

The Northwest

# Electric Railway Review

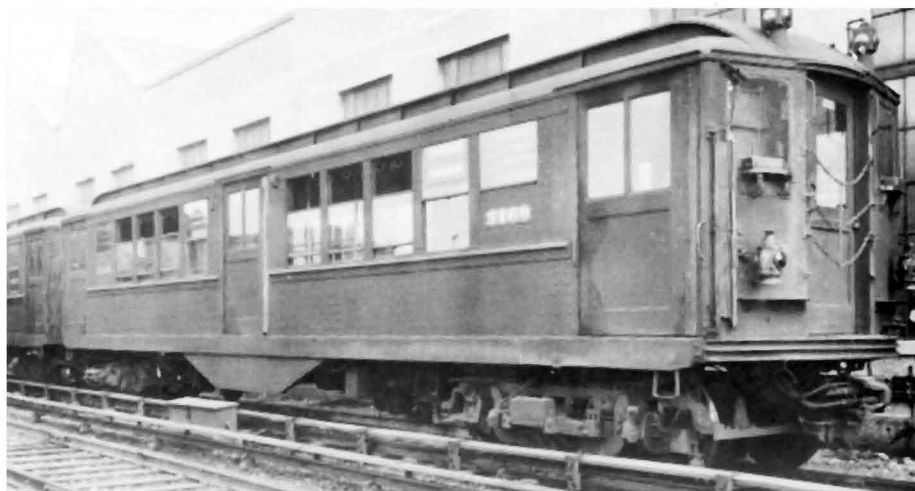
Volume 33, No. 3 - Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society Bulletin - May - June 1992

## Council Crest Car Back On Line

By Charles Seims

Recently returned to our operating fleet is no. 503, the Society's 1904 wooden Brill car used for years on Portland's scenic Council Crest Line. Originally obtained as a body, the 503 was fitted with standard gauge trucks at the Trolley Park for the 1983 San Francisco Trolley Festival. (It returned to San Francisco for a second Trolley Festival in 1985, and was the test car for the original Willamette Shore Line operation in Feb. 1987 - Editor) (Cont. on page 3)

Motorman Dick Shipley guides Car 503 over the main line during its first summer at the Trolley Park in 3 years (Charles Seims Photo).



Bill helped change marker lights on subway cars like Lexington Ave. Express no. 5160 above. They were the backbone of the IRT fleet in the '20s and '30s.

## Growing Up in New York in the '20s

### Or, The Adventures of a Teen-age Traction Buff in the Big Apple

By Bill Hayes, OERHS Historian

I spent a total of about ten years in several different periods of my youth living in the (then) world's greatest city, leaving for good in 1930. I have never returned and certainly wouldn't today. I have no desire to experience in person what I have seen and heard in the movies and on television. I think it would break my heart.

Greater New York in the 1920s was an unbelievable feast for a transportation buff; offering more trolley lines, elevateds with old wooden cars, subways, real taxicabs,

ferries, river steamers, electric and steam trains, double deck buses and other delights than one would have thought possible. I spent my spare time and what money I could earn, or cadge, enjoying all these goodies.

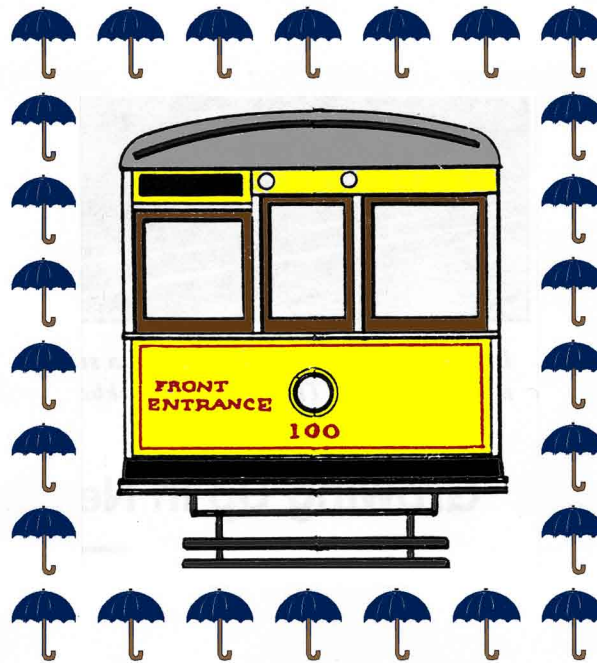
In those days there were streetcars everywhere in every borough. The red and cream cars of the Third Avenue system in Manhattan and the Bronx; the green and cream of New York Railways cars in lower Manhattan; the dark red of Brooklyn Rapid Transit; and the colorful red, cream and blue of the Brooklyn City

Railway cars with the circle of flames around their headlights. The equipment on all systems ranged from old and dilapidated to fairly recent.

It took only a nickel to go anywhere in New York on all traction systems except Fifth Avenue Motor Coach Lines which was 10 cents, obviously catering to the affluent. That same 5 cent piece would buy a ride on any of the many ferries plying the Hudson or New York Bay to New Jersey points and Staten Island. I started out early one day with five cents and a sack lunch to prove it was possible to ride the IRT and BMT subways and elevateds interchangeably all day without retracing one's way or paying another fare. I rode for hours all over both systems, getting off only to change trains or go to the bathroom. What fun!

I lived near the Eastern Parkway-Brooklyn Museum Station of the Interborough's Broadway-7th Avenue Line. At this station during off-peak hours they would cut the outbound ten car trains from Manhattan into two five car trains, sending the first half to the New Lots Ave. terminal and the second to Flatbush Ave. via the Nostrand Ave. line. As these trains returned they would put them together again on the other side of the station. I was going to school in downtown Brooklyn and would arrive at Eastern Parkway in the shank of the afternoon. I was fascinated by this cutting and adding process and took to hanging out there with the friendly Irish crew. They said I might as well be useful and gave me a brake valve handle. I worked on the cut side and when a ten car train would pull in, I entered the front vestibule of the sixth car, unfolded the motorman's cab, released the air for the coupling, changed the front electric markers to the proper colors and put on the oil lantern type markers. I would then hurry through

the last five cars changing destination signs from New Lots to Flatbush. It was all great fun and I thoroughly enjoyed the old country Irishmen. One anecdote: The New Lots trains served an area of Brooklyn that was then a ghetto of old country Orthodox Jews, many of whom spoke Yiddish and worked in sweatshops in Manhattan. On Yom Kippur they would have to be home before sundown and the ten-car trains would pull in loaded with



them before the normal rush hour. We were still cutting and adding and all those people had to be crammed into the first five cars like sardines. I even helped push them in. There was much untranslated complaining.

Many of the older streetcars in Brooklyn were not PAYE and during rush hours were jammed, with the conductor buried somewhere in the middle trying to collect fares. Passengers on the rear platform would operate the motorman's signal bell and things went pretty smoothly, considering.

In the Summer of 1927 I was staying with a cousin in Mamaroneck in Westchester

County. One night I had been to a movie in New Rochelle and got to know the operator of a little single truck Birney on a one-car line between New Rochelle and Larchmont on the New York and Stamford system. I told him of my interest in traction and about the cars in Portland (I had lived there from 1923 to 1926). We left for the barn in Port Chester about midnight, wet and stormy. He picked up a girl who had a snootful and she went to the rear of the car. He asked me if I could operate the car while he fooled around with the girl. Well, you know what I said. He turned off most of the interior lights and I ran the little Birney with the six-foot range headlight through the rainy night. The stretch between Larchmont and the Port Chester barn was only travelled twice a day as all that was left of the line was this Birney. It had been raining cats and dogs all day and I ran into a mud slide in a pitch-black area and presto, we were aground. The mishap caught the motorman in the middle of his love making and to describe him as unhappy doesn't do him any justice at all. The girl fled into the night and I borrowed a shovel and flashlight from a nearby house and we got her back on the rails and on our way. On the way to the barn we passed the place where I was living, on Palmer Avenue in Mamaroneck, and that was the end of my little adventure.

Except for the Fifth Avenue Motor Coach Lines the only buses in those days were extensions of existing streetcar, subway or elevated lines in Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens. These buses were terribly uncomfortable, noisy and smelly; usually old Macks with solid tires, wood or cane seats and ordinary window glass. Unfortunately, I had no money for a camera or film so all I have is fond memories of New York's Golden Decade. ❀



*Bill Hayes and Tim Class (first and second from left) confer while the crew hauling 503 to San Francisco stops for fuel at the Cedar Mills Shopping Center in Beaverton July 14, 1983 (Dick Thompson photo).*

## CC Car Back

Cont. from pg. 1

In June 1989 the car was loaned for a year to the Washington County Museum as part of an electrical power exhibit sponsored by PGE. Subsequently, it travelled to Antique Powerland in Brooks, and then (June 26, 1991) the Vintage Trolley car barn in downtown Portland.

While at the Vintage Trolley car barn for festivities in conjunction with inauguration of Vintage Trolley service, the 503 was painted on the outside by Greg Bonn, John and Joyce Nagy, Jack Norton, and Dick, Nancy and Alexa Thompson (*the car then remained in Portland a few more days to participate in the Central City Centennial parade on July 1, 1991- Editor*).

Superintendent Jack Norton gets the credit for reinstalling a number of seats which had been removed to make room for the Washington County Museum display. Jack, Pius Scherr and Harold Fullman worked on fabricating a new trolley base mount and reinstalled the trolley base and pole, which had been removed during transportation.

The car was recommissioned for display and backup passenger service during this past Memorial Day Weekend.

Future plans for the 503 include getting an estimate for needed woodwork and the preparation of a grant proposal to secure funding for this most important and worthwhile project. 🍷

*Ex-Portland Traction Co. 503 turning onto Duboce from Market Street during its first San Francisco Trolley Festival, July 1983 (Doug Richter Photo).*



## LA Considers Extending Blue Line to Pasadena

By Phil Hedene

Now that the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission (LACTC) has purchased trackage, or trackage rights, from SP and UP in the LA area for commuter service into the Los Angeles Union Station similar negotiations are under way with the ATSF. But, a significant difference is that on the Pasadena segment the negotiation is for lock, stock and barrel possession west of the Santa Anita Racetrack, with ATSF not even having trackage rights (freight or otherwise).

The reason for these special negotiations is that LACTC is planning to extend the "Blue Line" (now running from Los Angeles to Long Beach) to Pasadena, and LRT stations, because of high platforms, preclude the use of normal railroad equipment on the same track. The



spare parts (some equipment intended for 512 was placed on other cars). However, 512 still managed to see operation before its scheduled July 15th inauguration by sponsor PGE.

When 512 joined 511 and 513 in the car barn on the weekend of June 20-21 staff assumed it would again be placed on inactive status, but VT soon ran out of cars. The motor generator set on 513 failed near the end of the day Saturday and had not been repaired by Sunday morning. Supervisor Jack Goetz contacted Tri-Met to request that 514 be brought in from Ruby, but was told that it was unavailable. Instead, they authorized using 512, explaining that it had been certified a few days before.

Mr. Goetz and Conductor Denis Murrell hurriedly wiped the dust from the stored car and equipped it with boarding signs, brochures and megaphone. Moments later the last Vintage Trolley rolled out of the barn for its first revenue use. It wasn't the special occasion planned, in fact the car was still missing sponsor markings, but it was an unexpected Father's Day treat for crew members and riders present. 🍷

*New arrival 512 in the Vintage Trolley car barn on May 2, 1992 (the Unimog that towed the car in is still behind it). 512 was stored inactive at the barn during most of May while awaiting parts (Dick Thompson photo).*

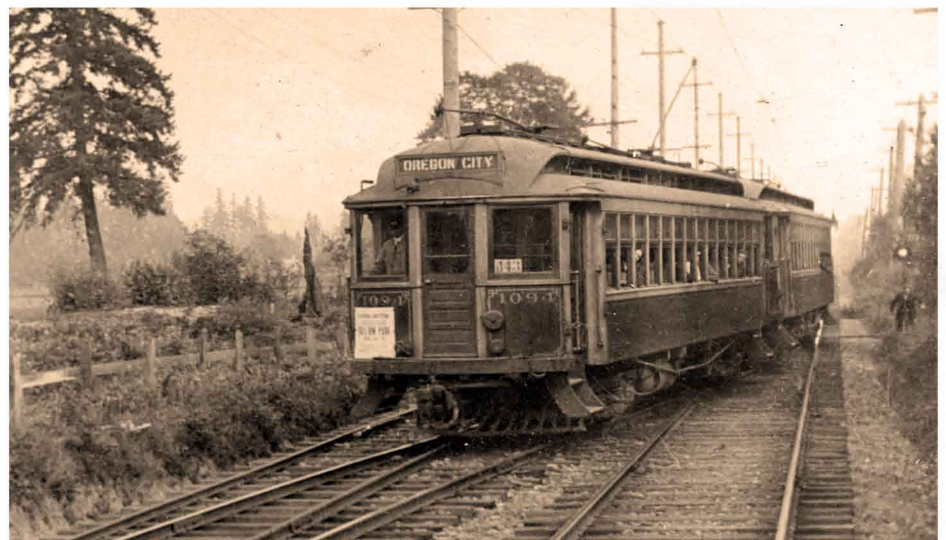
northern (Pasadena) extension of the Blue Line will start at Los Angeles Union Passenger Terminal. At some future date (the route has not been determined) a tunnel will be built under the business district to connect these two parts of the Blue Line.

One of the design features of the Pasadena route is that it is to be double track throughout with a depressed section from Green Street in Pasadena to the 210 Freeway. That'll be tight because the right-of-way is only thirty feet wide and most buildings in the area are "Historic" (translation: "no widening"). 🍷

the Vintage Trolley car barn at N. 1st and Holladay. It remained in storage there during May, and then was moved to Tri-Met's Ruby Junction facility and "burned in" while being used for brake testing and training.

It was originally intended that 512 would be certified for operation by May 22nd, but this date had to be pushed back due to a shortage of

*The conductor (at right) waits to realign the switch after cars 1094 and 1095 take the siding at Naef, on the Oregon City line, in 1915. Note the absence of the roof marker lights added in later years. See article next page (Fred Blaisdell photo).*



## Full House at Vintage Trolley

By Dick Thompson

With the arrival of the fourth GOMACO streetcar the Vintage Trolley fleet was complete. Car 512 was off-loaded at Red Lion Station around 6:00 a.m. on Thursday, April 30th and towed to

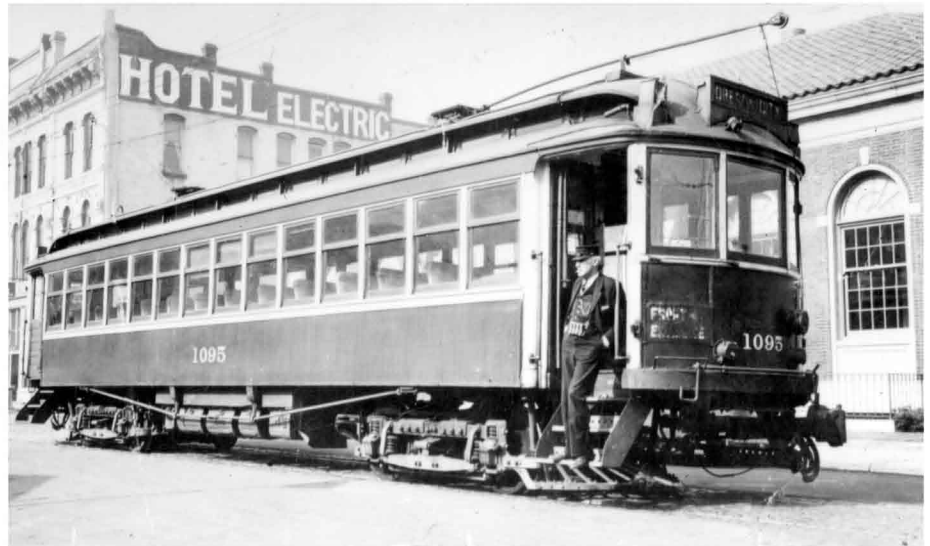
## I Don't Remember 1094, 1095 & 1096

By Mike Parker

Since the key years in this ongoing series of recollections of the Portland 1090 class cars are 1950 to 1952 I have little information about cars 1094, 1095 and 1096. They were off the line after 1946. However, I can relate some facts I have discovered, or otherwise surmised, about these classic cars.

Part of the 1910 fleet of interurbans built locally by PRL&P, these three were really no different than the rest of the batch. Many older photos show them in daily service. It just happened that these consecutively numbered cars were sidetracked for disposal, for various reasons, beginning in 1944.

A series of photos shows two 1090's lined up along with 1065, 1067 and snow sweeper 1455 (McGuire, 1899,



*1095 and motorman take a break in front of Oregon City's Hotel Electric in the '30s. Note the roof marker lights and lack of train doors (Parker Collection).*

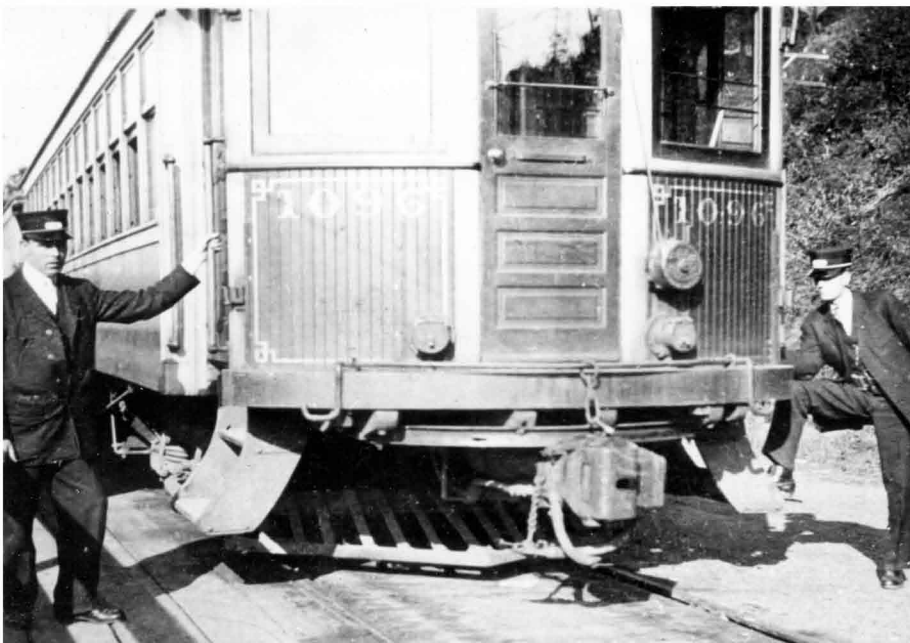
now undergoing restoration at the Trolley Park) on a storage track on Water Street awaiting disposal. A close inspection of these photos shows 1094 with an extreme amount of sag in the left front corner and quite a twist in the body. I have heard that a badly broken sill caused it to be retired beyond repair.

Car 1095 was taken to Center Street Shops sometime in 1944 and put on a

scrap track where it sat and died the slow death of a parts car. I have a 17 inch air whistle from 1095 given to me by shop foreman Roy Reinke in 1953.

An old photo I particularly like shows OERHS member Charles Hayden posed with 1095 at its Center Street resting place. Steps and pilots are missing and a trolley pole is bent toward the sky. Another photo of 1095 was taken in the 1930s in front of the Hotel Electric in Oregon City (above). The car is sporting a dash sign boldly claiming "Front Entrance."

*Crew poses with no. 1096 at the Sellwood Barn in the 1910's (Hayes Collection).*



There's not much to report on car 1096. Photographs taken at the Sellwood Barn in the teens or early 20s exist (see at left) but more must be found. They reveal that in the early days these cars did not have marker light boxes at the roof corners. I have been told that the car body was sold and taken to the Oregon Coast where it decayed into obscurity as a beach cabin, a fate similar to 1065 and 1067 (lone survivor 1067 awaits restoration at Glenwood).

I suspect these cars were kept only because of wartime duty. That's probably why they were not part of the orange and cream repainting project begun in 1943. 1946 records indicate carbody 1095 was sold for just \$100. ☞

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