

HEADLIGHTS



Headlights

The Magazine of Electric Railways

Published since 1939 by the
Electric Railroaders' Association, Inc.
WWW.ERAUSA.ORG

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Volume 70, Number 1-12 Published December 2012

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Contents

January–December 2011

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 four of Mr. Ridolph's exhaustive retrospective looks at systems in Western Canada.

Western Canada

- 4 **British Columbia**
Nelson, Vancouver, Victoria
- 26 **Alberta**
Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge
- 46 **Saskatchewan**
Regina, Saskatoon
- 52 **Manitoba**
Winnipeg

(Cover) Clareview Station is the north end of Edmonton's current one line LRT system, but now a second line is under construction. In April 2009, not long after the south end of the line was extended to South Campus Station, we see 1024 and train laying over before heading to that destination while 1022 serves as a gap train. ETS' 37 Duewag U2 LRVs are presently going through their first major rehab to extend their life by at least 15 years.

ANDRE GRAHL PHOTO

(Right) Edmonton Radial Railway's stand-out facility, the High Level Bridge, is seen here in close-up with the Alberta Legislature Building as a backdrop. Outer tracks hosted streetcars, while the middle track saw CP freight movements. Cars ran wrong-way so that, in an emergency, passengers could be off-loaded toward the middle of the bridge.

JOHN STERN PHOTO



RAILS
TO RUBBER
TO RAILS
AGAIN

Western Canada

British Columbia



Nelson

NELSON MUNICIPAL RAILWAY was a small and somewhat obscure line that opened on Dec. 27, 1899 as the privately owned NELSON STREET RAILWAY, a name which continued to be used under municipal ownership. Service was briefly suspended in 1910, then resumed in 1911 until the city bought the company in 1914. The single three-mile line, making a loop through town and ending at Lakeside Park, was served by three cars throughout its existence.

June 20, 1949: Last day of streetcar operation by the NMR.



New Operations

The NELSON ELECTRIC TRAMWAY is a .75-mile heritage railway which carries tourists along Nelson's waterfront. Operated by the Nelson Electric Tramway Society (NETS), it was the first heritage streetcar line in British Columbia when it opened in 1992. Service is seasonal, starting on Easter weekend and ending on the Canadian Thanksgiving weekend, and uses a pair of restored vintage streetcars.

June 15, 1992: Heritage streetcar line begins operation.

Nelson Electric Tramway

ANDREW GRAHL PHOTOS

(Above) NET car 23 poses in front of the Lyle Ward Memorial Carhouse in June 2009. Car 23 was originally built for Cleveland, Ohio's Forest City Line in 1906 by the

John Stephenson Car Company and acquired by Nelson in 1924.

(Right) Nelson's "Big Orange Bridge" forms the background for this waterfront view of 23 on the north end loop.







Vancouver

BRITISH COLUMBIA ELECTRIC RAILWAY operated one of the largest street railway systems in Canada, with local service in three cities, and interurban lines throughout the region. At its peak the company reported 376 miles of track, equally divided between local and interurban lines, nearly 400 passenger cars, and a large fleet of freight equipment on its various divisions. The first electric cars ran in Vancouver in June 1890, and the first interurban reached New Westminster the following year. In 1910 a 76-mile interurban line, Canada's longest, began operating between Vancouver and Chilliwack.



British Columbia Electric Railway

JOHN STERN PHOTOS • 1949

(Left) BCE 1204 is east-bound on Davie at Seymour. It has come from Granville Street, and will turn south on Richards Street to head for the Kitsilano trestle and

then onto Marpole. The car was built in the company shops in 1903.

(Above) 281 starts its inbound trip on Dunbar just after turning around on the wye at 41st Avenue.

The 'Line 3' in the back window indicator refers to the period when the 7-Dunbar was through-routed with 3-Main.



Vancouver City System

JOHN STERN PHOTOS • 1949

(Left) Car 247 was built in 1912 by J.G. Brill and is operating as a two-man car. It is southbound on the 1 Fairview Outer Belt line, and is seen turning east from Granville onto West Broadway. The 1 Fairview route ran on Broadway, Main, Hastings and Granville, and the opposite direction was referred to as the 1 Fairview Inner.

(Below) 718 is eastbound on West Broadway and will turn north (right in the photo) onto Granville Street, and thence downtown. It started its trip at 41st and Dunbar.



In 1923 BCE placed its first buses in service, and although the New Westminster division was converted in 1937, the company maintained a rail presence by ordering 36 PCC cars. However, a hostile local government and wartime deterioration of the infrastructure forced a streetcar to bus conversion program, which began in earnest in 1947, with the abandonment of the North Vancouver lines. Trolley buses, ultimately the preferred vehicle, appeared in 1948.

By 1955 only one PCC line, Rt. 14/Hastings East, remained in operation in the city. Regular service ended on April 21, 1955, but on April 24 BCE ran 29 PCCs for four hours, affording a last run opportunity for many thousands of people. The Marpole-Steveston interurban, an isolated line south of the city, continued operation as a rail line for four more years. The day after its abandonment, two special trains of two cars each closed out passenger rail service on the BCE. In 1998 a heritage operation, using ex-BCE interurban equipment, began offering a limited service.

February 27, 1958: Last day of regular passenger operation on the Marpole-Steveston line.



New Westminster

JOHN STERN PHOTOS • 1949

(Top) BCE 1226 rolls into the New Westminster BCE interurban terminal, viewed here from the west.

(Left) From the second floor of the terminal building, looking in the opposite direction (west on Columbia) a Central Park Line train, consisting of 1312 and 1316,

approaches the terminal. Car 1312 was previously named Coquitlam.

(Above) 1401 is shown leaving the east end of the terminal building for Chilliwack.



Vancouver Interurban Terminal

JOHN STERN PHOTOS • 1949

(Above top) PCC 428, outbound on Hastings, passes the front of the Interurban Terminal located just west of Carrall Street. This is one of the few PCCs painted in the

new B.C. Electric scheme of cream with a red BCE logo. The building still stands.

(Above bottom) This is what the back of the terminal looked like, with trains staging to take their turns boarding passengers

in the terminal. 1235 and 1311 are the cars closest to the camera.

(Right) A rare view through the terminal looking north, with 1233 easing out to go east on Hastings.









B.C. Electric's Heyday

JOHN STERN PHOTOS • 1949

(Left) 1401 and train stop at Langley Prairie Station on their trip to Chilliwack. 1401 was built by Ottawa Car Co. in 1910. The Chilliwack line was abandoned on October 1, 1950.

(Above top) Cars 314, 203 and 140, likely parked on the roof of the car barns at 13th and Main Street.

Car 140 was built in 1906 by B.C. Electric Railway, and clearly shows the closed in section where there was previously a door on the left side of the car. British Columbia traffic drove on the left until 1922, and streetcars had to be altered for right side operation.

(Above bottom) PCC 405 leaves Kootenay Loop for a trip downtown on the busy 14-Hastings East line. Both 405 and 417 behind it were built in 1944 by Canadian Car with Street Louis Car components.



Oak Line

JOHN STERN PHOTOS • 1949

(Above) BCE 322 takes the siding northbound at 52nd and Oak to allow 78 to pass. Car 322 was rebuilt after 1937 with an arch roof and leather seats.

(Left) 78 is at the inner terminal of the Oak Street line, at Cambie and Hastings. It will cross over and then begin its journey south to Marpole.

(Right) As seen out the front window, a good number of intending passengers await the northbound Oak Street car as it arrives at 67th Street. The southbound waits on its meet.









Frazier River Crossing

JOHN STERN PHOTOS • 1949

(Left) A train led by a 1700 series baggage car trundles off the north end of the Frazier River bridge and enters New Westminster on its trip to Vancouver.

(Right) Another crossing of the Frazier River occurred a few miles to the west, where the Marpole-Steveston Line crossed from the mainland to Lulu Island (Richmond). Today's Canada Line crosses near this point.

(Below) PCC 404 is near the end of the Grandview Line. It's seen turning from East 18th Avenue north onto Findlay Street. The same scene today features Skytrain on an aerial structure.

(Next page) BCE 1222 and 1225 pass at Marpole Station. 1222 leads a three-car train that has arrived from Steveston (Lulu Island). 1225 subsequently closed out the B.C. Electric passenger era on February 27, 1958.









B.C. Electric Scenes

JOHN STERN PHOTOS · 1949

(Above) A three-car train made up of 1401, trailer 1600 and 1311, poses on the loop at Chilliwack Station.

(Left) 718 Main Loop.

(Bottom) Car 78 is at terminus in Marpole, SW Marine Drive near Hudson Street. The motorman has changed ends and is ready for the return trip to Cambie and Hastings. Marpole interurban station is to right of the photo.

(Right) 1226 rolls east-bound on the Central Park line somewhere east of Earles Road on its way to New Westminster.







South Campus

South Campus

1024

Exit

P East Parking

P

South Campus