September 2021

Upcoming Events:

**The 23rd Annual Pumpkin Patch Trolley** is being held on Friday/Saturday/Sunday October 1-3, 8-10, and a new extra day on Monday October 11. Rides depart he Visitors Center at 10:50AM, 11:35AM, 12:20PM, 1:05PM, 1:50PM and 2:35PM. Multiple trolleys will be operating during each time slot to ensure social distancing on the trolley ride is maintained.

Various activities are available including pumpkin painting, craft in a bag, a cookie walk, and a photo scavenger hunt! Details at [https://trolleymuseum.org/event/pumpkin-patch-trolley-2/](https://trolleymuseum.org/event/pumpkin-patch-trolley-2/).

Tickets are available online at [https://pumpkintrolley.eventbrite.com](https://pumpkintrolley.eventbrite.com).

Other events upcoming in October include:

**Speeder Day at Seashore**! - October 17 @ 10:00 am - 5:00 pm - Speeder Day at Seashore is back this year by popular demand! Speeders come in a variety of sizes and designs. They can be open or enclosed. Really small or somewhat large. They can be powered by gasoline or diesel. Some regional speeder enthusiasts from the Cotton Valley Rail Trail Club will be at the museum. These volunteers are happy to provide the museum’s guests with an experience that falls somewhere between riding the streetcars and our pump car. Honestly… closer to the pump car. It is not sure what assortment of “speeders” the club will bring but the plan is to run cars on both the Main line and the Butler Grove lead.

**Dog Appreciation Day** at Seashore - October 23 - Would a trip to Seashore be complete without the entire family? No, it wouldn’t! Dogs are welcome every day at the Museum*, and not just service dogs; all dogs. Join us with your furry friend/s for Dog Appreciation Day at Seashore, and enter for your chance to win special door prizes. Volunteers will also be on hand to take special family photos on a trolley!

**Teacher Appreciation Weekend** - October 23 - October 24 -Join us for Teacher Appreciation Weekend! Join us and help us honor teachers. For their dedication and all they are doing to adapt to the reality we now live in, we offer free admission to all teachers visiting the museum on Teacher Appreciation Weekend.

**Happy Trolleyween at Seashore** - October 29 - October 31 - Costumes are encouraged at Trolleyween! Celebrate Trolleyween at Seashore on Friday, October 29th, Saturday, October 30th and Sunday, October 31st. Got to [https://trolleyween2021.eventbrite.com](https://trolleyween2021.eventbrite.com) to purchase tickets.

See all museum events @ [https://trolleymuseum.org/events/](https://trolleymuseum.org/events/)
Opening in 1909 our electric interurban railway of interest, Buffalo, Lockport and Rochester Railway, was constructed for some 54 miles between a county seat, now the fourth largest city in its home state, and a smaller city to the west, that city actually named after a transportation feature within its borders. At this city our line made connections with a railway running to the second largest city in the state, yet another county seat. Through cars were operated under a trackage agreement as was the steamship connection mentioned later so our line never actually owned track into the largest city included in its name.

Prior to 1909 several unsuccessful attempts had been made to build an electric interurban connecting these points. The sum total of these efforts was the construction of some 1.5 miles of track within a single village. In 1905 a new railway was chartered combining the earlier attempts with new Canadian owners taking control in early 1906. Finally on September 3, 1908 a section of the road was opened from Rochester to a point just west of the village that had earlier seen the 1.5 miles of track, Albion, and in November it reached the endpoint of Lockport for connecting onward to Buffalo.

The first equipment came in 1908 from Niles Car Co. in the form of 15 52 ft. passenger cars (Nos. 201-215) and two express motors (Nos. 301-302) and 1908 also brought two line cars (Nos. 100 and 101) from Mcguire-Cummings. Six 51 ft. passenger-baggage combines (500-506) arrived from Cincinnati Car Co. in 1909, along with a rotary plow (No. 103) from the Russell Car and Snow-Plow Company. A freight-motor (No. 303) apparently came in 1916 and a sweeper in 1918. There were numbers of trailers, flats, and service cars.
The new railway could not reach the downtown of Rochester because the New York Central would not grant permission for a diamond crossing its tracks at Lyell Avenue. Eventually in 1910 the New York State Public Service Commission took action and authority for the diamond was granted. Although thousands of passengers were drawn to the fast local service and cheaper fares compared to the competing steam roads the line had defaulted on its mortgage bonds and was placed in receivership in 1909. In 1911, Clifford D. Beebe purchased the line and made it part of the commonly managed "Beebe Syndicate." Service was extended 30 miles over the tracks of the International Railway Company to make connections with a leased steamship providing a 40 mile ferry service to Toronto, Ontario. This service ended in 1914. The Beebe Syndicate was severely overcapitalized and ultimately placed in receivership with Beebe retiring. Large portions of the syndicate’s holdings were sold in foreclosure in 1917. By the end of 1917 with its Beebe ties severed our road was again in financial trouble. The railway emerged from reorganization in the spring of 1919 under local ownership, primarily businessmen from Rochester. In the process its name was reversed and redesignated from railway to railroad as the Rochester, Lockport and Buffalo Railroad. Freight business continued to expand and helped the railway's bottom line. However, passenger and freight traffic declined through the 1920s with the closure of connecting lines and increasing competition from improved highways. The line’s last cars ran on April 30, 1931.

More in-depth information is available in William Reed Cordon’s 1963 Story of the BL&RR and the RL&BRC as well as various other on-line sources.
Our railway of interest this month was a small line (14 miles), relatively short lived (10 years), and not interested in passengers. It was initially established as a means of transporting rock and sandstone from quarries located in a canyon to the location where construction in the states’ new capital city was driving a demand for building materials that was overwhelming the ox teams and massive wooden transport wagons that were being used to transport huge stone blocks and great timbers. It was determined to build an electric railroad to facilitate the expanding demand. While rock and limestone were transported over our line, granite came from quarries to the south over a narrow gauge steam built 30 years earlier.

The railroad was incorporated in 1907 by a group of promoters led by the grandson of a man who had been the leader of a large religious denomination in the region, founder of the capital city, and the territorial governor prior to statehood.

By mid-1907 a portion of the line was open with the entire 14 miles completed by year’s end. People in the capital city soon realized that the stone-hauling railroad travelled through a very scenic region and was a cool escape from the heat of the city. Some began seeking rides and it dawned upon our railway that, besides rock, a whole other source of revenue was waiting to be welcomed. In 1909 the railway ordered four passenger cars (two motors, two trailers) from the Danville Car Company of Danville, IL. In 1910 two additional closed trailers came from the American Car Company of St. Louis, MO and in 1913 two more closed passenger motors from the Niles Car and
Manufacturing Company of Niles, Ohio. The line's own track ended on the east side of the capital city and most trips began and ended there. However, some cars operated into the city center of the capital over the rails of the local Light and Traction Company. This actually was apparently less popular with the company than with the patrons as operating packed trains of up to six cars over trackage in congested streets brought logistical and scheduling problems.

The line became immensely popular as an escape from summer's heat and for access to vacation spots out of the city. A lodge was built at the end of the line, some 3,000 feet above the capital city and vacation cottages began to spring up along the line. A side trip up one quarry off the main line provided riders a stunning vista back to the capital city and the lake after which it was named.

A well known brewery was located near the mouth of the canyon. The brewery stored all of its own ice in an icehouse built on the side of the mountain. In addition they improved a magnificent natural park of 100 acres nearby as a summer resort, which was open to the public on Sundays. This park was pleasantly laid out with shaded walks and drives, interspersed with trees, beautiful flowers and fountains. The brewery, an excellent traffic generator for our line, was destroyed by fire in December of 1914.

The railroad maintained a somewhat unique custom in that all of the cars were named rather than numbered. Even prior to the
passenger service the line’s two electric locomotives, one homebuilt in 1907, and one from Baldwin in 1909 were named although they did carry numbers, 1 and 2 respectively, as well as names.

At this time modern concrete and building techniques came upon the scene and greatly reduced the demand for stone as a building material. Obviously the Romans were adept in concrete construction 2,000 years ago and many of their buildings are still with us such as the Pantheon in Rome. Unfortunately much of the science of concrete-making was forgotten after the collapse of Rome and had to be rediscovered in the 18th century, also the “rediscovered” concrete could be poured rather than requiring hand layering. Methods for reinforcement such as rebar also advanced its use. Enough concrete discussion for a trolley article!

The rebirth of concrete foundation construction and its ultimate arrival as our line began business saw an enormous and rapid decline in freight traffic for the railroad. The passenger service was highly profitable and popular during the warm months but when snow buried the rails not only were they often impassible but there was little reason to clear them. For several months there was significantly too much cold and snow versus warmth to support a passenger-only (day trip and vacation-oriented) line. The end came at the end of the usual...
winter shutdown for 1916-1917 when the line did not reopen. All the passenger oars and one freight motor were shipped to the West Coast and saw wartime duty transporting shipyard workers in the First World War while the some 50-odd freight cars were scrapped and the line torn up.

The first completely onsite Library Committee meeting in over a year was held on September 4, 2021. A combination onsite and virtual meeting had been held on July 10, 2021 with wholly Zoom meetings held over the past year. The primary discussion of the September 4 meeting centered on potential workshop and meeting dates as well reorganization priorities of the library workspace to aid in catching up with materials that arrived during the closure. The business meeting was followed with working on reorganization of material in the library and a cleaning session. Workshop activity will now be able to start moving forward.

The next meeting of the Library Committee is scheduled for November 13, 2021. Materials will be distributed.

Workshops are scheduled for Saturday, October 9, 2021 and December 11, 2021 Saturday - Workshops only (10AM - 2 PM) are still cancelled. Updated information will be forthcoming.

The Library Committee’s meetings on Saturdays will be held on a bimonthly basis on the odd months. Updated information will be forthcoming as available.

The Wednesday Evening Workshops are still cancelled - hopefully resumption in the future.

The Library Committee plans to attend the Amherst Railroad Show in January 2022 and sell duplicate books and subjects outside the library’s purview to benefit the Library.

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/
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.

Local Sights -

A couple of images of Portsmouth, NH and the Portsmouth Electric Street Railway in the first decade of the 20th century:

The easterly, actually somewhat northeasterly, end of Congress Street in Market Square and the central point for the Portsmouth Electric’s routes in the city.

To the left of the North Church where the horses and wagons are standing was the location of a lunch cart that was pulled to the spot by horses. There were actually several at one time.
From early evening until the approach of dawn the carts sold food to workers getting off of their factory shifts, and other denizens of the night including sailors and marines from the shipyard (always good for a fight or two - not in the cart however - Gilley permanently banned troublemakers and that was a serious punishment! Although hardly ever needed, also backed up by the beat cop and shore patrol if necessary).

One of these carts started in 1912 and its descendent exists to this day although not beside the church. A replacement cart, built by the Worcester Diner Company in 1940, came to the Square - later drawn by a truck - until the mid-70s. The diner was illegally parked every night, apparently received a nightly ticket, and also had utility attachments at the curb. After being pushed out in the 70s there was an sufficient outcry to cause the city to find it a permanent home on a lot next to the municipal parking garage about two blocks from the Square. Just to connect the wagon back to passenger transportation - in the late 50s and early 60s I worked in the Trailways Bus Agency located directly across the Square from the church. When our Five-Star luxury service (DC - NYC - BOS - Portsmouth - Portland, ME) came through at 9:30PM the onboard hostess would take orders from frequent riders aware of the great dogs, in fact anyone wanting hotdogs and run across the square while the driver was unloading/loading. The lunch cart manager (Gilley) would shoo everyone out of the way so he could fill the orders and the “Star” could head for Portland. Gilley’s dogs and beans actually were very good!

The other end (westerly/south westerly) end of Congress Street lookin back towards Market Square. A ways behind the photographer the Portsmouth Electric’s routes split with service to Christian Shore and Portsmouth Plains going straight while the routes to Rye and Hampton Beach plus some Plains trips swung to the photographer’s right.
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

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http://www.trolleymuseum.org