



Trolley Lines

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33rd Edition

Summer-Winter 2023-2024

Ceremonial Re-Dedication Of 2651



Ah!! Here she is ... “Miss America.” After fifty years of hard labor (often under brutal outdoor circumstances prior to our arrival at Kinkisharyo), uncounted thousands of dollars invested, and with the indispensable assistance of fellow amateurs and professionals alike, we can at last publicly present the result of our labors. (30 November 2023) (GL)

North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society, Inc.

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2651-HONOR ROLL

Thanks go to all these who contributed materially and directly to advancing 2651 to virtual completion; 1973 - 2023.

Joe Adda, John Bishop, Ed Blossom, Nick Burenga (BR&W), "Nip" Caine, Paul Carpenito, Ken Coombs, Bill Covino, Al Creamer, Beverly, Harry, Ginny and Perry Didriksen, Don Engel, Tony Hall, Mike Healy, Bob and Rob Hooper, Carl Hosler, Jim Houston, Greg III, Bill Joyce, Hank Kaminski, Jim Lilly, Marc Lipkin, Gary Madden, Bill McKelvey, Frank Miklos, John Orłowski, Dave Phraner, Frank Riley, Peter Rodel, Bruce Russell, Jim Schworn, Gene Stains, Alma Sutton, Bilal Syed, Richard Taylor, Peter Terp, George Tomczyk, Jim Tomczyk, Nelson Tower, Paul Vassallo, Bill Wall, Jeff Wewers, Fr. Patrick Wilhelm.
(Our Apologies to any one whose name was inadvertently omitted)

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Adam Elmquist (AE), George LaPierre (GL), Carol Kim (CK), Tony Hall (TH), Dave Phraner (DP), Marc Lipkin (ML), Bob Hooper (BH).

2024 Dues notification is extended with this edition. Dues are still only \$25 per year. Payment is due upon receipt. Thanks to all paid-up members!

HENRY S. "HANK" KAMINSKI 1937-2023



Merchant Marine Veteran, Longshoreman, great-grandfather, cabinet maker, railroad fan and historic preservationist.

Hank passed away on Saturday, March 25 at his home in Clinton Township at age 85. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He will certainly be greatly missed by his many friends and extended family.

Born on December 3rd, 1937, in Harrison, he was raised there until moving to Clinton in 1977. His beloved wife of 54 years Mary Lou Mariconda Kaminski passed away in 2020.

Hank was a Merchant Marine veteran, serving from 1957-1960. He was long-time member of the Merchant Marine Association, rising to the office of vice-president. He subsequently became a longshoreman, retiring as Terminal Manager for the ACL Container Company in Port Elizabeth.

Hank enjoyed woodworking, reading, gardening, model railroading and not surprisingly, the study of ocean-going ships. Family excursions to the beach at Cape May were favorites, as well, as were opportunities to root for his sons at their boyhood sporting events.

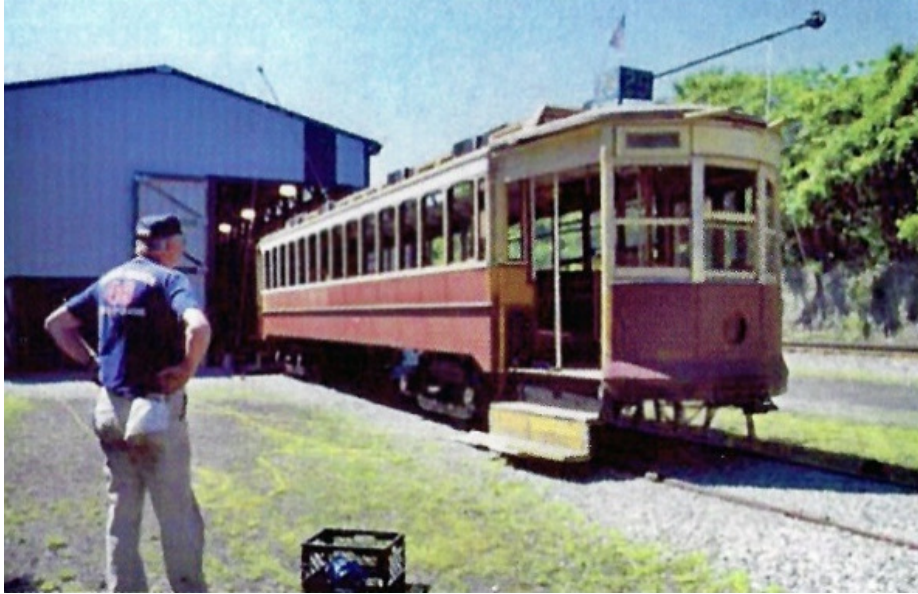
For many years, Hank generously donated his carpentry skills to local community organizations, including the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society, serving as chief wood worker on the 2651 Project. His skill, commitment and generosity were indispensable to the success we enjoy today. He cast a long shadow and leaves a great void in our ranks.

Survivors include three sons: Daniel also of Lebanon, Christopher of Holland Twp. and Thomas of Charleston, SC as well as eight grandchildren and a great grandson. He is also survived by his sister Dorris Pasanchin of Indiana.

Memorials can be made to the American Merchant Marine Veterans and/or the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society. Thanks, Hank and God speed... Tony Hall, with thanks to the Hunterdon County Democrat.

Hank Came On Board Shortly After our 2001 Arrival at Phillipsburg

Hank stands back and seems to wonder, "what the hell have I gotten myself into?" (TH)



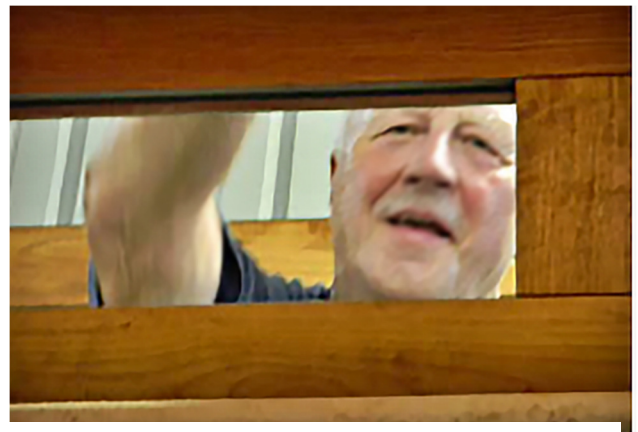
Hank applies his meticulously crafted curved wood blocks which will compress the overhang of the fabric roof seam seals. (TH)



How does one measure the "pain" of trolley restoration? Master carpenter Hank Kaminski makes one of his many meticulous measurements in preparation for fitting a glass "pane" to the clerestory. (TH)



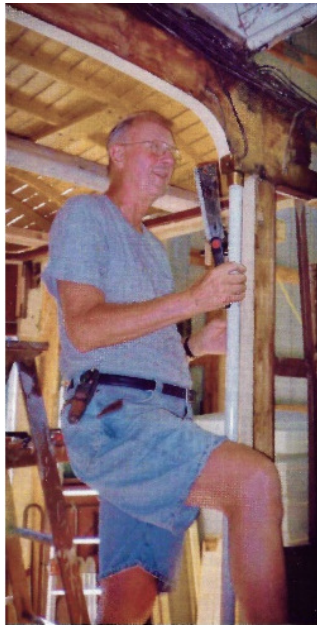
With his head in the trees, Too Tall Hank files a rough spot from one of the newly restored ventilators. (BH)



Not Kilroy, but Hank was here, working to get a ventilator into position. (TH)

Hank's Time and Many Skills were Generously and Expertly Devoted to the 2651 Project Over Many Years

In this archival view, Hank, our expert cabinetmaker, surveys the decaying bulkhead structure that he would subsequently rebuild. (TH)



Hank makes fine cuts to the recession into which a stiffening plate will be fitted. (BH)



With drill in hand, Hank prepares for the bolting of the west-end walk boards. (TH)



Kabinetmaker Kaminski deepens the rabbit on a window frame so it will accept the newer, thicker safety glass. (TH)



As work progressed on 2651, the Mother Seton swap meet intervened. Here we see Hank and the late Ira Deutsch displaying our wares while Bob Hooper, in rear center, conducts yet another transaction. Sales were brisk and we made many new friends. (TH)

Thanks to the Generosity of Liberty Historic Railway and Bill McKelvey, Painting 2651 Commenced in 2023



We see in this view the initial oversize striping. (ML)



Striping modification and "VEE" application are yet to come. (ML)

A springtime delegation from NJERHS agrees; The colors are right, the stripes not so much. L-R: Tony, George Tomczyk and Jim Houston. (ML)



Here, stripe modification is seen in progress (upper left). (ML)



The dashes are completed while re-striping continues. (ML)

DONE!



As handsome in long-shot as in close-up. (TH)



The late Frank Miklos' handmade number stencils were used yet again to great effect. (TH)

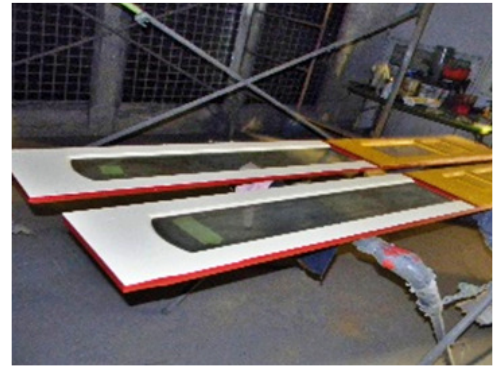
Well past her 100th birthday, 2651 smiles in the realization that, in transporting two generations of war workers, she thus helped defeat oligarchy, imperialism and fascism in Europe. (TH)



Bulkheads gleam in bright perfection. (TH)



Through a fence brightly, Bill McKelvey's logos and the late Frank Miklos' numbers proclaim our project. (TH)

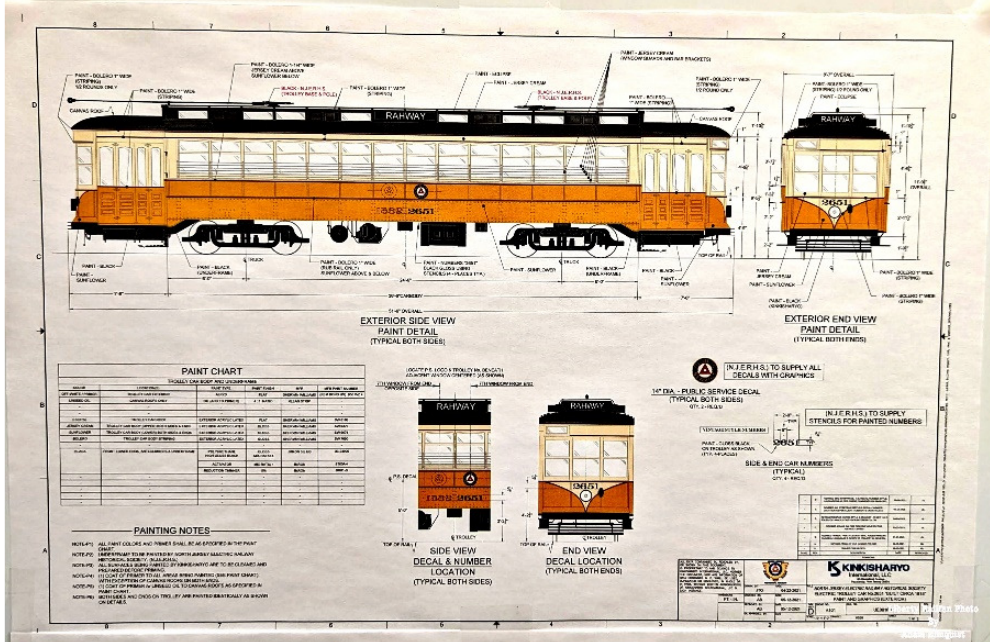


Our doors are....A-DOOR-ABLE! (TH)



Re-stripping is completed, and we're DONE! (TH)

Preparation Took Many Tasks Which Required Skill and Effort



Kinkisharyo's John Orlowski produced this detailed drawing with CAD, using old photos and Tony's advice and consent. It served as the paradigm for master painter, Bilal Syed (AE)

We also provided this model as an example of how 2651 should look. This O-Gauge tinplate car was detailed and painted by the late Ira Deutch. Here the 2702 is shown at Kinkisharyo, showing some damage from shipping and handling. (AE)



Here we see an illustration of the car that should have opened the Newark City Subway in 1935. Not that we don't LOVE the old cars, but a new subway deserved state-of-the-art rolling stock, and this is what they would have looked like, but with air brakes and no standee windows. (AE)

Nov 30, 2023: We Gathered to Re-Dedicate 2651



“Ready for my close-up, Mr. DeMille.” (AE)



Marc Lipkin, General Officer in the Corps of Restoration. (CK)



First Machinist Mate Jim Tomczyk and his charming mate, Joan. Jim is a Renaissance man, expert in all skills, structural, mechanical, electrical and finishing. Jim can do and has done it all! He is also a General Officer in the Corps of Restoration. (CK)



Here Jim is joined by his talented and resourceful brother, George. (CK)



Rob and Bob Hooper (l) with Jim Houston (r). Rob was a big help, especially during P-Burg Years. (CK)

The Crowd Continues to Gather



No other single individual has done as much to advance the fortunes of NJERHS as has Bob Hooper, seen with his son, Rob. Bob, through his many contacts with Bill Wall and others single-handedly amassed 7 of our 8 cars. For at least 20 years. Bob's devotion and professionalism have been indispensable to the level of success we enjoy today. (CK)



Jim Schworn greets the gathering crowd, blocking Tony and encountering Bill Wall, George LaPierre (blocking Bill McKelvey) and Jack May (I). (CK)



As the crowd gathers, we see (l to r) Bill McKelvey, "Subway Al" Zelazo, Rob Hooper, Jim and Joan Tomczyk, Bob Hooper, Bruce Russell, Jack May, George Tomczyk, Mitch Dakelman, Marc Lipkin and the back of Kevin Phalon (In the foreground) among many others. (GL)



Jim Schworn of Kinkisharyo, who provided the ceremonial ribbon and scissors, sets up the ribbon-cutting event. (AE)

Like a bird emerging from a cuckoo clock, Tony emerges from his cab to better hear what's being said. Jim Schworn continues his introduction of the ribbon cutting ceremony. (AE)



Our Friends Anticipate the Ribbon Cutting



Our crowd assembles in anticipation of the Ribbon Cutting. Early birds gather including L to Jim Tomczyk, Rex LaPierre, Bill McKelvey, George LaPierre, John Igoe, Bob Hooper (blocked), Mitch Dakelman, Bruce Russell, and (far right) Al Zelazo and Jack May. (CK)



Jim Schworn warms up the room, prior to the ribbon cutting as the crowd gets into the mood. (CK)



Usually humble and bashful, Tony comes out of his shell once a year (like Brigadoon?). Today is one of those occasions. Seen here, prior to receiving the ceremonial scissors, he promises not to run. (CK)



One snip! And it's done! 2651 can now embark upon her second century of service. Ah, but where? "Build it and they will come." We did, and they *are* coming. (AE)



Had enough trolley for one day? No? Well, come aboard we have placards illustrating Boston, Philadelphia and NY electric railway systems, back in the day, of course. (CK)



With a carload of eager enthusiasts, Tony reads the long list of those living or dead who have materially assisted the 2651 project over many years. Jim Hosten (mid-left) takes a pensive mood as he is reminded of those who came before us. On the right bench we catch a glimpse of "Subway Al" and Bill Wall at the far end. Looks like John Igoe and the three Tomczyk's closer in. Standing the in arch with necktie is Joe Tassiello of NJT Light Rail. (GL)

Anticipation Mounts As We Near the Climatic Event of the Day



Still more "trolley." For those fans who cannot get enough! BMT-"Q" cars, IRT "low-v's" and IND "R1-9's." Not *exactly* trolleys, but they qualify. (CK)



Smiling her mysterious "Mona Lisa" smile, Tony's friend, Laura, bravely consented to accompany him to the strange and unknown world of trolleydom, and, "miracle of miracles," she still likes me! L'chaim! (GL)



Before making his last appearance of the day, Tony takes a break on his motorman's stool, with feet on his trolley bell, which is mounted temporarily in a portable "bell-box" made by Jim Tomczyk for use in meetings and other ceremonial events. (AE)



Leaning on his brake stand, Tony prepares himself to "go on" one more time. (AE)

Lured out of his “cuckoo clock,” Tony encounters the crowd



Waiting in the wings for a cue to face his audience, Tony holds on to his “lucky pole.” (CK)



He is encouraged. “Seems like a good house, maybe this won’t be so bad after all.” (CK)



Cameras roll, flash bulbs pop. (“Daddy, what’s a flash bulb?”) (CK)



Tony greets the crowd, a round of applause ensues, cameras roll and flashes flash. (GL)



Raising an empty glass on high, he asks, “Where is the champagne? They said there would be champagne.” (CK)



Gingerly stepping down into the orchestra, Tony will seek to “mingle with that old time crowd,” still thinking, “where’s the damn champagne?” (CK)

Toasting the 2651 Project



With the golden glow headlamp seemingly burning a hole in Tony's motorman (actually a PRR) uniform, he receives the approval of the crowd. (CK)



While on a trolley car, the man with the reverser key is in charge. But, at moments like this, the man with the bottle-opener is king. Here Jim Schworn pours a glass of bubbly for the Man of the Hour. (GL)



"Fill it right up, Jim. There's plenty more where that came from." (CK)



2651 and her supporters get "toasted." (CK)



"Hooray for 2651," and the NJERHS Corps of Restoration, Kinkisharyo International ... and Liberty Historic Railway! "Hear! Hear!" (GL)



"What could possibly come next? We've cut the ribbon, had the toast?" "Ah, but just you wait Henry Higgins, just you wait!" ... (CK)

The Big Moment Arrives!



"Oh, don't leave yet, folks. The climax of our little show is coming up right now." (GL)



"May God bless this ship and all who sail in her." Tony blesses 2651 with the same invocation used to christen the *Titanic*. (and all other British ships) (CK)



Seen from another angle, the action is still compelling. Tony used the same lefty stance he used in hitting pop flies onto the Pennsy mainline (now NEC) from home plate at the "Aces" sand lot field in Rahway (now a warehouse), way back when. (GL)



"THAT'S ALL, FOLKS!" (GL)

“All Dressed Up and No Place to Go!” Bill McKelvey



A week later when WPIX-TV came to do a 2-minute primetime news story, Bill McKelvey said on air:

“All dressed up and no place to go”

But no, we are already discussing at least two alternative possibilities for a permanent home for 2651. (AE)

FRANK S. MIKLOS 1940-2013

Can it be that ten years have passed since we lost our esteemed globe-trotting co-founder? It hardly seems possible! Yet the void he left in our ranks remains unfillable, hastening to add that we have been fortunate indeed to have attracted so many skilled and dedicated volunteers as we have. But Frank was there at the beginning providing support and encouragement when most people thought we were nuts. The jury's still out on that one!

But here we are, and while we stand on his mighty shoulders, and those of several others, without him there would be NO 2651. It was Frank's many contacts in the traction community that got the word out and got the ball rolling.

I can only hope that he would be pleased if he could see how far we have gotten in a "mere" fifty (!) years. I know he would be glad to see his own handmade number stencils used in this latest painting. I know I am.

Thanks, again, Frank & Godspeed....

Tony for NJERHS



Through the dusty veil of time, Frank peers at the camera through eyes still young with boundless optimism and cheerful confidence in the future. On the right, the late Harry Didricksen gives the thumbs up signal to proceed while Tony Hall in the center wields one of the precision instruments he would use in trolley restoration. (Long Valley 1973)



As a "Ladder Day" (trolley) "Saint," Frank climbs to heretofore new and unfamiliar heights in pursuit of a new roof for 2651. L to R" the late "Old Doug," an interested local resident, Perry Didriksen (in red), Tony and Frank. (Long Valley 1973)

Here, after the move of 2651 to Ringoes in March 1974; on the north scaffold, work resumes with the unending tasks of paint removal and primer application. L to R: Ginny and the late Beverly and Harry Didricksen with Tony and Frank.



Frank Determinedly Developed Many Difficult New Skills to Advance our Project



Frank revealed a hitherto unknown capacity for dogged perseverance when he attacked and defeated the endless barbed wire tangle of a long-ago turkey pen, thus clearing needed space for trolley restoration. (TH)



Frank revealed yet another hidden talent; that of gandy dancer, as he rang the iron in vain anticipation of the then hoped for arrival of the City Subway flatcar #5223. (TH)



Frank was always up to his navel in trolleys, as illustrated in this shot. (TH)



By repurposing a derelict barn on the BR&W railroad property in Ringoes, we provided an all-weather shop, where Frank, seen here, continued preparing one of the complete dash-ends salvaged from the Parsippany car, for eventual installation into 2651. (TH)

Dirty Work or Dress-Up, Frank was Nothing if not Versatile



"The Man in the White Suit," but not Alec Guinness in one of his most famous roles, rather Frank in a vain attempt to protect his clothing. (TH)



This occasion was one of the BR&W RR's annual banquets given for their cadre of volunteer train crews and the railroad's freight customers. They were held at the former Black Angus restaurant in Flemington. Frank is bracketed in this view by the late Norm Hosler (left) and the "Still Rockin'" Greg III. (TH)



Car 2651 was rolled out for public display several times a year in conjunction with open houses conducted by the Phillipsburg Railroad Historians. A group from the NJERHS poses in beside the car at one of those occasions. L to R: The late Jeanne Miklos with Frank, Bill Toikka, Hank Kaminski with Rob Hooper, Bob Hooper and Jim Tomczyk. Only the last three are known to still be with us. (TH)

Public Service Railway and Coordinated Transport Blunders

By S. David Phraner

Perhaps the word “blunders” is too harsh a word to describe some apparently faulty corporate decisions by Public Service Railway (PSRy) back in the streetcar era. In hindsight we can now evaluate corporate business plans based on revealed history, but back in those times it may have made perfect sense. As native Americans once claimed, “walk a mile in my moccasins before you criticize.” This research is secondary and genuine, but the opinions expressed are my own and not necessarily those of our NJERHS, its members or leadership. Pardon me, therefore, my occasional use of the first-person singular.

I am confining my critique to Public Service streetcar rolling stock choices. First let’s recognize that PSRy was one of the largest street railway properties in the United States. Being big means that when corporate made a misjudgment it was an expensive whopper. Having a large car roster also meant that the annual replenishment rate for replacing older cars was typically at least a hundred units. It was sometimes easy to make mistakes, but at a hundred units or more annually, and cars having a 20–30-year life expectancy, any mistake had long-term consequences. The most common mistake, as we will explain, was to buy too much of the wrong thing at the wrong time. Some of these decisions, when subjected to further probing, explain why such seemingly unwise choices were made which, in retrospect, may have been reasonable for that time. In other cases, a purchase investment was made too late or in conflict with its other company purchase orders made at the same time. Strategic long-term planning and annual purchasing routines can, and often do, conflict. Another category of questionable car purchase judgements were deviations from industry standards or practice and seeming departures from its previous corporate policies. These examples are presented here in random order, rather than chronologically. Some appear more egregious than others and therefore merit more attention and more words in this space.

Other possible takeaways for the reader are insights into corporate decision making in car purchases. Some detail is provided on the design and functionality of the questionable individual car orders. The author, and hopefully also the reader, will have learned more about the history of streetcar companies and their rolling stock. The sources appear at the end of this article in the hope that the reader will consult these sources to expand their knowledge and fill in any gaps that may seem to appear in this text.

Before we treat each of the rolling stock issues, the reader needs to understand how corporate planning and culture influenced rolling stock purchases. Public Service (of NJ) size and leadership as a major utility and equipment buyer resulted in it influencing car design (generally conservative) and later bus design (innovative and individualistic). Public Service began to standardize its streetcar orders as early as 1906 with the objective of creating a streetcar fleet with interchangeable parts and motor/truck assemblies. Standardization also enabled components, largely trucks and controls that could be switched between open (summer) and closed (winter) cars. Our society obtained records of truck swaps for our #2651 and possibly other cars. Standardization became most apparent with an order of 100 identical closed city streetcars of the 1600 series cars built by Brill/Stephenson. Remember, the Stephenson car building plant was in Elizabeth NJ at the time. These 1600’s were distributed among the various subsidiary companies, not yet integrated into the unified system. That major unification would come a year later in 1907, when PSRy was created as a single operating entity with single reciprocal route transfer privilege, branding and management protocols.

Part of the tactic in PSRy corporate planning was to standardize every function down to the conductor uniforms and the streetcars in which they collected uniform fares. Until the mid-first decade, the PSRy fleet was a mix of mostly 19th century obsolete cars inherited from predecessor companies. The initial order of standardized specification car was a single-end, asymmetrical design in plan, with the number one end a short platform for the motorman to operate the car and a long rear platform for the conductor to collect fares. Nearly all cars were two-man at the time, especially on the heavier lines. Much later these cars and similar series (the last being the 2200s), were delivered with the short platform in front and were later altered in 1924-’25 when the system went to one-man operation. The cars were rebuilt by switching ends so that the rear long platform became the front platform with double stream doors for the motorman to collect fares and operate the car. These motormen were later called “salesman” but that’s another story. I recall seeing a small sign in a 2400 series car being used as the Federal Salvage junk yard office in 1958. The detachable plastic sign read “Do not talk to the salesman

The Phraner Report, cont'd

when the car is in motion." That artifact somehow became "detached" and is now part of the Friends collection.

What this corporate change to one-man practice tells us about PSRy is their tendency to standardized car modifications as well as car purchases. In the 2200 series, pre modification, short platform first configuration was most typically paired with 4500 series trailers for the short two to three-year period of trailer use. By the time of the one-man policy implementation and related 2200 series rebuild in 1925, most of the three-year-old trailers were relegated to dead storage. The last use of a trailer in service was an *employee only* #2291-#4598 pair running between Plank Road Shops and 16th Ave. car house.

Let's now explore in some detail, Public Service Railway deviations from reason and conventional practice. If nothing else, the Birney car represented a standardization that PSRy had striven to achieve. Birneys' standardization may have exceeded that of the PCC, though like the PCC, there were variants among individual Birney orders. Notice the recapitulating standardization theme repeated in the 1920s, order to order and blunder to blunder.

#7000 Series - Birney "Safety Car" Blunder

The single truck Birney "bobber" was introduced around 1915 by Charles Birney and a business partner. I say around 1915 because single truck cars had been around since the beginning of the streetcar era and small light weight cars had been the subject of earlier experiments. Birney was an official with the Stone and Webster, a familiar old name in streetcar management and transport technology. Birney thought the streetcar sector needed a cheap one-man, light-weight car that was easy on track and consumed little power. The result of his efforts was the safety car bearing his name. It was the ultimate *standard* streetcar until the PCC came along. Birneys all looked pretty much alike, though there were 27 variants in minor dimensions and features differing mostly in paint scheme and interior furnishings. Cox refers to the Birney car as "inspired by the jitney" that came into existence at the same time. Birney's simple features and low cost attracted robust sales for over a half-dozen car builders. The name "safety car" was largely used because of the door-controller-sander interlock that prevented the car from being started with the door(s) open among other features. The car also had a "deadman" control. It was ideal as a lightweight, steel, arch roof, single truck car, (double end was an option), 26' to 30' long (PSRy's cars were type "O", 27'9-7/8" long), seating about 28 passengers. Initially built by a Brill subsidiary, the American Car Company of St. Louis, other builders were licensed to build the uniform car design. Public Service Birneys happened to be built by Osgood Bradley. Being cheap to buy, operate, and maintain, Birneys were well

adapted to short shuttles and low volume feeder lines. The streetcar corporate sector loved their operating cost savings. Over 6,000 of these cars were built within a decade. While passengers were accustomed to softer ride and more comfortable seating, the rough riding Birneys were considered better than smelly crowded primitive motor buses and jitneys of the teens and twenties.

So, what was wrong with Public Service buying 200 of these cars; cheap and popular with large and small streetcar companies across North America?Timing. PS was slow to react to the jitney menace. Its challenge to the jitneys was initially by legal and regulatory means that were generally successful. But, by 1922, there were 1,700 crude buses operating in New Jersey on over 170 routes; all by private operators. The two hundred Birneys (#7000-#7199) were being delivered to PSRy in 1921 and '22. This coincided with the first full PSRy streetcar substitutions with buses and occurring in Camden with the motorization of the Kaighn Ave. streetcar line in 1923. The very adaptations best suited to the Birneys were better suited, as it turned out, by Public Service with motor buses. While PSRy started its first bus line; a shuttle in Bergen County.

in 1917, it became increasingly observant of the economies of the private bus and jitney operators. Busses were starting to make sense to PS corporate and eventually the Birneys were not. A new *bus* subsidiary of the railway was formed in 1923 called Public Service Transportation Company, but Public Service was still a gigantic streetcar enterprise with nearly 900 miles of track and over 2,400 streetcars.

While it was ordering the Birneys to replace over aged pre-1900 streetcars inherited from predecessor companies, PSRy was also buying out private bus operators to eliminate their service encroachments. By 1925, PSRy owned over 800 previously privately-owned buses. By 1929, the number rose to nearly 1,100 of wide diversity of makes, models and propulsion varieties; a clear violation of their intent to standardize. There were over 40 different bus manufacturers in the Public Service roster that came from the private operators thus acquired in the decade of the 1920s. Also in 1925, PSRy ordered 395 Yellow Coach (GM) gas electric and gas mechanical *standard* "off the shelf" motor buses. In each of the next four years, it ordered a hundred or more. Public Service was going to fight the encroaching jitneys with motor buses and by buying out the competitive private bus operators and then replacing the junk they got from these operators with new equipment. It wasn't a fair fight using Birneys to combat the invading jitneys challenging PSRy's low-volume AND major streetcar routes. *It was clearly contrary policies to purchase new buses and new streetcars within four years to fulfil the same purpose.*

The Phraner Report, cont'd

Birneys operated in the larger cities of the suburban New Jersey landscape. They were common on the short local streetcar routes in Plainfield, Paterson, Atlantic City, Trenton (two operators ran them), New Brunswick, the Amboys and some cross-town urban routes, but none ran in the wide gauge PSRy Southern Division (Camden). These were the same minor routes inhabited by Birney cars that were subject to the local streetcar purges in North Jersey in 1927 and 1928. Other New Jersey Birney operators were in Asbury Park and adjacent shore communities, Bridgeton, and Penns Grove. By the end of 1931, PSRy (by that time "Public Service Coordinated Transport" (PSCT)), the Birneys were scrapped. The last three PSCT Birneys were operated in New Brunswick in 1931. The Birney era for Public Service had lasted less than a decade.

Was this a blunder? Nearly all other major (and many minor) rail transit operators were buying Birneys. Yes, I believe in retrospect, the PSRy decision was flawed. First, we should understand that Public Service corporate culture was going through a gradual change in attitude that was unfavorable toward streetcars. A change at that time by *other* streetcar companies convinced them instead to choose light-weight streetcars, trolley buses, some motor buses and ultimately to PCCs. Public Service's transformation to bus happened earlier, in greater magnitude and part of their ultimate corporate business plan. During the 1920s-decade, Public Service corporate had decided to convert its entire transit system from rail to bus. Many rail transit advocates today consider this change in business attitude a Public Service blunder of greater impact than that of buying two hundred Birneys. In retrospect, bigger blunders were to follow in PSCT's pursuit of all-bus objectives during the 1920s and '30s.

Though none of the PSRy Birney's survived the purge of the '20s, the Birney turned out to be popular cars for preservation. Birneys are preserved in several museums. Shore Line Trolley Museum in Connecticut has preserved and restored the single truck Birney (Conn Co. #2350 – same Osgood Bradley builder and type "O" design features as the PSRy Birneys!). The museum also restored a double truck (#3001) Birney. Both are originally of the Connecticut Company. Warehouse Point, CT also has a double truck Conn Co Birney (#3000). Other preserved single truck cars may be found in CO, CA, AR, IL, PA, ME, and elsewhere in the US, Canada, and overseas. It is ironic that though PSRy was one of the largest owners of Birneys, none of theirs is preserved.

#4500 Series - Trailer Blunder



Trailer Car 4598 (DP)

Like the Birney misstep, Public Service tried what most of the major streetcar operators ventured into in the teens and twenties. This time buying trailers. The belief was to reduce costs and solve peak period crowding. PSRy bought 100 trailers (#4500-#4599) and like the Birneys, it chose Osgood Bradley as the builder. Also, like the Birneys, the trailers were delivered in 1920-'21. While the trailers were not considered a standard design in the same sense as the Birney or PCC car, 1920 era streetcar trailers all appeared and were configured about the same, regardless of the operator or builder. Cleveland, Chicago, Toronto and other large cities had nearly identical designed streetcar trailers, differing mostly in interior seating and passenger flow arrangements.

PSRy trailers were 49'8" long, round end, symmetrical body configuration, arch roof, single drop center entrance, double stream, paired, curb-side doors. These were light-weight steel cars, with low profile with unpowered double trucks, capable of being towed in either direction. The motor/trailer coupler was more of a drawbar than a conventional coupler arrangement. To energize the trailer's circuitry, there were electrical wired connections for lighting, heating and accessories (electronic farebox, door operating mechanisms, buzzer buttons) from the "mother" "motored car to the otherwise inert trailers.

Streetcar trailers were not without advantages. The trailers were crowd swallows with lots of standing space provided with predominantly longitudinal seating, in trailers so equipped. It is claimed that a trailer could carry 180 persons in the longitudinal seat cars. The first fifty trailers in the Public Service order (#4500-#4549) had 54 longitudinal wooden seating. The next fifty cars (#4550-#4599) featured a combination of rattan cross and longitudinal seating for 62. Externally, both variants in the 4500 series appeared identical.

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Shore Line Trolley Museum is restoring their #4584 with longitudinal seating. While not exactly authentic to that high numbered 4500, it does represent seating in the low numbered cars in the series and is a common seating arrangement for trailers. In addition, that arrangement is functional for Branford Museum's education mission, whether used for mobile lectures, tours, or static orientations and meetings. The 4500s weighed 23,300 to 24,400 pounds depending on seating. For reference, a contemporary 40' (12-meter) city transit bus weighs about 30,000 lbs.

The car house assignments of the PSRy trailer fleet in 1924 tells us much about their route assignments and their utility or lack thereof. Of the hundred trailers, only 17 cars were used in regularly scheduled service: 8 at 16th Ave, 5 at Big Tree and 4 at Hilton (Maplewood). These assignments show that 13 Broad and probably 33 Market and short turns of the 25 Springfield used trailers in peak and base day service. Other car houses at Roseville (2) and South Orange (3) used trailers only in the p.m. peak for the 21 Orange and 31 South Orange routes. Montgomery car house had 2 trailers assigned to shipyard am and pm shift changes, most likely serving Federal shipyard on the Kearny peninsula. The rest of the two-year old trailer fleet by that time was permanently stored in three vacant or little-used car houses; Secaucus (2), Prior St. (Jersey City) (6), Bayonne (15), and Newark Shops (47). It seems clear that at least three-quarters of Public Service streetcar trailers were used little or not at all. (Wrege/Hamilton).

The PSRy trailer blunder, though less expensive, proved to be worse than the Birney blunder. Seventy percent of the trailer order was never used and stored till they were scrapped or adapted as transit waiting shelters (Greenville (2), Exchange Place, West Shore Terminal come to mind as locations), field offices, lunch wagons, summer houses or kids' playhouses. One trailer #4584 was obtained for Shore Line Museum through the combined efforts of their staff and that of the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society. It was rescued from a steel manufacturing yard on SR 22 in Union/Springfield. The author knows first-hand, as he purchased a steel cellar entrance door for his house from that yard. Additional parts were obtained from two other former PSRy trailers that were part of a boat yard in Brielle; again by the same band of hardies.

What makes the blunder worse is that extensive research and testing of the motor car trailer combinations proved that the concept was questionable if not useless in most heavy volume streetcar route applications. Various combinations of motor cars and trailers were tried, including two and four-traction motor cars along with combinations of two-motor cars with two and four-motors per car and two or more motor cars in multiple unit (MU) tandem. We are getting a little ahead of Page | 23

ourselves since we will treat that relatively minor blunder later in this treatise; that is of experiments in MU electric motor streetcars run in tandem or in trains. Testing of various trailer motor combinations also revealed another flaw. The additional strain on the traction motors of towing car, caused overheating, increased maintenance, vigilance, and premature wear. Two-traction motor cars were found to be unsatisfactory for pulling trailers, so trailers were always paired with four-motor cars, usually of the 1910-vintage 2200 series cars before these cars had their ends reversed in 1924-'25.

There were minor labor advantages since the trailer still required a single collector/conductor onboard to collect fares and maintain order, while the 2-man towing car would have required a conductor and motorman. Major shift change assignments may have lessened the requirement for a collector on the trailer since prepayment at the point of origin by car starters and collectors on the ground lessened that need. The motor trailer combination proved unsuitable for routes with significant gradients. Acceleration was reduced in contact with single motor cars resulting in the lowering the performance along the entire distance of the route. Dwell times were increased at heavy volume stops though there were some advantages at factory and shipyard shift changes using off street terminal and loading points. Public Service's heaviest volume streetcar routes in Newark (13, 25, 34) appeared to be the best applications of trailers.

#2400, #3200, #3500 Series - Multiple Unit (MU) Blunder

Although all three series cars were fitted with MU jumper sockets mounted prominently below the operator's window on the dash, the appliance did not remain there long. The functionality of operating MU streetcars by Public Service was fleeting. Forgive the pun, because the 1918 vintage high 3200s (#3225-#3249) were built for the Emergency Fleet Corporation (EFC) in the World War I era to serve shipyards in Camden area. As with the trailers, shipyard and large defense plant shift changes exerted a huge surge of workers concentrated within a short time, justifying however briefly, the use of MU streetcars (and trailers). Then too, the testing of motor trailer combinations and MU cars in tandem cited above, did not find that the MU option was technically flawed, though again, the timing, magnitude and application might have been better thought out.

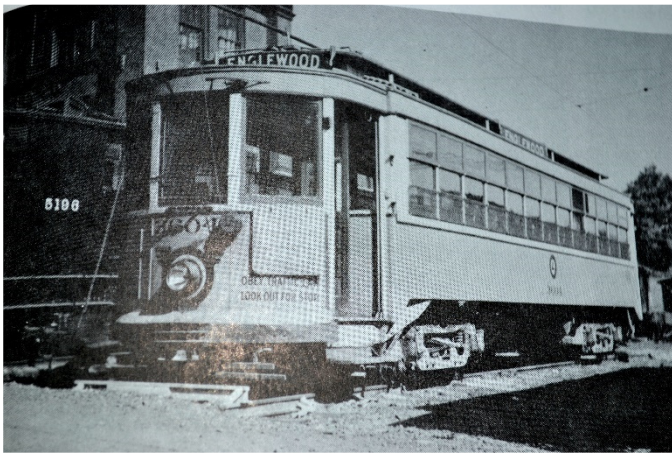
Each of the applications of MU technology to the three series of Public Service streetcars were employed in entirely different transportation functions. The 1912 vintage 2400s (#2400-#2533) some lower numbers delivered with MU HL controllers and were applied to peak period surges on a conventional urban streetcar route; *Route 23 Central Ave*. They were also assigned to shift changes on the *Port Newark* (later #4 bus)

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shipyard route. The 1912-1913 vintage 3500s (#3510-#3521) were delivered with high expectations, high speed and MU controllers on the "Trenton Fast Line" Public Services' only real intercity interurban route and given a separate corporate title, "Public Service Railroad". The wide gauge southern division 3200s were shipped north on railroad flatcars to be converted to use on Bergen County *Hudson River Line* and other Hudson Bergen County assignments.

In the case of the Fast Line 3500s, the anticipated demand never materialized, and the classy green varnish paint yielded to the deluxe but conventional streetcar cream and maroon. MU controls were removed and replaced with K35 controllers just as with other former MU cars on the Public Service roster. Several of the series, (including #2431) were also single ended. None of the 3200s or 3500s survived, but one 2400 did survive and is in the process of a multi-decade restoration at Shore Line Trolley Museum. #2431 had last been assigned to Hudson County routes and was returned in the late 1940s. Another 2400 and 2760 were also briefly preserved but later lost when it was believed that the retirement of the 3200s, 2600s and 2700s in the City Subway would provide replacements. The speed at which those vintage cars were replaced by PCCs and hauled away for salvage prevented quick action to preserve those cars. Beside #2651, car #2431 is the only surviving intact conventional Public Service design streetcar from the teens and twenties. It is our understanding that Shore Line Museum plans to restore the double end feature to #2431.

We can speculate that adding MU capability to streetcars and interurban cars in New Jersey was an unwise expenditure, and an overzealous anticipation of a brighter future. The feature did serve a purpose for a brief period and the cost was modest in comparison with other unwise choices. In the case of "MU-ing" streetcars, it was a mild misjudgment, if it can be called a blunder at all.



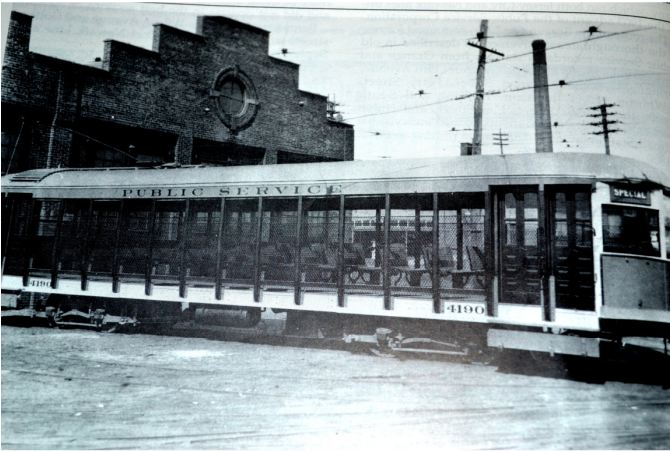
Brill High Speed Interurban Car 3604 Serving our Later Years in Bergen County. (DP)

#3600 series - High-Speed Fast Line Interurban Blunder

Of all the series of cars built for Public Service Ry, and in this case Public Service Railroad, the 3600s are a bit of a mystery. Surprise, the cars were built by Brill! Public Service seemed to prefer to buy from Cincinnati Car Company or to build cars themselves at Newark Shops. They had bought their last Brill-built car in 1904 but several later orders in that first decade came from the Brill subsidiary Stephenson. Another surprise, the 3600s were built as high speed interurbans (claimed 75 mph in full parallel!) to replace the still new (4-year-old) 3500s! Granted they were a mild improvement, having Standard C-50P, trucks rather than the C-45Ps of the predecessor series. They were about a foot and a half longer at 35'11" than the 3500s. Few photos of them appear since there were only twenty cars in the order (#3600-#3619). Eventually, they were relegated to more localized Fast Line services between Newark and Perth Amboy and New Brunswick routes. Being rogue cars in an otherwise predominantly Cincinnati and Public Service-built fleet, they came to a premature end. Like most transit fleet operators and maintainers, "different" cars (and buses) are shunned. The 3600s were more of a surprise than a blunder...perhaps.

What were they thinking? After the initial surge, the anticipated traffic volumes for the Fast Line never materialized. It was just too slow. Ridership started to decline in the early 1920s. This rider decline was particularly evident in the segment between Milltown and Public Service Junction in Trenton, where the fastest running was possible and achieved. The 3600s were only five years old when the route for which they were especially designed, faltered. Maybe the idea in the minds of McCarter and other Public Service streetcar advocates was that a truly high-speed car would attract more passengers. The real flaw was in the Fast Line route that traveled on local streets between Newark and Bayway and then after a speedy segment of private right-of-way to Bonhamton over local streets in New Brunswick to Milltown and then a dash on private right-of-way across the vacant farmlands to Trenton. Then back on the local streets. It could never compete with the speedy Pennsylvania Railroad travel times. Maybe the blunder was with Public Service never fully completing the "Fast" Line off-street private right-of-way segments bypassing New Brunswick and Elizabeth on the Fast Line Route rather than the 3500s and 3600s that navigated those tracks.

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Open Car 4190 in here later one-man configuration. (DP)

The #4000-#4100 Series - Open Car Blunder?

More of a departure from Public Service normalcy than a blunder, the 200 cars of this series were, even for Public Service, unique. It is understandable that corporate ordered new open cars in 1915-1917 since the newest open cars in the fleet were delivered in 1905 and most of the open car fleet dated from the 19th century. No open cars had been ordered by PSRy for a decade. Open cars were still popular in World War I years. Public Service Ry. conformed with common practice along with other major streetcar companies that swapped trucks between open and closed cars seasonally. Just how this was accomplished in detail would make an excellent article in *Trolley Lines*. The author believes that the Lockwood St. car house car storage facility in Ironbound across Ferry St. from the PSRy Newark Shops (also known as Plank Road Shops) was used for storing out-of-season cars. Both building complexes survive. The car storage house has been adapted to other commercial uses, but the shops are still used for transportation purposes by NJ Transit.

The 4000-4199 series of open cars arrived in three orders between 1915 and 1917. Public Service was the builder of all 200 cars. It is remarkable that during these same years, Public Service was also building the 2600s, some 2700s and 3200s series cars! Newark Ferry St. shops must have been a busy erecting shop at that time. Their design was a departure for Public Service in that the roof was arched rather than the conventional but dated clerestory feature or the unique Public Service compromise type (same as on our society's #2651). Canvas curtains "you could be roll right down in case there's a change in the weather..." (why am I thinking Oklahoma?) The open series cars were single end, assigned to the Essex, Hudson, Union and Bergen County routes.

The first order in 1915 was for 20 cars (initially numbered #1080 - #1099 to "fit" with the number series of PS subsidiary

Hudson River Railroad & Ferry Company open cars). The cars were later renumbered (#4080-#4099) to integrate them with sister cars in the 4000-4100 series. Oddly, this initial order specified that cars were to be equipped with Westinghouse HL controls, though they were never adapted for MU operation). They were built as 15-bench cars, though there was one rear bench outside the car body making them 16- benches in total. A rear end photo of a 4080 car shows that the body may have been altered to place all seats within the car body. The rest of the series were 16-bench with all the seats within the car body.

What was especially unusual about the 4000-4100 was not their original open design, which conformed with the usual practice varying only in the number of benches. It was what Public Service did with their 10-year-old open cars in 1925. Being conventional as-built open cars, entry to and from the 4000-4100s was accomplished along the entire length of the car by means of running board steps enabling passengers to climb up from the pavement to the car body interior. Like all traditional open car designs, the bench seating ran the entire width of the car. The left side (port) was enclosed with a wire mesh and no running boards to prevent passengers from falling out or entering the car without paying a fare. Entrance to the car was therefore impossible from the left side.

Public Service, like many streetcar companies of that time, decided to implement one-man operation on their streetcars. The labor troubles that this change caused could be the subject of another article, but we are concerned in this piece only with the change in the car designs required by collecting fares by a single operator at a single location. When converted to one-man operation, a row of benches in the front of the car was sacrificed to provide a larger front platform for fare collection and improved passenger flows. This conversion improvement was accompanied by double stream doors and air operated flop down steps to make it easy for ladies to climb up to the high platform feature of these cars. Recall how the asymmetrical closed cars ends were reversed with the long platform becoming the front and the short platform in the rear. The problem was especially acute for open cars since fares were normally collected by the conductors along the running boards along the side of the cars. Public Service's additional car modification was to cut an aisle down the center of the benches, enclosing the right or curb side of the car with a wire mesh as was done on the left side. Fares would be processed in the front of the car with the operator performing that function previously done by the conductors, now out of work. I suppose that one might consider, by cutting sixteen full-width benches in half, the cars became unique 32-bench cars (only half sized benches). It is claimed that this conversion was performed on open cars of other streetcar systems, but I cannot find another example; certainly not one of this scale. It

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appears that some of the earliest built cars in the series were scrapped rather than being converted at the time of the 1925 conversion to one-man operation.

Surprisingly, the 4100 series open cars in their one-man configuration lasted into the mid-1930s. Surprising, not because of their age, since they were the same vintage as the prevalent 2600-2700 series cars, but because they were open type operating at the time when most open cars had been retired. Perhaps because PSRy executed an unprecedented conversion of their newest open cars to one-man operation, it could be resolved by correcting what might have been considered a blunder of buying open cars when open cars were starting to lose favor with the public.

#9100-#9454, - Yellow Coach Model 729 All Service Vehicle, Blunder?

Depending on your point of view and biases toward or against motor buses, the major investment by Public Service Coordinated Transport in buses was either business genius or social and environmental stupidity. Wherever you stand on the issue, Public Service took an amazingly bold step in the conversion of transit service from streetcars to motor buses. They did so earlier than other large transit companies and did so in a way unlike any other transition to motor buses.

After the early 1920s streetcar purchase blunders, it was like PSRy gave up on streetcars. Other factors influenced the change in corporate attitude away from streetcars and toward buses. The jitney challenge taught PSRy management that buses could be cheaper to run. The nation's increasing devotion to vehicular travel and public investment in highway infrastructure combined with strict regulation helped swing Public Service and other transit operators to favor buses. PSRy's answer to the private bus competitors' challenge was to buy them out and it did so with gusto. By 1929, renamed "Public Service Coordinated Transport (PSCT)", operated a fleet of over 2,300 motor buses operating over 150 bus routes. Also in 1929, PSCT bus passenger volumes for the first time exceeded those carried on streetcars (343 million vs. 312 million).

A brief description of the ASV and its origins is necessary to understand the role it played in streetcar conversions. Motor buses in the early 1920s were propelled by gasoline fueled engines, but their transmission fell into two categories, gas-mechanical (stick shift) and gas-electric (the gas engine runs a generator which energizes traction motor(s) that propel the bus. Today we call this latter arrangement "hybrids." In a sense, the gas electric was a precursor to the ASV since adding trolley poles and an electric control group enabled the bus to

operate either as a gas electric with poles down or as a trolley bus with poles up to contact the dual overhead wires.

Regardless, PSCT joined the President's Conference Committee but left it in 1935; the same year that the first gas electric/electric bus, later to be known as the *All-Service Vehicle* (ASV) was demonstrated in Weehawken. It's ironic that nearly two decades later PSCT would purchase thirty used PCC cars. The next year 1936, Public Service executed its first order of purpose-built ASVs model 729 from Yellow Coach, an affiliate of General Motors. In the decade between 1923 and 1934, over 80 streetcar routes were abandoned or converted to motorbus; even before the first ASV had turned a wheel. The streetcar purges of the mid to late 1930s were then directed at the heavy streetcar routes and the device for accomplishing that was the ASV. It was because of the motorization of these heavy-volume streetcar routes like the 13 Broad, 25 Springfield and 27 Mt. Prospect that contemporary criticism is leveled at PSCT. The only routes surviving the purges of the late 1930s were the subway surface "City Subway" routes in Essex County (21, 23, 29, 7) and the streetcar routes that used the Jersey City - Hoboken elevated (Jackson, Weehawken, Union City and Oakland).

Aside from the appeal of motor bus advantages, Public Service was influenced by another factor unique to its business, its infrastructure and New Jersey development patterns. As a major electric and gas utility, Public Service Corporate continued to operate a major electric generating and distribution business. The streetcar was a cross subsidy and complementary transport business to the utility. The ASV was a means of preserving that complementary relationship as it used the current and electric delivery infrastructure already in place supplied by the utility. The best part was that the expensive and worn-out streetcar tracks could be abandoned while the electric component investment was retained and used. It took a while for PSCT to "fix" the local franchise, labor and regulatory issues in the conversion process, but by 1938, all those impediments had been resolved.

Something else startling happened in 1938 that forecast the doom of the new ASVs. Public Service bought *the first production GM (Yellow Coach) Detroit diesel transit bus* (prior to that, a limited number of Hercules diesels were used). Typical of PSCT, they bought almost a hundred Yellow Coach model 1203 (#7600-#7694) equipped with electric transmissions. And further, these were the only buses of that model made. One of the buses in our collection, PSCT #Z-546 is the sole surviving example of PSCT exclusively buying the entire production run of a GM model, T6M-5306N. Another indication of the future that did not include ASVs was the two-speed semi-automatic transmission that had been perfected by Spicer the year before. The combination of the diesel engine

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and the hydraulic transmission was to limit the ASV era to a short existence of barely a decade. It leads one to conjecture that had Public Service held off on buying 583 ASVs, and instead invested in PCCs and diesel hydraulic bus technologies, the war years and the rest of the 1940s would appear to be less of a blunder, if at all. You decide.

Conclusions

Throughout these tumultuous decades described herein, Public Service grew and prospered. Perhaps that condition is the greatest determinant of whether its business plans were blunders or foresight. A reoccurring theme was the eternal objective of standardization. Examples abound. The Emergency Fleet Corporation products were standardized according to the car type of the host operator. Public Service set the standard for the transit industry to follow, at least when it came to bus innovation and purchases. Standardization in regulation came in the form of the *Public Utilities Holding Act of 1935* that was to permanently hobble the transit industry as it required utilities to separate from their best customers, their streetcar affiliates. Amazingly, by chance and hard work, two of the Public Service blunders are preserved: #2431 and #4584, both at Shore Line Trolley Museum. 2431's MU blunder was removed early in its life and the 4500 series trailer is preserved (perhaps to remind us of our mistakes). Examination of the Public Service history reveals much of which we can be proud. Three of our noble NJ historical preservation institutions* document, educate, and restore artifacts of New Jersey electric traction, motor bus and railroad transport heritage... and that is no blunder.

*Friends of the New Jersey Transportation Heritage Center, North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society, United Railroad Historical Society.

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For the author's report on the past symposia, produced by the "Friends" and Bill McKelvey at Drew University, please anticipate Trolley Lines #34.

(Editor's note:) Blunders? Or Just Good Business?

Several years ago, I sat at a dinner table in Connecticut with none other than E.J. Quimby. He regaled our party with his eyewitness account of the purchase and destruction (that is, the substitution of our transit systems with General Motors busses) of many urban transit systems such as those in New York and Lost Angeles, among many others, under the cover of a G.M. Subsidiary called "National City Lines." Soon General Motors busses were operating over recently-abandoned streetcar tracks from coast to coast. This was no "URBAN LEGEND," litigated as it was in court (*See the People of New York vs. General Motors*). The verdict: "Guilty on all counts." The case was further documented by the late railroad historian Al Mankoff. For so long as transit "properties" were private business-managed operations, their main concern had to be PROFIT for their investors, and the traveling public be damned.

Thanks, Dave, for yet another excellent, colorful, and thoroughly researched treatise. Keep up the good work.

Editor

