



WEBFOOTER EXTRA

December 2013

MT. HOOD RAILWAY & POWER CO.



WEBFOOTERS POST CARD CLUB

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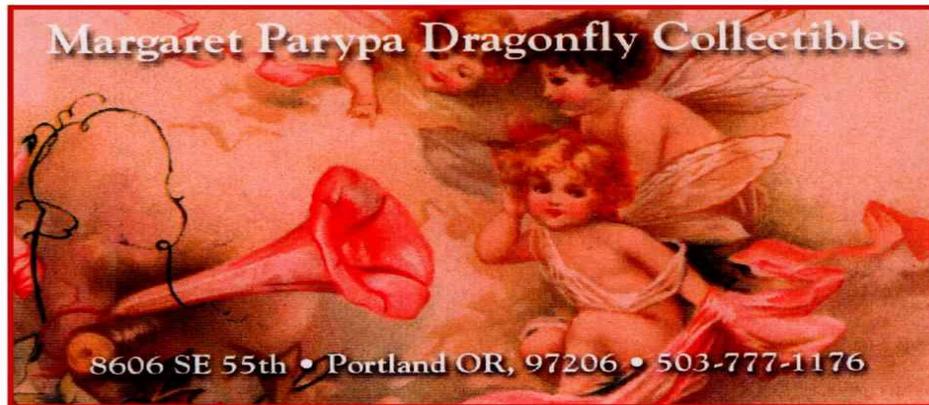


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Portland Railway Company streetcar near 16th & Thurman streets circa 1915.

MT. HOOD RAILWAY & POWER CO.



This is believed to be the first run of the Mt. Hood Railway with Engine number 1 at the Pleasant Home Depot in 1911. (Stephen Kenney Collection)



Builder's photo of Mt. Hood Railway cars built by the Kuhlman Car Co. in 1911. Freight car 101 (later renumbered 1190) heads up the train and 102 brings up the rear. Freight car 102, (renumbered 1191), is still standing, but it is in very rough shape.

There was a time in the history of Portland when the town of Bull Run, which was located in the western foothills of Mt. Hood, grew and flourished. As early as the 1880's, the Bull Run Watershed in the shadow of Mt. Hood, with the abundant and pristine waters of Bull Run Lake, was selected as a suitable source for Portland's pure drinking water.

The original settlement near Bull Run, which was christened Unavilla, was near to the present-day location of the Bull Run School. A post office was established there on May 6, 1893. This was about the time the waters of the Bull Run Watershed were harnessed. An elaborate water purification and delivery system was built to transport this water to the residents of Portland and the surrounding area.

Within a couple years, Bull Run outgrew Unavilla and the post office was closed. Postal staff and equipment were moved about a mile east to the town of Bull Run where a new post office was established on November 22, 1895 on property owned by the city of Portland in Clackamas County. The town housed and supported the workers who built and maintained the hydroelectric, water generation and railway operations.

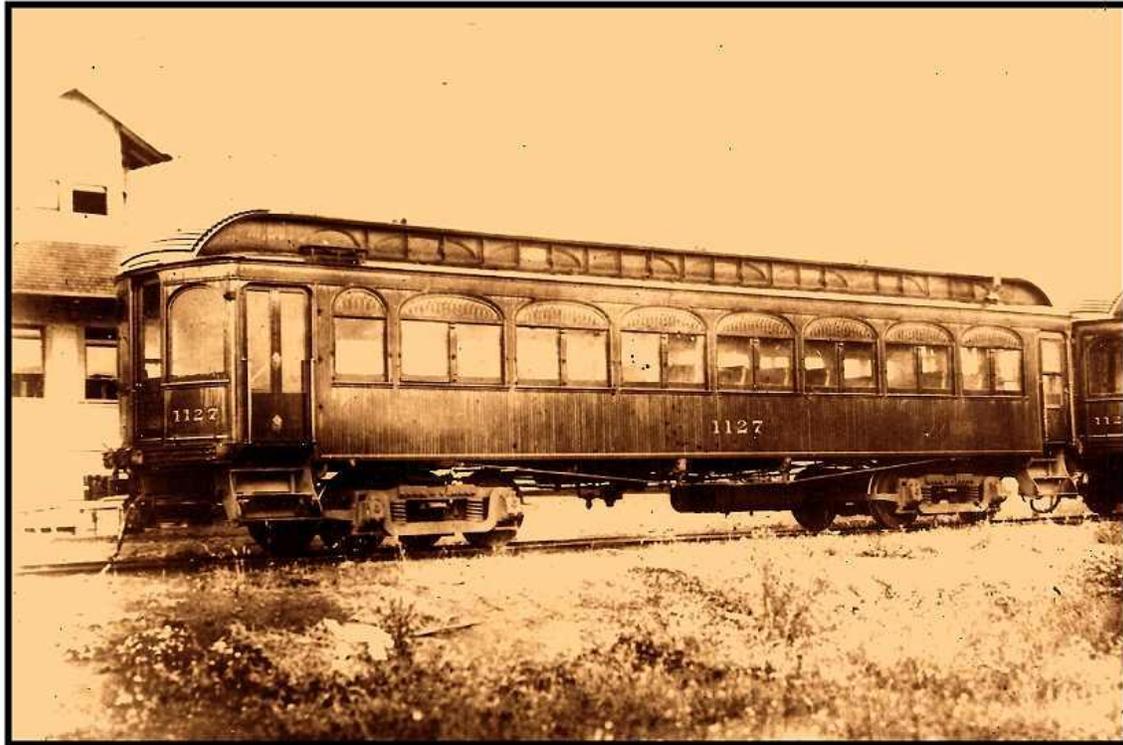
The need for lights and electricity led to the building of the Bull Run powerhouse and Roslyn Lake. Bull Run became a major source of electricity for Portland and in the early days it supported a town that had a hotel, gas station, grocery store, blacksmith shop and many other amenities that a modern town offered circa 1900. The Mount Hood Railway and Power Company was incorporated on September 15, 1906 with an authorized capital stock of five million dollars to construct the hydroelectric project.

At the time, it took three hours by stagecoach to reach Bull Run from an electric railway depot in Boring. In order to get the building materials to Bull Run, the Mt. Hood Railway and Power Co. built a steam locomotive railroad line from 90th and Glisan in Montavilla to Bull Run.

On July 4, 1911, the Mt. Hood Railway and Power Company opened a 22-mile railroad line from Montavilla to Bull Run. Nearly all the stations were located at little towns that sprang up around the rail line. The railroad served 30 stations, bringing passengers as well as mail, food, provisions, lumber and building supplies to the workers as well as homesteaders along the line.



Bull Run bound car 1125 stopped at the Pleasant Home Depot.



Kuhlman-built Mt. Hood Railway passenger car 1127 at Gresham in 1912.

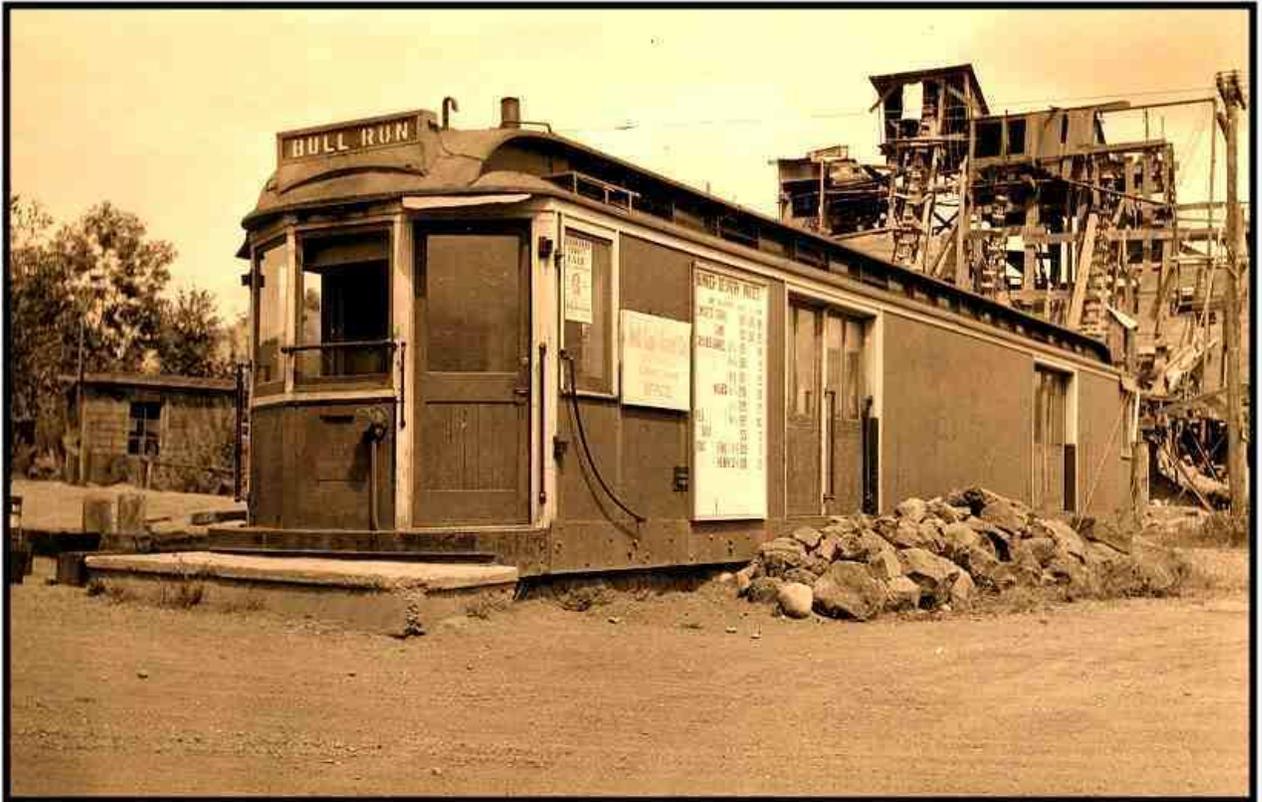
Within six months of opening, the new company was starting to experience a cash crunch and the Portland Railway Light & Power Company acquired the Mt. Hood Railway & Power Company's assets and operating equipment in March 1912. After PRL&P added overhead electric wires above the rails in 1913 and motors to some of the rolling stock in 1914, they began operating electric interurban coaches on the renamed Mt. Hood Division. The rolling stock was used by PRL&P on its lines throughout the Portland area.

Passenger service to Bull Run continued until December 27, 1930, while freight service continued until November 26, 1932 when declining revenues brought on by the Great Depression forced the abandonment of the line. The tracks were removed and salvaged from east Gresham to Bull Run. Much of the steel was used in making the steel hulls on many battleships during World War II.

Unfortunately, nearly all of the rolling stock was either sold or scrapped. Very few remnants of the Mt. Hood Railway are still in existence. The Bull Run Powerhouse is still standing; however, operations ended in 2007. Roslyn Lake was drained and the park still stands, it awaits a new purpose.

A non-profit group is being formed to turn the powerhouse into a museum. One of their goals is to obtain artifacts relating to the Mt. Hood Railway. The one remaining car left from the original Kuhlman Car Co. order in 1911 is currently located at Antique Powerland in Brooks, Oregon, where the car body was moved in 1992. It is awaiting a savior. It is one of a handful of Railway Post Office cars left in the world

Some of you may know I am on the board of the Oregon Electric Railway Historical Society. I was assigned the task of getting the one remaining Mt. Hood car under cover and out of the weather. I contacted the group at Bull Run that has acquired the Powerhouse. They have a generous benefactor who is willing to pay the costs to move the car. We are drafting a contract to loan the one remaining Mt. Hood Railway car to the group at the Powerhouse. We are looking for volunteers to restore the car and we are raising funds to make this happen. Any help you can give is very much appreciated.



After the Railway Express car 1191 was retired by Portland Traction in 1936, it was sold to Bell Sand & Gravel where it was used as an office and it remained there until 1992 when it was moved to Antique Powerland at Brooks, Oregon. (Photo courtesy Richard Thompson and Tracy Brown)



Former Mt. Hood Railway Express Motor 1191 at Brooks, Oregon about 10 years ago. (OERHS photo)