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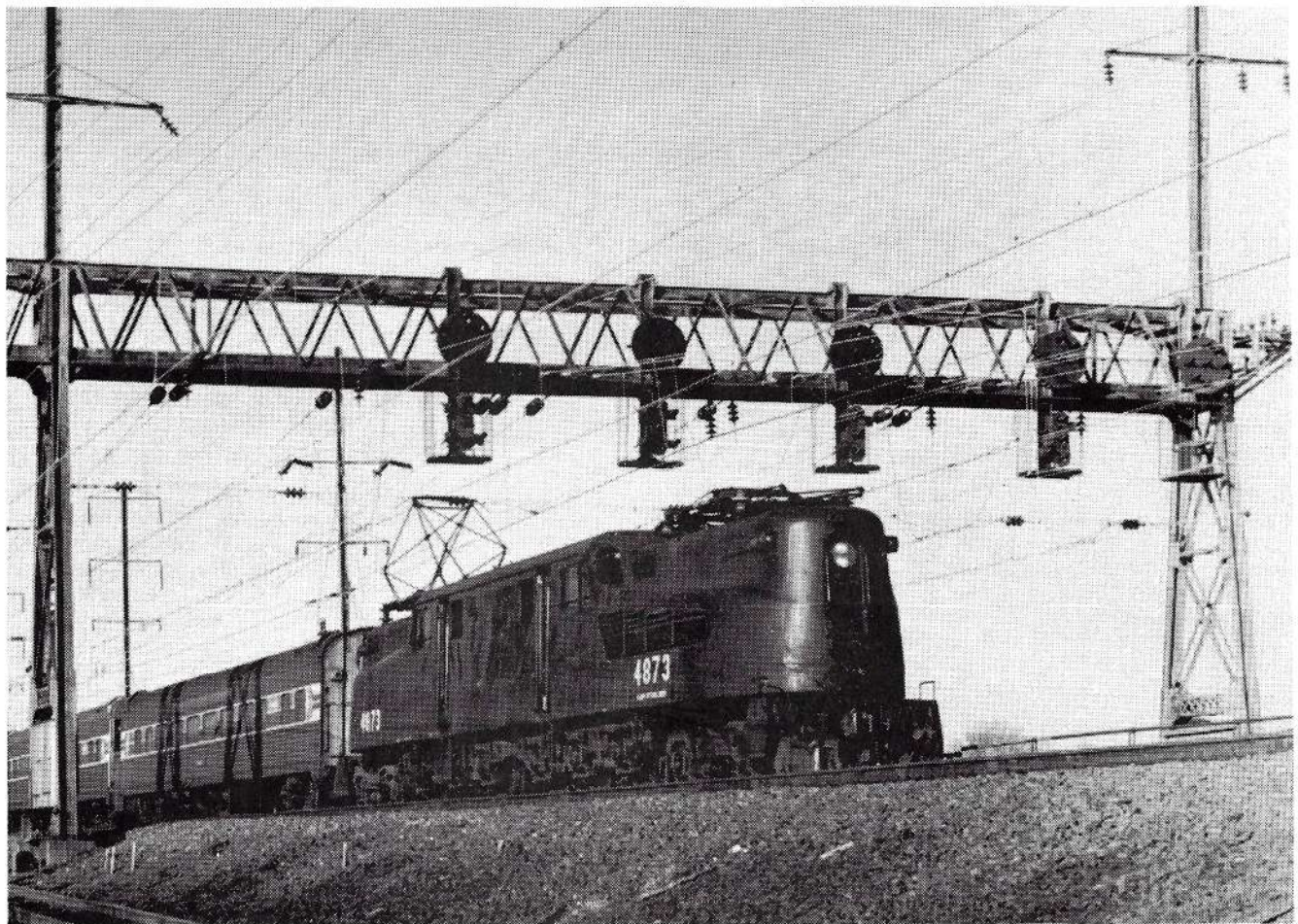


The Newsletter of the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society

Box 1770, Rahway, New Jersey 07065

Vol. 3, No. 2

April, 1938



The ultimate electric railway artifact, former Pennsylvania Railroad GG-1 No. 4873, as much a part of New Jersey's commanding position in railroading's past as the John Bull itself, has been assured a place in our future as well by having become the latest addition to the N.J.E.R.H.S. permanent collection, thanks to the dedication and determination of our secretary, Jack Keeler. Seen in this 1981 view by D.T. Walker, "Jack's G" streaks south (west to all real Pennsy men) past Union tower at Rahway, resplendent even in funeral black.

DESTINATIONS is published several times a year by the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society. Distributed free to members in good standing. \$1.50 per copy to others. Regular membership is \$10 per year. For information about membership or publication sales write: North Jersey E.R.H.S., Box 1770, Rahway, New Jersey 07065.

NORTH JERSEY ELECTRIC RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Anthony J. Hall, President
William J. Keeler, Secretary

Robert A. Sherwood, Vice President
Frank S. Miklos, Treasurer

Regular meetings of the North Jersey E.R.H.S. are held on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 P.M. at the Reed Center, 1670 Irving Street, Rahway, N.J. Entertainment featuring electric traction subjects is presented at each meeting. All members are invited to attend.

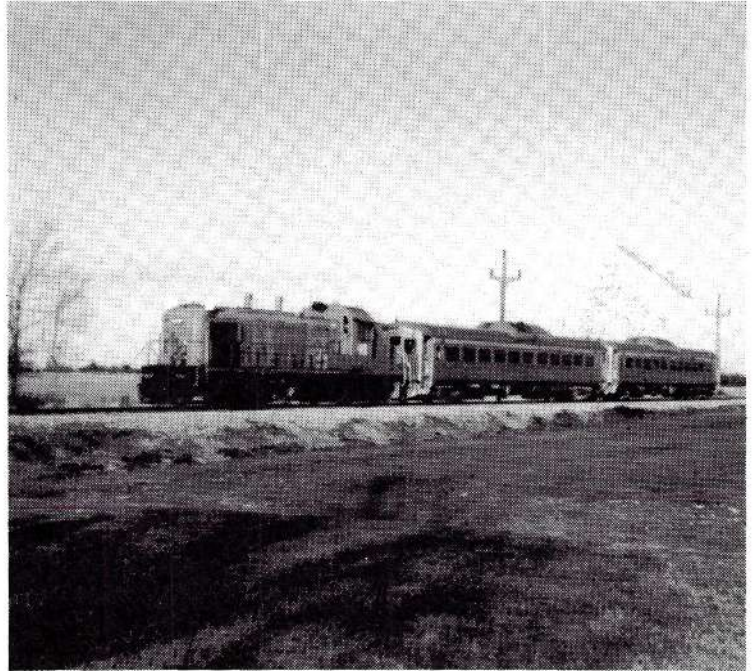
Membership Notes

Once again we are saddened by the death of one of our members. In December, Paul Renault who resided in Flushing, New York collapsed and died of an apparent heart attack. Although Paul had only joined our society in October, he was active for many years in several railfan organizations, including the Electric Railroaders' Association, and the Trolley Museum of New York. Paul was a quiet, soft-spoken gentleman who always seemed to find the time to lend a supporting hand to activities sponsored by numerous railfan groups. He could be seen on almost any fantrip with his trusty box camera poised to capture the event on film. He was a major supporter of the Trolley Museum of New York and was one of those instrumental in obtaining a permanent site at Kingston, New York for their collection of vintage rail cars. We extend our sincere sympathies to his family on this sad occasion.

In other membership news, we are happy to report that nearly all of our members have paid their 1988 dues. This will be the last issue of DESTINATIONS to be sent to unpaid members. If you have not paid, and wish to continue receiving this publication, please send in your dues now. Among those who paid their dues are the following members who have contributed additional money to our organization: Michael & Linda Burshtin, Francis J. Capalbo, Paul J. Heiser, Norman Hosler, Joseph G. Madden, Thomas F. Moran, Rev. Charles Reinbold, William A. Rorer, Henry W. Ruschmeyer, Bruce Russell, Frank F. Taylor, G. Lester Whitfield and John A. Yohannan. Thanks again to one and all for your support.

Publication Comments

Recent issues of DESTINATIONS have been mostly devoted to news of our activities. This month's issue also features news about other historical organizations, as well as general news about the field of electric traction. We welcome your comments about DESTINATIONS along with any news or articles you may wish to contribute.



Left photo: Two former PRSL RDC cars look right at home in this scene at Woodstown. The West Jersey Short Line locomotive was uncoupled and moved away for a more realistic photograph.

Right photo: The complete consist is shown in this view at Mannington, N.J. Both photos by Frank Miklos.

R D Seeing the West Jersey Short Line *by Tony Hall*

Sunday November 22nd dawned bright and brisk, and brought Frank Miklos and me to a meeting with Bob Sherwood and Jack Keeler at N J Transit's striking new Princeton Junction station. We piled into Jack's big Ford and headed south, destination: the Swedesboro interchange of Conrail and the West Jersey Short Line Railroad.

We arrived in plenty of time to meet Tony Macrie, manager of the property, and old friend and fellow N.J.E.R.H.S. member Tom Moran, the familiar voice of Philadelphia radio and owner of yet another Lackawanna MU car, one of two at the West Jersey Short Line terminal being converted to trailers. More of that later. The stars of this day's events were to be former Pennsylvania-Reading Seashore Lines RDCs No. 405 and No. 407, recently accepted from Conrail at Swedesboro, having been moved from N J Transit's Plainfield yard. These cars were acquired for preservation and

restoration by the Seashore Lines Historical Society whose members include Tony Macrie, Tom Moran, and Mike Burshtin. It is appropriate that the cars have found a haven on the West Jersey Short Line because this was formerly the Salem Branch of the P.R.S.L. While the units were complete and a sight to behold in their accustomed South Jersey environment, they were not operational. The honor of providing power for the move south to Salem, a run of about 18 miles, was to go to W.J.S.L. RS-3 No. 92, one of three such units forming the motive pool of the line and a former C.N.J. unit as well.

Departure was informal, around noon. Bob and Jack elected to chase the move in the big Ford LTD for pictures with an eye to meeting the train at Woodstown for the lunch stop, about half way down the line. Frank and I found a seat near one of the few remaining clear windows, dusted it off and proceeded to enjoy the passing scenery and all the proper railroad sounds, sights and what-have-you that accompany a rare opportunity to ride P.R.S.L. RDCs on this remote and rural route. The topography ranges from gently rolling partly wooded rich farmland to the somewhat flatter and less wooded, but equally fertile, country nearer the Delaware Bay to the south. Look north and west for great tunnels, cuts, fills and viaducts, for the W.J.S.L. clatters easily through the backyards of quaint picture-post card towns, through dense woods, across dark, meandering streams and past farms of obvious fertility. In fact, their flourishing freight business is related to the area's agricultural productivity in addition to considerable glass production.

Arrival at Woodstown was about a leisurely hour later. We crossed the main street and stopped in a grassy park-like area between two side streets and less than a hundred feet from what turned out to be a very fine Italian restaurant. "La Vita" appeared to be a not very old establishment so we concluded that we were probably the first passenger trainload of diners to arrive at this eatery in its history. Lunch was good but not swift, which allowed for much additional socializing. Apparently we came as a Sunday surprise to the astonished innkeeper. Afterward, the RS-3 was uncoupled for a photo feast of the RDCs unencumbered, as the bright sun was lighting the head end of the train.

That sun was fading fast when arrived at Mannington for a picture stop at a trackside golf course. Photos were taken and a bumper crop of golf balls, which seemed to be growing wild, was harvested.

Arrival at Salem was just before a crystal clear sunset. The yards there, sprinkled with box cars and covered hoppers, seemed largely intact. The two MU cars were there and bore evidence of the on-going work involved in their restoration and conversion to tuscan red trailer cars. The passenger terminal, with its long sheltered platforms and landscaped front yard was, alas, long gone, as was most of the freight station adjacent. However, the street end of the old freight facility containing the office, was very much in evidence, and it was there that most of the group retired after the taking of final pictures outdoors. The building proudly displayed its Pennsy heritage in the form of surviving board and batten siding outside and the old-time wooden trim work within. It was, however, the hot stove which attracted the most attention since, as the sun faded, a not unexpected late autumnal chill had set in. Anticipating the long, tedious highway trip north, we

said our "thank yous" and departed, sure in the knowledge that we would one day be seeing more of the soon to be restored P.R.S.L. RDCs and the D.L.& W. "MP-54s." What better way to celebrate the opening of N J Transit's new Atlantic City Terminal in 1989 than with a train of vintage equipment formerly associated with that world famous oceanside resort?



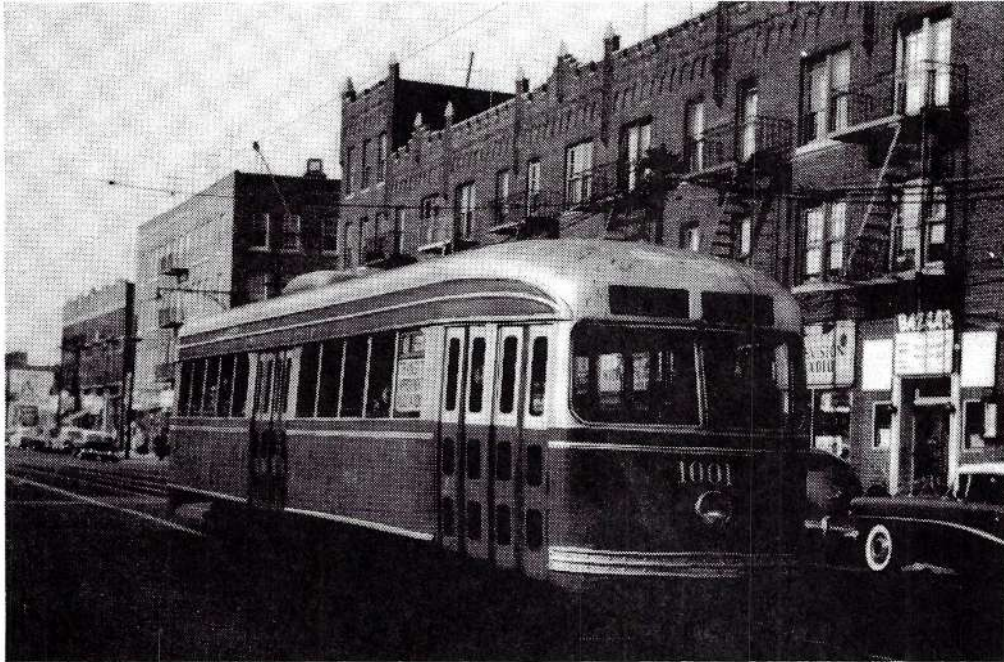
Above photo shows the two RDCs upon their arrival in Salem.

Frank S. Miklos photo



Left photo shows some of the N.J.E.R.H.S. members posing in front of Tom Moran's Lackawanna MU car. From left to right are: Frank Miklos, Kevin Moran, Tom Moran, Mike Burshtin, Bob Sherwood and Linda Burshtin.

Tony Hall photo



Brooklyn was the first transit system to operate a fleet of PCC cars. Car No. 1001 is shown on the Coney Island Avenue line posing for a photo during a fantrip two days before the line was abandoned. This was Brooklyn's first PCC and it is preserved at the Shore Line Trolley Museum.

Robert L. Presbrey photo.

Trolleys - The Long Road Back **by Frank S. Miklos**

American cities in common with other urban centers throughout the world owe their development to a dependence on good transportation. The oldest cities were built on navigable waterways, but the emergence of rail transportation also led to the establishment of major inland cities. Expansion of the cities themselves was made possible by networks of rail transit lines which spread out in many directions to link the downtown commercial areas with the nearby suburbs. In the early part of this century, electric trolleys could be seen in nearly every American city large and small, with subways and commuter rail systems supplementing them in a handful of the nation's most densely populated urban areas.

The arrival of the automobile brought with it a shift away from public transportation. By the 1920s, numerous small trolley companies were abandoned because of declining revenues and high operating costs. The Great Depression of the 1930s forced many trolley companies into receivership and led to the establishment of a committee made up of the presidents of the major American street railway companies. Their goal was to try to counteract the inroads made by automobiles on trolley ridership. For more than six years

they worked to improve the technology of trolleys and to develop a trolley with standard features which could be mass produced. The result was the Presidents' Conference Committee or PCC trolley which provided a streamlined vehicle with rapid acceleration and braking, and a smooth quiet ride.

The PCC car was an instant hit with transit riders wherever it was placed into service. More than a thousand cars were ordered in the first five years of their production. The outbreak of World War II brought with it shortages of gasoline and rubber. Motorists were forced to restrict the use of their cars, and once again depend on public transit. Ridership soared to record levels, and transit operators were hard pressed to meet the demand. Abandoned trolley lines in many cities were restored, and older inactive trolleys were hastily cleaned up, painted and pressed back into service. Transit companies competed with each other for orders of PCC cars. The Federal Office of Defense Transportation was established to oversee the nation's wartime transportation needs and they intervened to assign orders of PCC cars to cities with the most critical requirements.

The carbuilders continued to develop improvements to the PCC car during the wartime years. A redesigned car featuring an all-electric braking system and standee windows was introduced. Encouraged by their wartime ridership, many trolley operators welcomed this new version of the PCC car and were quick to place orders for them. Ironically, the first city to purchase the production model of the redesigned St. Louis Car Company's PCC was Louisville. Before the order could be completed, Louisville Railways had second thoughts, and decided that trolleys had no place in its future transit plans. The cars were traded to Cleveland in exchange for buses. While Louisville's actions were unique at the time, they were prophetic of actions that would soon be taken by other transit companies which purchased the postwar PCCs, as well as companies with older cars.

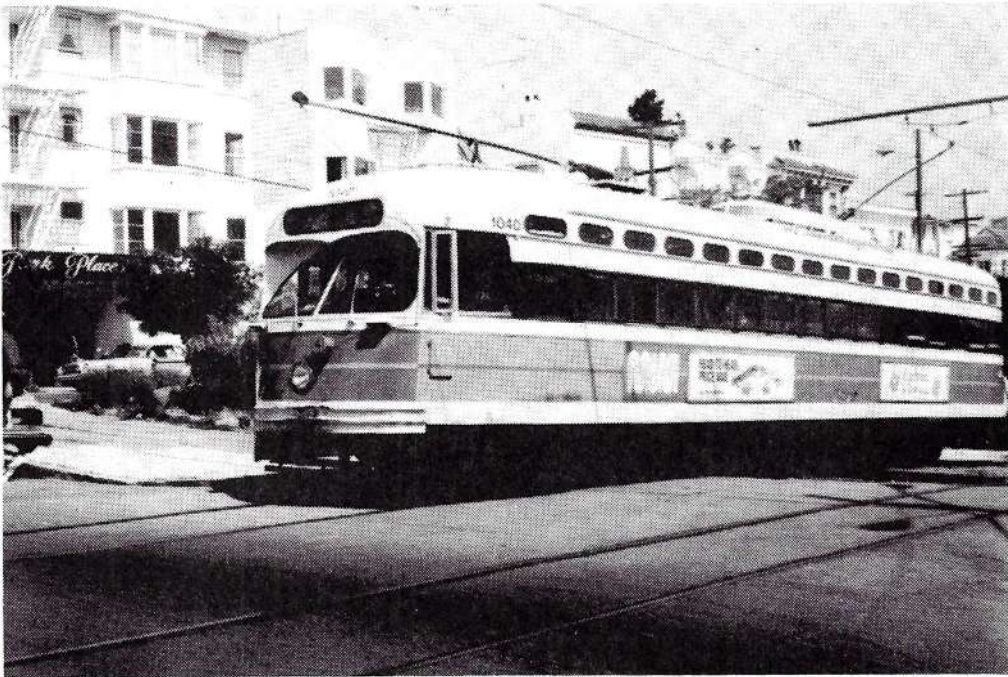
The resurgence of public transit enjoyed during the war years came to an abrupt halt with the cessation of hostilities. Gasoline and rubber again became plentiful and the automobile manufacturers lured consumers by offering cars with sleek body styles and luxury appointments. Transit ridership dropped significantly as people once again discovered their automobiles. Even the deliveries of new PCC cars could not halt the decline which was swift and dramatic. Chicago's order of 600 PCCs in 1946 was retired in less than ten years, largely because they were designed for two-man operation which could no longer be economically justified. The Chicago PCCs were stripped of their electrical gear and interior appointments including seats, lights and wall panels which were then reinstalled in the shells of new rapid transit cars, some of which continue to see service in 1988.

Other transit properties began to phase out trolleys in favor of buses for a variety of reasons. Some of the major properties like San Diego, Los Angeles, Oakland, St. Louis, Baltimore and Philadelphia were purchased by National City Lines--a syndicate controlled by automobile, oil and rubber companies. Retention of trolleys on those transit systems was clearly at odds with the thrust of that company's business interests. However, even National City Lines continued using PCC cars on heavy trunk lines where buses would be more costly to operate. Many trolley companies discovered that the wartime boom was a postwar nightmare. The heavy wartime transit ridership took its toll on track and rolling stock. Transit systems were faced with the need to renew their physical plant at the very time when ridership was dropping to record lows. Lightly patronized

trolley lines were abandoned and the systems were slowly whittled away to a few key routes with PCC cars. These too, were usually abandoned when the number of trolleys became insignificant in relationship to the size of the bus fleet as was the case with Brooklyn's PCCs. Other cities sold off their PCC cars when a buyer expressed an interest in them. The surviving trolley system would then stagger along with older cars until abandonment. Cincinnati, Cleveland and Minneapolis-St. Paul were classic examples of cities where modern cars gave way to the old before the closure of service. Purchases of new PCC cars dwindled yearly until 1952 when an order of 25 cars for San Francisco was completed by the St. Louis Car Company. That firm's assembly line would never produce another trolley--an era had come to an end.

If 1952 marked the end of PCC car construction, it also set in motion a new direction for American transportation. During that year the nation elected Dwight D. Eisenhower as President. One of his most controversial moves was the appointment of Charles Wilson, the President of General Motors, to the post of Secretary of Defense. While appearing before Congress which was concerned about a possible conflict of interest, Mr. Wilson defended his appointment with the now famous quote, "What's good for General Motors is good for America." Perhaps it was coincidental, but it was during the Eisenhower administration that the legislation was signed for the interstate highway program. And perhaps also by coincidence, these arteries were initially referred to as "Defense Highways".

The new interstates whisked motorists through congested areas and enabled people to move to distant suburbs located well beyond the limits of established local transit systems. This was another blow



San Francisco car No. 1040 was the last PCC to be built in America. This view shows that car at the crest of a hill on the J-Church line. It is one of three PCCs still on the active roster of the San Francisco Municipal Railway and sees regular service during that city's annual trolley festival. Frank S. Miklos photo

to mass transit usage. Despite this, mass transit ridership remained strong in cities like New York, Boston, Washington, Baltimore and San Francisco where the urban cores were too densely developed to accept a major roadway without massive disruption to the urban environment. Public opposition killed many highway projects such as New York's Lower Manhattan Expressway which was designed to link the Holland Tunnel with the Manhattan Bridge by slicing through the Canal Street corridor.

Yet even where population density and lack of highways might have warranted continued trolley operation, a number of systems were abandoned anyway. In a nation where generations were taught to regard anything new as "progress", some trolley systems such as Kansas City with PCC cars and miles of private right-of-way gave up their "old fashioned" trolleys in favor of "modern" buses. That any trolley systems survived amid all these obstacles is amazing in itself. In the 1950's, no one could have imagined that the 1980's would usher in a new era of trolley construction in America. How this came about, will be the subject of future articles in DESTINATIONS.

Newark Subway Notes

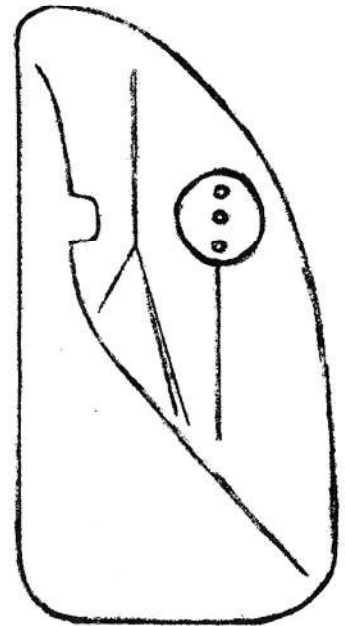
As of March 1st, the number of unrefurbished PCC cars in the Newark City Subway had dropped to just eight vehicles. The cars which still sported the red, white and blue exteriors and dark green interiors as of that date were Nos. 1,6,9,11,14,15,16, and 17. The remainder of the fleet was repainted into the N J Transit exterior colors with interiors repainted an attractive blue and white. Seats have been reupholstered with blue fabric. Other work involved in the rehabilitation program includes replacing the doors and stairwells, renewing the wiring and the traction motors and trucks. Except for the truck rebuilding which was subcontracted to SEPTA, all of the other work was performed by N J Transit's maintenance staff.

An interesting aspect of the program is the repainting work. The tiny shop under Newark's Pennsylvania Station is not adequately ventilated to tolerate paint fumes, so each car that is scheduled for repainting is driven to Franklin Avenue, where it is parked on the siding and painted in the open air. Since the repainting of every car inside and out can take anywhere from several days to a couple of weeks depending on the weather, the cars often appear on the line with various combinations of colors from primer to a combination of the old and new paint schemes. Of course they are not in revenue service at the time, but they do attract a lot of stares.

In other news, fluorescent lighting was installed along the walls of the City Subway between the Broad Street and Washington Street stations. The loop tracks under Pennsylvania Station have been equipped with high-intensity sodium vapor lights. On the subway mezzanine at Pennsylvania Station, the life-size plaster cast figures in the art display have been removed and will be replaced with bronze castings. Another artistic touch may be found inside each car where school children are invited to submit color drawings for display. These posters are entitled "Images of Public Transit" and are designed to fit into the overhead car card panels. The names of the young artists, along with their age and school are shown next to their drawings. All of this plus stations that are regularly scrubbed by a staff of dedicated workers make the Newark City Subway a premier transit facility.

A VIEW FROM THE CAB....

by tony hall .



The world's leading electric railway vehicle has become part of this organization's permanent collection and as such New Jersey is assured of retaining at least one of the locomotives which has done as much to put our state on railroading's map as the John Bull itself. This solid achievement is in contrast to the elusive efforts of New Jersey Transit to determine how many of these timeless beauties it will preserve for the state museum to come.

The man we have to thank for all this is Jack Keeler, our secretary and charter member of N.J.E.R.H.S. Jack spearheaded the GG-1 project when some of us hesitated. After all, it's so BIG; where would we put it? What would we DO with it? While most of us are content with our scale models and photo collections, some others dream full-scale and are able to inspire others to do so as well, and Jack is one of those.

Suddenly it became clear that we would FIND a place to keep it, with the help of our good friend, New Jersey's primary patron of preservation, Ben Friedland who has generously provided space for the 4873 at the Whippany Railroad Museum. What would we DO with it? We would HAVE it! That is what counts. We can now see to it that this endangered species will not become extinct.

And that is what we are all about; preserving electric railway equipment significant to the railroading history of New Jersey. "Jack's G" is clearly of the highest priority in that regard.

To those who might say that funds would better be spent on refurbishing units in our possession, we say that once a piece is lost, it is forever beyond restoration; when it is saved and protected, it can be restored at any future time. It is therefore our goal to pursue restoration, but secondary to saving and protecting significant units threatened with neglect or destruction. We have a clear-cut priority of worthwhile items and are already negotiating for some of them.

This is not to say that our success is fully assured. As you can well imagine, years of work remain before we in New Jersey can boast a collection worthy of our world-class position in the history of electric railroading. We are very pleased to see interest developing for a state railroad museum, but we are far from convinced that those on the Museum Study Commission truly grasp the overwhelming importance of electric propulsion in our state's railroading history. If they did, South Amboy, as the only electrified site under study, with its host of other advantages too numerous to mention here, would be the leading candidate for the museum's location. Instead, rumors fly and we hear each month a different site is the current favorite. While there is still more than a year remaining before the Commission must render its decision, it is NOT too early to let them know that South Amboy is absolutely the ONLY suitable location. I urge all our readers to get in touch with the Chairman of the Study Commission and let him know in no uncertain terms that the museum MUST be located at an electrified site and the only one under consideration is South Amboy. Write today!

Senator S. Thomas Gagliano, Chairman
New Jersey Railroad & Transportation Study Commission
1090 Broadway
West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764

NORTH JERSEY E.R.H.S. - 1987 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

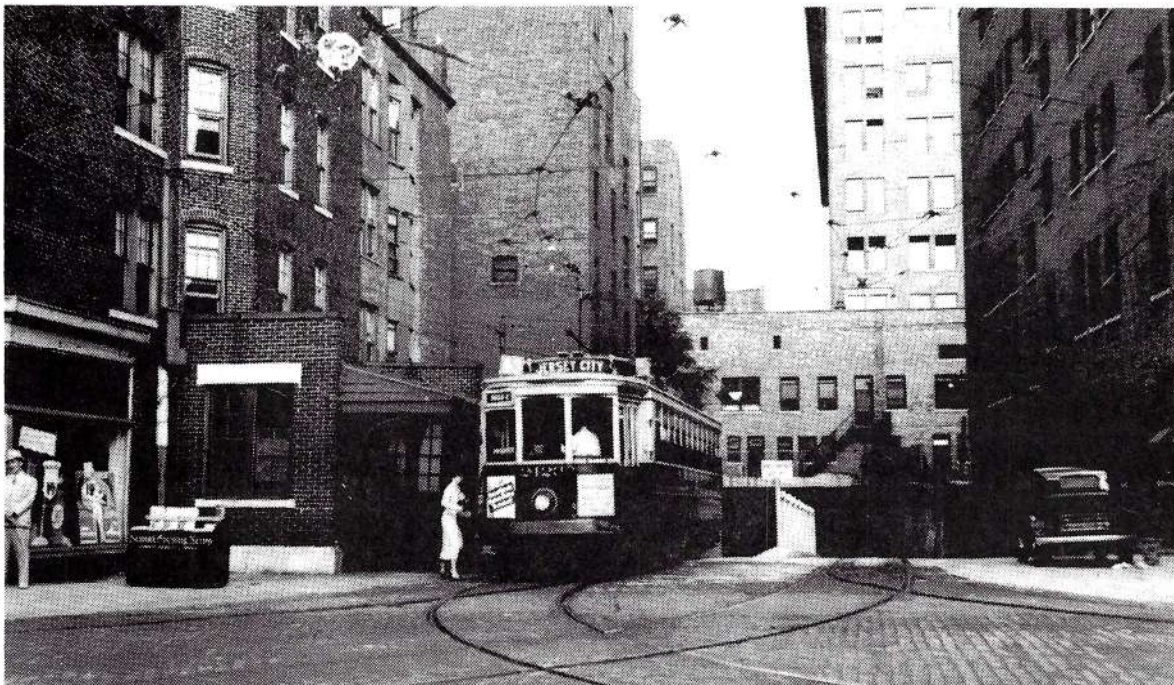
INCOME

Dues	\$630.00
Advance Executive Dues	600.00
Trips and Activities	568.00
Contributions	533.00
Photo and Memorabilia Sales	527.00
Total Income	<u>\$2858.00</u>

EXPENSES

Insurance	\$1240.00
Rail Car Repairs	800.00
Trips and Activities	350.00
Photo Printing Charges	198.00
Publication Printing	190.00
United R.R. Historical Society Contrib.	100.00
Bank Service Charges	93.87
AAPRCO membership Fee	75.00
Train Show Expenses	55.00
Post Office Box Rental	53.00
Postage	26.52
Total Expenses	<u>\$3182.08</u>
Balance from 1986	624.20
Excess of Revenue over Expenses	<u>\$300.12</u>

A Scene From The Past



On May 1st, it will be 50 years since trolleys disappeared from the streets of downtown Newark. On that date in 1938, the trolleys on the 43-JERSEY CITY line were replaced with all-service vehicles. The 43 line outlasted the many routes which operated on Newark's main thoroughfares--Broad and Market Streets. This photo provided by the North Jersey Chapter of the N.R.H.S. was taken on June 22, 1937 and shows car No. 2423 at the entrance to the Cedar Street subway about to turn right onto Washington Street. The abandonment of the 43 line severed the connecting trackage between the Hudson and Essex Divisions of Public Service. Unlike most of the 2400-series cars which were rebuilt as single-enders in the 1920's, car No. 2423 retained its double-ended configuration to the end.

Next Meeting-Tuesday April 19 at 7:30 P. M.

The April meeting of the North Jersey E.R.H.S. will feature a selection of old time traction movies. Included on the program is a film made by the Chicago Surface Lines in the 1920's showing that accidents can happen. Another film shows cable cars in San Francisco before the 1906 earthquake. Several other equally interesting films will also be presented. We invite all of our members to attend, and guests are also welcome. Enjoy a pleasant evening of films and refreshments. Looking ahead to the May meeting which will be held on May 17, our scheduled program will be an evening of films by Wilbur Sherwood. Mark those dates on your calendar. We hope you can attend.