

HEADEND

The Journal of the New York Museum of Transportation

SPRING 2010

THE GREAT TROLLEYVILLE PARTS DIVISION EVENT

By Charlie Lowe

PART TWO

We last left Charlie Lowe and Tony Mittiga in the middle of a Cleveland auction of spare parts and components from the Trolleyville U.S.A. collection. Charlie had put NYMT's name on a couple of compressors and some resistor grids, but there was much more to be had. Let's join them, as we present the conclusion of the saga...

On and on we wound our serpentine path around the warehouse. A rail bender came up, which by general acclamation went to NYMT. Two large car jacks got away but went to a worthy museum. A lot containing about 20 trolley poles was assigned to NYMT for distribution among five museums, a point of honor for NYMT. A large lot of trolley catchers and retrievers, but mostly consisting of less desirable retrievers, was assigned to Fort Smith Trolley Museum for distribution to several others including NYMT. I desperately wanted a catcher and base for 437, and since Tony and I helped the Fort Smith rep sort through the bin we were awarded with a catcher, a base and three retrievers, all in good condition. (A catcher recently sold on eBay for \$449, so we did well.)

In the end, NYMT's haul included the following highlights:

- Two WH DH25 compressors for 161 and 168
- Resistor boxes and grids for 437
- Catcher and base for 437 plus three retrievers
- Ohio Brass Form 1 Trolley base for 437
- Eight trolley poles, one with a base
- Two Tomlinson couplers (from 1200-series Shaker Heights cars)
- One mile of overhead parts (ex-Johnstown Traction Company)
- Two Brill signal bells for 437
- A screw-type rail bender
- One ex-Chicago, North Shore & Milwaukee wire tension gauge
- Ex-CTS 021 tower trailer car
- Two ex-Lake Shore Electric Ry. work flat trailer trucks
- Two signal boxes
- A vast supply of screws, bolts, and nuts

The assignment of the parts went on continuously from about 9:30 a.m. to about 5:00 p.m. Tony and I were afraid to take a lunch break for fear of missing anything. One hilarious incident occurred about halfway through the parts assignment session. Bill Wall had felt bad about the museums such as NYMT which were not getting electric cars. Previously, Bill had collected all the trolley controller and brake handles which did not belong to any car in the Trolleyville collection. Calling one representative from these museums over to a quiet corner of the warehouse, Bill then

spilled out on the floor the contents of a large box which, to our amazement, turned out to be trolley controller handles. While I dove into the very center of the mass of people crowding around the handles, I did take a moment to consider how comical it was for grown men to be scurrying in like a pack of wild dogs, ready to devour the handles whole! I thought it was a great way to break the tension of a stressful event.

Finally, everything was settled. Each of the part lots had a tag with a museum name on it. Now it came time to break up some of the lots, and then to load up the waiting trucks. NYMT had charge of breaking up two lots, one consisting of trolley poles and another consisting of spare parts including the coveted trolley base. I called over the museums interested in poles, and we took turns taking our poles, one at a time, until they were all split up. Tony and I were in charge of breaking up another lot, one that contained the trolley base for 437.

At this point it seemed that the way to go was to load up. Carts and forklifts were flying all around the warehouse. When we needed help, especially with the crates of parts and the two compressors, we flagged one of the forklifts to lend a hand. By 9:30 we were all loaded. Dinner followed with some of the volunteers from other museums.




Buckets full of overhead hardware are just part of the haul, and will be valuable for future extension of our trolley line.

The next morning, with everything except for the tower car loaded into our U-haul truck for the trip to Rochester, Tony and I made a quick stop back at the warehouse. Parts loading was still underway. As I walked through the emptying warehouse, I strolled over to the parlor car *Toledo*. The car body was in great shape, but all the electrical equipment had been stripped from it. The car owed its existence to use as a cottage on Lake Erie. This car and an Iowa freight motor in poor condition were both going to

Pennsylvania Trolley museum, with the freight motor providing electrical parts for *Toledo*. Suddenly, I realized that PTM has a broad-gage railway and that the work car trucks under *Toledo* might be useful under NYMT's line car 2. With representatives of the involved museums either still at the warehouse or in easy phone contact, it was decided that NYMT could, as one feature of yet another "deal" made this weekend, have the trucks. It turned out to be an hour well spent.

Finally, Tony and I were on the road about 12:30; we reached NYMT about five hours later. Ted Strang, Jack Tripp and Carlos Mercado were ready and waiting for us to help unload. Ted came up with using the auger truck boom as a way to unload the two compressors. The crates were unloaded part by part in fire brigade fashion. The faithful NYMT pallet jack that saw much duty in the warehouse in Cleveland was used to good advantage getting the parts out of the way at NYMT. By 8 o'clock or so, the job was done and I was free to return the U-haul truck.

The Postscript took place on December 4 when a Silk Road truck delivered the new tower car and the two work car trucks for line car 2. As had been the case in Cleveland, we were favored with good weather, but also blessed with a large crew of volunteers. Charlie Lowe, Bob Achilles, Jack Tripp, Dick Luchterhand, Bob Miner, Dick Holbert, Jim Dierks, Tony Mittiga, Paul Monte and Carlos Mercado all joined in. After several hours of struggle, we had the tower car inside the barn on track 1 and the trucks stored on the main barn lead near line car 2. The Great Trolleyville Parts Division Event was over for NYMT. 

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

It isn't often we are blessed with a "two for the price of one" volunteer, but our subjects this time are just that: Meet Beth Adams and her son, Trevor.



Maybe we should say, "Meet Trevor Adams and his mom, Beth", since Trevor's intense interest in trains is pretty much behind the involvement of this valuable duo. We'll get to him in a few minutes, but first let's find out more about Beth.

Born in Syracuse, the youngest of seven children, Beth recalls fun times with her brother, Pete (fifth in the line of kids), who had a nice 4' x 8' train layout, complete with scenery. It was a strictly hands-off arrangement for Beth...she could hang around and watch the trains roll, but wasn't allowed to touch them. Pete had a generous streak, though, and he would allow Beth to tag along when he went to a small, downtown Syracuse hobby shop that sold HO trains. Extra added attraction: the shop was right next door to a caramel corn

store! They rode the bus unaccompanied, with Pete in his early teens and Beth younger than 10. Beth wonders aloud as she tells this, "Would we do that today?"

The ride from their city home to the hobby store on the Syracuse "Centro" bus system was straight-forward and quick, with no transfers. Somehow the transportation bug didn't bite on those short bus rides. Worse yet, Pete took his trains with him when he got his own apartment a few years later, so it was looking grim for Beth to get hooked on trains or buses or anything with wheels. Dad did have a career in car sales, but there weren't any family members in railroading, and they even *flew* when the family took a vacation trip to Florida.

After high school, Beth moved to Rochester to attend St. John Fisher College, where she majored in international studies and languages (Spanish and Italian). She helped earn her tuition and expenses by working at Wegman's as a cashier and at the customer service desk. Hmm...there's some experience that might come in handy someday, say, at a museum ticket desk.

Beth spent a year after graduation, studying at the University of Salamanca, in Spain. As most of us know, the train systems in Europe provide fast, frequent service, and Beth was able to take advantage of this often. A bus trip would take her to the Madrid central station, and trains would whisk her from there to places throughout Spain and also France. She loved the busy station in Madrid and recalls how easy it was to get around, with the various rail lines and transit systems all interconnected and coordinated. Clear, understandable maps and directions, plus frequent service, made traveling by train in Europe a breeze, even if one didn't speak the local language.

Upon her return to U.S. soil, Beth began working for Citigroup on Garnsey Road. Her customer service position took advantage of her language knowledge, and she frequently handled difficult student loan cases with foreign students. She spent nine years in this work, and currently teaches Spanish at Monroe Community College.

Beth met her husband-to-be when they were both working at Citibank (they suspect it was a set-up by a mutual friend). They were married in 1992; ask them sometime to tell you about the transportation aspects of their honeymoon trip from Aruba to Venezuela! Mike has worked in the financial field most of his career, after graduating from RIT in 1980 with a bachelors degree in business administration, followed by an MBA. He has worked at Citibank and Frontier/Global Crossings, and is now a Senior Financial Analyst at Bausch & Lomb.

So far, we still haven't found a train connection that will bring this story to the volunteer ranks at NYMT. Mike tells us his father had had model trains, but Mike's younger brother broke them, and anyway by that time dad's priorities were family, not model trains. However, Mike's grandfather grew up in Russia, and served in the white army during the Russian revolution, supporting Tsar Nicholas II. His role (ah...I think we're on to something) had him in charge of transporting troops by train. (Our mind temporarily drifted away at this point to recall that great scene in "Dr. Zhivago", with the Red Army lined up along the railway tracks as Commissar Strelnikov's bright red armored train thundered past with the soldiers thrusting their fists in the air hollering "Strelnikov" in unison.)

(Continued...)

Back to important things. When the Adams' son, Trevor, was just a year old, he was already getting in touch with his great grandfather's train history. He had a wooden Thomas the Tank Engine locomotive, and was definitely hooked. His parents discovered NYMT in the Democrat & Chronicle, and came for a track car ride. By age 4, Trevor was into HO gauge trains, starting with a Santa Fe diesel from Uncle Pete, and another Thomas train from Santa Claus. Today, at age 8, his layout consists of two side-by-side tables each 3' x 6'. Beth and Mike tell us that Trevor is very resourceful, making scenery out of discarded styrofoam packing, etc. He's made several tunnels that way, but prefers the paper mache method that our own Bill Chapin and Jerry Doerr trained him on during one of our Bring Your Own Train seasons.

As you can see from the accompanying picture, Trevor always shows up when Beth is on duty in the gift shop. He helps stamp tickets when he's not running something on the museum HO layout. We're sure he'll be a great addition to the model railroad team in a few years, and we'll look forward to more involvement from him as he grows up.

Meanwhile, we are happy to count his mom, Beth, as one of our volunteers in the gift shop and at the ticket desk. With her background in customer service, she keeps things running smoothly and always has a welcoming smile for entering visitors. Thanks, Beth (and Trevor!). 🚂🚂🚂

FEEDBACK

We're always glad to hear from our members, with their questions or comments. Is there some aspect of local transportation history you'd like us to cover? Any of the museum's activities that you'd like to hear more about? Perhaps something we've written in HEADEND that went beyond your technical understanding that we could expand on? Or maybe you have a little "oral history" about trolleys, buses, trains or other transportation in our area that you'd like to share with our readers around the country. Don't be shy. Contact us at info@nymtmuseum.org. We look forward to your contributions that keep HEADEND relevant, and your suggestions that keep NYMT responsively serving our members and the general public. Thank you!

HOW TO UNLOAD...

Over the years these pages have shown numerous equipment deliveries, all involving plenty of effort on the part of museum volunteers, special equipment, detailed planning and a dollop of good luck. Here's a step-by-step account of the arrival and unloading last December of our new tower car that will be so critical to our overhead line maintenance and future construction.

The tower car, like most of our rail-borne acquisitions, would be in the care of Silk Road Transportation whose big rigs and trained drivers are just right for this kind of job. The company is headquartered in not-too-far-away Arkport, NY, and a big part of their business lies in hauling transit cars from systems around the country to rebuilding facilities in Hornell, NY. As a result, their trailers and techniques have been honed for efficient, quality service.

The Silk Road trailers are fitted with "rails" to fit the standard 4' 8 1/2" track gauge of most (and our) railroad and transit cars. Loading and unloading requires lining up the full rig with a straight section of railroad track in an area where surrounding terrain is even with the top of the rails.

After positioning the rig this way, the front end of the trailer is hydraulically lowered to the ground and the "gooseneck" that connects the front of the trailer to the truck is removed. Now, with the help of a special ramp and an on-trailer winch, a rail car can be transferred between the rail yard and the trailer. Simple, right?

Not so fast. Despite what seems like generous acreage surrounding our facility, there is precious little space available to unload rail cars and to maneuver the heavy equipment involved, so some advance planning on our part was needed. After considering several alternatives, it was decided to unload at the only part of our rail line where the terrain is up at rail-top level: the track car loading platform. The length of relatively straight track here is not really long enough, but there wasn't much choice. We crossed our fingers, borrowed the Chapter fork lift, and prepared for the big event.

We were already happy about Silk Road's tower car delivery, since it was piggybacked on the move of another car and saved us a lot in delivery costs. Our delight continued as the truck pulled in with the tower car sitting pretty, having more or less survived its long trip from Cleveland, via Arkport. After a brief conference with driver Don Egresi, our suggested drop area was confirmed and we all got to work. Well, at least Don did. We all watched in awe as he backed the truck and trailer between our parked cars, trolley platform, milking parlor, and other obstacles, and after some back-and-forth work spotted the trailer for unloading.



Driver Don Egresi skillfully maneuvers the huge truck and trailer into position for unloading the tower car.

The first task after lowering the trailer and driving the truck away with the gooseneck, was to assemble and position the ramp between the trailer and our track. Everything in the rail museum business is heavy, and the ramp components were no exception. Don let us "learn by doing" as we dragged the parts into position and secured them with large bolts.



Let's see...insert tab A into slot B on angle bracket 17, taking care to maintain gauge while simultaneously...

Once the ramp was ready, a final adjustment of the trailer was needed to completely align its rails with the ramp. Don assured us that a couple of nudges by the fork lift would slide the trailer sideways and into position. We were all a little doubtful, but Bob Miner slipped the forks under the trailer, gave a little lift, and easily jogged the trailer over, just as we had been told.



The trailer shifts easily into alignment. But the shadows are lengthening this afternoon, and there's much still to be done.

Another faithful piece of equipment was called to duty...the tractor Charlie Lowe uses for various maintenance jobs came out to help hold the tower car from rolling down the ramp and off to points south. Carefully and slowly, the car was allowed to roll down the ramp, and soon enough it was safely on NYMT rails, parked out of the way for the rest of the action.



The tower car is ready to come down the ramp...all we need to do is make sure it doesn't get away from us.

Next up were the two work car trucks Charlie had been able to add to our Cleveland haul. Using the tractor and the trailer's winch, these trucks were also carefully sent down the ramp onto our rails.

It's safe to say that one of the hardest workers during all this was Don Egresi. He probably could have just sat in his warm cab and let us do the grunt work. In fact, he could have told us no way was he going to try to maneuver his rig into the small landing area we designated. But we've learned from many other jobs with Silk Road that customer satisfaction is a

personal commitment on the part of their drivers, and Don's invaluable help was a great example of that.

After dismantling the ramp and helping Don load up his tools and equipment, we watched as he reconnected the truck and trailer and drove off into the gathering twilight. We immediately set to work getting the work car trucks spotted on the main barn lead and the tower car placed on track 1 inside the car barn. Most of this work was done in the dark, using track motor car TC1 for switching duty. ~~████████~~



One down and one on the way...the work car trucks are off the trailer and reporting for duty.



The tower car is silhouetted by TC1's headlight as the curtain comes down on the final act of a busy day.

WHAT'S A TOWER CAR?


First of all, if it isn't already obvious, "tower" rhymes with "power", not "rower". The idea is that our trolley line maintenance personnel can be lifted up on this "tower" so they can safely work on the overhead wire and hardware. The car is a heavy-duty piece of track car equipment that was specifically designed and built for the job.

Charlie Lowe has been checking out the tower car and while he's found some repair work needed, he's also discovered some clues to the car's origins. After some sleuthing, and based on the colors of several paint layers, he believes the tower car was created by Cleveland Transit System in the 1950s using components from a truck-mounted tower apparatus that dated back at least to the late 1930s. (Cont'd)

The car has a rotatable platform positioned on a manually operated lift. Normal “storage” position is with the lift lowered and the platform aligned with the car and track, in order to safely clear adjacent equipment, door openings, etc. In use, the platform is raised by means of a crank, and maintenance of the overhead wire can be performed at chest level, with personnel safely surrounded by a railing. The platform is oblong, so that when rotated 90 degrees the platform ends overhang the sides of the car by several feet. This brings pole and bracket arm work within reach and gives flexibility for work on curves and at switches. To keep the whole affair from tipping over, there are heavy rail grabbers that are attached to the rails before lifting, plus a hand brake to secure the car.



Solidly built and in good condition, the museum's new tower car will soon be ready for service on our overhead line.

The museum mission reminds us that our duty is to collect, preserve, restore and exhibit our transportation history, and we usually think of that in terms of equipment and artifacts. But it's also applicable to maintaining our operating assets. Maintenance of our overhead wire is essential for safe, reliable trolley operations. So having “collected” this tower car, we are well set to “preserve” and “restore” (build) our overhead, so we can “exhibit” the interurban era for our visitors. 

BOOKS AND TAPES

Several donations of rail and transportation books and VHS video tapes have arrived at the museum in the last half of 2009 and more have come in during this year. A lot of these great titles are available for sale in our gift shop, and at bargain prices!

For the books we receive, in all cases, we check our library first, and if the title is one that deserves to be on our shelves we put it there. In a few cases—local subjects and/or relatively rare items—we'll keep a duplicate or even triplicate copy for safekeeping. But, if the book doesn't pass this test, it's surplus and can be sold in the gift shop. We always

explain this policy when donors provide us with books, and they always are fine with it, as the gift shop profits go into our “joint enhancement” fund to pay for things that directly benefit our visitors.

There is a large portion of the books in the shop that have price tags labeled “DD”, and mostly with \$10.00 written below it. “DD” refers to “Destination Depot”, and sales of these books, many of which were donated to the cause by the Rochester Chapter, NRHS, provide a portion of the funds needed to extend our trolley operation all the way to RGVRRM's Industry Depot.

You really should see the array of books on sale for the bargain price of ten bucks! There are local-interest books, such as Mary Hamilton Dann's “Rochester and Genesee Valley Rails” that profiles the background of the many railroads that served our area. There also is a good variety of William Gordon's books on local traction...city trolleys and the interurban lines that reached out from Rochester to Buffalo, Syracuse, Geneva and Sodus.

Beyond this there's a wide array of railroad-specific titles as well as the popular general railroad books that do a great job of covering the history of railroads and explore their operations, past and present, throughout the world. More than just “coffee table books” full of pretty pictures, these publications are well-researched and loaded with information of importance to any fan or student of railroading. Many of these books have original prices on them in the \$50 to \$60 range, so picking up a slightly used copy for just \$10 is a real opportunity.

We realize that DVDs are the popular medium now for watching video, but most of us still have functioning VCRs, and there's no reason to turn our noses up at the great rail video productions that exist on tape...especially at the bargain price of \$7 per video! As with donated books, we check to see if the video tapes are relevant to our part of the country or cover trolley operations somewhere. If not, the next stop is the gift shop. There's a wide selection of subjects available, from small or unusual short lines to the big railroads, and from contemporary operations to films from the glory days of steam and early diesels.

While we're at it, we've got plenty of brand new books and DVDs available too. “The End of the Line” about the Rochester Subway is a real treat on DVD, with lots of interesting new footage not contained on the original VHS version. Our own Charlie Lowe's “Trolleys to Glen Haven” is a must for every rail and traction enthusiast. There's much more. Stop by some time...we'll see you in the gift shop!



THE WAY WE WERE

A set of snap shots made by early volunteer Rick Holahan surfaced recently, and we thought we'd share some of them with our readers from time to time as space permits, to remind us all of our humble beginnings. This installment deals with an early phase of construction of our railroad.

Most of us are familiar with the early history of our museum. We often have to clarify for visitors today that while some operating museums were able to take over an abandoned rail line, NYMT had to *build its own*. Back in the 1970s, with the vision of an operating trolley at a museum of transportation, our predecessors were able to secure the donation of Rochester Subway rail and track hardware from the portion of

the Subway line that was still lying fallow downtown and on the west side of the city.

While a Federal work training grant provided a significant boost to the effort, much of the work was in the hands of Director Mike Storey and dedicated volunteers who put in countless hours of hard labor, salvaging the rails, delivering them, and building the railroad. Money and equipment loans came from some of the trustees who were in a position for such assistance, but that was matched by the energy and enthusiasm of ordinary guys who wanted to help out.



Much of the museum railroad was built with Rochester Subway rail, here being salvaged in the mid-1970s near Mt. Hope Ave.

Trustee Richard Kaiser's electrical contracting company, Horacek-Hayden, specialized in railroad work such as replacing grade crossing signals. The company contributed the use of trucks, trailers and equipment, and also provided salvaged materials. It wasn't always possible to coordinate the trucks and the volunteers, and at least one pile of laboriously-salvaged rail, stashed beneath a street overpass bridging the Subway right-of-way, was buried in the City's program of filling in under such spans as part of a Greenfield Project.



Struggling through the winter is nothing new at NYMT; here, track is laid near Giles Crossing on a 20 degree Feb. 5, 1978.

Not only the rail our visitors are riding on has an "historic" aspect; the ballast that supports it has a history too. Much of it came from the abandoned Lehigh Valley right-of-way a few miles south of the museum. Tracks that once carried the famous *Black Diamond* were torn up in the late 1970s after the Lehigh was incorporated in Conrail, and a local contractor permitted us to scoop up the stone ballast that remained (along with years of cinders from the steam locomotives).



The Horacek-Hayden dump truck and a bulldozer gather ballast near LV's former E. River Rd crossing in the fall of 1978.

As the loop around the main buildings was completed, the line marched on to the southwest, but over terrain that needed some help before it could become a real railroad. The Horacek-Hayden Caterpillar D-6 went to work moving earth from a lower part of the hillside to create a section of fill on which to lay track.



Danny Wilson is at the controls, pushing earth uphill. Quite a contrast to the wooded landscape our riders see today.

One of those "January thaws" Rochester is known for gave an opportunity to move some dirt in mid-winter 1978, but the heavy rain that accompanied the mild temperatures did their best to inhibit progress. The Cat eventually bogged down in soupy mud as rainwater drained downhill. *(Continued...)*



The D-6 has met its match in rain-saturated, semi-frozen ground, and it'll be a while before more work gets done.

But, the work continued...gradually pushing southwest, beyond what we now call the S-curve and BOCES Crossing and part way down the long grade toward the pine woods.



The weather isn't quite so bad today, as Bill Reid unloads some ballast at a new end-of-track in December, 1980.

And that's where things stood for some time. As Charlie Lowe notes in his *Guide Book to the Electric Railway Collection of the New York Museum of Transportation*, "The railroad was deemed in good enough condition that public track car rides were first offered on July 19, 1980. The ride terminated at the end of track, which was just south of the present BOCES crossing, for twelve long years." We'll have to wait for the later chapters in this saga...this is as far as Rick's pictures take us. Suffice it to say, we've come a long way since these first steps in creating the only rail line that connects two rail museums.



Want to read more about NYMT's history and its equipment? The 126 page *Guide Book* is just the ticket. Come visit us some Sunday, and pick one up in the gift shop. Just \$24.95 (minus your 10% member discount!).

SHOP REPORT *by Charles Lowe*

Philadelphia and Western 161 and 168: The two "Cleveland" armatures were removed from the Trolleyville compressors and taken to K.J. Electric where they were fully refurbished. In late March, one of these armatures was installed into the compressor motor for car 161. It was a perfect fit! Shortly thereafter, the second "Cleveland" armature was fit into the compressor in 168. Final adjustments to the brushes were made, and both compressors were test-operated with no problems detected. This work will allow us to have both cars in service during 2010. Four marker lights were cleaned and repaired, and hung on 168. New lantern brackets for 161 have been obtained, the originals having been removed many years ago.

Electrification: The Rochester Chapter of NRHS has donated the auger truck to NYMT. NYMT will be installing a new transmission in this vehicle so that pole-setting can continue this coming summer.

Genesee & Wyoming Caboose 8: Work has concentrated on completing the windows during the winter months. Bob Pearce fabricated the remainder of the 16 window frames, and John Ross modified the opening on window 2 so the standard sashes would fit. Don Quant fabricated the outer, middle and inner jambs for the windows and made a couple of new top jambs where thinner-framed windows had been installed.

John arranged for laminated glass panes from General Glass and installed them. Bob made the outside window trim pieces and the roof eave pieces. John found an unweathered part that could be used as a G&W standard paint sample, and Jay Consadine arranged and delivered custom-matched paint from Sherwin-Williams' Irondequoit store. Don, John, Bob and Jim Dierks painted the window frames and other parts. Bob Achilles and Charlie Lowe reattached the four lantern holders located at each of the car's four corners.



Bob Pearce, our resident cabinet maker, is surrounded by his caboose windows as he paints jambs and other pieces.

Track: In March, the Saturday crew took on several projects. All the Subway track materials, including some 500 tie plates, were brought inside and stacked neatly for future use. The nine ties available for use on the main barn lead were installed on the curve between the switch in front of the barn and the entrance road. Car 437 had derailed here in 2006, and the ties were very weak. Most importantly, though, a 15-foot-long section of 100-pound rail was replaced with 90-pound rail. The stiffer 100-pound rail had straightened as the ties rotted, creating spots of wide gauge. The Saturday work crew, which included Jack Tripp, Bob Achilles, Tony Mittiga, Vin Steinmann, and Charlie Lowe, completed the track work and all cleanup by mid-April.



Charlie Lowe and Bob Achilles pause to survey their handiwork on the main barn lead.
Charles E. Lowe photo

Cleveland Transit System tower car 021: Beginning in early March, several items of work were performed on 021. The car's cracked side frame timber was treated with epoxy and had steel mending bars secured in place. The tower's sliding surfaces for the lift sections were lubricated, greatly easing the raising and lowering of these sections. A rotten tower timber was removed to permit replacement. During

tower paint scraping, two underlying paint colors were found. The layer below the present orange paint is a tan, matching a CTS color from the 1940s. The layer below this was a yellow, matching CTS predecessor Cleveland Railway Company (1910-1942). These discoveries would seem to date the tower to CRC days at which time it probably was used on a “hurry up” truck used to maintain streetcar overhead.

New York State Railways, Rochester Lines city car 437: The retriever obtained from the Trolleyville collection for use on 437 has been cleaned and oiled.

New York Museum of Transportation line car 2: Ted Strang torched off the four bolts holding one center bearing to the Brill 50E2 truck frames obtained last year from Pennsylvania Trolley Museum, freeing it for installation on one of the former lake Shore Electric trucks, also obtained from PTM. Another center bearing is being made available to NYMT by Baltimore Streetcar Museum. These critical parts will permit line car 2 to be placed on the LSE trucks.

New York Museum of Transportation 03: Jay and Todd Consadine have continued work on the work flat car. All old decking was removed and all four new floor beams were in place by the end of March. The drawbar was also reinstalled by the end of March.

RAILROAD COMMISSION SET UP

A fundamental and valuable asset for both the New York Museum of Transportation and the Rochester Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society is the shared rail line that we have jointly created over the past third of a century. We often tell our visitors that unlike many railroad museums and train rides, we didn't inherit a railroad already built...we had to create one ourselves. Plenty of money and “sweat equity” are contained in the mile and a half of mainline that connects our two facilities, and that investment deserves to be protected.

Much more important is the need to guarantee safe operation of our trolleys, track cars and trains for the visiting public. An accident due to deteriorated track could be devastating.

With this in mind we have invested heavily in the past few years to upgrade our railroad track. As reported in these pages, the work needed to replace rotting and split crossties, re-align track, and fix switches was way beyond the time and talents of our volunteers, so we hired professional track contractors. The work has been done quickly and well, with minimal interruption in our operations. A key to this success has been our own evaluation of the line to pinpoint the most important concerns. Dick Holbert has been our man for this job, and with his special training in track management, we've worked steadily toward our goal of a safe, upgraded line.

Since the southern half of the railroad was built by members of the Rochester Chapter, the intention has always been that the maintenance and upgrading were to be a shared responsibility. However, different organizations have differing needs and resources, and we haven't always been at our best in keeping the communications open. Issues have needed to be resolved, such as balancing work done by contractors (for money) against volunteer time spent doing similar work elsewhere on the line.

Recently a “Railroad Commission” has been set up to improve the communications and coordinate this critically important work. The group has two designated members from both

organizations, members who have knowledge and time to contribute: From NYMT, Charlie Lowe and Bob Achilles; from NRHS, Luther Brefo and Pete Gores. It is expected that they will be the central focus for (a) inspecting the line, (b) prioritizing the work, (c) tracking progress, and (d) assuring a proper balance of effort and cost between the two organizations. Overseeing the important task of preserving the railroad for safe, comfortable operations will guarantee a long life for this most valuable asset.

NEW OPERATING RULES

As reported in our last issue, a unified railroad operations rulebook has been created and blessed by the boards of both the New York Museum of Transportation and the National Railway Historical Society, Rochester Chapter. The rules cover operations on our shared rail line, including track cars, trolleys, and trains (all of these in revenue passenger service as well as in maintenance work, hostling, and other equipment moves.)



Mike Dow holds forth at the lectern at the April class, held in comfortable, well-equipped facilities at RIT. Harold Russell photo

As we can imagine, there are a lot of volunteers involved in all these operations, and they all must be certified in the new rules. Three training classes were set up to give everyone a chance to participate, on March 6, April 18, and May 9, 2010.

What's “**hostling**”? Glad you asked. The word's origin is the middle English “hostel” for an inn or place of lodging (and we find this in use today, as in youth hostels and elder hostels). The innkeeper was, therefore, a “hosteler”. One important task for an early innkeeper was taking care of the customers' horses, and the word later began to be applied to the stable man who was responsible for that job.

By the time steam locomotives were running on railroads, the word was spelled “hostler”, and it was a logical move to refer to the man who took care of the “iron horse” as the hostler. In the higher technology of modern railroading, maintenance and repair is handled by specialists, and the hostler's job is primarily to move locomotives around for servicing, orientation, and preparation for service.

TROLLEYS AT TWILIGHT

Many of us volunteers who have labored long into the evening hours during summer projects at the museum have marveled at the beauty of the unspoiled countryside that surrounds us. As the setting sun casts a golden glow across the fields and woods and the day cools, a quiet settles in and the world

becomes still. Perhaps a family of deer come out for a late forage. Sometimes a coyote howl is heard in the distance.

Operating our trolleys in this setting is a great way for us all to enjoy evening at the museum, and we've decided to host "Trolleys at Twilight" on July 17 as one of our summertime events. As a dry run to help our trolley crews train for this event, we're holding a members-only version on Saturday, June 5, from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. We'll skip the extra goodies planned for the public event, but there will be trolley rides and some unique photo opportunities as the day passes into dusk and total darkness. We hope all our members, and those of the Rochester Chapter, NRHS, will join us for this special nighttime event. See you there! 🚲🚲🚲

☾ **Members only "Trolleys at Twilight"** ☾
Join us for this evening special operation as a preview of our public "Twilight" event later in the summer. The time is 7:00, and the date is Saturday, June 5. Trolley rides as darkness settles over the beautiful Genesee Valley countryside. See you there!

SIGHTINGS

History is all around us, and not just at the museum. A recent curb-cut sidewalk enhancement in your editor's neighborhood revealed interesting markings on a manhole cover that had long been covered over. As you may be able to discern in the photo, cast into the cover are the initials "R R & L Co", which stand for Rochester Railway & Light Company.

Throughout the growth of electric power in our area several small companies combined into larger, consolidated operations. In our area, the Rochester Gas & Electric Company was the merger product of three electric companies and a gas company. It joined in 1904 with the Rochester Light & Power Company to create the Rochester Railway & Light Company. This firm not only controlled all the gas and electric business here, but also owned the Rochester Railway Company. This separately managed company ran the streetcars.

The corporate life of RR&L was brief, as in 1909 Rochester Gas & Electric Corporation was formed and the Rochester Railway operations were taken over by New York State Railways. Manhole covers are pretty well indestructible, so many of these RR&L covers have survived to this day. Although only lightly related, they remain additional mementoes of our transportation history. 🚲🚲🚲



And we all know why manhole covers are round, don't we...

ROCHESTER STREETCARS.....No. 54 in a series



New York State Railways, Rochester Lines 568
Photographer Unknown

by Charles R. Lowe

We are in the yard at the rear of the main car house at East Main Station. Our railfan photographer has found a rare subject in car 568. The car's sign reads WEST on the top line and MAIN EAST on the lower line. That should date this photo to 1932 or before, an extremely early date for railfans to be out with their folding Kodak cameras. However, the date of the photo is April 5, 1936, so this is yet another case of the railfans turning a car's sign to a line no longer in operation. WEST—MAIN EAST had its last run as a through route on March 22, 1932; the next day, the WEST—UNIVERSITY and MAIN EAST—ARNETT routes began operation on Main Street.

The 550-579 cars were built in 1904, the 550-559 cars by Brill (in Philadelphia, Pa.) and the 560-579 cars by Brill's then-newly-purchased subsidiary Kuhlman (in Cleveland, Ohio). As was the normal practice of the era, these cars were double-end cars. They

were rebuilt in 1917, and received new trucks at this time or shortly thereafter. Workhorses throughout their careers, the 550s gained notoriety late in their careers when they became among the last of Rochester's two-man double-end cars (most of the low 500s were also double-ended, too).

By the mid-1920s, nearly all of Rochester's streetcar lines had loops at their ends, permitting use of single-end cars. Only the DRIVING PARK (abandoned in 1929), JEFFERSON and CENTRAL PARK lines never had streetcar loops (DRIVING PARK had a trackless trolley loop from 1929 to 1932). In the 1930s, the 550-579 cars ran many miles on the CENTRAL PARK—JEFFERSON route. A 1935 photo shows 572 on the WEBSTER—LYELL line at Culver Road. Both lines in this route had loops, but the loop for the WEBSTER line was two blocks from the end of the line at Culver Road. Use of the loop on Webster Avenue was discontinued so that WEBSTER—LYELL cars could provide streetcar service all the way to Culver Road. Another reason might have been that there were more than enough double-end cars for two routes in Depression-era Rochester.

Once the use of streetcars on the CENTRAL PARK—JEFFERSON and WEBSTER—LYELL routes was abandoned on August 29, 1936 (along with many other lines), the 550-579 cars were hustled off to Blossom Road Yard for scrapping.



New York Museum of Transportation

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