

Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society

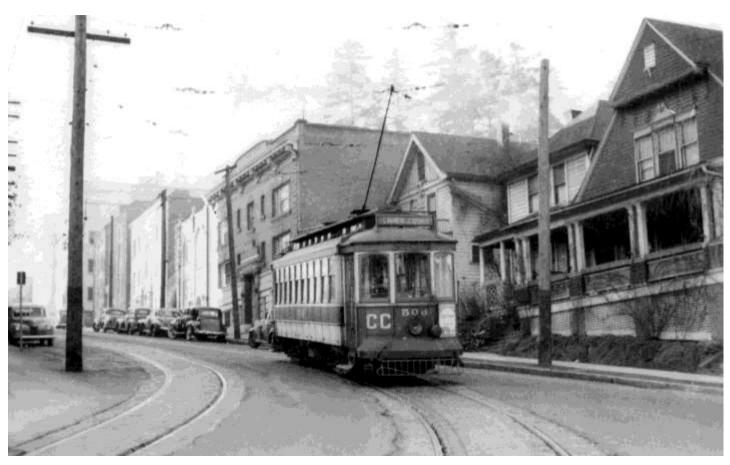
Volume 26 Issue 4 Fall 2021

Reminder to members: Please be sure your dues are up to date. They are due on Jan 1. If you have not renewed you can pay online, or download a membership form, at <u>http://oregontrolley.com/join</u>

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The Last Streetcar Down the Hill

By John Boswell Hudson



Council Crest car 506 is outbound on SW Vista Ave. c. 1949 having just exited the short private right-of-way from W Burnside. Bill Hayes captioned this photo, "these old growlers went up that hill at a truly remarkable speed," yet this is where the motorman in John Hudson's story began to eat his lunch. (McClellan photograph)

New member John Hudson, who lives in Iowa, sent us the following account of riding the last Council Crest Streetcar in addition to donating artifacts he salvaged from that same car. No. 506 is now part of the OERHS collection - Editor

read the announcement with a twinge of sadness that the vintage trolley cars that traveled Portland streets would be retired during February 1950. The date was scheduled for the break between fall and spring semesters of my sophomore year at Reed College. This meant that I would

have full time to witness the historic event without missing any classes.

This would be a poignant time for me. I had been riding these antique trolley cars for the past two and a half years, since moving to Portland as a senior at Grant High School. I was not only a rail fan, but I actually enjoyed riding these ancient electric streetcars. Riding the trolley - this was a time when trolleys actually ran on tracks - from my house to downtown would soon be a thing of the past since the city

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Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society

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Membership

If you have overlooked paying your dues for 2020 or did not realize that 2021 dues come due on Jan. 1 this is your reminder. Memberships should be renewed on January 1st each year. The OERHS is a non-profit 501-C-3 corporation, so dues are tax deductible.

Categories							
Active	\$30	Sustaining	\$ 250				
Family	\$ 60	Life	\$ 500				
Contributing	\$75	Benefactor	\$ 1000				
Supporting	\$100						

Mission Statement

The mission of the Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society, Inc. Is to preserve the regional heritage of electric railway transportation as a living resource for the benefit of the present and future generations.

To fulfill this mission the Society will promote:

- The study of electric railways, their physical equipment, properties, and operations, devoting special attention to the electric railways of western Oregon.
- The procurement and preservation of historic electric railway equipment, materials and property.
- The display, interpretation and operation of surviving historic equipment, materials and properties.

By Laws, Article II, 9/14/93

Official Notice

The Transfer is published quarterly as the official publication of the OERHS, a state and federally recognized not-for-profit institution and operator of the Oregon Electric Railway Museum at Brooks, Oregon and the Willamette Shore Trolley between Lake Oswego and Portland.

The views expressed herein are solely those of the individual writers identified and of the editor only, and may not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Society, its Board of Trustees, Officers or Members.

Articles, photos and letters for publication are always welcome. Please email to transfer@oerhs.org or postal mail to the museum address below.

Please send any change of address, your dues and donations to:

Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society 3995 Brooklake Rd. NE Brooks, OR 97303 Phone: 971-701-6327 www.oregontrolley.com

Do you want to drive a trolley?

You can be a Motorman, Conductor, Tour Guide, help restore trolleys or participate in more great activities. Want to learn to operate a 100 year old trolley or an electric locomotive?

Volunteers are needed - no experience is necessary - just a passion for trolleys! We can train you in any volunteer positions that meet your interest. Please come out to the museum and lend a hand. For the weekday or Saturday projects, contact Greg Bonn at 971-344-0755. For motorman, conductor and station agent training at the museum, contact Ken Peters at kennethipeters@msn.com or 503-646-5034. If you wish to volunteer for the Willamette Shore Trolley, call David Harold or Jan Zweerts at 503.697.7436.

How we deliver The Transfer and The Monthly Pass

Our quarterly newsletter *The Transfer* is published electronically in full high-resolution color. Members can view and download current and previous issues at the OERHS website: **oregontrolley.com/transfer**. You will also find an archive here of previous issues going back to the 1970s. It is easy to print copies on your personal color or black & white printer. By default, members receive email notification as soon as an issue is available. We believe you will appreciate the higher quality pictures that this process will provide to all the interesting photos that accompany our articles.

For those who prefer a printed copy of *The Transfer* a black and white version will be mailed to your home address by request. Please send this preference to Secretary Mark Kavanagh, Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society, 3995 Brooklake Rd. NE, Brooks, OR 97303 or send him an email at <u>mark@oerhs.org</u>.

When needed, the OERHS also updates members on events at the Oregon Electric Museum and the Willamette Shore Trolley in a short email newsletter called *The Monthly Pass*. We must have your correct email address for distribution of both newsletters. We respect your privacy and will only use your email address to send a single notification when the latest issue of *The Transfer* is ready. We do not send promotional material or advertising.

Last Streetcar from p. 1

planned to replace the venerable cars with motor buses.

The Broadway Streetcar Line ran up the hill and past my house on the east side of the city. The end of the track was only three blocks beyond, where the cars would sit for 10 or 15 minutes before returning downtown.

The most memorable scene that I replay in my memory about catching the streetcar at my corner was one day during a pouring rain rare for Portland. Usually, the moisture from the sky just misted down, and you rarely needed an umbrella. When I saw the streetcar round the corner at the top of the hill I observed water spraying out from both sides of the front wheels like a speedboat.

My favorite line was the one to Council Crest, the highest hill in Portland at 1,070 feet above sea level. To reach it, I first had to board the Broadway trolley at my house, riding it down the hill and along NE Broadway, across the Steel Bridge spanning the Willamette River, and into downtown, where I would transfer to the Council Crest streetcar.

After turning the corner from W Burnside Street onto SW Vista Avenue the motorman would turn the controller handle all the way forward, lean back in his seat, take out his lunch, and sit there munching while the ancient car labored its way up the steep hill, swaying slightly from side to side as it crossed the high Vista Avenue Bridge. On my right I could see large stately homes set back high from the street against the hillside. On my left I could enjoy the view of Portland spread

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Operator Elmer L Stockham poses with Council Crest car 506 on the Vista Avenue Bridge August 1, 1949. (Hayes Collection)



Council Crest Line train one, car 506, is seen outbound, entering the upper loop on Council Crest. Note the United States Electric Company block signal mounted on the pole to the left. Portland was the only city in the West to use this type of signal. (Bill Hayes Collection)



On February 26, 1950, Council Crest Line car 506 met Broadway Line car 808 at the intersection of SW Second Avenue and Morrison Street to become one of the last two Portland streetcars to operate. Passengers on their final runs included traction fans like Charles Hayden, who can be seen in the center window of No. 506. There were just three lines by this time – Council Crest, 23rd Avenue, and Willamette Heights..

out below. If the weather was clear, Mt. Hood showed its snow-covered slopes on the horizon.

After several minutes of street running, the narrow-gauge tracks veered off the street into the woods, continuing to climb the hill toward Council Crest Park.

My fascination never faltered while riding the wooden car with its wicker seats, the trolley pole on the roof with the bronze wheel at the end picking up electric current from the overhead wire, the motorman sitting at the front operating the car, using bronze controller handles for power and brakes.

Riding through the woods with the lush growth of trees and shrubs on both sides was a delight, finally emerging into the open onto a street at the end of the line at the summit of Council Crest. Well, actually, I had to walk up a set of stairs to reach the park at the actual summit.

What a panorama greeted my eyes, the Willamette River bisecting Portland with Mt. Hood in the distance. After enjoying the view, I would retrace my steps back to board the streetcar once again for the return trip down the opposite side of the hill, through the woods and finally back to Vista Avenue and downtown. There was great excitement among railfans when the date for the last run of the Council Crest streetcars was announced. I made plans to ride the last car down the hill into the carbarn.

When the evening finally arrived, I rode a streetcar to the top of Council Crest, where I boarded the last car to close down the line. The car was crowded - standing room only with enthusiastic revelers. We all realized that this would be the last ride ever, so the merriment was tinged with sadness too.

As the car came down onto Morrison Street, I realized that there was another streetcar following us several blocks to the rear. So, the streetcar I was on was not the last one after all, despite the motorman's assurance that it was. Risking all, I pulled the cord to signal that I wanted off and waited for the actual last car to come along, hoping it would stop for me.

When car number 506 arrived, it was full of riders, but somehow I managed to squeeze my way aboard through the throng of people. Truly this was the last car from Council Crest, and I rode it all the rest of the way into the carbarn.

The next day the streetcars were gone from the streets of Portland.

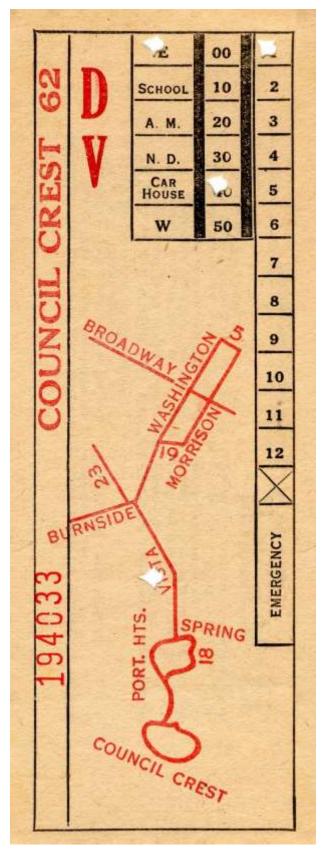
There was a rail yard next to the car shops in southeast Portland, and row upon row of retired streetcars were resting on the tracks, waiting to be burned for their metal to be sold for scrap. The fires burned all week as the wooden bodies and flammable equipment surrendered to the flames. I hung around most of the week taking pictures and talking to the men tending the fires. During the process I asked if I could take away with me a streetcar bell, a bronze controller handle, and a trolley wheel (the one that runs along the overhead wire.)



The vultures have picked the car clean of artifacts as can be seen in this picture of 506 at the carbarn after the final run. (Bill Hayes Collection)



On March 9, 1950, like many other streetcars before, sisters 501 and 505 became the last two Council Crest cars unceremoniously burned and scrapped on the rip track at the Center Street Shops.



The two loops on the Council Crest Line are clearly depicted on this 1940s Portland Traction Company transfer, which was punched for an inbound passenger at 1:40 p.m..



Car 506 was the subject of a 1962 Newman Myrah painting depicting a conductor closing a derail switch on the downhill portion of the Council Crest line along SW Vista Avenue. The scene, set during the 1910s, shows the trolley in classic yellow and maroon livery (although, to be accurate, doors and window sash should have been stained wood). The automobile in the background looks like a Detroit Electric.

A Tribute to 506

Interestingly, the following celebration of car 506, which accompanied color prints published during the 1960s, was reprinted by Portland Commerce Magazine on March 1, 1974 without comment about the car having been removed from Council Crest Park - Editor

rolley car 506 is one of Portland's outstanding retired senior citizens. It is 24 years since any trolley climbed the scenic route to the summit of Council Crest where 506 is now in permanent residence. There, on the brow of the crest she so many times conquered during her 46 years of faithful service to the public, she sedately reminds oldsters and youngsters that trolleys, too, once saw golden days.

She came to Portland, Oregon back in 1904, resplendent in new paint, proud of her four electric motors, distinguished for her magnetic brakes, which were supplemented by the usual hand brakes and very chic with cane upholstered seats. She was as beautiful and functional as the J.G. Brill Company, of Philadelphia, could build her for the magnificent sum of \$9,081.59.

With several identical sisters, 506 helped to replace the cable cars that previously had climbed Portland Heights to the scenic view from Council Crest. Generations of Portlanders and visitors subsequently became well acquainted with the determined growl of her motors as 506 climbed the long grades, passed the splendid homes, rounded the winding curves, and scaled wooded slopes to the summit.

Here 506 usually rested a few moments before setting off on the steep downward trip on which she occasionally might act up a bit as she approached the city's downtown district.

Lest she run away with herself, her tracks had derails at selected intervals to halt her downward flight if she should cast discretion to the winds. At each derail, 506 must stop. The conductor alighted, closed the derail switch until the motorman had driven the car safely over it, and then he would hop aboard again to collect fares. In later years when conductors no longer rode the trolleys, fancy automatic switches were installed to operate the derails. There are those who say that 506 never quite approved of this step toward automation, and much preferred the days when she kept company with two streetcar men. It was comforting to have a conductor aboard.

Nor was 506 above misbehaving once in a while. She is known to have scared the wits out of passengers, and even motormen, "by burning out the first series" of her controller, and she could become quite unpredictable when her tracks were covered by wet leaves, snow, or ice.

Eventually progress stepped forward again and trolleys were replaced by motor busses in the City of Roses. On February 26, 1950, Trolley Car 506 made her last run up Council Crest to end her historic travels of 1,125,769 miles. In September of that year 506 was accepted as a gift for posterity by the Bureau of Parks for the City of Portland and she was given her place of honor where thousands now see her every year - some in curiosity, and some with a small smile of nostalgia for other days.

Newman Myrah, Oregon artist, has gone back into earlier years of this century to picture 506 in her happiest days of service.

This is What Started it All

Bill Hayes

n 1971 retired motorman Alex Fediuk loaned me the original of the photograph seen on this page so that I could have it copied. This scene of him posing with No. 506 at Council Crest Park during the 1920s is what started me collecting streetcar photographs and memorabilia.

I was off to the races! Ten years later I had close to 3,500 pictures and near 2,000 separate pieces of printed material on electric traction in Oregon. Though I had loved the streetcars since I was a small boy, I had not thought of making a hobby of it in all those years. Better late than never. In 2004 I am still at it at age 91.

Alexander Fediuk was a Ukrainian immigrant who worked out of the Savier Barn for most of his career. He passed away on October 16, 1974, at the age of 88.



The conductor snapped this picture of motorman Alexander Fediuk alongside car 506 at Council Crest Park during the 1920s. A copy of this image became the first one in Bill Hayes' huge Collection.



On Jan. 23, 1973 86-year-old retired motorman Alex Fediuk recreated his 1920s pose with No. 506, this time at TriMet barn after the trolley had been removed from Council Crest Park (Oregon Journal)



No. 506 in 1951 soon after being placed at Council Crest Park. It would remain on display here until 1972, when Halloween vandalism caused the Park Bureau to remove it.

Old 506 Finds New Life

In 1973 Alex Fediuk was guest of honor at a press conference in which OERHS President Larry Griffith suggested a possible future for car 506, which had been removed from Council Crest Park. While that scheme did not take place, the occasion saw Alex again strike a pose with his old friend. The following account appeared in the January 23, 1973, Oregon Journal.

ouncil Crest streetcar No. 506, battered by time, weather and vandals, may run again. Portland Parks Commissioner Francis Ivancie and Dr. Lawrence Griffith, president of the Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society, jointly announced plans Monday for restoration of the 1905 (sic) trolley car and possible construction of a showpiece operating facility for it.

A special guest at the press conference in the Tri-Met carbarn was 86-year-old Alex Fediuk, 615 NE 73rd Ave., who has weathered the years better than the old streetcar on which he was a motorman in the 1920s.

The trolley was on display in Council Crest Park for several years after being painted and refurbished for the purpose, but vandals and the elements ravaged it, forcing its removal to the Tri-Met shop. It is there that members of the Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society will rebuild the car by hand, replacing rotted wood, restoring metalwork, overhauling motors and controls, rewiring, painting, and redecorating. The flanged wheels even will be reground according to the plan.

Dr. Griffith said that the society, which has 50 members, also plans to take the lead in recommending future disposition of the restored streetcar. Depending upon public support in financing the project, the trolley eventually may be operated on a short track, either at Council Crest or elsewhere, in an "old town" type of development.

Trolley 506 Today

Mark Kavanagh

ar 506 is one of the iconic Council Crest cars that operated up to the top of its nicknamed hill in Portland, Oregon. It was one of 10 cars built in 1904 for the Portland Railway Company. The OERHS has two of these cars in its collection. The other is No. 503.

This car series was unique in that they featured electric brakes, instead of air brakes, to help negotiate hilly terrain. Unlike most other cars in the collection No. 506 also retains its narrow-gauge running gear, which means it will not operate at the museum unless narrow gauge track is laid. It will, however, be restored to its former glory as funds allow.

When restoration is completed on sister car 503 those wishing to enjoy the experience of riding a classic Brill semiconvertible can do so on her. No. 503 was equipped with standard gauge trucks from Australia in 1976. \overline{m}



Although her interior is not restored, paint gives 506 a decent outward appearance in the carbarn at Brooks. (Mark Kavanagh)



Dean Moxley Manager of Powerland's Blacksmith Shop repaired a trigger gate for the people catcher on 503 then used that as a pattern to make a replacement gate for 506. (Gene Fabryka)

506 Artifacts on Display

Richard Thompson

rtifacts from Council Crest car 506 are now on display in Hopmere Station. They were salvaged by John Hudson, who located the trolley at the Center Street Shops a few days after he rode this "last streetcar down the hill" (see story on page 1). Mr. Hudson received an OERHS membership in gratitude for his donation of these historic items to our museum.



Clockwise from top: Brass rod bulkhead window guard, sander pedal, and enameled standee strap handles. (Mark Kavanagh)



The dual controllers and window guards on Council Crest cars can be seen through the window of No. 504 in this view on the upper loop taken on August 9, 1949.



Top to bottom: Removable brass handles for electric brake controller, controller, and reverser. (Mark Kavanagh)



Platform gong and brass trolley pole wheel. The loud 14" bell could be heard far from the streetcar. We are fortunate that young John Hudson saved all these things. (Mark Kavanagh)

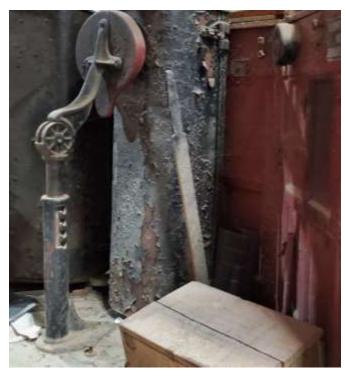
Museum Readied for Halloween Event

John Nagy

R ail museums across the US have found that Halloween and Christmas/Winter Holiday themed events are not only excellent fundraisers but are fun for both the volunteers and the public. It is also a great way to reach more people who might not otherwise come to your museum.

OERHS members Joe Tracy and Gene Fabryka have designed a fantastic local version for us: "Powerland Halloween - Pirates of the Portal Stone". It is a themed event with impressive displays and live actors that focuses on younger children and offers them an experience that includes a trolley ride, a trip through the haunted car barn and they also get to choose a pumpkin to take home with them.

This will be an annual event (with a changing theme) that will grow as we add more activities and potentially invite other museums at Powerland to partner with us. In order to maximize the experience, each trip will be limited to 15 people and tickets will be sold in advance for specific times only. More info and tickets can be found at https://powerlandhalloween.com/ Volunteer to help at the event and tell your family and friends to come to Powerland Halloween!



After more than 20 years out-of-doors at Council Crest Park the interior of Car 506 is naturally spooky. Perhaps she remembers that Halloween evening in 1950 when vandals struck... (Joe Tracy)







Car 506 has been given the least scarry role in the "Pirates of the Portal Stone" event. She will be the Pumpkin Car. (John Nagy)



Hong Kong car 12 is crawling with spiders for the Halloween Event at Powerland Heritage Park. (John Nagy))



We may have found Nemo! Porto 210 has been transformed into an indoor aquarium. (John Nagy)



We hope Pirate Halloween Adventure designer Gene Fabryka notices the ghostly presence in front of San Francisco MUNI 1159. She may not have paid her fare. (John Nagy)



Call the exterminator! Los Angeles Railway car 1318 is infested with skeletons. (John Nagy)



In a lighter vein, Oregon Water Power & Railway Snow Sweeper 1455 has morphed into the Tiki Party Car. (John Nagy)

DONATION REQUEST (Tax deductible receipt will be mailed to you)

Remember the OERHS in your Will or Trust. Even a small bequest can help the museum grow!

Did You Know?

Members 70.5 years and older can make tax free donations to the OERHS from their 401(k) that count towards the mandatory percentage 2.5% that they need to take out of their IRA anyway. Consider making a donation today!

Donation Opportunities

Endowment Fund	<u>Items</u> Endowment Fund	<u>Description</u> Helps create an endowment fund to support operations, staff (future) and general projects	<u>Amount</u> \$				
Board Fund	Unrestricted Funds	Allows Board to allocate funds as needed (Projects, events, car acquisition, etc.)	\$				
Capital Projects	Phase 1 Yard Project	Build a permanent switch yard (~11k)	\$				
	Carbarn #2	Build the 2 nd carbarn (will also be the temporary restoration shop) – (~\$450k)	\$				
	Mainline Loop	Complete the loop for multiple car operation and operate single-ended cars. Adding ~ 2000 additional feet will complete the loop. (~\$45k)	\$				
	Interpretive Center	Flooring, archives, displays, and exterior landscaping (sidewalks, platforms, etc.)	\$				
	Buy A Tie	\$55 buys us a new fir tie to replace worn out ones (we need about 2000 of them so every single tie is a great help)	\$				
	Buy Concrete	~\$120/yd ³ for track, curbs, platforms, etc.	\$				
Restoration Projects	PRL&P #1067	Help refurbish the running gear we obtained the NWRM to restore this car	\$				
	Car Restoration	All our cars need love & care and many are awaiting restoration. Donate to the car fund or specify a car. Some of the projects underway are: 813 (Broadway car), 1159 (PCC), 1455 (snowsweeper) & locos 254 & 401	\$ Car:				
Specific Items: (Donate items or \$)	Uniform Parts	Hats, pants, vests & jackets for volunteers	\$				
Name Your Project		Do you have an idea you would like to see done? Tell us about it!	\$				
		TOTAL	\$				
To: OERHS, 3995 Brooklake Rd, Brooks, Oregon 97303							
Name		Date Cash \$ Check \$					
Credit Card: \$	Visa 🛛	MasterCard 🛛 American Express 🗖 Discover 🗖					
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THANK YOU!							