



Vol 16

THE MAIN LINE



No 1

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



March 2024 Issue No. 1 of *The Main Line's* 16th Year

Goings On at Seashore —

Certainly the biggest undertaking in March at Seashore was Seashore and the National Streetcar Museum at Lowell hosting of North Eastern Alliance of Trolley Organizations' (NEATO) 2024 Winterfest on March 15-17. Winterfest is a yearly conference held by the North Eastern Alliance of Trolley Organizations for the active volunteer members of those organizations. The event was outstanding; hosting an event record 192 participants from 20 different trolley museums and organizations.

The Maine Central Model Railroad was also operating for the first time during Winterfest.

Events -

Saturday, April 27: NEERHS Annual Meeting and Volunteer & Donor Appreciation Dinner

AND

Almost Exactly One Month to Saturday, May 4: Opening Day at Seashore

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



Do You Recognize ?

Last Month's Do You Recognize -

Our street railway of last month, the Jamestown Street Railway opened its 1.77 mile horse car line in June of 1884 running from downtown in its home city of Jamestown, NY to the fairgrounds. The following year it was extended further to a 3.4 mile system. The horse system had 13 four-wheel cars, mostly if not all Brill products, and 42 horses. The system was extended and electrified in 1891 with work completed the following year. The first electric car ran June 11, 1891. The main line and branches was

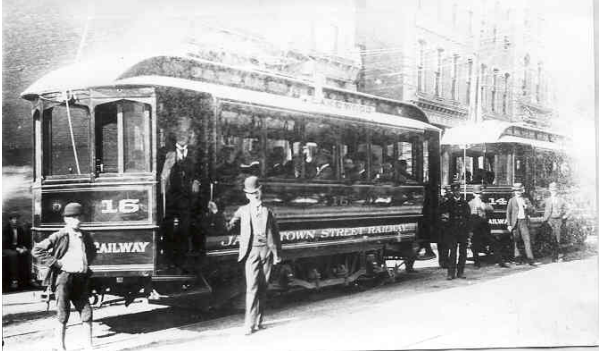


The First Horse Car Opening Day
June 19, 1884 - J.G. Brill (1884)

roughly 13 miles. In 1893 the line to the site of the Celoron Park added another 2.5 miles. in 1904 another 3.5 miles was added. The powerhouse was on 8th St. near the boat landing, and the carbarn at the west end of Third St. The Broadhead family had been connected since the

beginning, but after electrification in 1891-92 became the dominant interest.

The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 (aka Chicago World's Fair) had an interesting impact on the line. Almet N. Broadhead, the owner and president of the street railway company, attended the exposition and became enamored with the



The Electrics Arrive - #16 & #14
First day of Service in
June of 1891 - J.G. Brill (1890)

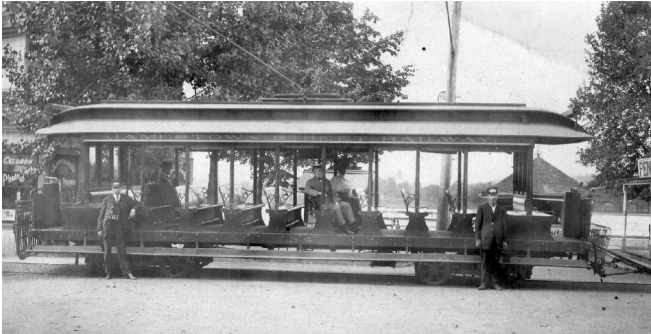
Pullman Car Company exhibit and in particular a new double-deck vestibule car being displayed. He ordered one of these for his railway and this double-deck open car had such popularity that it ran summers through 1923 and was finally scrapped in 1926. This "party car" was initially so popular that an extra fare was charged. It appears that the double deck may have operated for traction company as



Here Is The Super Hint That Gives It All
Away

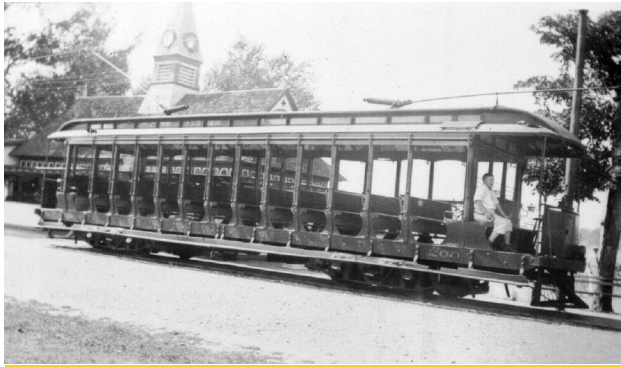
well as our street railway as various photos exist identifying it as belonging to each. This is also true for several other cars such as 15-bench #200.

In 1893 the street railway and the Celoron Land Company, both owned by the same Almet N. Broadhead joined to form the Celoron Amusement Company. An amusement park opened in 1894. It was served by the street railway and a



#34 12-Bench Open - J.G. Brill (1891)

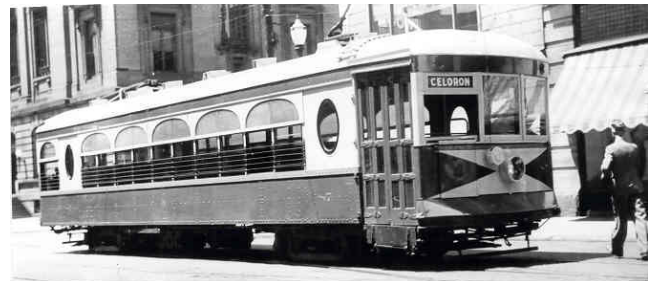
steamboat line controlled by the same owner. While at the World's Fair Almet Broadhead was also impressed by the world's first ferris wheel. He subsequently acquired a smaller "Phoenix Wheel" from the 1895 Cotton States and International Exposition in Atlanta for the midway at the new park (Certainly puts "impulse shopping" in perspective).



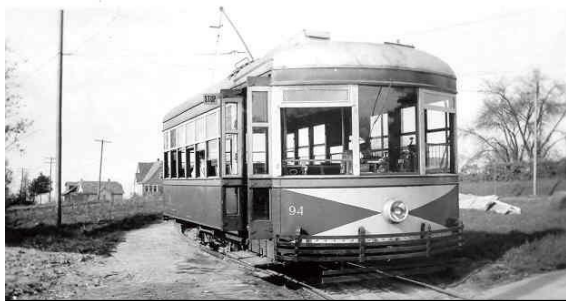
15-Bench Open #200 - One image identifies this car as ex-Connecticut Company - Likely Brill

In 1904 they also undertook a route

for a new traction company, the Chautauqua Traction Company, from the western end of the street railway some 34 miles along the west shore of the lake to a connection with a regional traction company. This was an interurban line that reached a future resort



No. #87 - St. Louis Car Co. (1923) third-hand from Chicago & Joliet Electric in 1935
Thanks to Paul Schneble for sorting out my #87 confusion.



#94 - St. Louis Car Co. (1926)

community July of 1904 and ultimately on to the connection with the regional traction system in 1906. The Chautauqua Traction Company used the street railway's shops. The Chautauqua Traction Company never had exceptional traffic and the onset of increased auto

competition plus competition from yet another interurban on the east shore of the lake, opened in 1914, founded by their and this street railway's common owner brought things to a close in 1926 with the line abandoned except for 2.5 miles taken over by the street railway.

Continuing from the horsecar days the street railway was primarily a customer of J.G. Brill into the middle of the first decade of the Twentieth Century with the exception of the owner's infatuation with the Pullman double deck.

A block of 10 cars was reported in railway trade publications for 1916 but no manufacturer was



1907

indicated. In 1926 the street railway purchased 8 Birney cars from the St. Louis Car Company. The street railway had also formed a motor bus subsidiary in 1924.



Six Months After The Switch Was Pulled

By the 1930s the effects of the Depression, auto competition, and the deaths of several members of the Broadhead family brought things to a head and the street railway closed its remaining 26 miles of track effective January 1, 1938.

For those who would like further detail you will need to scrounge a bit. Trolley Lines Of The Empire State (City And Suburban) by Felix E. Reifschneider (1950) has some material and then it requires searches through various historical society publications, fan publications, and the like for further material.



This Month's Do You Recognize -

Our railway of interest is centered within a large peninsula bordered by two large lakes and a river connecting the two lakes. The area is also one of the two largest wine producing regions in the nation.



No. #51 & #50-Ottawa Car Co, (1900)
It appears that circa 1915 opens were banned in a major city on the system due to accidents involving running boards - they were either rebuilt or transferred.

This system had over seventy-five miles of track and was both one of the earlier operations and also one of the most long lived. The system was founded in 1898 from three earlier lines developed throughout the peninsula. The earliest being a steam road incorporated in 1881 and after little success filing for bankruptcy in 1899 with the remnants purchased by our railway of interest. The second of the three was an urban horsecar line

incorporated in 1886, electrified in 1900 and sold to our railway in 1901. The primary attraction of the operation to the developing railway system was that it provided access to international traffic. The third company was another horsecar line incorporated in 1874 with full electrification in October 1887. It also absorbed an adjacent street railway the following year with

our railway acquiring control in May of 1901.

In the midst of consolidating these three companies the railway also extended its route to provide access to one of the lakes and established steamer operations through a new navigation company. Several steamers were acquired and the lake service continued until 1947. The original foreign interests in the railway



No. #61 - Niles Car Company (1912)



No. #82 - Company Shops (1923)
Rebuilt as Freight Motor in 1956

were bought out by local businessmen associated with a major steam railway. This brought an infusion of new capital that permitted both upgrading and expansion of the system. The fairly dense population in the area permitted passenger service with convenient headways freight service, using up-to-date equipment. The line was an economic success

throughout most of its history. The parent steam road failed just after the WW1 and the line was nationalized under the management of the government-owned national railroad. The new ownership looked to sell off the railway to the communities served but in 1923 the railroad's president became interested in



No. #130 - Preston Car Co. (1914)
Rebuilt in 1947



Originally No. #306 - Cincinnati Car Company (1926) assembled by the Company Shops
renumbered as #310 in 1948

the railway and interurban lines in general. This included turning over one of the railroad's steam tracks and electrifying it for a high speed route.

The full name of the entire operation was changed to reflect the parent railroad and differentiated from the steam road by the addition of "electric lines". Our railway's name was continued as a district within the network of electric railways controlled

in order to distinguish it from other interurban operations under the railroad's control. Towards the end of the 1920s costs of railway operation were rising, in June 1926 local streetcar service in provided by the railway was converted from two-man operation to one-man operation. Costs kept increasing, and profit margins thinning. Finally, in February 1929 a new local service was launched and used buses instead of streetcars.



No. #620 (in front) Ottawa Car Co. (1930) and No. #83 built in Company Shops (1923)

The Great Depression of the 1930's brought an end to our railway's prosperity and forced the abandonment of a number of lines along with cut backs on others beginning in 1931.

As the 1930s wore on increasing automotive and truck competition further weakened the system. Abandonments of major route segments in 1947 and 1950 left only a roughly 18 mile passenger line open on the south of the old system. Passenger service operated here until March 1959 with freight service lasting until July 1960.



No. #16 built by National Steel Car Co. - (1918)



No. #23 built by McGuire-Cummings Manufacturing Company - (1913)



Library Committee



Library Committee

The Library Committee has a workshop scheduled on April 13, 2024 (10AM - 2PM) - Further information as time progresses (Karen Dooks - 781-799-5868).

A Library Committee meeting and workshop was held onsite March 9, 2024. A discussion was held concerning several drives including the Library's Google drive. The remainder of the day was spent on cleaning and consolidating various materials coming into the Library.

The Library Committee's meetings on Saturdays are held from 10AM - 2PM with start times adjusted seasonally to weather and traffic. The meetings are on a bimonthly basis on the odd months followed by a workshop with the standalone workshops from 10 AM -2 PM on the even months. Start times are adjusted seasonally to weather and traffic. Updated information will be forthcoming as available.

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 2024 with business meeting followed by workshop: May 11; July 13; Sept 14; Nov 9

Scheduled workshop dates for 2024: Apr 13; June 8; Aug 10; Oct 12; Dec 14



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>



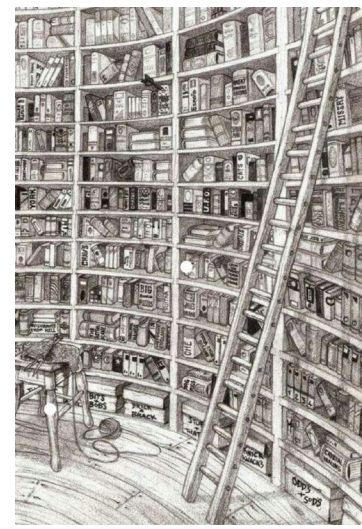
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Wandering through the collection -

ELECTRIC STREET CAR AMBULANCE.

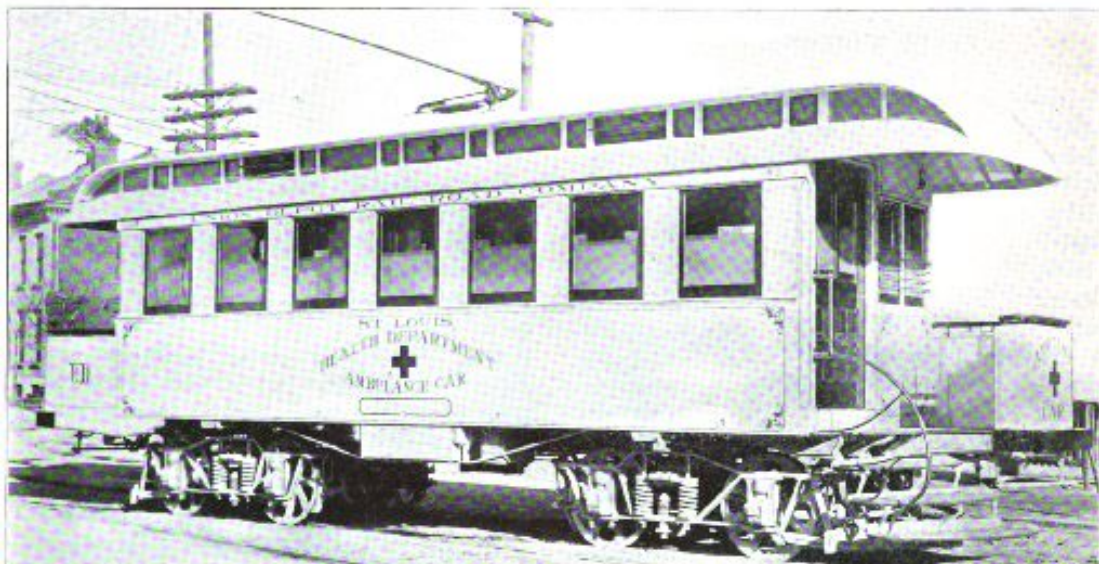
Between 1893 and 1895 various articles appeared in industry trade publications and news outlets reporting on the multi-year efforts of Dr. George Homan, Health Commissioner of St. Louis, seeking to obtain legislation for an electric streetcar ambulance for St. Louis.

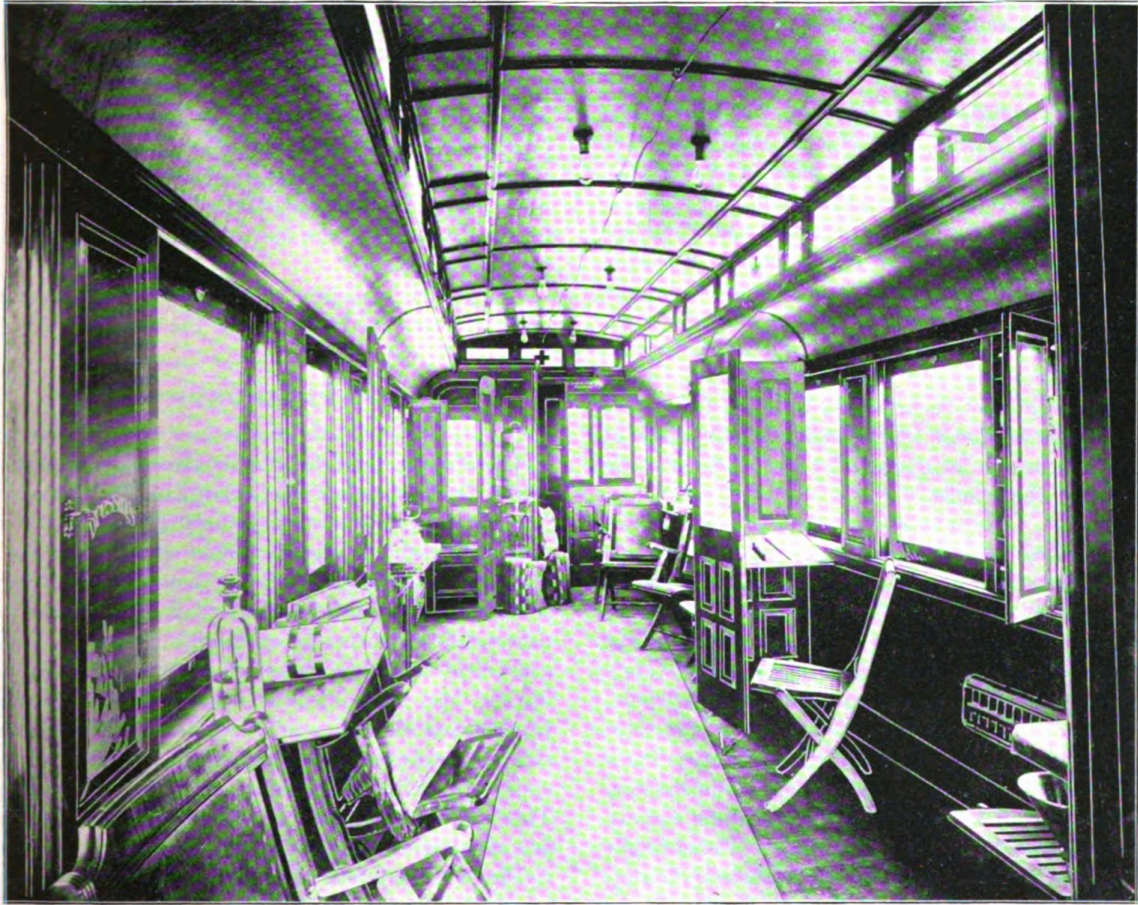


An 1893 edition of the Street Railway Review noted that, in the publication's words, *St. Louis seems have a quicker appreciation of the adaptation of the electric railway than any other city. She started with a postal mail car, the first its kind the world and now proposes to put in service an ambulance car.*

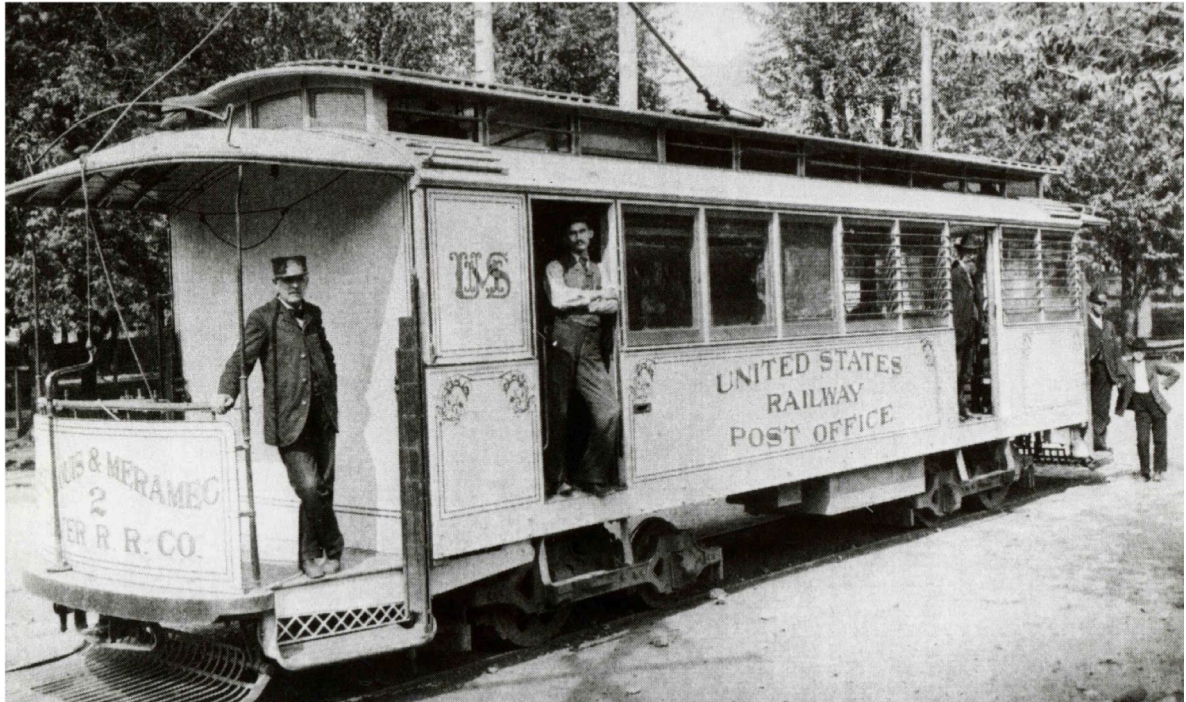
Finally in 1895 it was reported that Dr. Homan had been successful. the following is excerpted from V. 5 of the Street Railway Review:

After many years of hard work endeavoring to obtain favorable legislation, but unable to secure it, Dr. George Homan, Health Commissioner of St. Louis, has at last secured an ambulance car through another source. Dr. Homan has long felt the need of a car for transferring persons to the hospital, but has met with many discouragements in his efforts to bring it into practical operation. A short time ago President Scullin, of the Union Depot Street Railroad Company, became interested, and ordered a car to be built by the St. Louis Car Company after plans of Dr. Homan. In order to settle by a practical test the details of interior construction and finishing, an ordinary car was fitted up and run for a month while the other was being built. It is now believed that a perfect car has been secured.





INTERIOR ST. LOUIS AMBULANCE CAR.



The above-mentioned St. Louis Mail Car (c. 1896) -

