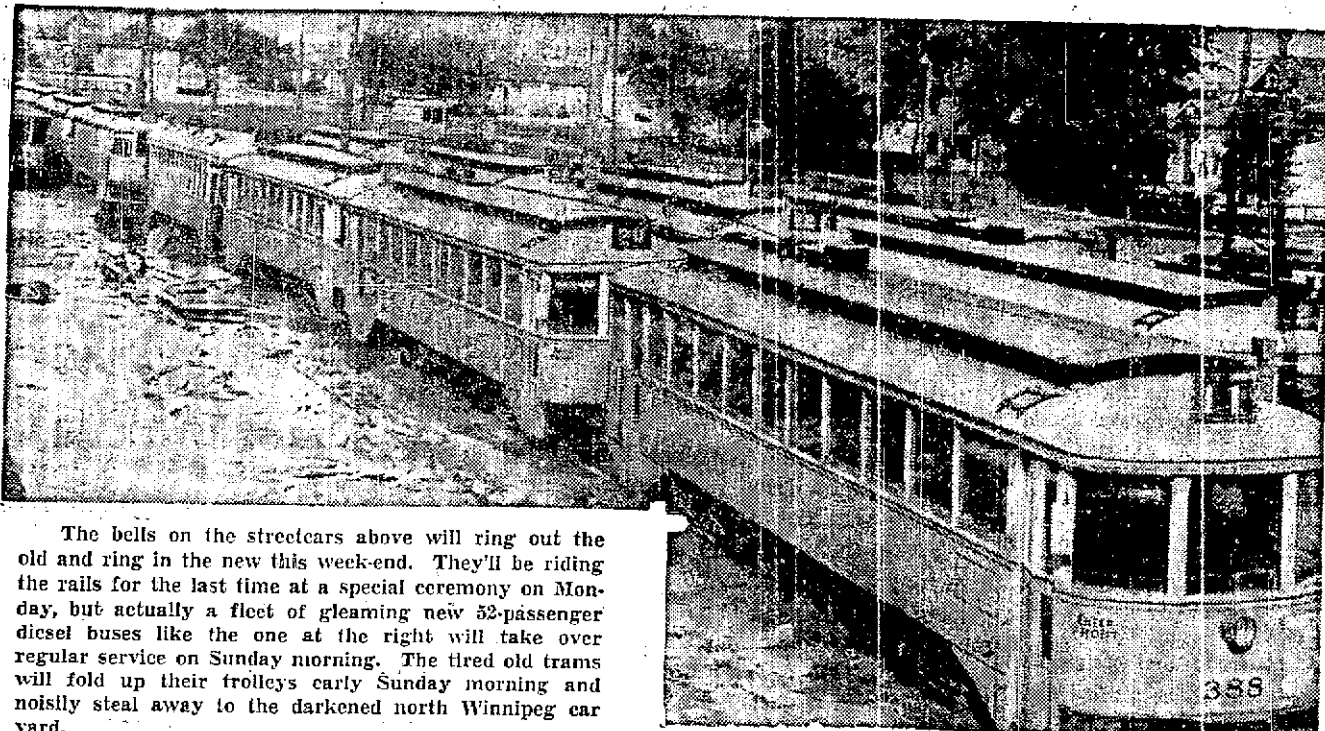


# A Transit Era Ends — Another Begins



The bells on the streetcars above will ring out the old and ring in the new this week-end. They'll be riding the rails for the last time at a special ceremony on Monday, but actually a fleet of gleaming new 52-passenger diesel buses like the one at the right will take over regular service on Sunday morning. The tired old trams will fold up their trolleys early Sunday morning and noisily steal away to the darkened north Winnipeg car yard.



to operate over Main street bridge so they could consolidate their lines on both sides of the river.

But it was four years, 1898, before council finally gave the permission. They were afraid the bridge wasn't strong enough and that having trolley wires strung across it would result in anyone walking over the structure being electrocuted. The bridge didn't fall and no one was killed.

Winnipeg with the transition being completed Dec. 1, 1952. The new transit company was short-lived. The city and surrounding municipalities were given an option, to expire May 31, 1953, to take over the system. The option was taken up and on June 1, 1953 the Greater Winnipeg Transit Commission was formed. For the first time in its history, Winnipeg's mass transportation system was publicly owned. W. H. Carter, former president of the Winnipeg Electric company, became commission chairman.

maintained, their operation confined to Main street and Portage avenue. There were 134 trolley buses, 191 motor buses with another 100 diesels on order to replace the last of the street cars. And so it is that on Monday when the north Winnipeg car house doors close behind the last street car they will be just as surely closing an era 73 years long — an era in which Winnipeg grew from a small town on the banks of the Red and Assiniboine river to a mighty city — grew because the street car was there to open streets and highways, industrial locations, suburbs and parks. Quieter buses will replace them but the clang of the gong, the rattling of the wheels, the swoosh of released air, the flashing of the trolleys will be long remembered.

## The Final Run

Crowds of Winnipeggers will witness a colorful, if slightly nostalgic procession down Portage avenue and Main street between 2.30 and 3.15 p.m. Monday. The final street cars will leave the St. James loop at Polo Park at approximately 2.30 p.m. In the first tram, which will be decorated with a banner reading: "We've Had It — We're Heading for The Last Roundup," will be the RCHA band.

Actually, the general public will have their last opportunity to ride a street car sometime after midnight Saturday. The final street car making the run from Sharpe boulevard to the end of the North Main line early Sunday will be the last one in regular service. Starting Sunday morning diesel buses will take over the route. It will be followed by a sweeper car with a banner reading: "We're Making a Clean Sweep — This Is Our Last Run — Buses Take Over."

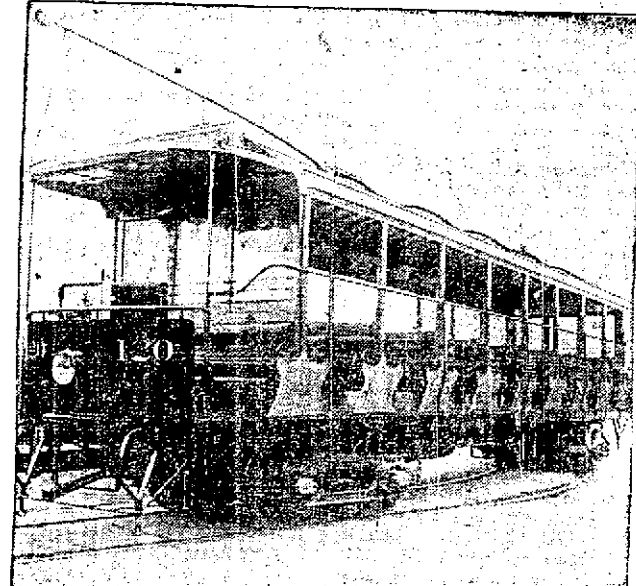
In the final car, old No. 799, will be Mayors of Greater Winnipeg municipalities, GWTC officials and press and radio. It will bear banners reading: "Take Your Last Look — I Won't Be Back — Modernization Has Forced Us To Retire." The cars will stop at Portage and Main for a brief ceremony when civic officials will lift out a section of track to cut for ever the street car line. Following the ceremony the cars will proceed to the north Winnipeg car field. Those who traveled on the last car will be returned to the transit commission's office at Fort Street and Assiniboine avenue by a shiny new diesel bus which will take over the Portage and Main run Sunday morning.

**GWTC EMPLOYS 1,300**  
The GWTC has close to 1,300 employees and pays out over \$4,300,000 in wages during the year. An additional \$2,000,000 is spent locally for the purchase of goods and services.

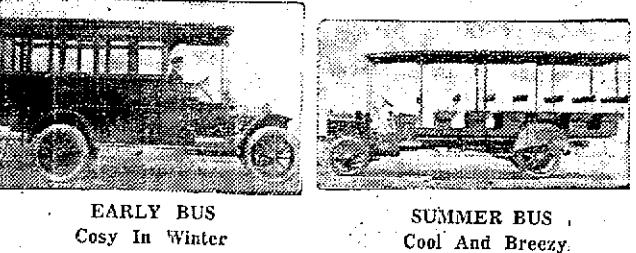
## Last Street Car Rolls Into History Monday

A whip cracked in the crisp morning air, a creaking horse car jolted down Main street from Fort Garry to the city hall and Winnipeg's first transit service was born Oct. 21, 1882.

Next Monday, 73 years less one month later, the last street car will vanish from the city's street, sacrificed to the same progress that saw horse cars replaced by electric trams and they in turn lose their predominance to gasoline buses, then trolley buses and now diesels.



This open-air type street car will be remembered by Winnipeg's old-timers who used to ride to family picnics at Selkirk and Elm parks. Young people used to ride them to Happyland amusement park. In the summer, the open-air cars were appreciated by those who wore the heavy serge suits so popular in those days, for a gentleman seldom removed his coat and a cool breeze was a blessing.



**EARLY BUS**  
Cosy In Winter

**SUMMER BUS**  
Cool And Breezy.

**DETROIT DOES IT TOO**  
DETROIT (AP) — Detroit's streetcar — all 184 of them — may go south of the border soon for service in Mexico City. The Detroit street railways commission has voted to abolish all street car service. Mexico City has offered Detroit \$1,104,000 for the streetcar fleet.

**W. E. Bradley, GWTC, and Gordon Sinclair Collaborate On A 73-Year History**

many sleighs in the winter. A. W. Austin, who owned the horse-drawn street car charter, soon saw that his system was to quickly become obsolete when he learned that Edison had developed an electric tram which moved along without visible horsepower. He urged city council to allow him to electrify his system but for some time aldermen balked at the idea of having wires, loaded with enough current to pull cars, hanging over their heads.

**Trolley Venture**  
Mr. Austin persisted and finally received permission for his trolley wire venture. But "try it," he was told "in the Port Rouge bush."

At 7.30 a.m., on Jan. 28, 1891 acting Mayor T. W. Taylor pushed the switch and the first electric car rolled proudly along River avenue, an area which at the time was outside the city limits. As the car's carbon lights flashed on they dimmed forever the weak, flickering light of the old oil lamps and jubilant citizens rode free for the first day. On Dominion day the same year the first street cars operated to Elm Park. With a population of 25,000, Winnipeg was set to celebrate the greatest picnic in its young history.

News reports of the day stated: "It had been expected that a fleet of eight cars and trailers would be ready for the picnic crowd but a strike delayed delivery of six cars so the task of carrying 2,000 persons fell on two cars and three trailers. "By crowding the cars inside, outside, on the platforms, roof and steps 250 passengers were carried on each trip."

**Franchise East**  
Barely one year after Mr. Austin operated his first electric tram he lost his franchise to a strong, well-organized company headed by the builders of the Canadian Northern railway. In 1892 the newly formed Winnipeg Electric Street Railway company operated the first electric street car in the city of Winnipeg along Main street.

The first franchise called for the cars to run along Central avenue (Notre Dame) from Portage to 14th street north (Sherbrook), then to 8th avenue north (Logan) to Main street. They were also to operate along 17th avenue north (Selkirk) to the main gates of the Exhibition grounds; along Portage avenue to Boundary street (Maryland) and along Main street from the bridge to the northern city limits.

At the start there were 14 closed cars, three open cars and six trailers. South of the Assiniboine river, the Austin company continued operations with three double-track cars. Along Main street there were four car tracks — the inner two for horse cars — the outer for electric trams. Other streets had single tracks with passing switches.

**\$30 A Month**  
In those days conductors received \$30 a month, motormen \$35 and they worked a 10½ hour day six days a week. Today operators get a top wage of \$1.58 an hour. Although passengers in the winter had a stove in the centre of the car for heat the crews had no such protection. The vestibules were open and the motormen, wearing heavy coats, thick mitts, warm caps had to scrape ice and frost from the windows continuously to keep a peep-hole open. During the first few winters of the new electric tram the horse car held the advantage as they could be put on runners. Electric car axles, brittle in the severe cold, broke easily. It's easy to imagine the derision of the horse car drivers as they passed stalled electric trams. But the bitter rivalry between the two companies paid off for the riding public. Tickets sold as low as 50¢ for \$1.

**Tragic End**  
The horse-car era came to a sudden and tragic end in 1894 when a fire in the barns killed 44 of the faithful animals. The Austin company sold out to the Winnipeg Electric Street Railway company and the new owners bought River Park as a traffic attraction. They also purchased the 40 acre site, where the south car barns now stand, for their shops and car storage. Part of this property will be put up for sale within the next month or two. At the same time the company attempted to receive permission

### Network Grows

As Winnipeg grew so did the street car network. By 1901 the company could proudly boast their cars had carried 3,500,000 paying passengers in a year. The following year the Main street car house was built to provide needed storage space for the 42 cars in operation.

In 1906 a strike took place. According to one transit old timer, George Calcott, now retired: "It didn't last as long as the 1919 strike, but it was wild and bitter while it lasted. Two street cars were burned in spite of police protection and the inside of others were wrecked."

The golden era of street cars was fast approaching. Tram rails were drawing a growing city closer together. The T. Eaton store was opened, drawing crowds of shoppers; Elm and River parks were centres of attraction; a race track and professional baseball drew crowds and the Exhibition was in its heyday.

In the west-end, Deer Lodge had Chad's Hotel with animal and bird attractions; Happyland amusement park was established on Portage with a roller coaster as a major attraction; Assiniboine park was opened to the public, and by 1910 the transit system was serving a population of 170,000.

**Common Centre**  
Outside of Winnipeg, other towns were appreciating street cars. Headingley, St. Norbert, Selkirk, Stonewall and Stony Mountain were joined to a common centre by rails, radiating from Portage and Main like the spokes from a wheel hub.

As the transit company grew so grew the need for office space. In 1913 "a sky scraper" was built on the corner of Notre Dame avenue and Albert street. It remained the company's headquarters until this summer when the offices were moved to their present site. The year the first world war ended, 1919, also saw the first threat to the street car monopoly of mass transportation. Gasoline buses began operating on Westminster avenue and two years later the first electric car route on River avenue was abandoned. The same year, 1921, a disastrous fire destroyed the Main car house and 21 trams.

Just as the burning of the horse stable 27 years earlier signalled the end of the horse cars, so the 1921 fire, in a less drastic manner, foreshadowed the decline of the street car.

Short feeder lines and lightly used suburban routes were converted to rubber. Economy measures transformed the street cars, first in the outskirts and then finally throughout the city.

**\$87,500 Robbery**  
It was in this period that Winnipeg's greatest unsolved robbery took place. On Aug. 13, 1925 robbers snatched \$87,500 in an unparallelled daylight holdup. By the dirty thirties the street cars were giving way more rapidly to buses. Even so, 1934 was the peak year for street car traffic with a total of 121.15 million. But shortly after, street cars disappeared from Selkirk, Headingley, Stonewall and St. Norbert. Buses rode the roads in their place.

Competition of 28,000 autos on Winnipeg streets demanded more improvements. In 1938 they came. The Winnipeg Electric company became the first transit utility in Canada to use trolley buses. Today the future of the trolleys is doomed. Rising power rates and the improvement of diesels foreshadow the disappearance within a few years of the trackless trolleys.

**Triple Service**  
Since 1895 the transit system had been generating its own power. In 1898 it acquired the Manitoba Electric and Gas Light company which made it a triple-service utility offering transportation, gas and electricity. When the power utility was taken over by the province a separate private company was formed — the Winnipeg and Central Gas company — to run the gas utility. The transportation utility became the Greater Winnipeg Transit com-

### Diesel Fleets

Modernization plans were pushed ahead. Fleets of gasoline, diesel and trolley buses continued to shove street cars off the road. Finally only 85 street cars re-



**W. J. JONES**  
Superintendent of transportation for the GWTC who will drive the last street car to travel over the Portage avenue and Main street route Monday between 2.30 and 3.15 p.m. On the car will be civic and GWTC officials and press and radio representatives. The way will be led by another street car carrying the RCHA band. This tram will be piloted by Mrs. Frances Daly, one of the three women drivers left with the company, in between will be sandwiched a sweeper car.

**JOB FOR THATCHER**  
NORWICH, England (CP)—Norfolk reed thatcher W. H. Farman is off to the United States to supervise the thatching of a mansion for chain-store heiress Pamela Woolworth. She "fell in love with the old-world charm" of thatched roofs while visiting Britain.

**GWTC Has 410 Buses, Covers 150 Route Miles**  
With the departure of street cars, the GWTC is left with 410 vehicles; 296 motor buses and 134 trolley buses. The motor bus fleet will consist of 161 diesels and 115 gasoline units. They will operate over a distance of 150 route miles (one way) in the Greater Winnipeg area, serving 12 cities and municipalities having a population of 370,000. During the past year 12,400,000 miles were operated, the equivalent of 498 trips around the world.

Most haddock caught in Canadian waters are under 10 pounds in weight.

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# NOW ALL WINNIPEG ROLLS ON RUBBER

There'll be a touch of nostalgia mingled with pride in the emotions of Winnipeg citizens this week as the last of the trolleys disappear from city streets.

In cities all across Canada the pattern is being repeated. The clang, clang, clang of the trolley is being replaced by the quiet, comfortable efficiency of a transit system that rolls on rubber.

The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company of Canada offers congratulations to the Greater Winnipeg Transit System for a gigantic job well done. We are proud of the fact that all of Winnipeg's bus passengers will travel safely and comfortably on Goodyear tires.

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