August 2020

**Goings On at Seashore -**

**Members Day** was held on Saturday, August 29th from 10AM-5PM. Various events were carried online via Zoom to make participation possible for those not able to attend. Zoom events included at 10:50AM: Special Ride on D.C. Transit 1304, 11:45AM: Riverside Dedication Ceremony for John Middleton, 1PM: Roundtable with the Executive Director, 1:30PM: Bylaws Roundtable, and at 2:30PM Worldwide Trolley/Tram Identification Trivia.

The weather decided not to cooperate but things went off amazingly well - if slightly damp.

The live Zoom-cast from D.C. Transit No.#1304 was rather amazing. While there were some audio hiccups the video from the car was quite good. I for one had never participated in a mobile Zoom event before.

The museum’s two MBTA 01400s (Pullman-Standard Car Co., 1963 Rapid Transit Cars), a New Direction (5-year plan) strategic restoration project, were available for viewing in front of the Highwood Carbarn.
Pumpkin Patch Trolley events will be held on September 25, 26, 27 and October 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, & 11 from 11AM-3PM. The perfect socially distanced fall event for families and friends of all ages to enjoy! This is the only Fall event in the line-up that is still being held while following every current pandemic restriction. Come out to the Seashore Trolley Museum and take a trolley ride on our heritage railroad to the pumpkin patch. Each member in your group can select a socially distanced pumpkin to take home! Hop back on the trolley with your pumpkin and enjoy a 30-minute ride on our heritage railroad. Back at the Visitors Center we will have pandemic-friendly activities to enjoy! Put those pumpkins back in your car and enjoy the rest of our pandemic-friendly museum. Check events and notices on the museum’s website for updates as to specific activities.

Ongoing Work - Lots of ongoing work has been underway including an intensive two-day effort to permanently fix the section of the main line infrastructure smashed by the derecho that hit the property in July. Volunteers have also been hard at work on the Riverside and Visitors Center renewal projects.

COVID-19 - Not much has changed recently as far as state regulations. The Museum is open Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 10AM-5PM, COVID-19 policies and purchase of tickets in advance of a visit are available at:

https://seashore2020tickets.eventbrite.com

New Muscle - A new piece of motive power recently arrived at Seashore and has been out and about. Providence & Worcester Railroad GE 25 tonner No. #150 is now resident at Seashore. No. #150 was built by GE in November 1945 for the T.A.D. Jones Oil Company of New Haven, CT. It ultimately passed to the New Haven Terminal Company and the Providence & Worcester.
Do You Recognize?

Last Month’s Do You Recognize -

Our railway last month, the Peninsula Railway, 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 the Southern Pacific Railroad - a good thing in that it probably stayed afloat because of this underpinning and a bad thing because the rather remote distracted, and poor management provided by the SP ownership created its necessity to be kept afloat.

The Peninsula Railway was named for the San Francisco Peninsula upon which it was located. The line’s northerly end was some 30 miles from San Francisco, then the largest city in California and located on the same peninsula. At Palo Alto it made connections with the Southern Pacific onward to San Francisco. Over the years several plans were made for a through route to San Francisco including electrifying a portion of the SP or extending the line about 13 miles to San Mateo to reach another electric subsidiary of the SP building south from San Francisco. 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 as the United Railroads of San Francisco 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 numbered (2-12 even) and also 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 the Fresno Traction Company. In 1930 the 50s 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 Southern Pacific had quickly acquired the Peninsula and placed its management in charge. In 1905 the SP had incorporated the Peninsula Railroad that was to become our line of interest. Named after the San Francisco Peninsula although initially incorporated as the Peninsula Railroad rather than railway.

The year 1907 was a bad one for these lines. The financial panic of 1907 combined with the break-through of the Colorado River into Salton Sea endangering Sunset Route of the SP, 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 Southern Pacific owned the Peninsula, the San Jose & Los Gatos, and the Santa Clara Interurban, all in the important Santa Clara 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 lines in the valley were consolidated into the Peninsula Railway. 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 the Palo Alto line 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 San Francisco was undertaken including leasing trackage rights from the United Railroads of San Francisco to provide part of the needed extension. With United 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 Southern Pacific rather than the Peninsula 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 Peninsula 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 San Jose hung on for a couple of additional months.
This month’s railway was started for what were the usual reasons for many startups. There was a desire in the local business community to have more choice and competition in long distance transportation and in the early 1900s this meant rail. Although the city was already served to two railroads there was another railroad’s terminal some 13 miles to the southwest. Our company was organized in February 1910 by a number of local bankers with the intent to have the new railway bridge the 13 mile gap and give access to the third railroad.

Among businesses to be served there was a tractor factory and a large nursery both seeking improved transportation.

Our railway, named after its home city, opened on January 1, 1911 over the 13 mile route with passenger service being provided by a 55 ft. gasoline powered McKeen wind splitter No. # 51. Also a home brew locomotive built on a McKeen power truck, and two gasoline powered streetcars for city service. A steam locomotive was acquired in 1911 for freight service and another in 1912.
Gasoline propulsion proved problematic and the line was electrified in 1915 with an eight mile extension built to the northeast as part of a plan to connect with yet a fourth railroad at either of two points some 12 and 17 miles from the end of the extension. This ultimately proved to be end of the line to the northeast with the linkup never occurring.

With the coming of electrification two McGuire-Cummings city cars were acquired for the city service (No’s #10 & 11) and No.#50 a combine built by McGuire-Cummings in 1915 was acquired to replace the wind splitter. No.#300, a McGuire-Cummings locomotive was also acquired in 1915. Apparently a most attractive part of buying from McGuire-Cummings was that they would take your company stock in payment.

The railway served a major tractor manufacturing company that produced steam and gas powered tractors. The plant opened in 1901 and by 1911 was employing 1,100 people - one fifth of the city’s population - and by 1970 was employing 3,000.
In 1903 the factory produced the first successful production-model tractor line in the U.S. The railway also served a very large nursery that in the 1920s was claimed to be the largest grower of evergreens in the world with some 50,000,000 plants in the fields as well as being a major rose producer. Also served were numerous other smaller businesses.

No. #50, the McGuire-Cummings combine, soldiered on through two owners of the railway and two heritage museums. At the second museum it still transports visitors to this day.

During the First World War the railway received some publicity as the first electric railway in the state to have a “motorwoman”. Coincidentally the young lady was also the daughter of the city’s mayor.

Local city service was discontinued in 1921 but the interurban continued to provide two round-trips daily except Sunday over the entire 21 mile system end to end until 1952 when the “freight-only” sign was hung out. At the end of December 1963 our railway was acquired by a nearby electric railroad. The two parts of the new line did not intersect and were run as separate divisions. Plans were underway to build a twenty-odd mile linkup when the new owner’s death in 1965 ended the effort. In 1968 our railway lost its catenary to a tornado that devastated much of its home city. Diesels replaced the electrics and the northeast extension of 1915 was trimmed back about five miles for a total line of 15.7 miles of the original 21 mile system. Freight traffic continued to shrink and by the mid 1970s the trackage representing the remainder of our railway was abandoned.
There will be a Library Committee meeting held through a virtual Zoom meeting on 12 September 2020 at 10AM. Login information will be distributed.

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

It is hoped that the Wednesday Evening Workshops can be resumed soon.

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

The Library Committee’s meetings on Saturdays (10AM) will tentatively be virtual meetings on a bimonthly basis on the odd months. Additional information will be forthcoming.

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

The Wednesday Evening Workshops Are Cancelled - hopefully resumption soon.

For further information/questions concerning the Library please contact Randy Leclaire (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 on line resources: https://virtual.yccc.edu/c.php?g=238406&p=3225494&preview=7b52901d1f51db2b76cb2a141ca8589c

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.

**Gone But Not Forgotten** - August 26, 2020 saw campus renewal projects continued with the demolition of the former woodworking shop/workshop/gift shop/visitors center/and library (pick your decade). To quote a posting from the Executive Director - “this project was bittersweet, and the building will always have a place in our history”. Now and again crawling around on the roof doing patch work it may have at that moment been more bitter than sweet but the place served us well. An interesting aspect to the old building was its construction. In the mid-1950s the original peaked roof building was built as the woodworking shop. A little later a small structure that had been a barbershop in Lynnfield, MA was trucked in and attached as part of the original gift shop/visitor’s center activity. Other additions were added in place. The ultimate result was a building that was in fact three structures loosely attached. Due to the nature of the subsoil these three components spent the rest of their existence trying to leave the site in three different directions which placed some strain on the roof and floor with varied and sometimes interesting results.
A Matchbox Mystery - In the last edition of The Main Line I noted a slight mystery relative to some photos of the Museum’s Dunedin, NZ cablecar. There appeared to be a picture of the cablecar still in New Zealand after it had arrived at Seashore. The date and location of the picture taken from notations accompanying the scanned image. The notation being Seashore - 8/17/58 - Dunedin car at North Terminal. This color image of the car and background building closely matched a black & white of the car and building. The building referred to as North Terminal and the background were totally unfamiliar so it MUST have been in New Zealand - right? WRONG! An email from Cecilia B. Clapp, NEERHS Corporate Secretary (aka CC) sorted things out for me. In the mid-1950s Seashore had built a short display track with a barn nearby at the other (Biddeford) end of the property from the Log Cabin Road facilities we know today. This was very close to where US 1 crosses the B&M (now Pan Am) main line. CC found mention in the Vol. 1 No. 3 (July 1958) issue of the Dispatch of Seashore Junction Terminal or “the north terminal”. A excerpt from what CC wrote follows:

I think Foster Palmer’s date and description are correct as my recollection is that there was indeed an old barn on Seashore’s north terminal property where rides were offered to the public 1957 - 1960 and it made sense to take the Dunedin car there as there would have been no place in the main museum area at that time to put it under cover. This was confirmed when I found the following in Vol. 1 No. 3 (July 1958) issue of the Dispatch:

“Seashore Junction Terminal will feature this year a wide selection of cars representing the types in our collection. Work on this program is well under way. Mail car 34, Locomotive 100, Double Deck Tram 293, and Interurban 118 are in that sequence on the display track built in the autumn of 1957. Cable car 105 is in the small barn near by.” So the color photo (and presumably the B&W photo also) was taken at Seashore’s north terminal (now long abandoned although Seashore still owns the land) during the summer of 1958.

So the basis of the “mystery” was my willingness to jump to the conclusion that the black & white image was in New Zealand when in fact it was Seashore’s North Terminal rather than Dunedin’s. Once I was straightened out on that I did some further digging in the Maine files and found a few more North Terminal pictures.

Thanks so much CC!

One addition: There was a picture of a similar car in service in Dunedin that I hadn’t used with the conductor just having hung a couple of prams on the front of the car as was the practice because of very limited space (the babies went inside the car!). There were multiple hooks across the front to attach prams.
The First Nickel - I recently had some correspondence with Thomas Williams whose great grandfather was Professor Leo Daft, inventor and electric railway entrepreneur, who is credited with the construction of the first commercial electric railroad in America, the Baltimore and Hampden in 1885. Readers may remember he was also the inventor of the overhead system for transferring electric power to streetcars. Professor Daft’s system used a two wire overhead arrangement upon which was towed a four wheel pickup connected to the car by cables. This was called a troller - although the single wire and pole pickup ultimately was the preferred method it became known as a trolley - a corrupted version of troller.

Mr. Williams sent me a copy of a photo of a letter that had been given to his great grandfather at the end of the inaugural trip in 1885 of the Baltimore and Hampden Electric Railway in the Hampden neighborhood of Baltimore. Included was the first nickel collected as a fare. The photo is quite faded as Mr. William’s father took it sometime in the 1930s prior to sending the original letter and nickel to the Smithsonian. Mr. Williams has since attempted to locate the letter through the Smithsonian in hopes of obtaining a better image but without success.

I played with contrast and shading of the original image and reached a point where perhaps 75% - 80% is readable. However the gods of research were kind and I found in an October 1904 - Vol 24 (15) - of the Street Railway Journal an article by Professor Daft. In the article entitled “The Early Work of the Daft Company” Professor Daft described the first nickel event in detail.

Below I have included a copy of the 1930’s photograph and an excerpt from the 1904 article.
Payee, Laid. Watchman.

To hand you the first

free ticket up to

Baltimore and Hamp
d Railways, on our Con

ductor's ticket, of which

you are

The Conductor of a

other, it is a five cent

Nickel Coin of 1883, and on

was taken by the Con

ductor, Board of directors

on Dec. 13/83. in the Car

of the "Farnham".

THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD COMPANY,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY.
Excerpt relative to the Baltimore and Hampden from the above October 1904 SRJ article -

On Aug. 15, 1885, the road first began regular operation, though the motor “Morse” had made many experimental trips, and on the morning of that day the motor “Faraday”, piloted by Guy M. Gest, the “father of the motormen,” who had been indefatigable for some time in training men for all kinds of work and being generally a host in himself, pulled out of the yard with a 16-ft. car in tow, containing some forty passengers; and the first commercial electric railroad in America had hung up its shingle!

Among the passengers was John H. Cowen, then chief counsel to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, who suggested that the first nickel taken by the conductor should be given to the writer, and accordingly this was done at the end of the return trip with a letter written by Mr. Cowen and signed by the conductor, J. T. Parrish, which is now in the writer’s possession.

The road continued in successful operation for four years, or until the fall of 1889.

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.

Have a happy and safe holiday weekend!

Regards,

Ed Ramsdell, Editor
The Main Line

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http://www.trolley museum.org