



*Vol 15*

# *THE MAIN LINE*



*No 5*

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

July 2023

## **Goings On at Seashore —**

### **Upcoming Events:**

Dino Trolley  
August 13

**Members Day and Open House at Seashore  
August 19**

Pirate Day!  
August 26

Ham Radio Day  
August 27

See Calendar at end of *The Main Line*

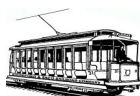
Note that some events sell out so always check for more info, online ticket sales etc at <https://trolleymuseum.org/events/>.



### **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 -

Our line of interest this month was a relatively small road constructed to serve the burgeoning, if small, resort city of Eureka Springs, Arkansas, described as resembling a Swiss village.



Early Open Mule Car - St. Louis Car? -  
c 1895

Beginning in 1883 Eureka Springs had been served by a branch line of the Missouri & Arkansas Railroad. The street car line opened as a mule car line c. 1891. The somewhat isolated location of the community nestled in a heavily forested group of the Ozark Mountains aided the early prosperity of both the steam road and the trolleys. Serious incursions by the motor coaches and private motor cars didn't begin until a good paved road connected to the city in 1920. In the Victorian era and up

to the First World War the area grew in popularity especially for the purported health-giving qualities of its mineral springs, believed to have medicinal qualities. It was estimated that, at its peak, summer populations grew to around 10,000. The year-round population in 1890 was about 3,700 compared with today's 2,200.

The trolley line opened with mule-power and the route was electrified c. 1898. The line was all single track with three passing turnouts.

The line effectively reached its full length at electrification, some three and one-half miles, almost double the mule system. One of the oddest statistics concerning the system is that while a trip from one endpoint to the other was three and one-half miles, the two endpoints were about one-half mile from each other! One end point being at the base of a quite steep hill and the other at the top serving a grand hotel, requiring an indirect route to achieve a sufficiently low grade.

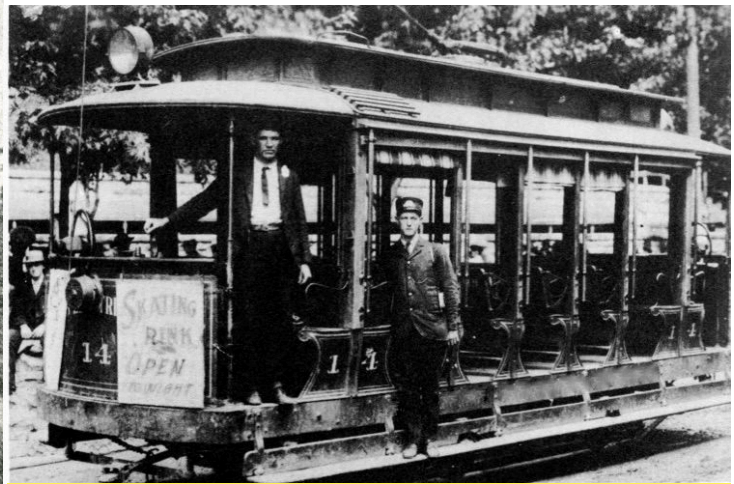


The community - 1895

The fleet was also somewhat interesting although data is a little sparse and slightly questionable in the details. Between its opening and the cessation of service in 1923 the system seemingly possessed a total fleet of 12 cars. The only new cars the line ever purchased were two open cars acquired



The palatial hotel on the hill - Built 1886

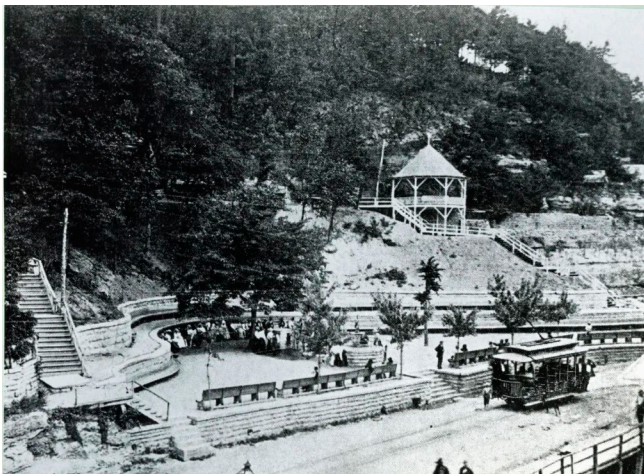


8-Bench Open Car No. #14 - St. Louis Car Co. (1904)  
One of the only two new cars acquired by the line

from the St. Louis Car Company in 1904. Other than these two cars all of the line's equipment were supposedly ten second-hand horse (mule) cars acquired from Houston and subsequently electrified with second-hand electrical gear from Detroit. One car was a flat car that doubled to haul sightseeing groups on partying excursions for the various hotels. The entire fleet was equipped as single-truck, double ended, two-motor cars. There were five one-man closed cars and six two-man open-cars plus the flat.

In the terms of sparse and questionable data impacting the above roster is a slight problem in that the St. Louis data I have indicates an incorrect state for the trolley line but seem to reflect the cars in every other way. Another

slight hiccup is that the ten Houston mule cars were noted as acquired in 1895/96 - this appears likely as this is when Houston was electrified. This presents a problem as our line was noted as starting c. 1891. Of course the 1891 start date may actually be the date the corporation was formed rather than the start of operations and both dates may be only from someone's memory.



An early electric (1890s) at a park located at one of the many mineral springs in the community

Near the end of her life a woman who had a significant impact on the liquor industry in the United States, Carrie Amelia Nation aka Carry A. Nation lived in Eureka Springs.





## This Month's do You Recognize -

Our railway of interest this month was the product of twenty years of incorporations, franchise acquisitions, construction, acquisitions, and



A colorized view of one of the original headquarters city

mergers of several predecessor street railways serving three counties in two mid-continent states. The earliest line was a street railway franchise of two miles, granted in 1890, in what would be our railway's headquarters city. A second line was franchised by the same city in 1891 and was eventually absorbed by

our railway. The ultimate system crisscrossed rich bituminous coalfields, claimed to be the richest between the Mississippi and the Rockies, along with having adjacent oil and gas deposits.

A drawback to this story, unfortunately not that uncommon, is what appears to be total lack of company records. A number of sources indicate that basically all pre-1929 records were destroyed at that time when the line had failed, was sold at auction, and purchased by local businessmen to save the remnants mostly for



A colorized postcard view of the same city

freight. Pretty much everything has to be garnered from legal records, newspapers of the day, and trade publications. Interestingly there was a history written as an academic paper but the voluminous citations in the paper all relate to governmental and court records and the aforementioned newspapers of the day and trade publications. Information such as developing an equipment roster had to be developed from car company delivery lists and trade publications.

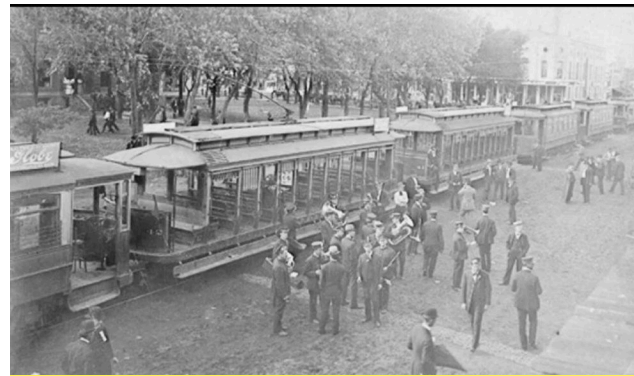
Yet another line arrived in 1894 with a 35-year franchise. This line purchased the earlier 1891 line after it's sale at auction. The new railway also branched out into selling power to residential consumers and for commercial lighting.



28 ft single-truck of predecessor railway  
St. Louis Car Co (?) c 1905

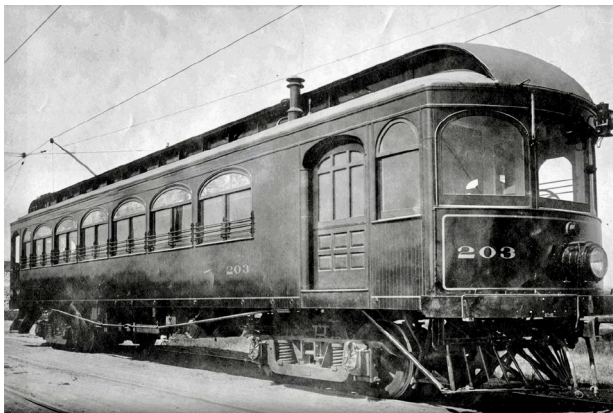
In 1905 the former superintendent of an electric railway serving the same general geographic region purchased this line. A number of closed city cars and 14-bench opens were acquired in 1905 from the St. Louis Car Company

The new owner expanded the line and by October 1906, twelve additional towns were all connected by the this company. In 1907 the owner of the line concluded an agreement with a resident of a major city straddling the state line between the two states served. This individual's family had major interests in breweries and amusement parks in the city, plus a streetcar line to the brewery and their Electric City amusement park. The westerly portion of the city having developed as a "streetcar suburb" of the eastern portion. It was agreed to merge the business interests with those of our line and move the headquarters into the city. The new partner in the merger was named president and he and



Celebration of opening of new extension - c 1906

his associates held \$3,000,000 of the total authorized capitalization of \$5,000,000.



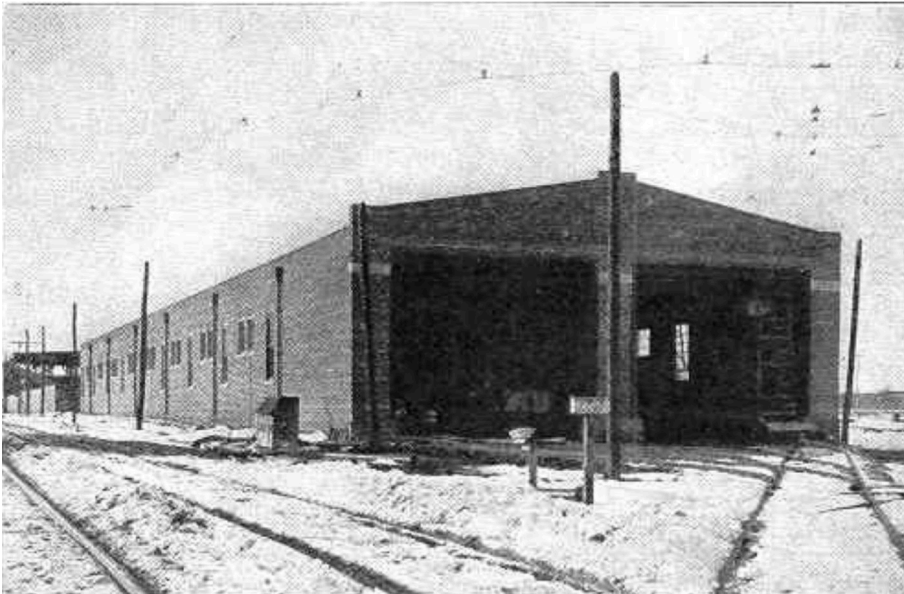
Interurban No# 203 - Jewett Car Co. (1908)

After the merger various other extensions were constructed and new lines started, all being brought under the merged company through a major reorganization. By the end of 1909 the system controlled 68 miles of track including the 28 mile interurban route between its namesake cities (the Air Line).



In 1909 a trade journal listed the entire rolling stock as:

- 5 double-truck 53-ft. passenger.
- 2 double-truck 53-ft. express.
- 15 double-truck 43-ft. passenger.
- 4 double-truck open, seating 85 each.
- 7 single-truck closed.
- 12 single-truck open.
- 2 line and wrecking.
- 10 flat.
- 3 ballast.
- 6 coal.



A carhouse and shop on the interurban c.1909

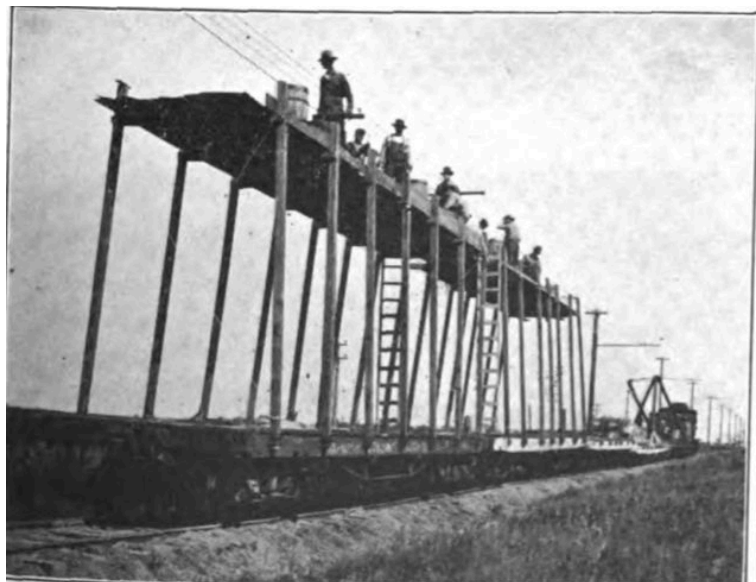
From 1907 through 1912 a additional number of city cars, express cars, and big interurbans (for the Air Line) were acquired from the Jewett Car Company.

On March 1, 1910 there was a reorganization of our company and its acquired and

constructed lines which brought all of the trackage, rolling stock, etc., through merger, under the head of the our railway of interest and under its final name.

An amusement park was leased in 1909 by survived only until 1912, the land then becoming a city park. Also in 1912 the line ran afoul of a county attorney for failing to equip its interurbans with toilets and proper heating as required by state law.

Problems also arose when attempting to negotiate crossing of the lines of a competing interurban. The



A rather dramatic platform car used for erecting catenary c.1909

period from 1911 through 1919 was rife with labor problems with six strikes occurring over the eight year period. The organized labor movement was much more active in western of the two states served than across the state line.

By 1920 the line was being heavily impacted by rate reductions mandated by regulatory agencies, competition, lawsuits, and labor issues cut into the line's revenue and It entered receivership in 1924. By the latter part of the 1920s the company was involved in several seemingly desperate attempts to increase passenger traffic with discounted tickets, reduced fare ticket books, increased frequency of service, weekend discounts, etc. All to apparently no avail as the company began to submit abandonment requests to the regulatory entities and the courts. Testimony was submitted



National Bank in original headquarters city - trolley to right c.1910

as to various routes operating with an average of 3 or 4 passengers per trip. One innovative effort to raise funds in 1927 was an attempted advance sale of \$50,000 of tickets to be used later - this had little success.

By the late 20s our line was so out of favor with some

communities because of lack of maintenance and unfulfilled promises to repair streets that several actually sought to have the company barred from their communities. Even one of the two communities in the company name actually petitioned the state commission to have it closed and offered to assume some promised street repair just to get rid of the railway.

Finally our railway received authority to end service at the end of March 1929 and the line was actually was sold at auction in mid-May 1929. A group of businessmen from a name-city (the one that didn't try to kick the railway out) purchased the line to save it from being junked. The reorganized line limped along with some city passenger (all passenger service ended in 1932) and local freight traffic while gradually lopping off bits of the line. However, the remaining and declining coal and gravel traffic were not enough and 1954 saw the last of the line sold for scrapping.



## Library Committee



## Library Committee

The Library Committee workshop in August, scheduled for August 12, 2023 from 9:00 AM to 1PM. was postponed because of the need to move a quantity of donated materials from NH to Seashore on the 12th, plus volunteer conflicts with the August 12-13 Dino Trolley. At this writing a new date had not been announced. At the next workshop cataloguing will continue along with cleanup. Cleanup chores include general cleaning in the library, as well as sorting and organizing recently received materials.

The Library Committee has a committee meeting scheduled for September 9, 2023 (9AM - 12PM) with a workshop following (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. **(SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO SUMMER WEATHER AND TRAFFIC CONCERNS).**

The Wednesday Evening Workshops are still cancelled - hopefully resumption in the future. There is also discussion of possible additional 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: September 9, and November 11

Scheduled workshop dates for 2023: October 14; and December 9

Links:

More than 1000 of the images are accessible online = [https://digitalmaine.com/trolley\\_images/](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_museum/)  
[https://digitalmaine.com/trolley\\_blueprints/](https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_blueprints/)  
[https://digitalmaine.com/trolley\\_images/](https://digitalmaine.com/trolley_images/)  
[https://digitalmaine.com/trolley\\_documents/](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](mailto:TheMainLine@ramsdell.com).

Regards,

Ed Ramsdell, Editor

*The Main Line*

[TheMainLine@ramsdell.com](mailto:TheMainLine@ramsdell.com)

<http://www.trolleymuseum.org>



**Canadian Coasters (aka Trolley Parks)** - If you have an interest in Canadian Trolleys and, in particular, Canadian trolley parks, the No. 613 (March - April 2023) and No. 614 (May - June 2023) issues of Canadian RAIL Canadien published by the Canadian Railroad Historical Association has an excellent two-segment article about the history of trolley parks in Canada entitled Trolleys to the Coasters. Should you not instantly catch the “Coasters” component of the title - one of the big draws in most trolley parks was the roller coaster. The article is a really interesting read as for that matter, is the whole publication.

# AUGUST

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)			Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)
First Responder Appreciation Weekend at Seashore			Free Story Time	Free Story Time	Free Story Time	Boston Day at Seashore!
			Ice Cream Night! (5:30PM-7:30PM)			
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)			Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Dino Trolley
			Free Story Time	Free Story Time	Free Story Time	
			Ice Cream Night! (5:30PM-7:30PM)			
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Dino Trolley			Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Members Day and Open House at Seashore
			Free Story Time	Free Story Time	Free Story Time	
			Ice Cream Night! (5:30PM-7:30PM)			
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)			Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)
			Ice Cream Night! (5:30PM-7:30PM)			Pirate Day!
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)			Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)
Ham Radio Day			Ice Cream Night! (5:30PM-7:30PM)			Model Railroad Layout Days



## HAM RADIO DAY

### With the York County Amateur Radio Club

**Sunday August 27 | 9:30AM-4:30PM**



**To purchase tickets visit [trolley museum.org/events](https://trolley museum.org/events)**



# SEPTEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)			Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)
Ham Radio Day			Ice Cream Night! (5:30PM-7:30PM)			Model Railroad Layout Days
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)			Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)
Model Railroad Layout Days						
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)			Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)
Grandparents Day at Seashore						
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)			Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Pumpkin Patch Trolley	Pumpkin Patch Trolley
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Pumpkin Patch Trolley			Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Open Today! (9:30AM-4:30PM)	Pumpkin Patch Trolley	Pumpkin Patch Trolley

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

