



FORT SMITH TROLLEY MUSEUM

TROLLEY REPORT

Winter 2007

Number 91

Panera Bread Fund-Raising Event

Come eat a good meal and help the Trolley Museum at the same time. The Fort Smith Trolley Museum will host an "Event Night" at Panera Bread, located at 2917 S. 74th Street (across from St. Edwards Hospital), in Fort Smith, Arkansas, on Monday, December 17, 2007. The hours for this event will be from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM. While you are there, be sure to get a delicious sandwich, cup of soup, or pastry, and Panera Bread will donate a portion of your total bill back to the Trolley Museum. In order for us to receive a portion of the sale, please sign our guest book that will be available at the restaurant.

In addition to the great food, the Trolley Museum Gift Shop will have items available for sale. These would make great last minute Christmas gifts for the trolley fan on your list.

We will need as many of our friends of the museum as possible to come by in order for this event to be successful. For more information, please call Bradley Martin at 479-650-5456. We hope to see you there.

Restoration Updates

Hot Springs Street Railway 50 is getting closer to being operational. The dash window frames are being painted and should be installed by the time you receive

this newsletter. Next, we will finish the brake system which has been on hold because the brake valves mount to the dash. After the brakes are finished we will complete the wiring for the traction motors.

The seat handles for the backs of the walkover seats in the Fort Smith Light and Traction 205 have been cast, and they are being polished. The cherry lumber for the seats has been purchased. We will be mounting the metal seat frames in the car soon and begin reproducing the backs and bottoms for the seats.

We can always use more volunteers to help with the restoration. To volunteer or for information call Bradley Martin at 479-650-5456.

Charles Winters' Library Donated

Charles Winters' books, papers, photographs, and files were recently donated to the Trolley Museum by his widow, Ann Winters. The publication of his manuscript of the history of Fort Smith's streetcars by the Fort Smith Historical Society was the catalyst that led to the founding of the Fort Smith Trolley Museum. The extensive collection represents the life's work of an excellent railway and steam locomotive historian. Thank you, Mrs. Winters, for your generosity in sharing this with us.

These donated materials

contain all of Winters' correspondence and research of streetcar history as well as an extensive history of the Fort Smith and Western Railroad. His files on the FS&W RR are very detailed with many supporting documents and photos. This is an excellent addition to the museum's growing library and archives.

His expansive collection fills 45 feet of shelf space, and many of the books are hard to find or out of print. Included is the complete run of the Railway & Locomotive Historical Society Bulletins from 1921 to 2006 and the Locomotive Quarterly from Volume 1 in 1976 to 2006.

We plan to build a library and archive with a public meeting room in the 3rd street building to properly house the Trolley Museum's growing collection.

If you have not made plans for the preservation of your own library, please give the Fort Smith Trolley Museum consideration. Whether it is made up of one item or a house full, your collection is important to us. Remember that larger libraries and museums already have extensive collections and that duplicate donations are many times sold or discarded. Your donation to the Trolley Museum will insure the preservation of your research materials and historic artifacts for use by future generations.

Looking Back

continued

by Becky Meyers

The last issue of the *Trolley Report* carried a letter written by Albert B. Elliot, sexton of Oak Cemetery, in December of 1922. He was requesting that the Ft. Smith Light and Traction Co. not discontinue service on the Little Rock Ave. Line to Oak Cemetery.

“Service on the Little Rock Avenue Line began at the foot of Garrison, extending east on double tracks to 13th, and further east on Little Rock Avenue, passing the junction with the Park Hill Line at 21st. Double track ended just east of 23rd, single track continued to Greenwood where the line turned south on private right of way at the east side of the curb line, with track ending at Oak Cemetery.”

It seems the reason the Ft. Smith Light and Traction Co. wanted to discontinue service was financial. The following information explains some of what was happening at the time.

“As a regular step in civic improvement, city authorities announced they would pave Greenwood Avenue, notifying the Light and Traction at the same time. With car tracks positioned along the east curb line and resting on rock ballast, the city ordered relocation and pavement of the route along the center line of Greenwood. Objecting to expenses of relocation and pavement, the company announced it would abandon the Greenwood Avenue track. Litigation dragged along for some months before the company began movement and pavement of the trackage.”

Obviously, service on the Little Rock Avenue Line was continued but no definite ending

date has been found. Reading between bits of information and in chronological order it was found that “The Fort Smith Light & Traction Company’s transportation division became a separate corporation in 1928, known as the Fort Smith Traction Company, a wholly owned O.G. & E. subsidiary.” With this information in 1928 and the following information written in 1929, “Fort Smith leaders considered improvement and paving of an east-west thoroughfare for designation as a link through the city for highways under construction in the area. Selecting Little Rock Avenue for widening and new pavement, streetcar service on that line ended, and the improved thoroughfare became Rogers Avenue. Related trackage removal included rails on 21st Street between Little Rock and South H Street and duplicate tracks situated along the west curb of 21st Street between Dodson and South W Street, leaving the Park Hill line to operate as a single tract route.” One can conclude that the Little Rock Line had service discontinued sometime in 1928 or 1929.

Streetcar service was slowly ending. In August of 1933, electric power production and marketing of the Fort Smith Light & Traction Company became the O.G. & E.’s Arkansas Division. Citing heavy financial losses of the subsidiary Fort Smith Traction Company, management announced that all operations would cease on November 15, 1933 to be followed by complete dissolution of the corporation.

2007 Operating Season

The 16th season of the Fort

Smith Light and Traction Birney car #224 was completed on November 1. The rider numbers for the season were above that of last year. However, the total is not the highest the museum has ever seen. The greatest number of riders was the second year of operation when the experience was still very new. The last commercial operation of the car was November 15, 1933, so few people remembered riding streetcars in Fort Smith.

If the price of gasoline continues to rise, interest may increase in the local museums as people look for entertainment and attractions closer to home. Fort Smith has several historic museums of interest in addition to the Trolley Museum. The newest museum will be the US Marshal’s Museum which will be built on the banks of the Arkansas River. This will be an ideal museum to fit with already existing National Historic Site where Judge Parker’s court has been restored. Judge Parker used the marshals to keep law and order in western Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma. The Fort Smith Museum of History is adjacent to the National Historic Site and is a stop on the trolley track. Also open for public viewing are Miss Laura’s, which currently houses the Fort Smith Visitor’s Center, the Art Center, and the Clayton House. Judge Clayton was a prosecuting attorney for Judge Parker.

More information about the extensive history of Fort Smith can be found in Fred Patton’s book a History of Fort Smith, and also *The Journal*, a publication of the Fort Smith Historical. Amelia Martin, a cofounder of the Trolley Museum and past editor of *The Journal*, was one of the founders of the Historical Society.

Happy 90th Birthday Art Martin

Art Martin, the founder of the Fort Smith Trolley Museum, is celebrating his 90th birthday! You are all invited to his birthday party at the Clayton House, 514 N. 6th St., on Sunday, December 9th from 2-4pm. Please join Art and his family as he celebrates 90 years of living, loving, and learning.

Year End Charitable Giving

Please remember the Trolley Museum in your year-end tax planning as 2007 draws to a close.

Donations of appreciated stocks and property are deductible at the asset's current value when donated and not your original cost.

Also, there is a new tax break for IRA owners. An IRA

owner, age 70 ½ or over, can directly transfer tax-free up to \$100,000 per year to an eligible charitable organization. This option is available in tax years 2006 and 2007. Eligible IRA owners can take advantage of this provision regardless of whether or not they itemize their deductions. For the funds to qualify for this tax break, they must be contributed directly by the IRA trustee to the eligible charity. Amounts transferred in this manner are non-taxable. Unfortunately, distributions from employer-sponsored retirement plans, including SIMPLE IRAs and simplified employee pension (SEP) plans are not eligible.

We at the Fort Smith Trolley Museum greatly appreciate any financial contribution made by our supporters. We couldn't do it without you!

Trolley Report

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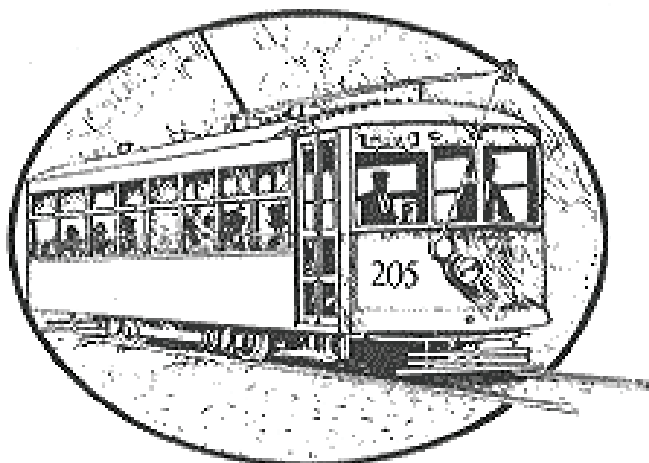
Association of Railway Museums, Inc.
Founded 1961

Promoting The Railway Museum Movement!

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100 S. 4th Street
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Panera Fund-Raising Event
December 17th from 5pm-8pm

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