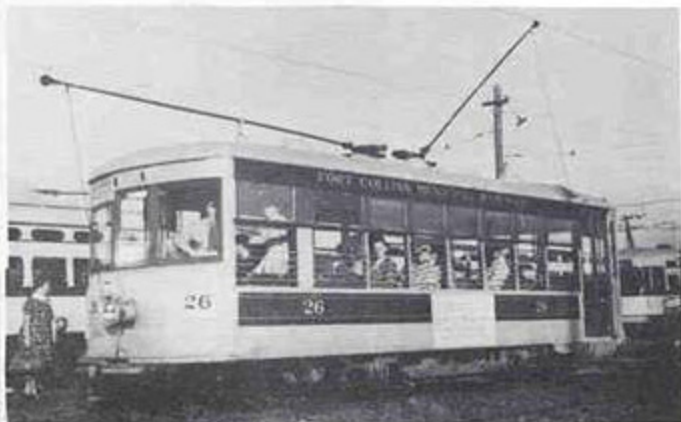


EX-FORT COLLINS
BIRNEY
ON DETROIT
STREETS.

T. DWORMAN PHOTOS



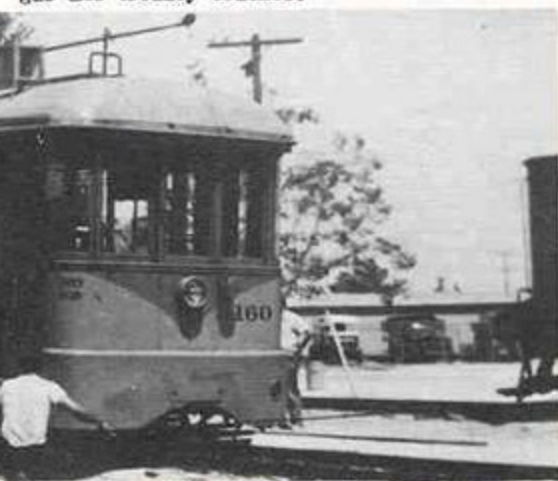
DETROIT
TRANSIT PARADE
INCLUDED
EX-FORT COLLINS BIRNEY,
DETROIT PCC,
AND 12 PETER WITTS

FORT COLLINS BIRNEY TO DETROIT

FORT COLLINS BIRNEY IN DETROIT PARADE;
PRESENTED TO GREENFIELD VILLAGE MUSEUM
by Thomas Dworman

635 railfans converged on Detroit and the DSR August 16, in one of the largest trolley-fan gatherings in history. As a special surprise, the Midwest Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society had purchased old Fort Collins, Colorado, No. 26, a single truck Birney car, for participation in a transit parade commemorating ninety years from the day of the first horsecar in Detroit. After the parade, the car was presented to the Henry Ford Museum in Greenfield Village for permanent display.

When the 500 fans who had arrived at Union Depot on a special train from Canton, Ohio, left the station, they were greeted by an array of transit equipment extending along several blocks of Third and Larned Streets. At the head was old No. 26 followed by twelve Peter Witts and one PCC. Behind the trolleys were diesel, gas and trolley coaches.



From Union Depot the parade proceeded with police escort to the Detroit Historical Museum. At the Museum there were brief presentation ceremonies while the line of streetcars traveled north on Woodward Ave. to the Highland Park terminal to turn around for the remainder of the fantrip.

During August and September the Museum featured transportation exhibits including many models of DSR equipment from horsecars to the PCCs. A large sign on the Museum steps advertising the exhibit was anchored down by a truck from Peter Witt No. 3851.

After the museum stop, the Birney car was placed at the end of the procession with a large wrecker truck following in case of a breakdown. Old 26 easily followed behind, but the wrecker rendered valuable service when a Peter Witt jumped the track on a switch at Woodward and Jefferson. Within seven minutes the car was rerailed, and the procession continued down Jefferson to the end of the line.

From Jefferson the route included track of the abandoned Clairmount line to the Gratiot barns for a picture stop. The inner half of the Gratiot line was quickly covered and then the procession rolled swiftly down Michigan Ave. to the Wyoming terminal, still with police escort. After a brief picture stop the entourage returned to the Union Depot.

Old No. 26 was filled to capacity for the entire trip. Its passenger list included many high DSR officials, railfans and Miss DSR for August. During the picture stops and the museum ceremonies several of the more virile railfans focused their cameras on the tall attractive blonde instead of on the streetcars.

When No. 26 arrived in Detroit, it was close to home. It was built in 1918 for the Grand Rapids Railway. Grand Rapids went bus in 1935 and it was sold to Marion, Indiana. Marion abandoned streetcars in 1947, and from there the peripatetic No. 26 was sold to Fort

(Continued on page 5)

BIRNEY IN DETROIT

(continued from page 1)

Collins, 'way out west in Colorado. When the City of Fort Collins got out of the trolley business on June 30, 1951 (see HL Oct. '51), the six Birneys on their roster went into dead storage in a shed. Last year they were offered for sale, and No. 26 is one of the group purchased by the Southern California Division, ERA.

Unloading No. 26 was a very laborious task for DSR crews. It was shipped in a gondola car, instead of a flat car as most streetcars travel. Braces on the side plates at the ends of the gondola tapered inwards so the Birney would not clear them. Track crews laid temporary rail up an incline eighteen inches high and then downwards to the unloading ramp. There were a few anxious moments as 26 slid backwards with spinning wheels. But after several times sliding back, the wheels finally took hold.

Although a Birney had to be imported from Colorado, the DSR once owned one of the largest fleets in the country. 250 single truck Birneys were purchased in 1920-1. Their utility was far below expectations because of a lack of shuttle and extension lines where their small capacity was practical.