

Cable Car's Last Trip

CABLE CAR NO. 5 was shabby indeed. She'd been stripped of her seats, headlights, and even her musical bell. Her faded gold-and-red paint was peeling.

Built around 1890, the one-time queen of San Francisco's Presidio and California line had survived the earthquake of 1906, the horseless carriage, and two world wars. Now she was up for auction.

For the past few years San Francisco has been steadily eliminating its gay cable cars; buses are more efficient. Where once a maze of cable existed, now only 10 miles of track and 17 cars remain. Collectors are picking up the sidetracked hill-climbers, paying as much as \$3,000 apiece.

Old No. 5 went on the auction block along with five sleek jobs. The well-groomed cables each went for around \$2,000. Finally, officials opened the lone bid on No. 5. It was for \$51 submitted by Bill McCready, a Forest Grove, Ore., lumberman. Other buyers wanted McCready's lowly offer tossed out, but it was ruled legal. So now old No. 5 is being restored to her former grandeur for an honored spot in McCready's transportation museum.



1. Here's a colorful San Francisco cable car in use, turning around at the end of its run.
2. Waving from the window of old No. 5, an Oregonian becomes its first Forest Grove rider.
3. Ready for the 700-mile trip to Oregon. No. 5 is 30 feet long, 8 feet wide, 10 feet high.

by *Ellis Lucia*

