



# THE TROLLEY PARK NEWS



Jan-Apr 1979

Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society Bulletin

Vol. 20, No's 1-3

## Girder Rail Salvaged

**O**n the morning of January 16th, 1979, a lone figure in a dark coat was observed searching through a pile of rusting rail that had recently been excavated from the streets of downtown Portland. The mysterious man began to measure the pieces of steel and write furtively in a small notebook. It may not have surprised any onlookers when a truck drove up and several additional characters joined the first. Nor could it have been a shock to see these zealous strangers begin straining at the pile of antique rails in order to load them onto the truck. But whatever could this group want with the old rail? Were they scavengers in search of scrap metal? Was the old rail worth a fortune? Or were these men, several of whom were dressed in business attire instead of work clothes, just a bunch of escaped "nuts"?

Well, fanatics maybe, but we hope those dedicated men are not construed as crazy. You see, there was nothing mysterious about them at all. They were none other than Paul Class, Chuck Hayden, Bill Hayes, Buss Stubblefield, and Dick Thompson, who were merely trying to salvage scarce girder rail for display at the Trolley Park. The fact is, grooved rail like this, once so common in Portland streets, is not easy to find today. The OERHS museum in Glenwood has none. So, when several members discovered that this sort of rail was being removed from several downtown streets during a sewer project, it was only natural that they would investigate the possibility of obtaining a few pieces for display.

Dick Thompson, whose office is located within feet of the project, contacted Commissioner McCredie at the Office

of Public Works to find out what contractor was

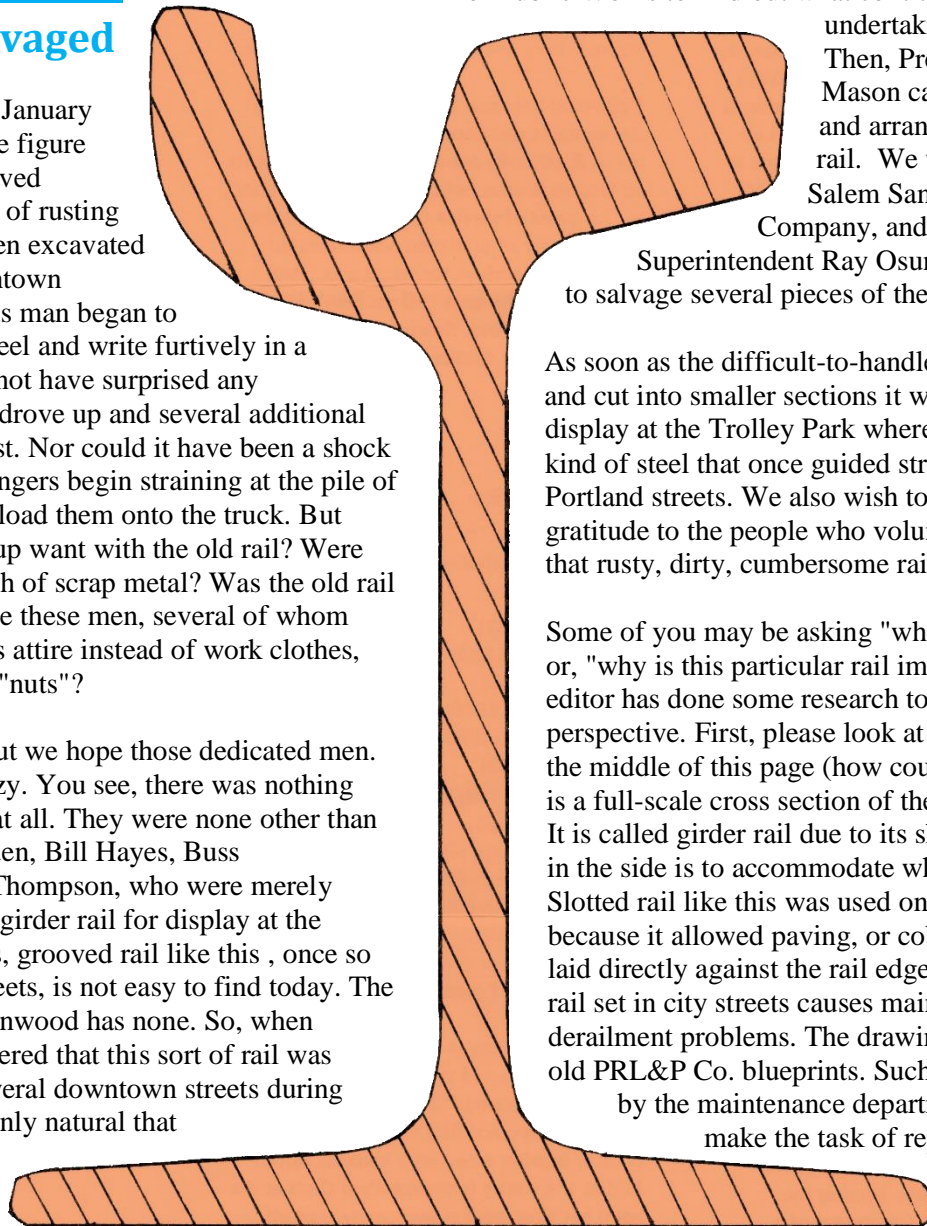
undertaking the work. Then, President Walt Mason called that company and arranged to pick up the rail. We wish to thank Salem Sand & Gravel

Company, and particularly Job Superintendent Ray Osuna, for allowing us to salvage several pieces of the rail.

As soon as the difficult-to-handle stuff is cleaned and cut into smaller sections it will be available for display at the Trolley Park where all can view the kind of steel that once guided streetcars around Portland streets. We also wish to extend our gratitude to the people who volunteered to retrieve that rusty, dirty, cumbersome rail.

Some of you may be asking "what is girder rail?" or, "why is this particular rail important?" So, your editor has done some research to help put things in perspective. First, please look at the line drawing in the middle of this page (how could you miss it?). It is a full-scale cross section of the rail we obtained. It is called girder rail due to its shape. The groove in the side is to accommodate wheel flanges. Slotted rail like this was used on city streets because it allowed paving, or cobblestones, to be laid directly against the rail edge. Regular T-shaped rail set in city streets causes maintenance and derailment problems. The drawing was traced from old PRL&P Co. blueprints. Such records were kept by the maintenance department in order to

make the task of repairing the many different types of rail inherited



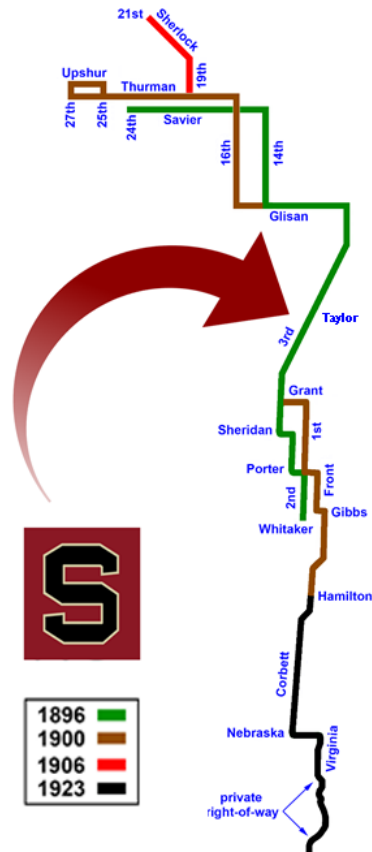
*The Trolley Park News* is published monthly by the OERHS and is available through membership in the Society. Send requests for information, or items for publication, to the Corresponding Secretary, Richard Thompson, 1836 N. Emerson, Portland, OR 97217.

from previous transit companies easier. The records we found seem to have been kept by Charles H. Willison, who was Roadmaster for PRL&P successor PEPCO during the 1920's. His offices were in the Hawthorne Building in SE Portland. They had been inserted into a rail catalog belonging to Benjamin H. Rossiter, who was a PEPCO engineer and draftsman in those years (and whose wife Floy was the company's chief clerk) and may well have been drawn by him.

This cross section is identified as 85 lb. Phoenix Brand rail, meaning it weighs 85 lbs. per yard (no wonder those guys sweated so hard trying to lift the 8 ft. sections into the truck!). The records show that most Portland city streetcar lines were equipped with 80 to 95 lb. rail.

This rail is not only significant as an important prototype for display, it also came from the site of one of Portland's oldest lines. The rail was removed from the ground at SW Third Avenue near Taylor Street, which was once a section of the North & South Portland Line. It almost certainly dates from the 1905-1910 period, when PRL&P was busily molding the lines it had acquired from several previous companies into an efficient city-wide system. But, the original franchise along Third Avenue was much older than 1905.

The first transit vehicles over this route, which extended from the car barn in Northwest Portland to the community of South Portland, were horsecars of the Transcontinental Street Railway Company, which began operation in 1883. Transcontinental ran three separate routes, painting the cars of each line in a different livery. The ones on Third Avenue were red. The line was not electrified until 1892, by which time it was owned by the City &



*Girder rail salvaged from SW Third Ave. near Taylor was once used by the North & South Portland streetcar line.*

Suburban Ry. Company. It was the C & S that modified the old route into the form it was to adhere to in later years. The North & South line was converted to trolley coach after the 1936 franchise renewal, and its tracks paved over not long afterward. No wonder those rails were rusty! 🚃

## Meeting Announcement

The next OERHS meeting will be held at Bill Hayes' house on Friday, Feb. 23rd, at 7:30 pm. This will be another evening of traction entertainment you won't want to miss, including: Don Burkhart's Portland Traction films

from the 1940's; Al Haij's mid-1960's photographs of the Trolley Park; and footage of Russia's famed Trans-Siberian Railway (most of which is now electrified) taken by a friend of Walt Mason's. Mark this event on your calendar, and bring along wives and friends. Mrs. Hayes would appreciate an RSVP at 255-5286.

Directions to the Hayes "museum" are: west on SE Stark to 113th, right onto 113th, south to Salmon, left onto Salmon for 1 block, right onto 114th, two blocks south on 114th to 1336 SE 114th. The house is a yellow one on the left-hand side of the road. On the other hand, if coming up from the south enter from 117th and Hawthorne. We hope to see you there. 🚃

## Annual Banquet Report

The annual banquet held on January 20th at The Crossing restaurant in Vancouver, Washington was a huge success. A round of applause is certainly due committee chairman Chuck Hayden for arranging to hold our banquet in the most interesting and appropriate facility yet found! The evening began with a no host cocktail hour. Members introduced themselves during this time, and browsed past four fascinating displays arranged in corners of the room. These included the Richardson Collection of around 200 historic Portland Traction photographs; a display of PRL&P memorabilia such as caps, badges, standee straps, and an air whistle from the



Street railway memorabilia on display at the OERHS annual banquet, included tickets, transfers, passes, timetables, receipts, badges, union cards and pins, advertising, and official traction company forms. There were also artifacts such as coin changers, ticket punches, and door handles.

Pacific Electric; destination roll signs from PRL&P (a Birney sign from the 1920's), OWP (a sign from an 1190's class interurban), an early bus roll sign, and a roll sign from a Yakima streetcar; and, last-but-not-least, was a row of reproduction car card advertising signs that wrapped nearly all the way around the room.

In addition to the exhibits was a table bearing the evenings' door prizes and free copies of old bulletins and historic reprints. The door prizes included a book on underground railways of the world, a painting of the old Portland Hotel, a new Portland Mall poster, and an old picture book on main line electric railways. The displays were loaned by Paul Class, Chuck Hayden, Bill Hayes, and Dick Thompson.

While the attendees were enjoying all of this, the sounds of electric interurbans rattled and

hummed softly in the background. This was not due to the real railroad outside the windows of the restaurant, of course, but a fine historic tape that Chuck Hayden had placed on the restaurant's high-fidelity sound system.

The cocktail hour was followed by a buffet style dinner. By the time the plates were cleared there were 30 people in attendance.

Following the meal, the business portion of the banquet was conducted in the usual quick and efficient manner. President Walt Mason thanked George Wilcox, who was unable to attend, for his years of volunteer service to the OERHS, and an official letter of gratitude was circulated among for signatures. Paul Class then outlined a "10 yr. Plan" for the Trolley Park. Finally, the elections were held.

The current officers are:

President - Walt Mason  
 Vice Pres - George Combs\*  
 Treasurer - Roy Bonn\*  
 Cor. Sec. - Dick Thompson  
 Rec. Sec. - John Wolff\*  
 \* = new to position

The list of new trustees includes several new ones:

Roy Bonn (1982)  
 Henry Brainard (public - 1981)  
 Paul Class (1983)  
 Larry Griffith (1979)  
 Chuck Hayden (1983)  
 Bill Hayes (1983)  
 George Hickok (1979)  
 Walt Mason (1981)  
 Donald McDonald (1983)  
 Dick Thompson (1982)  
 George Wilcox (public - 1980)

Trustees serve for 5 years. All other officers serve for 1 year.

Entertainment following the elections lasted until after 11 pm. First was the melodrama "Charlie's Angles," a 20-minute 8mm color film produced by a

church group and featuring our open breezer bearing down on a helpless victim tied to the tracks (with Paul Class at the helm her eyes were convincingly fearful). It was followed by 20 Jack Holst slides taken at various traction museums during the mid-1960's. Next was a short color film showing the Trolley Park in early years (with the Broadway car in Oaks Park paint). The evening concluded with a 12-minute Pacific Electric training film made in 1914 from Interurban Films. 🚃



A 1914 training film from America's largest interurban railway was shown at the annual banquet.

## News from the Trolley Park

Although we have had good luck in the past with grant applications, this winter has not been as successful. OERHS' application for archival assistance via the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA) was turned down. Therefore, Paul Class is urgently seeking volunteers to help inventory and organize an archive at Glenwood. If you can help, please give him a

call at (503) 357-3574. An archive would not only be of interest to the public, it would also be invaluable to operation at the Park. For example, Paul just located a complete wiring diagram for BCER car No. 1304. This schematic, which we did not know we had, will allow him to rewire the contactor switch group as well as related interlocks mounted beneath the car.

Also rejected was our preliminary exhibit grant request to the National Endowment for the Humanities. However, Paul is resubmitting it in a shortened form which focuses just on rebuilding the Trolley Park office as a depot and interpretive center. He feels the first request was too broad. The theme for the exhibit will be "How the Trolley Changed America." By the way, any members who still want a copy of the planning grant proposal should contact Paul while they last.

The Society's conditional use permit has been submitted to the county. This process, which we go through every five years, will include a hearing within the next 60 days.

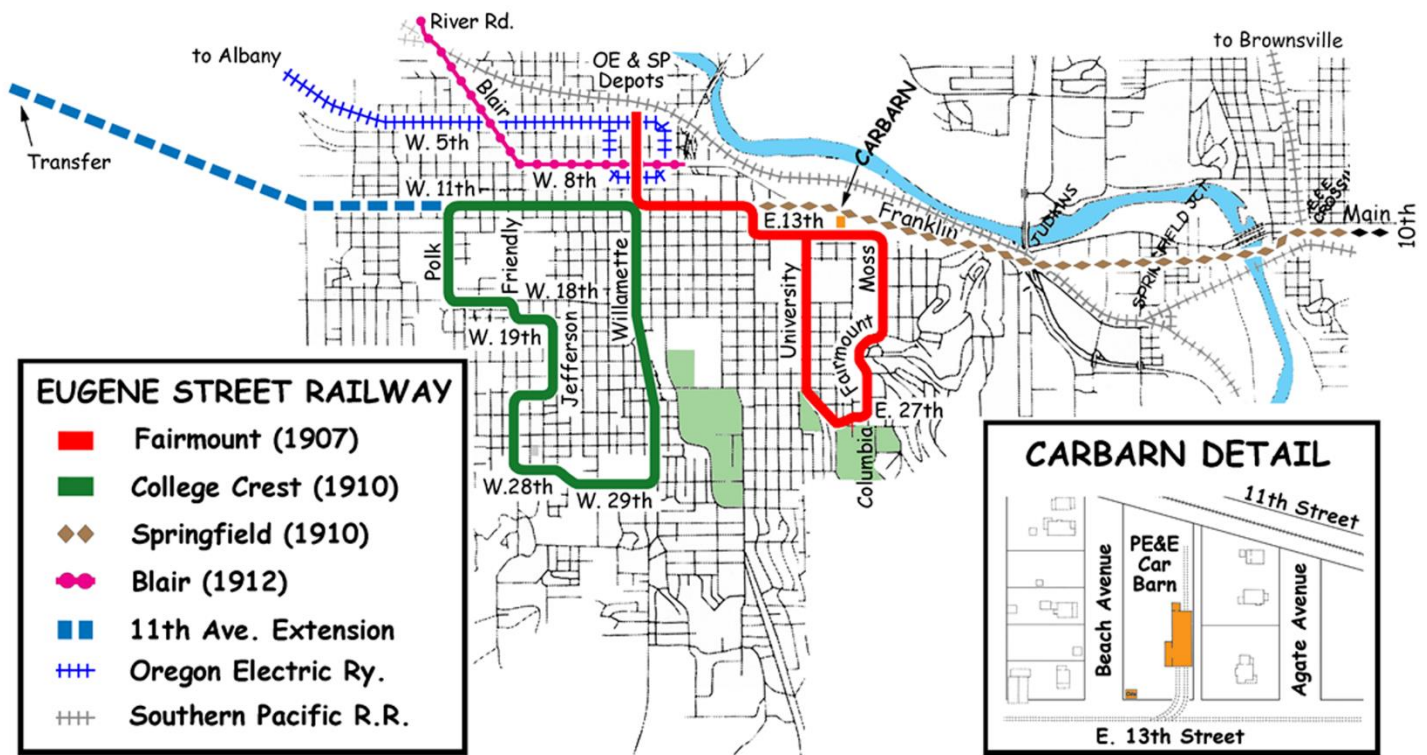
In non-trolley news, our truck, "Old Blue" has just had its worn Browning trans-mission rebuilt. Also, three new MCI coaches will be stored at Glenwood this winter by Gales Creek Enterprises. They will be moved to San Francisco next Spring. Paul thought curious members might want to know. 🚃

## Streetcars in Eugene: The PE & E

Along with current events in traction, news from the Trolley Park, and meeting reports, we try to include articles on transit history in this bulletin where possible. So far, these have focused upon Portland Traction Company and its successors. That is natural, since the Portland metropolitan area featured Oregon's largest trolley system. In fact, it was the third largest narrow gauge system in the country. The scope of the OERHS collection worldwide, however, so it seems appropriate to include the history of other areas from time to time. Much of the West has been amply covered in magazines like *The Western Railroader*. Now, we think it's time to focus on the Northwest and Oregon in particular.

Very little has been written about transit systems in smaller Oregon towns. We know that there were streetcars of some sort in Albany, Astoria, Eugene, Forest Grove, Medford, Salem, and West Linn. So, let's hear it from our readers. Help us launch a series of articles on these lesser known systems.

To kick this effort off we are reprinting most of an article on the street railways of Eugene, Oregon that appeared in *The Auger*, an underground student newspaper published in Eugene during the 1960's. Your editor discovered the following article by Peter Fuad while he was a student there. It is based on sound research conducted in the special collections division of the University of Oregon Library.



At its peak in 1912 what had become the Eugene Street Railway operated four streetcar lines, including two loop lines, a crosstown line that did not share the train depot terminus used by the other lines, and a suburban line that connected the cities of Eugene and Springfield. (Richard Thompson)

“In the name of progress much has been accomplished and trampled. Beginning late in the 19th century, Eugene, as did other progressive towns in America, boasted a phenomenon spawned by progress: the streetcar.

In an age when traffic jams were unknown streetcars provided quick and pleasant transportation. Between 1891 and 1927 when you wanted to go somewhere in Eugene you took the trolley.

If the era of the streetcar was short-lived, it was also unique. Quick, practical, and pleasant, the streetcar was indeed once part of the American scene. Today, few of us have ever ridden one, except perhaps in San Francisco. Yet, at

one time, Eugene had an extensive streetcar system.

In 1891 a mule began pulling streetcars on a line that ran from the Southern Pacific depot, south on Willamette to 11th Avenue, and then east on 11th to the University.

Service appears to have been determined largely by the whims of the mule; *The Roseburg Review* in 1892 reported that, ‘the imported mule isn’t acclimated yet, so that his sickness during the rainy season causes business on that line to be at a standstill most of the time...’

Nevertheless, the line did a bustling business. There were times when there were so many passengers that the mule couldn’t get the car started. Passengers would then get

out and start pushing. The mule system was sold in 1900, but soon discontinued because of declining patronage.

A franchise for a new electric line was granted by the city council in 1907. Expansion of the line and improvement of service were promised, and it wasn’t long before the Eugene & Eastern Railway was building. (soon to be renamed Portland, Eugene & Eastern – editor). Despite the optimistic name, it was never to go farther west than Chambers Street, or further east than Springfield. That summer four streetcars were delivered from St. Louis. Each car cost \$8000 and could carry 100 passengers. Equipped with electric heaters, the cars were 45 feet long.



Operator Wiley Griffon poses with car No. 4 during the 1890s. As can be seen in this picture taken near the University of Oregon campus, Eugene's first streetcars were mule-drawn. Wiley was one of Eugene's only African-American residents. (Lane County Historical Museum)

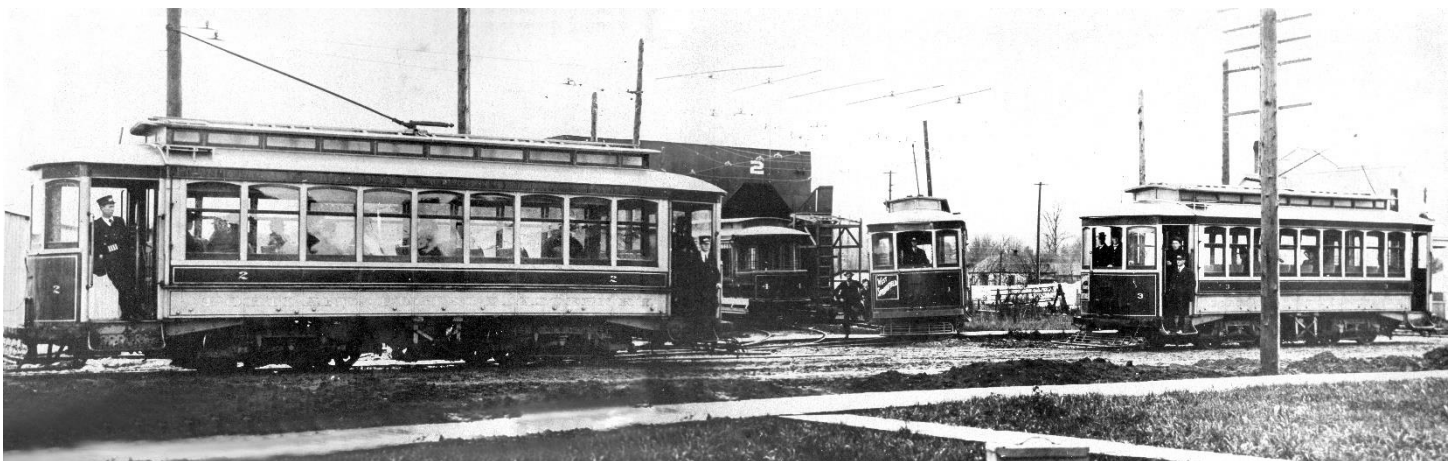
The first streetcar, loaded down with dignitaries, began operation on Sept. 21, 1907. The Springfield Line opened three years later, in October, 1910. One newspaper reported that the new extension 'linked the social and commercial destinies of Eugene and Springfield with enduring bands of steel.'

Life was not all work, however, for early citizens. For instance, for a

while during the teens, Eugene was "dry" while Springfield was "wet." Many thirsty Eugeneans were therefore refreshed in Springfield. At midnight on Saturdays when saloons closed, two streetcars hooked together would take the satisfied Eugeneans home. A deputy sheriff on each car of the "drunk special" preserved order.

Despite such accommodations to its clientele, the PE&E was not to last long. Declining patronage and rising costs plagued the line, however, the rise of a new means of conveyance—the automobile—sealed the fate of the streetcar.

The public was in love with the automobile, and by the fall of 1927 Eugene streetcar service was discontinued permanently. The cheerful clang of the bell and the familiar rumble of the cars were gone for good. The Southern Pacific Transportation Corp. purchased the assets of the company and substituted local bus service. By the end of the year much of the trackage had been removed, especially on South Willamette Street, which as yet was unpaved. Other sections were asphalted over (as evidenced by the center patch running on Moss and University streets - editor). Some tracks were left in place, and can be seen today, as on Columbia Street near Hendriks Pk. The cars were either sold to other lines or scrapped..." 🚋



Most of Eugene's rolling stock can be seen in this view taken in front of the two-bay car barn on East 13<sup>th</sup> Street around 1910. Cars 2 and 3 are on the Fairmont Loop Line, while No. 1 sits in front of a line repair vehicle and No. 1 is on the ladder tracks. (Lane County Historical Museum).

## Growing Photo Archive

Your editor has received a number of prints of Portland streetcars from the University of Oregon's Polhemus Collection. They were kindly made available by traction enthusiast Chuck Bukowsky, who acquired the excellent copies while studying for a master's degree at the U of O during the late 1960s.

These large-size prints will go into a growing archive, which also includes a collection from the late Portland Traction Company Superintendent Earl Richardson. These historic pictures will now be available to serious researchers as well as traction buffs. Our thanks to Chuck. 🚃

## Dues Reminder

Those of you who have not yet paid 1979 OERHS dues are urged to do so at your earliest convenience. We need your continued support this year. A 1979 members directory is being put together, for which we need up-to-date information for paid members. Please let us hear from you soon to insure that your name is included. The secretary's address is on page one, or you can write to Treasurer Roy Bonn at 11330 SW 92<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Tigard, OR 97223.



*A magnificent Pacific Electric interurban headlamp is displayed in Al Haij's basement.*

## Meeting Reports

**February:** After several years we again met in Bill Hayes basement, actually a museum. There were so many things to see that we almost didn't get around to starting the well-attended meeting. Entertainment included Paul Winkel's film along the Trans-Siberian Railroad, and the Pacific Electric movie presented by Dick Thompson at the annual banquet. Chuck Hayden played the tape of trolley sounds he used for the banquet.

**March:** Another great basement setting, this time in the Al Haij home. The forte was his great collection of books and magazines, one of which contained an article on planning a linear city over a rapid transit tube. Bill Lieberman borrowed it for use at Tri-Met. Chuck Hayden presented several films, including scenes from one of his East Coast tours.

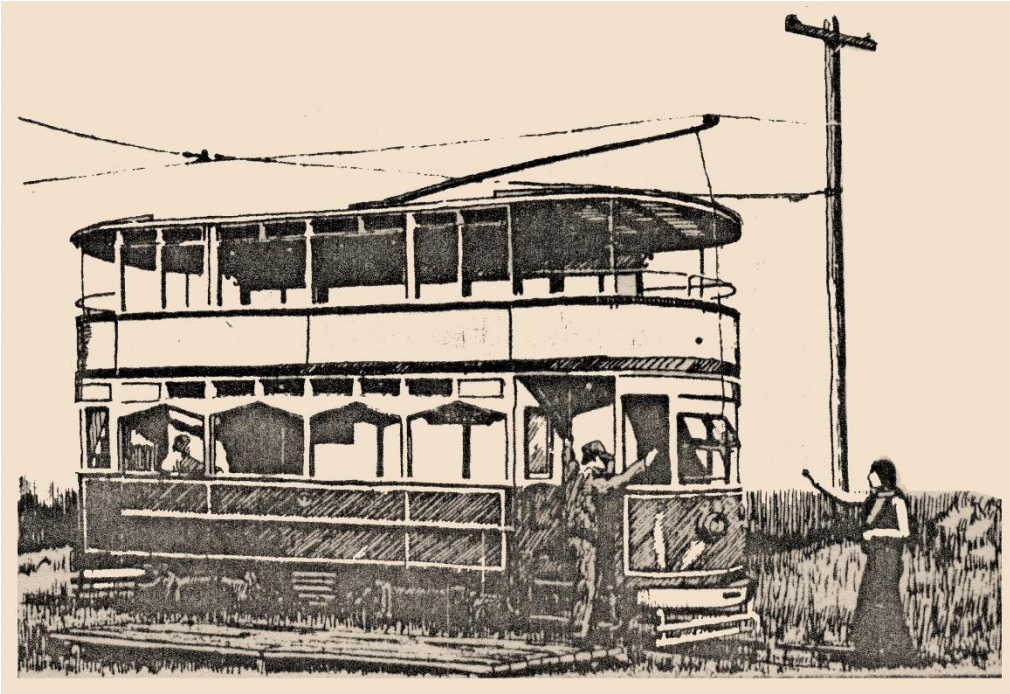
**April:** A ceremony marking outstanding progress at the

Trolley Park was discussed and it was decided to hold it at the end of July. Suggestions for the event are solicited. We hope to get some history buffs and officials from Washington County to attend.

By June 1st we hope to have received approval of our application to the National Endowment for the Humanities to implement plans for park improvements to better tell the trolley story to the public. If the \$25,000 grant is approved we will be able to let people know the imprint the streetcar made on urban development.

Paul Class has just returned from trolley shopping in Portugal, where he located some 1895 Brills that should be of interest to builders of nostalgic trolley lines like the ones Paul helped set up in Detroit, Yakima, and Seattle.





to lead a group in your area of interest or expertise. Paul Class appoints operation committees, and President Walt Mason, the others. Their respective phone numbers are 357-3574 and 643-2428.

Many devoted hours have been spent on the restoration of our favorite Blackpool tram, No. 48, and it is close to shuffling back into service. Blocking off the upstairs while work is completed there, may allow limited use of on the double-decker this season.

Board Chairman Dr. Larry Griffith (aka "Doc") reported on a conference he recently attended at Portland State University. A Friday afternoon and all day Saturday were spent at sessions dealing with grant writing. Private and government sources were reviewed, how to state your case, write a grant, and follow through on completion of work in a way to make you eligible for more grants. Larry made that should really pay off for the OERHS.

A half dozen of our members, including Larry Griffith and Walt Mason participated in a recent "Town Hall" public affairs TV program on KATU channel 2 in Portland. The show featured a panel talking about light rail transportation plans for Portland. The OERHS members, who were invited by host Gerry Pratt, contributed to the lively discussion.

In June Paul Class will be interviewed for the "Talk About" program on KOAP radio. OEPBS host Shirley Howard talks to interesting people every morning at 8:30. Our world-girdling manager should be of interest to her audience.

New committee chairmen have been appointed in time for the approaching operating season at the Trolley Park. They are: George Hickok by-law revision, Bill Lieberman Rose Parade float (with George Combs and Paul Class assisting), George Combs search for prospective donors (Larry Griffith should be on this committee after his grant writing training), Dick Thompson researching twenty years of Park history, Chuck Hayden depot design.

If you have an idea for a committee please don't wait for someone to be chosen. Volunteer

We are grateful to George Hickok who, in addition to working on the by-laws, and stringing miles of new wire in our cars, has made OERHS the beneficiary of \$150.00 grant. We will see the money is well spent. 🚲

