

Dispatcher

ISSUE #13

RAILWAY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

OCTOBER 1, 1957

SDTS TROLLEY #528 SAVED

San Diego County has a new museum piece---San Diego Transit System street car #528. Saved from dismantling when the Railway Historical Society of San Diego took quick action to purchase the car, #528 will be placed on display at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. A contract was signed with the San Diego Mill Supply Company, a salvage concern, and RHSofSD members set out to raise the required funds.

The 22nd District Agricultural Association, governing board of the Del Mar Fairgrounds, agreed to accept the donation of the car and to provide exhibition space. In Del Mar, Car 528 will be part of a growing transportation exhibit which includes San Diego & Arizona (Eastern) locomotive #104 and former John D. Spreckels private car #050, as well as horsedrawn and motorized equipment.

A second car, #508, was also saved. Purchased by the Southern California (Los Angeles metropolitan area) Division of Electric Railroaders' Association this car will be located temporarily at Travel Town in Los Angeles.

Car 528, although relatively modern as street cars go, is already of historic interest. It was the last new car to be purchased by the San Diego Electric Railway Company and it was in operation when successor company San Diego Transit System closed down all remaining street car lines in 1949.

Car 528 is a representative of the first model of the PCC (Presidents' Conference Committee) type street car which was developed in the thirties as an answer to the quickening competition of the motor bus. Car building companies and traction lines, including SDERY, pooled their resources so that a completely modern street car could be designed and mass produced. San Diego Electric Railway made available many of its own patented devices.

SDERY had a financial stake in this project inasmuch as it was the first Pacific Coast company and the fourth United States company to place an order for these cars.

The PCC street car did not achieve its purpose because motor coach service continued to expand. However hundreds of PCC cars were ordered and placed in service and many are operating today. Later models incorporated further improvements in traction construction, and today the PCC lives on in the form of a much

improved rapid transit car. Chicago rebuilt many PCC street cars into rapid transit cars which are now being used on that city's subway and elevated lines. The recently constructed cars of the new Cleveland rapid transit operation also incorporate PCC construction techniques.

In 1937 when the PCC type street car was first introduced on San Diego streets, transit riders were enthused with the quiet operation, smooth acceleration (99 instead of 9 notch control), greater speed, improved braking, new interior decoration and streamline design. This car was different!

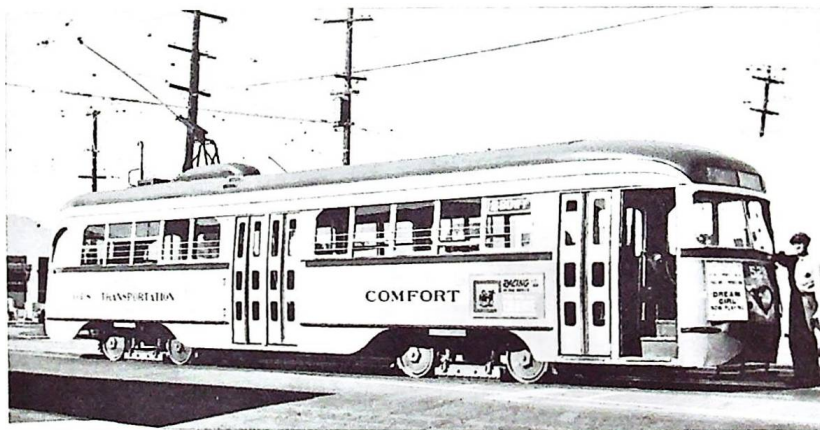
San Diego's PCC cars were built by the St. Louis Car Company. Each is equipped with four 55 hp. General Electric motors, each weighing 700 pounds. Car weight is 34,000 pounds. Length is 46 feet and width is eight feet four inches. Braking uses (in sequence) dynamic brakes, magnetic track brakes and air brakes.

Cars 501 to 525 were delivered to SDERY in 1937. An additional order of three cars (526-528) was received in 1938. Cars were publicly exhibited on March 25, 1937 when one car was displayed at the Plaza and two other cars provided free rides around a downtown loop.

San Diego's PCC cars (known locally as Class 6 cars) were used exclusively on the uptown lines. They dipped below Broadway only en route to and from the Imperial Car Barn. The class sixes were most often assigned to Route 2. They were also assigned, however, to Routes 1 (Park Blvd. Jct.) and 3 (Mission Hills). Route 2 was the Broadway line, the second oldest line.

The Class 6 cars earned for SDERY (and SDTS) the recognition that San Diego's street railway system was one of the nation's finest. As recently as the post-war period the Class 6 cars and the earlier 1924 400 series cars together provided San Diegans with an efficient and comfortable service.

Well remembered are the cars which scurried across the trestles on the well-maintained Balboa Park roadbed. The street cars were a familiar sight as they outpaced the latest automobiles on Broadway hill and as they made the turn on the Union Depot loop. Many were the passengers who transferred from line to line at 5th and Broadway. Route 2 riders remember the wig wags which warned motormen that only one street car could be on the old rickety 30th Street trestle at any one time. Yes, San Diegans remember the city's faithful street cars!



SDERY #528 at end of Route 2 (30th St. and Adams Ave.).
June 10, 1948 (Eric Sanders)

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EDITORIAL

Issue #13 is planned to serve as publicity material for the Fund Raising Committee. This issue is short on content but the Editor hopes that readers accept it as part of the historical record of RHSofSD. Issue #14 will feature the Metropolitan Coach Lines and will provide data for Nov. 10 (?) excursionists. Look also for columns by Doug Duncan and Joe Strapac.

Enclosed with either Issue #13 or 14 readers will find a copy of Western Rail-roader which features a story about San Diego's steam motor lines. Most Dispatcher readers are acquainted with WR. Here's a must for your library. Send in a subscrip-tion!

RHSofSD members contributed heavily to the fund drive which backed the project which started the Del Mar railroad exhibit. Now the exhibit is to be enlarged and additional financing is needed. Dispatcher readers who would like to help with the "528" project may send contributions to Fred Finke, 4255 Winona, San Diego 15. Jack Stodelle, 4666 Ashby, SD 15, and John Gorby, 2518 San Mar-cos, SD 4, head up the drive. Dave DeVol is chairman of the new traction committee.

NEWS BRIEFS

The California Mid-Winter Fair has added a 70 ton 1910 Southern Pacific passenger coach to its railroad exhibit. The car was brought to its fairgrounds site in Imperial, California, over one half mile of temporary track laid in sections on I. St. The move-ment took two weeks to complete. One de-railment slowed the process.

Imperial's railroad exhibit now includes Southern Pacific ten-wheeler #2353, Imperial Irrigation District O-4-O saddle tank #151, and the SP passenger coach. (San Diego Union)

San Diego & Arizona Eastern Railway Co. is now using EMD road switchers on the main line. (Duncan)...a track extension is plan-ned on I Street....RHSofSD has custody of the 1920 35mm silent film, "Carriso Gorge, the Magnificent." This is the film used on the publicity jaunt of SD&A officials who made a cross-country tour on private car, "Carriso Gorge."

The proposed San Diego Transit Author-

ity will be the subject of a study to be made by Mayor Dail's transit study committee....Oceanside City Council on July 24 opposed inclusion of the Ocean-side area in the proposed authority.

Santa Fe's application to the R.R.C. to reduce passenger train service be-tween San Diego and Los Angeles had not been acted upon at press time.

San Diego Transit System President Jesse L. Haugh has been elected presi-dent of the American Transit Associa-tion....SDTS has placed in service 20 additional "air suspension" buses, a total of 50 now in service....SDTS was named winner of the 28th Annual Main-tenance Efficiency Award.

Central Pacific coach #1217 is re-ported by Dick Pennick as being used as a store room on a Westmoreland ranch.

A San Diego & Southeastern inter-urban car body has been located in the Los Angeles area.

Memo. Mail in your MCL excursion reservation now! We'll see you in L.A.!

NATIONAL CITY STREET RAILWAY

by Fred Reif

As an outgrowth of intense compe-tition between the National City & Otay Railway Co. and the Coronado Railroad for passenger traffic between San Diego and National City, a horse car line was constructed and operated in the latter city.

An E. A. Hornbeck account relates that the National City Street Railway was built by the Coronado Railroad to attract passengers to Belt Line trains which op-erated to and from San Diego.

J. C. Crenshaw and Paul E. Chase were granted the franchise on or about January 19, 1888. The route began at the foot of 23rd St., went east on 23rd, north on 7th Ave. (now McKinley St.), east on 14th St., north on 2nd Ave. (now Hoo-ver), east on 8th Ave., north on Highland Ave. to approximately 2nd St. Length was two and one half miles.

Service began on March 28 or 29, 1888 and was discontinued sometime during 1889. Tracks were torn up in February, 1891.

(Note: As a retaliatory measure N.C. & O. built the 7th St., San Diego, horse car line to take passengers uptown to the F St. ticket office. Rail passengers rode free.)