Goings On at Seashore -

Around the campus:

- Another year’s pumpkin patch event with great fun for all has rolled into history.
- Member’s day is October 12
- Seven-day a week operation ends for the season on Columbus Day - October 14 with weekend operation on Fri-Sun - October 18-20 and 25-27. Don’t miss Ghost Trolley (18-19 & 25-26) and trolley-ween on the 27th. Also check for later special events on the event calendar.

At the Library:

The Library continues to upload material to the various sections of DigitalMaine - The DigitalMaine Repository is a partnership of the Maine State Library, Maine State Archives and community institutions around the state.

The uploads to the new documents area are quite fascinating as they allow you to literally leaf through the documents.

https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_museum/
https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_blueprints/
https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_images/
https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_documents/
Do You Recognize?

Last Month’s Do You Recognize -

Our line this month - The Chester & Derry Railroad Association - 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 New Hampshire began running in 1890. Some leading citizens in two communities about 30 miles from the state capital of Concord and about 7 miles apart became very interested in the possibility of electric cars between their towns. The larger, Chester, 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, Derry, 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 The Chester & Derry Railroad 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
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 Boston & Maine Railroad at its depot in Derry’s Railroad Square as the B&M tended to be friendly to the project seeing the Chester & Derry 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 Chester and West Derry 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 a new electric street railway opened between Manchester, NH and Derry, NH. A couple of oddities held down the through traffic you might expect to see develop. In the town of Derry that they jointly served the neither the Manchester & Derry Street Railway nor the Chester & Derry appear to have ever sought the rights to cross the Boston & Maine tracks to make a physical connection. 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 B&M tracks. Maybe not so bad except the schedules were not coordinated. The Chester & Derry coordinated its arrivals and departures at the Boston & Maine depot according to the arrivals and departures of the B&M trains. 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 Chester & Derry filed for abandonment. The New Hampshire 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, Merle Carlton, who had also received the mail contracts and school transportation. In about a year he sold out to the Checker Cab Company of Manchester, NH, a larger bus and taxi company. 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.

For anyone wishing additional detail about the Chester & Derry there is an excellent book by O.R. Cummings: Trolleys To Beaver Lake - A History of the Chester & Derry Railroad Association 1891-1928. Printed and sold by Harold E. Cox (1990).

This Month’s Do You Recognize -

This month’s line took its name from the community at the core of its operation. Fittingly this community was originally established as the end-of-track for a steam road building through the area. Simply a place to stockpile material before the next push in building the steam road and of course they also delivered passengers to this point. At that point in time there was probably no other reason to build a town here other than that. When the railroad pushed on the “town” remained behind. Our electric line was franchised approximately 32 years after the railroad pushed on south. Here is your BIG clue. When our line started operation it and the community after which it was named were located in what was still legally known as The Indian Territory. It was some four years after the franchise was granted that this territory was merged with an adjoining territory to create a new state.
By the way should you wonder, or care, or none of the above, the definition of a United States territory is more or less the following: Territories of the United States can either be incorporated or unincorporated. Whether or not a territory is incorporated or unincorporated is at the discretion of the United States Federal Government. The majority of US territories are unincorporated territories. In unincorporated territories, the U.S. Constitution is only partially applied. This pretty much means that a territory exists and is governed under the rules that are convenient at the moment. This was even more true in the era of western expansion across the continent than in the current day.

The city received its city charter in 1898, previously operating without a formal government. Our streetcar line received its franchise on May 14, 1904. Actual operation of the line began in March 1905 over some 14 miles of track with two opens and a convertible from American Car company. The opens were actually a cancelled order for a Florida traction company that came into and out of business while our line was getting going - two to three years. Actually the closed car may also have been destined for the same extremely short lived outfit.

By 1909 our line operated 16 motor cars over 14 miles of track and another four non-passenger motors. manufacturers included American Car Company, Laclede Car Company, Danville Car Company, and Cincinnati Car Co. The majority of cars owned by our line throughout its existence were from American. Actually by the time our line acquired these cars both American and Danville were J.G. Brill subsidiaries and Laclede was owned by St. Louis Car Co. In 1911 a ten mile interurban branch was built to an adjacent town that was named after a nearby military fort that had been abandoned some 20 years before. This fort had once guarding land acquired through the Louisiana Purchase.
In 1911 a small battery car line was acquired (soon electrified) bringing a Federal Storage Battery car and a McKeen gas motor car. Trackage in and around the city was added and by 1916 our line was running over 31 miles of track with a roster of 32 passenger cars, a locomotive (primarily for use on the interurban line), and 11 work cars. The line also owned a snow plow, somewhat unusual for its location.

The population of the main city began to decline just prior to the onset of World War One. Traffic on our line flattened after the conclusion of the war and as with many systems labor strife erupted shortly after the war’s end. In late May 1919 a strike initially shut down the system, some operation was resumed with replacement crew and in early June several crew were severely beaten by strike sympathizers. The mayor asked for the State Militia to intervene but the governor declined. Towards the end of August the strike finally ended and a weakened company resumed operation. Following the predictable path of evolution the company acquired six Birneys from Cincinnati car Co. in 1922 and another six from American in 1924 as well as full conversion to one-man operation being completed in 1924 along with service cutbacks.

The usual scenario of reduced service, increased fares, inroads of private motor cars, along with the population decline and the Depression played out and with little notice the entire electric system was abandoned in early march 1933.

The interurban line was kept for about a year to accommodate freight traffic. Our line continued operating under the same name using buses until a strike permanently closed its doors in 1958. As late as 1955 it was operating 20 buses over 29 miles of route, not that
different in capacity and route miles from its operation, sans the interurban, some 40 years before.

Library Committee

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 Saturday November 9, 2019.

Saturday - Workshop only (10AM - 2 PM)

October 12, and December 14

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

Nov. 9

**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)

October 2, October 9, October 16, October 23
November 6, November 13, November 20

Contact Amber (ATatnall@yccc.edu) 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/
Facebook page = https://www.facebook.com/groups/44932548777/
Blog = http://www.neerhslibrary.org/

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 first attempt to establish street railway service in Portsmouth was made in 1887 when eight residents of that city organized the Portsmouth Horse Railroad Company, chartered in perpetuity by the State Legislature on August 4 of that year. This company, which was capitalized at $75,000, was authorized to construct, maintain and operate a street railroad, to be operated by horse power, from any point near the railroad station in Portsmouth, over and upon Deer, Vaughan, Congress, Islington and other streets to any point in the neighboring towns of New Castle and/or Rye.

An application for locations in the city was filed with the board of mayor and aldermen on May 25, 1888. These were granted on June 19, and on July 16 and 17, the city officials approved the construction of several proposed branches.

When the company sought authority to operate its proposed lines by electric power. The petition was given preliminary approval by the mayor and aldermen but no final action was taken and the project remained in status quo for nearly five years. Early in 1897, the charter of the Portsmouth Horse Railroad was purchased by two Maine promoters, Amos F. Gerald of Fairfield and Isaac C. Libby of Waterville, who also acquired the charter of the proposed Kittery & York Railroad across the Piscataqua River in Maine. They devoted the greater part of 1897 to building the Kittery & York, renamed the Portsmouth, Kittery & York Street Railway (PK&Y), and it was not until late in the year that they turned their attention to
Portsmouth. On December 23, they filed a petition with the mayor and aldermen asking for locations in the streets of the city and for authority to operate electric cars. (The locations granted to the Portsmouth Horse Railroad in 1888 had been revoked by the municipal authorities three weeks earlier.) Petitions for locations in the towns of New Castle and Rye were filed at about the same time.

The necessary hearings on the Portsmouth petition were held in the City Hall on January 31 and Feb. 1, 1898 and the locations, subject to certain suggested restrictions, were granted tentatively on February 8. Final action was scheduled for February 14.

On the morning of February 14, the Portsmouth Chronicle carried the news that Frank H. Jones of Portsmouth, president of the Portsmouth & Dover Railroad, which was leased to and operated by the Boston & Maine, had offered to purchase the Portsmouth Horse Railroad's charter and take over the street railway project.

That evening when the mayor and aldermen met to take final action on the Portsmouth Horse Railroad's franchise, Messrs, Gerald and Libby, who earlier had disclaimed any knowledge of or interest in Jones' reported offer, were there and had agreed to most of the terms set forth by the municipal authorities.

Just as the matter was about to come to a formal vote, attorneys for Lite Portsmouth & Dover Railroad served an Injunction on the city officials, barring them from granting any franchise to the Portsmouth Horse Railroad until such time as the courts could rule on its legality. It was contended by the Portsmouth & Dover that the awarding of locations by the city to the horse railroad company was contrary to the provisions of the state's general street railway law, enacted in 1895. The following day the Portsmouth & Dover Railroad, acting under the provisions of the street railway law of 1895, filed a petition with the State Supreme Court seeking authority to build extensions, branches and additions, to be operated by electricity, to Portsmouth, New’ Castle, Rye, North Hampton and Hampton.

About a week later, on February 21, the injunction in the Portsmouth Horse Railroad case was dissolved by the Supreme Court, which ruled, in effect, that the mayor and aldermen of Portsmouth were within their legal rights in granting locations to the company. Such locations were granted formally on February 26, the franchise stating that the road had to be in operation by July 1.

The litigation and the time limit imposed by the franchise grant appear to have been too much for Gerald and his associates. During mid-March, rumors began to circulate that the Portsmouth Horse Railroad Company had been sold to the Portsmouth & Dover. These were denied at first but on March 29, it was admitted that such a transaction had indeed taken place and while the sale price was not revealed officially, it was reported to have been in the vicinity of $25,000.

Promoter Gerald made no further attempts to build street railways in New Hampshire but he continued his activities in Maine, where he produced the Lewiston, Brunswick & Bath Street Railway in 1898 and the Portland & Brunswick Street Railway in 1902.
The Portsmouth & Dover Railroad was merged into the Boston & Maine Railroad in 1899 with the Portsmouth Electric Railway extension of the B&M beginning operation on July 1, 1899.

Material for the above was excerpted in part from The Portsmouth Electric Railway by O. R. Cummings (March 1952) - published for the New England Electric Railway Historical Society, Inc.

Events for October 2019

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

Ed Ramsdell, Editor
The Main Line
TheMainLine@ramsdell.com
http://www.trolleymuseum.org
JOIN US FOR MEMBERS DAY & OUR OPEN HOUSE!

SATURDAY
October 12, 2019
10am - 5pm

FREE ADMISSION FOR EVERYONE—BRING A FRIEND!

FEATURING • Take a picture of Biddeford & Saco 31 • Transit Book Sale • Cookout • Be a Motorman (BAM) for Members on Dallas 434, Wheeling 639 or Eastern Mass 4367 • Rides on Montreal 2, Manchester 38, Atlantic Shore Line 100, Boston 396, City of Manchester & Blue Line Train • Try Out Our Pump Car • Norm Down Collection HO Model Train Sale

WWW.TROLLEYMUSEUM.ORG

EVENT SCHEDULE

10AM-11AM SPEEDER RIDES
Take a ride on a speeder on the Butler Grove lead!

10AM-4PM: EXPLORE THE NAGASAKI TRAM
This summer, a group of local teens spent a week volunteering at the Museum and completed the first phase of restoration work on Nagasaki 134. Check out their work, which includes an art installation!

10AM-12PM: MUSEUM LIBRARY OPEN HOUSE
The Library Committee has worked hard all year long to set up their new space, located at 203 Log Cabin Road. Come by and check it out!

11AM: HOW TO FLIP A SWITCH
Are you interested in the railroad operations side of our work? Learn how switches work, and you'll get the chance to flip a switch!

11:30AM-1PM: LUNCH
Enjoy hamburgers, hotdogs, snacks, deserts and assorted beverages!

1PM: BEHIND THE SCENES RESTORATION SHOP TOUR
Take an up-close guided tour of the cars currently being restored and the other special areas of the shop.

2PM: TOWN HALL WITH OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Join this Town Hall Meeting to learn about what's on the agenda for 2020 and share your thoughts and ideas.

2:30PM: BYLAWS DISCUSSION
Our Bylaws Committee has been hard at work this year revising our governing document. Learn about proposed changes and share your thoughts and suggestions.