

AROUND THE LOOP

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Trolley Volunteers

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WHAT IS A "MOONLIGHT CAR?"

The term "Moonlight Car" was a vernacular applicable to an open type of car used generally on the Creve Coeur Lake Line for its special amusement park traffic and other times for various pleasure trips. The first "moonlight car", an experimental unit, was built by the St. Louis Transit Company, and one successful car meant others. A striking feature was the evolution of the species. The inaugural model was a roofless affair, except for an abbreviated structure at the rear of the car on which the trolley pole was mounted.

The first of the "moonlight cars" constructed by the United Railways in the early 1900's were semi-moonlighters, so to speak, since they were equipped with a canvas roof that could be rolled back, and included with the inventory were two types, motors and trailers.

During World War I ten of these cars were destroyed by fire (one leader and nine trailers), and were replaced, in 1919, with an additional twenty cars (ten leaders and ten trailers). A basic difference in the equipment was the roof. Since on the older style cars the canvas roof was seldom rolled back, it was decided to construct the later models with a permanent roof, which was done with supporting arches of one inch iron pipe extending continuous from side to side. The roofing was canvas covered wood, upon which was installed a foot board and the trolley base support.

Another change was couplers. Since the building of the original cars, the Tomlinson coupler was adapted as standard, which necessitated a minor change from the original design, and new trucks meant an increased wheel base (4' 2").

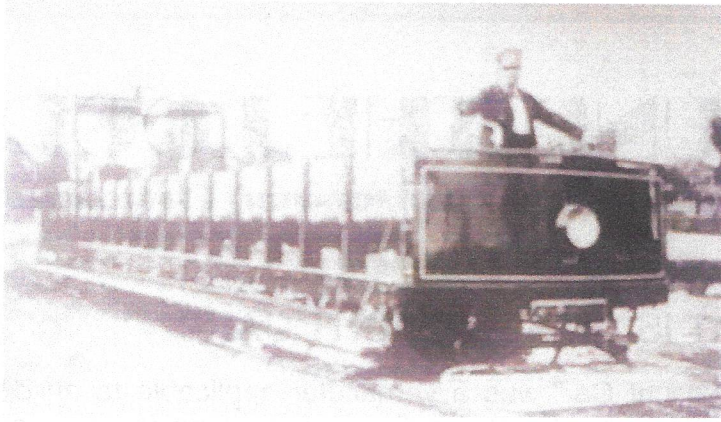
The steps of both series were of the fold up type and as the cars were intended for single end operation the left side was permanently closed and without steps.

Weighing 34,000 pounds, both equipments (motors and trailer cars) were mounted on the United Railways Number 27 maximum traction truck, equipped with the Westinghouse Number 56 motor. The motor cars were equipped with the K-35-W-2 type of controller, for operation either singly or as leaders in two-car trains. While the trail cars could be used only as trailers in two-car trains, they were nevertheless equipped with the K-11-A controller.

All cars were equipped with General Electric straight air brakes with an emergency feature, and Golden Glow Number TR-128 headlights were used.

Seating capacity of the motor cars was ninety-six passengers, and the seating capacity of the trailer cars was One-hundred passengers. Length overall was 47' 3" and width overall was 7' 10-1/4".

Source: Street Railways of St. Louis, F. Swyer.



"Moonlight Car"

As a reminder...Streetcar operations begin for the 2018 season on Thursday, April 5th, 2018.

Today's latest find is a St. Louis Public Service Company 10 Year Service Pin.



The Not-So-Standard PCC – conclusion:

Rapid Transit Cars

In addition to the streetcar production, ERPCC and TRC licensed rapid transit cars for Boston, Brooklyn, Chicago, and Cleveland. Brooklyn was the earliest player in the PCC rapid transit game, ordering two experimental articulated trainsets during the development process and several production units prior to 1940. The absorption of the BMT into the city owned system in that year put an end to that company's dabbling in PCC technology, and only a few trainsets lasted into the 1960's.

Chicago also purchased 4 articulated PCC trains in the late 1940s, followed by two production orders totaling 200 units in married pairs closely resembling surface PCC's in 1950. Pleased with these, the CTA traded in 570 of its post-war PCC streetcars on similar rapid transit cars, with the last 50 coming as double-ended, single units. These three fleets lasted into the 1980's.

Boston was the next to enter the PCC rapid transit market in 1951, when 40 cars were purchased for the East Boston Tunnel. These bore a resemblance in layout to the Chicago cars but featured picture windows and sliding doors. The MTA added 100 more cars using some of the PCC patents in 1957 and 1958 for its Roxbury to Everett elevated line. Both fleets were retired in the early 1980's.

Cleveland purchased 88 PCC rapid transit cars in 1955 and 1958, completely equipping its only line. These cars also survived into the 1980's before being replaced with new cars.

In Conclusion

From its inception in a Brooklyn car barn in the early 1930s to its widespread production in Europe in the 1950s and 60s, the PCC car was truly an adaptable solution to many city's transit needs. It prospered because it could adapt, and may have continued in development and production had initiatives such as that in San Diego happened before the gas crisis. Indeed many of today's Light Rail Vehicles are descended from the European PCC cars of the 60s.