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The remains of Red Arrow car 26 enters the Phillipsburg Railroad Historians site aboard Jim Lilly's often used low profile trailer. Photo - Tony Hall - 12 July 2008

Car 2651 Restoration

One of the most difficult aspects of any restoration project is acquiring parts for a vintage car. The situation with Car 2651 is no different. We achieved our most difficult acquisition with the purchase of a pair of trucks, but there were still numerous other items that were still needed to complete the final restoration.

We received word from our friends at Branford that the Electric City Trolley Museum had decided to scrap its Hog Island car and that we would be welcome to salvage parts

from it if we would remove it from SEPTA's Germantown Depot where it was being stored.

The car in question was one of three cars that were built for the Philadelphia Rapid Transit Company and sold to the Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Company (Red Arrow Lines) to meet World War II travel demands. It finished up its service as Red Arrow car 26. The three cars were never popular with Red Arrow riders. They only had

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Monthly meetings of the North Jersey ERHS are held at the First Presbyterian Church, 1731 Church Street in Rahway on the Third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM. During periods of bad weather consult the website to see if the meeting is still scheduled.

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two motors which made them slower than the other cars in the Red Arrow fleet. Their longitudinal wooden seats were a stark contrast to the cushioned walkover seating in the Red Arrow cars. Their years of service were mostly limited to rush-hour trippers on short section of the Red Arrow routes. The arrival of the streamlined St. Louis Car Company PCC-style cars in 1949 along with the abandonment of the West Chester line spelled the beginning of the end for the three Hog Island cars. None-the-less they continued to see limited service until 1958 when they were officially retired. They remained on the property out of service until the late 1960's.

When Red Arrow decided to dispose of the cars, two were scrapped and Car 26 was acquired by the Metropolitan Railway Association. They had assumed the operations of the trolley museum in Tansboro, New Jersey known as Trolley Valhalla. This property was sold and the group moved its equipment to Jobstown, New Jersey, where their plans to operate the cars on the Pennsylvania Railroad's Kinkora branch were blocked by opposition from local citizens. Once again the group was in need of a place to operate its equipment. Their needs were answered when

the management of the New Hope and Ivyland Railroad in Bucks County, Pennsylvania offered them the use of the outer end of their line in Buckingham for the operation of a trolley service. In conjunction with this, the group was reorganized as the Buckingham Valley Trolley Association (BVTA). Car 26 was one of two cars that provided rides over about a mile of track.

When the agreement with the New Hope and Ivyland came to an end they were again in need of a place to operate their cars. This time the solution was found in Philadelphia where industrial trackage on Delaware Avenue along the city's waterfront was made available for the trolleys. At the time, this seemed like the perfect place for this service, but in retrospect this was the worst possible turn of events for the organization and its collection of cars. The waterfront along the Delaware was seen to have the same potential for the development as other cities like Baltimore and San Francisco. The area was renamed Penn's Landing and the new rail service was given the designation Penn's Landing Trolley. A pier with indoor storage was made available to house the collection of cars. Service was operated on weekends, holidays and special occasions.

The development of the waterfront proceeded as envisioned by the city and ultimately the pier that was used to house the trolleys was acquired for the construction of a new building. The trolleys were move to a smaller pier nearby, but this was short lived as well when it also was acquired for real estate development. Space was made available for the storage of the trolleys under an interstate highway overpass about a mile north of where the Penn's Landing trolleys operated, but there was no way to get the cars from the storage yard to the active trackage. There were hints that funding might be provided to construct a link for cars to use in connecting to the trackage along Penn's landing, but this failed to materialize and the trolley line ceased operation.

Meanwhile the trolleys became targets of vandalism. Although the highway overpass provided them with protection from the elements, it provided shelter for members of the homeless population as well. Fencing that was installed around the perimeter of the property was no match for people who were determined to gain access to the site. Copper wiring was stripped from some cars along with other material with value on the scrap market. As if this wasn't bad enough, the vandalism ultimately resulted in Car 26 being severely damaged by fire

The vandalism to the historic fleet of trolleys was widely covered in the press. Perhaps out of political pressure or perhaps out of genuine sympathy, SEPTA offered to store the cars at its Germantown Depot. Fire damaged Car 26 was included in the move because there was serious

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The first full day of summer dawned hot and humid at Germantown Depot in Philadelphia. The only shade to be found was beneath the car. Rob Hooper, Jim Tomczyk and Bob Hooper are greeted by a bearded SEPTA representative. Car 26, destroyed by fire some years earlier, stands desolate awaiting its fate.

Photo – Tony Hall – 21 June 2008



Ravenous flames had rendered the interior of ex-SEPTA Hog Island car 26 a shambles. The day's expedition had as its purpose the preparation of this ruin for transport to Phillipsburg, where mechanical parts would be salvaged for 2651. To achieve a timely and efficient move, the height of the car had to be reduced to windowsill level to avoid the need for time-consuming and costlier permits.

Photo – Tony Hall – 21 June 2008



Our intrepid trio pulls down the last cornerpost. Battery-powered tools had long since been exhausted, and workers would soon follow. Rob Hooper mans a limbing saw purchased at a nearby hardware store. Car 26 had been lettered "DO NOT DESTROY" as part of a vain effort to generate interest in rebuilding the car. Bob Hooper surveys the work done by Jim and Rob.

Photo – Tony Hall – 21 June 2008



Two men who happen upon slower than the other side of the Red Arrow line. Their long-awaited window was...



citizens. Once again the group was in need of a place to operate its equipment. Their needs were answered when...

Jim Tomczyk pulls down a door motor (upper left). "Battery Bob" Hooper attacks the first of many charred window posts with a fresh charge on his portable saw, which could not be recharged at this location (upper right). The work completed, the exhausted team takes a well-earned break (left). It's hard to believe that this is the same car pictured at the top of the previous page. The wreck was finally ready for transport, thanks to our band of trolley vultures. Some old trolleys such as 26 perish so that others such as 2651 may have new life. A part of 26 will live on within 2651.

Photo - Tony Hall - 21 June 2008

was included in the movie because there was no room for it. (See 2007 on Page 7)



Jim Lilly's rail-equipped flatbed trailer delivers the cut down remains of car 26 to the Phillipsburg site, where the car would be further rendered into useful parts for 2651, with the trucks bound for Scranton and the remainder for scrap.

Photo – Tony Hall – 12 July 2008



To achieve the unloading, the railbus was temporarily moved out of the engine house into the west yard, and 2651 was moved to the west end of the building, creating a berth at the east end for Jim Lilly's trailer with its load. The tractor cab would uncouple to leave adequate track space for the assembly of the temporary unloading ramp as well as storage space on the limited remaining track. Jim Tomczyk and Bob Hooper help a member of Jim Lilly's crew to position the trailer in line with the track.

Photo – Tony Hall – 12 July 2008



After a tug and a pull, 26 reluctantly yet gingerly descends the ramp from its perch atop Jim Lilly's trailer onto NJERHS rail, where it will roll to a stop a few feet ahead.

Photo – Tony Hall – 12 July 2008



Viewing the ghastly scene of the immolated remnants of 26 through its own cyclopean eye, 2651 says a prayer of thanks that "There but for the grace of God go I." Car 26, having descended the ramp, awaits its fate behind the camera. Here Jim Lilly's crew, assisted by Bob Hooper, begins the disassembly of the unloading ramp. New overhead illumination had been available for some time inside the engine house, thanks again to the Phillipsburg Railroad Historians.

Photo – Tony Hall – 12 July 2008



No sooner had 26 rolled to a stop and its wheels chocked, the trolley vultures were already at work, removing useful parts and trade material. The frame will be scrapped and the trucks dispatched to Scranton. Here Hank Kaminski, Jim Tomczyk, Bob and Rob Hooper and Bill Toikka pick at the carcass.

Photo – Tony Hall – 12 July 2008

consideration being given to eventually rebuilding it.

With no real prospect of resuming their operations in Philadelphia, the BVTA looked elsewhere for a new location to run its fleet of trolleys. They settled on Scranton where some buildings and trackage were available adjacent to Steamtown. Scranton was interested in promoting its role as a pioneer in the development of the electric railway industry. Charles J. Van Depoele had conducted experiments in electric powered cars on the city's streetcar system. Scranton had already recruited the East Penn Railway Museum organization to move its collection of cars from Topton, Pennsylvania to Scranton and they welcomed the BVTA to join them.

The two organizations agreed to merge and reorganize as the Electric City Trolley Museum (ECTM). The museum has two major components. A former locomotive factory has been refurbished as a visitors center with restroom facilities, vending machines, a gift shop, photos and displays about trolleys, a room which serves as a theater showing films about the electric railway industry, an interactive display with a model trolley layout designed to appeal to children, a large room where car restoration work is done and several tracks both inside and outside where vintage cars are displayed. The other component is an operating line where passengers can ride on the cars in the ECTM collection. The trackage that is used for most of the ride includes several miles of the former Laurel Line including the tunnel just south of Scranton.

While many of the trolleys were moved to the museum site, others were taken to an off-site location in Scranton while some remained at SEPTA's Germantown Depot as well as at Buckingham and Jobstown. The cars at Jobstown were badly deteriorated from years of exposure to the elements. They were stripped of parts before being scrapped.

The physical layout of the museum at Scranton did not enable the operation of trolleys from the Visitors Center building. A small two-car facility was located along the operating line for the cars used in that service. A larger building located at the outer end of the line was included in the plans for the museum. This facility as subsequently constructed and has several tracks for car storage.

While the museum is up and operating, it took several years to accomplish all that has happened. During that period not much was done to the cars at SEPTA's Germantown Depot. About two years ago SEPTA informed the Electric City Trolley Museum that it wanted their cars removed from its property. With a limited amount of storage space at Scranton, they were forced to re-evaluate their collection and they decided to dispose of several cars. One of their two Peter Witt cars was sent to the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum in Arden. The other Peter Witt which had been used for excursions on SEPTA was

moved to Scranton for display at the Visitors Center Building. It was determined that fire damaged Car 26 would require too much effort to restore so the decision was made to scrap it.

With the help of Bill Wall from the Shoreline Trolley Museum in Connecticut, we reached an agreement with the Electric City Trolley Museum to salvage parts from Car 26 for use in the restoration of Car 2651. In exchange the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society was obligated to remove the car from SEPTA's Germantown Depot.

On June 21, 2008 a crew consisting of Tony Hall, Bob and Rob Hooper and Jim Tomczyk descended on Germantown Depot to begin the task of dismantling the car in preparation for the move to Phillipsburg. It was one of the hottest days of the year and the task consumed many hours but the crew succeeded in removing everything above the window sills and platform dashes. By doing this, the height of the car was reduced to make it easier to move over the road.

On July 12, the remains of Car 26 were loaded onto Jim Lilly's low bed trailer for the trip to Phillipsburg. There it was lowered onto a section of track outside of the building where Car 2651 is housed.

For the next several weeks our volunteers at Phillipsburg salvaged parts from Car 26 including air brake components, folding step mechanisms, resistor grids and various other items beneath the car body. Other items such as door motors were salvaged when the car was cut down at the Germantown Depot. As part of the agreement, the trucks were sent to Scranton for use on the cars at the Electric City Trolley Museum. The rest of the steel in Car 26 was sold for scrap by the NJERHS.

We now have a lot of useful parts for the restoration of Car 2651 and we appreciate the Electric City Trolley Museum for making Car 26 available to us for this purpose.

Publication News

Despite our best efforts to get caught up with TROLLEY LINES we are running later than ever. Because of this we are producing this issue to cover the entire year 2008. We hope to produce another issue for the Spring/Summer of 2009 before the end of this year.

Again this is a volunteer effort with the work done on two different computers using two different formats. Assembling all this material and making it ready to go to the printer has been a larger challenge than originally anticipated, but we feel that we are making progress.

2009 Dues

Dues renewals are usually sent out with the first issue of TROLLEY LINES each year. That would be the Spring/Summer 2009 issue which will include our annual financial statement so that our members can see how their dues money was spent. In 2008 our expenses exceeded our income for the second consecutive year so we are left with no choice but to increase our dues to \$20 for the year 2009. Our goal has always been to hold the line on dues especially in these difficult economic times. We have been able to do this thanks to the generosity of the many members who have included a contribution with their dues payments. The increase in dues to \$20 is our first increase since 1996 and is still well below the amount of dues for other similar organizations.

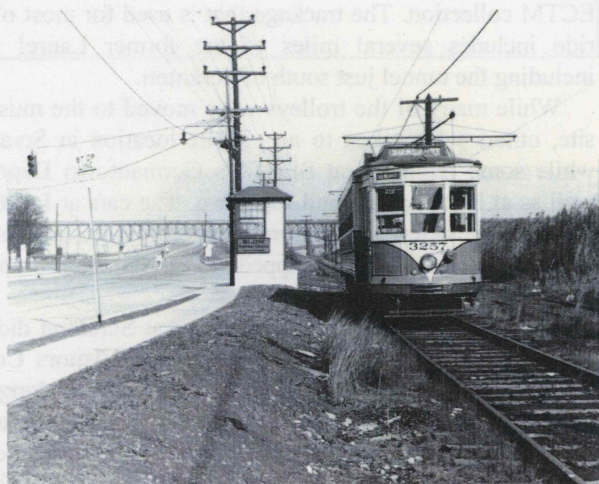


North Jersey Chapter, NRHS photo

Recognizing that we are running so late with the mailing of our dues renewal notices and as a show of appreciation to our members, any one who pays their 2009 dues prior to the mailing of the 2009 dues renewal notices may renew at the old rate of \$15. The new rate will take effect with the mailing of the dues renewal notices, so if you want to save some money send your 2009 dues payment now. If you are uncertain about the status of your dues check the upper right hand corner of your mailing label. The first number is your membership number followed by the year through which your dues are paid. Remember also that contributions are tax deductible.

South Kearney Memories

Sixty years ago, the South Kearny Line was abandoned. These views capture some of the action on the service that was started to meet the wartime travel demands of the workers at the massive Federal shipyards and the nearby Western Electric plant.



Railroad Avenue Enterprises Photo