

## LONG FORM (for historical record) Entertainment Report for August 2, 2014

**August 2, 2014.** Boston Transit Memories: The Road to the Green Line. Bradley Clarke presented the later years of the dense streetcar network in Boston that preceded the Green Line, with frequent showing of maps and fan trips to give us perspective. He prepared this show as a pilot for other presentations (including a web presentation) and for a future book, and acknowledged the input of several other people, with thanks to John F. Bromley, Daniel R. Cohen, Stanley W. Genthner, Russell E. Jackson, David Klepper, Ira Laby, R. Allan Pommer, and Leo J. Sullivan, and material from the late O. R. Cummings, Charles A. Duncan, Frank Pfuhrer, Robert A. Kennerly, Raymond E. McMurdo, Foster M. Palmer, Donald E. Shaw, and Elwyn A. Silloway.

In 1950, the MTA (the most immediate predecessor of the MBTA) was busy substituting streetcars with buses and in some cases with trackless trolleys. By 1964, when the MTA was absorbed into the MBTA, only 5 subway-surface streetcar lines remained, plus the Mattapan High Speed Line. We began with a 1948 MTA map, the first of many that Bradley showed us, which showed a much denser network of streetcar lines, followed by photos of the last holdout of Type 4 streetcar service (followed by photos of PCC service on the same line), from Watertown to Central Square (Cambridge). This line was substituted with buses briefly, and then made into a trackless trolley line, before being made into a bus line (modern line 70/70A) in more recent times. Next, we saw 3 lines in Hyde Park and West Roxbury (again, with maps) that were converted to trackless trolley service in 1948 through 1953: Dedham Line, Charles River (featuring a fantrip on a Center Entrance car), and Cleary Square. Routes 32 and 34 (the latter being the Dedham Line route) never had turnaround loops, so they had to use Type 5 or earlier streetcars instead of PCCs (the double-ended PCCs from Dallas not yet being available). We also saw the Arborway-Roslindale line (33), which was converted into a bus line 1952. The Arborway-Mattapan line was converted to bus in 1953. These lines were Eastern Massachusetts Street Railway lines, but operated with MTA streetcars up to conversion to bus service. For a while, the Cummins Highway line (30) was used to ferry streetcars from Arborway to Mattapan.

In East Boston, on January 5, 1952, the East Boston Tunnel Extension to Orient Heights opened, and at the same time 7 streetcar lines out of Maverick (which had been built as a streetcar to rapid transit transfer station) were converted to trackless trolley service, including the last single track line in the Boston area, the Lexington Street line. We saw a temporary station at Suffolk Downs, and Eagle Street carhouse.

In South Boston, we saw the City Point streetcar lines, converted to bus in 1953, together with a view of Massachusetts Station. Line 9 was a subway-surface line running from City Point into the Tremont Street Subway. Massachusetts Station was not only a streetcar station, but also used by buses equipped with left hand doors (an arrangement found up through modern times in Harvard Square station, but with trackless trolleys). Line 29 (Mattapan-Egleston via Blue Hill Avenue) was converted to bus in 1955, but the tracks were kept usable into 1956 for non-revenue moves.

Back to 1948, we heard about part of the reason for the drive to get rid of Type 4 streetcars: the Type 4 streetcars had a tendency to lose their brakes. In 1948, a Type 4 on Columbus Avenue became disabled; when the driver of a following streetcar tried to get it back in motion, it lost its brakes, and ran downhill out of control until it derailed in Egleston Station; after this, Type 4s were only used on lines having mild slopes until they could be eliminated completely; MTA and Boston EI investigations had determined that they had defective brake cylinders.

Our next stop was Arlington Heights, to see line 79 (now 77), which was converted to bus in 1955 beyond North Cambridge using 2100-series buses that lasted in service until 1972; due to neighborhood opposition in Arlington (a problem continuing into more recent times), conversion to trackless trolley service was only implemented to North Cambridge. We saw line 100, Elm Street-Sullivan Square, converted to bus in 1955; this line had a section rebuilt in 1953 due to road overpass construction. We saw the Fellsway Line, a scenic route ending in Medford.

Back to the south of downtown, we saw the Egleston-North Station line (43), another subway-surface line

running into the Tremont Street Portal. Although this line was heavily used, it was cut back to the loop at Lenox Street in 1956 to avoid having to spend money on track repairs. The replacement bus service on the outer part was extended inwards in 1961 to the Tremont Street portal, at which point streetcar service was reduced to 2 ex-Dallas double-ended PCCs providing shuttle service to Boylston Station; this was not a good arrangement for the passengers, and was eliminated in 1962.

Moving to the Cambridge area, we saw the lines to Watertown (71) and Waverly (73), which were converted to trackless trolley service in 1957 - 1958 to free streetcars for the new line to Riverside (D); lines 71 and 73 and the lines to Huron (72) and North Cambridge (part of line 77) are the only trackless trolley lines that remain today. One of the Type 5 cars we saw in the last years of service on these lines was 5645, which is now at Warehouse Point, that we got to ride in Fall 2013. On February 24, 1963, an old streetcar (396) from Seashore Trolley Museum was used for filming Otto Preminger's *The Cardinal* using the abandoned tracks of the Waverley line on Belmont Street. We also got to see rail grinder 724 working in 1958 at Mount Auburn and Palfrey Streets; this was originally a horse car built in 1884, which was electrified in 1889, and then converted to a work car in 1912. We also saw ex-Dallas Pullman PCCs refurbished at Everett in 1959.

After some more views of line 43 (including the 1961 - 1962 shuttle service), Bradley took us to the subway-surface line to Watertown (then labeled 69, and later A). This had 4 places for short turns until 1962, at which point Boston University applied political pressure to get rid of the one on its campus (which was shared with the B Boston College Line, being before the fork between these lines at Packard's Corner). This line was converted to bus in 1969 (allegedly temporarily), but the tracks were kept usable for non-revenue service until 1992, and we even got to see track work in 1975 (which gave hope to former users that service would be restored, but it never was), and the last vestiges of track were not removed until March 2014 (the last to go being a switch at Packard's Corner, where this line branched off from the B Boston College Line). This section of the show ended up with a fantrip on a Boeing LRV in 1981.

The last streetcar line (to date) to be converted to bus operation was part of the E line from the Central Subway to Arborway, cut back to Heath Street in 1985 (with the section between Brigham Circle and Heath Street actually being out of service from 1985 to 1987). Prior to this cutback, PCCs became concentrated onto this line as they were eliminated from other parts of the system. Many of the PCCs were repainted green, which started in 1970, but this repainting program never finished before the end of PCC service outside the long-isolated Mattapan High Speed Line, and some PCCs even had doors with mismatched colors. One of the repainted PCCs we saw was 3072, which served as a pilot for a proposed 100-car PCC rebuilding program, and which, after 34 cars had been completed with varying results, was cancelled in 1983. Unfortunately, car 3072 later suffered a serious collision, and was scrapped. The PCCs now running on the Mattapan High-Speed Line went through a separate more recent rebuilding program, and do not represent the work done on car 3072.

Pending a promised (but yet to be built) extension of the northern end of the Green Line to Somerville and Medford, the one streetcar line that bucked the trend of abandonment was the Riverside (D) line, which opened in 1959, only slightly over a year after the abandonment of its predecessor, which was a New York Central diesel-hauled (originally steam-hauled) commuter railroad line closed in 1958. We got to see photos of construction of the Fenway incline (when almost complete) and Riverside carhouse and yard, and then construction of a new Riverside carhouse in 1975. The Fenway incline opened up a source of trouble for the rest of the Green Line -- when the Muddy River overflowed in 1962 and 1996, it poured into the portal at the bottom of the incline, and flooded the Central Subway. Construction work in progress near Fenway today aims to uncover parts of the Muddy River to enable it to drain more effectively, to attempt to avoid this kind of flooding in the future. We saw the introduction of Boeing LRVs from 1975 to 1978; these were highly unreliable in their early years (and so we saw a photo of a Type 3 snowplow pulling a disabled LRV), so that the MBTA actually refused part of its order (in a dispute with Boeing that foreshadowed the more recent dispute with Breda over the Type 8s), and sought alternatives, including 3 CLRVs as ordered by the Toronto Transit Commission, which ran in revenue service in trials that bracketed 1980.

The show ended up with views of the B (Boston College) and C (Cleveland Circle) branches of the Green

Line, including the replacement of Reservoir Carhouse in 1983 with the current Reservoir Carhouse; and finally we saw the Mattapan High Speed Line, where the first of the current set of PCCs arrived in 1999; followed by Type 5 streetcar 5706 at Branford Trolley Museum; this is the car we are having rebuilt at Rail Technical Services.

**SHORT FORM** (for Annual Report) Entertainment Report for August 2, 2014

**August 2, 2014.** Boston Transit Memories: The Road to the Green Line. Bradley Clarke presented the later years of the dense streetcar streetcar network in Boston that preceded the Green Line, with frequent showing of maps and fan trips to give us perspective. He prepared this show as a pilot for other presentations (including a web presentation) and for a future book.