

DRAFT Orientation / History Talk or Brochure or Video for Prospective Trolley Passengers @ Wharton Canal Park

Edited by Bill McKelvey, July 26, 2016

NOTE: THIS TALK, OR ROTATING SECTIONS OF IT CAN BE GIVEN TO RAIL PASSENGERS WHEN THE CAR IS STOPPED IN THE HIGH TENSION TRANSMISSION LINE CLEARING ABOVE RESTORED LOCK 2E. THIS IS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE PASSENGERS AND FUTURE GENERATIONS TO LEARN ABOUT, FULLY ENJOY, AND TREASURE THIS WONDERFULLY HISTORIC SITE. IT WILL ALLOW A GROUP OF COMFORTABLY SEATED PASSENGERS OR SCHOOL CHILDREN TO BETTER UNDERSTAND LOCAL HISTORY AND PRESERVE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR PAST. THE ATTENTION OF PASSENGERS CAN BE MORE EASILY ATTAINED AS THEY WILL BE IN THE SHADE; PROTECTED FROM THE WEATHER; AND WINDOWS CAN BE OPENED IN HOT WEATHER FOR VENTILATION.

THE ABOVE FORMAT IS ESPECIALLY TAILORED FOR SCHOOL GROUPS AS ONE SCHOOL BUS LOAD CAN RIDE ON ONE TROLLEY OR RAIL CAR. WHEN A CANALBOAT IS PUT IN OPERATION A SECOND SCHOOL BUS LOAD CAN BE ON THE WATER AND THEN THE GROUPS COULD SWITCH TRANSPORT MODES. AT THAT TIME THIS TALK CAN BE SPLIT BETWEEN THE CANAL AND TROLLEY PASSENGER GROUPS. A PICNIC PAVILION NEAR THE PARKING LOT, ADJACENT TO THE BOROUGH DPW FACILITY, WOULD THEN BE A DESIRABLE ADDITIONAL AMENITY.

Opening Ice Breakers;

Who knows Superman? Who knows where Superman lived? He lived in Wharton! Kirk Alyn was the first actor to play the DC Comics character "Superman" for the 1948 movie serial Superman and its 1950 sequel "Atom Man vs. Superman" and other movies. A plaque commemorating his life in Wharton is hung in the municipal building.

Has anyone heard of the Wharton School of Business? It was named for its founder, Joseph Wharton, who built Morris County's largest and most modern iron furnace complex in this town which was originally called Port Oram. He also became the "undisputed largest miner of iron ore in NJ." In honor of him and his Wharton Steel Co., residents renamed the town Wharton.

Who knows singer Cyndi Lauper? Her music video, "Time After Time," was filmed in Wharton in 1984.

Did you know that the local Rockaway River appears in the movie "The Station Agent" and in one episode of "The Sopranos."

Any Questions?

Trolley History;

Morris County Traction Co. operated trolley service on Main Street to Wharton center between 1914 and 1928. Their main line operated between Elizabeth, Summit, Morristown, Dover, and Lake Hopatcong.

Description of car you (passengers) are riding in today;

No. 13: This is a President's Conference Committee car, a modern streetcar developed by executives of US operating companies in the 1930s. Public Service Coordinated Transport was an early participant, but dropped out of the conference and decided to try to develop its own modernized version of existing cars. PS never purchased any new PCC cars, but did buy 30 of this series (built 1946) of secondhand PCC cars in 1953 from Twin Cities Rapid Transit Co. (Minneapolis - St. Paul). These cars operated in the Newark City Subway until 2001 when they were replaced by new light rail vehicles. The direct connection with Wharton and the NJ fleet of PCC cars is that the Newark City Subway was built in the bed of the abandoned Morris Canal, the very same canal you see here today. The retired Public Service / NJ Transit PCC cars were acquired by many museums and tourist lines across the USA - a dozen of them now operate in San Francisco. The two-tone yellow retro paint scheme of this car is "What Might Have Been" if PS had purchased new PCC cars for the Newark City Subway when it opened in 1935. It is owned by and is being restored by the North Jersey Electric Railway Historical Society (NJERHS) at the URHS Boonton shop. njerhs.org

OR,

No. 1 is also a President's Conference Committee car from the Newark City Subway. It is presently stored at Arkport, NY, awaiting restoration.

OR,

No. 28 is also a PCC car from the Newark City Subway. It has been partially restored and is stored on the Hudson Bergen Light Rail System at Jersey City. At a future date it might be donated to NJERHS.

OR,

No. 2651 was built by Public Service Railway in its Newark shops in 1917 as part of the "Emergency Fleet Act," a Federal program preparing the US for entry into WW I. After retirement, post WW II, this car was sold by PS and became an interim home for a family in Long Valley. It was rescued by NJERHS in 1974 and underwent a multi-decade restoration by volunteers. njerhs.org

OR,

No. 2683 was built by Public Service Railway in their Newark shops in 1917 as part of the "Emergency Fleet Act", a Federal program preparing the US for entry into WW I. After long passenger service this car became a maintenance flat car in the Newark City Subway and was finally donated to NJERHS. It will need to undergo a rebuilding of the missing 2/3 of the car and then a complete overhaul and restoration in a shop building by NJERHS. It is currently stored at Arkport, NY. njerhs.org

OR,

Car No. 346 was built in Elizabeth, NJ (location is now a part of Linden) by the John Stephenson Company in 1906. This car was built for export and operated in Lisbon, Portugal until 1996. After retirement, it was acquired by the Friends of the NJ Transportation Heritage Center and returned to NJ. Although shrink wrapped, it is stored outside at Harrison, NJ. Whippany Railway Museum now has title to the car and they plan a static display for it at their site in Whippany. Ideally, this 110+ year-old wood car should be stored in a building for preservation...

OR,

Sitting at Ringoes, NJ, on the Black River and Western RR is a 1920's vintage Edwards self-propelled passenger railcar seating about 45. It has been inactive and stored outside, unprotected for many years. Perhaps we might negotiate a rental or an acquisition coupled with restoration and storage, protected from the elements in a carbarn at Wharton...

OR,

We are also aware of a genuine horsecar which is undergoing restoration. We might possibly be able to acquire it at some time in the future...

Land / Geology;

We are in the NJ Highlands, which are made up of Precambrian rock (550 to 600 million years old), sometimes called the Reading Prong, which runs from Phillipsburg to Ringwood and contains many veins of iron ore. There is a concentration of these ore veins in Morris County, especially between Chester, Mine Hill, Wharton, and Mount Hope & Hibernia in Rockaway.

Irondale Mountain is to the southeast of us and Iron Mountain is to the southwest of us - both had many iron mines.

The sand quarry to the southwest of us was created by glaciers. The sand was deposited by the glacial terminal moraines.

The gap between Irondale Mountain and Green Pond & Brooklyn Mountains north of us was or is used as a right-of-way by the Rockaway River, Morris Canal, NJ Transit Morris & Essex Line, the Wharton & Northern RR, Mount Hope Mineral RR, I-80, JCP&L transmission lines, and partly by the Union Turnpike (Chartered on February 23, 1804 to run between Morristown, Dover, Wharton, Sparta, Branchville, Culver's Gap and on to PA) which is now NJ Rt. 15.

The Rockaway River begins in upper Jefferson Township and flows down through Wharton, Dover, and Boonton, feeding the Jersey City Reservoir. Stephens Brook runs along the towpath by the lock and supplies water to the canal below the lock. The brook and the canal overflow both discharge into the Rockaway River.

Wharton is served by its own independent water system, fed by three wells and supplemented by water from Morris County. The water supply for Wharton's 6,500+ residents and 2.25 square miles requires an average of ??? _____ gallons per day.

Paleontology;

NJ has the most fossiliferous Late Cretaceous period rocks of the Mid-Atlantic region. By the Ice Age northern NJ was home to Mastodons and glaciers covered the northern part of the state. The Cretaceous period duck-billed dinosaur *Hadrosaurus foulkii* is both the state fossil and state dinosaur. In 1869 a nearly complete Mastodon skeleton was found near Hackettstown. When alive it would have been 9'8" tall and 22' long. For educational purposes it might be desirable to install a fiberglass dinosaur replica in the high tension powerline right-of-way north west of restored Lock 2E. There is strong interest in dinosaurs by youth as evidenced in the ten dinosaur museums / attractions in NJ. Field Station Dinosaurs (www.fieldstationdinosaurs.com) at Overpeck Park in Bergen County is a very successful venue. A popular attraction for children is the Dinosaur Train venue.

Area Wildlife;

The wildlife in the Wharton Canal Park is likely nearly identical to that found in the nearby Berkshire Valley Wildlife Management Area which is administered by NJ DEP Div. of Fish & Wildlife.

Animals: Deer, black bear, rabbits, racoon, skunk, fox and others are found in this area. Beaver and otters are found further north. The bobcat and Indiana bat are mammal species listed as State Endangered Species in this watershed.

Birds in this area include: Bald Eagle, Barred Owl, Black-billed Cuckoo, Blackburnian Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Broad-winged Hawk, Canada Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Cooper's Hawk, Golden-Winged Warbler, Great Blue Heron, Hooded Warbler, Least Flycatcher, Northern Goshawk, Northern Parula, Red-shouldered Hawk, Veery, Winter Wren, Wood Thrush and Worm-eating Warbler are listed as State Endangered or Species of Concern.

Waterlife: The Wharton section of the Rockaway River is popular for smallmouth bass fishing. The NJ Fish and Game Division stocks the river with rainbow and brown trout. Many fishermen find enjoyment in fishing the river. Without the clean waters of the Rockaway and other rivers, cold and warm water fish species such as trout, bass, and sunfish would not exist. The most productive stretch of the Rockaway River is in the Wharton - Dover area, where there is an abundant supply of trout.

Black racer, golden, and northern water snakes, snapping turtles, as well as American and pickerel frogs, and salamanders are common. The bog turtle, eastern box turtle, northern copperhead, timber rattlesnake and the wood turtle are reptiles listed as State Endangered or of Special Concern in or near the Watershed.

Plants found in the area include climbing fumitory, mountain spleenwort, purple

bittercress, featherfoil and tall cinquefoil. PLEASE - We need help describing the types of water plants found in the canal and the basin

The deciduous forests of the watershed provide the habitat in which white-tailed deer, wild turkey, rabbit, racoon, opossum, mink, beaver, fox, coyote, black bear, song birds, reptiles and amphibians live and thrive.

Insects found in this area that are Endangered or of Special Concern include the bronze copper, New England bluet, sable clubtail, ski-tailed emerald, spatterdock darner and the Williamson's emerald.

Indian Occupation;

The retreating glaciers left a fertile area in north Jersey teeming with wildlife that eventually became home to the first paleo Indians, beginning a native American history from the archaic period to the woodland culture of the Lenape or Delaware Indians. The Leni Lenape (which means "original people"), an Algonkian speaking people, were one of most advanced and civilized tribes in the eastern US. They were hunting and raising crops, such as corn, beans and squash, in the area which has become New Jersey. The Lenape culture flourished until the arrival of the first European fur traders in the mid-1600s. They visited Indian communities to barter metal pots, iron axes, scissors, cloth, glass beads and other items for the Indian's animal furs and skins.

Canal History;

The first trip on the new Morris Canal was completed from Newark to Phillipsburg on November 4, 1831. The first full boating season was 1832. On November 29, 1922 the Morris Canal ceased operation and it was turned over to the State of NJ. Wharton purchased its section of the canal, the longest watered section of the canal.

Lock 2 East, Wharton, was known as Bird's Lock - Elevation @ upper level, 673 feet above sea level. The lock was substantially restored in 2014, and the locktender's house is to be restored in the future. Eventually Wharton plans to have a replica canalboat in operation to provide rides for visitors. Plane 5E in Wharton no longer exists. Plane 4 East (Kenvil) was to the left in the Roxbury Auto Wreckers property and has unfortunately been destroyed.

NOTE: When the planned canalboat is put in operation at Wharton this section of the orientation talk can be greatly expanded to more fully cover the history and operation of the Morris Canal.

Rail History;

The DL&W RR was the first in the area, arriving from Dover in 1853. The DL&W operated passenger and freight trains between Hoboken, Scranton and Buffalo on this, their main line. Today NJ Transit operates passenger trains east from Port Morris to Hoboken

and NYC; the Morristown & Erie Ry. operates local freight service between Morristown and Lake or Chester Junction (to the west of Wharton), serving three branches owned by Morris County. Norfolk Southern Ry also operates in this area between Totowa, Dover, and the Washington Secondary to Phillipsburg and their big yard in Bethlehem.

The Mount Hope Mineral RR opened in 1867, connecting the Mount Hope Mines with Wharton and the Morris & Essex RR. The opening of the High Bridge Branch in 1876 allowed iron ore to be shipped south to the CNJ main line and west to the furnaces in Phillipsburg and the Lehigh Valley, which became the preferred route. The Lake Hopatcong RR was opened between Hopatcong Jct., south of us, and Lake Hopatcong in 1882. The CNJ took over the Mount Hope Mineral RR (which we are on) in 1930.

Highway History;

I-80 is in the distance beyond the NJ Transit rail line. One of the first sections of I-80 was completed between Denville and Netcong. It is one of the oldest sections of Interstate highway in the US. It connects Teaneck, NJ - opposite NYC, with downtown San Francisco, CA, passing through or near Wharton, Toledo, Cleveland, Chicago, Des Moines, Omaha, Salt Lake City, and Sacramento.

Martz Trailways motor coach began operating in PA in 1908 and in 1922 extended service to NYC. Martz began using I-80 shortly after it opened. Today they operate 50 bus trips on I-80 between NYC and Wilkes Barre (their headquarters), Scranton, and the Poconos. It is a family firm, now in the fourth generation, with 400 employees and 250 coaches.

Electric Transmission Lines;

The twin JCP&L High Tension Electric Transmission Lines overhead (voltage 230 kV) connect about a mile north with the JCP&L Wharton switching station, located between the NJ Transit Line and I-80. South and east, the lines above us connect with a JCP&L switching station at Morris Plains and the huge PSE&G Roseland switching station. West of us on the west side of the 230 kV lines are two parallel 34kV sub-transmission lines on wood poles. The Wharton switching station also feeds power east to NJ Transit at Dover for 25,000 volt AC traction power for passenger trains. There are many other NJ Transit power feed points as well. PSE&Gs NJ transmission network is one of the most networked in the world. Since US power grids east of the Rockies, except the state of Texas, are all interconnected power could come from generating plants anywhere, including Ontario, Canada - which ever are most economical at the time - be it nuclear, fossil fuel, water, solar, or wind power.

Additional information: Volts in the 230 kV high tension lines above you are almost 2000 times greater than the volts in your home. The new 500 kV grid system feeds into the PSE&G Roseland switching station.

Closing Remarks;

Thank you for riding with us today. We hope you will return soon. Don't miss Wharton

Canal Day; Our Annual Pumpkin Festival; Our Halloween Costume Festival; and Our Christmas Festival of Lights With Santa (give dates of each event). If you would like to join our group and volunteer, please contact one of our crew members or visit our website: LHRy.org

Want to Learn More?

For those of you who are history enthusiasts, we highly recommend our “Chronology of Wharton Area Transportation and Industry Database” which is (will be) on our website.

What's Next?

The Future For This Park & Rail Ride: We hope to extend our ride on the original right-of-way to Lake or Chester Junction, a half mile to the west, and possibly south into a portion of the mined-out areas of the huge County Concrete Co. sand quarry. Here we might build a second car barn, install a 2 foot gauge, iron mine-type, demonstration rail line. There might also be an opportunity to install a roadway to give demonstration rides in various historic and antique vehicles and a display building in which to store them.