

## **Old tracks found under road.**

These pictures were taken of the old “trolley-streetcar” tracks located between 200 S and 300 S on 7400 E. They were buried under the road and were unearthed during the water pipe upgrade project.





### **Brief History of the “Toonerville” in Ogden Valley.**



Sample picture of a Trolley

Light Rail is not new to Utah. During the heyday of America's interurban, Utah's enjoyed the best in U.S. rail commuter technology. In 1891 Simon Bamberger bought several small steam engines and established his Great Salt Lake & Hot Springs Railroad from downtown Salt Lake City to Warm Springs four miles north. If it was a modest beginning, he had big plans: not just a commuter line between Salt Lake and Ogden but also a freight line to compete against Union Pacific's Ogden-to-Coalville coal hauler. The

undertaking proved more difficult than he had envisioned. The Bamberger line (as it was popularly known) reached Bountiful in 1891 and Farmington in 1895 (where Bamberger drained a marsh and built the Lagoon resort).

Not until 1908 did his new, more powerful trains begin carrying passengers to Ogden. In 1910 Bamberger's son electrified the line to lower costs. GSL&HS's own substations ran trains at 750 volts, more powerfully than any other U.S. interurban of the time. The line's terminals (one stood where Symphony Hall now stands) had no turning facilities, so cowcatchers were installed on both ends of the trains. After his father was elected governor, Julian Bamberger constructed and shared a new Salt Lake terminal with the Salt Lake & Utah Company. Electric mass transit had become a Utah fixture. A few Utahans still remember the quiet, smooth ride from Layton to Salt Lake to shop or to Saltair Resort to dance to the big bands.

Nine years after the Bamberger line began, David Eccles started his Ogden Rapid Transit Company. Within a decade 24 miles of streetcar track combed Ogden City, with a branch to the mouth of Ogden Canyon and another to hot springs seven miles north of town. ORT eventually expanded west to Plain City and north to Brigham City. While students and adults steadily patronized it, the line earned three times as much by freighting sugar beets and other farm products.



Bamberger track crew



Tracks in Ogden Canyon

In 1910 the Ogden RPID Transit successfully waged a miniature “canyon war” with Simon Bamberger’s Salt Lake and Ogden Interurban: both raced to be the first to build a line up scenic Ogden Canyon.

While Bamberger crews were busy surveying and grading a new line to the mouth of Ogden Canyon, the Ogden Rapid Transit, headed by David Eccles, managed to get there first by extending its Ogden local line from the Sanitarium (Rainbow Gardens) on to the Hermitage. Eccles won, his grade never exceeding 4 percent. . Bamberger was forced to abandon his virtually completed roadbed.

In 1915 he extended it 10 miles farther to Huntsville, where he himself lived.

The railroad street car tracks came to the south corner of the present LDS church in Huntsville (300 S 7400 E). However the main stop was at Joseph L. Peterson’s store which was later Leon’s Mercantile (200 S 7400 E).

The old trolley would let visitors off at the store. They then proceeded to the end of the line where the present LDS church stands. The engineer and conductor would change the trolley while the travelers visited in the general store and walked around the center of the small town, basking in the uniqueness and beauty of its mountains. The trolley switched for the return trip went back to the store, picked up the passengers, and preceded back through the awe-inspiring canyon.

There was a huge plank platform which was level with the street car. Cans of cream and milk were loaded from this platform and hauled to the Bamberger station in Ogden, and then hauled to a processing plant in Salt Lake City. Around the corner was a small stockyard where sheep and cattle were loaded. A coal yard was in the vicinity.

After the railroad came to Huntsville, coal dealers would have coal hauled up on the railroad. On one occasion a great huge lump of coal some way or the other was dumped on the track. It was so large and heavy no one could move it. The coal dealer said if anyone could move it, they could have it.

Mr. Soren P. Peterson drove his team of horses, hitched to his wagon unto the tracks, got down, picked up the huge chunk of coal, put it in his wagon and drove home. That was the topic of conversation for quite some time and was remembered for years. He had the reputation for being extra strong.

The weigh station scales were on the west side of the general store where the gas pumps were later located. Farmers could pull up and weigh their hay, grain, or coal, as it was loaded or came off the street car.

More than 7,000 head of sheep were shipped from Huntsville over cars on the Ogden Valley branch of the local electric line by Binn Brothers and T.A. Butterfield. Many other sheep men also used the branch railroad including Lindsay Land and Livestock Company and Fred Cobabe.

The people from Eden and Liberty disembarked and embarked from the **“Toonerville”** as the street car was affectionately called, at a little brick station near Artesian Wells Park. There was also a coal yard close by, a sugar beet yard, and the Black and Griffin Creamery conveniently located in the adjacent area.

There were two daily round trips from Ogden to Huntsville. For many years this picturesque railway distinguished the Ogden scene. Tourists, families on outings, holiday parties, individual sight-seers, picnickers, and recreatinalists of all types used the street car daily as a popular pastime for 5 cents a fare.

The people of Huntsville depended on the street car to do their shopping in Ogden, as it came right to the center of town. Weber High School students from Huntsville rode the dear old **“Toonerville”** to the Weber High School from 1927 until 1931-1932 when buses replaced it.

When people began buying their own automobiles, the street car ceased to become a necessity and went out of existence in 1932. The electric steam car served the valley for about 19 years.

Portions of the above were taken from LaVerna Newey’s book **“REMEMBER MY VALLEY”**.

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