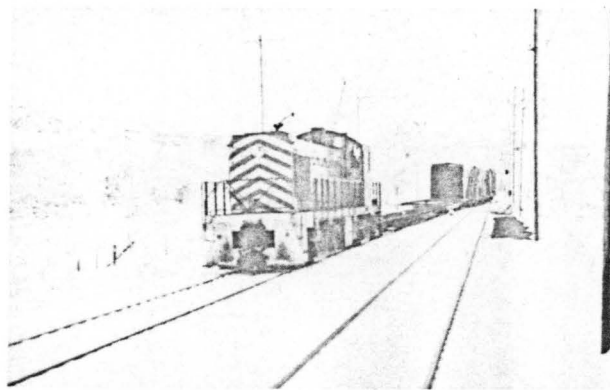


Bamberger Railroad



Fred Fellow

"This is the Place", Brigham Young had said in making his historic choice in 1847. The Salt Lake Valley, a narrow strip of fertile land bounded by the Great Salt Lake and the Wasatch Range of the Rockies, would become the spiritual, commercial and historical center of Utah. Here was a fruited plain in every sense of the anthem. The valley cities of Ogden and Salt Lake City grew large, while rich farms and a number of towns developed in the intervening fields. The bustling valley strip, aided by Western irrigation methods, produced fruit and vegetables in rewarding abundance.

This was the railroad: the Bamberger Electric, its first-class line a series of tangents, double-tracked and well ballasted, stretching down the valley through an avenue of poles and against the Wasatch backdrop. The Bamberger was largely a one-man creation and most assuredly a one-family operation. Built between Salt Lake City and Ogden as a local answer to big-road indifference, it gave the steam lines a literal run for their money and became one of the proudest Western interurbans of all time. But time is a key word in the history of interurbans. As the valley began to change to fewer farms and more homes and the bus, truck and auto arrived, the time came when the Bamberger line was no longer the way to ship or travel. It made a distinguished war record; but then passengers and wires passed, the Bamberger family ended a 65-year tenure of management, and finally, last New Year's, liquidation gave to its old adversaries the road's best parts.

* * *

WITH the interurban net that used to serve northern Utah, family identifications were always strong. Emigration Canyon R.R., the earliest of Utah electrics, was headed by a Young. The ubiquitous Eccles family (whose far-reaching investments once included Oregon's narrow-gauge Sumpter Valley Ry.), were identified with the Utah-Idaho Central. Salt Lake & Utah, presided over by the Orems and Curtises, was known as the "Orem Line".

In Bamberger R.R., keystone of the Utah interurban network, was vested the strongest family tie of all. Given a distinguished Utah name after it had already become popularly known as the "Bamber-

ger Electric", this line—as much as any railroad ever has—owed its inception, building and success to one man: Simon Bamberger.

Key dates in the early life of Simon Bamberger coincide with two of the most important events in Utah history. He was born in Hesse in 1847—the same year that the first Mormons came to the shores of the Great Salt Lake. Emigrating to the U.S. as a boy, Simon Bamberger became a resident of Utah in 1869, the year that transcontinental rails were joined at Promontory.

Railroading, in fact, early captured his imagination, and by 1881 he was "managing director" of the 3-foot-gauge San Pete Valley R.R., a British-owned mining line running out of Nephi in central Utah. It was the beginning of a meritorious career that would lead to the building of another, important local rail line; to success in the coal business and as a resort operator; and ultimately to high state office.

When Bamberger, a resident of Salt Lake City, first began talking about a railroad of local character from Salt Lake City to Ogden, there were already two rail lines between those points. The first was the "Mormon railroad", built under the personal direction of Brigham Young after the transcontinental route through Ogden had bypassed Salt Lake City, opened in 1870 as the Utah Central, and later taken over by Union Pacific's Oregon Short Line. The other was the Denver & Rio Grande system's new narrow-gauge, completed to Ogden in 1883—and widened out in 1890.

However early Simon Bamberger may have visualized a third line to connect Salt Lake City and Ogden, his initial accomplishment in the valley hardly implied as much. Great Salt Lake & Hot Springs Ry., chartered in November, 1890, and begun in January, 1891, was at first no more than its name suggested: a little line from Salt Lake City to the resort at Beck's Hot Springs on the city's edge, 4 miles north. Union Pacific and the Rio Grande may even have looked over its Baldwin dummy engines and old elevated cars (the cars were said to have come from Brooklyn, N. Y.) and dismissed the line as a serious competitor. But the

Great Salt Lake & Hot Springs was a sound beginning in the right direction, and even before it laid a length of 30-pound steel, Bamberger had drawn up plans for a 12-mile extension up the valley to Farmington, with a 3-mile branch to the Jordan River.

The dummies, already busy hauling pleasure-bent Salt Lakers to the baths and race course at Beck's, were running 5 miles farther to Bountiful by 1892. At this point Bamberger and his associates unveiled further plans: they would build all the way to Ogden, and more. The main line would extend from Salt Lake City via Weber Canyon to mines east of the Wasatch Range at Coalville, 68 miles; a 10-mile branch would serve Ogden.

Plans languished until 1894, when the dummy line added another two miles from Bountiful to Centerville. The following year it achieved Farmington—and ran out of money. Sold at foreclosure, the road was succeeded by Salt Lake & Ogden Ry. in October, 1896, in a business climate favorable to new financing; Utah had just become the 45th state.

The new company was further aided by a revenue-maker of its own creation: a great amusement park, Lagoon, which was built just north of Farmington. With an eye on the contemporary park boom and recollections of all that Beck's Hot Springs had meant to the line, Salt Lake & Ogden spared no expense in developing Lagoon. Known for its floral displays, fast dirt track and variety of amusement attractions, the park—leased to private operators in later years—was to remain an important source of traffic to the end of passenger days.

After several years' delay, SL&O resumed laying track toward Ogden in 1902. Completing only a few miles each year, the road reached Kaysville in 1903, Layton in 1904, Sunset in 1905, and finally—in 1908—the outskirts of Ogden. There was talk of a further extension up the Ogden River Canyon to Idlewild, a hotel owned by Simon Bamberger; but the local trolley company, Ogden Rapid Transit, already had laid track in that direction. As for the proposed line to Coalville, which would have made Ogden a branch terminus, Union Pacific's transcontinental route already occupied Weber Canyon. Essentially the route of SL&O was complete—and the only branch, a 2-mile line from St. Joseph Station (North Salt Lake) to a brickyard, seems to have been abandoned at an early date.

But to Simon Bamberger, his railroad was far from complete, although it was already a long way from the era of the dummies. Heavier engines—4-4-0's and 4-6-0's—had been added to the roster, and the original 30-pound rail had given way to steel as heavy as 60-pound. From the very beginning, the main line had been graded expensively, with easy curves. Gradients had been strictly held to 1.1 percent.

SL&O already possessed the general characteristics of a middleweight interurban—without the cars and wires. It linked two large urban areas

and enjoyed a heavy volume of local passengers. It also passed directly through the streets of such interlying towns as Bountiful, Centerville, Farmington, Kaysville and Layton—which was, then, an advantage, and adaptable for electric cars.*

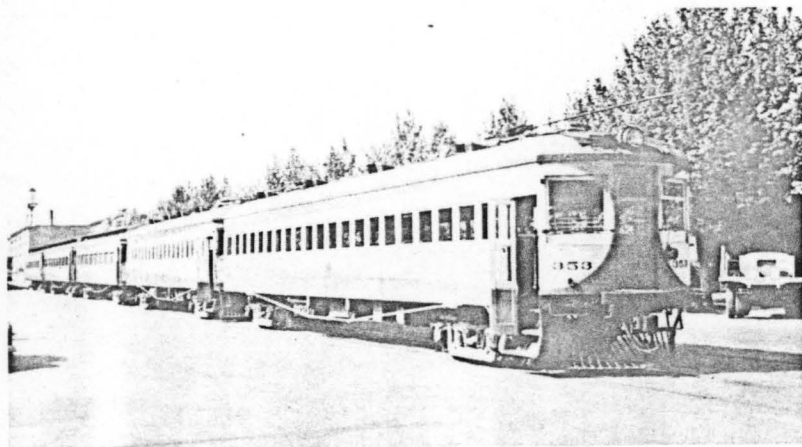
Furthermore, SL&O's terminals at Third West Street, Salt Lake City, and 31st Street, Ogden, both were poorly located outside the central district—particularly the Ogden terminal. With its own trolleys the road could reach better locations via city streets.

Bamberger called in traction experts from Chicago, and electrification was on. The job was finished in May, 1910, when ten speedy Jewett interurban combines of classic design, ordered the previous year, were placed in service. At first electric current was purchased; later SL&O opened an impressive generating plant, driven by a pair of Corliss engines, at Lagoon.

In the old days it had taken steam 40 minutes just to go from Salt Lake City to Lagoon; now the electric trains matched or bettered UP and D&RG running times by clipping off the 36 miles between Salt Lake City and Ogden in one hour flat, despite frequent stops and several miles of street running. SL&O's new schedule quickly produced the slogan: "Every Hour, On The Hour, In An Hour". Motormen wound up the arch-windowed speedsters to an easy 70 m.p.h. between stations; and in later years some would declare that a deadhead train once flashed over the 36-mile double-track line in 32 minutes.

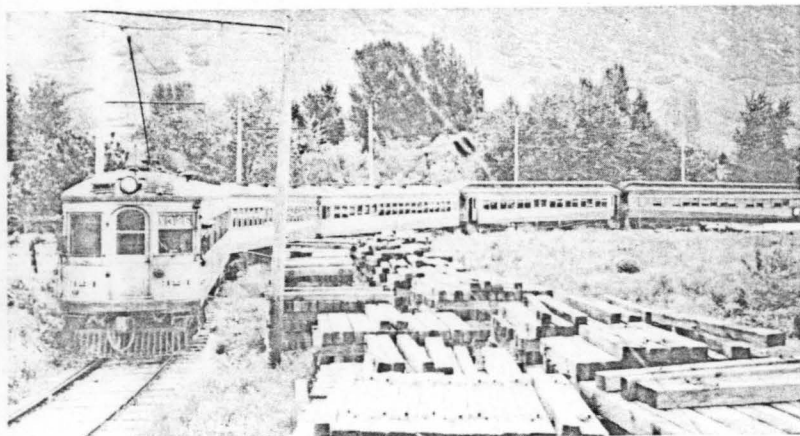
At the time of SL&O's transformation, UP's Oregon Short Line offered some ten daily round trips—all locals—between the two cities. D&RG ran six, of which only two were locals. UP changed some trains to expresses and tried getting one over the road in 45 minutes, but eventually gave up the struggle and reduced its service. Later the rivalry would take other forms.

**If a local example of an electric line were wanted, there was—besides the Salt Lake City and Ogden streetcars—the remarkable Emigration Canyon R.R., built by the Mormon Church and electrified in 1907. From Salt Lake City the Emigration Canyon's 14-mile line climbed eastward through the same defile that led the first Mormon settlers down to the chosen plain. By means of three switchbacks (and one stretch of 8 percent grade!) it gained the heights, 3,000 feet above Salt Lake City, from which Brigham Young had gazed upon the land and pronounced those immortal four words. Although the Emigration Canyon was intended to be only a quarry road, events took a predictable course, and its spectacular climb to the historic outlook was soon being enjoyed by wide-eyed passengers. The line was destined to fold in 1916. But at the time that Simon Bamberger began to think about electrifying his own railroad, the Emigration Canyon was in its prime and most surely an object of keen interest to the builder of the Salt Lake & Ogden—who also went to look at the alternating-current line of Colorado's Denver & Interurban R.R. and came back sold on direct current.*

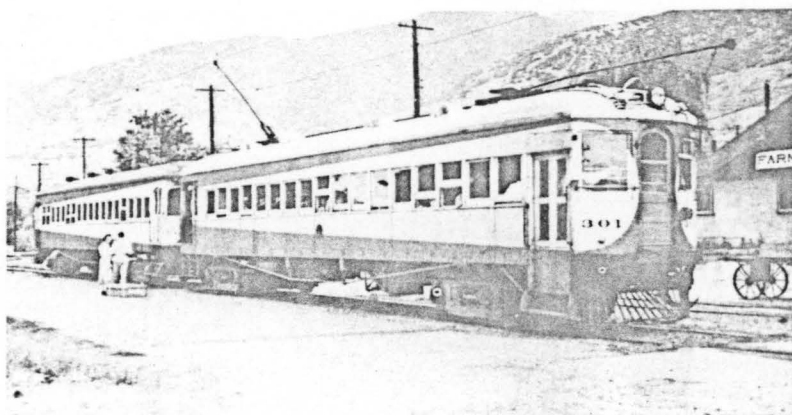
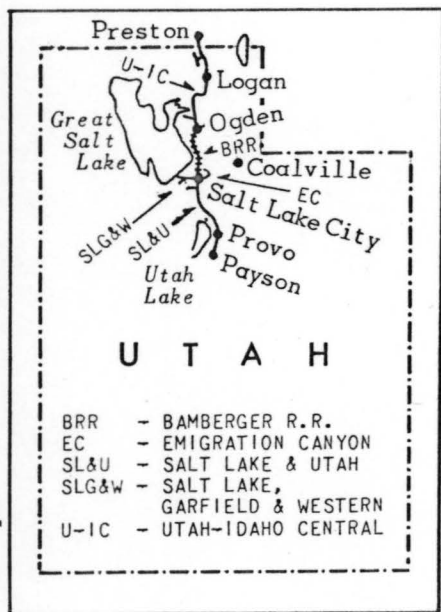


↑ Lagoon train—two motors, three trailers—rolls down street in Salt Lake City. Lead motor 353 was one of road's biggest cars, former open trailers

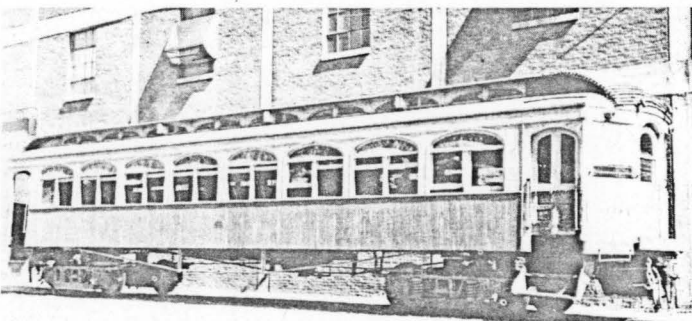
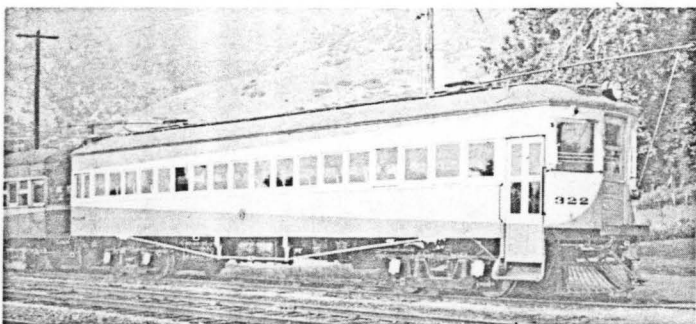
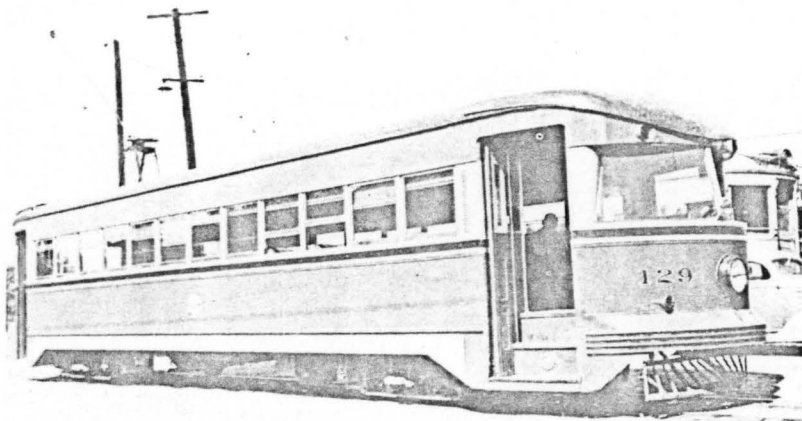
↓ Motorman carefully backs five-car special train through loop at Lagoon. Park outlived railroad, is still a major amusement attraction of valley area



Photographs by Fred Fellow



On last day of regular passenger service—Sept. 6, 1952--motor 301 and trailer 434 halt at Farmington



Passenger Cars

← Brill "Bullets" were best cars Bamberger ever had, outperformed most contemporary designs. Here is No. 129 just after entering Bamberger R.R. service in 1939

★ Attractively styled 322, rebuilt with dropped ceiling, shows what road's shops could do. This car, one of original clerestory-roof Jewetts of 1910, headed last regular passenger trip in 1952

★ Amid elaborate rebuilding and renumbering of older cars, only tired old Niles trailer 401 retained her original number and appearance down through the years



Photographs — Car 129, R. J. Anderson. All others, Fred Fellow

In fact, 1912 saw completion of a competing streetcar line from Salt Lake City to the north end of Centerville by the UP-controlled Utah Light & Ry. Co. Faced with a new challenge, Bamberger's motormen just grinned and leaned a little harder into their already wide-open controllers. Utah Light's slow route was no match for the interurban, particularly during winter storms. Thoughts of extending the Centerville trolley to Ogden were forgotten, and in 1926 the line was abandoned.

The maiden year of the hapless streetcar, 1912, also marked the start of the second of Utah's interurban big four. Salt Lake & Utah R.R. began to build south from Salt Lake City, switching to electric traction after a brief flirtation with Hall-Scott gas cars. It reached Provo in 1914 and Payson in 1916. With the opening of a branch to Magna the following year, the 75-mile SL&U system was complete.

Meanwhile, in 1914, Ogden, Logan & Idaho Ry. — later Utah-Idaho Central R.R. — had consolidated

the Logan and Ogden local trolleys and proceeded to construct a main line all the way from Ogden to Preston, Idaho, 95 miles. With Bamberger's line as the central link, the three companies now comprised a 197-mile north-south interurban trunk between Preston and Payson, plus branches. In 1917 came the last of the big four; Salt Lake, Garfield & Western Ry., a 17-mile steam road from Salt Lake City to Saltair Beach, was converted to electricity.

The advent of interurban allies eased more than one problem for SL&O. Soon after reaching Ogden, the Bamberger road had extended its line through city streets to a downtown terminal near 25th Street. In 1916 SL&O and Ogden, Logan & Idaho arranged to share the terminal, and OL&I provided a station building. The two companies also published joint passenger schedules.

Earlier, in November, 1913, the Bamberger road and Salt Lake & Utah together had formed Salt Lake Terminal Co. to build and maintain passenger and freight terminal facilities at Salt Lake City. The

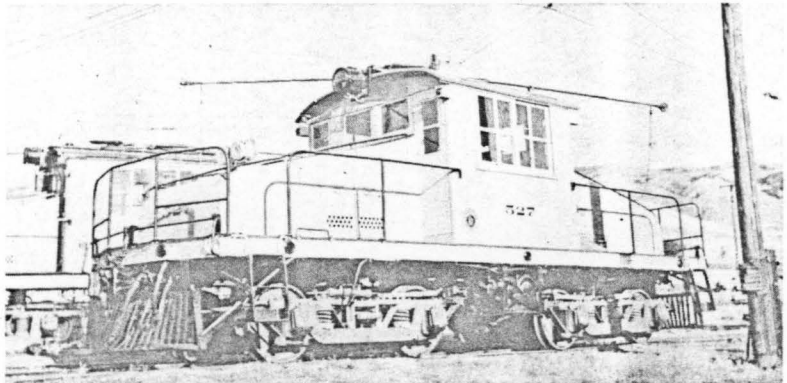
Freight Service

→ Electric locomotive 550 (ex-San Diego Electric Ry.) gets traction on string of boxcars and reefers at Centerville in 1949

→ Completely revamped to GE patterns, 527 was the Bamberger's original electric engine "A", turned out by McGuire-Cummings. Four electrics were used Baldwins bought during war; the other five were assembled, scratch-built or rebuilt by the Bamberger itself

→ Crew shows off road-switcher 570 in days before she was repowered. P.S.: 570 is getting help with those 25 old troop Pullmans from a juice hog on the other end

SPECTRUM: In painting its cars the Bamberger really flipped the color charts. Pullman green, yellow, olive green and cream, burnt orange, orange and cream are among color schemes recalled. Diesels were orange with some blue trim; but during last two years No. 802 (which went to Yreka Western R.R.) was painted dead white with black underframe and rails, nicknamed "The Ghost"



downtown freight trackage would prove of great value in years to come. Inducements offered by the Mormon Church assured the location of the passenger terminal at the southwest corner of Temple Square, in the heart of the city and opposite the famed Mormon Temple. Not until 1923 was a permanent station building erected; but by costs and standards of the Twenties, its \$350,000 two-story brick-and-concrete structure was a substantial achievement. The large, columned building contained a high-ceiling waiting room, company offices, stores and a restaurant.

Further benefits accrued to the Bamberger road through joint traffic arrangements among the interurbans. Although SL&O operated at 750 volts d.c. while SL&U and OL&I took their current from the wire at 1200 volts, the latter were able to use Bamberger current. OL&I - U-IC trains from the north sometimes were run through to Salt Lake City. At other times SL&U or SL&O electric

locomotives hauled special trains from the south, with up to ten trailers, direct to Lagoon. Salt Lake, Garfield & Western, another 1200-volt operation, was equipped to run its cars into the joint Salt Lake City terminal, but eventually decided not to adopt that practice.

Against a background of steam road hostility, the interurbans collaborated extensively on local freight service and freely interchanged their own cars, including some equipment that could not be used on other railroads. In its prime the Bamberger line owned about 75 freight cars. For years it served as overhead carrier for coal traffic moving from SL&U to points on U-IC.

The development of an interurban empire, so dependent upon the strength and location of Simon Bamberger's road, further enhanced his company's prestige. As the major electric, SL&O set the standards and set them high.

Initially, however, the road was forced to trail some of its old steam coaches behind the ten new motor combines to handle a rapidly growing passenger traffic. Use of the old cars imposed speed restrictions, and they were not in keeping with new standards. But more interurban passenger equipment was added, until by 1916 the road had 10 Jewett and eight Niles motor combines, nine Niles closed trailers (including three former motors from Washington, Baltimore & Annapolis Ry.) and six open-side center-aisle excursion trailers by Jewett. The last-named cars were built for Lagoon service and sometimes found their way onto SL&U and U-IC rails during rather a brief existence as opens.

SL&O's splendidly appointed Pullman-green cars bore the company name and the slogan "Lagoon Route", but valley people were already calling it the "Bamberger Electric". For printed advertising the road early adopted a circular emblem including a clockface, the "Every Hour, On The Hour, In An Hour" boast, and the popular name. A formal change of title soon followed; in August, 1917, SL&O became Bamberger Electric R.R.

Its further progress was temporarily retarded by disaster. In May, 1918, a half-million-dollar fire gutted the carbarn at Ogden, heavily damaging 21 cars—and seriously crippling operations already complicated by a war boom. As a result of the blaze, all maintenance activity was shifted to facilities at North Salt Lake. Eventually most of the cars were rebuilt amid extensive re-numbering. The six open trailers had been caught in the fire, and after three were first restored as opens and three as closed trailers, all finally emerged as the 350-series closed motors. Always in demand because of their high seating capacity, the arch-roofed former opens also set the pattern for revamping the original clerestory roofs of certain older cars.

Bamberger freight business, meanwhile, had been a long time coming of age. The first electric locomotive, a little McGuire-Cummings unit designated "A", did not arrive until the year after electrification was completed. Steam power, however, disappeared as the interurban empire freight business developed and the line added more electric engines. The rules of interstate commerce then current tended to discourage interline tariffs between standard railroads and traction lines. Progress in that direction was often blocked by big-road officials who bristled at the very word "interurban". And the Bamberger's steam neighbors were still smarting from its casual conquest of the passenger trade.

The unhappy advent of World War I had a happier effect on the Bamberger's fortunes, and the road did yeoman service during the emergency. Some of the old steam trailers worked out their last years in war service. Not only did passenger business soar, but the United States Railroad Administration characteristically swept aside established routing concepts to give the electric some inter-

line freight traffic. Undoubtedly the big factor here was the building of a U. S. Government munitions storage depot and arsenal 7.5 miles south of Ogden which was served exclusively by the Bamberger. By 1924 the interurban could no longer be ignored. That year Union Pacific joined in publication of the first complete set of through tariffs, and other steam roads soon followed.

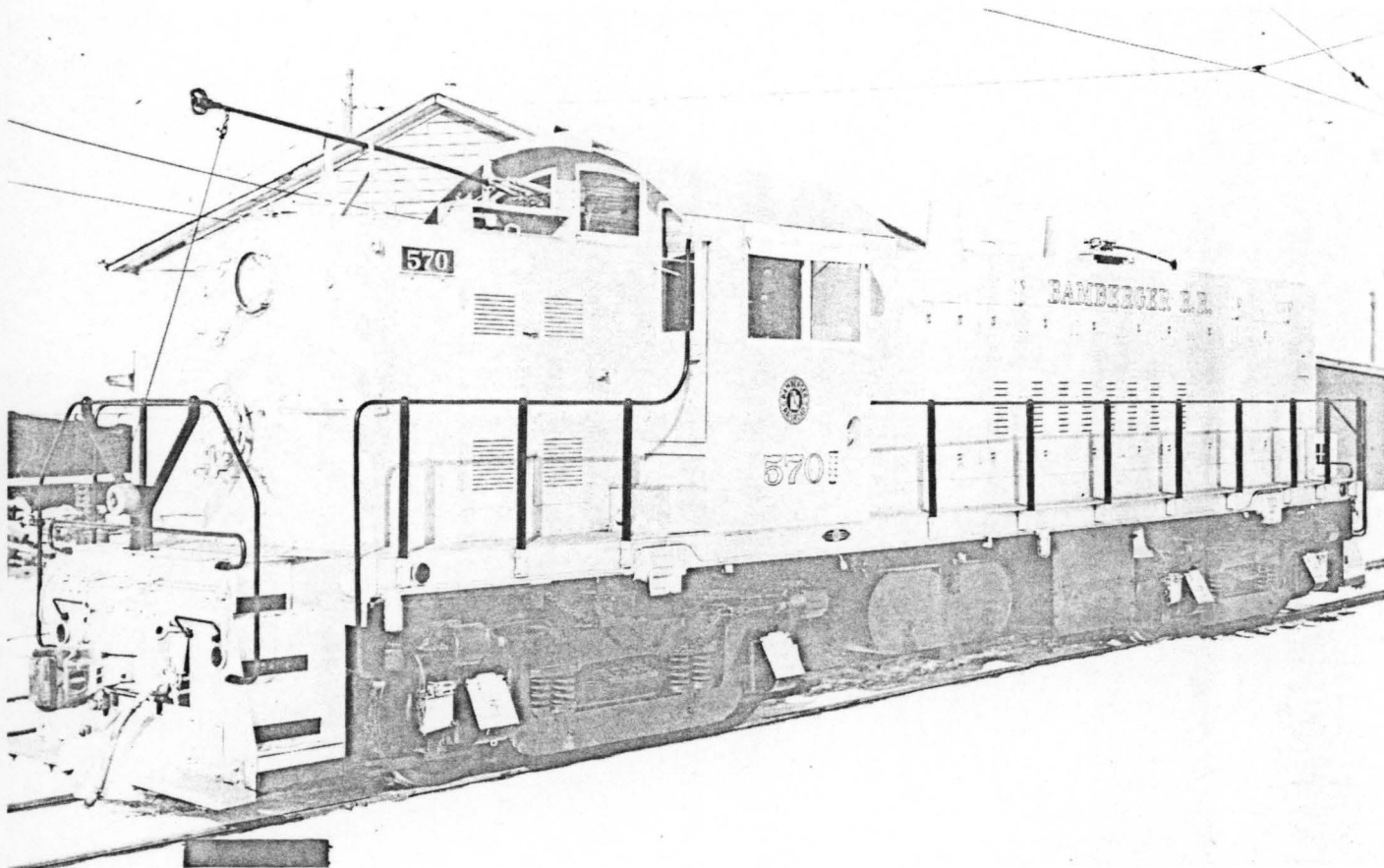
His business and civic achievements of half-a-century had brought wealth and distinction to Simon Bamberger. At a time when members of his faith did not often attain high political office, he served as a state senator and in 1917 became Governor of Utah. Prior to Simon's election as governor, his son Julian M. (who had risen to new responsibilities after the untimely passing of an elder brother, Sidney) took over as president of the railroad. The senior Bamberger continued as board chairman and treasurer until his death in October, 1926.

The life of Simon Bamberger had coincided with an era of development in which the growth of the West and the brief fling of the interurban were pertinent areas. Now the railroad he had built was beginning to pass some of those unpleasant mile-posts in the chronology of an interurban.

Although Bamberger Electric R.R. continued to be a valuable community asset, it was starting to show signs of becoming a financial liability. Not among those many electrics that fell by the rural wayside for sheer want of business along a route of dubious prospect, the Utah road nevertheless exhibited other symptoms of malaise interurban. At that time even the biggest and best of systems were buckling under the weight of properties costly to build and ever more expensive to operate. Many electrics offered generously low fares which custom forbade raising. Then as now, railroading was by general rule a volume business with critical margins. In a climate of rising costs, the bus, truck and auto could easily take away just enough traffic from even a short, busy operation like the Bamberger to drop profits into deficits.

There were other troubles. Severe floods in 1923 did extensive damage to the Bamberger. But the line bounced back. In 1927 it undertook new measures to fight competition and rising costs. Cars were inexpensively revamped and a new yellow paint scheme adopted as part of a switch to money-saving one-man operation. A bus subsidiary, Bamberger Transportation Co., was formed to operate a supplementary service along the railroad and forestall other bus competition.

Still, conditions were steadily worsening. Capitalization and indebtedness of Bamberger Electric R.R. involved one million dollars in common stock, a half-million in preferred, and a million-and-a-half in first-mortgage bonds. The road paid its last common dividend in 1919 and passed dividends on preferred after 1924. The original mortgage debt limit was reached in the early Twenties with issuance of the last \$75,000 in authorized bonds.



In 1927, when the bus line was set up and cars were rebuilt for one-man operation, the company floated a second mortgage for \$150,000. Until 1929 the Bamberger's losses were spotty and manageable, but the stock market crash and ensuing depression brought real difficulties.

In January, 1933, the road slipped into receivership. With maturity but a year away, it was unable to meet first-mortgage interest payments. Two receivers were appointed: Julian Bamberger, representing management and the majority stock interests, and Lahman V. Bower for the Chicago bank acting as bond trustee.

By 1938 the outlook had improved sufficiently so that the first-mortgage group could put forward a plan of reorganization. Bamberger Electric was sold at foreclosure to a reorganization manager in October, 1938, and final I.C.C. approval for the new company, named Bamberger R.R., was granted in June, 1939. The reorganization wiped out all but the first-mortgage interests, who received stock and bonds in the new company; but Julian Bamberger was given a one-third stock interest in lieu of cash due for personal services, and as inducement to stay with the road.

Over and above a general improvement in business conditions, Bamberger R.R. expected to save \$9,000 a year by removing some double track made surplus by a less frequent service and the partial installation of automatic block signals. Original-

"SWOOSER?" Road-switcher 570 (Alco-GE #70820, 1943) was packed off to La Grange for upgrading in 1951, came back half Alco, half EMD

ly the line had been equipped with contactor-actuated Nachod signals—which, as old-time motormen know, posed inconveniences and leaned heavily on the human factor.

The Bamberger was also cheered by development of an air base near the government arsenal. And in passenger operations, it anticipated pleased customers and a yearly power saving of about \$6,000 through a sensational find in used equipment—five fast interurban lightweights, the unforgettable "Bullet" cars.

World War II brought an unprecedented traffic to the newly reorganized line. The figures are impressive: in the biggest freight year (1942) business was more than ten times the 1939 figure; passenger revenue, at its wartime peak (1945), was almost five times that of 1939.

At the beginning of the war the Bamberger still had all but seven of its original passenger cars, and it put every one of them back into service. The Office of Defense Transportation ordered the road to drop bus runs for the duration and sell the highway vehicles. The teeming Ogden Ordnance

Depot, as the arsenal was now called, demanded special workers' runs. Multi-car trains came back to the Bamberger, which had been running mostly single units since the depression. The Maritime Commission soon provided five large de-motored cars from Southern Pacific's lately defunct Bay Area system, Interurban Electric Ry., for use as arsenal trailers. Six New York, Westchester & Boston Ry. cars were also on hand for a time, but they were sent elsewhere. A Bamberger locomotive or motor hauled trains of up to four trailers from Ogden to the arsenal gate, where an Army locomotive took over.

Wartime demands produced other unusual sights. In 1941-42 the Bamberger brought its roster of electric engines to nine with the purchase of four units from San Diego Electric Ry., Wisconsin Light & Power Co. and Great Northern's Spokane, Coeur d'Alene & Palouse Ry. The road also improved its electrical generating, rectifying and sub-station equipment. But bigger and more flexible motive power was needed. Recently Alco-GE had built the world's first standard diesel road-switchers for several companies. Although the Army was taking some of the 1000-h.p. units from their owners for use in Iran, the Bamberger was able to obtain priority for a new one, complete with heating boiler, to handle its troop trains. A second road-switcher was promised, but never arrived. However, No. 570—fitted with trolley poles to throw the Nachod signals—carried the overload well. Long strings of troop Pullmans passed over the line, sometimes behind steam locomotives of connecting roads. On one occasion, with some awkwardness and with help from electric power, the Bamberger moved an 80-car freight train. Military rail equipment was serviced at the arsenal, adding to the road's burdens.

Its last great task completed with the end of the war, the Utah interurban empire began to come apart. Salt Lake & Utah and Utah-Idaho Central—like the Bamberger—had been reorganized just before the world conflict. Now both faltered. SL&U was abandoned in March, 1946; U-IC followed in February, 1947. The Bamberger took over parts of their trackage at Ogden and Salt Lake City.

Temporarily, Bamberger R.R. was in a favorable position. Wartime earnings had enabled the road to pay dividends and to retire its entire funded debt. Immediately after the war it speeded up three of the biggest passenger cars, laid some new rail, placed more new block signals and installed some automatic crossing gates. In 1947 the company opened a compact, modern passenger depot in Ogden and paid surprised employees a 6 percent bonus.

Salt Lake Terminal Co., the joint property of SL&U and the Bamberger, had gone into receivership in December, 1944; but in December, 1946, after SL&U's abandonment, the Bamberger was able to buy the terminal concern, which was succeeded by Salt Lake Rail & Bus Terminal Co. Shortly afterward the terminal building was sold to a bus subsidiary of the Union Pacific. The structure was altered extensively, with the Bamberger staying as a tenant.

Bamberger Transportation bus service had been resumed since the war, and there began a gradual shift from rail to bus operation. During and even before the war emergency, freight revenue had far exceeded passenger revenue. Now passenger earnings dropped ever lower. The company began to weigh the cost of maintaining its passenger rail plant against the advantages of bus operation and reduced rail facilities.

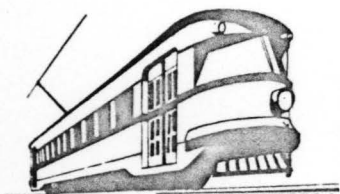
Surprisingly enough, the Brill Bullets were one discouragement. Popular though they were on one-hour "Flyer" trips, the Bullets often stood idle because of their low capacity, and the road considered making them over for MU operation. In 1949, and again in 1950, the fast cars were out of service for several months because of snow and ice which threatened to damage their low-hung motors. It gets cold in the Salt Lake Valley. Winter clouds, tickled by the cool mountain peaks, sometimes loose heavy snows on the area, and every Bamberger car wore a plop.

Diesel 570, the maid-of-all-work bought during the war, proved to be the mainstay of freight operations. Well worn from eight years of constant use, the 1000-h.p. unit was sent to La Grange in 1951 for upgrading with a new 1200-h.p. EMD plant. The standard EMD hood applied to the Alco-built road-switcher made her unusual among her class, if not unique.

Now began a pattern of events clearly shaping the future. On Mar. 11, 1952, fire destroyed a portion of the North Salt Lake shops. A few weeks later, pleading inability to keep up its cars with the facilities remaining, the Bamberger annulled 17 trains, leaving only three round trips—which handled express—on the timecard. The next month a vehement debate raged before the Public Service Commission of Utah. A number of riders protested the new schedule; inevitably, some questioned the seriousness of the maintenance problem. Late in April, 1952, the Commission told the Bamberger to restore two commuter trips, but the other discontinued runs remained bus.

That same month the road ordered two 800-h.p. switchers from EMD to effect dieselization of freight service. (Salt Lake, Garfield & Western, the only other surviving Utah interurban, had switched to diesel power two months before.) The new units arrived in July, and the Bamberger again went before the P.S.C., this time with the avowed intention of doing away with all regular passenger service plus poles and wires—and there were reports that the track would be abandoned from Hill Air Force Base to Salt Lake City. Admittedly the future of the interurban was questionable, and the Commission gave its approval for cessation of passenger service. At 5:05 p.m. on Sept. 6, 1952, cars 322 and 436 left Salt Lake City on the last regular run. The arsenal train was discontinued a few weeks later.

Electric equipment was sold or scrapped (except for line car 05, which remained until early this year). Julian Bamberger took steps to preserve one



The Bullets

In 1931 a vision took form at the J. G. Brill Co. car plant in Philadelphia. Its realization was to be attributed largely to Dr. Thomas Conway, who was rebuilding a suburban electric, Philadelphia & Western Ry., along radical lines. Deep into the bus age the electric railway car industry was beginning a last pitch for its product; in a few years the new research would help to build the first Presidents' Conference Committee streamliner. For Philadelphia & Western, Brill turned out ten blunt-nosed "Bullet" cars—high-level, high-speed, highly sophisticated, agelessly styled.

The excitement over the P&W units of 1931 was background for completion the next year of five Bullet adaptations—low-floor interurbans for New York's Fonda, Johnstown & Gloversville R.R. The FJ&G cars set new standards for speed and comfort on the Schenectady - Gloversville run, but condemnation of a bridge in 1938 ended their usefulness and brought about abandonment of FJ&G's electric division.

Here it was that the Bamberger found them in the hands of a finance company. The Bullets, then among the finest cars available anywhere, were brought to Utah early in 1939. North Salt Lake shopmen could only marvel at their features: magnetic track brakes (in addition to air), field-shunt wiring for fast stepping, and such interior fittings as indirect lighting, bucket-type leather air-cushion seats and a lavatory (which was removed by the Bamberger to provide much-needed extra seating capacity).

of the original Jewetts, No. 403, which was later taken over by a prominent collector of Utah historical material, Horace Sorensen, and is now at a museum in Salt Lake City. Trailer 400 went to the Bay Area Electric Railroad Association in California, while locomotives 550 and 551 were purchased by Cedar Rapids & Iowa City Ry. Sold for housing at \$500 apiece, the Bullet bodies may still be seen in the area. The six large one-time opens and two other cars were kept for awhile, but the road never fulfilled plans to use them on summer runs to Lagoon behind a diesel.

The Bamberger's net income had dipped to \$88,165 in 1952, the last year of electric operation. In 1953, thanks to a large increase in freight revenue and somewhat lower operating costs, the road cleared \$156,765. During 1954-55 earnings declined, but the company remained in the black. In August, 1956, Julian Bamberger retired from the management after a half-century of service, and joined with members of his family (who together owned about two-thirds of the capital stock) and other stockholders to sell a 95 percent interest to Texas investors.

The new owners, Lee Aiken of Corpus Christi and The Murmanill Corp. of Dallas, did not breathe new life into Bamberger R.R. Aiken became president and Murmanill's G. C. Mann was elected board chairman. The road completed 1956 with a net of \$17,009—saved from a deficit only by non-operating income—and in December, 1957, with publication of recession-year totals reflecting a 12-month loss of \$62,242 just a few days away, Murmanill acquired the Aiken interest.

Thereafter plans for liquidation of the property appeared to be of prime concern. Rumors that most of the line would be abandoned and the remainder sold began to circulate early in 1958.

That February the Bamberger sold one of the 800-h.p. diesels, No. 802, to Yreka Western R.R. in California. Acquisition of the entire road had already been proposed in turn to Western Pacific, Southern Pacific, Union Pacific and Denver & Rio Grande Western. But the lengthy, intermediate portion of the line was relatively unproductive, sapped the strength of the operation as a whole, and duplicated UP-D&RGW facilities.

Successful liquidation obviously hinged on abandonment of the 25-mile stretch from the outskirts of Salt Lake City to Hill Air Force Base and sale of the rest; the Salt Lake City switching tracks and the line from Ogden to Hill not only were too important to be abandoned, but would command a good price. Tentative agreements were reached for sale of the Salt Lake City trackage to D&RGW and the Ogden - Hill segment to UP. In May, 1958, the entire plan was laid before the I.C.C.

The Bamberger had little trouble making its case. Traffic over the entire line had declined steadily. To economize, the road argued, it had taken up most of the remaining second track in 1953 and pulled out a number of passing tracks in 1957. Main line freight service had been cut from two round trips daily to one job six days a week. The Salt Lake City switcher now worked two shifts only three days of the week and one shift the rest of the time; a single crew called for Sundays performed the road work and all switching. During the last year track repairs had been kept at a minimum, and considerable deferred maintenance had accumulated on the entire property.

Meanwhile, the Bamberger indicated, a shift to urbanization in the valley and mounting truck competition had nullified the value of the intermediate mileage. Refusal of connections to allow the road to participate in "fabrication in transit"

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through rates had cost it several potential new customers and much of the Hill Air Force Base traffic. The moving of Ogden Ordnance Depot operations to Tooele Ordnance Depot at Tooele, Utah, early in 1956 also had affected business. Between Hill and the limits of Salt Lake City industrial trackage at 15th North Street, only half-a-dozen customers required private sidings. In 1957 more than half the carloads handled on the segment were spotted on team tracks—which could as easily have been those of UP or D&RGW, whose lines at no point were more than a mile away. That year carloads originating or terminating on the segment (principally lumber, coal, automobiles, onions, cherries, apricots, potatoes and other products of agriculture) amounted to 492, a small portion of the Bamberger's total business of 9,107 carloads. The once-important overhead traffic, gone with the interurban empire, now amounted to just a few cars a year handled in connection with Salt Lake, Garfield & Western.

If more testimony were required, towns along the way—Bountiful, Farmington, Clearfield, North Salt Lake—were on record as favoring the removal of track from their streets and adaptation of certain railroad property to their own purposes. Some of the communities had been urging relocation of the tracks for years. Grimly appropriate was the state highway department's wish to use part of the right-of-way for the Federal Interstate Expressway from Salt Lake City to Ogden and, parenthetically, to avoid spending close to one million dollars for three overpasses. One of the Bamberger's more important customers, an onion shipper, faced eviction from a Bamberger-owned warehouse near Roy which stood in the path of the expressway.

In June and August, while the I.C.C. case was in progress, D&RGW and UP cemented their intentions by signing contracts to buy the Salt Lake City and Hill - Ogden segments for \$500,000 each. In point of total trackage, D&RGW's acquisition (6.7 miles) was smaller than UP's (12.8 miles). But the network of industrial tracks inherited by D&RGW, tapping a large number of businesses in the heart of Salt Lake City, had been the Bamberger's pride. That the road's most valuable mileage commanded a total payment of one million dollars from old rivals was perhaps the best measure of its achievements.

Soon enough came the last formalities. On Nov. 25, 1958, the I.C.C. approved the abandonment and sales, and on December 31st diesel No. 601 left Salt Lake City on the final run. Doughty road-switcher 570 was still around, having survived hard use and a 1956 collision-and-fire involving a gasoline truck. It was appropriate that 570 should take over the train at North Salt Lake and complete the run to Ogden, stopping at towns along the way for brief farewell ceremonies. A few hours later people would be ushering in the New Year to the strains of "Auld Lang Syne", and for those with sentimental or career attachments to Bamberger R.R., the words would have a special meaning.

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NEWSFRONTS

The Dispatcher's Table

This issue is of a special aspect in that it is given over to an outstanding electric line, Utah's Bamberger R.R.—dieselized a few years ago and recently liquidated. Each year sees the abandonment of several short-lines, and this magazine's function is very largely historical; so, if we seem to devote a great amount of space to corporate obituaries, it's not with the intent of sounding a dirge for an industry that shows every sign of being long-lived.

The story of the Bamberger has been well told before; it is our opportunity to tell it to the end for the first time.

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