rumored that the park might become a stop on the Chautauqua circuit. At its height popularity features included:

- Boat rental
- Swimming area
- Dancing pavilion
- Bowling alleys
- Tennis courts (asphalt)
- Fishing area
- Roller skating rink
- Roller coaster (figure eight)
- Laughing gallery
- Japanese roller ball game
- Water toboggan
- Circular swings
- Plays (by stock companies)
- Band and orchestra concerts
- Moving pictures

The line made it possible for the area’s growing workforce to live at some distance from the new industries where they were employed. The line also provided transportation in season to the amusement park.

In early 1902 there was an optimistic report in the Street Railway Journal that *the Electric Railroad Company will build 40 or 50 miles of track, to be operated by steam for the handling of freight and by electricity for passenger traffic. The necessary car houses, power stations, repair shops, buildings, bridges, etc., will be built, and the required apparatus installed, including rotary transformers. Rolling stock and equipment in sufficient quantity for the extension in question will be bought. First-class amusement attractions for the park will be purchased, including two or three electric or vapor launches*. This did not come to pass although the promoter did apparently try to develop another electric line. In 1907 the local press announced that the Kansas Southern Electric Railroad Co. had secured financing to build some 67 miles of line. However, two years later the new line had a reported assessed value of $462. The 1915 Poor’s listed the Iola Railroad as being 10.02 miles in length, standard gauge, 56 lb and 75 lb T rail, with 12 cars (6 motors, 5 trailers, and 1 flat). The company owned one power station. In that report the Iola Electric Railroad is shown as under the control (majority stock ownership) of the Kansas Southern Electric Railroad Co. Assumedly this was for asset management reasons as the new railroad line appeared to have no assets other than its stock in the Iola Electric Railroad.
Unfortunately for the Iola Electric Railroad and its communities, geologic reality caught up with the region. The seemingly endless gas reserves that had been spewing billions of cubic feet of gas since 1895 weren’t endless after all. By 1909 the gas output was declining and soon the era of free gas, actually of gas in general, was pretty much over. Without the cheap gas the industries went elsewhere and to make things worse there was a decline in the demand for zinc and zinc was the primary metal being smelted.

In 1919 the trolley service and the park ended with the population declining to the pre-boom levels.

I apologize for the limited detail and clues in last month’s mystery. The source book I thought I had on hand, which I have since located, is “Trolley Through The Countryside” by Allison Chandler - Denver (1963). The first section of this book is focused on the Iola Electric Railroad and a good resource for further information. Even including Allison’s book there is somewhat of a dearth of information on the fleet.

This Month’s Do You Recognize -

Our line this month is another of the smaller variety, a dozen cars in its peak years and a little over 7 miles of track - slightly shorter than the previous month’s Iola Railroad with about the same fleet size but an operating life of nearly double the Iola’s.

The first electric cars in our line’s state began running in 1890. Some leading citizens in two communities about 30 miles from the capital and about 7 miles apart became very interested in the possibility of electric cars between their towns. The larger with a population of 3,000 was prosperous with a growing residential and
industrial base fostered by a steam railroad connection that had arrived in late 1849. The smaller community with a population of about 1,000 was not convenient to a steam road and roads became mud holes in the wet seasons. These local residents formed an association to build a railroad between their communities and it was chartered by the state legislature in 1891. Interestingly the charter permitted construction of the line employing either horse or electric propulsion and the right to exercise eminent domain was also granted.

Unfortunately most of the residents of the two communities did not share the optimism of the association’s members as to the prospects for the line and the raising of money through stock subscriptions lagged. The members of the association pressed on and finally raised enough money to at least begin construction. Then in 1894 one of the association members living in the larger community attracted the attention of a street railway promoter from an adjoining state. After investigation and conferring with the principals the promoter offered to build out and equip the proposed electric railroad for $50,000 in capital stock and another $50,000 in mortgage bonds. This required a change in the original charter and the state legislature approved this change in early 1895. Acquiring financing and assembling materials took until the spring of 1896.

Construction began with 150 track laborers recruited from outside the region as well as many local men. This local connection of workers and the local nature of the association’s members would play out for the lifespan of the firm. Three 20 ft. closed cars and a freight car were ordered from Briggs Carriage Company as well as a nose plow from Taunton Locomotive. Land was leased from the steam railroad at its depot as the steam road tended to be friendly to the project seeing the electric as a feeder. The electric actually connected to the steam road through a spur track to promote the exchange of freight. It was originally hoped that an actual interchange of freight cars could be effected. However the first attempt to move a steam railroad freight car over the electric’s trackage resulted in the heavy car spreading the rails, sitting on the ground, and creating a major mess. Afterwards freight was exchanged on the spur.
In September 1896 the operation got underway with a grand opening and regular service beginning on October 1. In 1898 the line received a contract for carrying the mails between the two communities and also that year the line built the almost obligatory pavilion (dance hall, bowling, beach, etc.) adjacent to a lake on the line. The pavilion proved very successful and was quickly rebuilt when it burned in 1915.

The closed cars acquired from Briggs in 1896 were apparently the only new cars ever acquired by the line. In 1898 the line purchased three used open horse cars built by J.G. Brill - probably used as trailers in 1898 and electrified by 1899. In 1900 two used closed cars and an open built by J.M.Jones’ Sons were added to the fleet and electrified. These cars had vestibule fronts added for protection of the motorman. The closed cars also acquired electric lights and heat. In 1905 a used 10 bench electric was acquired from an unknown source and 1907 brought two second hand opens that had been built by the Lamokin Car Company for an electric branch of the connecting steam road.

Starting in 1907 an electric street railway opened between the state’s largest city and the largest town on our line. A couple of oddities held down the through traffic you might expect to see develop. In the town that they jointly served the two electric lines were across the steam road’s right-of-way from each other and it does not appear either line ever sought the rights to cross the steam road. Consequently passengers seeking to travel through from a point on the one to a destination on the other had to get off and walk across the steam railroads tracks. Maybe not so bad except the schedules were not coordinated. Our line coordinated its arrivals and departures at the steam roads depot according to the arrivals and departures of the steam road. This meant not only was there not coordination with the electric railway but our line’s schedules were not generally consistent i.e., the trolley doesn’t run consistently at five past the hour, or whatever. Not so much of a problem in an era of no competition but as private transport became more common this could be a greater problem.
Business remained good up to the First World War with at least a tiny bit left as net income in most years. The war, a bad winter, and influenza epidemic ((January 1918 – December 1920; colloquially known as Spanish flu) severely impacted business. Ridership dropped by 35,000 passengers in 1918 (roughly 10% of a total ridership of 350,000) compared to 1917’s 385,000. Winter storms gave ridership a little boost in 1919 and then a significant drop in 1920 and steady decline thereafter. The mortgage bonds came due in 1926 with $7,000 available to pay off the $50,000 due. Various schemes including issuing new bonds and replacing the trolleys with buses were discussed by the association. All were found impracticable for one reason or another and in 1928 the company filed for abandonment. The state’s public service commission authorized abandonment with the firm’s close of business on 4 June 1928. Replacement bus service was provided by a local individual who had also received the mail contracts and school transportation. In about a year this individual sold out to a larger bus and taxi company headquartered some 13 miles away in the state’s largest city. The “connecting” street railway had closed in 1926 while some steam road passenger service actually hung on until 1953.

Interestingly the involvement of local people in both the ownership, construction, and operation of the line probably contributed heavily to its longevity. There was certainly little business sense in continuing after the early 1920s and without the deep involvement of local folk at all levels the line would probably been gone much sooner.
Workshops continue on almost all Wednesday nights as well as after Library Committee meetings. They are well attended and much is being accomplished, under Amber Tatnall’s able direction.

The Library Committee’s next meeting will be on September 14, 2019.

Committee Meetings & Workshops (CM 10AM -12 Noon & Workshop 12PM - 2PM)

   Sept. 14 and Nov. 9
Workshop only (10AM - 2 PM)
   October 12, and December 14

**Workshops will also be held on Wednesday evenings from 5-7 PM**

except for the last weekend of the month

Wednesday evening (5 - 7 p.m.) workshops will meet on: (please confirm with Amber Tatnall)

September 4, September 11, September 18
October 2, October 9, October 16, October 23
November 6, November 13, November 20

Contact Amber or Karen (781 799-5868) to make arrangements to work at the Library at other times

Links:

More than 1000 of the images are accessible online = [https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_images/](https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_images/)

Facebook page = [https://www.facebook.com/groups/44932548777/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/44932548777/)

Seashore Library On-Line Resources -

A library resources page originally developed by Amber Tatnall dealing with useful and interesting resource material including among other things links to some three decades of the Street Railway Journal and the Electric Railway Journal on line is located at:

http://virtual.yccc.edu/seashoreTrolley

or this handy tinyurl works as well: http://tinyurl.com/zwhndoe

Please remember when sending donations for the library to note that it is for Library Development – Fund 951.

The Main Line - Availability

If you are not on our direct distribution list and would like to be please drop a note to TheMainLine@ramsdell.com.

Also, all back issues of The Main Line are now available online at: https://www.neerhslibrary.org/p/the-main-line.html

The Library Trolley (The Bookmobile With Steel Wheels)-

Most of us remember library bookmobiles - bus or truck bodies adapted to bring the services of a public library to sections of the community that didn’t have a brick and mortar facility or to the rural environs that couldn’t support a full time library and staff. However, how many are aware of the existence of the library trolley? I must confess only vague awareness if not outright ignorance until Seashore Librarian Karen Dooks had a chat at Seashore with a lady from Florida.

Janyce Gourlay related how her husband’s father, Hugh Cameron Gourlay, had become the second Director of Libraries in Edmonton, Alberta in 1939. The Edmonton library had existed since 1913 and by 1939 was a somewhat dusty, underfunded, under stocked entity of two branches struggling through the Great Depression. Ms Gourlay’s father-in-law was the head librarian at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario at the time he was hired by Edmonton. As described in Just Getting Started: the Edmonton Libraries First 100 Years he was hired as a “new broom” and he did not disappoint. Trained in library science probably 30 or more years more current than the retiring Director he set about creating open spaces,
better lighting, signage, and more and adequate bookshelves. He made the children’s area more fun and the adult sections inviting.

This is all wonderful - but of interest to us is another of his many “brainstorms”. Prior staff and leaders of the library had bemoaned the fact that working families living in outlying industrial areas such as North Edmonton and Calder had no easy way to get library services for themselves and their children. You simply couldn’t pick up the downtown Carnegie Library and take it to them.

Hugh Cameron Gourlay thought otherwise. In 1938 the Edmonton Radial Railway (Edmonton Radial Tramway) had retired a worn out 1909 streetcar. To Hugh Gourlay this car seemed an opportunity to take the library to the citizens and his Library Board agreed. It was noted in the *Just Getting Started: the Edmonton Libraries First 100 Years* that newspapers carried the syndicated story of how the “strange city” in western Canada made a traveling library out of an old streetcar. This inspired library buses, even library burros in cities around the world. The library streetcar actually launched in a royal blue and creme livery in 1941. Those also being the days of short subjects being shown in theaters before the main movie, a film crew arrived in Edmonton to shoot the streetcar library for a series called “Unusual Occupations” and this was seen all over the world.
The Christian Science Monitor covered the innovation as follows:

*This streetcar first went into service on Edmonton’s municipally-owned street railway in 1909, and was "putout tv pasture," or wherever honourably retired streetcars ultimately go, in 1938 after running 897,130 miles. Now this surprised old trolley car has had its seats removed, a new roof and ceiling added, and an excellent lighting system from 40 electrical lamps, and natural wood shelves, five rows high, installed to hold some 2,000 books.*

The streetcar is visiting the outlying districts, such as Colder and North Edmonton, once a week, where it is parked on new spur tracks out of the way of regular street-railway traffic front 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. This brings the library service within reach of many families who would not be able to come into town regularly to the two public libraries.

And how this rejuvenated old trolley must pinch itself with surprise and say: "Surely this is none of I!" For inside, the walls are completely filled with shelves containing a well chosen selection of novels, travel, biography, and non-fiction. Nor are the juvenile readers forgotten. A clever arrangement of "knee-high" sloping shelves have been filled with the gay and absorbing illustrated books guaranteed to be of interest to the children of grades 1, 2 and 3.

Over the years the streetcar library extended its reach to more parts of Edmonton. Bookmobiles in the form of buses and trucks joined the effort starting in 1947. Streetcar service ended in Edmonton in 1951 although it is not clear exactly when the library streetcar ended. Bookmobiles on rubber tires served Edmonton through 1973. By then there were multiple library branches across the city.

The Edmonton Library Streetcar was the first in Canada and it is believed the first in North America.

Ms Gourlay provided Karen with the information sources and images used in this article.
Hugh Cameron Gourlay
Director of Libraries in
Edmonton, Alberta
from 1939 - 1955

Maybe someone else would have thought of the Library Streetcar/Bookmobile but he is the one who did!

The Narcissus Project -

Phil Morse recently sent out an update on the Narcissus (PLI #14) Project. One amazing piece of preservation is that the project with your support was able to fund the conservation of the original 1910 surveyor's map of the Portland - Lewiston by the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) in Andover, MA. NEDCC is the first (1973) non-profit conservation center in the United States to specialize in the preservation of paper-based library and archival materials. The map has been cleaned, repaired, conserved, and photographed. This map is 28.5 feet long.
Senior Conservator, Luana Maekawa as she and her colleagues at Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) in Andover, MA, unroll the original January 1910, 28.5-foot-long elevation and grade map of the Portland, Gray, and Lewiston Railroad (which would become the Portland-Lewiston Interurban in July 1914) during one of the many steps in cleaning, repairing, conserving, photographing, and making a full-size facsimile. NEDCC staff left to right:

Monique Fischer-Senior Photograph Conservator, Luana Maekawa-Senior Conservator, Audrey Jawando-Assistant Conservator, Kathryn "Katie" Boodle-Associate Conservator, Suzanne Martin Gramly-Senior Conservator, and Amanda Maloney-Associate Photograph & Paper Conservator. Photo by Tim Gurczak, NEDCC Collection Photographer
Also a new book by Jean M. Flahive with cover and pen/ink sketches by Mt. Desert Island artist Amy J. Gagnon.

Millie Thayer is a headstrong farmer's daughter who chases her dreams in a way you would expect a little girl nicknamed "Spitfire" would-running full tilt and with her eyes on the stars. Dreaming of leaving the farm life, working in the city, and fighting for women's right to vote, Millie imagines flying away on a magic carpet. One day, that flying carpet shows up in the form of an electric trolley that cuts across her farm. A fortune-teller predicts that Millie's path will cross that of someone famous. Suddenly, she finds herself caught up in events that shake the nation, Maine, and her family. Despairing that her dreams may be shattered, Millie learns, in an unexpected way, that dreams can be shared.

This book is a fund-raiser for the Seashore Trolley Museum Narcissus Renovation Project. It will be available through the Seashore Museum Store in approximately a month to six weeks.

No Narcissus restoration funds were used as an individual privately funded the book.

Labor and the Trolley -

Lastly as we move through the Labor Day Weekend a slight reflection on the importance of labor organizations to the streetcar and conversely the importance of the streetcar to organized labor.

From the late 1880s through at least 1929 there was nearly ongoing labor unrest affecting almost every major city in the United States as unions sought to organize various trolley lines and owners fought back against unionization. The electrics were an attractive target for striking unions such as the Amalgamated Street Railway Employees of America. Unlike factory buildings, streetcar routes and cars were spread out and vulnerable. The routes went through the working class neighborhoods of cities where riders tended to be sympathetic to union causes. Their infrastructure was vulnerable to sabotage and their importance in the transportation of workers in other industries opened the possibility of leveraging a transit strike into a broader strike such as in the Philadelphia trolley strike and riots of 1910. Streetcar strikes rank among the deadliest armed conflicts in American labor union history.
Examples of significant American streetcar strikes include (sourced from Wikipedia):

1889, Twin Cities, Minnesota
1891, Detroit, Michigan, where strikers had the vocal support of Mayor Hazen S. Pingree, part of his administration’s long successful struggle against local traction companies
1895, Brooklyn, New York City
1896, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
1899, Cleveland, Ohio
1900, St. Louis, where the dynamiting of streetcars was a "nightly occurrence"
1903, Los Angeles, California
1907, San Francisco, California, with 31 killed and an estimated 1000 people injured. Striking workers during the strike felled trees to obstruct the tracks.
1908, Pensacola, Florida
1913, Buffalo, New York where two regiments of the National Guard were called out to quell a full day of rioting and mob violence, with several wounded by gunfire, and widespread property damage
1913, Indianapolis, Indiana
1916, Atlanta, Georgia
1917, the San Francisco United Railroads strike
1917, Seattle and Tacoma, Washington streetcar employees
1919, Los Angeles, California
1919, Charlotte, North Carolina
1920, Denver, Colorado, which left 7 dead and 80 wounded
1929, New Orleans, Louisiana

With increased organizational successes by the unions and changing economic times the frequency and violent nature of the strikes tended to decline into the 1930s. The First Red Scare during the early 20th-century in the United States marked by a widespread fear of Bolshevism and anarchism, due to real and imagined events; real events included the Russian Revolution and anarchist bombings. At its height in 1919–1920, concerns over the effects of radical political agitation in American society and the alleged spread of communism and anarchism in the American labor movement fueled a general sense of concern. The Great Depression also weakened labor’s hand and overall decline of the transit industry further reduced major strikes.

Interestingly it appears that Boston, while famous for its 1919 police strike that gave Governor Calvin Coolidge national prominence and launched him on his way to the U.S. presidency, was spared the effects of such strikes as occurred in other major cities.
Again, best wishes for the holiday weekend!

Ed Ramsdell, Editor  
The Main Line  
TheMainLine@ramsdell.com  
http://www.trolleymuseum.org

## Events for September 2019

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Please check https://trolleymuseum.org/events/ for details, updated and complete information and events throughout the year.