

## BSRA Entertainment Report for July 12, 2014

### LONG FORM (for historical record) Entertainment Report for July 12, 2014

**July 12, 2014.** Boston in Transition. Loring Lawrence showed us Boston-area transit service from 1970 to 1979, a period of change, when diverse types of equipment then in service were slowly making their exit. Throughout the show he demonstrated excellent recall of detail about various pieces of equipment.

He started with a view on Summer Street of Boston's downtown in the 1970s, and proceeded quickly to Green Line service using PCCs painted in Traction Orange, first near North Station, then on Huntington Avenue, including ex-Dallas double-ended PCCs at Northeastern University, with the turnout track on the inbound side in the street, and then back to the Green Line elevated structure next to North Station. We got to see 2 of 3 PCCs that were painted in the Bicentennial livery: 3262 and 3253. Next stops were Arborway Yard (including an interior view of the shop there) on the E line, and then the D (Riverside) and C (Cleveland Circle) lines, followed by the Mattapan High Speed Line with PCCs in a red paint scheme (which made sense, given that from a passenger's point of view this line is a feeder to the Red Line, even though it is operationally separate; however, this paint scheme never caught on). Next stop was Boylston Street Station, on the track (inbound from what used to be the Pleasant Street Incline), where Loring captured on film was a miniature diesel locomotive made by Davenport Locomotive Works/Davenport-Besler Corporation. This was being used by a private contractor for work service on the Green Line, and must have been of vintage no later than 1956, when the company was closed. Back in Arborway Yard, we saw ex-Dallas PCC 3323 that had been converted to a sand car (shown taking on sand) and painted yellow. Loring showed us Type 3 snowplows at Reservoir Yard and at Mattapan, followed by a very heavy duty snow plow truck. Much of the equipment Loring showed us was already on its way out, as he demonstrated with a January 1977 photo of scrapping in progress at or near Everett Shops.

Buses were also in a period of transition in the 1970s, as we saw next: A photo in Arborway featured PCCs in Traction Orange and a GM New Look ("Fishbowl") bus also in Traction Orange, followed by one of the predecessor buses, a GM Old Look TDH105 at the end of service in 1971. "Fishbowl" buses appeared in other liveries, as well, starting with one in yellow schoolbus livery. The MBTA had inherited some short Old Look and related buses from the Eastern Massachusetts Street Railway (which had long ago turned into a bus company), and we got to see one of these in the "Grey Ghost" paint scheme and another in a Revolutionary War paint scheme, the latter in Freedom Trail service. We even got to see an ex-Eastern Mass bus in a green paint scheme. An interesting use for an obsolete bus (3101) was as a bus shelter at MIT: The left side of the body down to the floor was cut away from the rest of the body, retaining the floor and seats so that the seats faced oncoming traffic, so that people could see when their bus was coming, and retaining enough roof to keep out the rain; this even retained the driver's seat and steering wheel, to give the kids something to play on while waiting for an operational bus.

The next buses were AM Generals, of which the 9200-series and 9300-series were among the MBTA's shortest-lived buses due to numerous problems (including frame defects), while the 9000-series and 9700-series managed to last into the 1980s. Another set of short-lived buses were 10 Highway Products buses of Twin Coach design (the former company having acquired the latter, and selling Twin Coach buses to the MBTA on clearance). These were mini-buses acquired for community service routes, most of which went away soon after inception, with only route 48 lasting up to 2012 before being eliminated. This was long after the Twin Coach buses were gone; these were also problematic for maintenance, and although they were officially in service from 1972 to 1979, they were in regular service for only 4 years. Flexible buses lasted longer, and we got to see 35 foot Flexible buses in airport service before Massport started its Airport Loop service. Many buses served to feed rapid transit lines: The next photos were of the old southern Orange Line and connecting bus service, including 1 of 5 buses painted in Bicentennial livery. To reiterate the point that much of what we saw was on its way out, Loring showed us a photo of buses in a scrap yard in New Hampshire.

Electric trolleybuses were yet another transportation mode in transition. First, Loring showed us the 8500-

series electric trolleybuses (of external appearance similar to GM Old Look diesel buses) that were in service before the arrival of the Western Flyer/New Flyer electric trolleybuses, and then the arrival of the first of the latter, originally numbered 9000, although this actually became the 4000-series. At this point, we had an interesting detour: some short 1937-vintage and 1947-vintage ACF Brill buses originally from the Eastern Massachusetts Street Railway were put into Boston Elevated Railway livery and brought in for filming *The Brink's Job*, which is set in Boston in 1950, and which was released in 1978. Afterwards, these buses were used for a fantrip, of which Loring showed us some photos.

Back to the Orange Line, Loring gave us a tour of the above-ground (then all elevated) parts, starting from the south end at Forest Hills and proceeding north, including views of Dudley Station and connecting bus service, and skipping the tunnel to resume the view of the elevated structure just outside of North Station, featuring an Orange Line car in the "Grey Ghost" paint scheme. This scheme was never distributed very widely on any particular mode of transportation, but it was tried on many different modes. One of the stops along the way was Everett Shops, where he showed us some home-made pieces of work equipment, including steeplecab electric locomotive 0514 (although the leading "05" was not visible, of vintage approximately 1913, used for shunting of Boston Elevated Railway cars delivered by freight rail service); snow sweeper-equipped flatcar 0501 (1920s-vintage), and boxcab locomotive 0522 (also 1920s-vintage). The northern part of the Orange Line was also in transition, and we saw a sign notifying passengers of closure of Everett Station, and then some photos of the old elevated structure being demolished in 1977, followed by the new Orange Line tracks at Wellington Station. Loring also showed us photos of the other 2 rapid transit lines. First was the Blue Line, featuring 1923-vintage Pullman cars and 1951-vintage St. Louis Car Company cars, including interior photos of both. Next was the Red Line at Eliot Square Yard (itself soon to be gone), featuring the last 2 of the 1928-vintage cars.

Next was a potpourri of water transport and suburban bus service. This started with a tug ("R. J. Bowlen") owned by the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad (one of the predecessors to CSX); this tug sank in 1981; Loring photographed it in 1970 and 1973. Then he showed us the Greyhound Terminal with 35 foot buses, followed by the Middlesex and Boston Street Railway (having long ago become a bus company) in its last year of independent operation, 1971 (it was merged into the MBTA in 1972); photos included the GM Old Look bus that became MBTA historic bus 2600, and buses in green and red and red/silver/white paint schemes. He also showed us other suburban bus operations, including some sho photos, as well as Peter Pan, Gray Lines, and a Copley Motor Tours Neoplan Skyliner double decker bus. Next was the steamboat "Peter Stuyvesant" originally from Hudson River Day Lines, which was mounted in Boston Harbor on fixed supports for use in restaurant service; this was dislodged in a storm in 1978 and damaged beyond repair. On display on land nearby was a small 0-4-0ST steam locomotive from which the tank (over the boiler) had been removed.

After this, Loring took us to South Station, showing us commuter trains and associated equipment from various railroads, starting with Penn Central (eventually Conrail) commuter trains hauled by E8, RS7, and GP9 locomotives still in Penn Central colors, and taking a detour to show us the large Plymouth & Brockton bus terminal at South Station, then returning to the tracks near South Station to show the semaphore signals in use in the early 1970s. After this we started to see Commuter Rail trains in MBTA colors. Loring showed us a photo (of aerial appearance) from the Prudential Tower of Back Bay Station. The non-MBTA colors did not disappear immediately, though: In addition to locomotives in MBTA colors, we saw locomotives in New York Central, Boston & Maine, and New Haven colors as well as the afore-mentioned Penn Central and Conrail colors, along with a few freight locomotives that came into the South Station area. We also saw 4 Alco PA locomotives that the MBTA leased from the Delaware & Hudson railroad (they were originally from the Santa Fe railroad) from March through December of 1978 before these units went to Mexico. South Station itself was undergoing a difficult period of transition, and Boston almost lost it entirely; Loring showed us demolition operations that removed 7 of its tracks (which will need to be added back in the future, as one of the subjects for the BSRA show of October 4, 2014) and eventually removed the Atlantic Avenue wing of the station building. The transition of the 1970s was not the first for South Station: Loring also showed us lift bridges near South Station that are no longer lifted, together with a pivot left over from their 1880s-vintage swing bridge predecessor. Amtrak was a newcomer to South Station in 1971, without which South Station probably would have been lost entirely, or at best replaced by something similar to the "train dungeon" that replaced New York's iconic Penn

Station. After a few photos of Amtrak signage in the South Station interior, we saw Amtrak RS3s originally from the New York Central and New Haven railroads, and an Amtrak E8 from Penn Central, as well as an ex-Union Pacific car in Amtrak service. Locomotives bought new by Amtrak started with SDP40Fs (built from 1973 to 1974), which were banned or speed-restricted on some eastern railroads due to derailment problems, thus greatly limiting Amtraks use of these locomotives after an initial short period of service (some were eventually rebuilt into F40PHs for most of the cost of new F40PHs, and others were traded to the Santa Fe railroad for rebuilding into SDF40-2s, which lasted in service until 2001, by which time the Santa Fe railroad was part of BNSF). This was even though they were similar to SDP40, FP45, and SDP45 locomotives that never had this problem on Western railroads (including Santa Fe and Burlington Northern); an FRA investigation eventually concluded that the problem had been caused by vibrations exacerbated by using lightweight baggage cars behind these locomotives, but poor track maintenance on eastern railroads likely played a major role. Another new type of Amtrak equipment at the time was the United Aircraft Turbo Trains -- in addition to several exterior photos (including the power cars which doubled as dome cars), Loring also showed us a closeup of an articulation junction between segments, and an interior photo showing the open passage between the segments. These photos were taken from 1972 to 1975, and Amtrak stopped using these trains in September 1976, although Canadian National continued to use very similar trains built by Montreal Locomotive Works using United Aircraft Canada (now part of Pratt & Whitney Canada) parts from 1968 until 1978, when VIA Rail absorbed Canadian National's passenger operations, and then VIA Rail continued to use them until October 1982, when they were replaced by Bombardier LRC trains. The show finished up with some photos of F40PH locomotives that arrived for Amtrak and MBTA Commuter Rail starting in 1976, and finally a sunset photo at the railroad bridge in Salem.

**SHORT FORM** (for Annual Report) Entertainment Report for July 12, 2014

**July 12, 2014.** Boston in Transition. Loring Lawrence showed us Boston's Green line from 1970 to 1979, a period of change, when PCCs were being repainted from Traction Orange to the now-familiar green (and occasionally in other schemes), and were slowly making their exit. He also showed us the other rapid transit lines, including the old elevated structures; south side Commuter Rail (including diverse motive power from various carriers); buses, and trackless trolleys, and Amtrak service (including the United Aircraft Turbo Trains); and a quick look at commuter bus service. Throughout the show he demonstrated excellent recall of detail about various pieces of equipment.