February 2022

Goings On At Seashore -

February saw Seashore staff and volunteers experience some “interesting” weather during the month with temperature swings between lows of minus 9° to highs of up to 66°. Nearly half of the days had highs in the 40s, or above, with six in the 50s and 60s. At the same time there was enough snow to plow a couple of times.

**Strategic Plan** - In March 2020, following a two-year process, the Board of Trustees approved a Strategic Plan to guide the museum for the next five years, called “The New Direction.” The structure of the plan was adapted from the Heritage Rail Alliance’s Best Practices for Railway Museums (2019). On Saturday (2/05/22) a Strategic Plan Review and Discussion over Zoom took place involving the Board of Trustees, members and supporters. Discussions included the progress made to date on The New Direction and the work that still needs to be done. Components of HRA’s Best Practices were selected for inclusion as a basis for the discussion.

Various Seashore members participated in the Northeast Association of Trolley Organizations' virtual Cabin Fever Winterfest event that was held on Saturday (2/26/22). The Baltimore Streetcar Museum hosted of this year’s event. Presentations from some 15 trolley preservation organizations included organizational updates and best practices. Seashore’s presentations concerned both the Seashore Trolley Museum at Kennebunkport (presentation by Executive Director Katie Orlando) and The National Streetcar Museum at Lowell (presentation by President & CEO Jim Schantz).

Upcoming Events:

Two dates to note on your calendar
2022 Annual Meeting: Saturday, April 30, 2022
2022 Opening Day: Sunday, May 1, 2022
Do You Recognize?

Last Month’s Do You Recognize -

Our line of interest this month, Kentucky Traction and Terminal Company, came into existence in 1911 through the consolidation of several lines - Central Kentucky, Bluegrass Traction, and Lexington Interurban—serving Kentucky. The system’s interurban operation was centered on the Kentucky’s second largest city, Lexington, a center for equine development, and forms a rough “X” with arms running north - south and east - west (the east - west arms both curve northward as they move away from the center point of Lexington). City service was provided in Frankfort, the state capitol, Lexington the system’s center point city, and also the northern (Georgetown) and eastern (Paris) endpoints of the system as well as in one city (Winchester) not connected by the line’s interurban network. Service began in Lexington with a predecessor horsecar line, Lexington City Railway, in 1882 and electrified in 1890 with a new predecessor, the Passenger & Belt Railway Company, assuming operation. There had also been pre-1882 horse-drawn omnibus service. After a subsequent reorganization in 1899 the company became a subsidiary of the Lexington & Interurban Railway Company along with two other entities. By 1911 economic problems including the impact of early automobiles resulted in the company’s liquidation and the formation of a new company, the Kentucky Traction & Terminal Company. The new line saw success until the advent of the Great Depression. By 1926 buses were introduced on some routes.
Frankfort was the endpoint of the westerly leg of the system and the state capital was reached from the center city in two steps - a line to approximately the midpoint in 1905 and a further extension to the endpoint by yet another affiliate in 1907. Georgetown, the endpoint of the northern leg, a rail hub and agricultural center, was reached in 1902, the eastern (Paris) in 1903, and the southern (Nicholasville) in 1910 - a claim to fame for Nicholasville was that a native son, Confederate Lt. Bennett Young led the St. Albans, VT raid in 1864.

As part of the 1911 reorganization the new company issued a mortgage to secure a $7,500,000 30-year bond issue to retire debt of the predecessor companies, build a new hydroelectric plant, and made some $800,000 available for betterments to the property.

The predecessor lines of our 1911 consolidation purchased many cars from J.G. Brill, Brill subsidiaries and others over the early years. A major modernization program was undertaken in the early 1920s. The system’s interurban lines were being operated with aging and heavy wooden interurbans weighing up to 38 tons per car. Kentucky Traction & Terminal’s search for a modern, lighter, attractive, and more efficient car had a major impact on the industry. In seeking this new lightweight interurban car the KT&T approached, among others, a smaller midwestern manufacturer, the Cincinnati Car Company, with demonstrated experience in lightweight design. In responding, the manufacturer developed a new lightweight.
design at one-third the weight that became that Cincinnati’s most famous design.

The first order of 10 double-truck 40’ 3” cars was delivered to our line in 1922 and was part of a total of 14 of this design and 29 single-truck cars of the same general design were purchased by our line between 1922 and 1929. Headway on the interurban was reduced from 90 minutes to one hour. Two lightweight freight motors were also purchased from the same manufacturer. A few second-hand single-truck cars may have been acquired and used on the city lines of the center point city into 1938. There are also a few single-truck cars listed by Cincinnati as built for our company.

This Month’s do You recognize?

While watching Leo Sullivan’s interesting Zoom presentation the the BSRA monthly meeting on February 5 there was a mention of one of this company’s cars. This brought the outfit to mind and I decided to go with it. Thanks for the stimulation Leo!

This Street Railway was chartered on October 27, 1899 and began service on January 1, 1900. You have heard of a company town - well these are company villages and a company street railway. The railway provided service between the villages where its parent company and the company’s mills were located and the nearby railroad station of the leased subsidiary of regional class 1 steam road.

Prior to its incorporation there had been electric railway operation between a machine works with facilities in two adjacent villages to the nearby steam road since 1892. Before the railway, transfers had been made over the 1.5 miles between the machine works and the railroad by machine works-owned horse-drawn transport using a stable of 100 horses. In February of
1889 the stable burned with the loss of all of the horses. The machine works owner made the decision to move to mechanical transport. In June of 1890 an order was placed with Thomson-Houston for a locomotive. A street railway, named after the family owning the machine works, and the village where it was headquartered, was organized in November of 1890 as a subsidiary of the machine works. There were expectations of delivery of the locomotive in February of 1891 but, in reality, delivery didn’t occur until May of 1892. Delivery was technically by General Electric as the merger of Edison General Electric Company and the Thomson-Houston Electric Company forming GE had occurred in the interim.

A story in the November 29, 1891 Boston Globe (p.6) related that the trial trip of the new electric locomotive which took place at the Thomson-Houston Electric Company's works in West Lynn was a success, fully coming up to the expectations of the electricians present. The story related that the locomotive, which is the first of its kind ever built in this country, is specially designed for freight work, and the Machine Company, for whom it was made, propose to carry their merchandise back and forth from the railway station to their works, a distance of one and one-half miles, by means of electric power, it being equipped with a powerful motor. It further related that on the first trip a weight of 54 1/2 tons was attached, on the second 94. and on the third and last 163.
In December of 1890 horsecar service was begun. The installation of track and overhead by Thomson-Houston was completed in February 1891 with the street railway continuing service with horse drawn cars for both freight transport and passenger service until the arrival of the locomotive in 1892. In the fall of 1893 the street railway entered bankruptcy and was sold at auction to the machine works. As of January 1894 the railway operation was absorbed as part of the machine works rather than a separate entity. The period from 1894 through 1898 saw only freight operation over the line.

Passenger service was resumed in January 1899, being operated by a newly-formed street railway company incorporated by the treasurer of the machine works. The new railway taking its name from a village where cotton mills owned by the machine works were located.

This privately owned railway corporation leased the trackage rights from the machine works until 1925. In 1909 the railway reported owning 5 passenger cars and employing an average of 7 people. That year, ended September 30, 315,278 passengers were carried with 53,318 car miles operated. The mill also operated both inter-plant narrow gauge (2 foot) and standard gauge electric locomotives. The standard gauge locomotives moved freight cars to and from the interchange with the steam road. Ownership of the locomotives always resided with the machine works.

The railway incorporator, and machine works treasurer, had died in 1920 and in 1925 the machine works purchased the physical assets of the street railway. Passenger service was maintained until 1935.
The line continued to be used by the machine works and their Thomson-Houston electric locomotive for the hauling of freight. The electric locomotive was finally withdrawn from use in 1943 when the machine works obtained a 65 ton GE diesel locomotive for use of the line. Hence the claim is made that this made the electric probably the longest serving Thomson-Houston industrial railway product.

There were two other GE locomotives in service at the works (#2 and #3) and the arrival of three 23 ton GE narrow gauge diesels completed dieselization in 1949-50. The trackage remained in freight service until the sale of the works in 1966. Ownership of the track had been transferred to the neighboring Class 1 railroad sometime previous to the closure.

As far as I can determine the roster (incomplete) was as follows:

Passenger cars-
- three four-wheeled horsecars (#1, #2, and #3) circa December 1890 - builder unknown - later equipped for electric use.
- Closed cars #1 & #2 - Jackson & Sharp 1899
- Closed car #3 - Jackson & Sharp 1900
- Closed car #4 - Wason 1907
- Closed cars #5 & #6 - Wason 1909
- Closed car #7 - Wason 1910
- Closed car #8 - (#2 & #3 horsecars were apparently eventually spliced into what became #8) - date unknown.

Locomotives -
- #1 - Thomson-Houston/GE - 1891/92
• #2 & #3 - GE dates unknown
• Taunton Locomotive Works delivered a battery powered switcher in July 1900 for intra-plant switching (probably narrow gauge) - Boston Globe article, # and result unknown.

• 65 Ton diesel, was built by General Electric in October 1943 - some confusion with this one as it is indicated to have replaced the apparently very long-lived Thomson-Houston from 1892. However the 65 ton was later sold to a crushed stone outfit that operated 36” narrow gauge. So it's “caveat emptor” or I guess in this case “lector cave”.

• Three 23 ton diesels - narrow gauge - two built by General Electric in August 1949 and one in May 1950.

The next Library Committee Meeting with workshop following is scheduled for March 12, 2022 (10AM - 2PM). It is assumed this will be an onsite meeting although a virtual meeting is an outside possibility if conditions warrant.

At this writing masks are still required inside the Visitors Center (both floors), the Restoration Shop, Library, and all other indoor spaces on campus.

A Library workshop was held on February 12, 2022 (10AM - 2 PM). Boxed material received during the past months with processing delayed by Covid was marked for tracking and transfer to a new storage unit. The cataloging of pictures added to the library’s holdings was resumed. A special note of Mark Sylvester’s herculean efforts. Mark has worked endless hours on the backlog, organizing, labeling, and recording 93 boxes for transfer!

The next Library Committee workshop is tentatively scheduled for April 9, 2022 (10AM - 2PM).

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.

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.

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.

Yet another peek back in time - Last month I took a glimpse back into the depths of history with the snowplow piece. A number of readers were kind enough to drop emails indicating that you also found it interesting. Thanks for those remarks.

So I thought to do one more meander back in time this month. This time exactly 130 years with an article from the Street Railway Journal of February 1892. The mayor of Brooklyn, NY had just vetoed a measure voted by Brooklyn’s aldermen approving a street railway franchise. His comments and those of other mayors reflect the profoundly serious discussions ongoing at the time as to appropriateness and safety of electrically powered railways.
Trolley Literature.

The amount of matter that has appeared in the Brooklyn papers for and against the merits of electric traction would, if collected, constitute a large volume. It has served its purpose well; for by it the mayor has learned that the mass of the people desire this method of traction. The people have learned that wherever it is in operation it is in favor with the public. All have learned that reliance is wanting to sustain the charge that it is dangerous to human life.

Mayor Boody, after vetoing the Aldermanic resolutions in the trolley case, which were afterwards again passed with some modifications, as explained in our editorial columns, in order to inform himself on the system, addressed a note to the mayors of a number of cities, asking for information on the subject. The following are some of the replies, all of which are favorable except the one from Chicago, and this because the authorities of this city have had no means of learning of its practical value, and are yet to be convinced by the same means that has worked a change of attitude with so many others.

The Mayor of Buffalo, N. Y., wrote: "There was considerable prejudice against electric traction when the proposition was first made, but it is beginning to die away, and I believe it is regarded more favorably every day. There have been a number of accidents, but they are due more to the carelessness or ignorance of employees than to the system itself. Has the result of its operation thus far been generally good? I have reason to believe that there have been some complaints about the irregular running of cars, which might be expected of any new system. The system has been in operation here about six months. The views which I had when the subject of the trolley for horse power was proposed have been materially changed. There is still room for improvement, but I believe, when properly managed, it is an excellent system."

W. H. Miller, mayor of Akron, Ohio, wrote: "There is no opposition here to the trolley (at least not expressed). There is no doubt that if some other system were devised dispensing with the overhead wires it would be safer and bring the electric traction which may exist. No person has been injured. Several horses have been killed and injured, the cause being indirectly the overhead wires. Thus far the trolley has been very satisfactory. My views are very much in favor of the system. In fact, there is hardly such a thing as a comparison to be made between the old method and the present. The trolley is superior in every respect, and proportionately better patronized. This has been my observation here. I do not think there is any probability that the approval of the change herein suggested could result in other than public favor. While there will no doubt improvements follow the present motive power systems, I firmly believe that the electric power has come to stay and will be the great factor to furnish the motive power for street railways. I am not either directly or indirectly interested in electric street cars."

Mayor William G. Rose, of Cleveland, Ohio, wrote: "The public is satisfied that the trolley system is a vast improvement over horse cars, being more rapid, clean, and affording greater facilities for moving large numbers of people. Two or three horse cars have been killed. The reason for the system has been main been satisfactory." He advised that whatever the system, great care should be taken in regulating the speed, proper signals and close watchfulness.

C. W. Clark, mayor of Erie, Pa., wrote: "Our people are pleased with the working of the trolley. There have been several accidents, but none directly attributable to the trolley—several parties run over. The result of its use has been very satisfactory. It has been in operation for four years."

Mayor H. I. Gourley, of Pittsburgh, Pa., wrote: "It is, up to the present time, more feasible than the underground system for electric traction, and much better than the old horse car mode of traction. In a cold climate it is more favorable. The trolley has not caused the street to be obstructed, the men have been killed and the street not damaged." He also wrote: "The public has been in favor for four years. At first, she writes, "we were a little apprehensive, and the proposition was not favored, but I am now satisfied that our people have changed their opinion and are well satisfied."

The Mayor of Columbus, Ohio, wrote: "The people of that city were satisfied with the trolley system. He says accidents have occurred, but they do not go to any particular extent. The result of the operation of the system has been so satisfactory, although it has been in use but four months. He would not exchange the new system for the old horse cars."

Mayor Washburne of Chicago referred Mayor Boody’s circular letter to J. P. Barrett, superintendent of the fire telegraph bureau of that city, and Mr. Barrett, in replying thereto, wrote: "The trolley system is not in use within the limits of Chicago. The system is now used in two of the annexed districts of the city, built through a sparsely settled part of the city. I have heard of no particular objections to them there, and have heard of no accidents. The public feeling of Chicago is against overhead construction of any kind, whether it is telegraph, telephone or electric light, and especially against the trolley system. We are now constructing a subway system in the northern part of the city for the purpose of experimenting with electrical conductors underground for the purpose of moving cars. This is not sufficiently advanced to justify an opinion as yet, but I believe it is the coming system."

We append the text of Mayor Boody’s veto:

To the Honorable the Common Council:

Gentlemen,—I am constrained to return to your honorable body, without my approval, the resolution attached to the report of the Committee on Railroads, known as Resolution No. 52, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, referring to the application of the Brooklyn City Railroad Co.; the Atlantic Avenue Railroad Co. (Resolution No. 33); the Coney Island & Brooklyn Railroad Co. (Resolution No. 36); the Brooklyn City & Newtown Railroad Co. (Resolution No. 35), for the consent of the local authorities for a change of motive power from horse power to overhead single trolley system, passed by your honorable body on December 21, 1891.

As two days only have elapsed since I entered upon my official duties, no time has been afforded me to give the resolutions that consideration which their importance demands.

The fact that my predecessor in office, with his large knowledge of the results which would follow their adoption, did not affix his signature to the same, may well increase my appreciation of their importance and my doubt concerning their beneficial effect.

It certainly is our duty to encourage those enterprises which will increase the comfort and convenience of our fellow citizens, and promote the prosperity of our city, but there are features of a grave character connected with the privilege which the said resolutions grant:

First—While it may be shown that the proposed method for propelling street cars is in successful operation in certain cities of the country, it cannot be said that any city of the size of the city of Brooklyn has felt justified in adopting that system.

Second—The resolutions grant important privileges, which impose new conditions on our citizens, but for which the city receives no equivalent.

Third—It is claimed that the proposed system is dangerous to life. While it is true that we are called upon to yield many of our personal conveniences for the public good, no citizen in time of peace can be justly asked to hazard the loss of life or limb. No amount of material benefit will compensate for the loss of life.

Without further discussing the subject at this time, I am clearly of the opinion that it is my duty to return the resolutions for the further consideration of your honorable body.

Respectfully,

DAVID A. BOODY, Mayor.
Snow Scenes on Boston Electric Lines.

The engravings which appear herewith represent two views taken during a recent snow storm in Boston, the first being a scene on the Warren Street & Grove Hall line, would bring about the same condition again. It seems that while sufficient power was at hand to maintain an efficient and reliable service under normal conditions of travel and weather, it had not been exactly determined how much additional power would be necessary to operate the cars in such a storm as occurred, and to this under-estimation was due all the difficulty.

In justice to the electric system, it is only fair to say that there was no trouble with the electrical apparatus in the power houses or with the motors or with any of the appliances used on the cars or line, and the occurrence should not be regarded as reflecting upon the West End Co. or the system which they use. As a Boston daily newspaper put it, "the system had not failed, but merely those who put it in had not taken into account the magnitude of the demand that might be put upon it."

and the second, a view on the Brookline & Arlington line.

During this snow storm, a stoppage of the electric cars occurred at about six o'clock in the evening, to the great inconvenience of the traveling public, and of course called forth a mass of criticism on the system in general which was not at all merited. The cause of the stoppage was not that electric traction is a failure. The power which the company had at its command was not adequate for the increased amount of work required of it during a snow storm. It naturally takes more power to operate cars under the difficulties of such a storm when the tracks are clogged by snow and ice and it is necessary to push heavy snow plows and sweepers in addition to the usual requirements of the cars. The result of this was that the dynamos became overloaded, and were obliged to shut down and although attempts were made to start up again, the fact that as soon as the current was turned on every car on the line would endeavor to get under way.
Regards,

Ed Ramsdell, Editor

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http://www.trolleymuseum.org