

BSRA Entertainment Report for April 4, 2015

LONG FORM (for historical record) Entertainment Report for April 4, 2015

April 4, 2015. The MTA, 1958 - 1963. Clark Frazier presented selected Kodachrome slides of Boston's Metropolitan Transit Authority from 1958 - 1963. But first, he started us off with some teasers from the 1970s for his upcoming show about the MBTA in that decade. This segment included old car #475, the CLRVs on trial in Boston, and LRVs. That teaser segment wound up in Harvard Square, which he used to transition into the 1950s, which became obvious when he showed us streetcar service there. He showed us streetcar service on the streetcar lines from the Central Subway to Watertown (A line, formerly route 69, not to be confused with the modern route 69), Boston College (B line, at the time route 62), Cleveland Circle (C line, formerly route 61), Lenox Street, Lechmere, and the Tremont Street Portal. The first three of these received their Green Line branch letter designations in the 1960s, but the others never received letters, with Lenox Street and all Tremont Street Portal service being discontinued before the transition to the MBTA, and Lechmere service being a continuation of whichever branch extends to it, up to the present day (currently E). Then he introduced us to the Riverside (D) Line in the 1960s (formerly route 4), showing it in snow, with PCCs providing passenger service (in trains of up to 3 cars) and Type 3 snowplows on duty to remove snow. The Riverside Line was far more popular than had been expected, and so only a few years after opening, Riverside Yard required expansion in the 1960s, for which he showed us photos of the construction, with service continuing in the background without need for an extended shutdown, and work equipment in the foreground. Moving back in time into 1958 - 1959 (the Riverside Line was converted very quickly from the Commuter Rail service discontinued in 1958), and using photos taken by Skip Clark, he showed us the original construction of Riverside Yard and the Fenway Portal, as well as the Riverside dedication ceremony. He introduced us to the Reservoir/Cleveland Circle area with an aerial photo of the area. Back down at ground level, we got to see work equipment, more snow service, and Cleveland Circle reconstruction, along with the now long gone Reservoir Upper Loop. We saw "Picture Windows" PCCs that had been on the Cleveland Circle Line, that were moved to the Riverside Line when it opened. The MTA liked to keep these PCCs separate, because they could not be run in multiple unit trains with other types of PCCs (also a problem for the All-Electrics).

After this, he introduced us to the Boston College area with another aerial photo. This line was also served by PCCs running in trains of up to 3 cars. He informed us that the Boston College line used to run along the north side of Commonwealth Avenue over much more territory than it does now -- the section from Boston College to Corey Hill Road was rebuilt to run in the center of Commonwealth Avenue, with the unfortunate result that streetcars traveling in either direction along the line have to cross over westbound street traffic three times instead of once. The tracks on this line and the PCC fleet in general were not maintained very well, although PCC rebuilds were eventually required in the 1970s (and done rather haphazardly) due to problems with the Boeing LRVs that eventually replaced them (after much delay). Proceeding inwards, we saw some service on the Watertown line and the part of the Boston College that had common track with it, in the Boston University area. The trackage in common between the lines was very busy, with a turnback loop (now gone) being provided next to Braves Field, in Boston University, and double-ended PCCs obtained from Dallas turning back from inbound to outbound at Blandford Street on the surface, to provide local service, because the streetcars coming out of the Central Subway were too crowded at rush hour for people to board.

At this point, he departed temporarily from streetcar service, and showed us photos of the East Boston Tunnel line (now the Blue Line) in the 1950s, including an interior photo. Then he took us back to more streetcar service, but not on what is now the Green Line, instead going to the Mattapan High Speed Line, first showing us Type 3 snowplows, and then Type 5 streetcars and ex-Dallas PCCs derelict in Mattapan Yard. We got to see freight trackage in active service on both sides of the Mattapan High Speed Line tracks, sometimes on both sides simultaneously. Moving further in, we saw Codman Yard, which is the yard for the Cambridge-Dorchester (now Red) Line just west of Ashmont Station, including the track connection from the Mattapan High Speed Line to the rapid transit tracks, to enable towing PCCs from the Mattapan High-Speed Line to Eliot Square Yard (now long gone) near Harvard Square for service. We got

to see a photo of a PCC about to be transferred to the rapid transit tracks, and then once again temporarily departed from streetcar service to see Cambridge-Dorchester service near and in Field's Corner and Savin Hill Stations, Charles Street Station and Longfellow Bridge, and then Eliot Yard and Stadium Station in the vicinity of Harvard Square.

Back to streetcar service, we saw Lechmere Station, featuring a work car and PCCs, and then the Lechmere Viaduct to North Station, where we also got to see Main Line Elevated (now Orange Line) cars in service above ground, and reconstruction after a bombing. Departing temporarily yet again from streetcar service, Clark showed us Everett Yard photos, including the scrapping of 300-series cars of the Main Line Elevated, and double-ended PCCs arriving from Dallas (these being the last PCCs that the MBTA acquired). Next stop was in Arborway Yard, on the Arborway Line (E). This was formerly routes 39 (service all the way from the Central Subway to Forest Hills and Arborway Yard, and substituted by route 39 since 1985) and 57 (short-turn service from the Central Subway to Heath Street, which is all that remains of streetcar service today, and is not to be confused with the modern bus route 57 that substituted the Watertown Line). Clark also showed us Main Line Elevated service at Forest Hills, and then PCCs and Type 5 streetcars in service (in trains of up to 2 cars except as noted below), along with a bus yard that was already part of Arborway Yard, and that featured several GM New Look ("Fishbowl") buses that must have been quite new at the time the photo was taken, and which were painted in a tangerine orange scheme now not seen on revenue service buses for a long time. Clark gave us a photo tour proceeding inbound along the line, eventually showing us the third track in the street at Northeastern University, then used to enable rush-hour service by 3 car trains to points inbound from Northeastern University Station. He showed us PCCs and Type 5s in service, with Prudential Center construction in the background in one of the photos.

The show ended up with completely extinct Boston streetcar lines. The first of these, connected to the Central Subway, was the Lenox Street Line. First we saw it in its last days as a shuttle service run by two double-ended ex-Dallas PCCs from Tremont Street Station to the Tremont Street Portal; then we saw earlier photos of the line to Lenox Street Yard, which was built in 1956 at considerable expense, but closed in 1961. The next extinct line was the Watertown Line, with Clark now showing us the outer (street-running) parts of this line, starting at Watertown Yard, with trains of up to 2 PCC cars, as well as single Type 5s until 1959, and also showing streetcar service to Harvard Square. Clark showed us photos proceeding inbound on the Watertown Line towards Boston University. Finally, he moved over to the lines from Harvard Square to Watertown, Belmont, Waverly, and North Cambridge, including North Cambridge Yard, which is now the garage for the electric trolleybuses that replaced streetcar service on all of the lines out of Harvard Square, and for which electric trolleybus wire was often visible alongside the streetcar overhead wire.

SHORT FORM (for Annual Report) Entertainment Report for April 4, 2015

April 4, 2015. The MTA, 1958 – 1963. Clark Frazier presented selected Kodachrome slides of Boston's Metropolitan Transit Authority from 1958 – 1963 (but starting with a few teasers from the 1970s for his upcoming show about the MBTA in that decade), featuring the Harvard Square lines, views of the now-closed Tremont Street, Watertown, and Arborway lines; plus slides of Beacon Street, Commonwealth Avenue, Mattapan–Ashmont, and the newly opened Riverside Line, as well as a few rapid transit shots.