

HISTORICAL CALENDAR


Chicago Transit Authority





A horse drawn omnibus, originally operated by the Citizen’s Line circa 1853, is displayed at West Shops at Pulaski and Lake. These early transit vehicles were quite primitive, barely just a notch above stagecoaches – little more than hard, wooden bench seats were provided on either side of very sparsely appointed coaches, with no heat, light, or other amenities. It is hard to believe that, from such humble beginnings, Chicago would one day have the second largest public transit system in North America, as it does today.

January 2017

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
1 New Year's Day	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	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		December 2016 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 2017 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	



Chicago streetcar #225 is outside of the 77th Street car barn, sporting an early Chicago Transit Authority emblem but still wearing the red and cream color scheme of its predecessor company, the Chicago Surface Lines. The car is approaching the end of its service life here, as the CTA was in the process of converting the existing streetcar lines to trolley bus and motorbus lines. The last of the red cars, as they were affectionately known, were taken out of revenue service on May 30, 1954.

February 2017


S M T W T F S

				A	B	C	D
			1	2	3	4	●
●	E	F	G	A	B	C	●
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	●
●	D	E	F	G	A	B	●
12	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17	18	●
●	C	D	E	F	G	A	●
19	20 Presidents' Day	21	22	23	24	25	●
●	A	B	C				
26	27	28	ABCDEFG: CTA Operations Division Group Days Off ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day ● Central offices closed		January 2017 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 2017 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	



Rapid transit car #4174, sporting a new paint job in the brown and orange color scheme of the CTA-predecessor Chicago Rapid Transit Company, is shown at Skokie Shop. This car was part of an early group of 4000-series cars built between 1914 and 1915 by the Cincinnati Car Company of Cincinnati, Ohio. The car interiors were pleasant but utilitarian, especially compared with the later group of 4000's built in the 1920s. Their smooth, rolled arch sheet steel roofs consequently earned them the nickname "Baldies."

March 2017

S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
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			1	Ash Wednesday	2	3	4	
	G ●	A	B	C	D	E	F	F ●
5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
	F ●	G	A	B	C	D	E	E ●
12	Daylight Saving Time Begins	13	14	15	16	17	St. Patrick's Day	18
	E ●	F	G	A	B	C	D	D ●
19	20	Spring Begins	21	22	23	24	25	
	D ●	E	F	G	A	B		
26	27	28	29	30	31			



Another new bus has arrived for the city – ordered by the Chicago Surface Lines, but with delivery taken by the newly created Chicago Transit Authority in 1948. Bus #6602, manufactured by General Motors, was part of a fleet of 179 buses ordered between 1946 and 1947 that helped modernize the rolling stock inherited by the CTA from its surface division predecessor, CSL.

April 2017

S M T W T F S

	<p>ABCDEFGHIJ: CTA Operations Division Group Days Off ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day ● Central offices closed</p>	<p>March 2017</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td></tr> </table>	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		<p>May 2017</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td></tr> <tr><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	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								C ●
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9 Palm Sunday	10 Passover Begins	11	12	13	14 Good Friday	15		G ●																																																																																				
16 Easter	17	18	19	20	21	22 Earth Day		F ●																																																																																				
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This is a train's-eye view looking west along the Loop Elevated above Lake Street of the original Clark/Lake elevated station as it looked shortly before construction of a replacement station began in 1988. Originally opened in 1895, this station and State/Lake were built by the Lake Street Elevated and actually predated the Loop 'L' by a few years, being incorporated into the downtown quadrangle in 1897. Almost everything seen in this photo is gone today, as this station has been replaced with a new, modern, ADA-accessible station with direct connection to the subway below it.

May 2017

S M T W T F S

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
<small>ABCDEF G:</small> <small>CTA Operations Division</small> <small>Group Days Off</small> <small>▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day</small> <small>● Central offices closed</small>	1	2	3	4	5 <small>Cinco de Mayo</small>	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14 <small>Mother's Day</small>	15	16	17	18	19	20 <small>Armed Forces Day</small>	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
28	29 <small>Memorial Day</small>	30	31	<small>April 2017</small> <small>S M T W T F S</small> <small>2 3 4 5 6 7 8</small> <small>9 10 11 12 13 14 15</small> <small>16 17 18 19 20 21 22</small> <small>23 24 25 26 27 28 29</small> <small>30</small>		<small>June 2017</small> <small>S M T W T F S</small> <small>1 2 3</small> <small>4 5 6 7 8 9 10</small> <small>11 12 13 14 15 16 17</small> <small>18 19 20 21 22 23 24</small> <small>25 26 27 28 29 30</small>	





It is 1948, and a brand new trolley bus basks in the sun at West Shops. It is actually a recently received demonstrator unit manufactured by the A. C. F. Brill Motors Company in Philadelphia, and the prototype of 110 trolley buses that were ordered for the Chicago Transit Authority. The newly formed CTA was in the process of converting some former streetcar lines to trolley bus operation and there was a great need for new, reliable trolley buses. At the peak of trolley bus operation in Chicago in 1953, there was a total of 16 routes, making it the largest such system in North America.

June 2017

S M T W T F S

A B C D E F G		May 2017							July 2017							F	G	A																
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Another new streetcar has arrived for Chicago, as proclaimed on the front of car #7129. Built by the St. Louis Car Company of St. Louis, Missouri, #7129 was a part of two orders totaling 600 cars split between the St. Louis Car company and the Pullman-Standard Company. These 600 cars comprised the second generation of Presidents Conference Committee (PCC) streetcars that operated in Chicago, and incorporated updated elements in design and technology. The public embraced these new streetcars for their comfort, speed, quietness, and smooth operation.

July 2017

S M T W T F S

cta		ABCDEFG: CTA Operations Division Group Days Off ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day ● Central offices closed					June 2017 S M T W T F S 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 2017 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		
	D ●	E		F ▼	G	A	B	1	C ●	D ●	
2	C ●		3		4	Independence Day	5	6	7	8	
9	B ●	C	10	D	11		12	13	14	15	
16	A ●	B	17	C	18		19	20	21	22	
23	G ●	A	24		25		26	27	28	29	
30			31								




CTA articulated car #52 is seen crossing the bridge over McCormick Boulevard and the North Shore Channel as it operates on the Skokie Swift line, known today as the Yellow Line. This series of cars were three-section articulated units, rather than separate cars. They operated on various parts of the system, somewhat as orphans as no additional cars of this configuration were ordered, but found a suitable home when they were assigned to the Skokie Swift line after its opening in 1964.

August 2017

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July 2017 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 2017 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							B							C							D							E							F						
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ABCDEF G:
 CTA Operations Division
 Group Days Off
 ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day
 ● Central offices closed





CTA #8000 is seen outside of the 77th Street depot on October 31, 1956, having just been delivered from the Flixible Twin Coach Company of Loudonville, Ohio. In the 1950's, the CTA decided to acquire a fleet of propane-powered buses to modernize its bus system. Propane, which is actually liquefied petroleum gas, was virtually odorless, and, at the time, less expensive than diesel fuel, and therefore quite desirable. Over time, the economic benefits of propane over diesel greatly diminished and the last propane buses were retired in 1976.

September 2017

S M T W T F S

cta		<small> ABCDEFG: CTA Operations Division Group Days Off ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day ● Central offices closed </small>	<small> August 2017 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 </small>	<small> October 2017 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 </small>	A	B		
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3	A ●	B	C	D	E	8	9	G ●
10	G ●	A	B	C	D	15	16	F ●
17	F ●	G	A	B	C	22	23	D
24						29	30	E ●



Car #725, a former cable car trailer from the Chicago Union Traction Company, is posed outside a streetcar car barn. Chicago once had the second largest cable car network in the United States with three private companies operating along 41 miles of double track. Trailers were frequently added to the rear of cable cars, simply by coupling them up, to increase passenger capacity. The cable car system was completely phased out by 1906 in favor of electric streetcars, which proved to be considerably faster and more economical.

October 2017

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Columbus Day	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 Halloween	September 2017 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 2017 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						



It's a beautiful day for holiday shopping as trolley bus #9732 is running on the #81 Lawrence route. The bus is making its way west along Lawrence Avenue at Winchester Avenue in the Ravenswood neighborhood on Chicago's northwest side, passing in front of one of a number of local Sears Roebuck & Company department stores found throughout the city. Part of an order of 349 buses manufactured by the Marmon-Herrington Company in 1951, #9732 is among a fleet of electric buses that operated on 16 trolley bus routes throughout the city.

December 2017

S M T W T F S

		<small>ABCDEF G: CTA Operations Division Group Days Off ▼ Alternate day off if you work on this day ● Central offices closed</small>		<small>November 2017</small> <small>S M T W T F S</small> <small>1 2 3 4</small> <small>5 6 7 8 9 10 11</small> <small>12 13 14 15 16 17 18</small> <small>19 20 21 22 23 24 25</small> <small>26 27 28</small>		<small>January 2018</small> <small>S M T W T F S</small> <small>1 2 3 4 5 6</small> <small>7 8 9 10 11 12 13</small> <small>14 15 16 17 18 19 20</small> <small>21 22 23 24 25 26 27</small> <small>28 29 30 31</small>		<small>B</small>		<small>C</small>	
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	<small>C</small>		<small>D</small>		<small>E</small>		<small>F</small>		<small>G</small>	<small>A</small>	
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	<small>B</small>		<small>C</small>		<small>D</small>		<small>E</small>		<small>F</small>	<small>G</small>	
10		11		12	Hanukkah Begins	13		14		15	
	<small>A</small>		<small>B</small>		<small>C</small>		<small>D</small>		<small>E</small>	<small>F</small>	
17		18		19		20		21	Winter Begins	22	
	<small>G</small>		<small>A</small>		<small>B</small>		<small>C</small>		<small>D</small>	<small>E</small>	
24											
31	New Year's Eve	25	Christmas Day	26	Kwanzaa Begins	27		28		29	
	<small>F</small>								<small>F</small>		

Historical Notes



January

A horse drawn omnibus, originally operated by the Citizen's Line circa 1853, is displayed at West Shops at Pulaski and Lake. In the earliest days of public transit in Chicago, the first attempts at providing some dependable means of vehicular transit for the citizens of the city were established by various private enterprises and individuals, usually competing with each other for business. The earliest transit vehicles were quite primitive, barely just a notch above stagecoaches – little more than hard, wooden bench seats were provided on either side of very sparsely appointed coaches, with no heat, light, or other amenities. Each car had a capacity of between twelve and fifteen passengers. As can be seen from the photograph, the omnibuses were equipped with wooden-spoked wheels, which often got bogged down in the swampy mud and mire of early Chicago's streets, especially after a good rain or snow. One can only imagine the bumpy and unsteady ride, as these rather fragile wooden conveyances, pulled by a horse, negotiated the ruts, muck, and trash that was rampant in the city's streets at the time. It is hard to believe that, from such humble beginnings, Chicago would one day have the second largest public transit system in North America, as it does today.



February

Chicago streetcar #225 is outside of the 77th Street car barn, sporting an early Chicago Transit Authority emblem but still wearing the red and cream color scheme of its predecessor company, the Chicago Surface Lines.

Built by the Pullman Car Company in 1908-09, car #225 was part of a fleet of 600 cars known as "Big Pullmans" that operated all over the city's surface system, and were the mainstay on many of

the heavily-used streetcar lines of the city. Throughout their careers, the cars operated with both an operator and conductor. Passengers boarded at the rear of the car onto a spacious platform, designed to allow quick and efficient boarding. After paying their fare to the conductor, passengers would proceed into the car interior, which was appointed with reversible rattan seats, wood trim, and a grooved wooden floor specially designed to catch water on rainy days. Each window was equipped with a window shade, and heaters could be found under each car seat. Exiting was via the front door. These streetcars were designed to carry large numbers of people and were used on the busier streetcar routes throughout the city.

Car #225 is approaching the end of its service life here, as the CTA was in the process of converting the existing streetcar lines to trolley bus and motorbus lines. The last of the red cars, as they were affectionately known, were taken out of revenue service on May 30, 1954. Car #225 is currently preserved at the Seashore Trolley Museum in Kennebunkport, Maine.



March

Rapid transit car #4174, sporting a new paint job in the brown and orange color scheme of the CTA-predecessor Chicago Rapid Transit Company, is shown at Skokie Shop, signed for Englewood Express via Elevated. This car was part of an early group of 4000-series cars built between 1914 and 1915 by the Cincinnati Car Company of Cincinnati, Ohio.

The car interiors were pleasant but utilitarian, especially compared with the later group of 4000's built in the 1920s. The interior features rattan-covered seats, wood trim, and leather standee straps with porcelain grips. Car #4174 was part of a later order of cars whose seats were transverse, rather than the longitudinal "bowling alley" seating of earlier 4000's; later 4000's would follow suit. As built, this group of cars also featured wide, pneumatically operated entrance/exit doors located at each end of the car, as well as an additional center door, which was intended to expedite passenger boarding and exiting at stations. However, these center doors were seldom if ever used and, in later years, were permanently sealed with an extra passenger seat placed in front of them. These cars also featured power collection only via third rail shoes, unlike later 4000-series cars equipped with trolley poles for overhead power collection, and this, along with their smooth, rolled arch sheet steel roofs consequently earned them the nickname "Baldies."

Through the years, the 4000-series cars were the workhorses of the system, operating on all of the existing elevated and subway lines of the time at one point or another, with the last cars operating in revenue service as late as 1973. A number of 4000-series cars have been preserved at various railway museums, including Fox River Trolley Museum in South Elgin, IL, and the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, IL, and East Troy Railroad Museum in East Troy, WI.

Historical Notes



April

Another new bus has arrived for the city – ordered by the Chicago Surface Lines, but with delivery taken by the newly created Chicago Transit Authority in 1948. Bus #6602, manufactured by General Motors, was part of a fleet of 179 buses ordered between 1946 and 1947 that helped modernize the rolling stock inherited by the CTA from its surface division predecessor, CSL.

Early in CTA's history, a decision was made to phase out the aging and deteriorated streetcars operating on numerous routes throughout the city with modern combustion engine-powered buses. After the end of World War II, the city expanded, as new neighborhoods were quickly built up beyond the inner ring of the city in order to accommodate the returning military service personnel and their new families, and this required the expansion of a number of routes into these new neighborhoods.

These buses were quite rudimentary in operation, with manual transmissions and standard steering. It was quite a feat for the bus operator to not only operate the bus, but accept fares, make change, and issue transfers at every stop. When compared to streetcars, these new buses did have their drawbacks since their capacity did not match the capacity of the streetcars they were replacing and, consequently, more buses were required to operate the routes once served by streetcars.



May

This is a train's-eye view looking west along the Loop Elevated above Lake Street of the original Clark/Lake elevated station as it looked shortly before construction of a replacement station began in 1988. Originally opened in 1895, this station and State/Lake were built by the Lake Street Elevated and actually predated the Loop 'L' by a few years, being incorporated into the downtown quadrangle in 1897. The station underwent significant modifications through the years, most notably losing its original enclosed stationhouses. However, the platform canopies, some sections of railing, and other appointments remained largely untouched until the station's replacement. Note the incandescent lights along the platform and canopies, another throwback to yesteryear.

Almost everything seen in this photo is gone today, as this station has been replaced with a large, painted steel station with wider platforms, overhead transfer bridge, longer canopies, skylight, escalators and elevators, as well as interior street level entrances though new buildings constructed on either side of Lake Street. The current facility provides a direct transfer connection between the Loop Elevated trains and Blue Line subway trains operating to O'Hare and Forest Park; at the time of the photo, free connection was available between the elevated and subway, but it was an out-of-station "walking transfer".

Notice that the building on the left in the photo is already under demolition, as eventually will be the entire block, in order to make way for the new State of Illinois Building (now James R. Thompson Center) that will be built on that site. The buildings to the right are long gone as well, replaced with a new office building at 203 North LaSalle, originally called the Loop Transportation Building. These buildings were specifically designed to connect to both the subway and the new elevated Clark/Lake station to create an integrated tri-level transfer station.



June

It is 1948, and a brand new trolley bus basks in the sun at West Shops. It is actually a recently received demonstrator unit manufactured by the A. C. F. Brill Motors Company in Philadelphia, and the prototype of 110 trolley buses that were ordered for the Chicago Transit Authority. The newly formed CTA was in the process of converting some former streetcar lines to trolley bus operation and there was a great need for new, reliable trolley buses. These trolley buses featured larger windows with standee windows above. Operationally, the technology very much resembled the streetcars they were replacing. Since tracks in the streets were no longer required, a second wire was required on the overhead for the negative power return. Unlike streetcars, trolley buses had the ability to board and discharge passengers at the curb, rather than requiring passengers to walk out into the street. These coaches provided a comfortable, smooth, and quiet ride and were well liked by the public.

Electric trolley bus service was originally instituted by the Chicago Surface Lines, a predecessor of the Chicago Transit Authority, along Diversey Avenue on April 17, 1930. Some of Chicago's earliest trolley bus routes were mainly extensions of existing streetcar lines into newly established neighborhoods, as the city continued its outward growth. In later years, trolley buses replaced streetcars on many city routes. At the peak of trolley bus operation in Chicago in 1953, there was a total of 16 routes, making it the largest such system in North America. In the late 1960's, the gradual conversion to diesel bus operation was well underway, culminating in March 1973 with the conversion of the #53 Pulaski, #54 Cicero and #72 North routes. The last trolley bus operation was a charter for transit enthusiasts on April 1, 1973.

Historical Notes



July

Another new streetcar has arrived for Chicago, as proclaimed on the front of car #7129. Built by the St. Louis Car Company of St. Louis, Missouri, #7129 was a part of two orders totaling 600 cars split between the St. Louis Car company and the Pullman-Standard Company. These streetcars were ordered by the Chicago Surface Lines, one of three transit agencies that were incorporated into the Chicago Transit Authority; delivery began in November 1946, less than a year before the newly formed CTA began operating.

These 600 cars comprised the second generation of Presidents Conference Committee (PCC) streetcars that operated in Chicago. In the early 1930's, the heads of the various city transit systems in North America met as the Committee to design a state-of-the-art streetcar, primarily to address the declining ridership prevalent in major cities due to the increasing popularity and affordability of the automobile, along with the aging and deterioration of the rolling stock operating on these street systems. Chicago received its first order of PCC streetcars in 1936, with the introduction of the "Blue Goose" streetcars – so called because of their color scheme – on Madison Avenue. The second generation of streetcars, of which #7129 was part, was significantly improved, and incorporated updated elements in design and technology. Affectionately known as "Green Hornets," a reference to the new cars' color and speed, the public embraced these new streetcars for their comfort, speed, quietness, and smooth operation. The interiors were appointed with bull's eye lighting, padded seats, chrome stanchions, and standee windows. Being fifty feet in length, these PCC streetcars were able to carry large numbers of people.

Sadly, these streetcars only saw about ten years of service, as the CTA streetcar system was converted to bus operation, with the last streetcar run on June 21, 1958. Upon their removal, most of these streetcars were shipped to the St. Louis Car Company, where various components, including seats, stanchions, window cranks, and electrical gear were salvaged and used in the building of the 6000-series rapid transit cars for Chicago, which bore a resemblance to the PCC streetcars in their appearance. Only one Green Hornet streetcar, #4391, exists today, housed at the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, IL.



August

CTA articulated car #52 is seen crossing the bridge over McCormick Boulevard and the North Shore Channel as it operates on the Skokie Swift line, known today as the Yellow Line. Four sets of these articulated 5000-series cars were ordered as prototypes for a new, modern rapid transit car by the predecessor Chicago Rapid Transit Company – two came from the Pullman-Standard Company, and two from the St. Louis Car Company. The two Pullman cars, #5001 and #5002, were delivered in 1947 shortly before CTA's takeover of the 'L'; St. Louis's #5003 and #5004 were delivered to CTA in 1948.

These cars were three-section articulated units, rather than separate cars. Their design was the precursor to the future orders of PCC 6000-series rapid transit cars manufactured by the St. Louis Car Company, which incorporated many of the design and technological elements found in these cars. Originally, the 5000s operated on various parts of the system, somewhat as orphans as no additional cars of this configuration were ordered – they were compatible with the later 6000-series cars they inspired, but had several differences as well. However, they found a suitable home when they were assigned to the Skokie Swift line after its opening in 1964. Equipped with both third rail and overhead power collection and having a high passenger capacity they could be operated by just one crewperson. For Skokie Swift service, the four cars were renumbered #51-#54.

The Skokie Swift line was established as a federal demonstration project to test the adaptability of urban rapid transit for a lower-density postwar suburban market. The Swift used tracks formerly served by the Chicago North Shore & Milwaukee Railway, an interurban line that had operated via the Loop Elevated in Chicago's Downtown between Chicago's Loop and downtown Milwaukee. The CNS&M ceased operations on January 20, 1963. In 2012, an additional station was opened at Oakton, to provide access to/from downtown Skokie.

CTA car #52 is currently preserved at the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, IL and former CTA #51 (restored to CRT #5001) is preserved at the Fox River Trolley Museum in South Elgin, IL.

Historical Notes



September

CTA #8000 is seen outside of the 77th Street depot on October 31, 1956, having just been delivered from the Flxible Twin Coach Company of Loudonville, Ohio, and is almost ready for service (it still needs a destination roll sign!). In the 1950's, the CTA decided to acquire a fleet of propane-powered buses to modernize its bus system – to that end, various orders were placed with companies such as ACF-Brill, Twin Coach, Flxible, and Mack.

Bus #8000 was part of an order of 150 buses from Flxible, with delivery of the first of these buses in 1956. These buses featured high passenger windows that were smaller than those of other buses, a protruding front windshield, dark green padded seats, painted interiors, and bulls' eye lighting.

Propane, which is actually liquefied petroleum gas, was virtually odorless, and, at the time, less expensive than diesel fuel, and therefore quite desirable. These buses only operated on routes out of certain bus garages at the time, since the depots that housed them required special equipment, including propane storage tanks. There was a significant amount of local opposition in some cases, given the high volatility of this fuel and the risk of explosion. Over time, the economic benefits of propane over diesel greatly diminished and, in 1959, a decision was made not to further invest in this system. Propane buses disappeared completely from the CTA with the retirement of the last of the type in 1976.



October

Car #725, a former cable car trailer from the Chicago Union Traction Company, is posed outside a streetcar car barn in this undated photo. There wasn't much in the way of amenities for the riders on these cars, nor for the conductor, as evidenced by the open platforms exposed to the elements. A number of these trailers were later converted to electric traction as electric streetcars replaced the cable car system, but most were simply scrapped.

Cable cars differ in technology from streetcars in that they themselves are not powered, but operate by means of an underground cable constantly moving in a conduit underneath the street surface. The operator would engage a mechanical claw-like device, or "grip", to grab the continuously moving cable through a slot in the street between the two running rails, enabling the cable car to move along the tracks. When a stop was required, the operator would simply release the grip, and the cable car would come to a stop with the help of hand-operated brake shoes on the wheels.

Chicago once had the second largest cable car network in the United States with three private companies operating along 41 miles of double track. Trailers were frequently added to the rear of cable cars, simply by coupling them up, to increase passenger capacity. The cable car system was completely phased out by 1906 in favor of electric streetcars, which proved to be considerably faster and more economical.

The Chicago Union Traction Company was one of a number of independent transit companies that once operated in Chicago's streets. Most of these early surface transit companies were unified into the Chicago Surface Lines in 1907, which ultimately was then incorporated into the Chicago Transit Authority in 1947.



November

It is 1964; the first four cars of the 180-car order for the new 2000-series units are being introduced to the public. A noontime crowd is waiting at the Adams/Wabash station on June 11 to board the train of "New Look" cars for a free demonstration ride to Randolph/Wabash.

The 2000-series cars were built by the Pullman-Standard Company, and were the last 'L' cars actually manufactured in Chicago. These were the first air-conditioned rapid transit cars for Chicago, and featured extra-large picture windows, eliminating the need for standee windows that were common on most earlier series of cars. The interiors featured light colored walls and light blue padded seats. The 2000s retained the use of "blinker" doors as used in the earlier 5000-series and 6000-series cars. Their original livery of mint green and alpine white presented quite a sharp appearance, particularly in full sun. In later years, their livery was changed to a platinum/black color scheme to better match aesthetically with the 2200-series unpainted stainless steel cars they were often paired with in Lake-Dan Ryan service.

The cars were equipped with four 100 horsepower motors and 28-inch diameter wheels. Initially, 140 of these cars were assigned to service on the Lake Street and 40 cars to the Milwaukee-Congress-Douglas lines on the city's West Side. After the Lake service was through-routed to the new Dan Ryan line in 1969, they served there for a number of years. Their other primary assignments were Howard-Englewood-Jackson Park and Evanston services, before their retirement in 1993. Four cars of this series, #2007-2008 and #2153-2154, are housed at the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, IL.

Historical Notes



December

It's a beautiful day for holiday shopping as trolley bus #9732 is running on the #81 Lawrence route. The bus is making its way west along Lawrence Avenue at Winchester Avenue in the Ravenswood neighborhood on Chicago's northwest side, passing in front of one of a number of local Sears Roebuck & Company department stores found throughout the city. Before the advent of drive-to shopping centers, a scene such as this was typical of many neighborhoods throughout Chicago, as residents did much of their shopping right in their own neighborhoods or in nearby commercial districts. Surprisingly, the surrounding neighborhood looks much the same today, except that motorbuses have replaced trolley buses, which had originally replaced streetcars on this route. The Sears store only recently closed, but the building remains and is being adaptively reused as housing.

Part of an order of 349 buses manufactured by the Marmon-Herrington Company in 1951, #9732 is among a fleet of electric buses that operated on 16 trolley bus routes throughout the city. These buses provided a comfortable, quiet ride. The interiors featured padded vinyl-covered seats, plenty of windows, standee windows, bulls' eye lighting, walls painted a medium green, and wide front doors to facilitate faster boarding/exiting. Acceleration was smooth and quick, and the operation was quiet and pollution-free.

The trolley bus system was gradually phased out beginning in the 1960's and finally came to an end in March 1973. After the end of service, a number of these Marmon-Herrington trolley buses were sold to Guadalajara, Mexico, where they operated for many more years. Two Marmon-Herrington trolley buses from Chicago, #9553 and #9631, as well as another from Milwaukee, #441 are preserved at the Illinois Railway Museum in Union, IL.