

Brookins Collection Update

By Bob Bresse-Rodenkirk

Five years have passed since the Gerald E. Brookins Museum's collection, mainly of streetcars and interurbans, was put up for auction. Today, a few have become star attractions in their new homes, while the rest await restoration.

Illinois Railway Museum has the largest group of cars and added in the past year the only streetcar the Brookins family held back from the 2009 auction, Cleveland center entrance car 1218 (Kuhlman, 1914), which spent most of its operating career on the Shaker Heights Rapid Transit as its 18. The Brookins family's original plan was to put the car on display in the University Circle neighborhood in Cleveland in a newly-built, climate-controlled building, but the plans fell through.

Car 1218 remains in the "protective cocoon" in which it was shipped to IRM, said IRM President Joe Stupar, but several of the other former Brookins cars at IRM are regular performers. CA&E 319 (Jewett, 1914) was repainted shortly after its 2009 arrival with the steel cars and required little mechanical work; over this past winter work began to replace its canvas roof. CA&E 409 (Pullman, 1923), the sole remaining Pullman-built Third Rail car, required replacement of a bad motor, a new air tank and work on a large portion of its air system but has been part of IRM's regular operating fleet.

Vera Cruz open car 19 (Brill, 1914) was the first car from Trolleyville to operate at IRM and is a "popular" performer, Stupar said. Despite that, time has been found to repaint the car, including its seats. He said its brake valve has been replaced with a more authentic straight air valve, and the brake rigging beneath the car has been changed.

CA&E 36 (Stephenson, 1903), from the Third Rail's second order of interurban cars, has been repainted back to the blue paint scheme of the 1940s, and Stupar said that a replacement air compressor is waiting to be mounted (see page 11). CA&E 451 (St. Louis, 1945) has a new canvas roof that awaits appliances but requires significant interior work, including a complete interior repainting. CA&E 460 (St. Louis, 1945), America's last standard interurban car, performed yeoman duty while the Brookins Museum's future was in doubt, working as the "locomotive" moving other cars to and from storage locations on the Cleveland Rapid. Since arrival at IRM, Stupar said, Electric Car Dept. volunteers have patched its roof, installed new batteries and resistors and done some mechanical work; it operates occasionally. Significant work also has been done on Shaker PCC 63 (St. Louis, 1947), which now sports glass windows salvaged from scrapped CTA 1-50 series cars, replacing the worn Lexan windows that came from Cleveland. It also has had significant cleaning and painting done and as of April 1, awaited a replacement agastat in its control circuitry.

Neither of the former Brookins cars at the **Fox River Trolley Museum** are regular performers, although ex-Fox River, ex-Shaker Heights car 304 (St. Louis, 1923) has operated for numerous special events, even as its restoration continues. Museum Car Dept. Director Joe Hazinski said that 2014 plans call for nine appearances, all on special events days, including the Aug. 16-17 Trolleyfest and Pumpkin Trolley operations October 18, 19, 25



▲ Car 303 is in storage at Dock 32 in Cleveland showing the effects of an accident years earlier at Trolleyville. —Northern Ohio Railway Museum (NORM) collection



▲ In NORM's barn the smashed front end has been removed from car 303 and new steel has been fitted into place on the frame and front bumper. —NORM Collection

▼ Chuck Legree has done a lot of work on car 303 including the painting as shown here in September 2013. —NORM Collection





▲ During the Fall of 2013 this line up of cars at NORM is in front of their barn that is located in Seville, Ohio, west of Akron, on the right-of-way of the former Cleveland & Southwestern's interurban line. —NORM Collection

and 26. The interior of the car has gone through extensive cleaning and varnishing, and its seats have been reupholstered. Plans for 2014 include repainting the roof to a red more in line with the color it used on both the Fox River Line and Shaker Heights Rapid Transit, along with “other subtle improvements.” The roof of CA&E 458 (St. Louis, 1945) has been patched and repainted and under-the-floor areas repainted, along with one end of the car; the rest of the car is slated to be sandblasted, primed, repainted and re-lettered. Mechanical systems have been repaired and updated to the point that 458 can be moved, but Hazinski said

problems persist with its brake system. Its interior requires a substantial amount of work, although the roof repairs have blocked out the raccoons that made 458 home during its last days in Cleveland (see page 75).

Northern Ohio Railway Museum received the second-largest number of cars, five, along with the Trolleyville substation, its Fairmont ballast tamper, bracket arms and shop tools. The car that has received the most work to date is ex-Fox River, ex-Shaker Heights car 303 (St. Louis, 1923), which is being repainted into its 1935 Cleveland Interurban Railroad “bankers” paint scheme. Both ends required rebuilding, one of which required complete reconstruction because of an accident that occurred at Trolleyville. NORM’s Steven Heister said the vertical posts have proved to be extremely complex pieces to make, with compound angles and many miters to deal with. To get it right, the other end had to be disassembled for study! In addition, hinged wood steps at all doors have been replaced with new wood and the original metal treads reinstalled after rehabbing. All doors have been repaired and missing parts to the door-opening mechanisms have been replicated and installed, making the doors functional again. Inside, the seat frames have been stripped, repaired and repainted, all seat cushions and backs have been reupholstered, pebbled glass (similar to a bathroom window) has been procured to replace broken panes in the upper portions of the car, heaters are being tested and repaired or replaced as needed, exterior paint is being stripped on windows and a couple may have to be made new.

Shaker Heights 25 (Kuhlman, 1914) now has 100 percent rattan seats; it had a mixture of leather and rattan at Trolleyville, with repairs as needed to seat frames and other loose hardware in the car. A 550 volt transformer has been added so lights can work from 120-volt “shore” power, and the rear tow bar pocket was reattached with new hardware as the anti-climber skirting was rebuilt. Some paint touch-up has been done on the yellow and brown Trolleyville paint scheme. The bracket arms will come in handy as NORM strings



▲ CA&E 303 is awaiting restoration. Since its arrival at the Connecticut Trolley Museum the car has been stored at one of the museum’s outlying barns. —Galen Semprebon photo



▲ Bruce Wells installs new car cards in Cincinnati 2227. —Scott R. Becker photo



▲ Pittsburgh Railways High Floor car 4145 is inbound from the Fairgrounds during PTM's 50th anniversary celebration on June 22, 2013. —Fred W. Schneider III photo

▲ Snow did not deter the faithful as Cincinnati Street Railway car 2227 enjoys its first run on February 9, 2013, following its restoration at the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum near Washington, Pennsylvania. —Scott R. Becker photo

wire for its growing collection of interurbans and streetcars. The substation will be wired for service while NORM uses a backup diesel generator set donated by a local television station.

Cleveland 172 (Pullman-Standard, 1970) has had its batteries inspected and serviced, and a “shore” power charger was built in-house to keep them charged and in good condition. Northern Ohio Traction & Light OX (Kulhman, 1925), which served Shaker Heights and lasted into the Greater Cleveland RTA era, “rests peacefully on public display awaiting a day (when) it can run under wire again,” Heister said.

Further away, the **Connecticut Trolley Museum** is hoping to use CA&E 303 (Niles, 1906) this year for some special trips, said museum President Galen Semprebon. It has been stored since its arrival in one of the museum’s outlying barns. The museum’s New York, Ontario & Western caboose 8146 is on display in the museum’s visitor’s center. Iowa Southern Utilities Line Car #1 (Stephenson, 1892) is stored under the visitor’s center train shed and Centerville, Albia & Southern Ry. express motor 101 (American, 1914) is stored and awaiting repairs.

Two of the cars that **Pennsylvania Trolley Museum** obtained in the Brookins auction have become regular performers. It already had a head start on restoration of Cincinnati Street Ry. 2227 (Cincinnati Car, 1919). Museum President Scott Becker writes that, by a twist of fate, through the efforts of long-time museum volunteer Bill Fronczek, PTM had acquired the 2227’s original truck frames and 6 of 8 wheelsets for the car years ago from storage in Yellow Springs, OH., where the car was moved initially after service. These were used by Lyons Industries, of Ebensburg, Pa., in



▲ Car 4145 is parked at the Richfol station on July 3, 2013. —J. Polyak Photo

conjunction with the trucks that came with the car (formerly from Cincinnati Street Ry. locomotive S-92). Motors were overhauled by Swiger Coil in Cleveland and significant rewiring and air piping replacement was done underneath the car by PTM volunteers. As an added touch, World War II-era car cards were copied from a car body on display at the Cincinnati Historical Center at Cincinnati Union Terminal.

Also in service is Pittsburgh Railways 4145 (Pressed Steel, 1911). The high floor car had its trucks and motors overhauled and regauged back to broad gauge by Lyons Industries in Ebsburg, Pa. Some mixing and matching of wheels and motors occurred, using the museum's stock, to get the best combination with the least amount of work. Significant rewiring and air piping replacement was done by PTM volunteers.

The parlor car Toledo (Toledo Ry. Light & Power, 1906) was set on a pair of broad gauge Brill 27MCB-2X trucks, originally from a Red Arrow center-door car, and is on display. A current GE type



▲ This parlor car is being returned to its original splendor. It is posed on PTM's mainline, a portion of Pittsburgh Railway's interurban line between Pittsburgh and Washington, Pennsylvania. —Scott R. Becker photo

M switch group was acquired in trade from IRM, and the master controller and compressor are also on hand. Broad gauge Baldwin interurban trucks from Philadelphia Suburban Transportation Co. flat car 06 will be used and design work is underway to fit motors to these trucks. The oval windows with leaded glass for the kitchen and restroom were missing, so replacements are being made. Pieces of the original drapes have been acquired for samples for new ones, and a search is underway for the correct leather parlor chairs. The museum hopes to initially get lights working and chairs installed for limited special stationary use with full operation as the ultimate goal. The car eventually will be repainted in its original green with gold lettering.

At the **Electric City Trolley Museum** in Scranton, Pa., CA&E 453 (St. Louis, 1945) remains in storage, and museum Vice President Dave Viles said some of its air brake parts have been taken off for use on other cars. Replacement parts have been located, but Viles said it needs painting inside and out, a total cleaning, new seat upholstery and a new roof canvas, in part because of damage inflicted while in transit from Cleveland.

Verz Cruz 9 (Brill, 1914) is a long-term project for the **Fort Smith Trolley Museum** in Arkansas. The museum previously purchased Vera Cruz 6 (Brill, 1914), a virtually identical open car, and museum General Manager Bradley Martin said the goal now has become restoring car 9 with parts from both cars, while retaining car 6 and hoping to complete its restoration as well. Parts from both cars were missing when the Fort Smith museum purchased them, Martin said. The side frames on the trucks were worn on both cars, but he said they have been welded and machined. The body itself is refinished and the seats are about to be stained with marine varnish, which Martin expects will stand up well in regular service. As is the case with many of the Brookins cars, Martin said, "We're rebuilding it as best we can. This is a long-term project."

Volunteers and paid staff at the granddaddy of the American railway preservation movement, **Seashore Trolley Museum**, are making progress on its Cleveland Rys. Peter Witt trailer 2365, which is being restored concurrently with Cleveland center-entrance car 1227, which it acquired separately. Volunteer Don Curry said that the other car obtained in the Brookins auction, Cleveland Transit System "Bluebird" 113 (St. Louis, 1958) awaits metal work.

One car has not survived and one has been resold. Southern Iowa Ry. box motor 100 (American, 1914) was intended by Trolleyville as a parts car because of its deteriorated condition from years of outdoor storage, and the parts salvaged following its move to PTM are being put to good use. Becker said its control and air brake equipment will be used for the restoration of Monongahela West Penn steel interurban 274 (Jewett, 1918) and is identical to what that car had. Its standard gauge Brill 27MCB trucks will be traded. Its compressor went to IRM in trade for a Type M switch group for the Toledo. Some parts peculiar to sister Southern Iowa box motor 101 have been shipped to the Connecticut Trolley Museum as spares for that car. The mastermind of the Brookins auction, Shore Line (East Haven, Conn.) Trolley Museum President Emeritus Bill Wall, has helped facilitate the distribution of parts.

Northern Ohio Railway Museum resold Norfolk & Western caboose 508021 to private individuals who have moved it to Michigan.

AE&FR 304 & CA&E 458 2014 update

By Joe Hazinski

It is anticipated that 2014 will be a season of continued updating of the condition of Aurora Elgin & Fox River Electric Company interurban car 304 at the Fox River Trolley Museum. Because of the maintenance and restoration demands of the rest of the Fox River museum fleet, this season it is planned to repaint the roof a red more in line with the color it used on both the Shaker Heights Rapid Transit and on the Fox River Line along with other subtle improvements. All work on the car has to be done around the occasions that the car will be operated, which 2014 include Rails to Victory, June 7th and 8th; Riverfest Express – Trolley Fest August 16th and 17th; the museum's annual Member's Day in September; and for the first time, during the Pumpkin Trolley operations on October 18th, 19th, 25th and 26th.

Chicago Aurora & Elgin car 458, which had served as a parts source at Trolleyville to keep their other St. Louis CA&E cars running and as a storage vehicle, has seen a lot of work since its arrival in 2009. The mechanical systems have been repaired and updated to the point that the car can be moved but problems persist with the brake system. The underbody details and #2 or South end have been repainted and the next step will be to sand blast, prime, repaint and re-letter the rest of the exterior. Following completion of that process the interior including all the seats will be refurbished with the goal to eventually put the car into the museum's roster of regular demonstration ride units.

