



The Trolley Coach Age in Portland, 1936-1958 *by Roy Bonn*

You may wonder why I am writing about trolley coaches in Portland. One reason is that were a part of the history of public transportation and also, I liked riding the trolley coaches, not as well as streetcars but better than buses. I remember riding the streetcars in the 1940's and how noisy they were in downtown Portland as they crossed over other tracks the noise bounced off the buildings. The seats lined the sides facing inwards rather than facing front or rear except the cars on the Council Crest line and a few others. In the 1950's I rode the Mack trolley coaches to work and remember how fast they could climb the grade on Interstate and Mississippi Avenues from a standing start at a red light. The trolley coaches were quiet as the main noise came from the motor gears and the trolley shoes especially as they crossed over other overhead lines.



PTC #135, in its original color scheme, on the Eastmorland line circa 1937.

Public transportation is ever changing. Portland by 1872 had grown to a city of twelve thousand situated north and south along the Willamette River. Ben Holliday recognized the need and built a horse car line on 1st Street and added lines as the city grew. The Mt. Tabor steam powered line was built east along Hawthorne in 1888 and the St. Johns steam line in 1889. Conversion of the horse car lines to electric began in 1890 with the last horse car line converted in 1896. The steam powered lines were gradually converted to electric; the Mt. Tabor in 1896 and the St. Johns in 1903. The cable car railway began operation in 1890 and was converted to electric in 1896.

The year 1912 probably was the high point of electric railways in the Portland area. Portland Railway Light & Power had purchased Mount Hood Railway & Power Co, and took over the Willamette Valley Southern. The Salem street car lines and the Willamette Falls Railway were sold to Portland, Eugene & Eastern Railway. A new streetcar line was built but several were cut back. The Center Street shops were completed and

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The Mack trolley coach #318 in the new paint scheme adopted by Portland Traction Company in 1939

additional cars were purchased from 1908 thru 1911, all PAYE (pay as you enter) type. World War I placed a strain on the system and to ease the problem, the federal government leased 25 Birney cars to PRL&P in 1918, which they later purchased in 1922.

Changes after end of the First World War and the growing love affair with the automobile, the decline in ridership accelerated. During the 1920's, the company attempted to update and improve the cars and the oldest were scrapped. The conversion to one-man cars was completed by 1924. The first motor buses were placed into service to operate on some of the feeder lines and provide extension service on other lines. In the early 1930's more of the older cars were scrapped as they were no longer required for the reduced level of ridership. In May 15, 1932, the last new city street cars for Portland were purchased.

The company's franchise with the city of Portland was coming due to expire and negotiations began for a new twenty year franchise. General Motors had purchased Yellow Truck & Coach Co. but it was losing money so it formed a new subsidiary in 1932, the United Cities Motor Transport (UCMT), and approached the city of Portland in 1933 with a proposal to replace the streetcar system with buses but would not purchase any assets of PRL&P. However, the voters in Portland voted no and UCMT was censured by the American Transit Association for its obviously self-serving role. UCMT soon folded its operations. PRL&P was awarded a twenty-year franchise on January 31, 1936 with the requirement specifying the retirement of about one-half of the streetcar system.

Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society

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Membership

If you have overlooked paying your dues for 2010 or did not realize that dues are based on a calendar year, this is your reminder that your dues are due. The OERHS is a non-profit 501-C-3 corporation, the benefits of a donation should be discussed with your tax advisor.

Active	\$ 30
Family	\$ 40
Contributing	\$ 50
Supporting	\$ 100
Sustaining	\$ 250
Life	\$ 500
Benefactor	\$ 1000

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 fulfil 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. Operator of the *Willamette Shore Trolley* line between Lake Oswego and Portland and a demonstration trolley line at the railway museum in Brooks.

The views expressed here in 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@waynejones.net or postal mail to the museum address following.

Please send any change of address, your dues and donations to Bill Binns, Treasurer

Oregon Electrical Railway Historical Society
3995 Brooklake Rd. NE
Brooks, OR 97303
Phone: 503.393.2424
www.oregonelectricrailway.org

Do you want to be a Motorman?

Volunteers are needed at the museum in Brooks to be trained as Motormen, Conductors, Ticket sellers and Car Barn Tour guides. Saturdays from 10am to 4pm, motorman training on Sydney 1187 and later, other cars. The Museum will again be open the public in early May 2010 on Saturdays and Sundays. For the weekday projects, contact Bill Binns or Charlie Philpot.

Please come out to the museum and lend a hand. For more information, contact Bob Terkelsen at 503.399.1882.

If you wish to volunteer for the *Willamette Shore Trolley*, call Rod Cox or Hal Rosene at 503.697.7436 for information about the many volunteer positions that may interest you.

2009 OERHS Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting and Members Day was held on November 14, 2009 at the Pacific Northwest Truck Museum in Brooks, Oregon. It started with car operations from noon to 4 pm with Gage Geist in charge. Social hour was 4-5pm with wine catered by Charlie Philpot.

Dinner at 5 pm was catered by members and served inside the Pacific North West Truck Museum. Greg Bonn, Museum Director as chef, cooked steaks; salads and desserts were provided by members Gene and Vicki Fabryka.

Mark Kavanagh arranged the program:

Dinner (with the popular Traction Quiz slides as a background)

Museum Reports and Officer Elections

Chairman Philpot gave a short state of the Society report.

Elections:

President - Robert Terkelsen

Vice President - Eugene Fabryka

Secretary - John Nagy

Treasurer - William Binns

Directors - Eric Sitiko nominated from the floor.

Traction quiz answers

Service awards

Toonerville Trolley Videos

Raffle of Door Prizes.





The Kenworth trolley coach #413 was operating on the Mississippi line. It was westbound on SE Hawthorne Blvd at SE 3rd Ave crossing the S.P. railroad tracks on August 22, 1954.

Much of the streetcar lines needed rebuilding and most of the cars were purchased prior to 1912. The cost of rebuilding the system and purchasing new streetcars during the depression was beyond the ability of the company. Oregon did not like streetcar tracks on the state highways. Multnomah County Road officials wanted the tracks removed from the bridges. I'm sure the city wanted the tracks removed too.

The Mack Truck Company, in 1934, was engaged in strenuous efforts to enter the city transit field in both electric and motor coach areas and was in negotiations with Toledo, Ohio and Portland for trolley coach installations. Toledo ordered the first



Mack #164 in the late 40s or early 50s wearing its last color scheme. Portland had the largest collection of Mack trolley buses of any city and they comprised the entire fleet until 1947.



PTC #406, on the Interstate line also on Hawthorne Blvd at SE 3rd crossing Southern Pacific railroad tracks on August 22, 1954.

seven model CR's built to go into service on February 1, 1935, Only six were delivered and one was sent to Portland as a demonstrator that was operated for several weeks on a special downtown loop in 1935. The company was pleased and ordered 120 trolley coaches. ORS 483.504 in the Oregon Vehicle Laws allowed trolley coaches up to 9 feet wide and 38 feet long but only 8 feet wide and 35 feet long for motor buses. Thus the trolley coaches had the same capacity of the streetcars they replaced.

Mack built 120 trolley coaches in 1936, 60 No's. 126-185 with Westinghouse motors, 60 No's. 301-360 with General Electric motors. 20 additional were purchased in 1937, 10 No's. 186-191 & 195-198 with WH motors and 10 No's. 361-370 with GE motors. The demo No. 192 with a GE motor was purchased in 1939. 50 trolley coaches were purchased in 1947 from Kenworth, 25 No's. 400-424 with WH motors and, 25 No's. 425-449 with GE motors and were the only Kenworth trolley coaches ever built. Portland Traction Co. tried to cancel the contract with Kenworth before delivery but was unsuccessful.

As the trolley coaches arrived on the property, street car lines were replaced by TC's and various route changes were made to improve service.

Trolley coach lines are listed in order of date service was activated, dates in operation and the car barn where they were based:

- **Eastmoreland Line**- Operated out of the Sellwood car barn from August 30, 1936 to October 1, 1938 then out of Ankeny Barns to November, 1948, then from Center Street to June 10, 1955, and reactivated from October 29, 1956 to Dec. 31, 1956.
- **Foster Road Line**- Operated out of Ankeny Barns from September 27, 1936 to June 15, 1951, then out of Center Street to June 10, 1955.
- **Hawthorne Line**- Operated out of Ankeny Barns from September 27, 1936 to June 15, 1951, then from Center Street to June 10, 1955.
- **Sandy Blvd. Line**- Operated out of Ankeny Barns from September 27, 1936 to June 15, 1951, then from Center Street

Portland's Trolley Bus System continued from page 3

to June 10, 1955, reactivated from Sept. 29, 1957 to Jan. 29, 1958.

- **Williams Ave. Line-** Operated out of Piedmont Barn from Feb. 21, 1937 to Feb. 17, 1952.
- **St. Johns Line-** Operated out of Piedmont Barn from April 11, 1937 to May 5, 1940 via Shaver, operated via Greeley cutoff to Jan. 29, 1958, reactivated Feb. 25, 1958 to Oct. 23, 1958.
- **Third Ave. Line-** Operated out of Savier carbarn from May 23, 1937 to Oct. 22, 1938, then out of Ankeny to August 10, 1953.
- **Sellwood Line-** Operated out of Ankeny Barn from May 24, 1940 to November, 1948, then out of Center Street to June 10, 1955, reactivated from October 29, 1956 to Dec. 31, 1956.
- **Interstate Ave. Line-** Operated out of Piedmont Barn from May 5, 1940 to Jan. 29, 1958, reactivated February 25, 1958 to October 23, 1958.
- **Mississippi Ave. Line-** Operated out of Piedmont barn from Feb. 6, 1949 to January 29, 1958, reactivated February 25, 1958 to October 23, 1958.

July 2, 1950- Motor bus service was substituted for TC's on Sundays and holidays. November 21, 1952- Motor bus service was substituted on Saturdays. Trolley coaches were operated only on weekdays from that date until end of TC service on Oct. 23, 1958.

Ridership dropped rapidly after the end of World War II and the Traction company resumed scrapping street car lines and purchasing replacement motor buses except for the 50 Kenworth trolley coaches.

October 23, 1958 marked the end of trolley coach service in Portland. Transit service remained all bus until the MAX blue line was placed into operation to Gresham, less than 30 years later.

Sources: *The Trolley Coach in North America* by Mac Sebree and e-mails from Paul Ward, Alan Eisenberg, and Steve Morgan.

Seattle's Trolley Bus System

Steve Morgan

The "Link" light rail system (sometimes called Central Link, since Tacoma Link opened in 2003) opened on July 18th. Link is a project of Sound Transit, not King County Metro. KCM does not plan to change its bus routes in connection with this until its next regular scheduled change (these are called "shake-ups" at Metro), on September 19th. Several bus routes will be changed at that time, but among the most interesting changes are that Metro is constructing extensions to two of its trolley bus-routes, to connect with light rail, and these are currently both expected to open on



Metro Transit (Gillig) Trolleybus #4117 seen here on Eastlake Ave N. Heading into Seattle on Route 70.



Metro Transit (Breda) Trolleybus #4202 parked on 24 Ave N.W. This Breda Trolleybus is being used on Route 44 that goes to the Ballard Neighborhood.

September 19th. Route 14 is being extended by about one-quarter mile, west along 31st Avenue to the Mount Baker Link Station, where a new off-street transit center is under construction. And route 36 is being extended by a full mile, east along Myrtle Street to the Othello St. Link station, where it will make a clockwise loop via 38th Avenue, Myrtle Street and MLK Jr. Way and Othello.

These routes, like most of Seattle's trolley bus routes, use 40-foot Gillig trolley buses, of which Metro has 100. These were supplied by Gillig without any propulsion and were outfitted as trolley buses by Metro itself (in 2001-2002), using equipment taken from its retired AM General trolley buses and rehabbed by Alstom (in New York). However, Metro also has 59 articulated trolley buses, built by Breda. These were among 236 dual-mode trolley buses built in 1990-1991 for use on routes serving the Downtown Seattle Tunnel. All were retired in 2003-2005, and trolley

Seattle's Trolley Bus System continued from page 4



Metro Transit (Breda) Trolleybus #4202 turning onto Market Street after a short layover on 24 Ave N.W. in the Ballard neighborhood.



Inbound Metro Transit (Gillig) Trolleybus #4125 on bus Route 70. The trolleybus is right now heading down Fairview Ave N. as the destination sign indicates.

bus service in the tunnel ended permanently in January 2005, but Metro decided to keep 59 Bredas for use on its surface ETB routes, and converted them to pure-trolley vehicles, removing all of the diesel propulsion equipment, which greatly reduced their weight and made them more efficient and reliable. The 59 vehicles were renumbered from the dual-mode fleet number series, 5000-5235, into a new series, 4200-4258, and the conversion program lasted from 2004 to 2007. The articulated Breda trolley buses operate only on routes 7, 43, 44 and 49 but they provide almost all of the services on those routes. Seattle's other trolley routes – ETB's are commonly just called "trolleys" in Seattle – are routes 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 12, 13, 14, 36 and 70. Route 70 was the latest to open, in 2001, while route 49 was created by splitting of route 7 into two parts in 2005 and renumbering of the northern half as 49. The last active coach of

Metro's previous group of articulated trolley coaches, the 49 MAN's built in 1987, was retired July 25, 2007. Only one, No. 4022 was in service on the last day.

Active coach of Metro's previous group of articulated trolley coaches, the 49 MAN's built in 1987, was retired July 25, 2007. Only one, No. 4022 was in service on the last day.

Photos courtesy of Rick Mendenhall



Metro Transit (Breda) Trolleybus #4202 on 24 Ave N.W. in the Ballard Neighborhood.



Metro Transit (Breda) Trolley bus #4202 on 24 Ave N.W. in the Ballard Neighborhood.

Seattle Transit Update *by Roy Bonn*

South Lake Union Streetcar

The Seattle Railway and Power Company built a streetcar line on Westlake Avenue in 1890 where much of the present streetcar runs. The Seattle Municipal Railway converted the last two streetcar routes in Seattle, # 19 Eight Avenue Northwest, and # 21 Phinney, that operated on Westlake Avenue, to trolley coaches in April 1941.



Purple Streetcar at the end of the South Lake Union Streetcar line on Fairview Ave N.

The South Lake Union Streetcar celebrated its 2nd anniversary on 12-12-2009. The first year ridership averaged 1273 daily passengers, 35% above the original estimates. The line is 1.3 miles in length with a planned extension to Ballard and possibly to the U of W. Paul Allen's company, Vulcan, is developing the area into a biotechnology & bio-medical center and companies like Amazon.com who will be moving to one of the new office buildings as they are completed.



Purple Streetcar at the end of the South Lake Union Streetcar line on Fairview Ave N.

Seattle Streetcar

Construction on the city's First Hill neighborhood with Capitol Hill and the International District streetcar line (Broadway line) will be expedited. The line is anticipated to



South Lake Union Streetcar Red car heading down (North) Terry Ave N. to the end of line.

begin operation in 2013 rather than 2016 as originally planned. The city plans to begin construction of the 2 mile line in 2012. The exact route will be determined as part of the environmental review process over the next 2 years but will extend to the Jackson Street terminus of the Waterfront Streetcar line. The project is fully funded.



Red car heading up Westlake Ave N. to Downtown Seattle.

Sound Transit Light Rail

The 1.7 mile south extension of the light rail line from Tukwila station to Seatac Airport opened on 12-19-2009. Daily passenger count has averaged 15,900 riders for the first 6 months of operation and is expected to increase to 21,000 with the extension. In Feb. 2010, the SR 99 bus will be truncated from downtown Seattle to operate from the Tukwila station to Federal Way. The total light rail miles in operation are 15.6.

The 3.15 mile extension from Westgate Center to U of W is projected to open in 2016. The line will be built in twin tunnels with a station for Capitol Hill, also to be served by the Broadway Streetcar, and one at the University near Husky Stadium. Demolition and cleanup work on the Capitol Hill station site started in February with utility relocation started in November with electric and telephone cables being buried and



An inbound (North) train heading to downtown Seattle coming out of the Beacon Hill Tunnel.

poles removed. The tracks at the Capitol Hill station will be 60 feet underground. Work is also underway next to I-5 to prepare for tunneling for the undercrossing. Work started in February at the University station site with relocation of utilities, new concession stands and removal of the small buildings.

Design and engineering is underway for extension from the University station to the Northgate shopping Mall. Funding has been approved by the voters.



Sound Transit Light Rail train heading to Seatac Airport, Sound Transit maintenance shop facility and yard are off to the left.



Looking at the Eastside of the Sound Transit Light Rail maintenance shop and rail yard. In the foreground is where Sound Transit is expanding their rail yard.



Outbound South train going onto trestle that will take it in to the Beacon Hill Tunnel and on to the Seatac Airport.

Important Information about The Transfer

We will be changing the way we deliver this newsletter to you. We are doing this for two reasons: to reduce the cost (printing and postage) and to improve the visual quality of the content, for example providing high resolution color photos. We will switch to electronic delivery of *The Transfer* beginning with the next issue (which should be before spring of 2010). We will send you notification when the next issue is available and a link to a web site where you can view the issue or download and print a copy. To give you an example of how this will work, you can see an electronic copy of this issue in full color by going to this web site: oerhs.org/transfer.

To notify you when the next and future issues are available, we need your email address. Please send an email to: transfer@waynejones.net with your name (as shown on the OERHS membership list) and the email address you would like us to send the notification to. Of course, we will respect your privacy and

we will only use your email address to send a single notification that a new *The Transfer* is ready and a link where you can get it—we will never send promotional material or give or sell your email address to any other person or organization.

The electronic copy that you will get can be printed in full color (or black and white of course) on your printer at home if you prefer to read *The Transfer* the traditional way. Starting now, we will also begin archiving back issues on the OERHS web site so in the future you will always be able to refer back to previous issues. We believe you will appreciate the higher quality pictures that this process will provide to all the interesting photos that accompany our articles.

Of course, you might ask: “Why don't you just print *The Transfer* in color and continue to mail it?”. Of course we could do that but after looking at what it would cost to print in color, even using inexpensive on-line printing companies, it would be far out of the society's budget and not possible without significantly increasing annual dues, something we are sure would not be welcome.

The Museum Metal Shop Advances

Greg Bonn

Efforts to convert a part of the east half of the shop into a functional metal fabrication and repair shop and now, saw filing shop, took a giant leap forward these past few months. The saw filing equipment, donated earlier in the year, was located to provide working access to each machine. Parts that were removed to ease transporting the equipment to the museum were reassembled and missing parts were noted. Some of the saw filing machines have already provided service to the sawmill crew just prior to steamup.



Overall view of new shop. Donated saw filing equipment ready for use in the machine shop.

A sheet metal shear and break were positioned on either side of a sturdy new table that also supports a reconditioned compound roll former. This set of rolls took four people several hours to clean and work the rust out before the hand crank would make one full turn. It is one of the pieces of equipment donated in the seventies during the transition from Rose City Transit to TriMet and has been in storage since. This equipment will allow us to fabricate many of the sheet metal parts used on the cars and other projects on the site.

Additional equipment coming out of storage for reassembly and use in the shop include an old Buffalo belt drive floor standing drill press, thought to have mysteriously disappeared during the move from



Greg Bonn, who managed the setup of the new metal shop, explains the layout.

the Trolley Park. It was found, one piece at a time, while digging through one of the storage trailers, looking for parts to put some other tool back together. It was a great find and a well needed tool for the shop. Resembling an archeological dig, the parts were laid out on the shop floor as they were located and removed from the trailer, cleaned and oiled and readied for assembly. With the addition of a new belt, it will be like new.

Although finding this equipment or the pieces to put it back together and making it into a useable tool takes time, having it available when its needed makes all the efforts worth it. There is still a lot of work to be done to complete the shop including sorting through storage, cleaning, equipment layout and painting. The best thing is...most of the work is indoors...dry and heated.

The wood shop is also in transition, new (to us) machinery is being added, some from storage and others by donation. The layout will be changed, not only to allow for the additional machines but also to provide needed work space required to operate the equipment while leaving room for layout and assembly.



Restoration work on the controller for electric locomotive 254 by John Halls.

Editor's Note

Let me introduce myself if I may. I am Wayne Jones and this is my first issue of *The Transfer*. I have just taken over the position of editor from the vary capable hands of Roy Bonn who has been its editor for many years now. In fact, Roy was the first editor back about 1960 and for many years, off and on, since then, his most recent stint lasting the past nine years. He has decided it is time to take a well-deserved break but will continue to contribute articles as you can see by the *Portland Trolley Bus* and *Seattle Transit* articles in this issue.

This is the first issue for 2010, the last issue was volume 15, issue 3, summer of 2009. (There was no fall 2009 issue)

I always welcome your comments and suggestions and of course article contributions. Please email me at transfer@waynejones.net.