



The Northwest

Electric Railway Review

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The East Side Railway's first interurban, "Alva," is said to have been named for the Spanish Duke of Alba, who visited the railway while it was being built. It was a Vulcan convertible built locally in 1891. (Al Haij Collection).

100th Anniversary of 1st Interurban

By Mike Parker

One hundred years ago this month the first interurban (between cities) trolley rolled into Oregon City, Oregon. The date was February 16, 1893.

As we reflect on February 16, 1893 it seems so very long ago, when the East Side Railway Company streetcar "Helen" made its way south from Portland, along the new 14 mile line, and into downtown Oregon City. It was the marvel of its time!

While a few scattered properties across the country were merely

thinking about connecting cities of importance with electric trolley cars, only a handful of properties were under construction. Oregon's transportation pioneers quietly beat them by several months, thereby operating the first electric interurban railway in the United States.

The hydro-electric power used to run these cars was generated at the Falls in Oregon City and transmitted to Portland along the trolley line. This was the first power line of its kind for commercial purposes (*continued on page two*).

New Officers Elected at Banquet

by Dick Thompson, Sec.

B allotting at the annual meeting introduced a new slate of officers for '93:

President - Gene Fabryka
V. P. - Charles (Bud) Statton
Trustee - Greg Bonn (re-elected)
Trustee - Roy Bonn (new)
Trustee - Bud Statton (new)
Secretary - Dick Thompson (re)

Both Bud and Roy have held board positions in the past. Write-in votes also gave Roy the post of Treasurer, but, in the board meeting following the banquet, Roy declined the position providing Dick Shipley agreed to return (he has). (*Cont. on page 3*)

Outgoing president George Inness introduces guest speaker Al Harwood at the banquet (Don Chalmers photo).



1st Interurban

(cont. from page 1)

In time the East Side Railway's quaint streetcars, with names such as *Alva*, *Bona*, *Helen*, *Inez*, *Mabel*, and *Rose*, gave way to the large locally-built wooden cars of the Oregon Water Power and Railway or Portland Railway Light and Power Company, coupled in trains of two or more cars, and, finally, the second hand, light weight, steel cars of the Portland Traction Company. The line operated the best passenger service possible right up to the day of abandonment (when some passengers were reported to have been stranded without warning at Oaks Park).

The Portland Traction Company, final operators of Oregon City service, defied a court order and ceased all passenger service on January 26, 1958. Had service been granted a "stay of execution" the Oregon City line would have been the longest running interurban in revenue service in the United States.

We must hope that it will not take another one hundred years for light rail to reach Oregon City. They tell us that it is planned after the completion of Portland's West Side Light Rail line. It now appears foolish to have destroyed the original Oregon City line. The town awaits return of its rightful status as an important stop on Oregon's electric railway future!

Editor's Note: I can find records, or photos, of at least 17 East Side Ry. named cars. At first, they seem to have been named in alphabetical order, but after the first 8, or so, names were randomly assigned. They were: Alva, Bona, Cora, Dora, Eve, Flora, Grace, Helen, Inez, Janet, Kate, Laura, Mabel, Nora?, Olive?, Rose and Una.



The East Side Railway named their cars, as is evident in this 1890s view of officials and maintenance staff (including the blacksmith!) posing with the "Mabel" in front of the recently completed carbarn at Jackson and Water (later McLoughlin) streets in Milwaukie. The building in the background is a school (John Labbe Collection).

Snow Sweeper Project Update

By Greg Bonn

Work continues on the restoration of snow sweeper #1455, with the near completion of the west end. All exterior sheathing has been completed on the sides and west end, controllers have been bolted in place and broken wires have been repaired. New window sills have been fabricated and put in place and hand rails installed. Some minor trim pieces have yet to be reinstalled, as well as the interior sheathing.

In January the car was moved to allow access to the east end and work was begun dismantling the rotted sheathing, flooring and frame members. New end posts have already been fabricated and will be installed when the new frame members are completed and installed.

Meanwhile, George Anderson has been busy manufacturing replace-

ment window frames and doors. Old pictures and drawings were used as models since no originals remained in the car. We hope to locate a source of bristle material to rebuild the brooms and complete the restoration.

Participants in this phase of the restoration include George Anderson, Roy Bonn, Mike Harris, John Nagy, Gene Fabryka and Greg Bonn.



President's Corner

By Gene Fabryka

An informed and active membership is this organization's best safeguard that the interest of this society (your society) are served. I have asked Dick Thompson to include a summary of the board meetings in the newsletter. I will see that the full minutes be made available for inspection by members at the Trolley Park Station. Besides keeping informed, I encourage more members to consider running for

office. Only by presenting real choices for positions can we hope to create future boards of high caliber.

As always, there is a lot to do at the Trolley park. You don't need to be a board member to head a project or be on a committee. Several projects have been budgeted for this year. However, many tasks, such as scraping paint or clearing brush do not take any money. Before opening we hope to upgrade the yard tracks, raise the overhead, and repair the carbarn face. At Antique Powerland, Car 1191 needs a cosmetic restoration by the end of July to be ready for the annual show. For car restoration, painting is the primary consideration to protect equipment from deterioration and to make it more presentable. How much we get done depends on your participation.

Training sessions for operators will be scheduled for before the Museum opens this Spring. We would like to have four operators on duty each day the Museum is open, and will run weekdays if crews are available.

This year's budget was put together to reflect the goals and priorities of the Society. Over the last several years we have been spending more money than was taken in. It is important to reverse that trend. To accomplish this spending authority will be limited to those responsible for each section of the budget. For any spending not in the budget prior approval must first be obtained from the board. If the current budget is held to, at least \$2000 should be added to savings this year. Building up our savings will be a high priority. It is needed to secure a permanent home for the Museum, to provide a cushion for possible emergencies, and to show financial credibility and provide matching funds for seeking grants.

I share a dream with many of you. It is a dream of a first class museum that we can be proud of. It is a dream of having the resources to grow and expand. It is a dream of good friends coming together to celebrate a common interest, a common goal. It will take hard work, commitment, and vigilance to make this dream come true. Join the effort and be part of the dream.



Banquet

(Cont. from page one)

The '93 annual meeting took place at "The Crossing", a Vancouver railroad theme restaurant that was a favorite location for OERHS banquets in years past. Tri-Met's Al Harwood gave the keynote presentation on The West Side Light Rail Project. Transportation consultant Bruce Schaefer spoke about the benefits of locating an OERHS museum in Woodburn. The evening closed with member Bill Binns' "Trolley Trivia Quiz". Al Haij won 1st prize in an entertaining competition based on traction slides from around the United States.



Annual banquet service award recipients were given Portland Traction Co. logo pins bearing a design based on artifacts on display at the OERHS Museum. The pins will also be on sale at the Trolley Park gift store (Gene Fabryka Artwork).

1993 Volunteer service awards:

Jack Norton (600 hours)
 Barb & Pius Scherr (480 hours ea)
 Chris Larsen (450 hours)
 Dick Shipley (414 hours)
 Bill Binns (214 hours)
 Jack MacDougal (125 hours)
 Bill LeRoy (110 hours)
 Greg Bonn
 Charles Seims
 George Anderson
 Joyce and John Nagy
 Gene Fabryka
 Ron Vandehey



After retirement car 1191 served as an office for Bell Sand & Gravel alongside SE Johnson Creek Blvd. (See article about this car's restoration on page 5)



Trolley Sees First Snow, Hit-and-Run

By Dick Thompson

Vintage Trolley's safety record is impeccable, but minor accidents have sought it out twice. Both events occurred during the daily December schedule. On December 18, 1991 an automobile swung out to pass a van at SW Yamhill and Broadway and hit the right rear stairs on car 511 as it moved through the intersection. The stairs were easily repaired that evening in the VT barn. On December 22, 1992 trolley 513 was the victim of a hit-and-run driver. Operator Jose Guerra was walking back from a break at the Red Lion Hotel when he saw a 1970s vintage Chevrolet careening through the construction area at the entrance to the Holladay St. right-of-way. Conductor Al Nelson saw the vehicle spin out and strike the concrete



Light hit and run damage is evident on the motor contactor and inverter panels and resistor grid screen beneath car 513 in this view taken after the trolley was moved to Ruby Jct. under its own power. The car was returned to service after approximately 60 hours of repair (Jack Goetz photo).

On Jan. 2, 1993 cars 511 and 514 were the first Vintage Trolleys to operate all day in snow. No. 511, with operator Bill Wegesend (left) and conductor Jack Norton, was first out of the barn and had to blaze a trail through the untrodden snow on NE 11th at Red Lion Station (Jack Goetz photo).



wall in front of the trolley as he was boarding passengers. He just had time to warn people away from the side of the trolley before the Chevy ricocheted into 513. As Al hurried to lower the pantograph (from inside the rear platform) the driver regained control and sped off down holiday traffic clogged Multnomah Street. After he hit a tree near the Lloyd Cinemas he tried to run back through Holladay Park on foot, but was tackled by construction workers. When the driver, who turned out to be a teenage male from Tacoma, was brought back to the trolley to await police, his only explanation was that people were chasing him (likely the owners of cars he is said to have hit on Grand Ave).

On a lighter note, on Jan. 2, 1993 cars 511 and 514 became the first Vintage Trolleys to operate all day in snow. Operation was cancelled on all other snowy days (Dec. 6, 7, 31, '92, & Feb. 20, '93) to keep trolleys safe from errant automobile traffic.



Society Moves Express Motor 1191 to Brooks

By Greg Bonn

Car #1191, a combination U.S. Mail and Railway Express Agency box motor donated to the Society in 1990, has been moved to the Antique Powerland property in Brooks for display. This unique survivor is probably the only car to have been lettered for the Pacific Northwest Public Service Company. (*Genealogy: built as Mt. Hood Ry & Power No. 102 in 1912, to PRL&P 1914, PNPS 1930, Portland Traction 1932, retired 1936 - Editor*).

The carbody was donated to the Society by members, Dave and Ginny Stabenow, who for the past twenty years had lived with the car occupying most of their back yard in Milwaukie. While in the Stabenow's possession, the car received a new roof designed to withstand heavy snow loads, as plans were to convert the body for use as a summer cabin on Mount Hood.

Work began in early summer to prepare the car to be moved. Most of the construction materials in the car had to be removed to reduce the weight. The exterior also was in desperate need of being scraped and primed to help preserve the original sheathing and to make the car a little more presentable in transit.

Although a new roof had been constructed for the car, it was supported by blocks and jacks and was not yet attached to the car sides. Several weeks were spent lowering the roof and bracing the car sides to support the added weight. Cross bracing was added to hold the body square since interior dividing walls and bulkheads had been removed during the remodeling process.

Transportation was arranged with

Gerlock Towing (to remove the car from the Stabenow's back yard) and Wilhelm Trucking (to haul the car to Brooks). Plans to move the car included raising the carbody and installing wheels and tires on axles that had been attached to the frame. Gerlock Towing was to pull the car into the street, where it would be jacked up, axles removed, and a Wilhelm trailer placed under it for transport to Brooks.

Moving day, Nov. 21, 1992, started with record-breaking rainfall. While Greg Bonn and Bud Statton went to the OERHS museum to load steel I-beams, plywood and blocks, John Nagy and Tom and Rick Mendenhall began jacking up the car and securing temporary axles and tires. Since the steady rain had turned the side yard into a swamp, plywood was laid out as a temporary road. By noon the car was ready to be pulled into the street.

A very large Gerlock tow truck arrived, connected to a temporary hitch welded to the frame, and began to pull. At first it appeared that the car was going to be an easy pull, but the more it moved, the deeper it sunk into the mud, pushing the sheets of plywood ahead of the tires. Thanks to a hydraulic lift on the truck and some very large tree roots, No. 1191 finally rode up onto the plywood and out into the street. The crew was then treated to hot soup and sandwiches, and a chance to dry out in Ginny's kitchen. On the next day the car was raised high enough on steel I-beams and blocks to clear a flatbed trailer and temporary axles and tires were removed.

Monday morning Nov. 23, 1992 found the crew guiding a 60 foot

flatbed under the car, which sounds a lot easier than the actual task. When the trailer was in place the car was lowered and secured, plywood was cut and bolted over the door openings, and loose pieces of the body were fastened to reduce the risk of parts flying off at freeway speeds.

Stretching a tape measure revealed the load to be three feet over the permit so a torch was rented to remove the temporary hitch. After lunch pace cars were positioned, radios checked, and then the procession headed through the side streets of Milwaukie and down I-5.

Stops were made at Burns Brothers (to weigh the load, check the tie downs and tires and see how the car looked) and the weigh station at Woodburn, where the car was ushered through without really stopping. This was a relief since the load was still three inches over permit.

Antique Powerland was reached an hour and ten minutes after leaving Milwaukie. The next five hours were spent raising the car off the trailer and blocking the frame to prevent sag. The crew left at 7:30 p.m. after a cleanup of the site.

The next step will be cosmetic restoration for display at this year's Annual Steamup. In the meantime, special thanks are due Tom, Rick and Gordon Mendenhall (who drove down from Seattle to spend three days moving the car), John and Joyce Nagy, Dave and Ginny Stabenow, Bud Statton, Greg Bonn, Jack MacDougal, Harvey Hilands, Gerlock Towing, Wilhelm Trucking and Anctil Sheet Metal.



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Portland, OR 97217-3855



Members Mtg. & Social

Tuesday, Mar. 9, '93

7:30 - 9:30 pm

PGE Service Center
14655 SW Old Scholl's Ferry Rd.
Beaverton, OR

Find out about:

☞ Training Days

☞ Crew Sign-up

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