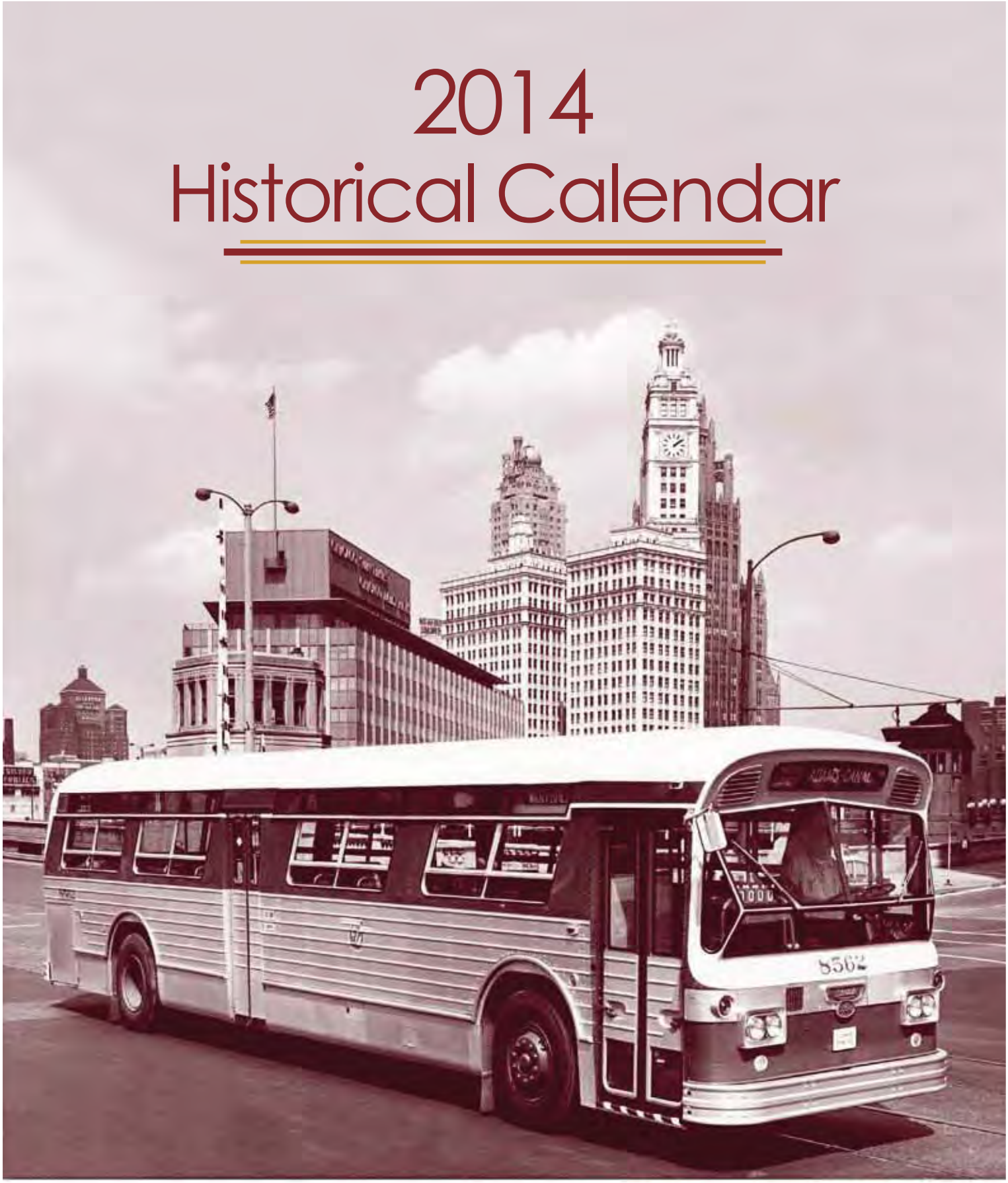
2014
Historical Calendar



Chicago Transit Authority

Chicago Motor Coach Company bus #525 is seen here, newly arrived from the Yellow Coach Manufacturing Company in 1923. The earliest motor bus routes were established on the city's park boulevard system due to the local park boards awarding franchises to bus companies rather than to street railways. The Chicago Motor Coach Company's fleet initially consisted of double decker buses that provided additional capacity, as well as great views from the upper level.

January 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
December 2013 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	February 2014 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	**ABCDEFG:** CTA Operations Division Group Days Off ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day ● Central offices closed	A ● ▼ 1 New Year's Day	B 2	C 3	D ● 4
D ● 5	E 6	F 7	G 8	A 9	B 10	C ● 11
C ● 12	D 13	E 14	F 15	G 16	A 17	B ● 18
B ● 19	C ▼ 20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	D 21	E 22	F 23	G 24	A ● 25
A ● 26	B 27	C 28	D 29	E 30	F 31	

In this early spring scene, CTA trolley bus #9338 is heading south along the #85 Central route approaching Lake Street. This coach was part of a fleet of electric buses that, at its height in the 1960's, was part of the largest trolley bus system in North America. The building in the park, influenced by Philadelphia's Independence Hall, was built as a field house in 1927 on the site of the Austin Town Hall, which served the then suburb of Austin when it was still a separate community before its annexation to the City of Chicago in 1899.

February 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
January 2014 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	March 2014 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	**ABCDEFG:** CTA Operations Division Group Days Off ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day ● Central offices closed				G ● 1
G ● 2	A 3	B 4	C 5	D 6	E 7	F ● 8
F ● 9	G 10	A 11	B 12	C 13	D 14 Valentine's Day	E ● 15
E ● 16	F ▼ 17 Presidents' Day	G 18	A 19	B 20	C 21	D ● 22
D ● 23	E 24	F 25	G 26	A 27	B 28	

An assortment of streetcars can be seen in this photo taken in front of the Kedzie car barn, located at Kedzie and Van Buren. Chicago Surface Lines (CSL) #1674 is most likely pulling out of the car barn to begin a trip on the Division-Van Buren route. Car #1674 was originally built in 1912 for the Chicago Railways, a predecessor to the CSL.

March 2014

February 2014

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

April 2014

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

A B C D E F G:
CTA Operations Division Group Days Off
▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day
● Central offices closed

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						C ● 1
C ● 2	D 3	E 4	F 5 Ash Wednesday	G 6	A 7	B ● 8
B ● 9 Daylight Savings Time Starts	C 10	D 11	E 12	F 13	G 14	A ● 15
A ● 16	B 17 St. Patrick's Day	C 18	D 19	E 20 First Day of Spring	F 21	G ● 22
G ● 23	A 24	B 25	C 26	D 27	E 28	F ● 29
F ● 30	G 31					

The ceremonial ribbon is being cut as part of the dedication of the new Skokie Swift rapid transit line on April 18, 1964 – at the ribbon, from left to right, CTA Board chairman George L. DeMent; Raymond Simon, representing Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley; William B. Hurd of the U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA); and Skokie Mayor Myron Greisdorf. The Swift was a "demonstration project" whose objective was to determine the feasibility of adapting rail transit to link fast-growing suburban development to an existing central city. Initially, four single-unit 1-50 series cars, one of which is pictured in the photo, provided service.

April 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
March 2014 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	May 2014 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	A 1	B 2	C 3	D 4	E ● 5
E ● 6	F 7	G 8	A 9	B 10	C 11	D ● 12
D ● 13 Palm Sunday	E 14 Passover Begins	F 15	G 16	A 17	B 18 Good Friday	C ● 19
C ● ▼ 20 Easter	D 21	E 22 Earth Day	F 23	G 24	A 25	B ● 26
B ● 27	C 28	D 29	E 30	**ABCDEFG:** CTA Operations Division Group Days Off ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day ● Central offices closed		

South Side Rapid Transit car #139 is seen heading southbound at the Harrison curve on the South Side Elevated in this 1898 photo. The car is testing the new electric traction equipment planned for converting the South Side 'L' from steam to electric power. Frank Sprague, the man charged with overseeing the work, is seen in the vestibule of the front car, in discussion with the motorman.

May 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	April 2014 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	June 2013 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	**ABCDEFG:** CTA Operations Division Group Days Off ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day ● Central offices closed	F 1	G 2	A ● 3
A ● 4	B 5 Cinco de Mayo	C 6	D 7	E 8	F 9	G ● 10
G ● 11 Mother's Day	A 12	B 13	C 14	D 15	E 16	F ● 17 Armed Forces Day
F ● 18	G 19	A 20	B 21	C 22	D 23	E ● 24
E ● 25	F ● ▼ 26 Memorial Day	G 27	A 28	B 29	C 30	D ● 31

In this 1962 view looking north on Halsted at Harrison/Blue Island, a southbound Halsted bus has just crossed over the relatively new Congress Expressway on the way to its terminal at 79th Street. The buildings in the background were in their last days before being demolished for the development of a new University of Illinois campus.

June 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
D ● 1	E 2	F 3	G 4	A 5	B 6	C ● 7
C ● 8	D 9	E 10	F 11	G 12	A 13	B ● 14 Flag Day
B ● 15 Father's Day	C 16	D 17	E 18	F 19 Juneteenth	G 20	A ● 21 First Day of Summer
A ● 22	B 23	C 24	D 25	E 26	F 27	G ● 28
G ● 29	A 30					

May 2014

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

July 2014

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

A B C D E F G:
CTA Operations Division Group Days Off
▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day
● Central offices closed

Chicago Surface Lines streetcar #920 – part of a fleet of cars built by the Pullman Company known as "Small Pullmans" – is seen heading westward on its journey along Irving Park at Seminary as a southbound Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee interurban train is making its way to the Loop overhead on the 'L' structure in the background.

July 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
June 2013 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	August 2014 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	B 1	C 2	D 3	E ● ▼ 4 Independence Day	F ● 5
F ● 6	G 7	A 8	B 9	C 10	D 11	E ● 12
E ● 13	F 14	G 15	A 16	B 17	C 18	D ● 19
D ● 20	E 21	F 22	G 23	A 24	B 25	C ● 26
C ● 27	D 28	E 29	F 30	G 31	**ABCDEFG:** CTA Operations Division Group Days Off ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day ● Central offices closed	

CTA trolley bus #418, built by the Marmon-Harrington Company in 1951, is signed for the #51 51st-55th route. The majority of the trolley bus routes in Chicago were concentrated on the North and West sides, however, east-west routes along 47th and 51st streets also were established.

August 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
cta	July 2014 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	September 2013 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	**A B C D E F G:** CTA Operations Division Group Days Off ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day ● Central offices closed		A 1	B ● 2
B ● 3	C 4	D 5	E 6	F 7	G 8	A ● 9
A ● 10	B 11	C 12	D 13	E 14	F 15	G ● 16
G ● 17	A 18	B 19	C 20	D 21	E 22	F ● 23
F ● 24 E ● 31	G 25	A 25	B 27	C 28	D 29	E ● 30

CTA "New Look" bus #8562, built by the Flxible Company in 1961, has just arrived from the factory and is crossing Wacker Drive at the Chicago River. The CTA was in the process of modernizing and enlarging its bus fleet, having completed the last of the streetcar-to-bus route conversions just a few years earlier. The 8500-series buses were used until 1975.

September 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	F ▼ ● 1 Labor Day	G 2	A 3	B 4	C 5	D ● 6
D ● 7	E 8	F 9	G 10	A 11	B 12	C ● 13
C ● 14	D 15	E 16	F 17	G 18	A 19	B ● 20
B ● 21	C 22	D 23 First Day of Fall	E 24 Rosh Hashanah Begins	F 25	G 26	A ● 27
A ● 28	B 29	C 30				

August 2014

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

October 2014

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

A B C D E F G:
CTA Operations Division Group Days Off

▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day

● Central offices closed

It is 1923 and Chicago Elevated Railways car #4252 has just been received from its builder, Cincinnati Car Company. The 4251-4455 group of 4000-series cars featured the newest amenities of the time, including plush seats and electric fans for the passengers' comfort, and new shaded lighting.

October 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
September 2013 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	November 2014 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	**ABCDEFG:** CTA Operations Division Group Days Off ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day ● Central offices closed	D 1	E 2	F 3 Yom Kippur Begins	G ● 4
G ● 5	A 6	B 7	C 8	D 9	E 10	F ● 11
F ● 12	G 13 Columbus Day	A 14	B 15	C 16	D 17	E ● 18
E ● 19	F 20	G 21	A 22	B 23	C 24	D ● 25
D ● 26	E 27	F 28	G 29	A 30	B 31 Halloween	

This is the Madison/Austin off-street terminal on the city's western border with Oak Park, where the Chicago Surface Lines (CSL) streetcars serving the #20 Madison line terminated. Two pre-war PCC streetcars are basking in the sun, waiting their turn to begin their eastbound trips along the #20 Madison route back to the Loop. These two cars have experimental paint schemes the CSL was testing for use on a new order of PCC streetcars.

November 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
cta	October 2014 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	December 2013 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	**ABCDEFG:** CTA Operations Division Group Days Off ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day ● Central offices closed			C ● 1
C ● 2 Daylight Savings Time Ends	D 3	E 4 Election Day	F 5	G 6	A 7	B ● 8
B ● 9	C 10	D ▼ 11 Veterans' Day	E 12	F 13	G 14	A ● 15
A ● 16	B 17	C 18	D 19	E 20	F 21	G ● 22
G ● 23 F ● 30	A 24	B 25	C 26	D ● ▼ 27 Thanksgiving Day	E 28	F ● 29

It's the 1964 holiday season and the Merchandise Mart is sporting its decorations, along with generations of soot left over from many years of coal burning heat used in the city. A train of newly-arrived 2000-series cars built by the Pullman-Standard Company in Chicago is posed for photos on the Wells Street Bridge over the Chicago River.

December 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
ABCDEFG: CTA Operations Division Group Days Off ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day ● Central offices closed	G 1	A 2	B 3	C 4	D 5	E ● 6
E ● 7	F 8	G 9	A 10	B 11	C 12	D ● 13
D ● 14	E 15	F 16 Hanukkah Begins	G 17	A 18	B 19	C ● 20
C ● 21 First Day of Winter	D 22	E 23	F 24	G ● ▼ 25 Christmas Day	A 26 Kwanzaa Begins	B ● 27
B ● 28	C 29	D 30	E ● ▼ 31 New Year's Eve	November 2014 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	January 2015 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	

Historical Notes

JANUARY
Chicago Motor Coach Company bus #525, signed as "Special," is seen here, newly arrived from the Yellow Coach Manufacturing Company in 1923. The earliest motor bus routes were established on the city's park boulevard system due to the local park boards controlling the power to award transit franchises on the streets they controlled, and granting them to bus companies rather than to street railways. Motor buses were first introduced on a 9.5-mile stretch of Sheridan Road in 1917. By 1922, the Chicago Motor Coach Company (CMC) was formed under the leadership of John. A Ritchie. The CMC was acquired by the CTA in 1952.

The CMC fleet initially consisted of double decker buses that provided additional capacity, as well as great views from the upper level. Unfortunately, these buses also had their drawbacks, since the upper level was not completely enclosed or heated. The roof extended only over each row of seats and was open in the middle, which provided little protection from the elements. In addition, as time went on, there were various clearance issues that posed potential hazards to the passengers – some riders recalled passengers having to duck down when the double-deckers went under some of the railroad viaducts – so these buses were gradually phased out, with the last double-deckers running in 1950. By this time, CMC had introduced buses with fully enclosed top decks, as well as a large number of single deck buses to use on lines where clearances were a problem or where ridership warranted only a one-person crew since double deck buses required a driver and a conductor.

Bus #525 appears in a typical winter scene common to Chicagoans. One cannot help but to wonder, however, in looking closely at the tires, which appear as tread-less, just how reliable these buses were in the snow and ice. Most probably, riding these buses on Chicago's streets during a snowstorm was indeed a memorable experience!

FEBRUARY
In this early spring scene, CTA trolley bus #9338, built in 1948 by the Pullman-Standard Company, is seen on its southbound journey along the #85 Central route approaching Lake Street. This coach was part of a fleet of electric buses that, at its height in the 1960's, was largest trolley bus system in North America, serving fifteen routes primarily on the North and West sides of the city. Trolley buses commonly served new routes in developing areas as newer neighborhoods beyond the established streetcar network were developed, or were implemented on several routes where the CTA integrated extension routes (commonly operated with motor buses) into the main route segments they extended (typically streetcar routes) and began converting to an all-bus fleet. Affording a more flexible operation than streetcars, which remained on tracks in one designated place on the street, trolley buses provided some maneuverability in being able to pull up to the curb to alight and board passengers, as well as being able to move around minor obstructions. However, they still had to travel where the wires led. Trolley buses ceased to be used on the #85 in January 1970; the last trolley buses ran in Chicago in March 1973.

In the background is Austin Town Hall Park, originally located in the suburb of Austin in Cicero Township. The Cicero town hall was located in the park until Austin was annexed to the City of Chicago in 1899. In 1927, the park was transferred to the West Park Commission, which built a new field house for the newly renamed Austin Town Hall Park. The large brick Georgian Revival-style building, seen in the photo, was influenced by Philadelphia's Independence Hall. The students in this photo have exited the trolley bus and are most likely walking to the Lake Street 'L' station, just out of view. The scene is much the same today, minus the trolley buses, which have long been replaced with motor buses that currently operate on this route.

MARCH
Quite an assortment of streetcars can be seen in this January 31, 1948 photo taken in front of the Kedzie car barn, located at Kedzie and Van Buren, one of a number of streetcar depots interspersed throughout the city. CSL #1674 is most likely pulling out of the car barn to begin a trip on the Division-Van Buren route. Car #1674 was originally built in 1912 for the Chicago Railways, a predecessor to the Chicago Surface Lines, in the railway's own shops. The car was part of the first series of streetcars to feature an arch style roof, without the clerestory style windows – high, narrow windows along the roofline – used on earlier streetcars. A 6000-series streetcar of undetermined number sits on the track in front of the barn, and also in the background are two 1936 pre-war PCC "Blue Goose" streetcars that were first introduced on the #20 Madison route, representing an attempt to modernize the surface fleet.

The Kedzie car barn was quite a busy place, with pullouts for quite a number of routes serving the West and Northwest sides of the city. More than 1,000 trainmen – 510 conductors and 515 motormen – worked out of Kedzie in 1912. A surface system depot still exists at this location, though it was converted to house buses circa early 1954 and completely rebuilt in 1984. Today's bus garages, like the car barns of past generations, are always a flurry of activity at all hours of the day and night, as crews arrive and buses pull out on their runs, and pull in at the end of their service, where they are cleaned and any minor repairs that are needed are performed so that they will be ready for the following day's service. (Photo from the collection of Mike Charnota)

APRIL
The ceremonial ribbon is being cut as part of the dedication of the new Skokie Swift rapid transit line on April 18, 1964 – at the ribbon, from left to right, CTA Board chairman George L. DeMent; Raymond Simon, representing Chicago Mayor Richard J. Daley; William B. Hurd of the U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency (HHFA); and Skokie Mayor Myron Greisdorf. The Skokie Swift was, in the lingo of the time, a "demonstration project" authorized by the National Housing Act of 1961. The two-year project's objective was to determine the feasibility of adapting rail transit to link fast-growing suburban development to an existing central city. In this case, the line offered a fast, non-stop shuttle service between Dempster Street in suburban Skokie – nearby access to the Edens Expressway and where ample parking, a "kiss'n'ride" drop-off/pick-up area, and

Historical Notes

connections to area bus routes were provided – and the Howard 'L' station, where connections could be made to the Evanston and North-South subway lines. The project was funded by the CTA, Village of Skokie, and the U.S. HHFA (in the second year of the demonstration project, the HHFA became the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); in 1968, HUD's transportation projects were transferred to the new U.S. Department of Transportation).

The private Chicago Rapid Transit Company originally provided 'L' service over the same stretch of track beginning in 1925 until the CTA replaced the service with buses in 1948. Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee interurban trains also used the tracks for service between downtown Chicago and downtown Milwaukee until the line's abandonment on January 20, 1963, precisely at the time when much of Skokie was being developed with new homes and apartment buildings. The availability of this existing stretch of compatible track already connected to the 'L' system made the demonstration project feasible. Consequently, thousands of Skokie residents – and commuters within driving distance or on connecting bus routes – found themselves without convenient transportation to jobs and shopping.

The project was a great success, exceeding ridership projections several-fold, with Saturday service added from the outset on what had been planned as a weekday-only service. After the two-year demonstration period was over, the service was integrated into the CTA 'L' system permanently. Initially, four single-unit 1-50 series cars, one of which is pictured in the photo, provided service. Built in 1959 by the St. Louis Car Company, cars 1 through 4 were modified with specially designed bow-type trolley poles for operation on the Skokie Swift, which was powered by overhead catenary wire. A switch in the operator's cab, when engaged by the operator, would raise or lower the pan trolley on the fly, in order to make the transition between overhead and third rail power supply. The success of the line required retrofitting additional cars for service quickly.

Today, the Skokie Swift is known as the Yellow Line. In September of 2004, the line was completely converted to third rail operation, eliminating the need for specially dedicated cars. In 2012, a new mid-route station was opened at Oakton, providing even more convenient access, and giving a boost to the continued development of downtown Skokie.

MAY

South Side Rapid Transit car #139, built in 1892 by the Gilbert Car Company of Troy, New York, is seen in this 1898 photo, heading southbound on a test run at the Harrison curve on the South Side Elevated. The passenger cars in this fleet originally were built as unpowered coaches that were pulled by small Forney-type steam locomotives. The steam-powered locomotives proved to be less economical compared to electric traction after the latter was introduced and proven reliable, as well as unappealing to the public since soot and cinders from the fires that heated the boilers would emanate from the engines. The engineering firm of Sargent & Lundy was hired to supervise the electrification project, and retained Frank J. Sprague as a consulting engineer to evaluate various proposals for the work. Sprague, an inventor originally from Connecticut, was later credited as being an important developer of the electric motor and electric railways and known as the "father of electric traction." Although not the first electric 'L' line in Chicago, Sprague's conversion included an important new development: multiple unit (MU) operation. Instead of having one locomotive (whether a steam engine or an electric motor car) pull the weight of an entire train, under MU operation the motorman in the lead car controlled the power to all the motors in the train simultaneously by means of a small master controller so that all the cars would move together. In this photo, Sprague is seen in the vestibule of the front car, in discussion with the motorman.

Today, all of the buildings seen in this photo are gone, and Harrison curve itself, which originally consisted of two sharp curves with radii exceeding 90 degrees, one immediately following the other, has been replaced. The new structure has gentler banked curves, enabling trains in both directions to travel at higher speeds without the noisy squeals and screeches caused when the wheel flanges of the trains negotiated the tight back-to-back curves at a snail's pace, so common at this location for well over one hundred years.

JUNE

In this 1962 view looking north on Halsted at Harrison/Blue Island, a southbound #8 Halsted bus has just crossed over the relatively new Congress Expressway, known today as the Eisenhower Expressway (I-290), on the way to its terminal at 79th Street. (The sign reading "#8A" is probably set in error, since that route began 8.5-miles south of this location.) To the north of the expressway is Chicago's Greektown. Originally home of the city's first Greek settlement, today Greektown is home to a variety of fine restaurants and ethnic shops. The buildings in the background were in their last days before being demolished for the development of a new University of Illinois campus. Blue Island itself no longer exists at this point, as the land has now been taken over by the university campus. The Halsted station of the Congress rapid transit line, known today as UIC-Halsted station on the Blue Line, can be seen in the center of the photo and today serves as one of the main CTA links to the university.

CTA #5979 was one of a series of 500 buses built by the Flxible Company in 1953-55. It was part of a fleet of nearly 1700 propane fueled buses received from four manufacturers – ACF-Brill, Twin Coach, Flxible and Mack – between 1950 and 1963. Propane, which is actually liquefied petroleum gas, was virtually odorless, and, at the time, less expensive than diesel fuel. However, special equipment, including storage tanks, was required at the garages that housed these buses, and there was a significant amount of local opposition, given the high volatility of this fuel and the risk of explosion. Other reasons for the end of CTA's investment in propane buses included a lack of engine development and the increasing cost of the propane fuel. Propane buses ultimately disappeared completely from the CTA with the retirement of the last of the propane buses in 1975.

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JULY
In this September 25, 1948 photo, Chicago Surface Lines (CSL) streetcar #920 is seen heading westward on its journey along Irving Park at Seminary. This car was part of a fleet of streetcars built by the Pullman Company originally for the Chicago Railways, which preceded the formation of the CSL. Known as "Small Pullmans," due to the fact that they were over three feet shorter than the larger Pullman-built streetcars already in use on the streets, they enjoyed quite a long life, since none were scrapped until 1945, with the majority lasting as late as 1951 and the last thirty-one being scrapped in 1952.

On the north side of Irving Park, the brick wall at the sidewalk edge encloses Graceland Cemetery, one of the city's oldest cemeteries and the final resting place of three Chicago mayors (Carter Harrison Sr., Carter Harrison, Jr., and Fred Busse), and a number of architects such as Louis Sullivan, Daniel Burnham, and Mies van der Rohe, who were instrumental in shaping the new Chicago from after the Great Fire of 1871 through the mid-20th Century.

Overhead on the 'L' structure in the background, a southbound Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee interurban train is making its way to the Loop. The CNS&M operated daily passenger service between downtown Milwaukee and downtown Chicago, and shared trackage with the Chicago Rapid Transit Company and, later, the Chicago Transit Authority. Though the years, the CNS&M earned and maintained a reputation for dependable and efficient service. All service on the CNS&M sadly ended on January 21, 1963.

AUGUST
CTA trolley bus #418, built by the Marmon-Harrington Company in 1951, is signed for the #51 51st-55th route. The majority of the trolley bus routes in Chicago were concentrated on the North and West sides, however, east-west routes along 47th and 51st streets also were established. The 51st Street route was converted from streetcar to trolley bus in June 1948, about a month after the route was re-extended east via 55th Street between Cottage Grove and Lake Park. Several of the north-south trolley bus routes did actually reach into the South Side, with the #52 Kedzie-California buses travelling as far south as 63rd Place, the #53 Pulaski buses to 31st, and the #54 Cicero buses to 24th Place.

Marmon-Harrington coaches featured wide entrance and exit doors, and offered a smooth, comfortable, and relatively quiet ride. In the photo, now-unused streetcar track remaining in the street from bygone days can be seen. Trolley buses often replaced streetcars, since the existing 600volt power conversion and distribution system could easily be retrofitted for trolley bus use. In addition, the trolley buses were quieter and gave off no offensive exhaust compared to motor buses. When the CTA made its decision to dismantle the city's trolley bus system, it rapidly disappeared, as line after line was converted to motor bus. The last trolley bus routes, #53 Pulaski and #54 Cicero, were converted to motor bus on March 24, 1973. After all trolley bus service ended in the city of Chicago, a number of the Marmon-Harrington trolley buses were sold to Guadalajara, Mexico, where they operated for many more years. (Photo from the collection of Mike Charnota)

SEPTEMBER
CTA "New Look" bus #8562, built by the Flxible Company in 1961, has just arrived from the factory and is crossing Wacker Drive at the Chicago River. The CTA was in the process of modernizing and enlarging its bus fleet, having completed the last of the streetcar-to-bus route conversions just a few years earlier, as well as looking to replace the aging buses of its fleet, some of which were inherited with the merger of the Chicago Motor Coach Company into the CTA. This bus represented a departure from the previous standards used in bus manufacturing during the 1940's and 1950's. Of note is the oversized front windshield as well as the large double side windows, particularly the lifting sashes on the side windows which was especially rare. The exterior was primarily brushed aluminum, with green and white painted trim. The interior featured vinyl-upholstered fully cushioned seats and light colored interior walls, and incorporated fluorescent lighting for the first time. The 8500-series buses were used until 1975.

The photo is a study in contrasts, as CTA's newest bus at the time has been positioned over disused tracks remaining in the street that, just a few years before this photo was taken, saw daily service by streetcars. In the background is the former Chicago Sun-Times/Chicago Daily News building, built in 1959. A great deal has changed since then, with the Chicago Daily News printing the last edition of its newspaper on March 4, 1978. The building itself was demolished in 2004 when the Sun-Times located to new facilities in the former Apparel Center next to the Merchandise Mart, and is now the site of Chicago's Trump Tower, a high profile multipurpose commercial/residential high rise building. Also seen on the right are the famed Wrigley Building, built in 1920 by the William Wrigley, Jr. family of chewing gum fame and, partially hidden behind it, the Tribune Tower, completed in 1925 and home of the Chicago Tribune and Tribune Company; in the left background is the Allerton Hotel, which still stands today but would be completely obscured from this location by the many tall buildings that have since been built along and transformed the character of North Michigan Avenue.

OCTOBER
It is 1923 and Chicago Elevated Railways car #4252, signed for Loop Express service, has just been received from its builder, Cincinnati Car Company. The 4251-4455 group of 4000-series cars featured the newest amenities of the time, including plush seats and electric fans for the passengers' comfort, and new shaded lighting. The 4000's were the backbone of Chicago's rapid transit system for several generations, with the last of them operating as late as 1973 in rush hour service on the then Evanston Express (today's Purple Line Express). On October 17, 1943, the State Street Subway opened for service exclusively using the steel-bodied 4000-series cars, since city ordinance prohibited the use of wooden rapid transit cars in the subway due to safety concerns.

Historical Notes

The 4000-series cars could draw power from the system's third rail by means of trolley shoes installed on each truck and the 1922-1924 built cars also had trolley poles for use on lines with overhead wire. For many years they served on the Lake Street Line and the Evanston Line since both lines had portions with power provided by overhead wires. The Lake Street Line west of Laramie Avenue operated at grade to its terminal in Forest Park and the Evanston Line operated with overhead wire from Howard St. to its terminal in Wilmette. When the ground level portion of the Lake Street Line was raised to the Chicago & North Western embankment and converted to third rail operation some of the 4000-series cars were moved to the Ravenswood and Evanston Lines while others were retired. The 4000's were retired from Ravenswood Line in 1969, and once the Evanston Line was converted from overhead wire to third rail in 1973, there was no longer any reason to keep these cars and the remaining 4000's were retired.

NOVEMBER

This is the Madison/Austin off-street terminal on the city's western border with Oak Park, where the Chicago Surface Lines (CSL) streetcars serving the #20 Madison line terminated. Passengers could transfer to Chicago and West Towns Street Railways streetcars to continue westward along Madison. This terminal continues to serve as a terminal for CTA's #20 Madison bus route, as well as Pace #315 buses. Two "Blue Geese" PCC streetcars – so named for their paint scheme of dark blue from the belt rail down, red belt rail, and cream above – are basking in the sun, waiting their turn to begin their eastbound trips along the #20 Madison route back to the Loop. These PCC streetcars, so named for the Presidents' Conference Committee, a transportation industry group that provided innovative ideas ultimately incorporated into their design, are part of a fleet of cars incorporating the latest technology and amenities of the time, based upon input from the heads of the various street railways in North America. At the time, the stark reality facing most city transit systems was that their equipment was aging quickly, infrastructures were in disrepair, and ridership was steadily falling, as the public became more and more infatuated with the automobile. The intent of this committee was to design a "state-of-the-art" car, long before that term came into vogue. CSL received its first PCC cars in 1936, which were introduced with great public interest and fanfare on the #20 Madison line and the public loved them. These cars offered a riding experience not known before, providing a smooth, quiet ride with quick acceleration. The interiors provided improved lighting and comfortable padded seats. The cars were so quiet, however, that they could literally sneak up without being heard. As the amount of traffic on city streets continued to increase, this became a mounting problem, as accidents between traffic and streetcars and pedestrians getting on and off said cars became increasingly common.

With additional orders of PCC cars planned, the CSL allowed passengers a chance to choose the color scheme for the post-war PCCs. In 1945, CSL repainted half a dozen 1936 PCCs in various color schemes, two of which are seen here. Ultimately, the scheme chosen was Mercury Green, Croydon Cream, and Swamp Holly Orange, a scheme popularly associated with the postwar PCCs and well as the PCC 'L' cars.

The Blue Geese operated on various routes throughout the system and lasted through the early 1950's, gradually being retired as the CTA accelerated its conversion from streetcars to buses. (Photo from the collection of Mike Charnotta)

DECEMBER

It's the 1964 holiday season and the Merchandise Mart is sporting its decorations, along with generations of soot left over from many years of coal burning heat used in the city. A train of newly-arrived 2000-series cars built by the Pullman-Standard Company in Chicago is posed for photos on the Wells Street Bridge over the Chicago River. The train is signed for Lake Street "A" service – although the train is posed on the Ravenswood Line for this photo, they were assigned to the Lake Street Line. Soon after the formation of the CTA, A/B skip-stop service was instituted on most lines, in an effort to speed up train service and lessen travel time. Certain stations were designated as "A" stops and only trains so designated stopped there; "B" trains stopped only at "B" stops; and interspersed between them were stations designated as "AB" stations, at which all trains stopped. In this scheme, during periods when skip-stop service was in effect, all trains are expresses and there are no locals. Off-peak, trains made all stops.

The West Side's Lake Street Line was the first rapid transit route to receive these new cars, which replaced the venerable 4000-series cars. In 1969, after the opening of the Dan Ryan Line to 95th Street, the Lake Street Line was connected with the new Dan Ryan rapid transit extension, inaugurating Lake-Dan Ryan service. A ride from end to end on that line afforded a variety of riding experiences, since the route consisted of running on a raised embankment, open-trestle steel elevated structure, and expressway median. The 2000-series cars sported a livery of alpine white and mint green when delivered, as well as wide picture windows. The entire fleet offered air conditioning for the first time. The interiors featured fluorescent lights and light walls and floors, and blue vinyl-upholstered fully cushioned seats. The cars also employed the blinker style doors that had been originally been introduced on the original 5000-series and 6000-series cars, and would continue to be the standard through the 1960's. The 2000s were retired in 1993.