CINCINNATI & LAKE ERIE NIGHT AT THE C.E.R.A.

The April 27th meeting of the Central Electric Railfans Association was devoted to the Cincinnati & Lake Erie Railroad. Mr. Eimer Corbett, who was the Passenger Traffic Manager of the road during 1930 and 1931 (now the GPA of the C&O R.R.) gave a description of the rise and decline of the railroad from its formation from the old Cincinnati Hamilton & Dayton, the Ohio Electric Railway, and the Lima-Toledo Railroad, to its closing days in 1939.

The innovation and introduction of the high-speed lightweight interurban cars, the widespread publicity and public reception of these cars was dramatically portrayed.

Plans for the extension of the interurban line into the unused 3½ mile Cincinnati subway, one of the ambitions of the owner. Dr. Conway, was not realized, although some of the features such as high level platforms and side bars on tracks for the 3rd rail shoe placements were incorporated into the design for such use.

Everything possible was done by employees and management to keep the line in operation but abandonment came as a result of general business conditions of the time, especially the depression. The lightweight cars capable of a speed of 92 miles per hour, and during the famous race with an airplane, 122 MPH was reached.

Many interesting instances in the life of the railroad were cited. The promotion of Indian Lake from which a large volume of traffic was created showed what could be done toward building up the business, the development of overnight freight service with thru cars to Indianapolis, Flint, Cleveland, and other off line points, and a large charter business competing with parallel bus lines, were all accomplished.

The April 21st issue of "Colliers" magazine contains a story of San Francisco's cable cars. Name of the story is "San Francisco's Pride and Joy." And rightly so.

This receipt not good if notched for more than two stations.

KENOSHA MOTOR COACH LINES, INC.
INTERURBAN RAILWAY DIVISION
Receipt for Fare Paid for Continuous Trip Between Stations Notched. -
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
-!
TROLLEY SPARKS

EARLY HISTORY OF THE

CHICAGO HARVARD & GENEVA LAKE RY. CO.

As related by

H. T. Wwindor, builder and

General Manager for many years

to Clarence Hesselman.

In the summer of 1896, while the writer was credit

man for the General Electric Co. in Chicago, Mr. H. S.

Williams of Harvard, Ill., owner of the local lighting

plant and member of the Illinois State Board of Review

came to my office and asked that I draw up a franchise

covering an electric railway line between Harvard, III.

and Fontana, Wis., on the shore of Lake Geneva. This

was at the time when the interurban lines were fast com-

ing into their own.

With the necessary data the franchises were drawn

one for the City of Harvard, one for the township of

Chasung, granted by the county board of McHenry County,

one for the Village of Walworth, and one for the County

of Walworth, Wis. Being in two states, we incorporated

in Illinois under the Alien Bill, being one of the two

companions organized under this bill before it was repeal-

ed, and in Wisconsin under the Railroad Act which gave us

the power of condemnation which we used in securing a

part of the right of way out of Walworth Village toward

Fontana.

At the time the franchises were drawn I supposed that

so far as I was concerned that was the end of it. Events

proved to the contrary. The Mayor and City Clerk of Har-

vard were in the livery business and did not propose to

see their business from Harvard to the Lake taken away

by an electric line. The right was long and rather bitter

but eventually the franchises as previously noted were se-

cured. Then the Spanish war came on and delayed matters.

In the interim, Mr. Williams, having no money, and I not

a great deal more, looked about for capital. Finally

Appleyard & Bates of Boston who had just completed a line

from Eau Claire, Wis., to Chippewa Falls, were interested

and came in for three-fourths of the necessary capital.

A contract was let with the Illinois Steel Co. for 1000

tons of 60 lb. 60 ft. rail which was rolled at Loring, O.

When the two Eastern capitalists withdrew, Mr. W. E.

Furbeck of the firm of Doer & Furbeck came in as he owned

40 acres at the head of the Lake which he wished to
develop.

Ground was broken in the middle of April and the road

was completed in 48 working days. Everything had to be

hauled by team, and the power house equipment hauled to

Walworth. The roadbed was graded and laid with seven

foot cedar ties except on the curves where oak ties were

used. Dirt was used as ballast at first, being anxious
to get the road completed for the summer business much of

which came over the Chicago & Northwestern RY. from Chi-

cago.

Two double truck and two single truck cars were purchased second-hand from the Toronto Street Railway

in Canada and the road was put in operation on July

4th, 1899. A man by the name of Gene Crumb of Wal-

worth whose farm we crossed and who fought us at every

turn, stood beside my brother who ran the first car over

the road. Later he became one of our best live stock

shipper.

The original roadbed being of dirt followed the contour of the land with the result that on Big Foot

Prairie and south of Oak Grove the road was often un-
der water. The nickname "High Dry" was given the ele-

tric line by John O'Connor, agent of the Northwestern

Road at Harvard. It was later also known as the

"Go to Hell Rail Road".

Power house equipment consisted of a 150 HP. Bell

Erie engine and a 300 HP. Providence Green Corliss,

both belted with Westinghouse generators which came

from the Intramural Railroad at the 1893 Chicago

World's Fair. Two Murray 150 HP tubular boilers fur-
nished the steam with a deep well, and tanks provided
to collect rain water to keep the stove. Later two 250 HP

second hand water tubes and a 500 HP direct connected

engines and generator were purchased in St. Louis.

Still later there was installed a lighting plant

which served the Village of Walworth and the west end

of Geneva Lake. This plant was finally sold.

The first month of operation brought in earnings of

$7,000.00. Mr. Furbeck secured two second hand cars

from the Suburban Railroad at Oak Park, which were later purchased. The old passenger cars were then

built into trailers with Brill trucks. A small freight

motor car with Moore truck and two 50 HP GE motors furnished the freight power. The passenger cars

had GE-1000's of 30 HP each.

All too soon the summer was gone and we found that

the passenger business was gone also. Outside of the

small mail contract, a little I &O business from the

C&NW, and a milk business that grew over a period of

years, the road was high and dry.

During the first winter, six men operated the road.

With the spring of 1900 it was apparent that something

had to be done in the way of producing an all year round

business. Beginning then and during the following three

years the road became a real freight producer. The sum-

mer haul was developed by an Excursion business, and a

sheep feeding yard was erected at Walworth. Shippers

from Fremont, Neb., shipped in as high as 32 cars of

sheep at a time for feeding.

That meant a two way haul besides the feed. A

general stockyard was built at Walworth and two

smaller yards on the line to Harvard. A 1000

car icehouse was built at Lake Geneva and a

gravel pit with a capacity of 30 cars a day

installed at Fontana. Later the Bowman Dairy Co.
built a $60,000 plant at Big Foot on the State

Line.

Being an interstate road our reports were made to

both the State of Illinois and Wisconsin as well as to Washington. Weighing scales were in-

stalled at Walworth and we became a member of the

Western Weighing Association.

Having grades as heavy as 5 percent between the

Lake and Walworth where our heavy tonnage originated

four 50 HP motors were installed on two new freight

motors built by McQuire-Cummings as far as trucks

and steel frames were borrowed. The bodies were

built in our own shops. Freight motors had both

straight and automatic air brakes, the latter used

when hauling steel road cars to save wear on our

own wheels.

One winter the lake did not freeze over until

the last week in March. Ice was scarce and we loaded

6,000 tons in 3½ days working day and night by

electric lights. Most of the ice went to Peoria,

Belvidera and Rockford. During this time the Mil-

waukee Road built their short line to Madison thru

Walworth and it was supposed they would take a large

share of our business. On the contrary it increased it.

We immediately made store delivery during the
day, set cars on the main line for night unloading,
loaded shippers' cars of live stock free of charge

in an electric lighted yard. All this resulted in the

Milwaukee Road giving us a switching charge equal
to our 8 to 11 mile haul to the Northwestern R.R. at

Harvard. We had interline billing with most of the

roads and maintained a repair shop for car repairs.
During this time the road was put into rock ballast, many new heavy ties and tie plates installed so that we could handle anything in the way of a car offered us. The first few years we were obliged to tie up the brakes on some equipment as our curves were very sharp in the city of Harvard, otherwise they would climb the wheels and lock. This was overcome by our building a mile of line outside of the city limits.

One winter we built a rotary plow which was unique. It threw snow over our telephone lines. The C.R.& L. was the first electric line to interchange freight cars with steam roads, and also to sell through passenger tickets.

Our problems were solved as they arose, and we can look back with a great deal of satisfaction to the days spent in a new field. As a business proposition there was not the slightest grounds for building the road, as it began nowhere, and at the time ended at the same place — on the shore of Lake Geneva. But building the road did bring about the old Boyle icehouse, the opening of the gravel pit at Fontana, the Bowman milk plant at Big Foot, and also put Walworth on the map.

In 1911, the road was sold to John and Walter Gunders of the McArthur-Gunders Co. In 1927 the passenger business was discontinued due to paved road competition. In April, 1930 the remaining freight business was abandoned and the road went into the hands of a receiver. Altho many predicted that the road would not last a year, it ran for years after many more prosperous roads had passed out of the picture.

TROLLEY SPARKS is published monthly in the interest of electric railroading. Subscriptions, $1.00 yearly from Editor and Publisher, Barney Neuburger, 6330 So. Laffin Street, Chicago, 36, Illinois.

TWO C.E.R.A. BULLETINS TO BE ISSUED.

Momentarily wanted are 2 new Bulletins of the C.E.R.A. Both are in the form of picture albums and will deal with the Springfield, Troy & Piqua Railway of Ohio, and old street cars of the Terre Haute Street Railway.

Baltimore "PLAY AS YOU ENTER CAR".

Car set aside by the Baltimore Transit Co. for a children's Play Car.
"O GAUGE" MODELS in home of James H. Richards, 4158 N. Franklin St., Philadelphia. Models are, left to right, top to bottom, as follows: Lehigh Valley Transit Co. #1033 Liberty Bell Limited, Philadelphia & West Chester Traction Co. #42, interurban car, Open bench car #713, free lance, combination of PRT 700 series, and Five Mile Beach Electric Ry. Former N.Y. Ry. Green Lines., #1500 TTT Birney, $200, Baggage and Mail combination favoring Sacramento Northern Ry., and #929 Victory and War Bond Car. Layout consists of a double track loop, with an interurban division branching off. Tracks and overhead wire switches operate by remote control, as well as door operating mechanism on the LVT and Birney cars.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS.

Wanted: Pictures and information about the old Pennsylvania & Ohio Railway Co. Ashakula, O., connected Connemat with Jefferson, O. Write, R. Walker, 310 Essex St., East Lynn, Mass.

For Sale: Collection of 3-wheel Birney car pictures. 65 different from as many companies. Price $5.00. Barney Reubinger 6350 S. Laflin St., Chicago, 37, 111.

WHERE TROLLEY CAR SERVES AS FIRE TRUCK

A novel "fire trolley car" takes the place of a fire truck in protecting the homes of Park Point, a thinly settled island near Duluth, Minn. Since the trolley line extends 12 miles through the center of the narrow island, all buildings are within easy reach. When an alarm rings, a fireman-motorman runs the car out of the barn and picks up volunteer firemen along the line.