



Vol 14

THE MAIN LINE



No 12

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

February 2023

Goings On At Seashore -

Although, as I'm finishing this, snow has finally arrived in some quantity but all in all this winter has been very cooperative in allowing construction on the new South Boston Carhouse and initial foundation work on the Model Railroad Building to proceed.

AVR #71 - A changing of the guard took place at the double slip switches - On February 21 Providence & Worcester Railroad #150 pushed Aroostook Valley Railroad #71 (44 seat - Wason Manufacturing Co. - 1912) from the double slip switches to the Central and Fairview lead for final preparations in its transfer to its new owner.



Below, on February 27, Boston snow plow (ex-type 3 passenger - St. Louis Car Co. - 1908) is at the double slip (not plowing - waiting for its turn for some TLC I believe) and in the background is the new South Boston with doors installed.



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.

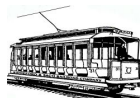
Saturday, May 6, 2023: Opening Day 2023!

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

Advance FYI for 2024-

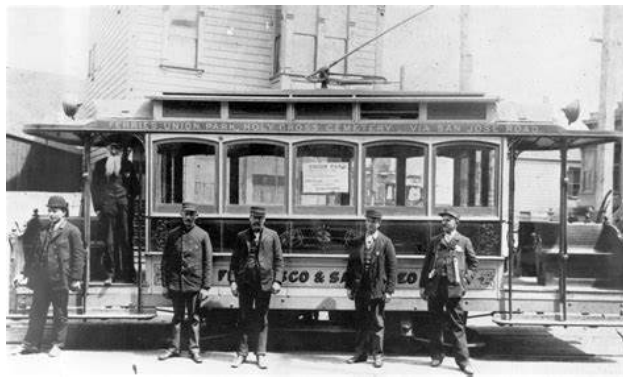
Friday-Sunday March 1-3, 2024:

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



Do You Recognize ?

Last Month's Do You Recognize -



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

Our electric railway of interest last 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 area where their holdings were located in a lightly populated section of San Francisco, CA would be a good way to increase property values.

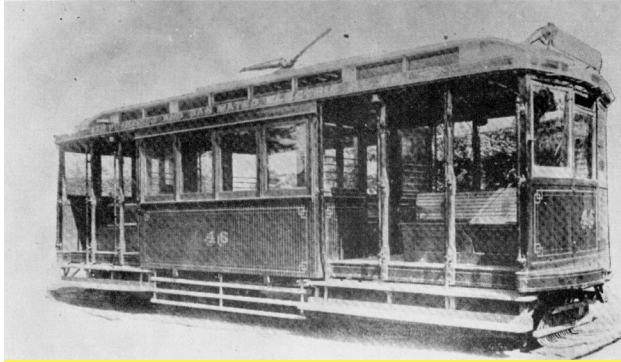
The San Francisco And San Mateo Electric Railway was headquartered in San Francisco and aimed to reach San Mateo some 20 route-miles away. The line reached San Mateo County but never the actual city of San Mateo until after the line was acquired by an eastern syndicate that was buying and consolidating area railways. Last month's description only discussed the first decade of the line's existence, while independent, before its merger into a large regional consolidation.



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

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 San Francisco County and San Mateo County at the end of July 1891 with the railway president Behrend Joost driving the ceremonial spike.

At the opening of business, track ran from the San Francisco waterfront to a point at 30th Street and San Jose Road in the southern part of San



Double-truck 28 ft car # 46

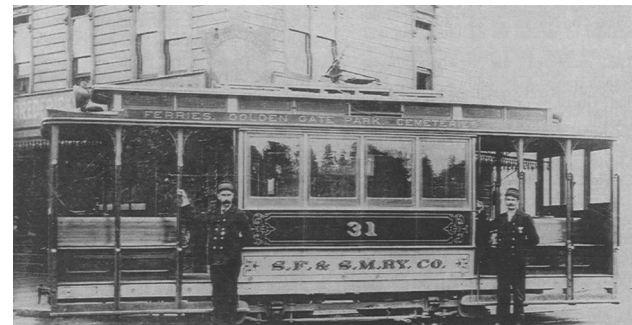
Francisco where a transfer was required to continue on the railway to a small community across the county line. It would take a decade, a 13-mile extension, and two additional owners before track reached San Mateo proper.

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.

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 car #31 - Carter Brothers (1894)
With improved braking these cars could run the

The SF&SM, while the first electrified system in San Francisco, 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 Golden Gate Park, but again direct access



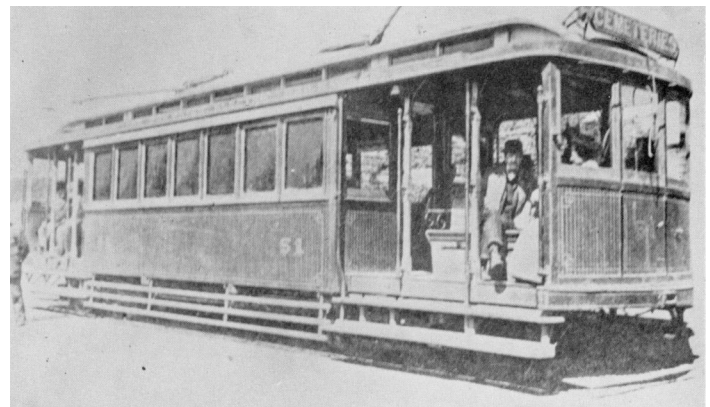
Single-truck cars #5, #13, and double-truck car #18 - O'Brien & Sons (1892) at the transfer point.

to this potential traffic generator was blocked by competitors. 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 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.

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.



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).



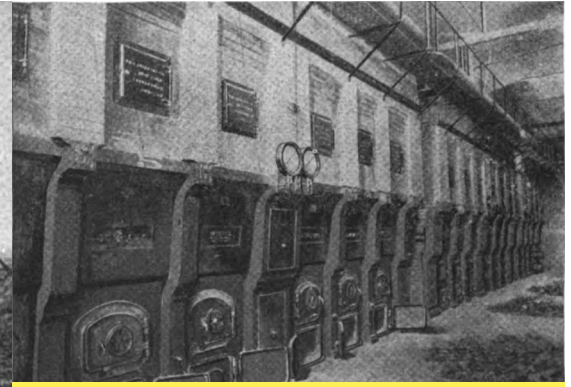
Spanning a ravine.

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 the San Francisco And San Mateo Electric Railway". At this point the line consisted of 21 miles of track, 30 motor cars, and three trailers.



The original power station built in 1891



The boiler room

These new owners paid down debt, purchased additional cars and replaced the original 50-pound with 85 and 60 pound rail, and finally 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 Brown Brothers (The Baltimore Syndicate) were also able to actually build and operate the extension into the southern endpoint a decade after the line's start.



This Month's Do You Recognize -

The railway of interest this month varies a bit from the last few months.



Combine #53 @ Company Shops - St. Louis Car Co. -(1902)
Built for predecessor line - later rebuilt to straight coach

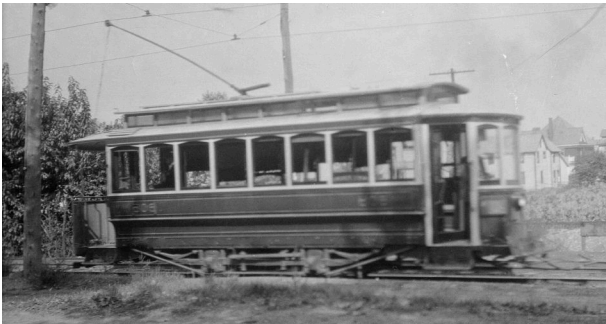
This one is an old and large carrier with multiple divisions, lots of track mileage, and lots of rolling stock rather those with less than 10 car and less than 20 miles that I have favored recently.

Our line was created through a number of mergers and reorganizations of a number of railway,

railroad, and electric companies starting with a horse car line and an electric company that both began in 1893. The 1899 merger of a traction company and a traction and light company effectively created the first of two major mergers that involved the company. The 1899 merger carried the name of a region of its home state and traction company. Three years later in 1902 the name was altered slightly to traction & light company to better reflect the business. The second major merger occurred in 1906 and incorporated into the system another cascade of mergers and reorganizations of companies harking back to 1895. This merger nearly



City car #110 - Second-hand - Originally an open car - Stephenson (1899) or St.Louis (1900)



Single-track city car #506 - Kuhlman (1907)
Converted to snow plow 1918

doubled the company's track mileage from 107 to 204 miles. With the 1906 merger there was no name change with region of state - traction and light continuing. This would remain so for twenty years until in 1926 the sale of lighting and power became to important to our line that "traction" was dropped in favor of power & light company.

A significant event in the history of our line's predecessors occurred with the 1894 incorporation of an early electric interurban. Included in the organizers was Henry Everett who would ultimately found a major syndicate investing in the financing, construction, and operation of numerous railways.



Steel PAYE car #635 - Kuhlman (1916)
Coupler added in 1917 to haul trailers

Our line added two companies in 1900 and 1906 that became important parts of the overall system. In addition to its interurban operations the company operated street railways in three of the cities it served and also supplied power in those areas. Ultimately, motor bus service was added paralleling much of its main line and two of the three city operations.

Branch lines were added in 1907 but along with other plans for further expansion to the southeast was cut short by the Banker's Panic of 1907, a six-week period of runs on banks in New York City and other U.S. cities in October and early November of 1907. A further expansion attempt was made in 1925 with the addition of an adjoining railway but interurban traffic soon began to decline. The remainder of the 1920s saw a succession of

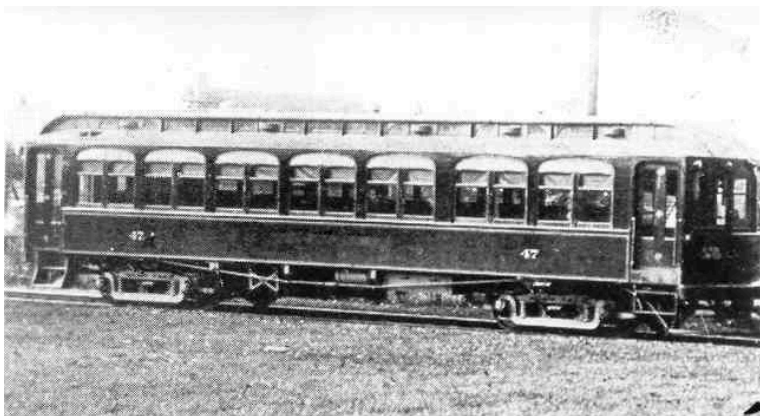


Single-truck line car #1025 - Company Shops (1900)

cutbacks, sales and abandonments. By 1928 the company was operating 250 buses in its interurban territory. With the end of 1931 only the old core of the system started by predecessors in 1895 remained in service, extending north from the line's headquarters city to the northern endpoint city, at that time the largest city in the state. This city had significant iron and steel production, chemicals, oil refining, a major railroad center. and major port facilities.



Locomotive #1050 - General Electric (1917)
The only GE equipment owned by the company



Two-truck closed car #47 - Kuhlman (1914)
Renumbered #1447 in 1920 and scrapped in 1931

As with most railways amusement parks were a major source of revenue. Our line had two major parks, the largest one, some 20 miles south of the headquarters city, owned by the company and one leased at the headquarters city. these drew people from all over the region by both our lines interurban

and steam trains as well. There were four other smaller parks and another three that were closed early on.

The remaining interurban line was heavily burdened with excessive street running and March of 1932 saw this abandoned as well.



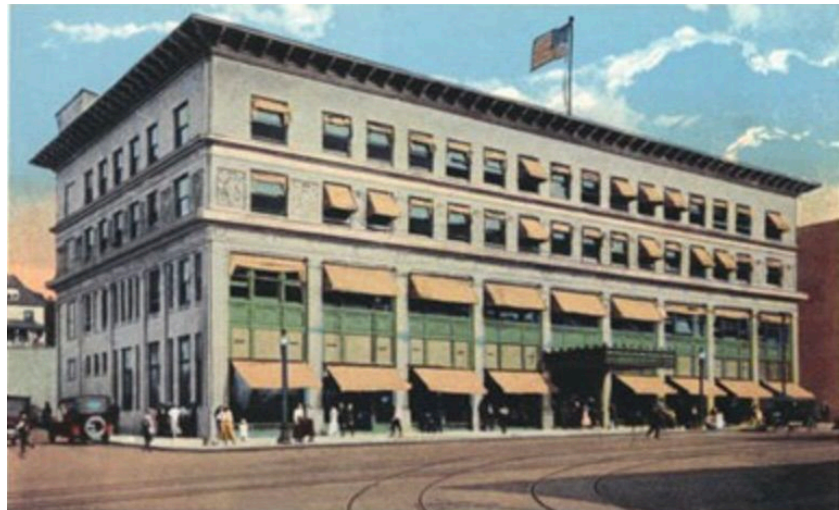
An impressive trestle along the line's southern portion
Colorized postcard

Power production by the company had become so important relative to the rail operations that in 1926 the company name was changed to reflect this with "traction" being dropped in favor of "power". In the late 1920s the system came under the control of a large public utility holding company.

Our line, during its approximately thirty years, fielded some 633 passenger cars and 164 freight and work cars

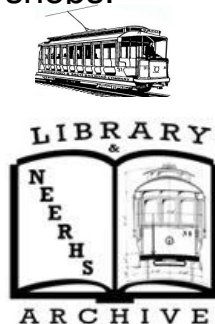
including cars inherited from predecessor lines. If cars were renumbered in a rebuild there is sometimes double counting in the above total. Manufacturers included Jackson & Sharp, JG Brill, Stephenson, Niles, Kuhlman, St. Louis, Jewett, American, McGuire-Cummings,

General Electric, Differential Steel, Browning Engineering, and numerous home-brews from the company shops.



Our line's new (1918) terminal in the headquarters city.
It included a double train shed containing eight tracks - some 32 interurban trains an hour arrived at or departed the terminal.

Library Committee



Library Committee

Design for New Library:

After a series of interviews with prospective vendors Scott Simons Architects of Portland, ME has been selected to provide renderings for a New Library Building. The Simons Team has a strong background in library and archive design for numerous private, non-profit, and governmental

entities. This initial step will provide the foundation for the grant writing and fund raising will follow!



The Library Committee held a workshop on on February 18, 2023 (note date change was for the month of February only) from 10:00 AM to 2PM.

The Library Committee will hold a committee meeting on March 18, 2023 (9AM - 12PM) with a workshop to follow (12PM to 2PM).

The Library Committee's meetings on Saturdays are held on a bimonthly basis on the odd months followed by a workshop with standalone workshops from 10AM -2PM on the even 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 18; May 13; July 8; September 9, and November 11

Scheduled workshop dates for 2023: 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.



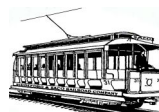
The Main Line - **Availability** If you are not on our direct distribution list and would like to be please drop a note to TheMainLine@ramsdell.com.

Regards,

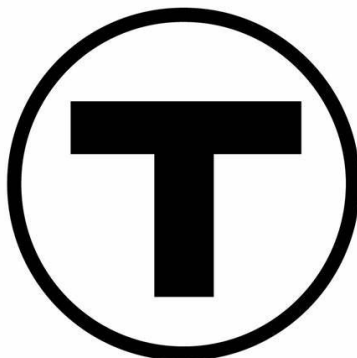
Ed Ramsdell, Editor

The Main Line

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<http://www.trolleymuseum.org>



A FAMILIAR LOOK?



Boston's MBTA

The **T** looks familiar but the blue one is in a square instead of a circle?

Both represent major urban transit systems.



Kyiv's Light Rail System