## **United States Department of the Interior** National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

Type all entries	s—complete applicat	le sections		
1. Nan	1e			
historic	Branford Electr	ic Railway		
and/or common	Branford Trolley	Museum		
2. Loca	ation			
street & number		eet, East Haven t h, Branford	co Court Street,	N/A not for publication
city, town Eas	t Haven, Branford	N/A_ vicinity	of	
state Con	necticut (	code <sup>09</sup> c	county New Haven	code 009
3. Clas	sification			
Category  _x_ district  building(s)  structure  site  object	Ownership public _x_ private both Public Acquisition in process being considered	Status _X_ occupied unoccupied work in prog Accessible _x_ yes: restrict yes: unrestr	gress educational entertainmen ted government	_x_ museum park private residence it religious scientific transportation other:
4. Own	er of Prop	erty		
name	Branford Electr	ic Railway Associ	lates	
street & number	P.O. Box 457	<b>.</b>		
city, town	Short Beach	N/A vicinity	of sta	ite CT
5. Loca	ation of Le	gal Descri	ption	,
courthouse, regis	stry of deeds, etc. Bra	unford Town Clerk		
street & number		9 Main Street		
ity, town	Rne	nford		A- 000
		<del></del>	ng Surveys	te CT
State D	egister of Histor	3 - D1		
	egister of histor	tc Flaces has th	nis property been determined	l eligible?yes _Xno
late 1981			federal _X	state county local
lepository for sur	rvey records Connec	ticut Historical	Commission	
ity, town	Hartfo	rd	sta	te CT

### 7. Description

Condition  — excellent — deteriorated —x good — ruins — fair — unexposed	Check one unaltered _X_ altered	Check one  X original site  moved date
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#### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Branford Electric Railway is a trolley museum which operates over nearly two miles of an old trolley right-of-way. The line begins at the end of River Street, East Haven, with the rails right in the middle of the pavement. The entrance to the museum is there, with a one-story brick building resembling a small station housing the museum shop and small exhibits; it was built in 1960 by the widow of Frank Sprague as a memorial to her husband, the pioneer inventor responsible for electric traction motors. Crossing Farm River on a wooden trestle, the line runs past seven large pole-frame and corrugated metal buildings, all built since 1947, which house the museum's rolling stock and shops. For the rest of its length the line is bordered by salt marsh on the west, where the river can be seen, and woodland to the east. A country lane, Farm River Road, intersects the track near the car barns. The line is carried over an old narrow-gauge right-of-way which once served a nearby quarry on an I-beam bridge set into old cut-stone abutments. It crosses Stoney Creek on a wooden trestle and terminates just short of Court Street, Branford, in the village of Short Beach.

The line was originally constructed in 1901 to connect Branford center and Short Beach with the East Haven Green, the eastern terminus of the New Haven streetcar system. The physical structure of the line was extensively rebuilt following the 1938 hurricane, and since the trolley museum took over operation of the line in 1947, the two wooden trestles and many poles and ties have been replaced as part of the ongoing maintenance program. Only one track of the original double-tracked line has been retained. One pair of cut-stone bridge abutments and a short section of 70 lb. rail are believed to date from the original construction, whereas most of the rail is 80 lb. weight and dates from the rebuilding of 1938.

The collection of the trolley museum has a heavy concentration in Connecticut Company cars. These have the distinctive bright yellow livery with red lettering and include both streetcars and heavier-built cars used in intervillage service; cars of wooden and steel construction; open cars, convertibles, and closed cars; and even an elaborate parlor car used by the Company's directors. Most have been restored to their original appearance and operating condition, a task involving extensive repair, reconstruction of deteriorated parts, and refinishing of interior and exterior surfaces. A few cars, such as parlor car #500, arrived in nearly perfect condition. Another large group of the museum's holdings includes both streetcars and rapid transit cars from the New York City area. Finally, there is a scattering from other cities, including one very old car from Providence, Rhode Island, and assorted maintenance-of-way equipment.

The nominated property includes both the right of way and the museum collection. Adjacent parcels of woods and salt marsh owned by the museum are not included, but they provide an appropriate physical setting, one largely unchanged since the line's opening. The Sprague building and numerous car barns, while not of historical significance (all having been built since the museum took over the line), are essential to the museum's operation and vital to the preservation of the collection. Therefore, they are considered part of the nominated property.

In the roster of equipment which follows, the collection is described in greater detail.

In addition to inventing the motors, Sprague devised the "wheelbarrow mount," a suspended motor mount which nevertheless kept the gears in close alignment; without this system, trolleys either had rigid trucks or poor gear mseh. He also developed the first successful urban streetcar system in Richmond, Virginia in 1888.

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#### ROSTER OF EQUIPMENT

#### PASSENGER STREETCARS

			***	
Numbers*	Former Owners	Builder	Date	Car Typeł
3	Metropolitan St. Ry.	Stephenson	1893	4-wheel closed horsecar
9	Montreal & Southern Counties Ry.	Grand Trunk Ry.		
11 (100)	Toronto Trans. Comm.	Toronto Trans. Comm.	1933	4-wheel open horsecar
34	Lynchburg Ry.; Five-Mile Beach Elec. Ry.	Jackson & Sharp	1899	st 9-bench open
61 (1567)	Rhode Island Co.; United Elec. Rys.	J. M. Jones	1893	st deck-roof closed car
71	Goteborg Sparvagar	A.S.E.A.	1912	st deck-roof steel
116	Cincinnati & L. Erie; Cedar Rapids & Iowa Cy.	Cincinnati	1930	dt lightweight interurban
193 (775)	Consolidated; Conn. Co.	Jewett	1904	dt r.rroof wood
220 (33, 275 2780, 20)	, Third Ave. Ry.; Metropolitan St. Ry.	Laclede	-1892	st closed, ex-cable
250	Fairmount & Clarksburg; Monon. W. Penn. Pub. Ser.; City Lines of W. Va.	Jewett ;	1904	dt interurban
316 (1, 489)	Union Ry.; Third Ave. Ry.	American	1895	st closed deck-roof wood
356	Johnstown Trac. Co.	St. Louis	1926	dt lightweight
357	Johnstown Trac. Co.	St. Louis	1926	dt lightweight
401 (923)	Consolidated; Conn. Co.	J. M. Jones	1906	dt 15-bench open
500	Conn. Ry & Lighting; Conn. Co.	J. G. Brill	1904	dt parlor car
614 (302)	Consolidated; Winchester Av.; Conn. Co.	J. G. Brill	1901	dt 15-bench open
629 (4239)	Third Ave. Ry.; Wiener Stadtwerke Verkehrsbetriebe (Vienna City Transit System)	Third Ave. Ry.	1939	dt lightweight
650 (884)	Wash, Ry, & Elec.; Capital Transit	J. G. Brill	1912	dt ctr. entr. semi-convert.
709	Chicago, North Shore & Milwaukee Ry.	Cincinnati	1924	dt heavy interurban
830	Third Ave. Ry.	J. G. Brill	1908	dt deck-roof wood
850	New Orleans Pub. Ser.	Perley A. Thomas	1922	dt arch-roof steel
865 (512)	Consolidated; Conn. Co.	Wason	1905	dt r.rroof wood
884	Third Ave. Ry.	J. G. Brill	1909	dt wood convertible
948	Georgia Power Co.	Cincinnati	1926	dt deck-roof steel
1001	BMT; N.Y. City	St. Louis	1936	single-end PCC
1199 (283)	Conn. Co.	Stephenson		dt r.rroof wood
1330 (554)	Conn. Co.	Osgood Bradley	1910	dt r.rroof wood
1339 (563)	Conn. Co.	Osgood Bradley	1910	dt r.rroof wood
1403	Montreal Tramways; Montreal Trans. Comm.	Ottawa	1914	dt arch-roof
1414 (448)	Conn. Co.	Osgood Bradley	1911	dt 15-bench open
1425 (459)	Conn. Co.	Osgood Bradley		dt 15-bench open
1602 (612)	Conn. Co.	Wason		It deck-roof wood

<sup>\*</sup>former numbers shown in parentheses

f dt = double truck, st = single truck

NPS Form 10-900-a

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#### PASSENGER STREETCARS (Continued)

Numbers*	Former Owners	Builder	Date	Car Typef
1706 (W24)	Toronto Ry.; Toronto Trans. Comm.	Toronto Ry.	1913	st single-end convertible
1792 (9730)	Nassau Elec. R.R.; BMT; N.Y. City	Laclede	1899	dt deck-roof wood
1802	Conn. Co.	Wason	1915	dt arch-roof steel
1911	Conn, Co.	J. G. Brill	1919	dt arch-roof suburban
1972	Montreal Tramways; Montreal Trans. Comm.	Can. Car & Fdry.	1929	dt single-end steel
2001	Montreal Tramways; Montreal Trans, Comm.	Can, Car & Fdry.	1929	dt double-end steel
2350	Conn. Co.	Osgood Bradley	1922	st Birney safety car
2431	Pub. Serv. of. N. J.	Cincinnati	1913	dt single end
2898	Toronto Trans, Comm.	Ottawa	1923	dt single-end Peter Witt
3000	Conn. Co.	Wason	1906	dt Birney safety car
4573	Bklyn. Rapid Transit; BMT; N.Y. City	Laconia	1906	dt deck-roof convertible
5706	Boston Elevated; Metro, Transit Auth,	J. G. Brill	1924	dt arch-roof steel
8111	BMT; N.Y. City	St. Louis	1923	dt arch-roof Peter Witt

#### RAPID TRANSIT CARS

Numbers≆	Former Owners	Builder	Date	Car Type†
G (41)	N. Y. Elevated RR; Interboro; N.Y. City	Gilbert & Bush	1878	money collection car
M-I	N. Y. Elevated RR; Interboro; N.Y. City	Wason	1878	dt flat
M-8	N. Y. Elevated RR; Interboro; N.Y. City	Wason	1878	dt flat
62	Interboro; N.Y. City	Pressed Steel	1906	switching motor
95	Interboro; N.Y. City	Magor	1914	dt covered hopper
197 (167, 324)	Bklyn. Rapid Transit; BMT; N.Y. City	Pullman	1888	elevated psgr trailer
659 (476)	Bklyn, Rapid Transit; BMT; N.Y. City	Jewett	1901	elevated psgr motor
824	Manhattan Ry.; Interboro; N.Y. City	Pullman	1881	elevated instruction car
999	Bklyn. Rapid Transit; BMT; N.Y. City	Bklyn. Hts. RR	1905	elevated instruction car
1227	Bklyn Rapid Transit; BMT; N.Y. City	Osgood Bradley	1903	elevated psgr car
1349	Bklyn Rapid Transit; BMT; N.Y. City	Cincinnati	1905	elevated convertible passenger car
1362	Bklyn Rapid Transit; BMT; N.Y. City	Jewett	1905	elevated convertible passenger car
3344	Interboro; N.Y. City	Wason	1904	private subway car "Mineola"
3662	Interboro; N.Y. City	Amer. Car & Fdry.	1907	subway passenger car
4280	Chgo. Elevated Ry.; Chgo. Rapid Transit; Chgo. Transit Auth.	Cincinnati	1922	elevated psgr car .

<sup>\*</sup>former numbers shown in parentheses

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SERV	CE	CARS	Š

	ODZ.C.	102 0		
Numbers*	Former Owners	Builder	Date	Car Type!
Air Car	Singer	?	?	st wood flat car
"Amy"	Abendroth Foundry	General Electric	1902	4-wheel locomotive
"Brick"	Johnstown Trac. Co.	Johnstown Trac. Co.	1945	st flat
Shunter	Montreal Tramways; Montreal Trans, Comm.	Montreal Tramways	1920	4-wheel shunter (switcher)
W-3	Montreal Tramways; Montreal Trans, Comm.	Differential Steel (now DIFCO)	1929	dt crane
5	Montreal Tramways; Montreal Trans, Comm.	Peckham	1910	dt rotary snow plow
12	Long Island RR	Amer. Car & Fdry.	1927	dt caboose
12 (904)	Utah-Idaho Central; Cornwall St. Ry.	Baldwin- Westinghouse	1917	dt Class B steeple cab frt. locomotive
25	Ottawa Elec. Ry.; Ottawa Transit Comm.	Ottawa	1923	st line maintenance
S-36 (89, 607)	Eastern Mass. St. Ry.; Third Ave. Ry.; Toronto Trans. Comm.	Russell	1920	dt snow sweeper
59	Yonkers RR; Third Ave. Ry.	McGuire- Cummings	1914	st snow sweeper
133	Singer	<b>?</b>	?	dt wood boxcar
0245	Conn. Co.	Russell	1916	dt work car
302	Union Street Ry.	J. M. Jones	1907	dt mail
516	Lehigh & N. Eng. RR	Amer, Car & Fdry.	1914	st caboose
1504	Rhode Island Co.; United Elec. Rys.	Rhode Island Co.	1904	dt emergency
1575	Rhode Island Co.; United Elec. Rys.	Rhode Island Co.	1912	dt work car
3152 (P-8)	Montreal Tramways; Montreal Trans, Comm.; Comwall St. Ry.	Can. Car & Fdry.	1925	dt snow plow
3715 (6028)	United Ry. & Elec.; Balto. Transit Co.	United Ry. & Elec.	1913	dt crane
5002	Montreal Tramways; Montreal Trans, Comm.	Montreal Tramways	1918	dt locomotive
9137 (96)	South Brooklyn Ry.;  N.Y. City—	Middletown	1903	dt rail carrier
9161 (184)	South Brooklyn Ry.; N.Y. City	Baltimore Steel	1904	dt gondola
9421 (171)	South Brooklyn Ry.; N.Y. City	Middletown	1903	dt box freight
9425 (175)	South Brooklyn Ry.; N.Y. City	Middletown	1903	dt box freight
9799 (9. 340, 68)	Nassau Elec. RR; BMT; N.Y. City	Taunton	1898	st wedge plow
9800 (10, 341, 69)	Nassau Elec. RR; BMT; N.Y. City	Taunton	1898	st shear plow
9832 (7)	Bklyn. City RR; BMT; N.Y. City	J. G. Brill	1915	st snow sweeper
GATX 58072	General American	Gen. American	1926	dt tank car
*former_number	ers shown in parentheses	† dt =	= doubl	e truck, st = single truck

\*former numbers shown in parentheses

Cover photo credits: Front: Convertible 4573 in summer operation on our line. by F. Schlegel Back: Open 1425 by J. Stern; 629 by F. Schlegel

### 8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 1800–1899X 1900–	agriculture architecture	heck and justify below  community planning landscape architectu conservation law economics literature education military engineering music exploration/settlement philosophy industry politics/government invention	re religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	N/A	Builder/Architect N/A	

#### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Branford Electric Railway brings to life that unique form of transportation, the trolley, which had a large impact on people's lives at the start of this century. Both the physical structure itself and the museum collection are significant, and together constitute an entity which illustrates an important part of early 20th-century history (Criterion A). Moreover, the museum has special meaning for the area, since the bulk of the collection are cars from Connecticut, with another large group representing transit in the greater New York City region.

The line itself is the only remaining long and substantially intact trolley line in the state, and it has been in continual operation since its opening on July 31, 1900. Built by the Branford Electric Railway Company, the line soon became part of the Consolidated Railway, the trolley monopoly set up by the New Haven Railroad. The Consolidated company, later called the Connecticut Company, controlled nearly all the traction lines in the state, and later, most of the bus service as well. In 1947, the company decided to discontinue the New Haven streetcars, the last system still operating, and the Branford line was sold to the two-year-old museum group. Over the course of thirty years, they have extensively repaired the large portion of the line which they operate as a ride for museum patrons. Nevertheless, much of the rail, pole system, ties, and the stone abutments are authentic historical remains. Moreover, the land adjoining the track has changed little: the woods and salt marches are and likely will remain undeveloped, providing an appropriate setting for the line. Although it tied into a streetcar system at one end, the Branford line was like most Connecticut trolley routes: it connected small villages and ran through the countryside.

Some of the cars in the museum's collection were actually used on this line. Car #865, a wooden enclosed car, was built in 1905 specifically for this line. Car #1911, a steel semi-convertible built in 1919, originally ran in Waterbury but was subsequently transferred to Branford, where it ran in the 1930s. The company's parlor car, #500, carried the directors and officers of the company on visits to all their lines, and may be assumed to have seen occasional service over these tracks. Many of the other Connecticut cars which were based in New Haven were probably used occasionally over the Branford line, especially in excursion service to Stony Point. The Branford Museum is unusual among trolley museums in that it has maintained an authentic trolley line in operating condition, using in part rolling stock which historically ran on its track.<sup>2</sup>

The extent of the museum's collection goes beyond the Branford line, however, and includes cars which recall the trolley's pervasive influence throughout all of early 20th-century Connecticut. Streetcars had an important effect on the state's cities: greater personal mobility within the downtown area, access to jobs at a distance from one's home, and easy trips to parks and cemeteries at the city's outskirts. As an example of the popularity of the streetcars, the Willimantic Traction Company is typical: serving a city of about 4,000 people and operating with only one mile of track along Main Street, the system carried in its first year over a half million fares! The museum

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Significance (continued):

preserves from this era many of New Haven's streetcars, including some of the famous open cars which carried football fans to the Yale Bowl; the only surviving car (#1802) which operated all its life in the Hartford system; and cars from Waterbury, Stamford and Torrington (#'s 1333, 1199, & 3000).

Many of Connecticut's trolleys ran far into the countryside, connecting small farming and manufacturing centers to each other, and ultimately, to the urban systems. In contrast to the streetcars, these lines had stations, ran on schedules, and made only limited stops. Villages as small as Central Village (Plainfield), South Coventry, and Somers were connected into this network. Car #2350, for example, ran between the city of Middletown and Highland, a farming village of about a dozen houses and one large resort hotel (there were mineral springs nearby). The brass fittings, hardwood seats, stained glass windows, and bright yellow paint recall what was the high pint of public transportation in Connecticut.

Several cars in the collection have individual significance which transcends their simply serving as representative trolleys. Parlor car #500, for example, is in near original condition: its plush seats, servant bells, onboard kitchen, and elaborate neo-Classical woodwork suggest the upper-class lifestyle of public transportation's private owners. Similarly appointed is car #3344, the Mineola, the private car of New York subway entrepreneur August Belmont. Car #61, from Providence, Rhode Island, is notable as one of the earliest trolleys built as an electric car (as opposed to converted horsecars like #3); it has the curved sides, clerestory roof, single-truck design, and decorative elements like red stained glass which typify the first generation of streetcars. At the opposite end of the continuum is #1001, significant as the first PCC (Presidents' Conference Committee) car to be built. The PCC was a streamlined, state-of-the-art trolley; its 1936 design was sponsored by a consortium of traction company presidents who hoped to reverse their declining patronage with a better trolley. Although PCC cars can be seen running in many cities today, car #1001 is notable as the first of that successful design.

Connecticut's other trolley museum at Warehouse Point, has an extremely valuable collection of trolleys and electric locomotives, including of the first built by General Electric, the Ponemah "Black Maria" (1895), and it operates over an old trolley right-of-way. However, all their track and structures were built anew when the museum was set up, and they do not have any of the cars built for their line.

The Arden Trolley Museum, Washington, Pennsylvania, was also taken over as an operating line, but it is not as early as Branford's. The Media SEPTA line out of Philadelphia is still operated as public transit; it too is somewhat later than Branford.

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#### United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

### **National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form**

Branford Electric Railway (Branford Trolley Museum) Item number

Continuation sheet Branford, CT

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#### UTM References:

- A: 18/678960/4571250
- B: 18/679000/4571210
- C: 18/678980/4571180
- D:- 18/679050/4571100
- E: 18/679100/4570920
- F:-18/679300/4570730
- G: 18/679580/4570240
- H: 18/679760/4570320
- I: 18/679860/4570300
- J: 18/679950/4570180
- K: 18/680120/4569650
- L: 18/680080/4569640
- M: 18/679890/4570240
- N: 18/679800/4570280
- 0: 18/679600/4570210
- P: 18/679500/4570250
- Q: 18/679250/4570720
- R: 18/679020/4570860
- S: 18/679000/4571160
- T: 18/678950/4571170



























