Goings On at Seashore -

This past summer, Seashore Trolley Museum was awarded a $10,000 grant by the Maine Office of Tourism to enhance our Visitors Center Exhibit Room. Funding was awarded to design, create, and install a new display in a small section of the room that features the transit artifacts in the museum’s international collection. Tricia Erikson of Whitecap Consulting Maine is co-curating this project with Seashore’s Historian Richmond Bates. Her previous involvement with STM includes curating the current Exhibit Room, ASL 100 and Narcissus PR materials, the Civil Rights Bus project, the History in Motion online exhibit, and the Engineering is Elementary teacher professional development sessions—all with Phil Morse and several other devoted staff and volunteers.

The international exhibit involves the following cities/countries: Nagasaki, Japan; Budapest, Hungary; Hamburg and Berlin, Germany; Paris, France; Lausanne, Switzerland; Rome, Italy; Blackpool, Liverpool, and Leeds Great Britain; Glasgow, Scotland; Halifax, Nova Scotia; Brantford, Ontario; Edmonton, Alberta; Hamilton, Ontario; Montreal, Quebec; Ottawa, Ontario; Quebec City, Quebec; Oshawa, Ontario; Toronto, Canada; Dunedin, New Zealand; Sydney, Australia; and Vienna, Austria.

A Couple Of December Glimpses From The Platform

12-10-2021

12-27-2021

Upcoming Events:

Two dates to note on your calendar
2022 Annual Meeting: Saturday, April 30, 2022
2022 Opening Day: Sunday, May 1, 2022
Our railway company of interest was located in Iowa’s most southerly city of Keokuk, one of two county seats for its county. The company was organized early in the year 1882 as the Keokuk Street Railway Company, with practically all the stock being held by local capitalists. Work was immediately commenced on two lines and subsequently a line was built connecting the two so as to form a loop. Mules and horses furnished the motive power over about three and one-half miles of track until 1890. The line was acquired in 1890 by the Keokuk Street Railway and Power Company with electric service begun in August of that year. In December 1891 a receiver had been appointed on petition of the International Trust Company of Boston. In 1892 a new company was incorporated by a syndicate comprised of Edison General Electric of NY and others and named the Keokuk Electric Street Railway. The Superior Court ordered the sale of the property to be made on March 21 but delayed the sale for 30 days on petition of a bond holder, the S.P. Townsend and Son Co. of Hartford, CT. The local company was then sold to S.P. Townsend and Son Co. for $21,000 and renamed as the Keokuk Electric Railway Company. The lines were extended and new car barns built. In 1901 the line was sold to a prominent local businessman, J.C. Hubinger, who had made a fortune with his brothers opening a starch factory in New Haven, CT. and then returned to his hometown to open another starch factory. As well as the starch business and railway he also invested...
in local real estate, power generation, and the local telephone company. The line then operated as the Keokuk Electric. The line provided city service in Keokuk and after the line changed hands in 1901 it became the Keokuk Electric Railway and Power Company. Negotiations with a regional railroad, the Toledo, Peoria & Warsaw Railroad, proved successful and our railway gained access to the railroad’s 2,400 ft bridge across the Mississippi and south, mostly over that railroad’s tracks, to a regional riverside community. The agreement included our line’s assumption the contract, as to passenger service over the line, which the railroad had made with the citizens of the endpoint city.

Business setbacks across the businessman’s investments caused the line’s sale again in 1904 and for a time it was operated in conjunction with the electric light plant. After one or two other changes in ownership the railway passed into the hands of the Stone & Webster Syndicate in 1911 operating as the Keokuk Electric Company. Stone & Webster added new cars and generally improved the service. In 1925 Stone & Webster sold the line to the North American Company and all streetcar service was curtailed by North American in 1928.

As a side note: no lesser personalities than Samuel Clemens in his “Life on the Mississippi” Abraham Lincoln in his papers mentioned our line’s home city.

In the November 2021 edition of *The Main Line* there were missing data and errors concerning Keokuk Nos. #64 and #65 - corrected in this edition. I was working with fragmented roster information and was not aware of the roster contained in CERA #114 Iowa Trolleys. My thanks to Paul Schneble and Lew Schneider for noting the publication and forwarding some material.
This month’s railway company of interest received its franchise between its endpoint cities on December 12, 1912. On one end was the state’s largest city, adjacent to the state’s capital city, with the opposite endpoint being a small city of about 4,000 population 15 miles to the northwest. In the latter part of the 19th century saw mills, wood working plants, and cooper shops-barrel makers were important to the community. After the mid-1880s the timber related businesses declined and a mix of business such as agriculture, shoe making and a state hospital came to the fore. Service began on June 11, 1913 with five trips per day, however, due to the lack of a sufficient source of electrical power in the area initial operations were conducted with two 55 ft. McKeen gasoline motor cars, a 200 hp switch engine, also from McKeen, and borrowed steam engines. At the beginning it was announced the line had contracted to deliver 5,000 carloads of construction materials to dam sites.

The McKeens appear to have had ongoing problems and a steam locomotive was used to haul passenger coaches.

The line entered bankruptcy in 1914 with reorganization taking place in 1915. Now named after its end points plus the optimistic addition of a mining region some additional 100 miles to the NNW. The addition beyond the original endpoints was never undertaken. The McKeen cars were apparently repossessed and steam pressed into service. A large hydroelectric dam was completed near the line in 1914 with electrification of the trolley system started in the summer of 1915 and actual
electric trolley service begun on October 1, 1915 with seven round-trips a day.

The reorganized company reached agreement with the local transit operator in the “big city” southern endpoint and that operator carried the line’s cars over its track into the city center. Another major connection between our line and the city operator was that the city operator had determined years before to build all of its own equipment in its own shops and ultimately built cars for other lines as well. With the arrival of a sufficient electrical supply to power our line the decision was made to electrify and to purchase cars from this same city operator. Our line of interest purchased three streetcars from the local transit operator. All were designed and built at that company’s shops in the state’s capital city. They looked like the transit line’s regular streetcars, but were painted dark red instead of yellow and the interior layout was slightly different to accommodate the line’s particular mix of traffic.

A transit directory, published in 1918 indicates that our railroad operated 19.21 miles of rail trackage, owned seven motor passenger cars, one other motor car, four other cars, and one electric locomotive.

During the 1920s the cars ran hourly headways during rush hours and every two hours at other times. In the 1930s the two hour headway became standard throughout the day with an endpoint to endpoint travel time of 70 minutes. The line was profitable through 1924 but generally declining traffic combined with the destruction of a large mill in the northern endpoint city brought on major financial problems resulting in
bankruptcy and another reorganization in 1926. The line then began a general spiral of decline in business and the condition of the physical plant.

Freight continued as the line’s primary source of income throughout its existence. Freight service was not electrified until 1922. Passenger service ended in 1939 after a tornado destroyed a significant amount of overhead with buses being substituted. Electric freight trains continued running until 1943.

In 1943 the line was purchased by a company operating a defense ordinance plant near the southern endpoint city. Passenger service was resumed in late 1943 with three cars running over four miles of track between a connection with the city transit operator and the defense plant operated by our line’s new owners. At war’s end traffic rapidly declined to sporadic service at shift-change times at the plant, the main reason for the lines existence. Passenger service was ended sometime in April 1948 with freight service continued by a regional class 1 railroad that had acquired the track.

The bus service introduced in 1939 between the endpoint cities continued until eventually purchased by a regional transit agency and survives to this day.

No. #100 built in 1913 by GE as a gas-electric for a neighboring line. Ultimately converted to electric and sold to our line in 1922

The next meeting of the Library Committee with workshop following is scheduled for January 8, 2022 (10AM - 2 PM). Materials will be distributed. This is subject to any changes brought about by changing covid regulations.

Seashore Executive Director Katie Orlando recently announced that due to the COVID-19 community spread in all of the counties where museum staff and year-round volunteers live, starting Monday, January 3, masks are required again inside the Visitors Center (both floors), the Restoration Shop, Library, and all other indoor spaces on campus.
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.

Subject to any changes in city or state covid regulations the Library Committee plans to attend the Amherst Railroad Show in January 29-30 2022 and sell used and duplicate books outside the library’s purview for the benefit of the Library.

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.
A Little History -

B&M to the rescue - of the Boston El!

I came across an article in the March 1946 issue of Interurbans reprinting a story from the Boston & Maine employee magazine detailing assistance provided by the B&M to the Boston Elevated after a liberty ship rammed the Charlestown Bridge in 1945. Information excerpted from the story follows:

An 85-foot turntable structure, stored at Mechanicville for possible emergencies on our own railroad (the B&M), provided a life-saving stopgap for the Boston Elevated Railway a few weeks ago when a 10,000 ton Liberty ship plowed a huge dent in the El's bridge structure between Boston and Charlestown. As a result of a fine spirit of cooperation existing between the B&M and the El, a temporary bridge was in place and El traffic resumed within 73 hours of the mishap, and this in the face of a raging blizzard.

The B&M's cooperation in the emergency actually began when the ship, out of control in a strong tide and wind, crashed into the Charlestown bridge. The collision was seen by B&M officials from their offices and the severity of the situation was appraised at once.

Chief Engineer T. G. Sughrue ordered an immediate check to determine what resources the B&M could offer as assistance to the El. Later, when an El official called the B&M to see what aid the railroad might offer, the answer was ready that, while the B&M had no steel girders long enough for the gap to be filled, it could provide an 85-foot turntable as a temporary stopgap.
This offer was promptly accepted and Chief Engineer Sughrue and General Manager Frank Rourke organized the efforts of three departments, Engineering, Operating, and Mechanical, to bring a spare turntable from Mechanicville in the shortest possible time. A wrecker put the huge 40-ton structure on three flat cars which were run in with Diesel-powered RB-2's regular train and one of the fastest freight runs ever made on the Fitchburg Division put the turntable in Boston in about five hours and 38 minutes, including a stop for a hotbox enroute.

There was no delay in handling the table at Boston. RB-2 arrived at 6 PM the day after the mishap; a waiting switcher cut out the three flat cars and moved them to Yard 13, where a wrecker had been placed to transfer the heavy load from cars to trailer trucks. Two hours 50 minutes after RB-2 arrived, the table had been placed aboard the trucks and was on its way to the damaged double-deck highway and railway bridge, a mile away.

The highway floor of the bridge received the full impact of the drifting ship. A huge gap was torn in the flooring, resulting in the collapse of one steel upright supporting the overhead railway. The table was turned upside down and placed in the gap, blocked up from stone piers below. The sagging Elevated structure was then jacked up and posts were installed from the turntable girders to the railway structure above, placing the table girders the load carried by that portion of the elevated tracks.

Although a foot of snow fell while the table was being installed, the job was completed and normal traffic was resumed 73 hours after the ship had crashed into the El bridge, about 10 AM Monday, December 17th.

The B&M turntable will serve merely as a stopgap, it being agreed that it will be returned to the steam railroad when the city and the El can make permanent repairs.
A side note to the above - The B&M Chief Engineer Timothy G. Sughrue cited in the article would become Executive Vice President of the B&M in 1950 and President in 1952. As such he was the last professional railroader to lead the B&M before he and B&M Board Chairman Edward S. French lost control of the B&M to financial operator Patrick B. McGinnis, a Wall Street financier with expertise in railroad securities, in a 1955 proxy fight. McGinnis’s principal contribution to B&M history was to oversee the completion of dieselization, the discontinuance of many passenger routes and runs, and the closure and sale of railroad stations, land and equipment. Ultimately McGinnis was convicted of and imprisoned for taking kickbacks on equipment sales as
as president of the Boston & Maine, he and three other members were accused by the Government of selling 10 of the B & M.'s passenger cars to the International Railway Corporation for $250,000, with the cars to be sold the next day to the Wabash Railroad for $425,000. Mr. McGinnis was to have received $35,000 in the deal. He was sentenced to 18 months in prison and fined $2,500 for his part in the transaction.

McGinnis eliminated the extensive motor bus operations of the railroad’s subsidiary B&M Transportation Company (BMT) in 1957. Mention of the trucking operations of the BMT also disappeared from the railroad's annual report after 1959.

*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 and a happy new year,

Ed Ramsdell, Editor

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http://www.trolleymuseum.org