

HEADEND

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March–April 2018

NEW SEASON BEGINS WITH CAR HOUSE EXTENSION

Buildings intended for the preservation of historic railroad equipment are a great investment. Following the lead of Rockhill Trolley Museum, which just extended one of its car houses some fifty feet, NYMT has just extended its trolley car house.

On March 26 and 27, Secor Lumber Company, of Savannah, N.Y., added ten feet to the northeast end of the NYMT trolley car house. This project was made possible by a grant provided to NYMT in 2017.

Several problems with the trolley car house as originally built in 2004 were finally corrected. The building was just a slight bit too short to adequately hold the G&W caboose and 168 on track 2; the difficult job of parking 168 within inches of the caboose resulted in 161 receiving much more mileage than 168. The extra space of the extended car house will permit easy parking of 168 on track 2. Another problem was the metal sheathing on the doors and front end of the barn. Contact of this sheathing by the front pole on an electrified trolley car might have charged the building's siding. That possibility has now shrunk to a near-zero probability since the entire north end of the trolley car house is now sheathed in wood.

Another reason the extension will prove useful is that it is now possible to move the newly-restored G&W caboose back into the hay barn where it can be properly exhibited. Car 437 will be shifted onto track 2 in the trolley car house. Even though 437 is two feet longer than the caboose, there will still be plenty of space for easily parking 168 with the building's extension.

Some work remains to be done. The trolley barn's doors will need priming and painting. The ten feet of overhead formerly outside but now inside the building needs to have proper supports added. A wooden sill needs to be added under the doors to prevent unwanted animal intrusions into the car house. Volunteers interested in this work should contact any Trustee for additional information.

Once the plans for the car house extension were developed, Bob Achilles shepherded this project all the way from the initial contact with Secor, to obtaining the necessary Town building permit, and right through to closing the doors once work was completed. Bob had hoped that the building could have been completed last fall, but the early onset of our long winter delayed the project's construction until now.

WINDSTORM DAMAGES OVERHEAD

On March 4, 2018, a windstorm with gusts up to 66 miles per hour recorded at the airport struck NYMT. Two trees fell on the overhead, one at Midway and another at Scanlon's Curve. The effect was disastrous.

At Midway, an 8-inch-diameter tree fell on the wire, depressing it a few feet toward the ground. Tower car 020 was used to advantage in cutting this tree away shortly after it fell, and the wire rebounded to its proper height. The tree that fell at Scanlon's Curve, though, was the top 20 feet of a Scots pine that, at its broken end, was just over a foot in diameter. Bracket arms at poles 48 and 49 had their pipes bent beyond repair, and ears of their sockets were broken off, leaving the bracket arms only precariously supported. The backbone between these two poles was snapped at pole 49, allowing the wire to be slacked and, at its lowest, just 15 feet above top-of-rail.

Repair of this damage was critical since, in a cooperative effort with RGV, a series of train rides for visiting boy scouts was planned for May 5. You can read about the repairs made in the Shop Report.

ROOF REPAIR DELAYED

The funding for the much-needed milking parlor roof repair has been delayed. Both NYMT and the Town of Rush have pressed the matter successfully, and the hope is that the roof will be repaired during warm summer months which are most conducive to flat roof repair.



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EDITORIAL COMMENT

As you will see in this issue of HEADEND, all has not been quiet at NYMT over the winter. While we have not been able to host any visitors, much work is in progress. The Shop Report details some of the activities that have been going on at NYMT in recent weeks. More help, though, is needed for the museum to reach its potential this year as we face extraordinary challenges brought on by the extremely poor and uncooperative weather as well as the leaking milking parlor roof. Please consider either becoming an active volunteer or, if you are already volunteering, please consider increasing your involvement with the museum as we all work together overcoming the obstacles NYMT faces.

Charles R. Lowe

SHOP REPORT

N. Y. S. Rys., Rochester Lines 1402 — The high winds of early March have broken most of the rope ties on the south end of the car. A windstorm in April ripped away the south half of the car’s tarping.

Philadelphia and Western cars 161 and 168 — An able crew consisting of Doug Anderson, Jay Consadine, Todd Considine, Rick Holahan and Bob Miner oiled both cars’ motor bearings and journals. The crew also performed a major cleaning on both cars as well.

Overhead — As was noted on page 1, severe damage hit our overhead in early March. That same day, March 4, a line crew consisting of Rich Fischpera, Rick Holahan, Charlie Lowe and Taylor Reed cleared two trees from the line, one at Scanlon’s Curve and the other at Midway. Additional tree limb and brush clearing was performed on March 11 by the track crew so that the NYMT bucket truck could run alongside the line down to Midway when the time comes for repairs.

A line crew consisting of Bob Achilles, Rick Holahan, Charlie Lowe, Carlos Mercado and Taylor Reed worked on Saturday, April 14 to begin overhead repair work. RGV graciously offered its bucket truck to assist in the effort but the crew could not operate the arm satisfactorily. Nevertheless, a new section of cable including a ceramic insulator was tied to the broken backbone at pole 49.

On Saturday, April 21, Scott Gleason of RGV removed the two damaged bracket arms and straightened pole 49, which had been pulled south quite a bit when backbone between poles 48 and 49 snapped.



Line car 020 has been in use making overhead repairs. Here, from left to right, are Taylor Reed, Rick Holahan and Bob Achilles after an arduous day. In the background is one of the bracket arms just installed by the crew but before the contact wire was attached. In the background is the RGV bucket truck, generously made available to expedite repairs. *Photo by C. Lowe.*

Work resumed the next day when Bob Achilles, Rick Holahan, Charlie Lowe and Taylor Reed used the RGV bucket truck to install replacement bracket arms at poles 48 and 49. These were selected for length so that the upper cables could be reused without modification. This

same crew re-assembled on Tuesday, April 24 and installed new double-insulated lower cables and attached the contact wire to the new bracket arms. In addition, Dick Holbert inspected and tested five of the line's eight lightning arresters and found each to be in good condition.

One final item of work needed at Scanlon's Curve was the re-tying of the broken backbone in place. Bob and Charlie took care of this on a rainy April 28th, making the line ready for the Boy Scout trains scheduled for May 5.

Crew Training — An annual training class for track cars and trolleys was held at NYMT on April 28, with new trainees Kyra Ridder and Rich Fischpera, Jr. in attendance. Also in attendance were Bob Achilles, Carter Brown, Jay Consadine, Dave Coon, Rich Fischpera, Sr., Charlie Lowe and Jack Tripp. A make-up training class will be held in May or June for those who could not be present at this class.

Eagle Scouts — Both of last year's Eagle Scout projects at NYMT have led to each boy becoming an eagle scout. Ryan Russell built the pavilion while Ben Brown built the railing at the NYMT trolley loading area and three museum exhibit label stanchions.



Ryan Russell and his parents at Ryan's recent installation as an Eagle Scout. *Photo by C. Lowe.*

Board — At its March meeting, the Board formally approved of the President's prior action of signing the new lease with the Town of Rush, and approved of the Boy Scout "Camporee" event scheduled for May 5. At its April meeting, the Board approved the draft agreements for the RGV steam engine and Christmas events. It was decided that museum admission will not be charged should a visitor opt to become a member that day. It was also decided that, should the trolley ride not be available on days the museum is open that a reduced admission price will be charged. Additional features are being contemplated for days of museum operation in May and June to replace trolley rides and the model train room. The Board also approved a small expenditure for overhead repair work, and determined that track cars will not be used in lieu of trolleys.

SUBSTATION CEILING AND OVERHEAD REPAIR PLANS

With roof leakage finally entering the substation, it became necessary at the end of the 2017 season to shut down the substation. Leakage had ruined two ceiling-mounted sensors, and dampness was discovered on substation walls. Ceiling panels were distorted and wet, the fiberglass insulation was ruined, and small animals were found to have entered the substation.

It had been hoped that the milking parlor roof would have been repaired before the commencement of the 2018 trolley operation season but it eventually became obvious that this would not be the case. An effort was undertaken to devise a new substation ceiling that could collect any small amount of roof leakage and direct it outside the walls of the milking parlor.



Here is a view looking inward from the door toward the inside of the NYMT substation. The large electrical panel in the center of the photograph was obtained during NYMT's earliest days and was formerly a part of a Denver trolleybus installation. *Photo by C. Lowe.*

The substation ceiling repair plan is to remove the old ceiling materials and replace them with a new corrugated fiberglass ceiling on a slight slope toward the far wall, visible in the above photograph. A slight downward slope will direct any drips toward a gutter mounted on the far wall, guiding the water through a series of piping to the outside. Kindorf beams will support the corrugated fiberglass and a 1-inch-thick layer of insulating material which will help keep the substation warm throughout cold winter months.

Several overhead problems have appeared all at once. The tree damage reported elsewhere in this issue of HEADEND was but one of a series of misfortunes. Last year, excessive leakage of electricity from the overhead was discovered. There were several possible causes noted. Vines had grown up several downguys, bypassing ceramic insulators. Several bracket arms with single insulators (as was typical in original overhead construction) were found to have insulators of questionable quality. Lightning arresters were thought to be failing. Varnish on the line's wood strain insulators

was largely gone. Lastly, the extension of the trolley barn brought a whole host of overhead issues to solve.

One by one, though, these problems are being addressed and NYMT trolleys will soon be running again.

Rochester Streetcars: No. 88 in a Series
By Charles R. Lowe



N.Y.S. Railways, Rochester Lines 500 Photo by George Slyford

In the last issue of *Headend*, we studied the double-truck double-end Brill-built low-500s (cars 500–509). These cars were part of a massive 1903–1907 replacement of Rochester Railway Company’s aging and outdated fleet of single-truck cars. Some 203 new double-truck passenger cars were placed in service during these years.

As built, the low 500s were double-end cars. This was in keeping with the lack of loops on the Rochester Railway system. During the 1910s and early 1920s, nearly all lines in Rochester were equipped with turning loops to improve streetcar service. Single-end cars, with controls in just one end of the car, weighed less than comparable

double-end cars. This resulted in reduced electricity and maintenance costs and, soon, single-end cars became the norm in Rochester. After 1908, no double-end city cars were purchased but, since many lines had not yet had loops built at both ends, existing double-end cars remained in use.

New cars were purchased by Rochester Railway successor New York State Railways throughout the 1910–1916 era, culminating in 1916 with the famous 1200-series Peter Witt cars. During these years, the company’s St. Paul Street shop was kept busy with various car rebuilding jobs, notably the 1915–1916 conversion of the forty 600-series cars to single-end operation.

Additional new cars were ordered for 1917. These were the 25 Peter Witt cars which would have presumably been numbered 1250–1274. With the commencement of the U.S. entering World War I in 1917, construction of these cars slowed, and they were eventually sold for use in Cleveland, Ohio. Meanwhile, New York State Railways decided to rebuild its existing cars, and no new cars were purchased after 1916.

During 1917, 1918 and 1919, New York State Railways rebuilt at least 102 of Rochester’s double-end cars into single-end cars. A new paint scheme of green and cream replaced the old yellow of Rochester Railway days. As for the 500–509 cars, only one was single-ended. This was done in 1917 while the remainder of the cars were rebuilt, but remained double-ended, in 1917–1920. Why car 500 was the only one of the series to be single-ended has been lost to the “infinite corridors of time.” Our 1936 photo shows the front door blocked shut forever and the rear pole hooked down for a last time but does not show, conspicuously, any trace of a hook for a front pole.

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