



Vol 16

THE MAIN LINE






No 12

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

March 2025

Goings On at Seashore —

The NEERHS Annual Meeting is less than a month away - April 26, 2025 to be exact - and only a week after that on May 3, 2025 brings Opening Day for the general public and Maine Day . Should you be wondering, New Hampshire Day  comes on June 21, 2025 which coincides with the 237th anniversary of New Hampshire's admission to the Union in 1788 as the 9th state and Massachusetts Day  is September 21, 2025.

Spring Has Arrived -

The Model Railroad Building will continue to open every Thursday-Saturday from 10AM-4PM, with additional hours on Wednesdays if the week is a school vacation week in Maine or New Hampshire. The rest of the museum campus, including the heritage railway, will re-open for Members on Saturday, April 26, and Opening Day for the public is Saturday, May 3. The full campus will be open weekends in May and the Wednesday-Sunday operating schedule will begin on June 1.

The National Streetcar Museum At Lowell, is open year-round on Saturdays and Sundays from 11AM-4PM.

Check out Seashore's 2025 Special Events Calendar [HERE](#);

Additional Events

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

The “Other Seashore” - Have you ever heard of Seashore's North Terminal or Seashore Junction? No or perhaps? You may find the “Wandering Through The Collection” article at the end of this issue of interest.



Do You Recognize ?

Last Month's Do You recognize -

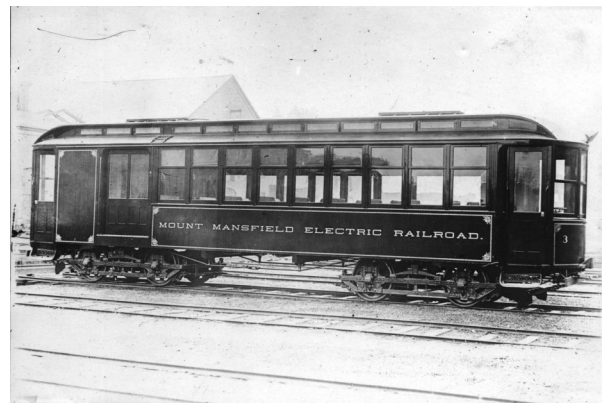
Our electric railroad of interest last month, the Mount Mansfield Electric



American Type 4-4-0, leased from Central Vermont Railway, in use on the big trestle in Waterbury Center during construction (c1897)

Railroad, had several common characteristics of small rural lines. It was quite small (12 miles) with a small population base. Built primarily to connect its hometown of Stowe, Vt with the somewhat larger adjacent community of Waterbury, Vt that was served by the Central Vermont Railway. Our road was intended to provide access to various urban markets through this connection. The primary traffic being agricultural products and various manufactured

goods - primarily wood products. Mt.Mansfield adjacent to Stowe did become a recreational attraction by the mid-19th century although this seems to have done little for the railroad while Waterbury at the southerly endpoint of our line became famous for producing Ben & Jerry's ice cream, although that occurred a little over fifty years after our line ended trolley service so that didn't help much either.



No. #3 Combine - Wason Company (c1897)



No. #50 Freight Motor - Wason Company (c 1897)

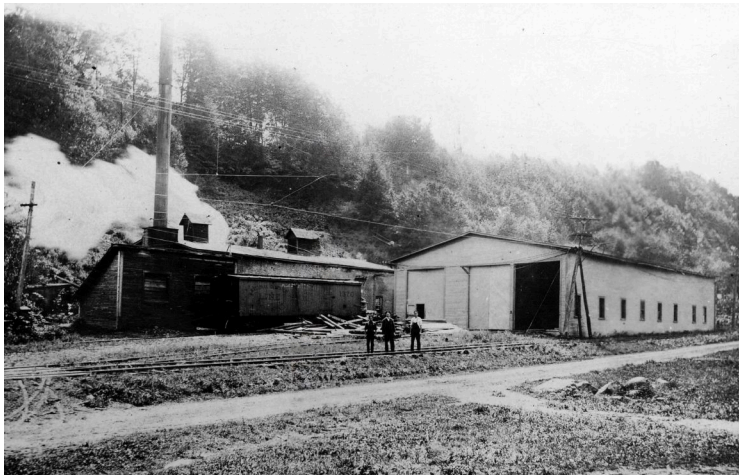
Our endpoint communities, ultimately were located in Vermont after the American Revolution, both had been chartered by the royal governor of New Hampshire. By the time our railroad was founded, the area had also passed through being the independent Vermont Republic during the revolution, and joining the United States in 1791.

Our line had difficulty getting started with an electric railroad being authorized by the state legislature in 1865, and reauthorized in 1872, 1888, and 1894. Finally in 1897 sufficient funding was secured so that actual construction could begin. The owners of a large lumber company in the line's hometown made significant investment towards funding the line. The most important investor, putting up about half of the needed funds, was Arthur M. Soden a Boston businessman who made ongoing investments throughout his lifetime and ultimately became our line's president. He also once owned the Boston National baseball team, precursor to the Boston, Milwaukee and Atlanta Braves.



No. #1 Combine - Wason Company (c 1897)

The line was constructed from Stowe to Waterbury some 12 miles away. A power plant was constructed adjacent to the car barn on the edge of Stowe. Unfortunately power was so diminished at the southerly end of line that



Company Shops and Power Plant (also location of rotary converter after going to commercial power).

operations, especially towing a freight car with one of the freight motors, were very difficult and operation of the double-ended rotary plow nearly impossible. A battery shed was soon built to boost power at the southern end of the line, charging when demand was low and supplementing from the batteries when demand required such. In 1912 the line began buying commercial power with a

rotary converter being located at the car barn.

The line operated three combines (#1,2, and 3), two freight motors, a single truck flat car, and the doubled-ended rotary snowplow. The #2 combine was badly damaged in August 1912 and permanently removed from service. The passenger cars, freight motors, and flat car were Wason products. The plow was a Ruggles Rotary Plow (Peckham Truck Co.). There was also a single truck open car used as a maintenance-of-the-way

car which apparently was also infrequently used to transport passengers. I can find no manufacturer for the open - perhaps "home brew" but no data.

The rotary plow tended to damage the track as well as adjacent structures by striking them with ice and debris. This to an extent that the Vermont Public Service Board eventually suggested that a different plow be used - a V plow was acquired and the rotary consigned to storage on a stub track until its eventual scrapping in the late '20s or early '30s.



No. #1 Combine in later life - Wason Company (c 1897)

A somewhat dramatic feature of the line was an 800 ft. wood trestle, 60 ft. in height at its highest point, towards the southern end of the line. This trestle was sturdy enough to support a leased 4-4-0 steam engine and work cars used during the line's construction. Another feature was the use of the traditional "golden spike" to complete the line. Two local men with gold panning experience from the California gold rush panned enough gold from a local stream (Gold Brook) to plate a spike for the ceremony of the line's completion.

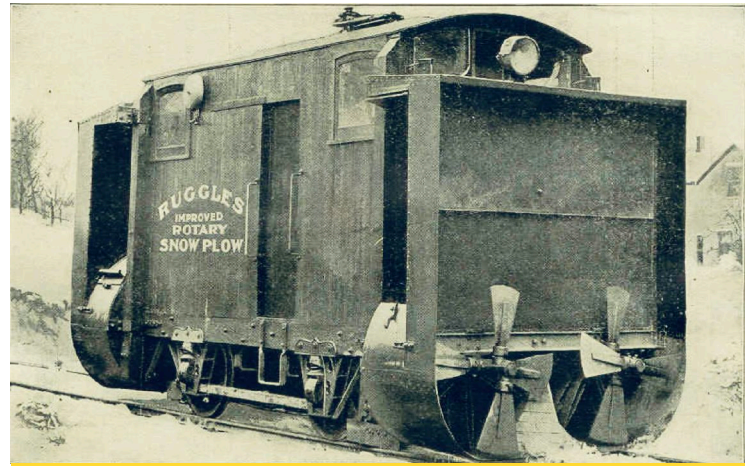


No. #3 Combine - Wason Company (c1897)
at starting point in Stowe, Vt

Although initially popular, but never overly profitable, the growth of automobile and truck competition that came with improved highways soon cut into the railroad's business. Bankruptcy came in 1907 with a subsequent reorganization. The

railroad began supplementing its rail service with a 15 passenger Graham Brothers Truck Company (Graham-Dodge) bus in 1929. Our line ultimately failed in 1932 with the right-of-way being transferred to the state and becoming the first concrete road in the state.

The railroad applied for and was granted authority to operate bus and truck services between its former rail endpoint towns. The railroad's bus operation seems to have disappeared quite soon although in the mid-50s a bus line served the route but apparently not owned by the railroad corporation. The truck operations extended into the late 1950s or early '60s. One source says the corporation was dissolved in 1959 and another claims trucks operated until 1963.



Ruggles Rotary Plow - Wason Company (c 1898)
Peckham Truck Co.

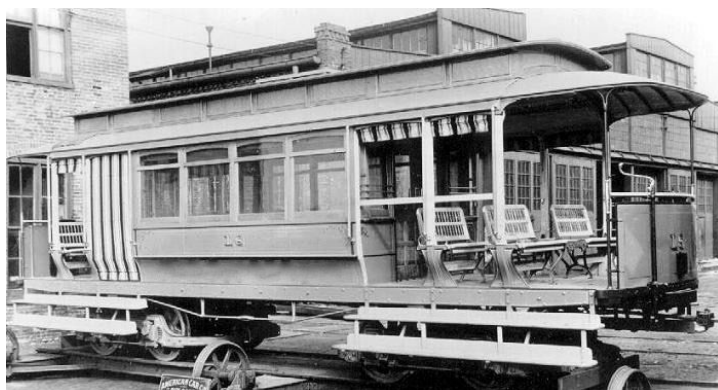


Our good friend Peter Murphy from CRHA sent along a picture of the Stowe terminal building as it now (2024) looks from the front. He notes that there is no trace of the trolley entry - the whole building has been re-clad. It's a bookstore and ice cream shop now with no trace inside either. Thanks Peter!



Do You Recognize?
This Month's Do You recognize -

This month's system began operation with horse cars in 1887. The line was

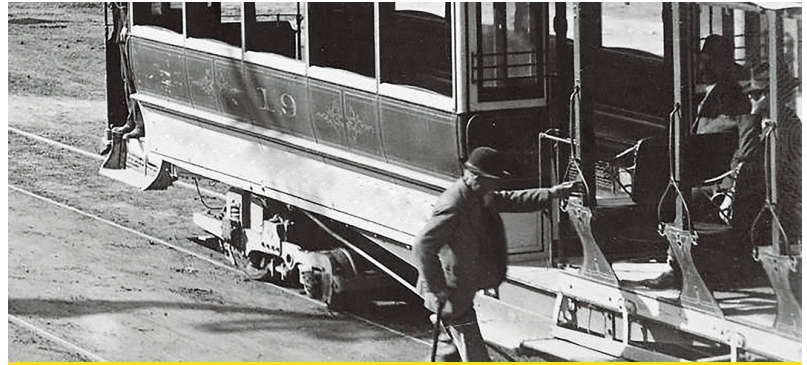


California-type car No. # 18 - American Car Co.

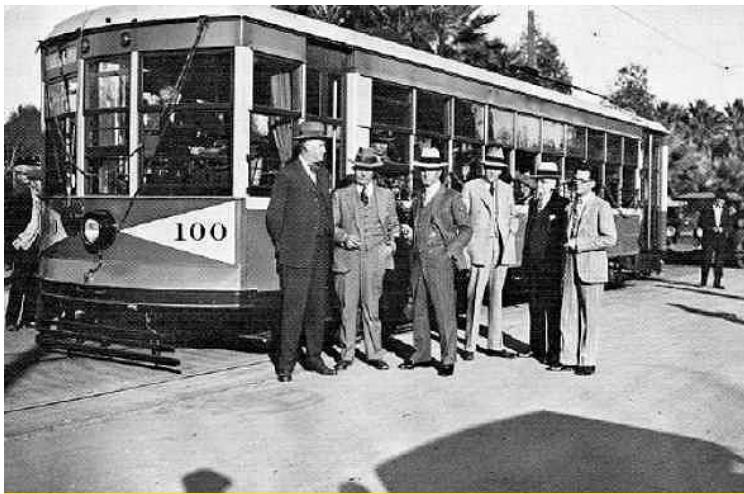
founded in 1887 and used horse and mule cars over a two-mile route growing to eight miles within six years. The founder, a Vermont native, was involved in land development and traction in several western states including the building of lines that formed a major part of the E.H. Harriman empire. Beginning in 1893 our system

was completely electrified in reasonably short order. The line proved popular with the inhabitants and, as with many traction companies, helped shape the growth of its host city.

In 1911, the first of several planned interurban lines opened - this line closed in 1927 after the system's sale to the municipality. Additional lines planned at the time were never constructed. A potential competitor arose in 1912 and surveyed several routes and did some minor construction but



California-type car No. # 19 - American Car Co. (1913)



The new fleet arrives - Double Truck Birney. - American Car Co. (1928)

then faded from the scene by 1914. The system reached its height in the 1920s with several line extensions and by 1925 there were six lines encompassing 33.6 miles of track transporting some seven million passengers a year. While popular, the line encountered growing financial problems and by the early 1920s the city was threatening to revoke its franchises for non-

performance. The system's owner had moved on west in 1890 to new development and traction prospects after a squabble with the city over water development rights. This may have led to some loss of interest and other focus for the founder. Hearings were held on suspending the company's franchises and various motor bus companies were seeking franchises of their own. However, In 1925, after a public ballot question, the city purchased the street

railway line. Improved service including reduced headways and new cars increased ridership. A significant step was the purchase in 1927-28 of eighteen new double-truck Birneys from J.G. Brill's American Car Company



Double Truck Birney. - American Car Co. (1928)



Double Truck Birneys. - American Car Co. (1928)

subsidiary. These were the core of the fleet through World War II with buses replacing streetcars on several routes after the war. In the last years the company operated service over four lines with seventeen of the

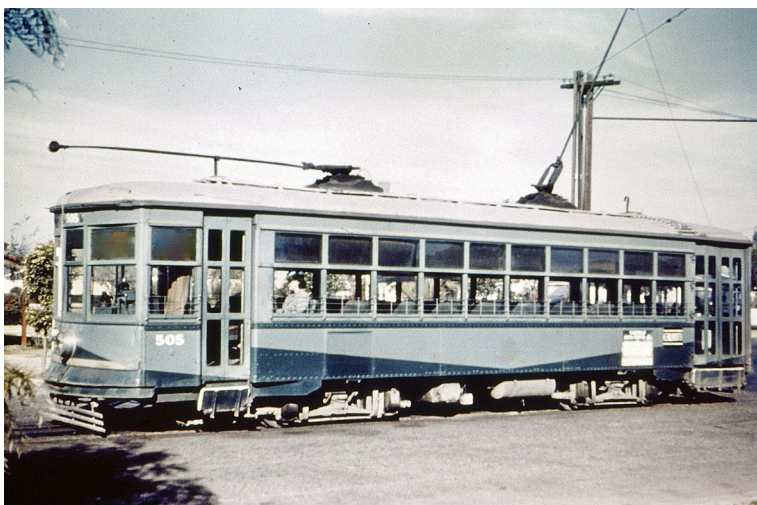
double-truck Birneys. October 1947 saw a massive fire destroy the central car barn and most of the streetcar fleet. City officials faced the decision to either rebuild the fleet or use buses. Buses were chosen as an alternative to rebuilding the fleet and the streetcar system was abandoned in February 1948. Conspiracy theorists raised the possibility that

this was the way for the city to get out of the streetcar business once and for all. However, as lovers of streetcar history know, wooden stuff including carbarns tends to burn and it is probable that the most likely culprit was

carelessness rather than evil intent.



Double



Double Truck Birney No. 505 - American Car Co. (1928)

As a point of information, notations with the color images indicate that these were probably taken in February of 1942 at about the time of renumbering the cars to the 500 series. Interestingly, light rail returned to the city just slightly over 60 years after the last run.



Library Committee



Library Committee

The next Library Committee workshop is scheduled on April 12, 2025 from 10AM -2PM.

The next Library Committee meeting and workshop is scheduled on May 10, 2025 from 10AM -2PM.

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 standalone workshops from 10 AM-2 PM on the even months. Start times are adjusted seasonally - 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).

Meeting Dates for 2025 with Business Meeting followed by workshop:
May 10; July 12; Sept 13; Nov 8

Workshop Dates for 2025: Apr 12; June14; Aug 9 ; Oct 11; Dec 13

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 has uploaded 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 . You can also find the most recent (18 +/-) issues on the museum's website at: <https://trolleymuseum.org/seashore-trolley-museum-library/library-newsletter/> Note: The most recent issue generally is available on the above site within two or three days of publication.

Regards,

Ed Ramsdell, Editor

The Main Line

TheMainLine@ramsdell.com

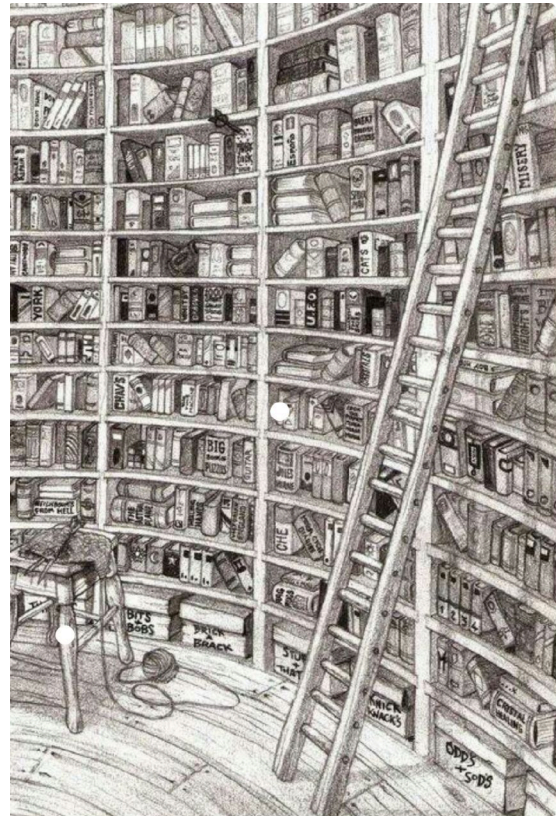
<http://www.trolleymuseum.org>



Wandering through the collection -

North Terminal, the Terminal, Seashore Junction Terminal ?

Usually articles under the “wandering through the collection” heading are the result of my tripping over something in the collection that I think might be of interest to readers. In the present case I actually was looking for specific information. Stephen Fontaine, Assistant Historian at Seashore, sent me an message concerning his interest in STM's early operation out at Route 1, wondering why it had been there, the operations, and why it was abandoned. He also suggested that it might be of interest to readers who had never heard of it or had seen very little.



I knew of the operation, actually remembered seeing it from my father's car when going along US-1 to Portland in the late 50's. I have to agree with Steve that there doesn't seem to be much in writing about the operation - Steve located some information in Dispatches and Annual Reports from the early 2000's and I knew of material in some of O.R. Cummings' writings and found a bit more in Annual Reports and Dispatches of the mid to late 1950s - so here we go!



Autumn at our northern Terminal at U.S. 1. Taken from the overpass of the B&M RR toward the city of Biddeford. From left to right: 838, 1391 shows a corner behind 293, the terminal building and gift shoppe, line car S-71 on the loading ramp which also serves as grease pit, in rear the storage barn for 105 and 12 and the annexe, the Winton power station (inside the box trailer). The poles of the main line cross the rear of the picture. AH photo.

(From 1958 Annual Report)

In the 1950s and 1960s the Society expended considerable efforts to purchase parcels of land of over 100 acres to form a right-of-way totaling about 4.5 miles. This land reached the North Terminal site just north of the Route 1 bridge over the CSX (nee Pan Am, nee B&M) rail line. The plan had been to extend Seashore's track over this right of way to both provide an appropriately long ride for higher speed interurban cars and to attract visitors passing on busy Route 1.

By the middle '50s Seashore was attracting visitors in such numbers that in 1956 the museum began providing rides on weekends at the Kennebunkport (shops)



The North Terminal with 1591 in front and the Dunedin cable car #105 by the storage shed - right middle. Note the trailer of "the Highway Monster" parked along the road (FP)

quarter-mile of main line. As noted by O.R. Cummings between July 1 and Labor Day 1956 it was estimated that some 5,000 riders were carried on two big 15-bench Connecticut opens (probably 838 & 1391 - there were five 15 bench opens on the roster). Observing this onslaught of visitors, combined with limited parking at the Kennebunkport location, and the potential danger of having the public wandering around the shops and cars in an area not, at that point, set up to handle large

groups of visitors, led the trustees to undertake the development of the north end of the property.

At this new terminus (North Terminal, the Terminal, or Seashore Junction Terminal), an entirely new railway was being constructed- extending from the US-1 easterly toward the former Atlantic Shore Line right-of-way. The original plans called for construction of a 2,100-foot stretch of track with a future extension to continue to the Atlantic Shore Line roadbed and thence to the yard and shop area in Kennebunkport. This would have given Seashore a main line of more than 4 miles - longest of any existent trolley museum in the nation. In 1957 over 20,000 passengers were carried on the new railway. The



Connecticut #1591 at the North Terminal (FP)



A car lineup at the Terminal: New Bedford 34, ASL Locomotive 100, Liverpool 293, CRANDIC 118, and Providence plow #16. (FP)

Terminal site was improved to include a remodeled terminal with waiting room and gift shop, a storage barn for #105 (Dunedin cable car) and Templeton 7-bench horsecar (#12), the Winton Power Station (gasoline powered generator) to provide power, a

loading ramp for transferring cars (also served as grease pit), nearly one-half mile of track for rides, and 400 ft of exhibit track.

In the near-term the burden of staffing, operating and protecting two effectively disconnected locations became all too apparent. In the 1959 Annual Report it was noted in Plans For 1960 that “It appears that extension of the mainline at the shops over the existing ASL roadbed will be more economically advantageous in light of estimated costs of filling and grading a new right of way at the Terminal. The Terminal Division will be mothballed when the Shops area is ready for passenger operation”. By 1962 operations had been consolidated at the Kennebunkport (Shops) end of the property under what was entitled the reunification program. After the Talbott Park loop was completed in the 1990s, the all-too-real facts of rising construction and maintenance costs essentially halted any progress on the northern extension.



Dunedin, New Zealand cable car #105 at the Terminal storage barn (FP)

In 2016 the Society completed the sale of a 37 acre parcel of land to the City of Biddeford for \$50,000. The city needed the land-locked parcel, much of which



Adjacent to the Terminal looking South. That's US-1 on the far right looking south towards the railroad bridge. (JS)

was below water, to improve the approach to one of the city's airport runways. The amicable agreement averted eminent domain proceedings and the Board decided the sale was in the Society's best interest. Sale of this parcel did not affect the right-of-way for the once-envisioned

potential track extension to US-1 in Biddeford.

Images in the above article attributed in files as follow:

Alexander Hamilton (AH). Foster Palmer (FP), Jim Schantz (JS)





2025 Season Events!

195 Log Cabin Road | Kennebunkport, Maine

Open 9:30AM-4:30PM on
Wednesday—Sunday from
June 1 thru October 26 and
weekends in May and
December.

May



= Experience our Pump Car!



Saturday, May 3rd: Opening Day & Maine Day! Admission for Maine residents is \$2.07; youth 16 and under are free.

Sunday, May 4th: May The 4th Be With You Day. Come dressed as your favorite Star Wars character and get free admission.

Saturday, May 10th Dress Like a Conductor Day. Youth ages 16 and under who dress like a conductor get free admission!

Sunday, May 11th: Mother's Day. Mothers admissions are free! Behind the Scenes Shop Tours will be offered from 11AM—1PM.

Saturday, May 17th and May 24th - May 25th: Military Appreciation Days. Active duty military personnel and veterans' admissions are free!

August

Saturday-Sunday, August 9th-10th: Dino Trolley! A Seashore fan favorite for youth of all ages. Admission includes several dino-themed activities across campus and a 2D dino hunt on our railway.



Saturday, August 16th: Members Day & Open House. Members have the opportunity to ride and operate cars in our collection and participate in special workshops! Admission is free for all guests.

Sunday, August 24th: Ham Radio Day. The York County Amateur Radio Club will be operating throughout the day. "Get on the air" and meet new radio friends from around the world!

Saturday-Sunday, August 30th-31st: Model Railroad Weekend

June



Saturday, June 7th: Speeder Day! Take a ride on one of several Speeders visiting Seashore for the day.

Saturday, June 7th Pride Day. \$3 from each ticket sold this weekend will benefit local LGBTQ+ nonprofits.

Sunday, June 8th: Dog Appreciation Day. Dogs are welcome every day at the Museum; come today for special dog-friendly door prizes!

Saturday-Sunday, June 14th-15th: "I've Driven By Several Times But I've Never Been Down the Driveway" Days. Free admission to York County, Maine residents who have never been to our museum.



Sunday, June 15th: Father's Day. Fathers' admissions are free! Behind the Scenes Shop Tours will be offered at 11AM and 1PM.

Saturday, June 21st: New Hampshire Day. To honor New Hampshire's statehood anniversary, car 38 and City of Manchester will be featured. Residents of NH get in for \$6.03! (All children 16 and under are free).

Saturday-Sunday, June 28th-29th: Dino Trolley! A Seashore fan favorite for youth of all ages. Admission includes several dino-themed activities across campus and a 2D dino hunt on our railway.

September

Saturday, September 6th: All Women Crew Day. Celebrate the role women have played in transit history.

Sunday, September 7th: Grandparent's Day. Free admission for grandparents.



Saturday-Sunday, September 13th-14th: Teacher Appreciation Days. To show our appreciation, teachers' admission is free!

Saturday, September 20th: Dog Appreciation Day. Dogs are welcome every day at the Museum, but come today for special dog-friendly door prizes!

Sunday, September 21st: Massachusetts Day. MA residents are half off!

Pumpkin Patch Trolley

Fridays-Sundays & Indigenous Peoples' Day

September 26th-28th and October 3rd-5th, 10th-13th & October 17th-19th

Ride a trolley to Seashore's Pumpkin Patch; all guests get to pick out a pumpkin. On Saturdays, Sundays, and Indigenous Peoples' Day enjoy fun, fall festive family games and activities for all ages!

Wednesdays in July & August Ice Cream Night!

Join us from 5:30PM-7PM for ice cream sundaes and a trolley ride! Admission is only \$12/per person; children 2 and under are free.

We partner with a different nonprofit from our community at each Ice Cream Night, and they will get 50% of the proceeds! Check out our website Event Calendar for a list of benefiting nonprofits.

July



Saturday, July 5th: Happy Birthday Seashore Celebrate our 86th birthday with treats and docent-guided tours.

Sunday, July 13th: Moxie Day. Free samples of Moxie and Diet Moxie.

Saturday-Sunday July 19th-20th: First Responder Days. To show our appreciation, first responders' admission is free.

Saturday-Sunday July 26th-27th: Daniel Tiger Visits Seashore!

October



Friday — Sunday October 24th-26th: Happy Trolleyween! Trick-or-treat around campus and participate in our "ghost hunt" for a chance to win a free 2025 Family Membership! Costumes are encouraged.

December

Friday-Sunday, December 5th-7th and 12th-14th: Christmas Prelude Trolley Rides! Ride on heated, decked out trolleys, free hot chocolate, SANTA and more! Check out our website for the details as the event gets closer, and be sure to purchase tickets in advance of your visit.

Regular Admission

Adults (ages 17 – 59): \$15.00

Adults (ages 60+) and

Children (ages 6-16): \$13.00

Children (ages 3 – 5): \$7.00

Children (ages 0-2): Free!

Become a Member!

Individual Membership: \$50

Youth up to age 18: \$25

Plus 1 Guest & Family
Memberships: \$80

For more information, the most up-to-date schedule,
and to purchase tickets, please visit
www.trolleymuseum.org