

STREETCAR

CURRENTS

September 2022



MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

How TCRT Handled the MINNESOTA STATE FAIR Crowds in 1907—By Bill The Motorman

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.

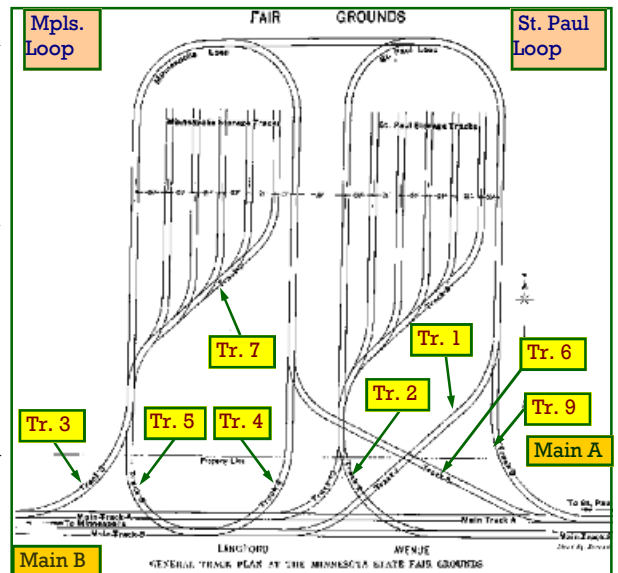
During the six days of the fair in 1907 (September 2-7) the company carried approximately 250,000 people to and from the grounds; the heaviest single day was Sept. 2, Labor Day, when attendance mounted to 80,000. The company’s fair terminal consisted of two great loops, enclosing five storage tracks 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 ¼ 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 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



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From the Front Platform—Thoughts on Our Museum

Aaron Isaacs — MSM Board Chair

Forward progress. Things tend to happen incrementally around the museum, but there is always progress to report.

Ben Franske put a new computer in the Linden Hills station video screen. It's now running all five of the vintage streetcar videos (Como-Harriet, University Avenue, Inter-Campus, The Rest of the System and Duluth streetcars) that also appear on YouTube.

The ESL carbarn crew has cleaned out much of the material that was stored inside Mesaba No. 10. At **Howie Melco's** request, **Bill Graham** visited and identified which remaining items belong to No. 10 and which can be disposed. Both trucks have been cleaned and lubricated. They're being installed under the car, which will make it movable for the first time (*see photo on page 3—Ed*). All this is preparation for pulling No. 10 out of the barn so the tracks can be realigned and the rest of the floor paved.

The second pair of ex-Toronto motors for TCRT No. 1239 have been overhauled and returned to the George Isaacs carbarn. Because storage space is tight, they have been placed under newly built, higher work tables (*photo on the bottom of this page—Ed*). The next step in the truck-building project is to get the gears made, as well as some other components.

Jerry Betz has been repainting the Linden Hills depot benches.

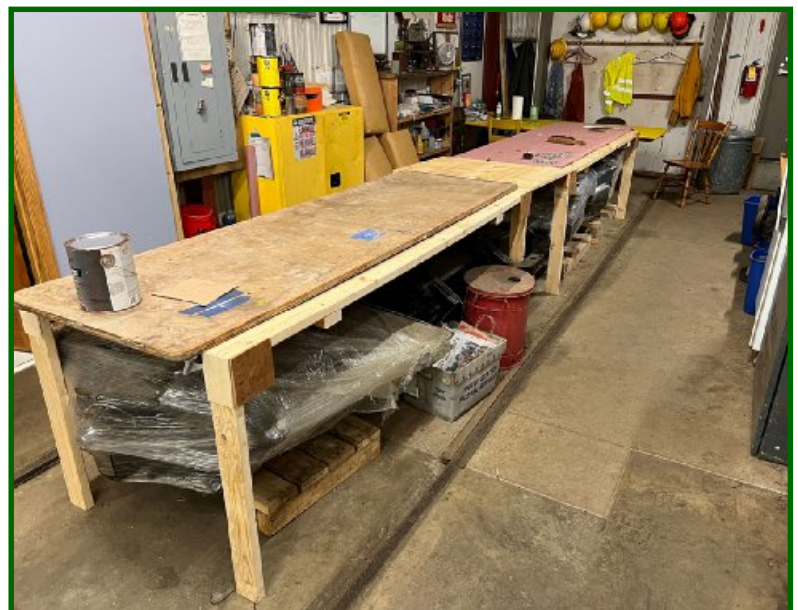
I'm overdue reporting this, but all the lighting in the Isaacs Carbarn has been converted to LEDs, which reduces our carbon footprint and will pay for itself in a couple of years. Thanks to **Karl Jones** for buying and installing them. The cost was reduced thanks to a grant from Enerchange, which assists non-profits with energy efficiency upgrades.

Mary Porter has negotiated an agreement with the University of Minnesota extension service to have the Linden Hills depot garden certified by the Hennepin County Master Gardeners. That permits Master Gardeners and interns to fulfill their annual volunteer hours requirement. We'll have more garden help, hopefully for years to come. Look for them to be working on the garden every Thursday morning from 9 to 11 AM until November 17.

More on the way. **Louis Hoffman** and **Jerry Betz** have organized an Eagle Scout project to paint the original TCRT railings by the pedestrian underpass and along Queen Avenue. They were last painted a non-historic brown when the underpass was restored in 2005. They'll be repainted the same dark green as the depot benches and trim.

A year ago **Ben Franske** installed a book scanner in the Russell Olson Library. This Fall we're finally going to start using it. We want to digitize important documents in our collection, starting with Russ' research notebooks. **Floyd Child**, **Mike Lerdahl** and **Sam Woolever** have volunteered to do the scanning.

The Excelsior Carbarn needs a new roof. It will be a budget priority for 2023. 🍀



Underneath this table are the four newly rebuilt GE 241B 50hp traction motors. Eventually, they will be put in the two new trucks that will go under and power TCRT gate car No. 1239.

MSM Photo Updates



Last week local TV station KSTP-TV sent a small crew to shoot a feature on the Minnesota Streetcar Museum. It was Streetcar Camp day and the kids provided good photo ops as they were shown the basics of streetcar operation. The "So Minnesota" segment is tentatively scheduled to air on Channel 5 on Labor Day evening. But the cameraman missed the best comment of the morning. Listening to the discussion of the use of the controller to operate the streetcar, a child said "I'm only in the second grade. I can't remember all of that!" But he did just fine. That's new Operator **Mike Erdahl** instructing the junior motorman.

(Caption and photo by Rod Eaton)



Dennis Stephens is seen here "painting" the brake release springs that will go on No. 1239's trucks. He's dipping the whole spring into a plastic pipe filled with the red oxide paint. Ingenious way to paint something long, eh? *(Jim Vaitkunas photo)*



Andy Jacob is shown giving an overview of PCC No. 322's control panel to some Kid's Club members. *(Rod Eaton photo)*



Did Mesaba No. 10 make it through the door of Excelsior's car barn track #3? It did, and we'll send to you a special photo supplement on the big move in mid-September. *(Karen Kertzman photo)*



Kid's Camp attendees are getting some information from **Craig Canada, Linda Ridlehuber, Mary Ann Goens-Bradley & Dick Zawacki**. Also on MSM's Kid's Camp crew on 8/25/22 were **Bill Pekarna** and **Rod Eaton** the photographer, who is in No. 1300.



Waiting for riders for ESL's August *StoryTime Trolley*. The theme was Up, Up and Away—stories about things that fly. (L to R) **Jim Kertzman, Debra Larsson** (Butterfly), **Denny Morrow** and **Elaine Love**. *(Caption & photo by Karen Kertzman)*

September 2-----End of CHSL's Wednesday and Friday afternoon operations and weeknight operations
 September 3-4-5-----Labor Day weekend operations at CHSL & ESL. See MSM's website for times.
 September 16 & 17-----Excelsior Apple Days festival.
 October-----CHSL & ESL Halloween special events (if Covid-19 allows)



MSM News & Views — News of our Museum's Administration and Membership

Jim Vaitkunas — MSM Corporate Secretary & Assistant Ops Chief

A *Address and E-mail Changes.* We continue to receive notices from the US Postal Service that a member's address has changed. These cost us money especially for an address correction when our *Twin City Lines* history magazine is forwarded or is returned. While we don't pay when an e-mail address gets rejected, it does mean that you don't receive the *Streetcar Currents* either. ☺

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 are:

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Streetcar CURRENTS
 September—2022

Jim Vaitkunas—Editor
 Bill Graham—Distribution

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

Deadline for submitting items for the next edition of the **Streetcar CURRENTS** is September 20, 2022.

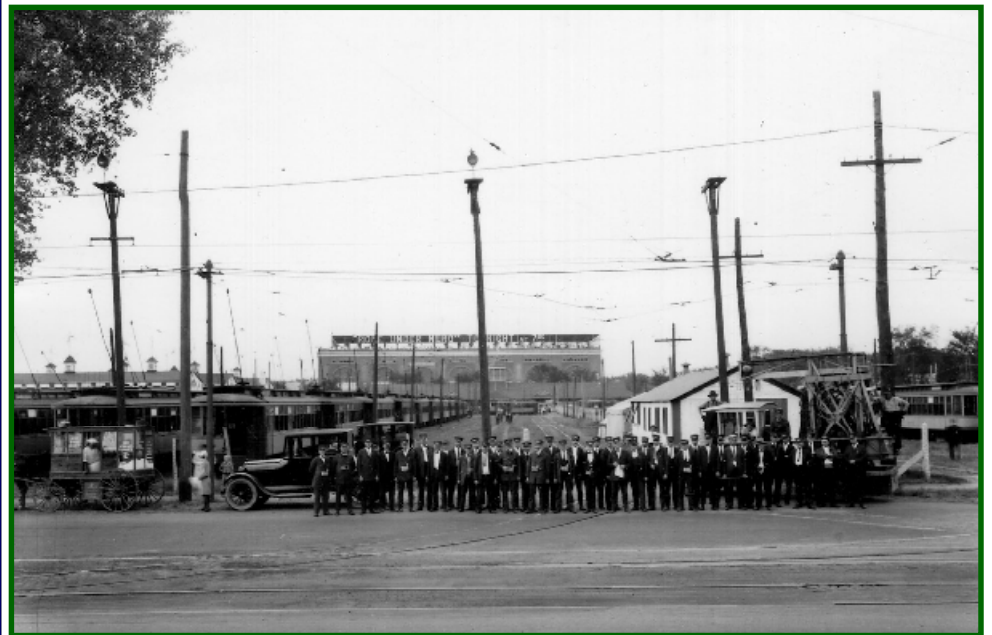
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these rush periods from thirty-five to fifty cars are stored on the Minneapolis tracks and from twenty-five to thirty on the St. Paul tracks. Cars are dispatched from these storage tracks in order of their occurrence, so that during the rush periods 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.



Photos of TCRT operations prior to 1920 are rare. Back in the day it was common for a photographer to take a photo of TCRT employees during a special event like the state fair. Here's the group shot taken around 1920 of mostly uniformed personnel standing on the north side of Como Avenue. The photo was taken probably sometime in mid-afternoon judging by the full storage tracks.

Note that the track layout is different from the 1907 diagram shown on page one. After TCRT built the terminal in 1904, they realized that the track as built was not efficient for car movement at the crush times in the evening and night so they rebuilt it entirely in 1909. In 1934, TCRT rebuilt the state fair terminal yet again, reducing it greatly in size. By then many more people had autos than in the period prior to 1920, so streetcar riders to the state fair was much reduced.

DETAILS-DETAILS. Look at the photo closely and you'll see on the left a horse-drawn wagon selling ice cream cones for 5-cents, the overhead repair tower truck on the right side with two workers hanging on and the spot light on top of the pole in the center that helped with nighttime operations by illuminating the area where the switches are in Como Avenue. Also, look how close TCRT's state fair terminal is to the grandstand. There are ten streetcars on the left storage track which means that track is at least 450-plus feet long! The banner sign on top of the grandstand reads: "ROME UNDER NERO" Tonight at 7⁰⁰ PM. One wonders what that was all about.