Goings On at Seashore -

Obviously as with every other locale on our planet the primary news is the pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). As this is being written the museum is closed with all employees having transitioned to work remotely. The health environment and regulations are changing rapidly enough that I am not going to attempt to provide information beyond that and would recommend you watch for bulletins from Seashore and the Seashore website as to current information for what is occurring.

Do You Recognize?

Last Month’s Do You Recognize -

The route of this month’s electric railroad originated in 1878 when the Concord Horse Railroad Company was chartered to build a narrow gauge (three feet) line from the state capital of Concord, NH to an adjacent village, a distance of about four miles. Initially five cars were purchased from the Abbott-Downing Company, the famed stagecoach manufacturer, with operations getting underway in 1881. Extensions were added in 1882 and 1884. As a result of heavy snow storms in the winter of 1884-85 the city granted permission to use steam power over part of the line. Cars were horse-powered for the first two miles from the city center and then hauled by steam dummy for the remaining five miles to another neighboring village. The stresses of steam power required the passenger cars’ four wheels be replaced with two trucks totaling eight wheels per car.

In 1889 the seemingly inescapable intrusion of fire destroyed a locomotive shed, stable, and car
barn resulting in the loss of one steam dummy and the buildings. This loss reduced the line’s service level. In December of that year the company petitioned the city for permission to electrify the system. After several months of agonizing over permitting a single or double wire system, in March 1890 permission was granted for the single wire system preferred by the company. By late November 1890 regular electric service was underway.

A new superintendent took over in late 1890 and found the line basically unserviceable. The line was effectively shut down in January 1891, both physically inoperable and with no credit. At this point the railroad owned 13 cars, 15 horses, and a steam motor. The road was reorganized under the name Concord Street Railway, capitalization was increased, repairs undertaken and new cars added. Extensions that were built in the period of 1891 - 1894 extended the line to 11.6 miles with a 50 acre trolley park being opened in 1893. By 1895 the roster included nine closed cars, 16 open cars comprising 17 powered cars and eight trailers.

In late 1900 the Concord and Montreal Railroad, under lease to the Boston & Maine Railroad, petitioned the state railroad commissioners for authority to build an interurban electric railway from the state capital to Manchester, an industrial center some 15 miles to the southeast. This proposal was somewhat unusual in that it was an experiment by the steam road in building an integrated electric division rather than simply owning a trolley line. The line was built to first class steam road practice and standards. Regular service was commenced in August 1902 with a mix of cars built in the Boston & Maine’s shops in Concord, NH and cars purchased from the Laconia Car Company. A large car barn was built on railroad property in the
capital and a smaller one midway between the electric line’s endpoints. Operation used modified standard steam road practice and standards. Meanwhile in June of 1901 a majority of the stock in the three foot narrow gauge city line in Concord was transferred to officials of the Boston & Maine. The new management outlined plans for converting to standard gauge and connecting with the new electric branch of the steam road. During 1903 the state legislature granted authority for the Concord & Manchester to assume control of the Concord Street Railway. In November of that year the Superior Court dissolved the street railway corporation and transferred its assets and franchises to the steam railroad. During the Fall of 1903 track crews widened to former city lines to standard gauge and the old rolling stock was rebuilt.

Costs involved in building the new electric branch, purchasing the street railway along with its conversion and rebuilding, were paid through the sale of railroad stock and bonds.

In 1909 a 1.09 mile loop extension was added to the city system. Summer-only service was operated to the river park that the city railway had opened in 1903. Route structure remained quite stable over the life of the branch. The state fair grounds in the capital were abandoned in 1909 resulting in the ultimate removal of track and overhead on an adjacent line and the river park branch was eliminated in the early 20s.

During 1902 the railroad shops built eight double truck closed cars equipped for multiple unit operation with eight more added during 1903. Six 13 bench opens were acquired from a car.
builder in the state during 1904. The electric branch acquired 12 closed and 11 open cars from the Concord Street Railway, plus six open trailers, some maintenance equipment and four horses. Most of the acquired equipment was immediately junked. In 1914 a report to the Interstate Commerce Commission reported that the electric branch had 23 closed cars, 14 opens, three service cars, and three plows.

In late 1919 the leased Concord and Montreal Railroad, that the Boston & Maine had used to purchase the city railway and build the electric branch, was merged into the Boston & Maine and the electric lines became a separate division of the B&M. In addition to rising costs and highway competition the division’s financial problems were greatly increased when in 1918, as part of the world War I effort, the Boston & Maine was temporarily taken over by the U.S. Railroad Administration but the electric division was not and suddenly found itself expected to stand alone financially. USRA control ended in March of 1920.

One-man operation came to the city lines in 1921 and the interurban in 1925. When the B&M’s other electric railway, the Portsmouth Electric Railway, was motorized in 1925 several cars owned by the Concord & Manchester were returned from operation on the Portsmouth system. There had also been two 20 foot closed cars built in 1900 belonging to the Portsmouth Electric Railway that had operated continually on the Concord line. In 1932 the railroad through its electric division affiliate petitioned the state to end all electric service and the railroad’s motor bus affiliate, the Boston & Maine Transportation Company, petitioned to start motor bus operations over those same routes.

For additional detail: The Concord & Manchester Electric Branch, the Concord Electric Railways and predecessors, 1878-1933 [O.R. Cummings - 1996]
This Month’s Do You Recognize -

Our line of interest was formed in 1897 as a reorganization of the “city name” street railway company, founded in 1881 as the city’s first street railway, beginning service by 1883.

The home city of our line was founded in 1856 as a village on the wild salt marshes of what was to become a county of the same name. It became the state capital in 1869. The state capitol building was completed in 1932, and is the one of the tallest capitols in the United States. As a minor side-note the state supreme court also sits in the capitol building. The state university was founded here in 1869.

In the sixteen years between the founding of the street railway and its reorganization, some dozen other streetcar companies were franchised in the city (one operated horsecars until 1906), with our company-of-interest being the largest. The line was controlled by out-of-state investors, and involved in multiple disputes over taxes, fare increases, and lack of maintenance. In 1905 local interests formed the competing Citizens Railway, largely to pressure our line. Members of the city’s Commercial Club conceived a street railway to be called the Citizens Interurban Railway. Within two years a local firm, Woods Brothers, formed the nearly identically named Citizens Interurban, laid track and in the fall of 1908 opened a line. The following year Citizens Interurban merged with Citizens Interurban Railway, both of which were owned by the Woods Bros.

This tactic was successful to the degree that when the Traction and Citizens merged in 1909 (as the “city” Traction Company) former Citizens directors held six of the eleven seats on the new board and only one of the directors was not a city resident. Both the Traction and Citizens were dedicated users of the products of the American Car Company. J.G. Brill had acquired American Car in 1904.

In its merged form, the Traction Company owned and operated almost all of the streetcars in the city. The company had its own electric generating plant which not only supplied the streetcar lines, but also sold electricity and steam to private customers.
The merger of 1909 was followed by a series of consolidations and abandonments of unprofitable lines leading to the company's most prosperous period in the early 1910s. Plans were developed for the new headquarters with a terminal company organized by the Traction Company's directors to construct the building with a common president of both companies. The building was planned in 1915 and erected in 1916 as headquarters for the Traction Company and also served as the terminal of the Traction Company's various lines.

By 1916 all of the nearly 65 miles of street railway in the city had been consolidated into the Traction Co. The Traction Company would be the major street railway company in the city from the 1909 merger until the end of streetcar service in 1943. The First World War brought declining income to the Traction Company, followed by labor strife and a violent strike in 1917. The company ran deficits in the early '20s as buses started competing with its streetcars on the suburban lines. The company began to acquire its own buses with a single route in 1926 and by the late 20s the system was half bus/half streetcar with revenues continuing to decline with just three streetcar lines remained after 1931.
A holding company had taken over the Traction Company in 1926, mainly to acquire the power plant, which was split off from the transit operation.

National City Lines acquired the Traction Company in 1942 and renamed the Traction Company as the “city” Lines with the last street railway line, a former interurban line, closing on Sept. 2, 1945.

In 1946 the company was operating 66 buses over 66.3 route miles. Most of the streetcar tracks had been removed by federal relief projects in the 1930s.

The Traction Company’s power plant was operated and expanded by new owners until it was completely replaced in 1949. In 1971 the “city” Lines name was replaced with “city” Transportation System, which operated until 1989. In 1989 a public transit authority assumed operation.

In case you have lost a grip on the question - it is what is the name of the traction company and its city? Actually if you get one you get the other.
The Library Committee did not meet in February due to power outages from the windstorm and the Library Committee did not meet in March or April due to public health recommendations for COVID19. The meetings are now postponed indefinitely.

Issues still on the agenda include:

- **Elections for 2020/2021**: We have one opening on our slate. Please contact Karen Dooks if you are willing to run.

- **Electrical work in the Conference Room.**

- **Concerns regarding the Curatorial Collections Management Policy as they relate to the Library.**

Our community partner York County Community College is also closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Library Committee’s meetings followed by a Workshop on Saturdays (10AM - 2 PM) are cancelled.

Saturday - Workshops only (10AM - 2 PM) are cancelled

The Wednesday Evening Workshops Are Cancelled

For further information/questions concerning the Library please contact Amber Tatnall (ATatnall@yccc.edu) or Karen Dooks (781 799-5868).

By Karen Dooks, Chair

Links:

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

Facebook page = https://www.facebook.com/groups/449325487777/
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.

Biddeford & Saco Railroad Company Ephemera -

Mike Lennon mailed us an envelope with little bits and pieces of paper from the B&SRR.

A trolley transfer with an advertisement for McKenney & Heard Hardware of Biddeford, Maine on the reverse. This was probably printed in early 1930s as a Portland Railroad transfer point is shown (Portland abandoned the connection in 1932) and B&SRR motorized in 1939. McKenney & Heard were still in business in the 1960s.
B&S RR Co. coach defect and daily inspection card. This piece probably harks from the 1939 motorization through the mid to late 1940s. Although no dates, descriptors of some items such as air bottles, motors knocking and skipping, and checking shutter operation point to that period.

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Coach Gassed at

Put Your Initials on Line of Defects to Be Remedied

1 NO DEFECTS
2 BRAKES — FOOT
3 BRAKES — HAND
4 Damaged Body
5 Body Squeaks
6 Broken Glass
7 Doors
8 Steps
9 Window Lifts
10 Seats
11 Signs
12 Mirrors
13 Horn
14 Generator
15 Starter
16 Ignition
17 Ammeter
18 Switches
19 Fuses
20 Buzzer
21 Lights — Inside
22 Lights — Marker
23 Lights — Tail
24 Lights — Head
25 Engine Knock

Motor Skipping 26
Clutch 27
Transmission 28
Oil Pressure 29
Oil Leaks 30
Oil Gauge 31
Radiator 32
Water Leaks 33
Fan 34
Air Pressure 35
Air Leaks 36
Application Valve 37
Springs — Front 38
Springs — Rear 39
Shock Absorbers 40
Axle — Front 41
Steering 42
Wheels 43
Tires 44
Fenders — Right 45
Fenders — Left 46
Windshield Wiper 47
Speedometer 48
Fire Extinguisher 49
Battery 50
Bumper 51

DAILY INSPECTION

Date 19

Odometer
1 Defect Card
2 Check Ammeter
3 Check Windshield Wiper
4 Check Oil and Air Pressure Gauges
5 Check All Lights, Buzzer and Horn
6 Check Engine for Unusual Noises
7 Check Clutch Pedal Clearance
8 Check for Broken Seats and Windows
9 Check for Leaks in Radiator, Heaters & Hose Con.
10 Check for Oil Leaks and Air Leaks
11 Check Hand and Foot Brakes Operation
12 Drain Air Tanks
13 Check for Leaks in Exhaust Pipes and Manifold
14 Check for Broken Spring Leaves
15 Check Oper. all Doors, Oil Latches & Hinges
16 Check Steering
17 Check Wheel Nuts
18 Check and Set Air Bottles
19 Check Tires, Enter Pressure on Card
20 Check Shutter Operation
21 Check and Note Body Damage
22 Check Tools, Fire Extinguisher, Flares and Chains
23 Check Card for Inspections Due
24 Clean Thoroughly Inside and Out
25 Check Gas, Oil and Water Supply
26 Check Water in Battery

COACH NO. .......... MECH. NO. ........

DATE .......... O. K.

ODOMETER
Lastly a lost and found item tag for bus use. This tag has a 195_ date on it so that gives some time point.

Miscellany - The Battery Cars of the Third Avenue Railway

I have been slowly (very slowly) pulling material together for an article on battery cars. In looking at this collection it is still a lot of this and that but I realized that there was a pretty solid base of material on the efforts of the Third Avenue Railway System (TARS) so here we go!
Battery cars were an attempt in the very early 20th Century to develop a self-propelled transit vehicle to replace the horse car. The propulsion system for the horse car (horse, mule, donkey) needed to be stabled, fed, and generally cared for, and it also produced great quantities of waste products that it left along the streets. At the peak of horse car usage the Third Avenue Railway stabled 1,700 horses. In 1898 at the world’s first international urban planning conference was held in New York City. It was noted that New York City had a population of 100,000 horses producing around 2.5m pounds (1,250 tons) of manure a day. Not all from street railways but enough.

Propulsion options were several, mostly complex and/or expensive such as cable car, electric trolley, internal combustion, or steam engine. The self contained electric car was quite attractive, especially in dense urban settings, as no underground moving cables, conduits, or overhead power infrastructure were required.

In 1900 the City of New York was the 2nd most populous city in the world after London, UK. Therefore it is not a surprise that the Third Avenue Railway was interested in exploring the development of the battery car.

My first example is actually not really a battery car as it had a gasoline engine driving a generator to power electric motors. It is included as it was a similar and parallel exploration of alternatives to railway propulsion.

TARS No. 1 - Manufactured by Wason for the Forty-Second Street, Manhattanville & St. Nicholas Railway the car was delivered by 25 October 1909 by General Electric after GE installed the gasoline engine, generator, and electric motors.

No. 1 went into service later in the month on the 125th Street Crosstown Line. It was not particularly successful but continued to operate on the crosstown until mid-September 1910 when it was withdrawn from service and its propulsion equipment transferred to an experimental snow sweeper - also not successful. No. 1 was stored at the 120th Street & Amsterdam Avenue carhouse until deleted from the roster at the end of 1932.
TARS No’s. 1A - 5A - At about the same time as the gasoline-electric experiments with No. 1 were underway a more successful trial was undertaken in rebuilding five former 18 ft. semi-convertable Dry Dock, East Broadway & Battery Railroad horsecars. These were rebuilt in the TARS shops for storage battery service during 1910. A No. 6A was constructed in 1911.

One of the 18 ft. semi-convertable Dry Dock, East Broadway & Battery Railroad horsecars rebuilt in the TARS shops as 1A - 5A battery cars.

TARS No. 1A after the rebuild
The success of these five cars led to the TARS shops building another 25 cars (No’s. 1126 - 1151) during 1910. The original design used a chain and sprocket drive that was soon replaced with conventional railway motor gearing. All subsequent cars of this design built for Third Avenue by J.G. Brill were so equipped.

Car No. 1133, one of the 25 cars built in the TARS shops in 1910, at the West 23rd Street Ferry Terminal on the 28th & 29th Street Crosstown Line. This line was discontinued on 9 August 1919.

Years later No. 1133 nears Fifth Avenue running Eastbound on the 110th Street Crosstown Line. This line was abandoned on 21 August 1930 and No. 1133 dropped from roster on 28 November 1932.
In 1911 J.G. Brill delivered an order of 50 cars (No’s. 1152 - 1186 [18’ 6’’], and No’s. 1187 - 1201 [18’]).

TARS No. 1154 Ave. B & 14th Street (c 1920)

TARS No. 1196 Flatbush Ave. Ext.
In 1913 an additional 40 cars (No’s. 1202 - 1241 [18’]) were built by J.G. Brill for the Belt Line Railway. The Central Park, North and East River Railroad had been formed in 1860. In 1912 the line was sold at foreclosure and the Belt Line Railway was incorporated to take over. Third Avenue Railway assumed control in 1913, gaining the 59th Street crosstown line that extended from the Hudson River ferries across mid-town Manhattan to 10th Avenue.
The period of development and operation of battery cars on the Third Avenue Railway lasted from 1910 to 1933. At the peak of operation there were 161 battery cars operating over the Third Avenue Railway. The peak coming between mid-1913 with the delivery of the Belt Line Railway cars by J.G. Brill through to the sale of 50 cars to the Union Railway in 1919 made possible by the abandonment of several lines. The Union Railway electrified these cars and assigned them to lightly travelled lines in the Bronx. Their light construction made them unsuitable for the service and all were scrapped by 1924.

A few battery cars also saw service at Steinway. On 30 July 1932 the last battery line, Avenue B, was motorized and the 50 battery cars still on the roster were retired. The last to be retired was No. 1137 on 6 February 1933.

As a side note cars No’s. 1A - 5A (renumbered No’s. 1281 - 1285 c. 1917) and No’s 1126 - 1151 were carried on the books as the property of the Forty-Second Street, Manhattanville & St. Nicholas Railway.

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**The Main Line - Availability**

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Ed Ramsdell, Editor

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