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FOX RIVER LINES

m a g a z i n e



Issue 04-4, Winter 2004

Building the Fox River Line



It appears that this picture is looking south from the north-side of the bridge. Some of the scaffolding appears to be in place for the rescue effort. Note Elgin Aurora and Southern name on the car. Quoting the local newspaper "July 2, 1902 - St. Charles officials and officers of the Elgin, Aurora and Southern Traction Company met in St. Charles to decide on repairs needed for the St. Charles Bridge. . . . Company officials offered to pay half the cost of repairing the bridge, and the city offered to pay up to \$10,000." In addition to EA&S (AE&FRE) cars the new bridge carried the AE&C (CA&E) West Chicago - Geneva - St. Charles branch trains until 1937. This new bridge remained in use until 1997 when a new bridge opened for traffic on November 26, 1997.

This is part eight of a nine part article dealing with the "ROOTS" of the Fox River Trolley Museum's history. Research has caused the expansion of this series from the original seven to eight. Andy Roth deserves a huge round of applause and appreciation for persevering in this significant endeavor. - Ed.

Elgin Aurora & Southern

Traction Company and the Cleveland Syndicate

AE&FRE (Part 8)

Officers of the business partnership known as the "Cleveland Syndicate" incorporated a new railroad in May 1901 named the Elgin, Aurora & Southern Traction Company (EA&S). The officers consolidated all of the railways they owned in the Fox River Valley communities under the EA&S corporation. The EA&S operated streetcar routes in Elgin and Aurora. The EA&S also operated an interurban line stretching from Carpentersville south through Elgin, South Elgin, St. Charles, Geneva, Batavia, Aurora, Oswego and ending in Yorkville.

The Cleveland Syndicate had purchased a mixed bag of rolling stock and physical assets when creating the EA&S. The Elgin City, Carpentersville and Aurora Railway had 30 motor cars and one power station to generate electricity for the streetcars and to sell electricity to communities. The rails varied in weight size from 40 to 65 pounds. The Aurora & Geneva Railway had four motor cars and 60 pound rail weight. The Aurora Street Railway had 72 motor cars, 2 snow plows, 4 other railway vehicles and 2 horses along with rail size weights varying from 56 to 67 pounds. Some of the older streetcars were worn out. The interurban cars did not have enough power to run on a faster schedule and lacked needed seats.

EA&S officials publicly stated in May 1901 that they intended to invest about \$203,000 in their electric railways to make many improvements. (The actual amount was higher.) Significant track and trolley wire improvements were made. Four new interurban cars were purchased as described in Part 7 of this series. The new interurban cars entered service on July 11, 1901. Twenty new streetcars, one baggage express car and two street sweeper cars were also ordered and arrived later in the year.

The St. Charles newspaper reported on July 26, 1901, "The city fathers have about completed arrangements with the EA&S for the improvement of Anderson Boulevard. The plans call for a reduction of the track grade from one to two feet, beginning at Bowmen Street and continuing to the crest of the incline at Wilcox Street. The City will grade and stone-chip the street to that point and the residents of that section will rejoice. It is a piece of work that should have been done when the electric line was built."

L. J. Wolf, the President of the EA&S wrote a letter to accompany a prospectus for a bond sale dated June 1, 1901 which gives a great description of the newly formed EA&S.

Dear Sirs:

The Elgin, Aurora & Southern Traction Company is the successor of the Elgin City, Carpentersville & Aurora, The Aurora & Geneva, The Aurora, Yorkville & Morris and The Aurora Street Railway companies. The

properties of the constituent companies make a north and south system, situated about forty miles west of Chicago, having sixty-nine miles of main track-including local lines in the cities of Elgin and Aurora-and serving a contiguous population of about 75,000. The system comprises six miles of electric railway from Carpentersville (population 1,002) through Dundee (pop. 2,765) to Elgin (pop. 22,433); twelve miles in Elgin, twenty-one miles from Elgin through South Elgin (pop. 515), St. Charles (pop. 2,675) Geneva (pop. 2,446) and Batavia (pop. 3,871) to Aurora (pop. 24,147); eighteen miles in Aurora and twenty miles through Montgomery (pop. 350) and Oswego (pop. 618) to Yorkville (pop. 413). Across the river from Yorkville, connected by bridge and lying so close as to be practically a part of the same village, is Bristol (pop. 427).

We have two power houses of brick at Elgin and Aurora respectively and three car barns, one in each of the cities named and in Geneva. The sites of these buildings are all owned by the company fee simple. Our rolling stock consists of twelve large motor cars for through traffic, forty-one smaller motor cars for local service, twelve open trailers and necessary construction and repair equipment. Twenty combination cars, being cars suitable for summer and winter traffic, have been ordered but have not yet been delivered. We operate a public lighting plant in Elgin and has a franchise to operate such a plant in Aurora. For ten and one-half miles our tracks are on private right-of-way. Most of the remainder of the inter-urban portion is operated under franchises granted without time limit. Those having time limits expire in the years from 1916 to 1920. None of our municipal franchises expire before 1915, except in Elgin where the shortest grant expires in 1909.

When the constituent properties came under one management in May, 1901, they were in two groups, each touching Geneva, but without connecting at that point. One of the first acts of the new management was to connect these groups and make the properties a continuous system. Our value of improvement something further to be said. It was also evident that earnings could be greatly increased and cost of operation reduced by expending a considerable sum in improving the physical condition of the line then operated. Accordingly, a comprehensive plan was prepared, contemplating an expenditure of about \$250,000. This plan provided for supplementing the present power plants, improving road bed with ballast and new ties where needed, re-bonding rails where necessary, reconstructing considerable of the inter-urban overhead wire system, repairing rolling stock then in service and purchasing new car for both inter-urban and urban use, replacing old motor equipment with new and making many minor betterment. We have been diligent in carrying out this plan and the contemplated improvements will be practically completed within three or four months. Disregarding current bills, the company had no debts except such as are represented by mortgage bonds, and this will still be true when the above mentioned improvements have been fully paid for. The increased earnings of the company have already furnished a sufficient demonstration of the wisdom of making these improvements.

Elgin and Aurora, the two most important places in Kane County, are separated by almost the entire length of the county. There is naturally large traffic between these cities. Moreover, Geneva, situated almost midway between Elgin and Aurora, is the county seat and this is a special

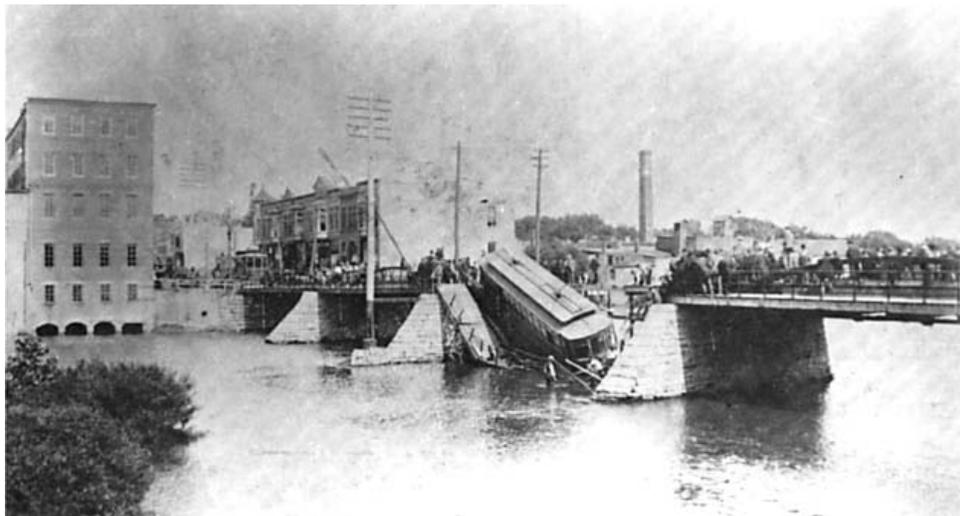
reason for travel between Geneva and the other cities. By building at Geneva to connect the northern and southern parts of the system, a through service between Elgin and Aurora became possible. Yorkville is the county seat of Kendall County, and this tends to draw travel to that point. We have no competitors for the electric railway business in our territory. There are nine parks and resorts along our line so distributed as to draw pleasure seekers from every city and considerable town served by our system.

For the better security of our bonds the mortgage provides that \$17,000 shall be paid into a sinking fund in each of the first five years of the life of the bonds and \$25,000 in each of the thereafter until the bonds become due. Our bonds are a first lien on all the property of the company, except for a mortgage covering the city lines in Elgin and securing \$200,000 bonds, and a mortgage covering the inter-urban line between Carpentersville and Geneva, securing \$100,000 bonds. Our bonds are steel engraved.

Yours Respectfully,

L. J. Wolf, President Dated August 30, 1901

In addition to many physical improvements, train operation improvements were also made. The Geneva newspaper reported on August 10th, "Trolley Lines New Rules. Conductors to Ring up Cash Fares Only and Tickets Punched With Care," read the headline. "New regulations for the streetcar employees went into effect on Thursday August 8th. Each employee was furnished with a copy of the new rules he is expected to rigidly observe. The Conductors and motormen are hereafter to be identified by numbers worn consciously on their caps. The numbers begin with 200, then even numbers being given conductors and the odd to the motormen. John Matteson who of the present employees had been longest in service was assigned 200 and the others follow consecutively according to length of service.



The bridge at St. Charles had not been constructed with the idea that 20 ton electric interurban cars would be crossing it. The result above. The first cars (circa 1896) of the CE&A weighed about one third of that amount. The car is combination baggage-passenger car 106. The

date is July 1, 1902. Based on the shadows the picture is taken looking northwest.

Only cash fares are to be registered. Tickets will be taken up and punched. Books are provided for keeping a complete record of each trip and minutes must be made of the number who ride on passes. The new plan had been introduced to conform to a new system of bookkeeping which had been put into vogue at the office. The conductors's records are almost exact copies of the office books and the clerical work will be considerably lessened. New signs also appear in the interurban car stating that after August 10th, those cars will stop only at such places as are designated by sign posts. It has been estimated that 60 stops would be made between Elgin and Geneva. If each stop consumes 30 seconds, the whole 62 stops would occupy more than 30 minutes. This plan will not change the schedule. The car will make the train in an hour and a half." The City of St. Charles had some concerns about the reduced number of stops in their town. The new arrangement had interurban street cars stopping about every third street corner where the company placed small signs accordingly. The St. Charles newspaper reported, "This idea of stopping the streetcars at only about every third corner is a good one. We understand that the plan was adopted for the purpose of saving time, but if that is the case, the company ought to be consistent. For example, yesterday, the Great Western train for Chicago was fifty minutes late, making it due here at 1:28 pm. Passengers from the 1:20 streetcar ought to have been able to catch the train with ease, but there were three passengers on the car who missed the train because the streetcar stopped at the town pump while the crew members quenched their thirst. After this delay of course they couldn't stop at the street opposite the Great Western Depot, but carried the passengers one block beyond to where one of their signs were posted, even though the train was then at the depot, and pulled out before the passengers could possibly get back to the depot. If the company continues business in this manner, they will find their patronage in this city gradually diminishing instead of increasing, as it had in the past.

The EA&S received a new twenty-year franchise in Elgin on December 3, 1901 to operate streetcars, sell electricity and heat. The franchise required an extension of the Douglas streetcar line north to the new D.C. Cook printing plant under construction and on north State Street.

The local newspapers reported on December 5th and 6th, 1901 that, "The Aurora street railway has received eight handsome new streetcars from the St. Louis Car Works. They arrived via the CB&Q railroad Tuesday. The cars, it is stated are to be used exclusively on the city lines of the company. They are the same dark green color as the present cars on the Elgin-Aurora route, an olive green. The single trucks are now being put under the cars in Aurora. The cars are a six feet longer than the current cars now used in Elgin. Westinghouse improved forty horsepower motors furnish the propelling power, and in a pinch a speed of 24 mph can be attained. Evidently the street railway intend that their road will be second to none in equipment as they buy nothing but the best." The EA&S purchased 20 of these single-truck streetcars. Generally, eleven cars were assigned to operate in Aurora and nine cars were assigned to operate in Elgin. These cars were 30 feet long, 8 wide and had seats for 24 people. More passengers could be carried as standees. The Elgin Newspaper

reported, "These new cars are the pet and pride of the designer Superintendent Zimmerman, who had used many clever ideas. They are so constructed that by taking out the doors and windows, they can be transformed into summer cars, while now they are fitted for winter. Plain wood panels can be easily cleaned, a register which records cash and ticket fares separately, and electric push buttons for every seat are some of the noticeable good features." The EA&S took Elgin officials for a introductory ride on one of the new streetcars on December 6th on a few lines in Elgin and down the interurban line to Batavia to tour the new powerhouse under construction. The tour began at 1 o'clock and returned to Elgin at 6 pm. Those on board expressed themselves as well pleased with the trip. The new car gives the same satisfaction on long runs as on the short trips about the city. There is no jolting. Mr. Ballou expects to launch some of the new cars next week." Two of the new cars began service in Elgin streetcar lines on December 12, 1901 and six were in Elgin service by January 21, 1902.

Additional improvements continued to be made by the EA&S. The January 21, 1902 paper reported, "Three miles of 5/8 inch copper wire has been strung in Elgin this week to take the place of the old 1/4 inch diameter wire. A new waiting station has been put up in South Elgin. It was built in Elgin and taken to its destination this morning on a flat car."

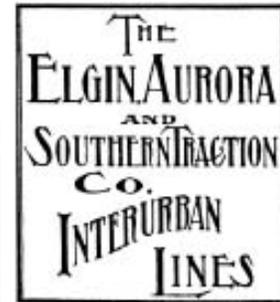
More improvements were made on the EA&S in 1902. Four new double-truck open streetcars were ordered from the St. Louis Car Company. These open cars became the pride of the company's summer streetcar fleet. The open cars were 33'-6" long, had thirteen benches allowing seats for 65 people, five people per bench. Open cars were very popular since air conditioning was rare at that time. A benefit of riding streetcars was the breeze cooled one down.

"Down With a Crash" reported the St. Charles newspaper. "Tuesday, July 1, 1902 at 10:20 am, a streetcar went through the Fox River Bridge. Fortunately all passengers escaped without serious injury. The car, which was crossing from west to east, was running at a slow speed. As the car passed the west pier, the bridge began to waver and then sank with its load of human freight. The rear of the car went down first and barely struck the water. The front of the car rested on the middle pier at an angle of 45 degrees.

Conductor Fritz Snook and John Knell of Aurora were standing on the rear platform when it went down. William Cainau was standing on the rear step. He felt the bridge going and jumped. He clung to the bridge railing and was unhurt. There was only one pedestrian on the bridge at the time. I was Mrs. Chas. Jacobson, and aged lady. She was directly opposite of the car on the south sidewalk and went down with the bridge. She was considerably bruised, but no bones were broken.

Inside the car was great excitement. The women and children screamed, and all began to scramble out. The bridge was in such a condition that those who hurried to the rescue could easily reach the car and they assisted the frightened women out of the wreck, and up the steep incline to the solid portion of the bridge.

Mr. F. Zimmerman of Aurora and Mr. A. Ballou of Elgin, general manager and assistant manager of the road, soon arrived upon the scene of the disaster and with a large gang of men proceeded to clear away the debris. Carpenters were immediately put to work and by the middle of the afternoon, a foot bridge had been erected across the chasm. The work of getting the car out of the hole using derricks, pulleys and jacks progressed slowly and although a gang of men worked at it all night, it was not accomplished until late the following day. The car was not badly damaged. It was broken loose from its trucks and one window was smashed.



Left: Workers took 32 hours to remove the car; however a foot bridge was completed in the afternoon. Again based on the shadows it appears that the picture was taken looking northeast from the north side of the bridge. Right: The Elgin, Aurora & Southern Traction Company logo.

The demolished bridge was built in 1874. It was the best bridge in the county at the time. The general opinion of St. Charles people, after the accident occurred, was to the effect that nearly everyone was glad the accident occurred, so long as no one was hurt, as it settled the lingering bridge question. The officials of the City and electric railway have come in for the severest condemnation for their dilatory tactics in regard to the bridge, which, for more than a year, has been considered unsafe. Last summer experts examined the bridge and pronounced it unsafe for the heavy traffic. At that time, the motormen were instructed to slacken their speed and teams of horses were forbidden to trot on the bridge. The City and railway have had numerous negotiations since then to no mutual agreement on paying for a new bridge. Thus nothing was done. New bridge discussions have begun. In the meantime, the streetcars run to each side of the bridge and passengers are transferred on the foot bridge. The teams (wagons pulled with multiple horses) have been fording the river south of the foundry and paper mill." The St. Charles newspaper reported, "The City Council and the Elgin, Aurora & Southern Traction Company came to an understanding Monday evening July 28th and the result is that the traction company will begin the erection of a new bridge across the Fox River at Main Street of this city at once. The cost of the bridge is estimated at \$26,000 and of this amount the city will pay \$12,000. The railway offered to help keep the cost of the bridge down by using their own superintending engineer, they can save considerable in freight by hauling their own material, and they will not expect any contractor's profit. The new bridge is to be fifty feet wide. The roadway will be thirty-four feet and the two sidewalks each eight feet wide. A concrete bridge can be built in less than six months. An iron bridge could not be built in less than a years time." Construction of the new bridge started on September 3rd and

streetcars began using the new bridge on December 15th. The EA&S constructed bridge was well built and remained in service until being replaced in 1997.

The St. Charles bridge was not the only bridge railway officials were concerned about. The St. Charles August 15th paper reported, "The EA&S is preparing to erect a new bridge across the Fox River between Coleman and Five Islands to take the place of the present timber structure which is said to be unsafe for the heavy cars which are now used. After the St. Charles bridge accident, the company began a thorough inspection of all the bridges on the line, and the above decision is said to be a result of such investigation. The new bridge is to be of cement, and will be considerably higher than the present one, the upward grade being started just south of the Illinois Central viaduct at Coleman and continuing with a gradual raise to the south end of the bridge. The hill this side of the river will also be cut down some to do away with the steep incline which is a great impediment to rapid transit. The old bridge at Five Islands was erected in 1895, when the railway was first put through. It was substantial enough for the light weight cars which were first used, but it is considered far too light for the cars now used." The concrete piers of this new bridge still stand today in 2005 supporting the bike path bridge just south of the Fox River Trolley Museum's tracks.

The following table lists all of the Fox River Division tracks in service in May 1911.

Trackage	Mainline	2nd Mainline	Sidings	Industrial	Total
Aurora-Elgin	18.88 mi.	-----	0.80 mi.	0.11 mi.	19.79 mi.
Aurora-Yorkville	12.14 mi.	2.03 mi	0.08 mi.	0.21 mi.	14.46 mi.
Elgin- Carpentersville	4.20 mi.	-----	0.26 mi.	-----	4.46 mi.
Aurora City Lines	-----	-----	-----	-----	4.46 mi.
Elgin City Lines	-----	-----	-----	-----	18.10 mi.
TOTAL MILES		-----			14.98 mi.
					71.79 mi.

The following table lists car mileage on the Fox River Division for the railroad for May 1910 and May 1911.

Fox River Division Railway Lines	May 1911 (in miles)	May 1910 (in miles)	Increase or Decrease (in miles)
Fox River Division			
Aurora-Elgin	36,101	41,881	- 5,780
Aurora-Yorkville	14,096	14,357	- 261

Elgin-Carpentersville	12,212	12,862	- 650
Express (Aurora-Elgin)	2,800	3,278	- 478
SUB-TOTAL	63,209	72,378	- 7,169
City Lines			
Aurora	69,143	63,708	+ 5,435
Elgin	54,900	51,649	+ 3,253
Fox River Park	7,198	4,574	+ 2,624
SUB-TOTAL	131,241	113,331	+11,312
Work Equipment	3,463	3,600	+ 137
GRAND TOTAL	508,593	483,632	+24,741

Additional changes were made on the EA&S in 1902. The Cleveland Syndicate was constructing a new electric railroad to connect the Fox River Valley cities to Chicago. Construction had begun in 1901 and the portion of the railroad between Aurora and Chicago, along with the railroad branch-line to Batavia, opened for business on August 25, 1902. Fox River Trolley Museum car CA&E No. 20, was a part of the original interurban cars on this railway in August 1902. The Elgin portion of this new electric railway line to Chicago did not open until 1903. The new consolidated Elgin depot for the Chicago service and the Elgin Aurora & Southern cars was well under construction in 1902 and EA&S local office employees moved into the new depot in the first week of July 1902. A new consolidated ticket office was also built in Aurora and opened in early September. The Aurora newspaper reported, "The new transfer station at Aurora now has a new ticket for all street railways, where tickets of all kinds can be obtained as well as at the power house. The new ticket office will be kept open 18 hours a day and will require two ticket sellers, working 9 hour shifts."

Aurora celebrated a huge Labor Day pageant including a grand parade in 1902. The Elgin newspaper reported, "Over five thousand people from Elgin attended the Aurora celebration. C&NW agent E. Howell estimates the number of people who went to Aurora at 5,000. Four C&NW trains of ten coaches each pulled out of Elgin early in the morning. Every seat was taken and the platforms and every inch of standing space were overcrowded. The traction company could not handle the overflow and as a result many people did not reach Aurora in time to see the parade. The EA&S officials gave permission for the Aurora Streetcar Operators to decorate a car and operate it in the parade. It carried a sign saying "Ride on a Union Car."

On a related note, Five Islands Park (which is now the Jon J. Duerr Forest Preserve at the south end of the Fox River Trolley Museum track) was mentioned in the St. Charles Friday September 5, 1902 newspaper. "The K. of P. Dance at Five Islands Park last Monday evening was not such a success as the boys had expected. The Labor Day program at Aurora, which was in progress all day and evening, attracted many of the St.

Charles populace to that burg, thus thinning the crowd at the park to 25 couples. The floor was in excellent shape, the music good and those who attended had a splendid time. At the appointed hour, 12 o'clock, the dance broke up and the attendees went to the entrance of the park to get a car back to St. Charles in short time, but owing to a misunderstanding with the railway, no car was at the place until one o'clock and it was going north. The car ran to Elgin and came back to the park to pick-up the passengers bringing them into town about 2 o'clock.."

The Cleveland Syndicate finally completed the high speed Aurora, Elgin & Chicago branch from Wheaton to Elgin in spring 1903. AE&S Elgin train service began without major fanfare on May 26, 1903. AE&C high speed interurban cars used a track and platform on the river side of the joint Elgin depot. EA&S streetcars and interurbans used street-running tracks on the opposite side of this depot.

A rare event took place in the Fox River Valley when U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt visited Aurora on Wednesday June 3, 1903 to dedicate its Memorial Hall. The Elgin newspaper reported, "Four to Five hundred Elginites journeyed to Aurora during the day to take part in the reception to President Roosevelt. This morning 225 of the special tickets were sold, extra cars leaving Fountain Square at intervals between the regular cars to carry the additional riders. Cars from Dundee and Carpentersville brought people from up-river towns who transferred here to Aurora." The Geneva newspaper reported, "over 750 people from Geneva went to Aurora to see President Roosevelt and partake of the festivities. The streetcar company did its best to handle the people, but those who left on the one o'clock car did not get to Aurora until after the president left. The President was in Aurora from 1:15 pm until only 2:30 pm."

Andrew Roth



A Vision to Work Towards

The tour bus doors open, and the tour group files out to meet a waiting docent. The docent exclaims, "Welcome to the Fox River Trolley Museum. Please follow me to the orientation area."

The group moves into the Education Center auditorium. There they take seats in anticipation of a multimedia orientation presentation. The lights dim, and the show begins. For ten minutes, the guests watch and listen to an overview of the electric transportation world of the 20th century. They learn that before the primacy of the automobile, electric railways moved the millions of the Chicago area from home to work or to family and friends. The presentation ends, and the docent gathers the group to begin the tour experience.

As the group moves ahead, the docent explains the Museum's philosophy is "Education Through Demonstration." The tour group will meet Museum volunteers performing many of the jobs that once moved the millions of the Chicago area. At Fox River, these jobs are more like classrooms for electric railroading.

First up is the train crew room. Motormen and Conductors in between car runs take a break to explain their jobs to the guests. The conversation becomes lively and soon the tour group members begin to understand the life of electric railway operators. Next is the maintenance and restoration center. Here, the docent brings the guests close to the Museum crafts people demonstrating fine carpentry, metalwork, and painting. Finally, the tour moves to the station and boards an electric car. On the car, the train crew interacts with the group members teaching them about running and riding an electric trolley.

On return, the tour group exits the trolley. One visitor asks the docent, Where did the people come from to teach and demonstrate these skills?

The docent reflects for a moment, and then answers, They came here as visitors just like you. They saw the demonstrations, and they saw that they could not only learn the skills needed to run an electric railroad, but teach and pass those skills down to generations to come. Simply put, they are people just like you.

That night, several tour group visitors clicked the Museum's web site and joined so that they could continue their education through demonstration.

Ed Konecki



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.

Track Department News

Member *Rich Chapas* has been working on the Museum's AT&SF Fairmont A3 Motor Car and has brought it back to life. There is still quite a bit of work to do on this unit, including transmission work, but the Museum now has a motor car back in service. Rich is looking for service and parts manuals for the Motor Car, so if you have any in your collections, please drop the Museum a note.

For the 2005 season, the Track Department has three large projects planned, in addition to our standard maintenance work.

First on the list is to change 80 to 90 ties on Castlemuir track two between switch 23 and Switch 54. After the tie change, the track crew will surface the track for a nice smooth ride. Work is planned for the end of March through the end of April

Later in the season, our second big job will be to change ties on the Museum's steel girder bridge. The bridge is approximately 19 feet from abutment to abutment with a total of 13 ties. Work will consist of changing ties and installing new bridge guard timbers. The project is planned for mid-May to the end of June.

Our third big project, after the bridge tie work, is to improve drainage at Stop 52. The project will require a lot of people power so we will need everyone's help on this. The work is planned for either July or August.

See you in South Elgin.

Ed Konecki

Board Sets 2005 Meeting Dates

At the March 19, 2005 meeting The Fox River Trolley Museum Board of Directors set the following meeting dates and times.

Board of Directors -- Saturday, May 21 at 1pm, South Elgin Village Hall

Board of Directors -- Saturday, July 16 at 7pm, South Elgin Village Hall

Board of Directors -- Saturday, September 10 at 1pm, South Elgin Village Hall

Members Day -- Saturday, October 1 at 10am, Museum Grounds

Annual Meeting -- Saturday, November 12, at 7pm, South Elgin Village Hall

Board of Directors -- Saturday, November 19 at 1pm, South Elgin Village Hall

Don MacBean

Sewer Easement News

In October, the Museum granted to the Village of South Elgin (retroactive to August 23, 2004) a 15 foot wide non-exclusive perpetual easement for the purpose of installing, maintaining, repairing, and replacing a sanitary sewer main. The easement will have no effect on the Museum's operation or public appearance.

The easement runs from the south edge to the north edge of our Castlemuir property in parallel to La Fox St. (IL-31). An eight inch sanitary sewer line will be built on the easement. The sewer will run north from the new Cambridge Bluffs town home development. On the Museum property, there will be two access points to the sewer line— one across from the substation and the other across from the Castlemuir Depot. Sewer construction began during the Winter of 2005.

Ed Konecki

Corrections and Clarifications

Issue 2004-3 : Doug Christensen article Page 8.

Doug Christensen's name was misspelled. Ralph Taylor was one of the C&NW morning commuters.

The sentence reading: *"He, Wendell Dillinger and I met in August of 1953 to see what we could do to preserve several CA&E cars."* The year is incorrect and should be 1957. The sentence should read: *"He, Wendell Dillinger and I met in August of 1957 to see what we could do to preserve several CA&E cars."*

The editor regrets the errors and omissions.

March Winds and April Showers

Bring Forth the 2004 Storms



The biggest "fallen tree incident" occurred when a large tree attacked not only our wires, but those of ComEd too, north of the stop at Woodcliff. ComEd had the honor of removing that tree during a storm by driving their line truck down our track. Electric service was cut to part of South Elgin because of this fallen tree incident.

Spring is in the air?.. Let's hope the trees stay there!
Over the years many trees have fallen along the Fox River Line, necessitating their clean up, and sometimes also repairs to the trolley wire overhead system in the aftermath. Last year for example during just May and June we had the following incidents:

A tree split in two, but not apart, and was leaning over the trolley wire like a bow string near Stop 51. After two days of work by *Chuck Galitz, Jim & Jan Gonyo, Ed Konecki*, and a pull with locomotive 73 it was taken down on May 14th & 15th.

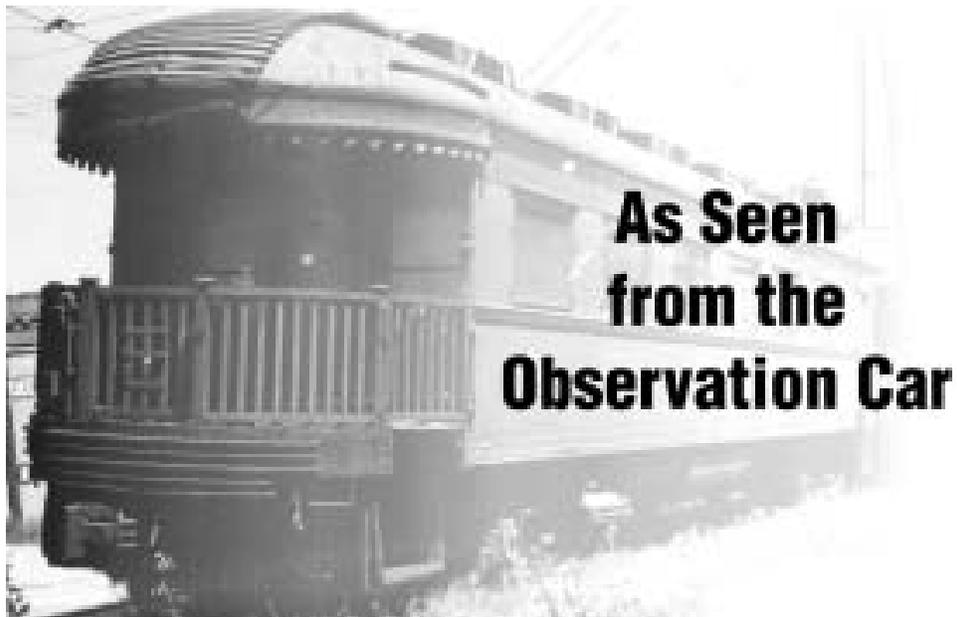
Just a week later a smaller tree by Stop 53 was removed from the track by *Chuck Galitz* and *Don MacBean*.

Then in June a large tree came down in the Coleman Yard area coming to rest on the feeder cable for the trolley wire. Clean up of this monster took place on June 25th & 26th with the aid of *Ralph Taylor, Bill Minerly* and *Chuck Galitz*.

In between these encounters, another large tree attacked not only our wires, but those of ComEd too, north of the stop at Woodcliff. ComEd had the honor of removing that tree during a storm by driving their line truck down our track. Trying to back the truck out later in the mud and climbing the wet rails proved fruitless for the rest of the night. They came back for it the next morning when daylight and drier ground allowed it to be extricated.

One more note; The trees were all deciduous, they DECIDED TO FALL ON US!

Chuck Galitz



Riding from the Past into the Future

One of the opportunities one has riding in an open end observation car is seeing the same scene or many scenes from several if not more vantage points. I remember my first open end observation car ride. It was in 1946 on Great Northern 236 from Butte to Havre, Montana. It was the local connection to the *Empire Builder*. The route started in a very large valley where Butte is located and traversed the mountains that were part of the headwaters of the Missouri River. The scenery was mundane in the view of many locals, but to a teenage railfan it was spectacular. The icing on the cake was riding in an open end observation car, part of a four-car train being pulled by a steam locomotive.

Leaving Butte with its then world's largest copper mine one saw shaft heads all over the place, the downtown, rows of houses and large smoke stacks and streets with people and autos. And then boom the scene vanished, we were in a tunnel and then soon rounding a curve there was Butte, several thousand feet below. No people, a barely recognizable street pattern and diminutive shaft heads. Another curve found the train following a clear mountain stream, bounded by beautiful balsam firs (I visualized many of them as our next Christmas' Christmas tree) and then the "waiter in charge" "called" for lunch. I ordered a sandwich with the trimmings, ate most of it and taking the remainder to the open platform, sat down in one of the chairs to enjoy the sandwich and the ever changing scenery.

Every new curve provided a different view, sometimes of the same area from a different angle and distance or an entirely different vista. What does this have to do with Fox River Trolley Museum? The whole trip to Great Falls, my destination, was the big picture and the individual views were part of a tableau making up the entire experience from which many conclusions were drawn and acted upon. What are the conclusions to be made from your ride in the observation car that is your participation in the

Fox River Trolley Museum from 1963 (when we arrived in South Elgin) to 2005? What has happened from then to now? Have the expectations of 1963 been met? Are we better off now in terms of physical plant, cars, traffic, visitor questions and visits, internal relationships . . . what has changed and what needs to be changed and how did we or do we do it? Has it been a smooth and breath taking trip or rough and disconcerting . . . has the purpose of the trip . . . the arrival at THE destination been achieved . . . are we there yet and if not what do we have to do to get there?

One of the great vistas of 2004, if not the greatest, was the overwhelming success of "**POLAR EXPRESS**" . . . not in terms of revenue but the fact that over forty people, Museum members, community members and Museum friends worked hard *TOGETHER* over many many weeks to do something exciting and new. That was a great view! What will rounding the next curve reveal?

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