

NEW YORK MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION

HEADEND

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September–December 2019



Car 161 heads southbound approaching Reid's Crossing with a Holly Trolley run on December 7, 2019. C. Lowe photo.

NYMT ROUNDS OUT 2019 WITH STRONG SHOWING FOR HOLLY TROLLEY

Holly Trolley was spread out over the Saturdays and Sundays of the first two weekends in December. Event Chairperson Nancy Uffindell guided the museum through two very busy weekends. Nancy and Chris Playford, with an assist from Dick Holbert, spent much of their time in car 409 serving hot chocolate and cookies to our visitors. Dick also ushered trolley riders to and from the trolley car house on the last Sunday of the event. Nancy Holland, Jim Wiesner, Jim Dierks, Beth Adams and Trevor Adams all served in the gift shop. Our Officers of the Day included Jim Dierks, Dave Coon, Bob Achilles and Doug Anderson. Al Emens and others worked in the model train room. Rick Holahan showed up every day for Holly Trolley to lend a hand with turning heaters on, shoveling snow and spreading salt. The trolley crew included Bob Achilles, Jay Consadine, Charlie Lowe, Carlos Mercado, Bob Sass and Jack Tripp. You can read about the effort to

ready the trolley cars for this event in the “Shop Report” elsewhere in this issue of HEADEND.

Meanwhile, the RIT “Tiger Tracks” model railroad show took place on December 14 and 15. Nancy, Doug Anderson and Sylvia Anderson set things up at the show and served as hosts there. Bob Achilles, Nathaniel Genthner and Nathaniel’s grandfather also helped host the NYMT table at the show.

Out on the trolley, most runs were pleasantly full, while some carried “crush” loadings. A great

many of our visitors were fascinated enough by the trolley ride that they took second and even third rides. All service was provided by car 161, and it performed flawlessly.

It was exciting to see NYMT come so “alive” with visitors during Holly Trolley. With the close of this year’s busy Holly Trolley event, though, NYMT will be closed to the public until late March. This will give volunteers a chance to recharge and then set about projects at the museum during the winter.



Top this column: Jay gives another of his tailored talks to Holly Trolley riders on December 15. Bottom this column: At the end of the last day of Holly Trolley, the trolley crew shuffled the two cars so that car 161 is on track 2. This makes it easier to inspect first in the spring. C. Lowe photos.



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EDITORIAL COMMENT

As our 2019 operating season winds down I am reminded at how very fortunate NYMT is to have such wonderful and caring volunteers. When I take a time-out from whatever I am doing and take a stroll through the museum, I see our volunteers hard at work, the results of projects by volunteers, and happy visitors because of our volunteer effort. As important as our physical assets are, I think there is nothing more important to the museum than its dedicated volunteers.

Charles R. Lowe

SHOP REPORT

New York State Railways, Rochester Lines 1402 (ex-25-44, number unknown) — On a warm October 10, a large crew assembled to apply tarps to car 1402. The work party included Bob Achilles, Carter Brown, Jim

Dierks, Gary Lamphron, Charlie Lowe, Carlos Mercado, Don Quant and John Ross. Two long-stored tarps were carefully applied to car 1402 in a four-hour-long work session. Thanks go to Justin Micillo who, by selling soft drinks at several NYMT events, earned enough income for the 1402 fund to make this re-tarp job able to happen.

Philadelphia and Western 161 and 168 — Jay Consadine and Doug Anderson oiled both cars on September 30.

On October 9, Bob Achilles, Rick Holahan and Taylor Reed met Scott Gleason at RGV with TC-1 and trailer 03. Scott had the steel pilot given to NYMT by RGV all loaded on the forklift and ready to lower down onto trailer 03. This pilot will be used on one of our Strafford cars so that it will have a pilot on both ends.

In early October, Bob Sass installed a new speedometer battery on car 161.

On November 17, Bob Sass and Charlie Lowe sealed leaks at doors and ran both cars over the full length of the rail line. Heaters and lights were all tested and found to be in good condition as well. The between-the-rails walkway on track 1 was lengthened four feet to provide a wider walkway. On November 23, Jay Consadine oiled motor bearings on car 161 and journal boxes on cars 161 and 168. Meanwhile, Bob and Charlie oiled the trolley bases, checked roof wiring connections and inspected trolley wheels on the roof of 161. Bob checked compressor oil levels on both cars. All three then worked on oiling pivot points on seat frames on 161 and re-taped the sliced and worn areas of seat cushions.

It snowed mightily the weekend before Holly Trolley was to begin. A sleet storm passed through the area, with ice coating everything including the trolley wire. That Tuesday, Bob Sass and Charlie Lowe assembled again, and shoveled out critical areas such as grade crossings and the pathway to the trolley barn. The trolley wheels on 161 had been causing trouble for years. A heavy thumping noise could be heard as every HS clamp was passed by the trolley. When the trolley wheels were examined, it was found that their grooves were or had been worn into vee-shaped grooves. This made the wire sit too deeply in the wheel, and the sides of the HS clamps hit the trolley wheels flanges constantly. This was causing unacceptable wear on the HS clamps. It turned out that Bob Miner had cleaned the original U-shaped wheels that the car had come equipped with when it arrived from Iowa in 1996. These trolley wheels were designed to pass by the HS clamps without striking them. Once the U-shaped trolley wheels were installed, it was late in the afternoon, but a test run was necessary. Out went 161 into the darkness!

Except for the headlight, all was dark until the first ice on the trolley wire was encountered. The lights on the car went out, but this was followed by a giant flash that lit the countryside for an instant. Successive outages and arcs became more prevalent as the journey proceeded to Midway, the last quarter mile having some very long outages. The worry became that the car might slow to a

halt with no power, but this did not happen. On the return run there was much less arcing but a second run seemed necessary to completely rid the wire of ice. This second trip became a disaster when the bowline knot tied with the very stiff trolley rope at the north-end trolley pole came undone. Most fortunately, the front pole somehow stayed on the wire, leaving open the option of backpoling the car north. This was done at a crawl, the fear being that the pole would dewire and be un-retrievable since the rope was not attached. Upon reaching Giles, the car was shut down, power on the overhead was shut down, and a harrowing journey to the car's roof finally got the front pole hooked. From here, the trip back into the barn was routine, at which point the trolley rope was retied in a more secure fashion. More snow fell later in the week, and a second session of runs was held on Friday. Running cars often during winter weather was a time-honored way to keep trolley lines open when snow storms struck; running car 161 did the trick for us!

All this work paid off during Holly Trolley as 161 was one of the stars of the event and operated flawlessly.

Track — Rick Holahan and Taylor Reed cleared leaves from the mainline between BOCES and Midway. Considerable additional work was performed in removing weed growth from the loop track between Forest Lane and the Loop Switch. This work was performed on November 26. Just before Holly Trolley runs, a crew consisting of Dick Holbert, Charlie Lowe and Bob Sass repaired three joints with loose bolts.

Facility — Two classic street light “harps” and their ceramic reflectors were provided to NYMT by RGV in late September so that our concrete pole may be erected at the trolley stop at NYMT.

Board — At its October 15 meeting, the Board approved seeking additional funding for the proposed inspection pit. The Board also determined that the museum would be closed to the public after the conclusion of the Holly Trolley event; that it would reopen (without trolley operations) on March 22, 2020; that the first day of trolley operation will be May 17, 2020; and that the museum will continue to be open, with trolley operation, until November 1, 2020.

At its November 19 meeting, the Board approved an agreement with Rochester and Genesee Valley Railroad Museum, allowing its “Santa” trains to reach the waiting shelter at Midway. An allocation was made to permit the digitizing of movies of street railway and Subway operations in Rochester as a preliminary step in creating a DVD highlighting Rochester's street railway history. A resolution was passed re-avowing the practice of having those who make purchases on behalf of the museum to record such purchases on the proper form with proper approvals before making the purchases, and to submit these with receipts after making the purchases.

Rochester Streetcars: No. 96 in a Series By Charles R. Lowe



The morning rush hour is over and NYS-R 437 is pulling in to East Main Station on March 25, 1936. *George Votava photo.*

Somehow, in the 22-year history of ROCHESTER STREETCARS, we have never featured our favorite car, New York State Railways, Rochester Lines car 437. Now, at long last, car 437's time has arrived.

As part of a shift from rough-riding and small single-truck cars, Rochester Railway Co. invested heavily in new cars from 1904 to 1907. A total of 195 new cars were purchased during these years. These were: open cars 25–44 (20 cars); semi-convertible cars 355–449 (95 cars) and 600–639 (40 cars); and closed cars 500–509 (10 cars) and 550–579 (30 cars). This was an average of nearly 50 new cars per year.

Car 437 dates to late 1904 and was among the first lot of five lots total of the 10-window semi-convertibles of 1904–1906. An oddity of the 355-series cars is that the lots were numbered downward from 449 since the car numbers from the mid-340s up to and including 449 were available for new cars in 1904.

As delivered, the 355–449 cars were double-ended but had only a single trolley pole at the center of the roof, and only hand brakes. By 1912, the lack of air brakes was being keenly felt, and conversion of all the 355-series cars to air brakes was commenced at this time.

The next conversion of the 355-series cars was from double-end to single-end operation. This was made possible by the installation of loops at the ends of lines. Single-end cars required controls only at one end, and the saving in maintenance cost was attractive. This conversion took place between 1917 and 1919.

A further cost-cutting conversion took place in the mid-1920s when the 355-series cars were converted to one-man operation. NYMT's car 437 was one of the first three cars so modernized. Rear-entrance-front-exit passenger flow was adopted, and air-controlled turnstiles were installed near the rear platform to ensure payment of fares and to prohibit passengers from routinely exiting at the rear of the car. Air-operated doors replaced hand operated doors, air-powered sanders replaced hand-operated sanders, and larger compressors were installed to meet the demands for a larger air supply. New controllers

with a deadman feature were also introduced. When a motorman of such a car let go of the controller handle, the car's air brakes were put into emergency, the turnstile was unlocked, the sanders were turned on, and the doors opened. Under normal operation, power to traction motors could not be applied with doors open. A side-view mirror on the right side of the car allowed the motorman to see passengers trying to board the car.

A final upgrade on the 355-series cars took place in the late 1920s when the side panels below the drip rail were painted white for safety. When they finally reached this stage, the 355-series cars had almost a circus-style paint scheme, with no less than eight colors involved (barn red roof canvas, olive green body, sienna doors and window sashes, cream window frames, bright yellow car numbers, bright red pinstriping in the white side panels, white side panels and black underbody equipment).

Some 355–449 cars were sent to Syracuse and Utica but, as of 1933, a total of 79 cars were still in Rochester. This changed when eleven lines were bused in August 1936, and all but eight of the 355-series cars were withdrawn from service. Those eight were withdrawn a year later when the University line was bused. While some car bodies were sold, most cars were stripped of their electrical components and the car bodies burned to produce their scrap steel for salvage.

NYMT's car 437 lasted in service until late August 1936. The 437 and 394 car bodies were sold for reuse as a fishing cabin at Lake Lamoka, near Tyrone, N.Y. Seashore Trolley Museum (at Kennebunkport, Maine) eventually obtained rights to the two cars but gave one car to NYMT provided that NYMT remove its car first, freeing the other car for easy shipment to Maine. After selecting car 437 and spending several months preparing

the car for moving (Tony Mittiga was a key player in this), the car was moved to NYMT in August 1997.

Since 1997, several upgrades have been made to the car. A mostly complete "kit" of components awaits final restoration efforts. Trucks and motors were obtained through trading parts with Western Railway Museum, and these were placed under the car in 2003. Since 2005, the car has been inside and on display. It's entirely reasonable to expect that, should a concerted effort be made, car 437 could grace NYMT rails at least occasionally.



Car 437 is seen decorated for the season on December 7, 2019. C. Lowe photo.

REMEMBER, volunteers, NYMT may be closed to the public this winter but jobs still need to be done. Your help in getting NYMT into top condition for the start of the 2020 season is urgently requested! Contact any of the Area Managers for more information.

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