TACOMA STREET CAR LINES

A collection of materials concerning the Tacoma StreetCars from their beginning in 1889 to when they were replaced by the Tacoma Transit System.

Tacoma Public Library

August 1968

CONTENTS

Boom Days of Tacoma Saw Street Car Line Being Built to Nearly Every New Addition

Ledger Feb 27, 1916

April 4, 1889, was a gala day in Tacoma, for on that date a new street railway system was put in operation. One system had already been built and put in operation, the cars being filled to capacity on each trip. Capitalists were taking of constructing other systems, and residents were happy over the fact that Tacoma was the largest city on Puget Sound. It was a gilded age, and the thoughts and hopes of the citizens were not so much with the present as with the future when Tacoma would be the largest city on the Coast. Thousands of tourists were arriving here weekly, almost daily new additions being opened and Tacoma being heralded through the east as the growing city of the west.

The newspapers were filled with nothing but boosting literature and scathing editorial criticism of the attempts at boosting that were filling the press of Portland and Seattle. Money was spent freely as there were great quantities of it coming to the city. For each new plat of land that was placed on the market a railroad was built to connect the new addition with the business section.

Notable First Ride.

So on the 4th of April, 1889, the first run on the Tacoma & Fern Hill railroad system was made. The road was opened to carry purchasers of lots in that addition to and from the city. The cars were pulled by a "dummy." Following is the account that appeared in the Ledger of April 5, 1889:

"Two busses filled with people who themselves were filled with pleasant anticipations started from the vicinity of the office of Hewitt & Hill at 2:45 yesterday afternoon and ambled gaily down Pacific avenue.

"They did not stop until at the junction of Delin street, where the motor of the Tacoma and Fern Hill railroad stood puffing quietly to itself as though enjoying the utmost satisfaction in prospect of being able to 'show off' to so distinguished a company.

"The party that alighted was composed of City Councilmen Collins, Caughran and Lillis, City Engineer Bean, Assistant Clerk Kreider, E. N. Fuller, editor of Every Sunday; C. W. Hobart, editor of the Real Estate Journal; Clinton A. Snowden, late of the Chicago Times; Col. Calkins, H. H. Warner, of the machinery department of the N. P. R. R.; Col. C. W. Griggs, president of the St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber company; Maj. Thad Huston, George Browne and Messrs. Wilcoxson, Hewitt, Hill, Plume and several others.

Seven Minutes to Make Run.

"It was exactly 10 minutes after 3 o'clock when J. Vincent Browne, who superintended the construction of the road, and who took charge of the party, declared everybody on board and told the engineer 'to let her go.'

"Exactly seven mniutes after that time the party alighted from the car at the terminus of the road, in the furthermost extremity of Oakes addition.

"The seven minutes had been delightfully spent, first climbing the hill along Delin street, presenting each minute a widening horizon that finally compassed Commencement bay and the Puyallup valley on one side and the water reservoir and a fine birdseye view of the city on the other. The road follows the east side of a very picturesque canyon opposite the reservoir for a short distance and then by a sudden curve strikes into the level country with frequent clearings marked by newly built cottages. The road passes through the Tacoma Land company's Sixth addition where there are quite a number of new houses and many more under construction, new lumber being supplied here and there at frequent intervals. At Oakes addition a little collation had been prepared for the visitors, of which they partook with evident satisfaction. After a little time, following the discussion of the refreshments, spent in the enjoyment of the surroundings and a favorite brand of cigars, the party took the car again and rolled merrily into town. They were all more than pleased. The new and elegant car—the finest street coach [illegible] by the Pullman factory [illegible] as smoothly as its famous makers' finest drawing room cars. The road is well ballasted and the rails are 40-pound steel—the same as those of the Utah Northern railroad. The whole work, in truth, is of superior character and the builders are cordially complimented on all hands. Another remarkable feature of the new road is the fact that it was completed three days before the time set for completion by the franchise."

Nelson Bennett Given Franchise.

The Tacoma & Fern Hill railroad was not the first built for the purpose of booming real estate, however. In 1887 a franchise was granted to Nelson Bennett and his associates to construct a railroad covering the same territory now covered by the Old Tacoma street car. This franchise was amended a short time afterward, but the substance of the new agreement was practically the same.

This railroad was in operation in the late 80's, and was financially successful. Much as at the present time the city council of Tacoma was rather backward about granting a franchise to the new companies. The first permit for a street railway was granted to Nelson Bennett in 1887. After a rather heated debate between Bennett and the council "he and his associates," according to the Ledger of 1887, "were granted the privilege of operating in the streets the latest improved steam dummy engines, at a rate of speed not to exceed six miles an hour. Judge Sears, attorney for the company, asked permission to have the ties, which would be here on Monday, piled up along the route until the work of construction began, which was granted."

In 1890 the Point Defiance Railway company and the Edison Railway company were consolidated and through service was established from the smelter to Edison, or South Tacoma.

Allen C. Mason Invests $25,000.

A man instrumental in the building of Tacoma was Allen C. Mason, associated with several of the earlier street railway companies. Anxious to make Tacoma the largest city on the Coast Mr. Mason made several trips east. On some he bought material for the construction of the railway systems. Desiring to have in Tacoma the most up-to-date railway system in the country Mr. Mason at one time invested $25,000 in a new electric battery invented by Edison, which in model street cars [illegible] with perfection, but which proved to be an abject failure in practical work. Although Mr. Mason still owns the rights to this battery he has never yet been able to realize a cent on the investment.

About 1888 Mr. Mason contracted for a half page advertisement in New York, Philadelphia and Boston papers, in which the commercial, scenic and domestic advantages of Tacoma were properly eulogized. In due time he received a bill for $10,000 from the three papers.

Come Flocking to City.

The same year he sent 20,000 persona letters to "prospects" in the east. Following this effective compaign thousands of people came to Tacoma. Many amusing incidents are told in regard to the early street railway systems. Walter Thompson, actively identified with one company, formerly lived at what is now Broadway and Division avenue. During the summer he had erected in his spacious front lawn a beautiful tent. A few days later a "dummy" on the line operating past his house attempted the steep hill by the tent. At first the engine was unable to ascend. It backed down and made a rush for the hill. A glorious quantity of sparks were emitted from the stack, and, according to Mr. Thompson, "lit nowhere but on my new tent, which was quickly consumed by fire."

It was not an uncommon occurrence for the Old Tacoma "dummy" to become stalled on the 9th street hill. According to Ralph Stacy, the engineer always made three attempts to climb the hill when the trailing coach was full. If there was little prospect of ascending the hill on the second attempt, a third one was made, which was nothing more than a signal to be obeyed automatically by the passengers to get out and walk up the hill.

"Dummy" Shows Them.

When Tacomans first learned that a dummy line was to be constructed they were somewhat doubtful as to the remarkable abilities of these small engines as set forth by the promoters. They were not sure the engines would be able to pull the coaches up the steep 9th street hill from Pacific avenue to A street. The skeptics were in the minority at first. However, more members were initiated into the clique, and by the time the little engines had arrived here direct from the H. K. Porter factory in Illinois, the skeptics had increased so alarmingly that Mr. Mason was afraid to make the first trip in the daytime. Large crowds waited on the hills all day long for the engine to make a failure of itself on this hill.

By nightfall Mr. Mason, himself, began to fear that the engine might not be able to make the hills, so he decided to try it at night. About 3 o'clock the following morning the "dummy" started on its first journey. "It never lost a breath during the whole trip," said Mr. Mason, "and when it came to the 9th street hill it sailed up the incline as majestically as a modern palace car."

Following the trend of modern science, the "dummy" lines were soon electrified, and today all parts of the city are covered by the street car lines of a corporation that was consolidated from more than a dozen different companies.

Nelson Bennett, a prominent Tacoma pioneer, is credited with having conceived the plan for the first street railway system in Tacoma. In 1887 he obtained a charter and was joined the same year by Allen C. Mason, after whom one of the city's intermediate schools was named. Their lines were built on Pacific Avenue, and on May 1, 1888, William White drove the team that pulled the first car. Four of these horse-drawn cars were run on Pacific Avenue and one on a short line on Tacoma Avenue.

RADEBAUGH BUILT CAR LINE

"In the latter part of 1888 the same men built another line from New Tacoma to Old Tacoma and R. F. Radebaugh, a newspaper editor who died only recently, built a street car line from Twenty-sixth Street and Pacific Avenue toward Oakland and later extended it to South Tacoma, then called Edison, and Fern Hill, and finally to Puyallup. Mr. Radebaugh's line was operated by small steam locomotives.

"About the time that horse cars and steam-propelled cars were inaugurated in Tacoma, electric cars were successfully operated for the first time on a line in Baltimore. Two years later Tacoma experienced a remarkable growth and electric cars were demanded here. In answer to this demand, a company was formed by D. H. Louderback, J. M. Ashton, Henry Hewitt, Jr., John Cummings and E. J. Kershaw. This company bought the property of Mr. Mason and Mr. Bennett and built a small steam plant capable of generating 250 horsepower, in a brick building at Thirteenth and A streets. It still stands. The Radebaugh lines continued to operate for a number of years. The electric plant furnished power for the Pacific Avenue and Tacoma Avenue trolley cars, which were larger and a distinct improvement on the old horse cars.

FIRST ELECTRIC CAR

"The first electric car was operated early in 1890, after nearly a year's work in preparation for the change.

"Declared to be the first railway built in the West entirely with white laborers, since Orientals had been employed largely in other railway construction, the Point Defiance line was built between December 16, 1889, and March 1, 1890, under the direction of Allen C. Mason, a feat that has gone down in local history as remarkable. The franchise had provided that a 10-cent fare could be charged if the work was completed by that time. The company contained, besides Mr. Mason, Hugh C. Wallace, Isaac W. Anderson, Thomas B. Wallace and Stuart Rice. This line was at first a narrow-gauge line, but was soon made standard width. It operated with steam cars when it was first built.

"Other lines sprang up largely to aid in the promotion of the various real estate developments. None of them proved successful financial ventures and by 1898 all were declared practically bankrupt. The Point Defiance Company was one of them and the line was sold by the sheriff to satisfy a judgment, the price being $82,000. Paper money was not acceptable and the sum in gold was carried to the courthouse by S. Z. Mitchell, connected with the General Electric Company, to whom most of the Tacoma lines were indebted.

T. R. & P. MERGES LINES

"Finally in January, 1899, the Tacoma Railway & Power Company came into control of all the lines, the tracks and equipment were standardized and the whole operated as one system. In 1900 the Puget Sound Electric Company began the interurban line between Tacoma and Seattle and the next year this company bought the Tacoma Railway & Power Company, the whole being managed to the present time by Stone & Webster of Boston, a firm of public utilities managers.

"The Pacific Traction Company, headed by E. J. Felt, finished the building of a line from Tacoma to American Lake in 1907. It was sold in 1912 to the Tacoma Railway & Power Company.

"The last line built in Tacoma was the Municipal Belt Line, extending from Pacific Avenue to the tideflats district across the Eleventh Street bridge in 1917. This line was made necessary by the ship building and other industries demanded by this country's participation in the great war.

CHAPTER XLI

1889-90—BENNETT SELLS STREET CAR INTERESTS TO VILLARD—ELECTRIC CARS INTRODUCED—BROAD FRANCHISES GIVEN TO VILLARD—MASON COMPLETES POINT DEFIANCE LINE—MASON'S "FREE" WATERFRONT PLANS—NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD WATCHES HIM—"THE TWELVE APOSTLES"—ANDERSON THE FATHER OF POINT DEFIANCE PARK—CONTROVERSY AROUSED BY D. A. R. TABLET—MASON'S $86,000 MANSION—BUILDING OF LAKE CITY RAILWAY, ITS SALE TO UNION PACIFIC, AND ITS DESTRUCTION.

The winter of 1889 recorded important street railroad developments. December 6th it was announced that Nelson Bennett had sold out the Tacoma Street Railway Company to Henry Villard, Paul Schulze and D. H. Lauderback, and the buyers announced that as soon as the change could be made they would replace the horses on Pacific Avenue and the steam motors on C Street with Sprague electric motors. The street car company was building the power plant at Thirteenth and A streets, and December 6, 1889, its 75-foot smokestack was raised. The tube was five feet in diameter, and the placing of it was a difficult task, watched by a large crowd.

The change to electricity as motive power was a long time coming. Indeed more than a year elapsed before the first trolley car skipped and bobbed along the billowy avenue rails. This glad event took place February 10, 1890, bringing from one of the newspapers the following comment:

"The electric cars began running up and down Pacific Avenue and the multitudes lifted up their voices and cheered until every throat was parched. No wonder the people went half wild. They had been promised much, but something always happened to prevent the fulfillment of the promises. The track wasn't laid, the fly wheel had broken, the engineer lost a suspender button, the dynamos caught cold sleeping out in the wet o' nights, the electricity couldn't get a good 'collar-and-elbow' grip on the wires, or some other dire calamity interfered to prevent the starting of the cars.

"Work began last March and it was expected that the line would be in operation long ago. From that time to the present the officers of the company have had many obstacles to overcome. It wasn't exactly a 'demon of ill luck' that pursued them, but it was a regulation-sized imp who wiggled his tail at every opportunity. And whenever he wiggled something slipped a cog. Now it wasn't the fault of Manager Cummings or any officer of the company."

Car No. 11 made the first trip at about 11 o'clock, having aboard as passengers Manager Cummings, a reporter and several of the manager's friends. Mr. Prebble, who had supervised the electrical work from the start, was in charge of the motor. Pacific Avenue was enjoying the quiet of a winter day when the car rounded the curve at Thirteenth Street and started along Pacific Avenue. A strong armed man yanked the gong and rope and the clamor was heard for blocks. Windows went up with a bang. Crowds in the restaurants left their meals, the saloons disgorged, the games of pedro, poker and faro were deserted and within ten minutes the avenue was crowded with people who cheered again and again.

A few minutes after Car No. 11 left the power house, Car No. 16, one of the largest and finest belonging to the company, pulled out on the line with forty or more persons on board. It was operated by Mr. Hill. The cars ran almost to the Northern Pacific wharf, reversed and started back. The run from the Northern Pacific Headquarters Building to Twenty-sixth Street was made in ten minutes, which time included several stops. On the return trip equally good time was made. No. 11 then attempted to climb the Ninth Street grade, being successful at the second trial, while the crowd cheered. The next night the line again was put in operation and hundreds of persons were given free rides.

More than four thousand passengers were carried on the new cars on Sunday, February 16th. The next day the first trip was made over the line to Old Tacoma, the car jumping the track at two places, but no damage was done. It was said the tracks had been spread by the steam motors which had been used on the line. The arrival of the cars at Old Tacoma was greeted with cheers by the citizens. The sharp curve from C Street into Division Avenue had been eliminated through the building of a track up North First Street, over which connection was made with the Point Defiance line. The Division Avenue track, owing to the curve and the steep precipice at the foot of the street, had been torn up. It was a danger spot, and too steep for economy.

April 20, 1889, a franchise was granted to a syndicate of which Villard was the head, granting wide authority to lay additional trackage, and it was announced that the company was ready to spend about five hundred thousand dollars. This promise, however, was inflated to some extent no doubt, in order to hasten the passage of its franchise. Two months before a franchise had been granted to Hugh C. Wallace, Isaac W. Anderson, Thomas B. Wallace, Allen C. Mason and Stuart Rice for a line to the smelter. It was provided that a ten-cent fare could be charged on this line, if work were completed within a given period. There were many delays and it was not until December 16th that the company gave to Allen C. Mason a contract to build the line, he to receive 10 per cent of the force account for his

services. The company already had arranged to use the lines of the old company as far as Division Avenue and from that point, northwestward the new track, six miles of it was to be laid. The line had to be in operation by March 1st.

Few believed that Mason could complete it. The next morning he ordered 300 tons of rails by wire and the Northern Pacific Railroad officials promised to bring them from Chicago in ten days. Mason set 240 men at work on I Street. Bridges already had been built over the deep gulches at Sixth and I streets and at Proctor and Thirty-first streets, Mason having erected them at his own expense. Through all sorts of weather conditions the work was pressed, and on March 1, 1890, the day set, Mason drove the last spike, near Annie Wright Seminary.

A goodly crowd had gathered and while the people were waiting for the track layers to drive the spikes up to the finishing point, one of the men offered to bet Mason that he could not hit the last spike squarely on the head two times out of five. Mason took the bet. Stepping forward with a hammer and silver spike, Mason said:

"On the 15th day of December I promised that the last spike of the Point Defiance Railroad would be driven on the first of March at 2:30 o'clock in the afternoon. It is now 2:30 o'clock and the last spike is to be driven."

He said the company had done more than it had set out to do, and even in the face of almost insurmountable obstacles had constructed more than fifteen hundred feet more of track than had been planned. He praised the men who had worked day and night through fair weather, through snow and through rain to complete the road and expressed pleasure that it had been done without the employment of Chinese labor.

It was the first railroad built in the western country entirely by white labor.

Asking the superintendent to set the spike for him, Mason raised the hammer and struck the first blow, saying it was for Bean and Cline, the engineers who had kept them in the middle of the road; the second was for the subcontractors, Mullen, Geiger and Zabriskie; the third for DeLaplain, who had directed the laying of the tracks; and the fourth and fifth were for the officers of the company—Hugh C. Wallace, president; Isaac W. Anderson, vice president; Thomas B. Wallace, treasurer; Stuart Rice, secretary; George W. Balch, superintendent—and Mason had won his bet. Each of his blows struck the spike squarely.

The first track laid was a narrow gauge which was to be taken up a little later and replaced with one of standard width. The railroad scheme had originated with Mason some two years before at about the time he had laid out the Park and Boulevard additions. To this he had added the Prospect Park, Blinn, Puget Park, Bridge and Lawrence additions.

The line cost $85,000, Mason furnishing the money and taking a note for $16,000 from each of his partners. About twenty-five thousand dollars was spent for steam dummies and cars.

The route of the line was the same as the present line as far as Union Avenue, where it ran diagonally northwest to Washington Street, thence to Thirty-first, and to Proctor.

In after years, when the panic had shelled out Mason and his partners the road was sold under the mortgage by the sheriff who demanded gold coin in payment. This indicates what dishonored depth paper money had reached. The price was $82,000 and this sum, in gold, was carried to the court house by S. Z. Mitchell under guard of a number of officers. That was Mr. Mitchell's entry into Tacoma street railway affairs. He is now an important figure in electrical affairs in the East.

Mason was pounding away on the necessity of developing the north waterfront as an offset to the corporation-controlled front elsewhere. His arguments were that it was desirable that this waterfront be held by individuals and be not permitted, if avoidable, to fall into the hands, as a whole, of any corporation. It really was the activity of Mason along this "free" waterfront that won the smelter for Tacoma. He gave Thomas Maloney, afterward chief of police, a site for a shingle mill, procured other industries in that section, and, by organizing the Washington Shortline Railway Company, first suggested the watergrade line as it later was followed by the Northern Pacific, though he proposed to carry his line entirely around Point Defiance, and not through a tunnel.

The railroad that he started to build, from Old Tacoma to the Smelter, was designed as a part of the Washington Shortline, whose southern terminus never was fixed, its incorporation papers taking it "to such point as might be desirable," or words to that effect. The Northern Pacific Company feared that Mason would sell out to the Union Pacific which had been flirting with Tacoma. In order to build this stretch of line Mason had to procure right-of-way from owners living all over the United States, but they all willingly gave. The Northern Pacific never believed he would build the Washington Shortline, and it was surprised when he began laying rails of the Old Tacoma-Smelter line. Litigation arose but Mason proceeded in spite of that, and finally the Northern Pacific, with the aim of disposing both of Mason and the Union Pacific specter, offered him a price that he could not refuse and he sold. The company then employed Nelson Bennett as contractor to complete the road between Old Tacoma and the Smelter, and the foundation was laid for the wonderful work which the Northern Pacific accomplished within recent years, in the fulfillment of Mason's great conception, and in the performance of that achievement Bennett again carved his name deeply in the history of tunnel building in the West.

Having completed the line to his large property interests in the north end Mason then set about creating inducements to home-builders, and his first conception was a community-center on what afterward became known as Whitworth Hill. He subsidized R. B. Mullen to build a waterplant in the great gulch now owned by the Tacoma Water Supply Company, paying him about twenty-two hundred dollars and furnishing a steam plant for the pumps, as well.

He built a row of a dozen houses across the street from what is now the Sherman School property. These houses were known for years as "the twelve apostles." He built two dozen more cottages in the Park and Boulevard additions. Soon all were sold, the first buyers in the "twelve apostles" group being Frank Blattner, E. W. Taylor and Thomas W. Hammond. The real pioneers of the Whitworth Hill neighborhood were L. E. Sampson, R. R. Tripple and Edward Knoble, who had built just west of the water works gulch.

The carfare was five cents to the west line of Prospect Park Addition, and this was known as "Poor Man's Corner" as the laborers from the smelter walked to that point in order to avoid paying an additional nickel.

The steam dummies puffed and snorted and spewed sparks and cinders with a prodigal recklessness, and when women went abroad in their pretty clothes they wore "dusters" and other protecting garments. Even then a hot cinder now and then found its way through a handsome gown. On the steeper grades the dummies occasionally "ran out of breath," retraced their lumbering way to the foot of the incline, then ran for it with a cataract of sparks and a mighty noise that roared in its echoings through the brush and timber

TELLS OF FIRST TRIP OVER LINE

Pioneer Who Helped Build Early Tacoma, Recounts Initial Journey on Tacoma and Fern Hill Railway

Beginnings of the operation of one of Tacoma's early railway lines, in which he was deeply interested, is described here by R. F. Radebaugh, prominent in activities of the fast-rising Tacoma of two score of years ago. He was editor of the Tacoma Ledger and later of the Tacoma Tribune and has watched with keen interest the growth of the city from a humble start to its recognized position as the Lumber Capital of America. He was one who had an abiding faith in the future of Tacoma from the beginning.

By R. F. RADEBAUGH

Two omnibusses filled with gentlemen who themselves seemed to be filled with pleasant anticipations, started from the vicinity of Hewitt & Hill's real estate office, 1105 Pacific avenue, at 2 p. m. of April 4, 1889—close to an even 34 years ago—and ambled gaily down south on the unpaved gravel surface of that noble highway. They crossed the Northern Pacific railroad tracks and continued on their southerly course, bee line, not stopping until they arrived at Delin street and the temporary city terminus of the Tacoma & Fern Hill street railroad on top of the southern bank of the gulch, near 26th street. There on the rails, coupled to a new and shining Pullman coach, they saw a new eight-ton steam dummy, polished, painted, varnished, appropriately lettered and pretentious in all ways, dreamily discharging toward the empyrean in customary lazy columns its escaping calories as though enjoying the prospect of "showing off" before a company so distinguished.

Those since antiquated horse-drawn vehicles, now almost claimed by the curiosity shop, were rendered necessary then for the journey by the limitation on that avenue of the Bennett car line which at that time had not been extended south of 17th street. T.N.T.

Among the 30 men who alighted from the omnibusses and were comfortably seated in the Pullman car, were City Councilmen Collins, J. D. Caughran, J. B. Houghton, J. H. Houghton, John Horsfall and C. M. Lillis; C. O. Bean, city engineer; Eugene Kreider, assistant city clerk; E. N. Fuller, editor of Every Sunday; C. W. Hobart, editor of the Real Estate Journal; Clinton A. Snowden, formerly managing editor of the Chicago Times; H. H. Warner, superintendent of the Northern Pacific railroad shops; Col. C. W. Griggs, president St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber Co.; George Browne, treasurer of said lumber company; Messrs. Hewitt and Hill, agents for the Oakes addition; Col. Calkins, Maj. Thad Huston and John Plume. They were, on that occasion, guests of the Fern Hill Railroad Company, invited on the first formal trip for inspection of its completed line to Oakes addition.

It was 10 minutes after 3 o'clock when J. Vincent Browne, who superintended the construction of the road, and was engaged for management of its operation (a brother of George Browne), declared everybody on board and ordered the engineer to "let her go." 7 APR 1923

First Ride Thrilled

Exactly seven minutes after that time the train was brought to a stop at the other terminus of the road in the furthermost extremity of Oakes' addition. The seven minutes were agreeably spent amid new and rapidly changing scenery, first in ascending the hill along the edge of the canyon, presenting continuously an ever-widening horizon that finally compassed the bay and the Puyallup valley on the one side and the reservoir and birdseye view of the city on the other. The guests gave voice in chorus to their enthusiastic praise of these quickly varied and beautiful panoramic scenes, which, be it said, have ever since been and will remain admirable ornaments appertaining to that line of travel.

Approaching the summit from below, the line followed a strikingly picturesque portion of the canyon opposite the reservoir for considerable distance, and then by a sharp curve to the eastward struck into the level country of the plateau, where were seen straggling clearings and rising cottages—direct results following construction of the Fern Hill railroad project. The rails were first laid in a side cut around a high and steep hill extending from the edge of the canyon eastward several blocks and over the site now occupied by the Tacoma Steam Laundry.

That hill was gradually cut away, through years, by taking from it gravel for the streets and the track shifted eastward from time to time, as excavations permitted, until finally straightened to the center of the street there platted, graded and paved as at present. But in the early days when the dummy train "coonsed it" narrowly around the steep side of the hill at the canyon edge, the timid passengers after looking into the fearsome and beckoning depths, breathed easier when the danger had been left behind.

Saw Rising City

The train passed through the Tacoma Land Company's sixth addition where were visible from the car windows new houses about completed and many more in the building stage, fresh lumber being piled here and there at frequent intervals. Entering Oakes addition, another and much larger building boom came to view. Here the finished houses were numerous and scattered over a large area and those under construction were still more numerous, while more than 30, as stated by Supt. Browne, were under contract for completion the current season. An artistic little station house or waiting room, provided by the railroad company, was passed at Oakes avenue (now 40th street) and at the terminus was seen the motor house of the road in a fine location, tanks for supplying the local water pipe system, a sawmill, a boarding house for the millmen, a blacksmith shop, machine shop and other improvements.

There was also found here an enticing collation prepared for the guests of which they partook with unusual zest, due to the timely warning to refrain from their noon luncheon. Following discussion of the refreshments, after a little time spent in enjoyment of the surroundings and in a favorite brand of Havanas, open to all, the party took to the train again and rolled merrily into town. They were all more than pleased. The new and elegant car—faithful type of the finest street coaches that had ever been turned out of the Pullman factory—rode as smoothly as the best drawing-room cars of its famous makers. The road was all well ballasted and the rails were of 40-pound steel—the same as those of the Utah Northern railroad. The whole work, in truth, was of superior character and the builde s were, in consequence, warmly compl mented on all hands. Members of the city council, which had unanimously granted the franchise, expressed much satisfaction with the manner in which the company had fulfilled the obligations of their contract with the city.

Officials Pleased

By the terms of the franchise the road was to be built to the city limits, a distance of one mile from its starting point, within one year from the 7th of February, 1888. An extension of two months was asked and granted because of faulty fishplates. The time was up therefore on the 7th of April, 1889—exactly 34 years ago to the day. The road was not only completed to the city limits but a mile and a half beyond three days before the time limit expired. And the councilmen and all those who had the pleasure of making the initial run pronounced the job well done.

"I see that you have not only built your railroad to the land company's sixth addition but have also actually extended it for three-quarters of a mile in the middle of the north half of the section of that addition," said Colonel Griggs to me. "That I would regard as a great favor to the land company and justifying substantial aid from that quarter for building the road."

"We wanted to manage the affair in a way to please Mr. Wright," I replied, "and therefore, instead of asking him for money, as so many people are doing, we were content to solicit his company manager, Mr. Anderson, and Mr. Wright's brother-in-law, Theodore Hosmer, to take each a fifth of our railroad stock, which they promptly did."

For his ready and cheerful acquiesence in this matter I reciprocated by negotiating the purchase for Mr. Hosmer of William Laing's 80-acre tract adjoining the Oakes addition on the south, at the very low price of $5,000, and caused the same to be platted and recorded as the "Hosmer addition;" afterwards finding a purchaser for his addition at a considerable, and to him, satisfactory advance. Associated with him as a party in interest in that addition was L. R. Manning. The purchaser from them was George F. Orchard.

Advertised Lots

The Tacoma Land Company's appreciation of the value gained from the building of our street car line through its addition was signalized by its three-column displayed, long-standing advertisement which first appeared when our road was nearing completion and which was in the words following:

"The Tacoma Land Company is now offering for sale lots in its Sixth Addition at prices ranging from $200 to $500 per lot, and on easy terms to those wishing to improve. This addition lies on the line of the Tacoma & Fern Hill Street Railroad.

"ISAAC W. ANDERSON,
"General Manager."

The title of the Tacoma & Fern Hill line was justified some eight months later by completion and operation of a branch line connecting at 38th street and proceeding south to Fern Hill and thence to Puyallup, known as the Tacoma & Puyallup Railroad. In that fair, healthful and prosperous suburb, so long reaping accretions of population from constant servive of rail branch there are dwelling today 3,000 souls.

The Oakes Addition road was put into operation on the rising springtide of the year distinguished by vastly more building activity and development, propotionate to population, than any other year of the city's life. There was no interruption of building operations during the preceding winter, the weather being favorable for outside work. A large number of mechanics of all crafts were constantly employed on the warehouses, elevators, coal bunkers, in the shipyards and railroad grounds and in building stores, offices and residences.

In this article Mr. Radebaugh recalls vividly the thrills Tacomans received as they proudly viewed the first steam motor on their streets, at a time when the city was striding ahead with the establishment of many lines of new endeavor. Mr. Radebaugh was editor of The Ledger nearly 40 years ago, and was prominently identified with the industrial life of the city.

By R. F. RADEBAUGH

In the half century of Tacoma's record, 1888 is an upstanding year of marked advance under prevailing impulse of the railroad finish and resulting prompt service. In that period came, among many other largesses of fortune, the theater at 9th and C streets, which remains a worthy monument to the enterprise of its builders; the Fife hotel, modestly representing the liberality and civic pride of its founder, though now held under the inappropriate misnomer Donnelly; the Northern Pacific headquarters, recently depopulated of their legitimate occupants—steered away on the trail of age-long habitual theft—through unavoidable cowardice of the "corporate soul"; a smelter, which has steadily contributed in great extent to the population and wealth of the city during all of its more than 30 years of energetic functioning, which, in 1905, 17 years after its beginning, was sold to the American Smelters Securities Company for $5,500,000, and is now producing a gross annual revenue of more than $25,000,000 from sales of copper, silver and gold—thus by virtue of quantity of production practically making of Tacoma the Swansea of the Pacific coast; and the great sawmill of the St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber Company, which, in still very much larger degree, has been tributary to the growth and enrichment of Tacoma—a truly immense factory of unequaled capacity in its line—capable of producing a million feet of lumber per day, and, therefore, the largest sawmill plant in the world.

Street Cars Came

Along with the foregoing superlative expressions of confidence in the future of this city followed speedily provision of means for rapid transit through the main ways in the several street car systems authorized by ordinance, and which, in the course of years, have been consolidated and developed into an admirable system, amply covering the needs of the people.

The first street railway construction in Tacoma was that of Nelson Bennett, who began on Pacific avenue, at the 17th street Northern Pacific railroad crossing on the morning of December 28, 1887. That being an occasion of entraordinary interest, a large crowd gathered to witness the memorable event at the very beginning, and the tracklayers did not find themselves abandoned by spectators for the rest of the day. The tracklaying crew comprised a strong force of men, and it was observed that if the work should continue with the celerity displayed at the outset, the track would shortly reach 13th street, where the city offices were located, so that the councilmen could, through the windows of the council chamber, look out and see that Nelson Bennett and his company meant business; an attempt having been made to place a question mark on this point by parties who had applied to the council for a street car franchise overlapping the Bennett routes.

The track was of narrow gauge, and "T" rail, with good, closely-fitting planks firmly spiked to the ties between and on the outside of the rails. It soon became obvious that Mr. Bennett was building a really first-class railroad track on Pacific avenue, such as was forcing favorable comment from those who knew what constituted good work in that line. But when a few envious men saw him in full grasp of the enterprise and faring onward, they grew agitated over what they dreamed was the beginning of great fortune in view of the imagined destiny of the terminus, and, combining, sought eagerly to tear the opportunity from him.

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Cold Stopped Work

On the next day after the beginning the wind changed to the north, bringing a severe cold spell of nearly a month's duration, by which the ground was frozen to a depth that forbade continuance. The work in consequence was suspended until the end of January, when, the frost having yielded to the chinook, track-laying was resumed up the avenue by 100 men, making speed that surprised all observers. At the same time track-laying was begun on C (now Broadway) at 9th street, also going north, with like good headway showing at day ends. The rails on C street were lighter than those on Pacific avenue, the latter weighing 41 pounds to the yard and the former 30 pounds. Mr. Bennett announced that four cars and two steam dummies had been ordered for delivery by the time the road could be finished.

Before the 10th of February Bennett's railroad building was seen to be making rapid strides toward completion. The building of the connecting portion between Pacific avenue and C up 9th street was in progress, the rails were down and the planking was being placed. The road along C street had been finished as far as 2d, the rails had been laid to Division avenue, and work on Tacoma avenue toward Old Town had been commenced.

First Motor Comes

"Tacoma Street Railway" in gold letters was painted conspicuously on the sides of the first steam motor for the street railway, which arrived April 25, 1888, from Layton, Pa. Standing on a flat car at the wharf, near the north end of Pacific avenue, it attracted great attention. Crowds gathered about it, and boys and men climbed upon the dummy for close inspection. Mounting to the roof and waving a folded newspaper, a good-natured and enthusiastic engineer loudly cried, "Three cheers for the baby locomotive," and the cheers were given with great gusto by 200 throats. This so-called "baby," weighing 10 tons, completely enclosed by the housing, resembled, except as to length, a passenger car which it was built to pull, the notable difference observable at a distance being the short smokestack projecting above the roof.

The cut herewith, showing a dummy attached to a car in Point Defiance Park, several years before the work of improving the latter attained much headway, accurately illustrates the equipment provided for both the Bennett and Oakes addition lines.

Three of the cars arrived April 29 from the east, and were on flat cars in the half-moon yard in full view from the overlooking sidewalk leading to the wharf, where another crowd collected to view them at length of range and to discuss the pleasing prospect of early rapid transit facilities for Tacoma. These cars came from the shops of John Stephenson, famous New York car builder. Equipped with the patent Slawson fare boxes, they were neatly upholstered and painted, and had seat room for 28 persons each. The section of road from the headquarters building at 7th street to the wharf was finished May 5.

Dummy Balked

The plan of operation was to run a car from 17th street north on Pacific avenue to 9th, up the latter to C and thence to Old Town, and another car from 17th street to the wharf as a separate route. It seems, however, that Mr. Bennett overestimated the power of his dummy engine and this misconception forced a radical change of plan for when the dummy was placed on the track, coupled to a car, it very positively refused to ascend the 13 per cent grade of the 9th street hill from the avenue to C street even under maximum head of steam and load of an empty car. Hence followed temporary abandonment of the 9th street connection, recourse to horses on the avenue and restriction of dummy employment to the route between 9th street and Old Town.

Early in June, while track construction proceeded rapidly northward, work was started at Division avenue, moving south on Tacoma avenue, on which branch 50 men were employed and the objective at 21st street was reached in about two weeks.

Good cars, excellent steam motors and first class tracks which, Nelson Bennett knew so well how to make, having been provided, and critically inspected by nearly everybody in town, the public interest ascended to a degree of excitement as the time approached for putting the wheels in motion. The date chosen by the management for that eagerly expected event was May 30, which, it was predicted, would be memorable in the history of Tacoma as the inaugural day of another metropolitan enterprise—a fine street railway system.

Early in the morning of that day the management had the cars out rolling over the newly-laid track for final test before the bustling throng of a later hour should appear. Horses were attached to the cars running between the wharf and the 17th street station, while the steam motor plied its course along C street from 9th to Division avenue and return from early morning until evening.

The whole system was generally pronounced to have worked like a charm and all day long the cars were crowded. The horse cars were in movement until 11 p. m. Mr. Bennett had announced that the receipts of the first day would be donated to the two hospitals. The Fanny Paddock hospital received $35.65 and the Sisters' hospital $19.90.

First Time Table

Eight days later the first time table of our first street car line was issued as follows:

"Tacoma Street Railway Company.

"Commencing today, June 7, 1888, and continuing till further notice, the motor line will be run as below: Leave North 6th street on Tacoma avenue at 5:45 a. m. and every 30 minutes thereafter until 9:45 p. m.

"Leave 9th street on C at 6 a. m. and every 30 minutes thereafter until 10 p. m. Train will be in waiting at 9th street at close of theater.

Pacific avenue cars will run as follows: Leave wharf at foot of North Pacific avenue at 6 a. m. and every 25 minutes thereafter. Last car will leave 9th street for wharf at 10 p. m.

"JOSEPH M. BLAIN,
Superintendent."

TACOMA'S new streamline, rear drive busses, latest development in urban transportation recently put on by the street railway company to serve the district around the College of Puget Sound, started some of the older generation reminiscing about the first street railway which grew out of the boom in the early eighties. It consisted of a single line of track on Pacific ave. between Ninth and 21st streets and one car drawn by a pair of not too good looking horses. The line was built by Nelson Bennett and associates. Operation began just before the Northern Pacific trains started crossing the Cascade mountains through the tunnel.

E. T. Short

Talk of the necessity of a street railway system in a growing metropolis like Tacoma started a couple of years before but there were several important issues to be settled. One of these was the character of the motive power. Bennett proposed using electric power and with Allen C. Mason and others bought a site for a power plant on Chambers creek.

The use of electric power was not as well known then as it is now and the members of the city council were a bit dubious about giving Bennett the franchise. It didn't seem possible that electric power developed way out on Chambers creek would be dependable for street car operation.

The gentlemen who sat in judgment in the informal gatherings around town also were doubtful about the scheme. How was Bennett going to keep the current from jumping off the wires before it got to Tacoma, and if it did jump off wasn't it liable to kill somebody?

Another school of thought on street railway operation held that electric power had not been thoroughly tested in street car operation. If it had, why were horse cars still being used in such places as San Francisco, Chicago, and New York?

The upshot of the controversy was that the council sent C. O. Bean, city engineer, back east to get the latest information. When he returned he reported that electric power was destined to become generally used for street railways operation provided the current was generated close at hand.

The best judgment of electrical engineers, said he, was that it was impractical to transmit electric current more than four miles. That put the quietus on Bennett's power proposal.

The franchise was amended to provide for horsepower, and with a few other changes was approved the last of November, 1887. A month later, Dec. 28, Bennett started construction at the south end of the line. The first day he laid half a block of track and in a week the rails were laid as far as 13th street. In two months the first car was running.

* * *

Bennett's venture brought on a regular epidemic of street railway promotion. R. F. Radebaugh applied for a franchise for a line connecting with Bennett's near the Northern Pacific station and running south through Oakes addition. This was the beginning of the South Tacoma line.

George F. Orchard applied for a cable line franchise covering the present route up 11th and down 13th street. The next week Eben Pierce applied for a franchise to operate street cars connecting with the cable and running toward Steilacoom.

* * *

In the meantime other promoters had come in with an electric power plant and offered a guarantee of power for street railway operation. This inspired Bennett to extend his operations and he undertook construction of a line up Ninth street from Pacific avenue to C street and north to the First ward. This was the beginning of the Old Tacoma line.

* * *

Though it was better than no transportation, Pacific avenue horse car service was not satisfactory. The long grade from 21st street to Ninth made slow going for the horses in spite of the urgings of the driver. In the hope of improving the service they tried out a team of mules but that was no better.

According to "Uncle Jimmy" Sales, who came to town to see a circus in the spring of '88, these same mules put on a show that was as good as the main ring event. The car reached the end of the line just as the parade was starting up Pacific avenue. The driver and passengers stepped off to get a better view. Just then the circus band blared and both mules jumped and went galloping down the street with the car. That started a couple of other runaways. For a time Pacific avenue had plenty of action but there was no damage.

Another street car runaway occurred shortly after the first electric cars began operating up Ninth street. The car had just about reached the turn on C street when the trolley came off. Before the brakes could take hold the car began to slip back, took a curve to the Commerce street tracks and ran down to 21st, where it was stopped by the grade. Passengers were badly scared but nobody was hurt.

REVIEWING Tacoma's street railway development in the days of the horsecar, which blazed the trail for the streamline bus, discloses that among other commendable characteristics, the stalwart souls who built this city had a passion for immediateness. They were not given to dillydallying and putting off till tomorrow what they should do today.

E. T. Short

That spirit was most emphatically expressed in street railway development. Of course, those first projects did not always have smooth sailing any more than they do today. That was too much to expect of human nature even when the entire population was committed to the thought that Tacoma, "City of Destiny", was to become the metropolis of the Pacific coast.

There were bickerings in the city council over franchise provisions of no great consequence. Land owners wanted the lines built where they would benefit their own properties. Issues were raised which quite likely will come before the conference soon to be held by the city and the present street railway company, successor to the half dozen companies which pioneered in that field. But when it was all over everybody got behind the projects and pushed them along. Once committed to a definite policy they wanted to go through with it as soon as possible.

* * *

Street railway franchises multiplied in 1888 like banks in the early nineties. Nelson Bennett's narrow gauge, single track line with one horsecar operating on Pacific ave. between Ninth st. and the Northern Pacific station near 17th, completed early in 1888, was just a taste and the people demanded more.

Bennett immediately extended his line up Pacific ave. to the Northern Pacific wharf and put on more cars. Allen C. Mason and Bennett rushed to completion the first unit of their C st. line which was to reach Old Tacoma and Mason's new residence subdivision to the north.

* * *

May 30, 1888, had been set for the "grand opening" of Tacoma's new railway system. The papers referred to it as an event no less memorable than the cause for which Memorial Day was established.

Early in the morning the management had the new cars out rolling over the newly laid track to test it before the "bustling throng" of a later hour should appear. There must be nothing to mar the service on Tacoma's great day of street railway operation.

All day long the horse cars

rumbled up and down Pacific ave. between the dock and the railroad station. When the cars passed over hollow spots under the planks which covered the street, the sound was like rolling thunder. But it represented progress.

* * *

On C st. a steam motor created quite a commotion as it puffed up and down between Ninth st. and Division ave. Children danced and clapped their hands as it went by. Their sedate elders viewed it with quiet satisfaction. What if it was noisy? And what did it matter if the sparks which flew from the stack of the wood-burning steamer burned holes in a few hats? Suppose a few horses were so badly scared they nearly kicked their shoes off—nothing mattered as long as Tacoma was going ahead.

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To stimulate interest in the new enterprise, Bennett and Mason announced that all receipts for the first day's operation would be divided between the Fannie Paddock and Sisters' hospitals. The two institutions split $55.50, representing 1,110 rides at 5 cents each.

* * *

Because it was impractical to climb the Ninth st. hill, Bennett and Mason announced that there would be no connection between the horse car and steam motor lines until a cable line wes built to operate up Ninth st. The latter was part of a proposed project to be extended to Tacoma ave. to connect that district with downtown.

Motor service on C st. started at 5:45 a. m. with a round trip every half hour until 10 p. m. On "theater nights" an extra trip was made.

Pacific ave. cars started at 6 a. m. and continued until 11 p. m. with a round trip between railroad station and dock every 25 minutes. The schedule was not always maintained, for it was a hard pull up from the dock and coming the other way the grade was enough to bring the horses down to a walk. But it was the best transportation up to that time and downtown Tacoma was proud of it.

* * *

Among the next of the street railway developments was the Tacoma ave. line between Division ave. and 15th st. The single car was pulled by a big, rawboned horse which clumped up and down without much regard for a schedule. An electric successor of the old horsecar makes a round trip over the Tacoma ave. line every half hour.

ONE of the most important of Tacoma's early street railway developments was the Tacoma & Fern Hill Railway. This was a steam motor line connecting at Pacific avenue with Nelson Bennett's horse car line in front of the Northern Pacific station, and running in a southerly direction through Oakes addition. The franchise for this project was obtained by R.F. Radebaugh, George Browne and A. F. Kline, trustees. The real interests back of it were members of the St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber company, represented by Browne, and a land company which was controlled by the Northern Pacific. The purpose of the enterprise was to sell the land.

E. T. Short

The equipment was similar to the line Allen C. Mason and Nelson Bennett built to Old Tacoma but less efficient. The engine was too small for the load that sometimes was carried, and it was not unusual for the steam to give out while going up the Delin street hill.

When that happened the passengers would get out and walk. The engineer would wait a few minutes to get up a head of steam and, relieved of the load, would be able to run up the hill and overtake the passengers.

If anything like that happened today indignant citizens would protest to the city council and the street railway company but the oldtimers in Oakes' addition didn't make a fuss because it was so much better than no transportation at all. They joked about the experience and even laughed when sparks blowing out of the stack of the wood burning engine scorched holes in the brims of their hats.

Oakes' addition was planned for a high class residence district. It was close enough to the business district to be convenient. Unlike most of the other real estate promotions the greater part of the area was level and the remainder only slightly rolling.

Streets were given Indian names to which there was attached glamour and romance or historical significance. Among them were Neah, Naches, Nisqually, Cowlitz, Chelan, Chehalis, Kitsap, Palouse, Whatcom, Idaho. Oakes avenue, the main street through the addition was 100 feet wide.

Before the property could be disposed of, the panic of the nineties began to affect Tacoma and the original plans of the owners were never carried out. Even names of the streets were changed by a city council in prosaic mood and only a few of the original names are left.

* * *

The Tacoma & Fern Hill railway, later extended to Puyallup, didn't amount to much until after it was electrified. "Old Jim" Clark, one of the oldest of the street railway company's employes, retired, and known to thousands of street car riders, recalls the completion of the line and the introduction of electricity as motive power in 1890-91. J. Vincent Browne, brother of George Browne, of the St. Paul & Tacoma Lumber company, was construction superintendent.

That year marked the beginning of the end of the horse cars and steam motors in Tacoma. The first to change was the Pacific avenue line.

Another electric line built in 1890 went up Ninth street and St. Helens avenue to the Baker street loop, then up Seventh street to Tacoma avenue, south on Tacoma to Ninth, west on Ninth to I, then south to Eleventh and west to the ball park on M street. This was in what was for many years known as the "Nigger Tract." It was so named because the property once had been owned by members of a colored theatrical company who planned to establish a colony to which they could retire when their show days were over. Before their purpose was accomplished there was dissension in the group and the project was abandoned. The property originally had been sold by metes and and bounds and straightening out the title when the property passed to other ownership was a tremendous task. This finally was accomplished by a commission of which the late S. R. Balkwill was chairman.

* * *

The "Nigger Tract" line created a boom around what is now the K street business district. In a few years the line was extended to Steilacoom. From K street west it followed the route of the present Eleventh street line.

* * *

As "Old Jim" Clark recalls, there was a great deal of trouble with street cars when electric power was first applied. There were few electrical engineers who understood the proper method of distributing and applying the power. Overhead construction was too light. As a rule the transmission wires were too small to carry the load, and as cars moved away from the power house the current became weaker and they would barely crawl along. Slower even than Nelson Bennett's "plugs."

TRANSITION from horse cars and steam motors to an electric street railway system, Feb. 10, 1890, was a great event in Tacoma. First intimation of the proposed change had been given about a year before when the first Tacoma electric company began the construction of a power plant on A street near 13th. Next came the announcement that Nelson Bennett and Allen C. Mason had sold their street car properties and franchises to Henry Villard, Paul Schulze and D. H. Lauderbeck, executives of the Northern Pacific.

E. T. Short

Tacoma was not particularly happy over the deal as Villard was then suspected of using his influence as head of the Northern Pacific to switch the western terminus from Tacoma to Seattle. Schulze, head of the land department, however, pointed to the company's great holdings here and assurred the people that nothing of the kind was intended.

* * *

Next event in the transition was the erection of the power plant stack. That was a great undertaking half a century ago and crowds stood about all day watching the operation. One of the newspapers referred to the event in the following:

"The Tacoma Electric Motor and Railway company yesterday raised the large power house smokestack at the headquarters of the ocmpany at the foot of 13th street. It is the largest iron stack in the Northwest and one of the largest in the world, being 75 feet high and five feet in diameter.

"The stack is so strongly built that its entire weight could rest on the cable to which it was suspended at its center without breaking or bending while it was being raised by a derrick to be placed in its upright position. It now stands like a tower above the buildings where it is securely braced by strong cables."

Up to that time there had been some skepticism about electrification of the street car lines but that night Tacoma went to sleep reassurred. Certainly a concern which could put up such a great stack must know what it was doing.

* * *

About the end of January, 1890, it was reported that the company was about ready to take off the horses and steam motors and operate the electric cars. Day after day curious ones went to the power house but always there was some excuse.

The delay increased the number of doubters. When the company announced positively that the first car would start on the morning of Feb. 8, a great crowd was on hand to see a failure and they were not disappointed. A car was operated a few feet up and down in the barn when a fuse flashed out.

Of course it never would work. What was the use of fooling with an experimental, elusive thing like electricity when horses and steam provided reliable power that anybody could use?

* * *

Unmindful of the critics, the company experimented and tested two days more. Then, with only a few specially invited guests, the first car was started from the power house about 11 o'clock the night of Feb. 10.

As the car, No. 11, rounded the curve from 13th street to Pacific avenue, brilliantly lighted and with gong ringing, Tacoma began to wake up. Heads popped out the windows along Pacific avenue. Lunchrooms and restaurants were depopulated. Bars, poker and faro games were abandoned. Cheering throngs lined both sides of the street. Referring to the event the next day, one of the papers said:

"The line of electric street cars is running. The cars bowled up and down Pacific avenue last night and the multitudes lifted their voices and cheered until their throats were parched. Then they wet their whistles and the cheering was resumed.

"No wonder the people went half wild. They had been promised again and again but something always happened to disappoint them."

As soon as car No. 11 had tried out the power it was followed by No. 16, quoting from the next day's news, "one of the largest and handsomest cars on the line operated by Mr. Hill, and with 50 people aboard. Both cars ran to the Northern Pacific wharf, reversed, and started down Pacific avenue at a speed of 15 miles an hour. They made the run from the headquarters building to 26th street in about 10 minutes with several stops.

"Both cars worked almost perfectly. On the return trip almost as good time was made. Car No. 11 was turned up the Ninth street hill and made it in the second attempt. The cars were then loaded with excited gents and resumed their running up and down Pacific avenue."

Newspaper stories emphasized the "excellent roadbed," over which the cars "moved with the greatest of swiftness and not the least jolting or jarring." The builders were complimented particularly for their "ingenuity in planning the crossing of the Northern Pacific on 17th street. "The cars glide over the railroad with all the ease imaginable."

Lest there be those who will take the reference to the smooth roadbed with a grain of salt, it should be remembered that in those days people had not been accustomed to riding on air inflated rubber tires over smooth highways. They were used to jolts.

FIRST effect of the electrification of the downtown street railways in February, 1889, was a sharp expansion of the real estate business, then at its height. Fortunes were being made buying and selling property in the business district and in the subdivisions through which it was proposed to extend the transportation lines. The purchaser of an option on favorably situated real estate would be beseiged by buyers and frequently doubled his money before a transfer was made. This activity stimulated more street railway building and the frenzied speculators tried to outdo each other in buying ahead of construction.

E. T. Short

Some of the transportation projects of those days were built on a shoe string. Due to the advertising of the Northern Pacific, the east had been sold on the future of Tacoma. Railway equipment houses offered extreme inducements to transportation promoters. Three companies were competing with each other in making terms for the sale of equipment—Westinghouse, Thompson-Huston, and Edison.

Tacoma representative of the Edison was the late S. Z. Mitchell, whose driving energy and forceful personality in later years made him a big figure in the country's electric power business. His greatest achievement was organization of the Electric Bond and Share company, one of the groups hit by the panic in 1930. Mitchell refused to believe that any panic could be strong enough to affect his organization and was stunned when the blow fell.

Henry Villard and his associates, who bought and electrified the Nelson Bennett and Allen C. Mason street car lines, were so pleased with the immediate success of the venture that they applied for a franchise covering streets in all directions. They announced that they intended to immediately spend $500,000 in construction but by that time there were rumblings which made the Villard financial structure tremble a bit and the investment was withheld.

Soon after Villard took over the street railways here, Hugh C. Wallace, Isaac W. Anderson, T. B. Wallace, Allen C. Mason and Stuart Rice undertook what was to become one of the most important street railway developments in Tacoma. They obtained a franchise to build a line through subdivisions to the north in which Mason had sold thousands of dollars worth of property on the promise that transportation would be available early in 1890. The franchise provided for a 10-cent fare.

Though Mason and his associates were among the most substantial men in the community, they did not want to tie up their ready money in the project but that did not hinder them. They were able to obtain all the equipment they required merely by giving their notes and the notes of the corporation. Such was the faith of the financial world in the future of Tacoma. Nobody guessed what the nineties would bring forth.

* * *

Mason took charge of construction and in December, 1889, began to build what is now the Point Defiance line. Skeptics doubted that the line could be finished by the first of the following March as the franchise provided. Mason said it could be done and that the last spike would be driven at 2:30 of the afternoon of March 1, 1890. He made good his promise and also won a bet that he would drive the last spike himself without missing a blow.

* * *

One factor which threatened to thwart Mason's objective was the refusal of the Villard group to permit him to run his Point Defiance cars over the C street tracks from Division avenue to Ninth street. Mason's answer was to prepare to build from Ninth and Commerce along Cliff avenue to Division and come down town over his own tracks. That brought Villard to time and Mason obtained a favorable lease.

The next development of the Mason group was to go down Ninth street to Commerce, or Railroad as the street was then called, to connect with the Radebaugh Oakes addition and Fern Hill line which had been extended north from Delin street. They made an alliance with Radebaugh and operated as the Point Defiance, Tacoma and Edison (South Tacoma) Railway.

REFERENCE was made Saturday to Allen C. Mason's part in obtaining Point Defiance park for Tacoma and developing it as an attraction to make business for the Point Defiance, Tacoma and Edison Railway company. Though Mason did provide most of the energy which finally put the project underway, others assisted. Development of the park was first suggested by Isaac Anderson, one of Mason's associates. Hugh Wallace went to Washington on behalf of a bill giving the property to Tacoma for park purposes, but congress was not interested.

E. T. Short

Mason asked Wallace what he thought should be done to stimulate interest. Wallace ventured the suggestion that a bit of entertainment for some key members of congress might help. Mason gave Wallace $500 and hold him to go to it.

The "entertainment" must have been effective, for congress soon passed the bill. Grover Cleveland, however, fearful that the situation on the Pacific might make it advisable for the government to retain the property, vetoed the bill. Walter J. Thompson went to see his friend, Dan Lamont, one of Cleveland's advisers, and the bill was reintroduced and went through.

The matter was not definitely settled until some time later when Mason, with the help of the late Francis W. Cushman, obtained the property for Tacoma. Meantime Mason had taken a chance on developments at Point Defiance which helped the street railway business.

* * *

The incentive which prompted the building of the Point Defiance line was to keep faith with those who had bought property in the North End. Neither Mason nor his associates expected to make any money out of it and they intended to give the line to anybody who would operate it.

To their great surprise, however, the line began to pay from the start, and after they tied up with the Radebaugh line to Fern Hill and Edison, revenue increased. So they hung on and accepted the profits as a reward of their virtue in keeping faith with the property owners.

* * *

Besides developing the North End business property, Mason also undertook a waterfront development and obtained right-of-way for a combination freight and passenger line from Old Tacoma to the smelter. The greater part of the waterfront south of Old Tacoma was controlled by the Northern Pacific or other private interests and Mason proposed that the north waterfront should be retained in independent hands.

He also had in mind the project finally carried out by the Northern Pacific and Great Northern—a tunnel under Point Defiance and a water grade entrance to Tacoma for the Union Pacific. The Northern Pacific, of course, put every possible obstacle in his way and when it seemed that the project would be successful, bought him out.

A standard gauge track was laid to the smelter but no effort was made to carry out Mason's idea for a local passenger service.

* * *

All this time the Point Defiance line continued to make money. It could have been sold at a profit but Mason and his associates decided to hang onto it. Then came '93 and the panic. Fortunes were swept away as fast as they had been made and the Point Defiance railway went with the rest. The property was ordered sold by the court and was picked up for considerably less than half its value. One of the plaintiffs was the Edison company, represented by S. Z. Mitchell. The property finally passed to the predecessor of the present Tacoma Railway & Power company, survived the panic and again made money.

* * *

Mason's franchise provided for a ten-cent fare between Point Defiance or the smelter and downtown. For the benefit of the daily riders in the North End residence district, the fare from Orchard and North 45th was reduced to five cents. That point was given the name of Poor Man's corner when, during the panic, laborers at the smelter walked out there to save five cents.

* * *

Even nickels were scarce in those days and the only regular passengers were those who rode to and from work. Many a substantial citizen walked three or four miles down town to save five cents. That the extra walking was hard on shoes didn't matter. He had the shoes at the moment but didn't always have the nickel.

When the shoes wore out it was too bad!

LOCAL and interurban transportation systems multiplied so rapidly with Tacoma's first boom that in the early nineties rail lines with snubnosed, puffing steam "dummies" radiated in all directions. The first builders of Tacoma were men of vision who should not be criticized if their enthusiasm sometimes went beyond the bounds of good judgment. They believed in the "City of Destiny" and risked everything they had to make their dreams come true. In their railway promotions they had in mind the benefit that would accrue to the city as well as their own profits, and none of the early builders made a profit. The lines to Puyallup and the South Tacoma carshops of the Northern Pacific, about which Fred Foye told yesterday, were of vastly more benefit to the people they served than they were to the promoters.

E. T. Short

Another such transportation venture was the Center st. and Spanaway steam line built in 1890 by Lucian Cook, brother of C. A. Cook. He combined the altruistic with the practical in a large degree. His road was built to Spanaway lake largely with the idea of providing an inland water resort which would be another asset in attracting newcomers to Tacoma.

The probabilities are that Cook might have made his line pay if the panic had not crashed down on him. Spanaway lake was an attraction that took many picnic parties over the line. There are in Tacoma today hundreds of grownups who remember the thrill of riding on the "choo-choo" to Spanaway lake. To them it did not matter that the stumpy little cars bounced and bumped over a road not too well ballasted. To most of them it was "the thrill that comes once in a lifetime."

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While the picnickers and other riders paid actual operating expenses, they did not provide anything for interest and other overhead and when the pinch came the road went into the hands of a receiver. Some new capital was obtained through the receivership but it was insufficient to stem the depression tide and operation was abandoned. The predecessors of the Tacoma Railway & Power company purchased part of the assets, including the right-of-way and track between the city limits and Spanaway lake, over which the present Spanaway line runs.

* * *

Another and one of the important transportation ventures of those who had faith in Tacoma was the Tacoma & Lake City railway. This line was built by Frank C. Ross, Fremont Campbell, C. A. E. Naubert and R. B. Mullen. The Tacoma terminus was at Union ave. and No. 26th st., and the line ran south through Oakland addition, Menlo park and terminated near the old Lake City hotel.

Steel rails and other construction materials were shipped over a track built by Ross and his associates connecting with the Northern Pacific near the car shops. A locomotive and three passenger cars purchased from a railroad receiver in the east were brought here by John Graham, first engineer on the line. The first trip was made April 29, 1890, when a group of Tacoma citizens were guests of the promoters.

On this trip somebody asked why they had built a standard gauge with heavy rails instead of the narrow gauge construction like the other local transportation lines. Ross then disclosed that the project had been promoted with the understanding that it was to become part of the Union Pacific line to Puget Sound.

That was the first real intimation Tacoma had of the Union Pacific's intention to come here. Rumors one day would be denied the next, but when Ross disclosed that the Union Pacific was interested in the line and that his office had been buying right-of-way between the Columbia river over a route surveyed by Union Pacific engineers, the effect was something like that which followed announcement that Tacoma was to be the Northern Pacific terminus.

JUN. 10 1936

ONE of the biggest spurts of Tacoma's early boom days followed completion of the Tacoma & Lake City railroad, built by Frank C. Ross and associates, and the announcement that the line was to become part of the Union Pacific system. The news was spread through real estate advertisements and newspapers proclaimed the tidings that Tacoma no longer was a one-railroad town. The mighty Union Pacific, with its Pacific Mail Steamship line, was another factor that would help fulfill the destiny of the metropolis of the Pacific.

E. T. Short

A few days after Ross announced that the road would be taken over by the Union Pacific, the Tacoma Chamber of Commerce received a letter from W. H. Holcomb, vice president of the system, announcing that it was proposed to extend the line from Portland to the Canadian boundary and that the route would include Tacoma provided sufficient inducements were offered. The "inducements" included right-of-way in the city, land for terminals and sufficient water frontage for warehouses and docks suitable for the landing of the ships of the Pacific Mail line.

That wasn't what Tacoma expected, but as everybody had plenty of land and Allen C. Mason controlled a large waterfront area, there was no trouble in meeting the requirements. Virgil G. Bogue, Union Pacific engineer, approved the property and in a few days articles of incorporation for the Oregon Railway Extension Co., Union Pacific Construction Corporation, were filed at Olympia. Tacoma surely was on the way then, and there was not a cloud in sight.

* * *

Meanwhile the Tacoma & Lake City railroad, operating from No 25th st. and Union ave. to Lake City, was doing a good business. Ross announced that he proposed extending the line to Olympia providing the citizens would provide a bouns of $75,000. He pointed out that it would be a great advantage to have direct rail connection that would make the capital and the metropolis of the state only an hour's ride apart. Olympia thought so, too, and began to raise the money. That deal, however, was not completed, for Ross and his associates sold the line to the Union Pacific for $153,000.

Under Union Pacific operation, the line did good business during the summer months but in the fall traffic decreased. In an effort to balance the budget, the fireman and trainman were laid off and the train was operated by Conductor George Balch and Engineer W. C. Graham.

Then a small cloud appeared on the horizon. There were rumors of a scandal in the Union Pacific organization. Stockholders charged that the road was losing money and that the rolling stock and equipment were being neglected to make a showing. Investigators went over the entire system and when they reached Tacoma, clamped down on the Lake City line. Conductor and trackmen were fired and Engineer Graham was put in charge of operations. In his personal memoirs he recounts that he was engineer, fireman, conductor, brakeman and track walker.

One-man operation cut running expenses but still the line did not pay and the Union Pacific sold the property to John S. Baker and Robert Wingate "for a song," and they were not very good

singers, either. They continued to run the road with one man for a few months and then abandoned the service between No. 26th st. and the city limits. They made arrangements with Graham to operate one train daily each way between Lake City and So. 64th st. A bus carried passengers from the end of the line to 54th and Union. That was the city's first bus service as a part of the local transportation system.

* * *

Even though these changes cut operating expenses to the bone, the line failed to pay. There was no chance to refinance the road for everybody had been bankrupted by the depression. There was nothing for Baker and Wingate to do but quit. They stopped operations one Saturday night in September, 1897. All the road's movcable equipment was hauled over to the Northern Pacific yards and the next day, Sunday, part of the American Lake tracks were torn up.

That ended one of the colorful episodes in the development of Tacoma's street railway and suburban transportation systems.

The Union Pacific? That bubble blew up when the financial powers that control railroads and such decided that instead of fighting each other for business on Puget Sound, the Union Pacific and Northern Pacific should get together. And they did!

PACIFIC ave., Old Tacoma, Point Defiance, Oakes addition and other street railway promotions in the late eighties provided reasonably good north and south transportation but there was no direct way of getting "up the hill." What was considered some of the most desirable residence property was above Tacoma ave. and on the plateau west of K st., but those districts did not develop as fast as those which had transportation.

E. T. Short

A few weeks after Nelson Bennett obtained the franchise for his horsecar line on Pacific ave., George F. Orchard and associates applied for a double track cable franchise over a loop which included A st., 11th, K and 13th, to provide that service.

Orchard attempted to interest capital in the project, but was unsuccessful. In the spring of 1888 the franchise was revised to permit building of the 11th st. line first, and two years more to complete the loop. But the council tacked on a couple of sections requiring Orchard to pave between and along the rails with any material the city engineer designated, and reserving the right to impose a gross earnings tax of one to three per cent.

The last two uncertain provisions again made the project difficult to finance. Orchard tried for nearly two years to build the line and then gave it up.

* * *

During the time Orchard held the cable franchise, the Tacoma Railway & Motor company, organized by Henry Villard, had been acquiring some of the other lines. As soon as Orchard quit, the Villard company applied for a double track cable franchise over the K st. loop.

By that time the council had big ideas of Tacoma's transportation requirements and insisted that any cable franchise must provide for four lines. Eight streets had been opened up the hill and the council was willing to let the streetcar company choose four.

* * *

There was a long squabble over the terms of the franchise, but the company finally agreed to accept it and on Sept. 5, 1890, the contract was let for the double track line on 11th st. Before the contractor started work, however, business men and property owners sent a petition to the council requesting the company be permitted to build a single track line around the loop.

Speakers pointed out that the double track would clutter up the streets unnecessarily and serve no good purpose. They also asked that the franchise be amended to include only 11th and 13th sts. Something caused a change in the councilmanic viewpoint and the franchise was amended as requested. A year later the line was finished.

The first day the little open cable cars with two seats running lengthwise and facing the outside were operated, the company offered free rides but nobody wanted to be first until Major C. M. Riddell came along. He boarded a car at 11th and Pacific and rode around the loop, the first passenger on the cable. The major's trip reassured others and soon the little cars were carrying capacity loads.

Though the cable line was welcomed as an important link in Tacoma's transportation system, it proved to be a thorn in the flesh of the public, the city council and the company. Part of the equipment was too light and was continually getting out of order. The first time the cable broke, the line was crippled for a week.

The open cars were all right in summer but what a howl there was through the rainy season! Water dripped from the top of the cars into the laps of the passengers on the seat, or down their necks if they stood. Wind blew the rain through the cars. A ride from Pacific ave. to K st. in an ordinary winter storm was as good as a shower bath.

Protests finally brought the closed cars in use today, but there are still those who feel like fighting when they think of the old cable car experiences.

* * *

The panic of the nineties was one influence which united the street railways in one company. The Tacoma Railway and Motor company, now Tacoma Railway & Power company, was the only one that survived and was able to absorb the others.

* * *

Though the trail of Tacoma's transportation system is marked with some bitter controversies and protests against unsatisfactory service, the story also reveals substantial benefits. Each of the early transportation ventures was followed by new business activity in the locality served. Extensions opened new territory and increased property value.

THEY'RE "headin' for the last roundup." Tacoma's old street cars are nearing the end of a useful service. For 50 years they have been a part a part of the community life. They have carried thousands of students to and from school. They have provided a substantial connection between home and business. For many thousands of Tacoma residents they provided the only means of reaching

E. T. SHORT

places of recreation. But their usefulness is about over. Like "old Kate," saddled for the last roundup, they go to the barn tonight probably to stay until they are bid in by the junk man or the machinery dealer.

* * *

Like the gallant old ships which are beached and burned for the metal which holds hulls together, they will be worth only the value of the equipment and material of which they are composed. Once upon a time, like the old ships, they glistened and sparkled with new paint and varnish. The motor equipment was the most modern of the time. 11 JUNE 1938

The first electric car in Tacoma was a thing of beauty as well as utility. Near the end of January it was reported, unofficially, that the Tacoma Electric Motor and Railway company was about ready to take off the horses and steam motors and operate only electric cars. Day after day curious ones went to the power house on A street and watched the engineers doing things around the generators and who shook their heads when asked how soon the electric cars would be running.

The great event, in spite of the misgivings of the skeptics, came the night of Feb. 11, 1890. About 10 o'clock, car No. 11 rolled out of the barn, brilliantly lighted, and with song ringing, swung out on Pacific avenue. As the car proceded on its way, heads popped out of windows along Pacific ave. Crowds poured out of restaurants, bar rooms and gambling houses. Soon cheering throngs lined both sides of the street. Referring to the event one of the papers said the next day:

The line of electric street cars is running. The cars bowled up and down Pacific ave. last night and the multitudes lifted their voices and cheered until their throats were parched. Then some of them "wet their whistles" and went at it again.

"No wonder the crowd went wild. The new cars had been promised again and again but 938 something always happened to disappoint. This time it was a fact."

* * *

Car No. 11 soon was followed by No. 16, "one of the handsomest and largest cars on the line." Both cars were run up and down Pacific ave. and operated almost perfectly. After a trip to the Northern Pacific wharf the cars came back up town where "they were loaded with excited gents and resumed their running up and down Pacific ave."

* * *

A day or two later the old horses and the steam "dummies" were headed "for the last roundup." Various fates befell the horses. Most of the old cars were junked and the old service soon was forgotten.

* * *

Something akin to the old scenes which marked the passing of the horse car and steam dummy 48 years ago will be reenacted Saturday night. There will be great jubilation over the passing of the old equipment, long lacking new paint, and generally out of date. There will be the same jubilation in welcoming the new busses that was evidenced when the first electric cars appeared on Pacific ave. the night of Feb. 10, 1890.

* * *

The passing of the street cars will cause many to be thoughtful. It will be a reminder that time changes all things; that the passing of the old and the coming of the new is inevitable.

From the street cars their minds will wander to some of the fine old mansions in Tacoma, many of them showing signs of neglect. Some of them are being relegated to that class of domicle known as the "rooming" house.

* * *

In the jubilant throng to watch the burning of one of the old street cars Saturday night as a climax to the festivities, there will be a few sentimentally inclined who will not be very happy, for to them the street cars are associated with the days when we had what was called "Tacoma spirit." That was a spirit which did things and seems to have grown decrepit along with the old cars. They will wonder if by any chance the new transportation will bring a new will and desire to do the things which once made Tacoma one of the most talked of towns in the country.

E. J. WEEKS is having what might be called a superabundance of anniversaries. A few days ago he celebrated his 80th birthday. Sunday, Nov. 1, with Mrs. Weeks, who lost her identity as Cora Folsom, at Exeter, Mass., Nov. 1, 1886, he will join with a son and daughter and four grandchildren in a golden wedding anniversary. This year also marks the 50th anniversary of his appointment as superintendent of the street railway at Framingham, Mass.

E. T. Short

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The last anniversary will be celebrated only by a reminiscent hour occasionally as "B. J." occupies a comfortable seat in the streamline bus on which he travels between his home and office.

In this comfortable transportation unit he thinks of the days when he drove a couple of rawboned nags hitched to a car of the Boston street railway company; by the hostler, John L. Sullivan; of his promotion to a place on the back platform, and then the superintendency job in Framingham.

* * *

Ill health of one of the children was a contributing factor in the westward move a few years later. The doctor said a change of climate was imperative. Among other choices he recommended Porto Rico and Tacoma.

* * *

About this time it happened that the General Electric Co., which, through extending credit for equipment, had a controlling interest in most of the country's electric railways, including the Framingham and Tacoma systems. So when the energetic young superintendent early in January, 1901, told his superior that he intended moving to Tacoma, there was the job of looking after General Electric interests in the T. R. & P. waiting for him. He landed here Feb. 3, 1901.

* * *

Two and a half years with the T. R. & P. earned him a better job with J. P. Greaves, who, with General Electric help, was building the Spokane traction system. When the Spokane job was finished he came back to Tacoma to help E. J. Felt build the Pacific traction lines. Felt had been working on the project several years and in the latter part of 1905 had sufficient financial backing to go ahead.

From the first it was a battle with the T. R. & P. First, in the city council over the city franchise. Felt was soon over that hurdle, as the council had just been having a big fight with W. S. Dimmock, manager, and B. S. Grosscup, T. R. & P. attorney, over rates and franchises. An equally hostile feeling on the part of the county commissioners gave Felt his county franchise. Then the battle began in earnest.

The first big fight was on Commerce street when Dibble & Hawthorne, contractors, began laying Pacific traction tracks on Commerce street north from 9th, the beginning of the line that was to run on Cliff ave. (Stadium way) and out Division ave. to a connection with a line to American Lake.

The day the Commerce street work started there was a pitched battle between Felt's crew and a T. R. & P. gang. Pick handles, shovels and fists did minor damage until court action stopped hostilities and finally gave Felt the right-of-way.

* * *

Next was the "Battle of Clover Creek," a conflict only a little less memorable than the "Battle of Fern Hill" a few years previous. when residents of that community tied up the line until the T. R. & P. agreed to a fare adjustment.

Felt had built a bridge across Clover creek for his American lake line. A couple of nights after the job was finished, a T. R. &. P. crew built a section of roadbed across Felt's approach to the bridge, about 18 inches above his grade, and laid the rails.

The next night when Weeks, Felt's superintendent, went out with a gang to remove the obstruction, he found a T. R. & P. crew guarding the job, and in charge of "Big" Kinney, an Irishman, and W. H. Bosworth, the chief engineer.

Weeks' crew was outnumbered about three to one, but a speech by his Italian foreman, Fred Pellegrini, and a display of his deputy sheriff's star gave the Felt gang the advantage and they began to tear up the rails. Just as the job was finished, Dimmock, the manager, and Sheriff A. J. Denholm arrived.

Dimmock ordered his men to tear up the traction rails.

"If they touch a rail," said Weeks, showing his deputy sheriff star, "I'll arrest you."

Dimmock demanded that the sheriff protect him. Weeks said it they were looking for trouble all they had to do was ask for it. Denholm said he wasn't looking for trouble and advised Dimmock to call off his men.

* * *

In the mean time Felt had routed Judge W. O. Chapman out of bed at 5 o'clock in the morning to sign a restraining order directed to the T. R. & P. That transferred the battle to the courts, where Felt was again victorious.

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Felt finally completed the line from 9th and Commerce to American lake and the next year sold out to the T. R. & P. He made some profit on the deal and went to England, where he died a few years ago.

* * *

After Felt sold out, Weeks became commissioner of public utilities and is now in the real estate and insurance business.

"Those were the days," said Weeks, as he gossiped about the horse cars, his hostler, John L. Sullivan, and the traction line battles.

WHEN an acquaintance, a newcomer, asked the other day how come the patch of cresoted blocks on Commerce st. at Ninth and the two streaks running north in the asphalt pavement to Stadium way, it recalled interesting episodes in a fight to control the street railway situation in Tacoma. It involved first fights between rival construction crews and breath-taking midnight rides to Seattle for federal court injunctions.

When things began to pick up after the panic of the nineties, E. J. Felt, a man with vision and some financial connections, got the idea that Tacoma needed a better transportation system and he organized the Pacific Traction Co. He began preliminary work about 1902 and obtained franchises for street railway lines but it was not until 1905 that his financial backers put up any money, and a year later before he was ready for construction. 18 SEP 1934

E. T. SHORT

The unit he first proposed to construct was a line beginning at Commerce and Ninth, running north to Division ave., west on Division to Sprague ave. and south to the prairies and American lake The line was intended to serve a large territory which had no transportation facilities and later was to be extended to Olympia.

JUST THOUGHT OF IT

About the time Felt was ready to begin work the city council let a contract to the Independent Asphalt Co. to replace the planks on Commerce st. with asphalt. The day the paving company started work on Commerce st., W. S. Dimmock, manager of the Tacoma Railway & Power Co., notified Owen Woods, commissioner of public works, that under an old franchise inherited from Allen C. Mason's Point Defiance Railway, the company had just decided to immediately begin laying a track on Commerce st. Dimmock explained that the company wanted to do this before the street was paved, and without waiting for a reply from Woods moved a construction crew to Commerce street while the asphalt company's men were eating lunch. TIMES

When George Milton Savage, head of the Independent Asphalt Paving Co., heard about Dimmock's plan he protested on the ground that he had a contract to pave Commerce st. the full width and if he did not do so he might not be able to collect anything from the city. While city officials were pondering the situation Savage told his construction foremen to go ahead with the Commerce street job and throw the street railway men off if they tried to start anything.

FIGHT STARTS

Just as the paving crew was ready to start work after lunch, the T. R. & P. construction gang appeared and began to shovel out a road bed. Then the fight started. Shovels, fists and pick handles were used by the rival crews. A paving company teamster tried to drive the horses over a bunch of the street railway men. A couple of railway men grabbed the horses by the bits and turned them around so short that the wagon was tipped over. Two policemen who tried to interfere were swept aside. By that time Tom Maloney, chief of police, arrived with reinforcements. Some of the belligerents were taken to jail and several were sent to a hospital to be patched up.

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Dimmock demanded that Woods, as commissioner of public works, give his crew the protection to which they were entitled. Woods went for advice to C. W. Riddell, then city attorney. Riddell said the old franchise had expired and told him to notify Dimmock to keep his men off.

That was the first skirmish. Felt, and his manager, B. J. Weeks, made a tentative deal with the paving company to lay the Pacific traction tracks. Just as they were ready to go ahead all work was tied up by a federal court injunction obtained for Dimmock by B. S. Grosscup and C. O. Bates of Tacoma and two Seatle attorneys, Judge George H. Donworth and E. H. Todd, said to be representing the Seattle Electric Co.

MIDNIGHT RIDE

For the time being that tied things up tight but Felt discovered a loophole in the injunction and was about to wiggle out when the T. R. & P. folks made the same discovery. Then there was a scurrying around!

At a conference that night a new injunction petition was drawn up and at midnight Dimmock and Attorney Bates started for Seattle on an interurban car. They were given a clear track and made the run in exactly 37 minutes, nearly a mile a minute. Speaking of the experience Bates said he never would be the same man again. He expected every minute that the wildly swaying car would jump the track. But it didn't, and Bates and Dimmock routed Judge Hanford out of bed and got the new injunction signed.

* * *

These skirmishes and rows before the city council and county commissioners continued several months but Felt finally won and built his line through South Tacoma to American lake. Then evil days fell upon him. Tacoma was doing business with clearing house certificates, and the money market generally was panicky. Felt's backers became involved and eastern financiers sent a representative out here to take charge of the Pacific Traction Co. It wasn't long then before the Stone & Webster interests came into the picture and Felt's lines become part of the T. R. & P. system and part of it, including the Commerce st. line was abandoned.

Minus a few details, that, in substance is how come the wood blocks and streaks on Commerce st. It's also the story of a valiant fight against overwhelming odds and how powerful interests can sometimes stifle competition.

By Albert Ottenheimer

TIME has faded the print of remembrance of the days that were. The mist of the years is beginning to haze the memory of the old times. One by one, slowly, steadily, the old men are being gathered in. dropping off like wilted petals before a winter wind, going like the old days in which they lived —beyond recall.

And much of Tacoma's mottled and romantic early history will be forever, irrevocably lost in their going. Men will soon forget the days when jet-haired Indian boys cracked hazel nuts on the still-living stumps that lined Pacific avenue. They will cease to remember how the black bear and the white-tailed deer were hunted on the not far-removed upper stretches of the avenue. They will forget for the lack of telling.

And there is much of that story that should not be lost. It is a glowing tale of a stalwart, vigorous city in its infancy. It is the story of its successes, its failures, its accomplishments—its life! And there is no single phase of that early history that tells these things quite so graphically, quite so fully as the story of the early days of the street car in Tacoma. 5 NOV 1922

The glamor of romance often gilds the least expected things. So it is with the old street car days. There is romance there, honest and potent, an intangible, powerful interest hidden behind a drab, prosaic veneer of modernity. From the very days of the old horse cars, down through the obstreperous steam dummy and the pitiful early electric cars, down to the big electrically propelled steel coach of today, there are tales worthy of the telling, stories which should not and must not be lost.

Billy White, the forerunners of Tacoma's army of street car men today, startled the little town that was Tacoma then, on the blue-skyed morning of May 1, 1888, 34 years ago. Legs spread like the Colossus', his chest straining at the buttons of his jacket, he stood on the front platform of Tacoma's first street car at the reins of a team of plodding chestnuts.

Up the street from the barns at 13th street went the car, bouncing and bobbing up the billowy tracks to the Northern Pacific headquarters building at 7th street, while on both sides of the street the people turned to stare and marvel in unfeigned amazement. The Indians scurried off the track and hugged their gaudy shawls anew and found no solace in the further encroachment of invader. It was a seven-days' wonder, and then, like all things, Tacoma settled down to get used to it.

The beginnings of the street car in Tacoma came into being through circumstances fraught with trial and tribulation. Allen C Mason and Nelson Bennett, both of them dead now, but builders of Tacoma to whom the city owes more than it has ever paid, joined in asking for the first franchise in the latter part of 1886. Their plans met with opposition from the very start. The two builders desired to use horse-power in the raw as a means of motive power. The mayor and the City Council were highly partial to electricity. And so they talked and argued—and nothing came of it.

Then, when it looked as though the promotors would withdraw their application in dispust at the delay, the council finally thought better of the plan, and on February 5, 1887, ordinance No. 152 was passed, granting to "Nelson Bennett and his associates, their successors and assigns, the right to construct and operate a street railway upon certain streets and avenues in the City of Tacoma." Not that it was that easy. Not at all. Mayor Mann vetoed it twice, but the council finally managed to pass it the third time over his demurrer.

Work was pushed immediately on Pacific avenue and a portion of Tacoma avenue, then the second business street of the city. Electricity was discussed again for a time, but this idea was finally quashed when Engineer P. O. Bean, sent East to study the situation, reported that electric power could not be carried profitnbly more than three miles! So the Tacoma Street Railway Company was incorporated on January 19, 1887, for $250,000 and its first car started down Pacific avenue on the first day of May of the next year behind a team of truck horses.

There were two lines originally. The one on Pacific avenue started at 25th street and made its laboring way down to the Northern Pacific Headquarters building at 7th street, now opposite the city hall but then across the street from a dank, boggy marsh. The line on Tacoma avenue was about the same, with some distance cut from each end. Four antiquated cars were assigned to Pacific avenue and one to Tacoma avenue. These constituted the entire rolling stock of the company at the time.

And those cars! To the man used to the comparative luxury of the well-outfited, well-heated and well-ventilated cars of today, they were hopelessly rude and inadequate. But in those days they were the acme of wonder Tiny, single-truck affairs they were, smaller, even, than our smallest present-day one-man cars. By dint of a little economical placing, perhaps 25 passengers could be accommodated with seats, such as they were. They ran the length of the car, their painted surfaces unpadded by even a strip of carpet. There were five or six windows to a side, equipped with shutters as well as glass, that slid down into the body of the car. Passengers entered on low-hung steps at the rear. The driver watched their movements and chucked to his horse when they were safely aboard. If the process was not speedy enough for his liking he gave a gong, fastened on the back platform, a vigorous clang to hurry their movements.

The fare collecting system, the early counterpart of what today is the automatic farebox, was amusingly involved. There was a slot on each window post for the deposit of the fare. Slipped in here, the nickles rolled down concealed tubes behind the woodwork to a tightly locked woden box in the driver's platform. As much faith as the management had in its venture, little of it was manifested in thei rtrusting to the honesty of mankind. Besides the precaution that the conductor should not handle the fare, the sysem of making change was designed to thwart any money-making designs at the company's expense. On the first trip the driver was equipped with $10 in change, divided up in portions of 25, 50 cents and a dollar and placed in envelopes. These in turn were put in a partitioned box within the easy access of the driver.

The passenger unlatched the door to the driver's platform and thrust out his coin. The driver loosed one hand from the reins, and gave the correct envelope in return for the money.

Then he kept a close watch to see that the slot received its tribute. Verily it was a smart crook that foiled that system, and but few of them took the trouble to try.

The traffic, to measure it by the standards of today, was far from excessive. Fifteen dollars taken in by one car in a day was considered phenomenal. A much smaller sum was regarded as normal. It was not considered unusual to take in less than $2 a day on the Tacoma avenue run. It was a rarity to see a crowded car. The nearest approach to that came with the last car at 8 o'clock at night when the steamer Greyhound disgorged its mob of passengers from Seattle. The tracks, after a short time, had been extended to the wharf and the passengers were picked up a short distance from where they landed at the old Flyer dock, long since gone but then located about where the Northern Pacific docks now stand.

The company owned 30 head of horses, not to mention a team of perverse-minded Missouri mules. These were spelled off at three-hour intervals. The fresh team was driven for three hours and then the old one was pressed into service again. When the day was done the horses were sheltered in the car barns at 13th and A streets, where the present general offices, cable barns, repair shops and power plant of the company of today are located. The driver on the Tacoma avenue line trotted down the hill behind the horses to the barns every night. The cars were left standing in the streets. The traffic wasn't heavy enough on either of the thoroughfares for them to cause any difficulty. It was an urgent errand that brought a Tacoman abroad on the streets much after 9 o'clock.

It was a far different Pacific avenue he horse cars saw then than it is today. Low frame buildings rambled up and down the street, many unpainted, the rest resplendent in varicolored signs. The line of buildings was frequently broken by a broad expanse of a vacant lot, grassy, marshy plots that steamed in the spring and after a May shower. Mud lay deep on the street, a black, albuminous ooze that clung and clogged. It lay thick and heavy over the car tracks and in a sag in the rails at 15th street the driver ran more on mud than steel and trusted his horses and his luck to hit the rails on the other side.

James Cummings, since dead, was the first manager. Neal Harrison drove old Buck and Barney, the buckskin and chestnut team on Pacific avenue. One of the most familiar figures in the old days was Neal of a frigid winter's morning, wrapped and swathed against the cold, standing on the platform of his rocking, lurching little car like a mariner on the quarterdeck in a nasty squall, thumping his thigh with the fist which held the

reins to keep his fingers warm and marking in staccato accents at frequent intervals, "Gid-dap, Barney!" Neal went to work for the street car company driving one of the horse cars early in March, 1889. He's N. P. Harrison now, of Harrison Brothers, one of Tacoma's largest dealers in fuel and building materials.

Then there was Jim Clarke, who went to work in May, 1889. Jim, long, lank and as Scotch as ever, is an operator on the Point Defiance line now. Ben Swanson is still following the steel ribbons, a motorman on the Pacific traction line. Ben went to work driving a horse car in August, 1889. Fred McClelland, now a motorman on the Interurban, was barn boss. There were other old names, familiar ones, that have since disappeared. Freeman Dotten, Alex Stevenson, "Little Joe" Sparling, Billy Myers, "Shorty" Morrison and a host of others. Many of them are long since dead. Sparling was last heard of at Dash Point. Myers has a ranch at Spanaway. Morrison, at last reports, was chief dispatcher for the electric railway company in Los Angeles.

It was no bed of pink and purple roses, their life in those times. They rose in the sooty gray of dawn and trudged through the mud and rain and snow, from their homes to the barns in time to take the first car out at 6 o'clock. They remained at their posts until 8 o'clock until the last car stood stark and deserted at 13th and the horses were crunching fodder in contentment in the barns. And for those 14 hours of straining labor, they were magnificently remunerated at the magnificent scale of $2 a day—and congratulated themselves on their luck!

Then, in 1888, a year after the advent of the horse cars, two steam dummy lines were put in operation, one by the operators of the horse lines and the other by R. F. Radebaugh, founder and editor of The Ledger. The T. S. R. Company's line started at 9th and C streets, now Broadway, ran out C to Division avenue, up Division to Tacoma avenue, out Tacoma to North 6th. Thence it ran to North G to McCarver and down through Old Town, making the loop that the present line does there. The return trip was over practically the same route with the exception that the cars came down St. Helens from Division.

Radebaugh's line ran from 26th and Pacific to Oakes Addition, now Oakland, as far out as 46th and Asotin. Subsequently it was extended through South Tacoma, then to Fern Hill and finally, a branch was run out to Puyallup. This, in after years was electrified as the Old Puyallup line, abandoned beyond Summit only a few years ago.

The Old Town trip took an hour to go and return. The other was somewhat longer. Fare on both lines was five cents. Diminutive railroad coaches drawn by antiquated steam dummies, were used. At times open flat cars with improvised seats were employed. The old wood-burning dummies threw sparks and brands in happy-go-lucky abandon and the devastation to the passengers' clothing was deplorable. The pungent odor of scorched and burned linen was ever-present and the passengers took the trip at the risk of coming away with neatly burney holes in the most unexpected and least desirable places.

The crew of a train consisted of an engineer and a fireman and a conductor. The routes of both lines ran through wild, unpopulated territory. Neither were particularly profitable and both went bankrupt in the course of time. Virgin forest, undesecrated as yet by the inroads of the saw and axe, lay on both sides of the Oakes Addition run and even after it was extended to Puyallup, sunlight broke through the trees in only three places all the way from Tacoma to Puyallup. The Old Tacoma line was less heavily timbered but ran through rough, houseless blocks. The Annie Wright Seminary at Division and St. Helens was practically the outpost of the populated territory until Old Tacoma was reached. Then progress planted its iron-shod heel again and all this vanished. Tacoma grew like a stripling youth and the horse cars and steam dummies proved inadequate. Science had made sufficient advances to warrant the use of electric power and in March, 1890, the electrification was completed. The company was organized in June of the year before by Paul Schulz, D. H. Louderback, J. M. Ashton, still a resident of Tacoma; Henry Hewitt Jr., J. H. Mitchell Jr., John Cummings and E. J. Kershaw, with a capital of $500,000. The properties and franchises of the early company were purchased for $250,000, with $125,000 in stock in addition to Villard for his franchise.

It was a memorable day on February 10, 1890, when the first electric car traversed the streets of the city of Tacoma. Herbert Hunt, in his "History of Tacoma," tells this story graphically:

"Car No. 11 made the first trip at about 11 o'clock. . . . . .Pacific avenue was enjoying the quiet of a winter day when the car rounded the curve at 13th street and started along Pacific avenue. A strong armed man yanked the gong and the clamor was heard for blocks. Windows went up with a bang. Crowds in the restaurants left their meals, the saloons disgorged, the games of pedro, poker and faro were deserted and within 10 minutes the avenue was crowded with people who cheered again and again."

The old horse-car drivers were taught to drive the new cars. They were joined by several railroad men, turned West by a serious rail strike in the East at the time. There was Dave Harris, still an operator on the Point Defiance Line; Oliver Wise, running a one-man car now on Tacoma avenue; Fred Foy, at present an inspector for the T. R. & P.; J. C. Boone, motorman on the Traction line: and many more or less familiar, some dead, some still here, many scattered to the far ends of the earth.

The old electric cars were percocious affairs. They were somewhat but not a great deal larger than the old horse-drawn vehicle. The trollies were as jumpy as a man with a guilty conscience. The motorman started out in the morning with his pockets full of steel contact springs and fuses. The old Sprague motors which propelled the cars were extremely touchy affairs and all the care of a diplomat was of necessity exercised to keep them functioning properly. A mis-movement of the control caused a short that called for new contact springs. Fuses blew out oftener than tires on a stretch of glass-studded pavement. The fuses were located under the seat and the passengers were compelled to stand the whole length of the car while the motorman replaced the fuses. And not infrequently the bare wires gave him a shock that caused him to jump, much to the edification of the juvenile passengers.

The front end of the cars were open to offerings of the storm god and in rain, snow and glaring sunshine, the motorman and the conductor stood unprotected from the elements. Finally, however, the company magnanimously agreed to allow the men to build their own vestibules, promising to repay them in due time. The vestibules were constructed like bay windows and usually cost the men somewhere in the vicinity of $15 for a set. Ben Swanson has $13 still coming to him for the vestibules he had built, having been refused payment because he lost his receipt.

Tacoma's street railway history in all the 35 years of its existence has been singularly devoid of accidents. There have been but few minor ones and non of any magnitude of seriousness. None—save one, and that on the Black Fourth of July, 22 years ago.

Car No. 16 pulled out of South Tacoma at 8 o'clock that morning. Conductor Jimmy Calhoun whistled as he lolled aaginst the rear vestibule. Motorman F. L. Bohem was busy at the front end of the car. It was a wonderful day and pleasure-bent crowds soon crowded the car until it was full beyond capacity. A jostling, good-natured mob it was, bound for a day's outing.

The bridge crossing to Broadway, C street then, was at 26th street, instead of at Tacoma avenue, where it is today. As the car started down Delin street the drama that turned out to be a tragedy was begun. The grin on Bohem's face froze. The brakes were slipping. He toiled feverishly with the hand brake, strained and pulled until his hands were torn and running red—to no avail.

On down the hill the car careened. The terror of despair spread through the jammed car and a struggling, screaming mass fought and tore to escape from the car that held them helpless prisoners. A few managed to jump from the madly rushing car and escape. The remainder were trapped. The car gained momentum as it went. On it lurched, gaining speed, more speed, more speed—and then the crash! The car failed to make the sharp curve at the bridge, leaped the track, turned and skidded on its side 40 feet and dropped over the edge to a heap of broken logs below, 100 feet down!

The crash resounded for blacks. The screams rose above the grind of tearing metal and splintering wood, searing themselves indelibly into the memories of those who heard them. The dead and dying were in a molling heap. Bodies lay strangely twisted and oddly still. Little rivulets of crimson ran from under some of them, forming welling little puddles that mingled with the marshy mud. Torn, broken forms lay revealed in the heap of twisted boards and warped metal all that remained of the car.

Forty-three people were killed that day, 37 of them outright. Man and wife, whole families in some cases, were wiped from the light of the summer sun. Bohem escaped badly injured but Calhoun was found bent over a rail of the bridge, without a bruise on his body, a look of stunned surprise on his face—dead.

Tacoma's present street railway system is built on wrecks, but of a different sort. The history of the company is strewn with the remains of more than a score of enterprises, but after each failure there was always someone ready and willing to carry one. The Tcoma Railway & Power Company of today rests on a foundation of companies of the past. Here is only a partial list: Tacoma Street Railway Co.; Tacoma Railway & Motor Co.; Point Defiance Railway Co.; Pt. Defiance, Tacoma & Edison Ry. Co.; City Park Railway Co.; Park Avenue & Fern Hill Ry. Co.; Tacoma, Edison & Puyallup Railroad Co.; Tacoma & Puyallup Railroad Co.; Tacoma & Fern Hill Street Ry. Co.; Wapato Park Belt Line Railway Co.; Lake Park Land, Railway & Improvement Company; Tacoma Lake Park & Columbia Ry. Co.; Tacoma & Columbia River Railway Co. and several others.

And meanwhile the system has grown. Campare the five cars, the few employes, the scanty passengers of the old days to a company which today is valued at some $7,000,000, which has some 600 employes, 200 of them trainmen, a payroll of more than $1,000,000 a year, a corporation that carries 26,500,000 passengers a year, running over 17 different lines employing 145 cars of late type and construction, traversing more than 91 miles of track, serving districts within and outside the city limits with an approximate population of 110,000 and growing year by year.