



When the Trolley Came to Town

In 1896, the electric trolley made its debut in Westport. For its inaugural ride, a large host of visiting agricultural enthusiasts from the county's Pomona Grange would take the new electric trolley from the train station up Riverside Avenue to National Hall where they were scheduled to meet. Large crowds of people lined the way on Riverside and the Post Road, some even watching from the windows of National Hall, excited to see the new cars which they had heard so much about. The time for the train to arrive in the station came and the trolley was expected any minute ... for nearly an hour. Then, just as all seemed to be at a loss, raucous jeers and laughter erupted from the windows of National Hall and the furthest reaches of the crowd. Instead, jingling up the track, came the old horse-drawn trolley, or Tunerville as it was called, with George "Pop" Mills at the reins. He guided the trolley full of grangers up the track to their destination and the crowds laughed and clapped. The electricity for the tracks had failed.

The electricity was restored later that day, but not before the large crowds that had lined the streets to see it had dispersed. The electricity for the trolley was provided locally by the Post Paper Mill on Sylvan Road operated by Robert W. Post. In those early days, it had frequent failures to provide electricity, but none so memorable as that failed maiden voyage.