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New England Electric Railway Historical Society/ Seashore Electric Railway: Special Report -- Boston Collection

New England Electric Railway Historical Society

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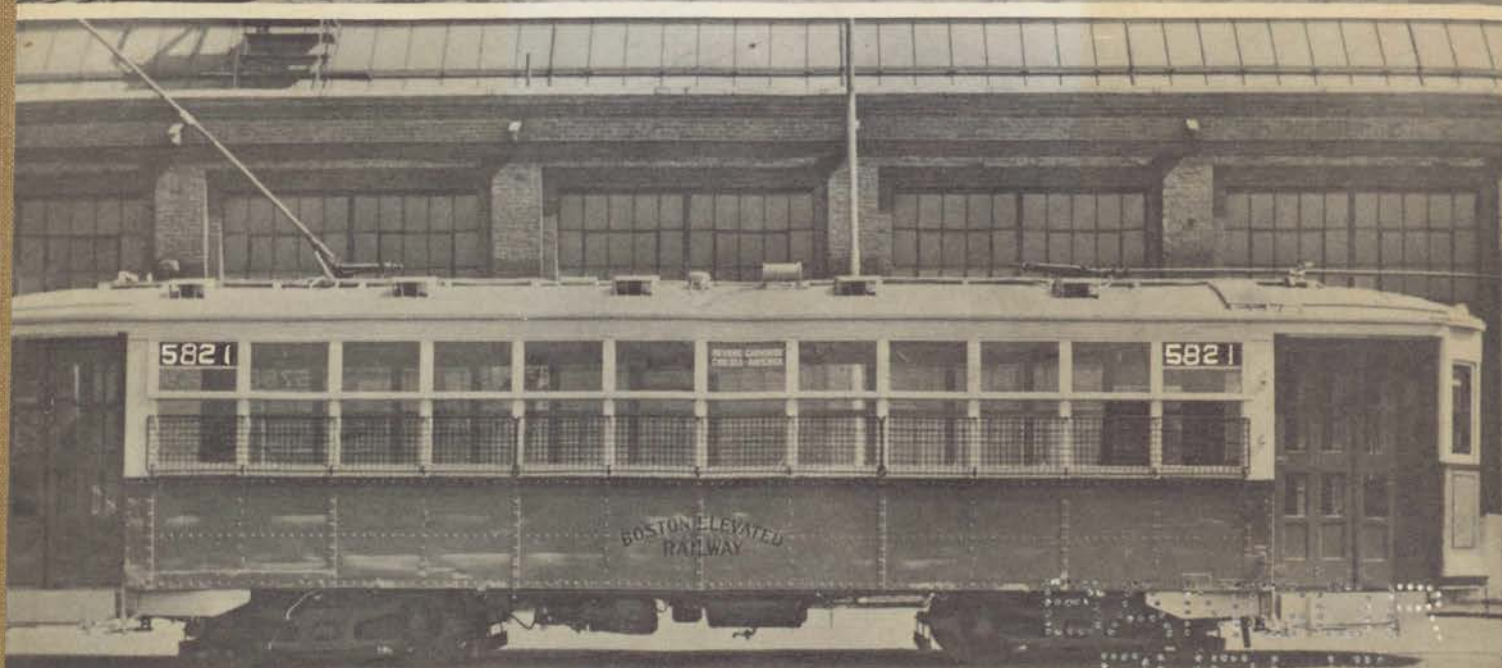
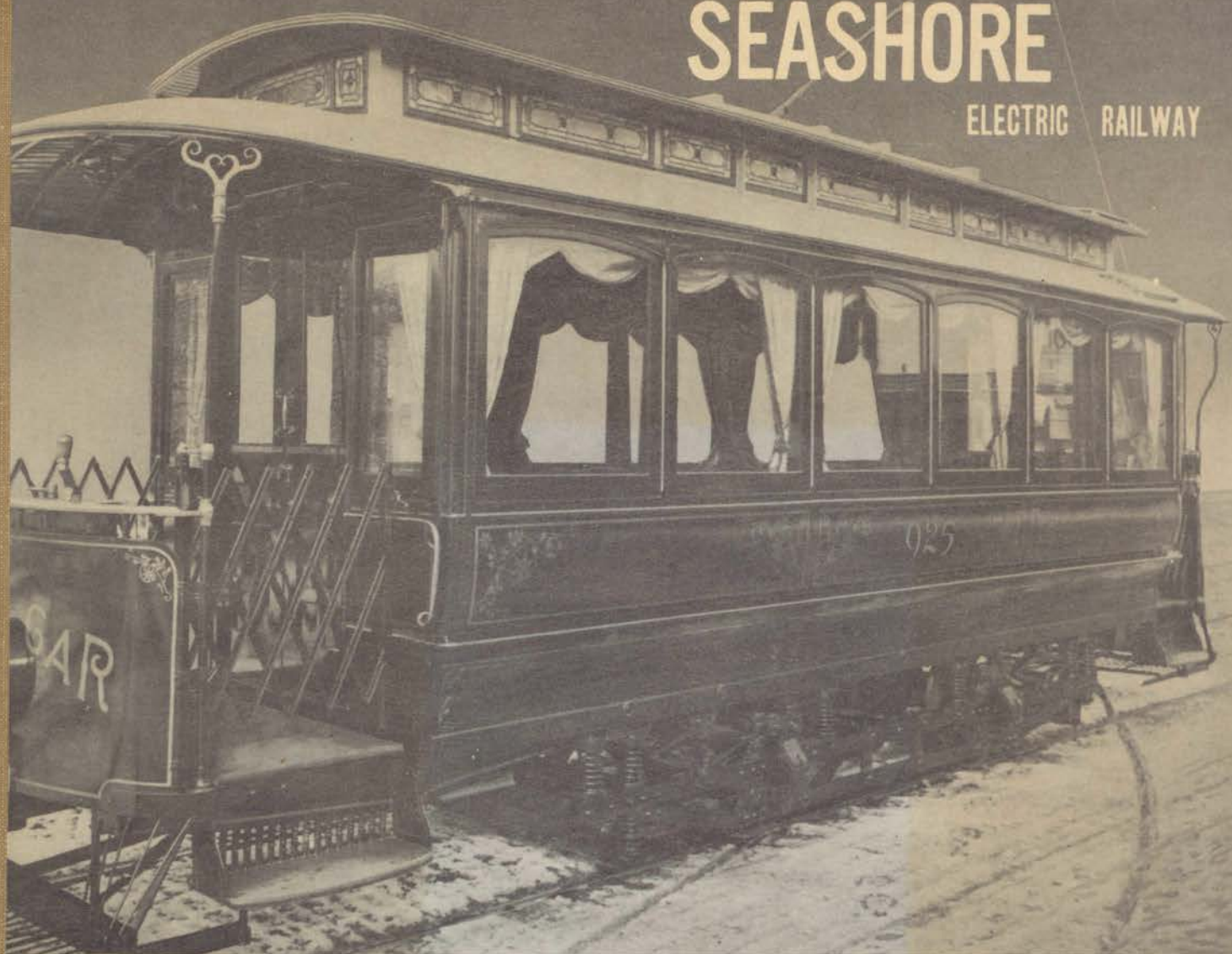
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SEASHORE

ELECTRIC RAILWAY



SPECIAL REPORT: BOSTON COLLECTION

DANFOR, ME.

Special Report
on the
BOSTON COLLECTION
of the

SEASHORE ELECTRIC RAILWAY
owned and operated by the
New England Electric Railway
Historical Society, Inc.

A non-profit educational foundation
Founded 1939 - Incorporated in Maine, 1941

Museum

Biddeford Road, Kennebunk Port, Maine
Office

21 Carver Road, Newton Highlands 61, Mass.

Photo Credits: 372, 475, type 2 interior, T. F. Santarelli —
396, 925, 3246, 5060, 5821, C. A. Duncan — 3608, C. C. Holt —
6270, R. L. Womson.

Cover Photo. Boston streetcars from
start to finish. Parlor car 925 (above)
began service on West End Street
Railway in 1894. Type 5 (below)
were last conventional car type
ordered by the Boston Elevated
Railway, 1922-28.

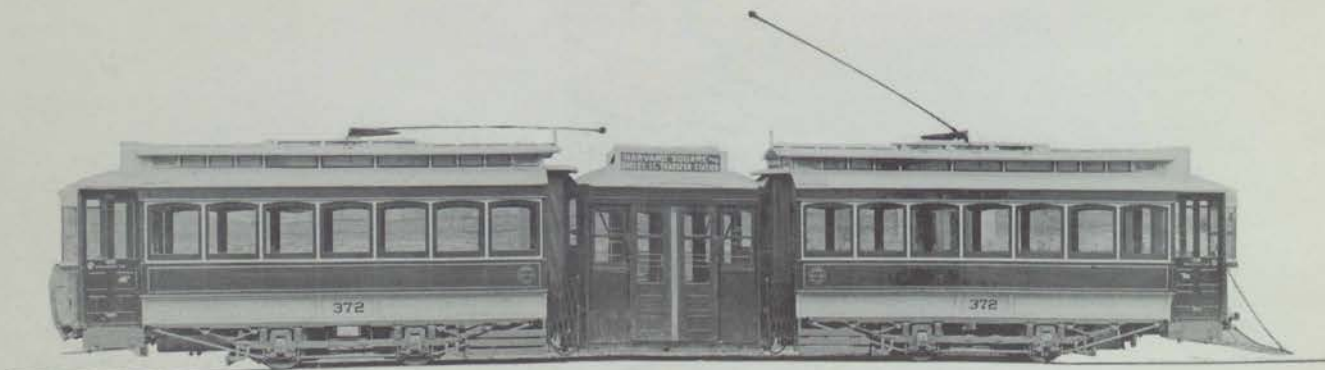
In recent years, this Society has undertaken to gather a collection of electric railway equipment to illustrate the many developments that marked the rise and decline of this fabulous but short-lived industry. As a part of this program, we have acquired a group of cars from Boston's Metropolitan Transit Authority representing an almost complete sequence of car types from a single large system. We had several Boston cars, and when it became clear that most of the remaining old equipment on the MTA would soon be retired, we undertook to preserve seven more cars, which, with those we already had, would form a living record of local streetcar evolution.

Besides the fact that the Society's activity has centered in the locality, and that Boston has always been noted for its attention to historical matters, there are several other reasons why so extensive a representation of this one system is a tremendously significant part of a cosmopolitan collection. The Boston system was among the first to be electrified on a large scale (1889), and is the largest one in America that has been unified ever since horsecar days (1887). Boston's subway was the first in the New World (1897), and it is the first city where both rapid transit lines and surface routes were operated by the same

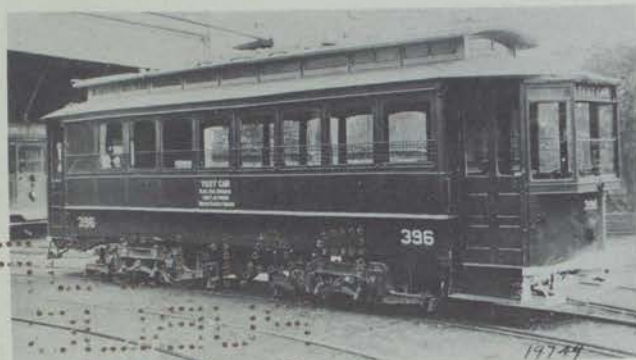
management. The resulting use of surface equipment in combined service may well keep streetcars in Boston long after they have disappeared elsewhere. As the largest single system, the Boston operation could set its own standards of car design. Only in the case of Birney and PCC cars were standard types used, and even these were modified. Today the picture window rapid transit and PCC cars are regarded as the most advanced in the industry.

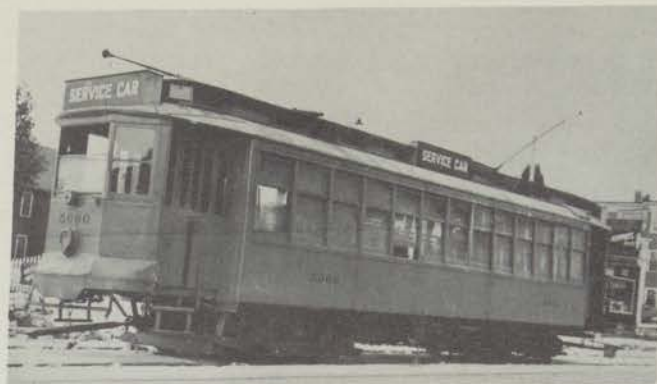
When the West End Street Railway, predecessor of the Boston Elevated (now the MTA), was electrifying its railway system in the 1890's the cars they bought for the purpose were little different from the horsecars they replaced. Car 1059, a 20 ft. box car, is typical of these early single truck cars, and was later modified by the addition of a West End Portable Vestibule, one of the first efforts to shield the motorman from the elements. Interestingly enough, this innovation was bitterly opposed at the time by the men and their union because of danger from broken glass. This little car served in recent years as a rail grinder, but beyond removal of seats and installation of grinding equipment, it is the same as it was when it carried passengers, and will be repainted outside as it was originally.

About this same time, it was fashionable



Snake Car. Most of the 20 foot box cars like Seashore's 1059 were rebuilt into articulated units like 372 (above). Many were also built from 25 foot box cars like 396 (below, left). Employees knew them as "Two Rooms and a Kitchen." Center Entrance Cars (below, right) copied reverse poles and center sliding doors.





Pencil Sharpener. Interior view of Type 2 semi-convertible (left) shows features of the Brill Company's famous design. Seashore plans to restore 5060 (right) to its original condition.

for every streetcar company to have a parlor car for its officials and for charter service. The West End line had six, of which 925 was kept as a tow car long after the others were discarded as an unnecessary expense. This car still has its original stained glass clerestory windows, and we hope in time to replace the elegant drapes and interior furnishings.

The West End early recognized the larger capacity and better riding quality of a double truck car. After two experimental designs in 1890-92 they standardized on their third, "25 ft. box no. 3," buying a total of 750 from 1895 to 1900. No. 396 is from the last order of this type. It was actually built for the Boston Elevated Railway, which had leased the West End in 1897.

The Boston Elevated in 1903 produced a new design, the 26 ft. 6 in. box car, of which No. 475 is one. This was the first type to have air brakes and enclosed vestibules as original equipment. Also it introduced the Boston Front, a dash with three flat panels matching the three windows. The Elevated claimed that in case of accident it was much easier to replace one flat panel than a whole curved dash. This front was used on all Boston surface cars until streamlining was introduced in 1937. West End and Elevated box cars had numbers from 1 to 1650. New cars were given whatever numbers happened to be vacated by cars retired, wrecked, or lost in fires. When it became obvious that airbrakes should be on all equipment, the company was distressed to discover that neither the 20 foot (1059 type) or the 25 foot (396 type) boxcars had enough room underneath for both air and the electrical equipment already there. This problem and the need for still larger cars were ultimately solved by making pairs into the famous articulated cars nicknamed "two rooms and kitchen" or "snake cars." The regular vestibules were sawed off one end of each car and a hanging hinged affair substituted. The air compressor could then be placed on one car and the grids and other electrical equipment on the other. It is said that a disadvantage of these was that it took quite a crew to reraill one of these cars,

which left the track all too often.

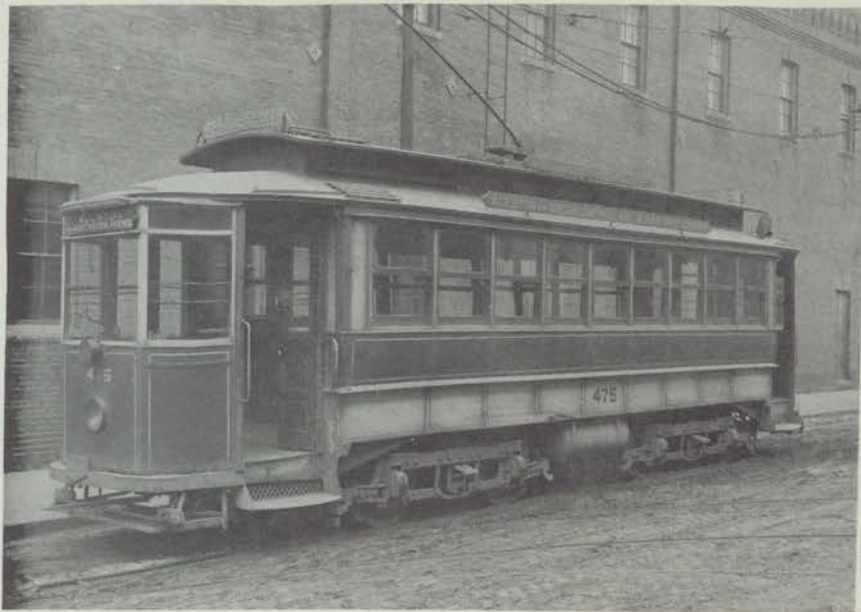
Open summer cars were, of course, a feature of the early days, and one can only imagine what it must have been like to ride one in the subway, because all of them were scrapped long ago. Our collection contains open cars from other systems which are much like those of early Boston, since there was much less variation in open car design. The expense of keeping two sets of cars caused consideration in Boston, as elsewhere, of a semi-convertible type of car, in which wide opening windows approximated the ventilation of the summer cars. Most famous of all semi-convertible designs was that of the Brill Company, in which the windows could be pushed up into the roof. The Type 2 Semis, like 5060, were a Brill product throughout, and a few were retained for use as compressor cars. The Type 1's, all scrapped long ago, were

similar, though they did not embody the Brill Patent, and the Type 3's were substantially the same body design as the Type 2's, but were built by St. Louis under a Brill license, and had different trucks. Although some 3's are still in service as snowplows, they have been so drastically modified that restoration would be close to impossible. The Type 2's also were originally "Easy Access Cars," with sliding doors, though these were later replaced with the folding type.

For many years snake and box cars were used where track had not been re-spaced to the clearance required by the bigger semi-convertibles.

Perhaps the greatest gap in the series is the Type 4, of which there were many in service until recently, but of which it was unfortunately impossible to secure a specimen when the last ones were retired. The slightly later

Fill In. The first airbrake cars in Boston were bought to replace 25 foot box cars that had burned in carhouse fires.

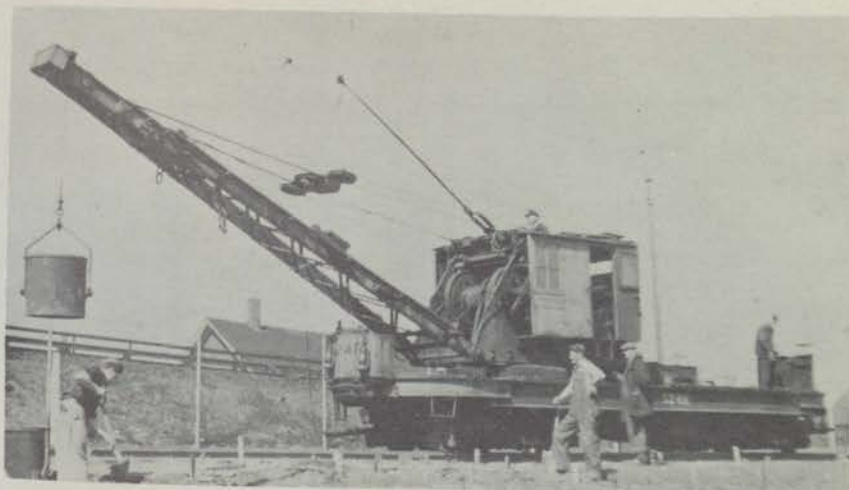


Center Entrance cars, such as 6270, however, embody many similar body design features, though they have a different door arrangement and lower trucks, and Dump Car 3608 has Type 4 trucks, motors and controls. The first three hundred Center Entrance cars like 6270 had multiple unit controls for use in the East Boston Tunnel and the Boylston St. Subway. They were followed by the 6300 series with single unit controls, and the lower-roofed 7000 series trailers pulled by Type 4's. The sliding center doors and the reversed trolley poles are said to be copied from the snake cars.

Although the Elevated bought Birney Safety Cars like Seashore's 80, 82, and 615, it soon became dissatisfied with them, and, like many other companies, undertook to design its own double truck arch roof lightweight car. The Type 5, last of the semi-convertible series, was designed for utmost simplicity, but still kept such features as the Boston Front, and the inward tilt from beltrail to roof that would keep cars with broken springs or similar difficulties from striking the walls of the subway. Like all Boston cars, they have wooden slat seats. 471 of these cars were built, representing several builders and equipment suppliers, and with several minor modifications between orders. Car 5821 is a Brill-General Electric model of one of the later series, which had all brass window sash. Although Seashore's 4400 is in some respects similar and ran on the Elevated for many years, it is essentially a foreign car, having come originally from the Eastern Mass. Street Railway as part of the Chelsea Division that was sold to the El in 1937. The cars had to be retained for use on that division as long as it had streetcars, since the limited clearances, particularly in the carbarns, precluded use of the company's own equipment.

In addition to the passenger cars that have been converted to work equipment, we have several from the MTA that were originally built as service cars. Motor Flat 2016 was built in the company shops, and has its own loading crane, plus reverse poles like a Center Entrance Car. Big Hook 3246 was used to clean up wrecks and pull rail from the streets. Differential Dump Car 3608 can dump gravel clear of the track on either side. Although Seashore's rail will probably never see service so severe that Goldschmidt Grinder 3234 will be needed as a utility item, it is one of the most fascinating mechanisms ever developed by the electric railway industry, and we expect it to be one of our most valuable exhibits.

Although we had hoped to obtain this last group of cars as a gift, the public character of the MTA precluded this. We are, however, indebted to the trustees for reserving the cars for us at a reasonable price. As always, these costs must be met by contributions from members and others interested in seeing this equipment preserved. If you have not already participated, we hope this may interest you in



Hook and Dump. Twenty ton crane (above) and differential side dump car (below) are Seashore's first pieces of heavy work equipment.



doing so. Contributions should go to the Boston Car Fund, New England Electric Railway Historical Society, Inc., 21 Carver Road,

Newton Highlands 61, Mass. All contributions are tax deductible, and those from members will be credited for shares of contribution.

ROSTER OF SEASHORE'S BOSTON COLLECTION

| No. | Type | Builder | Year | Trucks | Motors | Control |
|------|-----------------------|----------------|------|----------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| 925 | Parlor car | Jones | 1894 | Brill 21E | 2-GE86 | K-28N |
| 1059 | 20-ft. box, grinder | Barney & Smith | 1895 | West End | 2-GE86 | K-28N |
| 396 | 25-ft. box | St. Louis | 1900 | Peckham 14B4 (Bost. Spec.) | 2-GE86 | K-28 |
| 475 | 26-ft. box | Newburyport | 1904 | Taylor LB | 2-GE86 | K-28N |
| 5060 | Type 2 Semi-conv. | Brill | 1906 | Brill 27 | 2-WH306CVD | M, C26C |
| 2016 | Motor flat with hoist | Boston Elev. | 1912 | Std. 0-50 | 4-WH101B | K-28G |
| 3234 | Automatic grinder | Goldschmidt | 1913 | Angle Iron | 3-GE (5 hp) | CR |
| 3246 | Electric crane | Industrial | 1916 | Industrial | 4-WH306 | HL, 15B |
| 6270 | M-U Center Entrance | Kuhlman | 1918 | Brill 77E | 4-GE247 | ABPC, 32A |
| 5821 | Type 5 Semi-conv. | Brill | 1924 | Std. C-35P | 4-GE264A | K-71 |
| 3608 | Side Dump | Differential | 1926 | Taylor HLB | 4-WH306 | HL, 15B |
| 4400 | Deluxe lightweight | Bradley | 1927 | Brill 177E-1X | 4-GE265 | K-35KK-LB |

All owned by Boston Elevated Railway until 1947; after 1947, by Metropolitan Transit Authority. Cars 925 and 1059 owned by West End Street Railway until 1897. Car 4400 owned by Eastern Mass. Street Railway until 1937.

New England Electric Railway Historical Society, Inc.



HALF WAY 'ROUND THE WORLD BY TROLLEY!



SEASHORE ELECTRIC RAILWAY

Proudly Acknowledges Two New Gifts
From GREAT BRITAIN and CALIFORNIA

SEASHORE ELECTRIC RAILWAY

New England Electric Railway Historical Society, Inc.

In a year during which Seashore's rolling stock additions have amounted to nearly half the total previous roster, two cars stand out as among the most significant exhibits ever placed in any railway museum. Not only do they come from farther away than any equipment previously placed in ours or any other collection, spanning most of the free world, but their intrinsic features would make them outstanding even if they came from the next county.

Although California's mild climate makes open air cars desirable, there are just enough unpleasant days to preclude the exclusive use of the usual type of open car, but not enough to justify having a set of closed cars in addition. As a result, a special type of car with a closed center or end section, and the rest of the car open, was developed back in horsecar days. Except for Birneys, PCC's, and a few interurbans, almost every car type used in the state incorporated this design in one form or another. Even today, most of the remaining conventional equipment, including the San Francisco Cable Cars, is of the 'California' type, as these were called.

Many of these cars were already in service on the several cable and electric car systems which Henry E. Huntington took over around the turn of the century and consolidated into the Los Angeles Railway. This equipment was poorly designed, and much of it was worn out, so Huntington ordered his engineers to design a completely new car that would give his customers the best of everything - the Los Angeles Standard Car. It kept the basic California design, but was much larger, with a square front and curved glass corner windows, much in vogue at the time in higher priced home construction. The standards were widely copied, even in some Pacific Electric Interurban cars. Los Angeles Railway ordered them over and over again, with only minor variations.

Seashore's 521, built by St. Louis in 1906, is typical of the class, which, through the medium of motion pictures, is probably familiar to more people than any other car design. Many persons in remote areas and among our own televiewing younger generation who have never seen a real trolley car know what a Los Angeles Standard looks like.

Car 521 was donated to the society by Los Angeles Transit Lines, which bought the property from the Huntington estate in 1945. Both managements were known

for the quality of their maintenance, which accounts for the splendid condition in which this car was received.

Double deck cars were tried in this country by several systems, but were soon given up as unsatisfactory. In Britain, however, quite the opposite is true, and nearly all the cars used there, including PCC's, have a second floor.

Traditionally, one of the finest systems in all England is that operated by the County Borough of Blackpool, one of the country's leading seaside resorts. Local conditions are ideal for street railway operation, and the line has endeared itself to British rail enthusiasts by continuing to improve its tramway facilities, rather than substituting other types of vehicles.

The standard cars of the system, built in the '20's' in the Blackpool Transport Department's own shops, were typical of British trams generally, including those of the late lamented London Transport. Many of the conventional cars are being displaced in Blackpool now, not by buses, but by PCC type equipment, and one of the standards, No 144, has been donated to Seashore by the Blackpool Transport Committee and the town council. This car also has had excellent maintenance, and is therefore in prime condition.

It should be a matter of tremendous pride to our members and friends that our work has received worldwide recognition. The transit industry has cooperated almost universally with us in helping to build our collection of historic equipment, but it is now our responsibility to finance the movement and maintenance of these and other cars we have obtained. The costs for shipping these two cars alone will be considerable, but we have proceeded in the faith that our supporters would agree with us that these are extremely valuable exhibits, and back us financially in the undertaking.

Contributions to the Blackpool and Los Angeles car funds are tax deductible, and, if from members, will be credited for shares of contribution. Please be sure to specify that your contribution is for a specific car fund. All correspondence should be directed to:

NEW ENGLAND ELECTRIC RAILWAY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

21 Carver Road
Newton Highlands 61, Mass.

Blackpool Corporation Transport Department No. 144, by E. R. Hargreaves
Los Angeles Transit Lines No. 521 unloading at Boston, by Foster Palmer