

January–March 1997 • \$5.00 / *The Hershey Cuban Interurban: Past, Present and Future*

HEADLIGHTS



HEADLIGHTS

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CONTENTS

Jan-Mar

Columns

3 Rail Transit News

A roundup of rail transit activities in various cities reported by Frank S. Miklos, E. L. Tennyson and J. McMahon.

6 Rail Book Reviews

James N. J. Henwood reviews Allen Morrison's new book *Latin American by Streetcar*, with a generous sampling of photos supplied by the author.

Features

8 The Hershey Cuban Interurban: Past, Present and Future

Clive Foss presents a lavishly photographed history of the Hershey Cuban, the last old-style interurban in the western hemisphere.

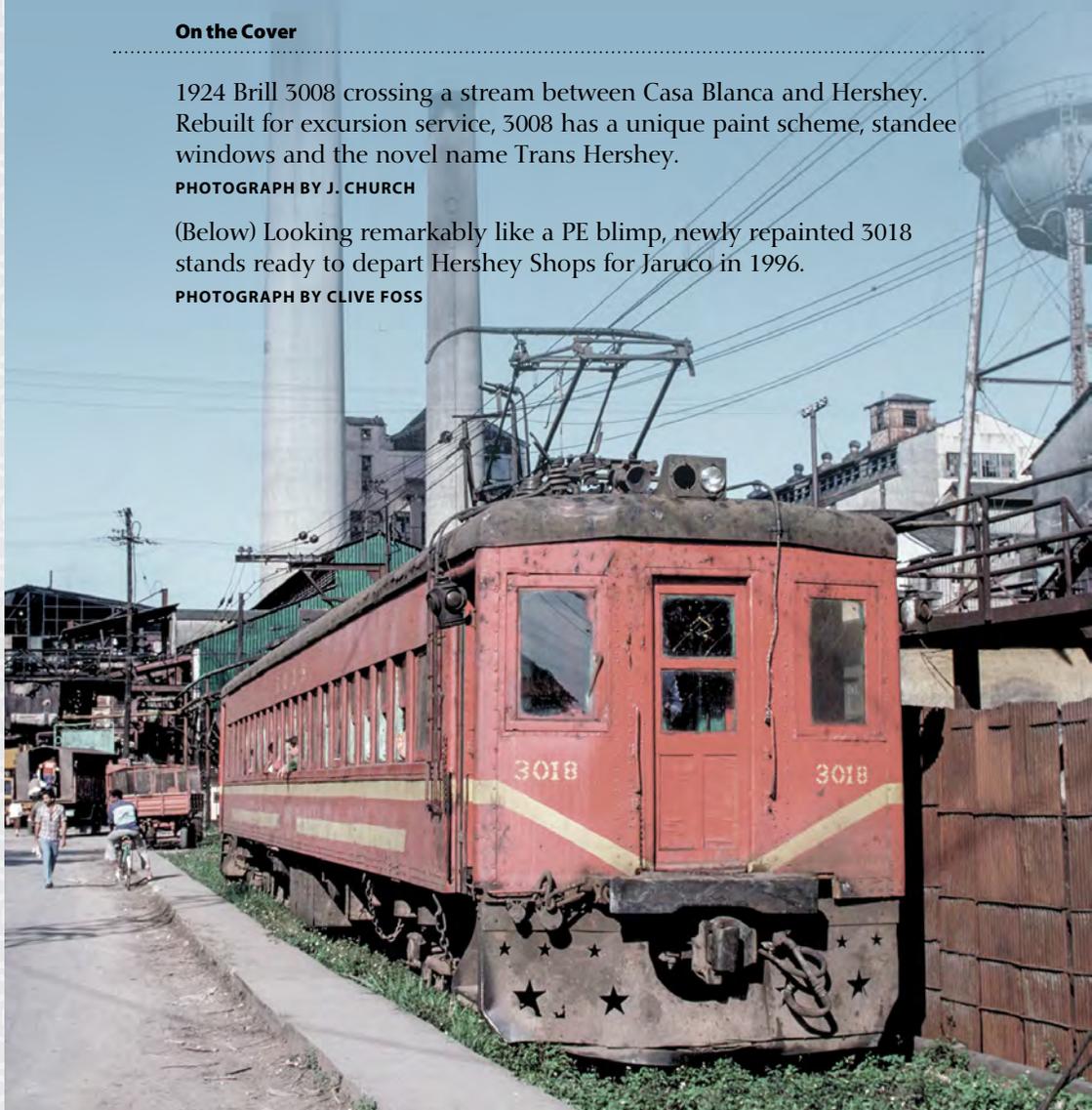
On the Cover

1924 Brill 3008 crossing a stream between Casa Blanca and Hershey. Rebuilt for excursion service, 3008 has a unique paint scheme, standee windows and the novel name Trans Hershey.

PHOTOGRAPH BY J. CHURCH

(Below) Looking remarkably like a PE blimp, newly repainted 3018 stands ready to depart Hershey Shops for Jaruco in 1996.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CLIVE FOSS



RAIL TRANSIT News



FRANK S. MIKLOS

▲ LRV 3411 climbs the ramp near Fenway Park where water from the nearby Muddy River flowed into the Green Line subway, disrupting service and causing millions of dollars in damages. Much of this may have been avoided through the installation of flood gates.

REPORTED BY FRANK S. MIKLOS, E. L. TENNYSON (DALLAS), AND J. MCMAHON (TORONTO)

BOSTON

Heavy rains from one of the worst storms to hit the Boston area in more than 25 years flooded major portions of the Green Line subway. The severe northeaster struck on October 21, 1996. Water from the Muddy River, which parallels the Riverside line, overflowed onto the rail right-of-way and into the subway portal at Fenway Park (above). Within hours the subway was flooded with water reaching as far as the Arlington Street station.

Kenmore Square was especially hard hit with the platform area entirely submerged and water covering the turnstiles on the mezzanine level. Water also reached the mezzanine at the Hynes Convention Center (formerly Auditorium)

station. After inundating the Boylston Street subway, the flood waters followed the tunnels into the Huntington Avenue subway with water reaching the mezzanine at the Prudential Station.

Fortunately the weather did not affect the Orange, Red or Blue Lines, but most of the service on the Green Line was severely disrupted. Rail shuttles were established between Park Street and Lechmere, as well as on the above-ground portions of the Commonwealth Avenue and Beacon Street lines. Connecting bus transported passengers between the surface rail lines and downtown Boston. Rail operations were suspended on Huntington Avenue because rail equipment now based at the Reservoir carhouse was isolated by the floods, while service was increased on the bus route that

“temporarily” replaced the Huntington Avenue streetcars in 1985.

After the flood waters receded, MBTA crews worked around the clock to clean up the tunnels and stations so that service could be restored. On Tuesday, October 22, the Riverside line was reopened as far as Fenway Park. The first expansion of underground operation did not take place until Thursday, when service was restored between Park Street and Copley Square. On Friday, October 25, the Commonwealth Avenue line resumed through service into the subway as far as Government Center, while Huntington Avenue cars began operating between Lechmere and Northeastern University. Through service on the Beacon Street and Riverside lines was resumed on Sunday, October 27. The surface portion of the Huntington Avenue line was not restored until Sunday, November 10, and was operated only as far as Brigham Circle. Rail operation beyond there to Heath Street was not resumed, prompting fears among the riders that the MBTA would use the situation as an excuse to permanently cut back the line.

The floods caused severe damage to the signals and switch controls in the subway. Battery powered red flashing lights were positioned throughout the tunnels, and cars were required to stop at each one.

They could proceed only when the next red flasher was visible after the car ahead cleared. All switches in the flooded section were thrown by hand, with MBTA employees authorizing cars to proceed. Cars were required to stop at yellow flashing lights outside each station and could then proceed slowly into the platform. The regular signals were gradually restored over a period of weeks except for the section between the subway portals and the Hynes/ICA station. The signals there were so badly damaged that they had to be replaced.

Regular Huntington Avenue service to Heath Street was finally restored on the afternoon of December 7. It may be months before anything resembling normal operations are restored throughout the subway. In addition to new signals, the escalators at Kenmore Square also had to be replaced.

There is always the risk of a similar occurrence in the future. After a less serious storm struck the subway in the 1960s there was talk of installing flood gates at the Fenway Park portal to guard against a similar disaster, but nothing ever came of these plans. In light of the October flood it may be wise to pursue these plans once again.

NEW ORLEANS

Plans for the expansion and modernization of the New Orleans streetcar system call for new or

▼ **New Orleans streetcar 957, rebuilt to resemble the city's vintage Perley Thomas cars, made a test run outside the Carrollton depot on January 5, 1995. Still lacking windows and paint, the car is months away from service.**

rebuilt cars resembling the city's vintage Perley Thomas cars. Car 957 was returned to the city more than 20 years after it was retired from service. Following an extensive rebuilding, the retro car made a test run outside the Carrollton depot on January 5, 1995 (below). Betraying its appearance of historical accuracy are PCC trucks and a clearly visible opening for wheelchair accessibility.

DALLAS

In June 1996, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) opened eleven miles of light rail transit service between downtown Dallas and Oak Cliff West on the Red Line and Oak Cliff South on the Blue Line, with 20-minute service on each for 20 hours per day, except for ten-minute headways on each line during peak periods. The 1996 schedule required 28 cars operating as 14

peak hour trains. Almost 19,500 weekday passengers were attracted initially to enjoy the novelty of the new LRT line, but ridership settled down at the 15,500 level, about 7% more than estimated. About 10% of the riders were new to transit, which served a modest income, transit dependent neighborhood.

In January 1997, DART opened the three-mile, 65 mile-per-hour subway north along the North Central Freeway (US 75) to Mockingbird Lane, with three additional miles of surface and elevated railway to Lovers Lane and Park Lane stations, serving a high-rise commercial area and University Park. About 10,000 weekday passengers were projected, about half from parallel bus lines and half new to transit. Initial reports in the *Dallas Morning News*

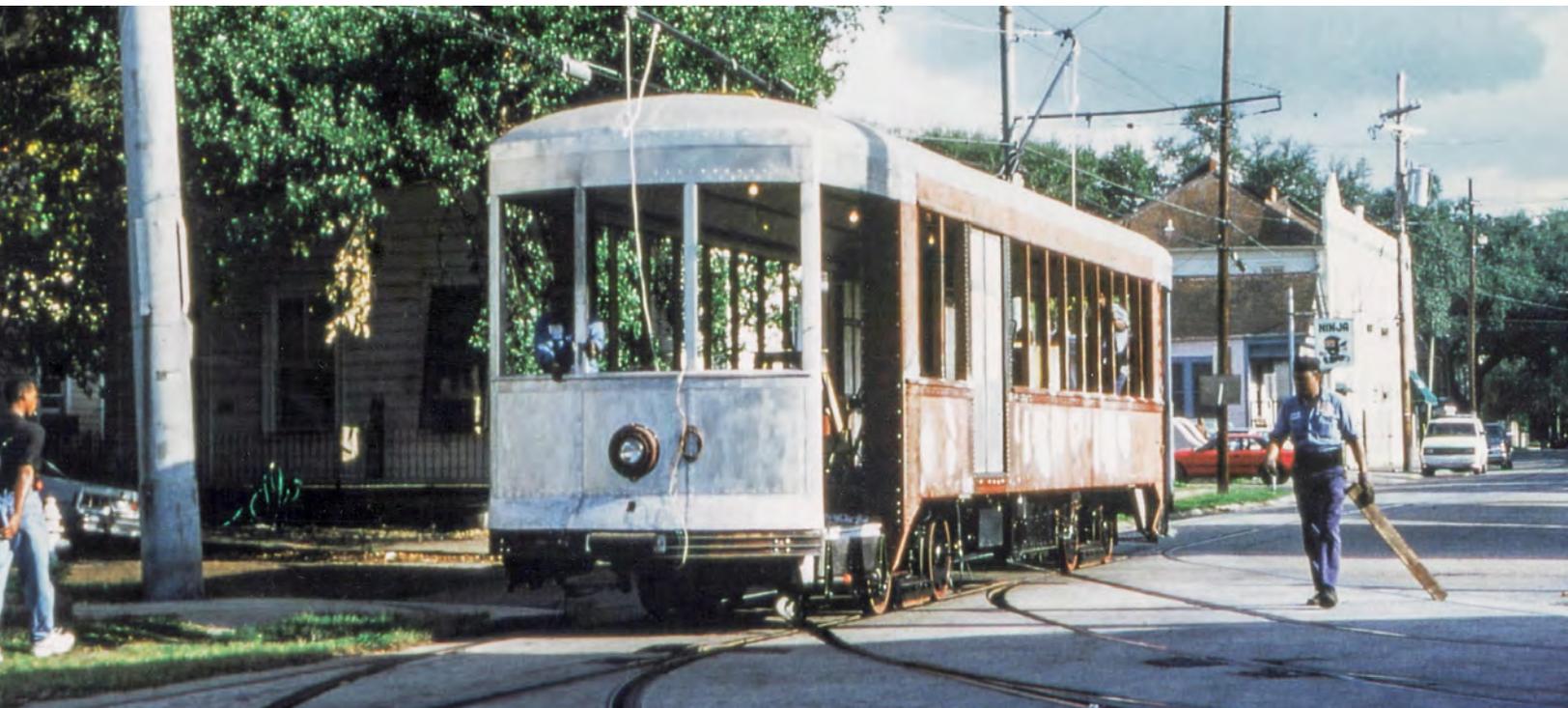
placed weekday system ridership at 30,000, with 24,000 on Saturdays and 14,000 on Sundays, about 33% over estimates. The 32 scheduled peak cars are averaging 938 weekday passengers per car, about 15% heavier than the New York subway system.

After a slow start, developers are finally getting on track with Dallas's new rail line. The *Morning News* reported that the HBE Corporation plans to invest \$150 million in a new Adams Mark Hotel, one of the most costly real estate projects in downtown Dallas in a decade. The article indicated, "Officials of the St. Louis-based hotel company wouldn't be spending a dime on the deal if the DART rail line didn't run by the hotel's front door." Six other new development projects are also in the works, primarily at the north

end of the line. Higher than expected ridership has stimulated both commercial builders and property buyers. Since January, trains have run at peak capacity and transit station parking lots have overflowed.

Early estimates project nine million 1997 passengers for the new DART light rail which will add three more stations in May on the south end of the Blue Line. Part of the Blue Line is on old Texas Electric Railway right-of-way where the Monroe Shops are being refurbished as a community center at the Illinois Avenue station. The annual cost of operation and maintenance is now estimated at \$16 million per year, about \$1.75 per passenger, 33% below the cost of DART bus service.

The northern extension through the subway is served by the Red Line





RUSSELL E. JACKSON

▲ Car 1003, the first of a new generation of cars for Philadelphia's Market-Frankford subway, built by Adtranz.

from West Oak Cliff. With this auspicious start, extensions of the Blue Line to Garland and the Red Line to Richardson are now getting under way. The Dallas City Council has also approved extensions to the McKinney Avenue Transit Authority's vintage trolley line to connect the new underground City Place station, to be completed in 1999 with the downtown West End transit terminal.

PHILADELPHIA

The first of a new generation of cars for Philadelphia's Market-Frankford subway was delivered on January 25th. Built by Adtranz, car 1003 (above) was followed three days later by the arrival of car 1002. The two cars made their first trip on the line

between 69th Street and 15th Street during the early morning hours of February 9th for clearance testing.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

A new rush hour service on the Green Line between Greenbelt and Farragut North was begun on January 27. Prior to that date commuters from stations on that line had to transfer to Red Line trains at Fort Totten station for downtown Washington.

The northern segment of the Green Line was opened in 1993, but the portion of that line between Fort Totten and U Street-Cardoza is still under construction and not scheduled for completion until 1999. Because of this the service has been operated as a feeder route

to Red Line trains going downtown. The newly established through service uses a single track connection between the Green and Red Lines south of the Fort Totten station, which had been built for non-revenue movement of trains to and from the car shops.

The through service is provided from 5:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. and from 4:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., with trains operating every nine minutes during those periods. Downtown Green Line trains cannot stop at Fort Totten, so passengers traveling between points on the Green Line to Red Line stations between Fort Totten and Wheaton must transfer at the Brookland-Catholic University station. The number of passengers doing this is small in comparison to those who benefit from a one seat ride to the center of Washington.

TORONTO

Toronto's newest order of subway cars entered service in March 1996. The cars which are designated as the T-1 class incorporate many new features, most notably doors that are a foot wider than the cars they replace. A byproduct of this is a reduction in seating capacity from 76 to 66. The wider doors take a few seconds longer to open and close – a factor that could affect schedules on a subway system with a large number of stops. However, transit officials feel that faster loading and unloading through the wider doors will compensate for this. Other features include lower overhead grab bars for standees and fold-up seats to provide space for wheelchairs. The air-conditioned cars feature grey interiors with maroon seats and doors. A durable fabric upholstery on the seats is designed to resist vandalism.

The 216 cars were constructed by Bombardier in Thunder Bay. They will replace cars that were built in the 1960s for the opening of the first section of the Bloor Street subway. ☺

RAIL BOOK *Reviews*

► The street railway in Campinas, Brazil, closed in 1968. Four years later a repentant municipal government opened the Portugal Park tramway, a new line around a lake with four restored cars.



ALLEN MORRISON

▼ Trinidad & Tobago postage stamp showing the first electric railway in the West Indies, inaugurated in 1895.



LATIN AMERICA BY STREETCAR

by Allen Morrison
P. O. Box 445
New York, N.Y. 10113-0445
11G x 8G hard cover, album format, 200 pp., \$29.95
Printed by Bonde Press, New York, 1996

A LLEN MORRISON HAS DONE IT AGAIN! The author of two previous studies on the tramways of Brazil and Chile now offers this pictorial tour of Latin American urban transport.

Latin America by Streetcar is arranged geographically: from Mexico, through Central America, the Caribbean and around the continent. Depicted among the 193 photographs, most full-page, are 100 of the 700 tramways that once operated "south of the border." Of these,

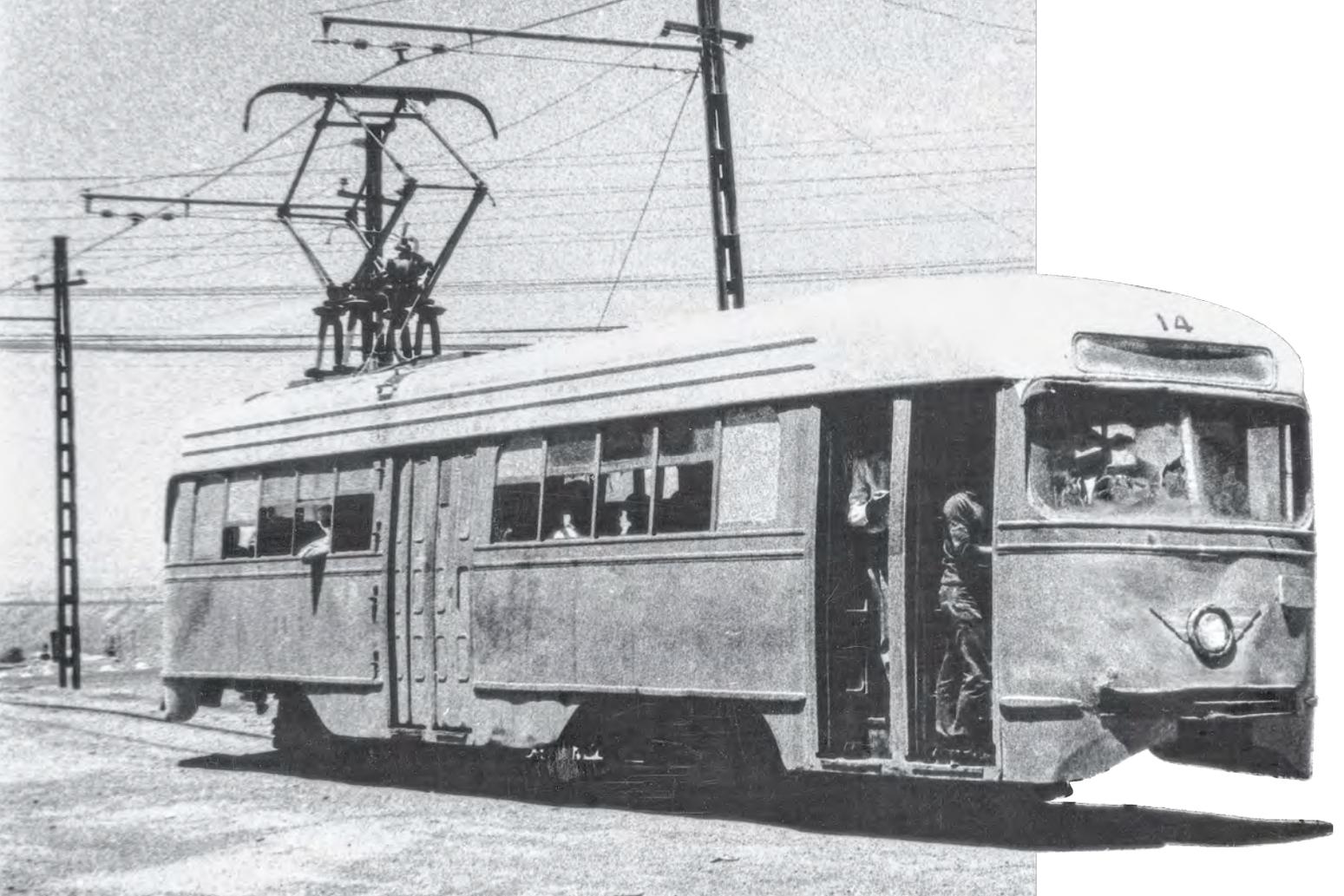
63 were electric, 21 were animal-powered, seven used steam locomotives, and five used gasoline. Brill and other American builders predominated, but a surprising number of the cars were supplied by European firms, and a few were even built locally.

The variety of streetcars was amazing. Almost half the photographs come from old postcards, with the remainder from rail enthusiasts, museums or archives, books and magazines, and in one case, from a postage stamp (left). Captions provide details on locale, routes, dates, owner, builder, gauge and system size. Reproduction is sharp and clear, and most shots include passengers, pedestrians and street scenes.

Morrison has included a brief but detailed history of Latin American tramways, with many specific facts, a list of countries and cities covered, a two-page map of these cities, and an eight-page bibliography of sources, organized by country and city.

All told, *Latin America by Streetcar* is an outstanding effort by the leading scholar of Latin American traction. Unfortunately, it may be Morrison's last book, as eye problems have made it difficult for him to continue his studies. If so, we are all the losers, but we still have this outstanding album to enjoy. Every traction fan will want a copy. 🌍

REVIEWED BY JAMES N. J. HENWOOD



GARY ALLEN, JOHN KIRCHNER COLLECTION, COURTESY JEFF MOREAU

▲ A rare view of one of the former Los Angeles streetcars that carried workers between the nitrate mines of Pedro de Valdivia in northern Chile from 1964 until about 1975.



◀ In the 1940s Compañía Nacional de Tranvías of Lima, Peru, purchased 20 streetcars second-hand from the Third Avenue Railway in New York. This one is arriving from Callao in 1964.

RAY DeGROOTE



The Hershey Cuba

PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

Honey, I'm home! 1921 Brill steam-roof interurban 103 at Casa Blanca heading a train for Matanzas, typically composed of two passenger cars and one combine, on June 26, 1956. These cars have since been scrapped. **PHOTO BY FOSTER PALMER**



n Interurban

One of the greatest treats an electric railroad fan can have is a visit to the Hershey Cuban, the last old-style interurban in the western hemisphere. **By Clive Foss**

THE HERSHEY CUBAN is the last old-style interurban in the western hemisphere. Cars from the 1920s in regular revenue service still clatter along a 56-mile long line through open country with innumerable local stops, starting just outside Havana and centering on the great sugar refinery built by the Hershey Chocolate Company. Busy branch lines that radiate out from



FOSTER PALMER

the plant add to the feeling of antiquity, but are very much alive and well.

This article describes the line as it is today, on the eve of a major modernization. It is not complete, since obtaining information about Cuba is difficult due to the present state of relations between the island nation and the U.S., even though the Cubans themselves are extremely friendly and helpful.

A ride on the Hershey Cuban starts at Casa Blanca, reached by a short ride from the historic district of Havana on a crowded ferry across the oily waters of the great harbor. In 1946 Casa Blanca was filled with bright-colored houses lining the hillside above the waterfront and numerous bars and shops. Both are long gone (private enterprise was virtually extinguished by the Castro regime) and the town is now pretty tattered, but there is still an attractive square above the harbor and a nice climb up to the statue of Christ on top of the hill. Railfans, who will be struck by the catenary over the main street, will probably proceed directly to the small station by the pier, where a ticket to Matanzas at the other end of the line costs 3.50 Cuban pesos (\$3.50 U.S. at the official exchange rate, but about 17¢ by the free rate that is generally available). Check your ticket; some have seat numbers. If you are lucky, you will find a train of two or three red vintage interurban cars waiting to depart. If not, an ancient

electric locomotive will be ready to pull out with a train of converted boxcars, as appealing as they sound. Even though they offer limited comfort, the ride is still spectacular.

After skirting the houses of Casa Blanca, the train passes factories and a naval base before arriving at Molina Junction, where the electrified freight line branches off to the industrial suburb and port of Regla. Soon after, the mainline emerges into open country, following a long valley cut off from the sea by a range of hills. The district is amazingly rural, though not far from the capital. Palms, fruit trees and dense vegetation are interrupted by cultivated fields,



FOSTER PALMER

where these days it is possible to see oxen or horses pulling the plows, since Cuba suffers from a desperate shortage of fuel. The train stops constantly (45 times in the 56 miles to Matanzas), sometimes seemingly in the middle of nowhere, often by the side of a paved or dirt road. (At Guanabo a 16-mile non-electrified branch to Playas del Este turns off to the northeast. During the summer three daily diesel-powered excursion trains carry bathers to the shore directly from Cristina station in downtown Havana, reaching the Hershey mainline at Molina Junction.) Because of the poor condition of the track, the run takes four hours (if the train is on time) and there is a

The Early Years

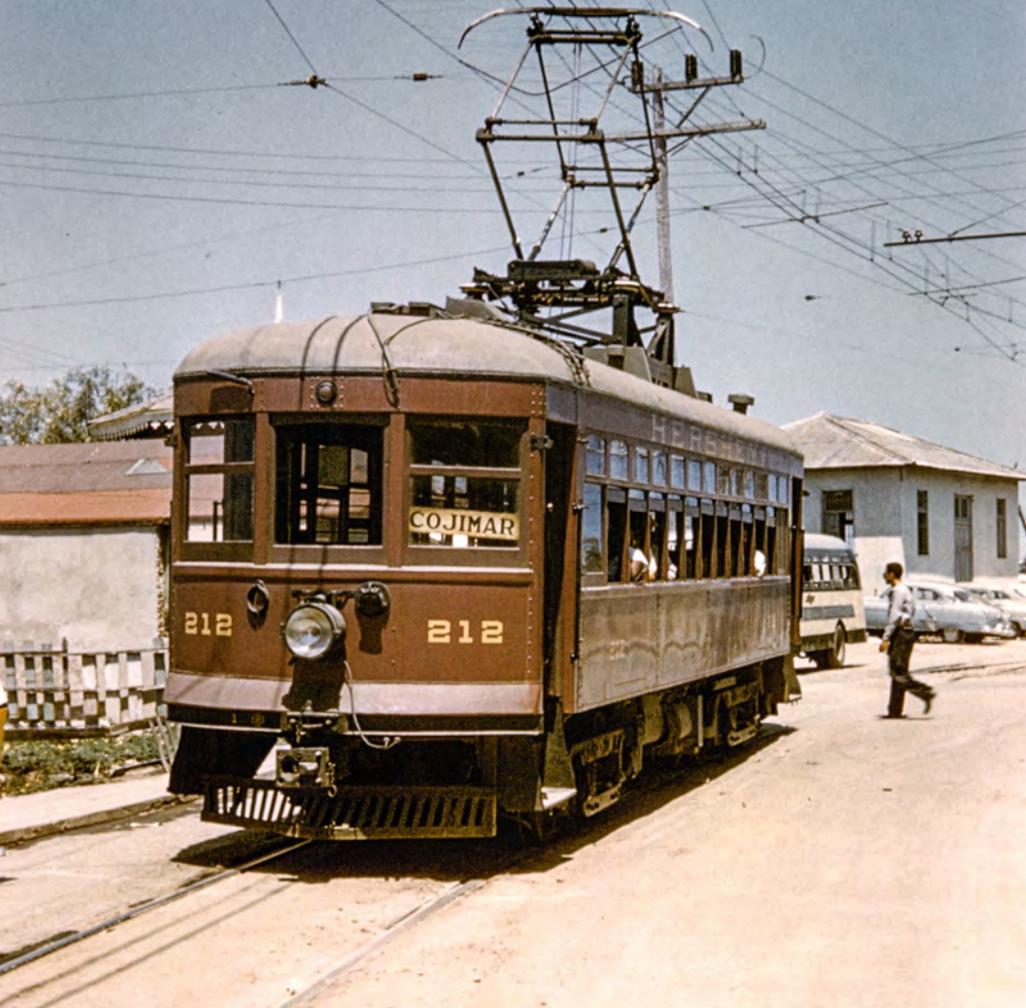
Extinct. Baggage and mail 410 in Matanzas station (1956). This and similar equipment are long gone.

Like New. 1924 Brill car 153 at Matanzas (1956). This is the original appearance of cars still in service, then immaculately maintained by the Hershey Company.

Cojímar Bound. 1922 Cincinnati car 212 at Casa Blanca about to leave for Cojímar on 26 June 1956. These cars provided service on Hershey's busiest suburban line, abandoned in 1957. This is the only line Hershey ever gave up; these cars have all been scrapped.

great deal of pitching and swaying. But somehow progress is made and finally, after two hours, the impressive refinery of Hershey, belching black smoke in the sugar harvest season (January to April) comes into sight around a huge curve. At Hershey, trains coming from the opposite ends of the line meet, and those heading for the branch to the coastal town of Santa Cruz del Norte begin their journey.

Hershey is remarkable not so much for its station, the nerve center of operations, but for its huge yard, with row after row of electric tracks filled with busy little steeple-cab engines pulling innumerable open-sided cane cars. As you skirt the yard, you may also get a



FOSTER PALMER

in a 24-hour period, with careful planning; but it would probably be best to take two days. Alternatively – and much easier and more comfortable – would be to cover the mainline in a specially rebuilt car, and visit the branch lines on a second day. In any case, the Hershey Cuban offers something that simply can't be found anywhere else in the late twentieth century.

HISTORY AND OPERATIONS

The Hershey Chocolate Company was one of the great success stories of American business. Starting from nothing, Milton Hershey built up an internationally renowned operation near his birthplace in southeastern Pennsylvania. The enterprise included not only the factory for the famous milk chocolate, but also a model company town (called Hershey) that offered a decent standard of living for the employees, and had its own street and interurban railway. The local dairy country provided enough milk, but as the company expanded rapidly in the first decades of this century, it needed a dependable source of sugar. The obvious place to look was Cuba, which offered an extremely favorable climate for American investment. Hershey bought up several plantations between Havana and Matanzas, eventually accumulating 60,000 acres of rich and well-located land. In 1916, he built a large modern sugar mill midway between the two cities. To move the raw cane to his mill and the refined products for shipping, he needed dependable transport. Consequently, the Hershey Cuban Railroad Company was established on May 29, 1916, to connect the sugar mill with the port of Santa Cruz del Norte, north of the refinery, and the seaport cities of Havana and Matanzas. From there, the company would be able to load its products directly onto ships that would carry them to the United States, and ultimately to the chocolate factory in Hershey. The first lines reached north to Santa Cruz del Norte and south to Bainoa, the junction with the mainline United Railways of Havana. They were opened in September 1918.

This would have been enough for most sugar operations, which in Cuba ran their own network of small steam railways. Hershey in fact owned two other mills in the area, Rosario and San

view of some of the work equipment. Beyond Hershey, the line becomes more scenic. The lush tropical vegetation is denser, settlements are more scattered and small lakes and streams enliven the view. Scenery culminates in the splendid Yumur valley, one of the beauty spots of the island, before the ride suddenly ends in a small station on the outskirts of Matanzas, an extremely attractive colonial town.

Visiting the whole system requires a long stop at Hershey, where branch line services start. Only one, a half-hour ride to Santa Cruz del Norte, operates from the mainline station. The others begin at an unmarked track beside the sugar mill, a ten minute walk from the station, and just by the entrance to the shops and storage yards. These are officially off limits, but a friendly guard might let you in. Alternatively, you can inquire at the nearby headquarters of the railroad. Anyone who has time should have a look at the town. The Hershey Company built it as a model town for its workers in a completely North American style. Instead of the typical Spanish-style stucco houses, Hershey is filled with wooden bunga-

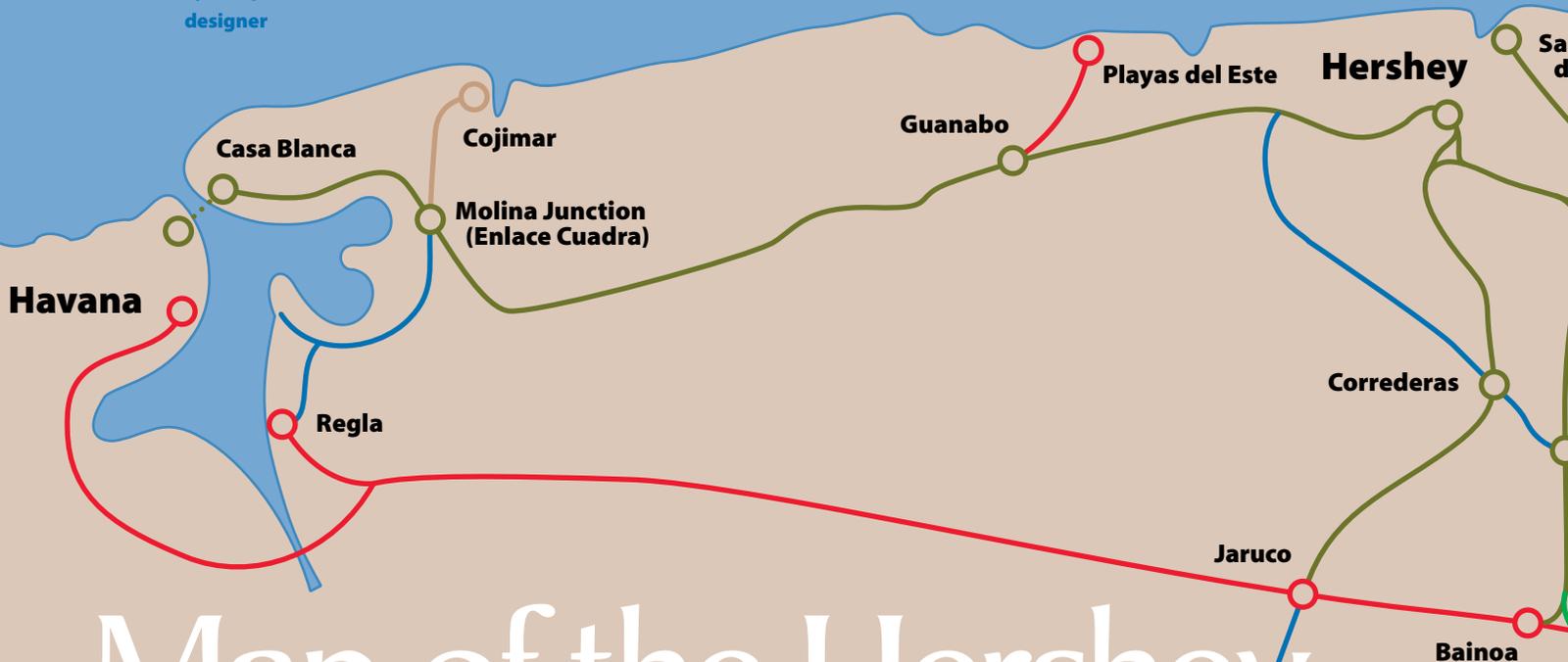
lows laid out along straight streets with broad sidewalks and lined with trees. The 1950s American cars parked in the streets add to the general illusion of stepping into a time machine.

The two branch lines that leave from the mill (officially Talleres station), run to Jaruco (8 miles) and Caraballo (7 miles). Both offer frequent service with a one-way trip taking about a half hour and culminating in a very rapid turnaround. The Jaruco line uses converted ex-German diesel railcars that look and feel remarkably like Pacific Electric blimps, even to the Ohmer fare registers. This ride, too, is an experience, through remote country with many stops in small and seemingly isolated places. These trains are usually very crowded, since they operate for the workers in the mill. A foreigner will get many friendly glances here. The Caraballo service, using a converted mainline coach, runs through open fields until it reaches the town, where it operates alongside the houses facing the main street. A single car suffices for the light traffic on this line. The fares on the branch lines are 50 Cuban cents (about 3¢ U.S.). Visiting the entire system could in theory be done



ERA MAPS

Clive Foss, author
Elizabeth Wahle, artist
Sandy Campbell,
designer



Map of the Hershey Cuban Interurban

LEGEND

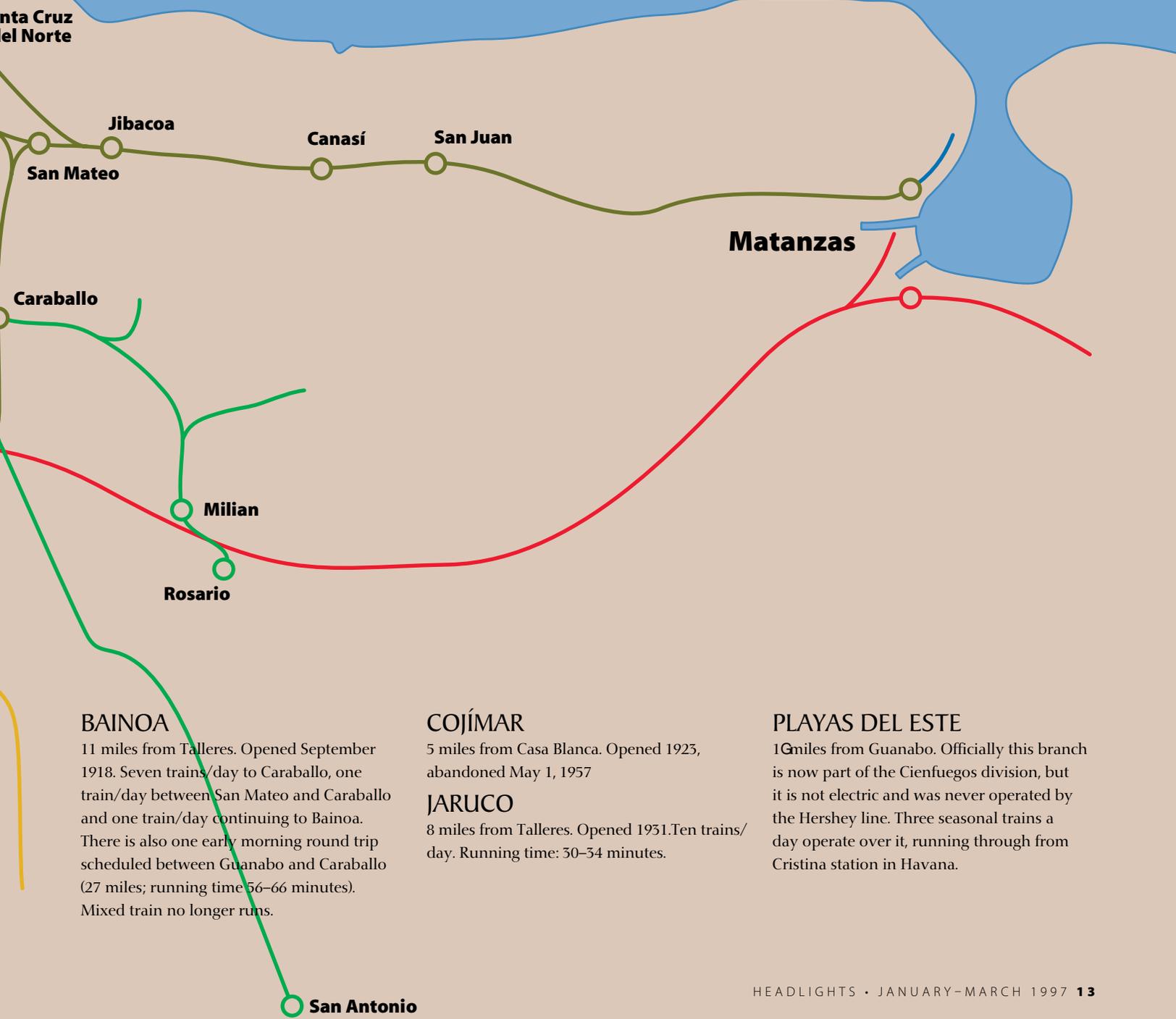
- Electric passenger lines
- Electric freight lines
- Non-electric lines
- Non-electric lines (status uncertain)
- mainline railroads
- Abandoned lines

MAINLINE

56 miles. Opened from Hershey to Matanzas October 1921, and to Casa Blanca early 1922; electrification completed October 5, 1922. Four trains/day, leaving Casa Blanca at 4:00 a.m., 9:40 a.m., 2:45 p.m. and 9 p.m. (similar times for returns from Matanzas); running time 4 hours.

HERSHEY-SANTA CRUZ

Four miles from Jibacoa, ten miles from Hershey. Opened September 1918. Six trains/day between Jibacoa and Santa Cruz del Norte. The scheduling is very complicated: there is one direct run from Talleres to Santa Cruz del Norte and two from Hershey station. Running time: 36–39 minutes. From Santa Cruz del Norte, they usually make a round trip to Canas (on the mainline, east of Jibacoa Junction) before returning to Hershey.



BAINOA

11 miles from Talleres. Opened September 1918. Seven trains/day to Carballo, one train/day between San Mateo and Carballo and one train/day continuing to Bainoa. There is also one early morning round trip scheduled between Guanabo and Carballo (27 miles; running time 56–66 minutes). Mixed train no longer runs.

COJÍMAR

5 miles from Casa Blanca. Opened 1925, abandoned May 1, 1957

JARUCO

8 miles from Talleres. Opened 1951. Ten trains/day. Running time: 30–34 minutes.

PLAYAS DEL ESTE

10 miles from Guanabo. Officially this branch is now part of the Cienfuegos division, but it is not electric and was never operated by the Hershey line. Three seasonal trains a day operate over it, running through from Cristina station in Havana.