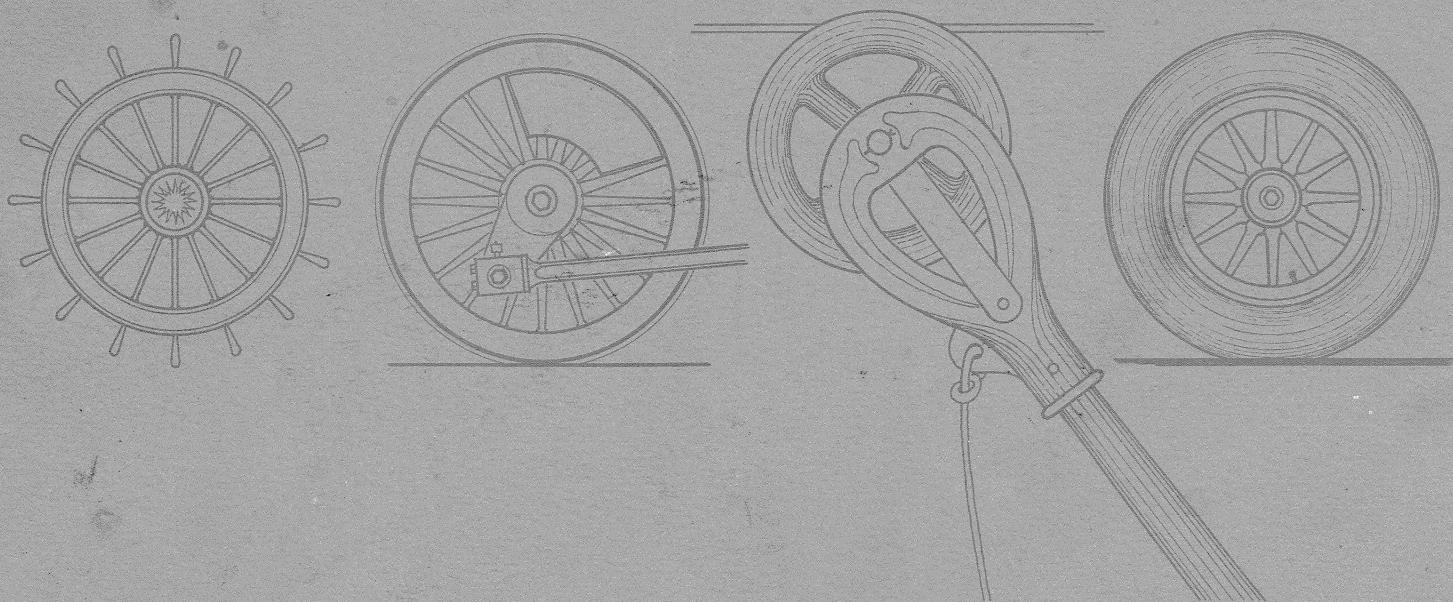




PROSPECTUS:

AN OPERATING  
VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM  
IN RICHMOND



Prepared by the Old Dominion Chapter, National Railway Historical Society

**AN OPERATING VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM IN RICHMOND:**

**a proposal prepared by the**

**Old Dominion Chapter, National Railway Historical Society**

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**VIRGINIA AND HER CAPITAL CITY** have a wonderfully rich heritage of transportation and travel development. A proper facility for bringing together and presenting an operating fleet of the colorful vehicles and memorabilia which recreate this progress can be of great value and keen pleasure to both local and touring public. Such a resource has been left too long undeveloped.

WE PROPOSE to establish and maintain a Virginia Transportation Museum in Richmond. It is to be an active, rolling museum, whose parade of transportation highlights would encompass our many "golden ages" of travel. These exhibits will be full-size originals. They will be capable of carrying each visitor on an experience into the romance of Virginia's travel history.

A SURPRISINGLY IDEAL and attractive site for such a facility now exists in the vicinity of downtown Richmond. It is the Second Street railway yard area just below the Virginia War Memorial, alongside the old Kanawha Canal and Tredegar Iron Works. Immediately adjacent to the new James River Recreation areas, the site contains ample space for displaying and operating antique autos, railway cars and locomotives, fire engines, steam farm machinery, canal boats, and trolley cars.



VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM

## CROSS SECTION

BELVIDERE ST. TO THE JAMES RIVER

CONSTRUCTION of the Downtown Expressway will drastically and permanently affect present railway usage of this yard, making the site potentially available for use as a recreational museum. We propose that acquisition of this site for such purpose be undertaken by our organization.

CAREFULLY COLLECTED, restored and preserved by this State's active transportation history organizations in long anticipation of just such a development is a wealth of historic equipment and material worthy of display and operation. The present collection of the Railway Historical Society alone is appraised at well over a hundred thousand dollars and includes some sixteen passenger train cars and two steam locomotives from the "golden age" of railroading. The Antique Automobile Association of America's operating collection is similarly extensive and valuable. And a host of fascinating and irreplaceable items lies preserved but homeless at various locations throughout the State and elsewhere; these, too, could be available for a unique operating museum here.

ALL OF THESE COLLECTIONS have an important and colorful role in making Virginia's transportation history come alive. And it can indeed come alive, for transportation personifies the romance of motion, and things that move do hold an unequalled fascination for people of all ages and origins.

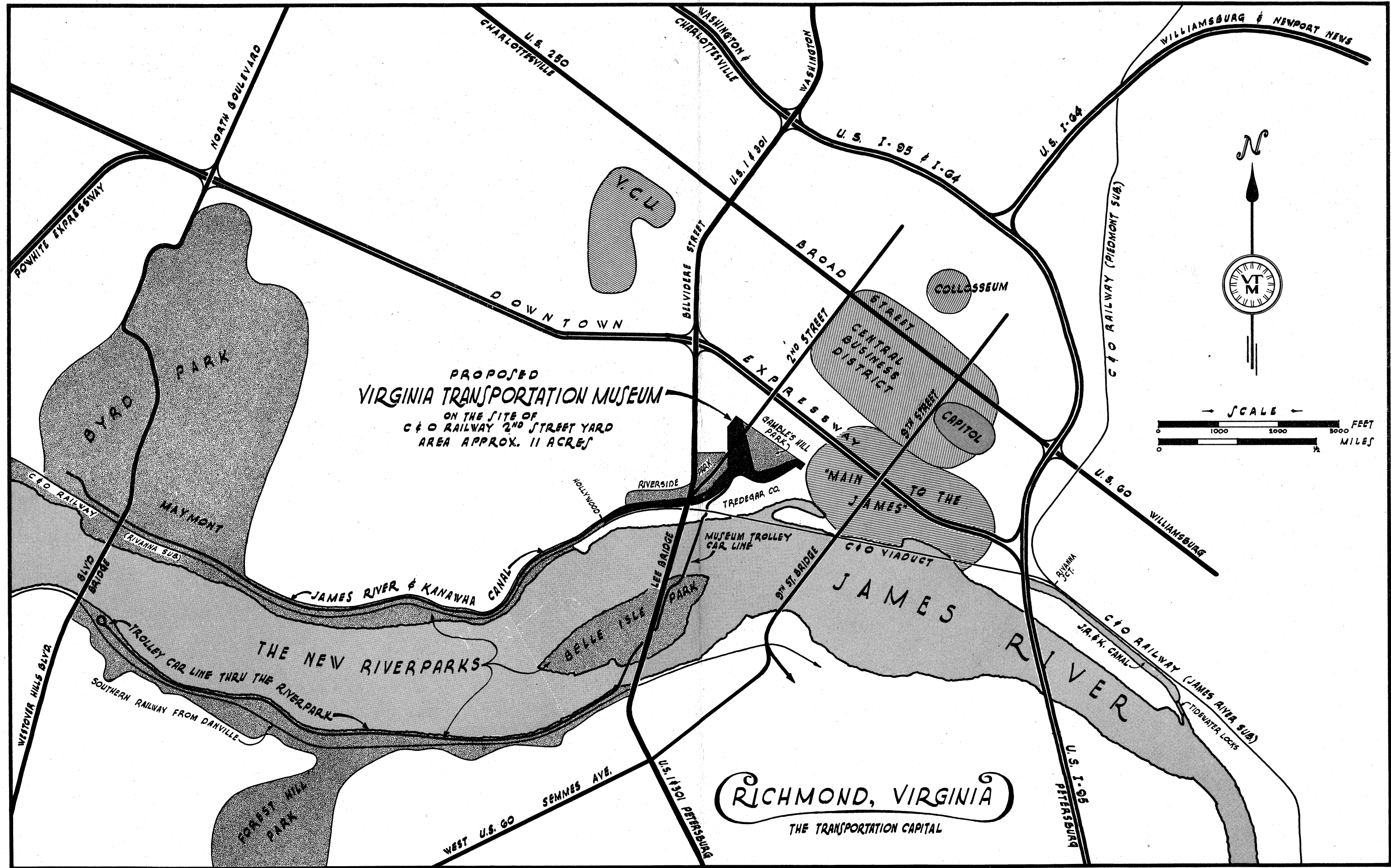
THE OLD DOMINION CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY is one of the active historical organizations deeply concerned with this project. We have taken the lead in sponsoring it because we recognize an immediate need for it. Our own organization of over a hundred and sixty members has been formally committed to its continued support and maintenance, and to the regular, public operation of its railway features. As a non-profit corporation with some ten years' operating experience we have become specialists in our field - the promotion of active public interest and participation in railway transportation history.

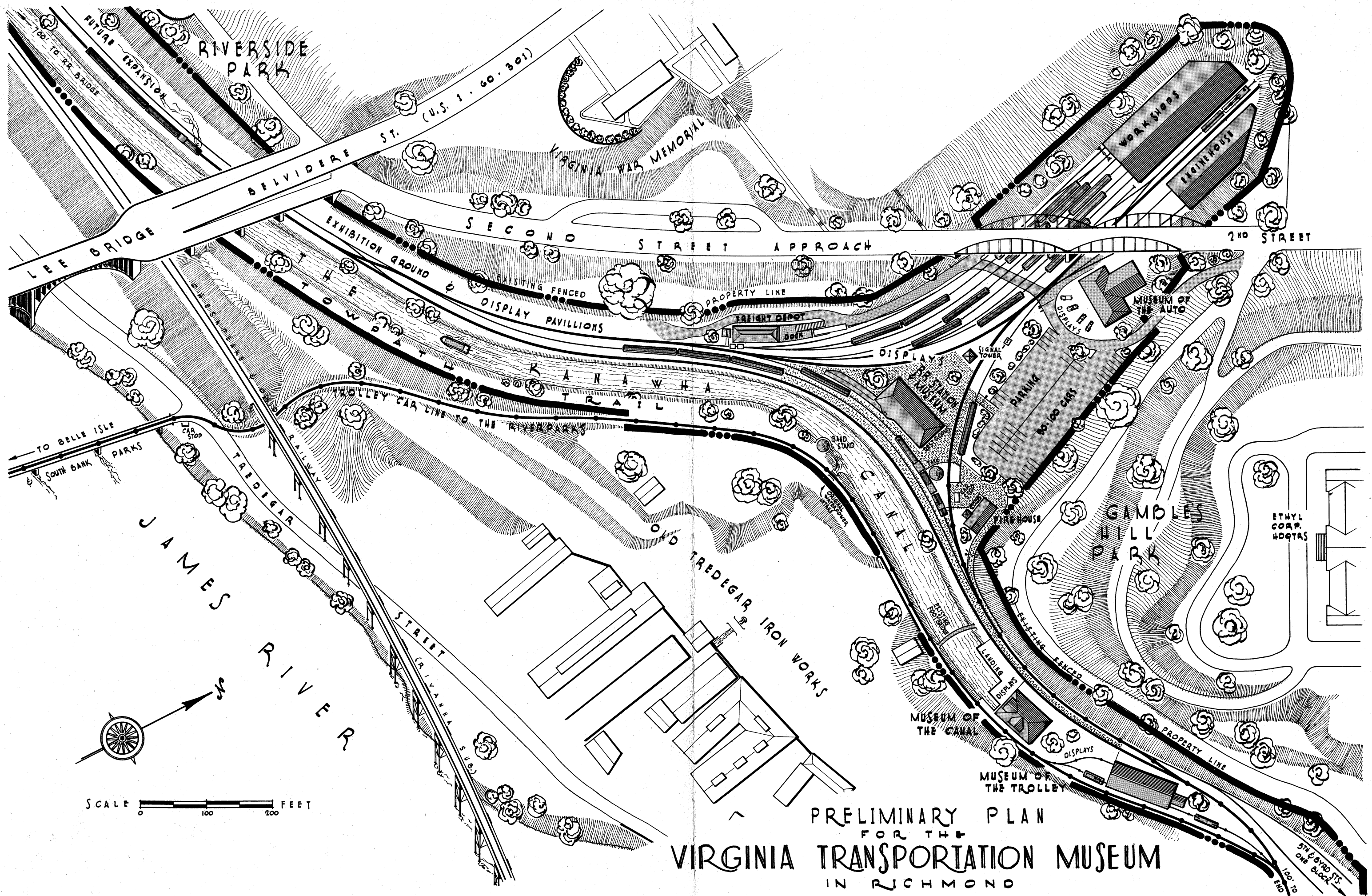
WE BELIEVE that an operating, scenic transportation museum such as proposed and described herein can be a highly successful and attractive facility. We are confident that the local and touring public's interest will be well served by its creation and operation. The museum undoubtedly would be a prime drawing card in its own right - a unique Capital City tourist attraction, with educational and recreational utility.

THE 1966 VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY formally recognized the solid economic and cultural value of preserving and developing our historical resources. Strongly recommended was the encouragement and active support of projects such as this one, especially where such a project could form a viable part of the proposed Virginia Museum of Science and Industry.

YOUR VOICE IN SUPPORT OF THIS UNIQUE PROJECT IS URGENTLY NEEDED. ACQUISITION OF THE SECOND STREET RAIL YARD SITE IS THE FOUNDING ACT OF THE MUSEUM. WE ARE PREPARED TO UNDERTAKE THIS IF IT CAN BE SHOWN THAT THE VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM IS REGARDED FAVORABLY BY PUBLIC INTERESTS AT THE LOCAL AND STATE LEVELS. SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY WILL NOT PRESENT ITSELF AGAIN IN TIME TO SAVE FROM THE SCRAPYARD TORCH THE PRICELESS HISTORICAL MATERIAL THAT HAS BEEN SO PAINSTAKINGLY PRESERVED FOR THE COMMON BENEFIT.







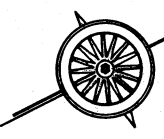
RIVERSIDE PARK

VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL

GAMBLE'S HILL PARK

PRELIMINARY PLAN  
FOR THE  
VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM  
IN RICHMOND

SCALE 0 100 200 FEET



JAMES RIVER

BELVIDERE ST. (U.S. 1. 60. 301)

SECOND STREET APPROACH

2ND STREET

EXHIBITION GROUND

EXISTING FENCED

DISPLAY PAVILIONS

FREIGHT DEPOT

MUSEUM OF THE AUTO

PARKING 30-100 CARS

KANA WHA TRAIL

OLD TREDGAR IRON WORKS

MUSEUM OF THE CANAL

MUSEUM OF THE TROLLEY

ETHYL CORP. HOQTAS

WORK SHOPS

ENGINE HOUSE

TO BELLE ISLE  
SOUTH BANK PARKS

CAR STOP

TREDGAR RAILWAY

TROLLEY CAR LINE TO THE RIVER PARKS

STREET (RIVANNA SUB.)

DISPLAYS

SIGNAL TOWER

LAND STAND

EXISTING HOUSE

EXISTING HOUSE

LANDING

DISPLAYS

5TH BYRD ST. ONE BLOCK

100.30

100.30

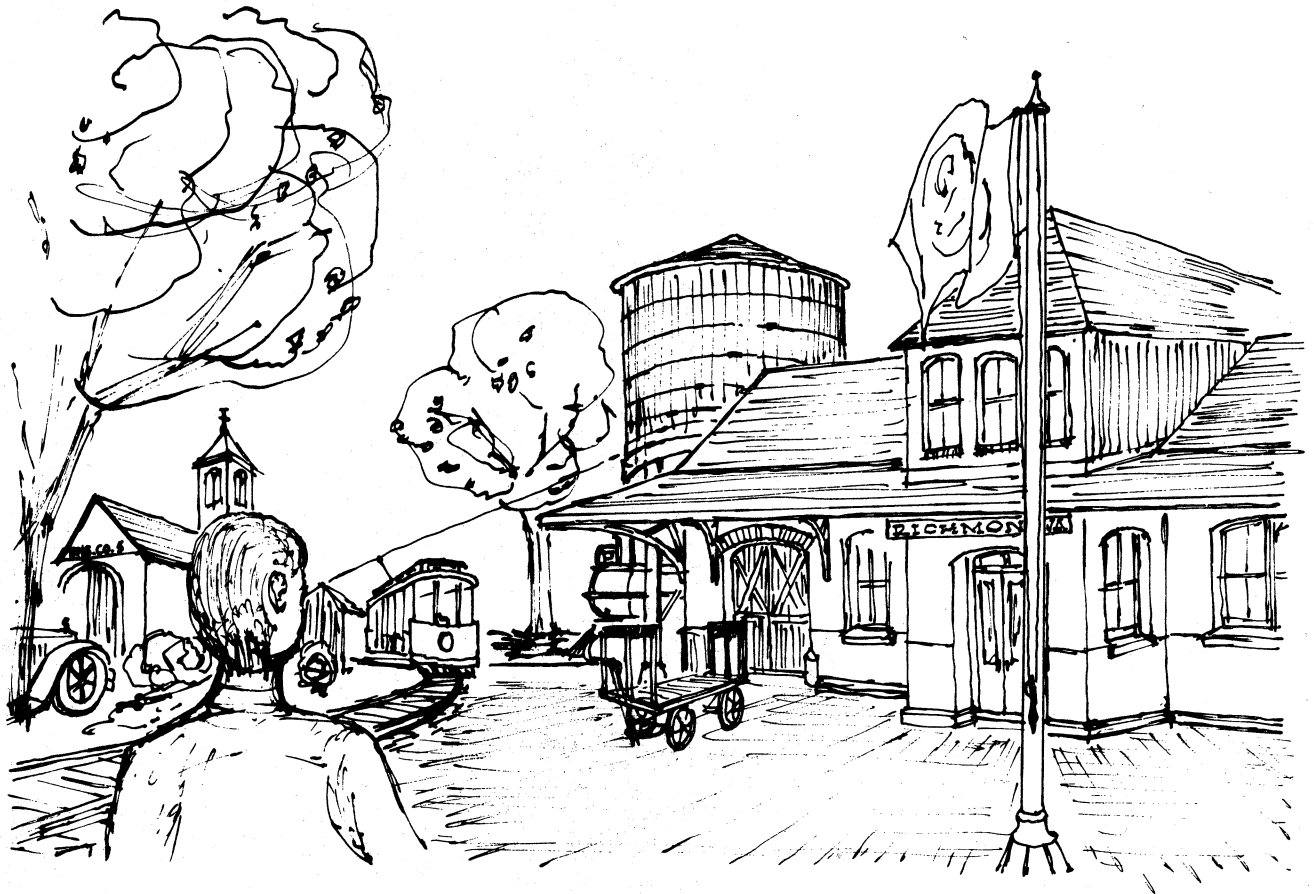
A DESCRIPTION  
OF THE PROPOSED VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM  
AND ITS OPERATIONS

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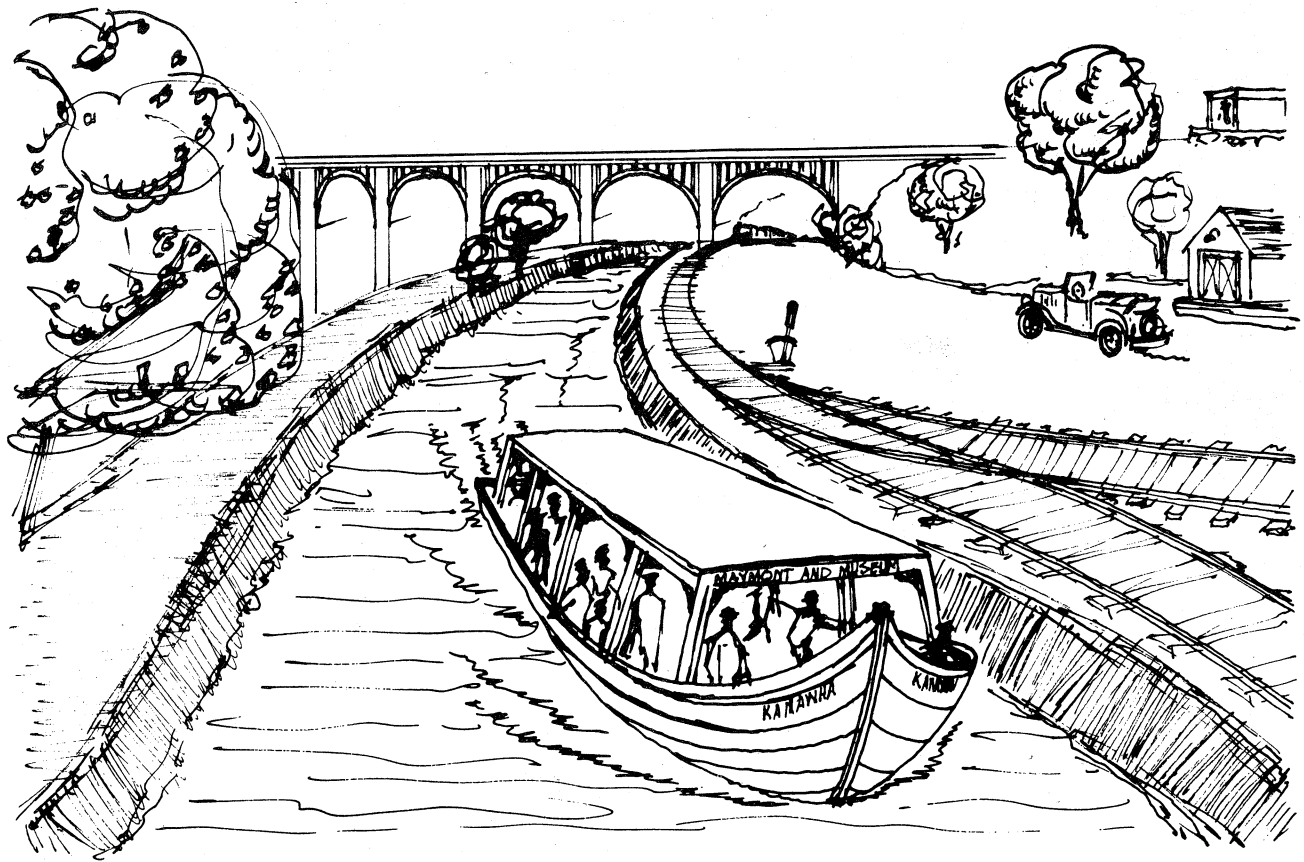
HOW WOULD THE MUSEUM FUNCTION? What transportation displays and operations would be of particular significance and attraction in Virginia's Capital City?

YOUR ATTENTION is called to the attached location and development sketches of the museum site and surrounding area.

"TRANSPORTATION" connotes people and products going places; the entire museum area should set the stage for a variety of realistic travel activity for effective presentation. Designing the central museum area around the focal point of a Railroad Station serves these purposes well, and provides a familiar, easily identifiable setting for visitors of all ages. With this concept as a starting point, study of the proposed Second Street site has shown the following museum operations to be among those desirable and possible and, indeed, quite realistically practical.







THE QUIETLY BEAUTIFUL JAMES RIVER AND KANAWHA CANAL begins in the proposed museum area and extends westward well past the Maymont zoo in Byrd Park. An impressive engineering feat, this was the second great inland transportation system conceived and constructed in our nation. Canal boat excursions up and down this uniquely scenic, historic waterway along the river's north bank have been seriously proposed for some time. Such operations, representing an important pioneer milestone in our transportation development, ideally belong as a functioning part of a Virginia Transportation Museum; they are in fact admirably suited to this particular museum site, which was originally a turning basin for the Kanawha Canal.

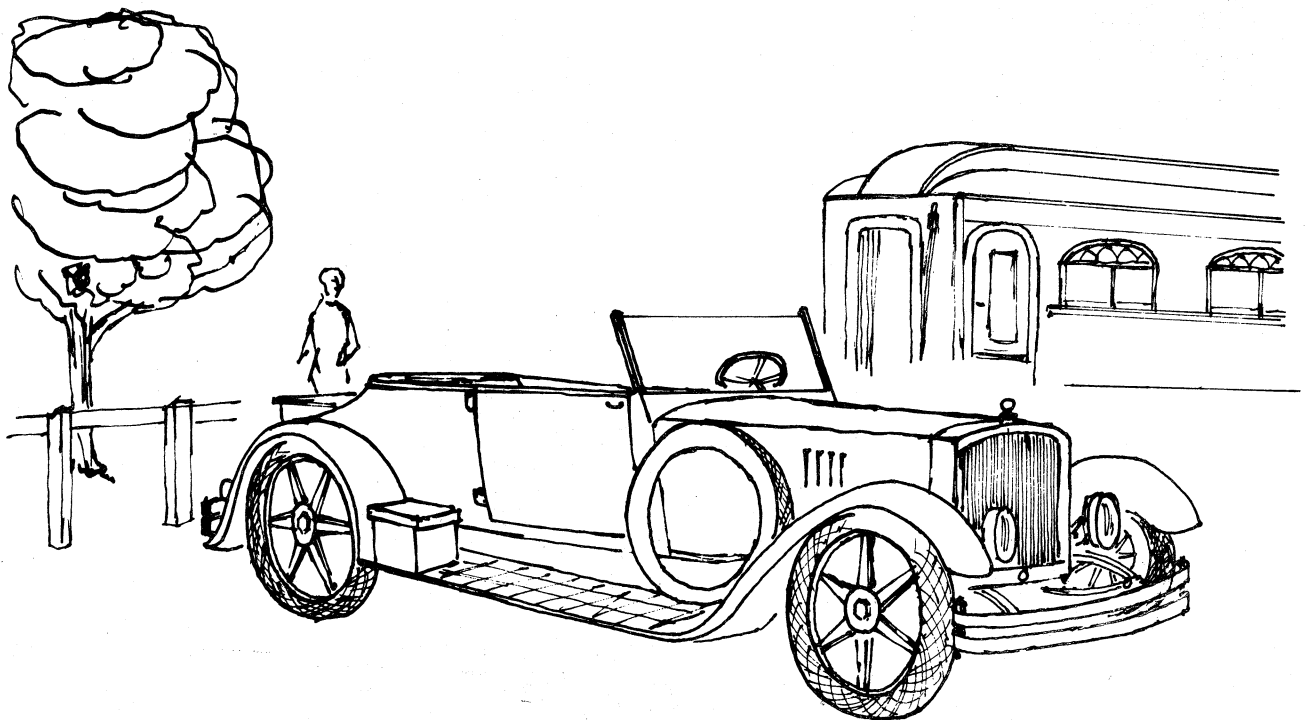
SUCH CANAL BOAT OPERATIONS have been successful elsewhere, notably on the restored Delaware Canal in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where they have amply proven their positive attraction and recreational value. The James River and Kanawha Canal is one of our finest, potentially useful historic assets; what a loss it would be if the canal were not to take its proper place as a functioning part of a Virginia Transportation Museum!

THE AUTOMOBILE and truck are our Twentieth Century transportation standards. Among all the various developments in transportation and travel the automobile rates a showplace in the Virginia Transportation Museum, for it is the most familiar form of transportation. It is the reference point from which we judge all other forms, since it plays a direct, observable, and very personal part in our individual daily lives to an even greater extent than did the trolley car in the first quarter of this century.

VIRGINIA TODAY is a major highway corridor and crossroads, with one of the largest home-based trucking industries in the East. Our State's highway system is rated as one of the nation's finest; we are recognized leaders in the field of highway design. We contributed to the motor vehicle's pioneer days, too; Richmond manufactured automobiles for a number of years, the now-forgotten Kline Car being our modest claim to fame.

THE ANTIQUE AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA is an extremely active organization in Virginia. Among the extensive and valuable collections of its members are outstanding restored masterpieces of automotive history; these are occasionally seen by the public at various special events throughout the State. The Association has long been seeking some way to put these operating vehicles on continuing public display, attractively housed under cover, with exhibits changed from month to month on a rotating basis. The Association is convinced that this project is an ideal answer.

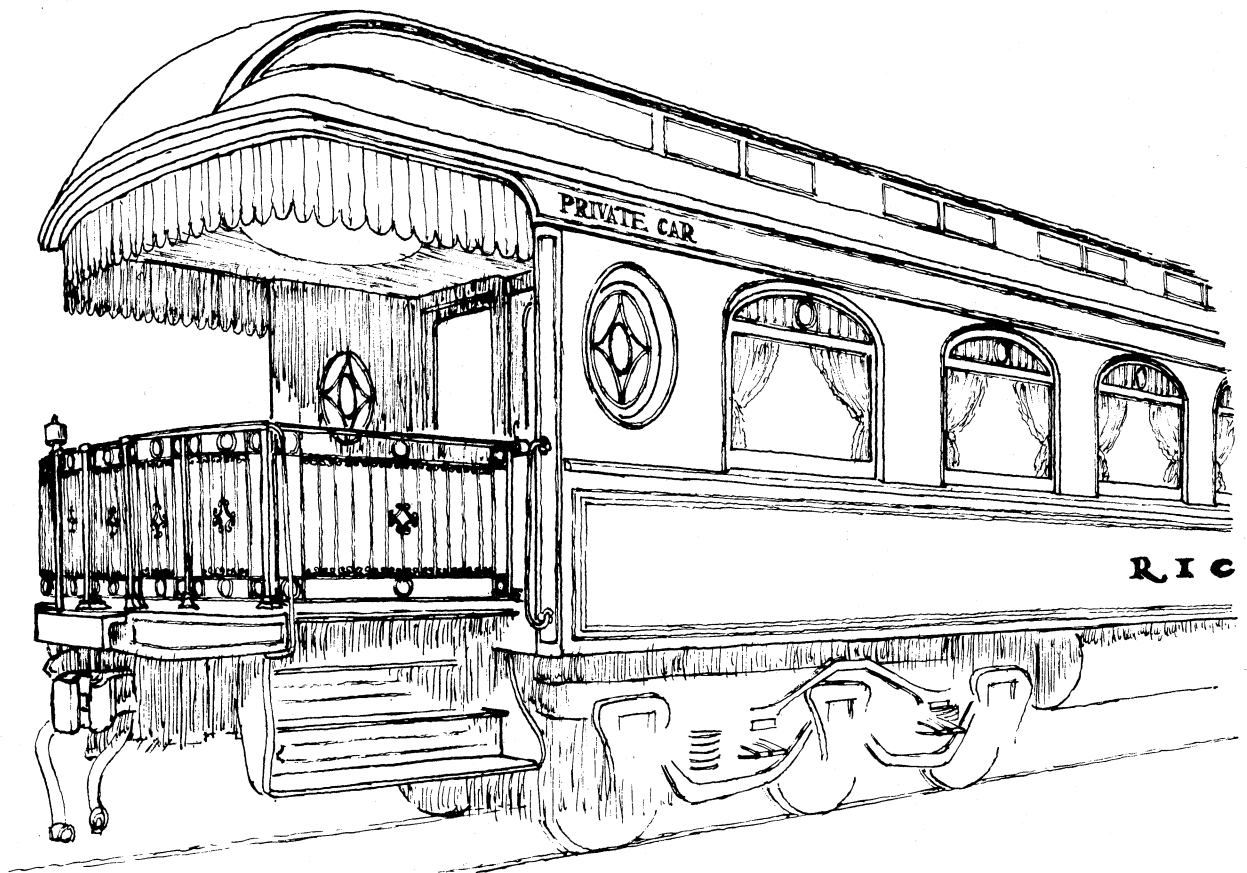
THE MUSEUM WOULD ALSO SERVE as an unusual public showground for the various antique car gatherings held several times each year by the Association's different chapters both in and out of State. These events have always attracted visitors and sightseers in large numbers, for the vehicles displayed make a colorful show, the peak of automotive progress and classic excellence.







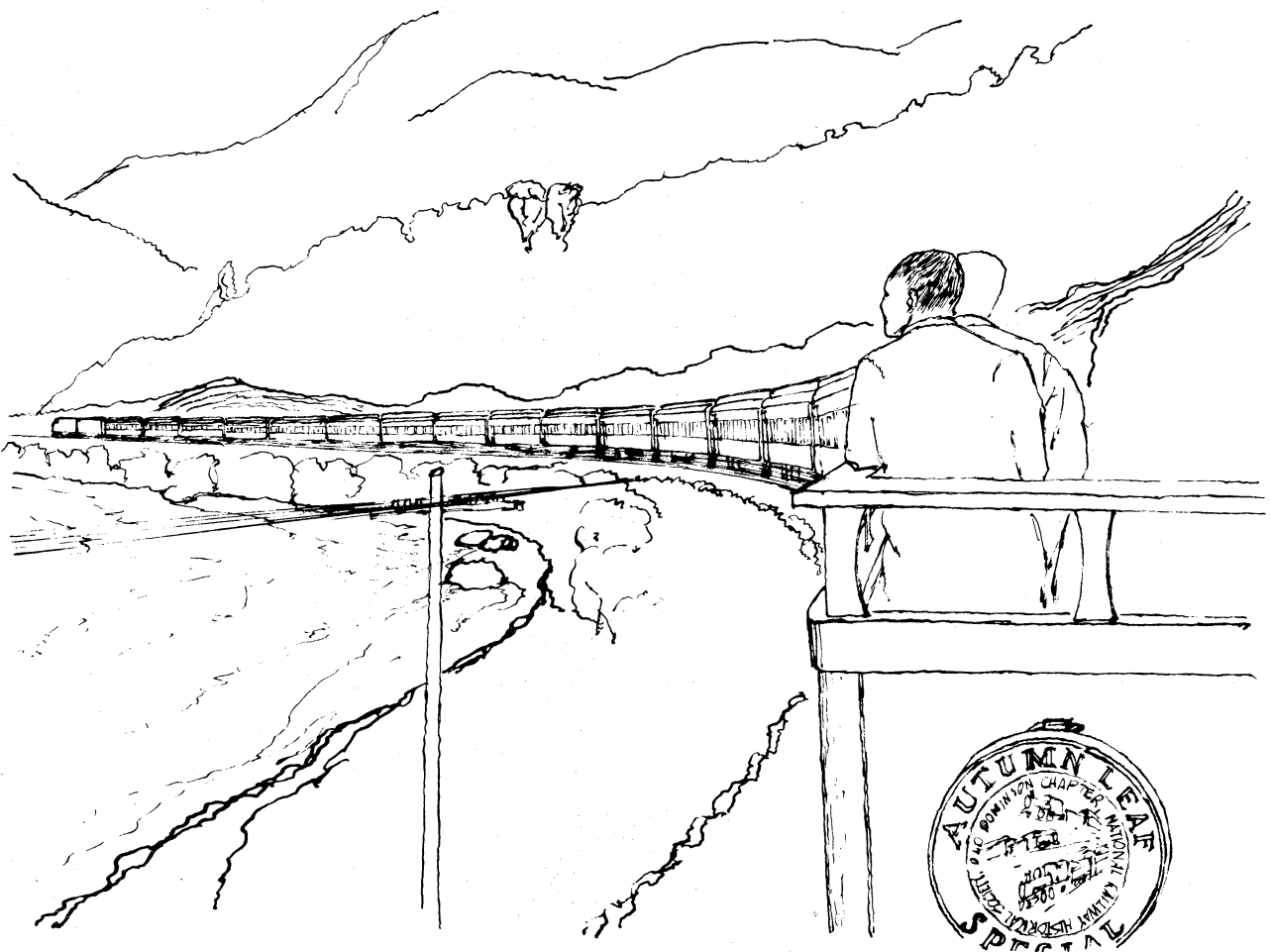
AND THE PRIDE OF THE SYSTEM would be standing by on open display in the yard outside: The Passenger Fleet! Ubiquitous day coaches with green plush walkover seats and those ridiculously tiny "parcel racks" that could hold a good-sized lunch and very little else; immaculate linen and gleaming silver enticingly laid on in the now-nearly-vanished dining car; a branch-line "combine", its coach and baggage halves effectively answering the requirements of a complete passenger train on less pretentious runs; the magnificent supremacy of the brass-railed, open platform observation car that once graced the rear of every really self-respecting name train, and to this day still sums up our collective image of what a passenger train should look like. Surely deserving a place of honor would be the legendary Pullmans, those sleek, carpeted, open-section sleeping palaces whose green-curtained upper and lower berths on the aisle - and equally legendary porters - set a national standard for solid comfort in overnight travel. And standing apart on the house track, overlooking them all with unequalled splendor, the gold-trimmed Private Car, "fitted out in the very best and most approved manner", the grander status symbol of an age not blessed with the corporate aircraft. Even the Railway Post Office Car, its compact interior bristling with pigeonholes, belongs here, for it represents a famous, century-long service that got the mails delivered with a better record than today's troubled system.



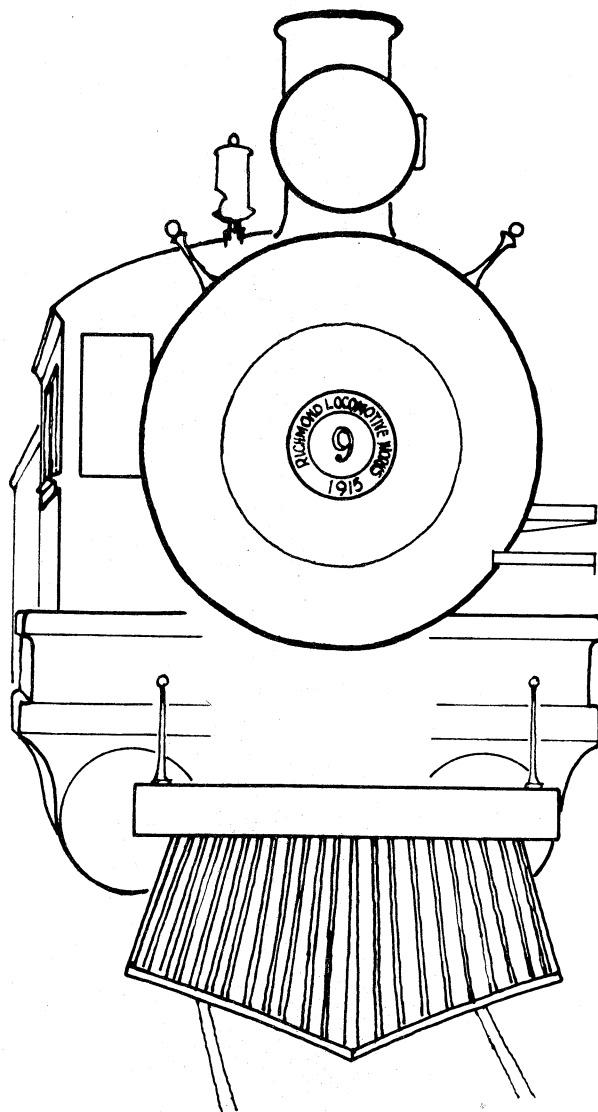
THIS IS NOT WISHFUL THINKING. These representatives of America's golden age of rail travel do exist, and are already owned or are being acquired by the Railway Historical Society. Their public attraction as restored museum displays is already proven in numerous railway museums in other States. Moreover, the public is nostalgically fascinated by railroading themes in general; the lure of the "golden age" of rail travel splendor is a very real and positive economic fact. Restaurants, for example, have cashed in on the legendary magic of superb railway dining in the "good old days."

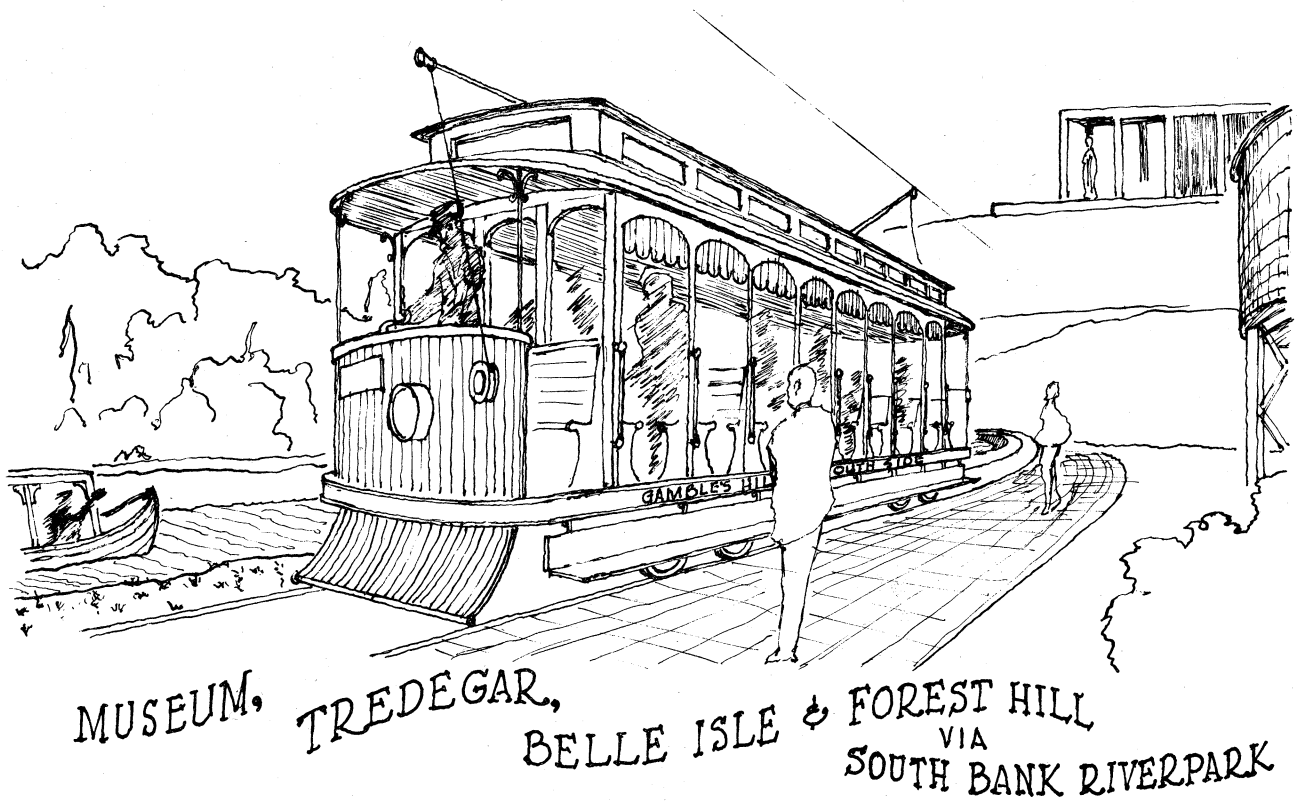
**BUT WE ARE PROPOSING AN OPERATING MUSEUM.** These vehicles of travel are not to stand as motionless displays, their fascination welded to seventy feet of track. The proposed Second Street museum site was chosen for its very size and its direct accessibility to the rail lines serving the Capital City. Serving the public for better than ten years, our organization has been providing special excursion trains throughout the year to places of scenic and historic interest in and near Virginia. These events are preserving for all the grand experience and tradition of the American railway passenger train; they have grown from a half-dozen coaches with three hundred people aboard to full twenty-car trains carrying fifteen or sixteen hundred passengers in a single weekend. But time is fast running out for these special excursions, unless something is done now. The railroads themselves no longer have available the extra passenger cars required. The proposed transportation museum offers a matchless opportunity - and the only one - to continue and expand this service, with the possibility of a wide variety of special excursions originating directly from the museum station. A unique "rolling museum" would be created, whose exhibits and displays could actually come alive and go "on tour."

**IT IS OUR INTENT AND DESIRE** to make this service available, for example, to school children as a functioning part of their education in the transportation world around them; speakers and travelling exhibits could be provided as well. Restoration work at the museum site might well offer a practical, constructive outlet for area high school students taking shop courses. And we would welcome the opportunity of sponsoring a transportation-oriented Explorer Post of the Boy Scouts of America. The museum, if created, would make these and a good many other worthwhile activities possible.



THE QUESTION UNDOUBTEDLY ARISES: what about the one single item that, even though unknown in real life to an entire generation of modern Americans, still so perfectly and thoroughly expresses the driving power and romance of railroading? It has captured our hearts; doesn't the steam locomotive, then, perhaps more than anything else, have a place in the Virginia Transportation Museum? The steam locomotive does, and it will. Richmond built "iron horses" for years at the old Tredegar Iron Works and at the much larger Richmond Locomotive Works. In point of fact, Richmond was the last major steam locomotive builder in the South, other than the N & W Railway. At least two of these Richmond-built locomotives still exist, one in active operation and the other stored under cover and in good condition. Of all the prizes we could boast, the outstanding highlight of the day would be one of these magnificent machines steaming out of Richmond for a day's excursion. Again, this is no smoke-and-cinders dream. The old water tank still stands in the proposed museum site, a nearly complete turning track exists there, and at least one Richmond railroad has already agreed to cooperate and encourage such excursions. The museum site itself is quite ideally suited to the regular weekend operation of a small steam locomotive and perhaps an antique wooden coach or two over its mile of track paralleling the old Kanawha Canal. And we already own two engines of this type.





VIRGINIA'S CAPITAL CITY HAS ONE PARTICULAR CLAIM TO FAME THAT NO ONE ELSE CAN BOAST: the world's very first successful electric railway was pioneered and constructed here, in 1887. The clanging trolley car in its heyday, not so very long ago, was an intimate part of the American way of life. No self-respecting town or city, small or large, was without its car lines, and everybody rode the trolleys. The old-time trolley cars are gone now, crowded off the streets by the automobile. But today, in our own time, the automobile is rapidly crowding itself off the streets, and what do we find as the result? That the trolley car, or something like it, wasn't such a bad idea after all. Many of our major urban areas have come full circle, the lowly trolley car arising from its own ashes and reappearing to do yeoman service in modern form as high-speed rapid transit lines are proposed, voted for, and constructed to successfully handle an increasingly heavy flow of people on the move. Once again, Virginia stands in the vanguard of transportation progress; our Northern Virginia urban complex is involved right now in the construction of the revolutionary new 97-mile Washington Metro rapid transit system.

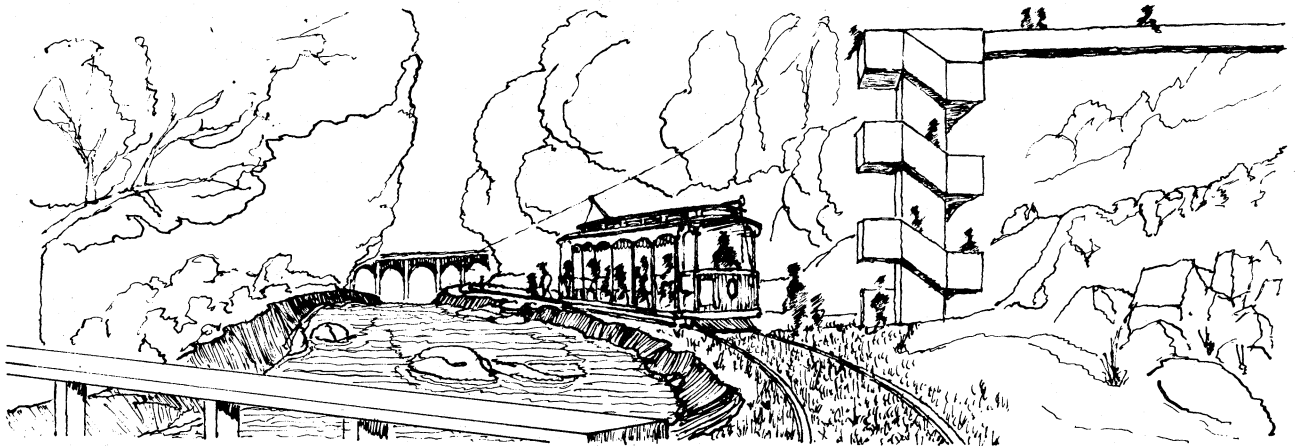
VIRGINIA IS WHERE IT ALL BEGAN. RICHMOND, HER CAPITAL CITY, WAS FIRST TO PROVE THE WAY. Surely no other place in the world could more suitably host an operating museum trolley car line.

WE PROPOSE THAT SUCH AN OPERATION should be a feature of the Virginia Transportation Museum. And in recreating some of the magic and flavor of the heyday of the trolley, we further propose that such an operation serve a useful public purpose as well. Our proposal is nothing less than that "beau ideal" of the trolley car legend, a summer car line to the park! The big, breezy, canvas-awned, open-sided summer cars, like those that first graced Richmond, humming along by a tree-lined riverbank, were perhaps the most thoroughly enjoyable form of transportation ever invented. Experience at operating trolley car museums in other States has shown that the open "breezers" look appealingly "trolley-like" to today's generations - rather different from the unglamorous streetcars of more recent times. The old open cars have in fact proven irresistible attractions wherever operated. And there are still operating old-time open trolleys that can be obtained for this museum, if no time is lost.

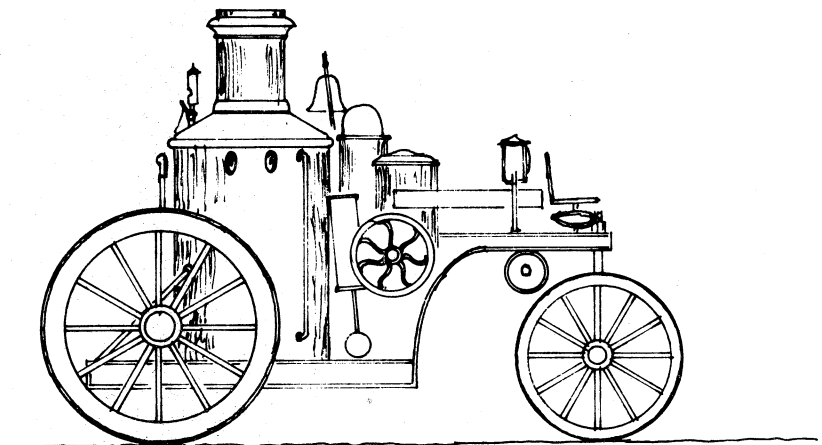


THE SUMMER CAR LINE should begin, of course, in the central museum area, and run across from the museum along the south bank towpath of the Kanawha Canal overlooking the Tredegar Iron Works, then down the abandoned Tredegar railway grade and under the big C & O trestle to Tredegar Street, across the river to the new Belle Isle recreational area, across the island in the shade of Lee Bridge's massive concrete arches, then across the existing railroad bridge to the James River's south shore. From there a desirable extension of the line could serve the entire south bank park area of the James River Recreation Project, running westward past the lower end of Forest Hill Park (which, incidentally, was an amusement park served by a summer car line in earlier days) and along the tree-shaded riverbank to its ultimate terminus just below Boulevard Bridge.

WITH SUITABLE PASSENGER STOPS along this very scenic line, a trolley car maintaining a leisurely average of no more than fifteen miles an hour could work a schedule of six minutes from the museum's eastern end (near Sixth and Byrd Streets) to the center of Belle Isle, and six minutes more from there on to Boulevard Bridge. That's faster than you can drive between those points in today's motor-clogged traffic!



AS A FINAL TOUCH, few persons are aware that the City of Richmond has a beautifully preserved horse-drawn steam fire engine. For lack of permanent display facilities, it is rarely seen. Properly displayed, perhaps in an old-time firehouse, what an attraction that could be for visitors to the Virginia Transportation Museum.



WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN HERE is a partial description of the more obvious and practical operational and display possibilities comprising this imaginative project. It would be unique. There are in fact only two remotely similar (but very successful and popular) operations in the United States that come readily to mind: Hew hope, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, a well-known art and folklore center with a steam railroad and the previously-cited Delaware Canal operations in fairly close proximity, and the trolley car and narrow-gauge steam railroad operations at the East Broad Top Railroad (a National Historic Landmark) in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania. The latter operation uses the old summer car trolleys, by the way, and hosts a colorful antique car caravan once each summer. Other places, too, have chosen to capitalize on the demonstrable appeal of these colorful modes of travel; San Francisco has its world-famous cable cars, New Orleans has turned her park-like St. Charles Street car line into a major attraction, and other cities are even proposing to reinstate the vanished trolley car line as a means of attracting visitors.

WHAT IS PROPOSED HERE IN RICHMOND, however, is a comprehensive, well-coordinated and lively presentation of Virginia's transportation and travel story: canal boat, steam train, trolley car, and automobile. All would be presented in relation to each other and each would represent a historic and colorful milestone in transportation - a milestone to which Virginia has contributed significantly. Moreover, this project can become a continuing, viable institution representing each important step in Virginia's transportation progress as it unfolds.

THIS FULLY OPERATING VIRGINIA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM can enhance the value and usefulness of the new James River Recreation Area, helping in a very practical and colorful way to tie the whole together, and adding to the attraction and life of the downtown area by contributing the flavor and magic of our own unique transportation history. A lively tourist attraction would be created, too, one with a widespread, basic appeal tapping the fertile resource that is our transportation heritage. Tourism is Virginia's second largest industry, and the immense number of visitors to the historic attractions near Richmond represents a built-in market. Those tourists spend money, and that money means more than increased business in the area; it means increased tax revenues to Richmond and to Virginia. And in addition to its economic potential, the Virginia Transportation Museum could add significantly to our cultural and educational facilities by preserving for all an important part of our common heritage and involving our youth in active awareness of transportation's continuing impact on our lives. Finally, such a facility could play a viable part in the much-proposed Virginia Museum of Science and Industry.

WE HAVE A VALUABLE RESOURCE IN OUR TRANSPORTATION HERITAGE.  
LET US MAKE PROPER USE OF IT, NOW.



Shelley Rolfe's

# BY THE WAY

Richard Lee  
June, 1942

5/3/42

... an hour yesterday morning when half the population of the metropolitan area seemed to be on wheels and on the move, more or less toward a small area of downtown that already was cluttered with trucks, two women and your again rendezvous for a journey into holiday, a quest for a simpler time when the Internal combustion engine was a wonder yet undreamed of.

One of the ladies, one whom I happen to know quite quite well, had announced rather frankly not too long ago that she was planning to embark on a great adventure, the exploration of Richmond, a great part of which, even after all this time still was terra incognita. The week before, the two ladies had gone to Belle Isle and had told a stay-at-home word-of-adventure stories.

Now the target was to be a section of the Kanawha Canal from roughly Ninth Street east. An almost lost section, a section that had figured prominently in the dreams of those who would recreate past glories. A section that has been overwhelmed by civilization, which, perhaps, is not always a good thing.

THE JOUJOU begins at Ninth and Canal streets. We are expected presently by a strong odor of roasting coffee, courtesy of the old mansion plant. While the men attend to a head-bulking monster, is cracking sidewalk to make room for an approach road to the new Ninth Street bridge.

Humans already have been panned on a pier for the new bridge. "Dude," for while. We find a canal rat is not just of the Kanawha and that leads to a Vepco power plant. "Look, a fish," one of the women says with some surprise. She points to a eel.

We are surrounded by railroad tracks, rusted, mangled spikes, dress rubber hose. The arrangement improves dramatically as we approach the Vepco plant. There are carefully manufactured betges and what may be ivy walls across walls. No a man from Vepco saws, he doesn't know what that particular can be called. Possibly simply the Vepco canal.

He tells us that the canal had been used to drive water wheels to make electricity and as recently as the mid-thirties were making electricity this morning. "He says, by more sophisticated methods of course. We will see and see a streamway, water is just a streamway, water is just a streamway."

THE FLOOD what must be the Kanawha Canal, just before it is dammed up by plants and warehouses and railroad tracks. Two ducks swim serenely around a band and are lost in low-hanging reed branches.

"Look," one of the women says—she is also a bird watcher— "Gardens." It is a small, quiet scene—never mind the murkiness of the water—and somehow seems out of place.

The march to the east continues. Men and boys carrying fishing equipment begin to cross a southern Railway bridge. We discover a dilapidated corrugated tin hut. Inside are six equally dilapidated sofa, empty wine bottle and a box labeled "Sport shops." Someone's abandoned? "Frostbank weekend retreat?"

We dodge more trucks and railroad tracks and at Ninth and Dock streets we encounter the canal again. It recedes eastward and that is an area that in the neighborhood long ago was abuzz with commerce and odors of wealth and the West.

We are standing where in the once upon a time was located the office of a canal barge company. "Boats leave daily. All freight insured," reports a handbill that has been preserved by a historian. For the 3 1/2 day trip to Lynchburg.

The spruce of magnificent Victorian Main Street Station can be dimly seen. The more plainly seen buildings are less grand, of a turn-of-the-century industrial, institutional genre.

A sign on the side of one building proclaims a beer that has not been brewed in 30 years. We must stop briefly to reward rounds of empty beer and soft drink cans. "Look, a cedar waxwing," says the bird watcher. The bird is quickly lost in Fifth Street traffic.

THE PART of our expedition was to be the redoubt that Reynolds Metals Co. is building to its 12th Street aluminum plant. Thus is where there still is a trace of canal, perhaps the last in the area. A construction foreman talks of a building that will span the canal and of plans to restore the 12th Street lock. We study the lock and marvel at its staunch granite walls. "Look there's water." It is murky like the soil.

The 12th Street lock is one of five that were located between Ninth and 12th streets, and now, most are memorials, a canal, non than, naturally, prompts traditionalists to roll with indignation.

At 10th Street, one of the women discovers what she thinks may be a lock. It is a dry gulch, a trash heap, which, among other things, contains an abandoned Christmas tree. "With fluorescent lights," she says. No one can think of anything appropriate to say. Finally one of us says "wouldn't it be ironic if the canal had been paved over to provide being location for parking lots that surrounded us."

Well, we were born at Ninth and Canal, and on a parking lot an elderly attendant is negotiating. The late 1920s when Ninth Street crossed the canal via a plank bridge. "The old Ninth Street bridge." There had been fewer cars then, of course, and yet, for the long lot had displaced the canal, and that is over the top. The clearly to properties, and there the two women drive up the cars and buses.

