October 2019

Hopefully you all had a pleasant Halloween. We were promised a howling rainstorm for the trick or treat folk. However fate smiled on a lot of the area and while warm, windy and wet underfoot the rain abated for a period. Also best wishes to our friends south of the border for the festival of Dia de los Muertos (November 1 - November 2, 2019).

Goings On at Seashore -

**November**

**Friday, November 9th: Night Photo Shoot! 4:30PM-10PM.** Enjoy an exclusive evening at the Seashore Trolley Museum to take night shots of various scenes set up around the museum campus. The shoot is performed with mobile-handheld flash units with long duration exposures.

Before starting the event, we will offer a basic introductory class on taking night photographs and on railway safety, and a pizza dinner. $50 admission includes dinner and photo shoot. This event is limited to 12 photographers.

What you’ll need if you attend: Camera, cable release or remote shutter control, tripod, and flashlight.

The 2019 regular season has ended but the wonderful year end “special stuff” is upcoming.

Great things for families, children, fans, and casual visitors. several new events as well as on going favorites. Be sure to check the website for potential changes. Please check [https://trolleymuseum.org/events/](https://trolleymuseum.org/events/) for details, updated and complete information and events throughout the year.

**December**

Friday-Sunday December 6, 7, 8 and 13, 14, 15: Daytime Rides during Kennebunkport’s Christmas Prelude: 10AM-4PM. Rides in heated trolleys decked out in holiday greens, shopping in the Museum store, and warm chocolate chip cookies! Only $10/person.

Fridays, December 6th and 13th: Golden Chariot Ride & Cocktail Party, 5PM-6:30PM. BUNDLE UP! The Museum’s most beautiful open car becomes a wintry chariot whisking you along on a nighttime ride under the stars–your ride is illuminated only by the car itself. Signature cocktails and appetizers warm you up back at the Visitors Center. Tickets are only $30 and include the ride; two signature cocktails, beer or wine; and appetizers! Seating is limited.

Saturday-Sunday December 7th & 8th, Family Sleigh Ride! 12PM and 4PM. Make memories with your loved ones with a ride on the Golden Chariot, singing carols! At the end of the ride warm up with hot chocolate and S’mores! Tickets are $15/person and seating is limited.

Tuesday, December 10th and Thursday, December 12th, Story Time, Craft and a Trolley Ride! 10AM-2PM. Join us for some Prelude Weekday Fun as we read a story together and then hop on a trolley! Stay for crafts and cookies, or take your craft to go. $7 per person, children 2 and under free. Trolleys operate every 30 minutes.

Wednesday, December 11th and Saturday, December 14th: Surprise! Santa’s on the Trolley, 4PM-6PM. Enjoy a short story and sing along when you arrive at the Visitors Center. Board the trolley with a jingle bell and a covered cup of hot chocolate to sip on during after-dark ride in a heated trolley car.

**When you get on the trolley, SURPRISE! Santa’s riding with you!** All children get a goodie-bag to take home! Tickets are $25/person. Seating is limited – advance reservations are required. First seating, 4PM, second seating 5PM. Pajamas are encouraged!
Do You Recognize?

Last Month’s Do You Recognize -

Last month’s line, the Muskogee Electric Traction Company, took its name from Muskogee, OK at the core of its operation. Fittingly this community was originally established in 1872 as the end-of-track for the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad 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. The Muskogee Electric Traction Company (METC) was franchised approximately 32 years after the railroad pushed on south. The BIG clue was that when the METC started operation it and the Muskogee were located in what was still legally known as The Indian Territory. It was some four years after the franchise was granted that the Indian Territory was merged with the Oklahoma Territory create the new state of Oklahoma.

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, the Manatee Light & 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 the METC 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 the town of Ft. Gibson that was named after a nearby military fort that had been abandoned some 20 years before. This fort had once guarded land acquired through the Louisiana Purchase.

In 1911 a small battery car line, People’s Electric Railway Company, was acquired (soon electrified) bringing a Federal Storage Battery car and a McKeen gas motor car. Trackage in and around Muskogee 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
The population of Muskogee began to decline just prior to the onset of World War One. Traffic on the METC 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 the 1956 edition of Mass Transportation’s Directory indicated that the METC 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.

This Month’s Do You Recognize -

With no offense to the roads that I have covered recently this one is probably a little more mainstream. Our company was incorporated June 8, 1899 and was intended to fill a need for transportation in the northern part of its home state and took its name from the county in which it was centered.
The first limited operation began on the fourth of July 1903. By early in 1907 a western division of 11 miles and an eastern division of 8 miles were operating with further construction underway.

Actually the first cars did not reach the town that was chosen for the line’s headquarters until August 27, 1909. A great many plans for expansion and connecting with other lines never came to fruition and the system, as completed, consisted of some 50.55 miles of track. In places operating rights over various other carrier’s track were negotiated. In one instance stage service was substituted to reach a city center while a right-of-way was sorted out. While by 1920 the road owned 42 cars including a mix of Jackson & Sharp, Barber (the line’s two Barber cars were described as “riding with all the grace and comfort of an ice wagon”, St. Louis, Stephenson, Brill, Cincinnati, and Wason rolling stock to operate the 50.55 miles of track. As late as late as 1924 he company attempted to improve its fleet through the order of ten lightweight cars from Osgood Bradley. This was partially driven by a 1923 car barn fire that destroyed seven trolleys. However, while these could have been replaced by cheaper used equipment the company continued to look to the long term health of the company in acquiring new, more efficient cars.

Despite good business the line fell into decline in the mid-1920’s entering receivership in July 1923. By 1926 the line was so short of cash that in the case of a municipal repaving project the city had to pay for relaying the rails as the company literally had no monies to pay for it. The first abandonment took place in April 1926 when five new 29 passenger Fageol buses replaced rail service on a six mile branch. They cost $42,796.00 and were painted...
orange. By the end of 1926 the company owned nine buses. In comparison the transportation company that would ultimately acquire most of our lines assets already owned 1,200.

A foreclosure sale was held in May 1927 but rail service was maintained until early in 1928. Other abandonments occurred on Jan. 15, 1928, Jan. 15, 1928 and Jan. 28, 1928. Total abandonment came on Feb. 4, 1928 when the last trolley service discontinued. The sale at auctions of franchises, equipment, and real property eventually brought some $290,000.

This represented property on which $3,900,000 of bonds had been issued. The bidding at the auctions was somewhat “rigged” (really too harsh a term as nothing illegal was done) in that a major transportation company that wanted to acquire the auction items had agreed with the bondholders committee that it would stand aside so as to prevent them from bidding against each other. Ultimately the bondholders prevailed over individual bidders for parts of the system, scrappers, and the like.

Very soon thereafter the property was sold by the bondholders to the interested transportation entity for a substantially higher, although undisclosed, amount.

As Fageols/ACFs began to appear on the scene in 1926-1927 the face of the immediate future became very evident.
The transportation entity that acquired our line ultimately became the largest private transit company in their mutual home state. The new company was owned by an electric and gas company, in 1971 it was renamed after the state and it still exists today as a public transit entity that took over the private operation in 1980. Last year (2018) it was operating approximately 1,100 rail cars and 3,700 buses and still serves many of the former route points of our line of interest as well as the rest of the state with extensions into two adjoining states.

The Library Committee’s next meeting will be on Saturday November 9, 2019.

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

Agenda for November 9 -

Call to Order

Approval of Agenda

Approval of minutes of September 14, 2019

Administrative Reports

Karen Dooks, Chair

Amber Tatnall, Vice Chair

Old Business

Report of subcommittee on library construction and costs

Report on Library Open House and sale of trains on Member’s Day

Progress on electrician
New Business

Amherst Railway Hobby Show, January 25 & 26, 2020

Set up meeting and workshop dates for 2020

Adjournment

Saturday - Workshop only (10AM - 2 PM)

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:
November 6, November 13, November 20
(please confirm with Amber Tatnall - ATatnall@yccc.edu )

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
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/

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

Events During Winter 2019-2020

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

Ed Ramsdell, Editor
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http://www.trolleymuseum.org