July 2020

**Goings On at Seashore -**

**Wind** - On Tuesday, 14 July, a violent straight-line wind burst (called a derecho) barreled through Seashore’s woods and toppled several healthy trees, including a large oak tree on the main line. This unfortunately caused damage to the overhead infrastructure. If you are familiar with the railway, the damage was to the north of Meserves (Pumpkin Patch field) and the stop sign, and south of Tower 1. The overhead wire was compromised in this section. Hard work by a lot of people returned the main line to operating condition in a couple of days. Some additional already scheduled pole replacement will take place at a future date.

**Annual Meeting** - The 2020 Annual Meeting was held via Zoom on 25 July 2020. Various events and presentations took place throughout the day including an Estate Planning Seminar, the opening of the Business Meeting, Administrative Officer & Department Reports, a Bylaws Committee Roundtable concerning the proposed bylaws, Election Results, and the Meeting of the Board of Trustees: Electing and appointing 2020 Officers. Elected to the Board of Trustees were James van Bokkelen, Robert C. Grindrod, John Grube, and James D. Shantz. The February 2 appointment of Sue Ellen Stavrand to the Board was also confirmed. Following is the breakout of the vote as released at the meeting:
Elected at the subsequent meeting of the Board of Trustees were:

- Robert C. Drye, Chairman
- Sue Ellen Stavrand, Vice Chairman
- James D. Schantz continues as President & CEO (and Chairman Emeritus)
- James van Bokkelen, Vice President
- Connie Garland, Membership secretary

**COVID-19** - Obviously as with every other locale the primary news is the pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). A 29 July 2020 update from Seashore indicated that the museum continues to be open to the public on Wednesdays and Fridays-Sundays. Vacationers residents returning from the same states (NH, VT, NY, NJ and CT) are still allowed to travel throughout Maine with no restrictions. The full list of the museum’s External (Guest) and Internal Policies will continue to be updated as state guidance and executive orders change, and will be posted to [https://trolley museum.org/learn/bylaws-policies/covid-19-policies/](https://trolley museum.org/learn/bylaws-policies/covid-19-policies/).

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.

**Marshmallow Is Back!** - During her presentation at the annual meeting Executive Director Katie Orlando noted that Seashore’s resident albino porcupine from last year has reappeared. Marshmallow successfully survived the winter and is again roaming the fields of clover and trolley cars. It’s somehow particularly nice that something as small and cute as Marshmallow has stuck with us in this currently somewhat messed up world.

**Do You Recognize?**

Last Month’s Do You Recognize -

Last month’s system was neither especially long (6 miles) nor wide (3 ft. narrow gauge), nor long lasting. The “home community” of our line was Watsonville, CA (a town as of 1868 and city about 1889) had been served by a class 1 steam road since an initial narrow gauge line was constructed by a predecessor of the Southern Pacific around 1871 and converted to standard gauge in 1883. There was also the Pajaro Valley Consolidated Railroad, a narrow gauge steam road, primarily a sugar beet hauler, after 1890. By 1903 local farmers and businessman were dissatisfied with both steam roads and hoping for more favorable rates with access to their own seaport. The idea was promoted to build an electric narrow gauge railway from the city to a harbor where goods and produce could be shipped via packet boat to a major port located some 100 miles to the north all the while avoiding both steam roads.
In 1903 the Watsonville Transportation Company was incorporated by three local men and two transportation promoters.

The electric Watsonville Transportation Company opened in April of 1904 and began with some success. Equipment consisted of two trolleys, two box cars, and four flatcars. The trolleys served as passenger transport and also as motors to haul the box cars and flats. The company acquired the steam schooner F.A.Kilburn, built by Hans Ditlev Bendixsen of Fairhaven, CA, to operate as a steam packet boat between the company pier at Port Rogers and San Francisco, CA some 100 miles to the north. This packet boat made an overnight run to San Francisco transporting local produce.

Unfortunately the only site for the line’s pier was exposed to the open ocean and the pier almost immediately seriously damaged by teredo worms (aka shipworms or the "termites of the sea") and further damage was inflicted by heavy seas in November 1904. The pier was repaired with timbers more suited to the job at a not insubstantial cost of $35,000 (approximately $1,020,000 of buying power in 2020). The line still managed to do a reasonable business but the Southern Pacific soon reduced its freight rates to about one-half that charged by Watsonville. Faced with the decline in freight revenue the line moved towards passenger transport. However events were moving rapidly in the wrong direction. In 1905 the steam packet had to be removed from service for heavy repairs so the company was reduced to transporting recreational passengers over its six-mile line from the city to the pier. A shareholder dispute over payments between the two transportation promoters led to their indictment in August 1905. With these events as background a local bank...
attached a claim for $19,000 (another $600,000 in today’s money) and other creditors soon piled on with further claims. The line finally filed for bankruptcy with a receiver appointed in September 1905. The packet boat was sold and the remaining infrastructure became dormant while the bankruptcy proceedings continued for six years.

During this period one of the streetcars was burned in 1909 while in storage. A new receiver was appointed in 1907 with orders from the court to dispose of the property. As a side note the packet boat, no longer involved in this property, ultimately burned off of Florida in mid-1918.

Finally after five-plus years of litigation between shareholders and one of the promoters (Rogers) the assets were sold to benefit the creditors. In April of 1911 the company was reorganized by a new set of local investors as the Watsonville Railway and Navigation Company. The shops, power plant, and depot were renovated plus a new 1,700 ft. concrete pier was constructed. Also Port Rogers, named after one of the original promoters, was renamed Port Watsonville.

Service resumed using the remaining trolley and 10 flatcars. Flatcars were outfitted with seats when extra capacity was required for events being held at the ocean end of the line. Land adjacent to the pier was sold to a land development company and a company owned by the lead promoter of this round of investors acquired additional land near the pier and erected a tent city complete with boardwalks and running water. A baseball team was
sponsored and a baseball park was built adjacent to the railway line near the pier. On May Day of 1912 the local citizenry put on a celebration to honor the officials of the Watsonville Railway & Transportation Co. and celebrate completion of work at the pier. In December 1912, heavy storms destroyed 160 feet of the new pier. Faced with $40,000 worth of damage (another million dollars plus in 2020 money), the company took the San Francisco Bridge Company to court to recover the losses for alleged faulty construction. Ultimately, the suit was lost and after failing in a search for new financing to rebuild the line, operations came to an end in October of 1913.

In 1913 the Pajaro Valley Consolidated Railroad was given permission by state regulators to haul sugar beets from the junction of the two lines, westward 3 miles on the electric’s track, but this operation was short lived. In November a receiver was appointed receiver and scrapping of the line began. The Southern Pacific purchased the rails, while the remaining rolling stock was sold elsewhere.

One last attempt was made in 1915 to promote development when a citizens group promoted the pier area for a new port for Monterey Bay where it was located. Studies by the Army Corps of Engineers and a Congressional Committee ultimately decided that the costs associated with the need for a reinforced pier and several breakwaters because of the open ocean exposure were too great and an alternative site was chosen.

The roster is somewhat unclear. One source indicates that the initial operation started with two trolleys, two boxcars, and four flatcars with one trolley burned during the 1905 - 1911 closure and then the new company continuing with the one remaining trolley. Yet another source shows the initial line with four trolleys, one destroyed, and the second iteration operating with the remaining three trolleys. Four boxcars and sixteen flats are shown during both periods. I have only been able to find images of two trolleys (Nos. 2 & 4).

During the period between the cessation of operations by the Watsonville Transportation Company and the startup of the Watsonville Railway and Navigation Company a great opportunity for sightseeing traffic was missed. In early 1908 the United States Navy’s round-the-world cruise of the Great White Fleet visited Monterey Bay where Watsonville’s pier
(damaged at that point in time) was located. As a side note the Great White Fleet was comprised of the 16 battleships of the US Navy’s Atlantic Squadron. At the time of the cruise the Navy had only recently started painting its battleships white and after the cruise it was decided that white was not a good color and the standard color became grey.

This Month’s Do You Recognize -

Our line of interest this month can be described as always equipment rich and for most of its existence traffic poor. Also for almost its entire existence it was controlled by a major Class 1 railroad - a good thing in that it probably stayed afloat because of this underpinning and a bad thing because the rather remote and distracted poor management provided by the steam road ownership created its necessity to be kept afloat.

Our line was named after the landform upon which it was located, the line’s northerly end was some 30 miles from the then largest city in the state, also located on the same landform. Here it made connections with its controlling steam road onward to the major city. Over the years several plans were made for a through route to the city including electrifying a portion of the steam road or extending the line about 13 miles to reach another electric subsidiary of the steam road extending south from the major city. For a number of reasons including financial panics, wars, natural disasters, bad luck, and a goodly share of incompetence none of these plans came to pass.

The first portion of what was to become our railway was incorporated by a predecessor line in 1902 with construction underway in 1903 and operation beginning in 1904. Twelve big 45 ft. interurban cars were ordered from the American Car Company and arrived in February 1904. Six of these were motorized and six were trailers. The motors were both numbered (2-12 even) and named while the trailers were only numbered (3-13 odd). All of this class were rebuilt in 1910 and renumbered to the 50s (50-61) with four trailers being motorized. In 1928 the class was removed from service when seven second-hand California-type city cars (70-76), built by the Jewett Car Co. in 1912, were acquired from a neighboring traction company. In 1930 they were returned to service when the 70s were
transferred to another subsidiary of the steam road and the big Jewett interurbans acquired in 1913 were also removed from service to reduce excess capacity. Thus the 50-class both ushered in the company and ushered it out at its closing in 1933/34.

The Class 1 steam road had quickly acquired the company and placed its management in charge.

In 1905 the steam road had incorporated the railway that was to become our line of interest. Named after the geographic feature where it was located but initially incorporated as a “railroad” rather than railway.

The year 1907 was a bad one for these lines. The financial panic of 1907 combined with a natural disaster which imperiled the steam road’s main line further south in the state. This combination distracted management and dried up assets in both capital and resources to the extent that even ties and rails intended for expansion of the railways were diverted south in the battle to save the steam road.

By late 1908 the steam road owned our named road and two others in an important agricultural valley, at the time the largest fruit-producing and packing region in the world, as well as owning a number of other electric roads in the state. In mid-1909 these three in the valley were consolidated into one “railway” entity. The combined systems were reported to have about 48 miles of owned track and 16 miles leased from the parent steam road along with 50 pieces of
rolling stock comprised of 35 passenger motors, 4 trailers, 2 freight motors, 4 work cars, and 5 flatcars. By 1930 the company ultimately peaked at some 91 route miles. A little under 50 percent of the 200 mile system forecast at the 1905 incorporation.

The newly combined company quickly ordered five 44 ft. interurbans from the St. Louis Car Company by tacking its order onto one already placed for 20 cars by another of the steam road’s subsidiaries. These new cars were allocated to a route under construction at the time of the merger with three being motorized (100, 101, and 104) and two (102, 103) as trailers. These were also motorized after a short time.

In 1913 one more attempt to reach the major metropolis to the north was undertaken including leasing trackage rights from an existent electric line to provide part of the needed extension. With the other line willing to provide trackage rights our line again moved ahead with equipment purchases. This was again accomplished by tacking on to an order of the same line that it had piggybacked with on its 1909 St. Louis order. This time it added eight 55’ 6.5” interurbans (105-112) to an existing order of 45 interurbans placed with the Jewett Car Company by its fellow subsidiary of the steam road. These cars arrived in mid-1915 but were overtaken by the beginning of World War One in Europe in 1914 - The United States entered the war in April 1917. This saw the end of the last of many plans for northern extension. The big Jewett cars were popular with the riders for their ride and extremely fast acceleration but
were probably too much car for our railway. In 1930 they were removed from service as no
longer needed and then sold when the railway closed in 1933. These five cars were actually leased from
the parent steam road rather than the railway owning them.

Five Birney safety cars arrived in 1919 from American Car Company. There was also a flirtation with buses
but the public was definitely not impressed and it is also claimed that the company shops strongly disliked
the buses and tended to be a bit slack in their maintenance.

During its existence the railway owned or leased some forty five pieces of passenger equipment, three locomotives, nine flat
cars, four work motors, and miscellaneous work equipment.

In addition to financial panics and wars, problems of both bad judgment and poor
management proved costly. Early on in the company’s history it was decided that side-of-
the-road operation was more financially expedient than private right of ways. Unfortunately
many little dirt roads of 1909 became the heavily travelled thoroughfares of the 20’s and 30’s
and when the highways needed to expand the railway lost out. The steam road’s
management appointees to the railway operated the line for the benefit of the steam
road and detriment of the railway.

Schedules were run to connect with the steam trains rather than to maximize traffic
on the railway. Also when there were parallel operations on part of a route the railway’s schedules were adjusted so as to
not take any traffic away from the steam road and the electric was reduced to being a
feeder between stops on the steam road where their routes paralleled even though the
electric could have offered faster service.

With the arrival of the Great Depression there was a drop in traffic and automobiles were
starting the make strong inroads into people’s travel preferences. Gradual abandonment
was authorized for various sections of the railway and during 1933 - 1934 the railway
received authority to abandon its remaining lines with the last closing in October of
1934. A street car operation in one city hung on for a couple of additional months.
The Library Committee held its first meeting in several months through a virtual Zoom meeting on 13 June 2020.

With COVID19 restrictions continuing, no Library Committee meetings or workshops were held in July.

It is hoped that the Wednesday Evening Workshops can be resumed near future. Amber Tatnall is going to evaluate this possibility.

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

The Library Committee's meetings on Saturdays (10AM - 2 PM) will be virtual meetings on a bimonthly basis. Getting back to the odd month schedule the next meeting will probably be a virtual meeting on September 12, 2020 although that has not been finalized. Additional information will be forthcoming.

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

The Wednesday Evening Workshops Are Cancelled - hopefully resumption in near future.

For further information/questions concerning the Library please contact Randy Leclair (207-641-9324 - text preferred) 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/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

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.

A Matchbox Mystery - With appropriate apologies to children’s author Sally Gardner - The Matchbox Mysteries - there is a slight matchbox mystery at Seashore.

Resting in one of the car barns at Seashore is a tiny cablecar from Dunedin, NZ. No. #105 was built in 1903 by Stansfield, a local Dunedin builder, as part of a replacement of a number of cablecars from 1895 that were destroyed in a 1903 fire. These small cars (L. 16’ 6”, w. 8’, and h.) were known locally in Dunedin as matchboxes.

Dunedin was the second city in the world, after San Francisco, to install cable cars (Rattray Street Line in 1881) and the last in the world, except San Francisco, to discontinue them (Mornington line in 1957).

No. #105 was originally assigned to the Maryhill Line, later served as a spare on the Mornington and Maryhill lines, and then ended its career on the Mornington. No. #105 was somewhat unique in that it was a “convertible grip car” in that the grip could be extended to two different lengths to match both the Maryhill and Mornington cables. Opening on 23 March 1883, the Mornington line travelled one mile (1.6 km) up High Street to Mornington. This line was the steepest recorded tramline in the world, with a gradient at the highest
point of the track measured at 1 in 3.75. The Mornington line was the last to close, on 2 March 1957, leaving San Francisco with the only operational cable car system in the world.

In looking for material I found two interesting documents. A letter from Foster M. Palmer describing to provenance of the car as he had researched it.

November 29, 1957

Mr. Henry B. Brainerd
10 Upland Road
Wellesley, Massachusetts

Dear Henry:

I have looked up the facts on no. 105. First of all I must report that it is by no means as old as first reported, though hardly new either. Instead of being "the original Maryhill car" which would imply a date of 1885 it was "originally the Maryhill car" before it became the Maryhill spare and very lately a Mornington main line car. It seems that the 1885 cars were all lost by fire in 1903, and no. 105 was built in that year in Dunedin as a replacement. It is possible that some elements of the original cars were used in rebuilding, but to determine whether this is true of 105 specifically would require further correspondence with New Zealand. The best I can say is "built (possibly rebuilt) Dunedin, 1903." The car was built for the Mornington Borough Council and is still in their colors, though the operation was taken over by Dunedin City Corporation at the beginning of 1916. When used on Maryhill, at least in more recent years, it was a one man car. One man cable cars are very unusual but not unique; for instance, I believe some were used on Pacific Avenue in San Francisco in the 1920's.

As for dimensions, no. 105 is reported to be 15'6" long, 7'6" wide, and 9' high. How much the last figure is reduced by removal of the running gear I cannot say. The weight is approximately 6 tons — subject to the previous comment.

I have high hopes of getting photographs here before the ship arrives and will get in touch with you promptly.

Sincerely,

Foster M. Palmer
Assistant Librarian for Reference

EMP:d

C.C. Dwight B. Minnich
The Foster M. Palmer collection at Seashore includes several thousand images from worldwide - primarily taken by Foster M. Palmer and time-wise centered on the 1950s and 1960s.

Secondly I found a February 17, 1958 press release describing No. #105’s trip to the United States and subsequent display in Boston and trip to Kennebunkport. After its retirement in March of 1957 the car spent seven months resting in Dunedin and then departed New Zealand aboard the Montreal Australia New Zealand Lines' ship M.V. Whangaroa on November 2, 1957. After an almost 9,000 mile trip, actually 9,000 miles is straight line and it is more like 9,993 miles assuming the Whangaroa came through the Panama Canal, the ship arrived in Boston on January 9, 1958. Then No. #105 became the guest of the MTA at the Sullivan Square car barns for a couple of weeks. On January 28, 1958 the car was moved for display at the annual New England Sportsmen Show held in the massive Mechanics Building on Huntington Avenue in Boston (The Mechanics Building was demolished in 1958/59 to make room for the construction of the Prudential Center). It was estimated that 150,000 people saw the car between February 1 and 9, 1958. It was displayed in the International Booth at the Sportsman's Show and there on February 3 Sir Leslie Munro, New Zealand Ambassador presented the car to the people of the United States in custody of the museum. Sir Leslie was also President of the United Nations General Assembly. The Museum's Board Chairman, the Rev. Alexander Van Cortlandt Hamilton accepted the car on behalf of Seashore.

Sir Leslie Munro, K.C.M.G., U.N. General Assembly President and New Zealand Ambassador to the U.S., presents Dunedin Cable Car hook to A. Edward Langlois, General Manager of the Maine Port Authority, representing Governor Edmund S. Muskie. Rev. Alexander Hamilton (right), the Society's Board Chairman looks on. (From 1957 NEERHS Annual Report)
On February 16, 1958 the little cable car had a quiet trailer ride to Kennebunkport.

Now you ask - where is the mystery I alluded to at the start of all this? From the excellent documentation we know precisely when the car ended service, when it took its world cruise, display in Boston, and travel to Kennebunkport.

We have a black and white image (undated) of No. #105 that is displayed on the equipment collection website. In the Foster Palmer Collection there is a color image that appears at first glance to be the same car right down to spots of paint fading, etc. Even a paper notice, illegible of course, that is in the B&W in the windscreen just left above the headlamp is also in the color image. However, and a big however, the two color images we have are entitled *Seashore - 8/17/58 - Dunedin car at North Terminal* - six months after No.#105 was all tucked in at Kennebunkport. I suppose the color image car can simply be a different car looking very much the same and in the same location or that the date on the images is wrong although the Palmer Collection material tends to be rather meticulously documented.

I did say slight mystery so I should probably quit obsessing at this point. It would just be nice to have a color image of No. #105 in its home habitat.

No. #105 being helped uphill in Dunedin - probably lost the cable or ran into a bit of grease.
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.

Regards,

Ed Ramsdell, Editor

The Main Line

TheMainLine@ramsdell.com

http://www.troleymuseum.org