



Streetcar CURRENTS



September 2006

Minneapolis and Excelsior, Minnesota

The TCRT in 1907

- TCRT operates a total of 363 miles of track (at it's height [1931] TCRT will have 523 miles of track)
- TCRT's basic fare is five cents
- TCRT operates approximately 600 streetcars (ten years later TCRT will operate over 1,100 cars)
- TCRT's Snelling Shops open (September)
- No. 1239 is part of the last group of cars built by the 31st Street shops
- Our No. 1300 is one of the first cars built (in 1908) at the new Snelling Shops

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Masthead Photo: No. 322 and No. 265 pose for a photo shoot on June 18, 2006 during a special operation for a tour group from Germany.
Jim Vaitkunas photo

TCRT's 1907 Minnesota State Fair Operations

BILL THE MOTORMAN



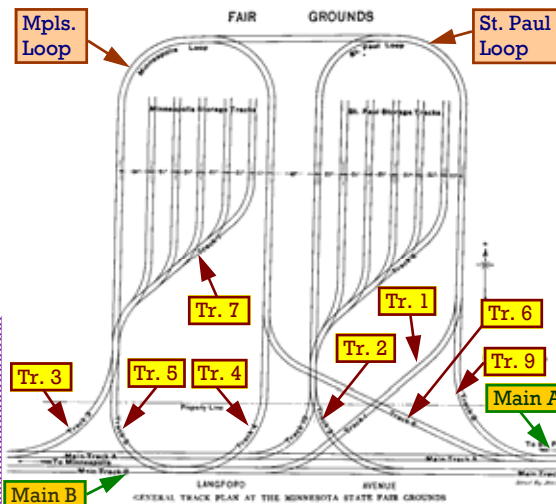
Bill

Well, a quick look at the calendar tells me right quick that it is Minnesota State Fair time. What a great State Fair we have, probably one of the best in the Midwest if not the entire country! And as you all know the State Fair was located on the Como-Harriet "interurban" line.

The TCRT was thoroughly prepared to move the throngs of people who took the streetcars to the fair each year. So, let's take a closer look at the TCRT's State Fair operations for the year 1907 (as described in the Street Railway Journal) and you can get an idea of what the company did to "move the masses," so to speak.

During the six days of the fair in 1907 (September 2-7) the company carried approximately 250,000 people to and from the grounds; the heaviest single day was Sept. 2, Labor Day, when attendance mounted to 80,000. The company's fair terminal consisted of two great loops, enclosing five storage tracks between each loop. This duplicate arrangement is adopted to separate the Minneapolis and St. Paul traffic; the St. Paul cars enter and leave on the east or St. Paul loop, while the Minneapolis cars use the west or Minneapolis loop. Large signs direct the passengers to the proper points and absolutely no confusion occurs. The main loops are so connected to the two main tracks that cars can be run in and out of the terminal on almost any conceivable manner, making a very flexible arrangement.

The method of handling and dispatching cars in and out of the terminal is as follows: Through service, running on a five minute schedule, is maintained between Minneapolis and St. Paul (this is the Como-Harriet Line—Ed.). These cars come from Minneapolis on main track B and enter the St. Paul loop by means of track 1. They proceed around this loop, stopping at the upper end to receive and discharge passengers, and then go out to main track B again via track 2. Through cars from St. Paul enter the Minneapolis loop from main track A via track 6, proceed around the loop, stopping at the loading platform at the upper end as described above and then leave the terminal over track 3 which switches the car again on to main track A.



Local cars are run from both cities on a 1 1/4 minute schedule. The Minneapolis cars enter from main track B via track 4 and proceed to the unloading platform, from which they return to Minneapolis over track 3 or enter the storage yard via ladder track 7. St. Paul cars are run around the St Paul loop in a similar manner. This method gives

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MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM



The Minnesota Streetcar Museum is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization with the mission to preserve and communicate to the public the experience of Minnesota's electric street and interurban railway history. To accomplish this mission the Museum operates historic streetcars at two demonstration railways.

COMO-HARRIET STREETCAR LINE
Excelsior Streetcar Line

For more information on our Museum, our collection of historic streetcars and our demonstration railways, visit our website:

www.trolleyride.org

The museum's business address and telephone number is:

P.O. Box 14467, University Station
 Minneapolis, MN 55414-0467
 952-922-1096

Streetcar CURRENTS
 September 2006

Streetcar CURRENTS is a periodic newsletter for the members and friends of the Minnesota Streetcar Museum.

Deadline for submitting items for the next issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** is September 20, 2006.

Please send items to editor Jim Vaitkunas at the following address:

155 Chaparral Dr.,
 Apple Valley, MN 55124-9774

You can send input or inquiries by e-mail to: jvaitkunas@msn.com

OK—Who Was Bill the Motorman?

Jim Vaitkunas—EDITOR



Some of you will undoubtedly ask me the next time you see me who Bill the Motorman was—the fellow who authored the article found on page one of this issue of the **Streetcar CURRENTS**. To answer your question here is a brief story on Bill the Motorman, with thanks for information provided by CHSL Historian, **Russ Olson** and long-time member **Bill Olsen**.

Bill was born in the early 1920's, the creation of the TCRT's General Passenger Agent himself more than likely. Bill could be found in both newspaper advertising (see a sample below) and on the advertising "car cards" found inside the streetcars on the small curved ceiling directly over the side windows. You can see at least one of these company ads in our No. 1300.

Bill was a sort of father figure, the quintessential friendly and conscientious motorman who represented all that was good about the streetcar company. Bill put into human terms what the TCRT wanted to say to its passengers about the company, streetcar service, special announcements, and so forth. He was the Twin Cities' equivalent to the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad's *Phoebe Snow*, the mythical female passenger on that eastern anthracite coal hauling and anthracite using railroad. [In the Lackawanna's advertising campaign, *Phoebe Snow* extolled the virtues of riding on the "Road of Anthracite" because of the clean burning characteristics of anthracite coal (also called hard coal) used to fuel the railroad's steam locomotives. The ads were in the form of a short poem or jingle of rhyming verse with *Phoebe* adorned in a white dress and standing on one of the Lackawanna's camel-back-type steam locomotives or on the back platform of an observation car.]

Apparently TCRT was pleased with Bill's work as the company's spokesman as he represented the company for quite a while, at least until the late-1940's (see the cut of Bill shown at the head of this column). Note that Bill is wearing the military-style cap introduced in the late 1930's as opposed to the traditional railroad-style box hat he wore when he first appeared in the 1920's. And how about that snazzy striped four-in-hand tie?!

So, why has Bill returned after all these years of rest in Lakewood cemetery? Well, besides the mythical reasons, Bill has returned to talk to all of us MSM volunteers about the "good old days" when the Twin Cities truly had

one of the finest public transit systems in the country. Periodically Bill plans to give us snippets of Twin City transit history and facts to inform us, entertain us, and also sometimes to set straight some wrong (or perhaps slightly exaggerated) information that has perpetuated over the years. Bill has not written anything for our news-

letter for the last several years but we hope that now he's back he'll give us something on a regular basis. We hope that you will enjoy Bill's short articles and that they increase your knowledge of TCRT history which will also help us answer our passengers' questions.

By the way. Bill has also agreed to answer your questions as best he can. You can send him your questions (through me) by either e-mail or a phone call. Bill doesn't want to give out his phone number at Lakewood, for obvious reasons.

BILL SAYS:


I sometimes envy you folks taking a nice peaceful ride with nothing to worry about. I'd like to try it myself some day.

Bill



General Superintendent's Notes

Rod Eaton — GENERAL SUPT.

A *Busman's Holiday.* Some of our volunteers travel quite a distance to operate at Como-Harriet and Excelsior. But one of our members, **Dr. Leland Whitson** now holds the record for longest commute. For his Wednesday afternoon shift Leland traveled 2,000 miles from his home in Southern California!

Leland contacted us early this summer and asked if he could visit and perhaps operate as part of a crew. Since Leland is Operator No. 553 with the Orange Empire Railway Museum, which has an extensive traction collection, we welcomed him as a Guest Motorman. On August 2, Leland joined **Blair Dollery**, **Russ Isbrandt** and me at Lake Harriet. He quickly learned our operating sequence and spent the afternoon aboard No. 265.

"My day with you-all on the Como-Harriet Line was certainly the highlight of my visit to Minneapolis," Leland said. "I have shared the photos with many of my colleagues. They have all remarked about the wonderful condition of your equipment and the picturesque setting in which you operate." He added that our track work "is second to none in my experience on operating museums. Thank the rest of your crew. It was truly a memorable day for me."

S *peaking of Wednesday.* The new Wednesday afternoon shift we've been running this summer has been quite successful. From June 14 (the first day of operation) through August 9, we carried 735 passengers. That compares to 933 carried on those regular Wednesday evening shifts. After the first two weeks, we've averaged a bit over 100 riders each Wednesday afternoon; the best day saw 167 passengers.

When the Wednesday afternoon schedule was established, it was hoped that it would attract groups for whom charters aren't affordable. By offering them the slight cost savings of 10-ride tickets, the afternoon ride provides an attractive alternative. Several small groups have taken advantage of the opportunity. Next season, we'll actively advertise to this market.

Does the afternoon shift cannibalize evening riders? Although it's impossible to say conclusively, that doesn't appear to be the case. On August 16, for example, two small groups rode. One, thirteen kids (and an adult) from a day care facility could only visit on a weekday afternoon. The other group was from a home for handicapped adults. Anecdotally, a woman thanked me for running in the afternoon, since it was difficult for her and her young children to visit any

other time. On that afternoon we carried 125 passengers.

Thanks to all the volunteers who have been a part of Wednesday afternoon crews. Next summer, Wednesday afternoons will be a regular part of our schedule from June through August.

E *nd of the Season.* We'll be running weekends through the end of November this season, weather permitting. However, we won't be running special Holly Trolleys this year. Last year's experiment, although only moderately successful, showed there is potential in a Christmas holiday event. Other museums do very well with holiday trains and trolleys, rivaling our Ghost Trolley in ridership. With more advance planning and better marketing, we may look at adding Holly Trolley again in future years.

S *omething New.* Minnesota Streetcar Museum's Webmaster, **John DeWitt**, is continually updating our presence on the World Wide Web. The latest addition is several video clips. You can see No. 265 travel under the Berry Bridge, traverse the entire Como-Harriet Line in 30 seconds, get a sneak preview of this year's Ghost Trolley, and more. On our Home page, click on "Learn More About Us", then scroll down to "Videos." By the time you read this, there may be additional links to the video clips throughout our site. The clips not that large but John warns "you'll want to think twice about downloading them unless you have a cable modem or DSL." You'll also need QuickTime to view the clips. Most newer computers come with the program, but you can get a free download for Windows or Macs at <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/mac.html>



Here's MSM member and guest Operator, **Dr. Leland Whitson** at the rear controls of Duluth Street Railway No. 265. Leland is a regular Operator at the great Orange Empire Railway Museum, located in southern California about 60 miles east of Los Angeles.

MSM News Update

Louis Hoffman AND Aaron Isaacs

M*embership news and donations.* We welcome the following new members: **Ted and Tiffany Hanson, Rachel Harrison and David Pharris, Mary Margaret Lawler, Linda and Steven Mertens, Tom Rollo, John Sorteberg, Kirk and Suzu Thompson, Ann Ware, and Jim and Sarah White.** Total memberships since inception are now 222.

Many thanks to renewing members **Barb Thoman and Chip Welling** for the kind donation made with their recent membership renewal and to member **Norm Carlson and Walt Keevil**, Chicago area traction historians, for their donations after their recent visit.

I*mportant membership processing information.* A reminder to all “front line” volunteers (that is, primarily station agents): it’s imperative that everyone who pays for a membership complete a membership application form. If there are no membership brochures in the station, please ask them to write down their names, addresses (including city, state, and ZIP Code), telephone numbers (including area code), and e-mail addresses and note whether it’s an individual or household membership. Recently there were several instances where memberships were paid for with cash without an application—giving the Museum no way of including the new member or members in our database. That means they won’t get a permanent membership card!

S*peaking of Membership Renewals and our Member Database.* The vast majority of our members joined MSM between February and July of 2005. That means that between February and July of this year those memberships came due for renewal. Most members, when they received their renewal notice, promptly sent in their renewal slip along with their dues—and we thank you for doing that! However a large number of members failed to renew and we feel certain, judging by the members involved, that they simply misplaced the renewal notice sent out at the beginning of the month their membership expired. So, we ask that after you read this take a few moments to look at the reverse of your MSM membership card and note the date on the back of the card. That’s your membership expiration date. If that date is July 31st or earlier that means that you haven’t received a new one most likely because you have not sent in your dues for the next year. If you have any questions about your membership call **John DeWitt**

at 612-338-1871 or send John an e-mail to jdewitt@mn.rr.com

A*aron Isaacs reports the following items.* Several loose ends from the big TEA21 project are wrapping up. The City of Minneapolis Public Works Department has painted the railings at the pedestrian underpass. The Cottage City railings remain to be painted. The City laid a short concrete sidewalk from the Lake Calhoun streetcar stop to the curb of Richfield Road. Metro Transit moved its bus stop back to this location, so we once again have a direct bus-to-streetcar transfer point, now with a proper surface on which to wait.

By the time you read this the four lamp posts next to the pedestrian underpass will have been installed and wired. It took awhile to find a vendor who could supply the light fixtures. The industry standard is three inch diameter post tops and the ones we have are five inches. **Aaron Isaacs** finally located a distributor with a five-to-three inch conversion top. **Jim Otto** painted the lamp posts and **Keith Lindberg** wired them.

Some vintage Twin City streetcar photos have appeared on eBay lately. **Jim Vaitkunas** has bid on them for the MSM collection. In both recent cases, we were out-bid but the winning bidder has been willing to share copies. The result is over 40 new additions to the Museum’s photo archives collection.

If the Linden Hills depot display case looks a little emptier, especially on the right hand side, it’s because **Aaron Isaacs** removed a couple dozen photos for cataloguing and safekeeping. When the displays were created some years ago a number of original photos were used. It’s easier now to scan and print copies so from now on only copies will appear in the cases.

New depot displays will be a project for this winter. If you’d like to work on displays, call **Aaron Isaacs** at 612-929-7066 or aaronmona@aol.com.

Member (and architect) **Joe Metzler** is attempting to replicate the Lake Harriet “Chalet” streetcar station on his computer. He is using photos from the MSM archive and is searching public records for more info. If you are old enough to remember the Chalet station, especially the interior, please call Joe at 612-824-3843 and share your memories.

First Annual MSM Member’s Picnic!

Circle October 15th on your calendar. We’re holding the first annual MSM member’s picnic on 10/15 out at Excelsior. Details in the next issue of the *CURRENTS*.

Museum Store Update

Charles Barthold — MERCHANDISE MGR.

On-line store sales picking up. Starting August 7th, we received the first orders from the on-line store on our website. Many thanks to **John Dewitt** for setting it up. The first three orders all ordered the *Como-Harriet Story*. Two of them also ordered additional merchandise. The fourth order included only postcards and tokens. The four orders came from California (2), New Jersey, and Nebraska with the top two items being St. Paul tokens and the *Como-Harriet Story*. Our average order is over \$30.

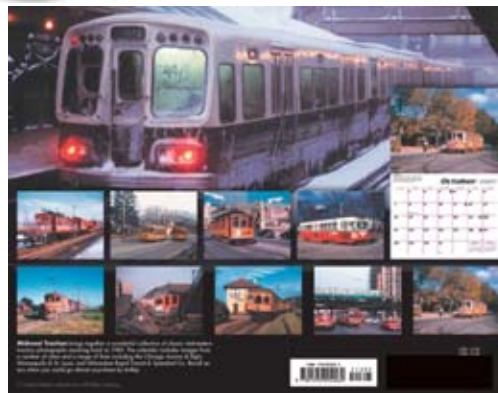
Coming to your favorite trolley store in September.

- MSM baseball hats—khaki and black with the MSM logo embroidered.
- Midwest Traction 2007 calendars—limited quantity. Watch for them. See sample on the right.
- MSM mug—just in time for those nippy autumn and winter days ahead. 14 oz made in St. Paul, Dijon with cinnamon white
- MSM pin—the official MSM pin (see above)

Note that there are now separate containers for each pin and patch. No more digging through the one big jar trying to find the right pin. Please note—we are almost out of the old Como-Harriet pins, so if you want one, get yours before they are gone.



They'll be here in September! Here's the official MSM cloisonné pin. The proof is shown on the left. You can purchase one at the station or order from our website.



2007 Midwest Traction Calendar brings together a wonderful collection of classic Midwestern traction photographs reaching back to 1940. The calendar includes images from a number of cities and a range of lines including the Chicago Aurora and Elgin, Minneapolis, St. Louis, Milwaukee Rapid Transit and Speedrail Co. Recall an era when you could go almost anywhere by trolley.

GET YOUR HISTORY HERE AT MSM!

Minnegazette back Issues. *Minnegazette* back issues are now available through the MSM Museum Store for \$1.00 a copy, or \$10.00 for 12 copies. Almost every issue going back to 1970 is in stock so here's your chance to fill out your collection. Go to our website (or call Aaron) for the inventory and index of the *Minnegazettes* in stock right now. If you'd like to donate your *Minnegazette* back issues so MSM can sell them, call **Aaron Isaacs** at 612-929-7066.



Historic Minnesota Streetcar Photos for Sale. MSM has a large collection of Minnesota streetcar photos. **Aaron Isaacs** keeps the collection and he has catalogued about 6200 photos so far. To give the collection more exposure, and to raise money for MSM, we are offering photo scans for sale to members and the public. Aaron will do a high resolution TIFF scan onto a CD. The normal price will be \$10.00 per photo for the public. Members get a discounted price of \$5.00 per photo.



So how do you know what photos are available? Aaron's searchable photo database is in FileMaker Pro. If your computer can handle that program, he'll send you a copy. If not, call Aaron and tell him what general topics you're interested in. It could be a particular line, or type of equipment or time period. He'll pull a selection of photos for you to look at, but you have to visit his house to do it. He lives near the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line. Call Aaron at 612-929-7066 or send him an e-mail to: aaronona@aol.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| September 4 | Labor Day CHSL special early bird service starts at 9:30 AM |
| September 8 | Last day of daily service at CHSL |
| September 9 | Excelsior Apple days festival at ESL |
| September 10 | Last day of ESL weekend service |
| September 16 | Streetcar cleaning—8:30 AM to 11:30 AM (Linden Hills carbarn) |
| October 15 | MSM First Annual Family Picnic—12:00N to 3:00 PM—Excelsior Streetcar Line |
| October 27 & 28 | ESL Halloween GHOST TROLLEY —5:00 PM to 8:00 PM |
| October 27, 28, 29 & 31 | CHSL Halloween GHOST TROLLEY —5:30 PM to 8:30 PM |

Operations Notes*Jim Vaitkunas*—OPERATIONS CHIEF

Included with this mailing to MSM operating personnel is the September 2006 CHSL schedule of operations and the September-October 2006 ESL schedule of operations. If you see a vacancy that needs filling, please contact either **Jim Vaitkunas** or the Foreman for that shift. Each CHSL shift has a normal complement of four crewmembers. ESL shifts have two crewmembers. PCC shifts have only two crewmembers. If you see a space with no name on a shift on the schedule of operations then that's a shift vacancy.

Remember that **you must inform your Foreman** of all substitutions or if you are forced to cancel your shift and **please** inform **both Foremen** if you swap shifts with someone.

Reminders from Our Treasurer and Accountant. Always be sure to record thru the cash register all token sales at the north end and all sales anywhere away from the register. Do this as soon as you come back to the depot before you forget it. Also be sure to check ALL crewmembers to make sure there is no change cash they may have in their pockets before leaving the carbarn at the end of your shift and at the end of the day's operations.

Be Careful Out There! During a recent Wednesday evening CHSL shift, a Queen Avenue neighbor came over to the station to warn us there was a break-in in a parked auto on Queen Avenue. The neighbors saw it happen and called the police but the suspects fled by the time the police arrived. The victim was one of our passengers riding our streetcar when the crime occurred! The neighbor wanted us to make sure we did not leave any visible valuables in our vehicles. She was afraid one of the museum volunteers would also be a victim if the suspects returned.

Reminder to Foremen. Several Operators recently have reported that they weren't called 2-3 days prior to their shift to remind them. In one instance an Operator missed their shift because of this. The task to call and remind crewmembers that their shift is coming up is one of the first items listed on our Foreman's checklist. Please take the checklist out and read through it several days prior to your shift. This will remind you to call your crewmembers. The Foreman's checklist can be found at our website if you have misplaced your copy.

(The TCRT's Minnesota State Fair Operations *Continued from page 1*)

a continuous uninterrupted stream of both through and local cars, all moving in the same direction on each loop; the traffic from each city is completely separated, an important feature in operating a terminal of this nature. While under normal conditions the cars are dispatched as described above, the main line connections are purposely arranged to permit any variations from the usual procedure that an emergency may dictate. Two or three repairmen and a dispatcher is all the operating force necessary at the terminal. A repair car is also maintained in readiness for any emergency.

Twin City standard cars are designed to load and unload from the rear platform only. At the fair terminal, however, special steps were provided so that passengers were unloaded from both platforms at once. Ninety-five percent of the travel was either in one direction or the other. By using both platforms for unloading and loading, a car could be emptied and filled in practically one minute.

The fair exodus reaches a maximum at 5 and 10 PM. To provide for these rush periods from thirty-five to fifty cars are stored on the Minneapolis tracks and from twenty-five to thirty on the St. Paul tracks. Cars are dispatched from these storage tracks in order of their occurrence, so that during the rush periods one-quarter minute service is maintained to Minneapolis and St. Paul. This amounts to 240 cars per hour to each city. Each car carries about 100 passengers, which means that the maximum number of passengers moved per hour to each city is 24,000.

This record was actually attained several times during the week, and the traffic was handled without undue crowding or congestion. Every passenger did not get a seat, but this could not be expected. The company made an honest effort to provide and keep moving a sufficient number of cars to carry the crowds. By means of this terminal this was accomplished throughout the week without a single hitch.