

HEADLIGHTS



Headlights

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January 2006–December 2010

Rails to Rubber to Rails Again

By Edward Ridolph. The street railway industry in the U.S. and Canada entered a precipitous 30-year decline after World War II. Under the banner of "light rail," the industry was reborn in the early 1980s, a renaissance which continues to this day. Part three of Mr. Ridolph's exhaustive 60-year retrospective looks at U.S. systems from Rhode Island to Wisconsin.

(Front Cover) Seattle is all up-to-date electric traction-wise, with both a new light rail line and a modern streetcar route seen here on December 22, 2009. Kinkisharyo-built 907 is inbound from SeaTac Airport at University Street Station in the downtown transit tunnel shared with King County Metro buses. Seattle's summary begins on page 46.

DOUGLAS DANIELS PHOTO

(Back Cover) Seattle's South Lake Union Streetcar uses the curb lanes along Westlake Avenue to connect downtown with the rapidly redeveloping South Lake Union area. Here, inbound Czech Inekon-built car 302 (the Orange car) waits at Virginia Street for one of Seattle's ubiquitous trolleybuses to pass on September 14, 2009.

JOHN PAPPAS PHOTO

(Right) The Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light operated a rather varied interurban and streetcar system which lasted through most of the 1950s. The last line to be converted was the 10-Wells, which made use of this high bridge between 38th and 44th Street. Car 940 traverses the span in the late 1940s. Milwaukee's summary begins on page 69.

JOHN STERN PHOTO



Part 3:

Rhode Island— Wisconsin



Rhode Island

Providence

UNITED ELECTRIC RAILWAYS went into business in 1921, following the RHODE ISLAND CO., a New Haven Railroad subsidiary which went into receivership in 1918, after 12 years in the electric railway business. Electric cars began service in Providence in 1892, and cable cars ran from 1890 to 1895. The various roads were consolidated into the UNION RAILROAD during the 1890s. The UER was another major New England system, with more than 1300 cars and 400 miles of city and interurban track in Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts, as well as a substantial freight business. The company began operating buses in

1922 and trolley buses in Pawtucket in 1931, as the trend to rubber tired transit accelerated and the rail system rapidly contracted. Only 48 miles of track remained in service during WWII, and by 1948 only four streetcar lines remained in the once large system. The four lines, Hope, Elm Grove, Butler and Waterman, were all abandoned at the same time, ending rail service in Rhode Island's capital city.

May 15, 1948: Car 2108 made the last run to Swan Point on the Butler line at 3 AM.



United Electric Railways

FRANK MIKLOS COLLECTION

Above, 2175 at the end of the Hope via Tunnel line. 2108 and 2106, right, pass on the lone siding on the Butler Street route. 2030 and traction mates, far right, on Dorrance at Kennedy Plaza.



South Carolina

Spartanburg

PIEDMONT & NORTHERN, which also had a division in North Carolina, operated a larger 100-mile interurban network with a small fleet of heavyweight cars between Spartanburg, Greenville and Greenwood, S.C. Passenger service began between Greenwood and Belton in September 1911 and was soon extended over the entire line. As on the North Carolina division, freight service was the mainstay of the operation and continued long after interurban passenger service ended in 1951.

October 31, 1951: Last P&N passenger run.

Tennessee

Chattanooga

TENNESSEE ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY succeeded the CHATTANOOGA RAILWAY & LIGHT COMPANY in 1922 to become the principal streetcar operator in the city and its suburbs. At its peak in the mid-1920s TEPC ran more than 90 cars over 68 miles of track. The first electric cars ran in 1889, and by 1906 most, but not all, of the various traction companies in the area had been merged into the CHATTANOOGA RAILWAYS. The first bus substitution occurred in 1928, and more of the streetcar system was abandoned during the 1930s. By 1942, when the system was sold to a new operator, SOUTHERN COACH LINES, only



Tennessee Electric Power Company

FRANK MIKLOS COLLECTION

(Above) 138 features a low profile design, a product of the Lightweight Noiseless Car Co. of St. Paul, Minn.

It is seen loading on Market St. at 6th for a trip on Oak, one of Chattanooga's last rail lines.

four rail lines and 20 miles of track remained. The Ridge line was abandoned in 1945, and the Oak and Vance lines went out in September 1946. Streetcars continued to serve the Boyce line until new buses were delivered in April 1947.

April 10, 1947: Car 133 made the last run at 12:40 AM.



Knoxville

KNOXVILLE TRANSIT LINES was the final streetcar operator in the city, which had previously been served by the KNOXVILLE POWER & LIGHT, itself a successor to the KNOXVILLE RAILWAY & LIGHT. Electric cars began running in 1890, and eventually the KR&L ran 125 cars over 55 miles of track. Motor buses, and a few trolley buses, began replacing streetcars in the 1930s, and only six rail lines were in operation during WWII. The Highland, Washington, McCallie Sixth & Yale lines were all replaced with buses during 1946, leaving only the Burlington and Lincoln Park lines to close out streetcar service in Knoxville, which ended with appropriate ceremony and a 12 car parade.

August 1, 1947: Last day of streetcar service in Knoxville.



Knoxville Transit Lines

FRANK MIKLOS COLLECTION

(Left) The Perley A. Thomas Car Works Co. of High Point, N.C. created a version of the lightweight, low profile "master unit" type car, an example of which is seen here on Gay St. in downtown Knoxville.

(Above) 366 leads this procession of Curveside cars lined up in front of the Magnolia barn on the final day of streetcar service.



Madison Street, Then and Now

SPRAGUE LIBRARY (ABOVE) AND JOHN PAPPAS (RIGHT) PHOTOS

(Above) Two views of Madison at Manassas on the east side on April 6, 1947. Both 324 (top) and 327 are destined for downtown on the busy line 2-Fairgrounds. The

wires for the replacement trolley coaches are already in place. About a mile east and six decades removed, Car 452, an ex-Melbourne, Australia W2 class (right) is starting its inbound trip

at Claybrook under heavy duty catenary and on substantial rails, indicative of Memphis' plan to eventually make this into a light rail line, taken September 4, 2007.

Memphis

MEMPHIS STREET RAILWAY was one of the largest streetcar systems in the South, with more than 350 cars and 125 miles of track in service in Memphis and its suburbs during its heyday. Electric cars had run in Memphis since 1891. The MSR was an early convert to the trolley bus, placing the first of these vehicles in service in the 1930s, and as the rail network diminished the trolley bus took over. The rapid conversion of this once large streetcar system to bus left only four rail lines in service by 1947. Route 2 was abandoned in April, and the last streetcars ran on routes 3, 7 and 12 just two months later. In 1993 streetcar service once again returned to the streets of Memphis, serving areas that had not experienced rail service in half a century.

June 14, 1947: Car 306 on Rt. 3/National Ave. made the last streetcar run on the MSR.



New Operations

MEMPHIS AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY, or MATA, opened the MAIN STREET TROLLEY in 1993, partly to help revitalize the downtown area. The 2.5-mile line runs along a pedestrian mall and city streets, serving the central business district. In 1997 the Riverfront Line opened, looping southbound on private right-of-way along the Mississippi River, then north on Main St., passing such attractions as the Pyramid and Mud Island. On March 15, 2004 a third line opened, running east from downtown along Madison Avenue. Service is provided by a mixed fleet of elderly single-truck cars from Oporto, Portugal, and a few other cars of mixed origin, including W2 cars from Melbourne, Australia, and a new conventional car built by Gomaco.

April 29, 1993: Main Street Trolley begins operations.

Texas

Dallas

DALLAS RAILWAY & TERMINAL COMPANY was the principal streetcar operator in the largest electric railway center in Texas. Electric cars first ran in Dallas in 1891, and in 1917 the DALLAS RAILWAY COMPANY, a merger of four operating companies, was formed. The DR&T succeeded the DRC in 1925, and by 1928 the company reported 332 cars and 125 miles of track. Buses first appeared in 1925, and trolley buses later as the rail system gradually declined. In 1945 the DR&T bought 25 PCC cars, but this was simply a stopgap in the ongoing rail to bus program. In 1955 the DR&T was sold to the DALLAS TRANSIT COMPANY. By then, only four streetcar lines, less than 20 miles of track, and 49 cars remained in service. Routes 3/Junius Heights, 10/Sunset, 11/Hampton and 12/Second Ave. were rail operated until the last runs less than a year later. Streetcar service would return to Dallas in 1989 on McKinney Ave., and in June 1997, Light Rail operation began on the new DART system.

January 15, 1956: Car 772 made the last DTC streetcar run on Route 10/Sunset.

TEXAS ELECTRIC RAILWAY was the largest interurban system in the South. Organized in 1917 as a merger of the TEXAS TRACTION and SOUTHERN TRACTION companies, the TE eventually operated some 175 cars over nearly 300 miles of local and interurban track. Freight traffic, however, accounted for over 50% of company revenue. Three principal interurban lines radiated out from Dallas,

going 76 miles north to Denison, 56 miles to Corsicana, and 97 miles south to Waco, the longest interurban run in the South. A somewhat extensive local streetcar service was offered in six on line cities, but other than Waco, all were abandoned by 1932. The Corsicana line was abandoned in 1941, the local line in Waco was sold to another operator in 1946, and the Denison and Waco interurban lines closed out service on the TE two years later.

December 31, 1948: Last day of interurban service on the Waco and Denison lines of the TE.



Dallas Railway and Terminal

JOHN STERN PHOTOS

Images of conventional cars on the Myrtle Line. DR&T 710 (left) rests at the end of the Myrtle line in the late 1940s.

(Above) 723 is inbound on Myrtle at Lawrence in Southeast Dallas. As can be seen, the Myrtle Line was mostly single track.

Both cars in this series were originally built in 1923 in the Peter Witt style. The center doors were removed in the 1930s.





Dallas in the PCC Era

JOHN STERN PHOTOS

624, above, is southbound on line 2 on Colonial at Garden. At left, 617 changes ends at the terminus of the 8-Oak Lawn route in northwest Dallas before a return to downtown and a continuation to Oak Cliff on line 16, with which it is through-routed. With Dallas in the background, 603, right, rolls across the signature Trinity River Bridge en route to Oak Cliff in the late 1940s. The present DART line bridges this watershed a little over a mile further down river.









(Left) PCC 606 heads south on Ervey below Marilla on route 2 with the post WWII downtown skyline as a backdrop.

(Above) 609 is inbound on Cedar Springs Rd. at Turtle Creek Blvd., in a pastoral scene not far from the present day McKinney Avenue barn.

(Following spread) 606 has reached the end of line 2 at Colonial & Emery in S.E. Dallas and awaits its leaving time to return downtown. Rail transit returns to S.E. Dallas in 2010 with the extension of DART's Green Line to Buckner.







New Operations

DALLAS AREA RAPID TRANSIT, known as DART, was organized in 1983, took over DALLAS TRANSIT in 1988, began light rail service in 1996, and now operates three light rail lines. The Red Line runs from Westmoreland to Plano, the Blue Line runs from Ledbetter to Garland and the newest, the Green Line (longest in the U.S. at 24 miles), runs from North Carrollton/Frankford to Buckner. All three lines share common track in downtown Dallas along a transit mall. A 3.5-mile subway, the only subway in Texas, also comprises part of the system. The operating fleet consists of 115 Kinki-Sharyo articulated light rail cars. The original 11-mile system has continually expanded since its opening and now comprises 72 miles, with extensions and a new Orange Line under construction.

June 14, 1996: DART begins operations.



The M-line Streetcar is a historic trolley line operated by the MCKINNEY AVENUE TRANSIT AUTHORITY, known as MATA. It is free to the public, thanks to a joint operating subsidy received from DART and the Uptown Improvement District. Service is provided by a fleet of six cars of mixed origin, including a Brill from Porto, Portugal and a DC Transit PCC. The M-line connects with DART at Cityplace Station on the Red and Blue lines. The downtown end of the line currently terminates at the corner of Ross and St. Paul near the Dallas Museum of Art, but there are plans to extend the M-line further into downtown.

July 22, 1989: M-line Streetcar begins operations.



M-line and DART in Present Day Dallas

JOHN PAPPAS PHOTOS · SEPTEMBER 27, 2005

(Facing page) Former Dallas Railway & Terminal turtle roof 186 pauses at an off-street loading area on McKinney Avenue north of Bowen in May 1990.

The major junction of the Red and Blue lines is at Mockingbird Station, in a deep cut sandwiched between the Central Expressway tunnel portal on the south and the interlocking on the north. The depth of the cut can be seen at left, while a three car train (above),

standard peak consist on the Red Line, negotiates the junction bound for Plano and Parker Road.

(Top) Car 176, the prototype with an added low-floor center section, is southbound as a two car Red Line train.

El Paso

EL PASO CITY LINES was the final operator of the international streetcar line that crossed the border between El Paso and Juárez, Mexico. The EL PASO ELECTRIC RAILWAY began operating electric cars in 1902, and ultimately ran 89 cars over 43 miles of track in El Paso and neighboring Juárez. Buses first operated in 1925, and by 1943, when the system was sold to EPCL, a National City Lines subsidiary, only four rail lines remained. The last two local lines in El Paso, Ft. Bliss and Park, were converted in 1947, leaving

only the 3.2-mile loop line into Juárez. In 1950 EPCL bought 20 PCC cars from San Diego to modernize the line. In 1973, a cross border dispute with Mexican authorities brought a sudden, unexpected end to the international trolley, and the last cars ran to Juárez on July 31. The city of El Paso attempted to run a truncated local service with the PCC cars, but this experiment ended less than a year later.

May 4, 1974: Last day of operation on the El Paso local streetcar loop line.



El Paso City Lines

GERALD L. SQUIER COLLECTION

(Above) The final paint scheme on the PCCs is shown here on 1505, seen backing down San Antonio Street from the car house to the line at Stanton in April 1973.

(Right) 1512 carries the “vegetable salad” scheme used by National City Lines after 1959. It is seen here on Stanton after the turn from San Antonio in 1960.







Juárez, Mex. Welcomes You!

GERALD L. SQUIER COLLECTION

(Left) 1511 wore this one-of-a-kind colorful scheme for most of its career. It is southbound at 6th & Stanton, with three blocks to go before reaching the international border on March 9, 1961. Commercial businesses have replaced everything in the background.

(Above) 1504 has passed the toll booth and is crossing the Rio Grande on the Stanton Bridge on September 9, 1960. El Paso City Lines owned the bridge and their action of firing the toll collectors 13 years later would precipitate the end to North America's last international car line.

Ciudad Juárez today is considered one of the most danegerous cities in the world. The number of drug-related killings in 2008 surpassed 1,600. In contrast, El Paso was recently named America's second-safest city of its size, behind Honolulu, by *Congressional Quarterly*.



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