

HEADEND

The Journal of the New York Museum of Transportation

WINTER 2014

THE ACQUISITION OF NEW JERSEY TRANSIT PCC CAR 7 First of a Six Part Series Devoted to NYMT's New PCC Car By Charles R. Lowe, NYMT Trustee

"How would you like a working streetcar?" said the voice on the phone. I could hardly believe my ears.

The person behind the voice, who would like to remain anonymous, has made it his mission to fairly distribute street railway materials and cars to worthy museums. "What car are you talking about?" I asked.

"Four Newark Subway PCCs are being distributed, and I want to know if NYMT would like one," the voice continued.

I replied with the standard "I'll have to take it to the Board" response.

"Well, I don't really have time for Boards and their meetings. These cars have to be sorted out now. They might start to move in two to four weeks."

It was Thursday, August 29, 2013. The next NYMT Board of Trustees meeting would not be convened for over two weeks. I negotiated. "How about I get back to you on next Tuesday, after Labor Day?" I figured that would be enough time to assemble the Board for a special meeting at the museum on Sunday. "Sure," said the voice, "Let me know by Tuesday."

So began NYMT's epic effort to bring a PCC streetcar to Rochester as part of the museum's collection.



Newark Subway car 7 prepares for an inbound run at the Franklin Avenue terminal in 2000, a year before retirement.

Photo by Otto Vondrak

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The Board meeting on the following Sunday took place at one of the picnic benches under the shade of the willow tree. The Board had turned down PCC cars before. I mentioned how the Newark PCCs were in good, complete condition, but had not been operated since 2001; how Rockhill Trolley Museum had brought Newark car 6 back to life in 2011; that a PCC could be a change of pace for our visitors; and that a

PCC car has fewer steps for passengers to negotiate than do the Stratford cars. That was it, however, for the plusses.

I was peppered with questions. How will we *pay* for this car? Where will we *store* it? It should be *inside*! Is it a *single-end* car? How would we run a single-end car without a loop at the south end of the railroad? PCCs *never* operated in Rochester!

"The car is being donated to us," I explained. Storage remained a problem (the Board had previously refused a PCC on those grounds alone). All I could offer was to study the problem. As far as car configuration, I said, "Yes, it is a single-end car, but it has a back-up controller at the rear end of the car." I had already found out that Rockhill Trolley Museum, whose line has no loops, successfully operates its Newark PCC in reverse with the back-up controller and a front-end pole.

It was Bob Achilles, stating that he favored the acquisition and that "we will find a way to store the car inside," who turned the tide of the discussion. The Board voted to acquire one of the cars, and I signaled our intent on Labor Day, one full day before the deadline.

A plan soon developed. While it would be too expensive to enlarge the hay barn, one slot which could be turned into car storage space was the area between Philadelphia snow sweeper C-130 and Northern Texas Traction parlor car 409. Space both inside and outside the barn had to be cleared; a switch and 200 feet of track built; and a door installed on the north end of the barn.

Once the Board agreed to this, I designed a switch and contacted Giambatista Railroad Contractors, our track contractor. Sure, they could build what we needed and, sure, they could supply a frog and point rails, parts we did not have in stock. Trustee Dave Coon, one of NYMT's Facility Co-Managers, found a contractor who could install a roll-up door. Clearing the work site, though, would be an in-house effort.

The Board decided that our Canadian National box car should be de-accessioned as soon as practical. Theoretically that took care of the biggest item in the way of the new track. When we found that an overhead pole was also in the way, I designed a way to set this pole back and span over the long resulting distance with a catenary wire.

The car delivery was quite a puzzle. After considerable study, including an attempt to create a landing pad at NYMT with cross ties, it was decided that the car would have to be delivered to RGVRM and towed north to NYMT. RGVRM readily agreed to this.

Knowing track gauge would be critical because of the narrow-tread streetcar wheels on a PCC, Bob Achilles and a crew measured rail gauge throughout the route the car would follow when towed north. Bob and the crew then installed eleven temporary gauge rods to fix this.

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While waiting for our car to appear, I discovered that an original Kodachrome trolley slide in my collection shows Twin City Rapid Transit (Minneapolis-St. Paul) car 326. This car

just so happened to be one of the available Newark cars, since 30 TCRT PCCs had gone to Newark in 1953. I put in my pitch for car 7, figuring that all the remaining cars were basically in the same condition.

By early November, all was in readiness for the arrival of the PCC. Finally, an email arrived on December 24, saying that the arrangements were made and the car would be delivered to RGVRM on January 15. Most happily, car 7 had been designated for NYMT per my request. The news was an excellent Christmas present!

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Loading of car 7 and three others took place on January 14. It must have been quite a sight seeing three PCCs move out of storage at the same time. I had originally thought we should all assemble at RGVRM on the 15th at 9:00 a.m., but changed this to 11 a.m. after hearing, late on the 14th, that delivery would not occur before noon.

Wednesday, January 15, 2014 was a sunny, snow- and wind-free day with temperatures mercifully near freezing. As it turned out, the 15th was right between two shots of bitter polar weather that would make January 2014 the coldest month in many years throughout the United States.

Eager workers and onlookers all assembled at RGVRM, but the driver had been delayed and estimated his arrival time at 3:00 p.m. A southbound LA&L train prompted Otto Vondrak to position locomotive 1941 next to the Hill Block semaphore for a great photo. Dave Scheiderich, Otto and I formed a photo line and got some great shots.

As the overall Officer of the Day, I had appointed some volunteers with specific duties. Dave Scheiderich was in charge of all rail movements. Otto was in charge of crowd control. Bob Achilles was my personal assistant, responsible for solving any problems that might crop up.

The Silk Road truck majestically rolled into view about 3:15 p.m. Maneuvering this rig into position proved difficult. To back into the open lot across NY-251 from RGVRM, it was necessary to saw back and forth at a 45-degree angle across both the state highway and the railroad. When the heavily loaded trailer bottomed out on the track, I cast a worried gaze down the track. But, the air shocks were used to slightly raise the trailer and trouble was averted. After about an hour, the trailer was finally in position for unloading.



It's all in a day's work for the skilled drivers at Silk Road Transport, Inc., as the heavy trailer gets lined up.

Photo by Rick Holahan

Bob Achilles arranged for the RGVRM forklift to be brought down from the Restoration Building to lift the heavy sections of the unloading ramp. Joe Nugent did the honors with the forklift. Since the Silk Road truck did not have a winch, the company's tow truck came up from their Arkport,

NY shop at 5:00 p.m. The tow truck, positioned in the westbound lane of NY-251, forced a flagging crew into action. Critically, it was getting dark by this time.



Shadows are getting long, with more work still to be done.

Photo by Rick Holahan

At last it was time to release the brakes on the car and bring it down onto its new home rails. Most unfortunately, we were incorrectly told that to release the brakes one turned the nut on the actuator rod CLOCKWISE. The force applied in this action was enough to snap one actuator. With darkness well on us and unable to release the car's brakes, I had the trailer rails greased and the train crew use 1941 to forcibly pull the car off the trailer with six of the eight wheels on the car sliding. With this done, I signed the paperwork making car 7 officially the property of NYMT.

Once the car was on track 4, the tow truck departed and we brought in the flaggers. It was about 10:00 p.m., and they had been out in the highway for about two hours in freezing weather. Even though it had been a grueling day, no one had been hurt and car 7 was at its new home.

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Our luck with the weather looked like it might just hold through Saturday, January 18th, and we decided to tow car 7 north that day. We assembled at RGVRM and agreed to press on in spite of a few inches of snow that had fallen during the night.

Use of the lone tow bar being used to haul car 7 up the 3% grades at the Hill Block and at NYMT prompted bringing diesel 1654 into play as a following locomotive. Jeremy Tuke was the engineer on 1654, with Otto Vondrak as conductor. A safety chain was also rigged between 1941 and car 7 to offer us all just a little more reassurance that car 7 would not somehow go rolling down the hill. Between Wednesday and Saturday, I learned how to correctly release the car's brakes. Dave Scheiderich took care of that job in about ten minutes, now that we knew how it was done.

As they had on Wednesday, Mark Wilczek operated 1941 with Joe Nugent along as conductor. Once we started to roll north, Dave Scheiderich and I watched the narrow-tread PCC wheels carefully as we traversed various switch frogs and wide spots in the track up to Switch 6. The wheel drop at the frogs was minimal, but in a few spots I saw very little of the car's tread still contacting the rail, making it clear some track improvements will be needed to permit operating the PCC car.

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Once car 7 had cleared Switch 6, the track leading to Midway had no switches or wide gauge spots. Various workers and onlookers, hoping to experience a ride in the car, welcomed the opportunity when I offered it at Switch 6. I

boarded and took the operator's seat while others took their places in the car. Dave stayed on the ground to insure that no risk of derailment would occur. The ride to Midway was incredibly smooth and provided a grand view of the future.



Car 7 gets its first look at Midway Station, current end of overhead wire.
Photo by Rick Holahan

After a photo stop at Midway, the slow run north continued. The trip was uneventful, and once the car cleared the Main Entrance Road, 1654 departed southbound as the rest of car 7's trip to the passenger boarding area was downhill. Setting the car's brakes was a breeze, now that we knew what to do, and car 7 was soon safely in place at NYMT.



Car 7 is almost home as former-RG&E 1941 eases its way over the Main Entrance Road crossing.
Photo by Rick Holahan

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Perhaps the most satisfying part of the unloading and moving of car 7 was the great camaraderie I experienced. As with many accomplishments at the two museums, car 7 simply could not have made it to NYMT without the enthusiastic support of the volunteers at both museums. I am confident that making car 7 operational will meet with success because of more such cooperation in the future.

In the next issue of Headend, read more as we look into two instances when PCCs were at least considered for use in Rochester

A LOOK BACK AT 2013

Our report for the past year covers some significant changes in visitor headcount and an increase in dollar income, all in another year of progress at the museum.

Our partners at the Rochester & Genesee Valley Railroad Museum with whom we share our ride season income urged an admission rate increase on us. We were concerned that the recommended increase was a lot for our visitors to accept, but after extended discussions we settled on new rates of \$10 for adults and \$8 for youths under 18 and seniors 65 and up.

At the same time, RGVRRM also took an aggressive stance on shared advertising, something our past experience worried us could result in more money going out than coming in. However, we have over recent years been supplementing our extensive free-publicity efforts with a small summer ad in the Democrat & Chronicle, so we agreed to see what could be done with an increased ad program. The talents of Otto Vondrak, a member of both museums, were put to work, and attractive, eye-catching ads were produced for the Messenger-Post papers and Railpace Magazine, as well as a nice redesign of our summer Democrat & Chronicle ad.

The net result was a 5.1% increase in paid headcount on weekends during the summer shared season. Interestingly, free headcount was down by 3.7%—mostly adults—resulting in a net increase in total weekend summer visitors of 4,969 people, or 3.1%. The numbers for the full year on weekends were pretty much in line with these figures, including Holly Trolley rides in the Christmas season.

Group visits dropped off significantly, however, with a total headcount of 620, a reduction of over 40%. As a result, the total visitors to NYMT for the year—weekends and weekday groups—came to 6,666, down 4.7%.

A few things can be said for all this. First, the increased paid attendance combined with the new admission rates helped our financial bottom line considerably. However, even at the new, higher admission prices, the added shared season weekend attendance did not cover the cost of the additional advertising. Also, with the growing popularity of birthday parties at NYMT on Sundays, 270 of the weekend summer visitors came under that banner. Without them, the total summer weekend attendance would show a drop of 2.5%.

And, we need to dig deeper on group tours. Whether we aren't getting the word out well enough or the economy is still causing cutbacks in field trips from schools and day care centers, we have to do something to bring back those weekday visitors.

Finally, while the increased income from the higher admission prices will help with the many priorities we face, our mission is to share area transportation history with the public. Headcount matters, and we must continue all efforts to let the public know we're here and encourage them to visit us. With that in mind, we've agreed with RGVRRM to try again with the enhanced ad program, modified to target the effort over certain parts of the year to improve effectiveness.

Our Special Event Days are always popular. They boost headcount but also give us a shot at some free publicity in print and on TV which has a spin-off effect over the rest of the season. As a "sneak preview" for 2014, you can count on a repeat of some of 2013's event successes plus some new ones. Here are two new ideas in the works:

-- National Train Day is on May 10, so we'll open our ride season with the diesel train meeting our trolley at Midway station a week earlier than usual on May 11, Mother's Day.

(Continued...)

-- June 29 will be "Subway Sunday", building on publicity for a press event the previous Friday promoting the centennial of Rochester Subway car 60. The car is in RGVRM's restoration building.

In addition, we expect to have a repeat visit from Spikes, the Redwings' mascot on "Baseball Day" and antique fire trucks to kick off Fall Foliage rides. Stay tuned for more details.

Let's take a look at the special events in 2013. Our summer season opening day often seems to come on the first nice day for home yard work, and this year May 19 was no exception. Those who came, however, enjoyed the appearance of two antique buses. Bob Malley's Flixible coach, dressed up in Blue Bus Lines colors was a nice pairing with the 1957 GM city bus, fully restored by Regional Transit Service.



Both representing transit after the streetcar-and-interurban era, the two buses delighted kids and adults too.

Diesel Day is always a busy one for us, and the 2013 version didn't disappoint. Over 500 visitors attended in what was one of several days when we came close to maxing out our ride capacity. RGVRM is aiming to build an open car to add to the current capacity of their two cabooses, and if we continue to have success with advertising, we'll need it.



Diesel 1654 has brought another load of happy visitors to the BOCES Crossing interchange point for the return trip to NYMT.

Autumn is a great time to get out and enjoy New York State's colorful scenery, and the museums have a lot of that to offer. Each year, we go into the trolley-and-diesel mode from mid-September 'til the end of October, and we're always busy.



The September foliage was still green, but the visiting fire trucks added lots of color to our Fall Foliage opening day.

The 2013 "Fall Foliage by Trolley and Train" event was kicked off by a visit from the members of the Genesee Valley Antique Fire Apparatus Association on September 15. We hadn't had a chance to host these folks with their wonderful old fire trucks for several years, and it was good to have them back with us again.



Still running after all those years, a couple of old-timers meet.

Photo by Jay Consadine

Throughout the shared season, it was the usual run of activity. Kids, grandparents and fans of trains, trolleys and history continued to stream in. Some have tales to tell of a relative who worked on the railroad (see "A Red Lantern" on page 8 for one example), while others can't quite understand why their toddler son (or daughter!) is so nuts about trains. Then there are the car clubs that show up to add their special value to the visitor experience.



Antique car enthusiasts are always willing to park their babies on display for our visitors to enjoy.

With the end of Fall Foliage by Trolley and Train, and the season shut-down at RGVRM, we decided to continue trolley operations in November as a bridge to the annual Holly Trolley Rides. This gave us three additional Sundays of ride operations, followed by the four Saturday/Sunday weekends starting November 30, and running through December 22.

Things started off pretty well with attendance on the first two Sundays in November comparing well with usual numbers at holiday time. But severe winter weather conspired to slow things down on November 21, closed us down completely on the weekend of December 14/15, and shut down trolley rides on Sunday, December 22. Even with those obstacles, another 580 visitors enjoyed our museum during this period.



The heaters in 161 are keeping riders comfy as they prepare for their trip to Midway Station and back amid December's snow.

Photo by Rich Fischpera

And all this is just our public operation. There's much more to say in these pages about the work that goes on behind the scenes to keep the museum interesting, in solid shape, and ready for tomorrow's challenges and opportunities, so read on.



TRANSIT ADVENTURES

With the dawn of the 1940s, the effects of the Great Depression still lingered, but America's concern was turning to the growing drumbeat of war in Europe and in the Pacific. Sketched in a pocket notebook of a 13-year-old Rochester boy was a copy of a bus "car card" urging young men to enlist. "Win Your Wings. Fly with the Army. Join the Army Air Corps Now", was the message. Old enough to understand but too young to sign up, Tom Kirn had other things on his mind that summer of 1941.

Rochester Transit Corporation had just months before run its last streetcar, and the entire service was now accomplished with a fleet of buses. Tom was fascinated—by the vehicles and by the organization, and he set out to learn more and document what he found. We're glad he did, as his written records are probably the only source of the information they contain.

Tom bought a weekly pass on the system, and on Sunday, June 28, 1941 set out to ride as many buses and bus lines as he could. Notebook, pencil and weekly pass number 565 in hand, he set out from his Richard Street home to begin his odyssey on an inbound bus on Monroe Avenue. It was vehicle number 300 and the driver's badge number was 1036. This run's "train number" (nomenclature that had its origin in streetcar days) was 706.

Next up was a run with train number 813, on bus 929 signed for BENEDICT DR. via CHILI AVE. Tom rode to the end of that line, returning with the same bus and driver with the vehicle now signed for MAIN to GIBBS. On went the day, with each run carefully recorded in neatly ruled columns of the pocket notebook...WEST Ave LOOP; GOODMAN: SEABREEZE via PEART; DEWEY; and so on.

The close of the day's adventure found Tom on a PARK (avenue) run, changing to a PARK to STRUCKMAR bus, and finally onto a MONROE bus, train number 707. Tom bid driver 1181 goodbye as he got off bus 295 and headed for home. The whole week was ahead of him.

Route	Badge	Bus	Train
POWELL'S	1364	2K	2553
EXCHANGE - SOUTH	1015	114	1442
BAY - MORTON	1015	114	1442
EXCHANGE - PLAIN	1015	114	1442
GEN. P. D. WEST	1544	352	816
UNIVERSITY	789	832	426
MAIN STATE	789	832	426
MONROE	182	815	713
CLINTON	137	502	707
LYELL	707	917	311
MAIN - GIBBS	707	917	311
ST. PAUL	705	742	516
MAIN ST ONLY	705	742	516
NORTH FRANKLIN	228	752	147
MONROE	765	881	723
SEABREEZE	112	267	713
GENESEE	1017	381	421
UNIVERSITY	1017	351	421
MONROE	235	704	707
CLINTON	235	704	707
SEABREEZE	152	285	704
BENEDICT DR. via CHILI	1182	707	5
MAIN - GIBBS	1182	707	5
MONROE	235	381	707
CLINTON	235	381	707
CLIFFARD	557	803	1416
TIDGEMAN - INTRAD	381	75	1301
CLIFFARD - DEWEY	381	75	1301

Tom kept careful notes of each leg of his days' journeys.

The next morning, bus driver 1378 in command of bus 265 greeted Tom as he sailed off on train number 717 for another day in his adventure. The only thing missing from the notebook is the times of each connection. But we do know that these circuitous routings were all-day affairs, leaving home right after breakfast and returning just in time for dinner.

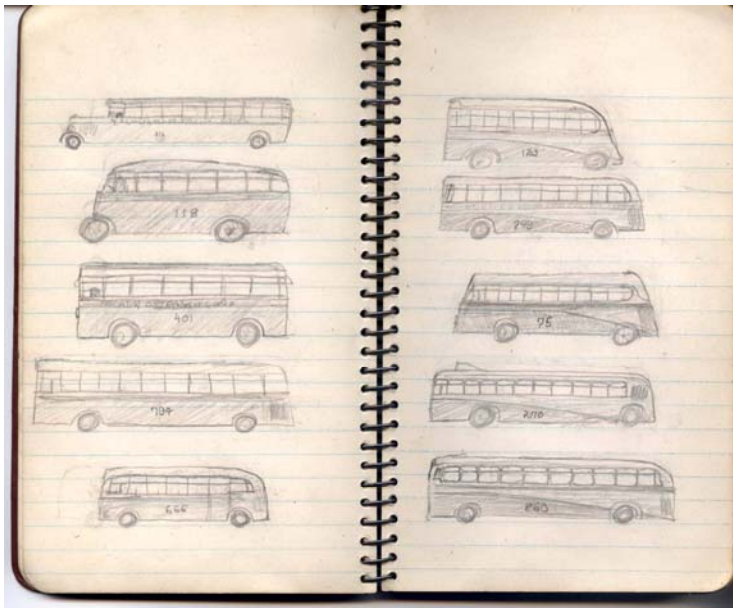
There wasn't any master plan with Tom poring over bus timetables to figure out which connections would result in the most efficient routing. In fact, he just got on one bus and at the downtown transfer area picked another that looked interesting and climbed on. Reading through the notebook, the days reveal many repeated routes, but also some new ones. But by Thursday apparently enough was enough, as arrival at his last stop (MONROE train number 701, driver 1378 again, in bus 207) brings this part of the notebook to a close. Noted in pencil at the end of the Thursday page is "\$16.50"...the amount he would have paid had he not been traveling on his \$1.25 weekly pass.



Check out the serial number on this RTC weekly pass...a true collectible for any transit enthusiast.

A month later, rejuvenated and with a fresh supply of lunch money, Tom headed out again and this time made it a full week, Sunday through Saturday, August 17 – 23, 1941. This time, he was able to snag serial number 1 of the weekly passes printed for that week.

From the notebook we can see these trips weren't just joy riding. Tom was a student of the transit system, getting to know the drivers, identifying the various models of buses in the fleet, and recording details of the operation probably not captured anywhere else. The buses ranged from older and smaller models to more recent purchases by the transit company, and Tom took careful note of the differences among them—seating, noise level, ride quality, etc. He had his favorites, and took pains to “black list” the ones he didn't like. On two facing pages in the notebook we find early exercising of Tom's considerable artistic skills, documenting ten different types of coach.



Elsewhere we find a listing of all buses in service, in numerical order, and there's a similar list of driver badge numbers. Tom carefully listed both the “Old Bus Lines and Streetcar Lines” and the new list of “Bus Lines of Rochester, N.Y.” There's a short list of “Bus Lines that Change at Night” as well as ten bus numbers posted as “Buses in Crackups that are Back”.

Interest in transit company operations wasn't limited to Rochester for Tom. When he traveled with his family, he carried his notebook and jotted down the routes shown on bus destination signs he spotted in Binghamton, Erie, Cleveland and several other cities.

Over the course of his transit travels, Tom made friends with some of the drivers and found others who weren't so friendly. The latter drivers—grumpy ones who had no patience for Tom's hobby—were recorded by badge number in another “black list” in the notebook. On the good side, however, were such notations as: “190 offered me chewing tobacco before starting for Main St. on 512”. There's also this revelation: Unnamed driver “1238 made the run to Benedict Dr. in nine minutes. It is a half hour ride”. Eventually, Tom's riding and hanging around led to extra benefits: “Herman 558 gave me my first free ride out of State Street [car barns] on 949 towards South Clinton. I got off at Main and Clinton”.

Tom even reserved several pages to document friends among the drivers, with their badge numbers, routes they usually operated on, and their signatures. Nick names were recorded, such as “Brownie” for Robert L. Browne and “Short Pants” for Larry Braden, one of Tom's special friends.

A most interesting part of the notebook is documentation of transfer punch marks for the system's drivers. Recorded over the holiday breaks in December, 1941 and 1942, we find ten pages of punch marks, each carefully set down with the driver's badge number, the line he was on, and the date and time. These were all obtained on board buses that Tom was riding on. He would simply ask the driver if he could borrow his punch to make the record in his notebook!

Tom wrote in his notebook that what was regarded as the “worst punch mark” of all was a round hole, since that was just like what anyone could buy at a five and dime store. Any driver worth his salt would have a unique punch shape that he considered a part of his working life. One of Tom's favorite punch marks was a “double cross”: ++.

Badge	Line	Date	Time	Mark
1324	1000	12-27-41	4:03 PM	+
618	100	12-27-41	4:08 PM	+
353	1000	12-27-41	4:08 PM	+
171	400	12-27-41	4:10 PM	+
316	1000	12-27-41	4:12 PM	+
119	600	12-27-41	4:15 PM	+
292	800	12-27-41	4:50 PM	+
143	1500	12-27-41	4:55 PM	+
1046	700	12-27-41	4:50 PM	+
1039	400	12-27-41	12:00 AM	+
210	1000	1-6-42	3:45 PM	+
291	700	1-26-41	8:25 AM	+
138	1000	12-27-41	8:30 AM	+
1202	1700	12-42	6:1 AM	+
359	1600	12-42	8:55 AM	+
1314	1000	12-42	8:35 AM	+
355	1000	12-27-41	4:00 PM	+
1133	1000	1-20-41	8:15 AM	+
247	1000	1-2-42	3:49 PM	+

As this sample page from the notebook shows, each driver had a unique punch shape that was his alone.

Although RTC driver punches were issued to them by the company, the average citizen could walk into Bournes Office Supply and get a punch with any one of a variety of punch marks. Tom tells us of a friend, Jim Nagle, who often accompanied him on these journeys and who was a fellow bus fan. Like Tom, Jim had a special buddy among the drivers and that was Stan Kowalski. Stan's punch mark was a double diamond. As a practical joke on Jim, Tom went to Bournes and bought a punch with a double diamond mark, and told Jim, “Hey look what Stan gave me”. Dirty trick, but

their friendship apparently survived, and Tom still has the double diamond punch.

Tom's travels around the Rochester Transit System brought him many happy encounters, but there was a poignant moment too. On a Sunday morning in 1941, the 1600 Crosstown bus was waiting at Hollister St. Loop when a man got on and said, "Well, were in it now". It was December 7 and the Japanese had just bombed Pearl Harbor.

Tom's notebooks and two weekly passes are in the private collection of your editor, but they'll surely someday find their way to the archive of the New York Museum of Transportation. There's a lot of historical material on local transit in the archive, but nothing quite like the recorded adventures of Tom Kirn, boy transit enthusiast. 🚂🚂🚂

SHOP REPORT *by Charles Lowe*

New Jersey Transit 7: After the arrival of car 7 (detailed elsewhere in this issue), new locks were purchased and applied to the car's doors. A hole through the roof was discovered. The hole had provided access for a crank for manually lowering the pantograph that was on the car in 2000 and 2001. A bronze plug was screwed in place on the roof to seal this hole for now.

Philadelphia and Western 161: The B-end master controller gave the trolley crew a bit of trouble during the first weekend of our Holley Trolley Rides event. It seems that a piece of an arc chute broke away and jammed a controller finger. Repairs were made quickly by Ted Strang and rides resumed with no further problems encountered.

Philadelphia and Western 168: Bob Achilles continued his project of replacing hazed-over plastic bulkhead windows with glass panes. In January, the Board of Trustees approved the purchase of tempered glass to replace the car's 28 side windows which are currently smoked acrylic.

Line Car 2: On November 23, a large crew of NYMT and RGVRRM volunteers assembled for a rearrangement of equipment on track 21.



Line car 2 gets its journal oil topped up by Tony Mittiga and Vin Steinman.

Photo by Jack Tripp

Line Car 2 was pulled off track 21 by RGVRRM's RG&E diesel 1941. After other equipment moves were made, Line Car 2 was shoved back onto track 21 about ten feet from the hay barn. This was the very first time a diesel locomotive had

operated on track 21, which had been among the very first tracks constructed at NYMT, way back in 1977.



Easy does it as RG&E 1941 approaches the mainline for temporary placement out of the way of other equipment moves.

Photo by Rick Holahan

Rochester, Lockport and Buffalo 206: The ex-Chicago Transit Authority Baldwin trucks for car 206 were repositioned on track 21 as part of the November 23 equipment moves. RGVRRM's backhoe did the honors, and the trucks were later placed between Line Car 2 and the head blocks for the track 22 switch.



The Baldwin trucks begin their part of the equipment shuffle, directed by RGVRRM trustee Dave Scheiderich.

Photo by Jack Tripp

Rail Grinder 01: This small 4-wheel grinder was removed from track 22 and placed inside the hay barn for storage as an additional player in the November 23 equipment move. This cleared away yet another piece of equipment from the work area around track 23.

Rochester Products Trackmobile L-3: Since 2006, NYMT's Trackmobile L-3 has occupied space in front of the hay barn, a location made more valuable by the arrival of car 7. L-3 relies on the weight of a rail car for traction, but nearly all cars at NYMT lack modern couplers...and it's the couplers that transfer car weight to the Trackmobile.

RGVRRM was in need of a large Trackmobile, and since L-3 was not being used at NYMT, the NYMT Board of Trustees voted to donate L-3 to RGVRRM under the conditions that NYMT would have right of first refusal should RGVRRM want to dispose of L-3; that NYMT could make use of L-3 should it be needed; and that RGVRRM would retain the car number "L-3."

(Continued...)

The Trackmobile never carried this designation in regular service, but it was a successor to NYMT's ex-Subway L-2. In 1975, when railroad service via the Subway to the Rochester Products plant was ended, L-3 was obtained to make in-plant moves. In early 1995, much of the by then unused rail at Rochester Products was salvaged by crews from both RGVRRM and NYMT, and the Trackmobile was tossed into the deal (for \$10!) at the last moment. L-3 departed NYMT under its own power on November 23.

NYMT TC-1 and other Track Car Equipment: On Sunday, December 29, warm weather encouraged Bob Achilles, Rich Fischpera and Tony Mittiga to place TC-1, the TC-1 trailer, weed sprayer 02 and work flat 03 in winter storage. A gas line leak was discovered on TC-1. Ethanol gasoline had eaten a neoprene gas line hose. Bob Achilles has led the effort to replace this hose with a steel gas line. Problems with ethanol in gasoline are becoming common knowledge, and because of this NYMT began using non-ethanol fuel exclusively last summer.

Track: Jack Tripp and Tony Mittiga cleaned ice and stones out of flangeways at the Main Entrance Road crossing on December 20 just before the last weekend of Holley Trolley runs.

Plans for the Trolley Bypass at RGVRRM were presented to the RGVRRM Board in January. This will permit an orderly development of the area by RGVRRM.


Track 23: A No. 5 self-guarded frog and suitable point rails were delivered to NYMT when our track contractor, Nicolas P. Giambatista, Inc., came to NYMT to visit the work site in late October. This allowed for a final design for the switch and track to be developed based on the frog. A series of steel stakes were then set to mark the proposed centerline of track 23. Next, the switch timber locations were marked on the rails for the contractor. In mid-December, the contractor removed the old ties in the area of the switch and inserted new switch timbers. No spiking was done at this time except for track 22 head blocks, which were replaced and reversed to make room for track 23.



A brief warm spell on December 19 sees the Giambatista crew installing the head block ties for the new switch.

On January 12, Bob Achilles and Charlie Lowe separated rail at a joint which unfortunately is located right where the switch points will be located. All four nuts were so badly rusted they had to be cut away with a grinder. Bob and

Charlie also spent several days clearing the area between PTC snow sweeper C-130 and NTT 409. By the end of January, 80% of the area was cleared.

Overhead: A late November snowfall of 10 inches brought some tree branches down close to and on the trolley wire. Rich Fischpera, Bob Sass and Jack Tripp cleared these away, using TC-1 and tower car 021 on November 30 so that trolley operations could take place later that day. 

A Red Lantern

An email arrived from a lady who is the 4th generation living in a house on East Henrietta Road in our town of Rush, just across Honeoye Creek from the former Lehigh Valley Railroad mainline. She contacted the museum after discovering a red lantern globe in the rafters of an outbuilding she was re-roofing. It was with a collection of old schoolbooks from a hundred years ago, and on the ruby red colored globe it said, "Ham's Cold Blast Matchless".

The lady's email went on to tell tales of connections with local railroading. Her father and brother rode on the last run between Rochester and Rochester Junction on the Lehigh ("they told me girls weren't allowed to go", she says). At the time her family lived in a house that was opposite the Creekside Inn, adjacent to the Lehigh, and she still has scars from skinning her knees falling on the ballast while walking the tracks.

That track walking was in spite of the standing order in the family, that when playing in the yard and seeing the crossing signals light up, the kids were instructed to drop what they were doing and run into the house. "You did not mess with the trains", she says...still wise advice today.

With all that background, it seemed likely that the red globe was from a railroad lantern.

Ah, but then came the surprise, with this sentence: "My grandfather, Vince Behnk (whose house I live in now), was the highway superintendent in Rush for many years and he drove the old snow plow that is at the museum." Well, that explains a lot. The 7" tall red globe was most likely from a highway lantern, and a 1914 ad for the C. T. Ham Manufacturing Company (a prominent Rochester maker of oil lanterns sold around the world) shows their "NuStyle" lantern with an identical globe. Among many claims for the lantern, it was able to burn for 24 hours on a single filling, a likely benefit for highway use.

It's probable that Mr. Behnk used a lantern with this globe in connection with his job, and it's even possible that it could have been carried at the rear of "Big Bertha", the Caterpillar plow that once cleared snow drifts from rural Rush roads and now resides at our museum.

Our thanks go out to Pam Ebersold for her donation, and for possibly reuniting two pieces of local transportation history. We can only imagine what tales the two have to tell.

ROCHESTER STREETCARS.....No. 69 in a series



by Charles R. Lowe

In 1890-91, Rochester Railway Company began electrifying its horse car lines and purchased 100 cars from Gilbert Car Manufacturing Company of Troy, New York. These cars included 354, shown in our photo which dates to the 1890s. The Gilbert firm started in 1820 as a wagon and carriage builder, and began building streetcars in 1889. Gilbert built three closed cars that year for Rochester Electric Railway (Ridge Road to Charlotte via Lake Avenue). These cars performed well on the RER line and may have influenced RRC to use them on their city lines.

The double-end, single-truck, railroad roof Gilbert cars were delivered to Rochester in several batches. An initial group, numbered in the low 100s was soon complimented by groups in the mid-150s, low 200s, low 300s, and mid-300s. Photos of these cars in their original paint with fancy "Rochester Railway Company" lettering below side windows are known for cars 112, 114, 115, 118, 119, 157, 202, 208, 310 and 354.

The Gilbert cars used rheostat control and had two Short-type 15 hp. Motors. Car 354 as seen here has an early Bemis truck. The cars' enclosed vestibules were an unusual feature not to become standard in Rochester for 15 years. A very unusual feature of these cars was that they were painted in a variety of colors according to the route on which they would serve. Car 354, used on the Monroe and Plymouth line, was a chocolate brown color. Other colors were: orange on St. Paul and Sophia (later Plymouth Avenue North) line; red on East and West Main; maroon on South and Lake; green on Exchange and Joseph; gray on North and West; and blue on Lyell and University.

RRC decided in early 1892 to electrify the remainder of its horse car lines. Since the 100 Gilbert cars would not satisfy the needs of the expanded system, an additional 30 cars were purchased from Stephenson. These were numbered in the mid-100s, starting with 123, so as to not interfere with any of the small groups of Gilbert car numbers. Since the narrow doorways of the Gilbert cars had hindered loading and unloading, the Stephenson cars were ordered with open platforms.

With the new cars came the abandonment of the color coding of lines by car paint, a system which had made substitutions of cars on other lines nearly impossible. Patrons had refused to board cars other than those with colors of their lines. Colored paddles and lights were later used in addition to signing to identify the route on which a car was serving.

The Gilbert firm had disastrously enlarged its factory in 1892, just in time for the company to be crushed out of existence in the aftermath of the Panic of 1893. Gilbert built its last cars in 1895, leaving the 103 RER and RRC Gilberts as the only ones ever to operate in Rochester.

In order to group similar cars together by number, it was decided to renumber the non-200-series Gilbert cars into a series which filled the 200-299 block completely. This seems to have taken place in the mid- to late 1890s once the original paint required refinishing. The three RER cars were probably folded into the 200s at this time as RER was leased by RRC in 1894. The renumbering of the Gilbert cars, followed by the purchase of many slightly newer cars numbered in the 100s, accounts for why some did not consider the 200s the oldest cars on the property. Even Rochester Transit Corporation seems to have forgotten. In 1941, it selected NYMT's 162/243/0243 for preservation as representative of the oldest car still on the property even though several of the even older Gilbert cars remained in work car service. (Peter Witt 1246 was selected as an example of the newest car but it has not survived.)

Car 354, like the rest of the 200s, had its primitive controller and motors replaced in the mid-1890s with K-controllers and modern GE800 25 hp. Motors. Its truck was probably changed at this time to a sturdier Peckham or Taylor truck. The ultimate disposition of 354 is unknown. It may have been used to build a 300-series car (lengthened 100- or 200-series single truck cars); it may have been scrapped in the early 1900s; or it may have been converted into a work car. If this latter event occurred, 354 may even have been one of those lucky Gilbert cars to survive to 1941.

ALL ABOUT US

The New York Museum of Transportation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit museum chartered by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York. We are managed and operated entirely by volunteers, and the welcome mat is always out for anyone wishing to join our work. Open for visitors all year on Sundays only, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., we also welcome group visits during the week by appointment.

We are located at 6393 East River Road in the Town of Rush, and our mailing address is P.O. Box 136, West Henrietta, NY 14586. www.nymtmuseum.org is the place to find us on the internet and learn much more about us. Also, you can visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NYMTmuseum.

Want to contact us? Call us at (585) 533-1113 or send us an email at info@nymtmuseum.org. And, remember to tell your friends!



New York Museum of Transportation

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