

# HEADLIGHTS



## Headlights

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January–December 2012

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**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 five looks at the systems of Eastern Canada, concluding Mr. Ridolph's exhaustive retrospective.

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(Front and back covers)  
TTC Class A7 MU PCC 4475  
has just left the Neville  
Park loop at the eastern  
end of the Queen line  
and is ready, despite  
forgetting to change the  
headsighn, for the long

trip to Humber Loop  
some 20.7 miles to  
the west in 1974.  
At that time only the  
owl cars continued  
to Long Branch.

ANGUS MCINTYRE PHOTO

(Right) Toronto Transit  
Commission pre-war A2  
PCC 4153 is westbound on  
the Carlton line (present  
route 506) on College  
near University Avenue in  
a scene that development  
has made unrecogniz-  
able today.

RAY BERGER PHOTO



**Eastern Canada**

# Ontario



## Cornwall

CORNWALL STREET RAILWAY began operation in 1896 as the CORNWALL ELECTRIC STREET RAILWAY, offering freight and passenger service in the city of Cornwall over 11 miles of track. Electric freight, which lasted until 1971, was important enough to rate five steeple cab locomotives to handle the traffic. Passenger service over three short lines, Pitt St., Second St., and the Belt Line, was handled by a small fleet of second hand cars from a variety of U.S. and Canadian roads. The small passenger

operation lasted through WWII, but was replaced by trolley buses four years later. The Second St. line was converted on June 8, 1949, and the balance of the system the following month.

July 27, 1949: Last day of streetcar service in Cornwall.



## Fort William

FORT WILLIAM ELECTRIC RAILWAY, also known as FORT WILLIAM UTILITIES, began streetcar service in June 1893, shortly after sister city Port Arthur began operating its first electric cars. Fort William took control of the streetcar in 1908 and began operating it in conjunction with the Port Arthur system, although retaining separate ownership. In 1940 the road reported 23 cars in service on 20 miles of track, totals which remained fairly constant until final conversion to trolley bus in 1947.

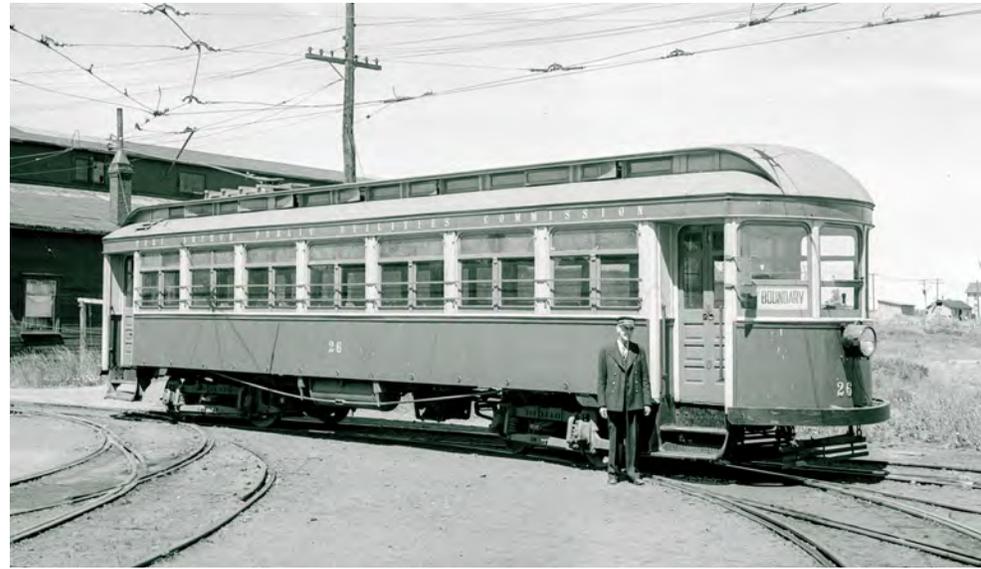
October 15, 1947: Last day of streetcar service.



## Port Arthur

PORT ARTHUR PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION, also known as PORT ARTHUR CIVIC RAILWAY, had the distinction of being the first municipally owned street railway in Canada when it opened in February 1892. In 1940 the road reported owning 19 cars and 20 miles of track on its small, three route system. Joint service was offered with the separately owned Fort William system and cars which traversed both cities would change fare boxes when crossing the Neebing River. The two cities merged in 1970 creating the city of Thunder Bay.

February 15, 1948: Last day of streetcar service.



### Fort William Electric Railway

FRANK MIKLOS COLLECTION

(Left) Car 104 on the Main Line carries a banner sign advertising for recruits. This wartime scene on Victoria Avenue in downtown Fort William was a vibrant one.

### Port Arthur Public Utilities Commission

FRANK MIKLOS COLLECTION

(Above) Car 24, photographed at the Port Arthur Public Utilities Commission car house on Front Street, shows off its interurban heritage.



## Galt



GRAND RIVER RAILWAY, a Canadian Pacific subsidiary since 1908, operated a 30-mile interurban line between Galt, where it connected with the LAKE ERIE & NORTHERN, and Waterloo, with a branch to Hespeler, using 12 heavyweight interurban cars. The line had its origins in an 1894 streetcar line between Galt and Preston, and finally reached Waterloo in 1904. The road's principal function was feeding freight traffic to the parent road, and electric freight operation continued until 1961. The GRR ran its first buses in 1925, but interurban passenger service would continue for another 30 years. Following abandonment of regular service, special movements and charter runs would continue for more than a year, and the final passenger run was a four car special excursion held on August 30, 1956.

April 23, 1955: Car 844 made the last regularly scheduled passenger run on the GRR.



### Grand River Railway

SPRAGUE LIBRARY PHOTOS

(Far left) Grand River Railway 846 is an all steel passenger car built in 1921 for the conversion to 1,500 volts DC. It is sitting in front of the depot at Preston, the nerve center of the system in the early 1950s.

LAKE ERIE & NORTHERN RAILWAY, sister road to the GRAND RIVER RAILWAY, was another Canadian Pacific subsidiary whose principal function was as a freight feeder to the CP. The LE&N, which connected with the GRR at Galt, operated a 51-mile interurban line between Galt and Port Dover, on Lake Erie. The line was opened in sections between 1915 and 1917, and used the rather uncommon 1500 volt electrical system to power its 13 passenger cars and the road's freight equipment. In common with the GRR, electric freight service continued until 1961 and regular passenger service ended the same day. Several special excursions were run in the week following cessation of regular service, with the last movement being a special charter run using cars 937, 848 and 846 on May 1, 1955.

April 23, 1955: Car 975 made the last regularly scheduled run from Galt to Port Dover.

(Left) Combine 626 is a generation newer, built in 1947 by National Steel Car. It held the distinction of being the last new electric interurban car built in Canada.

## Hamilton

HAMILTON STREET RAILWAY operated one of the larger city systems in Ontario, with 134 cars and 107 miles of track in the 1920s. Electric cars first ran in July 1892, and the property eventually came under control of the DOMINION POWER & TRANSIT COMPANY. Although



### Hamilton Street Railway

JOHN STERN PHOTOS •  
AUGUST 1949

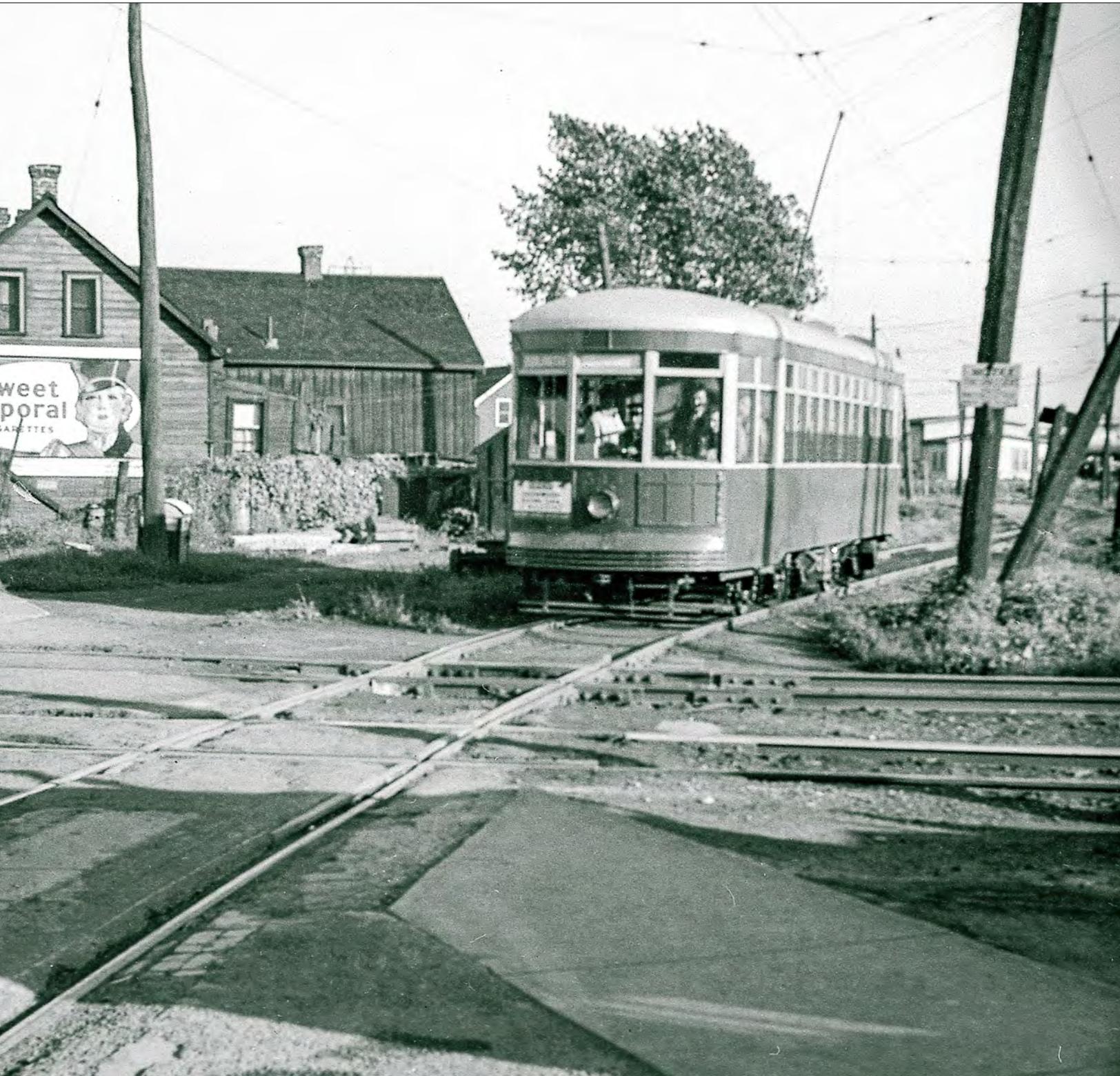
(Above) Streetcars dominate this downtown scene. 509 is eastbound on King, having just turned off James, where another car waits.

(Right) 543 is about to cross the CN tracks before exiting the right-of-way that defined the Burlington line.

extensions to the system continued into the early 1920s, buses began running in 1926, and the first rail-to-bus conversion took place in July 1929. The first major conversion, York St., occurred in 1939, and several other rail lines were abandoned in 1941–42. The system was sold to CANADA COACH LINES, a bus company, in 1946. Four more rail lines were converted between 1947 and 1950, leaving only the Belt Line, the heaviest in the city, operated by streetcars. The last regular run on the Belt Line took place in the early morning hours of April 6, 1951, followed by a ceremonial last run with cars 515 and 529 several hours later.

April 6, 1951: Last day of streetcar service in Hamilton.







**Hamilton Street Railway**

JOHN STERN PHOTOS · AUGUST 1949

(Top and right) Scenes on the Burlington Line, presided over by two 500 series cars, the newest on the system (National Steel Car, 1927–29).

(Above and far right) King Street east of Hughson, looking southwest and west, respectively. A new F.W. Woolworth “Five and Dime” store is under construction to the right of car 546.



## Kitchener

KITCHENER & WATERLOO STREET RAILWAY operated a 10.5-mile line with 17 cars primarily along King St., the principal thoroughfare of the two neighboring cities, with a branch line to Bridgeport. Electric cars appeared in May 1895, as the BERLIN & WATERLOO STREET RAILWAY, and in 1907 the line came under municipal control. (Berlin was changed to Kitchener in 1917). The first rail-to-bus substitution, the Bridgeport line, took place in May 1939, leaving just over six miles of track in service. The line was scheduled for abandonment on Dec. 31, 1946, but a sleet storm four days earlier brought a premature end to streetcar service. Trolley buses took over, giving the K&W the dubious distinction of being the first Canadian streetcar property to totally abandon rail service.

December 27, 1946: Last day of streetcar operation in Kitchener and Waterloo.

## London

LONDON & PORT STANLEY RAILWAY operated a 24-mile interurban line between the two cities in its corporate name. The road had its origins in an 1856 steam railroad. In 1913 the City of London bought the property, and in 1915 the line was electrified, using a 1500 volt system. The system had a total of about 35 miles of track, some of which was operated for freight service only. Electric freight service, which continued until 1965, was an important source of revenue for this municipal operation, but a limited interurban service, using 10 motor cars and 7 trailers, continued until 1957,

February 18, 1957: Last day of interurban passenger service between London and Port Stanley.





## London & Port Stanley

SPRAGUE COLLECTION PHOTOS

(Far left) Typical of the heavy interurban design on the LPS was car 4, a product of the Jewett Car Company delivered in 1914, seen here at the London terminus.

(Above) Also a Jewett product, car 10 was a combine. The roof design was similar to that on the New York, Westchester & Boston cars.

(Left) Car 8 rolls south in the typical open countryside below St. Thomas in the 1950s.





## Ottawa

OTTAWA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION, successor to the long-lived OTTAWA ELECTRIC RAILWAY, was the last streetcar operator in the Canadian capital. Electric cars first ran in June 1891, and the system peaked with 164 cars in operation over 58 miles of city and suburban track, including a line to the neighboring city of Hull. The OSR, which still had six rail lines on the eve of WWII, was sold to the city in August 1948. In 1954 the OTC abandoned the Hull line, and by 1957 the streetcar system consisted of four main lines, routes A, B, R and S, served by 81 conventional streetcars. Route B/Bank-St. Patrick was converted in January 1959, followed by Rt. S/Holland-Laurier in February, and Rt. R-Preston in April. Route A/Britannia, the last OTC streetcar line, went out the following month. On May 2, 1959, a 17-car parade and ceremonial last run closed out streetcar service in Ottawa.

April 30, 1959: Car 831 made the last regularly scheduled streetcar run on Rt. A/Britannia.

### Ottawa Transportation Commission

FRANK MIKLOS COLLECTION · SEPTEMBER 2, 1951

(Right) Car 660 is an all steel, 1913 product of the Ottawa Car Company. It is serving as a railfan extra, posed on the

Britannia line right-of-way. The "X" designation was used in Ottawa to indicate "Extra" supplemental service.





### Ottawa Transportation Commission

(Left) The typical Ottawa car was a deck roof design, as modeled by car 808, seen here outbound on Holland at Byron, where the Britannia Line diverged. 808 was a 1924 product of the Ottawa Car Co.

FRANK MIKLOS COLLECTION · SEPT. 22, 1946

(Above) Another view of the Britannia Park right-of-way showing car 833 approaching the Westboro Station (note the shelter) near Athlone Avenue.

ESM PHOTO · AUG. 8, 1958

RAILS  
TO RUBBER  
TO RAILS  
AGAIN



# Sudbury

SUDBURY & COPPER CLIFF SUBURBAN ELECTRIC RAILWAY ran its first streetcar on Nov. 11, 1915. The company served the city and mining area in and around Sudbury, operating 11 cars over 9 miles of track, using mainly second hand cars from U.S. properties. In 1947 the S&CC put its first bus in service, and the following year buses replaced streetcars on the short Ramsey Lake line, two years

before the last run. On the last day of streetcar service cars 38 and 37 made the last regularly scheduled run from the Copper Cliff smelter, followed shortly after by car 31 in a ceremonial last run.

October 1, 1950: Last day of streetcar service in Sudbury on the S&CCSR.



## Sudbury & Copper Cliff

SPRAGUE LIBRARY · 1940S

At top, two views of the center of the Sudbury system at Elm & Durham Streets. (Top left) Car 37, followed by car 30, turn from Durham onto Elm to go westbound for a trip on the Copper Cliff line. Gatchell is a peak hour turn back. (Above) Looking west on Elm through the downtown area.

(Bottom left) Cars 36 and 38 meet at the passing siding at Gatchell on the Copper Cliff line.

(Left) Car 36 was acquired from Wilkes-Barre (Pa.) Railway.



## Toronto

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION is the largest streetcar operator in Canada. The TTC was organized in 1920, and in 1921 assumed control of three independent streetcar companies in the city, merging them with the municipally owned TORONTO CIVIC RAILWAYS, which began service in 1912. Electric cars first ran in the city in 1891. The TTC inaugurated bus service in 1921, but the road still reported more than 1,000 cars in operation over 230 miles of track in the mid-1920s. The first rail-to-bus substitution, the Port Credit line, occurred in 1935, but the TTC remained committed to rail, taking delivery of its first PCC cars in 1938. Ultimately, aided by the purchase of second-hand PCCs from U.S. properties, the PCC fleet grew to 745 cars, the world's largest.

The TTC also had a large fleet of Peter Witt cars, the last of which ran in 1963. Construction of new subway lines led to a contraction of the streetcar system in the 1960s and 1970s, but the commitment to rail service remained with the development of the Canadian LRV, which first went into service in 1979. By 1995, with the retirement of the last PCCs, the fleet consisted completely of single-unit and articulated LRV cars. The streetcar system expanded in 1990 with the opening of the new Harbourfront line, and in 1997 with the return of streetcars to the Spadina line. The TTC currently operates 11 streetcar lines, giving Toronto North America's last large scale traditional streetcar system.

### TTC

RAY BERGER PHOTO

Ex-Kansas City all-electric 4768 operates the last trip out of Avon Loop on Friday evening, February 25, 1966. The next day, the Bloor Subway opened and a number of streetcar routes were discontinued, including this peak-hour-only extension of the St. Clair line.





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**CANADA  
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NEVILLE PARK  
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Park  
Variety  
McDonald's

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STOP

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FOR RENT  
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GROC  
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