December 2019

Goings On at Seashore -

Christmas Prelude
During Kennebunkport Christmas Prelude the Seashore Trolley Museum entertained some 2,054+ guests who enjoyed trolley rides, hot chocolate, homemade cookies, marshmallows & s’mores, and Christmas stories during our nine days of events.

Ninth Annual Donor & Volunteer Appreciation Event
The Ninth Annual Donor & Volunteer Appreciation Event was held on Thursday 27 December 2018 at the Double Tree by Hilton in Andover, MA. For the second year in a row no ice, snow, or even rain! The event was very well attended with the good company and great buffet enjoyed by all. It is always great fun to catch up with some folk whom you seldom have a chance to visit.

Additional comments and photos of the event at the end of this issue.
Last Month’s Do You Recognize -

Our railway of interest last month was the largest system in Oklahoma, operating a group of lines radiating from Oklahoma City, the state capital. The Oklahoma Railway Co. was also an integral part of the capital’s city transit system. The original predecessor line, the Metropolitan Railway Co. was organized in 1902, receiving a franchise in perpetuity over all streets of what would soon become the state capital, and opened its first six miles of track in 1903. In 1907 the company’s name was changed to reflect its potential growth from its city railway origins. Other components of the system were Oklahoma City & Suburban Railway Co. in the city acquired in April 1910, a partially constructed interurban purchased in August 1911, the El Reno Interurban Railway Company, completed that December, the Oklahoma Traction Company, bought in 1913, and the Guthrie Railway and the Oklahoma Electric Terminal Company. Somewhat unusually the system was not associated with an electric generating company but was primarily financed through investors located in an adjacent state.

The first line was the interurban, completed part way by the predecessor company and opened for service over the entire route in late December 1911. A shorter line, but higher density route, was completed to the location of the state university in 1913. A northern line was partially opened in 1911 and completed in 1916. While a lot of the traffic was of a local nature to and from the major city there was considerable through traffic to the terminal cities, and especially to the university. By 1920 the road had identified carload business as worthwhile and in 1929 it purchased the Oklahoma Belt Railroad, leased the Oklahoma City Junction Railway and electrified both of these steam-powered railways. In the early 1940s the potential
abandonment of interurban operations was on the horizon and freight trackage and rights over other lines were sold adjoining steam roads. Significant long-haul freight business was lost when for many years a major freight haul of handling through cars for a connecting short line railway into the capital city was lost with the short line abandoning the route in 1939.

In WWII a large Naval training station was established at the university with increases in traffic to the extent that freight equipment was rebuilt to handle passengers and the second-hand market was plumbed for cars from as far away as New York and Ohio. The Navy also purchased eight interurban cars and leased them to the line.

Passenger service was typically on an hourly basis on all lines, although in later years the service was increased to every 30 minutes on the university line while frequency decreased to 90 minute intervals on the other lines, which had much lighter traffic density. All lines reached downtown in the Oklahoma City via streetcar tracks of the city railway.

Plans had been under consideration to abandon the interurban since the early 1940s and probably pre-war. During WWII the system came under the control of a wealthy oil man who announced his intention of scrapping the road as soon as
busses could handle the traffic. In 1946 the longer interurban route was converted to buses and in mid-April of 1947 the arrival of 87 new GMC diesel-hydraulic buses with an equal number of older GMC and Mack gas buses for rush-hour overflow brought the end of the streetcar service in the capital. Summer brought the end of the electric car service to the university, also replaced by buses.

Over the years our line operated a variety of equipment with interurban cars, new and second-hand, from American, St.Louis, Niles, and Jewett. City service cars, again both new and used, came from American, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Kuhlman, and Niles. In the peak WWII years the system fielded 40 streetcars and 28 interurbans operating over a 113 mile route. Freight and work cars were primarily railway rebuilds of previous passenger equipment. The railway also built at least six locomotives which eventually outlived the railway and went on to other carriers plus miscellaneous other rolling stock.

This Month’s Do You Recognize -

Our railway’s home state was at the heart of interurban development in the United States. The first of the predecessor lines of our railway-of-interest was formed in September of 1869 but unfortunately a shortage of cash delayed the start of construction until another railway company was formed in January 1885. In April a small horsecar opened service. Its host city was the site of an early experiment in electric propulsion, albeit initially a failed experiment. This attempt utilized the Van de Poele system but it was unsuccessful and the wires were removed until further refinements in electrification technology. Van Depoele’s system was successful in a number of locations and he is also credited with the invention of...
the trolley pole. Van Depoele sold his electric motor business and related patents to the Thomson-Houston Electric Company in early 1888 and Thomson-Houston merged with the Edison General Electric Company to form the General Electric Company in 1892. Our line’s predecessor’s ultimately completed electrification in 1894 when yet another new line was organized to build to a neighboring community some six miles away.

These and other roads merged into a railway system bearing the state’s name. During the first few years of the 20th century additional companies in abortive attempts to connect our line’s home city with a city on one of the United State’s largest lakes. This was finally achieved with the 1905 acquisition of these lines by our railway-of-interest and work pushed forward with end to end operations of this western route beginning in 1908. It is of some historic interest that a more famous and certainly longer lived interurban completed its trackage between these two cities a month prior to our line’s completion. Probably somewhat unique in the world of interurbans these two lines ran side by side for some number of miles.

In 1907 our railway fell under the control of a railway syndicate funded by Eastern monies and yet another name change took place although it continued to be known by its earlier name. Two new city lines were
opened the same year. Under this management the system grew to a system of 160 miles of line and 140 cars.

Under yet another railway entity a 38 mile northern route was built from the home city to a city and county seat in an adjoining state. The city is located on the same lake as that reached by the western extension in 1908. An extremely obscure factoid is that early European settlers at this site laid out a plat of the village, then known as Newburyport, named after the coastal city in Massachusetts. The non-Massachusetts Newburyport changed its name to the current one when it was incorporated in 1834 so there was again only one in the world.

Another city route was added in 1912.

The two brothers who controlled the syndicate died in 1925 and the collapse of the syndicate along with growing and unregulated bus competition across the system led to financial problems and declining revenues. The company had been reorganized in 1930 with the new entity assuming almost the same name as our 1905 carrier.
In 1905 it was a “Railway Company” and in 1930 the name reverted from the 1907 carrier to “Railway Inc.”. The new 1930 company acquired 10 modern lightweight one-man interurbans from the Cummings Car & Coach Company and 10 42 ft. closed city cars from the Cincinnati Car Company.

Despite the efforts to attract new business receivership ultimately followed in December 1931. The receiver made efforts to preserve the system’s assets through abandonment of some city operations including the entire city service in the endpoint city of the western line that had opened in 1908. All interurban railway service was abandoned on June 1, 1934. During the later 1930s there were further conversions from streetcar to bus. Finally in 1940 all streetcar service was converted to busses - five city routes in the “home city” surviving the longest - and our system adopted “Transit” in its name to replace “Railway”. This continued in some fashion until 1956 when operation fell to National City Lines. In 1956 the system operated 110 busses over 77 route miles providing service in the original home city of our line and over parts of the eastern and northern legs of the old system. Then 1968 saw a transfer to the current public transit entity.

The Wednesday Evening Workshops Are Temporarily Cancelled

Due to the holiday season and also the advent of winter weather the Wednesday evening workshops are suspended until March for better weather and longer daylight.
The next Library Committee and Workshop meeting will be Saturday January 11, 2020.

The Library Committee’s meetings followed by a workshop in the first quarter of 2020 will be on Saturday January 11, 2020 and March 14, 2020. (CM 10AM -12 Noon & Workshop 12PM - 2PM)

Saturday - Workshops only (10AM - 2 PM)

February 8, 2020, April 11, 2020.

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

Seashore’s Ninth Annual Donor & Volunteer Appreciation Event

The Ninth Annual Donor & Volunteer Appreciation Event was held on Thursday 27 December 2018 at the Double Tree by Hilton in Andover, MA. The following are some random comments and images (mostly taken from the table where I was seated):

This year’s event began at 6:00PM with a cocktail hour to mingle and chat. A series of vintage films of Seashore from the 50’s and 60’s taken by Mike Lennon ran during the hour followed by a buffet dinner at 7:00PM.

The “formal” portion got underway after the dinner with a welcome by Fred Hessler, Event Co-Coordinator. Fred’s opening was followed by presentations both looking back at 2019 and to the future by President and CEO Jim Schantz and Executive Director Katie Orlando. The list of accomplishments over the past year and upcoming were quite amazing. Some are big and visible such as shop improvements, the major Fairview expansion, cleaning and repairs to Tower C for exhibition space, the Narcissus, the return of Eastern Mass 4387 to the operating fleet, Toronto 2890’s advance towards return as a special car, and the exciting Nagasaki 134 project.

In some respects less apparent to the casual eye but as important (maybe more?) is the great deal of effort put into the property by volunteers, staff, and contractors. Hundreds of ties replaced, track sections rebuilt, brush clearing along the right-of-way, the major
clearing and clean up efforts at Talbot Park, along the entrance road to the property, and also next to the Parts Warehouse and at the future Coney Island Yard site. These aren’t a big “brick and mortar” event but immensely important to the overall museum and the public’s impression of it.

Looking ahead certainly the major item is the facility that is in the planning stages for next to the Visitor’s Center designed to hold cars, exhibit space, and a new library facility. Stay tuned for more details with unveiling and kick off Seashore’s 5-year plan in January 2020 with the announcing of the projects planned for completion.

Jim and Katie’s presentations also touched many new “fan” and family events, including Daniel Tiger Visits Seashore, Free Weekday Story Times, appreciating each state our operating fleet once operated in, and offering a special fleet ride each weekday, which continued through October. All Women’s Crew Day was a big hit in August. The museum also hosted a dual Business After Hours event with two local chambers, a wedding reception, a rehearsal dinner, and two movie shoots.

There was also an update on Seashore’s albino baby porcupine of worldwide fame - literally. “Marshmallow”, as named through a poll by the museum, made newspapers and tv stations worldwide across North America, to Europe and Asia. Marshmallow was seen strolling, actually waddling, the property through to the end of the season. While porcupines do not hibernate in winter or otherwise, they do sleep more regularly and remain close to their dens come winter. We look forward to our friend’s reemerging come spring.

Next came Special Presentations:

• The first Roger E. Somer’s Legacy Award presented for contributions to Operations was presented to Roger Tobin. Eileen and Matthew Somers were present and spoke at the presentation.
• The George Sanborn Award was presented to Frederick Hassler - the first recipient of this award (2018) was Cecilia “CC” Clapp.

An update on the restoration program was provided by Randy Leclair, Restoration Shop Director, and Donald Curry, Project Restoration Manager. A broad overview was given of various projects completed, underway, and the trials and tribulations involved therein. Illustrative of such was the story related by Randy as to the rebuilding of a bank of resistor grids for Boston 5821.

As with most things required for repair/replacement of an almost one hundred year old streetcar you don’t get the part off the shelf at the “streetcar store”. With resistor grids you have the leavings acquired over the years from earlier failed banks from cars at the museum or decades earlier failures on the Boston Elevated or some other. You have those grids that didn’t burn up in whatever the prior event was. So the shop sorts through and measures resistance of those miscellaneous grids to assemble the bank needed for the specific use required. A project requiring both skill and infinite patience.

Probably the most rewarding piece of restoration news of the moment was that, after four years of searching and deals falling through, on that morning (Friday, December 27, 2019) a Selectwood delivery truck from Portsmouth, NH, arrived at Seashore Trolley Museum with two vintage, 37-foot-long, southern yellow pine side sills for the National Register of Historic Places member, Narcissus. The following information and two images are excerpted from Phil Morse’s blogspot https://narcissus1912.blogspot.com as written on the 27th.

Here’s a Christmas story for today. Later in the month of September, a long-time Seashore Trolley Museum member, Ralph Littlefield, contacted me. Ralph had had an interest in the restoration of the Narcissus for decades now and he had a potential lead for us to access vintage timbers that may be applicable for use in the Narcissus. The name of the lead was Steve King, of SelectWood in Portsmouth, NH. I passed the contact info on to the Museum shop’s manager of the restoration of the Narcissus, Ernie Eaton. Ernie, in turn, contacted Steve and over a few weeks were able to arrange for an onsite visit to view potential vintage timbers located in Springfield, MA at Armster Reclaimed Lumber. One of the vendors also present during the site visit was Bruce Smith from Rex Lumber in South Windsor, CT. Ernie
learned that the vintage timbers came from a raised mill building in Thompson, CT. The building was built circa 1870s. After inspections and discussions, Ernie earmarked an 11.5" x 13.5", southern yellow pine, 40-footer. Over the coming days/weeks, details of specifications, milling options, shipping, etc., were worked out. The two 5" x 8", 37-foot-long sills required for the Narcissus would be extrapolated from this one single massive 40-foot timber.

For extensive images and information about the acquisition of these sills and the entire amazing Narcissus project go to Phil’s blogspot as noted above.

Event Co-Coordinator John Grady gave closing remarks.

We all owe a special thanks to Paul Castiglione, John Grady, and Fred Hessler for coordinating this year’s event.

A most informative and entertaining event.
and from around the room:

This one I couldn't resist - How to title it?
Perhaps Randy Unglued! We were in deep discussion of childhood memories of owning livestock (chickens and turkeys) with a few squirrel stories thrown in (don't ask).
May
Saturday, May 2nd: Opening Day & Maine Day! Admission for Maine residents is $2.07; children 15 and under are free. Special cars in our Maine collection will be featured.
Saturday, May 9th: International Day. International visitors admissions are half off. Cars from our international collection will be featured!
Sunday, May 10th: Mother’s Day. Mothers admissions are free! Behind the Scenes Shop Tours will be offered at 11AM and 1PM.
Saturday, May 16th and May 23-May 25: Armed Forces Days. Active duty military personnel and veterans' admissions are free.
Saturday, May 30th: Dog Appreciation Day. Dogs are welcome every day at the Museum, but today we will have special door prizes and more!

June
Saturday-Sunday, June 13th-14th: Daniel Tiger Comes to Seashore! Take a trolley ride to meet Daniel Tiger, son of Daniel Striped Tiger from the PBS series Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. Pre-purchase tickets online; available Friday, March 27th.
Saturday, June 20th: West Virginia Day. To honor WV's statehood anniversary, car 639 will be featured. Residents of WV get in free!
Sunday, June 21st: Father’s Day. Father’s admissions are free! Behind the Scenes Shop Tours will be offered at 11AM and 1PM.
Saturday, June 26th: New Hampshire Day. To honor New Hampshire's statehood anniversary, car 38 and City of Manchester will be featured. Residents of NH get in for $6.031 (NH children 15 and under get in free).
Sunday, June 27th: Something’s Fishy at Seashore/Maritime Festival in the Kennebunks. Activities at Talbott Park, fish trivia and more!
Saturday-Sunday June 27th-28th: First Responder Day. To show our appreciation, first responders’ admissions are free.

Wednesdays In July & August: Ice Cream Night!
Join us from 5:30PM-7PM for ice cream sundaes and a trolley ride! Admission is only $7/per person; children 2 and under are free.

July
Wednesday, July 1st: Canada Day! Canadian residents’ admission is half off. Special cars in our Canada collection will be featured.
Saturday, July 11th: Massachusetts Day! Admission for MA residents is half off!
Sunday, July 12th: Moxie Day! Experience a Moxie Invasion!
Saturday-Sunday, July 19th-20th: Business Member Appreciation Days. Seashore’s business members will be featured. All guests will get one chance to win door prizes donated by our business members!
Saturday, July 25th: Connecticut Day! Admission for CT residents is half off! Special cars in our CT collection will be featured.
Sunday, July 26th: Minnesota Day. Car 1267 will be featured and celebrated. Residents of Minnesota get in free!

August
Saturday, August 1st: May Day Celebration with the School Around Us! Our neighbor school is turning 50 and are celebrating with a festival at Meserves Field all day! Join us for good food, live music, and trolley rides.
Saturday, August 8th: Superhero & Royalty Day! Dress as your favorite superhero, or as royalty! Special activities will be set up around campus.
Saturday-Sunday, August 15th-16th: Teacher Appreciation Days. To show our appreciation, teachers’ admission is free! All teachers will receive a free chance to enter to win door prizes!
Saturday, August 22nd: All Women Crew Day. Celebrate the role women have played in transit history! BAMs will be offered throughout the day for female guests interested in becoming a volunteer trolley operator at the Museum in 2021!

September
Saturday-Sunday, September 5th-6th: Model Railroad Layout Days. Check out model layouts and displays in our Exhibit Room!
Sunday, September 13th: Grandparent’s Day! Grandparent’s admissions are free! Behind the Scenes Shop Tours will be offered at 11AM & 1PM.
Saturday-Sunday September 26th-27th: Pumpkin Patch Trolley. Ride a trolley to the Seashore Pumpkin Patch to pick out a pumpkin to take home and to play fun family games and activities!

October
Saturday-Sunday October 3rd & 4th: Pumpkin Patch Trolley. Ride a trolley to the Seashore Pumpkin Patch to pick out a pumpkin to take home and to play fun family games and activities!
Saturday, October 10th: Members Day & Open House. Members have the opportunity to ride and operate special cars in our collection and participate in special workshops! Admission is free for all guests.
Friday-Saturday October 30th-31st: Ghost Trolley, 7PM-9:30PM. Take a ride down Seashore’s haunted track if you dare to our car barn of terror, but prepare to be scared!
Saturday, October 31st: Trolleyween! The last day of our regular operating season! Participate in our “ghost hunt” for a chance to win a free 2020 family membership! Costumes are encouraged.

Regular Admission
Adults (16 - 59): $12.00
Children (6 - 13): $9.50
Children (0-5): $5.00
Children (0-2): Free

Become a Member!
Individual Membership: $35
Family Membership: $60
Student/Senior/Military: $30

For more information, the most up-to-date schedule, and to purchase tickets, please visit trolleyuseum.org

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