July 2021

Blue Star Museum - Seashore was listed as a Blue Star Museum in 2021. Blue Star Museums is a collaboration among the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), and museums across America offering free admission to the nation’s active-duty military personnel and their families, including National Guard and Reserve. The 2021 Blue Star Museums program began on Armed Forces Day, Saturday, May 15, 2021, and ends on Labor Day, Monday, September 6, 2021. Click on the map at link below to see all other participating museums across the country, including 7 others in Maine: https://www.arts.gov/initiatives/blue-star-museums.

Goings On at Seashore —

A great weekend: Saturday, July 31 brought Tower C Day. Tower C’s new first floor exhibit formally opened with museum members, volunteers, and members from the community joining for a special ceremony and ribbon cutting at 11AM.

Sunday, August 1 was Washington, DC Day! The museum’s beautiful D.C. Transit 1304 was out and about! Residents of Washington, D.C. got in free!

Coming up:

Free Story Time! Every weekday at 11AM through August 27th. Visitors Center Exhibit Room.

Sunday, August 1: Washington, DC Day! D.C. Transit 1304 will be featured! Residents of Washington, D.C. get in free!

Wednesday, August 4: 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 Center in Kennebunk (a local resource for the 55+ population); August 11: 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 Kennebunk Free Library. Purchase event tickets at http://icecreamnight.eventbrite.com.
Saturday, August 7: Superhero & Royalty Day, 11AM-3PM. Dress as your favorite superhero or as royalty and enjoy special crafts and a superhero training course! THE Elsa (from the movie Frozen) and THE Spiderman (needs no introduction) will be visiting Seashore from 11AM-3PM; taking trolley rides, pictures, and singing/dancing with the children or adults who would like to. Tickets are on sale at http://superherotrolley.eventbrite.com.

Members Day Schedule August 14, 2021

9AM: Coffee, munchkins and hot chocolate available, Trolley Fare
9:30AM & Noon: Special behind-the-scenes tours of the Narcissus Restoration, Phil Morse
10AM: Museum Store Opens
10AM-4PM: Library Committee book sale
10:10AM: Trolleys Begin Operating
11AM: Lexington & Boston 41 dedication and ribbon cutting
11:30AM-12:30PM: Lunch served (hot dogs, hamburgers, macaroni/potato salad, table talk pies, beverages).
12:30PM-2PM: SOAC Cars Open for viewing
1PM: Presentation at Tower C, Richmond Bates and Rick Wolf
1:30PM: Bucket truck demonstrations, Rob Drye
2PM: Roundtable with the Executive Director, Exhibit Room
2:30PM: Strategic Plan Update, Exhibit Room
3:30PM: Model Railroad Building update, Exhibit Room

See all museum events @ https://trolleyuseum.org/events/

Do You Recognize?

A confession and a correction: Last month I promised a confession about this (Bangor) Do You Recognize - that confession is that this was a repeat from September 2014 - I got myself jammed between traveling and a houseguest. I just plain ran out of time and I really dislike two-month editions. OK - so much for the mea culpa, now to the correction: I stated in the Bangor article that Bangor was the next to last electric passenger service in Maine, only exceeded by York Utilities. Lew Schneider dropped me an email noting that the Aroostook Valley Railroad operated its last electric passenger service in August 1946 (August 7, 1946...
to be exact). There is some confusion in the literature as to when AVR ended electric service. They acquired two diesel electric locomotives in mid-1945 and some sources interpreted that arrival as the termination of electric service and incorrectly assumed the August 1946 termination to actually be August 1945. Lew, thank you.

Last Month’s Do You Recognize-

We are stayed in New England this month but moved back to the Pine Tree State. Our street railway of interest, the Bangor Street Railway, was approved by the Bangor 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. Bangor 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, Birch Hill and the isolated Brewer line, 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 the Brewer Division the 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 Bangor Railway & Electric Company. The consolidation in April 1905 of the electric railway lighting and water companies of Bangor and vicinity connecting with Brewer, Kenduskeag, Corinth, Charleston, Veazie, Orono, Stillwater, Great Works, Orrington, Hampden and Old Town comprised the following: Bangor, Orono & Old Town Railway Co, Bangor Hampden & Winterport Railway, Old Town Electric Company and the Public Works Company owning the Bangor Street Ry, the Bangor Electric Light & Power Company, the Penobscot Water & Power Company and the Brewer Water Company. On Feb 1 1906 the new firm also absorbed the Bangor & Northern Ry Co reorganization of the Penobscot Central Ry Co.

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.

The 28-mile Penobscot Central Railway/Bangor &
Northern, 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. WABI launched in 1924 from Bangor, Maine. Bangor Railway & Electric Company owned the station. 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 (WAEI) and its power has increased
from 100 watts in 1923 to a current output of 5,000 watts. The radio station changed again to WABK in 2014. The TV station has remained WAEI.

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.

Bangor lay claim to being the first electric railway in Maine and only lost out to being the last by two places: the Aroostook Valley Railroad that ran its last scheduled electric passenger run on August 7, 1946 and the three-mile electric railway operated by York Utilities that continued passenger service to 1947 and freight through 1949.

Further information on the BSR is contained in a book by Charles D. Hazeltine published in the NRHS Conn. Valley Chapter’s Transportation Bulletin No. 81 (Jan-Dec 1974)

This Month’s Do you recognize -

Our railway company of interest this month was a relatively small operation of twelve and a half miles and as one of the company officials remarked that “our line started no-where and ended no-where”. There wasn’t any community along the line that was more than a few houses at a crossroads. The line was named after two purported endpoints but actually it didn’t really serve either of
The trolley was promoted by a local entrepreneur as part of his scheme to develop a small scenic community into a summer resort. The line ran from a small university (then normal school) town along a scenic route to the proposed resort community with such entertainment as swimming, boating, fishing, exploring dramatic rock formations, and a cave with 2,000 feet of passages and caverns that maintained a brisk 38° temperature in summer. An added attraction was a miniature steam train that carried visitors into the park named in our railway’s official title. The park is slightly south of the end of track for our trolley and across a river from the actual hamlet of that name.

The trolley line was famed for traveling through some of the most picturesque scenery in the entire area with its creek and rugged gorge although it was also famous for its somewhat casual track work that induced bouts of mal de mer, cows frequently blocked the tracks, and low voltages requiring patrons to help push cars up hills.

Towards the southerly end of the line there was a branch that left the main line and climbed out of the creek’s gorge to transport attendees at an annual religious camp meeting. This branch, technically operated by a commonly owned line, only operated for the annual approximately ten day duration of the camp meeting.
The line purchased its electricity from a local power company. The power company had a steam and water power station that supplied power for the street railway company and also provided electricity to the village at the endpoint of the street railway. The plant was built in 1905 and locally owned until it sold to the street railway company in 1911. The plant’s output was apparently barely adequate as the village experienced dimming lights when a car was climbing a grade and sometimes trolley patrons had to debark and provide shank’s mare motive power to assist their car up a grade.

Summer patronage of our line by fishermen and vacationers was quite good but summer simply wasn’t long enough and the rest of the year saw very limited traffic. The line was
never financially successful. It and its jointly controlled power company and branch line to the camp meeting all ceased operation for a short time in 1916 due to financial suits. These immediate problems were overcome or at least deferred and the line struggled on until the last car ran on October 15, 1930. The line was one of the few that remained independent of a major regional railway headquartered nearby.

Library Committee

A Library Committee meeting was held on July 10, 2021 as a combination of onsite and virtual meeting. The primary discussion centered on potential workshop and meeting dates as well as the need to reorganize the library workspace to aid in catching up with materials that arrived during the closure.’

The next Library Committee meeting will tentatively be held onsite at the Library on September 4, 2021 at 10 AM. Materials will be distributed.

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

A Work Day is scheduled for August 21 at 9:00 AM. The day’s goal will be cleaning and preparing the Library for resumed operation.

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/

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](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/)
[https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_documents/](https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_documents/)

Please remember when sending donations for the library to note that it is for Library Development – Fund 951.

**Miscellaneous** - Earnings of Maine railways for year ending June 30, 1900 - (from 1901 SRJ)

### Earnings of the Maine Roads

The following table, showing the capitalization, bonded indebtedness and operating figures of the street railways of Maine for the year ending June 30, 1900, has been compiled from the annual report of the Railroad Commissioners of that State. The report shows the total capitalization of the companies to be $3,732,748, and the total funded indebtedness to be $4,253,000. The total receipts of the companies were $1,218,431, and the total operating expenses were $870,576. The percentage of operating expenses to gross receipts was 71.4 per cent. Ten, or 50 per cent, of the companies concluded the year’s operations with a deficit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Capital Stock</th>
<th>Funded Debt</th>
<th>Total Receipts</th>
<th>Operating Expenses</th>
<th>Dividends Paid</th>
<th>Surplus for Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Augusta, Hollowell &amp; Gardiner.</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>$38,748</td>
<td>$27,397</td>
<td>$8,646</td>
<td>$4,800</td>
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<td>Bangor, Hampden &amp; Winterport</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>26,817</td>
<td>22,986</td>
<td>2,674</td>
<td>1,207</td>
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<td>Bangor, Orono &amp; Old Town</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>50,585</td>
<td>36,674</td>
<td>5,723</td>
<td>3,783</td>
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<td>Bangor Street</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>65,171</td>
<td>50,542</td>
<td>10,841</td>
<td>3,783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benton &amp; Fairfield</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,559</td>
<td>5,995</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>156</td>
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<tr>
<td>Biddeford &amp; Saco</td>
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<td>240,000</td>
<td>31,572</td>
<td>20,803</td>
<td>7,175</td>
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<td>100,000</td>
<td>24,301</td>
<td>20,403</td>
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<td>Fryeburg Horse</td>
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<td>6,68</td>
<td>5,19</td>
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<td>50</td>
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<td>Lewiston, Brunswick &amp; Bath</td>
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<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>167,590</td>
<td>31,011</td>
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<td>Mousam River</td>
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<td>Norway &amp; Paris</td>
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<td>18,000</td>
<td>6,425</td>
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<td>50,000</td>
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<td>80,000</td>
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<td>6,387</td>
<td>1,794</td>
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Ten out of the twenty railways had deficits. Of the four railways that paid dividends only the Portland Railroad actually had a surplus at year-end. Portland was the largest in the state in terms of receipts ($413,512), expenses ($285,157), dividends ($49,780), and surplus ($21,911). At the other end of the scale was the Fryeburg Horse Railroad with $668 in receipts, $519 in expenses, $0 dividends, and a deficit of $1. The Fryeburg received permission to electrify in 1902 but could never afford the cost and struggled on to be Maine’s last horse road when it closed in 1913.

*The 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.trolleymuseum.org