

\$1.50



*The Newsletter of the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society*

Box 1770, Rahway, New Jersey 07065

Volume 14, No. 1

June 1999



**ORANGE MOUNTAIN CABLE RAILWAY  
ORANGE MOUNTAIN TRACTION COMPANY  
PUBLIC SERVICE SNOW REMOVAL 1928**

**NORTH JERSEY ELECTRIC RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Robert E. Hooper, President  
 Frank S. Miklos, Treasurer

Ed Gibbs, Vice President  
 Gary Madriss, Recording Secretary

P.O. Box 1770, Rahway, NJ 07065

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at the Rahway Senior Citizens Center, 1306 Esterbrook Ave., Rahway, N.J.  
 Beginning at 7:30 P.M., each meeting features a program featuring electric traction subjects.

Annual dues are \$15.00 per year.

**President's Message**

The state continues to move steadily toward establishing a Transportation Heritage Center at Phillipsburg. Funding for the master plan has been included in this year's state budget and approved. So the horizon brightens with a true home for our nomadic equipment. We are working with Friends of the NJ RR& TM to construction a building at Phillipsburg in cooperation with the Phillipsburg Railroad Historians for restoration work. Meanwhile, we continue to labor outside on stabilizing and restoring as best possible. Work on the MP 54s continue with scrapping and painting and some metal replacement. The sweeper frame (PS 5173) at Phillipsburg is being primed to improve its appearance. Bill Keigher has completed a grant application for financial assistance in restoring it to operating condition. We continue to search for a means of obtaining trucks for PS 2651. We have several strong possibilities under investigate. The restoration building at Phillipsburg will open more days to work on the restoration as we will not longer be weather limited on our work days. Meanwhile we keep the faith that restoration can happen in Jersey and move forward.



*Rob Hooper*

The following members achieved ten years of continuous membership during 1998. Our thanks to them for their support:  
 Ted Eickmann  
 Daniel T. Espy  
 Elmer W. Fry  
 Gene D. Gordon  
 John B Gutberlet  
 James Homoki  
 William Joyce  
 William J. Keigher  
 Robert E. Landwehrle  
 Alexander J. MacDonald  
 John H. Schluter  
 Harry J. Volpe

The following members achieved ten years of continuous membership in 1999. Our thanks to them for their support:  
 Jan Archacki  
 Douglas R. Bennington  
 Kenneth Berk  
 W. Edward Catterall  
 Robert Diamant  
 William C. Fahey  
 Thomas C. Hellyer  
 Neal Huff  
 Donald F. Koehler  
 James Tomczyk  
 Marie Wright

**Corporate Matching Programs**

We can not overlook a significant contributor to our organization. Dan and Audrie Dicso learned several years ago that Audrie employer, CPC Interational, had a matching gift program. So the Dicsos have been applying for a match from them. So, thanks Audire and Dan for generating the match from CPC. And a big thank you to CPC! Does your employ have a gift matching program? Check it out.

**Front Cover: Late in its short life, a throng of visitors prepare to visit the parkgrounds on Orange Mountian. The funicular car had a covered passenger body as well as wagon capacity. The floor remained level whatever the grade. Circa 1896**

**Contributions 1998 Contributions 1999**

Albert Ambrose  
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 Jonathan D. Boyer  
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 Robert Yuell  
 Walter Zahn  
 Tim Zukas



Letters to the Editor:

### More Swamp Line ...

Regarding the "Swamp Line memories" of some recent issues—the South Orange and Maplewood Traction had some relationship with the Erie railroad. It was noted that the terminal at West Orange lay directly across the street from the end of the Erie's West Orange Branch, but there was more to it than that. There are some scattered notes in John Harrington Riley's book *The Newark City Subway Lines* that I will collect here.

The SO&MT had to *extend* their route north to Main Street, which was done in November 1897, over two years after the main part of the line opened in summer of 1895 (but I don't know the original north terminal). A month later the company obtained permission to cross Main Street for a track connection to the Watchung Railway, that is, the Erie's Orange Branch. While one can see the advantage of extending the SO&MT to meet the Orange trolley line in Main Street, it is also clear from the timing that the choice of location opposite the Erie Terminal was no coincidence. The Erie branch itself had previously been extended a few blocks south to Main Street from its original terminal at Llewellyn, but I don't have the date for that and can't say if it also was part of the plan.

Consolidated Traction (later Public Service) fought the Main Street crossing, but it was finally laid in November 1900, and was first used for *freight* service in March 1901. SO&MT used an electric freight engine (also serving as a snow sweeper) to bring freight cars from the Erie's West Orange station down to a freight house in the property at Valley Road and Forest Street. The freight house was even painted Erie green, although operation was kept separate. There was a rumor that the Orange branch might be electrified, and through passenger cars would run from South Orange to Forest Hill, connecting with Greenwood Lake trains to Jersey City, but no such plan was actually announced. The connection to the Erie was taken up in 1917 after a few years of disuse.

By the end of 1903, Public Service began seeking permission to connect the Orange trolley line with what it would call the Montrose line, namely the former SO&MT. Permission was needed from both the City of Orange and the Town of West Orange because the switches would be partly in each municipality, and it dragged on "due to disagreement over transfer privileges and fares". West Orange finally approved in 1910, and Orange in 1912. No through service was run though. The main use of the switches was for the "Erie Loop" needed to operate single-end cars on the Orange Line turning back short of the Mississippi Loop in West Orange.

I have quite a bit of information on the Orange Mountain cable line, which I am attaching as a separate article.

Joseph Brennan

### Hand Held Registers

You asked about hand held registers. I think I remember them on 49-UNION. My aunt and I boarded on Broad Street, Newark about 1934 and my aunt asked the fare to Bound Brook. The old looking Irish salesman (motorman) replied "Now and all the time". True to his word, he came through the car at fare zones beyond Elizabeth to get "his" nickels. He could not touch the money until it was registered.

Memory tells me Fifth Avenue Coach Co. conductors also used them or a similar device.

In Pittsburgh, a relief motorman would board inbound Route 64, and 67 cars at Braddock and Forbes to operate the car through Frick Park on Forbes St. The regular motorman went through the car to get his city zone fares from those without a fare receipt. When finished, he resumed motoring and the relief man went back to serve another inbound car. Unlike Public Service, Pittsburgh had no-pay downtown, so even two zone trips needed extra collection. Outbound, you just paid two fares at once in the second zone if you lacked a 2-nd zone receipt.

Suburban trippers on the interurban lines were not covered by hand held registers. Outbound worked the same as in the city zones, but inbound, the motorman expected several zone tickets or cash in the fare box and he was to memorize who paid only one-zone, stop for them and invite them to get off.

Interurban cars in Pittsburgh had Ohmer registers, the same as Public Service Interstate Transportation Company, but if a city car had to double head an interurban trip in peak hours, it all went into the fare box, rather than the operator's pocket. (After registration) and railroad conductors duplex receipts were issued to passengers. If the Ohmer register failed, these duplex receipts were used by Charleroi and (little) Washington "trainmen".

E.L. Tennyson 31 December 1998

## MEETING LOCATION

**NJERHS meets at the Rahway Senior Citizens Center, 1306 Esterbrook Ave., Rahway. It is the old post office building. The air conditioned facility is two blocks from Rahway Station. (From the station, go two blocks west on W. Milton St. to Esterbrook. Turn right to 1306 on the left. Ample parking in the rear of the building.**

More Letters to the Editor:

### **Fare Collection on Car Lines with Three or More Zones**

There was another method of collecting fares on lines with more than two fare zones on Public Service that required equipment on the car itself but still only the service of one man on the car. Some times it did require another element and that was time itself. All of the Bergen County lines running in 1934 had three, or more, fare zones. FARE LIMIT was what the sign hung from the support wires said. Cars on the HUDSON RIVER, ENGLEWOOD and PALISADE lines were all equipped with overhead devices attached to the ceiling of the car from which straps, the same as for standees, were extended. These were attached to a long rod that was connected to the inside fare register on the forward bulkhead of the car. The motorman went into the car and collected the fares ringing them up by pulling on the straps.

Fare collection was done at Leonia Junction, Franklin Place in Hackensack on the HUDSON RIVER and ENGLEWOOD lines and at Palisade Junction on the PALISADE line. All of the 3500s assigned to Edgewater and all of the 2050s assigned to West New York had ceiling collectors. I do not know whether or not the UNION line used this method of collection, but it was possible it did. I never saw any of the fare collection devices mentioned in the article on any Bergen County line. I did see them and paid fares to collectors using them on the 29 BLOOMFIELD line from Caldwell in the late 1940s and the early 1950s.

Collection on the PALISADE line was not a big problem as it only happened on the lightly traveled owl trips to Coytesville and return. The stop at Leonia Junction on the HUDSON RIVER and ENGLEWOOD lines was another matter. I have been on fully loaded cars wherein fare collection took over ten minutes. The use of tickets was introduced on these lines in early 1936 where a passenger paid the entire fare upon entering and received a color coded ticket to surrender at the end of the trip.

Time was saved by this ticket use and the 1 hour 18 minute running time from Edgewater to Paterson on July 1936 was later cut to 1 hour 8 minutes. This was fast for New Jersey trolleys as it required an average speed of 14.2 MPH. Most lines did less than half that, the exception being the PALISADE line that covered the 7.5 miles from West Shore Terminal to Coytesville in 30 minutes averaging 15 MPH. This with cars that had a top speed of 32 MPH at best. HUDSON RIVER cars on the other hand could easily make 50 MPH.

J.F. O'Connor - December 29, 1998

### **Fast Line Open**

Seeing that nice shot of PS Open No. 1487 on the cover of October 1998 DESTINATIONS reminds me to comment on a Fast Line trip that I managed to "enjoy" as a youth too young to note the car numbers but memorable enough to register its uniqueness. Mom, Dad and I as a 5 or 6 year old had come down from

Lyndhurst (apparently on a bus!) after a family visit and arrived at PS Terminal during a summer evening in what probably was the year 1930. For some reason we forsook whatever means it took to reach Penn Station for a faster trip to Metuchen. Instead my parents chose the Fast Line leaving the same terminal.

What we rode on that night was an OPEN CAR! I remember distinctly the open sides, screen and shades that may have been partly pulled to lessen the rush of night air. It has always caused wonder as to which type of open car could serve that fast schedule but I deduce from a photo of car 1499 just repainted and standing outside Plank Road shops on May 9, 1930 that a substitute had to be found to fill in for the declining 3600 series and one of these racier opens of the Hudson River Line may just have been available. Memory is remiss about the overall trip streetwise into and through Elizabeth but once out into the private right-of-way it was high speed going with the roof swaying back and forth and outside features passing swiftly in the gathering dusk.

We arrived safely at Bonhamtown Junction, the point where the cars turned onto Main Street for slower running toward New Brunswick, some 70 minutes later, and the walking distance to home in Metuchen was about the same as from PRR's station.

If it wasn't for my mother confirming over the years the type of car utilized I would probably likened this to an apparition. Through service between Newark and New Brunswick ended Feb. 9, 1931 and I never had the opportunity to ride again.

Keep up the good work. Looks like you'll soon be riding electric cars in N.J. Almost an inducement to move back!

Sincerely, John Brinckmann

### **From Ed Francis: A Circle Tour**

The South Orange Avenue Line and the Montrose Line each had a terminal at South Orange and was first separated by the Lackawanna R.R. grade crossing. The lines were never connected in spite of postwar elevation of the railroad.

One car did cross the rail-less section of South Orange Avenue and depart via the Montrose Line.

On January 6, 1922 car no. 2602 of the South Orange Avenue Line, with two man crew, arrived at the end of track but failed to stop because of brake failure. The car went off the end of track and under the railroad bridge, struck a lumber wagon and came to a stop at the most western column supporting the bridge. One of the horses pulling the wagon was killed and the second was later destroyed because of injuries.

The simplest way to remove the car was to move it over pavement to the end of the Montrose Line track. The car was towed via Orange to Roseville Car House and then to Newark Shops. Two weeks later No. 2602 returned to South Orange Avenue car house for service.

# Public Service Railway Snow Removal Equipment 1928

*John F. O'Connor*

This trolley company had ready to use in that coming winter a fleet of more than 94 sweepers and 24 plows to operate from 31 car houses located in the six operating Divisions. Well over half of this fleet had been in service for over 25 years. Twenty six of the sweepers and 15 of the plows were between 8 and 12 years old, indeed 10 new sweepers were built in 1927. By the early 1930s the fleet would start to drop in size so that by the fall of 1938 it would be reduced to about 20 pieces of equipment. The fleet was well maintained and so was quite capable of performing its job.

The trolley company had been a major factor in providing snow clearing of the principal streets and of course for all the PRW, from the time the trolley became the prime mover of public transit. This contribution to local towns, villages and hamlets was substantial. It was basic to major cities in their ability to have main arteries of commerce kept open. The cost of the snow removal, depending upon the severity of the winter, varied, but it was quite significant. Anyone who has ever tried to or has been involved in keeping a rail line open in a blizzard would appreciate the effort and costs involved.

One hundred eighteen pieces of equipment in action meant a minimum of 236 men just to operate the sweepers and plows. Another force would have to be available to direct their movements and additional forces would be needed to clean the switches and shovel snow from places the equipment could not. Assume an army of 500 men in 1928 cost of \$.65 an hour and the expense for eight hours would be \$2,600. This does not include electric power, maintenance and upkeep costs, the investment in equipment and delays caused by the snow. A bad winter was a very expensive matter for the trolley company.

a month had a labor cost of \$31,200. Translated into five cent fares that meant 624,000 fares went towards paying for snow removal. In 1928 the trolleys moved 332 million passengers and buses 312 million. Snow removal for buses was primarily the problem of the localities where the buses ran. Except where they were operated on the same streets as the cars. Public Service did very little to clear the streets for buses. Each sweeper or plow was assigned a route which was displayed in the car. These routes did not necessarily follow the car line routes. Most equipment stayed on the same route.

The trolley company was well aware of the costs and the transfer of these costs to local political entities was done with little, if any, mention of the fact by either. Since little snow clearing was done for buses, what was spent to keep the cars moving was, for the most part, saved in the case of the buses. The trolley company intent on bus operation for a line was not about to call attention to the fact that a significant saving was to be made at the expense of the taxpayer. Politicians usually did not realize what was happening until after the change had been accomplished and snow removal became the town's problem, not the trolley company's.

The equipment listed herein is shown by assignment to car house. There were no doubt a few more in service and from some points not shown. This does present a good picture of the operations.



*Dick Young Photo Frank Miklos Collection*

**Public Service 5173 in service at Bloomfield Ave. and Argyle Parkway - January 16, 1945.  
Builder: PS Railway Date: January 8, 1917**

Equipment that had to be used for just four full days





*Wilbur Sherwood Photo Frank Miklos Collection*

**Public Service 5107 sweeping the Roseville Yard - February 9, 1936. Builder: Maguire, First Assignment - February 1, 1907; Destroyed - February 25, 1938**

## **PUBLIC SERVICE RAILWAY SNOW FIGHTERS**



*Wilbur Sherwood Photo Frank Miklos Collection*

**Public Service Plow 5243 (built by PS Railway 1921) passes Car 8014 on Main St. at 14th. St. (Roseville Yard.) - January 20, 1936.**

Public Service Snow Removal Equipment - 1928				
Sweepers	Units		Plows	Units
5100 - 5120	21		5208 - 5211	4
5125	1		5216	1
5136 - 5139	4		5241 - 5255	15
5140 - 5146, 5149	8			
5150 - 5159	10		5910 Rotary	1
5160	1		5937	1
5167	1		5942 - 5943	2
5169 - 5170	2			
5171 - 5196	26			
5700 - 5709	10			
5710	1			
5903 - 5909	7			
5935 - 5936	2			
Grand Totals	94			24

Divison	Car Houses		Sweepers	Plows	
Essex	10		27	6	
Hudson	8	*	25	4	
Central	6		18	5	
Passaic	2	*	8	2	
Bergen	2		6	3	
Southern	3		10	4	
	31		94	24	

\* There were no sweepers or plows assigned to Hudson Division Car Houses at Bayonne, Secaucus or Pavonia nor to Passaic Division Car House at Lake View.

Sweepers 5152 and 5153 were assigned to Market Street in Paterson and Sweeper 5159 was assigned to Union City in 1928 but were removed from service and scrapped in summer and fall of the year.

Location of Snow Removal Equipment			
October 1928			
Divison	Car House	Sweepers	Plows
Essex	Hilton	5175, 5183, 5700	5245
	Roseville	5169, 5176, 5178, 5704, 5149	5243
	Miller Street	5170, 5172, 5186, 5705	5247
	Bergen Street	5103, 5187, 5707	
	16th Avenue	5188, 5703	5246
	Montclair	5171, 5189	5242
	South Orange	5173, 5191	
	Central Avenue	5190	
	Big Tree	5181, 5192, 5701	5241
	Harrison	5194, 5702	
Passaic	Market Street	5119, 5150, 5154, 5155, 5177, 5195	5254, 5255
Bergen	Edgewater	5143, 5144, 5196	5244, 5252
	Rutherford	5116, 5120, 5185	5253
Central	New Brunswick	5102, 5115, 5139, 5167, 5184	5250
	Perth Amboy	5105, 5107, 5706	5251
	Bound Brook	5104	
	Dunellen	5110, 5193	5249
	Westfield	5112, 5117	
	Elizabeth	5106, 5109, 5125, 5157, 5182	5216, 5248
Southern	Newton Avenue	5903, 5904, 5905, 5906, 5907, 5908, 5909, 5710	5910 Rotary
	Riverside	5935, 5936	5937, 5942
	Bordentown		5943
Hudson	Greenville	5108, 5113, 5118, 5146, 5174	5209
	Montgomery	5111, 5114, 5136, 5137, 5160, 5709	
	Hoboken	5100	
	Union City	5138, 5141, 5142, 5179, 5180, 5708	5211
	West New York	5101, 5140, 5145, 5151, 5156, 5158	5208, 5210
Not Assigned		5152, 5153, 5159	



# The Orange Mountain Cable and Traction Companies

by Joseph Brennan

About a year ago, after I had moved to South Orange, I was checking old land atlases and came across the Orange Mountain "Cable road". My interest in an unusual railway so nearby led me to research its history just as proposed in *Destinations* number 25.

## History

The Orange Mountain Cable Company grew out of a residential land development scheme by the Orange Mountain Land Company, incorporated in 1887. The cable road was intended to make the Land Company's property on the top of the First Mountain more accessible than by going up the steep public roads, Walker Road and Northfield Avenue. Construction of the cable road began by 1891 and the line was opened on April 29, 1893. It was a funicular, the two cars partly counterbalancing each other, and powered by a stationary steam engine in a stone house at the top of the incline. The incline cut through the cliff of the ridge top in a 30 foot deep rock cut. The upper station was therefore at the top of the cut, set back from the natural cliff edge. The lower station was on the west side of Valley Road between Union and Nassau Streets, where it did not connect with any other transit line. One account says the complete plan had been to connect with the Highland Avenue station on the Morris and Essex (Lackawanna) Railroad, which would take it across roughly six blocks of more level ground, but I do not see how this could have worked as a funicular. At any rate permission was never obtained for this extension through streets or private property. The only road crossing on

the incline was Gregory Avenue, about the halfway point, and there were no curves. The grade varied, steepest at the top and next steepest in the last block to Valley Road. The cars had a cabin for passengers and also a space for carriages, which may mean prospective buyers were expected to come by carriage to the Valley Road terminal and not necessarily by walking over from Highland Avenue Station.

The company built a hotel and visitor facilities to attract visitors for the fresh air and view. These structures were at the cliff top on both sides of the big rock cut, and were connected by an arched footbridge over the cut that became the most photographed site on the line. Unfortunately the land development, hotel and cable road all failed to meet expenses, and the companies went into receivership on September 24, 1894, and were sold on November 27, 1895.

The new owners built a more extensive mountain attraction, damming a stream to form Cable Lake, and put up a dance hall,



Terminus of the Cable Road showing part of the car from the top of the mountain looking down toward the valley. Circa 1898

*Seifert Collection North Jersey Chapter NRHS B04S*



*Seijert Collection North Jersey Chapter NTKHS BUSS*

The picnic grounds and cool mountain air were the rewards for braving the cable ascent. Circa 1898 by the sign on the bridge.

The bridge was a popular addition to the reconstructed park. The locals used the cable road to avoid the steep climb up the road running over First Mountain.

carousel, and amusement center, all open for the 1896 season. Since the summer of 1895, a closer transit connection had become available in the form of the South Orange and Maplewood Traction "Swamp Line", running just one block east of the Valley Road cable terminal. Since the Swamp Line itself required a change of cars at South Orange, this was still not a good connection for the Newark area, and the cable line still failed to gain much ridership. Its closing was announced on October 23, 1896 and the whole company failed in 1897.

The entire life of the cable operation therefore had been four summer seasons, and this might have been the end of the story, but after lying disused for ten years, the project came back to life.

The Orange Mountain Traction Company was formed in 1906 by the same people as the original Orange Mountain Land Company, who purchased the land that had been used for the amusement park in 1896 and additional real estate. Once again they saw the "cable road" as the way to open this land to residential development. This time, despite the steep grades on the line, the company proposed trolley operation purely by adhesion. They quickly rehabilitated and electrified the old line, and bought two cars from Public Service and equipped them with special "patent brakes". The public opening ceremony on June 24, 1906 was a

disaster. The car managed to travel up as far as the rock cut near the top when it lost adhesion. The patent brakes failed to hold, and the car slid or rolled all the way down to the bottom and continued across Valley Road where it landed in a heap in a dirt lot. All but one of the passengers had jumped off as soon as it started to slide, and there was no loss of life.

The traction company reacted quickly and rebuilt the property into a new and better form. The steep grade at the bottom was avoided by a deviation one block to the south, and the line was further improved by continuing down to meet the Swamp Line. The grade near the top was replaced by a loop and three switchbacks. The line was also extended more than a mile west along the now-gone street called Cable Road Avenue to Northfield Avenue, and along Northfield Avenue to Walker Road at the Rock Spring. This longer and safer line was opening sometime in 1906, and continued in operation without further incident until 1914.

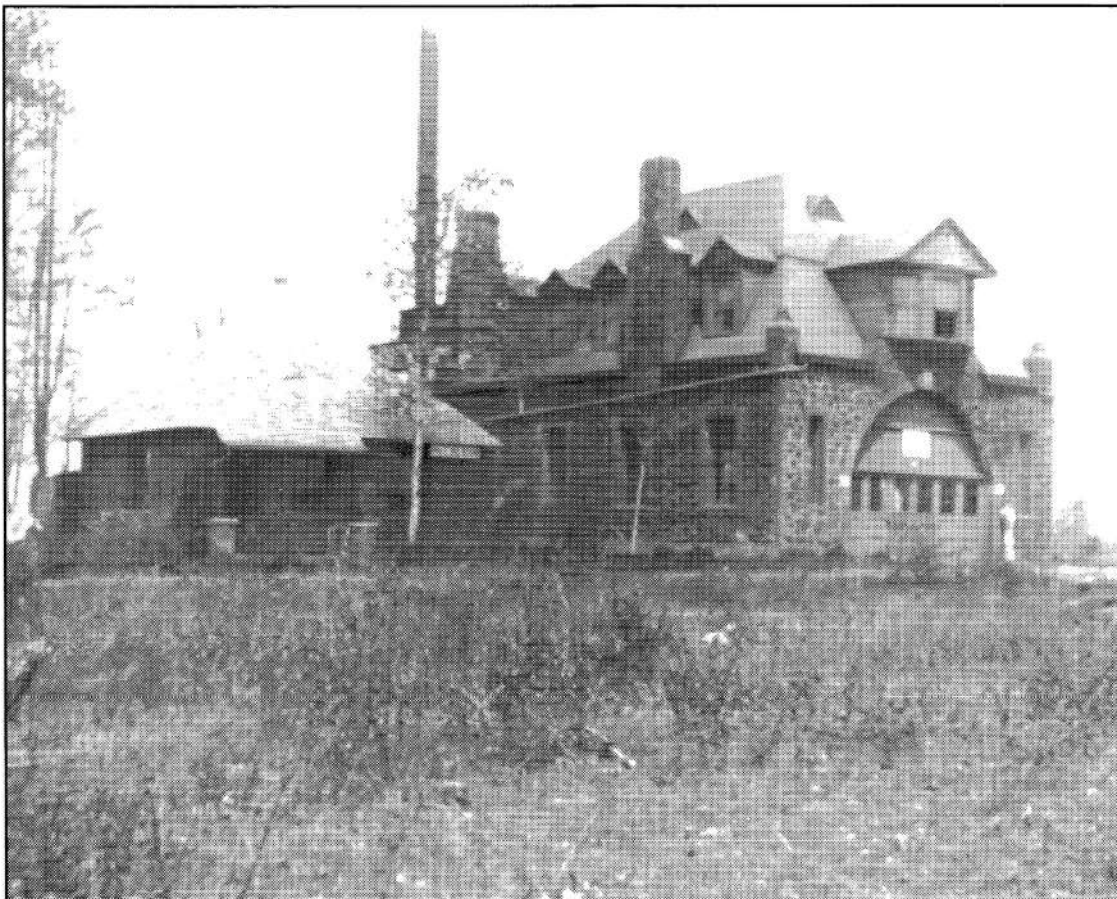
A trolley guide of 1914 lists the line under the name "Orange Mountain Traction Co.—(Leased to Mountain Ry. Co.)", and "Frank Brewer, President, Orange Heights Ave., West Orange, N.J." with the following information:

*Continued on page 12*



*Bill McKelvey Collection*

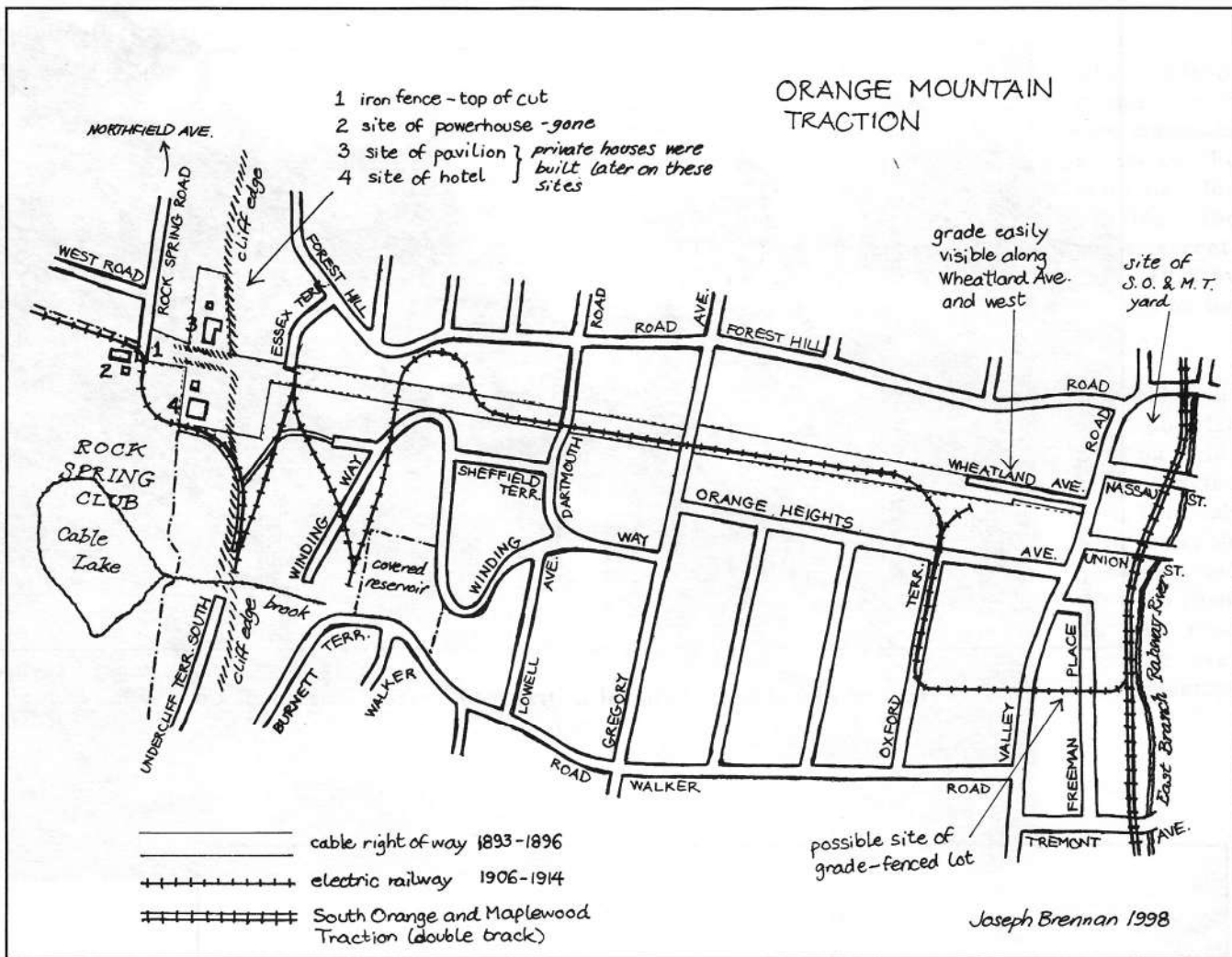
**Postcard view of upper terminal of Orange Mountain Cable Road. Circa 1896.**



**Power House  
at the top of  
the Cable  
Road also  
housed the  
waiting room  
for the line.**

*Siefert Collect North Jersey Chapter NRHS Neg B03S*





Map by Joseph Brennan

Places	time	miles
Fare, 5 Cents		
Orange Valley (Christopher St.)	0	0
Gregory Ave.	5	1/2
Cable Lake	10	1
Saint Cloud	15	2
Rock Spring	18	2 1/2

**Notes:** Cars run every day; leave either end about every 30 minutes from about 7:00 a.m. until about 7:00 p.m.

How the line possibly survived for even eight years is a wonder considering the low population and the difficult nature of the route. The schedule suggests two cars with crews working 12 hour days, typical of the time. I don't know what caused the end of operation in 1914 but I would guess a combination of the inflation affecting all transit lines by that year and possibly the need for engineering work on the grade. It is interesting that this was one of the few lines not yet bought out by Public Service.

### A Tour of the Route

The reasons for the continuing poor receipts of the line are suggested by the fact that almost all of the development along it has occurred after the closing in 1914. Unlike some former trolley rights-of-way, the property was not kept together, but was parceled out eventually for housing lots. Therefore we cannot expect to trace the route easily today, and some of the middle portion cannot be recognized at all. A good reference to start with is the *Atlas of the Oranges* by Robinson and Mueller of 1911, which I found on open shelf in the South Orange Public Library (Scotland Road at Comstock Place).

Starting at the bottom, the Orange Mountain Traction terminal was at a now-hidden location where it met the Swamp Line. The spot is in West Orange directly opposite the end of Christopher Street in the City of Orange Township, but separated from it by the stream forming the township boundary. The first spot we can actually look at today is in Freeman Place, West Orange, a one-way street reached from Tremont Avenue. The Swamp Line ran behind the houses on the east side of Freeman Place. About halfway down the street there is a lot on the west side with a chain link fence enclosing a stepped inclined grass lawn. This is

part of the property at 100 South Valley Road and the only lot that goes clear through the block. I think this is the remains of the Traction line right of way, which as we can see, began its uphill climb as soon as it crossed Freeman Place, which existed in 1906.

Coming around to the Valley Road side of the block, we find that the house at number 100 appears to be newer than its neighbors, from perhaps 1960. I don't know what this implies for sure but perhaps the property had been held off the market for some years. There is otherwise no trace of the Traction line at Valley Road, here or across the street where there is a row of houses of similarly recent date. Note however the continuing rise in elevation up to the next street, Oxford Terrace.

The 1911 atlas shows Oxford Terrace laid out but not "improved", and with no houses, so while the Traction reached Oxford Terrace is at number 20, which is interesting because it is the only brick house on the block, as if it had been built separately, although just as clearly it is on the same general age, namely some time in the 1920's. At the end of the street, the Traction ran across Orange Heights Avenue and into private property, where it turned west and into the old cable road. There is no trace of this.

To continue, we need to go back down to Valley Road to see the bottom of the cable road incline, one of the better preserved

portions of the line. The small shopping center north of Nassau Street, which was built over the Swamp Line's yard and shop property, happens to be a good place to park. Walk back south to Wheatland Avenue, a narrow dead-end street within the former cable road right of way. The incline is still cleared and the steep grade is obvious. The place where the trolley landed in 1906 is still an open lot, and the house seen next to the wrecked car in an old photograph is still there, now Quincy's Place restaurant.

On each side of Wheatland Avenue at Valley Road are very old houses that were not only there when the cable road opened but when Valley Road was a colonial highway. The house of the north side is believed to be an inn where George Washington and Lafayette once shared a meal. As we go up Wheatland Avenue on foot, we can see a low stone retaining wall in places along the south side of the right of way, showing the shallow cut made to maintain a steady grade for the cable road. At the end of the paved road, the incline is full of trees, but we can make out a somewhat deeper rock cut continuing up.

From here to near the top, the line is obliterated by later development, but its routing in relation to modern streets can be traced. Gregory Avenue was still the only road crossing on the route of the old cable road as late as 1911 and probably to the end. On the east side, the houses seem to have deep lots but there

*Continued on page 15*



**L o o k i n g  
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# Orange Mountain Traction Company

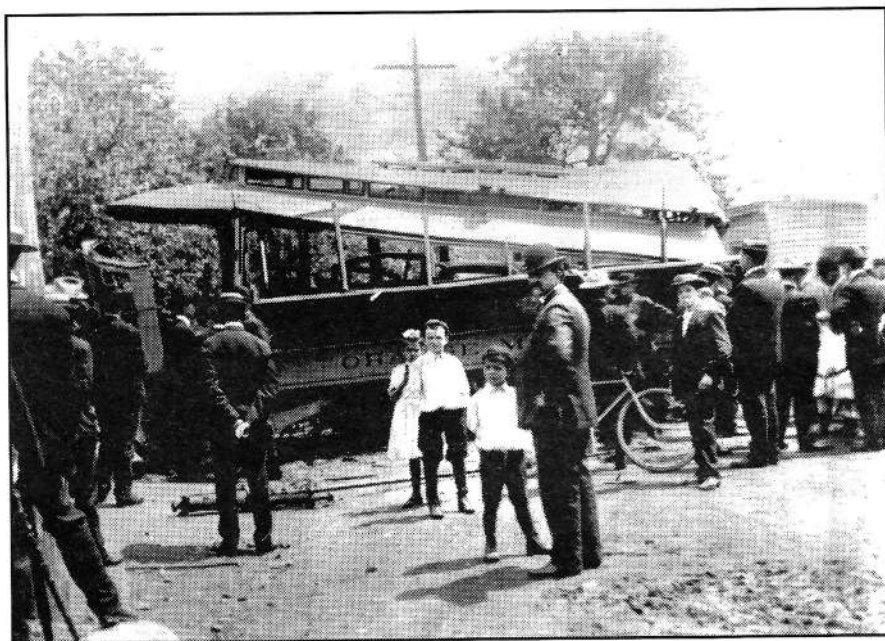
June 24, 1906  
First and Last Day of  
Operation

Wreckage of Car 101 after the patented braking system did not hold. The car plunged from the top of the line to the lower terminal at Valley Road.



*Copied from Aramris Burrelli by H. Taylor - North Jersey Chapter NHRS*

Note from Ed Francis: The Orange Mountain Traction Company made one trip ... car run away on the 14% grade and at the bottom hit the second car on the company's roster. All of the passengers jumped from the car except one...he survived the wreck and lived to be the last PS superintendent of track maintenance. Ed was acquainted with the gentleman ... he told Ed that he was too scared to jump from the car.

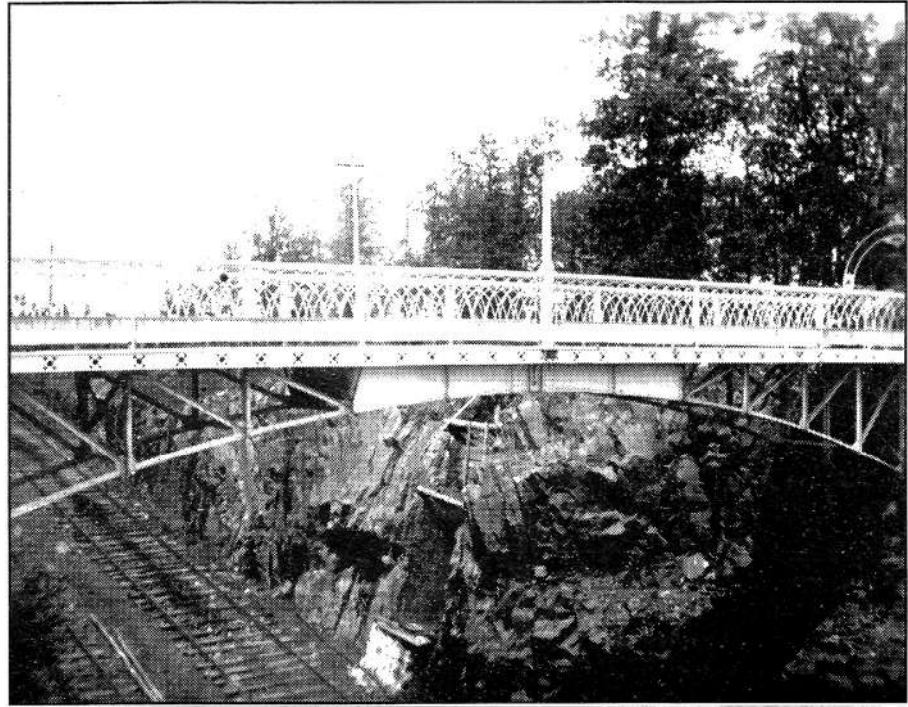


**Plunging car 101 crashed into Car 102 standing at the Valley Road Terminal destroying it. Here we see the wreckage of Car 102. June 24, 1906**

*Copied from Aramris Burrelli by H. Taylor - North Jersey Chapter NHRS*



The center piece of the Orange Mountain Land Company was the bridge over the cable line. The ornate iron remained in place until World War II.



*Seifert Collection North Jersey Chapter NRHS B06S*

*Continued from page 13*

is no view down to the incline we know is there. In 1911 there were very few houses west of Gregory Avenue. The next street up, now Dartmouth Road, was then part of Lowell Avenue and ended at the Traction right of way without crossing, where Dartmouth Road now has a slight reverse curve as one housing development joins another. The houses around here date from about 1927 and later. West of Dartmouth Road, the street plan today is confusing and not even shown right on most maps. My accompanying map is based on township engineer's plans and my own field notes.

The aptly named Winding Way is shown on the 1911 atlas as "opened" under the name of Orange Heights Avenue all the way to the top of the ridge, but with just two houses on the east side south of (lower) Sheffield Terrace, and with sewer ending at that point, which was I suspect the real end of the road at that time. Up in this area, the Traction line began to deviate from the straight path of the cable road. First it looped to the north just touching the south line of Forest Hill Road (not yet opened). And then ran south across Winding Way and to a switchback located probably just above the present covered reservoir. It then ran north, again across Winding Way, to a second switchback located at about the end of the present day Essex Terrace (nonexistent at the time). There is absolutely no trace of the crossings of Winding Way today, probably because of regrading during construction of the houses on the hillside. At the end of Winding Way is a ravine with a brook that drains Cable Lake. The first and third switchbacks did not cross the ravine, and would have been about

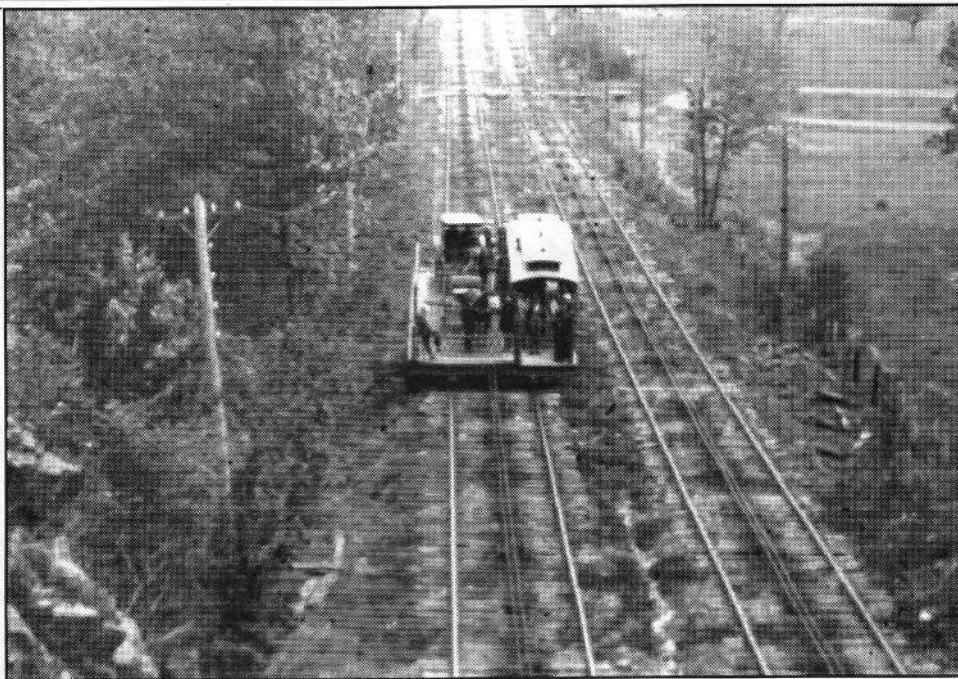
equally far east and west from here. There is an abutment for something upstream.

If we go back down Winding Way, cut over at Dartmouth Road, and back uphill on Forest Hill Road, we can get to Essex Terrace, the end of which is probably within the cable line right-of-way. The end of Essex Terrace cannot be far from the big rock cut but I have been unable to see it from below. The house at number 10 probably is blocking the view up. The cliff edge can just be seen from here above the houses. On the cliff above Essex Terrace once stood the pavilion, and the hotel was to the south, above and past the end of the street.

From the second switchback around Essex Terrace, the line ran south again to a third switchback in land up above Winding Way that is not now visible at all from public streets. The 1911 atlas shows Winding Way taking more than one twist into this area, and modern maps show other streets, but there really are no public streets there now. At the third switchback, the Traction would be almost to the top, and its course from there up seems to match that of an unopened part of Undercliff Terrace South as shown on modern maps (for example, Hagstrom's Essex County).

The 30-foot deep rock cut can be seen today from above, on Rock Spring Road. It's just a block west of Essex Terrace, but about a mile and a half by road, clockwise along Forest Hill Road, Gregory Avenue, Walker Road, Northfield Avenue and finally Rock Spring Road, all the way to the end where it enters the

private lands of the Rock Spring Country Club. The club was founded in 1925 and occupies much of the land once slated for houses by the Orange Mountain developers, including what is still known as Cable Lake. On the east side of Rock Spring Road, just before the entrance to the club, are two broken sections of iron fence, one of which looks old enough to date from 1906 when the Traction line was rerouted out of the steep incline following the disastrous opening day. The land is posted “no trespassing”, but we can see from the road into the still impressive cut, now full of trees and probably some rock and dirt slide. This is most clearly seen in the winter, with the leaves gone. The footbridge that once crossed over the cut is long gone, and the Orange Mountain companies’ lands on each side are now occupied by private houses built after 1914 and set well back from the road. “Casalta”, the one on the south side with the Italianate tower, must have a commanding view, but is definitely not open to visitors judging from the signs.



*Seifert Collection North Jersey Chapter NRHS B07S*

**Above: A view of the Cable Road in operation with the car about midway up. Below: Mountain Railway car crossing the Cable Road right of way on the upper switchback. The photos can be matched by the looping Windy Way on the right side. The cars in each photo is at the same spot.**

The cable road’s powerhouse was a stone building still standing in 1911, on the west side of modern Rock Spring Road facing the rock cut, but there is not even a foundation visible today. The relocated Traction line came up from the south side of where “Casalta” is now, and through what is now the parking lot into the very end of Rock Spring Road, and then turned west around the old powerhouse to run straight along the edge of the modern country club land, in what is shown in 1911 as an “improved road” called Cable Road Avenue. That long-gone road reached Northfield Avenue at the same point as Ridgeway Avenue (this does not look like it lines up, on the Hagstrom map, but it does). The modern West Road runs down what would have been the back property line of houses on the north side of Cable Road Avenue, but interestingly the one block of Raynor Road seems to be exactly in line with a planned street, making it the only survivor, in a way, of the streets planned by the Orange Mountain company.



*North Jersey Chapter NRHS - T01S*

The Traction’s single track probably ran along one side of Northfield Avenue, a very old east-west highway crossing the Watchungs. We may note that the old retaining walls along the uphill north side are of the same type of stonework as the shallow



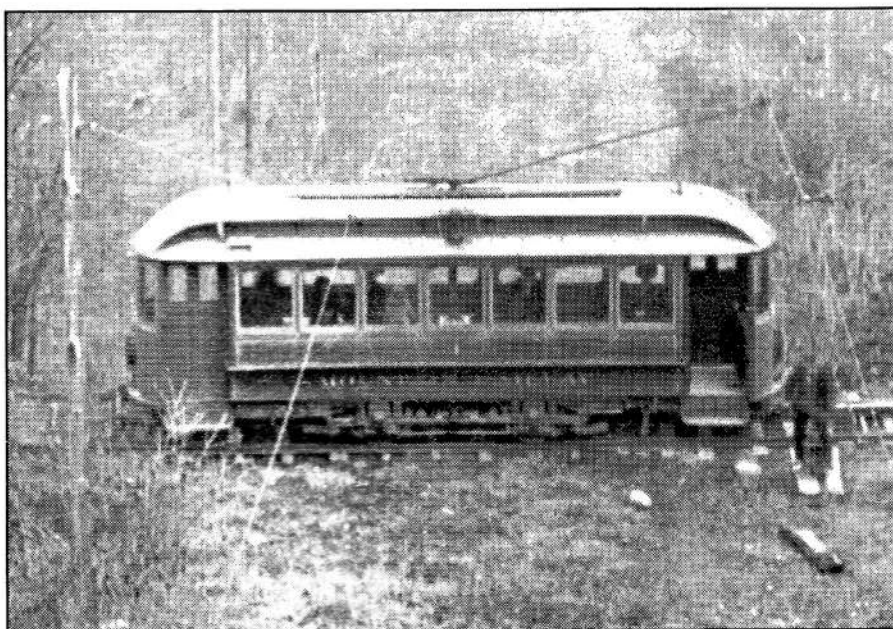
## Orange Mountain Memories

*From E. L. Tennyson*

In May 1998 DESTINATIONS Jonathan Goodman asks several good questions about the Mountain Railway, a two mile trolley line with two cars in 1913. The line was owned by Orange Mountain Traction Co. And extended from Christopher Street in Orange to Rock Spring, West Orange through private property. Source: McGraw's 1914 Electric Railway Manual. The Cable Railroad had failed and the trolley replaced it. By 1918, the listing disappeared.

I am enclosing a sketch, not to scale, of the area where I lived in the 1930s. [Ed. note: We have not represented Mr. Tennyson's sketch. Mr. Brennan's map of the area on page 12 duplicates it.]

There was a very rusted iron foot bridge across the cut at the top of Orange Mountain over the tracks which were gone. I think the Cable Railroad went straight up and down, as shown on the map, but the trolley right of way definitely had [three] switchbacks. I walked the right of way which still contained rotting ties and a few spikes as well as some other track material in very small piece that the scrapper left behind. The trolley route, as I knew it, is shown in railroad standard cross hatched lines, along with the Montrose Swamp Line. Winding Way was a gravel road, but all of the others were concrete north of Forest Hill Road. Dartmouth was concrete. Lower Winding Way, Forest Hill, Orange Heights and Walker Road were macadam.



*North Jersey Chapter NRHS - T01S*

**Close up view of Orange Mountain Railway car #1 crossing the Cable right of Way.**

*Continued from page 16*

walls on the incline near Valley Road, but I don't know what relation there may be. Northfield Avenue is certainly wider now than it was then. The end of the line was next to Rock Spring bottled water company buildings. The mineral spring here was well known in the early decades of the 19th century but somewhat out of fashion as a spa after 1830. The trolley's destination was doubtless not the spring itself but the hoped-for development here in the St. Cloud neighborhood, which did not actually take place until long after the Traction line closed.

### Sources

These three books are on the local history self in the West Orange Public Library, on Northfield Avenue near Main Street.

Mr. Frank Brewer was General Manager and a Director of the Mountain Railway. Herman Freeman and E.L. Sawyer were the other officers. I went to school with a Brewer kid who lived on Winding Way, in a mansion house much older than ours.

It may be that the Orange Mountain Railway claimed 2 miles of line but the O. M. Ry had only 1 1/2 miles to lease. I always assumed that the cable road ended at the amusement park at the Cable Lake. Only the trolley went to Rock Spring on Northfield Avenue, at the intersection of Walker Road.

*A History of West Orange* by Victor Zakrzowski and Nora Kallen, Worrall Publications, 1976. Collected bicentennial articles from the West Orange Chronicle, one of which is about the cable line. Two photos taken near the big cut at the top: the one looking down shows the footbridge and the pavilion on the north side, and the one looking up shows part of the powerhouse. This is a good summary of the history. It notes there was a "Cable Car Playhouse" in West Orange founded in 1972.

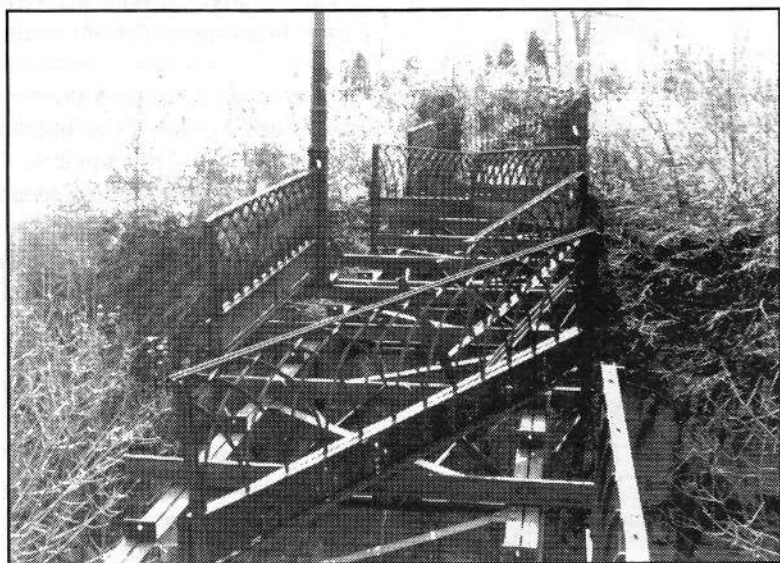
*West Orange: A History* by Advanced Placement American History Students in West Orange High School, 1980. This has a poorly reproduced full-page photo showing the wreck of car 101 after it slid down the incline in 1906. I have also seen a postcard view of the wrecked car being moved into Valley Road.



Looking up through the remains of the bridge over the Cable Road right of way at the top of the mountain. Bridge remained until World War II. November 11, 1938



*North Jersey Chapter NRHS - B08.03S*



*North Jersey Chapter NRHS - B08.04S*

The picnic grounds were long overgrown in this November 11, 1938 view of the remains of the bridge.

*Continued from page 17*

*History of the Oranges* by Pierson, Lewis Historical Publishing, 1922. This has a little on the land company and the cable road.

There is also a 3-volume survey of historical structures in West Orange, which has nothing about the cable road, since no buildings survive, but it does explain some of the history of the housing development in town, and it describes those colonial houses on Valley Road at Wheatland Avenue. The library owns some real estate atlases, probably including the 1911 Robinson-Mueller, but they are in storage. I thank the staff for finding me a 1934 Sanborn atlas when I was trying to compare the 1911 streets to modern ones, but I still wish the atlases were up where we could browse around the collection.

## Hudson Bergen Light Rail Tour

The Society organized a host of the Hudson Bergen Light Rail on June 26, 1999. The bus tour included stops along the right of way to view the construction and a tour of the cars in the storage shed. Our gracious hosts, 21st Century Corporation proudly displayed their cars and invited us back for a ride on a future date. Thanks 21th Century. Photos in the next issue.

## SIP AVENUE TERMINAL - Preserve or Demolish?

The Terminal Shed of the Sip Avenue terminal has survived. The structure today provides shade for a parking garage. While the skylight has long since lost its glass, the structure is still in tact.



*Andrew Brusgard Photo*

The Jersey City University has done a beautiful job in restoring the commercial building adjacent to the shed. The inbound unloading platform skylight has been restored.

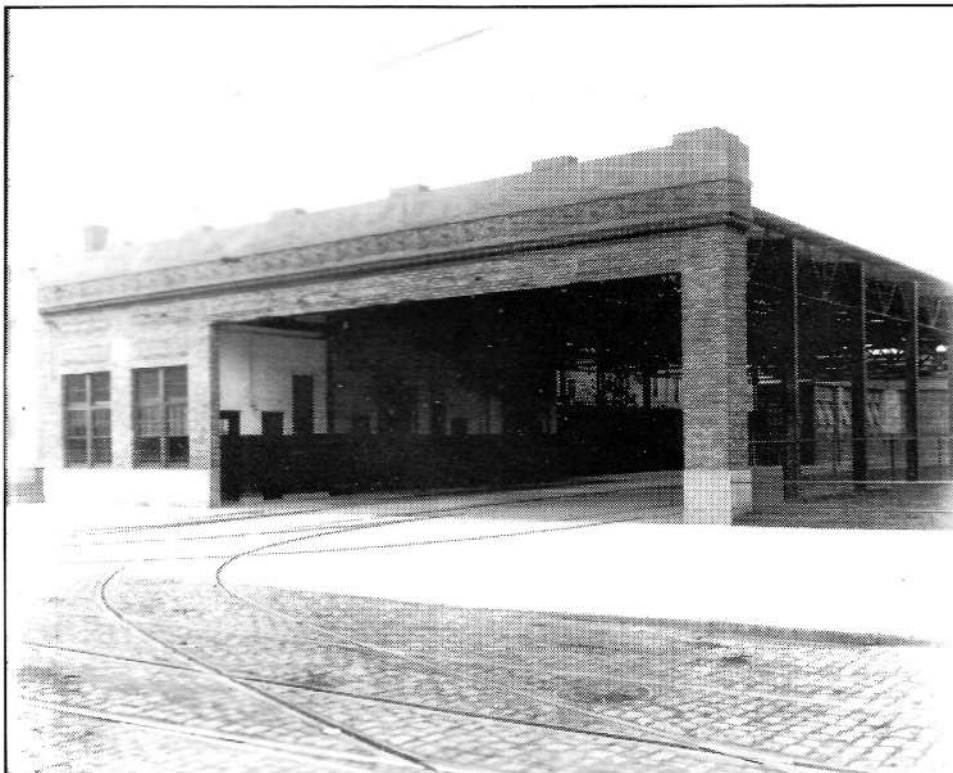
We need to seek your endorsement for saving the outbound terminal and shed. The college is developing plans for the site. Contact the Jersey City Historical Society, the College Administration office or Andrew Brusgard by letter to our PO Box expressing your support for preservation.

We suspect that this is the oldest surviving trolley shed in the state if not the country. Can anyone confirm this. We know that the Sip was put into operation in 1913, converted to bus operation and all service vehicles in August 1949 and used for bus operation until 1975 when the Journal Square Transportation Center opened.

**Above Left - Current condition - August 1997**

**Left: Terminal as built in 1912.**

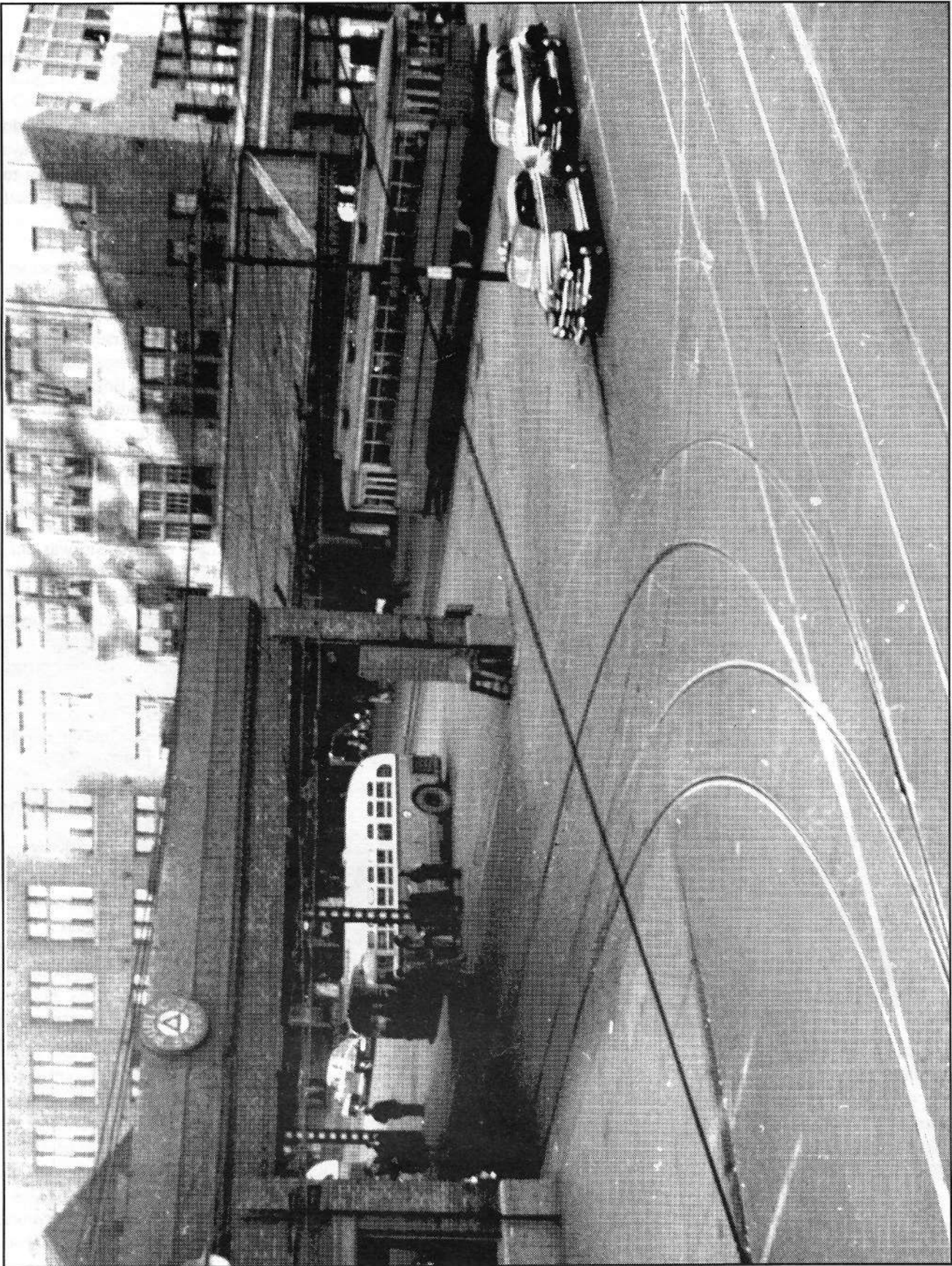
**Rear cover: SIP Avenue Terminal in operation in early 1949. The trolleys would stop running on August 9 and be replaced with All-Service Vehicles. The structure has been modified by removing every other supporting pole to permit clearance for bus operation.**



*Ira Deutsch Collection -Neg No. 396*



Sip Avenue Terminal - 1949



Joe Guardino collection photo





# NORTH JERSEY ELECTRIC RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## 1998 REPORT OF ACTIVITIES

The society had another good year in 1998. With the support of our members we were able to maintain the same dues for 1999. Our financial report for 1998 is presented on page 2.

### MEMBERSHIP REPORT

At the close of 1997 our membership stood at 139 persons. Of these, 133 renewed for 1998. Once again this is a truly remarkable rate of renewal for any organization. During 1998 we took in 14 new members and welcomed back two others who reactivated their membership. Sadly, two of our members, Joseph F. Braun and Edward C. Sosman passed away during the year and we extend our sincere sympathies to their families. Our active membership at the close of 1998 stands at 147. The 14 members who joined the North Jersey E.R.H.S. during 1998 are:

Timothy W. Apgar	Russell E. Jackson
Joseph Brennan	Robert A. McNamara
Andrew J. Brusgard	John P. Mickesh
Rev. John R. Cody	William J. Myers
Michael J. Constantino	Raymond G. Neviel
Irwin W. Davis	J. Andrew Sack, Jr.
Michael T. Greene	John C. Strole

We welcome these new members and appreciate everyone's support. We look forward to another successful year.

### MEETING REPORT

In March 1998 we moved our meetings to the Rahway Seniors Center at 1306 Esterbrook Street. This is a larger facility with better parking and is more convenient to rail and bus transportation. Unlike our previous meeting location at the Claude Reed Center the new facility is air conditioned

allowing us to hold meetings during the summer. Regular meetings are now held on the third Tuesday of each month including July and August at 7:30 PM.

The first meeting of 1998 was also the 100th meeting of the North Jersey E.R.H.S. To commemorate this milestone, the January meeting was moved to the Cranford Hotel where everyone enjoyed dinner and an evening of pleasant conversation.

In February we bade farewell to the Reed Center with another members night where everyone had the opportunity to show a selection of slides. During the year we had some outstanding programs which included presentations by Tony Sassa, John Yohannan, Jack May, Frank Miklos, Dennis Hage, Bruce Russell, Ed Gibbs, Phil Stevenson, and Bill McKelvey. Our December meeting was our annual Christmas celebration with refreshments paid for with money that was left over from the regular monthly refreshment donations. This was followed by another presentation of slides from among the members in attendance. Our special thanks to Bill Keigher for serving as our liaison with the City of Rahway. Thanks also to Bill McKelvey and Bob Hooper for bringing the beverages and refreshments to our meetings; to Ed Gibbs for serving as our entertainment chairman, and to Phil Stevenson for the use of his slide projector.

### PUBLICATION REPORT

Once again our biggest expense was the printing of our newsletter DESTINATIONS. This year we had many noteworthy articles including a salute to

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

BALANCE ON HAND AT THE CLOSE OF 1997  
\$1130.15

## INCOME

Dues		\$2125.00
Train Show Revenue	1365.00	
Contributions	1110.51	
Excursions	775.00	
Photo & Publication Sales	123.00	
50/50 Ticket Proceeds	114.00	
Fast Line Rail Sections	70.00	
Total Income		\$5782.51

## EXPENSES

Newsletter Printing	\$2957.80	
Insurance	988.40	
Photo Processing	744.30	
Bank Fees	172.02	
File Cabinet Purchase	130.31	
Train Show Table Rentals	120.00	
Postage	115.00	
Post Office Box Rental	104.00	
U.R.H.S. Dues	100.00	
Corporation Fee	10.00	
Total Expenses		\$5441.83

Excess of Income over Expenses \$340.68

Balance on Hand - December 1998 \$1470.83

## Outstanding Funds (Cash Within Balance Designated for Projects)

Public Service Sweeper Restoration	\$875.00
Window Replacement Fund	170.00
Total Cash Reserved	\$1045.00
Balance	\$425.83

the Hudson River trolley line. Among the publication's contributors were Jonathan Goodman, George Knopf, Al Mankoff, John F.O'Connor and Edson L. Tennyson. We want to thank all those who provided articles and encourage others to share their knowledge of New Jersey's once vast traction operations. Thanks to Bob Hooper for typing, laying out, and mailing each issue of DESTINATIONS. This was essentially a one man job, but the finished product is appreciated by everyone. We would welcome anyone willing to assist Bob in the production of this newsletter.

**PHOTO COLLECTION**

We are fortunate in having an archive of more than a thousand negatives of trolley and rail scenes. We are also working with member Ira Deutsch to obtain prints from more than 600 glass plate negatives which he acquired in the 1960s. During 1998 the glass plate negative collection of Edward T. Francis was donated to the Friends of the New Jersey Railroad and Transportation Museum. Ira Deutsch was designated to oversee these items because of the care that he gave to his own glass plates over the years. The North Jersey E.R.H.S. will have

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access to the Ed Francis plates and has obtained a file cabinet to provide a safe place for their storage. We will continue to make prints of these negatives as our finances permit. These are outstanding views depicting major construction projects on the Public Service Railway system in the early years of this century. The negatives from the collection of the late Bob VanBuskirk are still being catalogued in preparation for compiling a master listing of all the photos in our collection.

## **TRAIN SHOWS & ETC.**

During 1998 the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society was again represented at six transportation events. In February we had a table at the EastRail multi-media presentation at the Bergen Technical School in Hackensack. In March we participated in the annual Transportation Symposium at Drew University in Madison. During the same month we were present at the train show sponsored by the Jersey Central Chapter of the N.R.H.S. at Mother Seton High School in Clark. In May we had a busy weekend with a table at the Hoboken Festival on Saturday, followed the next day at the Communipaw Commemoratives train show in the old Jersey Central Railroad Terminal at Liberty State Park in Jersey City. We also attended their October train show at the same location. These shows are an important source of revenue for us through the sale of magazines and photographs. They provide an outreach for the association, thereby introducing us to others with an interest in electric traction. Thanks go to Ira Deutsch, John Gutberlet, Bob and Rob Hooper, Neal Huff, Bill Keigher, Janet McKim, Gary Madress, Frank Miklos and Beverly Rodel for assisting in manning the tables at one or more of the above train shows.

## **EXCURSIONS**

In 1998 we got back on track with an excursion on the Newark City Subway. In addition to a special PCC car which made three round trips complete with photo stops, the participants were given passes for unlimited riding on regular City Subway cars. We were also given a tour of the subway shop under Newark's Penn Station. Despite its small size, the skills and dedication of the subway's maintenance staff have kept the fleet of PCCs in first class

condition. In conjunction with our visit, the line car and flat car (former passenger car 2683) were parked on tracks adjacent to the shops so that our excursion group could inspect and photograph them. This was probably the last opportunity to see the City Subway in its traditional setting. During 1999 the subway is expected to be closed on weekends to permit the replacement of the existing trolley wire and poles with catenary. New low-floor articulated cars are being built to replace the PCCs. A modern shop facility is under construction in Bloomfield to replace the tiny one under Penn Station, and the subway itself will be extended to a new terminal at Grove Street and Bloomfield Avenue. Pantographs are being installed on the PCCs for use on the new catenary during their final year of service. Special thanks are in order to Bill Keigher for arranging this very enjoyable day.

## **EQUIPMENT RESTORATION**

Many summer weekends were spent engaged in our restoration efforts. Former Pennsylvania Railroad MP-54 No.413 was the focus of attention. Most of the cosmetic paint that was applied several years ago was removed on one side of the car. After it was stripped down to the metal a coat of primer was applied. Assisting in this work were Mark Donahue, Bob and Rob Hooper, Bill Keigher, Derek Long, Frank Miklos, and Jim Tomczyk. In addition several rust holes in the roof were patched by Jim Tomczyk to keep water from leaking into the car. Jim also welded and repaired one of the traps which was frozen and inoperable. He reinstalled it and for the first time in years it now can be raised and lowered.

Meanwhile our goal is to move forward with Public Service car 2651. The construction of the building to house 2651 and serve as a workshop was delayed by requirements of the Town of Phillipsburg that a set of plans (blueprints) be submitted before a building permit could be issued. Ira Deutsch did an excellent job of drawing up the required plans which were approved by the town. It is expected that a contractor will soon be hired for the construction of the building's foundation, and the building itself will be completed soon after. Regardless of whether the building is available, we expect to work on the car this year even if it means doing so at its present location in Ringoes.



A second Public Service car was added to our collection about two years ago. The car in question is former sweeper 5173 which was severely damaged by fire in the 1960's. The remains of that car sat on a siding in the Newark City Subway until it was donated to us by NJ Transit. Essentially everything above the floor of the car burned, but the truck and sweeper mechanisms below the floor survived. Bill Keigher volunteered to lead the effort to rebuild the wooden carbody. He is seeking plans or diagrams of the car to assist in this project. If anyone can supply a copy of these items it will be appreciated. Recently we received a crate full of parts that were salvaged from that car and another sweeper which also burned. Our thanks to NJ Transit's City Subway staff for providing us with these materials which will aid our restoration efforts.

## U.R.H.S. AFFILIATION

We are pleased to continue our affiliation with the United Railroad Historical Society. This was founded as a cooperative effort among all the New Jersey rail clubs and associations for the establishment of a state railroad and transportation museum. Bill McKelvey is the North Jersey E.R.H.S. delegate to the U.R.H.S. and attends their monthly meetings. Last year the Commission established by the state legislature selected Phillipsburg as the site of this museum. The U.R.H.S. and the North Jersey E.R.H.S. have endorsed their choice. This was an important railroad town and was served by most of the major New Jersey railroads. Unlike other potential museum sites the officials of Phillipsburg have already provided land and money for museum

purposes. We look forward to the day when New Jersey will have a first class transportation museum and welcome the opportunity to be a part of it.

## SUMMARY

The past year was another one of accomplishments. As we noted in last year's report, an organization such as ours depends upon the assistance of its members. We are grateful to those who have volunteered their time in behalf of the association. Finally, while we ended 1998 with a cash surplus, it was down from the surplus of the previous year by just over \$300. However, we decided to hold the line on dues for 1999 and to look for other ways to generate income and reduce expenses. Since printing DESTINATIONS is our largest expense, we hope to reduce printing costs without sacrificing the quality of the publication.

Within our cash balance, funds have been budgeted for specific projects. The \$875 in proceeds from our Newark City Subway excursion are earmarked for the restoration of Public Service sweeper 5173. In addition, \$170 has been set aside for replacing windows in the MP-54 cars. Contributions for this project were made several years ago and will be utilized when restoration of these cars advances to the point where the installation of new glazing is appropriate.

Since we are a non-profit organization all contributions are tax deductible. All contributors will be acknowledged in DESTINATIONS. If you know someone with an interest in the subject of electric railway operations, tell them about the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society. We will be happy to hear from them. Again thanks to everyone for their support during 1998.

## NORTH JERSEY ELECTRIC RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Robert E. Hooper, President  
Frank S. Miklos, Treasurer

Ed Gibbs, Vice President  
Gary Madriss, Recording Secretary

P.O. Box 1770, Rahway, NJ 07065

Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at the Rahway Senior Citizens Center  
1306 Esterbrook Ave., Rahway, N.J.

Beginning at 7:30 P.M., each meeting features a program featuring electric traction subjects.

Annual dues of the Society are \$15.00 per calendar year.