

CTPA Quarterly Meeting - Minutes

Thursday, June 13, 2013

Meeting was called to order at 5:55pm and the sign-in sheet with forty-one RSVPs was passed around.

The event update and recap:

- **Trip to Milwaukee – Friday, July 12. Brian Whitaker of Chicagoland Transportation Solutions** put together the trip. It will be a great learning experience. Visit Milwaukee is our host and we will stop at the Public Market for lunch.
- **Pullman Tour- Wednesday, August 14. Drew Sexton of Accenting Chicago** organized the Pullman visit. He is part of the community and has served in the historic society. **Bill Tyre of the Glessner House** is opening his home during the tour for us.
- **Next quarterly meeting will be Thursday, October 10, at Lawry's. Michael Corcoran CTG** who wrote the second edition of *Hollywood on Lake Michigan* will be speaking at the meeting. He will have a book launch party in Forest Park on June 14 at Centuries and Sleuths.

The study dates for the CTPA certification test are:

- July 22, Monday, at the Harold Washington library from 3 to 5pm
- August 26, Monday, at the same location at 8pm
- September 9 will be the written test

The dates for the slide review are yet to be determined.

Ideas for guides to visit on their own:

- The lobby of the Millennium Knickerbocker has a large painting of the “Museum of Science and Industry” painted during a fireworks show during the 1893 World Fair.
- The Pritzker Military Museum and Library has a good lecture series.
- There is tea served each Friday at 3pm at The Drake Hotel.

Acknowledgments were made for the company and associate members in attendance:

Patrick Steffes of Forgotten Chicago; Steve Sandford from Chicago Meetings and More, Brian Whittaker and Stephanie Casstevens from Chicagoland Transportation Solutions and **Donna Mitros of Chicago Greeters**. A special guest from Richmond, Virginia from World Stride Educational Tours was Mary Ellen Pauling; she was here to meet CTPA guides she has only known by email and phone. She thanked Donna and CTPA.

PROGRAM

Introduction was given for our guest speaker and fellow CTPA member, **Greg Borzo** who spoke about **Chicago Cable Cars**.

The first thing Greg mentioned about the cable cars was that they were different than electric trolleys. Other things he touched on were:

While San Francisco had cable cars first, Chicago had the biggest cable car system in the world operating for 25 years and serving over one billion people.

The cable cars had a grip man who maneuvered the cars on moving cables.

The cable cars were important to Chicago as they helped the city expand from 1882 to 1906 by providing public transit (in addition to the private horses and carriages of the

day.)

They were an economic stimulus, and laid a path for other forms of transit. Chicago proved they operated well even in cold weather.

Twenty seven additional cities built cable car systems based on the Chicago model.

In 1882, the first cable cars were introduced on the south side running on State Street with two tracks from Madison to 21st street, then later expanded on to 63rd street.

The addition of the Wabash Street line to 63rd expanded to 71st street served the World's Fair.

On October 9 (Chicago Day) 700,000 people rode cable cars to the 1893 fair, some on the car roofs.

There were car barn bandits who terrorized Chicago, stealing \$2,250 in nickels, killing 8 people and cable car worker. They were the most ruthless until Al Capone came into the picture.

Charles Tyson Yerkes built cable cars and became the cable car czar. The north and west side systems were built by Yerkes. The tunnel on LaSalle Street (no longer there) was built for the cable car to run under the river and to the north side.

In 1895, Yerkes and George Washington Ferris re-assembled the 1893 Ferris Wheel at the end of the cable car line at Clark and Sherman (near Diversey) to build ridership.

The west side line ran to Blue Island and along Milwaukee Avenue with all lines converging downtown.

By 1906, the city had installed overhead wires for electric trolleys.

Ice and snow in cable slots and on the overhead electric wires were challenging in the winter months.

The cable cars were shut down from time to time to inspect for cable frays and because of the ice and snow conditions. Frayed cables could not catch in the grip system that helped to turn the car.

There are a few power stations left. One of two remaining is at LaSalle and Illinois Streets (where Michael Jordan's Café used to be, then The Power House.) The other one was at Jefferson and Washington Streets. The building was heavily remodeled, but it was also once a power house. There were once 11 power houses.

There are cable barns remaining at Blue Island and Levitt, which is now used as a factory. Another one is at Armitage, west of Milwaukee.

At 5529 S. Lake Park Avenue is a cable car waiting room that now houses the Hyde Park Historical Society.

No original Chicago cable cars remain. Although there is a replica in the MSI and another at the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, IL

There was a question about the sites of former power houses. There is one at Jefferson and Van Buren that is now a parking lot. Another at Sheffield and Lincoln Avenue that is now a park. A third one, at 55th and Cottage Grove, is presently a grassy knoll.

Another question was about the fares. There were regulated by the city and were 5 cents for many years.

Another question was how many people normally operated the cable car. We were told that most often there was a conductor plus and a grip man who worked with the cable.

The meeting ended and there was more networking with members.

Minutes taken by
Gina V Driskell