June 2021

A Great Fourth Of July Holiday And All The Best To Our Friends And Neighbors North Of The Border For A Happy Canada Day On July First

Best Wishes

Goings On at Seashore —

Happy Birthday Seashore!

The museum was founded 82 years ago today, on July 5, 1939.

Even with heat and deluges the museum had another great week including Canada Day on the 1st and Boston Day on the 3rd with paid regular admissions 29% higher to date than the same time in 2019.

Upcoming Events & Meetings:

• Wednesday, July 7: Ice Cream Night! Take an evening trolley ride and enjoy an ice cream sundae with all of the fixin’s. 50% of the proceeds benefit the United Way of York County. Purchase event tickets at https://icecreamnight.eventbrite.com

• Saturday, July 10: Moxie Day at Seashore! Enjoy free samples of regular and diet Moxie.

• Saturday, July 10: Library Committee meeting, in person at the library, 10AM

• Saturday, July 10: Curatorial Committee meeting, on Zoom from 1PM-3PM. Wednesday, July 14: Ice Cream Night! Take an evening trolley ride and enjoy an ice cream sundae with all of the fixin’s. 50% of the proceeds benefit the Kennebunkport Conservation Trust. Purchase event tickets at https://icecreamnight.eventbrite.com

• Saturday/Sunday July 17 & 18: Business Member Appreciation Days. Seashore Trolley Museum Business Members and their employees get in free this weekend! Free door prize raffles with prizes for all guests to enter. The Pump Car will be out for guests to experience!

See all events @ https://trolleymuseum.org/events/
Our electric railroad of interest last month, the Salt Lake & Utah Railroad Company stretched south some 67 miles from Salt Lake City which was also the county seat, state capital, and the state’s largest city. The SL&U while named for its home city and state was informally known as “the Orem Road” for the name of the promoters. Local citizens had acquired some franchises in 1910-1911 but no real progress was achieved until a new organization financed by mainly eastern money took control in 1912.

A. J. Orem & Company, the firm of a Boston promoter and financier, undertook the financing and construction of the line. This firm had initially incorporated the Utah Development Company in Portland, Maine in 1905 with the intent of undertaking mining activities in the west. In 1912 the firm undertook the construction of the electric railroad and in October of that year the firm formed "The Interurban Construction Co." in Portland, ME to build the railroad and also incorporated the Salt Lake & Utah Railroad Company in Portland that same month, a year later it was also incorporated in the state where it would operate. The son of the financing firm’s founder served as acting head of the company.

The new firm purchased land for its right-of-way outright, only seeking franchises where the use of public streets through communities was necessary. The franchises also helped in thwarting the establishment of a potential competitive line by regional western interests.

Actual construction began in late 1912 with materials being stockpiled at several points along the proposed route. Construction began in earnest in 1913 with a goal of 53 miles of route by year end. The winter of 1913-1914 was extremely harsh and it is said that the track gangs piled brush in the right-of-way and burned it during the night to attempt to thaw the frozen ground. The railroad’s target date of January 1, 1914 for initiating service was slipped until March by the winter conditions.

The railroad had ordered three gasoline-powered 60 ft. steel rail cars (Nos. 501-503) from Californians Elbert J. Hall and Bert C. Scott (the Hall-Scott Motor Car Company) to provide initial service and for backup after electrification. Completed in January 1914 the three gas-electrics travelled in February the some 800 miles by rail from the Hall-Scott factory.
Using these gas rail cars an initial ceremonial run was made on March 6, 1914 with public service beginning on March 23 over the first 33 miles of completed route to American Fork, Utah. This service was technically operated by the construction company as the railroad did not officially take over until electrification.

Electrification was accomplished with Westinghouse rotary converters converting 45,000 volt 60 cycle current commercially acquired under a 50-year contract to 1500 volts DC. On July 24, 2014 electric railroad service began from the capital to a Provo, Utah some 48.5 miles distant with seven round-trip trains per day. Initial equipment comprised five 61’ 8” steel cars (Nos. 601-605) built by Niles in 1914 along with two 50’ express, baggage and freight motor cars (Nos. 801 & 802), No. 851, resembling 801 and 802 except especially designed to transport milk, and, an electric locomotive (No. 51), also by Niles.

Four additional steel cars (Nos. 606-609) came from Niles in 1916. This same year also saw the delivery of two 60’ steel trailers (701 & 702) and two 60’ steel trailer observation cars (751 & 752). In 1917 the first non-Niles products since the Hall-Scott gas cars arrived in the form of two 60’ 7” motor passenger cars (610 & 611) by the American Car Company. These two were very similar to the Niles 601-609 series except these had wooden roofs. They were also the only true double-enders with the earlier Niles’ cars rear controls on lHall-Scott Motor Car Company used for backing up the cars.

In May 1915 service increased to 10 round trips per day and in July the line extended a further six miles to Springville and a daily except Sunday freight train was added in each direction. May 1916 saw the completion of construction to the final endpoint of Payson, Utah with 12 round-trips per day over the 66.6 mile route, increased to 13 round-trips in July. During the 1920s between eight and nine round-trips were operated daily. The nadir was reached in 1937 with only five daily round-trips. The 9.7 mile Magna Branch was opened in
1917 to the nearby copper mining center of Magna with as many as nine round-trips in the beginning and falling to three during the depths of the Depression.

The entire railroad was constructed to steam road standards. It used main line rail of 75 lb. with spurs and sidings laid with 60 lb.

The Interurban was immediately very popular even in its intermediate stages of development. When construction reached Provo, some 48 miles from Salt Lake City, in 1914 a streetcar line was also laid out within that community. The streetcar line did not succeed in attracting widespread patronage and was curtailed in March of 1919.

The owners of our railroad were associated with a local mining and rail entrepreneur, Simon Bamberger, who was a member of the state senate and later governor. Our railroad actually connected with the Bamberger Railroad in the Salt Lake City and formed a jointly owned terminal company to build an interurban terminal in Salt Lake. A temporary interurban terminal station was completed in 1916 but the permanent terminal did not open until October 1923.

Between 1916 and 1930 the line bought six Baldwin-Westinghouse electric locomotive (Nos. 101-106). These added to the original No. 51 freight locomotive built by Niles in 1914 and wrecked in 1915. Components were rebuilt by the company shops into No. 52 in 1922. In the early 1920s the line was reported as owning 15 old box cars, 10 new box cars, 50 new gondolas, 20 old gondolas, 4 flat cars, 14 hopper cars, and 2 cabooses.

By the mid-1920s the impact of the automobile and motor truck was staring to be felt in a significant way. In mid-1925 our interurban line slipped into receivership. The line struggled along in a status quo until 1929. In 1929, under a new management team, extensive efforts were made to increase revenues with cars being painted and given the most complete overhauls they had ever received. Unfortunately these efforts were unsuccessful and
passenger and freight traffic continued to decline in the long term. In 1937 two court orders instructed the Receiver to sell all properties of the railroad to the highest bidder at a foreclosure sale. This was held on January 26, 1938. The successful bidders, Marriner A. Browning and George S. Eccles, were involved in regional banking in the area. A new corporation was again named after the capital city and state, but with “corporation” in the name rather than the earlier “company”. It was initially incorporated in Delaware in late 1936 and in its state of operation in 1938. The successful bidders transferred their interests to the new company in mid-1938. This brought our line under common control with another electric, the Utah Idaho Central Railroad, headquartered in Ogden some 40 miles from Salt Lake. Our line’s rails were connected with this firm over the Bamberger Railroad mentioned previously.

The new company immediately sought franchises for bus operation over the entire system to block bus competition. Five buses were placed in service with service beginning on January 1, 1939 and in Provo beginning in April 1940.

The railroad’s physical plant continued to deteriorate at an increasing rate accompanied by increasing accidents, equipment failure and the like. Eventually in 1945 the line went into receivership again with operations ending on March 1, 1946 by court order. Later in the year the ICC and state utility regulators gave final approval for abandonment. With the company’s demise the local operating authority went to the Rio Grande Motorway, a highway subsidiary of the Denver & Rio Grande Western that was then sold to Continental Trailways in 1948. The local city bus service in Provo ended with the railroad’s demise. An attempt to resuscitate the city service failed in the early-1950s and the possibility of BRT is still currently under discussion.

This Month’s Do You Recognize - (I’ll make a confession about this one next month)

Our street railway of interest, featuring the name of the city it served, was approved by the city council in January 1887 and the council’s endorsement given to the application for a state charter. In February of 1888 the state legislature granted the incorporation and the
governor signed the document four days later. The city had steep enough hills and this was late enough in the development of railways that this system did not pass through the horsecar phase but proceeded directly to electricity. There had been an earlier and unsuccessful attempt with an omnibus but that was it for animal power. Actual construction began on August 16, 1888 with the Boston firm of Gore & Woodward constructing the roadbed and laying rail while Thomson-Houston Co. installing the overhead and generating equipment. Thomson-Houston offered to take partial payment in blocks of the new company’s stock as was its practice in building other street railways and electrical generating plants in the area. In 1892 Thomson-Houston merged with Edison General Electric to form the General Electric Company and consequently GE held substantial stock in this and other area trolley and lighting and power generating companies. Four 16-foot closed cars were ordered from the Newburyport (MA) Car Company. Service began on May 21, 1889 with two cars in service over three miles of track.

Four 8-bench open cars and an 18-foot closed car were purchased from Newburyport Car Co. in 1889. To meet rising demand an additional ten closed cars and eleven open cars were purchased in 1890, all from Newburyport Car Co. Because of the size of this order it is likely that some cars were built for Newburyport by the Ellis Car Co. of Amesbury, MA although they were all referred to as “Newburyport cars.”

By the end of 1890 the railway had built two additional lines giving it a total of 7 1/4 miles of track and by 1900 trackage had expanded to a total of 9 3/4 miles with 13 closed cars and 15 open cars in service. With the exception of one line this company built no suburban
extensions but rather these came into being in 1905 when various local lines and power companies under a common holding company were merged into a single railway & electric company. At this time General Electric not only held significant blocks of stock in local companies but also nationwide and it organized the Electric Bond & Share Company to take over these GE interests across the country. Locally various lighting, street railways and water power companies, including our initial railway, were brought under a common entity. Immediately following the merger the combined fleet included 25 closed cars, 24 open cars, 3 work cars, 6 snow plows and one miscellaneous car of some type. In 1906 another adjacent street railway was acquired adding another 28 miles of track. With this addition the new company, the state’s fourth-largest for a number of years, had 56 miles of main track and 2.7 miles of second main. Serving this system were 29 closed cars, 25 open cars, 3 motor freight cars, 20 freight trailers, 3 work cars, 7 snow plows and the “miscellaneous” car. Also merged in 1905 were two power companies and a water company - another two power companies, a water company and a realty company acquired shortly thereafter.

A 28-mile street railway acquired in 1906 is somewhat interesting in its own right. Begun in 1898 the line received a certificate of safety by the state railroad commissioners in December of 1898 although it was June of 1899 before operations got underway. The line was built without poles or overhead. Passenger service and freight power was to be provided by a 32-foot self-propelled closed car. The car furnished by the Patton Motor Company of Chicago consisted of two compartments, one for the power plant and one for passengers. A 50 hp gasoline engine drove a 30 kw direct current generator which charged a bank of 110 storage batteries. Current from the batteries was fed through controllers to two 50 hp traction motors. The passenger equipment consisted of the Patton car and a 16-foot trailer (former Boston horsecar) with the same Patton car serving as a freight motor for pulling boxcars or flats. The Patton car proved noisy, smelly, underpowered and unreliable and in April of 1900, slightly under a year, service was suspended and the entire line was re-equipped with standard overhead and new rolling-stock was acquired. Service resumed in May of 1901. There was limited passenger traffic but as this part of the railway did not parallel a railroad it was able to build up a substantial carload agricultural business. Unfortunately it was not able to survive the development of motor truck transportation and was abandoned in 1930.
In an interesting if not terribly successful attempt to generate traffic for its lines the newly consolidated railway established a farm to demonstrate “modern farming practices” as well as building warehouses for agricultural crops it hoped to transport.

From 1898 until 1916 the railway leased and operated a major entertainment park adjacent to its namesake city on a 10-acre site overlooking the neighboring river. This park was initially leased to a predecessor line and then became part of the consolidated line in 1905. In its heyday the park saw a dozen cars at a time delivering patrons to the park. The park included a large open-air theater featuring band concerts and vaudeville with nationally-known acts. The park also featured a midway with a shooting gallery, baseball throw and concession stands, which sold hot dogs, popcorn, peanuts, candy, and soda. There was also a bowling alley, merry-go-round, Ferris wheel, wooden swings, dancing pavilion, open-air stage casino, picnic spots along the shore, and even live alligators on display in their own specially built pools.

A major disaster, the Great Fire of 1911, reshaped the city's landscape, burning 55 acres, destroying 267 buildings, damaging 100 more resulting in almost half of the city destroyed and the business district all but gone.

The line had many problems with crossing the river and recurrent washouts of various bridges. One division of the railway was not connected to the central system until 1914 when a steel bridge was finally constructed. The bridge at this location had a long, spotty history. Originally built in 1832, it was carried away in a flood or freshet in 1846. Rebuilt in 1847, its middle span was demolished in another flood in 1902 but was replaced by a steel span but declared unsafe for trolleys. By 1914, after multiple delays and lots of bickering, the whole bridge had been replaced with steel capable of carrying trolley cars.

The late teens and early nineteen twenties were not kind to the company. A 1916 strike disrupted service for a short period and resulted in union recognition by the company but few changes in working conditions. Nineteen-twenty brought heavy snows and terrible operating conditions. The winter of 1922-23 saw more severe storms with drifts of six and eight feet. The street railway managed some semblance of operation through clearing the tracks with its rotary plow. In one major fire the fire department was unable to move through the snow clogged streets and
the street railway moved fire fighting men and equipment on flat cars behind double-headed freight motors and the rotary.

In 1918 the railway joined the national trend with the arrival of one-man Birney cars. Three were received from American Car Company in 1918 and another twelve in 1919. Another two were acquired from Wason in 1922 and a final second-hand Birney, built by American in 1918, was acquired in 1923. With this purchase the equipment history of the railway and its successor company was effectively complete.

A little side note and hint: In a 1923 US Department of Commerce publication, the railway is listed as the owner of one of the city’s radio stations - one that still exists as a radio and television station to this day. It is the oldest operating radio station in the state although its operating frequency changed several times due to national frequency realignments, its radio call letters were changed in 2009 and its power has increased from 100 watts in 1923 to a current output of 5,000 watts.

In 1924 the General Electric Company divested itself of the Electric Share & Bond Company. A new company was organized to assume operation of the local railway. At the time the new company began operation in March of 1925 the system was operating 53.7 miles of main line track. Rolling stock consisted of 9 double truck semi-convertibles, 7 double truck safety cars and 18 single-truck Birneys. With the Birneys in place the railway rebuilt its large double-truck semi-convertibles to one-man operation while scrapping some older double-truck cars.

In the late 1930s through 1941 ongoing state highway reconstruction made the continuance of various lines infeasible. By 1941 significant cutbacks in routes and equipment became
inevitable with the total fleet declining from 39 units of all kinds in 1940 to 23 units in 1941. A motor subsidiary was formed in 1940 to replace electric railway service on some routes. It had been the company’s intention to end railway service in 1943 but wartime demands intervened and the cars held on until the last trips were run on December 31, 1945.

This railway lay claim to being the first electric railway in its state and only lost out to being the last by a single three-mile electric railway that continued passenger service to 1947 and freight through 1949.

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The next Library Committee meeting will be held onsite at the Library on July 10, 2021 at 10 AM. Materials and login information will be distributed. If planning to attend please notify Karen Dooks at kdooks2@gmail.com.

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

Saturday - Workshops only (10AM - 2 PM) are still cancelled. Updated information will be forthcoming.

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

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.

Miscellaneous - Some 1904 Ads -
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Regards,

Ed Ramsdell, Editor

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