

Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee Railroad #606

Builder: Cincinnati Car Co., Winton Place, Cincinnati, Ohio

Date: 5 January 1923

Lot #: 2620

Group #: 230

Type: Tower Car

Modifications – North Shore Line: Changed from 2 to 4 Motor Car and Installed High-Speed Gearing¹

Modifications – Chicago Transit Authority: Rebuilt for Restricted Clearances

Condition: Complete Car

Out-of-Service: 26 November 1977, Unexplained Fire

Provenance: Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee Railroad; Chicago Transit Authority; Indiana Transportation Museum, Noblesville

Purchased: 12 May 2018

Price: \$3,500

Removal: From Indiana Transportation Museum: 12 May 2018

Carbody Removed to Murphysboro, Illinois; trucks and mechanical equipment to 515 Sheridan

Status: On Hand

Intended Use: Restore as Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee Railroad #606

Justification: Line maintenance is a constant task for electric railways. What Americans once did for work is often now done for recreation (think hunting as a need to work for food v. hunting for recreation). Interpreting electric railway practices will require hands willing to do work for recreation to illustrate how overhead trolley contact wire is maintained.

¹ AFE 4500, 31 August 1944; work begun 1 November 1944; turned over to service 2 March 1945.

Conclusion

Tower car #606 is the only extant Insull-era tower car from the Insull Group's vast holdings. Preserving tower car #606 is useful both for interpretation of the demanding work endemic to railroading and actual maintenance of an operating railway.



Nearly new Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee Railroad (CNS&M) tower car #606 at Highwood, Illinois, 10 May 1923. Tower car #606 was unique in interurban railroading as a purpose-built car; all other tower cars were home-built. Tower car #606 served CNS&M for just short of 40 years until abandonment on 21 January 1963.



Nearing the end of its service on CNS&M, the line crew is at work at Mundelein, Illinois, on 10 October 1962. The movable platform is necessary when working on adjacent tracks.



Rebuilt by the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) in 1964, tower car #S-606 is posed at McCormick Boulevard in Skokie on its inaugural run. While owned by CTA, tower car #S-606 served its original CNS&M home trackage in Skokie, as well the former Milwaukee Road Wilmette Branch freight and passenger trackage.



Many museum visitors will recognize tower car #606 for what it is at its best – an eight-wheel man-cave. Work benches, parts bins, tools, and bits of wire fill the cramped interior. The men who worked in and on tower car #606 on CNS&M and CTA took pride in their work to be certain, but the Friday paycheck was most important. Today, men and women gather at railway museums to do this same hard work for recreation.