

Halton's Radial Railway

No job is too big or too small for members of the Halton County Radial Railway.

There are about 300 of them with their eyes and ears open to find old electric rail cars and their latest acquisition is a Hamilton street car they're taking down and rebuilding a barn to get. The old car has been a tool shed in a farmer's barn outside Hamilton for a number of years and the barn was built right around it. The farmer agreed to let the railwaymen have the car if they left him a whole barn.

This rolling museum is in Nassagaweya (now Milton) just south of Rockwood on the Guelph Line. It has 24 electric railway cars from all over Ontario and Quebec, some rescued from the scrap dealer and others retrieved from such things as storing sailboat masts. One was even used as a home near Hillsburgh.

There are line cars, flat cars, double-end cars, a crane car, and a number of other names that boggle the mind of someone new to the railway business.

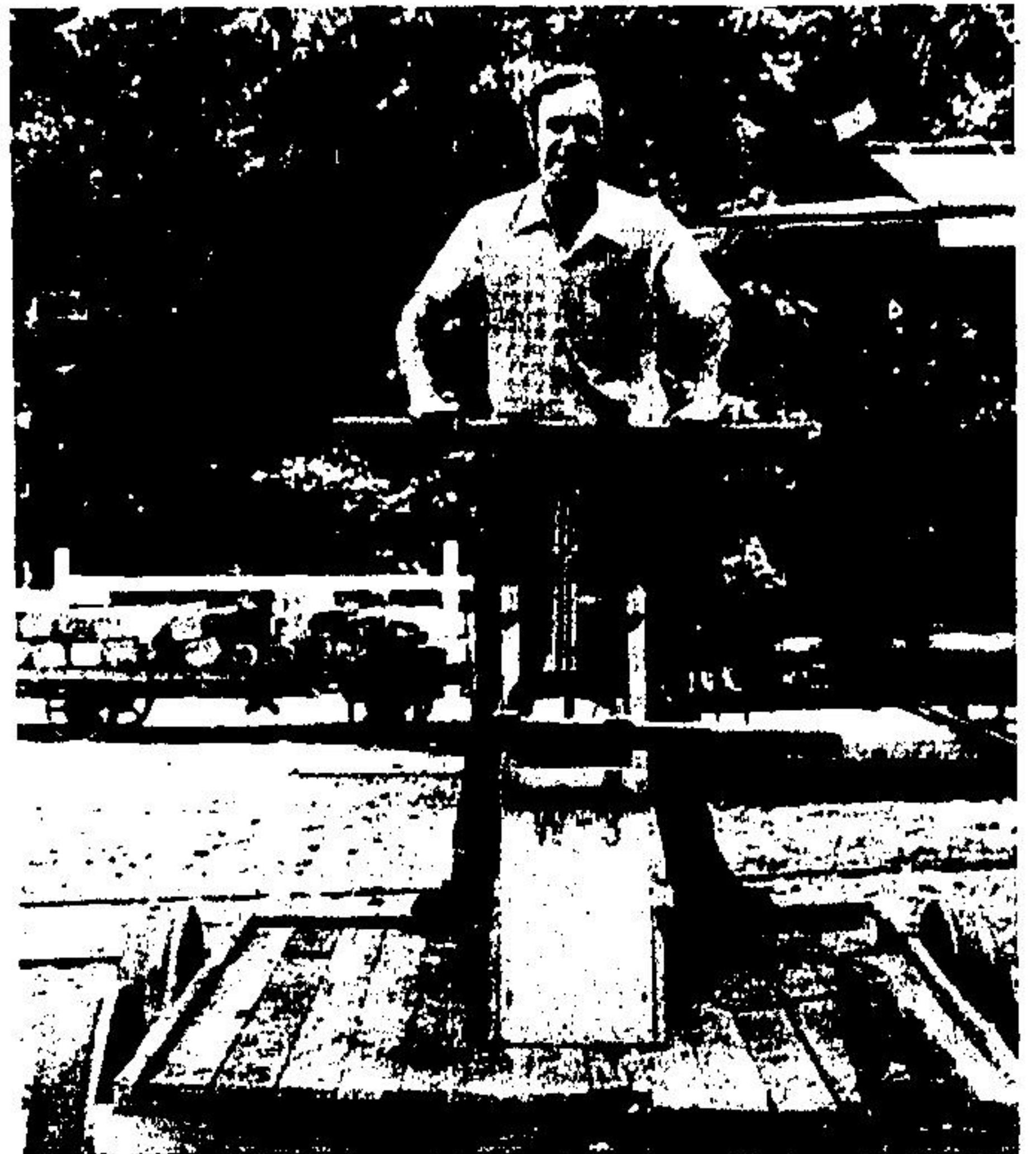
But the museum members know and call them all by number, just like old friends. They can tell you when and where a car was

built, where it was used and for how long. Older members are apt to tell you about just how wild a ride it used to be going down Hog's Hollow in one of the Toronto cars before the first world war.

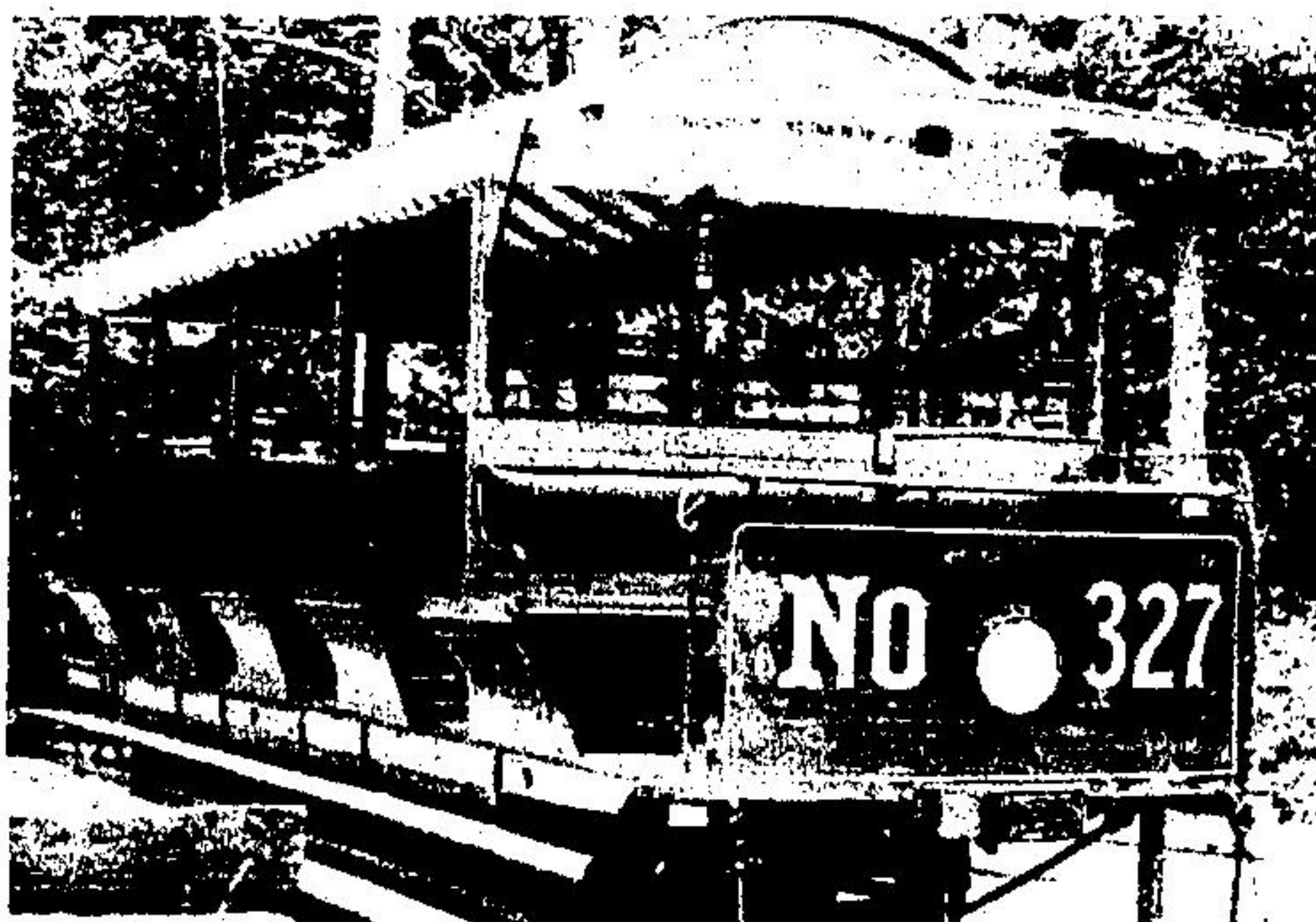
Each vehicle is representative of technological advancements in the car-building art, president Bob Johns points out, and is restored as close to mint condition as is possible by members. The museum is a non-profit association run by its members simply because they love electric railroads and hate to see them die.

The group, now celebrating its 20th anniversary, supports itself entirely from admission fees, gift shop proceeds and donations. "We're a great bunch of dollar stretchers here," says Bill Houston, "we can make one go about three worth."

The time and talents of members is used for everything from moving the old Rockwood CNR station to the museum's 58 acres, to repairing the mile of track they are hoping to add to. If a museum grant from the Secretary of State is approved in the new year, the members will be able to begin work on a new car house to keep the humidity from burning out the motors.



MUSEUM MEMBER John Ogilvie of Brantford demonstrates how a little muscle power moves a handcar along. When the same model is run by gas, rather than elbow grease, it's called a jigger.



THE OLDEST CAR at the museum is No. 327, built in 1893 and used in Toronto until 1915. It may be the only one of its kind still in operation, since its manufacture ended before the turn of the century.



INSIDE THE STATION Bill Houston sells tickets to passengers. The station was the 1912 CNR station formerly at Rockwood, and the inside wickets are ones the TTC stopped using in the 1920's.



DAVID JOHNS, son of the museum president, helps out on weekends by taking tickets on the mile ride. Passengers board at the station, ride to the end of the line where they make a stopover at the car house, and return on the next trip back.