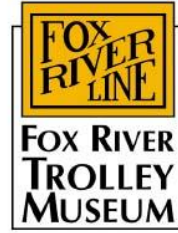


# FOX RIVER LINES

m a g a z i n e



Issue 05-1, Spring 2005

## Building the Fox River Line



**Baggage - Express car #1** pictured here just north of stop 44, "Pinelands," between Five Islands Bridge (Stop 49 - Coleman Grove) and St. Charles. This section of the E A & C is now part of the "Fox River Trail" of the Kane County Forest Preserve District between Elgin and Aurora.

## Early Years of Operation of the Elgin, Aurora & Southern Traction Company AE&FRE (Part 9)

*This is the concluding part of a nine part article dealing with the 'ROOTS' of the Fox River Trolley Museum's history. Again, Andy Roth deserves a huge amount of applause, appreciation and the Museum's continual gratitude for persevering in this very significant endeavor." - Ed.*

Railway management continued to improve service and look for ways to generate more revenue. The EA&S announced the start of package express service in mid-December 1903. Newspapers reported, "Commencing Monday December 21, the Elgin, Aurora & Southern Traction Company will carry packages, merchandise and other related items as express for all points on the Elgin-Aurora line in a compartment car as per the schedule shown at below:

**Northbound**

**Southbound**

<b>Leave</b>	<b>A.M.</b>	<b>P.M.</b>	<b>Leave</b>	<b>A.M.</b>	<b>P.M.</b>
Aurora	7:30	1:30	Elgin	10:00	4:00
No. Aurora	7:45	1:45	So. Elgin	10:15	4:15
Batavia	7:55	1:55	St. Charles	10:40	4:40
Geneva	8:10	2:10	Geneva	10:50	4:50
St. Charles	8:20	2:20	Batavia	11:05	5:05
So. Elgin <b>Arrive</b>	8:45	2:45	No. Aurora <b>Arrive</b>	11:15	5:15
Elgin	9:00	3:00	Aurora	11:30	5:30

Goods will be received at offices of the company or on the car en-route. There will be free delivery at each point where the company has an office and express for shipment will be received at these places. At other points, the company will receive the express on the car and deliver to consignee from the car. If express is to be left at points where there is no office, the company will not be responsible after putting same off of the car. Offices will be opened at once in Aurora, Batavia, Geneva, St. Charles and Elgin. At North Aurora and South Elgin, there will be no offices. In Elgin, the office for receiving goods is the office at the waiting room. In Geneva, Good for shipment will be received at J. C. Long's store."

The new express service caught the attention of a number of people and businesses. On December 21, 2003, the first day of service, the Elgin newspaper reported, "A proposition has been submitted to the EA&S by the four Elgin meat packing concerns for the hauling of their meat to the towns along their line between Elgin and Aurora. The packing companies have guaranteed that they will furnish eighteen thousands pounds for transportation overt the traction company's line a week. Meat is now delivered to Elgin by refrigerator car and until a year or so ago was sent to the dealers by wagon from here. Manager John Huntington of the Traction company stated today that the proposition was being considered by his company"

The compartment car was EA&S express car No. 1. Shortly after the beginning of the new express service, the EA&S won the contract for hauling mail between Elgin, St. Charles and Geneva. The mail service began on January 1, 1904 and the mail was carried in Express Car No. 1 operating on the above shown train schedule. The Elgin newspaper reported, "Instead of the Elgin mail going from here to West Chicago and from there being transferred to St. Charles, Geneva or other Fox River towns, it now goes direct by way of the electric line, leaving Elgin at 10:00 am and 4:00 pm. The new service will prove a great convenience to those who live in any of the places mentioned." On Friday Morning January 1<sup>st</sup>, the new mail service over the electric line between Elgin, St. Charles and Geneva will be formally inaugurated. Each car will take up mail pouches at St. Charles and will carry them to Geneva and Elgin. Heretofore, a letter directed from Elgin to St. Charles or Geneva required nearly 24 hours for its transmission. It is expected that the electric car mail service will be of material benefit to residents of all three towns. Postmasters state that a letter mailed one-half hour before the pouch departs will be placed in the sack. This will mean that within the period of one and a quarter hours a letter can be transferred to the office at St. Charles or Geneva." The winning of the mail contract was apparently a two year effort of EA&S management. The EA&S announced in July 1901 that they would endeavor to secure a contract from Uncle Sam to carry mail from Carpentersville to Yorkville by its electric car service. The proposition had the support of the Elgin and Aurora postmasters even back then. In 1901 it was reported to take a day for a letter to Aurora for Elgin or the other upriver

towns. An article in the February 6, 1904 newspaper stated, "Since the first of the year, the experiment has been tried of using the electric line for dispatching to and receiving from towns south of here on the Aurora line. Whether the scheme will be permanent is not known as yet."

Cleveland Syndicate officials decided in early 1906 that there would be benefits to consolidating the Aurora, Elgin & Chicago Railway and the Elgin, Aurora & Southern Traction Company into one railway. Meeting of officials were held in Chicago on March 20, 1906. The Elgin Newspaper reported the net earning for the AE&C for February 1906 was expected to be about \$8,000 and the EA&S net earning for the same month to be between \$3,000 and \$4,000. Cleveland Syndicate officials created the Aurora, Elgin & Chicago Railroad, chartered on March 23, 1906, under which the other railways were consolidated into one railroad. The former EA&S properties and trolleys became known as the Fox River Division of the new railroad. Train operations did not change too much under the new corporate identity. However the former EA&S officials were consolidated with the AE&C and all corporate jobs were moved to the AE&C offices in Wheaton. Mr. John W. Gunderson, who had been the chief train dispatcher at the Fifth Avenue Station became Elgin Division Superintendent with the March 31, 1906 announced management changes and consolidations. Mr. Gunderson hired on with the AE&C in 1901 working as a trainmaster managing construction trains building the railway and retired from the railway in 1961 when it went out of business. He also helped Robert DeYoung with office paper work for the one-man and one-locomotive Aurora Elgin & fox River Electric freight operations in the `40's `50's and `60's.

The EA&S had trolley carbarns in Aurora and Elgin that could both do light and heavy repairs to the trolleys. The AE&C had its repair carbarn in Wheaton. After the consolidation heavy repairs were only done at Aurora and Wheaton. The Elgin carbarn remained in service, but its employees only made small and light repairs to the trolleys as necessary.

The new consolidated railway bought a total of four new interurban cars for the Fox River Division over the next two years. These cars could seat 48 people and spent most of their careers operating between Elgin and Aurora. Between 1908 and 1920, management purchased ten used and thirteen new streetcars for Elgin and Aurora city service. These trolleys, which seated between 40 and 48 seated passengers, helped enhance and improve service in both cities.

The last major physical improvement made by the Cleveland syndicate affecting the Fox River Division lines occurred in 1909. In that year, a new branch line to Geneva from the Wheaton-Elgin line was constructed. The new electric line ran through the town of West Chicago and via a new bridge

across the Fox River, connected with the Fox River Division in Geneva at the corner of State Street and Third Street. High Speed Third Rail Division interurban cars ran from Wheaton over the new Geneva Branch to Geneva and then over the Fox River Division mainline northward to downtown St. Charles. The Third Rail Division cars stopped in St. Charles at the railway's storefront depot on the east side of the river.

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Management continued to make improvements to both the Fox River Division and the Third Rail Division (the railway's routes to Chicago). The August 19, 1911 Electric Railway Journal reported, "The Aurora carbarn shop equipment has been increased by the addition of an engine lathe, several smaller tools, such as drill presses, forge, conduit benders, a number of gas-heating appliances and compressed-air tools and hoists. Rolling stock of the Fox River Division consists of forty-seven single-truck cars and eighteen double-truck cars for city service. The interurban equipment on this division includes twelve double-truck motor cars and one baggage-express car, in addition to twenty maintenance-of-way utility cars used by both city and interurban sections of the Fox River Division.

The latest city cars purchased were built by Niles Car & Manufacturing Company and were designed for one-man operation with pay-as-you-enter fare collection.. No decision, however, has yet been reached as to the advisability of the re-arrangement of the other cars to this configuration. The interurban cars of the Fox River Division are wired in iron conduit and are being standardized as fast as overhauled.

The snow-fighting equipment consists of three single-truck sweepers and two double-truck plows on the Fox River Division. Similarly on the third-rail division, the snow fighting equipment consists of one double-truck nose plow and two detachable nose plows that can quickly be fitted on one of the company's baggage-express cars.

All oiling and inspection of cars on both divisions are done on a mileage basis, the intervals on the third-rail division being 800 miles and on the Fox River Division 600 miles. Overhauling of the cars is done every 60,000 miles.

The third-rail division is supplied with 600-volt current by seven rotary converter substations, two of which-those at Clintonville and Aurora-also feed the Fox River Division interurban line and the local street railway systems."

One can compare the information on the two tables to get an idea of the high level of service the electric railway served the Fox River Valley communities. For example, for Aurora, the 69,143 accumulated car miles translates into over 2,230 miles a day operated by the local streetcars on Aurora's 18.1 miles of track. That mileage is a lot of streetcars running back and forth through town on one day! Customer service, convenience and frequent streetcar operations went hand-in-hand to allow a company to make a profit operating streetcars.

The Cleveland Syndicate owned the tracks our Fox River Trolley Museum operates from 1901 until the early 1920's. The Elgin Aurora & Southern

Traction Company name only existed for five years of our trolley line's history. Many improvements were made to the trolley line during the EA&S's short corporate existence. Cleveland Syndicate officials continued to make more improvements to the electric railway after it was merged into the larger Aurora, Elgin & Chicago Railroad. All of these improvements increase the profitability of the railway and were an important part of the survival of the railway so that our museum's trolleys could one day operate over the same tracks.

**Andrew Roth**



**Ringg Cachingg \$ No Sale -  
on the antique Fare Register . . .**

All museums are in the business of selling their services, mission, and vision to their visitors. Our Museum is no different. Selling is what keeps the doors open and pays the bills. A visitor may walk in off the street out of curiosity, but only selling our Museum to that visitor will bring them back again.

But what is salesmanship? Salesmanship refers to a person's ability or effectiveness in selling something to others as well as presenting something persuasively to others. Unfortunately, too often salesmanship and selling have a lot of negative associations with a great number of people. In fact, a lot of people will go out of their way to avoid being thought of as a sales person or being accused of salesmanship. For instance, if you were to ask most Members if they are in Museum sales, they will likely say, no. They might add, I'm not in sales, I'm on train crew. Or, they may say, Don't look at me about sales, I work on the cars. They might also say, I'd rather work on track on a hot, humid and sunny 98 degree summer day than try and sell something.

People will do a lot to avoid being in sales. Yet selling our Museum must be every members business. When selling our Museum is not every member's business that is when we could get into trouble. Why would we get into trouble? Think about the last time you visited another railway museum and

- That museum's train crew ignored you;
- None of that museum's people would answer your questions;
- The people at that museum's gift shop treated you in a cold and surly manner;

After a sales experience like that, did you ever go back to that museum?

We want people not only to visit our Museum; we want them to come back again and again. That means we must provide the most positive sales experience possible. The only way for that to happen is for every member of the Museum to be on the Museum's sales team. What our members say and how they say it while on train crew, while in the gift shop, while working on cars, or while maintaining track is the most powerful selling tool in our possession. It is our choice how we use that tool. The future success of our Museum hinges on our salesmanship. Let us make sure that it is positive salesmanship.

**Ed Konecki**

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## Mission

To preserve and interpret Chicago's electric transport era that began in the 1890s and peaked before 1950. The electric transport era is significant because electric railways, including interurban, rapid transit, and streetcars, helped the Chicago region grow to be one of North America's great metropolitan areas. The Museum strives to show that electric railways were more than convenient, they were and are a way of life for generations of people from all walks of life.

The Museum fulfills this mission by preserving, interpreting, and operating historic railway vehicles on its demonstration electric railway, over the Aurora, Elgin and Fox River Electric route at South Elgin, Illinois. Furthermore, the museum preserves, displays and interprets smaller artifacts, photos, oral histories, and documents which help relate the importance of electric transport in and around the Chicago Metropolitan Area, putting them in context with their surroundings and era.

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## HELP! ! ! !

There are many many activities going on at the Museum that should be reported in "*Fox River Lines*." But they are not. All we need, to paraphrase the U. S. Marines, is "*A few good reporters*." There are a few department heads that make reports and there are others whose "plates are full" carrying out their responsibilities which at the same time have stories worthy of being in print for the benefit of the membership.

Being a reporter or correspondent for the newsletter can be helpful to a members knowledge and understanding of the Museum its goals and mission. Submittal requirements are very simple and easy to do. An e-mail addressed to me at DmacBRR@aol.com will get the story to me. It can be part of the e-mail or an attachment to it either an MS-Word or WordPerfect or a text document will do.

Pictures can be scanned and sent as JPEG files to accompany the stories.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

**Don MacBean - Managing Editor**

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# Cash Income and Expenses

## 2003 vs. 2004

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
DUES	\$10,964	\$9,782
DONATIONS	\$27,197	\$29,604
MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	\$405	\$43,198
STORE SALES	\$10,081	\$10,064
TICKET SALES	\$20,559	\$23,466
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$69,206</b>	<b>\$116,114</b>

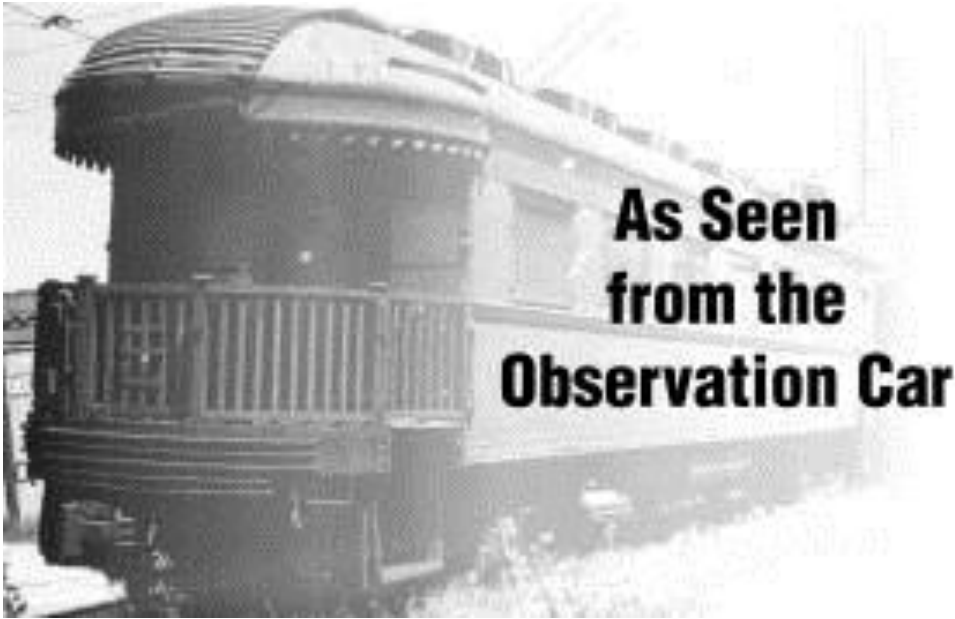
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### **EXPENSES**

ADMINISTRATION	\$28,440	\$37,931
CAR MAINTENANCE	\$3,523	\$3,225
ELECTRICITY	\$2,069	\$2,220
FACILITIES MAINTENANCE	\$3,008	\$2,328
MEMBER & MUSEUM SERVICES	\$18,121	\$24,002
STORE STOCK	\$6,572	\$8,468
TRACK MAINTENANCE	\$6,803	\$6,748
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$68,536</b>	<b>\$84,922</b>
<b>INCOME LESS EXPENSE</b>	<b>\$670</b>	<b>\$31,192</b>

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**Chuck Galitz**



## **"Give Me Land, Lot's of Land, Deep In The Heart of . . . ."**

*"Give Me Land, Lot's of Land, Deep In The Heart of Texas . . . ."* so went the popular 1940's song. But it is now 60 plus years later. Is it the same in Texas, eastern Tennessee and South Elgin? The fourth largest city in the U.S. is Houston and with its metro area, has a land mass nearly equal to the sprawling Los Angeles Metro Area. Land values are at a premium. Or eastern Tennessee, the home of the "Tweetsie Railroad," a combination, "theme park" and museum in the mountain area of the state. There are questions about its future.

The situation was discussed in an article in the Travel Section of the Chicago Sun-Times of Sunday, May 29, 2005. The "Tweetsie Railroad," operates about two miles of the old 3 foot gauge Eastern Tennessee and Western North Carolina R.R. One of the themes of the article is development of the area. "The park's location was *once* in a no-mans land between Boone and Blowing Rock. `Now we are right in between, and there is a huge demand for good buildable land,' according one of the parks owners." The leases of the land on which the park and railroad are located are soon to be renewed.

Moving west to South Elgin, there is virtually no vacant land in DuPage County immediately east of South Elgin. The Kane County Forest Preserve District within the past five years has secured \$150,000,000.00 through voter approved bond issues, to purchase farms and other open areas or otherwise vacant land for forest preserves. They are, according to

a recent article in the Chicago Tribune, "aggressively pursuing" the purchase of property.

What does all of this have to do with Fox River Trolley Museum? The Museum's grounds are right in the heart of downtown South Elgin's TIF district slated for business and residential redevelopment. Our "property" is "valuable" . . . we need to make it more valuable as a "museum" and as a viable commercial attraction as part of a growing vibrant and commercial downtown. This involves making our collection more attractive and operable, buildings more pleasing and functional and our accessibility (open times) greater. Additionally we should secure more participation of our neighbors in the operation and planning of the Museum. All of this to protect and preserve our mission and interest. The editor welcomes comments from our readers.

**Don MacBean**

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