

The Bulletin



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NEW YORK RAILWAYS CARS QUIT 70 YEARS AGO

New York Railways, which operated most of the Manhattan street car lines, converted to bus 70 years ago. The company operated a fleet of old cars, most of which were built at the turn of the 20th century.

New York Railways, which was in receivership since 1919, became solvent again six years later. New York Railways Corporation became the successor to the bankrupt company on May 1, 1925. A year later, August 25, 1926, Fifth Avenue Coach Company, whose goal was the conversion of all rail operations to bus, bought the common stock of the company. Unfortunately, the city officials were determined to get rid of all street cars and Fifth Avenue was willing to supply the cash for purchasing the buses.

In 1925, there were no available buses large enough to transport the passengers riding the Manhattan street cars. Meanwhile, the company overhauled rail operations, rebuilt several cars to cross-seat convertibles, and even rebuilt an open car to a closed streamliner.

By 1934, Yellow Coach was able to build a bus with the size and seating capacity to replace the street cars. On February 1, 1935, the 40-passenger Yellow Coaches replaced the street cars on Fourth and Madison Avenues, an extremely busy line. The company was pleased with their performance and motorized its street car lines in rapid succession:

| DATE | LINE(S) |
|-------------------|---|
| November 12, 1935 | Eighth Avenue Ninth and Amsterdam Avenues |
| February 12, 1936 | Broadway-Seventh Avenue Columbus and Lenox Avenues |
| March 6, 1936 | Seventh Avenue Eighth Street Crosstown |

| DATE | LINE(S) |
|----------------|---|
| March 12, 1936 | Sixth Avenue |
| March 25, 1936 | Lexington Avenue Lexington and Lenox Avenues |
| April 1, 1936 | 34 th Street Crosstown 116 th Street Crosstown |
| April 8, 1936 | 23 rd Street Crosstown |
| April 20, 1936 | 14 th Street Crosstown |
| June 8, 1936 | 86 th Street Crosstown |

The company made a down payment of ten percent on 486 buses, which cost \$5,256,968:

| NUMBER OF BUSES | SEATING CAPACITY | APPROXIMATE UNIT PRICE |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 201 | 40 | \$13,000 |
| 60 | 36 | \$10,000 |
| 225 | 32 | \$8,900 |

Although the company received its Certificate of Convenience and Necessity and permission to abandon its lines on January 22, 1936, there was one obstacle to motorization. A committee of holders of New York Railways preferred stock appealed to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals that the reorganization plan was unfair and discriminatory. Until the suit was cleared up, the company operated a franchise car on each line at a cost of \$1,500 to \$2,000 a day. Because Green Bus Lines was operating buses on 86th Street, the street cars kept running there to preserve the franchise rights. After more than a year of litigation, the judge signed final orders on June 3, 1936. Two days later, the Transit Commission author-

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