

NEW YORK MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION

HEADEND

Volume 38, Number 2

May–December 2024

MG Car Club Show at NYMT



On July 21, 2024, the MG Car Club held its annual car show at NYMT for the first time. A total of 155 show cars were on display, and in addition to those displaying their vehicles, over 400 visitors attended. Car 168 was in half-hour service for the entire day. The crew of Cody Catlin, Jay Consadine, Bob Sass and Stephen Sypnier made 12 revenue runs and carried 178 passengers between 9:30 A.M. and 3:30 P.M. runs.



Top: Visitors enjoy some of the oldest cars at the show. Above: Car 168 makes yet another run past the full parking area.

Doug Anderson was the Officer of the Day. Others on duty in various roles included Beth Adams, Jim Dierks, Nathaniel Genthner, Dave Kirkwood, Fred Kirkwood, Helene Novick, John Ross, Jim Wiesner, and Mike

Williams. A ton of work, including mowing and fencing set-up, took place before the show.

Upcoming Schedule at NYMT

Volunteers make it possible for the community to visit NYMT. Please consider offering your services in the gift shop, in the model train room, or on the trolley crew to help keep NYMT open for our “Holly Trolley” on December 7, 8 and 15, 2024.

ALFRED R. “BOB” MINER

Long-time volunteer Bob Miner passed away at age 92 on October 26, 2024. Bob volunteered at NYMT for many years as museum trustee, trolley motorman and conductor, master mechanic, and Officer of the Day. Along with his wife Marie, the Miners spent many days volunteering together at NYMT.



Line car 2, ex-Philadelphia snow sweeper C-125, is looking vastly improved on September 22 with its new coat of green paint. See the Shop Report section of this issue of Headend for details.



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SHOP REPORT

Archive Room — The contractor has finished the work of installing various doors, wall and ceiling treatments, lighting, and electrical circuitry in the new Archive Room. Additional work, mostly centered on heat and air conditioning, is ongoing. Archive room painting was done by Charlie MacDonald, Helene Novick, Michael Storey and Fred Wagner.

Grounds — An able mowing crew, led by Dave Coon and including Rick Holahan, Taylor Reed and Rand Warner, have kept the grounds looking great and well cared for throughout a season with much grass growth. In particular, the crew had the grounds in tip-top shape for the car show in July.

New York Museum of Transportation 2 (ex-SEPTA C-125) — This car was once a Philadelphia sweeper in the same series as NYMT’s car C-130. In 1974, it was acquired by Pennsylvania Trolley Museum

and made into a line car. Since Pittsburgh work cars were painted red, PTM painted the car red and, at that time, renumbered it “2.” PTM traded the car to NYMT in 2009.

In the time the car has been at NYMT, the red paint faded and began to peel. To best preserve the car, an effort started in 2018 to repaint the car. A close match to the Philadelphia green was selected for historical purposes and since this was the Rochester work car color.

Members of the “Thursday Crew,” including Carter Brown, Helene Novick and John Ross, scraped and sanded loose red paint from unpainted areas of this car early this summer. Charlie MacDonald, seen here with the car, primed the south end and west side of the car. Others from the Thursday crew have assisted in priming this car. Don Quant and Jim Dierks installed a final narrow board at one end of the car as a repair to the siding. In September, green paint was applied by Jim, Helene, John, Gary Lamphron and, as we go to press, the car is nearly all green again for the first time since the mid-1970s.



Here is a study in contrasts. The top photo shows line car 2 on July 21 once scraping and sanding were nearly complete. The bottom photo shows the car on September 22 once its gleaming new green paint was applied to the car’s tongue-and-groove siding boards.

Overhead — Bob Sass, Jay Consadine, Rick Holahan and Taylor Reed used TC-1 and tower car 020 to clear brush from near the overhead trolley wire. This work was

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done in mid-summer once tree growth had started to get near the wire.

Philadelphia and Western 161 and 168 — Bob Sass renovated the speedometer apparatus in car 161. This allows crew to closely adhere to railroad speed limits. Bob, Stephen Sypnier and Dick Holbert worked on installing new brake shoes on 161 this summer. This work involved making many adjustments to the car's braking system. Jay Consadine maintained oil levels in both cars.



Car 161 is seen back in service on September 7. This was a "Twilight" operation with the NYMT terminal at the main entrance driveway. The runs that evening included joint operation with RGV trains at Midway.

Track — Dick Holbert and Bob Sass installed a replacement rail bond on the mainline within the loop switch on June 12. Our track contractor replaced 21 ties near Midway in late June and, in August, installed 38 four-jaw gauge rods on the railroad, two at Midway and the rest at Scanlon's Curve. Gauge rods are necessary on sharp curves to help maintain gauge at rail joints. Our contractor also adjusted gauge at Scanlon's Curve, straightened a bow in the track just north of Scanlon's Curve, and corrected several spots of irregular spiking. Jay Consadine has cut weeds along the track as well.

Railroad Crew — A total of 8 motormen completed their annual familiarization runs and other training by mid-June. Bob Sass took charge of this program.

Cookout — The regular season was capped with a cookout for our volunteers, and 33 filled Northern Texas Traction car 409 to enjoy hamburgers, hot dogs, side dishes and dessert. Bill and Nancy Holland did a great job at the grill, Helene Novick's baked beans and macaroni salad were a good accompaniment, along with Missy Holahan's fruit salad, Jay and Margarite's homemade pickle, and cookies and brownies prepared by Mary Reed and Andrea Popp. Jim Dierks handled the organizing and buying the food. It was a good time and a fitting end to a successful season.

Board — The Board approved additional funding for track work at its April and May meetings. Officers were re-elected at the annual meeting in May. At its August meeting, the Board provided additional funding for completing the archive room and selected a budget committee for 2025. Budget committee members for 2025 are Jim Dierks, Bob Sass, Jack Tripp and Jim Wiesner.

BILL MIDDLETON, JR. STOPS BY

One of the most famous rail historians was William D. Middleton (1928–2011). Middleton wrote or co-wrote at least 27 books and some 700 magazine articles



on various aspects of rail history. At the same time, Middleton was a prolific photographer of scenes which illustrated in some cases what he wrote.

In his later years, Middleton lived near Rochester and occasionally visited NYMT with his son Bill, Jr. Your editor was chagrined to hear about such visits well after they had occurred, with an off-handed, "Oh, by the way, Charlie, [the famous] Bill Middleton stopped by last Sunday." Despite many close calls, including times when I was at the museum when Middleton visited, I never had the chance to thank Middleton for all his great writing.

Finally, though, I was able to meet and thank Middleton's son Bill, Jr. for his dad's efforts. It turned out that Bill, Jr. most liked his dad's *When the Steam Railroads Electrified* since it reminded him of many fun adventures when the book was being written. I looked over my copy of that book, and it is indeed a masterpiece. But, then again, everything William D. Middleton wrote was a masterpiece.

Rochester Streetcars: No. 115 in a Series



Rochester and Manitou RR 31

Unknown Photographer

HEADEND (for over three decades since resuming publication in 1990 under Editor Emeritus Jim Dierks) and ROCHESTER STREETCARS (since 1997) have striven to note as many 100-year anniversaries as possible. These were almost all concerned with opening of a street railway line or obtaining new cars. Even in recent years, the 100-year-ago news has been positive. In 1922, the Clinton Avenue North streetcar line was extended from

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Norton Street East Ridge Road, and in 1923 the Durand Stub was extended to Durand-Eastman Park’s bath house. Now, with 1924 in our sights, we come to a precipice.

One of the earliest country trolley lines in the U.S. was in the Rochester area. The Rochester–Charlotte line along Lake Avenue opened with electric cars on July 3, 1889. This might be considered a proto-interurban line in that the lands in between Rochester City and the Village of Charlotte were, in 1890, rural in nature. Connecting with this was a trolley line heading west from Charlotte along the Lake Ontario shoreline, the Grand View Beach Railway. This line was opened as an electric trolley line on May 30, 1891. Eventually, this line was extended across Braddock’s Bay on a 2,000-foot-long timber trestle, reaching its terminus at Manitou Beach some eight miles from Charlotte. This trestle proved to be an overwhelming burden on the line, and it was replaced in 1908. Some economy was found by purchasing power from New York State Railways after 1913 instead of operating a power house.

Operations on this line, which became known as the Rochester and Manitou Railroad, were seasonal. The busiest time, of course, was during summer months when many tried to escape the summer heat at one of the many hotels or cottages along this section of Lake Ontario. In spring and fall seasons, the line reduced its schedule but continued to run for the benefit of those who lived along the line and for fishermen and hunters. Winter operation was never undertaken.

Low patronage, seasonal operation, publicly financed highways, and reasonably comfortable, speedy, and safe automobiles all combined in the early 1920s to doom the Rochester and Manitou.

So just when was the last day of operation on the Rochester and Manitou? Bill Gordon, in his *Manitou Beach Trolley Days*, does not give us an exact date but does give us some tantalizing clues. Gordon noted (p. 66) that “some six hundred from Gleason works on a Saturday in August 1924 drove to Manitou Beach. This was the last year of service for patrons of the Manitou Line as this fall the trolley made their last run. No service was started in May 1925....” Gordon tells us that in 1902, the line opened on April 5 and closed on December 1 (p. 57), and that in 1909 the line opened in April and closed on December 1 but only ran to Grand View Beach in spring and fall months (p. 58). So, until a future historian can tease out the actual date from the historical record, the best we know for now is that on some brisk fall afternoon in 1924 on or before December 1 a final run on the Manitou line closed out that season as well as the operating history of the Rochester and Manitou Railroad.

In our photo, the bare trees in the background suggest a late November timing. The trolley shelter at the loop for Lake Avenue cars of New York State Railways, visible in the background, was built in 1921 so our photo must date after that time. A 5” by 7” camera, such as was used by New York State Railways, seems to have been used to make this photo. Could it be that, knowing the last day had finally approached, that New York State Railways’ photographer made a last day shot of the R&M? Surely, this may well have been the case!

[For additional reading, see Gordon, William R., *Manitou Beach Trolley Days*. Rochester, N.Y: 1957. This 112-page book is profusely illustrated and tells the full story of the Rochester and Manitou Railroad and its predecessors.
]

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Thank You!