

LONG FORM (for historical record) Entertainment Report for July 9, 2016

July 9, 2016. Traction in Worcester and Environs. Leo Sullivan started the show with a large scale map of the Worcester, Springfield, and Berkshire County streetcar systems in central to western Massachusetts. These systems were independently managed with respect to operation, but streetcar procurement was in common between them, under ownership by the New Haven Railroad. The photos which followed were from the early to mid Twentieth Century, and thus nearly all in black and white, because streetcar service had ended by December 31, 1945, although service had contracted considerably by that time, although some equipment and infrastructure persisted into the 1940s. The next photo was of Eliot Bridge near Worcester after the right of way on the Boston and Worcester was widened, followed by photos of streetcars in the system, which was independent of the other companies and ran from Boston to Worcester. These systems were quasi-interurban, featuring some operation in rural areas at high speed for the time, which posed an interesting problem: Cars had to be closed during parts of the summer despite the heat, to shield against the impact of bugs at high speed. Another interesting detail was that not only did parts of these systems also carry streetcar freight, but for a while, the Worcester Sewer Department had its own streetcar work equipment, of which a photo was shown, as well as six electric trolley boat center paddlewheel catamarans for construction work in the sewers; no photo of the electric trolleyboat was available for the show, but a photo and more information about these electric trolley boats and the associated sewer construction work can be found online at the following link, in **The Electrical Engineer** Volume XXV:

https://books.google.com/books?id=J-IQAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA58&lpg=PA58&dq=Worcester+Sewer+Department+electric+trolley+boat&source=bl&ots=Fn2M5W80p6&sig=XXLnzkyN9OLQR_paVdt0niuVYGM&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewjGqvH89unNAhUMWh4KHakjDI4Q6AEIMDAC#v=onepage&q&f=false

Interspersed with photos of Worcester streetcars from the early 1900s were photos of a New Haven steam locomotive and Worcester & Shrewsbury 3' gauge railroad steam locomotives #4 and #5. Northwest of Worcester, the Holden line, which was another semi-interurban line, ran electric streetcar service, shown on private right of way in rural territory and in city streets in downtown Worcester. Photos were heavy rail stations and other buildings of the time were also shown. One of the Boston & Worcester car photos from 1903 featured a third trolley pole pivoted in the center, for redundancy with the end poles in case a pole head broke off when dewiring at high speed; this streetcar had four axles, but was still short enough for this arrangement to be usable. The Worcester Main Street car house was also shown in both 1910 and 1934; this served as the main car house until the end of streetcar service. Worcester also had several other car houses, the next one shown being Market Street car house; one of the photos of this showed Worcester car #87 inside. Another car house (shown in 1935) was shown with streetcars from different companies. This car house still exists today, but is due to be demolished soon. An inside view of Grove Street showed streetcars and a lightweight transfer table of skeletal appearance, designed to operate without the requirement for a pit -- streetcars got onto it by going up a slight incline. To fit into a low space just above ground level, such transfer tables were necessarily not very robust, and could only accommodate small and lightweight streetcars. A photo from 1934 also featured a then new Yellow Coach bus. A photo taken by Ted Santarelli showed the Pullman Standard factory nearby, where PCCs and trackless trolleys were made; an inside photo showed All-Electric PCCs being made for the Boston Elevated Railway. The Pullman factory building still exists, but is abandoned.

After this, Leo showed various towns in the Worcester area: Boylston, Leominster, Fitchburg, Clinton (a small town served by two axle streetcars of Birney size but older vintage), and Northboro (showing a car house). One of the photos of Worcester taken in 1914 featured the 1875-vintage Union Station, which could not be raised to accommodate the tracks elevated in 1911 (which required the building of the current 1911-vintage Union Station by the New York

Central), but was not torn down immediately. The next several photos showed various types of streetcars in downtown Worcester, showing busy service.. Most of the streetcars had four axles, but some Birney cars and older cars of two axles and similar size (both closed and open) were also shown. A view of Worcester Freight House featured equipment for trolley freight service. Although streetcar freight service ended in approximately 1927, some of the freight cars were stored into the 1940s before scrapping (the last being photographed in 1946), and in the meantime, a few were converted into work cars. Gates Lane car house was also shown, together with a collection of streetcars stationed there. Uxbridge car house was shown in 1942 after conversion into a bus garage. Sometimes streetcar lines crossed heavy rail lines, and needed trestles to pass overhead, of which a very long example was shown. The Worcester Consolidated Street Railway even had a "California-type" car, which had open and closed sections, and also featured both poles pointing the same way (possibly for the same reason as the streetcar mentioned above having three trolley poles).

More photos featured the line from Worcester to Leicester and Spencer (cut back to Leicester in 1932, and then ended entirely in 1945). In between streetcar and infrastructure photos was a photo of transfer tickets. Another photo featured a sprinkler service car (formerly used to wash horse manure from the street), shown rinsing the street for the benefit of railfans on a fan trip. One of two color photos in the show (from a postcard of unknown date) featured a test car belonging to Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Back to car houses once again, photos (both outside and inside) of Oxford car house showed cars that ran to Putnam; this building still exists. Leo showed photos of Laconia cars running in Webster, and then more car houses: Charlton car house and Sturbridge Barn. Another photo showed the aftermath of the derailment of September 4, 1905, including an interior photo showing collapse and splintering of the wooden wall (streetcar bodies of the time being made largely of wood). The line to Southbridge featured single-track running with passing sidings, and twin wires to avoid the need for wire frogs for running into passing sidings. After this were photos of Southbridge and then Brimfield, the latter being the extreme west point on the Worcester Consolidated Street Railway. When the Springfield Street Railway stopped running streetcar service, it started running a bus service, but roads of the time were not yet up to making the service attractive. Another photo featured a large bus garage in 1942 at Grove Street. At this time, some buses still had front engines, but rear-engined buses had also appeared. The last photo of the show was also the second color photo, featuring Worcester GM New Look "Fishbowl" bus #372.

SHORT FORM (for Annual Report) Entertainment Report for July 9, 2016

July 9, 2016. Traction in Worcester and Environs. Our July meeting featured a presentation by Leo Sullivan on the Worcester Consolidated Street Railway Company in Worcester and its surrounding towns. This was a history-filled evening from a master presenter, with vintage images from a great Central Massachusetts transit property.

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