



Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee (North Shore Line) Car 162

Car 162 is the oldest surviving North Shore Line passenger car. It was one of 15 new interurban coaches ordered from the J.G. Brill Company, Philadelphia, PA in 1915 for the Chicago & Milwaukee Electric Railroad Company, predecessor of the Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee Railroad – also known as the North Shore Line – which ran frequent high-speed trains between the Loop in downtown Chicago and 6th Street in downtown Milwaukee from 1916 through January of 1963. Railroad historian and photographer William Middleton described the North Shore Line as a “super interurban.” There are still many people today who remember the North Shore Line fondly and remember riding on the line.

The 15 Brill cars (numbered 150-164) were the North Shore Line’s first all-steel passenger cars; earlier cars were constructed of wood. Car 162 was capable of speeds exceeding 80 miles per hour and often ran in trains up to seven cars long. Unlike later steel cars ordered by the North Shore Line, the Brills were never modernized, and they retained their original interior seats, fixtures and lighting for their entire operating lives. As newer cars were acquired, the Brills were moved from limited to local service. Car 162, which went into service on October 17, 1915, remained in operation until the North Shore Line ceased operations on January 21, 1963.

In a bizarre accident on June 4, 1918, Car 162 collided with a small Chicago & North Western steam-powered switch engine in North Chicago where the tracks of the two railroads crossed. Car 162 stopped nearly in time, barely touching the left drive rod of the C&NW locomotive. However, power was still applied to the locomotive and the drive rod continued to move, locking onto the front end of Car 162 and causing the locomotive and its tender to gently tip over. While there were only minor injuries to the C&NW crew, and only minor damage to Car 162, the steam locomotive was heavily damaged.

After the North Shore Line shut down, Car 162 was purchased by the American Museum of Electricity in Niskayuna, New York, which is near Schenectady. However, the museum’s plans to build a campus dedicated to all things electrical – including electric railcars – were never achieved, and the entire enterprise collapsed in 1970, before any construction began. Its collections were dispersed and the Connecticut Trolley Museum in East Windsor, CT acquired Car 162 in 1971. The East Troy Railroad Museum acquired the car from the Connecticut Trolley Museum in 2022.

A restoration effort for Car 162, which will likely take several years to complete, is planned – and fundraising for the project has already begun.

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CNS&M 162 at Highwood, Illinois, July 1955 (Don Ross photo).

Vital Statistics:

Length - 56' 4.75"

Width - 8' 8"

Height - 12' 5.5"

Weight - 90,280 lbs.

Construction - Steel

Gauge - Standard (4' 8.5")

Roof Type - AR

Ended - Double-Ended

Seats - 56 passengers

#Wheels/Conf. - 8 (B-B)

Trucks - Brill 27 MCB 3X

Brakes - AMU (M23)

Compressor - CP-28

Motors - WH 557A5 (4)

Control - WH HLF-28A

Voltage - 600 VDC

Ownership History:

Chicago & Milwaukee Electric #162 - 1915-1917

Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee #162 - 1917-1963

American Museum of Electricity, Niskayuna, NY - 1963-1971

Connecticut Trolley Museum - 1971-2022

East Troy Railroad Museum - 2022-present

East Troy Railroad Museum

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