October 2020

Goings On at Seashore -

Another regular season at Seashore, albeit a strange one worldwide, fades into history. Regular weekly operations end with the last day of Trolleyween at Seashore on October 31. Remaining events include: Dog Scent Trials: November 6-8 6AM-6PM. Spectators are welcome. STM will be observing quiet hours campus-wide during the event.

Night Photo Shoot: The Bus Collection: Upon hearing our traditional night photo shoot was cancelled, the Bus Department has organized a “no frills” opportunity. Learn more and register: https://busnightphotoshoot.eventbrite.com

Prelude: Daytime Prelude Trolley Rides: 10AM-4PM on Friday-Sunday December 4-6 and 11-13; 10AM-2PM on Tuesday/Thursday December 8and 10. Tickets are available: https://preludetrolley.eventbrite.com

Drive Thru Santa Photos! Santa will be positioned on the Golden Chariot by the road crossing across from Tower C for photos. Families will stand on the ground below. Saturday/Sunday December 5-6 and 12-13 10AM-12PM and 1PM-3PM.

Check the Seashore Events Calendar at https://trolleymuseum.org/events for details and updates on these events.

Major onsite efforts to the benefit of Seashore are ongoing:

The Track Department had a weeklong project to replace the switches leading into the Restoration Shop.

A major upgrade landscaping is underway. Thanks to a new partnership and donation made possible by Sue Ellen Stavrand and Terrapin Landscapes, the Visitors Center grounds are getting a big upgrade, with new plants and flowers that bloom at different times, year-round including a beautiful tree that will be planted at the corner of the Visitors Center.

Seashore has received the good news of acceptance as a Google Arts & Culture site. Google Arts and Culture builds free tools and technologies for cultural organizations to showcase and share their cultural treasures and stories with a global audience. More information about this amazing opportunity will be forthcoming.
Our electric railway of interest this month, the Keene (NH) Electric Railway, qualifies as a rather small one serving the small city of Keene, NH and environs with about eight miles of route. The line’s total fleet over its 26-year lifespan consisted of 15 powered units including two snowplows, notably all Wason products, and two 4-wheel flat trailers of indeterminate origins.

Keene (pop. 9,165 in 1900) for which the company was named served as the county seat and was also the only city in the county. Today the city’s is estimated just over 23,000 and it is still the only city in the county. The city became a manufacturing hub for wooden-ware, pottery, glass, soap, woolen textiles, shoes, saddles, mowing machines, carriages and sleighs. It also had a brickyard and foundry. This manufacturing success was supported by the city being served by three steam railroads, the Cheshire RR, the Ashuelot RR, and the Manchester & Keene RR all ultimately absorbed by The Boston & Maine RR. Keene included large shops of the B&M and two rail yards. Changes in the pattern of manufacturing throughout the country and the impact of the Great Depression severely affected the region.

The first effort at establishing our railway came in 1887 when a group of city residents were granted a charter for the Keene Street Railway company. Perhaps because potential investors may have been somewhat astute there was no progress until 1893 when some of the original incorporators joined with others to form a new corporation. This new entity was incorporated by the state legislature in March 1893 as the Keene Electric Railway with the previous street railway charter being revoked at the same time. In late 1895 the company petitioned to extend the route some three miles into the town of Marlboro. This extension was approved by the state railroad commissioners in early 1896. After some discussion as to the type of power distribution the Keene City Council approved overhead trolley wires in March of
1897. The railway and the Keene Gas Light and Electric Power Company were given permission to erect joint poles through the center of the city. March of 1899 saw another extension of the charter to March 1902. Authority to construct a crossing at grade on the main street and three others at industrial sidings was granted as a prelude to the start of construction. A money problem yet again raised its ugly head and the company found itself unable to raise construction funds from local sources. In early 1900 discussions were held with Thomas T. Robinson, the representative of the Boston firm Boston Industrial Company. Ultimately the line’s incorporators voted to sell their interests to Robinson. In May of 1900 the electric railway was again reorganized and in that same month construction finally began some 13 years after the initial incorporation.

Regular service commenced in early September 1900. In November another extension from the city center to a park west of the center was opened giving an overall system length of six and a quarter miles. In late 1901 the railway sought authority to build southeastward to Swanzey, small community about six miles distant. Approval was received from the railroad commissioners and construction started the following spring. The perennial lack of funds interceded and progress was very slow. Ultimately approximately two miles of the proposed six mile branch were completed. Other extensions were proposed and approved but never built.

The electric railway acquired a large piece of land at the end of the 1901 extension into Swanzey and constructed a recreation park where such entertainments as bowling, shooting, roller skating, swimming, boating, band concerts, dancing, and movies were available. The area was very popular on weekends but, as with many trolley parks, primarily only on weekends. Trolley parks tend to provide weekend ridership to bridge the drop from weekday traffic. Unfortunately, other than workers riding to and from their jobs, there wasn’t too much weekday traffic either. The main line had started at a 30-minute headway in 1900 and both lines enjoyed this level of service for a brief time. Headway on both lines were soon reduced to 40 minutes with extra cars when factory shifts were changing. These headways were maintained throughout the life of the electric railway.
In 1900 four twenty-foot closed cars were acquired (two new and two second-hand that had been repossessed by Wason) and five 10-bench opens (three new and two second-hand also repossessed from the original purchaser) from Wason. Nineteen hundred also saw two four-wheel nose plows, also from Wason. That was all for equipment purchases until 1922 when three single-truck Birneys were acquired from Wason with a fourth coming in 1923. The two second-hand closed cars were scrapped upon the arrival of the 1922 Birneys. The Birneys faired poorly as by the time of their arrival the limited infrastructure maintenance had resulted in spots of track being submerged, especially in the spring. The Birney motors took unkindly to being splashed with water and exhibited an annoying propensity to either short circuit or simply burn out. In those instances the remaining old and faithful closed cars from 1900 would be trotted out to keep things going.

Finally in 1926 the electric railway sought and received permission to motorize. The trolleys were replaced by six Graham Brothers (Detroit) 21-passenger buses and two second hand 15-passenger Ford buses.

The railway had apparently extracted its moneys-worth from the rolling stock as everything but the Birneys was scrapped. The Birneys were sold to the Waverly Sayre & Athens Traction Company in New York’s Southern Tier Region. Three were supposedly operational and the fourth provided parts. These cars continued to operate through that company’s demise in 1930.

Our electric railway continued its bus operations until the last day of 1929 when it was succeeded by a local transportation company. As late as 1956 this transportation company was still providing city service and suburban service in the area originally served by our electric railway.
Readers wishing further detail are referred to O. R. Cummings “The Keene Electric Railway” in Transportation Bulletin No. 46 - February 1958.

This Month’s Do You Recognize -

To test the mettle of some our more knowledgable readers we now and again try to go for the quite obscure. With no offense meant to the line selected I think we have one this month. Since I have said this it will probably be obvious to everyone. Our line in question was constructed to connect its namesake community with a regional steam road that had bypassed the town by some four miles.

The home town of our line was laid out in 1886, incorporated as a city in 1916, and is the county seat. The county is named after a Pennsylvanian who settled in the area in 1830 and in the late 1830s was Secretary of The Navy of the Republic where he then lived.
Located in the rather sparsely settled west central part of its state the city suffered from lack of water until the mid-50s when a lake was created some 45 miles south of the city as a power plant lake, also providing a water supply to be piped to the city. The city had a population of between 700 and 800 when our line was established, reached about 900 as our line closed in 1941, peaked at slightly over a thousand in 1950, and has since declined to about 600.

Our line was chartered in 1915 with capitalization of $10,000 to build north to connect with the regional steam road that had bypassed the community. The steam road been leased the previous year to a Class 1 steam road. Our railroad was frugal from the start with rails and other materials acquired from an abandoned road chartered some seven years earlier to build from our namesake town. By 1911 the road had constructed about five miles of track. Then efforts stopped and the engine and other equipment lay for a few years where the tracks had stopped and was sold for scrap or salvaged to be used on our railroad. Our railroad entered into agreement with the the city’s citizens for them to haul the track and other material to the new site. Our line’s initial rolling stock consisted of two steam locomotives, a passenger car, and two box cars. The intent of our line was to ship cotton north to the connection with the Class 1 and bring various material and merchandise back. Service began in January 1916 with a four-and-a-half mile line. By the early 1920s our line was in bankruptcy and threatening to close. Local businessmen convinced an electric utility to take over the line in 1923 and electrify it. By this quirk of fate our little line became an extremely small component of the vast Insull empire. With electrification came two second-hand electrics Nos 6 and 7.

No. 6 was built c.1918 as a large gas-electric motor car (59’ x 10’) by the Electric Car and Locomotive Corporation (West Orange, NJ?) for a Tennessee railway and rebuilt as an electric car when acquired by our line in 1923.

No. 7 was rebuilt by the American Car Co. in 1924 from a city car built for a city operation about 43 miles from our line.

The rebuild included changing the car from a single truck Birney to a double truck passenger/baggage car reconfigured to add a large baggage section. A drawbar was also added so the car could haul freight cars when needed.
In 1931 the state railroad commission listed our line as a Class III road having one locomotive, one freight car, and three passenger cars. One locomotive and one freight car seemingly having disappeared with the passage of time. It appears that the steam engine was seldom if ever used.

Three round trips were operated daily to meet the two trains operated by the steam road as well as a mid-day trip.

Passenger traffic was always minuscule. The round-trip fare was 25 cents. In the later years of operation #7 was generally operated by one individual with only two employed on the line.

The road petitioned the ICC to discontinue operations in November 1941, permission was granted in November, operations were discontinued on December 31, 1941, and was abandoned the following year with the rails etc. scrapped for the WWII metal drive.

A Library Committee meeting was held through Zoom on September 12, 2020.

The next Library Committee meeting will be held through a virtual Zoom meeting on November 7, 2020 at 10 AM. Materials and login information will be distributed.

Our community partner York County Community College is entering its Fall Semester with a revised schedule due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On site hands-on instruction is only occurring where absolutely essential - other instruction is through virtual sessions.
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 still cancelled - hopefully resumption in the 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/](https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_images/)

Facebook page =  [https://www.facebook.com/groups/44932548777/](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](https://virtual.yccc.edu/c.php?g=238406&p=3225494&preview=7b52901d1f51db2b76cb2a141ca8589c)

or this handy tinyurl works as well:  [http://tinyurl.com/zwhndoe](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_museum/)
[https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_blueprints/](https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_blueprints/)
[https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_images/](https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_images/)
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Please remember when sending donations for the library to note that it is for Library Development – Fund 951.
The Tale of a Very Nice (and quite large) Poster - In 1979 the New York City Transit Authority celebrated the Diamond Jubilee (1904 - 1979) 75th Anniversary of the New York City Subway System. One part of the jubilee undertaking was a large (44 3/4” x 59 1/4”) poster celebrating the founding of the Interborough Rapid Transit system (IRT) on October 27th 1904. This poster was produced by a grant from the J.M. Kaplan Fund - the design by noted graphic designer Bill Bonnell was donated as a public service by the JC Penney Company. The late Hugh Dunne (long-time ERA member and MTA employee) was credited with assembling the historic photographs.

In mid-2009 Jeff Mora of Washington, DC donated an unframed copy of the poster to Seashore. At the time it was evident that there was not currently a space large enough to display the poster. It was discussed with Jeff that it might be “several years” before it could be displayed. Jeff concurred and the museum received the poster but I don’t think any of us realized how long “several years would turn out to be.

The poster was stored in an offsite location that we use for delicate items. Over the years we tried to find an appropriate space in the Visitor’s Center to no avail - it is amazing how scarce 30 sq.ft. of empty space is when you are trying to find it on a wall. Finally in 2019 the library began moving into the current building (formerly known as the Arundel House, aka the Howe House). As operation and equipping became somewhat sorted out there was finally a good space for the poster. Towards the end of 2019 it was retrieved and, funding having been received for its proper framing, it was turned over to a framing shop. However the drama wasn’t over yet - first came the holiday rush with a subsequent vacation period at the shop, and then just as the framing was completed Covid-19 appeared on the scene. Then for several months volunteers from outside of the State of Maine couldn’t enter without quarantine. Anyway - to cut off this long story - in early October we were able to move the now framed poster into the Library. Framed the poster is roughly 5 x 6 ft., somewhat weighty, and looks quite spectacular.
The library’s thanks and my (ELR) personal thanks to Jeff for this donation and his forbearance through the “several years”.

**Other Stuff -**

Indulging my fondness for browsing I was looking at an 1895 issue of The Street Railway Journal issued as a souvenir edition for 12th Annual ASRA Convention in Montreal PQ. As the convention was in Montreal there was a large section devoted to Canadian street railways. It makes an interesting read if you like somewhat early street railway history. Obviously way too much to excerpt here but for a few bits from 125 years ago I picked a small outfit that had been a horse line for about a decade and had only recently switched to electric propulsion. The Berlin & Waterloo Street Railway Company was a two and one half mile single track operation - I guess I could have developed a “Do you Recognize” around this.

![Image of Berlin & Waterloo Street Railway Car Shed]

![Image of Berlin & Waterloo Street Railway Advertisement]

The Berlin & Waterloo Street Railway Company serves the two towns named, which have a combined population of about 11,000 inhabitants and are located about two miles apart. The line is 2 1/2 miles long, and is single track with a maximum gradient of 4 per cent for about 1,000 ft. The rails are 30 pound T, laid on cedar ties. The overhead construction is with cedar poles, and No. 9 trolley wire and No. 90 feed wire are used.

The power station is of brick with stone foundations, 40 ft. x 60 ft., and divided equally into engine room and boiler room. It has a brick chimney 75 ft. high, and 6 ft. x 6 ft. at the base, located near the Berlin end. In the power station are two 100 H. P. return tubular boilers.
and some miscellaneous advertising:
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The Consolidated Traction Co., Jersey City, N. J.
The Erie Railway Co., New York City.
The North Western Railway Co., Hoboken, N. J.
The Manhattan Railway Co., Manhattan, N. Y.
The Metropolitan Street Railway Co., New York City.
The Market Street Railway Co., San Francisco, Cal.
The Baltimore & York River Railroad Co., Baltimore, Md.
The Illinois Electric Railway Co., Terra Haute, Ind.
The Chicago & Northwestern Railway Co., Chicago, Ill.
The Leavenworth Electric Railway Co., Leavenworth, Kan.
The Lynn & Boston Railroad Co., Lynn, Mass.
The New York & Waupaca Falls Electric Railroad Co., Poughkeepsie, N. Y.
The Metropolitan Street Railway Co., New York City (Cable.)

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Philadelphia, P. A., 200 Arch Street.
Baltimore, Md., 109 E. German Street.

Pittsburgh, Pa., Thomas Building.
Atlanta, Ga., Ponce de Leon Building.
Cincinnati, O., 444 West Fourth Street.
Columbus, O., 14 N. High Street.
Nashville, Tenn., 84 N. Springer Street.
Chicago, III., Monadock Building.

Kansas City, Mo., New York Life Building
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Baton Rouge, La., The Bank of Louisiana.

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Cleveland Electric Railway Company, Cleveland, Ohio.
Cleveland & Berea Street Railway Company, Cleveland, Ohio.
Columbus Street Railway Company, Columbus, Ohio.
Columbus Central Railway Company
Hartford Street Railway Company, Hartford, Ct.
Hartford & W. H. Street Railway Company
Fair Haven & Westville Street Railway Company, New Haven, Ct.
New Haven Street Railway Company
Edgewood Street Railway Company
Dixwell Avenue Railway Company, Norwalk, Ct.
Louisville Railway Company, Louisville, Ky.
Toledo & Maumee Valley Railway Company, Toledo, Ohio.

Lorain Street Railway Company, Lorain, Ohio.
Scranton Traction Company, Scranton, Pa.
Allegheny Traction Company
Pittsburgh, A. & M. Traction Company
City Railway Company, Dayton, Ohio.
Oakwood Street Railway Company
White Line Street Railway Company
Dayton Traction Company, Lexington, Ky.
Belt Line Electric Company
Austin Rapid Transit Company, Austin, Texas.
Ithaca Street Railway Company, Ithaca, N. Y.
Suburban Traction Company, Orange, N. J.
Evansville Street Railway Company, Evansville, Ind.
Waterbury Traction Company, Waterbury, Ct.
Rockford City Railway Company, Rockford, Ill.
Danbury & Bethel Street Railway Company, Danbury, Ct.
Oil City Street Railway Company, Oil City, Pa.
Olean Street Railway Company, Olean, N. Y.
Watertown Street Railway Company, Watertown, N. Y.
Newburgh Electric Railway Company, Newburgh, N. Y.

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The Back Cover
Regards,

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