



Vol 14

THE MAIN LINE



No 11

*The Monthly Bulletin
of the New England Electric Railway Historical Society Libraries*

January 2023

Goings On At Seashore -

Aroostook Valley Railroad #71-

On the afternoon of January 4 Providence & Worcester Railroad #150 brought Aroostook Valley Railroad #71 (44 seat - Wason Manufacturing Co. - 1912) down to the slip switch where various parts are to be removed from #71 before its transfer to a new owner.



Construction -

With the weather's earlier cooperation progress has continued on both the new South Boston Carhouse and the Model Railroad Building.

Winter finally arrived with several back-to-back small storms. Not huge but enough for the museum to lose internet and phones over a few days due to wet snow bringing down trees and wires in the surrounding area.

Upcoming Events:

Saturday, April 29, 2023: Annual Meeting of the New England Electric Railway Historical Society, doing business as Seashore Trolley Museum and the National Streetcar Museum at Lowell.

Saturday, May 6, 2023: Opening Day 2023!

For further additional event information and ongoing information throughout the year be sure to check: <https://trolleymuseum.org/events/> .

Advance FYI for 2024-

Friday-Sunday March 1-3, 2024:

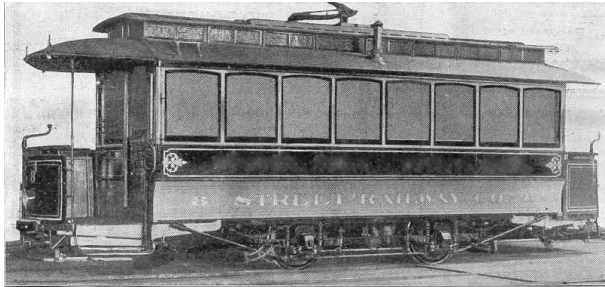
Seashore Trolley Museum will be hosting Northeast Association of Trolley Organization's Winterfest.

Do You Recognize ?



Last Month's Do You Recognize -

This Bellows Falls & Saxtons River Street Railway was headquartered in Bellows Falls, Vermont and from 1900 to 1924 operated between its



#8 closed car with open vestibules -
Possibly Wason? (c. 1900)

endpoint namesake cities of Bellows falls and Saxtons River. The line's promoters received their charter on November 22, 1892, but nearly seven years were required before construction started.

The line was capitalized initially at the grand sum of \$20,000.

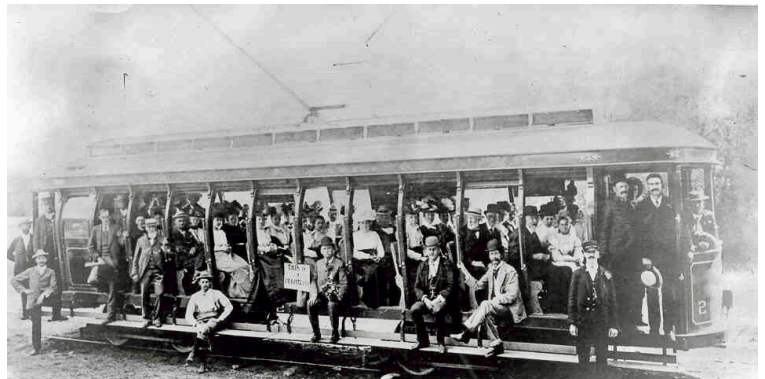
One local businessman, Calvin Lysander Barber, who had been very

interested in the railway was elected as a director of the company. He donated a large piece of his farm on the south side of the route, approximately halfway between the two villages, to the railway with the intent that the land be developed as a family park, where picnics, dances, and other activities could be held.

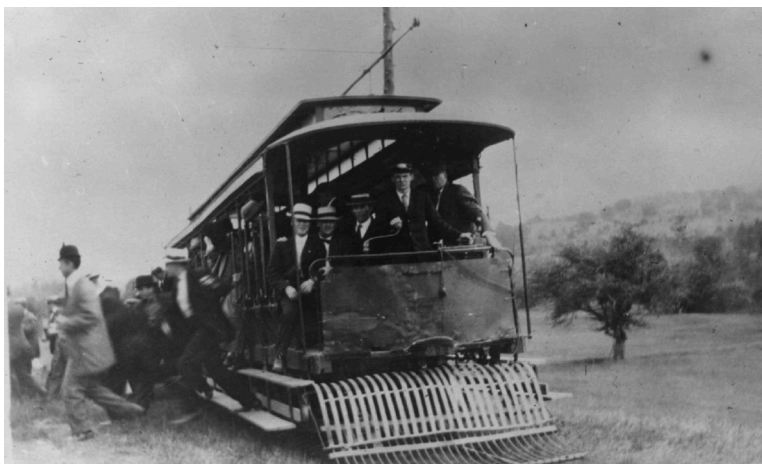
Two restrictions on the property were that no intoxicating

beverage was ever to be sold

on the property; and if the railway abandoned the property, it should revert to his heirs. I have included several images of the railway with two photos



Barrel car #2 - licensed by Duplex Car Co. constructed by
The Briggs Carriage Company (1900)
Image believed to be the first car arriving at Saxtons River in
July 1900.

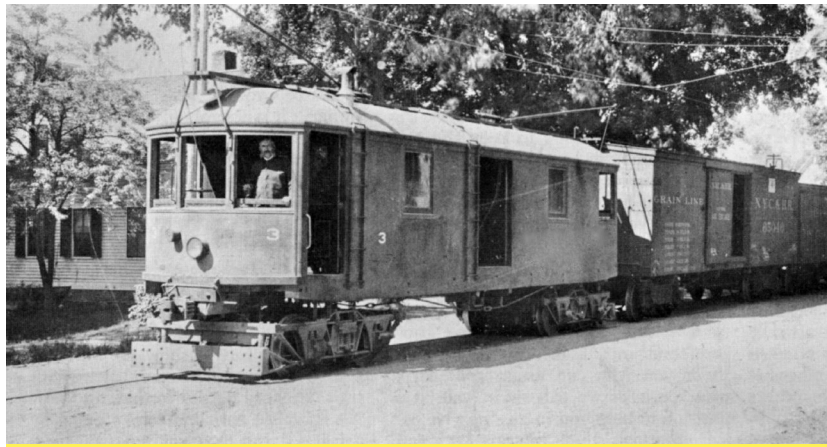


Open #4 at the park

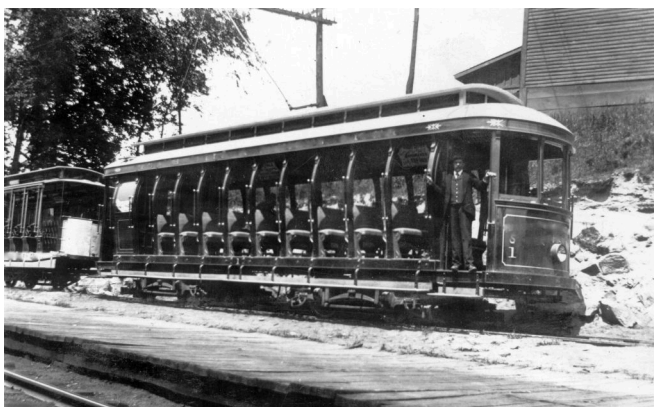
at Barber Park built by the street railway. From the park picture of # 4 unloading apparently there was not a "no running rule" when exiting the car. The park featured several beautifully terraced acres on which were located a pavilion, a theater, a small zoo, playgrounds, attractive picnic areas,

ball fields, tennis courts, a polo field, and a swimming pool. Band concerts were held during the summer.

A somewhat poignant note is that Mr. Barber, being gravely ill, had expressed an intense desire to see cars running on the line before he died, and so on June 13, 1900 the end of the line, in his home town, was energized, and a newly arrived car was run from the depot to his home. Only days after having this wish fulfilled, he died at the age of fifty-seven. On June 20, a car carried his body from his home to his farm. Due to an uncompleted trolley bridge a horse-drawn conveyance provided transport the rest of the way to the cemetery.



Freight motor #3 - Wason Manufacturing Company (1900)



Barrel car #2 - licensed by Duplex Car Co. manufactured by Briggs Carriage Co. (1900)

A few days later, on July 1, 1900, the Bellows Falls & Saxtons River Street Railway officially opened for business with an initial fleet of two passenger cars, a heavy freight motor, a flatcar, and a trailer. LCL freight was handled in the freight motor. Carloads were handled behind the freight motor. Purportedly the line was built entirely with second-hand rail from a regional Class-1 steam

railroad. Near Bellows Falls our line had freight interchanges with both the Boston & Maine Railroad and the Rutland Railroad.



Colorized postcard of Bellows Falls with open car and freight motor in background.



Two open cars at the Saxtons River terminus

The railway's so called "barrel cars," # 1 & # 2 were Duplex Car Company 30' convertible cars built under license in 1900 by The Briggs Carriage Company of Amesbury, MA.

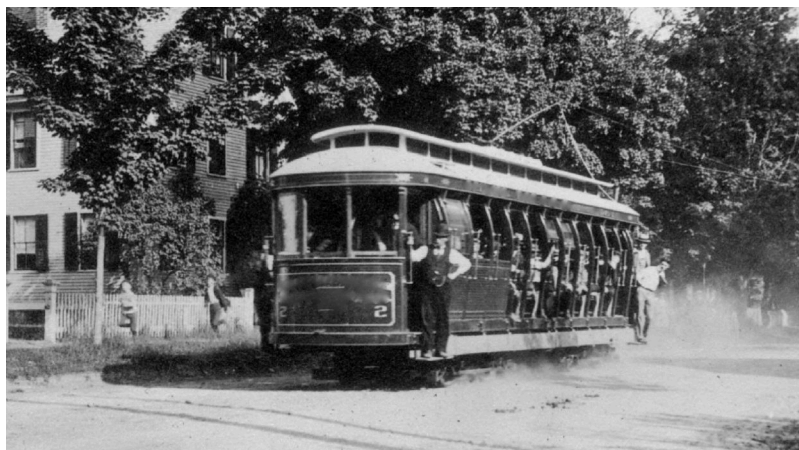
A slight mystery in our collection rests with the "first car" image above - It is marked 7/28/00 First Car. I believe the 7 should be a 6 as on the 20th of June the road was only open to the uncompleted trolley bridge and full service started on July 1. We know there was a special first car with dignitaries and honored citizens that ran between the endpoint cities prior to the start of regular service on July 1 because there are notations about the great celebration at the westerly endpoint. My assumption is that this is that first car.



Open #4 and a barrel car at the park.

During the latter 1910s and into the 1920s the company suffered losses from Increased automobile and truck competition that was encouraged by the improved streets and highways in the area.

January 1924 saw a fire at the main carbarn that brought about the company's demise. The



Barrel car #2 kicking up some dust - licensed by Duplex Car Co. manufactured by Briggs (1900)

carbarn, office, waiting room, along with six cars, a snowplow, and much of the company's tools and parts were destroyed. In debt by more than \$250,000, receivership soon followed with a valiant, but in vain, attempt to provide service with the two remaining cars. In the Fall of the year the

receivers decided to abandon operations. November 24 was the last day of service in the twenty-four year history of our line.

Interestingly, At a public meeting on Dec. 5, business men and citizens of Saxtons River were recorded as opposed to the establishment of a bus

line, and at the present would rely on taxis and independent, privately conducted facilities for handling freight. The former superintendent of the railway had started running a taxi service to carry mail and passengers.

In addition to the two Duplex Convertibles the railway had five single truck ten-bench open cars (no's 4,5,6,7,8), manufacturer unknown; two double truck 15-bench opens (no's and manufacturer unknown); a double-truck freight motor (#3) built by Wason. Another double truck freight motor built by Laconia in 1902 (originally Claremont Railway freight motor "A"); plus a snow plow and a trailer flat.

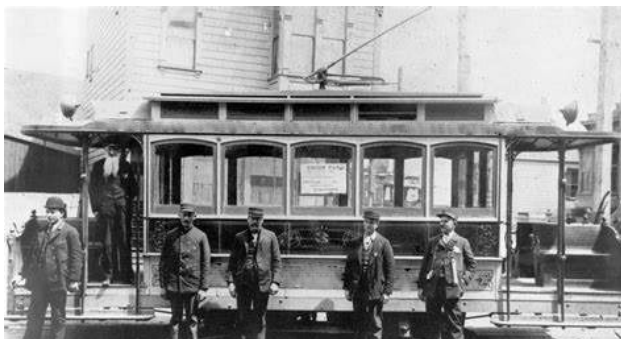


This Month's Do You Recognize -

Our electric railway of interest this month was the result of two real estate developers who, upon noting the success of Sprague's Richmond Union Passenger Railway, came to believe that an electric streetcar system running through the lightly populated area of the city where their holdings were located would be a good way to increase property values. The railway was headquartered in one of its namesake endpoint cities (the county name as well) and aimed to reach its other namesake city some 20 route-miles away. The line reached a county of the same name this endpoint city but never the actual city until after its being absorbed by an eastern syndicate that was buying and consolidating area railways. This month's description will only discuss the first decade of the line's existence, while independent, before its merger into a large regional consolidation.

The railway was incorporated in 1890 with the railway actually opening for business in late April of 1892. A silver spike ceremony had been held at the points the rails crossed the border between the two counties at the end of July 1891 with the railway president driving the ceremonial spike.

At the opening of business, track ran from the waterfront of its headquarters city to a point in the southern part of the city where a transfer was required to continue on the railway to a small community across the county line. It would take a decade, a 13-mile extension, and two additional owners before track reached its namesake southern city.



Single-truck car #3 - O'Brien & Sons (1892)

The first rolling stock was constructed by O'Brien & Sons, consisting of fifteen 26 ft. single-

truck cars (# 1-#15) with open sections at each end and twelve 28 ft. double-truck cars (# 16 - #27) of a similar design also constructed by O'Brien & Sons. Because of the hilly terrain in parts of the route and braking problems the single-truck cars (# 1 - #15) were used between the waterfront and the transfer point and the double-truck cars (#16 - #27) beyond.



Double-truck car #21 - O'Brien & Sons (1892)

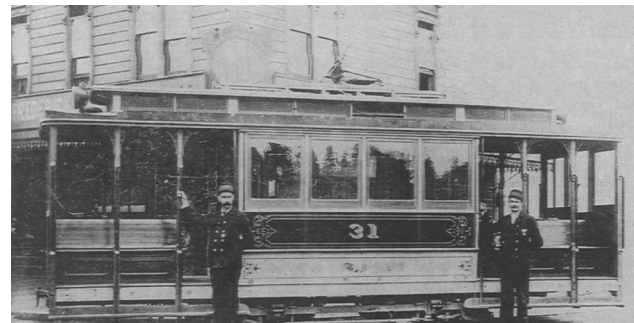
Because of its route problems the company used a number of somewhat innovative approaches including a switchback involving one problematic hill, a counterweight system to slow cars on one steep hill (not totally successful and absent from another hill where several runaway accidents occurred), track brakes were initially employed in addition to the wheel brakes, but determined to be of no real help in stopping the cars. A somewhat impressive trestle was also constructed across a ravine blocking the route.



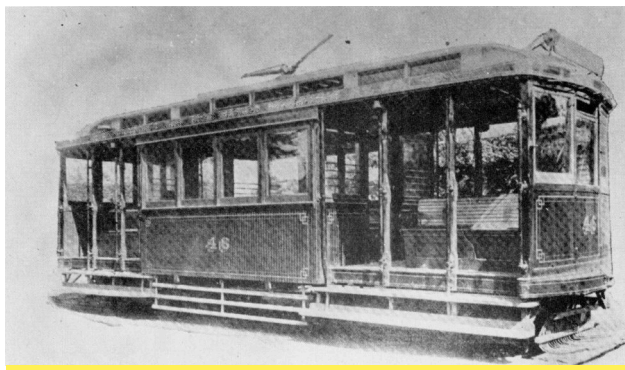
Single-truck cars #5, #13, and double-truck car #18 - O'Brien & Sons (1892) at the transfer point.

Our line, while the first electrified system in its headquarters city, had the misfortune of being denied serving lucrative areas as earlier non-electric railways held routes that blocked access. The area beyond the transfer point mentioned earlier was quite sparsely populated. A second route was opened in 1892 running towards a major park, but again direct access to this potential traffic generator was blocked.

In mid-1894 six new single truck cars (#28 - 33) arrived from Carter Brothers. These cars had superior braking systems that allowed their use along the entire line without the midway transfer. In 1898 another four single-truck cars (#34 - 37) were added from Carter Brothers. Early 1900 saw a ten car order of 28 ft. double - truck cars (#41 - 50) delivered by J. Hammond & Sons. In 1901 the company's largest order



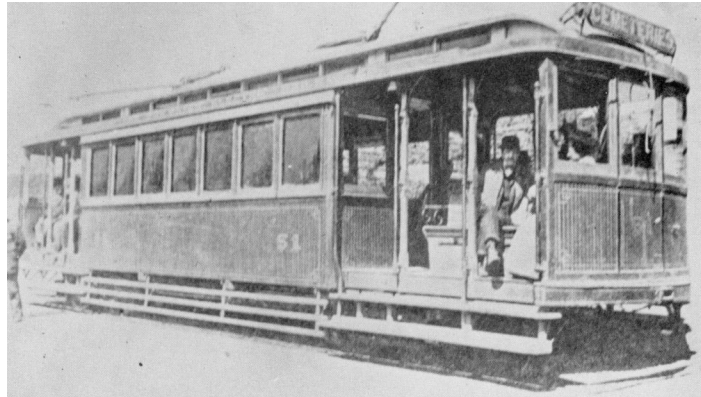
Single-truck car #31 - Carter Brothers (1894)
With improved braking these cars could run the entire length of the line, eliminating the transfer.



Double-truck 28 ft car # 46
J. Hammond & Sons (1900)

One somewhat incidental source of revenue was that while the route system had problems dense population neighborhoods it did serve several cemeteries. Upon realizing this the company acquired a mail, express, and funeral car. Special funeral trains were run consisting of the funeral car carrying the casket, followed by two or more conventional passenger cars carrying mourners. The transport of a casket cost \$10 while the fare on additional regular cars was 10 cents per mourner.

was placed with the St. Car Company for nineteen 44ft 8 in double-truck cars (# 52 - 70). W.L. Holman built the prototype car for this series that became #51 although it was 40 ft 8 in rather than 44 ft 8 in.



Double-truck 40 ft 8 in car #51 - W.L. Holman (c 1900)
This car was the prototype for nineteen cars delivered by the St. Louis Car Company in 1900 (# 52-# 70).
The St. Louis cars were 4 ft longer at 44 ft 8 in.



Spanning a ravine.

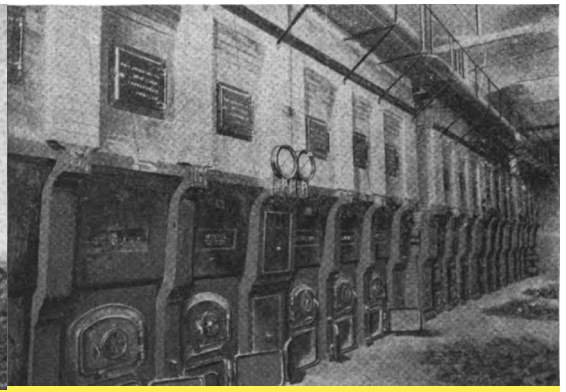
Unfortunately, when your best captive clientele are the deceased and their mourners financial survival can be difficult. The first default came in 1896 with the railway not making expenses and the bondholders sold the line in

April 1896 to a group of prominent local investors who altered the line's name from "railway" to "electric railway". At this point the line consisted of 21 miles of track, 30 motor cars, and three trailers.

These new owners paid down debt, purchased additional cars and replaced the original 50-pound with 85 and 60 pound rail, and finally

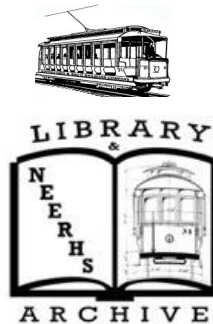


The original power station built in 1891



The boiler room

acquired a franchise to operate over the streets of the company's southern namesake city. Times appeared so promising that in May 1901 the railway was yet again sold at a profit to a syndicate of East Coast capitalists. This group was intent upon buying and merging many of the local railways including our line. When this was accomplished the problems dogging our railway of one company blocking another effectively went away. The new syndicate was also able to actually build and operate the extension into the southern endpoint a decade after the line's start.



Library Committee

Library Committee

The Library Committee held a committee meeting on January 14, 2023 (9AM - 12PM) (Because of forecast weather conditions the committee meeting was by Zoom and the scheduled workshop was cancelled).

Attendees included Karen Dooks (Chair), Kenyon Karl (Vice Chair), Mark Sylvester (Secretary), Brooke Hubner, Meir Khitrenovich, Ed Ramsdell, Lloyd Rosevear, Leo Sullivan, Tom Tello, and Ann Thompson.

Chair Karen Dooks opened the meeting at 10:10AM.

The agenda was accepted.

Discussions under old business included:

a. Report of subcommittee on library construction:

- b. Continue reorganization of Library materials in containers and garage
- c. Library organizational issues needing discussion and recommendations:
- d. 2023 Amherst Railway Show at Big E in Springfield: Library has two tables. Seashore has rented a van to transport materials to Springfield on Friday, Jan 27th.

Elections for committee members and officers were held. Due to the disruptions caused by the pandemic no regular election was held in 2022.

Mike Frost and Leo Sullivan were reelected with new terms expiring in 2024.

Karen Dook, Kenyon Karl, and Mark Sylvester were reelected with new terms expiring in 2025.

Ed Ramsdell was reelected with a new term expiring in 2026.

New committee members Brooke Hubner and Tom Tello were elected with terms expiring in 2026.

Members Herb Pence and Lloyd Rosevear chose not to seek reelection but will continue to participate as non-voting friends of the committee. Meir Khitrenovich will also participate as a friend of the committee.

The Committee's next bimonthly standalone workshop is scheduled for February 11, 2023 from 10AM to 2PM.

The Library Committee's meetings on Saturdays are 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. There was also discussion of possible other workshops.

For further information/questions concerning the Library please contact Karen Dooks (781-799-5868).

By Karen Dooks, Chair

Currently scheduled meeting dates for 2023 with business meeting followed by workshop: March 11; May 13; July 8; September 9, and November 11

Scheduled workshop dates for 2023: February 11; April 8; June 10; August 12; October 14; and December 9



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.



Already Ten Years -



O.R. in 1952 as a newsman with the Newburyport Daily News. He moved on to the Manchester (NH) Union Leader in 1956, retiring from the Union Leader in 1987

I'm not a fan of dwelling on things in the past - other than trolleys of course! However, a decade ago - January 15, 2013 to be specific - Seashore, the railway hobby, and many of us as individuals lost a good friend and amazing resource. O.R. Cummings (May 17, 1923 - January 15, 2013), longtime Seashore member, noted and prolific author, trolley expert par excellence and a friend to all who knew him. A longtime member of the New England Electric Railway Historical Society, Inc., he served the NEERHS in many positions including trustee, chairman of the board, librarian, director of public relations, historian,

library committee member and, historian emeritus to name a few. He also belonged to the 470 Railroad Club of Portland, Maine, Mass. Bay Division,

Railroad Enthusiasts, the Boston & Maine Historical Society, the Boston Street Railway Association, the Central Electric Railfans Association, the Shore Line Interurban Historical Society, and the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum, Inc. As most all are aware O.R.C. was a prolific writer of books

and articles concerning electric railways, particularly in New England. I count at least 48 meticulously written books plus innumerable articles. To this day if you are researching the trolley industry or simply want a good read you will be hard pressed to find a better source than material authored by O.R.



Lunch Break at 20 Feb 2009

LibraryWorking Group

Karen Dooks, Herb Pence, ORC, Lloyd Rosevear and Amber Tatnall



A Double-Deck From 131 Years Ago -

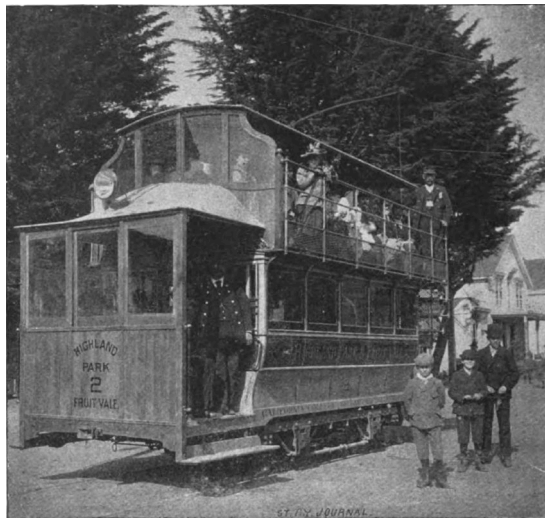


FIG. 12.—DOUBLE DECK CAR—HIGHLAND PARK & FRUIT VALE RAILWAY, OAKLAND.



Circa 1893 the Pullman Company manufactured a number of double-deck cars for the Highland Park & Fruit Vale Railroad Company of Oakland, CA. Highland Park & Fruit Vale was owned and operated by E .C. Sessions was the inventor of the double-deck cars bearing his name and manufactured by the Pullman Company. The cars were twenty-four feet over all, and had a seating capacity of fifty-two people.

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.trolley museum.org>