

## The 30th Hoosier Traction Meet

An important part of  
the Hoosier Traction  
Meet is the series  
of audio-visual  
presentations offered  
each year.

On September 6–7, 2013, well over a hundred people again assembled at the Clarion Hotel in quiet western Indianapolis for two full days reviewing well over a century of the mass transportation industry, especially electrically powered rail-based systems for urban and regional mobility.

Let's also take a moment to mention our own history. It was the 30th consecutive summer for such a convention. We recognize two people who have attended all thirty of the Meets: **Richard H. George** of Pittsburgh and **Ronald L. Stuckey** of Indianapolis.

**The North Shore Line** drew the biggest crowds at the 2013 Hoosier Traction Meet. The Illinois-Wisconsin electric railroad stopped running fifty years ago. But for two hours, audiences totaling 147 people relived it through color movies and still photography. The films were collected and narrated by *Walter R. Keevil*, second-generation rolling stock design engineer (following his Uncle Charles) in Chicago. And *George Millen* and *Richard W. Aaron*, teenage photographers in the North Shore's final years, presented their own color slides.

As with other popular subjects at recent Meets, these speakers offered their program twice. Some of the viewers couldn't get enough in one showing and attended both the prepeat and the repeat. (And yes, we counted them twice in the attendance statistic—just as the North Shore counted you twice when you took the train to Milwaukee and then returned to Chicago later in the day.)

Another prepeat-repeat subject was another late-surviving electric interurban. *Ken Schramm* presented the **Illinois Terminal** to audiences of 119. The images of this railroad in the central part of the state and across the Mississippi into downtown St. Louis were possible in part due to *Richard R. Andrews*, who was unable to attend in person.

Third in attendance—112 viewers—was a short presentation on a tri-state (Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia) interurban with a short nickname, "**The Stream Line**," by *Dwight Long*. This long-gone Ohio River Valley line needed a short trade name to compensate for its lengthy corporate title: the Steubenville, East Liverpool and Beaver Valley Traction Company.

Audiences of 103 enjoyed another prepeat-repeat subject: **trolley freight**, primarily in Michigan, by *Norman Krentel*. He demonstrated that there is a lot to say about this phase of an industry that so often seems dominated by carrying passengers.

Three speakers each drew crowds numbering in the 70s in single showings. One was *Greg Borzo*, the author of a recent book on his subject: **Chicago cable cars**. Until electric streetcars supplanted them, cable trains in the Second City formed the largest example of that technology in terms of passengers carried and cars deployed to transport them, although San Francisco had more miles of cable car lines.

*Carl Bajema* told the story of the street railway era in **Grand Rapids**, the metropolis of western Michigan. Following innovative modernization in the 1920s, seventy years of streetcar service there ended in 1935, making Grand Rapids the second-largest U. S. city (after San Antonio) with no streetcars. Carl is currently writing a book on this subject, but you saw it first at the Hoosier Traction Meet.

*Charles Bogart* again brought us right up to date and into the future with two sessions on **transit industry news**, attended by 76 and by 51 persons. These were two different presentations, not a prepeat and a repeat.

To receive a schedule of the 2014 Hoosier Traction Meet about June 1, send your email address now to R-Benedict-11@alumni.uchicago.com

The Meet had begun at 10:00 Friday morning with an audience of 68. *Bill Van Doren*'s subject was the **Rapid Railway Division of the Interurban Railway & Terminal Company**, the line between Cincinnati and Lebanon, Ohio.

*Blaine Hays*, accomplished Cleveland mass transportation researcher and author, showed 65 people the **trackless trolley system** of his city. Like many another major place, the northern Ohio city has been served by a full range of transit modes before today's motor buses and electric rapids in the form of both heavy and light rail.

The final program of the weekend was a 45-minute, 48-audience session by *William Shapotkin*. His subject for 2013 was the **DeKalb, Sycamore & Interurban**, an eight-mile electric railway in north central Illinois.

In all, the Meet included 11 different auditorium sessions. Counting prepeats and repeats separately, seven were held throughout the morning, afternoon and evening on Friday (September 6) and seven on Saturday. Credit auditorium manager *William M. Shapotkin* with the intricate task of scheduling all of these presentations into a busy weekend.

## The Hoosier Traction swap meet also drew crowds.

In addition, a capacity group of **exhibitors** displayed merchandise—and an operating miniature streetcar line—from noon to 10 PM Friday and 8 AM to 4 PM Saturday. Hoosier Traction swap meet manager *Richard K. Baldwin* made it look easy to fit them all into the hotel's Grand Ballroom. It again formed a lively spot for conversation and admiration of products covering the gamut from the smallest of model traction components to books telling about the largest of urban mass transportation systems.